Green employment initiative: tapping into the job creation potential of the green economy

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The European Parliament adopted by 542 votes to 99, with 20 abstentions, a resolution on the Green Employment Initiative: Tapping into the job creation potential of the green economy.

Towards a green economy – opportunities for the labour market: Parliament emphasised that a transition towards sustainable societies and economies can **generate the potential both to create new quality jobs** and to transform existing employment into green jobs in virtually all sectors and across the entire value chain. It also noted that the transition bears significant potential to create local jobs which **cannot be relocated**, and in sectors hit by the crisis such as the buildings sector.

In this regard, Members highlighted the fact that **full implementation of environmental legislation**, as well as the improvement of environmental integration and **policy coherence across different sectorial polices in the EU**, are essential for a full deployment of the potential linked to the green economy and therefore for the creation of green jobs.

Just transition and creation of quality and sustainable jobs: Parliament urged the Member States, and the Commission to commit to a **'just transition roadmap'** to pursue ambitious environmental goals with the promotion of the following aspects: (i) adequate social protection and remuneration, (ii) long-term jobs and healthy and safe working conditions, (iii) government-led investment in education, (iv) respect for labour rights and the strengthening of worker information, consultation and participation rights regarding matters concerning sustainable development, and effective workforce representation.

Members highlighted the importance of national governments in promoting sectorial social dialogue, especially in newly emerging green industries. They stressed the need to:

- provide the existing workforce with proper opportunities to acquire the **new skills** needed for the circular economy;
- **anticipate change in employment** requiring proactive transformation management and improved high-quality data collection on the current and future needs of the labour market, with the involvement of European higher-education institutions.

Local authorities can play a key role in promoting job growth in the green economy and more decent and inclusive jobs by green investment and supporting both green SMEs and greening of SMEs.

Skills for green employment: Parliament called for an **ambitious strategy** for creating sustainable jobs, including by addressing the skills mismatch with a particular focus on meeting the skills needs of a greener economy. It recalled that skills development should encourage the development of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills, which are widely useful in an economy.

Whilst welcoming the tools for skills development and the forecasting of skill needs proposed by the Commission, the resolution called for:

- the setting up of a **data bank** listing training courses and job offers related to green employment, with the aim of improving the quality of information, advice and guidance available on careers;

- **better synergies between education systems and emerging new green jobs** through better coordination between educational institutions and employers' unions and other relevant organisations;
- the adoption by the Member States, regional governments and local authorities, together with the social partners and training providers, **skill development and anticipation strategies** with the objective of improving generic, sectoral and occupation-specific skills;
- the integration of sustainable development and environmental competences and skills into training and education systems;
- put in place mechanisms to train staff in employment authorities and services to mainstream skills for green employment in labour market policies.

The Commission is asked to open a **public debate** on, and to promote the concept of, 'education for sustainable development', with special emphasis on the education of girls and women.

Policy coherence: Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to **adopt ambitious, long-term and integrated regulatory, fiscal and financial frameworks** for sustainable investment and to encourage innovation. Policies should be developed in a framework of long-term horizons that includes targets as well as indicators to measure progress towards their achievement.

The European Union and the Member States should:

- set **mandatory energy-saving and efficiency targets**, and to support white certificates as an instrument to facilitate the achievement of EU energy-saving targets;
- consider examining whether the introduction of environmental and social criteria in **public procurement policies** could boost job creation in the greener economy;
- support the contribution of **public services** to the just transition towards a sustainable economy;
- **phase out** direct and indirect environmentally harmful **subsidies** including, but not limited to, those for fossil fuels;
- introduce targeted subsidies and/or tax exemptions for **start-ups** that provide goods and services offering high environmental added value;
- step up **international efforts** to create a global environmental policy that can limit the damage caused by offshoring of industrial production outside the EU and by carbon leakage.

For its part, the Commission should:

- help revive the repairs sector;
- issue country-specific recommendations to the Member States that can contribute to efforts to foster green employment and reduce ecological footprints;
- use the EU Semester and the review of the Europe 2020 strategy to support green job creation
- propose more ambitious social and environmental targets for 2030 and 2050;
- present its proposal to reform the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) as soon as possible.

Investing in sustainable job creation: Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to promote, including in the framework of the European Fund for Strategic Investments, quality investments geared towards generating societal and economic benefits. Investments should be focused in areas with positive labour market impact.

Member States are called upon to make full use of the possibilities under the legal framework for the European Structural and Investment Funds to promote sustainable projects that foster green employment.

Parliament recommended that **quality investment in key public services** such as communications, energy, transport, waste and water management are targeted in order to support sustainable public-procurement procedures and the mainstreaming of green skills.

Support to SMEs: recalling that SMEs have enormous potential for creating employment, in particular youth employment, Parliament supported the objectives of the Green Action Plan for SMEs and recognised that the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) could help micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises to engage in activities involving a high degree of environmental and social innovation.

The Commission is called upon to stimulate new business models, such as **cooperative enterprises**, for increasing the efficiency of production and distribution processes, adopting innovative solutions to save resources and offering more sustainable products and services.