Resolution on the strategic priorities for the Commission Work Programme 2017

2016/2773(RSP) - 06/07/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 417 votes 209 with 78 abstentions, a resolution on the strategic priorities for the Commission Work Programme 2017. The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D and ALDE groups.

The resolution sets out Parliament's recommendations in the following priority areas:

Improving the working and living conditions of European citizens: Parliament stressed that the EU must work towards a dynamic and inclusive labour market embedded in the European social market economy model. All EU citizens must count on a **fundamental set of fair working conditions** and access to quality education, social protection and essential services which enable a work-life balance and meet the needs of a modern labour market within the EU.

The Commission was asked to put forward a **proposal on a European pillar of social rights**, to be translated into concrete initiatives, in particular to: (i) promote the accessibility and quality of early education; (ii) close the skills gap and ensure access to quality education, training and lifelong learning for all; (iii) reduce social inequalities and promote quality employment, (iv) address work-life balance challenges and the gender gap in pay and pensions.

Strengthening economic recovery and long-term competitiveness: Parliament called for **re-launching the sustainable growth and employment strategy Europe 2020**, whilst stating that boosting employment and productivity remains the top priority, and that the EU needs targeted investments to accelerate the transition towards a resource-efficient, digital economy.

The Commission was asked to:

- design a new, ambitious **industrial strategy** complementing the circular economy package;
- propose more measures which would **foster research and development**, innovation, cultural diversity and creativity as key drivers of job creation, while bearing in mind that companies', and in particular SMEs', access to capital is vital.

Responding to climate change and ensuring energy security: Parliament called for necessarily ambitious targets to be set at EU level for greenhouse gas reductions and renewables and energy efficiency for the post-2020 period, in line with the Paris COP 21 Agreement. It asked the Commission to: (i) develop a common strategy for energy and climate diplomacy that would address these global concerns; (ii) identify efforts to phase out fossil fuel subsidies.

Ensuring a consistent response to the increased inflow of refugees: the European Union must work out concrete solutions to address the refugee emergency, by strengthening cooperation with countries of transit and origin of migration flows and by using all available policies and instruments to ensure their stabilisation, rehabilitation and development.

Parliament encouraged the Commission to **pursue necessary humanitarian assistance** and ensure decent living conditions in refugee camps, combined with longer-term development programmes, especially in the field of education.

Furthermore, EU asylum and migration policy is not fit for purpose and **needs a fundamental rethink**. Members recommended:

- systematic, enforceable programmes to be organised for the direct resettlement and relocation of asylum-seekers;
- conditions to be created within the EU for a well-managed reception of asylum-seekers that would ensure their safety and humane treatment, paying particular attention to the needs of vulnerable groups;
- proposals for establishing a proper EU economic and legal migration policy.

Addressing the security concerns of citizens: in this regard, the Commission was called on to:

- monitor closely the transposition and implementation of EU counter-terrorism measures;
- mobilise expertise and technical and financial resources in order to ensure EU-level **coordination and exchanges of best practices** in the fight against violent extremism and terrorist propaganda;
- present its proposals for a proper legal basis for the **European Counter Terrorism Centre within Europol**, proposals to improve and develop existing information systems, accompanied by necessary data protection safeguards.

Deploying an ambitious external action agenda: on neighbourhood and on the global system: Parliament called for an ambitious the EU Global Strategy which positions the EU as a **geopolitical player** in a rapidly changing world. It called for mobilisation in a coherent way all EU external action instruments with a view to achieving improved global governance, wide convergence on better standards, improved security and stronger respect for human rights in the world.

Amongst the main priorities in EU foreign policy, Parliament called for a **revival of common security and defence policy**, which can no longer be the weakest link in the EU integration process.

Fair taxation policies: Parliament underlined that the Commission must continue to act without delay to ensure that profits are taxed in the European countries where the economic activity actually takes places and value created. The EU should work towards a mandatory common consolidated corporate tax base.

Strengthening the EU budget and financial instruments: Parliament called on the Commission to present a new financial and fiscal strategy to meet challenges in the areas of EU own resources, the multiannual financial framework (MFF) before the end of 2016, the structural and cohesion funds, the common agricultural policy and the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI)

Completing the Economic and Monetary Union: Parliament asked the Commission to present a consistent and well-substantiated set of proposals on completing the Economic and Monetary Union. It insisted on respecting the requirements in Union law regarding democratic accountability for decisions in the context of European economic governance. It considered that the EU needs to be working towards upward economic and social convergence, improving national ownership and democratic legitimacy of the European Semester and completing the banking union.

Strengthening fundamental rights and democracy: Parliament asked the Commission to take initiatives with a view to strengthening the European institutions and encouraging EU citizens to be **more involved in European political life**. It called for all the EU institutions to connect better with younger generations and their platforms for debate, stronger actions to inform EU citizens about their rights, exploit the potential of the European Citizens' Initiative and strengthen the role of the EU Ombudsman.