Annual economic report 1999

2000/2046(COS) - 02/03/2000 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted its resolution on the Annual Economic Report for 1999 drafted by Mr. Giorgios KATIFORIS (PES, Gr). In its resolution, the Parliament states that the recovery of the European economy in terms of GDP growth and profits is well under way, while unemployment remains unacceptably high and income inequalities and poverty are growing. It calls on the Council, in setting the broad Economic Guidelines, to formulate policies, including microeconomic policies, designed to achieve full employment which are consistent with stable prices and a balanced budget over the whole economic cycle. Parliament recalls that attainment of the objective of full employment depends on more sustained growth, as borne out by international and European experience, and that this growth must be supported by an economic and fiscal policy favourable to investment, particularly on the part of SMEs, by a wage policy which reflects productivity gains and by a reduction in the rigidity which still characterises labour legislation in too many Member States. The EP calls on the Commission and the Council to: - increase their efforts to make the Trans-European Networks connect the present EU Member States and candidate countries and other neighbouring countries, because of the TENs' particular strategic importanc to future growth and to integration between different parts of Europe and its neighbours; - strengthen modrn Information Technology Highways and networks within the TENs programme in order to give Europe an advanced IT infrastructure; - lend active support to the scientific community and industry in the development of a common European research space, supported by increased spending on R&D; - introduce quantitative targets for youth training as well as retraining for long term unemployed workers, taking into account the changes in skills dictated by emergent technologies, to which Member States will bind themselves to converge over a fixed time period; - eliminate the democratic deficit in economic and employment policy making by means of an inter-institutional agreement involving the European Parliament fully in decision making on the broad outlines of economic policy and the economic policy guidelines. The Council and Commission are invited to do everything in their power to render the European patent application process quicker, simpler, more efficient and cheaper in order to improve the competitiveness of European inventions and hence Europe's prospects for the future; but insists on better provisions to secure full respect for ethical standards and consumer interests. Lastly, the Parliament urges the Commission to include proposals for resources to implement the ideas of the eEurope initiative, especially regarding education, infrastructure and broad public access to the Internet.