Resolution on preparatory work for the Stockholm European Council

2001/2527(RSP) - 15/03/2001 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament voted 308 to 33 with 23 abstentions in favour of a resolution endorsing the Commission's recommendatinos to EU leaders meeting on 23/24 March in Stockholm. The Parliament is concerned to see the Member States live up to the commitments made in Lisbon and indeed expect the European Council to adopt a self-critical stance. There is support for the aim of a 3% growth rate adn full employment and Parliament wants to see tangible results in the liberalisation process, structural reforms, a better business climate and more quality jobs. Moreover, the Parliament considers that the economic and social approach of the "Lisbon Strategy" must include the environmental dimension for all policy fields concerned. The resolution also advises against setting too many targets, which may prove not only contradictory or produce perverse effects but may also serve to reduce the margin of manoeuvre of Member States in achieving the strategic goal. It also warns that the statistical burden on business and the economy must be reduced. The House underlines the importance of the Stability and Growth Pact and stresses the importance of public/private investment in order to create a competitive and dynamic knowledged based economy. The European Council is urged to instruct the Council of Ministers to reach an agreement as a matter of urgency on outstanding internal market issues such as liberalising the gas and electicity markets and postal services. The resolution also supports the Commission's proposal for urgent action to be taken to deal with the problem of cross-border labour mobility. MEPs also recognise the need to pay attention to demographic trends and the need to modernise pension systems. The Parliament also agrees with the Commission on the need to take decisions on the Community Patent and the Galileo programme as well as looking at the issue of state aids in the context of risk capital. There is also support for more spending on research to a level of 3% of GDP. While MEPs want to see modernisation of the European social model, Parliament also wants to see action to solve the problems of social exclusion and a review of EU structural aid programmes in the context of enlargement. For the future, Parliament also support involving the applicant countries in the Lisbon process and more wide-spread consultation with interested parties.