Resolution on the strategic political orientations of the Barroso Commission

2004/2627(RSP) - 16/12/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the strategic political orientations of the Barroso Commission. The joint resolution was adopted by 284 votes in favour, 154 votes against and 17 abstentions and the resolution was put forward by the EPP-ED, ALDE and UEN groups.

Parliament believed that the central objectives of the 2004-2009 European Commission should be:

- to increase the competitiveness and dynamism of Europe's social-market economy, on the basis of sustainable development;

- to ensure the cohesion and consolidation of Europe, underpinned by the success of enlargement;

- to develop an area of freedom, security and justice, while protecting citizens' fundamental rights;

- to make Europe a stronger and more effective force in building a safer and more prosperous world;

- to improve the quality of life of European citizens, and

- to make Europe work better and bring it closer to the citizen.

A more competitive, more cohesive Europe:

Parliament reiterated its support for the EU's Lisbon strategy as the best way of achieving a competitive European economy, and maintained that sustainable economic development should be the guiding principle for future policy. It stressed, however, that the strategy currently addresses too many, often competing, objectives. Parliament urged the Commission, in the context of the Kok report and next spring's mid-term review, to invest significant political capital in streamlining and refocusing the Lisbon strategy on the central objective of generating sustainable growth and employment, with a more precise timetable for the achievement of its goals over the next five years. It added that structural economic reform is central to ‘putting Europe to work', thus maximising the prospects for employment, investment and growth for European citizens.

An area of freedom, security and justice:

The domestic and international fight against terrorism and organised crime – and the structures which sustain them – is critical to building a safer Europe for its citizens. Parliament felt that Europe should pursue a stronger common approach to security and an effective, coordinated counter-terrorism policy; stressed the importance in this process of ensuring the right balance between the requirements of law enforcement and the protection of fundamental freedoms and personal data.

On the matter of immigration and asylum, Parliament endorsed the need for greater clarity in respect of the right of asylum, for quicker procedures for determining who qualifies for asylum and for the conclusion of readmission agreements with third countries. There needs to be clearer distinctions between, and differentiated treatment of, asylum seekers, economic migrants and temporary refugees in

time of war. The Commission should promote a fair common asylum and immigration policy backed by an active policy of social inclusion and integration.

A stronger Europe in a safer world:

In the interests of prosperity and peace, it is important that Europe use the next five years to project stability among its neighbours, promote democracy, human rights and good governance around the world, extend international free trade, and encourage sustainable development. Parliament believed that the promotion of regional stability and democracy is a distinct added value which the EU can offer to the international community, often with striking success. Every effort should be made in this process to give more consistency and coherence to the external actions of the Union.

A better quality of life:

Parliament made several recommendations to the Commission on improving the quality of life of Europeans, including enabling citizens to take full advantage of their freedom to work, study and travel

within the EU, and building a society in which all citizens enjoy equal opportunities, in which the rights

and freedoms of the disabled are respected, and in which poverty is reduced.

A Europe that works better and is closer to the citizen:

The Commission is invited to come forward with innovative ideas for giving greater substance to the concept of European citizenship, so that Europe delivers visible benefit to real people in their daily lives. Parliament felt that the EU should focus more than in the past on the effective implementation of existing law, and asked the Commission to take speedier, more consistent action in ensuring the proper transposition and enforcement of EU law in Member States, with more pro-active legal action against being taken against serious offences.

In addition, the financial perspectives already proposed by the Commission for the period post-2006 should take proper account of developments since last spring, reflect the new Commission's priorities (in line with this resolution), and run for a financing period in line with the length of the mandates of the Parliament and the Commission.

Finally, Parliament underlined the important role of the Commission in communicating to citizens why

Europe matters and what Europe is trying to achieve. The Commission should draw up an appropriate communication and campaign strategy which presents the new Constitution to Europe's citizens in as clear, fair and understandable a way as possible.