Employment and productivity and their contribution to economic growth

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Ona JUKNEVICIENE (ALDE, LT) on improving the conditions for economic growth and the creation of employment opportunities. Favouring the removal of all obstacles to labour mobility, the committee called for an end to the transitional period applied to the new Member States in the area of the free movement of workers.

The report endorsed the goals of the Lisbon strategy and emphasised that these must be the EU's top priority for the next 5 years. It viewed the Stability and Growth Pact as indispensable to employment and productivity, and outlined an array of factors which could contribute vitally to this end: public investment at EU and national level, a successful and sustainable economic and monetary union, comprehensive structural reforms, the provision of public services, innovation and entrepreneurship, a strengthened internal market combined with labour market reform and integrated capital markets, with particular attention to services, and improved labour mobility.

The committee also made certain more targeted recommendations. As prerequisites for growth and employment, there should be a greater focus on "improving market efficiency, technological innovation, training and education systems, and competitiveness and productivity". MEPs supported measures to finance SMEs, including indirect measures to create an SME-friendly environment, such as the simplification of legislation and better impact assessments. They called for measures in support of "active ageing", whereby the skills and experience of older workers would be harnessed, and early retirement, which undermines the potential of the labour market, discouraged.

Finally, the European Investment Bank should redouble its efforts and promote intervention in the areas of technological innovation, training and education systems.