Resolution on the mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy

2004/2557(RSP) - 09/03/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted by 514 votes to 110 with 20 abstentions a resolution on the mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy.

The resolution had been tabled pursuant to Rule 103 of the Rules of Procedure by the Conference of Presidents. Parliament believes firmly that the EU can be a beacon of economic, social and environmental progress in the world. It confirms its commitment to the Lisbon Strategy. It notes that sustainable growth and employment are Europe's most pressing goals and underpin social and environmental progress, and stresses the need for high social and environmental standards as part of Europe's competitive model.

Parliament also considers that the success of the Lisbon agenda requires Member States to face up to the structural reforms necessary to preserve the European Social Model. There also needs to be a macro-economic framework supportive of growth, and this framework must combine stability with incentives to invest in the Lisbon goals.

Parliament believes, as the Commission does, that to revitalise the Lisbon Strategy it is essential to address the failure of living up to the goals set in March 2000 and to make the Lisbon Strategy a central part of national as well as European debate. This in turn depends upon:

- a more effective prioritisation with identifiable priority actions in all three strands of the Lisbon Agenda, in order to obtain a clearer focus to correct the diffuse orientation of the Lisbon process;
- an attractive, well-communicated vision around which it is possible to mobilise the European public;
- more transparent policy-making and implementation, in order to enhance democratic accountability and give ownership to Parliamentarians and citizens at both national and European level;
- the national and European budget resources necessary to give tangible expression to the objectives set;
- stimulating private and public investment.

Parliament considers that a high level of social protection was central to the Lisbon Strategy. It reaffirms that it is unacceptable that people should be living below the poverty line and in a position of social exclusion, and supports the Brussels European Council's call for the reinforcement of policies to combat poverty and social exclusion. It also takes the view that entrepreneurship, a risk-taking culture and personal initiative should be encouraged, that legislation governing the economy should be readily understandable and unbureaucratic and that the tax system should be simple and fair.

The resolution goes on to stress the importance of the following:

- the achievement of a single market in services, with a balance between market opening, public services and social and consumer rights;
- the role of services of general interest in promoting social integration, territorial cohesion and a more efficient internal market;
- the contribution of high quality, universally available and efficiently provided public services to the quality of life and social cohesion goals that underpin the Lisbon Strategy;
- the vital contribution of SMEs to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy goals;
- a competitive energy market supporting sustainable energy choices;

- the mid-term review should give due weight to the contribution that new technologies with a promising future (e.g. nano- and micro technologies, medical and laser technologies, transport and logistics technologies) as well as environmental technologies and high environmental standards;
- strategies to improve the functioning of labour markets and to ascertain future changes for youth with a European initiative for youth;
- rural development agricultural expenditure, especially in favour of training of young farmers, which is of particular importance in the new Member States;
- the creation of a well-educated and highly-trained workforce and on a big increase in the scale and effectiveness of research and innovation. The mid-term review must put education and training, improving human capital and lifelong learning at the heart of the Lisbon Strategy;
- the need for gender mainstreaming in the context of the Lisbon objectives, including measures to promote family-friendly patterns of employment and working time, secure employment and equal treatment, to improve access to training and to close the gender gap in pay and extend childcare and support for care of the elderly;
- all Member States should commit themselves at the Spring European Council to the measures needed in order to raise R&D spending to at least 3% of national income (2% for the private and 1% for the public sector), while ensuring that any promotion measures are checked against the Lisbon goals. This must be matched by doubling the European funding for R&D in line with the Lisbon goals.

Members insist that a real culture of dialogue should be developed with the Parliament in order to build a sense of shared ownership, communication and vigilant implementation also being of major concern to Parliament. They believe that a strong partnership between the Parliament and the Commission, and the Parliament and national parliaments, together with increased involvement of regional and local authorities, is key to achieving success.

Lastly, Parliament asks the Spring European Council to recognise that investment will be a crucial agent of Europe's modernisation and to agree on common action to boost public and private investment, with special emphasis on those forms of investment most crucial to Lisbon.