Resolution on the Commission legislative and work programme for 2006

2005/2578(RSP) - 15/12/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution, and approved the Commission's general orientations for its legislative and work programme for 2006. The resolution was put forward by the EPP-ED, ALDE and UEN groups with 255 votes in favour, 251 against and 32 abstentions. Parliamentagreed that the best way for Europe to respond to the challenge of globalisation and to achieve its strategic objectives is by unlocking its full potential and by promoting its common values at home and worldwide. EU institutions and the Member States' authorities must fully contribute to the fulfilment of this programme.

Reconnecting Europe with its citizens: Parliament welcomed the Commission's Plan 'D' for democracy, dialogue and debate (COM(2005)0494), but called for a properly coordinated interinstitutional campaign and strategy facilitating the rapid adoption of the European Constitution based on the existing draft Constitutional Treaty.

Financial perspective: Parliament insisted thatthe financial perspective 2007-2013 should provide the basis for the further development of a strong EU and expected the Commission to defend its position, namely that the financial perspective must be set at a level sufficient to finance the EU's political priorities. 2006 will be a year when more than 40 multiannual programmes will be concluded, and these must be able to start by the beginning of 2007 so that the new political priorities that are linked to the new generation of multiannual programmes can be implemented. Parliament called on the Commission, independently of an agreement on the financial perspective, to be more resolute in its cooperation with Parliament (particularly in the area of external policy programmes) and to do everything possible to enable the necessary legislative procedures to be concluded.

Research, knowledge and qualifications: Parliament urged the Member States, as well the EU, to intensify their respective efforts in the field of knowledge and research in accordance with the Lisbon strategy and, in this respect, urgently called for the new framework programmes on research and competitiveness and innovation, and the i2010 initiative, to be given sufficient resources and for the Council fully to reflect their importance in budgetary terms as well. It welcomed the planned proposals for the creation of a European Institute of Technology and for the establishment, on a voluntary basis, of a European Qualifications Framework. However, it regretted the lack of more ambitious proposals to address the shortcomings in EU education systems.

Single market: In order to improve the competitiveness of the European economy, the Commission must give a pre-eminent position to completing the internal market, in the interests of both consumers and businesses. Parliament called for measures to reduce bureaucracy for small and medium-sized enterprises, the proper protection of intellectual property rights and a proposal for a single Community patent, which would offer more legal certainty and would promote innovation.

Environment: Parliament askedthe Commission to maintain a leading role in the fight against climate change and to develop strategies aimed at the inclusion of aviation in the EU emissions trading schemes. The Commission must establish a framework paving the way for further commitments onemission reductions in the post-Kyoto period after 2012, thereby providing further incentives for the use of market-driven instruments to meet these goals.

Agriculture, rural development, fisheries: Parliament welcomedthe launch of work to simplify the Common Agricultural Policy, but noted with regret the absence of initiatives in the field of fisheries.

Social policy: Parliament welcomed the follow-up to the 2005 Green Paper on demographic trends in the EU and expected the Commission's proposals for concrete actions to contribute to tackling Europe's demographic ageing problem, given that the working population will fall by nearly 21 million within the next 20 years. It attached particular importance to increasing active participation in the job market by people of working age, with a view to achieving the Lisbon objective of a participation rate of 70% in 2010. Parliament also underlined the need for a family support policy and for the promotion of a suitable environment for children, in order to make it easier to combine work and family life. It proposed, in particular, revising Council Directive 96/34/EC on parental leave with a view to making it more relevant and effective.

Gender equality: Parliament askedthe Commission, in cooperation with Eurostat, the Fundamental Rights Agency and the future Gender Institute, to establish harmonised methodologies, definitions and criteria in order to gather comparable and compatible data throughout the European Union on violence against women, especially comprehensive studies of its prevalence.

Area of freedom, security and justice: Parliament reaffirmedthe importance of implementing the Hague Programme, in the context of the deadly terrorist attacks in London and Madrid. The reasons for the lack of progress in implementing the Hague Action Plan lie with the Council, which has regularly blocked the objectives set by the European Council. Parliament also stressed that increased security for citizens must never compromise the protection of their fundamental rights. It called on the Commission to continue prioritising measures to combat terrorism and organised crime, particularly measures relating to the financing of terrorism, while also tackling the problem of radicalisation.

Borders and immigration: Parliament was awarethat the management of immigration flows constitutes a key issue for the immediate and long-term future of our peoples. The fight against illegal immigration, conducted in accordance with the humanitarian traditions of our continent, and the integration of legal immigrants should be two linked aspects of the same issue. It called, therefore, on the Commission to take all appropriate measures which could contribute to a sound management of this crucial issue.

Europe as a world partner: Parliament believed that the process of enlargement should proceed in accordance with the commitments already made, but called on the Commission to launch a process of reflection and analysis on the external limits of the EU, bearing in mind the Union’s capacity for absorption, and to present its conclusions to Parliament.

Security and defence: Parliament welcomed the inclusion of a communication on defence industries and markets in the list of priorities for 2006, and encouraged the Commission to bring forward corresponding legislative proposals which will make it possible to boost the competitiveness of the European defence sector. It eagerly awaits the communication on the interpretation of Article 296 of the EC Treaty concerning defence procurement contracts, which will clarify the criteria for applying the derogation from competition rules for the procurement of military equipment.

Transparency, the budget and budgetary accountability: With a view to increasing transparency in the decision-making of the EU institutions, Parliament called for Council legislative meetings to be public. The Commission is asked to come forward with a revised proposal for an Interinstitutional agreement on budgetary discipline and improvement of the budgetary procedure, incorporating Parliament's proposals concerning the reserves and flexibility as well as other qualitative elements. ;

It underlined the need for the Commission to continue the ongoing internal reform process to achieve full transparency and accountability in the use of public money.