

Mid-term review of the Lisbon strategy

European Parliament resolution on the mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Rule 103 of its Rules of Procedure,
- 1. Believes firmly that the European Union, in the context of the global objective of sustainable development, can be a beacon of economic, social and environmental progress in the world; reaffirms the validity of the strategic goals set by the Lisbon and Gothenburg European Councils for strengthening employment, economic reform, enhancing competitiveness, completing the internal market, social cohesion and environmental protection, as engines of a sustainable growth-oriented economy; and believes that the Lisbon Strategy should be the EU's top priority for the next five years;
- 2. Confirms its commitment to the Lisbon Strategy and the vision it sets out for a dynamic economy and a better society with a higher quality of life, to enhance growth and employment, thus creating a framework for social cohesion and environmental policy; believes that sustainable growth and employment are Europe's most pressing goals and underpin social and environmental progress; insists that well-designed social and environmental policies are themselves key elements in strengthening Europe's economic performance;
- 3. Recognises that, while the free movement of goods is already functioning well, the internal market is still far from being complete and that therefore stronger efforts need to be made to finalise the internal market;
- 4. 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; considers that it also needs a macro-economic framework supportive of growth, and that this framework must combine stability with incentives to invest in the Lisbon goals;
- 5. Acknowledges, firstly, the positive environmental policy contribution to growth and employment through, in particular, the development of eco-innovations, and acknowledges, secondly, that the EU must take up a number of challenges concerning natural resources and the environment, such as climate change and diminishing biodiversity, which, if account is not taken of them immediately, will entail costs and have direct consequences for the Lisbon growth objectives; believes therefore that it is necessary to incorporate environmental considerations into the revised Lisbon process; insists that sound environmental, health and food safety policies will have a positive impact on growth and competitiveness;
- 6. 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; believes that 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 open and 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;
7. Believes that the Spring European Council should focus the Lisbon Strategy on key objectives to create growth and jobs, through actions for a knowledge-based society; promoting private and public investment in the Lisbon goals, promoting a business-friendly environment, a social policy based on inclusion, security, solidarity and adaptability and making Europe's environmental policy a source of competitive edge;
 8. Takes the view that growth-oriented, sustainable macroeconomic conditions must be guaranteed if these economic, social and environmental objectives are to be achieved, and that this is a prerequisite for the international competitiveness of Europe; notes that a dynamic economy and labour market, a stable currency, the reduction of state debt and deficits and arrangements guaranteeing sustainable pensions are fundamental to this process;
 9. Takes the view that entrepreneurship, a risk-taking culture and personal initiative and responsibility should be encouraged, that legislation governing the economy should be readily understandable and unbureaucratic and that the tax system should be simple and fair; notes that economic policy should offer a high degree of predictability;
 10. Insists that, in order to build a broad coalition for change, the Lisbon Strategy must be universally understood as a strategy whose benefits will be widely shared and developed in cooperation with all relevant socio-economic actors; which looks for labour markets which promote both dynamism and security; which seeks to modernise, but not to weaken, social security; and which sees high social and environmental standards as part of Europe's competitive model;
 11. Emphasises the importance for Europe's competitiveness of achieving a single market in services, with a balance between market opening, public services and social and consumer rights; emphasises the role of services of general interest in promoting social integration, territorial cohesion and a more efficient internal market; invites the Spring European Council to undertake to adopt a Community legal framework on services of general interest so as to guarantee the quality thereof and access to them for all Europeans, while applying the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality to services of general interest;

12. Reiterates 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; considers that the effective implementation of public procurement measures should form part of the Lisbon goals;
13. Considers that the vital contribution of SMEs to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy goals must be more explicitly recognised; notes that the SME sector not only represents the largest proportion of employment across the EU but has also in recent years created more new jobs than any other sector; therefore demands enhanced measures to create a more SME-friendly environment, avoiding unnecessary bureaucratic burdens, and ensuring better access to financial resources for investment;
14. Believes that, to create a society which welcomes change, the role of a more inclusive style of economic decision-making will be crucial; recalls that the Brussels European Council insisted that a high level of social protection was central to the Lisbon Strategy; reaffirms that it is unacceptable that people should be living below the poverty line and in a position of social exclusion; supports the Brussels European Council's call for the reinforcement of policies to combat poverty and social exclusion, with a view to adopting a comprehensive approach to renewing the decisive momentum given to the elimination of poverty by 2010 and to enabling all European citizens to gain access to their fundamental rights; asks for a commitment by the Spring European Council to an ambitious social agenda;
15. Considers that satisfactory agreement on new legislation for chemical substances (REACH) would provide a clear example of the Lisbon Strategy in action by balancing competitiveness and environmental, social and public health goals;
16. Considers a competitive energy market supporting sustainable energy choices to be one of the conditions for a competitive and sustainable European economy and urges the Commission to come forward with a new initiative to ensure a level playing field between all actors and forms of energy, including renewables; observes furthermore that increased resource productivity reduces costs for industry and households, thus freeing resources for other investments and making the EU economy less dependent on scarce resources and volatile resource markets;
17. Believes that 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 can make to a winning competitive strategy; calls for increased support for eco-technologies and eco-efficient innovations; more broadly, underlines the role of quality of life as a factor in investment and industrial location; believes that ignoring climate change and loss of bio-diversity will seriously harm the ability to achieve these goals;
18. Reaffirms, with a view to the European Council decision on future climate policy, its views expressed in its resolution of 13 January 2005¹ on the outcome of the Buenos Aires Conference on climate change;

¹ Texts Adopted, P6_TA(2005)0005.

19. Calls on the Commission to offer strong leadership in proposing strategies to improve the functioning of labour markets and to ascertain future changes for our youth, thereby improving the opportunities for youth in the area of recognition of diplomas, cross-border education and professional opportunities, while respecting the principles of solidarity between generations and being compatible with the demographic situation; calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop the necessary comprehensive measures in order to support complementary financing schemes, as a way of supplementing existing national pension systems; believes that a more flexible functioning of labour markets should be targeted on increasing the opportunity to bring more people into jobs, with a special focus on the specific needs of SMEs;
20. Accordingly, encourages a European initiative for youth, proposed by a number of Member States, which is included in the Commission communication to the Spring European Council;
21. Considers rural development agricultural expenditure, especially in favour of training of young farmers, which is of particular importance in the new Member States, to be a crucial part of the Lisbon strategy;
22. Believes that legal migration has an important role in enhancing the knowledge-based economy in Europe as well as in advancing economic development;
23. Believes that European excellence in the knowledge economy depends on the creation of a well-educated and highly-trained workforce and on a big increase in the scale and effectiveness of research and innovation; insists that high-quality education, accessible to all, is essential to a strong economy and to a just society; calls on the Commission and the Member States to actively support scientific research during all stages of the innovation process from developing an idea to implementation at enterprise level;
24. Calls for the mid-term review to put education and training, improving human capital and lifelong learning at the heart of the Lisbon Strategy and considers that the Spring European Council should set ambitious targets;
25. Recalls that, in some Member States, the largest group of excluded workers is women, for many of whom the decision whether to take paid work depends on the availability and attractiveness of employment; therefore invites the Spring European Council to address 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;
26. Supports the idea of an integrated research and industrial policy with a special focus on SMEs, and its financial accessibility; considers also that Europe needs a sound industrial base and that its competitiveness must be enhanced by setting up major technological initiatives on the basis of private initiatives and/or public-private partnerships;
27. Calls on all Member States to 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; emphasises that this must be matched by doubling the European funding for R&D in line with the Lisbon goals, including the approval of the establishment of an European Research Council, as an independent advisory board on research matters;

28. Calls for preferential treatment of measures facilitating the cross-border exchange of researchers;
29. Asks the Council and the Commission to increase their efforts to propose a cost-efficient, least burdensome and properly functioning Community patent that provides legal certainty, fosters opportunities for SMEs and gives a real boost to European research and development;
30. Supports the Commission in defining, together with Parliament, a reliable road-map with clear legislative and budgetary priorities for the three pillars within the Lisbon Strategy; insists on detailed consultation with Parliament on its content and on the creation of an effective Commission-Parliament mechanism for joint programming;
31. Requests the Commission to use economic, social, health and environmental impact assessments more coherently, to cooperate with the European Parliament in monitoring and improving existing legislation, and thereby implement effectively the Interinstitutional Agreement on better law-making¹ as a matter of priority, including appropriate mechanisms for effective consultation of all stakeholders; insists, however, that impact assessment must always take account of the costs of not taking action and of longer-terms costs and benefits in monetary and qualitative terms; calls also for better ex-post evaluation of adopted and implemented measures;
32. Requests the Commission to check all draft legislative proposals for their consistency with the Lisbon Strategy objectives, to guarantee that future legislation, even if comitology instruments are used, is fully in line with the necessary democratic procedures, to enhance its plans to simplify and streamline the existing "acquis", thus reducing compliance costs and releasing resources to stimulate innovation and create jobs;
33. Supports the idea of national action plans to implement the Lisbon strategy, with every government nominating a minister to coordinate action;
34. Welcomes consolidated reporting and calls for fewer but better indicators to provide more transparent measurement of progress on the economic, social and environmental elements of the Lisbon strategy, including a publicly accessible database listing the transposition quota per Member State, as well as bench-marking and best practice for co-financed programmes; calls for a communication to be presented on a regular basis by the Commission to the attention of the European and national parliaments which evaluates the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy by Member States;
35. Demands that the Commission's annual progress reports and its economic strategic guidelines be sent to the European Parliament prior to their transmission to the Council, to enable Parliament to give its opinion;

¹ OJ C 321, 31.12.2003, p. 1.

36. Calls on the Spring European Council to create simpler and more coherent governance systems and a single focus for public and parliamentary scrutiny;
37. Proposes a tripartite meeting between the three Institutions to identify key political priorities prior to the annual Spring European Council;
38. Insists 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; therefore, believes 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;
39. Calls attention to the interparliamentary conference to be held in Brussels on 16-17 March 2005 to promote cooperation to this end between national parliaments and the European Parliament; calls on the Spring European Council to make proposals to strengthen both the parliamentary dimension and the role of public debate in the Lisbon Strategy;
40. Requests that the national and European budgets, including the future Financial Perspectives 2007-2013, should be an expression of the goals pursued in the framework of the Lisbon process;
41. Recognises the unique added value of regional policy in the implementation of the Lisbon objectives and recalls that adequate financial means are necessary to respond efficiently and in a balanced way to this challenge; calls attention to the fact that the redesigned structural funds are now focused strongly on the Lisbon objectives and insists that the Financial Perspectives must reflect this role;
42. Recognises the importance of the TENs projects and their rapid construction in reinforcing the achievement of the Lisbon goals; therefore supports the Commission in its endeavours to persuade the Member States that these projects must be planned and financed with the support of the EU budget and via public-private partnerships;
43. Calls for a globally sustainable approach to transport policy, based on greater use of new technologies;
44. Believes that it is necessary to launch a new information society initiative addressing the challenges up to 2010 and that this initiative should set a stable environment for the development of electronic communications and digital services and focus on developing EU efforts in research, innovation and deployment of ICT;
45. Observes that Creative Industries (CIs) are about to become a most promising sector in our economy and that huge employment potentials exist in the area of new media and digital culture;
46. 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;

47. Calls on the Spring European Council to reinforce the role of the European Investment Bank, with an emphasis on better focusing lending activities to Lisbon-supporting investments and expanding respective risk-capital lending and its support for SMEs, in particular those neglected by the capital market;
48. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission.