



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014 - 2019

Plenary sitting

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 35(3) of the Rules of Procedure and the Framework Agreement
on relations between the European Parliament and the Commission

on the Commission Work Programme for 2015

Bas Eickout,

on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

European Parliament resolution on the Commission Work Programme for 2015

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission Communication on the Commission Work Programme for 2015 (COM (2014)910),

- having regard to the Commission Communication “An investment plan for Europe” (COM (2014) 903),

- having regard to the existing Framework Agreement on relations between Parliament and the Commission and, in particular, its Annex 4,

- having regard to Rule 35(3) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. Whereas this Commission is right to consider that the outcome of the last European elections is a call for change from citizens and that a “new start” is needed,

B. Whereas the Communication on the 2015 Commission Work Programme is structured like a truly “political programme”, around a few targeted political goals which indeed helps make sense of European policy-making and contributes to a more political reading of the Commission’s action,

C. Whereas this programme also clearly exposes the strong neoliberal bias of this Commission in many key policy-areas such as trade, employment, agriculture, etc., even if it offers some valuable first steps in urgent and significant areas (lobby register, taxation, resource efficiency, etc.);

D. Whereas the structure, heading and wording of the priorities ignore the disastrous effects of the austerity policies, and clearly downgrade social and environmental issues as minor concerns, all subordinated to the hypothetical return of growth, blind to the damages done to society and the citizens by rising inequalities and environmental crisis;

E. Whereas this almost exclusive focus on outdated policies and economics eclipses the mentions of social justice and inequalities, public health, education, culture and many areas that are as crucial to the re-launch of activity as they are to the core and heart of European societies;

F. Whereas the Commission is the Guardian of EU treaties where sustainable development, social justice, solidarity, and the fundamental rights of European Citizens to a clean environment and a high level of environmental protection are enshrined,

G. Whereas in his public statements, as well as his parliamentary hearing, first VP Timmermans provoked more uncertainty than reassurance as regards the spirit of the Commission’s “better regulation” agenda, especially when it comes to essential pieces of environmental and social legislation,

H. Whereas the concern to reduce burdens when these are unnecessary or outdated is widely shared but several recommendations clearly show a “de-regulatory purpose”, destroying important European rights and/or standards;

I. Whereas reducing the overall costs of regulation on business cannot come at the expense of the health, safety and environmental protection that these regulations provide to European citizens, workers and consumers;

“New initiatives”

1. Shares the Commission’s concerns regarding the dire state of the Union today, and the urgent need to seriously invest to break the current pattern of stagnation; regrets nevertheless that the Commission’s “new start” reflects mostly the priorities of pre-crisis Europe, choosing to maintain the orthodox framework of the economic policies that led to the crisis, failing to fully recognise what 21st century Europe really needs and what Europeans truly demand;
2. Urges the commission to make sustainability the core of any sound, future-oriented and crisis solving economic policy and is given substance in this and future work programmes via a dedicated header focussing on the comprehensive and rapid implementation of the 7th Environmental Action Programme and the preparations for a new EU Sustainable Development Strategy; considers that the forthcoming investment plan must respond to such priorities; insists that public investments must focus on energy transition, eco-innovative SMEs, research and education; is opposed to diverting already planned EU-programme funds, such as Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation funds, towards lesser quality or unsustainable projects.
3. Welcomes the intention of the Commission to come forward with a legislative follow up to the 2030 Climate and Energy Package, calls for the Commission to bring forward all necessary legislative proposals (ETS, Effort Sharing Decision, Fuel Quality Directive) as a package, as soon as possible in 2015;
4. Looks forward to contributing to the “strategy for renewed and integrated approach to the single market in goods and services”, particularly focused on sectors where economic potential is greatest; yet asks the Commission to build this strategy on high levels of safety, security and consumer protection, and to ensure timely transposition and proper implementation of existing legislation before prematurely proposing new or revised legislation;
5. Welcomes the specific attention to Green Jobs, eco-innovation, eco-industries, the labour mobility package and the employability package with a follow-up on the Youth Guarantee but accordingly demands concrete actions; is concerned that the declared “priority” on job creation is not in the responsibility of DG Employment but is being developed by Commission actors without track record on employment and job creation, while job creation is actually the backbone of employment policies; consequently doubts the Commission’s commitment to the creation of quality jobs, really “benefitting the citizens”, and instead fears investment activism without job potential;
6. Deplores the absence of specific proposal to address the social urgency caused by the austerity policies, especially in the Troika’s programme countries.
7. Welcomes the proposal for a deeper and fairer EMU; expects however even deeper and fairer proposals, fully taking into account the comprehensive set of corresponding recommendations adopted by the EP, addressing the rising inequality, and eventually making the European environmental and social targets as binding as the budgetary constraints;
8. Welcomes the first step towards enhanced fiscal justice against the persistent aggressive tax-planning which deprives Europe of its legitimate and necessary budgetary resources, through the obligation for Member States to exchange information on tax-rulings; stresses however the need to speedily amend existing company-law directives to extend and enhance tax transparency for large companies; and calls on the Commission to put forward proposals to this end.
9. Welcomes the proposal to set forth a European migration agenda and to develop a new approach on legal migration, but strongly opposes the dubious and misleading association between migration and security issues; urges the Commission to focus not just on labour migration and the needs of European labour markets but also to develop a human rights based approach on people

seeking protection from war and persecution in the EU by creating effective ways for legal entry for refugees; encourages the Commission to foster burden sharing and solidarity among Member States.

10. Welcomes the intention of the Commission to democratize the decision-making process with regard to GMO-applications; stresses that this review should obviously cover both applications for use in food/ feed and for cultivation;

11. Strongly supports the initiative for a mandatory Transparency register but expresses major concerns that it would be based on an Inter-institutional Agreement as such register is not binding for lobbyists and thus not mandatory; reiterates hence the EP demand for a legislative proposal; calls on the Commission to further strengthen its action in the field of anti-corruption and more specifically focus on tackling the misuse of EU funds and tax fraud in the Union.

12. Commends the Commission's transparency initiative that includes publishing contacts between Commissioners, cabinets, directors-general and lobbyists; but is concerned with the large number of exemptions from publication; suggests that the Commission begins publishing these meetings in a centralised location rather than on 89 individual websites.

“Proposals of the European Commission for withdrawal and REFIT”

13. Expresses serious concerns, as regards REFIT in general, that the work of regulatory simplification has become a pretext for lowering the level of ambition on issues of vital importance to the safety and wellbeing of employees, of consumers, or on the protection of the environment;

14. Considers that impact assessments should not only focus on cost and price competitiveness and potential market-losers, but also public benefits, innovation, potential market-winners and fundamental rights;

15. Takes note of the withdrawal of the legislative proposal restructuring the community framework for taxation of energy products and electricity; and asks the Commission to seize the opportunity of falling oil-prices to come forward with a new proposal, as such legislation offers an important community instrument for completing the EU toolkit on climate change as well as a potential key-enabler instrument for an ambitious energy Union, and it would provide more budgetary means to Member states.

16. Objects to the Commission's intention to modify the proposal for a revised directive on national emission ceilings as part of the legislative follow-up to the 2030 climate and energy package and the uncertainty created by the contrasting statements regarding the procedure to follow; recalls that the NEC directive revision is more than 10 years over-due and any further delay would only undermine the level of protection to the citizen and the environment;

17. Calls for the evaluations of the Fuel Quality Directive and Reduction of CO₂ from light duty vehicles to be concluded as soon as possible, in order for the Commission to make proposals for amending them in 2015; encourages the Commission to better integrate the EU targets of climate protection and energy consumption into its transport policy;

18. Urges the Commission not to withdraw the amendment of six pieces of waste legislation (so-called “circular economy”) and instead support raising the ambition level as part of the on-going legislative process, and if necessary, complement it with additional initiatives;

19. Calls on the Commission to ensure that in the development and implementation of the work programme, the fundamental rights of European Citizens to a clean environment and a high level of environmental protection are protected, and that the commitment of the European Council to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity by 2020 is upheld, in particular in light of the evaluation of the Birds and Habitats Directives;

20. Calls on the Commission not to do a stand-alone cumulative cost assessment of the most relevant EU legislation and policies relevant for the European chemicals industry, and instead integrate this aspect into the general Fitness Check of the most relevant chemicals legislation not covered by REACH so as to ensure a balanced approach that also takes into consideration the benefits of chemicals legislation; and asks the Commission when preparing its review of the Common Transport White paper, to evaluate its work on the 2011 White Paper's goals and 40 initiatives.

21. Expects the Commission to withdraw the December 2013 cloning proposals, and come forward with new proposals that adequately reflect the European Parliament's position, with a legal base allowing for the ordinary legislative procedure;

22. Strongly criticises the Commission's announcement to withdraw its proposal for the revision of Directive 92/85 on “pregnant workers and maternity leave” and the intention to yield to business demands and thus weaken existing gender equality, health, safety and labour legislation that guarantee high social and equality standards;

23. Demands that the proposal on trade secrets currently negotiated in JURI be withdrawn, as its potential anti-competitive impact, especially towards SMEs, have not been analysed; furthermore the current proposal creates legal uncertainty with regards to rights to access to information and workers mobility, and its loopholes and vagueness could be misused to overprotect commercial information against the general interest;

24. Considers that the “comprehensive review of the EU’s trade policy strategy” should not be limited to its “contribution to jobs, growth and investment” but also to the EU’s coherence as regards its development goals, climate targets, environmental priorities and human rights standards; moreover urges the Commission to change its practices towards full democratic disclosure of the documentation supporting the negotiation process.

25. Welcomes the incentive-based approach towards the ENP countries based on merits and differentiation and calls, in this respect, on the Commission to set up the mechanisms of implementation of the “more for more” principle, which implies also a “les for less” for those countries that show no willingness to engage constructively with the EU, defining clearly the relevant benchmarks, indicators and criteria;

“Missing initiatives”

26. Takes note that this is only the 2015 CWP, nevertheless expresses strong concerns that some key-areas as well as important initiatives would in this current state be left aside; thus calls on the Commission to re-consider and include the following proposals:

- a “Social Veto Right”, or any mechanism able to prevent EU legislation from coming into force when its impact would damage the poorest, increase inequalities or decrease social rights;
- a revision of the Working Time Directive, in order to dispose of the opt-out on the “average 48hour work week”;
- a proposal for a Directive on the Access to Public Information in EU Member States;
- a proposal for a Regulation on the Security of information technology products and services on the EU market;
- an adjustment of EU public procurement rules so that the source codes of every information technology product or service is made available to the respective authorities;
- a revision of the audit directive to prevent auditing companies from providing tax-advice;
- a revision of the accounting directive to extend country-by-country tax-obligations to companies

to all sectors, and furthermore to oblige companies to publish the tax-rulings granted to them by Member States and third countries;

- a new legislative proposal for Access to Justice on environmental matters, in order to ensure implementation of the Aarhus Convention in the Union;
- a legislative proposal on environmental inspections as a major instrument to contribute to full implementation of environment legislation in the Union;
- the communication on “Building a Sustainable European Food System”, as agreed by DGs AGRI, ENVI and SANCO Commissioners in April 2014;
- scientifically-based horizontal criteria for endocrine disruptors, thus fulfilling without further delay, the Commission’s overdue legal obligations;
- a new framework law for animal welfare laying down minimum EU welfare standards for all categories of animal;
- a legislative proposal for different types of leave (paternity, adoption, care leave and filial) in order to improve the reconciliation of professional, family and private life, which at the same time could unlock the blocking of the Maternity Leave in Council;
- the revision of the existing legislation Considers the existing legislation in matters of equal pay for men and women, as the current one is ineffective and unenforceable and despite countless campaigns, targets and measures in recent years, the gender pay gap remains stubbornly wide;
- a comprehensive European response to the fundamental rights problems of LGBTI persons, in the shape of an EU strategy/roadmap against homophobia and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, as repeatedly called for by Parliament and Member States;
- the revision of the ECI regulation in order to ease the technical requirements and unify the Online Collection Systems for signatures, to harmonise the mechanism of verification of supports in every Member State and to allow non-national European residents to sign in the host country.

“A word on the method”

27. Expects that, as regards the financing of the foreseen investment plan, the same high standards will apply as those for EU funds, especially quality control, performance orientation, effectiveness and law-abiding; in addition, demands especially the respect of the criteria set out in the Regulations on CEF 1315/2013/EC and TEN-T 1316/2013/EC when selecting the co-financing of transport infrastructure projects;

28. Urges the Commission to clearly mark its intention to respect the equal footing of both Co-legislative institutions – especially when Parliament is contributing to alleviate the legislative burden as in the case of plant reproductive material (COM/2013/0262; 2013/0137/COD); and guards the Commission against using Council’s possible stalling to bypass the Parliament’s position.

29. Urges the Commission to intensify its efforts in monitoring the transposition – and respect – of EU law by the Member States, especially in a context of a reduced legislative agenda; and calls on a better and more systematic inclusion of the national parliaments.

30. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.