

European Parliament resolution of 12 December 2007 on the Commission legislative and work programme for 2008

The European Parliament ,

- having regard to the Commission Communication on its Legislative and Work Programme 2008 ([COM\(2007\)0640](#)),
- having regard to the contributions made by Parliament's committees, which were forwarded to the Commission by the Conference of Presidents,
- having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the annual legislative and work programme is an important tool allowing the European Union to focus on achieving its key strategic objectives of promoting prosperity, solidarity, security, freedom and a stronger Europe in the world; whereas the Commission will be judged on the delivery of results in these fields,

B. whereas in 2008 it will be crucial for the Lisbon Treaty to be ratified so that it can enter into force before the elections to Parliament,

C. whereas political priorities should be matched with the available financial resources,

General remarks

1. Welcomes the focused structure of the Commission's work programme and the Commission's effort to continue improving its political content; requests, in this context, the inclusion in the future of an indicative timetable of Commission initiatives;
2. Supports the crucial importance accorded in the work programme to growth and jobs, sustainable development, climate change, energy and migration, and the emphasis on better regulation, correct implementation and reinforcing the role of Europe as a world partner; asks the Commission, nevertheless, to be more ambitious in its initiatives aimed at securing fundamental rights, freedom, justice and social inclusion;
3. Underlines once again the importance of vigorous implementation of the Lisbon strategy, and emphasises the interdependence of economic, social and environmental progress in creating a dynamic and innovative economy; urges the Commission, therefore, to engage in a balanced and output-oriented Lisbon Community Programme 2008-2010;
4. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to supporting the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty; believes that the objectives and reforms enshrined in that Treaty are essential for the sound functioning and future development of the Union, will render it more democratic and bring it closer to citizens;

5. Calls on the Commission and the Council to work on a new culture of subsidiarity jointly with Parliament and the parliaments of the Member States in the light of the new instruments offered by the Lisbon Treaty, for example to national parliaments;

Growth and Jobs

6. Reiterates its calls for a European agenda where prosperity and solidarity are truly mutually supportive;

7. Calls on the Commission, following its single market review, to step up efforts to extend and deepen the internal market as a strong, innovative and competitive market; insists that the single market should be developed through fair competition, social cohesion and a high level of consumer protection;

8. Calls on the Commission to place particular emphasis on the timely and coherent implementation of the Services Directive, and in particular to implement effective Points of Single Contact so as to promote access to the single market; urges improvement in the effectiveness of rules on public procurement;

9. Stresses the importance, for better consumer protection, of improving market surveillance, in particular in order to establish strong credibility for CE marking and to tackle counterfeiting; encourages the Commission to continue to guarantee consumers' rights in product safety, focusing especially on the safety of toys; urges the Commission to clarify the legislative grey area in fields such as on-line auctions; emphasises the need for the review of the consumer acquis to lead to a more coherent legal framework; supports a coordinated approach from the Commission in its ongoing work on a common frame of reference for a more coherent European contract law;

10. Recommends examining very carefully and in close cooperation with the Member States, the business community and consumers possible ways to enhance the quick, efficient and fair resolution of conflicts between businesses and consumers, as easier access to court is vital for the protection of consumers in a globalised environment; stresses, however, that this process should not lead to the creation of new barriers to free movement in the internal market;

11. Urges the Commission not to sacrifice the social dimension of the Lisbon strategy by considering that it is a handicap to competitiveness, but requests the Commission to respect the balance between its different pillars; believes that proper investment in knowledge creates a more prosperous economy which could fight problems such as poverty, social exclusion and unemployment and ensure the better protection of workers;

12. Calls on the Commission, in the framework of the Social Reality Stocktaking, to identify initiatives for economic and social governance; welcomes the imminent proposed revision of the European Works Councils Directive which should lead to clarification regarding information, consultation and participation, but calls strongly on the Commission to consult the social partners in advance; calls for measures to promote a better balance between work and family life, as well as the health and safety of all workers;

13. Strongly welcomes the Commission's announcement of a legislative proposal on the European Private Company and asks for this proposal to be presented early in 2008 in order to support SMEs; regrets that the Commission does not intend to proceed with a legislative proposal regarding the Fourteenth Company Law Directive (transfer of the registered office), while stressing that this long-awaited directive would fill a gap in the internal market for the benefit of undertakings;

14. Underlines the need for an adequate level of protection of intellectual property rights and supports the initiative for an affordable, secure and efficient patent system which would give incentives for investment and research; urges all three institutions to work together towards a political consensus on a real improvement of the patent system; recalls that the counterfeiting of products, for example drugs, is a major problem and an urgent issue of concern in Europe;

15. Regrets that the Commission is not intending to come forward with an initiative regarding the creation of a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base which would complete the achievements of an internal market with fair competition in leading to greater transparency by enabling undertakings to operate according to the same rules abroad as at home, and by increasing cross-border trade, as well as competition, between Member States as far as attracting investment is concerned; at the same time underlines the Member States' responsibility for setting corporate tax rates;

16. Asks the Commission to put forward proposals which could effectively improve European prudential supervision, including that of hedge funds and rating agencies; recalls the considerable consequences of the sub-prime mortgage crisis in the United States for European financial markets; expects the Commission to conduct a thorough analysis of the origins and consequences of this crisis, including a risk assessment for European markets; requests an evaluation of the current systems and instruments of prudential supervision in Europe, and insists on close consultation with Parliament, leading to clear recommendations on how to improve the stability of the financial system and its ability to provide secure long-term finance for European business;

17. Regards the revision of the telecoms package as a key priority in the coming year;

18. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to the creation of a liberalised and integrated internal market in energy; considers that a distinction should be made between the evolution of the energy market in electricity and that in gas;

Sustainable Europe

19. Welcomes the Commission's ambitious proposals on climate change, and encourages it to deliver them in full; asks the Commission to enhance the synergies between employment and industrial development on the one hand and development and the use of clean technologies on the other, as complementarities are strong and a potential source of increased competitiveness;

20. Calls for a comprehensive legislative framework for the promotion and the use of renewable energy in the EU, including binding targets, that will provide the business community with the long-term stability it needs in order to make rational investment

decisions in the renewable energy sector so as to put the European Union on track towards cleaner, more secure and more competitive energy in the future;

21. Notes that the Commission actions listed in the Energy Efficiency Action Plan and Biomass Action Plan are not included in the work programme, and notes the severe delays in implementing the promised actions; calls on the Commission to take both action plans fully into account, thereby helping the EU to meet renewable energy and energy efficiency objectives; underlines the important contribution that can be made by sustainable biofuels in this respect;

22. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to finding a political agreement on the burden-sharing required to achieve a 20% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2020 as against 1990; strongly advocates reinforced efforts by the EU and its Member States and regions to support CO₂-free energy sources;

23. Welcomes the Commission's plan to publish a Green Transport Package, bearing in mind that sustainable mobility across the EU must be ensured in accordance with the fight against climate change;

24. Supports the two priority initiatives on maritime transport and air transport; recalls that administrative simplification for short sea shipping is an essential lead-up factor to the real development of this mode of transport, which is a fundamental link in the establishment of an integrated, coherent and sustainable network system; is pleased with the various proposals aimed at promoting the greater effectiveness of air transport management, leading to a significant reduction in costs, delays and greenhouse gas emissions;

25. Welcomes the Commission's initiatives in the area of public health, in particular the envisaged legislative proposal on quality and safety of organ donation and transplantation, as well as the proposed Council recommendation on healthcare-associated infections included in the health package, aimed at ensuring the highest possible levels of patient safety and quality of care; asks the Commission to contribute to the reinforcement of patient safety, patient information, patients' rights and patient protection and to tackle the determinants of rare diseases;

26. Calls on the Commission intensify its efforts to work out a coherent policy with regard to emergencies in the health sector, people with disabilities or chronic illnesses and information to patients; calls on the Commission to pay particular attention to the pandemic-preparedness issue;

27. Welcomes the Commission's Communication on the CAP "Health Check", especially in view of the importance of a competitive and environmentally sustainable agricultural sector and of preventing rural depopulation and securing consumer access to the food supply, but stresses that the precise nature of any legislative proposals to follow should not be defined until such time as Parliament, the Commission and the Council have concluded a thorough debate on the Commission's initial "Health Check" Communication;

28. Calls on the Commission to define specific proposals on the implications and the detailed rules of the MSY model (Maximum Sustainable Yield), to propose concrete

legislative proposals on the eco-labelling scheme and to put forward, within the shortest possible period, a proposal for simplification of Council Regulation (EC) No 850/98 for the conservation of fishery resources through technical measures for the protection of juveniles of marine organisms and towards the recasting and strengthening of the control framework of the CFP;

29. Strongly supports the Commission's initiative to present a Green Paper on European territorial cohesion, as requested by Parliament; believes that the concept of territorial cohesion, which was recently endorsed by the Lisbon Treaty, will be central to the development of this Community policy;

30. Underlines the need for an EU Baltic Sea Strategy and calls on the Commission to present an EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region during 2008;

An integrated approach to migration

31. Believes that a common migration, visa and asylum policy and effective economic, social and political integration of immigrants on the basis of common principles are two sides of the same coin and represent key challenges, whilst fully respecting, in particular with regard to integration, the division of responsibilities between Member States and the EU;

32. Calls on the Commission to strengthen measures for tackling human trafficking and illegal immigration, and in particular to examine the implementation of the Council's 2005 Action Plan in this area; awaits from the Commission the evaluation of the implementation of the free movement directive due in 2008, and asks for further measures to ensure the full application of this right in the EU;

33. Welcomes the Commission's renewed commitment to a common policy on migration, common tools to protect external borders, and a Common Asylum Policy; invites the Commission to further improve education and integration policies in order to establish a clear and safe framework for economic immigrants, notably skilled workers, which clarifies their rights and obligations;

34. Considers that as of 1 January 2009 the Lisbon Treaty will substantially modify the institutional framework concerning the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, and recalls that 2008 will be very important for the implementation of the Schengen acquis and its expansion to the new Member States; stresses that rigorous measures must be taken to ensure the smooth functioning of the system and the integrity of the EU's external borders; invites the Commission to deeply involve the European Parliament and the national parliaments in developing these provisions;

35. Notes that the work programme does not mention the future EU PNR system, and calls for greater operational cooperation at European level in the fight against terrorism and greater involvement, where appropriate, of Parliament; stresses that effective and enforceable data protection instruments are not to be seen as obstacles in the fight against terrorism or any sort of radicalisation, but as indispensable confidence-boosting mechanisms in the exchange of information between law enforcement agencies;

Putting citizens first

36. Considers that the Commission should continue to focus the attention of citizens on the importance of cultural diversity and of dialogue between cultures in an enlarged Union; considers that intercultural dialogue should also be promoted beyond Europe's borders and become a bridge for mutual comprehension which might help to prevent or resolve social and human conflicts;
37. Notes that the Commission's priorities for 2008 highlight the potential contribution of lifelong learning (LLL) to raising employment rates and to developing a knowledge society in line with the Lisbon goals; regrets that this is not reflected in a single concrete proposal; considers that minors should be protected from the special content of some programmes in using the internet and new technologies by means of specific and appropriate filter systems;
38. Suggests the creation of a European force that could immediately react in emergencies, as proposed in the Barnier report; asks the Commission to formulate a concrete proposal to this end;
39. Underlines the necessity of strengthening the rights of passengers, in particular long-distance coach passengers;
40. Looks forward to the Commission's proposal to put forward a significant directive implementing the principle of equal treatment outside employment, thereby completing the non-discrimination legal framework whilst underlining that Member States' competences in this area must be respected;

Europe as a world partner

41. Considers that the EU's role in promoting respect for human rights, democracy and good governance must be regarded as an integral part of all EU policies and programmes;
42. Welcomes the fact that the Commission's work programme stresses the need to continue the enlargement process, and regards the Western Balkans as a priority area;
43. Notes the Commission's intention to pay particular attention to the future of Kosovo and expects it to present further evaluations and proposals on EU assistance to Kosovo as the situation evolves;
44. Considers that the Black Sea Synergy is an important first step in elaborating a comprehensive strategy vis-à-vis the region, and calls on the Commission to develop further specific proposals, including an action plan with specific objectives and benchmarks to enhance cooperation between the EU and the countries of the Black Sea region;
45. Considers the transatlantic link to be fundamental to both the promotion of shared values and the defence of common interests;

46. With regard to the Middle East, takes the view that – apart from providing funds for economic survival and reconstruction, notably in Lebanon and Palestine – the EU should continue to develop political initiatives to increase further its active diplomatic role in the region;

47. Believes that further steps towards a common external energy policy should be taken in order to ensure access to sustainable, secure and competitive energy for all Member States, and asks the Commission to take a clear and constructive approach in the dialogue with Russia;

48. Asks the Commission to strengthen the bi-regional strategic partnership between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean, and welcomes the inclusion of the EU-Africa strategy as a priority for the Commission, while stressing the need for the involvement of parliaments and civil society;

49. Stresses the need for coherence regarding EU development policy; underlines that development issues need to be taken into account in the framework of other European policies; welcomes the Commission's intention to examine new avenues for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals; urges the Commission to ensure that its development policies have a positive impact on peace-building;

50. Emphasises the need for a successful conclusion to the Doha Round; underlines that the EU also needs to reinforce its engagement with emerging economies through bilateral or regional free trade agreements seen as complementary to the multilateral approach, while asking for provisions on the implementation of core labour standards to be included; regards a comprehensive new strategy on China as important; takes the view that trade has to be free and fair; calls on the Commission to provide stronger protection for intellectual property rights and to do its utmost to combat counterfeiting;

Horizontal issues

51. Welcomes the Commission's determination to reach the goal of a 25% reduction in administrative burdens on undertakings at EU and national level by 2012; regards this as a key priority, in particular for SMEs, for the coming months and as an essential contribution to reaching the Lisbon targets; underlines that it will examine legislative proposals in this light; urges the Commission to present a detailed scoreboard on the implementation of its action plan containing clear and concise information on targets reached, indicators developed, outcomes of baseline measurements and concrete proposals for subsequent areas most suitable for a further rapid, sustainable and tangible reduction of administrative costs;

52. Supports the Commission in its continuing efforts to improve the quality of EU legislation; underlines the need to accelerate the simplification and consolidation of EU legislation and to put more effort into better regulation and the prompt transposition and correct implementation of EU legislation whilst fully respecting Parliament's prerogatives; calls for a stronger mechanism for the monitoring and enforcing of the implementation of EU legislation in the Member States;

53. Underlines that the principle of subsidiarity as currently enshrined in the EC Treaty clearly states that in areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Community is entitled to act only if and insofar as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States; underlines that non-action by Member States does not in itself create EU competence;
54. Insists on independent assessments of the consequences of legislation; considers that such assessments must be systematically carried out in the context of the legislative process and also in the process of simplifying legislation;
55. Notes that the dossiers contained in the Commission's list of pending proposals to be withdrawn are in any case obsolete;
56. Asks the Commission and the Council to give Parliament the necessary time to issue its opinion on future enlargements of the Eurozone;
57. Insists on the proper implementation of the new comitology procedure and the safeguarding of Parliament's rights in this respect; attaches particular importance to comitology procedures in the field of financial services (the Lamfalussy procedure), as a number of important dossiers are undergoing fine-tuning; takes the view that the correct application of the framework is essential for the smooth functioning of the financial system and for avoiding financial crisis; demands that the rights of Parliament as agreed upon are respected to the full and that the present agreements are invigorated;
58. Awaits with interest the results of the consultation process initiated by the Commission on Reforming the Budget, Changing Europe (SEC(2007)1188); demands the full association of Parliament with the review both of EU spending and of the EU own resources system, as provided for in Declaration No 3 to the Interinstitutional Agreement on budgetary discipline and sound financial management (IIA) on the review of the financial framework;
59. Is of the opinion that, in order to achieve a positive Statement of Assurance from the Court of Auditors, the Commission should undertake the technical preparations and urge the Member States to issue national declarations as suggested in Parliament's 2003, 2004 and 2005 resolutions on the discharge, regards the audit summaries as requested in paragraph 44 of the IIA only as a first step in this direction; expects a more proactive approach from the Member of the Commission responsible for transparency and good governance; notes furthermore that the Commission feels itself bound by and committed to the highest standards of sound financial management;
60. Calls on the Commission to reform without delay its procedures and to involve more closely the Parliament and its competent committees during the process for the selection and appointment of Agency Directors; will take the necessary measures to allow for a more in-depth process for the selection of Agency Directors.

Communicating Europe

61. Urges the Commission to put the citizen at the centre of the European project, which it will only succeed in doing by listening to the concerns of Europeans, and to

intensify its efforts to develop a more effective communication policy in order to achieve a better understanding on the part of citizens of EU action and its contribution to addressing their concerns, with a view to preparing the way for ratification of the Lisbon Treaty and the European elections in 2009;

62. Calls on the Commission to set out clearly how it intends to put into practice the content of its communication priorities, particularly the priority relating to the Lisbon Treaty;

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