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Developing the job potential of a new sustainable economy

P7_TA(2010)0299

European Parliament resolution of 7 September 2010 on developing the job potential of a new sustainable economy (2010/2010(INI))

(2011/C 308 E/02)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘Europe 2020: A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’ (COM(2010)2020),
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘Mainstreaming sustainable development into EU policies: 2009 Review of the European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development’ (COM(2009)0400),
- having regard to the Commission proposal for a Council Decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States, Part II of the Europe 2020 Integrated Guidelines (COM(2010)0193),
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 106/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 January 2008 on a Community energy-efficiency labelling programme for office equipment ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to Directive 2010/31/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 on the energy performance of buildings ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources and amending and subsequently repealing Directives 2001/77/EC and 2003/30/EC ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to the Commission White Paper entitled ‘Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action’ (COM(2009)0147) and its resolution thereon of 6 May 2010 ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘Greening Transport’ (COM(2008)0433),
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘Strategy for the internalisation of external costs’ (COM(2008)0435),
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘An Energy Policy for Europe’ (COM(2007)0001),
- having regard to the conclusions of the European Council of 10/11 December 2009, in particular points 21-24,
- having regard to the Council Presidency Report on the 2009 Review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy ⁽⁵⁾,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 39, 13.2.2008, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 153, 18.6.2010, p. 13.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 140, 5.6.2009, p. 16.

⁽⁴⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0154.

⁽⁵⁾ Council document 16818/09, 1.12.2009.

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- having regard to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and to the Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC,
- having regard to the 2007 IPPC document entitled 'Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report, Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change',
- having regard to the 2006 Stern Review Report on the Economics of Climate Change,
- having regard to the 2008 UNEP, ILO, IOE and ITUC Green Jobs Initiative entitled 'Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World',
- having regard to the ILO background note entitled 'Global Challenges for Sustainable Development: Strategies for Green Jobs' submitted to the G8 Labour and Employment Ministers Conference held in Niigata, Japan, from 11 to 13 May 2008,
- having regard to the OECD's 'Declaration on Green Growth', adopted at the Council Meeting at Ministerial Level held on 25 June 2009, and its ongoing Green Growth Strategy,
- having regard to the 2009 Greenpeace and European Renewable Energy Council (EREC) report entitled 'Working for the climate: renewable energy and the green job revolution',
- having regard to the 2007 European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and Social Development Agency (SDA) report on 'Climate Change and Employment: Impact on employment in the European Union-25 of climate change and CO₂ emission reduction measures by 2030',
- having regard to Ruhr Economic Papers 156 'Economic impacts from the Promotion of Renewable Energy Technologies, The German Experience',
- having regard to CEPOS publication 'Wind Energy, the case of Denmark',
- having regard to the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos publication 'Study of the effects on employment of public aid to renewable energy sources',
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 14 December 2007 on pre-commercial procurement (COM(2007)0799),
- having regard to the Commission's 'Employment in Europe 2009' report, in particular Chapter 3: Climate change and labour market outcomes,
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled 'A European Economic Recovery Plan' (COM(2008)0800) and its resolution thereon of 11 March 2009 ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled 'Driving European recovery' (COM(2009)0114),
- having regard to the European social partners' joint analysis, entitled 'Key challenges facing European labour markets', of 18 October 2007,

⁽¹⁾ Texts adopted, P6_TA(2009)0123.

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- having regard to the European social partners' 2002 'Framework of actions for the lifelong development of competencies and qualifications',
 - having regard to the Commission communication entitled 'New Skills for New Jobs - Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs' (COM(2008)0868), and the report by the Expert Group on 'New Skills for New Jobs: Action Now' of February 2010,
 - having regard to the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) 2009 research paper entitled 'Future Skills Needs for the Green Economy',
 - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the opinions of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, the Committee on Regional Development and the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A7-0234/2010),
- A. whereas, in 2009, the European Council confirmed that sustainable development is a key objective of the Lisbon Treaty; whereas the guidelines of the EU sustainability strategy include the combined consideration of economic, social and ecological interests, intensifying social dialogue, greater social responsibility for companies and the precaution and polluter pays principles,
- B. whereas the promotion of a social, resource-efficient, ecological and competitive economy is one of the focuses of the Europe 2020 strategy,
- C. whereas industrialised countries should according to the Copenhagen Accord reduce their carbon dioxide emissions by 80-90 % of the 1990 level by 2050,
- D. whereas the impact of climate change in Europe varies from one region to another; whereas according to a Commission study ⁽¹⁾ the regions in southern and eastern Europe, where more than one third of the European Union's population lives, are particularly exposed to the pressure of climate change, whereas the most vulnerable population groups are those worst affected, and whereas greater regional and social imbalances may develop as a result,
- E. whereas the change towards a more sustainable economy has different positive effects on different sectors, namely, whereas jobs are created, replaced, or partially cease to exist; whereas all jobs should be adapted to sustainable, resource-efficient production and working methods, and the greatest need for adaptations therefore arises in existing employment relationships, with flexible employment relationships being desirable,
- F. whereas figures in the Green Paper on Demographic Change (COM(2005)0094) show that the working age population of the EU will fall by 20.8 million (6,8 %) between 2005 and 2030 and whereas the number of people aged over 60 is now increasing twice as fast as it did before 2007 – by about two million every year compared to one million previously,
- G. whereas this change has the potential to stabilise employment and to increase the number of jobs, with considerable spill-over effects, whereas, where reliable framework conditions have been introduced, a constant rise in employment possibilities and job security can be noted, which is stabilised by increasing exports,

⁽¹⁾ Commission staff working paper entitled 'Regions 2020 – An Assessment of Future Challenges for EU Regions', November 2008, available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/working/regions2020/pdf/regions2020_en.pdf.

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- H. whereas the necessary economic growth and resulting employment gains in an innovation-based economy cannot be achieved unless European researchers and businesses are able to convert their research results into commercial products, whereas the Commission's Innovation Scoreboard shows an innovation gap of 30 % with the USA and 40 % with Japan,
- I. whereas in some new sectors social dialogue structures do not yet exist; whereas there are cases of new sectors where collective agreements do not exist, or existing ones are not applied, and sector-specific codes do not exist either; whereas all sectors are subject to great pressure to increase their competitiveness, whereas, in regions with high unemployment, the pressure to accept poor working conditions is high,
- J. whereas a long-term job insecurity has developed in the EU labour market over the last two decades, with young people especially tending increasingly to work on short-term contracts with poorer working conditions, whereas new jobs created under these circumstances cannot be regarded as sustainable, whereas these structural deficiencies need to be addressed in the context of seeking to develop the job potential of a new sustainable economy,
- K. whereas the transition towards a new sustainable economy should not be a pretext for excluding the most vulnerable and least qualified workers from the employment market, whereas, therefore, there is a need to avoid the 'cream-skimming' effect of which the least qualified workers would be the first victims,
- L. whereas gender equality is an objective of the Lisbon Treaty and one of the Millennium Development Goals; whereas women are underrepresented in various sectors, and can therefore not profit from the increase in jobs in the new sustainable economy to the same extent,
- M. whereas a new economy will take shape in an ageing society with a shrinking workforce, making it necessary to attract more women to perform paid labour by adapting work organisation and preparing employers in all sectors for a more diverse workforce,
- N. whereas, according to recent studies, the presence of women at all levels of responsibility provides added value for companies, in particular with regard to their economic performance,
- O. whereas women secure most of the university degrees in the EU and are in the majority on business, management and law courses, but remain in the minority in positions of responsibility in companies and public bodies,
- P. whereas, notably because of the sexist stereotypes that exist in education and in society, women are under-represented in fields that are wrongly considered to be 'male', such as information technology, engineering, physics, and technical occupations such as mechanics and bricklaying,
- Q. whereas unemployment is rising among older workers, who face a particularly acute problem of social exclusion after the age of 55, and despite the progress made in the past decade only a little more than a third of women between the ages of 55 and 64 had a job in 2008, while 55 % of men in that age group were in work,

Job strategy for a new sustainable economy

1. Views sustainable development as being based on a long-term vision in which economic growth, social cohesion and environmental protection go hand in hand and are mutually supportive; draws attention to the potential represented by the creation of 'green jobs' in a sustainable economy;

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2. Considers the post-crisis economy to be a strong opportunity for sustainable growth based on social justice and eco-efficiency; notes that the transformation of European economies from polluting to eco-efficient economies will lead to profound changes in production, distribution and consumption, which should be used as a chance to move towards true sustainability without endangering prosperity or jobs; believes that the transition to an economy based on non-polluting energy sources needs to be seen as an opportunity for investment in sustainable development and not merely as a burden on public and private budgets;
3. Emphasises the importance of measures to promote growth and employment in the countryside, so as to stem rural depopulation;
4. Notes that there is a need to make production of goods and services more sustainable; notes that investments in a new sustainable economy bear potential for growth in the employment market and new income opportunities; notes that the positive balance takes losses in some sectors into account, and that re-skilling and retraining should therefore be stimulated;
5. Is of the opinion that the current global economic and social crisis, which has slowed down changes in energy use and reductions in carbon emissions, should not deter Member States from making the transition towards a competitive, more sustainable, low-carbon, resource-efficient economy, given that this will make them more resilient, less dependent on increasingly expensive imports and more competitive;
6. Believes that more should be done to internalise external costs; calls on the Commission to use existing policy tools – or develop new tools if necessary – to attribute costs, and to ensure that future policy proposals reflect its findings;
7. Believes that a new sustainable economy for the EU must ensure balanced economic and social development; calls for an ambitious sustainable industrial policy, with an emphasis on resource efficiency; stresses that the green economy needs to offer prospects for decent, well-paid jobs, with the focus on the protection of the environment;
8. Is firmly convinced that market-economy based environmental policy can become the engine of growth and employment in all branches of the economy, and stresses that predictable, investment-friendly framework conditions are the basis that will allow innovative businesses to make the best possible use of these opportunities for the benefit of the environment and of employees;
9. Calls for industry to be involved in eco-innovation, since entrepreneurs have a very important role to play in spreading eco-innovation more widely; notes, in this regard, that informing entrepreneurs – by demonstrating new business opportunities – will be crucial to the success of a strategy aimed at developing resource-efficient economies and sustainable industries;
10. Supports the Commission's flagship initiative under the Europe 2020 strategy to make the change towards a sustainable economy now, to make economic growth less dependent on consumption of resources and energy, to reduce climate-damaging emissions and thus to act against global warming; welcomes the intention to align legal framework conditions, market economy incentive instruments, subsidies and public procurement with that objective; regrets, however, that, with the EU 2020 Strategy, the Commission misses the opportunity to address the labour market potential of a sustainable economy;
11. Notes that, in order to reach the EU 2020 strategy's employment targets and use the job potential of a new sustainable economy and to improve the sustainability of production of goods and services, there is a need to increase the energy efficiency of housing and construction, the share of renewable energies, environment technologies, sustainable transport and mobility, sustainable agriculture, forestry and fishery and advice through environmental services, as well as recycling, low-resource production processes and closed-loop material cycles; notes that the service sector and the social economy sector also bear considerable green employment potential;

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12. Stresses the importance of the public sector leading by example, adopting progressive procurement standards and providing incentives and information, especially in the areas of energy, construction of infrastructure and facilities, transport and communications, for creating jobs with rights; calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote, particularly in pre-commercial procurement, the inclusion of environmental and social standards, in addition to promoting local content clauses and enterprises operating in a sustainable and inclusive economy, especially SMEs;
13. Urges the Member States to exchange experience and best practice in the field of employment opportunities when dealing with the economic, social and environmental impact of climate change;
14. Is convinced that green sustainable jobs must not be a mere appendage, but that business and society as a whole must be sustainably organised; is aware that there is no branch of the economy that can be separated off and called 'environmental protection' or the 'environment industry', since the activity of environmental protection ties in with many traditional sectors such as the manufacturing industries, the construction industry and the service industries; calls, therefore, for the adoption, as a working definition, of the ILO's definition, according to which all jobs which promote sustainable development are green sustainable jobs; points out that the definition includes, firstly, jobs which directly reduce consumption of energy and resources, protect ecosystems and biodiversity and minimise waste production and air pollution and, secondly, all jobs which reduce the environmental footprint; recognises that, owing to the relative nature of the definition, the job potential cannot be definitively determined;
15. Takes the view that significantly more research is needed to measure the impact of environmental and climate change policies on net employment creation; calls on the Commission to make this area a priority under the 8th Framework Programme;
16. Stresses that all jobs are committed to the objective of promoting sustainable development and that production and working methods should be organised so as to be as resource, material and energy efficient as possible; stresses that this approach should apply to the entire supply chain and that there is no sense in making a separation into good and bad industries, but all industries can be made more sustainable;
17. Considers it very important that a new Community framework have a sufficient budget to support public research and make research results accessible in a simple and unbureaucratic way so that all companies, including micro-enterprises and SMEs, can make changes with respect to energy efficiency, the use of new energy sources, new production processes and recycling and the better use of resources, and create jobs with rights;

Optimising employment potential

18. Calls for the development of a European job strategy for a sustainable economy as part of the EU 2020 strategy, aiming at optimising job potential whilst paying special attention to decent work, employees' health and safety, skills needs and a socially just transition; stresses that a sustainable economy has to combine social, technological, economic and ecological sustainability; stresses that a sustainable employment strategy such as this should be one of the central components of the employment policy guidelines;
19. Recommends that the regional authorities adopt development strategies in line with the objectives of the EU 2020 Strategy with the aim of creating new jobs in a sustainable economy;
20. Calls on the Commission to propose, by 2011, a strategy including legislative and non-legislative measures to encourage green jobs that are a source of growth and prosperity for all;
21. Stresses that European businesses' powers of innovation have made them into world leaders in the area of environmental protection; is concerned, however, that manufacturing activities are still being extensively relocated from the EU to third countries which have much lower environmental standards; calls on the Commission and the Member States to combat this phenomenon promptly and vigorously by working on a worldwide, multilateral approach which ensures that global competition is based on comparable requirements;

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22. Underlines that a stable, long-term, ambitious regulatory framework is a prerequisite for achieving the full potential of green employment; calls on the Commission and Member States to determine environmental standards and financial incentives creating reliable framework conditions for at least 10 years, and thereby creating legal and planning certainty; demands that existing financial instruments should be used to promote sustainability and that increasing sustainability of economic activity and production should be inserted into the financial perspective of various funds, including the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund, as one of the promoted objectives;

23. Stresses, in this connection, the importance of the concept of integrated urban development and that a sustainable redevelopment of disadvantaged urban areas could assume a beacon role; considers that a prerequisite for this is a clear policy framework, including maintenance of the promotion of the urban dimension in the Structural Funds;

24. Notes the need for funding within existing programmes to carry out targeted studies in the most disadvantaged regions of the EU, so as to set strategic objectives and determine the type of measures required to establish favourable conditions for the development of sustainable local economies, with the specific objectives of creating new green jobs and integrated measures to attract new green companies and support those which already exist;

25. Stresses that targeted investment for the ecological transformation of the EU's disadvantaged regions is one of the most useful instruments for achieving the strategic objectives of regional convergence and territorial cohesion;

26. Stresses the importance of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for regional clustering by bringing together research, innovation and infrastructure locally in the context of new technologies, such as renewable energy and energy efficiency; further underlines that, especially in urban areas, regional and local authorities are the best positioned and most capable of creating the conditions necessary for the growth of clusters of innovative enterprises; points out that such clustering can act as a decisive spur to local economic development and can create new jobs in the regions;

27. Is aware of the fact that EU, national and regional funding schemes remain highly uncoordinated, and therefore underlines the need for better multilevel coordination between the programmes and support for more synergy between different common policies using structural, agricultural and rural development funds, the research framework programme and the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) to be devised to achieve a sustainable, resource-efficient economy; believes, as regards funding under the Common Agricultural Policy, that further consideration should be given to a greater shift from direct support mechanisms to rural development and the development of environmentally sustainable agriculture;

28. Calls again upon the Commission and Member States to capitalise on the success of the Reconstruction Fund and to set up a new Community initiative, including pilot projects, for reconstruction towards a new sustainable economy;

29. Notes that paragraph 8 of the Council conclusions of 21 October 2009 invites the Commission to undertake an urgent sector-by-sector review of subsidies which have an adverse environmental impact and are incompatible with sustainable development; calls on the Commission to act on those conclusions immediately, examining means of redeploying those subsidies within the budget in support of new activities related to the sustainable economy;

30. Calls for efficient funding systems and fiscal incentives to help SMEs steer towards green employment policies and ensure green innovations and production;

31. Takes the view that existing and proposed EU environmental legislation has significant potential to create new jobs in areas such as air, soil, water, energy, public services, agriculture, transport, forestry, and environmental management; calls on the Member States to implement EU legislation which could lead to new investment in eco-friendly technologies and jobs;

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32. Recalls that public procurement constitutes a large share of the market and could provide significant incentives for greening the economy; calls, therefore, for all public procurement to require high environmental standards;

33. Calls on the EU and the Member States to anticipate change, i.e. to overcome information failures and uncertainties and foster awareness, social learning processes and changes in consumption patterns; states that incentives are needed for companies to invest more in clean technologies and that workers are more willing to face change if the changes lead to more employment opportunities and a safety net is provided for employees;

34. Stresses that the need to develop the potential for quality jobs offered by a new sustainable economy means that innovation must be targeted on finding solutions to the major challenges facing society, including unemployment and poverty, climate change, the ageing of the population and scarcity of resources; draws attention to the relevance of industrial and research policies based on open innovation and clusters, in order to promote the pooling of knowledge by the different public and private economic operators and to stimulate innovation; to this end, calls on the Commission to develop a European Technology Platform for resource-light industries;

35. Recommends that, if a Member State decides to subsidise, for example, the increase of wind, bio- or solar energy production, the level of subsidies be based on scientific evaluation of empirical data and that the subsidies provide reasonable investment perspectives and security to possible investors and calls for careful consideration of factors such as the increase in net jobs created through subsidies, price of energy, net influence on emissions of green house gases and other pollutants, and thus aim to optimise the increase of sustainability;

36. Notes that there is no uniform understanding which technological choices are environmentally, economically or socially most sustainable in the global competitive situation; notes that many variables have to be taken into account when comparing, for example, the sustainability of the production of energy using windmills, solar PV-panels, burning coal with carbon capture and storage, nuclear reactors or some other technologies; therefore calls for more scientific study on the subject comparing whole life-cycles of production and calls for all production processes to be made more resource-efficient;

Job potential for women and men in the new sustainable economy

37. Underlines that only by raising female participation in the European labour market can we fully utilise the growth potential and job potential in the new economy, since narrowing the gap between male and female employment rates has accounted for half the increase in Europe's overall employment rate and a quarter of annual economic growth since 1995, and since this is a prerequisite for ensuring sustainable growth and meeting the demands of the ecological transformation in an ageing society;

38. Calls for an EU initiative to raise awareness among employers, especially in traditionally male-dominated sectors, of the need for, and benefits of, a more diverse workforce in an ageing society and to offer them tools with which to prepare for more diversity;

39. Calls on the EU, the Member States and the social partners to fight discrimination and promote gender equality in a sustainable economy, create work environments that attract and retain women in these sectors, promote work-life balance through adequate, high-quality childcare and adaptable family-friendly workplace arrangements, create opportunities as well as conditions under which both men and women can participate in the labour market on equal terms, promote female participation in male-dominated representative bodies, reduce gender-based job segmentation and wage gaps;

40. Points out that investment in social infrastructure provides an opportunity to modernise Europe and promote equality, and can be seen as a parallel strategy to modernisation of the physical infrastructure through investment in green technologies; considers that gender equality should therefore be a policy priority and an essential tool;

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41. Underlines that a targeted effort to ensure women's access to education at all levels by combating sexist stereotypes, and to provide life-long-learning, is essential in order to break down gender segregation in the labour market; calls for the provision of adequate training in order to prevent the under-representation of female workers in green jobs, bearing in mind that a massive opt-out by women from science and technology would impede Europe's growth and sustainability and leave many talented and qualified young women on the margins of employment and economic certainty;

42. Calls for a specific EU initiative to attract girls to the MINT professions (mathematics, informatics, natural sciences and technology) and to combat the stereotypes that still dominate these professions; stresses that the role of the media and education is key in combating such stereotypes;

43. Stresses that young women, in the transition between school and work, should be guided towards apprenticeships, in which they are under-represented, this being promoted by means of joint planning between schools, universities and training agencies and/or firms, so that they acquire specific skills and capabilities – also at advanced and specialist levels – through work experience and by working on a regular, rather than a precarious, basis, and with the prospect of fulfilment;

44. Calls on the EU and the Member States to give higher priority to green jobs for women in the context of European Social Fund (ESF) programmes, taking into account of the fact that the ESF finances training projects in areas such as renewable energy and ecotourism; emphasises that greater efforts are needed to increase the rate of female participation in EFS-supported projects, which is currently below 10 %; calls for the introduction of gender budgeting in the ESF as well as in recovery plans and structural adjustment programmes to ensure that such programmes attract and integrate women equally;

45. Stresses that the transition to a new economy should not be used as a pretext for cutting various equal opportunities measures but should instead be regarded as a unique opportunity to improve women's participation in the EU labour market because this is a precondition for ensuring sustainable growth, the optimum development of job potential and strengthening competitiveness;

Decent work

46. Calls on the Commission, over and above the job potential for highly qualified employees, to pay special attention to the many jobs in the middle and lower qualification bands in the sustainable economy, as well as unskilled but specialized workers; calls on the Commission and the Member States to take particular account of this fact in the Employment Policy Guidelines; calls on the Member States to enhance the status of jobs in the middle and lower training bands and to ensure Decent Work in those jobs;

47. Stresses the need to pay special attention to decent work, skills needs and a socially just transition; calls on the Commission, the Member States and the social partners to ensure that an employment strategy for a sustainable economy benefits everyone across the EU; stresses the need to mainstream this strategy in all types of employment, be they high-, medium- or low-skilled; calls to increase education and research and development opportunities; calls, furthermore, for attention to be focused in the employment policy guidelines and the Commission's 'New Skills for New Jobs' programme, particularly on people furthest from the labour market, the most vulnerable, especially disabled people and low-skilled workers, as well as on protecting these people;

48. Takes the view that employment policy plays a central role in combating poverty and social exclusion, and consequently calls, in line with the ILO 'Decent Work' programme, for qualitatively good working conditions and remuneration that not only provides a decent living, but also guarantees an appropriate share of GDP;

49. Notes that, owing to the often lower level of organisation of employees and of employers in some new sectors, there is a risk of precarious employment relationships and poor working conditions; calls on the EU and Member States to create framework conditions for establishing representative bodies in new sectors; calls on the social partners to organise themselves and invites the Commission to promote EU-wide exchange of best practice examples, in particular on strengthening of information and consultation of workers and the establishment of European Works Councils;

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50. Notes that further efforts need to be undertaken in order to ensure the effective EU harmonisation of minimum requirements for the organisation of working time connected with workers' health and safety;

51. Calls on the Member States, in cooperation with the social partners, to draw up integrated plans for evaluating ecological transformation operations at both local and national levels; calls on the social partners to monitor employees' participation in the sustainable development strategy, proposing and then adopting policies to reinforce effective participation with regard to sustainable mobility for workers and green growth;

52. Calls on the social partners to embrace new sectors and develop strategies to include sector associations in the social partnership;

53. Calls on the EU and Member States to link public subsidies, as well as public procurement, more closely to minimum social standards at Member State level and to advance the creation of representative bodies of the social partners;

54. Points out that training and lifelong learning for employees affected by changes in a company's or industry's production processes also creates new jobs; calls on the EU to develop a framework for anticipating change and restructuring, in particular of production, providing the right for all affected workers to take part in training and lifelong learning schemes; calls on the Member States, employers and employees to recognise skills management, training and lifelong learning as a shared responsibility, as acknowledged in the social partners' 2002 framework agreement on lifelong learning; calls on the Commission to incorporate a ninth key competence relating to the environment, climate change and sustainable development – which is essential in a knowledge society – into the framework for lifelong learning; calls on the Member States to incorporate the concept of sustainability into basic training, education and lifelong learning;

55. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and the social partners to step up their efforts to deal effectively with the adverse effects of restructuring, both in the local economy and in employment. Underlines the need for the dissemination of guidelines on managing change and its social consequences;

Facing skills needs

56. Points out that the Member States must adapt their training and education systems and devise and implement targeted action plans for retraining workers in sectors which will be affected by the transformation of local economies towards a new sustainable economy, to ensure that they have access to new green sustainable jobs, to ensure that the workforce can adjust their skills to the labour-market needs of a more sustainable economy founded on competence-based training concepts; welcomes, in this context, the Commission's 'New Skills for New Jobs' initiative and acknowledges cooperation with the EU Member States as a step in the right direction; points out, however, that this initiative must be more closely linked to the objectives of the Council Decision on sustainable development and taken further with tangible measures both at EU level and in the EU Member States;

57. Underlines the need to reinforce the open method of cooperation and exchanges of best practice with regard to sustainable development, green jobs and lifelong learning, so as to ensure successful and effective management of the economy's transformation and, by extension, of the new training needs and adverse social consequences resulting from this kind of transition;

58. Calls on the Member States to combat discrimination on grounds of age and adapt the training offer and lifelong learning strategies to the requirements of older employees, in order to ensure high participation rates for workers over 55 years of age as well, including women over 55;

59. Calls on the EU and Member States to adopt detailed policies on innovation and creativity, in particular on education and training, including vocational education and training, as a basis for a green economy, competitiveness and prosperity;

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60. Notes that in times of crisis, it is essential to attract young people to the new type of green jobs and to ensure that skill programmes promote the access of young people to the labour-market, so that young people can profit from the job potential, to combat high unemployment among citizens under 25 years of age and in order to capitalise on the young generation's skills in using new technologies; regrets the fact that the EU 2020 flagship initiative 'Youth on the move' excludes young people who are not involved in higher education; stresses that, in order to make a real change, it needs to focus on the young people that have now the least opportunities and are at risk of poverty;

61. Calls on the Member States to devise, in cooperation with the social partners, and implement vocational guidance programmes for young people in science and technology disciplines to promote the development of a viable and sustainable economy, and information and awareness-raising measures in relation to ecological and environmental issues, both through the formal education system and in the framework of measures by local and regional authorities;

62. Calls on the Commission to work more closely with the Member States in order to draw up medium- and long-term forecasts regarding the skills required by the employment market and to encourage partnerships between universities and the business sector in order to foster the transition of young people to the employment market while helping to create a knowledge-based society, develop applied research and create better employment-market prospects for graduates;

63. Calls on the Member States as well as social partners to establish targets to achieve equal participation of women and men, to provide equal opportunities to education, training, targeted recruitment schemes, specialised apprenticeships and training initiatives for women, migrants, the long-term unemployed and other groups discriminated against by the employment market;

64. Encourages the Member States to use the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund to implement European objectives, to promote new skills, including for new sustainable 'green' high-quality jobs;

65. Calls on the responsible stakeholders to monitor employment with a view to making basic vocational training and lifelong learning more relevant; calls in this context on the Member States to assess the feasibility of Transition Funds to manage skills needs;

66. Calls on the EU and the Member States to make promotion of adaptability to a sustainable economy one of the objectives of the European Social Fund, in order to contribute to increasing sustainability of economic activities and infrastructure development;

67. Recalls that the sustainable dimension should not be restricted to training in environment-related jobs, but needs to be incorporated into all education and training programmes in order to promote a culture of sustainable development and environmental awareness;

68. Highlights the added value of life-long learning and calls on the Member States to conduct a thorough mapping of local potential in order to organise demand-driven training that matches available resources to actual needs and to re-establish the prestige of vocational secondary education by providing high-standard education, particularly in regions where local potential and traditional work areas require special skills and knowledge to be fully developed; calls on the Commission to provide the Member States with sufficient technical support on how to map local needs and notes that high-standard vocational secondary schools could help reduce graduate unemployment and lead to sustainable employment;

69. Stresses the importance of Member States using the European Social Fund to invest in skills, employment, training and retraining activities with a view to creating more and better jobs through national, regional and local projects; believes that the professional experience of older people may also make a contribution to these initiatives, bearing in mind the growing proportion of older people in the EU population; recommends that regional and local authorities should have appropriate, permanent contacts with the business environment, employers' organisations, trade unions and NGOs with a view to projecting the needs of the labour market in the medium and long term;

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70. Recognises the important role of local and regional authorities in education, which forms the basis for the acquisition of further, future-oriented skills, including through lifelong learning and retraining; points out that the general conditions governing education and the further training of young people, including school leavers with no qualifications, in many countries are the responsibility of the regional and local authorities; therefore encourages the regions to use the Structural Funds for educational infrastructure, especially in disadvantaged urban areas and regions and to make comprehensive and inclusive school education possible using this support; points to the significant (educational and training) potential offered by networking between local and regional authorities and firms and associations, in terms of creating sustainable jobs in the fields of local transport, urban mobility, education, and research and development, and placing emphasis on equal opportunities;

71. Notes the need for cooperation between the Member States, the social partners and tertiary education providers with a view to setting up undergraduate and postgraduate courses and to creating subject areas geared towards the ecological transformation of economies;

72. Believes that the demographic challenges require a broader strategy combining job creation and meeting new and emerging needs on the European labour market; considers that, in this respect, further progress must be made in improving the mobility of EU workers, including researchers and other professionals, with a view to achieving a Europe without barriers within the EU internal market;

Socially fair change

73. Notes that increasing sustainability of economic activities may involve changes in whole industrial sectors; calls on the EU and the Member States to take care to avoid social sacrifices in moving to a sustainable economy and to work towards framework conditions for a socially fair transformation which minimises the risks of change and optimises gains for all employees; emphasises that socially just transformation is a basic component of sustainable development and an essential prerequisite if people in Europe are to give transformation their support;

74. Stresses that the consequential costs of a lack of transformation management may be many times higher than anticipatory investments; calls on the Commission, the Member States and the social partners to confront the responsibilities of preventive transformation management together;

75. Underlines the need to integrate the sustainable economy in the framework of corporate and social environmental liability and the possibility of promoting a culture of sustainable development and a sustainable economy through training programmes in the context of corporate social responsibility;

76. Recalls that creating the necessary conditions for workers to undertake further training and adapt to new technologies, in order to prevent job losses, and the promotion of and support for collective agreements to anticipate change and avoid unemployment, together with the strengthening of social security, income support systems and proactive sectoral training initiatives, are crucial prevention measures;

77. Calls on the Commission to provide EU-level support for research into the careers of the future so as to prevent redundancies and retain jobs in the European Union;

78. Underlines the need for close and effective cooperation and complementarity between international organisations, and calls on the World Trade Organisation to take action concerning the social and environmental dimensions of investment and trade;

79. Recognises that NGOs and trade unions have an important role to play in developing green job potential, in terms of contributing to the decision-making process, as employers and in raising public awareness;

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80. Points out that those organisations that invest in eco-efficient practices will help create a better working environment for staff and employees, and may consequently be more productive; calls on the Member States to promote the European Eco-Management & Audit Scheme (EMAS) and to encourage all economic sectors to strive to achieve EMAS registration; calls on the Commission, the Member States and the social partners to include essential environmental issues in the social dialogue, at all levels of consultation, with emphasis on sectoral negotiations; emphasises that, in order for transition to be socially just, workers should have a participative partnership role to play in the process; calls for the involvement of employees' representatives in charge of greening the workplace, as defined by the ILO, according to national practices in order to make workplaces, companies and industries more sustainable; calls on the Member States and the social partners to cooperate in a structured manner with environmental stakeholders and experts, to make use of their advice in managing transition;

81. Calls on the EU, with the assistance of the social partners, to begin a systematic dialogue in its external relations, with a view to a similar approach to sustainable development in other parts of the world, so as to secure the same development conditions and ensure that industrial competitiveness is not at risk; considers that ensuring fair competition in sustainable manufacturing sectors will have a beneficial effect in terms of improving protection and working conditions for workers;

82. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to launch information and public awareness campaigns on developing green jobs in a sustainable economy;

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83. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission, and to the Governments and Parliaments of the Member States.

EEA-Switzerland: Obstacles with regard to the full implementation of the internal market

P7_TA(2010)0300

European Parliament resolution of 7 September 2010 on EEA-Switzerland: Obstacles with regard to the full implementation of the internal market (2009/2176(INI))

(2011/C 308 E/03)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Free Trade Agreement of 22 July 1972 between the European Economic Community and the Swiss Confederation,
- having regard to the Agreement of 21 June 1999 between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Swiss Confederation, of the other, on the free movement of persons, and in particular its Annex I on free movement of persons and Annex III on the recognition of professional qualifications,
- having regard to the Agreement of 25 June 2009 between the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on the simplification of inspections and formalities in respect of the carriage of goods and on customs security measures,
- having regard to the Agreement of 21 June 1999 between the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on mutual recognition in relation to conformity assessment,