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(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RESOLUTIONS

COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

85th PLENARY SESSION HELD ON 9 AND 10 JUNE 2010

Resolution of the Committee of the Regions ‘For a better tool-box to implement the EU 2020 Strategy: the integrated guidelines for the economic and employment policies of the Member States and the Union’

(2010/C 267/01)

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

1. **supports** the proposal to reduce the overall number of the broad economic and employment guidelines and to integrate them into a coherent document aligned with the Europe 2020 Strategy;

2. **acknowledges** that while these guidelines are addressed to Member States, the Europe 2020 Strategy should be implemented in partnership with regional and local authorities, who, considering their competences and capacities in the fields covered by these guidelines and according to the principle of subsidiarity, are needed for the elaboration of National Reform Programmes, for their implementation and the overall communication on the Strategy;

3. **requests** the European Commission and the European Council to respect and support the bottom up approach in the policy areas relevant for regional and local authorities and in terms of governance and ownership of the Europe 2020 Strategy, by applying a multilevel and flexible design of the 2020 flagship initiatives and the National Reform Programmes. Welcomes, in this respect, the recent reference by the European Parliament to the importance of involving the local and regional authorities in the Strategy;

4. **emphasises** that the Europe 2020 Strategy must be implemented with due regard to the objective of territorial cohesion recognised in the Lisbon Treaty;

5. **calls for** a clarification of the budgetary implications of the measures proposed in the Europe 2020 Strategy in order to

ensure that the next financial framework fully reflects the priorities set out in the Europe 2020 Strategy. This clarification should also encompass an impact assessment of new EU financing instruments as well as of a new resource system for the EU;

BROAD GUIDELINES FOR MEMBER STATES AND EU ECONOMIC POLICIES

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

6. **approves** an adequate economic and fiscal coordination both at the EU level and between Member States to mitigate the problems already faced by public finances within the context of the current financial, economic and social crisis;

7. **welcomes** the EU's initiative to more closely monitor Member States' budgetary discipline and substantially overhaul financial markets regulation;

8. **supports** the call on the Commission and the Council made by the European Parliament in its Resolution of 10 March 2010 to assess the potential of different financial transaction tax options to contribute to the EU budget;

9. **endorses** the recommendations made by Mario Monti in his 9 May 2010 report to President Barroso on ‘A New Strategy for the Single Market’ for an increased European tax co-ordination in order to eliminate tax barriers within the single market and to tackle the anti-labour bias of tax competition within the EU;

10. **underlines** that long-term monetary stability can only be achieved by convincing consolidation and a stricter stability package. It can be supported by strengthening long-term growth perspectives for all EU countries and territories through a mix of structural policies for sustainable growth (Europe 2020 Strategy) and cohesion policy, both of which should be granted adequate resources;

11. **advocates** stronger emphasis on the quality and sustainability of public finances which should be targeted at public investment in environmentally and socially innovative sectors;

12. **strongly opposes** the proposal made by the European Commission in its 12 May 2010 Communication on reinforced economic governance to suspend the Cohesion Fund for Member States subject to an Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP). This proposal would be discriminatory in three regards: i) it singles out cohesion policy as the only EU policy where sanctions would apply; ii) the suspension would unfairly target regions and cities and iii) it would be unfair considering the uneven allocation of Cohesion Fund resources among Member States;

13. **firmly reiterates** that cohesion policy has to be strengthened in its role as the only EU policy which offers an integrated place-based approach to development allowing the combination of European priorities with local and regional specificities and which addresses the reduction of disparities between and within regions;

14. **considers** that evaluation of growth should not only refer to GDP figures but also to the distribution of growth and to measurable targets for the depletion of natural resources;

15. **welcomes** the development of regional research and innovation strategies that foster cooperation of public authorities, universities and the private sector resulting in jobs and sustainable growth of regions and cities;

16. **recalls** that local and regional authorities have a responsibility to fight climate change and to protect the environment. They can reap important benefits from the necessary shift to a low-carbon economy if an adequate European framework is put in place, which allows for the anticipation of technological changes, as well as the adaptation of education and vocational training profiles and the encouragement of green public procurement. **Supports**, in this context, the Covenant of Mayors initiative and its enlargement to the regional level;

17. **considers** support to entrepreneurship as crucial to turn creative ideas into innovative products, services and processes that can create growth, quality jobs, territorial, economic and social cohesion; moreover **encourages** local and regional authorities to improve the conditions for the functioning of the SMEs in

line with the Small Business Act initiative, notably by exploiting to the full the potential of e-government services; also **recognises** in this context the important role that can be played in helping the economy through smart growth by supporting women entrepreneurs. Calls for a European Framework for Women's Economic Development as a means to tackle disparities in member states, fight child poverty, facilitate work-life balance, enhance growth potential and the regional development of a growing SME base;

GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYMENT POLICIES OF MEMBER STATES

18. **reiterates** that because the social partners, including local and regional authorities, are large employers in the EU's Member States and because of the role they often play in providing education, training and measures supporting the labour market they are key to delivering flexicurity policies. Regions and municipalities should therefore be involved at the outset of policy formation in order to contribute to dynamic labour markets and help citizens into work;

19. **notes** that long term integrated planning and financing of the public education systems, transport infrastructures, child care facilities and educational establishments is crucial for the development of sustainable regional labour markets;

20. **recalls** that the local and regional authorities are central players in the implementation process for achieving the strategic objectives concerning quality, relevance of and participation in education, as well as the prevention of early school drop out;

21. **recalls** that, in a period where unemployment is rising, young people face difficulties entering the labour market and need a greater understanding of the various options available to them, to secure a smooth transition from education to either the labour market or to life as a job-creating entrepreneur. Expects therefore that the European Youth Pact be included in the guidelines and that entrepreneurship will be promoted more actively at school level;

22. calls for targeted measures for older workers, who find themselves unemployed due to the economic crisis, to empower them with new, better skills for further job opportunities;

23. **stresses** that in order to achieve the proposed reduction by 25 % on the number of Europeans living below the national poverty lines, adequate funding should be attributed to local and regional authorities, as they hold legal responsibilities for framing, funding and carrying out active inclusion policies: and promoting the decent work agenda. The year 2010 of fighting poverty and social exclusion is the appropriate moment to highlight these facts which risk to deteriorate further due to the current financial and economic crisis;

24. **underlines** that the access to services of general interest, in particular social services, integration into the labour market and adaptation to structural changes as well as social, economic and cultural inclusion policies are all primarily delivered by the local

and regional authorities; therefore the employment guidelines must provide an appropriate framework and financing instruments to support local and regional authorities in fulfilling these responsibilities.

Brussels, 10 June 2010

*The President
of the Committee of the Regions*
Mercedes BRESSO
