

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

Tabled by Mr DE GUCHT

pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

on the setting-up of employment zones in
frontier, backward and problem areas

The European Parliament,

Having regard to the fact that:

- A. Regional disparities are generally becoming more marked and are putting the existence of the Community in jeopardy,
- B. The geographical distribution of unemployment is extremely uneven with frontier areas and backward areas being the most severely affected and there has not yet been any improvement in the unemployment trend,
- C. More reliance on the trade cycle will only help to solve part of the unemployment problem to a limited extent and new imaginative measures are urgently needed,
- D. A regional policy at European level should be designed to adapt and if necessary reorganize structures in such problem areas and the method of compensating revenue transfers should be avoided since it amounts to papering over the cracks,
- E. Redressing the balance between regions simply by revenue transfers is unrealistic and even undesirable,
- F. A regional approach to the unemployment problem is required in view of its geographical distribution and a recovery policy based on regional programmes should be maintained,
- G. Unemployment policy in problem areas must go hand in hand with a policy on productivity with emphasis on stepping up production,
- H. In view of this link between the unemployment problem and regional policy at national level, certain countries including one Member State are experimenting with employment zones and other Member States have drawn up proposals for national legislation along these lines; the common characteristic of these zones is that for a restricted geographical area and for a limited or unlimited duration, government intervention via taxation or other regulations is reduced in such a way that there is renewed stimulus for investment aimed at encouraging production for export,

- I. Such 'exemptions' range from anticipated depreciation facilities, simplification of certain official procedures - although without prejudice to the fundamental elements of town planning and environmental provisions - to exemption from corporation tax, land tax and customs duties,
- J. The existence of such employment zones - despite their internal freedom - must be made subject to strict regulations, since the uncontrolled growth of such zones could have a disruptive effect on the external market and, at domestic level, could result in the formation of socio-economic ghettos;
 1. Requests the Commission to arrange for a study to be conducted of the existence of employment zones, both inside and outside the Community, covering their structure and impact, both locally and on the surrounding regions;
 2. Suggests that the existence of such employment zones within the Community should be subject to regulations and in particular strict priority should be given to the problem areas which are most backward in socio-economic terms and where the associated unemployment is most severe;
 3. Proposes that a map of Europe should be drawn up to show the areas which are potential employment zones;
 4. Suggests that there should be a general framework of regulations with which these zones would have to comply, in order to avoid the economic chaos that their uncontrolled growth would cause;
 5. Proposes, more specifically, that when such employment zones are created, account should be taken of their impact on the surrounding regions, and of the existing infrastructure and that the zones should not exist in isolation but should fit in with, for example, the local agricultural infrastructure or the proximity of university institutions;
 6. Suggests in particular that access to such zones should be strictly controlled so that the firms concerned not only fulfil the objectives of the zones themselves but at the same time do not come to be a divisive element - either as regards competition

- or at social level or environmental level for the surrounding regions;

. Considers that such a framework is required to prevent all forms of regulation being abolished in such zones and to ensure a controlled relaxation and simplification of procedures with guarantees for the whole of the area concerned;

7. Proposes that this framework should leave room for adapting projects to local needs and infrastructures;

8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the to the Commission and the Council.

