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on Common Principles of Flexicurity
(2007/2209(INI))

Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on Common Principles of Flexicurity(2007/2209(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Communication from the Commission entitled 'Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity: More and better jobs through flexibility and security' (COM(2007)0359),
- having regard to the European Economic and Social Committee's exploratory opinion on 'Flexicurity (internal flexibility dimension - collective bargaining and the role of social dialogue as instruments for regulating and reforming labour markets)' of 11 July 2007(SOC/272),
- having regard to the European Social partners recommendations of the 18th of October 2007 on the key challenges facing European labour markets¹,
- having regard to the European Economic and Social Committee's opinion on 'The role of the social partners in reconciling working, family and private life' of 11 June 2007 (SOC/271),
- having regard to the European Economic and Social Committee's opinion on 'Employment of priority categories (Lisbon Strategy)' of 12 June 2007 (SOC/251),
- having regard to the Commission Green Paper on modernising labour law to meet the challenges of the 21st century (COM(2006)0708) and Parliament's resolution thereon of 11 July 2007²,
- having regard to the OECD's Employment Outlook 2006: Boosting Jobs and Incomes,
- having regard to the ILO report entitled 'Is a stable workforce good for the economy? - Insights into the tenure - productivity - employment relationship' of August 2004, which shows that there is a positive relationship between tenure and productivity,
- having regard to ILO Convention C87 on freedom of association and protection of the right to organise (1948), ILO Convention C98 on the right to organise and collective bargaining (1949) and ILO Recommendation R198 concerning the employment relationship (2006),
- having regard to Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation³, which prohibits age discrimination in employment,

¹ "Key challenges facing European labour markets: European Social partners joint analysis", 18th of October 2007.

² Texts Adopted, P6_TA(2007)0339.

³ OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16.

- having regard to its resolution of 6 September 2006 on a European Social Model for the future¹, which reiterates the European Union's common values of equality, solidarity, non-discrimination and redistribution,
- having regard to Articles 136 to 145 of the EC Treaty,
- having regard to Articles 15, 20 and 27 to 38 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, in particular the rights to protection in the event of unjustified dismissal and fair and just working conditions,
- having regard to the European Social Charter,
- having regard to the Report of the High Level Group on the future of social policy in an enlarged European Union of May 2004,
- having regard to the Commission staff working document entitled 'Community Lisbon Programme: Technical implementation report 2006' (SEC(2006)1379) and its implementation,
- having regard to the SME Charter,
- having regard to the Communication from the Commission on the Social Agenda (COM(2005)0033),
- having regard to the national Lisbon reform programmes as presented by the Member States,
- having regard to the Communication from the Commission entitled 'Global Europe: competing in the world'(COM(2006)0567),
- having regard to the Communication from the Commission on Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs (2005-2008) (COM(2005)0141),
- having regard to the Presidency conclusions of March 2000, March 2001, March and October 2005 and March 2006,
- having regard to Council Directive 1999/70/EC of 28 June 1999 concerning the framework agreement on fixed-term work concluded by ETUC, UNICE and CEEP²,
- having regard to its resolution of 23 March 2006 on demographic challenges and solidarity between the generations³,
- having regard to Directive 96/71/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 1996 concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of

¹ OJ C 305 E, 14.12.2006, p. 141.

² OJ L 175, 10.7.1999, p. 43.

³ OJ C 292 E, 1.12.2006, p. 131.

services¹,

- having regard to its resolution of 26 October 2006 on the application of Directive 96/71/EC on the posting of workers²,
- having regard to the ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975,
- having regard to the ILO Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997,
- having regard to the ILO decent work agenda,
- having regard to the Communication from the Commission entitled 'Promoting decent work for all: The EU contribution to the implementation of the decent work agenda in the world' (COM(2006)0249),
- having regard to Council Directive 75/117/EEC of 10 February 1975 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women³,
- having regard to Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation⁴,
- having regard to the Communication from the Commission entitled 'Promoting decent work for all: The EU contribution to the implementation of the decent work agenda in the world' (COM(2006)0249) and to Parliament's resolution of 23 May 2007 on promoting decent work for all⁵,
- having regard to Council Directive 76/207/EEC of 9 February 1976 on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions⁶,
- having regard to Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding⁷,
- having regard to Council Directive 94/33/EC of 22 June 1994 on the protection of young people at work⁸,
- having regard to Council Directive 94/45/EC of 22 September 1994 on the establishment of a European Works Council or a procedure in Community-scale undertakings and Community-scale groups of undertakings for the purposes of informing and consulting

¹ OJ L 18, 21.1.1997, p. 1.

² OJ C 313 E, 20.12.2006, p. 452.

³ OJ L 45, 19.2.1975, p. 19.

⁴ OJ L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 23.

⁵ Texts Adopted, P6_TA(2007)0206.

⁶ OJ L 39, 14.2.1976, p. 40.

⁷ OJ L 348, 28.11.1992, p. 1.

⁸ OJ L 216, 20.8.1994, p. 12.

employees¹,

- having regard to Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002 amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions²,
- having regard to Council Directive 97/81/EC of 15 December 1997 concerning the Framework Agreement on part-time work concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC – Annex : Framework agreement on part-time work³,
- having regard to the report by the European Expert Group on Flexicurity entitled 'Flexicurity Pathways: Turning hurdles into stepping stones', of June 2007,
- having regard to its resolution of 13th of March 2007 on corporate social responsibility: a new partnership⁴,
- having regard to Rule 45 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, of the Committee on Culture and Education and the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A6-0446/2007),

A. whereas the EU is not only an economic union but also a community of shared values as a consequence of which any reform of labour law and the labour market should reflect those values, and whereas the basic principles of labour law which have developed within Europe remain valid; whereas labour law should reflect the dialogue among all social partners and reflect a good balance between the interests of both employers and workers on the one hand and between flexibility and security on the other; whereas labour law provides legal certainty and protection for workers and employers by way of either legislation or collective agreement, or a combination of the two and whereas the success of any changes in labour law will be greater if workers feel more secure; whereas it is necessary to increase the level of security of both workers and enterprises, especially in the case of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); whereas such security also depends on how easy it is to find a new job, whereas global competition and rapidly developing technology mean that enterprises have to adapt ever more quickly,

B. whereas flexicurity, therefore, should be seen as an important component of the European social model fostering competitive and adaptable businesses and workforces; whereas the term 'flexicurity' arouses strong concerns among European workers, who fear increased job insecurity, and whereas, therefore, this term, and the firm principles it covers, should be defined as precisely as possible,

C. considering that 16 % of Europeans remain at risk of poverty, and 10 % live in jobless

¹ OJ L 254, 30.9.1994, p. 64.

² OJ L 269, 5.10.2002, p. 15.

³ OJ L 14, 20.1.1998, p. 9.

⁴ Adopted Texts, P6_TA(2007)0062.

households and that it is therefore essential that any reform under on the basis of flexicurity is based on a detailed impact assessment as regards vulnerable groups and that any such reform should aim at furthering social inclusion while not putting new groups at risk,

- D. whereas unemployment in the European Union does not have a direct relationship with labour legislation but rather with limited job creation which, amongst other factors, depends on dynamic, innovative and competitive companies and on investment in research and development and lifelong learning, which can also contribute to a dynamic labour market,
- E. whereas a cutting-edge, innovative, knowledge-based economy should aim at being competitive at the top-end of the value chain and in order to achieve this long-term employment and a highly skilled, highly motivated workforce is required,
- F. whereas one of the aims of flexicurity is to expand the supply of jobs on the labour market and, at the same time, to enable individuals and companies to cope with change and to increase mobility on the European labour market and must be combined with a policy of creating stable and sustainable employment and income,
- G. whereas mobile workers still run the risk of losing social security benefits,
- H. whereas, in order to avoid unfair competition in the internal market, Member States need to make sure that a common level of standards in their respective labour laws are respected, while at the same time making sure that this does not prevent Member States from improving standards, should they wish to do so,
- I. whereas flexicurity implies a balance between rights and responsibilities for employers, workers, job seekers and public authorities and it requires a climate of trust and a transparent dialogue between public authorities, social partners and other stakeholders, where all are prepared to take responsibility for change, and produce balanced policy packages, with a view to supporting the process of creating more and better jobs for all, to ensure gender equality and to fight discriminatory practices against vulnerable groups of workers such as migrants, younger and older workers and disabled people,
- J. whereas while the Commission's Communication sets out the principle of equality between women and men , its formulation is weak, as it does not challenge the fundamental inequality between women and men encountered with regard to access to and participation in the labour market and to the equal sharing of unpaid work,
- K. whereas high unemployment and labour market segmentation need to be overcome by removing inequalities affecting certain groups of insufficiently covered workers, fostering job creation and by protecting a broad core of rights for all workers and access to lifelong learning,
- L. whereas part-time working, lower pay and fixed-term contracts – the main risk factors for in-work poverty – are characteristic first and foremost of the employment situation of women,

- M. whereas the Commission's Communication entitled 'Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity: More and better jobs through flexibility and security' should be used to start a more balanced debate on flexicurity; whereas OECD and ILO studies endorse a policy strategy that incorporates a high level of social security with a positive effect on replacement rates and productivity and the European Union's concept of 'good work' includes rights and participation of employees, fair wages, protection of safety and health at work as well as a family-friendly work organisation; whereas those rights are indispensable for the acceptance of the European Union by its citizens,
- N. Whereas the European Social Fund has a vital role to play in promoting social dialogue and active labour market policies in order to ensure a strong European social model with more and better jobs,
- O. Whereas the OECD recently stated that employment protection legislation has no significant impact on the total employment rate and that high replacement rates in unemployment benefits has a positive effect on productivity; whereas, furthermore, the ILO has shown that there is a positive relationship between tenure and productivity,
1. Recognises that, in order to succeed in the 21st century, Europe needs a well-educated workforce and companies that are quick to seize opportunities that arise in a fast-moving world to increase productivity and enhance innovation;
 2. Strongly endorses the conclusion that flexibility can be in the interests of the employee as well as the employer, and that this can be achieved through promoting adaptable and reliable contractual arrangements, including permanent contracts;
 3. Emphasises, however, that flexicurity can be a policy strategy for the reform of the labour market and as such must be comprehensive by including all the existing facets of employment and social policy at both national and EU levels;
 4. Realises that, in view of the changes in national social security systems and labour law, the Commission's flexicurity options are too one-sidedly interpreted, since they take no account of the costs these measures involve; calls therefore for the Commission to carry out a cost-benefit analysis on these options; recalls that a flexicurity concept can be put into practice only in the long term;
 5. Stresses that Europe's flexicurity strategy should take a closer look at the demands of the modern economy, what sort of workforce European firms need in order to succeed, and what are the main obstacles; stresses the need to take into consideration the specific nature of one-person-company, micro-enterprises and small enterprises of production of goods and services in European and national strategies; regrets that the Commission communication envisages flexicurity solely in the context of employment relationships; calls, therefore, for public policies linked to flexicurity to set up adequate conditions for creation of this kind of enterprises, for their development and their transfer;
 6. Notes with deep concern that the Commission communication, while it refers to promoting gender equality, completely disregards the obligations and responsibilities set

out in the Commission's communication entitled 'A Roadmap for equality between women and men'; is critical of the fact that the EU's existing legislation on promoting gender equality has so far not achieved its objectives and that the income gap between the sexes, the absence of the necessary conditions for combining work and family life, and the lack of public child-care facilities, remain a central problem for European workers;

7. Believes that flexicurity strategies should facilitate recruitment and allow rapid responses to changing economic circumstances, flexicurity strategies should address these problems on the basis of transparent dialogue with social partners and other stakeholders, in accordance with national custom and practice, and on the basis of an impact assessment, in which flexibility and security should be mutually reinforcing;
8. Calls on the Commission to present a proposal for a limited set of synthesised qualitative indicators on the quality in work to complement the ones already agreed on within the framework of the Laeken 2001 reform of the Employment Guidelines; believes that the Commission should also rely upon on indicators on investment in peoples skills, on the level of precariousness and insecurity of jobs and contracts and on the transition between non-standard to permanent contracts in order to monitor the effectiveness of employment policies;
9. Opposes the creation of a new indicator on the 'strictness of employment protection legislation' as proposed by the Commission;
10. Believes, however, that the biggest problems in the EU concern the supply of a skilled and adaptable workforce in competitive and innovative companies; stresses that the priority should be given to the creation of a flexible labour market by raising educational levels and expanding apprenticeship opportunities, training and retraining programmes; by implementing effective policies against discrimination and by breaking down barriers to the integration into the labour force of women, migrants, older or younger workers and other discriminated disadvantaged groups; by removing obstacles to occupational and geographic mobility; and by active labour market policies that support the transition from an old job to a new job; emphasises the decisive role of skilled and adaptable employees and new technologies in education and training and recalls the new forms of flexibility offered by the social partners' agreement on teleworking, part-time and fixed-term work; disagrees with the Commission's distinction between insiders;
11. Proposes, therefore, that the Council examine, in December 2007, the possibility of bringing forward the date for lifting the transitional measures obstructing the free movement of workers from eight new Member States to 1 January 2009; stresses that removing obstacles to mobility at the end of 2008 would send an important political message confirming the European Union's commitment to doing its utmost to improve workers' geographic and occupational mobility;
12. Recalls that the freedom of movement for workers is one of the cornerstones of the European Union, which entails the obligation to address many issues regarding the compatibility of Member States' social systems in order to ensure the full implementation of that freedom, in the best conditions for workers, to the benefit of European competitiveness and without jeopardising the achievements and balances of national

social systems;

13. Emphasises that in a globalised world, Member States must step up their efforts to treat all individuals equally in cross-border regions and that best practice requires the conclusion of fair bilateral agreements in the spirit of reciprocity between Member States, not least in the area of taxation;
14. Notes that flexicurity should support and implement gender equality by promoting equal access to quality employment for women and men and by providing possibilities for reconciling work and family lives, particularly in view of the fact that three-quarters of new jobs created in the EU since 2000 are occupied by women, often already under flexible and less secure employment contracts;
15. Proposes, therefore, that the European Council in December 2007 adopt a more balanced set of common principles of flexicurity, based on the creation of quality employment and the strengthening of the values of the European Social Model; considers that those principles should include:
 - action for adaptable and reliable contractual arrangements and action against abusive labour practices especially in certain non-standard contracts;
 - breaking down labour market segmentation by promoting employment security and improving job security; all workers shall have a core of rights regardless of their employment status;
 - reconciliation of employment and family or private life, and the promotion of the concept of "decent work";
 - partnership between government (at local, regional and national level), social partners and civil society in managing change;
 - gender equality and promoting equal opportunities for all;
 - design and implementation of national pathways in close consultation with social partners, in accordance with national customs and practices;
 - enhancement of companies' and workers' adaptability by strengthening transition security;
 - the need for a skilled and adaptable labour force, therefore combining active labour market policies with investment in lifelong learning to enhance employability;
 - a macro-economic framework for balanced and sustainable growth and more and better jobs;
16. Recalls that the European Union has certain competences in the field of employment and social policy within the principle of subsidiarity and proportionality, and reminds the Commission and the Member States of their responsibility in guaranteeing certain rights at EU level; recalls that European legislation complements national labour market rules and is an important element when it comes to securing the rights of workers;

17. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to give particular attention to the legal situation of the self-employed, small businesses and SMEs, which is characterised by a high level of economic dependence on their customers, and to consider together the most appropriate legislative means to raise their level of social protection;
18. Regrets that the Council has failed to progress key employment dossiers which could help promote flexicurity as a positive concept;
19. Calls also for a renewed fight against undeclared work and the black economy, which – although to a varying degree among the Member States – damages the economy, leaves workers unprotected, is detrimental to consumers, reduces tax revenues and leads to unfair competition between firms; calls on the Commission to combat undeclared work namely through more efficient coordination and administrative cooperation between national labour inspectorates and/or social partners; calls for intensive national coordination between public and private organisations involved and calls on Member States to use innovative methods based on indicators and benchmarks specific to the different business sectors in order to fight against fiscal erosion; calls upon the Commission to support the exchange of best practices between Member States in the fight against undeclared work;
20. Is convinced that a climate of trust and dialogue can best be created through the involvement of social partners and other stakeholders in adjusting national policies and promoting collective agreements as part of a participative employment system where there is a high level of trust as a result of which a balance is guaranteed; stresses the need to address deficiencies in the coverage of collective bargaining and the need to guarantee rights of association and representation of the two sides of industry; encourages the extension of collective bargaining and social dialogue according to national customs and practices - including cross-border dialogue and sectoral dialogue - so that they include training, work organisation and issues that are connected with anticipating change, restructuring and relocation;
21. Recalls that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to flexicurity and that each Member State should compose the elements of their flexicurity concept on the basis of its own situation and national traditions, within the framework of the common principles;
22. Stresses that all models of flexicurity should be based on common values that underpin the European Social Model; believes that flexibility and security requirements reinforce one another and that flexicurity allows firms and workers to adapt appropriately to the new international situation, with strong competition from the emerging economies, while maintaining a high level of social protection, social security and unemployment benefits, health and safety protection, active labour market policies and training/ lifelong learning opportunities; and a modern and transparent labour law; moreover, highlights the success of recurrent and effective collective bargaining that strong and representative social partners can provide and also emphasises the need for broad welfare provisions and universal access to good quality services, such as childcare and care for other dependents; further stresses that guaranteeing these levels of social protection can support labour mobility and structural change by increasing the willingness to take risks; stresses that well-designed job protection systems provide business with the incentives to invest in workers' skills and look for innovative and productive ways to restructure, thereby

enhancing internal flexibility and adaptability of business;

23. Calls on the Commission to promote the development of the four policy components laid down in its communication: adaptable and reliable contractual arrangements; comprehensive lifelong learning strategies; effective active labour market policies; modern social security systems and to look at flexicurity within the wider context of the European Social Model;
24. Underlines the need to include educational and training measures in a wider flexicurity agenda and stresses that lifelong learning should address opportunity gaps among workers and must start at the initial education system;
25. Emphasises that the fight against labour market segmentation should include the provision of a core of rights for all employees regardless of their specific employment status, which should include: equal treatment, workers' health and safety protection and provisions on working/rest time, freedom of association and representation, protection of unfair dismissal, collective bargaining, collective action, and emphasises the importance of access to training as well as the continued protection of acquired rights by covering periods of education and training, improved care opportunities, maintaining of essential social rights such as pension rights, training rights and right to unemployment benefits during changes in occupational situation, from one employment contract to another and from dependent to autonomous employment; recalls that core rights and labour law provide fair living and working conditions, adequate remuneration and social protection leading to a guarantee of minimum conditions for a decent life;
26. Stresses the need to introduce policies that prevent worker exploitation through the accumulation of non-standard contracts that do not contain the same rights as full-time employment contracts; calls for every Community employment policy to continue to keep the traditional model of the open-ended employment contract, which forms the basis of the social security systems in Member States;
27. Stresses the need to introduce preventive and accompanying measures to counteract the recurring accumulation of atypical contracts;
28. Calls for the creation of comprehensive lifelong learning systems, also applicable to workers with non-standard contracts; calls on the Member States to focus strategies on areas of national weakness and make tailor-made investments in education and training and to ensure that the performance of public authorities and businesses improves; calls upon Member States to ensure the right and access to training for all;
29. Calls for strengthening systems of industrial relations at EU and national level as a key to reach and implement flexicurity policies that are balanced and provide firms with the right kind of flexibility while ensuring that unfair competition at the expense of working conditions is ruled out;
30. Stresses the need for companies to anticipate changes and their human resource requirements in order to plan internal training and retraining programmes for their employees;

31. Recalls that, given this relationship, subcontractors, multiskilled workers, new workers and casual workers are workers subject to flexibility with high risk, as evidenced by their high accident rate;
32. Considers that lifelong learning should address opportunity gaps among workers and must start in the early education system; takes the view that illiteracy and innumeracy must be fought, and the qualification levels of all school leavers must be improved, beginning in the early education system;
33. Calls on the social partners and the public authorities in the Member States to promote and invest in lifelong learning; calls, moreover, on Member States to encourage companies to increase their investment in lifelong learning;
34. Stresses the importance of the Seventh Framework Programme for research and technological development (2007-2013) in creating new and better companies that will promote a Europe of knowledge;
35. Recognises that innovative forms of work organisations, such as learning organisations, multi-skilling and job rotation via training offered by employers, sectoral fund initiatives, regional development aid and active labour market policies which support an inclusive labour market;
36. Is convinced of the importance of encouraging stable employment relationships by improving the organisation of work and the quality of relationships at the working place based on trust and dialogue; furthermore is convinced that employment law, modern forms of lifelong learning, sustainable social security systems and effective and efficient employment policy can contribute to a high level of confidence;
37. Recalls the importance of effective, active labour-market policies, including advice and guidance, retraining and help with mobility in order to shorten transition periods between jobs and welfare systems that should actively motivate people to look for new job opportunities while also encouraging openness to change by mitigating income loss and providing opportunities for education;
38. Stresses the need to facilitate mobility by developing pathways of upward mobility in order to make it easier for workers to shift to more secure, stable and high-skill employment and by promoting the recognition of skills and qualifications acquired during periods of formal education and non-formal and informal learning¹;
39. Recalls the right of access to lifelong learning, and the recognition and transferability of formal, non-formal and informal education and competences, which are crucial factors in enabling individuals to be able to make transitions from job to job, and from unemployment or inactivity to employment, being elements that improve their employment chances;
40. Calls on the Member States to introduce measures, in order to promote equal access to

¹ Non-formal education concerns organised and sustained educational activities that do not correspond exactly to the definition of formal education. Informal learning concerns activities outside formal or non-formal education, of a low-level of organisation, such as self-study. Formal education is the regular educational system of each country. See SEC(2006) 639

quality employment for women and men that comply with the European Pact for Gender Equality and the Communication on the Demographic Future of Europe; calls on Member States to close the existing gender pay;

41. Notes that woman and men do not have the same starting point in the labour market, notably in terms of power balance, nor in the distribution of unpaid work;
42. Underlines the importance of taking into consideration all aspects of flexibility, including flexibility of work organisation and working time, in particular through the use of new technologies; stresses the need for the social partners to negotiate working time arrangements better, to be sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of employers and employees and to enable people to balance work and family and personal life;
43. Calls on the Member States and social partners to reduce their policies of putting workers into early retirement and to introduce arrangements supporting the flexible retirement of older workers through part-time employment, job-sharing and similar schemes that promote active ageing and may increase the integration of older workers into the labour market;
44. Reminds the Member States that, in order to translate flexicurity into higher aggregate employment, there must be a supportive macro-economic environment and the strategy for flexicurity must include improved coordination of macro-economic policies and public spending in support of smart growth, with a shift in spending towards the Lisbon priorities;
45. Reminds the Commission of the need to provide Parliament with the necessary time, and in any event no less than five months, to fulfil its consultative role;
46. Considers that the common principles of flexicurity should be taken up as a cross-cutting issue and implemented by the Community institutions and the Member States within the framework of the Lisbon strategy; calls for a revision of the Employment Guidelines to allow aspects of flexicurity to be taken into account; and also for the inclusion of a specific chapter regarding the quality and strength of social dialogue in the annual Joint Employment Report; calls on the Commission and the Member States to better involve Parliament and national parliaments, as well as the social partners, in the implementation and monitoring of the Open Method of Coordination, including the European Employment Strategy and the Employment Guidelines in order to optimise the efficiency of those policies; notes that the measures that fall within the Employment Guidelines, including flexicurity, are eligible for the European Social Fund (ESF) support, in particular training and active labour market measures, and calls on Member States to ensure that ESF programmes contribute to the implementation of the European Employment Strategy and to flexicurity strategies;
47. Calls on the European Council and the Commission to set an ambitious social reform agenda both at EU and national level; moreover, calls on the institutions to draw up, together with Parliament, a vision for the future of social Europe; emphasises thus that, in order to strengthen growth and increase levels of employment and the quality of work, social rights and protection, which are firmly anchored in European tradition, must be ensured; stresses that Social Europe, together with ambitious national reforms, will offer,

in this way, real added value for working people and citizens using all the tools at its disposal; believes that only an internal market which balances economic freedom with social rights can obtain the support of its citizens;

48. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Social Protection Committee, the European Employment Committee, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the candidate countries.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. The Commission, following its report on the Modernisation of Labour Law, published in July 2007¹ its communication on the pathways of flexicurity on the basis of the recommendations of its expert group². Closely linked to the debate on labour law, the debate on flexicurity is also very timely given that the welfare systems of the Member States of the European Union face challenges due to the progressive integration of world and European economies, high unemployment, the ageing of European society, the pace of technological change and the increasing role of women in the labour market. However, only an EU based on economic and social cohesion that defends its common values can be strong enough to defend its interests and preserve and enhance the values associated with the European social model – equality, solidarity, individual rights and responsibilities, non-discrimination and redistribution with access for all citizens to high-quality public services - and the high social standards already achieved.
2. European integration has always progressed via the combination of European legislation and reforms on the national, regional and local levels. The European framework offers an inestimable opportunity to frame national legislation and the evolution of the Internal Market. The EU acquis in the social field on one hand and the Open Method of Coordination together with the National Reform Programs on the other have created the framework for the coordination of Member States' social policies. The flexicurity debate can be part of this framework and the different parts of the reforms for the pathways will have to be carried through at the most appropriate level. Although no one-size-fits-all solution can be achieved due to the differing characteristics of the European Member States labour markets and social policies, our internal market also created and continues to create common challenges that can best be tackled at the EU level. The role of the EU, while respecting the competence of the Member States, is not simply to be a platform of exchange of best practice, but also to frame the debate by agreeing legislation, guidelines and benchmarks, for implementation at Member States level.
3. As several studies have indicated, flexicurity models can only function in an environment which fosters trust. It is crucial to reflect upon the consequences for all stakeholders including employers, employees and the society at large. People will accept recurring change if they have guarantees and compensating mechanisms. This involves the empowerment of individuals to make choices over their lives without facing major risks for their carriers/pensions. This involves strengthened social protection and labour market systems, a quality social infrastructure and core rights with developed consultation processes. To foster this trust there are several 'pathways' which Member States could follow, but this can only function if they are embedded in a substantial European framework which cares for a core of social and employment rights for all (potential) workers.

¹ Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions entitled 'Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity: More and Better Jobs through flexibility and security. COM(2007) 0359.

² http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_strategy/pdf/flexi_pathways_en.pdf

4. A strong European framework with the full participation of the social partners on national, sectoral and European level is an absolute precondition to allow Member States to implement flexicurity pathways based on trust. This means that European social partners, along with their national counterparts, need to play a leading role in designing the necessary European legislative framework which would provide European businesses and workers with the guarantees needed for their flexibility and security. Flexicurity is about enhancing Social Europe, which in turn enhances the productivity and the competitiveness of our companies. The European Social Model, including highly competitive businesses and a highly-skilled adaptable workforce, should be constructed simultaneously at the national and the European levels by bringing closer and harmonising European legislation in the economic, employment, social and environmental fields.
5. Not only does the EU need to quickly reform its institutional setup to be more effective, it must provide policies to its citizens and businesses which mitigate the side effects of increased competition and market opening which sometimes create new types of risk for both employers and employees. Flexicurity has been proposed as a way of more evenly distributing these risks but the debate over it has been clouded by prejudice and suspicion. Member States which implemented comprehensive flexicurity policies (Nordic and The Netherlands), it is a well-functioning and widely supported approach to reconciling the objectives of a dynamic economy and a secure workforce. At European level, there are widespread fears that the term has been hijacked to provide cover for what is essentially a deregulatory drive, giving priority to the needs of employers over those of employees.
6. Therefore the starting point of the debate should be a clear and unambiguous definition of flexicurity. There are various models of flexicurity in Europe, combining to different degrees internal flexibility and security within enterprises, and external flexibility and security in accordance with the Member States' historical pasts, legal traditions, economic situations, public finances and industrial relations systems. However, they are based on common principles of solidarity, equity, rights and responsibilities. Thus flexibility and security requirements are not contradictory but rather mutually reinforcing. Therefore, the combination of these two should be seen as an opportunity. Flexicurity combines the ability firms and workers to adapt with a high level of social protection, social security and unemployment benefits, health and safety protection, active labour market policies and life long learning and vocational training opportunities. This is supported by recurrent and effective collective bargaining taking place in a tri-partite structure with strong and representative social partners as well as broad welfare provisions and universal access to good quality services such as childcare and care for other dependents. In this respect, the definition of flexicurity in the Commission's Green Paper on labour law and its Communication on Flexicurity is too narrow and is not adequately policy-oriented.
7. The basic assumption by the Commission that the risks and benefits need to be spread among workers with protected contracts and those who do not have such contracts (insiders and outsiders) is regrettable. Segmentation of the labour can be ended only if the social partners, both employers and employees agree on the balance of rights and obligations. It is therefore crucial to include the social partners in the debate on flexicurity and this should have been done earlier. Although the Commission supports strong social partnership in principle, the communication does not specify a strategy for promoting and strengthening social partnership on the European and national levels. Moreover, the

Commission's claim that strict employment protection creates unemployment is not supported by the OECD's 2006 Employment Outlook¹ report which claims that employment protection legislation has no influence on the total employment rate. Thus new-comers or returnees to the labour-market need stepping-stone jobs for easier access, but these need to include a core of rights which protect these workers from unfair treatment. In this respect, the Commission did not adequately explain what it meant by 'sufficient' flexibility in recruitment.

8. There is a need for a clear division of labour between the EU and the Member States; what needs to be done on the European level and what on the national one. The Commission's communication can be complemented by exposing the role of the European Union in the flexicurity policy-making process. Key European legislation whose adoption or revision is lagging behind is not mentioned. Directives such as Working Time, Temporary Agency, Posting of Workers and the European Works Council and information and consultation of workers need to guarantee and raise protection to employees across the EU in order to enhance their trust and to balance the risks associated with the pressures of enhanced competition, restructuring and labour market flexibility. This is part of the flexicurity pathways as are the numerous agreements concluded by the European social partners on fixed-term work, parental leave, part-time work and teleworking.
9. Moreover, social dialogue and collective bargaining on the European level needs to be encouraged given the progressive integration of European economies and labour markets. (deleted because it has been discussed with them) The Flexicurity principles cannot be concluded without a formal input of the social partners in fixing rights and responsibilities of employers and employees. Social Partners should be convened at all levels (European, national, sectoral, regional and local) to discuss how to enhance the flexibility and security both internally and externally.
10. On the national level, the common principles agreed between the Member States need to be implemented via the Lisbon strategy and therefore need to be included in the revised European Employment Guidelines as they represent the framework to be implemented by the Member States through their National Reform Programmes.
11. The Commission communication mentions the need to guarantee a 'basic level of job protection'. This means that any form of employment, whether non-standard or otherwise, should carry with it a core of rights regardless of the specific employment status, which should include: equal treatment, workers' health and safety protection and provisions on working time, freedom of association and representation, collective bargaining, collective action, and access to training as well as the protection of acquired rights; Any reform of national labour law should be carried out in the framework of these core rights.
12. Higher investment into lifelong learning and vocational training and the better recognition of formal, non-formal and informal learning are preconditions of any flexicurity policy. The fourth European working conditions surveys (2005)² show that there is no improvement in the levels of training in companies. There are also significant differences in the level of access to training between Member States, between low and high skilled

¹ http://www.oecd.org/document/38/0,2340,en_2649_201185_36261286_1_1_1_1.00.html

² <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/ewco/surveys/EWCS2005/index.htm>

workers, between workers with secure and those with precarious contracts, and between those with solid basic education and those who did not benefit of secondary/university education. Therefore new incentives are needed in order to raise levels in the future.

13. Important to emphasise is the impact of flexicurity on gender issues and equal opportunities. Flexible labour market arrangements have greater impact on disadvantaged groups such as women, migrant, younger, older workers and those living with a disability, hence the importance of introducing core rights for all workers and stronger social and labour market inclusion policies.
14. Macroeconomic policies should encourage investment into active labour market policies and enhanced partnership with employers training and lifelong learning programmes for an adaptable workforce. It is important that all initiatives need to be negotiated with the social partners and need to be financially sustainable. If a Member State decides to take over from companies the risks associated with restructuring by introducing less stringent employment protection, companies should in exchange commit to invest more into workers via training and lifelong learning as well as investing more into R&D in order develop the workplace, improve working methods and the work environment and develop new technologies to keep the company competitive. This should be done in close consultation between management and workers.
15. Unemployment still remains high in Europe, and more needs to be done both by the Member States and by the European Union to change the situation. There can be employment for all if the right reforms and investments are made by the private and the public sectors. Europe needs to invest more in lifelong learning as well as in research and development to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

6.11.2007

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND MONETARY AFFAIRS

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on Common Principles of Flexicurity
(2007/2209(INI))

Draftsman: Olle Schmidt

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the discussion on flexicurity initiated by the Commission; recalls that the continuous reduction in the working-age population renders a change of labour market policies necessary, as the average annual growth rate in GDP for the EU-25 will fall systematically from 2,4 % for the period 2004 to 2010 to only 1,2 % for the period 2030 to 2050;
2. Believes that the priority of Europe's strategy on changing its labour market policies should be to create a flexible labour market based on a long-term, highly skilled and highly motivated workforce by raising educational levels, expanding training and retraining programmes, breaking down barriers to integrating disadvantaged groups into the labour force, ensuring gender equality and fighting against discriminatory practices, removing obstacles to occupational and geographical mobility, and labour active policies that facilitate the transition from old to new high quality jobs;
3. Notes that the dependency ratio is set to double and reach 51 % by 2050 whereas the working-age population is projected to decrease by 30 million; insists that the labour force potential must be fully and efficiently used in order to ensure that pension and health care systems become sustainable; notes that that process could be greatly facilitated if the European private sector were given proper political support and economic incentives to improve its performance in terms of investment, R&D, innovation and training, thus contributing to economic growth and high employment; is of the opinion, therefore, that any new measure as regards labour market policy must contribute to a responsible management of public finances;

4. Regrets, therefore, that rigid national employment protection levels, while protecting those already inside the system, may also complicate entry for those seeking to gain access; recalls the Commission discussion on insiders and outsiders; welcomes the ambition to make upward mobility a core aim when defining flexicurity; underlines that the character of European societies require a more mobile and flexible labour market with the individual in focus;
5. Acknowledges that the flexicurity model can provide good examples of how to achieve the Lisbon Strategy goals;
6. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to devote special attention to young people's access to the labour market; notes that internships can be a particularly valuable and attractive way for young people to gain important experience and contacts; calls on the Commission to invite Member States to ensure that internships are not used in an indiscriminate or even abusive way;
7. Notes that whilst essential elements of social policy and labour law remain a matter of national competence, the European Union must adapt to the new challenges, and improve coordination of social and economic policies in order to promote the objectives set out in Article 2 of the Treaty; insists that when defining flexicurity, the diversity of national and regional situations should be duly taken into account, so as to avoid the errors of a "one-size-fits-all" approach;
8. Recalls that the freedom of movement for workers is one of the cornerstones of the European Union, which entails the obligation to address many issues regarding the compatibility of Member States' social systems in order to ensure the full implementation of that freedom, in the best conditions for workers, to the benefit of European competitiveness and without jeopardising the achievements and balances of national social systems;
9. Calls also for a renewed fight against undeclared work and the black economy, which – to a varying degree among the Member States – damages the economy, leaves workers unprotected, is detrimental to consumers, reduces tax revenues and leads to unfair competition between firms;
10. Emphasises that in a globalised world, Member States must step up their efforts to treat all individuals equally in cross-border regions and that best practice requires the conclusion of fair bilateral agreements in the spirit of reciprocity between Member States, not least in the area of taxation;
11. Emphasises the need for strict coherence between new labour policies and a supportive macroeconomic policy framework, which enables sufficient investment in education and training, ensures policies promoting an active labour market such as in-work training, retraining, lifelong learning and unemployment benefits, and provides well-designed and comprehensive welfare systems that help adapting to the risks of economic change;
12. Calls on the social partners and the public authorities in the Member States, in particular, to guarantee investment in lifelong learning by agreeing on a 2 % benchmark as a percentage of GDP (total public and private spending);

13. Insists that in order to translate flexicurity into higher aggregate employment there must be a supportive macro-economic environment and that the strategy for flexicurity must include improved coordination of macro-economic policies and public spending in support of smart growth, with a shift in spending towards the Lisbon Strategy goals;
14. Calls on Member States to coordinate their fiscal and budgetary policies in order to develop a common macroeconomic framework where European investment strategies can be implemented to foster growth, employment and competitiveness in order to render flexicurity viable;
15. Recalls that the economic success that has been achieved through flexicurity should be due to a two-pronged economic policy in which expanded flexibility is balanced by better security; insists that such duality must be retained in order to improve Europe's economies; notes that from an economic point of view, flexicurity is neither flexibility alone nor security alone: it is and should be a combination of the two.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	5.11.2007
Result of final vote	+: 39 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Mariela Velichkova Baeva, Zsolt László Becsey, Pervenche Berès, Slavi Binev, Sharon Bowles, Udo Bullmann, Ieke van den Burg, Christian Ehler, Jonathan Evans, José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil, Jean-Paul Gauzès, Donata Gottardi, Benoît Hamon, Karsten Friedrich Hoppenstedt, Othmar Karas, Piia-Noora Kauppi, Wolf Klinz, Christoph Konrad, Andrea Losco, Gay Mitchell, Cristobal Montoro Romero, John Purvis, Alexander Radwan, Dariusz Rosati, Eoin Ryan, Antolín Sánchez Presedo, Manuel António dos Santos, Olle Schmidt, Peter Skinner, Margarita Starkevičiūtė, Sahra Wagenknecht
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Harald Ettl, Ján Hudacký, Werner Langen, Gianni Pittella, Margaritis Schinas, Charles Tannock
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	Cornelis Visser, Jamila Madeira

9.10.2007

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND EDUCATION

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on common principles of flexicurity
(2007/2209(INI))

Draftsman: Giovanni Berlinguer

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Culture and Education calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Considers necessary a comprehensive approach to flexicurity which aims to maintain and improve social equality, job protection, gender equality, good quality of jobs and collective bargaining; takes the view, within the framework of this global approach, that lifelong learning is an essential element for a dynamic labour market and for enabling workers to remain employable throughout their careers and lives;
2. Highlights the need, within the framework of a comprehensive approach to flexibility and mobility, to implement the transferability of acquired social security rights;
3. Recalls the right of access to lifelong learning, and the recognition and transferability of formal, non-formal and informal education and competences, which are crucial factors in enabling individuals to be able to make transitions from job to job, and from unemployment or inactivity to employment, being elements that improve their employment chances;
4. Stresses the link between weak job protection and inequalities, inasmuch as young people, the less skilled, women, migrant workers and adults with lower education levels may come under far greater pressure at work and, for these groups, many inequalities as regards access to lifelong learning still remain;
5. Reiterates the important contribution of information technology skills to employability and, accordingly, calls on the Commission to reinforce programmes such as Lifelong Learning in order to enable all citizens of all ages to have equal access to education and

training;

6. Recalls that, for a competitive Europe, there is a need to increase education levels and to invest more in education and training;
7. Reiterates the importance of promoting, reinforcing and establishing a lifelong learning culture, especially for adults, by creating flexible opportunities for education and training programmes as well as suitable conditions for implementing them;
8. Considers that the approach to flexicurity must be coherent in all respects, including the social, educational and cultural aspects, so that, within this framework, both social dialogue and negotiation between social partners may actually achieve the goals intended;
9. Notes that, although lifelong training and the organisation of the employment market are obviously closely interconnected – inasmuch as the possession of constantly upgraded skills is the greatest asset the most vulnerable members of the workforce can have in the context of a 'progressive' approach to flexicurity – the lifelong training system is often used by firms to invest in the workers they regard as necessary, while the rest are ignored, with the result that the cost burden of training them and resolving the problem of getting them back into work is shifted on to the public purse;
10. Underlines the need to include educational and training measures in a wider flexicurity policy agenda;
11. Considers that lifelong learning should address opportunity gaps among workers and must start in the early education system; takes the view that illiteracy and innumeracy must be fought, and the qualification levels of all school leavers must be improved, beginning in the early education system.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	04.10.2007
Result of final vote	+ : 20 - : 1 0 : 0
Members present for the final vote	Maria Badia i Cutchet, Giovanni Berlinguer, Guy Bono, Věra Flasarová, Claire Gibault, Vasco Graça Moura, Lissy Gröner, Ruth Hieronymi, Manolis Mavrommatis, Ljudmila Novak, Doris Pack, Zdzisław Zbigniew Podkański, Karin Resetarits, Hannu Takkula, Helga Trüpel, Henri Weber, Thomas Wise, Tomáš Zatloukal
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Elisabeth Morin, Nina Škottová, Ewa Tomaszewska
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	

6.11.2007

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on 'Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity: More and better jobs through flexibility and security'
(2007/2209(INI))

Draftswoman: Kartika Tamara Liotard

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas while the Commission's Communication sets out the principle of equality between women and men , its formulation is weak, as it does not challenge the fundamental inequality between women and men encountered with regard to access to and participation in the labour market and to the equal sharing of unpaid work,
- B. whereas in countries in which the flexicurity model has been developed (such as in the Nordic Member States), solid social welfare systems and public investment in care services have been simultaneously guaranteed as an integral part of the model, whereas public policy intervention, whatever its form in practice, is a condition sine qua non of the flexicurity strategy, whereas those Member States which provide the highest rates of day care services for children have the highest employment rates for both parents; whereas the reconciliation of work and private lives should be recognised as one of the pillars of the framework for flexicurity,
- C. whereas the flexicurity debate needs to be placed within the scope of the Treaty obligations regarding equality between women and men and anti-discrimination, and of initiatives which address the reconciliation of professional and private lives, the gender pay gap, , the Lisbon Strategy on growth and jobs particularly in relation to the 60% target employment rate for women by 2010, the childcare targets set by the Barcelona European Council of March 2002 and the issue of demographic transition; , whereas the need for an overall coherent approach demonstrating that flexicurity is an instrument that should take due account of and be in conformity with other EU initiatives, namely

the European Pact for Gender Equality, the Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men (2006-2010), the directives on equal treatment between women and men, the open method of coordination on social protection and social inclusion and the EU strategy for active inclusion ,

1. Notes that flexicurity should support and implement gender equality by promoting equal access to quality employment for women and men and by providing possibilities for reconciling work and family lives, particularly in view of the fact that three-quarters of new jobs created in the EU since 2000 are occupied by women, often already under flexible and less secure employment contracts;
2. Emphasises in that perspective that a gender-sensitive definition of common principles for flexicurity and formulation of the policies required for its implementation must take into account, with a view to avoiding further segmentation of the labour market and greater social and professional inequality of:
 - the over-representation of women in non-standard employment (atypical, fixed-term, part-time contracts) and the need to ensure security through employment protection legislation and gender-mainstreamed labour policies,
 - frequent switches between work and care activities among women,
 - the gender imbalance in the share of family and domestic responsibilities,
 - the specific situation of single parents, in a vast majority, women,
 - the gender dimension of the digital divide,
 - the need for proper protection and social benefits during transitional periods (care, family responsibilities, education, training and re-training),
 - the need for work and working hours to be negotiated and organised in a flexible manner so as to enable the reconciliation of professional, family and private lives,
 - the need for flexibility in vocational training and retraining and in all back-to-work measures, including during transitional periods, in order to enable the reconciliation of professional, family and private lives,
 - the role of social partners in defining and implementing gender-sensitive measures,
 - the European Pact for Gender Equality, the Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men 2006-2010 and the Commission's Communication on the Demographic Future of Europe – from Challenge to Opportunity¹;
3. Calls on the Member States to promote the labour market and social protection policies supporting the smoothest possible transition from one job to another and to take into account the lower geographical mobility of parents with small children;
4. Is concerned at the fact that, three years before the 2010 target date for achieving the goals of the Lisbon strategy, the Commission continues to regard women as outsiders on the labour market; notes, however, that in principle, the developments seen in the labour market in Europe, above all the de-industrialisation of the European economy and the corresponding rise in the service sector, favour women, who have a higher rate of employment in highly specialised jobs than men in many Member States; calls, therefore, on the Commission to carry out a full and detailed study into women's

¹ COM(2006)0571.

- working conditions in the Member States, in particular their rate of employment in full-time, part-time and seasonal employment, and into the situation of male and female employees in newly emerging sectors of the labour market;
5. Emphasises that fighting against precarious and undeclared work needs to better clarify the status of dependent economic workers, many of them being women, and their social rights as well as enforce control and measures against undeclared work;
 6. Draws attention to the fact that women work mainly in those sectors which have weak or no trade unions, such as services, textiles and agriculture, and that, therefore, they do not benefit from collective agreements and often have to work on an individual contract basis, if such a contract even exists; emphasises that in such cases, women need special protection against abuse of all kinds and a decent level of wages;
 7. Notes that the Commission has repeatedly stressed the importance of adequate social and unemployment benefits while at the same time wishing to restrict these benefits in order to stimulate participation in the labour market; considers that the Commission should further clarify, by means of practical examples, how the balance between security and flexibility can better be achieved for women, with particular regard to increased occupational risks for women entailed by efforts to reconcile professional, family and private lives and to ensure a high level of job security;
 8. Notes that women's work-related problems will increase over time, particularly if they have to be even more involved in the increasingly competitive labour market; stresses that, given the growing number of women in the workforce, flexicurity is doomed to failure if no parallel steps are taken to deal with the obstacles to women participating actively in the labour market, notably the gender pay gap, discrimination and the problem of the inadequate availability of services of care for children, elderly and dependent persons; points out that investment in such services has dual benefits, since it enables women to keep their jobs and increases the rate of female employment;
 9. Calls on the Commission, given the quantitative targets set by the Barcelona European Council for the creation of childcare facilities for at least 90% of children aged between three and six and for 33% of children under three, to be achieved by 2010, and given the importance of achieving these targets for reconciling working life and family life, to identify which Member States are significantly falling beneath these targets and why;
 10. Points out that flexibility and security policies should also be implemented in the self-employed and professional sectors, given that in those sectors the risks involved in leaving the labour market are higher still for women;
 11. Welcomes the encouragement of lifelong learning for persons in employment, irrespective of their type of employment contract, as well as for unemployed persons, workers with few qualifications, temporary workers, the self-employed, older workers and women; notes, however, that education and training need to be adjusted to make lifelong learning possible for women and men who combine work with caring for children and relatives; observes that this can be done by, for example, using local premises, arranging child-minding, distance learning for those who live in remote areas and the provision of tailor-made programmes and flexible instruction;

12. Points out that the formulation of lifelong learning strategies tailored to women and the demands of family life must be seen as a long-term investment requiring the sharing of costs between the public and private sectors and the active involvement of the social, business and labour partners;
13. Calls on the Member States to use the Structural Funds to finance professional training, lifelong learning and job-search support measures and measures to foster entrepreneurship, particularly in rural areas and areas in economic decline, with a view to making it easier for vulnerable groups, especially women, who help to preserve the particularly fragile social fabric in such areas, to find and keep jobs;
14. Notes with regret that there are still significant differences in pay for women and men for the same job and that many Member States do not implement at all the principle of equal pay for work of equal value;
15. Requests an adequate and correct evaluation system of both women's and men's work based on performance and not on individual wage negotiating ability, which could become even weaker for women on account of a more frequent change in jobs;
16. Notes that having children and a satisfactory private life is an individual decision with important social and economic effects which could be undermined through lower security for employees;
17. Notes that while the numbers of women participating in the labour market have increased, working patterns have had no significant impact in matters of achieving equality between women and men; notes however that research confirms that in families in which both parents are participating in the labour market, unpaid work such as domestic tasks and responsibilities are more equally divided and shared;
18. Notes that women and men do not have the same starting point in the labour market, notably in terms of power balance, nor in the distribution of unpaid work;
19. Notes that the absence of issues concerning the balance between professional and private lives in the flexicurity debate is in contradiction with other initiatives, namely the consultation between social partners on reconciling professional, family and private lives;
20. Notes that the absence of a gender perspective in the flexicurity debate carries the risk of exacerbating current and persistent gender gaps in terms of wages and real choices for women and men to fully participate on an equal footing in the labour market and in unpaid work;
21. Stresses therefore that security should at least include areas such as paid parental leave, the right to reduce working time when having and caring for children, access to affordable day care services for children and equal access to social benefits and social services.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	5.11.2007
Result of final vote	+: 16 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Věra Flasarová, Claire Gibault, Piia-Noora Kauppi, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, Anni Podimata, Christa Prets, Karin Resetarits, Amalia Sartori, Eva-Britt Svensson, Anna Záborská
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Jill Evans, Donata Gottardi, Christa Klaß, Kartika Tamara Liotard, Corien Wortmann-Kool
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	12.11.2007
Result of final vote	+: 32 -: 6 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Jan Andersson, Alexandru Athanasiu, Edit Bauer, Philip Bushill-Matthews, Alejandro Cercas, Jean Louis Cottigny, Proinsias De Rossa, Harlem Désir, Harald Ettl, Richard Falbr, Ilda Figueiredo, Stephen Hughes, Karin Jöns, Ona Juknevičienė, Jan Jerzy Kułakowski, Jean Lambert, Bernard Lehideux, Thomas Mann, Jan Tadeusz Masiel, Jiří Maštálka, Ana Mato Adrover, Csaba Óry, Pier Antonio Panzeri, Jacek Protasiewicz, Bilyana Ilieva Raeva, José Albino Silva Peneda, Gabriele Stauner, Ewa Tomaszewska, Anne Van Lancker, Gabriele Zimmer
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Françoise Castex, Donata Gottardi, Richard Howitt, Sepp Kusstatscher, Jamila Madeira, Ria Oomen-Ruijten, Agnes Schierhuber, Anja Weisgerber
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	Vincenzo Aita