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24 January 2006

Securing Employment for Europe's Youth: A Must for Our Common Future.

Motion for a resolution
presented by Mrs Zapfl-Helbling and others

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members who have signed it

1. The recent social disturbances in France, mainly involving young people, are indicative of a Europe-wide problem of a lack of adaptation by much of European society to the demands placed on our economies in an era of accelerating globalisation. Traditional economic and social policies in many countries – shaped during a now elapsed era of comparatively painless growth and a belief in the invulnerability of the welfare state – no longer work in a world economy where a rising number of emerging economies around the world challenge the established industrialised countries as sites for research, investment and employment, and hence economic growth.

2. This situation calls for a fundamental rethink of traditional economic and social policies in several European countries, especially those where the traditional approach is showing itself particularly resistant to change. Labour markets have to be made more flexible and welcoming to young people, even to the point – as in countries with high immigration – where recourse may have to be taken to 'positive discrimination'. Special educational programmes have to be launched in favour of young people with insufficient schooling or skills. Bureaucracy at national, but also at EU, level has to be reduced to a minimum for the start-up and growth of companies. Research and development, in close symbiosis between universities and economic life, has to be enhanced.

3. The markedly lower youth unemployment in certain Council of Europe member states – such as the United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark and Switzerland – when compared to others shows that there is a way forward. It is essential that the methods and policies used by such countries can be emulated by others, and that innovative policies are not rendered impossible due to, for instance, excessive EU uniformisation tendencies. Young people are the future, in Europe's continued economic development. Social peace and political stability will critically depend on our ability to successfully integrate our young into the working environment.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed ¹:

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¹ SOC: Socialist Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democratic Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: not registered in a group