



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Regional Development

2009/2222(INI)

21.2.2011

DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on the future of social services of general interest
(2009/2222(INI))

Rapporteur: Luís Paulo Alves

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Regional Development 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 Article 3(3) TEU provides for the development of the EU on the basis of a social market economy, while Article 14 TEU and Protocol 26 to the same treaty recognise that services of general interest are an integral part of the European social model, with Parliament and the Council being responsible, albeit without prejudice to the competences of the national, regional and local authorities, for defining the principles and conditions,
- B. whereas social services of general interest (SSGI) are essential for the achievement of the objectives of the EU's 2020 strategy, and have positive effects in terms of economic growth, employment and social and territorial cohesion,
 1. Recalls that the diversity of models of SSGI among Member States needs to be respected in line with the principle of subsidiarity;
 2. Draws attention to the crucial role of regional and local authorities in providing social services, and recalls the need to take account of their opinions in the definition by Member States of such services;
 3. Urges the Commission, especially at a time when the citizens are resorting even more to SSGI owing to the severe economic crisis, to ensure that when Member States decentralise power to regional or local authorities they also provide sufficient budgetary resources;
 4. Stresses that SSGI also cover non-economic activities which are not and should not be subject to the rules of the internal market;
 5. Urges the Commission to act in response to the lack of regulation currently affecting SSGI, by creating an unambiguous legislative framework grounded in legal certainty, in line with the wishes of all interested parties;
 6. Advocates minimum standards for social protection throughout the EU; also favours implementing a Voluntary European Quality System for SSGI.