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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to the Commission statement

pursuant to Rule 37(2) of the Rules of Procedure

by Guido Podestà, W.G. van Velzen, Marialiese Flemming and Bartho Pronk

on behalf of the PPE-DE Group

and Cristiana Muscardini on behalf of the UEN Group

on the Second United Nations World Assembly on Ageing
(Madrid, 8-12 April 2002)

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European Parliament resolution on the Second United Nations World Assembly on Ageing (Madrid, 8-12 April 2002)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to United Nations Resolution 46/91 of December 1991 on Principles for Older People that supports the rights of older people to participation, dignity, independence, personal fulfilment and care,
 - whereas 5.1% of the population in developing countries is aged over 65, and this is set to rise to 6.5% by the year 2015, representing an absolute increase of 52% (US Census Bureau),
 - whereas within the EU people aged 60 or over account for 21.5 % of the population and whereas by 2020 a 30% increase is expected in this age group and a 40% increase in the group aged 80 or over (Old Age in Europe, MISSOC-Info, June 2001),
 - having regard to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, in particular Article 25 thereof, which recognises and respects the right of ‘the elderly to lead a life of dignity and independence and to participate in social and cultural life’,
 - having regard to Article 13 of the Treaty, which outlaws discrimination on grounds of age,
- A. whereas the United Nations Second World Assembly on Ageing will be held in April 2002, and whereas this provides an opportunity for issues associated with ageing to be recognised both in industrialised countries and in the developing world,
- B. whereas the ageing of society is too often seen in both industrialised and developing countries in negative terms, i.e. in terms of challenges to the age structure of the labour force and the sustainability of social protection and health care schemes and of being a drain on family resources in developing countries, whereas in fact older people offer key community and family support,
- C. whereas this image fails to do justice to the enormous cultural and professional resource represented by older and retired people, and whereas the vast contribution they make to society, often in a voluntary capacity, is too often overlooked,
- D. whereas a change of attitude is needed if society is to become a society for all ages, bearing in mind the distinction within European societies between those belonging to the third age, who live healthy, active and independent lives and who should participate fully in the society they live in, and those belonging to the fourth age, whose independence and health is more fragile and who deserve specific attention and care in order to live dignified lives,
- E. having regard to the rights of older citizens to full participation in whatever society they

live in, and recognising the barriers faced by older people throughout the world to employment, income support and community development programmes, all of which must be addressed,

- F. whereas migration from the developing world is leading to a drop in family support, so that the problem of isolation of older people is worsening; and whereas shifts in family patterns resulting from social changes is causing isolation and social exclusion in the European Union,
 - G. whereas the eradication of poverty in old age throughout the world is a fundamental aim of the International Strategy for Action on Ageing, and whereas there is an essential need to incorporate the age dimension into poverty indicators and measures, in both the EU and the developing world,
 - H. whereas access to healthcare for all and a good standard of physical and mental health and social well-being is a basic human right,
 - I. whereas exclusion of older people from HIV/AIDS programmes in developing countries results in a lack of testing for those over 49, so that HIV in older people usually goes undetected or is misdiagnosed; having regard also to older people's critical role in the care of people living with AIDS and their orphaned grandchildren and their potential role as educators and players in HIV prevention in developing countries,
 - J. whereas abuse against older people in all its forms is prevalent throughout the world, including in the EU, and whereas violence against older people must be condemned in the strongest of terms as an infringement of their most basic human rights,
 - K. whereas women outlive men in all societies and, as populations age, the number of older women will increase; and whereas older women are particularly vulnerable in the developing world, *inter alia* to accusations of witchcraft,
1. Calls on the Council and the Commission to support the International Strategy for Action that will be adopted at the World Assembly on Ageing and to make a full commitment to 'a society for all ages' by allocating adequate political and financial means and by giving older people particular attention in EU development cooperation and social policies;
 2. Calls on the Council and the Commission to mainstream ageing issues in all relevant policy areas and to include older people in all relevant European social, economic and development cooperation policies and programmes on the basis of the UN Principles for Older Persons;
 3. Calls on the Commission and Member States to give priority to activities geared to the integration of older people in danger of isolation, both within the European Union and through their development cooperation policies;
 4. Welcomes the Commission's recent initiatives in the areas of pensions, older workers and social exclusion;

5. Calls on the Commission, the Council and the Member States to come forward with specific measures aimed at reducing inequalities and poverty among older people, and in particular at improving the situation of older women as regards inequality in pension payments and the situation of the very old;
6. Calls on the Commission, the Council and the Member States to take measures to ensure that the incomes and resources available to older and retired people keep pace with the standard of living of society as a whole;
7. Draws attention to the particular problems of older migrants and refugees within the EU in terms of social integration;
8. Calls on the European Union and the Member States to recognise that for many older people learning opportunities and access to new knowledge are a valuable aid to maintaining physical and mental health and continuing to be active by preserving the maximum level of physical, psychological and social autonomy; calls on them also to recognise that this represents a means of increasing cross-generational links and social cohesion; calls therefore for the principles of 'active ageing' to be further developed in their policies;
9. Draws the Commission's attention, in the context of its communication on 'Health care and care for the elderly', to the vital supportive role of carers for elderly people and the need for a major effort to recognise the role of family carers and to give particular attention to the accessibility of health care for all and to the quality of services provided;
10. Calls on the Commission and Member States to develop and encourage research initiatives aimed at gathering data on the situation and needs of older people in European society, making clear the difference in the situation of the third age and the fourth age;
11. Calls on the Commission to present a proposal for a specific action programme on ageing, to provide for the establishment of an exchange programme for older people in Europe and to appoint a Commission official in charge of these issues within the Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs;
12. Calls on the Council and Member States to recognise that the EU needs a broader legal base to enable it to promote worthwhile measures to assist older people;
13. Calls for international assistance to developing countries and those with economies in transition to enable them to develop policies to address ageing, and for issues linked to ageing to be included in the social aspects of EU enlargement;
14. Calls on the Council and the Commission to acknowledge that widowhood is a major risk factor for older women in the developing world and to include older women in development cooperation policies and gender-mainstreaming initiatives;
15. Calls on the Council, the Commission and international agencies to address the growing problem of older people in developing countries living with HIV/AIDS;

16. Calls on the Commission to issue a communication on the needs of older people in development cooperation;
17. Calls on the Council and Commission to fund capacity-building measure for older people's organisations in the European Union and developing countries so that they have a strong voice and are consulted on matters of concern to them;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the United Nations World Assembly on Ageing.