

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

2004/2191(INI)

31.3.2005

OPINION

of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on the social policy agenda for the period 2006-2010
(2004/2191(INI))

Draftswoman: Zita Gurmai

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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:

1. Agrees on, the new Social Policy Agenda is a response to the renewed Lisbon Agenda; notes the three key priorities: employment, fighting poverty and promoting equal opportunities; criticises it gives less priority to social questions, it has a rather passive attitude, set up on the basis of the well-tried methods and tools, lacking of horizontal approach and a chiselled strategy to face the new challenges of the EU-25;
2. Points out that the current European Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality and attached programme are coming to an end in 2005; notes that the new gender equality funding programme is part of a larger social programme called PROGRESS from 2007; fears that the access for women's NGOs to Community funds would be difficult; calls on the Commission to adopt a comprehensive, forward-looking New Framework Strategy for Gender Equality, addressing the main challenges to achieve equality between women and men in Europe, it would firmly establish gender equality objectives in the areas of EU employment policies, immigration policies, social protection reforms, EU external relations, development co-operation etc.;
3. Strongly supports the plan to organise a European Year on equal opportunity and a European Year of combating exclusion and poverty;
4. Calls on Member States to pay adequate attention to those, mainly unemployed, who are not able to get a job and are not protected by a national minimum wage, with particular regard to the homeless;
5. Stresses the importance of a new intergenerational approach, not only for the young people; criticises the lack of consideration of the situation of pensioners, disabled people and women; notes that Commission proposal supports this with legislation, social dialogue, financial instruments, in addition, training which is also a key factor; agrees the re-structure of the ESF priorities could put these goals forward; agrees, the link between the ESF and the policy framework of the new Social Policy Agenda should be strengthened;
6. Considers that comprehensive and detailed statistics and analysis are needed, an adequate social public support system must set up, providing information on job opportunities, corresponding health services, counselling; stresses the added value of the partnership between authorities, social partners and civil society (Public Private Partnership); points out the wider sense of „best governance“; notes that annual meeting is important to follow up and evaluate the Social Policy Agenda, however, in the enlarged Europe a continuous and defined network strategy should exist; misses the proper determination of sharing responsibilities and competencies between Community, Member States and NGOs;

7. Notes that the Commission is going to adopt a Green Paper on the development of labour law; agrees to aim at providing a more secure environment encouraging efficient transitions on the labour market; considers it leads to proposals for a whole range of measures to modernise and simplify the current rules; draws attention that the concrete measures and clear timetable are missing;
8. Asks the Commission, in connection with the plan to organise a European Year of workers mobility, to assess the impact of enlargement on mobility with regard to the effectiveness of the transition period for free movement of workers and to abolish the barriers to free movement as soon as possible;
9. Criticises that there is no word on local economy, on the SME's as key factors for economic development and employment despite their weight is over 90% in European economies; notes that creating new jobs can be supported by helping SME's developing favourable conditions, special programmes, benefits for new working places;
10. Welcomes the tool of setting up the European Gender Institute, to fulfil the information gap on Gender matters, this development could enlarge the visibility of gender equality; considers that in the enlarged Europe it would be an asset bridging the old and new Member States by locating the Institute in one of the 10 new Member States;
11. Agrees, the open coordination method is going to be expanded to new territories, such as health and long-term care, this is the right tool to achieve our common aim „equal opportunities for all”; recalls that the gender issue must be included in all Community policies, as this is the sole way to guarantee the three key pillars of equal life for women: awareness, opportunities and success.

PROCEDURE

Title	Social policy agenda for the period 2006-2010
References	2004/2191(INI)
Committee responsible	EMPL
Committee asked for its opinion Date announced in plenary	FEMM 18/11/2004
Enhanced cooperation	No
Draftsperson Date appointed	Zita Gurmai 16/12/2004
Discussed in committee	17.03.2005 31.03.2005
Date amendments adopted	31.03.2005
Result of final vote	for: 9 against: 0 abstentions: 5
Members present for the final vote	Edite Estrela, Věra Flasarová, Lissy Gröner, Zita Gurmai, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Urszula Krupa, Astrid Lulling, Siiri Oviir, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, Raül Romeva i Rueda, Eva-Britt Svensson, Britta Thomsen, Anna Záborská
Substitutes present for the final vote	Christa Kläß
Substitutes under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	