Resolution on the conclusion, by the European Community, of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto

2009/2545(RSP) - 24/04/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 23 April 2009,the European Parliament adopted by 320 votes to 2 with 7 abstentions a resolution tabled by the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs on the conclusion, by the European Community, of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto.

Parliament approves the conclusion by the Community of the Convention and the Optional Protocol. It recalls that the Optional Protocol provides the possibility for (groups of) persons with disabilities, who claim that parties to the Convention have violated rights provided in the Convention, to submit communications to a Committee. It calls on Member States to accede to and/or ratify the Optional Protocol to give persons with disabilities whose rights have been violated any opportunity of ensuring their protection against all forms of discrimination.

Members urge the Commission to clarify the potential extent of Community competences in respect of the Convention, and suggest emphasising the indicative nature of the Community acts listed in the Declarations. They stress the importance of highlighting in the Declarations the competence of the Community to support the rights of persons with disabilities in development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, health and consumer affairs.

Parliament goes on to call on the EC and Member States to incorporate all the provisions of the Convention into law, to provide financial means necessary for their application within specific deadlines and to set quantitative objectives for this. It also calls on Member States, and the Community, as appropriate, to do the following:

- exchange information and best practices on the implementation;
- apply gender mainstreaming in decisions about policies for women and men, girls and boys with disabilities and in their implementation in all areas, especially regarding integration in the workplace, education and anti-discrimination, and to introduce legislation to protect the rights of women and girls with disabilities in cases of sexual abuse and violence;
- ensure free access for citizens of the Union and for organisations of persons with disabilities to information about their rights under the Convention and the Optional Protocol, and to ensure dissemination of that information in an accessible form;
- designate focal points within governments for matters relating to the national implementation and monitoring of the Convention and to consider the designation of a coordination mechanism within the government to facilitate action in different sectors. Special attention should be paid to the establishment of an appropriate independent monitoring mechanism pursuant to the Convention;
- promote a well coordinated social dialogue between the interested partners and actively involve organisations of persons with disabilities in monitoring and implementing the Convention.

Lastly, Parliament underlines the importance of equipping the Commission with all the necessary financial and human resources to enable it to serve as a focal point in respect of matters falling within the Community's competence relating to the implementation of the Convention.