

Social protection: setting up an advisory committee

2000/0055(CNS) - 13/03/2000 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to set up a Social Protection Committee in the context of a Community framework for closer cooperation in the field of social protection on the European level. **CONTENT** : this proposal for a Council Decision follows on from the Council's conclusions concerning the Communication on "A Concerted Strategy for Modernising Social Protection" (refer to document COM(1999)347). In the Communication, the Commission proposed that the Council endorsed a framework for closer co-operation in the field of social protection, based on the exchange of experiences, mutual concertation and evaluation of ongoing policy developments with a view to identifying best practices. The Commission identified 3 key elements to bring about this co-operation: - a group of high-level officials; - systematic use of the "Social Protection in Europe-report"; - involvement of all relevant actors. In light of the discussion on the Communication's suggestions in the Social Affairs Council in Luxembourg on the 22 October 1999, the Council Conclusions are taken into consideration. Thus, this proposal follows up these Council Conclusions (which range from highlighting the importance of the exchange of information, permanent dialogue to discussing the future of social protection) in order to set up, as soon as possible, this group of high-level officials. It is suggested to name this group "European Social Protection Committee" (ESPC). This title is to stress the analogous character of this group's work to the cooperation sui generis between the Member States and the European Commission, which existed in the field of employment before entering into force of the Amsterdam Treaty. Beside the creation of the ESPC, the other key instrument of the new mechanism for enhanced co-operation is the new Annual Social Protection-report which will be submitted to the Council.