Modernising and improving social protection in the European Union

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The Committee unanimously adopted a report drafted by Barbara WEILER (PES, D) on modernizing and improving social protection in the European Union. The Committee called for action to be taken by the Commission and the Council in order to use the opportunities offered by the Amsterdam Treaty for a common European social policy. It stressed that only an active employment policy can provide a basis for preserving or strengthening social security. The Committee called for proposals on EU-wide minimum social standards. It stressed the need to harmonize and coordinate company taxes at a European level as soon as possible. In addition, tax burdens should be shifted from labour to other areas, such as energy. The Committee gave its firm support to identifying good practices and the evaluation of the reforms undertaken in the Member States. It expressed its concern over current economic, social and demographic challenges, such as the ageing of the population, and proposed the introduction of flexible systems for the transition from employment to retirement. It wants the value of the basic pension to be preserved in the future although there should be an option to introduce supplementary schemes