

Harassment at the workplace

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Jan ANDERSSON (PES, S) on harassment at the workplace. It pointed out that bullying - which could stem from a number of causes, such as shortcomings in the organisation of work, in-house information and management - was a serious problem in the world of work, as evidenced by a recent survey by the Dublin Foundation showing that up to 12 million workers in the EU (8% of the workforce) had been subjected to bullying over the past 12 months. The problems associated with such bullying, including devastating effects on the health of victims, were still probably underestimated in many quarters within the EU. The committee therefore urged the European institutions, Member States and the two sides of industry to devote greater attention to combating this phenomenon. The committee said that the Commission should publish a Green Paper by March 2002 providing a detailed analysis of the situation on bullying at work and present a Community action programme by October 2002 on the basis of this analysis. Mental and psycho-social factors in the work environment should also be taken into account in the Community strategy on health and safety at work and in the Green Paper on corporate social responsibility. The Council and the Commission should include quantitative indicators for bullying at work in the indicators on quality at work that would be developed for the Laeken summit.