Scoreboard on implementing the Social Agenda

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Miet SMET (EPP-ED, B) on the scoreboard on implementing the social policy agenda. The report repeated Parliament's call for the Commission to send Parliament the annual scoreboard in good time to enable it to deliver its opinion before the spring European Council each year. The committee also wanted Parliament to be fully involved in the mid-term social policy agenda review scheduled for 2003 and called for action to be taken, in connection with the Convention and the IGC, on the integration of the open coordination method into the Treaty, with due attention being paid to Parliament's involvement in this method. The report was critical of the Commission's failure to take account of the requests formulated by Parliament in previous reports on the new social agenda and the scoreboard for 2001. These included: the establishment of a fiscal and legislative framework for the development of the social economy; defining the right to take part in collective action and, in particular, the right to strike at European level; legislation on home-working; reorganising working hours to ensure a better balance between working and family life; drawing up a proposal on individual dismissals, etc. The committee also called for more active participation by the social partners, particularly employers, in meeting the objectives that had been set. On the positive side, the committee congratulated the Commission on the attention paid to the quality of work, the employment of older workers and the protection of workers in the event of the restructuring or relocation of undertakings. It was also pleased that the Commission had submitted a proposal for portable pensions. There was praise for the decision to organise the European Year of People with Disabilities, although the report also called for more attention to be paid to integration into working life and action to combat discrimination in employment, access to professional training, etc. The committee made a number of recommendations, including a call for legislative proposals and preparatory work to be speeded up in areas such as revision of the directive on the works council, the drawing up of Green Papers on supplementary sickness insurance and on illiteracy and social exclusion and the submission of a proposal, based on Article 13 of the Treaty, on combating discimination against people with disabilities. The Commission was also urged to take the initiative in combating undeclared work and to propose measures to improve the situation of women and promote the full participation of women in decision-making at the workplace.