The situation of single mothers and one-parent families

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The Committee adopted the report by Ludivina GARCIA ARIAS (PES, E) on the situation of single mothers and one-parent families. One-parent families account for some 10% of all families with children recorded in the EU. In addition, between 80% and 90% of single parents are women. The committee wants the EU to commit itself to solving the fundamental problem of the huge differences in the situations faced by single mothers in every Member State. Problems exist at various levels: social security, the jobs market and employment legislation, vocational training, housing, childcare facilities, schooling, etc. The EU has been looking into this matter since 1992 but Parliament is not satisfied with the results achieved so far. Hence its decision to draw up this own-initiative report, which calls for a number of measures including the following: - the drafting of guidelines and policies to help the integration of single parents into mainstream society; - support from social security systems for single-parent families to cover their essential needs as well as steps to identify the obstacles preventing most single parents from joining or rejoining the world of work, which would enable them to be economically and socially independent; - improvements in the legal systems and practices of the Member States to ensure that both parents fulfill all obligations towards their children, together with steps to devise formulae for shared custody; - measures to have assistance for single parents included in the criteria of the Structural Funds; - the granting of tax credits to firms which provide their employees with childcare facilities.