Asylum: reception of applicants, minimum standards

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The committee adopted the report by Jorge HERNANDEZ MOLLAR (EPP-ED, E) broadly approving the proposal under the consultation procedure. It nevertheless tabled a large number of amendments to the directive which were aimed mainly at clarifying and tidying up the text. For example, the committee wanted the directive to be extended to cover applicants for all forms of international protection and not just persons applying for protection on the grounds of the Geneva Convention, as proposed by the Commission. The report also pointed out that the proposal referred constantly to the substance of a proposal for a directive on minimum standards for asylum procedures and appeals which had not yet been adopted and on which Parliament had to be further consulted. The committee therefore wanted to delete the parts of the text referring to that future directive, in view of the legal uncertainty regarding its actual substance. Other amendments sought to ensure that housing, food and clothing would be provided either in kind or in the form of financial allowances, but never in the form of vouchers. Experience had shown that providing vouchers could lead to discrimination and was of no tangible benefit. The committee also wanted applicants to be required to contribute to the cost of their material reception conditions in whole or in part, if their financial resources or those of their accompanying family members were sufficient. Other issues taken up in the report included the need to ensure that minors were integrated as quickly as possible into the education system, under the same conditions as nationals. Lastly, the committee wanted to ensure that reception conditions would be withdrawn for any asylum applicants found to have been actively involved in terrorism activities or to have aided and abetted or provided financial support to terrorist organisations, either before or after the asylum application had been lodged.