Social policy. White Paper

1994/2109(COS) - 27/07/1994 - Non-legislative basic document

This White Paper on European social policy ("a way forward for the Union") follows on from the Green Paper on social policy, which sought the opinions of all interested parties in Europe on the shape of European social policy over coming years. This White Paper addresses several subjects: - volume I: main lines of action at Union level over coming years; - volume II: summary of Member States' responses to the Green Paper. The White Paper (volume I) lays down a framework for Union action in the social sector which takes account of past achievements, especially in labour legislation, health and safety in the workplace, freedom of movement and equal treatment of men and women. It also aims to create new momentum by presenting new proposals in both these and other areas, such as social protection, equal opportunities and public health. It also endeavours to stimulate a new partnership between the Member States, the social partners, charities and public bodies, European citizens and international organizations in this changing process. The principles and objectives which need to guide European action are as follows: - economic and social integration, with employment as the top priority; - competitiveness and social progress, which need to go hand in hand; - convergence of social policy, which must respect the diverse social conditions in the Member States; - minimum joint standards, which need to be developed in order to preserve the cohesion of the Union, taking account of different national systems and requirements and the relative economic forces of the different Member States. In order to meet these objectives, the Commission proposes Community legislation and collective agreements, financial assistance and support measures, mobilizing cooperation at Member State level and information on and an analysis of future trends.