Combating discrimination: Community action programme 2001-2006

1999/0251(CNS) - 25/11/1999 - Document attached to the procedure

PURPOSE : to combat discrimination under the new powers bestowed on the European Community under Article 13 of the Treaty. CONTENT : The document examines the provisions at both national and Community levels to combat discrimination. It looks at the European Union initiatives already taken and the outcome of consultations with various institutions and interested parties, notably the European Parliament and NGOs. Building on experience, it proposes a mix of legal instruments, which will contribute to combating discrimination, including through the promotion of equal treatment. The Commission proposes: - A directive to combat discrimination in the labour market on all grounds referred to in Article 13, with the exception of sex, which has a specific legal basis for action in the field of employment. - A directive to combat discrimination on grounds of racial and ethnic origin which goes beyond the labour market. The scope of the two directives overlaps since both cover racial discrimination. If one were adopted before the other, the remaining proposal would be amended accordingly. - A programme of action designed to complement Member States' efforts to combat discrimination. This covers all grounds under Article 13 except sex discrimination. A new Commission programme will cover the latter. These proposals form a comprehensive basis for action, ensuring a minimum level of legal rights throughout the Community. The Commission points out that other measures will contribute to the fight against discrimination, including the provisions of the Employment guidelines, the Structural Funds, the new Education, Training and Youth programmes and the new programmes on gender equality and social exclusion currently being prepared. Community action is a clear signal that discrimination is not acceptable within the European Union.