Family policy and social protection of battered chidren

1998/2143(INI) - 28/01/1999 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The report by Marie-Thérèse Hermange (F, UPE) on the protection of families and children was adopted by the European Parliament. The report considers it necessary to define guidelines for an integrated family policy and calls on Member States to conduct specific family policies supporting and protecting the family financially and in its role as an educational force and a source of solidarity between the generations, while taking account of the diversity of family models. It further calls for specific measures to involve fathers more closely in the upbringing of children and to deal with the situation facing single-parent families. The report places a particular stress on the situation of children and asks that family policy place this subject at the heart of the European debate. To this end, it recommends: - an extraodinary European Council meeting to discuss the consequences of individual Member States' demographic, family and child-protection policies; - a Council of Ministers responsible for family affairs and children should meet once a year, or part of the agenda of the Social Affairs Council should be devoted to these issues once every six months; - a clearly identified unit should be set up within the Commission entirely devoted to family affairs and child protection, maintaining contact between the European Parliament, family and child-protection organisations and Europol; - the revival of the Commission's inter-departmental group on matters related to childhood; - a conference to be held by the Commission in the coming year, with the European Parliament, NGOs and the Council of Europe on the situation of children in the EU; - the introduction of guidelines for action in favour of children; - a strengthened structure and role for the European Family Policy Observatory; - the introduction of a European perinatal epidemiological network to combat child and maternal mortality; - speedy implementation of directives to reconcile family life and social life; - backing up the Council recommendation on child care with a directive; - dissemination of best practice in the Member States by the Commission on family related issues; - Provision of financial support at Community, national and local level for measures to improve children's integration into social life, commit both parents to child care, and benefit children and young people in rural areas; - appointment by Member States of children's ombudsmen to settle conflicts involving young people under 18; - public awareness-raising information campaigns conducted by Member States on the issues surrounding problems affecting children, particularly abuse; - creation of a European centre for children in danger to help prevent mistreatment and violence suffered by children; - harmonisation of Member States' child-protection laws; - action within Member States to set up agencies, foundations or telephone services and multi-disciplinary structures toprovide assistance to victims of violent family situations; - a co-ordinated European mechanism to avoid penalising children in the event of divorce between partners of different nationalities; - measures to combat sexual exploitation and prostitution of children, child pornography and sex tourism; - a Commission assessment of the application of Council Directive 94/33/EC on the protection of young people at work; - equipping Europol to identify and tackle criminal networks in trafficking and sexual exploitation of children and using the Schengen Information System (SIS) to exchange information; - adoption by Member States of measures analogous to Directive 97/36/EC on television without frontiers to protect children from exposure to damaging situations in the media.