Equality of opportunity for people with disabilities

1996/0216(COS) - 11/04/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mrs Barbara SCHMIDBAUER (PSE, D), Parliament expressed its deep concern about the absence of a new disability programme and therefore called on the Commission to present a new action programme after the evaluation of Helios II. It fears, in the meantime, that the absence of such a programme might damage the dialogue between organizations of disabled people and experts. It notes in this connection that NGOs want a follow-up to Helios II and believes that existing structures of cooperation built-up in recent years need to be further enlarged. Parliament calls on the Commission, until such time, to implement pilot actions, which are to be developed with NGOs of disabled people. At the same time, it wants a distinction made as regards funding by the Union of projects for disabled people and priority to be given to disabled people's organizations, whose management boards are to be composed as to 51% of disabled people or parents of disabled people speaking on their behalf. Parliament calls on the Commission to base its actions on the Standard Rules established by the UN in this area and invites Member States to propose within the framework of the IGC an appropriate legal base for social programmes based on qualified majority voting. Member States are invited to include a clause prohibiting discrimination on grounds of disability in the new Treaty. Ever anxious to ensure that greater account is taken of disabled people's requirements, Parliament calls on the Commission to take active measures within its mainstreaming approach to enable disabled people to participate in all the Community programmes. In this connection, it believes that the best way to achieve a higher degree of involvement of such persons is to guarantee at least 51% representation by disabled people at all conferences, events or other activities organized by the Commission and to provide financial support towards their attendance at ONG events. Stressing disabled people's right to work without discrimination, Parliament also calls on the Commission to submit a proposal for a directive for improving the integration of handicapped people into the labour market. Parliament calls on the Commission: * to help improve the accessibility of new information technologies to disabled persons; * to launch a Europe-wide model project to establish an electronic information and communication platform for people with disabilities and their representative organizations (E-mail, Internet, etc.); * to create a High Level Group to ensure dialogue between the Member States on matters affecting disabled people; * to step up action designed to reduce the number of obstacles preventing people with disabilities from moving freely; * to improve employment conditions for disabled people and take action against their long-term unemployment; * to improve access to high-quality education; Lastly, Parliament calls upon the Community to set an example by establishing a quota for the appointment of disabled employees to the institutions and by giving priority to disabled applicants over people who are not disabled where candidates are of equal merit.