Code of practice on the implementation of equal pay for work of equal value for women and men

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When it adopted the report by Mrs Laura GONZALEZ ALVAREZ (GUE/NGL, E) on a code of practice on the implementation of equal pay, the European Parliament took the view that this code would help towards creating a more gender-neutral job-classification and job evaluation system and could serve as an instrument to reduce discrimination as regards wages. It emphasized that the code of conduct must apply to all employees including apprentices and those working for home) whether on full-time, part-time, casual or temporary contracts, regardless of length of service. An awareness and information campaign is vital to ensure that the social partners are aware of the code of conduct. Parliament called on the European Commission to provide information, training and guidance targeted at the social partners involved in decisions about pay. Parliament took the view that the public sector should set an example by implementing the code of conduct rapidly but emphasized that the first requirement for putting the code into practice was job evaluation with a view to detecting discrimination. The European Commission must therefore devise gender-free job evaluation schemes and draw up appropriate guidelines. For Parliament, it would also be useful if a clearer distinction were established between wage components which result from societal developments and those which are mainly bound to wage settlements where gender-biased arguments are more easily introduced in wages. Since negotiations between the social partners are essential for equal pay, collective agreements must respect the principles of non-discrimination, and women should be involved more closely. To facilitate the negotiations of the social partners, Parliament feels that the Commission should compile a database able to give advice to employers and employees and their representatives on equal pay for work of equal value. The Member States and the Commission are also called upon to encourage transparency in this field (particularly by comprehensible statistics on wage levels and better access to information on pay components). The Commission is also asked to collect examples of good practice in the Member States in this field and monitor the actual implementation of the code of practice. Should there be no reduction of inequalities as regards pay in the next three years, the Commission should envisage making the code of practice into a legally binding instrument. Recalling once again the importance of an equitable division of family duties between men and women, which is one of the root causes of segregation on the labour market, it once again expresses its wish to see Article 119 of the Treaty expanded in such a way that the right to equal pay for work of equal value is enshrined therein. Finally, it calls on the Member States to set up a network of experts responsible for verifying compliance with legislation on remuneration and for providing for court proceedings and penalties which will ensure that it is applied in practice.