Future of the social dialogue at European level

1996/2191(COS) - 18/07/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Helwin PETER (PSE, D) on the development of the social dialogue, the European Parliament expressed the view, firstly, that social dialogue was an instrument of proven effectiveness, which should be developed in order to promote economic and social cohesion in the Community. As regards the various 'levels' of the social dialogue, Parliament considered: - as regards the Val Duchesse dialogue, that other representative organizations at European level should participate in the dialogue (particularly organizations representing the SMU sector); - as regards the interprofessional advisory committees, that representatives of the social partners from the EEA countries should be involved in the social dialogue; - as regards the sectoral dialogue, that account should be taken of direct practical experience in the social dialogue in order to assess the impact of deregulation on employment. This led to a call for the sectoral social dialogue to be encouraged in the public sector, which was particularly affected by the problem. Parliament called on the Commission to enhance its services (particularly its translation services and DG V) in order to impart greater weight to the sectoral dialogue. It called for the Commission to ensure transparency in the planning and allocation of funds for the sectoral social dialogue; - as regards the Standing Committee on Employment, that it should be reformed and that coordination mechanisms should be introduced between that committee and the Committee on Employment and Labour Market Policy in order to avoid conflicts of competence. The necessary reform must meet the requirements arising from the new employment chapter of the Treaty on European Union; - as regards the Agreement on Social Policy, that the representativeness of the organizations involved in the legislative procedure on the basis of Articles 3 and 4 of the Agreement on social policy needed to be improved. It took the view that, in addition to the criterion of representativeness, the mutual recognition of the social partners involved should continue to be a precondition for involvement. It considered that it should be possible for agreements concluded at Community level to be implemented by a Council decision only if the organizations party to the agreement were representative and covered a sufficient number of partners in the economic sector concerned. In the institutional field, it called for the European Parliament to be granted a power of codecision so that, like the Council, it could reject or approve any proposal in this field. It called, in parallel, for an interinstitutional agreement to be concluded, should the progress expected by the EP with regard to social policy in the new Treaty prove unsatisfactory; - as regards the development of the Social Dialogue, that employment policy should be fully taken into account within the dialogue and that transfrontier regional dialogues should be introduced. It was not in favour of the introduction of an additional social dialogue in large undertakings, but said that it would welcome the introduction of training activities to benefit the workforce. Lastly, Parliament fully supported the idea that observers from countries in Eastern Europe (particularly the applicant countries) should be involved at the various levels of the social dialogue.