Equal opportunities between men and women: 4th action programme 1996-2000

1995/0206(CNS) - 17/11/1995 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

In adopting the report by Mrs BENNASAR TOUS (EPP, E), Parliament approved the Fourth Programme of equal opportunities for men and women, with the following amendments: - Parliament recommended that the programme should be designed: . to incorporate the principle of equality of opportunities in the drawing up and implementation of all policies and measures applied at both Community and State level; . to develop and strengthen the monitoring and implementation of directives in all the Member States as well as to direct positive actions which seek to reduce the degree of inequality and discrimination against women. The programme has six objectives: . to monitor and implement Community legislation in this area, . to inform all the social representatives of the inequalities which exist and to promote a change in mentality, . to promote equality by taking account of the most vulnerable women, . to stimulate a policy of reconciliation between family life and professional life by taking account of the implications in respect of taxation and social security; . to promote equality between men and women in decision making; . to reinforce the policy of integrating women in all measures and policies relating to the economy, social security, culture, etc. The different objectives are incorporated in the concrete actions to be taken within the framework of the programme. Among the actions which are eligible under the programme, Parliament proposed the support and implementation of Community legislation in the Member States, the carrying out of integrated research into all issues relating to women's inequality and the integration of women, the exchange of information (taking account of regional and local differences and seeking to reach the specific target audience), the setting up of a data base collating statistics and studies on women's representation, and the coordination of information on equal opportunities between Community institutions. - In the context of budget transparency, Parliament called for complementarity to be encouraged both through existing actions and through the measures being proposed within the framework of the International Women's Conference held in Pekin; - programme activities which are open to non-member countries are to be cofinanced under the PHARE and MEDA programmes; - there was a call for the participation of all representatives from civil society who are involved in this area (NGOs, etc.); - as regards information, Parliament asked to be kept up to date each year on the actions taken under this programme from 1996 on. To this effect it was to receive an interim report detailing the programme's deficiencies and successes. A final report is planned for 31.03.2001. At the same time, Parliament drew attention to the fact that: . it was essential to monitor the application of Community legislation in order to have real equality of treatment, . the principle of equality should be incorporated in the Treaty on European Union such that the concept of equal rights would be applied not only in the economic field but also in the political, social and cultural sectors, . the legal basis for the programme should be revised in order that Parliament might be more actively involved, . the economic crisis tended mainly to affect women rather than men, and that women should have a greater and more effective involvement in the employment sector, . organisations and business undertakings should adopt a new social contract between men and women.