Social dialogue at European level

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In adopting the report by Mr Helwin PETER (PSE, D) on social dialogue Parliament considered it vital to lay down, on the basis of clear criteria, provisions governing access for representatives of the two sides of industry to the social dialogue and their functions in it. There was a need to flesh out the role of the European social partners in the light of the attainment of economic and monetary union and its impact on wages policy and macroeconomic policy and on the organisation and financing of social security. Parliament called on the Commission to submit a reflection document on this subject. Parliament called for interinstitutional negotiations on its role in the legislative procedure following the incorporation of the Agreement on Social Policy in the Amsterdam Treaty. Parliament should be granted equal status with that of the Council with regard to social legislation the initiative for which came from the two sides of industry. Parliament expressed doubts as to the usefulness of the advisory committees set up to assist the two sides of industry during the negotiations under the Agreement on Social Policy. However, the upgrading of sectoral dialogue by means of new committees was considered positive. Parliament considered that it was necessary to distinguish between information and consultation within the various bodies and advisory committees, with the participation of the Commission, the Council or the national governments, and the actual collective agreements between autonomous partners. It supported the reform of the Standing Committee on Employment and called for it to examine both the employment guidelines and the economic policy guidelines. Parliament considered that the reduction in the number of representatives of the two side of industry in the new committee to twelve members per organisation made it essential that the Commission should give particular support to the representatives of workers' organisations. It wanted to see greater transparency of the planning and use of the appropriations for the social dialogue. It also called for the Commission to draft a White Paper on the impact of the euro on wage trends and other working conditions in the Community. Lastly Parliament reiterated its call for an agreement laying down the legal and institutional framework for the decision-making procedures of both sides of industry at Community level. It considered that these deliberations should begin without delay and be completed before the end of this parliamentary term.