Employment: combating discrimination, guidelines for Community initiative EQUAL

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The European Parliament approved the report by Mrs. Ursula Stenzel (EPP/ED, Aus) on the resolution welcoming the Commission's new initiative to promote equal opportunities · the EQUAL programme. This programme expresses in concrete terms the EU·s aim to reinforce social cohesion and combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, which is also suffered by refugees and asylum-seekers. The MEPs adopted this resolution subject to a number of amendments that are designed to reinforce the commitment to combating discrimination and calling on the Commission to use simple and clear language in all documents explaining the programme. This is to avoid perpetuating the ambiguities which already exist in the various language versions and to give practical meaning to the concepts of prevention, innovation, transnationality, co-operation management, comprehensive dissemination, including via the Internet, evaluating and gender mainstreaming. Furthermore, the EP calls on the Commission: - to make explicit in the EQUAL Guidelines that Member States must choose both Geographical and Sectoral Development Partnerships for each of the selected thematic fields in their Community Initiative Programmes in order to ensure a balanced involvement of all discriminated groups in the EQUAL programme; - to ensure that thematic fields identified in the EQUAL guidelines are to be fully and easily accessible to all discriminated target groups supported by the EQUAL programme and that no thematic field is identified for participation by one discriminated target group to the exclusion of all other discriminated groups. With regard to the assessment of results, the EP calls on the Commission to ensure that programmes will be monitored and evaluated in such a way as to fully exploit the potential leverage effect, in particular in terms of best practice.