Social policy agenda: 3rd scoreboard, report for the implementation in 2002

2003/2097(INI) - 03/09/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Ilda FIGUEIREDO (GUE/NGL, Portugal) on the scoreboard on implementing the social policy agenda. Parliament stated that the structural weaknesses identified on the labour market are largely to blame for lasting poverty and social exclusion, which are being aggravated by other factors such as health problems and disability, family break-ups, a lack of basic training and housing problems. The most recent income figures show that 15% of the population, that is to say about 56 million people, are at risk of poverty, since they are living below a threshold defined to be 60% of the national average income. 9% of the EU's population face a persistent risk of poverty, since they have remained in that position for at least two out of the last three years. Social security is vital to reduce the risk of poverty - without welfare transfers, the poverty risk would have amounted to 24% (if one excludes pensions from the definition of welfare transfers) or 40% (including pensions). Parliament went on to ask the Commission to implement the principle of equal treatment for men and women by submitting a proposal for a directive, based on Article 141(3) of the Treaty, recognising paid paternity leave as an inalienable individual right that cannot be forgone. It also asked the Commission and Member States to ensure the correct timely implementation of existing directives, in particular those adopted on the basis of Article 13 of the Treaty. The Commission must not hesitate in pursuing infringement actions against Member States in this regard.