Protection of minorities and anti-discrimination policies in an enlarged Europe

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Claude MORAES(PES , UK) on the protection of minorities and anti-discrimination policies in an enlarged Europe . The report said that there was an urgent need for minority protection and anti-discrimination policies in an enlarged European Union with more citizens and greater diversity. MEPs wanted the Commission to establish a policy standard for their protection, along with common and minimum objectives for public authorities charged with implementing minority protection policies. Noting the absence of any definition of a "national minority", the committee recommended the Council of Europe definition as the appropriate basis.

MEPs were not satisfied with the contribution of Member States, in particular with regard to the Racial Equality and Employment Equality Directives. They highlighted the late or incomplete transposition of anti-discrimination measures, the failure to set up equality bodies and the need for greater information and awareness-raising about anti-discrimination laws. The committee also wanted to see greater efforts to overcome obstacles to the integration of third-country nationals, including establishing common basic principles for a coherent European Framework for their integration.

The committee stressed that minorities were discriminated against on multiple grounds, including race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, disability and age. It issued a warning against the possible discriminatory side-effects of measures against crime and terrorism, as ethnic minorities were more likely to be the target of police action, ID checks, etc. The EU institutions, the Member States and all European democratic political parties and civil society were urged to condemn all acts and expressions of anti-semitism and anti-Muslim behaviour, all acts of intolerance and incitement to racial hatred, all acts of violence motivated by religious or racial hatred or intolerance, including attacks on all religious places, sites and shrines, and all acts of homophobic or transphobic violence. The report also urged the Member States to do their utmost to ensure the effective integration into education systems of the children of refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants.

MEPs stressed that women continue to suffer discrimination in various areas of everyday life and drew attention to the multiple discrimination of women who belong to national minorities (especially the Roma /Sinti minority), or who are migrants. They also called for special protection for the Roma community, which is now one of the largest minorities in the EU. Particular attention should also be devoted to groups of people belonging to linguistic minorities. Moreover, stateless people permanently residing in the Member States faced a unique situation in the EU, and the Member States and the Commission were urged to align their rights with those of EU citizens.

Lastly, the report detailed a series of legislative measures to be taken before the entry into force of the Constitutional Treaty.