Social security status of artists

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report drawn up by Claire GIBAULT (ALDE, FR) on the social status of artists within the European Union. The report argued for an overall improvement in employment conditions for performing artists through the development of a legal and institutional framework which would involve the introduction of comprehensive measures concerning contracts, social security, sickness insurance, direct and indirect taxation and compliance with European rules. MEPs stressed the need to take account of the "atypical nature" of an artist's working methods.

The Member States were also urged to introduce contracts for the provision of training or qualifications in artistic professions, as well as a Europass-type 'European professional register' of artists containing details regarding their status, the nature and duration of their contracts, their employers or the service providers recruiting them.

Moreover, with a view to helping artists get clear information about their rights under existing EU legislation, the report urged the Commission, in cooperation with the sector, to draw up a comprehensible standard practical handbook for European artists and the authorities dealing with them containing information on all current sickness insurance, unemployment and pension provisions at national and European level. The Commission and Member States were also asked to consider possible measures to ensure the transfer of the pension and welfare entitlements acquired by artists from third countries when they return to their countries of origin.

With regard to social security, the committee urged the Commission to launch a pilot project introducing on an experimental basis a European electronic social security card specifically intended for European artists.

Among its other recommendations, the report called on Member States to give particular attention to the recognition at Community level of diplomas and other qualifications issued by all European conservatories, arts academies and other official schools for the performing arts in order to enable their holders to work and study in all Member States, in accordance with the Bologna Process. The same recognition should be accorded to diplomas and other qualifications issued from arts schools in third countries in order to facilitate mobility for artists seeking to enter EU Member States. In this context, the committee underlined the problems encountered by a number of European and third-country artists in obtaining visas and work permits, and called on the Commission to draw up Community rules in this area which could lead to the introduction of a specific temporary visa for artists.

Lastly the report called on Member States to create specialised training structures for those working in the cultural sector with a view to developing a genuine employment policy in this area, and to investigate the possibility of creating an Erasmus-type European mobility fund for the exchange of teachers and young artists.