Social security status of artists

2006/2249(INI) - 07/06/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report by Claire **GIBAULT** (ALDE, FR) on the social status of artists within the European Union. In order to improve the situation of artists in Europe, Parliament called on Member States to develop a legal and institutional framework for creative artistic activity through the adoption of a number measures in respect of contracts, social security, sickness insurance, direct and indirect taxation and compliance with European rules. Stressing the need to take account of the atypical nature of an artist's working methods, Parliament encouraged Member States to introduce contracts for the provision of training or qualifications in artistic professions.

Protection for artists: the Commission and Member States were asked to introduce a Europass-type "European professional register" of artists, containing details regarding their status and the nature and successive duration of their contracts and details concerning their employers or the service providers recruiting them. Parliament also 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 levels. The Commission and Member States must consider possible measures to ensure the transfer of pension and welfare entitlements acquired by artists from third countries when they return to their countries of origin and to ensure that work experience gained in a Member State is taken into account. Parliament asked the Commission to launch a pilot project introducing, on an experimental basis, a European electronic social security card specifically intended for European artists, since such a card, containing all relevant information concerning the artist, would resolve a number of problems inherent to his profession. Member States should give particular attention to the recognition at Community level of diplomas and other qualifications issued by all European conservatoires, arts academies and other official schools for the performing arts enabling their holders to work and study in all Member States, in accordance with the Bologna Process.

Mobility and employment of third-country nationals: pointing out that artists with short-term employment contracts currently find it difficult to fulfil the conditions for obtaining visas and work permits, Parliament called on the Commission to reflect on current visa and work permit arrangements and to begin drawing up Community rules which could lead to the introduction of a specific temporary visa for European and third-country artists, such as that which already exists in some Member States.

Lifelong training and retraining: Member States were asked to create specialised training structures for those working in the cultural sector with a view to developing a genuine employment policy in this area. The Commission should make a survey evaluating the current situation regarding provision in the EU for work-related illnesses which are specific to artistic activities, such as arthritis. Parliament urged the Commission to assess the real level of European cooperation and exchange as regards vocational training in the performing arts and promote such measures within the framework of the programmes for Lifelong Learning and Culture 2007 and European Year for Education and Culture in 2009.

Guaranteeing artistic and cultural training: the Commission was requested to draw up a survey of education in the field of art in the EU (content, nature of the training provided - formal or otherwise - results obtained and career opportunities) and to forward to Parliament the findings within two years. Parliament emphasised the need to promote mobility for European arts students by stepping up programmes for the exchange of students from national conservatoires and arts academies both inside and outside Europe.

Lastly, it asked the Commission and Member States to investigate the possibility of creating an Erasmus-type European mobility fund for the exchange of teachers and young artists, and recalled, in this connection, its concern to increase the European budget for culture.