Basic information

2015/2223(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Meeting the antipoverty target in the light of increasing household costs **Subject** 4.10.05 Social inclusion, poverty, minimum income	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	MESZERICS Tamás (Verts /ALE)	09/09/2015
	Shadow rapporteur ROLIN Claude (PPE) KUMPULA-NATRI Miapetra (S&D) GERICKE Arne (ECR) CALVET CHAMBON Enrique (ALDE) BOYLAN Lynn (GUE/NGL) AGEA Laura (EFDD) BIZZOTTO Mara (ENF)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality (Associated committee)	WARD Julie (S&D)	08/09/2015

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion	THYSSEN Marianne

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
10/09/2015	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
10/09/2015	Referral to associated committees announced in Parliament		

17/02/2016	Vote in committee		
25/02/2016	Committee report tabled for plenary	A8-0040/2016	Summary
14/04/2016	Decision by Parliament	T8-0136/2016	Summary
14/04/2016	Results of vote in Parliament		
14/04/2016	Debate in Parliament		
14/04/2016	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2015/2223(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	EMPL/8/03784

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE569.633	21/10/2015	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE571.431	18/11/2015	
Committee opinion	FEMM	PE571.414	29/01/2016	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE572.941	16/02/2016	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A8-0040/2016	25/02/2016	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T8-0136/2016	14/04/2016	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2016)484	20/09/2016	

Meeting the antipoverty target in the light of increasing household costs

2015/2223(INI) - 25/02/2016 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by Tamás MESZERICS (Greens/EFA, HU) on meeting the anti-poverty target in the light of increasing household costs.

Between 2008 and 2013, the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU increased from 117 million to 122.6 million. **In 2013, 16.7 % of the population of the EU was at risk of poverty** after social transfers, 9.6 % were in a situation of serious material deprivation and 10.7 % of

households were considered to have very low work intensity. This development runs counter to the strategic objective of the EU that is defined in its Europe 2020 Strategy and which aims to **reduce the number of people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion by at least 20 million by 2020**.

Based on the recommendations developed in this initiative report, Members called on the Commission and the Member States to:

- **invest fully in the fight against poverty and social exclusion and to adopt an integrated strategy** to combat its various forms by means of a holistic approach linking economic, education, employment, energy transport and social policies on the basis of best practices;
- sign up to a **winter heating disconnection moratorium** so as to ensure that during a defined winter period no household can be cut off from energy or that those who are must be reconnected emphasising that related costs are public responsibility in nature, since social policies are primarily the responsibility of governments; Member States should evaluate the measures needed to comply with the World Health Organisation (WHO) standards for adequate housing temperature;
- carry out an **impact assessment of minimum income schemes in the EU** and to evaluate the manner and the means of providing at Member State level an adequate minimum income above the poverty threshold of 60% of national median income in all Member States in line with national practices and traditions respecting the characteristics of each of them;
- ensure a more efficient, targeted and more carefully monitored use of the **European Structural and Investment Funds** (ESI Funds) by national, regional and local authorities in order to tackle energy poverty, increasing living costs, social exclusion, housing deprivation, and the insufficient quality of the housing stock; the Commission should allow greater flexibility in this field;
- dedicate a **summit** to the reduction of poverty, extreme poverty and social exclusion and access to decent living standards.

The initiative report aims to **build bridges between social policy and energy policy** in the European debate. In this regard, it called on the Commission and its Member States to:

- **target funding and policies towards tackling poverty and energy poverty**: Member States and the EU are urged to provide microcredits or loans free of interest or at low rates via (e.g. the EIB) to low-income households to support them in the upfront investment in renewables or energy efficiency, such as insulation, solar energy and energy efficient appliances. Any investment made, either in new homes or in improving existing homes, should be based on energy efficiency;
- **evaluate**, in the framework of the energy efficiency package, the application of relevant provisions in Directive 2012/27/EU to target households affected by energy poverty and social housing and on the basis of this evaluation to consider strengthening the provisions of the Directive so that Member States are encouraged to ;include social aims in their energy efficiency obligation schemes
- **propose decisive measures on social housing** and enhance energy efficiency investment in social rental housing through European funds: Members recommended that the Member States expand the supply of quality social housing in order to guarantee access for all, and in particular for the most disadvantaged, to adequate housing and to further use their opportunities to provide social housing with alternative legal constructions.

The report also urged for measures to **end the outrageous gender pay gap in the EU** which is a key contributors to female poverty. It noted that lone parents, the majority of whom are women, are at a higher than average risk of poverty (34 %). Therefore, measures need to be taken to address female poverty and social exclusion through initiatives to guarantee high-quality jobs with a living wage in female-dominated sectors, as well as measures to legislate for a living wage that guarantees that workers' basic needs can be met.

The European Commission and the Member States are called upon to :

- press ahead with their efforts to tackle socio-economic inequalities, which would ultimately make it possible to reduce some of the inequalities relating to **healthcare** by focusing their attention on the needs of vulnerable groups such as people living in poverty;
- put in place strategies aimed at **reducing the digital divide** and promoting equal access to new information and communications technologies;
- do everything possible to ensure that all people have **access to drinking water** as soon as possible.

Meeting the antipoverty target in the light of increasing household costs

2015/2223(INI) - 14/04/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 310 votes to 73 with 26 abstentions, a resolution on meeting the antipoverty target in the light of increasing household costs.

Need to fight against poverty and social exclusion: Members recalled that the combination of the financial and economic crisis and falling household revenues have **increased unemployment and social exclusion within the EU,** especially among the most vulnerable groups of people, thereby increasing the burden on welfare services. **Unemployment among young people** has exploded in the European Union since the crisis and is now running at over 20 %, putting young people at risk of falling into poverty from a very early age.

Between 2008 and 2013, the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU increased from 117 million to 122.6 million. **In 2013, 16.7 % of the population of the EU was at risk of poverty** after social transfers, 9.6 % were in a situation of serious material deprivation and 10.7 % of households were considered to have very low work intensity. This development runs counter to the strategic objective of the EU that is defined in its Europe 2020 Strategy and which aims to **reduce the number of people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion by at least 20 million by 2020.**

Main recommendations: Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to:

- **invest fully in the fight against poverty and social exclusion** and to adopt an integrated strategy to combat its various forms by means of a holistic approach linking economic, education, employment, energy transport and social policies on the basis of best practices;

- sign up to a **winter heating disconnection moratorium** so as to ensure that during a defined winter period no household can be cut off from energy or that those who are must be reconnected emphasising that related costs are public responsibility in nature, since social policies are primarily the responsibility of governments; Member States should evaluate the measures needed to comply with the World Health Organisation (WHO) standards for adequate housing temperature;

- carry out an **impact assessment of minimum income schemes** in the EU and to evaluate the manner and the means of providing at Member State level an adequate minimum income above the poverty threshold of 60% of national median income in all Member States in line with national practices and traditions respecting the characteristics of each of them;

- ensure a more efficient, targeted and more carefully monitored use of the **European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds)** by national, regional and local authorities in order to tackle energy poverty, increasing living costs, social exclusion, housing deprivation, and the insufficient quality of the housing stock; the Commission should allow greater flexibility in this field;

- **dedicate a summit** to the reduction of poverty, extreme poverty and social exclusion and access to decent living standards.

Build bridges between social policy and energy policy in the European debate: in this regard, Parliament called on the Commission and Member States to:

- **target funding and policies towards tackling poverty and energy poverty**: Member States and the EU are urged to provide microcredits or loans free of interest or at low rates via (e.g. the EIB) to low-income households to support them in the upfront investment in renewables or energy efficiency, such as insulation, solar energy and energy efficient appliances. Any investment made, either in new homes or in improving existing homes, should be based on energy efficiency;

- **evaluate, in the framework of the energy efficiency package**, the application of relevant provisions in Directive 2012/27/EU to target households affected by energy poverty and social housing and on the basis of this evaluation to consider strengthening the provisions of the Directive so that Member States are encouraged to ;include social aims in their energy efficiency obligation schemes

- **propose decisive measures on social housing** and enhance energy efficiency investment in social rental housing through European funds: Members recommended that the Member States expand the supply of quality social housing in order to guarantee access for all, and in particular for the most disadvantaged, to adequate housing and to further use their opportunities to provide social housing with alternative legal constructions.

European policies to meet the antipoverty target: Parliament asked Member States to provide everyone with accessible adequate support, including minimum income as long as it is needed. It highlighted the importance of defining eligibility criteria in order to benefit from an adequate minimum income scheme. The Commission was asked to study the possibility of extending the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived beyond the programming period 2014-2020.

Members supports the Commission's intention to ensure a social triple A score for the Union by presenting new measures, in order to improve the effectiveness of social and employment policies, which includes a clear strategy for combating gendered aspects of social exclusion. They stressed gender pay gap in the EU, which is a key contributors to female poverty. It noted that lone parents, the majority of whom are women, are at a higher than average risk of poverty (34 %).

The Commission and Member States were asked to:

- establish an **EU framework** to reduce poverty and social exclusion in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy, consisting of concrete measures and actions;

- urgently identify, and maintain policy measures that enable households to **meet housing costs,** including the provision of housing allowances, given that 22 348 834 households (approximately 11 % of the EU population) spend more than 40 % of their disposable income on housing;

- press ahead with their efforts to tackle socio-economic inequalities, which would ultimately make it possible to reduce some of the inequalities relating to **healthcare** by focusing their attention on the needs of vulnerable groups such as people living in poverty;

- put in place strategies aimed at **reducing the digital divide** and promoting equal access to new information and communications technologies;

- do everything possible to ensure that all people have **access to drinking water** as soon as possible.

Lastly, Parliament invited the Commission, in the context of the European Semester, to make recommendations to the Member States regarding the policies to be put in place and the reforms to be made in order to combat poverty and social exclusion effectively to promote social convergence, taking into account the specific features of each Member State.