


Procedure file

Basic information	
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	1998/2096(COS)
Social action programme 1998-2000	Procedure completed
Subject	4.10 Social policy, social charter and protocol

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	FEMM Women's Rights		03/06/1998
		PPE MANN Thomas	
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Social Affairs	2127	27/10/1998

Key events			
29/04/1998	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1998)0259	Summary
15/06/1998	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
27/10/1998	Debate in Council	2127	
27/10/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
27/10/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0381/1998	
17/11/1998	Debate in Parliament		
18/11/1998	Decision by Parliament	T4-0665/1998	Summary
18/11/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
07/12/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1998/2096(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142

Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	EMPL/4/10046

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		COM(1998)0259	29/04/1998	EC	Summary
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report		CES1146/1998 OJ C 407 28.12.1998, p. 0187	09/09/1998	ESC	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0381/1998 OJ C 359 23.11.1998, p. 0004	27/10/1998	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0665/1998 OJ C 379 07.12.1998, p. 0059-0087	18/11/1998	EP	Summary
Committee of the Regions: opinion		CDR0277/1998 OJ C 093 06.04.1999, p. 0056	14/01/1999	CofR	

Social action programme 1998-2000

OBJECTIVE: to propose a new social action programme for the period 1998-2000 taking account of the new priorities of the Union in the context of the Amsterdam Treaty and Agenda 2000. SUBSTANCE: the communication described the next steps to be taken in European social policy. Drawing on the results of the previous action programme and making the most of the dynamism arising from the new chapter on employment in the Amsterdam Treaty, the document identified three main priorities for action in 1998 to 2000: 1) jobs, skills and mobility: taking as a basis the Employment Guidelines adopted by the Luxembourg European Council (November 1997), it was considered desirable to: - monitor annually measures based on the Employment Guidelines (particularly local development measures, development of an enterprise culture, etc.), - promote exchanges of best practices, - launch a debate on undeclared work, - renew the Socrates and Leonardo programmes, - promote child care and raise employment levels among people with disabilities. Measures are also planned to facilitate the free movement of workers. 2) modernising the organisation of work and promoting adaptability: - measures in accordance with the guidelines to promote the adaptability of workers, - proposing Community action on the protection of teleworkers, - formulating clear objectives with regard to state aids for training. The Commission also intends to take action to anticipate industrial change, particularly by continuing to promote social dialogue and through support under the ESF. Actions are planned to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the information society (particularly for the disabled) and to ensure the health and safety of workers (revision of existing directives and monitoring of their correct application in Member States, new proposals in certain sectors not yet covered - scaffolding, carcinogens, exposure to chemicals, etc). 3) promoting integration and combating social exclusion: the Amsterdam Treaty provides new scope for action to combat social exclusion. The Commission intends, in particular, to present a communication on minimum income and on social integration (including that of refugees). Fresh initiatives are also proposed to combat all forms of discrimination (between men and women, racial discrimination, discrimination against the disabled) and to promote public health (combating tobacco consumption). Lastly, one section of the action programme will be devoted to the correct implementation of the *acquis communautaire* in the social field by the applicant countries and promoting minimum labour standards internationally (ILO rules on working conditions). ?

Social action programme 1998-2000

The Committee adopted a report by its chairman, Stephen HUGHES (PES, UK) on the Commission Communication on a Social Action Programme 1998-2000. The Committee welcomes the Programme but criticises the Commission of increasingly resorting to the use of "soft law", i.e. instruments that are not legally enforceable. In order to improve the Social Action programme, the Commission should, *inter alia*, * make a more explicit commitment to promoting worker participation in company decision-making by strengthening the rights of employees' representative; * bring out a Communication on the future of civil dialogue; * launch an initiative for the inclusion of a Bill of Rights at the next revision of the treaties; * set out how it intends to make use of the possibilities offered by the new social protection legal base and indicate in each case how far the social partners should be consulted; * start preparatory work on an anti-discrimination action programme and a new social inclusion programme so that the proposals can be put forward immediately after the ratification of the Amsterdam Treaty; * indicate how it will enforce compliance with social legislation in the public procurement directive and how it will introduce provisions on the basis of which social clauses may be included in contracts; and * assess the impact of the Code of Practice on Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value and publish a proposal for a Directive completing the legislative framework for equal treatment between women and men in social security schemes. The Committee wants to monitor the implementation of the Social Action Programme on a regular basis. ?

Social action programme 1998-2000

In adopting the report by Mr Stephen HUGHES (PSE, UK), the European Parliament approved, with certain reservations, the Commission's new social action programme. It deplored the fact that the Commission was increasingly acting by means of instruments which were not legally enforceable, rather than making use of Directives, particularly as regards the organisation of work, workers' individual and collective rights, and social measures regulating the free-market economy. Parliament regretted that the Commission had opted to draw up its new programme for the period 1998-2000 rather than 1998-2006, which would have highlighted the central role of employment and social affairs in Community

policy. In order to improve the new Social Action Programme, Parliament suggested a series of measures. In particular, it considered that the Commission should: -make more explicit its commitment to promoting worker involvement in company decision-making; -bring out a Communication on the future of the civil dialogue; -launch an initiative for the adoption of a Bill of Rights; -start preparatory work on an anti-discrimination action programme; -promote innovative approaches to combating discrimination and social exclusion; -specify the measures to be taken in connection with the directives on public contracts to ensure that the social legislation in force was respected. Parliament also called on the Commission to: -ensure that stress was included among health risks; -take measures to protect home workers; -adopt binding legislation on sexual harassment; -take steps to overcome the gaps between the earnings of men and women for equal work; -adopt supplementary measures concerning the position of spouses assisting in businesses; -publish before the end of 1998 its proposal for a Directive completing the legislative framework for equal treatment between women and men in social security schemes; -publish a report on the implementation of the Directive on pregnant workers?