Procedure file

Basic information

INI - Own-initiative procedure	2004/2210(INI)	Procedure completed
Social inclusion in the new Member States Subject 4.10.05 Social inclusion, poverty, minimum income 8.20.20 Enlargement's employment and social point of view		

Key players

European Parliament			
	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	PPE-DE ŐRY Csaba	10/11/2004
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	CULT Culture and Education	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	PSE REYNAUD Marie-Line	25/11/2004
	FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality	PPE-DE BAUER Edit	25/11/2004

Key events

22/06/2004	Non-legislative basic document published	SEC(2004)0848	Summary
18/11/2004	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
20/04/2005	Vote in committee		Summary
29/04/2005	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0125/2005	
09/06/2005	Debate in Parliament		
09/06/2005	Decision by Parliament	T6-0244/2005	Summary
09/06/2005	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2004/2210(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/6/23988

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		SEC(2004)0848	22/06/2004	EC	Summary
Committee opinion	FEMM	PE355.759	30/03/2005	EP	
Committee opinion	LIBE	PE353.594	31/03/2005	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0125/2005	29/04/2005	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0244/2005 OJ C 124 25.05.2006, p. 0429-0572 E	09/06/2005	EP	Summary

Social inclusion in the new Member States

This report examines the main challenges which the 10 new Member States will have to face in order to combat poverty and social exclusion and promote greater social cohesion, in parallel with their efforts to gradually close the current gaps in competitiveness and living standards vis-à-vis the rest of the Union. Its overall aim is threefold.

First, by providing an overview of the situation and of main policies across the new Member States, it provides a basis for promoting exchange and learning between them and old Member States.

Secondly, by identifying key priorities for the future it aims to assist the new Member States in the further development of their social inclusion policies and in particular their first National Action Plans for social inclusion, to be submitted by July 2004.

Thirdly, by identifying the most critical features of the situation in the new Member States it helps to highlight issues that may need to be taken more into account in the further development of the EU social inclusion process after enlargement.

This report is based on work carried out bilaterally since October 2002, which led to the joint signature of 10 Joint Memoranda on Social Inclusion (JIM) by Commissioner Anna Diamantopoulou and the Ministers responsible for Social Affairs of the new Member States on 18th December 2003. The context for preparing the JIM was provided by the conclusions of the Göteborg European Council in 2001 that asked the Commission and the candidate countries to initiate a cooperation process with the aim of promoting their full participation in the economic and social policies of the Union. The purpose of compiling a JIM was to prepare each country for full participation in the open method of coordination that had been launched in the context of the Lisbon strategy with the aim of making a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty in the Union by 2010. Under this process every Member State has prepared a National Action Plan on social inclusion (NAPs/inclusion) every two years on the basis of a set of common objectives that were agreed first at the European Council of Nice in 2000. The NAPs/inclusion are assessed jointly by the Commission and the Council with the help of commonly agreed indicators.

Each JIM outlines the principal challenges facing a country in terms of poverty and social exclusion, presents the major policy measures taken by each new Member State to start translating the EU's common objectives on poverty and social exclusion into national policies and identifies the key policy issues for future monitoring and policy review.

This report is in two parts. Part I is a cross-country analysis identifying the extent and main trends in poverty and social exclusion and the underlying economic, social and demographic factors. In the light of this, it summarises the key challenges facing the new Member States. It then reviews the main policy approaches being adopted to address the challenges and suggests priorities for the future both in terms of policy development and of institutional arrangements. There are also specific sections examining gender mainstreaming, the adequacy of the existing statistical systems and indicators and the role that EU Structural Funds can play in achieving the social inclusion goals set in the JIM. Part II of the report contains short summaries of the key features and key challenges facing each new Member State. A statistical annex provides data comparing the situation across new Member States and makes comparisons with old Member States.

Social inclusion in the new Member States

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Csaba ORY(EPP-ED, HU) on social inclusion in the new Member States. The report said that social inclusion should be treated "as a social problem falling under the Lisbon Strategy". It called on the new Member States inter alia to revise their economic policies with the aim of promoting the creation of permanent, high-quality jobs.

MEPs pointed to the need to improve the social situation of, amongst others, women, older, sick or disabled persons, unprotected children, minorities, immigrants, the homeless and victims of dependency. To this end, the new Member States should ensure that measures for educational, professional training and employment promotion programmes meeting the needs of different vulnerable groups are in place. There must be sufficient funds to ensure access to lifelong learning for all and proactive policies should be developed to ensure the inclusion

of immigrants and children at risk of poverty. MEPs also warned the governments of the new Member States to avoid a situation where the adoption of the euro will plunge certain social groups, particularly those living on small pensions or social welfare payments, into poverty.

The committee recognised the key role of the social partners and called for the creation of favourable legal and financial conditions enabling civil, professional and social organisations to participate actively in combating poverty. The new Member States were asked to draw up a long-term strategy and give financial assistance to improve the situation of local authorities which face difficulties in performing their duties related to social inclusion. Greater efforts than at present should also be made to support construction projects which increase the availability of more affordable housing.

Finally, appropriate legislation in the area of social services in the new Member States should be developed through the targeted use of the European Social Fund and other structural funds.

Social inclusion in the new Member States

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Csaba ORY (EPP-ED, HU) on social inclusion. (Please see the document of 20/04/2005.) Parliament cited high levels of unemployment due to non-existent labour force mobility and to a lack of education and training as key obstacles in the fight against social inclusion in the new member states. Parliament called on the new EU members for Central and East Europe to review their economic policies with the aim of promoting the creation of permanent, high-quality jobs.

Parliament went on to state that very little use has been made in the new Member States of financial incentives which indirectly promote job creation. Employment levels 8% are lower in the new member states than the old ones. With national governments often handing over ever more responsibilities to local authorities, efforts must be concentrated at regional and local level in particular, with job creation via SMEs particularly desirable. Local governments in the new Member States are, however, plagued by an acute shortage of resources and most Member States lack any strategy for solving this problem. Communication flows must be increased between new member states to foster an exchange of experience and best practice.

Parliament called on the new Member States to do the following:

- pay greater attention to legislation in the area of social services, with particular regard to intervention, and encourage the inclusion of groups in the social economy, the development of which should be supported through the targeted use of the European Social Fund and other structural funds;

- extend educational measures, tackle illiteracy (including, equally, functional illiteracy and actual illiteracy), with special reference to the requirements of all minorities, especially, in some countries, the Roma, and eliminate segregated education and in particular to take account of educational needs in rural areas;

- increase the range of services provided for families, in order to improve the situation of breadwinners with children or elderly family members in need of care;

- develop proactive policies to ensure the inclusion of immigrants;

- make greater efforts than at present to solve the housing problem, by increasing the supply of more affordable housing and,in particular, by supporting the construction projects of local authorities;

- include in their social inclusion policy the issue of homelessness, as an extreme form of social exclusion, since it affects thousands of people, particularly women, in each country;

- promote more effectively than at present the social inclusion of minorities and improvements in the conditions for the education of the Roma;

- promote the social integration of persons with disabilities more effectively than hitherto;

- make sufficient funds available to ensure access to quality systems of lifelong learning for all;

- revise their economic policies in the light of the conclusions of the European Union in its mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy.

- statistical data from the new Member States is scarce, and the latter should collect and publish updated and comparable data broken down by gender.

Finally, Parliament urged the Commission to review all legal provisions to combat discrimination, based on Article 13 of the EC Treaty, and bring appropriate proceedings against all Member States which do not transpose or apply the relevant directives in the required way or within the required time limit.