

Proposal for a Council Decision setting up a Social Protection Committee

(2000/C 274 E/02)

(Text with EEA relevance)

COM(2000) 134 final — 2000/0055(CNS)

(Submitted by the Commission on 15 March 2000)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to the proposal of the Commission,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions,

Whereas:

(1) The European Commission has made in its Communication 'A Concerted Strategy for Modernising Social Protection' of 14 July 1999 (COM(1999) 347 final) suggestions for the enhancement of cooperation in the field of social protection by, among other things, setting up a group of high-level officials.

(2) The European Parliament has welcomed the Commission's Communication and the creation of such a group in its Resolution on the Communication from the Commission on a concerted strategy for modernising social protection (A5-0033/2000).

(3) The Council, in its Conclusions of 17 December 1999 on the strengthening of cooperation for modernising and improving social protection (OJ 2000/C 8/7), underlined the need for cooperation in modernising social protection, based on a structured and permanent dialogue, follow-up and exchange of information, experience and good practice between the Member States.

(4) The Council, in the same Conclusions,

— supported the Commission's suggestion to establish a mechanism for enhanced cooperation brought about by the work of a group of high-level officials for the implementation of this action;

— underlined that this kind of cooperation should cover all forms of social protection and should help the Member States, where necessary, to improve and strengthen their social protection systems, including their financing, in accordance with their national priorities;

— considered it particularly important that this new cooperation towards improving and modernising social protection should be a coherent action, parallel to and interactive with the European employment strategy as well as to the macro-economic dialogue; and

— underlined the role of the social partners in the modernisation of the social protection process,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

1. An Advisory Social Protection Committee (hereinafter referred to as 'the Committee') is hereby established to promote cooperation at Community level on social protection policies.

2. The tasks of the Committee shall be, *inter alia*,

— to monitor social protection policies in the Member States and the Community;

— to facilitate exchanges of information, experience and good practice between Member States and with the Commission; and

— to prepare an annual report on Social protection to be submitted to the Council, reporting on policy developments in respect to the achievement of the objectives pointed out by the Council.

The Committee may, at the request of the Council or the Commission, prepare other reports or opinions or undertake other work in the area of its competence.

3. The Committee shall work as appropriate in cooperation with other relevant bodies and committees dealing with social and economic policy matters.

4. In fulfilling its mandate, the Committee shall establish appropriate contacts with the social partners.

Article 2

The Committee shall consist of two representatives appointed by each Member State and two representatives of the Commission. These representatives may be assisted by two alternates.

Article 3

1. The Committee shall elect its chairman from among the representatives of the Member States for a non-renewable term of two years.

2. The Secretariat of the Committee shall be provided by the Commission.

3. The Committee shall establish its own rules of procedure.

4. Meetings of the Committee shall be convened by the chairman, either on his own initiative or at the request of at least half of the members of the Committee.