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Towards a new European Social Model: which social vision for Europe of tomorrow?

Motion for a resolution

tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

There is no single uncontroversial definition of what constitutes the European Social Model. In its widest meaning the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) defines it as “a vision of society that combines sustainable economic growth with ever-improving living and working conditions”. This model, linked to the so-called Welfare State, has always been perceived as a distinctive characteristic of post-war Europe that has been able to match social progress and economic growth to the benefit of a vast majority of the population, by following different regional and country-specific approaches.

Developments in recent decades, including the impact of globalisation and the current financial and economic crisis, undermine the traditional European Social Model. Nevertheless, in the midst of the crisis situation and based on a number of shared values, experts see the signs of emergence of a new European Social Model which should be seen as an opportunity for Europe. Amongst its constituents are a strong enterprise culture, a new balance between work and family life, revamped gender equality, a range of income which is less wide than in other regions of the world, the role of trade unions in social dialogue including at European level, as well as the existence of a welfare state.

The Parliamentary Assembly should explore the components of an emerging new European Social Model to be consolidated through coherent economic and social action. Current European policies that are mainly aimed at implementing austerity programmes and reducing public debt levels, and which continue to threaten democratic and social rights, should be completed by a new dimension of constructive European policies which also help regain the European citizens' trust in public leadership and policies at all levels.

