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ILO Convention of domestic worker, good opportunity for the Parliamentary Assembly

Motion for a resolution
presented by Mr Volontè and others

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

The government, worker and employer delegates at the 100th annual Conference of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on 16 June 2011 adopted a historic set of international standards aimed at improving the working conditions of tens of millions of domestic workers worldwide. "We are moving the standards system of the ILO into the informal economy for the first time, and this is a breakthrough of great significance" said Juan Somavia, ILO Director General. "History is being made". Conference delegates adopted the Convention concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers (2011) and the accompanying recommendation.

The ILO is the only tripartite organisation of the United Nations, and each of its 183 member states is represented by two government delegates - one employer and one worker delegate - with an independent vote. The new ILO standards set out that domestic workers around the world who care for families and households, must have the same basic labour rights as those available to other workers: reasonable hours of work, weekly rest of at least 24 consecutive hours, a limit on in-kind payment, clear information on terms and conditions of employment, as well as respect for fundamental principles and rights at work including freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.

Recent ILO estimates based on national surveys and/or censuses of 117 countries, place the number of domestic workers at around 53 million. However, experts say that due to the fact that this kind of work is often hidden and unregistered, the total number of domestic workers could be as high as 100 million. In developing countries, they make up at least 4 to 12 % of wage employment. Around 83 % of these workers are women or girls and many are migrant workers.

The Convention defines domestic work as work performed in or for a household or households. While the new instruments cover all domestic workers, they provide for special measures to protect those workers who, because of their young age or nationality or live-in status, may be exposed to additional risks relative to their peers, among others.

The Parliamentary Assembly should encourage member states to accede and implement ILO documents, according to the European Social Charter of the Council of Europe.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed ¹:

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¹ EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democratic Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: not registered in a group