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REPORT

on behalf of the Committee on Social Affairs and
Employment

on Community measures to improve the situation of old
people in the Member States of the Community

Rapporteur: Mr M. CIANCAGLINI

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PE 102.278/fin.

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At its sittings of 23 October 1984, 12 December 1984, 11 February 1985, 8 and 10 May 1985 and 17 and 18 February 1986, the European Parliament referred to the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment the following motions for resolutions tabled pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure:

- motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Mattina (Doc. 2-724/84)
(asked for its opinion: Committee on Women's Rights)
- motion for a resolution tabled by Mrs Chouraqui and Mrs Lemass
(Doc. 2-1068/84)
- motion for a resolution tabled by Mrs Squarcialupi (Doc. 2-1137/84)
(asked for its opinion: Committee on Budgets)
- motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Selva and others (Doc. 2-1507/84)
(asked for its opinion: Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport)
- motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Vandemeulebroucke and Mr Kuijpers
(Doc. 2-1525/84)
- motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Michelini and others (Doc. 2-1755/84)
(asked for their opinions: Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport; Committee on Women's Rights)
- motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Parodi and others (Doc. B 2-211/85)
(asked for its opinion: Committee on Legal Affairs and Citizens' Rights)
- motion for a resolution tabled by Mrs Squarcialupi (Doc. B 2-535/85)
- motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Romera i Alcazar (Doc. B 2-1517/85)
(asked for its opinion: Committee on Budgets)
- motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Happart (Doc. B 2-1537/85)
(asked for its opinion: Committee on Women's Rights).

At its meetings of 20 March 1985, 18, 19 and 20 September 1985, 24 - 25 February 1986 and 17 - 18 March 1986, the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment decided to deal with the abovementioned motions for resolutions in a single report on Community measures to improve the situation of old people in the Member States of the Community.

On 20 March 1985, the committee appointed Mr Ciancaglini rapporteur.

At its meeting of 30-31 January 1986, the committee also decided to deal, in the abovementioned Ciancaglini report, with Petition No. 95/85 (PE 99.948) referred to it at the sitting of 17 January 1986.

The draft report was considered at the meetings of 18-19-20 September 1985, 27-28-29 November 1985, 24-25 February 1986 and 17-18 March 1986. At the last meeting, the motion for a resolution was adopted by 19 votes to 4.

The following took part in the vote: Mr Welsh, chairman; Mrs Salisch, first vice-chairman; Mr McCartin, second vice-chairman; Mr Ciancaglini, rapporteur; Mr Bachy, Mr Barros Moura (deputizing for Mr Alavanos), Mr Brok, Mrs Cassanmagnago Cerretti, Mr Christiansen, Mr Crespo, Mrs Giannakou-Koutsikou, Mr Herrero Merediz, Mr Hindley (deputizing for Mr Stewart), Mr Iodice, Mr Lacerda de Queiroz, Mrs Marinaro (deputizing for Mrs Hoffmann), Mr Megahy, Mrs T. Nielsen (deputizing for Mrs Larive-Groenendaal), Lord O'Hagan, Mr Papakyriazis, Mr Raggio, Mr Suarez Gonzalez and Mr Tuckman.

Mr Cassidy and Mr Daly were also present.

The opinions of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport and the Committee on Women's rights are attached.

By letter of 12 March 1986, the Committee on Budgets stated that it would not deliver an opinion.

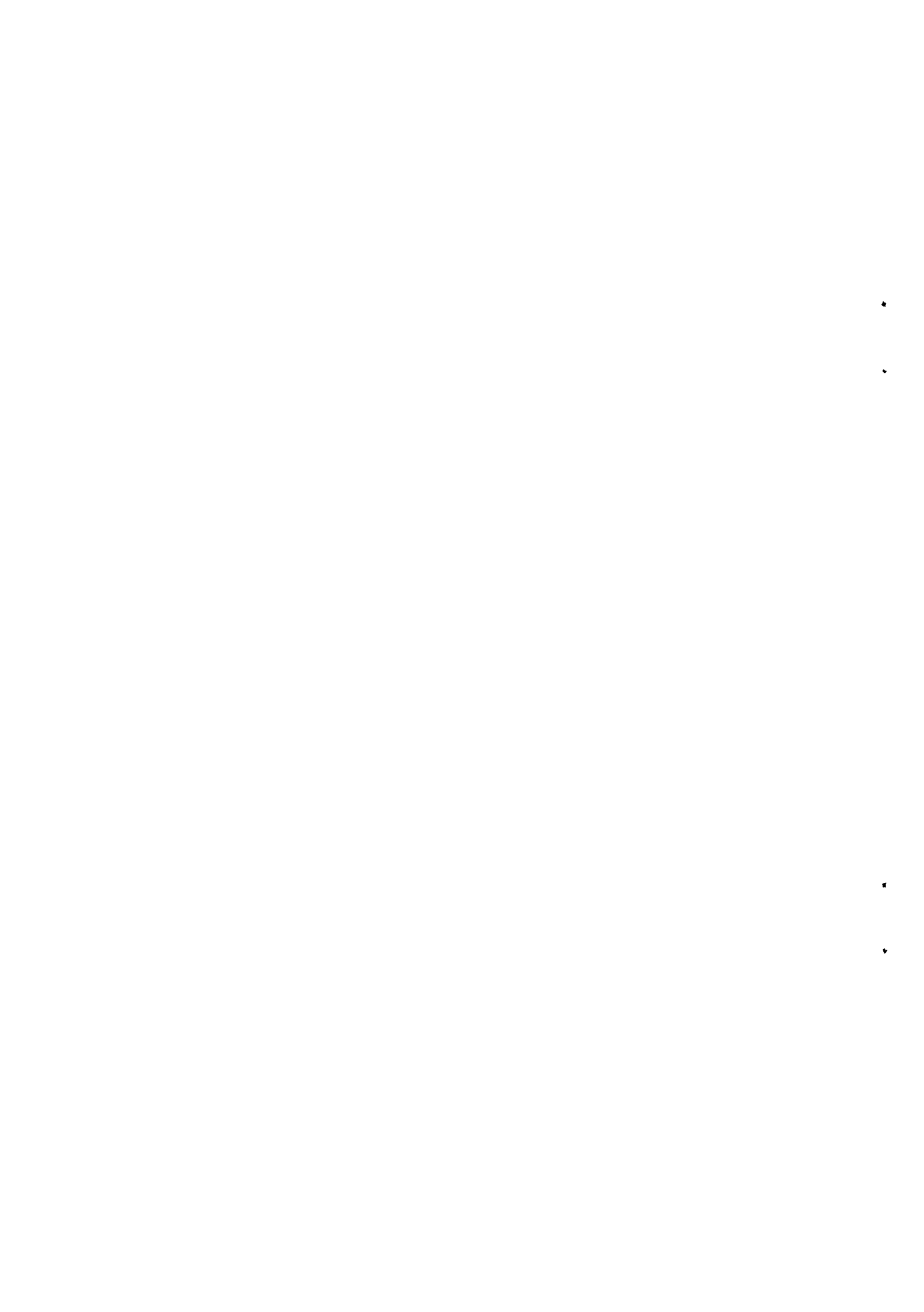
The opinion of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Citizens' Rights will be published separately.

The report was tabled on 20 March 1986.

The deadline for tabling amendments to this report will be indicated in the draft agenda of the part-session at which it will be debated.

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The Committee on Social Affairs and Employment hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

A

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on Community measures to improve the situation of old people in the Member States of the Community

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 18 February 1982¹,
 - having regard to its resolution of 22 May 1984²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 16 April 1985³,
 - having regard to the motions for resolutions tabled by Mr Mattina, Mrs Chouraqui, Mrs Squarcialupi, Mr Selva, Mr Vandemeulebroucke, Mr Michelini, Mr Parodi, Mr Romería i Alcazar, and Mr Happam (Docs. 2-1724/84, 2-1068/84, 2-1137/84, 2-1507/84, 2-1525/84, 2-1755/84, B 2-211/85, B 2-535/85, B 2-1517/85 and B 2-1537/85),
 - having regard to Petition No. 95/85 (PE 99.948),
 - having regard to the Council recommendation of 10 December 1982 on the principles of a Community policy with regard to retirement age⁴,
 - having regard to the preamble and Article 2 of the EEC Treaty,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment and the opinions of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Citizens' Rights, the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport and the Committee on Women's Rights (Doc. A 2-7/86),
- A. believing that the pursuit of the objectives set down in the Treaty must extend also to improving the living conditions of the elderly,
- B. believing also that it is unacceptable that in our society, individuals should be valued and dealt with in terms of their productivity,
- C. noting that in all the Member States the numbers of old people are increasing significantly, and that 14% of the Community population are aged over 65,

¹ OJ No. C 66, 15.3.1982, p. 71 et seq.

² OJ No. C 172, 2.7.1984, p. 58 et seq.

³ OJ No. C 122, 20.5.1985, p. 63 et seq.

⁴ OJ No. L 357, 18.12.1982, p. 27 et seq.

- D. noting that the ageing of the Community population is attributable primarily to the decline in infant mortality and to increased longevity, which have resulted from the notable advances of medical science, as well as to the falling or static birth rate generally prevalent in certain Member States,
 - E. stressing in addition the need to make a distinction between 'young senior citizens' and 'old senior citizens' (i.e. those aged over 75) and emphasizing that it is the latter group - consisting mainly of women - which is particularly vulnerable and has far more specific needs,
 - F. believing that in the light of current population trends, with the increasingly heavy preponderance of old people in relation to the working population, serious thought must be given to the role of social security systems and their adjustment to the changes taking place in the population structure and generally decreasing employment,
 - G. stressing that the moral and civil values embodied in old people represent a highly positive factor for society as a whole in the context of a renewed pact of social interchange and solidarity between the generations,
 - H. whereas the economic, social, educative and cultural role of old people is universally recognized and must be safeguarded,
 - I. whereas this role may be better performed if old people can take a constructive and active part in the changes affecting society rather than being isolated from them,
 - J. whereas society cannot limit itself to providing old people with such economic and welfare measures as are strictly necessary, but must also foster a basic change in attitudes so that its senior citizens are treated with the same respect as that shown to others,
1. Considers that improving the lot of the elderly has to be one of the priority objectives for Community social policy and that, if this objective is to be attained, increased budgetary funds must be earmarked for it from the next financial year onwards;
 2. Notes with satisfaction that in virtually all the Member States there is a growing awareness both of the phenomenon of the ageing of the population, with its related consequences, and of the particular situation of the elderly, their problems, their needs and their wishes and the new identity which they must have in the society of today;
 3. Points out, however, that the 'rediscovery' of old people is not invariably accompanied in the Member States by specific laws to meet their expectations and provide for plans of action to deal effectively with all the factors that tend to force them onto the fringes of society;
 4. Notes that the image of old people is generally equated with retirement; is therefore convinced that an effective policy of preparation for this new way of life must be regarded as having fundamental importance in all the Member States and must take into account the wide variety of conditions in which old people live and the social disparities affecting them, if it is to improve the quality of life for all the over-65s and over-75s;

5. Considers that public awareness is essential for the preparation for retirement and calls, therefore, on the Member States to organize information campaigns in the mass media on:
 - health and preventive medicine,
 - pension and social security schemes and how they will develop,
 - financial assistance accorded to the elderly (supplementary benefit, housing allowances, welfare benefits, etc.),
 - household management and, where appropriate, investment opportunities;
6. Draws attention also to the importance of training courses prior to retirement and hopes that, with the backing of management and labour, such courses will be made widely available for both employed workers and the self-employed;
7. Stresses that, to launch an operative European policy on preparation for retirement, a number of measures must first be adopted, and calls in particular on the Commission to
 - draw up forthwith a directive on voluntary and flexible retirement, following the guidelines set out in the Council recommendation of 10 December 1982 on the principles of a Community policy with regard to retirement age,
 - set an adequate minimum European pension which takes proper account of inflationary factors and the relationship between pensions and contributions,
 - guarantee that, in any reform of old-age pensions in Community Member States, the new provisions will not jeopardize the pension rights being acquired by workers of over forty-five years of age,
 - propose practical measures for the harmonization of the pensionable age, which must in any case be the same for men and women,
 - take immediate steps, in agreement with the two sides of industry, to bring about a restructuring of working time whereby workers over 55 are given the opportunity to work part-time until they reach full retirement age;
8. Also requests the Council to adopt as soon as possible the directive on part-time voluntary work so as to ensure that proper protection is provided for old people intending to take up such work;
9. Points out that a large number of very old people are women and believes, therefore, that the structure of most pension schemes needs to be reformed so that all women, including housewives, may receive a proper pension regardless of their marital status;
10. Stresses that old people need to enjoy a degree of peace of mind with regard to their financial situation and calls, therefore, on all Member States to introduce an inflation-proofed policy on income for retired people, and to afford them the opportunity of investing any savings they may have at a higher rate of interest, whether in a post-office savings account or in a bank account;

11. Points out that the payment of pension occasionally does not coincide with the end of working life and that this causes numerous problems and traumas for the retired person; asks therefore for this difficulty to be averted in all Member States by helping resolve in advance all factors contributing to this problem;
12. Draws attention to the success of the open universities and other similar forms of disseminating culture, which are also aimed at older people, and calls in this connection on the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport and the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment to conduct a survey in 1987 on the situation of these initiatives and the possibilities for cooperation at European level;
13. Considers it desirable that old people should be allowed to remain in their familiar surroundings, and points out in this connection that a range of aid measures should be considered, including optional special leave for all families with an elderly dependent whose income is below subsistence level, through fiscal and other mechanisms;
14. Points out that housing is a fundamental problem for old people, but notes with regret that in most Member States old people tend to live in impractical and uncomfortable accommodation or even in precarious conditions; calls therefore on the Commission and the Member States to study thoroughly the ways and means of tackling the problems of old people's housing; also considers that integrated housing schemes (old people living alongside other sections of the population) would enable old people to take a more active part in social life avoiding the risk of isolation and bridging the generation gap and therefore urges the Commission to participate in experimental integrated housing schemes;
15. Calls also on all the Member States to devise a housing policy for the elderly making provision for, among other things, tax concessions for old people who already own their home, subsidies for would-be home buyers and rules prohibiting the termination of a lease where the tenant is over seventy years of age;
16. Calls finally on Member States in which the housing crisis is particularly acute to take special measures to protect people over 65 years of age from eviction;
17. Is increasingly concerned at the spread of acts of aggression against and assault on old people, especially in large built-up areas, and points out that this phenomenon is giving rise to a state of perpetual anxiety; calls, in this connection, on the governments of the Member States to take appropriate steps to enable all old people living alone to obtain a telephone at concessionary tariffs and, in cases of hardship, make calls at reduced rates; requests in addition that those aged over seventy-five be supplied free of charge with an alarm device linked to the telephone so that, in an emergency, an old person may transmit an appeal for help via the telephone lines without having to make his way to a telephone;
18. Requests that, to improve social integration, old people be granted reductions on all transport tariffs and tourism for the elderly be developed; calls also for old people to cultural and other events at reduced charges;

19. Points out that social security for very old people will become a matter of unceasing concern for the Member States and therefore requires the definition at Community level of health and social action programmes incorporating special measures for disabled elderly people;
20. Stresses that, in addition to real development in social security, the improvement of old people's quality of life calls for parallel developments in voluntary measures that provide care, comfort and friendship for persons too often abandoned; hopes that voluntary work on behalf of old people will be promoted and encouraged by the public authorities;
21. Urges the Commission to inaugurate a 'European Charter for the Aged' as soon as possible - and at all events not later than 1 January 1988 - so that the rights of this group may be fully recognized and guaranteed by law;
22. Calls also on the Commission to study the possibility of introducing a European health card for the elderly;
23. Welcomes the work of the associations for the elderly and is convinced that greater recognition should be given to their role and their development encouraged and that they should be consulted regularly at European level on decisions concerning old people;
24. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments of the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTI. INTRODUCTION

This report has been drawn up on the basis of various motions for resolutions tabled, under Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure, since the opening of the current parliamentary term. All this activity shows that the European Parliament is particularly concerned about the problems of old people, taking the view that the improvement of their living conditions must be one of the priorities for the Community's social policy, if the Community is to pursue effectively the objectives laid down in the preamble of the EEC Treaty, in particular that of 'the constant improvement of the living and working conditions of ... (its) peoples'.

Incidentally, this is the second time that the European Parliament has addressed itself to this problem. As long ago as 18 February 1982(1), it adopted a comprehensive and detailed resolution on the subject, setting out a number of measures and urgent requests. Sadly, however, no action has ever been taken on most of them.

Furthermore, Parliament's permanent and intense concern with the problems of old age finds expression in many resolutions. There was, for instance, the resolution of 16 April 1985(2) on the new Commission's priorities in the field of social affairs and employment, and above all paragraph 30, drawing

'the Commission's attention in particular to the position of the elderly, which is frequently one of loneliness, poverty and mental distress; considers that thought should be given at Community level to improving the material condition of the elderly and better integrating pensioners in society,(3) and that it is desirable for the Commission to make a recommendation in this field'.

The aim of this report, however, is first and foremost to draw attention once again to a category of European citizens whose problems, especially under the effects of the gradual ageing of the population, are becoming progressively more acute, can no longer be ignored and demand responses which, with every day that passes, are becoming a matter of greater urgency.

Facing up to the economic crisis, with its burden of unemployment and profound and radical social change, also means evolving towards a more civilized society, founded on a fairer distribution of wealth and greater social justice. All this can be done, provided that the problems are tackled in a spirit of genuine collective solidarity, in which the elderly too must be actively involved.

(1) OJ NO. C 66, 15.3.1985

(2) OJ No. C 122, 20.5.1985, p. 63 et seq.

(3) See European Parliament resolution of 9 June 1983, OJ No. C 184, 11.7.1983, p. 116

II. THE INCREASING PROPORTION OF OLD PEOPLE IN THE MEMBER STATES

From 1 January 1986, the Community will have a population of more than 321 million, with over 14% aged 65 and above. This trend is already apparent in the figures overleaf, relating mostly to the period 1981 - 1983:

TABLE I

Member State	Total population as at 1 January 1980 ('000)	Total population as at 1 January 1984 ('000)	Over-65s as at 1 January 1984 ('000)	Over-65s (%) (1984)	Over-65s (%) in estimated total population (1995)
Belgium	9 847.0	9 856.0 ¹	1 415.3 ¹	14.37	13.70
Denmark	5 123.0	5 114.0	766.1	15.20	14.50
France	53 714.0	54 832.0	7 052.5	12.90	13.30
Greece	9 643.0	9 872.0	1 309.1	13.30	—
Ireland	3 401.0	3 528.3	373.4	10.60	10.20
Italy	56 416.0	56 929.0	7 476.7 ²	13.30	14.30
Luxembourg	365.1	365.8	48.3	13.20	13.90
Netherlands	14 150.0	14 394.0	1 708.5	11.90	12.80
Portugal	9 819.0 ¹	10 049.7	1 174.3	11.80	—
United Kingdom	56 360.0	56 449.7	8 417.0	15.00	15.00
Germany (FR)	61 566.0	61 423.0	7 095.1	14.80	15.20
Spain	37 242.0	38 280.0	4 627.1	12.20	—
TOTAL	317 646.1	321 093.5	49 880.7		

¹ 1981
² 1982

Although the reasons for the ageing of the population are not invariably the same in all countries, the main causes are to be found in a falling or static birth rate and in the significant advances in medical science, which have led to a fall in infant mortality and greater longevity.

According to the information available, infant mortality fell in all the Member States in the period from 1970 to 1983. This trend can be clearly seen from the following tables:

TABLE II

INFANT MORTALITY RATE

Member State	1970	1980	1982	1983	1984
Deaths in the first year of life per 1 000 live births					
Belgium	21 09	12 15	11 65	11 27	--
Denmark	14 20	8 40	8 20	7 70	7 80
France	18 20	10 10	9 40	9 00	8 20
Greece	--	17 90	15 10	14 60	--
Ireland	19 50	11 10	10 50	9 80	--
Italy	29 60	14 60	13 50	12 30	12 00
Luxembourg	24 90	12 50	12 10	11 20	11 70
Netherlands	12 70	8 60	8 30	8 40	8 30
Portugal	55 50	24 30	19 80	19 20	--
United Kingdom	18 50	12 10	11 00	10 20	--
Germany (FR)	23 40	12 70	10 90	10 20	--
Spain	28 10	11 10	9 60	--	--

TABLE III

TOTAL DEATH RATE

Member State	1970	1980	1982	1983	1984
	Deaths per 1 000 people				
Belgium	12 30	11 54	11 11	11 66	--
Denmark	9 80	10 91	10 80	11 20	11 20
France	10 70	10 20	10 00	10 30	9 80
Greece	--	9 10	8 80	9 20	--
Ireland	11 40	9 80	9 40	9 30	--
Italy	9 60	9 70	9 40	9 90	9 80
Luxembourg	12 20	11 30	11 30	11 30	11 10
Netherlands	8 40	8 20	8 20	8 20	8 10
Portugal	--	--	9 60	9 30	--
United Kingdom	11 80	11 70	11 70	11 70	--
Germany (FR)	12 10	11 70	11 60	11 60	11 30
Spain	8 40	7 70	7 40	7 70	--

Generally speaking, then, the proportion of old people to total population is also increasing in all the Membr States - albeit to varying extents. One just needs to ponder the fact that in some of them - for instance Belgium - the number of persons aged over 60 will have overtaken that of young people under 19 by about the year 2010.

Life expectancy has thus increased for both men and women, though the increase has been greater in the latter case. According to the laterst information available, the situation is as follows:

TABLE IV

Member State	Period	Life expectancy at birth (years)	
		men	women
Belgium	1972-76	68 60	75 10
Denmark	1981-82	71 40	77 40
France	1981	70 40	78 50
Greece	--	--	--
Ireland	1979	69 50	75 00
Italy	1977-79	70 60	77 20
Luxembourg	1976-78	68 00	75 10
Netherlands	1982	72 70	79 40
Portugal	1979	67 70	75 20
United Kingdom	1978-80	70 20	76 20
Germany (FR)	1980-82	70 20	76 90
Spain	--	70 40	76 20

The table above clearly shows that the majority of senior citizens will be women and, it may be inferred, mostly widowed or single and materially in a very precarious position.

Finally, the influence of migration on population trends in the countries of origin and the host countries should not be overlooked. It is quite certain that the fall-off in migration has had a specific bearing on the population structures of some Member States, since workers almost invariably emigrate while they are still young. The most striking example here is Luxembourg, where immigrants account for 26.3% of the total population and the percentage of old people in the population of foreign extraction is only 5.9%. It should also be noted that, according to the figures for 1981, 38.5% of all babies born in the country were born to foreign nationals.

The figures quoted above, setting out population trends between now and the end of the century, point to a general levelling-off in population growth. Population will fall in some countries, for example the Federal Republic of Germany, Denmark and Italy, while in others, such as the Netherlands and Spain, the level will gradually become static between now and the end of the century.

Parallel to this trend, the total number of people aged over 60 will increase far more rapidly, while the over-65s will increase even faster than the sixty-year olds.

III. SOCIAL SECURITY PROBLEMS AND THE PENSION ASPECT

Given this trend towards a general ageing of the population, serious thought must be devoted to the role that social security systems are to play in the future and to the reforms that may be necessitated by the changed structure of the population. Population trends, with a significant deterioration in the ratio of working people to the elderly, must therefore be considered in terms of their direct implications for the operation of social security systems, especially as regards their funding and the nature of benefits.

On the other hand, social security expenditure in all the Member States, despite absorbing an increasingly large share of GDP, frequently fails to provide an adequate return in terms of services. The data compiled by the Commission in various Member States have shown that increased spending does not necessarily mean that the money will be used for the right purposes - especially in the field of health care - and where it is genuinely needed.

The ageing of the population has been reflected above all in the volume of benefits paid and of expenditure on health in particular: as can be seen from the Commission's medium-term projections of social protection expenditure and its financing (1), 'health' and 'old age'(2) continue to be the two most important 'functions' for which social security benefits are used, accounting for between 2/3 and 4/5 of total benefits paid, depending on the individual country. This point is illustrated by the chart on the following page:

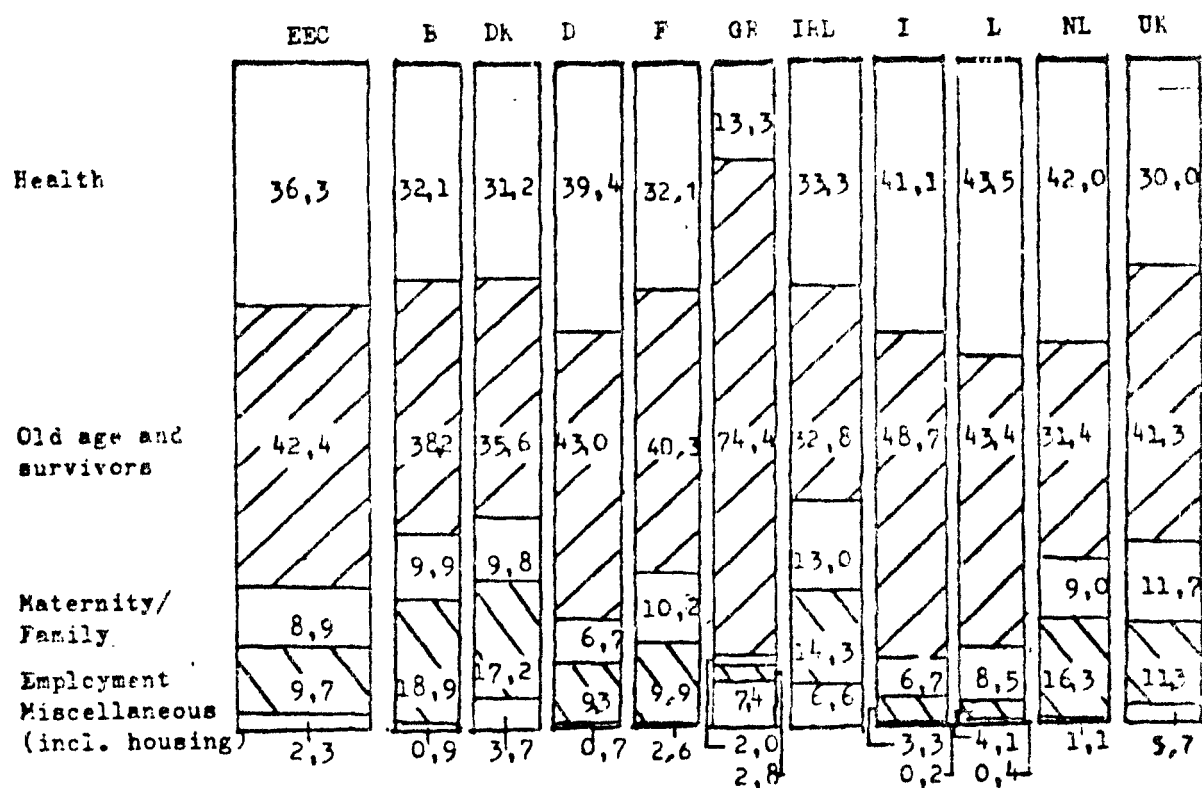
(1) COM(85) 119 final of 1 April 1985

(2) The function 'old age' covers:

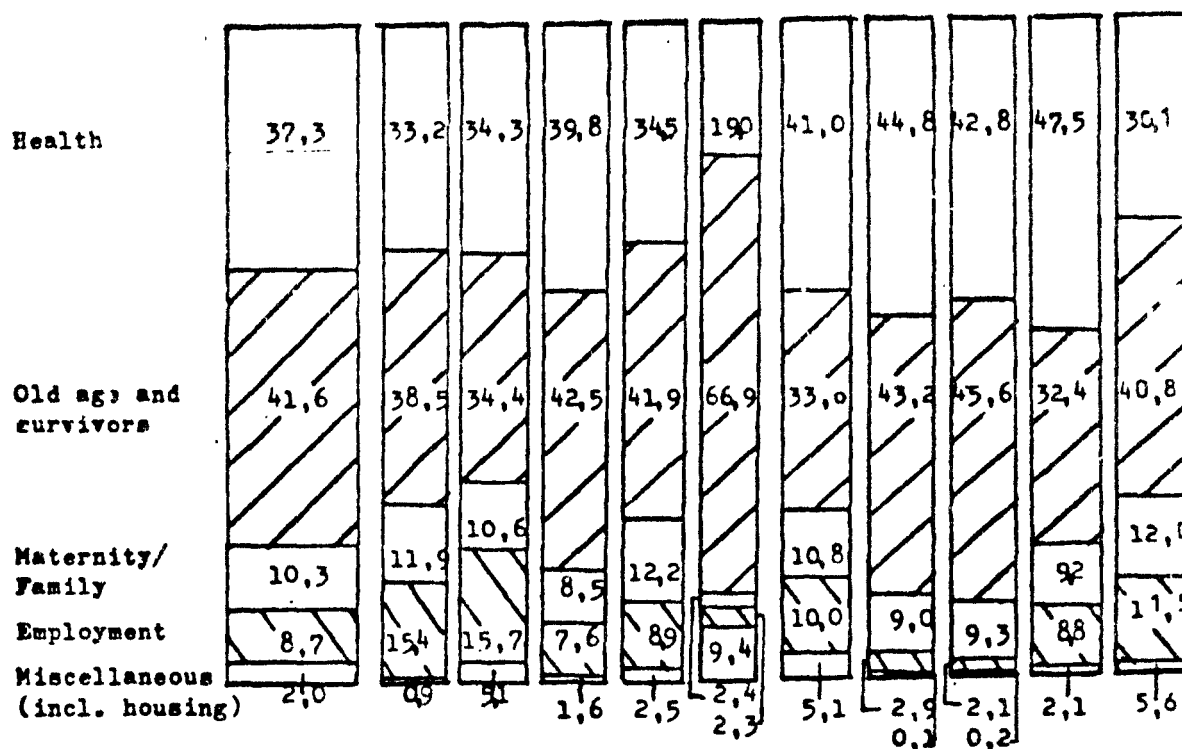
- pensions, allowances, compensation payments and other cash benefits paid in the case of survival beyond a prescribed age;
- the cost of staying in nursing homes for the aged and old people's homes;
- payments described as early retirement pensions and effected in accordance with laws or regulations.

Social protection benefits by main function: percentage structure

1986



1981



Source: Commission of the European Communities
 Projections of social protection expenditure
 1986 projections - summary report

In the light of the ageing of the population, these trends will inevitably lead to an increasingly crushing financial burden for the working population. This applies above all to pension schemes, whether based on social insurance contributions as in Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain, or wherever these principles of social insurance are combined with various forms of social benefit as in the case of Ireland, the United Kingdom, Denmark and other Scandinavian countries outside the Community (Finland, Norway and Sweden).

However, pension allowances vary in the Member States: although the system of a minimum pension now applies in many countries, for instance Belgium, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom, it is only in countries such as the Netherlands and Denmark that these pensions correspond to an acceptable minimum wage.

The debate on the pensionable age must be placed in this context: it would certainly be advisable to consider at European level how the available options as regards pensionable age would affect social security systems and their performance. While some countries are proposing to reduce the pensionable age, there are in contrast others (including Italy) where there is actually a move to raise it. At present, the minimum pensionable age is:

TABLE V

PENSIONABLE AGE IN THE MEMBER STATES

Member State	Pensionable age	
	Men	Women
Belgium	67	60
Denmark	67	67(1)
France(2)	60	60
Greece	65	60
Ireland	66	66
Italy (3)	60	55
Luxembourg	65	65
Netherlands	65	65
Portugal	65	62
United Kingdom (4)	65	60
Germany (FR)	65	65
Spain	65	65

(1) Unmarried women are eligible on request for an old age pension from age 62

(2) From 1 April 1983, pensions equal to 50% of salary at age 60, after 37 1/2 years of contributions

(3) Guaranteed old age pension after 35 years of contributions, provided that the beneficiary is no longer in employment at the time of submitting his or her application

(4) The pensionable age may, optionally, be reduced to 63

Here too, it is difficult to assess what might be the system most likely to provide the best benefits over the long term and to protect as effectively as possible the interests of old people and their right to choose. While it is true that by bringing forward the pensionable age, jobs, may be freed for young people (the working population), thereby guaranteeing a longer-term source of finance for social security systems, it must equally be borne in mind that early retirement for a more substantial part of the population would entail quite a financial burden, and indeed might swell the black economy or other forms of undeclared employment.

Nor should it be overlooked that early retirement schemes do not necessarily create new jobs in traditional sectors, still less in sectors in crisis.

For these reasons, the rapporteur, while unable to give a final judgment on the most appropriate solution for Europe, feels that the options to be recommended to the committee should tend towards flexible and voluntary retirement, following the guidelines set out in the Council recommendation of 10 December 1982 on the principles of a Community policy with regard to retirement age (1).

Finally, it must not be forgotten that this process cannot be separated from a new restructuring and redistribution of working time.

On the wider subject of social security and the extension of the risks covered, especially for the aged, it is disturbing to observe the general pressure for cuts in social services and for more or less accentuated forms of privatization.

The rapporteur supports the Commission and the Council of Europe in their demands for greater rationalization of social security spending, with the emphasis on prevention - especially in the case of expenditure on health - and selectivity, but without neglecting a more balanced relationship between contributions and pensions.

Nevertheless, he feels compelled to point out that social security systems are by definition mechanisms of redistribution, and assistance to the elderly and the most underprivileged groups must continue to be one of their priorities.

The rapporteur is firmly convinced that there is little scope for economizing on the social security spending devoted to old people, and indeed one of the most desirable objectives would be a European minimum pension, corresponding to the Netherlands level, which could be introduced as part of a general reform and rationalization of social security systems and pension schemes.

Having reaffirmed the priority that must be accorded to old age pensions and social security for the elderly, the rapporteur calls on the Commission to continue its inquiry into social security problems and deepen its analysis in the manner requested by the European Parliament in its interim report adopted in May 1984(2).

(1) OJ No. L 357, 18.12.1982, p. 27

(2) Maij-Weggen report on the publication of the Commission of the European Communities entitled 'Social security problems'. Resolution in OJ No. C 172, 2.7.1984

IV. THE ROLE OF OLD PEOPLE IN THE MEMBER STATES

In most of the Member States (apart from Denmark and the Netherlands), clear awareness of the ageing of the population and of the specific situation of old people, their problems and their needs, is only just beginning to emerge.

However, this new awareness has not been accompanied by the necessary action, because, owing to the cuts which have for some years been affecting social security budgets, it is not possible to set up the services that old people need. Yet it is they - as the Commission itself acknowledges in its 1984 report on social developments - who are hit particularly hard by the austerity measures affecting social security and welfare.

Even though the circumstances vary from one Member State to the next, depending on the social and economic structures, the economic, social and educative role of old people is too evident not to be universally recognized. At the same time it has become common practice in virtually all countries over the last few years to devote particular attention to the problems associated with old age, not only from the point of view of social security and welfare, but also taking into account the social value of old people as a positive force for the general development of the country. Sadly, despite this revaluation of old people and their role, most Member States do not have the specific and comprehensive laws that would be needed to match old people's expectations and effectively save them from relegation to the fringes of society.

Numerous studies on the situation of old people agree that in the eyes of society, the image of an old person is reduced purely to his retired status, which symbolizes, almost emblematically, his departure from working life and the productive economy, and from the network of social intercourse attaching to that life.

There can be no doubt that this stereotyped image is detrimental to individuals and takes no account of the historic dimension of all life, or of the fact that certain values embodied in old people are still of paramount and irreplaceable importance. Not even (and least of all) the industrial society can confine itself to the rationale of production and profit, or regard as useless all those outside the 'economic cycle'. The future is built on the past and if needless errors are to be avoided, it will be necessary to draw not only on the strength of the young but also on the experience of the aged, and each age group at its particular stage in life can and must make a positive contribution and has a specific part to play in society.

It must nevertheless be pointed out that the situation of old people after retirement depends also on the type of work in which they were previously engaged, their level of education and the structure of their families.

The transition to retirement is a particularly difficult time, especially for employed workers, because numerous upheavals in individual life are occasioned by their departure from working life: the sudden cessation of social intercourse and obligations, the lowered esteem in the eyes of society and a change in personal relationships arising from one's job.

In addition, there are certain occupations - such as the liberal professions - which in practice allow one to spin out the process of retirement or which end ultimately in a kind of partial retirement in which the person concerned, while no longer officially exercising his profession, continues to have work

interests. Family status also influences life after retirement. It is evident that a person with a spouse and children is in a much better position than the person who ends up alone. When discussing old age, then, the variety of personal situations in which old people live and the social disparities affecting them cannot be left out of account. For instance, the old age of a labourer's widow with nothing to live on but her reversionary pension will certainly bear no resemblance to the old age of a professional person. The variety of social contexts is thus an essential factor to be considered if the reality of old age is to be truly grasped.

V. PROBLEMS OF OLD PEOPLE AND POSSIBILITIES FOR THEIR INTEGRATION IN SOCIETY

In the explanatory statement to the resolution of 18 February 1982(1), referred to above, there is a perceptive analysis of old people and their specific problems. It has to be stressed yet again that no action has yet been taken at Community level to alleviate these problems, which include matters such as early retirement, housing, health, economic vulnerability and involvement in community life, as also the problems encountered by certain vulnerable groups, especially emigrants and women, once they reach old age. For a survey of all these problems, reference should be made to the report of the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment. However, the rapporteur wishes to draw attention here once again - especially in the light of foreseeable population trends over the next decades - to the need for genuine awareness of the problem of the elderly. Unfortunately, the economic crisis, which is currently affecting - albeit to varying degrees - all the Member States and whose end does not appear to be in sight, is liable to obscure this awareness and may even call into question the existing attainments of the welfare state, which were made possible entirely by today's old people. This applies in particular to the social security systems, which are incomplete and in crisis in all the Member States and whose harmonization is becoming a matter of constantly greater urgency. Real social security for the elderly means a guaranteed decent income for the elderly. This presupposes a pension scheme able to guarantee the maintenance of their purchasing power and efficient social services such as home helps, medical treatment in the home, strengthened security services to protect old people from aggression, etc.

The rapporteur also wishes to point to the need for a 'European Charter for the Aged', in which the rights of this group would be fully recognized and legally enshrined.

Aside from the material problems, it is in addition extremely important that the psychological conditions are favourable for the onset of old age. The highest priority must be given to creating the conditions that will enable each person to assume a new and satisfying role on retirement from working life. In this context, a comprehensive preparation for retirement appears an increasingly urgent imperative on which the appropriate action must be taken.

Prevention is better than cure and, from the point of view of geriatric medicine, a policy on preparation for retirement could be regarded as a preventative measure which might even help to reduce social security spending on the elderly. The credibility of such a policy will clearly depend on the general public's perception of its utility.

(1) Doc. 1-848/81

People who are about to retire must therefore be provided with detailed information on the major problems such as health and preventive medicine and, as far as the management of their household budgets is concerned, must have access to legal and financial advice, given that their pension will be lower than their previous salary. They must also, by means of suitable publicity, be encouraged to seek new centres of interest which will keep them integrated in society. There are many possible activities (crafts, the arts, cultural interests, church work, technology, sports and games, helping children, young people or even other old people) and they could all help retired people to discover a new role, which could be as useful and valuable to society as that which they played in their working life. Another example worth noting here is the highly successful universities for the elderly, an initiative which deserves to be developed further and amalgamated with the open universities.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

It is a well-known fact that the problems of old age have generated and still are generating vast quantities of literature, most of it in the wake of the World Assembly on Ageing held in Vienna in 1982.

However, bearing in mind also the breadth of the problem, the rapporteur has felt it appropriate to confine himself for the moment to a purely general approach. He may of course subsequently decide to explore certain aspects in more detail, depending on how discussions progress in committee.

The aim at this stage of the proceedings was merely to point out that further practical action is needed to ensure a fitting quality of life for the elderly, and the foundations must accordingly be laid for a real Community policy which will afford them the social security they need.

To sum up, what is needed is genuine solidarity between the generations. It must never be forgotten that it was today's old people who worked and fought for the economic and social progress from which younger generations are now reaping the benefits.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (DOCUMENT 2-724/84)

tabled by Mr MATTINA
pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure
on the European pension system

The European Parliament,

- A. confirming that it is in favour of reducing working hours in order to provide the solution required to stem the tide of technology-related unemployment,
- B. being of the opinion that there should be close correlation between the reduction in working hours and the total working life, so that the length of the latter does not absorb and cancel out the social effects of the former,
- C. whereas it seems most inconsistent that retirement age should remain the same or be raised (as is the purpose of an Italian Government proposal), whilst in nearly all other European countries early retirement is being applied to mitigate the adverse consequences for employment of industrial restructuring,
 1. Calls on the Commission to draw up, with the fullest possible trade union cooperation, a draft European pension system aimed at providing a model for and thus standardizing national pension schemes;
 2. Also calls on the Commission and the Council to do their utmost to see that individual national governments refrain from amending their respective pension schemes until the European scheme is drawn up, especially if, as in Italy, they plan to raise the retirement age from 60 to 65 years;
 3. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and the Council of Ministers of the European Communities.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (DOCUMENT 2-1068/84)
tabled by Mrs CHOURAQUI and Mrs LEMASS
pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure
on Community action for the elderly

The European Parliament

- A. whereas appropriations for operations in the area of the Social Fund and the social sector of the Community's budget do not adequately meet the needs of the elderly;
 - B. whereas the institutions of the European Community have not seriously looked at the importance of elderly people, their needs and their welfare;
 - C. whereas at the start of the new Parliament's term of office the situation of the elderly should be considered as a priority task;
 - D. whereas 70% of those people with disabilities are over retirement age;
 - E. whereas there has been a rapid increase in the percentage of elderly people, typically accompanied by a fall in the birthrate;
 - F. whereas elderly people usually represent 13% of their respective populations;
 - G. whereas there has been a rapid rise in the population of the very elderly, that is those over the age of 75 with a corresponding increase in the number of elderly people suffering from physical or mental disabilities;
 - H. whereas the development of social policies for the elderly presents the Governments of the Member States and the Community itself with a major challenge in future years;
1. Recognises that the situation of the elderly in the European Community has been ignored for too long;
 2. Recommends that an immediate examination into the particular problems of the elderly be set up by the Commission drawing on the experiences of the social services of all the Member States;
 3. Believes that this study should pay particular attention to the demographic changes in the populations of each of the Member States and the requirements of policies at Community and national level as a result of such changes;
 4. Urges the Commission to come forward with a 'charter for the elderly' based on the conclusions of its studies and consultations with the Member States;
 5. Notes the Commission's proposal on specific Community action to combat poverty and underlines the need for this programme to give particular consideration to the problems of the elderly;
 6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (DOCUMENT 2-1137/84)

tabled by Mrs SQUARCIALUPI
pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure
on the situation of the elderly in the European Community

The European Parliament,

- A. having regard to the resolution adopted on 18 February 1982 on the situation and problems of the aged in the European Community,
- B. whereas in recent years all the problems connected with the aging of the population have become more acute so that resolute action is urgently needed,
1. Points out that most of the requests contained in the report have gone unanswered and that nothing has been done as regards such problems as:
 - (a) fixing a minimum pension rate,
 - (b) financing pensions in the future,
 - (c) differences in the treatment of men and women which become accentuated as women get older,
 - (d) extending the concept of equality to pensions for men and women on the basis of actuarial parity of contributions,
 - (e) housing, assistance and transport;
2. Calls on the Commission to submit proposals along these lines, including financial provisions, as soon as possible.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (DOCUMENT 2-1507/84)

tabled by Mr SELVA, Mr BROK, Mr CIANCAGLINI, Mr ESTGEN, Mrs MAIJ-WEGGEN, Mr GAIBISSO, Mr CHANTERIE, Mrs GIANNAKOU-KOUTSIKOU and Mr McCARTIN on behalf of the Group of the European People's Party

pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

on a Community policy for the aged

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 18 February 1982 on the situation of the aged¹;
 - having regard to its resolution of 22 May 1984 on social security problems²;
- A. considering that the situation of the aged must be a matter of priority for the social policy of the European Communities;
 - B. whereas the Commission has not yet followed up the proposals made by the European Parliament regarding a comparative survey of the situation of the aged in the European Community and a Community policy for the aged;
 - C. stressing that under no circumstances must the economic crisis or administrative problems connected with social security have a negative effect on the situation of the aged or on the assistance guaranteed them;
 - D. whereas the problem of the aged must not be treated as a welfare question but in a broader social, human and cultural context;
 - E. whereas it is essential for European society to rediscover the valuable contribution to be made by the experience of the aged, not only in the context of the family, but also in the sphere of work and the craft industries,
- 1. Calls on the Commission of the European Communities:
 - to carry out a comparative survey of the situation of the aged in the European Community during 1985, as already requested by this Parliament;
 - to draw up, on the basis of its conclusions, a three-year action programme for the aged, to be submitted to Parliament and having the following central aims:

¹ OJ No. C 66 of 15.3.82
² OJ No. C 172 of 2.7.84

- (a) to improve and harmonize the operation of social security schemes for the benefit of the aged;
 - (b) to accompany measures for a gradual lowering of the retiring age with alternative forms of employment for the aged, such as part-time work and vocational training programmes which will make use of their experience, especially in the handicrafts sector;
 - (c) to introduce discounts for transport and holiday travel for the aged, giving them favoured treatment in the matter of leisure projects and cultural activities;
 - (d) to promote the establishment of more 'open universities' and adult education programmes for the aged;
2. Calls on the Commission to report periodically to Parliament on the implementation of this programme;
 3. Has decided to organize a hearing at the European Parliament during 1985 to gather information on the situation of the aged in Europe, to which members of organizations representing the interests of the aged in the Member States will be invited;
 4. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and the Council.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (DOCUMENT 2-1525/84)

tabled by Mr VANDEMEULEBROUCKE and Mr KUIJPERS
pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure
on old people in the European Community

The European Parliament,

- A. Whereas, in view of the increase in life expectancy, the issue of old people is becoming ever more topical,
 - B. Having regard to the Squarcialupi report (Doc. 1-848/81) on the situation and problems of the aged in the Community,
 - C. Noting that since 1982 (the Year of the Aged) and the adoption of the abovementioned report, little or no attention has been devoted to this important question,
 - D. Noting nevertheless that the European Parliament has put a whole series of policy proposals to the Council and the Commission, in particular on:
 - the establishment of local committees of elderly people to advise the authorities in each area on all aspects of aging,
 - devoting particular attention to the ever growing strain involved in the transition from working life to retirement,
 - devoting more attention to creating part-time jobs to facilitate the change-over to 'non-working' life,
 - the need for the Commission to collect information about all the experience that has been gathered and to draw up a report on an 'integrated policy for the aged',
1. Decides, taking existing studies as a starting-point, to consider the problems of the aged and solutions to them in the relevant committees;
 2. Urges the Council and the Commission to translate the recommendations put forward by the European Parliament into proposals for legislation and to submit a report on these proposals to Parliament every six months;
 3. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (DOCUMENT 2-1755/84)

tabled by Mr MICHELINI, Mr FORMIGONI, Mr CIANCAGLINI, Mrs LENTZ-CORNETTE, Mr HABSBURG, Mr CASINI and Mr MALANGRE

pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

on the need for Community action against the serious consequences of the ageing of the population in Europe

The European Parliament,

- A. having regard to its resolution of 12 April 1984 on Community provisions to encourage population growth in Europe,
- B. whereas, in the last twenty years, Europe has been faced with an entirely new problem, namely the sudden and rapid decline in its population, bringing most European countries below the generation replacement threshold,
- C. whereas the problem's grave implications have been highlighted by the most recent statistical and demographic data available, including those of the United Nations and the World Bank, and have been the subject of serious analyses, such as those of the Council of Europe's conferences on demographic problems in 1976 and 1982,
- D. whereas, among the latest data, those provided by the international fertility comparison project - 'Projet international de comparaison de la fécondité' (INED) - show that the fertility rate in Europe has reached an all-time low (1.32 in FRG, 1.57 in Italy, 1.82 in France in 1983) and that the problem is growing at an alarming rate in all countries with grave implications for the future, given that generation replacement is impossible below an average of 2.1 children per woman,
- E. whereas the slump in the population implies a steady decline in the number of young people and, on the other hand, an increase in that of old people, with inevitable economic, social, cultural and geopolitical consequences, which are a source of grave concern for the future of Europe,
- F. recalling, in particular, that the result of the ageing of the population is that schools will gradually empty, the unemployment rate will not drop but increase as offers of work decrease, production and hence the countries' wealth will fall, there will be a shortage of human resources in all areas, and inertia will be inevitable even in the cultural field owing to the lack of generation replacement,
- G. believing that a Europe without young people is a Europe without any future,
- H. aware that the French and German Governments have already taken measures to combat this worrying problem,
1. Invites the Commission to give deep and urgent consideration to the problem of the ageing population in Europe and to ensure that suitable measures are taken to combat and prevent it; special attention should be given to the need for action to be taken by the Community and by individual Member States, providing for:
 - a. financial compensation for those who devote themselves to the upbringing of children; family allowances, tax relief, better pensions, transport facilities, pregnancy allowances, housing subsidies in the framework of a housing policy that gives priority to young couples; remuneration for parents remaining at home to bring up their children, etc.;

¹OJ No. C 127/78

- b. a restructuring of work time and timetables to reduce, as far as possible, the clash between occupational requirements and women's responsibilities as mothers; maternity leave, flexible working hours, part-time work, etc.;
 - c. to this end, possible amendments to legislation must be accompanied by measures that take account of the important cultural and moral aspect of the problem;
 - d. family and cultural policies aimed at restoring the fundamental traditional European values taking into account the connection between the European continent's demographic decline and its moral, cultural and social decline;
2. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission of the European Communities.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (DOCUMENT B 2-211/85)

tabled by Mr PARODI, Mr CIANCAGLINI, Mr CHIUSANO, Mr Nino PISONI, Mr POMILIO, Mr IODICE, Mr ERCINI and Mrs CASSANMAGNAGO-CERRETTI

pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

on the rights of pensioners, the disabled and the elderly

The European Parliament,

- A. having regard to its resolution of 18 February 1982 on the situation and problems of the aged in the European Community and, in particular, the statements of principle concerning pensions adopted in that resolution,
- B. whereas to ensure that pensioners, the disabled and the elderly have full and genuine enjoyment of their rights in all the Member States of the Community, it is vital for these rights to be precisely defined,
- C. whereas the following definitions should be considered as a European Charter of the rights of pensioners, the disabled and the elderly,
 1. Affirms the right to adequate economic protection by the State of those whose moral and material welfare should be respected and guaranteed in recognition of the service they have given, because of their advanced age or for reasons of health;
 2. Considers that the social security schemes for which provision is made in all the Member States should be based on the following principles:
 - (a) it ought not to be possible for social security pension funds to be used for other purposes;
 - (b) among the various types of pension schemes, provision should be made in all cases for the following categories of pension:
 - pensions through social security contributions
 - disability pensions
 - welfare pensions
 - pensions for particular services performed in the interests of the state,
 - (c) special legal bodies or specialized departments should be set up for the protection of social security rights;
 3. Considers it vital, with a view to the proper recognition of the rights of pensioners, the disabled and the elderly, that:
 - (a) there should be no discrimination on grounds of sex, race, religion, nationality or political beliefs,
 - (b) insurance cover and equal treatment in the sphere of social security should be guaranteed for both public and private employees,
 - (c) the mechanisms for protecting the purchasing power of pensions should be the same as those applicable to the wages of persons in gainful employment,
 - (d) only pensions secured through social security contributions should be subject to tax,
 - (e) the laws of the Member States on the reversion of pension rights should be harmonized at the level of the most favourable provisions,

- (f) States should provide free of charge for the treatment and rehabilitation of the disabled and recognize their right to be reintegrated into the work process in a position compatible with the capacity they still have for work,
- (g) States should make provision for the disabled and elderly who cannot be looked after at home to be admitted to special institutions, which could also be privately run, subject to the necessary authorization. The individual's right to privacy should be guaranteed in all cases in these institutions,
- (h) adequate forms of medical and social assistance, both within and outside the home, should be provided for invalids and elderly people who require these services, to which appropriate voluntary organizations could also contribute. Staff would be trained for welfare work by means of appropriate training courses. This type of work could represent an alternative to military service for conscientious objectors,
- (i) appropriate reductions in transport fares and entrance fees for public entertainment should be provided for citizens over the age of 65.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (DOCUMENT B 2-535/85)

tabled by Mrs SQUARCIALUPI

pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

on the increase of eviction notices issued to elderly tenants

The European Parliament,

- A. concerned at the problem common to many countries of the shortage of housing, which is exacerbated in some of them by the decline in the private rented sector,
 - B. whereas in Italy alone the number of eviction notices served in 1984 was more than 145,000,
 - C. whereas the problem of evictions especially affects large cities on account of the growth of the tertiary sector which is transforming dwellings into offices, uprooting residents from the city centres,
 - D. whereas the residents of large city centres affected by the growth of the tertiary sector are mainly elderly people,
 - E. whereas the problem is particularly serious for elderly people moved to another area where it is difficult to reestablish their severed social contacts,
 - F. whereas elderly people therefore suffer particularly from this loss of identity and prefer to remain in a dilapidated home in the city centre rather than move to a new home on the outskirts,
1. Hopes that in order to protect elderly persons served with eviction notices, Member States will take measures aimed at :
 - a) the automatic renewal of leases in law;
 - b) the study of measures for urban regeneration that do not involve uprooting residents from old areas;
 - c) the improvement of services outside the home such as, for example, transport;
 2. Requests that the building industry construct housing units which, in terms of their size and accessibility, are particularly suited to elderly people;
 3. Also calls on the Commission to give special attention to old people in its programmes for the construction of housing units for specific groups (iron and steel workers, immigrants);
 4. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council and the governments of the Member States.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (DOCUMENT B 2-1517/85)

**tabled by Mr ROMERA I ALCAZAR
pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure
on the position of the elderly in the Community countries**

The European Parliament,

- A. aware of the large numbers of elderly people who, owing to lack of means, have to be cared for by public or private bodies in their respective countries, in conditions which are often shameful,
- B. whereas the rise in average life expectancy among Community citizens is leading to an increase in the number of elderly people in need of care,
- C. whereas the problem of providing such care has not been solved in many Community countries,
- D. whereas one of the inalienable rights of citizens is the right to live out one's life in dignity,
- E. having regard to the reports to this effect produced in the principal international forums, particularly the United Nations and the Council of Europe,
- F. aware of the need to give the solution of this problem priority over the solution of others, which are less important and do not have the same human interest,
 1. Expresses its concern at the fact that such a problem exists ;
 2. Deplores the fact that the various countries concerned have not so far been able to solve this problem ;
 3. Declares that priority should be given to dealing with and solving this problem, in that it is a humanitarian matter whose very existence raises doubts as to the efficacy of the Community system ;
 4. Voices its willingness to instigate the necessary action to ensure that a stop is put to the situation in which elderly people without means are given inadequate care, and sometimes no care at all ;
 5. Asks the Commission to draw up, in cooperation with the individual governments, a list of urgent requirements in investment and maintenance resources in the various Community countries ;
 6. Asks the Commission, until such time as paragraph 4 has been put into effect, to give thought to a programme of immediate action and submit it officially to the council, to ensure that the 1987 budget contains the relevant items to meet preliminary estimates of requirements ;
 7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council and the governments of the Member States.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION (DOCUMENT B 2-1537/85)

tabled by Mr HAPPART
pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure
on the right to a guaranteed minimum income in respect of retirement pensions

The European Parliament,

- A. having regard to the problems facing elderly persons whose retirement pensions are below the guaranteed minimum income,
 - B. whereas this discriminatory state of affairs reduces them to a state of poverty,
 - C. whereas every person drawing a retirement pension has contributed to the economy, whatever function he may have performed in society,
1. Calls for the harmonization of retirement pension schemes with a view to simplifying them and rendering them more equitable;
 2. Asks that pensions below the guaranteed minimum income be updated without bureaucratic delays;
 3. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council of Ministers and the Governments of the Member States.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

PETITIONS

pursuant to Rules 108 - 110 of the Rules of Procedure

Petition N. 95/85

by Ms Mary A. CORRIGAN

Subject : Old age contributory pension and elimination
of unjust law.

I wish to apply through you for my Contributory Old Age pension which was due August 6, 1984. Because I have worked a lifetime I am eliminated -due to a dividing factor in the 1953 Social Welfare Act.

I am a registered nurse in three countries : England, Ireland and New-York State ; I also worked in St. Lo, Normandy-France with Irish and International Red Cross taking care of war casualties in a prefabricated hospital on the ruins of the town.

I was born British here-pre Republic. May I point out that Irish Administration of Social Welfare has become a national disgrace. It has put the stamp of approval on idleness, laziness and dirt. The fact that I had worked a lifetime made it difficult for Social Welfare Workers who admitted they were not geared to people who had worked. They refuse to give their names. One S.W. employee reminded me that I was just a number now. It is a gross calculated insult to the elderly most of whom conducted their own life's work in decency, dignity, and fairness to others.

Having voted for Ireland's entry into E.E.C. I have faith that giventime you will see that justice is done in many aspects of life here.

As time is of the essence with the elderly please act as soon as possible to eliminate the injustice to us in the 1953 Social Welfare Act.

Many thanks for any efforts you make in this matter.

Luxembourg, 6th August 1985

Mary A. CORRIGAN
British/ Irish
Registered Nurse
Kiltomane, Lisacul
Ballaghaderreen
IRL - Co. ROSCOMMON

The annexes of this petition will be forwarded to
the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Petitions.

OPINION of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport

Letter from the chairman of the committee to Mr WELSH, chairman of the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment

Subject : Opinion of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport on a Community policy for the aged (Doc. 2-1507/84) and on the motion for a resolution on the need for Community action against the consequences of the ageing of the population in Europe (Doc. 2-1755/84)

Dear Mr Welsh,

At its meeting of 31 October 1985, the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport considered the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr SELVA and others on a Community policy for the aged (Doc. 2-1507/84) and the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr MICHELINI and others on the need for Community action against the consequences of the ageing of the population in Europe (Doc. 2-1755/84)

At the end of the discussion, the committee unanimously adopted¹ the following conclusions :

The Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport :

- whereas the large number of aged persons in our society, in both absolute and percentage terms, is likely to increase considerably in the future,
- regretting that in our society, the aged, after having contributed to its progress throughout their working lives, gradually lose their active role in life and, consequently, are to some extent excluded, whence the need for practical measures to be taken to reduce their feelings of isolation and exclusion,
- convinced that European society must come to recognize again the value of the aged and their experience, both within the family and within the world of work and the craft industries,
- emphasizing in this respect the contribution which may be made by the aged to the transmission of knowledge and experience to the younger generations and, hence, the value of promoting contact between young and old,
- stressing the growing interest among the aged in education projects, open universities and other forms of cultural training which enable them to express their personalities more fully, while maintaining contacts with their social and cultural environment,

¹The following took part in the vote : Mrs EWING, chairman; Miss BROOKES, Mr ELLIOTT, Mrs FONTAINE (deputizing for Mr HERSANT), Mr HOWELL, Mrs LARIVE-GROENENDAAL, Mr MARCK (deputizing for Mr HAHN), Mrs PEUS, Mrs SEIBEL-EMMERLING, Mr SELVA and Mr TRIPODI.

1. Feels that the situation of the aged must constitute one of the priorities of the Community's social policy;
2. Considers, therefore, that the Commission of the European Communities should draw up a multiannual action programme for the benefit of the aged and that this should include concessions in the area of tourism and travel and preferential access to cultural and leisure activities;
3. Considers that with particular regard to transport, provisions on the duration of travel entitlements and the reductions granted to the elderly - which vary widely from country to country - should be harmonized at Community level, and that any future concession granted to its citizens by a Member State should be extended to cover nationals of other Member States visiting that country;
4. Considers that the issues of the harmonization of pension systems and the transfer of pensions from one country to another deserve very close attention;
5. Considers that prominence should also be given to education projects for the aged by expanding the scope of open universities and permanent education, with literacy courses provided for elderly people who are still illiterate;
6. Considers, furthermore that the aged should be given better access to cultural programmes and vocational training.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd) Winifred M. EWING

OPINION

(Rule 101 of the Rules of Procedure)

of the Committee on Womens Rights

Draftsman: Mrs LEMASS

On 22 May 1985, the Committee on Womens Rights appointed Mrs LEMASS draftsman of the opinion.

The Committee considered the draft opinion at its meetings of 17/18 September 1985 and 14/15 October 1985. It unanimously adopted the draft opinion on 15 October 1985.

The following took part in the vote:

Mmes LENZ (Chairman), CINCIARI RODANO and GIANNAKOU-KOTSIKOU (Vice-Chairman), LEMASS (draftsman of the opinion), DALY, D'ANCONA, DE BACKER-VAN OCKEN, GADIOUX, LARIVE-GROENENDAAL, Mr PEARCE, Mmes PANTAZI, SQUARCIALUPI and TONGUE.

Introductory Remarks

The most striking fact about elderly people in our society is their growing numbers. There are several factors at play here - longer life expectancy through better health-care, falling birth-rate - with the resultant "ageing" of the European population.

We must of course avoid the temptation to generalise about elderly people - as with every other category of society, there is immense variety amongst elderly people: the category covers a very wide age-span, the health of the elderly can vary greatly, and most important of all, the individual situation of elderly people will vary widely depending on personal economic and family circumstances.

However, despite the variety apparent within the global category of the "over-65s", there is one over-riding fact - the majority are women (see table I).*

Profile of elderly women

Given the longer life expectancy of women (table II),* and because men traditionally marry women younger than themselves, it follows that the majority of elderly women are widows or single (table III).*

It is essential to bear in mind when talking of the elderly that we are talking mainly of women, and that most of these women are alone.

The majority of these women who are or have been married will have had little or no experience of the labour-force. It is not so long, in some Member States, prior to the introduction of anti-discrimination legislation of the equal treatment directive 76/207 (OJ L 39 14.2.1976), since women were obliged on marriage to resign from certain professions.

The elderly women who constitute the majority of Europe's "senior citizens" dedicated their adult life to others - the majority of them were wives and mothers. The higher birth-rate of former generations was, partially at least, due to the lack of information about contraception.

* - Annex

Bigger families and fewer labour-saving devices in the home made "wife-and-mother" a very full-time occupation! In addition, given the general tendency to reserve higher education for the sons of the family, women in former generations who could or had to work, were usually employed in low-category, poorly-paid jobs.

Therefore to consider the elderly merely as "retired workers" is to completely ignore the large numbers of women who do not fall into this category - not every elderly person is a former worker or has been in receipt of a salary.

Pensions and equal treatment

In our affluent society, it is appalling to consider what, in some of our countries, is considered to be an adequate sum of money for an elderly person to live on.

And, of course, we have the recurrent problem of the unequal treatment of which women are victims as a result of the retention, in directive 79/7 on equal treatment in matters of social security (OJ L 6, 10.1.1979), of the notion of "the derived entitlements of a wife".

It is urgent, as a matter of basic human dignity, to raise the minimum level of old-age benefits to one which enables pensioners to live without the constant fear of going hungry or suffering from the cold.

Similarly, priority should be given to ensuring equal treatment of the elderly with regard to benefits and entitlements. Those who have given so much to the younger generations - as mothers, aunts, grand-mothers, educators, nurses, carers - must be accorded this minimal degree of dignity and respect.

Housing and "homes"

All sources seem to agree that the ideal housing situation for elderly people is that they continue to live in their own home. In this way, they are in familiar surroundings, with neighbours of long standing, and an established relationship with the local postman, shopkeepers, etc. This is, of course, an excellent arrangement, where it is possible.

However, it must be remembered that the homes of the elderly will generally be older houses with less amenities than newer buildings, and more maintenance problems. Elderly people living in such conditions should be grant-assisted in necessary repairs and in the installation, where necessary, of adequate sanitary facilities and heating.

Where the elderly do not own their home and are living in rented accommodation, particularly when such is provided by a local/regional authority, they should be assisted where necessary so that financial constraints do not oblige them to leave their home. In the case of public authority housing, this could be accomplished through rent reductions.

In cases where the elderly are homeless and public housing must be made available, every care must be taken to ensure that "ghettos for the elderly" are not created. Irrespective of whether the elderly people in question are entirely self-sufficient or require care and help in the home, they should be housed in small units dispersed among other housing schemes and amenities. This "mixture" of ages and categories - a small unit of "old folks' flats" set in an estate where young couples with children predominate, close to churches, shops and public transport - means that the elderly people can retain a sense of being part of society and not "left-out". It can only benefit children too, to live in the same community as the elderly, and learn thereby tolerance of people who may be less strong and capable than themselves.

A final - and important - aspect of this "mixed" approach to public housing should be a reduction in the insecurity felt by elderly people who are cut off from daily-life through being "isolated at the top of a block of high-rise flats in which the lifts have broken down".¹

1 - debate on SQUARCIALUPI report: doc. 1-848/81 - 18.2.1982 - Annex 1-280 to Official Journal.

One hears too often of the abuse of elderly people who are in private or institutionalised care - exorbitant fees and inadequate services. Institutions and homes for the elderly should be subject to regular visits by public authorities with a view to ensuring that the services to the patients or residents correspond to the fees being paid and that at the very least the human dignity of the elderly is being respected.

Measures to protect elderly people

It is a distressing fact that in today's society elderly people, and especially elderly women, live in constant fear of being attacked. They are seen as 'easy targets' by petty criminals. Many become too frightened to venture out for fear that they will be mugged or their houses broken into while they are out.

There are ways in which the local community could be encouraged to assist the elderly to overcome these fears. Regular visits by neighbours and the installation of telephones and alarm systems (preferably linked to the local police station) would help to allay some of their fear and also deter an intending attacker. The overriding priority is to develop a public awareness about the safety and wellbeing of elderly people.

Services for the elderly

We have already referred to the meagre financial means on which too many elderly people are forced to live. It automatically follows that the provision of certain services free or at a reduced rate for pensioners would greatly alleviate the financial strains on someone trying to live on an old-age pension.

My own country gives free travel to all old-age pensioners. This has meant great freedom to visit relatives and friends throughout the country for many elderly people who previously might only have seen such relations and friends at very wide intervals. Countries where this service does not exist might well consider introducing it for their elderly inhabitants.

The allocation of a certain number of electricity units per month and cheap fuel would all go a long way towards freeing the elderly of the ever-present fear of cold during the winter.

The following services should also be considered:

- Free medical cards with a choice of doctor for all Old Age Pensioners irrespective of income;
- Support for voluntary services such as 'Meals on Wheels' which provide invaluable assistance to those living alone;
- Where elderly people choose to remain in their own homes but cannot manage all of the household chores, local or regional health authorities should ensure that an adequate home help service is available to assist them.

Information

Finally, it goes without saying that the provision of services to the elderly is pointless if they are not aware of their rights and entitlements.

As pointed out earlier, elderly women are, in the main, outside the labour-force and have not therefore been informed of their rights and entitlements on retirement. We must also remember that the general provision of social benefits is a recent phenomenon in many countries - our elderly were not accustomed, when they were young, to looking for or accepting "handouts". Not only must information as to their rights be made available to the elderly - it is essential that such information be presented in such a way that they are fully aware that they are entitled to these benefits and are not being offered "charity". If people are in need of assistance, financial or social, they should not be further insulted at the suggestion that they are imposing on society by claiming the assistance to which they are entitled.

Given that many elderly women are not in the "mainstream" of work contacts, through their absence from the labour-force, it is doubly important to ensure that they are properly informed of their rights. Womens groups and organisations have an important role to play here - such information could also be disseminated through the churches.

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The Committee on Womens Rights hereby submits to the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment the following recommendations which it would wish to see included in the motion for a resolution to be presented to the European Parliament:

- noting that in all countries of the Community elderly women living alone make up a large part of the 'new poor'
- pensions should enable pensioners to live in dignity, without fear of hunger and cold, and supplements should therefore be paid to those receiving the lowest pensions, in the main women
- equal treatment of elderly men and women should be implemented as a matter of urgency, notably equal minimum State pensions and the elimination of existing anomalies with regard to survivors' pensions; there must also be an improvement in the situation of women who have been employed but are nevertheless penalized on retirement for the periods during which they gave up work to raise their children
- ways must be found of enabling elderly people to remain in the surroundings familiar to them for as long as is possible
- national authorities should ensure that public housing for the elderly is appropriate to their needs, that the elderly do not become victims of evictions uprooting them from their known and familiar surroundings and that amenities, including cultural and leisure amenities, are adequate and are regularly serviced and up-dated; these authorities should also investigate

and supervise the services offered in private homes for the elderly with a view to ensuring that the quality of service corresponds to the fees paid

- national authorities should seek to ensure that the elderly are more actively involved in the formation of policy on the elderly. They should be more fully represented on advisory bodies and the boards of homes for the elderly and voluntary organizations active in this field, in place of younger people who think they know what is right for their elders
- the national authorities should, on publication, carefully examine the findings of the inquiries currently being undertaken by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions and the Commission of the European Communities, with particular reference to services and provisions for assisting the elderly, with a view to the introduction throughout the Community of analogous services for the elderly comprising notably subsidized or even free transport and, where the income is below an acceptable minimum, electricity and heating
- national and local authorities should launch an information campaign on the situation and role of elderly people, one purpose of this being to increase the public awareness of acts of violence directed in particular against elderly women
- it is also important to provide elderly people with information on their biological development and health problems
- in the framework of the common transport policy the 'senior citizens' rail pass' should be made available to persons aged 60 or more in all the Member States. The distinction made between women, who can obtain this rail card at 60 and men, who have to reach the age of 65 before they become eligible, should be abolished

- information of elderly people concerning their rights and entitlements and how to claim them is of paramount importance; this is particularly true of elderly women, many of whom will not have been members of the labour-force and who will not therefore have had access to "pre-retirement" courses. Such information should be geared towards an awareness that benefits available are entitlements and not "charity"

- special attention should be paid to the position of elderly women in minority groups who often become very isolated because of their lack of familiarity with the language and customs of their host country. This could take the form of radio and TV programmes in their own language providing both entertainment and information, and of the training and employment of elderly persons and other assistants who are members of the minority groups concerned

- the potential contribution of the elderly to society should be emphasized at all levels by giving them - and particularly women - social responsibilities such as looking after children in play camps, involvement in the campaign against drugs, involvement in road safety and such like, which would encourage them to participate in the political and cultural life of the community -

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TABLE I*

ANNEX

POPULATION OVER 65 (%)¹

	D	F	I	NL	B	L	GB	IRL	DK	EL	EUR 10
FEMALE	18.4	15.7	13.5	13.9	16.7	15.9	17.7	11.8	17.0	14.6	16.7
MALE	10.8	10.3	13.6	9.7	11.3	10.8	12.0	9.4	12.6	11.9	11.2
TOTAL	14.8	13.1	13.6	11.8	14.1	13.4	14.9	10.6	14.8	13.3	14.0

¹ - average 1983 (1982 or 1983)

TABLE II*

LIFE EXPECTANCY¹ (Years)

	D	F	I*	NL	B	L	GB	IRL*	DK	EL	EUR 10
FEMALE	38.8	40.7	39.3	40.9	38.8	38.4	38.9	36.8	39.1	39.0	39.2
MALE	33.1	33.7	33.6	34.8	33.0	32.4	33.6	32.2	33.9	35.6	33.4

* figures for 1974/1979

so that people may reasonably expect to live to age

FEMALE	78.8	80.7	79.3	80.9	78.8	78.4	78.9	76.8	79.1	79.0	79.2
MALE	73.1	73.7	73.6	74.8	73.0	72.4	73.6	72.2	73.9	75.6	73.4

¹ - at age 40; figures for 1980/82

* Source - Eurostat Demographic Studies 1985.

TABLE III ¹POPULATION OVER 65 - MARRIED / ALONE

	Total Population		Total over 65		Married		Total ALONE *	
	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE
GERMANY April 1981	26,905,500	23,917,600	6,113,400	3,492,300	1,886,600	2,712,000	4,226,800	780,300
FRANCE March 1982	21,968,060	20,371,460	4,463,560	2,817,320	1,533,660	2,053,020	2,929,900	764,300
ITALY October 1981	23,139,109	21,290,188	4,415,882	3,069,244	1,589,763	2,350,862	2,826,119	718,382
NETHERLANDS April 1981	5,652,715	5,464,709	975,575	677,595	388,973	504,571	586,602	173,024
BELGIUM March 1981	4,075,622	3,800,542	855,497	559,796	311,478	394,288	544,019	165,508
LUXEMBOURG March 1981	153,765	143,339	30,071	19,475	9,524	13,695	20,547	5,780
UNITED KINGDOM April 1981	22,696,367	20,917,243	4,936,943	3,226,298	1,829,131	2,348,427	3,107,812	877,931
IRELAND April 1981	1,205,731	1,193,945	203,771	165,183	59,647	94,845	144,124	70,338
DENMARK April 1981	2,080,582	1,988,537	428,950	312,500	156,620	216,996	272,330	95,504
GREECE April 1981	4,219,436	3,995,605	689,557	549,984	300,341	455,562	389,031	94,467

¹ Compiled on the basis of statistics supplied by EUROSTAT Office

* Total of figures for single, widowed and divorced persons

The first part of the document
 discusses the importance of
 maintaining accurate records
 and the role of the
 committee in this regard.

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