COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

of 27 May 1998

on the ratification of ILO Convention No 177 on home work of 20 June 1996

(notified under document number C(1998) 764)

(98/370/EC)

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular the second indent of Article 155 thereof,

Whereas ILO Convention No 177 on home work of 20 June 1996, as supplemented by a recommendation adopted on the same day, provides a framework for protecting homeworkers;

Whereas that Convention requires countries which ratify it to adopt, implement and periodically review a national policy on home work aiming at improving the situation of homeworkers;

Whereas the Convention also expressly states that the national policy on home work should promote, as far as possible, equality of treatment;

Whereas the aims pursued by the Convention meet the objectives of the Commission as expressed in its medium-term social action programme (1995 to 1997);

Whereas the aims pursued by the Convention help to promote the objective of striking a balance between flexibility of the labour market and security of the employees;

Whereas the second indent of the first paragraph of Article 118 of the Treaty gives the Commission the task of promoting close cooperation between Member States in the social field, particularly in matters relating to labour law and working conditions;

Whereas the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers states (point 10) that 'Every worker of the European Community shall have a right to adequate social protection and shall, whatever his status and whatever the size of the undertaking in which he is employed enjoy an adequate level of social security benefits';

Whereas 6,9 million people in the Community usually perform their work at home, which at Community level is equivalent to 4,9 % of the working population;

Whereas the particular vulnerability of homeworkers and the need to provide them with appropriate protection are acknowledged;

Whereas the nature of home work is evolving rapidly with the introduction of new information technologies, making the need for appropriate protection even more necessary;

Whereas most homeworkers are women; whereas they choose homeworking as a way to combine earning a wage needed for the household with taking care of dependants, most commonly young children; whereas this choice made by women is often a result of external factors such as limited job opportunities or lack of childcare or other supporting facilities,

HEREBY RECOMMENDS:

— that Member States which have not yet done so ratify the ILO home work Convention, adopted on 20 June 1996,

— that Member States inform the Commission, within a period of 18 months from publication of this recommendation, of the steps taken pursuant to it.

Done at Brussels, 27 May 1998.

For the Commission

Pádraig FLYNN

Member of the Commission