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Press release | 18.05.2010

Equal treatment

EP vote will stengthen EU rules on equal treatment for self-employed men and women but falls short on key issues

Today the European Parliament voted in favour of a compromise agreement revising EU rules on the equal treatment of self-employed men and women (1). Following the vote, **Green/ICV MEP Raül Romeva**said**:**

"Today's vote will help strengthen EU rules on the equal treatment of self-employed men and women and bring them up to date to the realities of modern family structures. Women play an essential role in sustaining self-employed business as owners, assisting spouses or life partners and it is crucial that this role is recognised and supported under EU legislation.

"Assisting spouses are not necessarily married partners but are equally engaged in both the business and the relationship. For this reason, it is particularly welcome that the directive will establish the principle of equal treatment in relation to the establishment, equipment or extension of a business. However, it is regrettable that the directive will fail to ensure mandatory registration to ensure social security protection of assisting spouses/life partners, as most Member States leave assisting spouses/life partners with deprived rights in terms of access to social protection systems and coverage.

"It is important to give self-employed women and assisting spouses/partners maternity leave of a duration long enough to ensure the proper course of a normal pregnancy and physical recovery of the mother after a normal childbirth. Consequently, it is regrettable that the Council did not accept the Commission's original proposal to ensure that female self-employed workers and assisting spouses are entitled to the same period of maternity leave as provided for in the EU legislation on the health and safety of pregnant mothers and those who have given birth (2)."

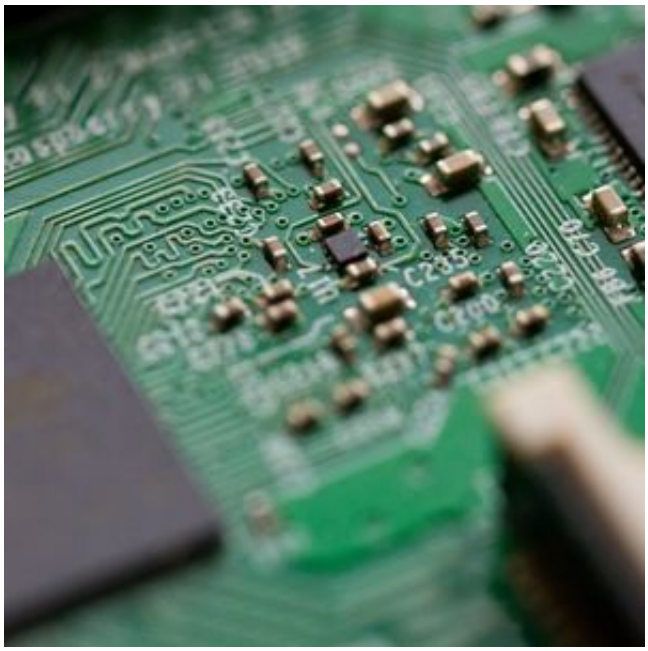
(1) Second reading vote on the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity 86/613/EG.

(2) Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding.

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