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Directorate-General for Internal Policies  
Directorate C - Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs  
Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality  
The Secretariat

## **COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY**

### **MAIN ACTIVITIES IN THE SIXTH LEGISLATIVE PERIOD**

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## 1. SOME STATISTICS

So far in the sixth legislative period, the committee on women's rights and gender equality

- adopted 26 initiative reports
- adopted 7 legislative reports
- adopted 93 opinions
- held 26 public hearings
- held exchanges of views with 94 VIPs during committee meetings
- organised 22 external delegations
- held 99 half days meetings
- sent 923 letters

For more details about these events, please see the committee website ([http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/femm\\_home\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/femm_home_en.htm))

## 2. PRESENCE ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

### Follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing + 10)

An ad hoc delegation of the committee took part in the 49th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women held from 28 February to 11 March 2005 in New York, the objective of which was to review the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action 10 years after its introduction. The Committee also participated in preparations for the 49th session at a conference organised in Luxembourg by the Luxembourg Presidency on 2 and 3 February 2005.

The key strands of the committee's position were set out in the European Parliament resolution of 10 March 2005, which called *inter alia* for:

- ratification by the Member States of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,
- greater participation by women in the economic, political and social decision-making process,
- implementation of *gender mainstreaming* and *gender-based budgeting* in Community legislation.

The follow-up to the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women was the subject of a series of oral questions put to the Commission and the Council within the context of the European Parliament debate on International Women's Day, 8 March 2005.

## 3. HIGH-LEVEL RELATIONS WITH THE COUNCIL

The committee received Ministers in charge of equality between women and men in the countries holding the Presidency:

Mr Aart-Jan de Geus, Minister of Social Affairs and Employment, the Netherlands

Mrs Marie-Josée Jacobs, Minister for Equal Opportunities, Luxembourg

Mrs Meg Munn, MP, British Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Women and Equality, United Kingdom

Mrs Maria Rauch-Kallat, Austrian Minister for Health and Women's Issues, Austria

Mrs Tuula Haatainen, Minister of Social Affairs and Health, Finland.

Mrs Ursula von der Leyen, Federal Minister for the family, the elderly, women and young people, Germany

Mrs Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany

Mr Pedro Silva Pereira, Minister for the Presidency in the Portuguese Council of Ministers

Mrs Marjeta Cotman, Minister for Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Slovenia

Mrs Romana Tomc, Secretary of State, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Slovenia

Mr Gerd Hoofe, Secretary of State, Federal Ministry for the family, the elderly, women and young people, Germany

Mr Jorge Lacao, Secretary of State for the Presidency in the Portuguese Council of Ministers

Mrs Valérie Letard, State secretary for solidarity, France

The Chairperson and Members of the committee participated as speakers in the following conferences organized by the Presidency-in-office:

- European Conference "*Beijing + 10*", Luxembourg Presidency, Luxembourg, 2-3 February 2005

- "*What Works for Women: meeting the challenges, sharing the solutions*", British Presidency, Birmingham, 7-8 November 2005

- Experts' Conference "*Prevent and combat trafficking of human beings*", Austrian Presidency, Brussels, 28-29 June 2006

- Experts' Conference "*Men and gender equality*", Finnish Presidency, Helsinki, 5-6 October 2006.

- Equality Summit & Opening Conference of the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All, Berlin, Germany, 30-31 January 2007

- Trafficking in Human Beings and Gender, Porto, Portugal, 08-09 October 2007.

- Closing Conference of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All, Lisbon, 19-20 November 2007, Lisbon, Portugal

- Conference "Elimination of Gender Stereotypes: Mission (Im)Possible?", 29-30 January 2008, Brdo (Slovenia)

- Conference "Intergenerational Solidarity for Cohesive and Sustainable Societies", Brdo, Slovenia, 27-29 April 2008

- Final Conference of the Parliamentary Dimension of the Council of Europe Campaign to Combat Violence against Women, including Domestic Violence, Vienna, Austria, 30 April 2008

- Conference of the Network of Parliamentary Committees for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the European Union (NCEO), Paris - 2/3 July 2008

The Chair participated and made statements in the following informal meetings of ministers of equality between women and men:

- Ministerial meeting, Birmingham, 9 November 2005
- Informal Council of Ministers for Health, Vienna, 25-26 April 2006
- Ministerial Conference on equality between men and women, Stockholm, 8-9 June 2006
- Informal meeting of Ministers for equality, Helsinki, 6-7 October 2006
- Informal Meeting of Ministers for Gender Equality and Family Affairs, Bad Pyrmont, 15-16 May 2007
- Informal Ministerial Meeting for Gender Equality, Lisbon, 4 October 2007

Besides the above mentioned conferences and meetings, the committee has numerous contacts with representatives of the Council at all levels concerning different legislative and non-legislative subjects.

#### **4. HIGH-LEVEL RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

It became a tradition to meet President José Manuel Barroso for a working breakfast in order to discuss priority matters of common concerns (see below).

Commissioners, especially Vice-President Franco Frattini and Commissioner Vladimír Špidla, regularly attended committee meetings and took part in exchanges of views and public hearings on relevant matters. The committee also invites the European Commission officials to its public hearings and discussions in committee meetings.

The Committee has been invited to meet with a group of Commissioners, under the chairmanship of the President of the Commission. Meetings with this Commissioners' group on Fundamental Rights, Anti-discrimination and Equal Opportunities were held in the framework of the celebration of the International Women's Day, on 8 March 2005 and 2006.

#### **5. CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

##### **- 2005**

On the invitation of President José Manuel Barroso, the Chairperson and Coordinators participated in the meeting of the above-mentioned Commissioners' group on 8 March 2005. The meeting was attended by Commission Vice-Presidents Franco Frattini and Margot Wallström, Commissioners Vladimír Špidla and Ján Figel' and Mrs Marie-Josée Jacobs, the Luxembourg Minister for Equal Opportunities. Representatives of the European Women's Lobby and the European Economic and Social Committee also took part in the meeting. The main subjects addressed were all priority ones for the FEMM committee:

- the state of play as regards implementation of the Beijing Platform,
- the role played by women in giving new impetus to the Lisbon Strategy,
- the setting up of the European Institute for Gender Equality,
- violence against women.

## - 2006

An informal **working breakfast** was organised with the participation of President José Manuel Barroso, Vice-President Franco Frattini and Commissioner Vladimír Špidla, in order to evaluate the current EU legislation in the field of gender equality, as well as the necessary revision and possible new legislation in such field.

The main concern voiced by members of the committee was related to the technical merging of several key European programmes in the area of gender equality: the proposal to merge the DAPHNE Programme (on combating violence) with a drugs prevention programme, and the merging of the action programme on equal opportunities for women and men with four other programmes into a single programme, 'PROGRESS', designed to implement the social policy agenda and a number of budget lines relating to working conditions. The concern was that the consequence of merging programmes in this way would be to make the Commission's commitment in this area less visible, which could lead to its being accused of failing in its task of bringing Europe closer to citizens, women and children.

Furthermore, the Committee invited representatives from NGOs, sports and politics to a **seminar** aiming to raise awareness and discuss strategies to tackle **forced prostitution on the fringes of major international sports events**. This seminar was held in the presence of Vice-Presidents Margot Wallström and Franco Frattini and Commissioners Vladimír Špidla and Ján Figel'. An oral question and a draft resolution on the same topics were tabled by the committee to the March plenary session. Big events such as sports events and fairs are said to provoke a sharp increase in the demand for sexual services including an increase in forced prostitution. Every year around 100,000 women are victims of human trafficking in Europe. Several thousand girls and women were expected to be forced into sexual exploitation in Germany for the World Cup (9 June-9 July). It was considered essential to focus more attention on the fate and misery of women trafficked for sexual exploitation. This was the start of a campaign against forced prostitution, which requires action at European and national level. By adopting the resolution the Parliament made it clear that trafficking in women for sexual exploitation ought to be combated more comprehensively.

## - 2007

A **working breakfast** with President Barroso, accompanied by Commissioner Vladimír Špidla, was the occasion to discuss future initiatives intended to facilitate work-life balance, in particular parental and maternity leave. The other main topics of the discussion were: the reinforcement of the implementation of equal treatment directives, the EC Communication on Pay Gap, the major involvement of men in Gender Equality policies, the gender discrimination in social security schemes as well as the implementation of Gender Budgeting at EU level.

The year 2007 was the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, and the year of equal opportunities for all. The **Seminar** on this occasion organised by the committee highlighted the **achievements and milestones in the area of women's rights and gender equality over the past 50 years**, in order to give a new impulse to actions in favour of gender equality. The committee focussed on the Lisbon strategy and how to overcome obstacles for women on the labour market. The seminar also considered the role of women when it comes to meeting the demographic challenge with low birth rates and a society with less and less young persons and children. The event was solemnly opened by Hans-Gert Pöttering, President of the European Parliament, Heidemarie Wiecek-Zeul,

Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development of the German EU Presidency and Vladimír Špidla, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

## - 2008

On 6 March the committee organized a **conference** on "**the role of women in the intercultural dialogue**", followed by a seminar on gender mainstreaming in parliamentary works.

The conference was opened by Hans-Gert Pöttering, President of the European Parliament, and by HE Gertrude Mongella, President of the Pan-African Parliament, followed by Nimet Çubukçu, Turkish Minister for social services, Jàn Figel', European Commissioner for Culture, Naomi Chazan and Amal Khreisheh, members of the International Women's Commission for a sustainable peace between Israel and Palestine, and Erna Hennicot-Schoepges, rapporteur for the European Parliament on the Intercultural Dialogue. All speakers underlined both the fundamental role that women should play in the promotion of the intercultural dialogue, and the necessity to respect women's dignity as a pre-condition to such dialogue.

The **seminar on gender mainstreaming in parliamentary work** was the occasion to invite the Network of Parliamentary Committees for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the European Union (NCEO), in order to foster the exchange of best practices and to launch a debate on the latest initiatives of each parliament in the promotion of gender equality. The seminar was opened by interventions from Marjeta Cotman, Minister of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, from the Republic of Slovenia (Council Presidency), Ms Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Vice-President of the European Parliament, Chair of the High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity, and Vladimír Špidla, Member of the European Commission responsible for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

On 12 March the Coordinators and the Bureau of the Committee met President Barroso and Commissioner Špidla for the traditional **working breakfast**. The main topic discussed also this time was the need to modernise legislation, especially in order to make it possible for these mothers and fathers who so wish to reconcile work and family life.

Anna Záborská opened the meeting by pointing to some concrete proposals the Commission could reflect upon when revising the legislation. Three revisions were in the pipeline: a proposal for a Directive amending Directive 92/85/EEC on the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breast-feeding; a proposal for a Directive amending the framework agreement on parental leave and a proposal for a Directive amending Directive 86/613/EEC on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity, including agriculture, in a self-employed capacity, and on the protection of self-employed women during pregnancy and motherhood. The European Commission would also present a proposal for a new directive in the field of paternity leave, adoption leave and 'filial' leave, expected to be adopted in September.

## 6. OWN-INITIATIVE REPORTS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

### **- The role of women in Turkey in social, economic and political life. (INI/2004/2215)**

**Rapporteur: Emine Bozkurt (PSE).**

#### **A public hearing on 16 March**

*Adopted by the committee on 26 May 2005*

*Adopted in plenary on 6 July 2005*

In order to prepare this report, a delegation composed of 10 members visited Turkey from 31 January to 2 February 2005. In addition, Mrs Guldal Aksit, the Minister in charge of gender equality, took part in the public hearing.

Women's rights and gender equality form an integral part of the *acquis communautaire* that must be accepted by Turkey as part of the process of accession to the EU. The report stresses that progress made by Turkey in the field of legislation now needs to be 'implemented in practice'.

The report also stresses the crucial role played by Turkish civil society and its support for the recent legislative reforms. In the Members' view, the whole political class, religious communities and the media need to join forces in order to promote democratic change.

The report asks for an annual report on the situation of women in Turkey to be drawn by the European Parliament (see INI/20062214, adopted in committee 20 December 2006)

### **- Gender discrimination in health systems (INI/2004/2218)**

**Rapporteur: Eva-Britt Svensson (GUE/NGL).**

*A public hearing on 30 March 2005*

*Adopted by the committee on 14 July 2005*

The report highlights a number of ways in which women are discriminated against, ranging from research into certain diseases to access to health care and the costs of specific types of care for women.

At its meeting of 14-15 September 2005, the committee decided that the report should serve as a basis for a detailed study on discrimination against women and young girls in the health sector.

### **- Women and poverty in the European Union (INI/2004/2217)**

**Rapporteur: Anna Záborská (PPE-DE).**

*Adopted by the committee on 15 September 2005*

*Adopted in plenary on 14 October 2005.*

The report strongly emphasises the fact that poverty manifests itself in various ways and is not characterised solely by a lack of income. It highlights new forms of poverty and marginalisation linked to discrimination in the area of health and education, for example. It underlines the consequences of extreme poverty, which can lead to trafficking in women, prostitution and violence.

The report recommends the following:

- the development of indicators and methodologies in order to measure, with a breakdown by gender, the impact of poverty and social exclusion on men and women;
- the need to involve socially excluded women and families in all levels of decision-making;
- measures to balance work and family life in the context of a disadvantaged environment;
- the involvement of civil society.

## **- Women and Microcredit Day**

*A public hearing held on 11 October 2005*

Small loans known as "micro-credits" are an effective tool for fighting poverty and empowering women. This was the key message of a hearing organised by four European Parliament committees (FEMM and DEVE with the support of AFET and ITRE) to mark International Year of Micro-Credit 2005.

The term micro-credit is used to describe a small amount of money lent to a low-income client by a bank or other institution. And micro-credits can be particularly important for women: in a world where most poor people are women, studies have shown that access to such loans can improve the status of women within the family and the community. Women become more assertive and confident, they come to own assets, including land and housing, play a stronger role in decision-making and take on leadership roles in their communities.

Representatives of civil society and micro-financing institutions from Morocco, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon and Egypt described their experience as well as their expectations of micro-credit. Speakers also stressed the need for further resources, technical assistance, capacity- and institution-building and ways to increase the take-up of funds.

Most contributors in the afternoon session were women who spoke about the role of micro-credits in various parts of the world such as Latin America, Africa, Afghanistan and Asia.

The problem of exchange rates was mentioned several times. When institutions and lenders provide loans in foreign currency, local firms are exposed to the risk of exchange rate fluctuations.

In the conclusion of the meeting it was said there was clearly an opportunity for the EU to make its development aid more effective by improving the current state of affairs.

## **- Strategies to prevent the trafficking of women and children who are vulnerable to sexual exploitation (INI/2004/2216)**

**Rapporteur: Christa Prets (PSE).**

*Adopted in committee on 24 November 2005*

*Adopted in plenary on 17 January 2006*

An external study, commissioned by the committee, on national legislation on prostitution and trafficking in women and children was presented to the committee on 4 October. The report stresses the need for an approach based on the rights of the person, the use of gender mainstreaming and a child-sensitive approach in developing and implementing prevention strategies. The report suggests a holistic and integrated multidisciplinary approach at EU and international level. It calls for research, at national and European level, into the underlying causes of trafficking in women and children for sexual exploitation, i.e. what factors place people at risk and what factors affect demand for sexual services and sexual exploitation of women and children. Prevention also means looking at the "triangle of trafficking": victim, trafficker and client. The report suggests practical actions, such as awareness raising campaigns to inform of the dangers and educate the vulnerable members of society in the countries of origin, to alert and raise the awareness of the public about the problem and reduce demand in the countries of destination. The report calls on the Member States, especially Germany, to take appropriate measures in the course of the World Cup football tournament in 2006 to prevent trafficking of women and forced prostitution. Member States are asked to enforce

the law and strengthen the prosecution and punishment of traffickers, accomplices, persons seeking sexual services from minors and to prosecute the laundering of the proceeds of trafficking, and to prosecute clients who knowingly make use of the services of the forced prostitutes.

**- The future of the Lisbon strategy from a gender perspective - Mid-term assessment of the Lisbon strategy from a gender perspective (INI/2004/2219)**

**Rapporteur: Edite Estrela (PSE)**

*A public hearing on January 25, 2005*

*Adopted in committee on 24 November 2005*

*Adopted in plenary on January 19, 2006*

The report focuses on existing disparities and delivers a series of recommendations to the Member States and the European Commission in order to help reach the Lisbon targets.

The Lisbon European Council set the objective, to be achieved by 2010, of an employment rate of 60% for women. The Stockholm European Council added an intermediate objective, for the end of 2005, of a 57% employment rate for women, and added an objective of a 55% employment rate for all older workers, both male and female. In the enlarged EU, the average pay gap is 15%, but it rises to as much as 33% in some sectors of the economy of some countries. Women's level of education tends to be higher than that of men (58% of university graduates and 41% of PhD graduates are women) even though career in higher education remains predominantly a man's job.

Parliament voices its concern at the continuing disparities as regards the pay gap, access to employment, segregation on the employment market, and access to post-university education, lifelong training, new technologies and the information society. It called on the Member States to maintain their efforts in promoting quality employment for women of all age groups and in all sectors, and take more effective measures to promote a growth in employment for women, particularly in the poorest regions of the EU.

Member States are asked to take effective measures for the benefit of men, such as promoting appropriate systems of parental leave and organising awareness-raising campaigns with the aim of greater investment by men in the equitable division of family responsibilities. More use should be made of the flexible organisation of working hours and new forms of employment which make it possible to reconcile professional, family and private life. It deplored the fact that men do not make sufficient use of the organisation of working time and new forms of employment which allow professional, family and private life to be successfully combined.

**- Equality between women and men in the European Union (INI/2004/2159)**

**Rapporteur: Edite Estrela (PSE).**

*Adopted in committee on 24 November 2005*

*Adopted in plenary on 2 February 2006*

The report offers constructive criticism in relation to the main developments in the respective situation of women and men in the area of education, employment and social activity, as set out by the Commission in its annual report. The emphasis is placed on monitoring implementation at the national level, which is the key factor in achieving genuine progress in the area of equality between women and men.

Members felt that the Commission's report was descriptive in nature and dealt with significant developments in the law in the Member States, but avoided mentioning shortcomings in transposition and the violations of Community law committed by the

Member States and included no analysis or evaluation of the current situation. The report shows that the disparities between women and men have decreased in employment and education within the EU, but that the pay gap between the two sexes has remained virtually the same. It clearly demonstrated that there has been no real progress in the implementation of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, which was introduced thirty years ago by Council Directive 75/117/EC. In the Union of 15 the gap remained stable at about 16%, whilst the estimated figure for the Union of 25, which takes account of pay differences in the new Member States, is, at 15%, slightly lower.

**- Current situation in combating violence against women and any future action (INI/2004/2220)**

**Rapporteur: Maria Carlshamre (ALDE)**

*A public hearing on 21 June 2005*

*Adopted in committee on 29 November 2005*

*Adopted in plenary on 2 February 2006*

The report underlines the criminal nature of violence against women, calling on the Member States to make the necessary changes to their civil and criminal law in order to strengthen measures against the culprits and to provide practical support for the victims of violence. A public hearing was convened in order to broaden as far as possible the knowledge base relating to this phenomenon.

Members pointed out that men's violence against women could affect women of any age, irrespective of education, income or social position, and only a few Member States had gathered data relating to the prevalence of different forms of men's violence against women, making it difficult to understand the real extent of such violence and to draw up an efficient response at EU level.

The report made several recommendations to the Commission and Member States, inter alia:

- to formulate a zero-tolerance policy as regards all forms of violence against women;
- to adopt a framework for cooperation between governmental and non-governmental organisations;
- to appoint national rapporteurs in order to gather, exchange and process information and statistics on men's violence against women, and to promote the exchange of best practice;
- not to accept any reference to cultural practices as a mitigating factor in cases of violence against women, crimes of honour or female genital mutilation;

Member States should take appropriate measures to ensure better protection and support of victims and those who are at risk of becoming victims of violence against women by providing a wide variety of assistance and protection and adopting a strategy towards the perpetrators.

**- The situation of women in armed conflicts and their role in reconstruction and the democratic process in post-conflict countries. (2005/2215(INI))**

**Rapporteur : Véronique De Keyser (PSE)**

*A public hearing on 20 February 2006 (in association with SEDE and DEVE)*

*Adopted in committee on April 25, 2006*

*Adopted in Plenary on June 1, 2006*

The report highlights the positive role that women play in conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction. It also draws attention to the vulnerability and special needs of women and girls in conflict situations and women as perpetrators of violence.

The report states that women civilians in times of conflict, like children and old people, are victims of all sorts of ill treatment. In many cases the violence is not only physical and/or sexual abuse but also a violation of their economic, social and cultural rights. The report calls for zero-tolerance of the sexual exploitation of children, girls and women in armed conflicts and refugee camps, and demands severe administrative and criminal penalties for such exploitation.

Women should take a more active role in peace-making. Despite all the resolutions, appeals and recommendations adopted and made by various international and European institutions, women are still not fully involved in conflict-prevention and conflict resolution, peace-keeping operations and peace-building. Consequently, the report does not call for fresh recommendations but the implementation of existing ones, for example UN resolution 1325 of 2000 on Women and peace and security.

Finally, the report supports the due implementation of human rights clauses in agreements with third countries and of the principles of international humanitarian law and related international agreements with specific reference to women's rights and needs.

#### **- The situation of Roma women in the European Union (INI/2005/2164)**

**Rapporteur Lívia Járóka (PPE-DE)**

*A public hearing on 23 November 2005*

*Adopted in committee on 25 April 2006*

*Adopted in plenary on 1 June 2006*

The report urges EU public authorities to promptly investigate extreme human rights abuses against Roma women, to swiftly punish perpetrators, and to provide adequate compensation to victims. Member States are asked to give the highest priority to measures to provide better protection for women's reproductive and sexual health, to prevent and outlaw coercive sterilisation, and provide redress for such abuse, and to promote family planning, alternative arrangements to early marriages, and sex education. The report also calls for proactive measures to eliminate racially segregated maternity wards, to help victims of domestic violence and for particular vigilance regarding the trafficking of Roma women. It urges Member States to ensure that all Roma women have access to health care, and not only, as often occurs, in the case of an extreme emergency or childbirth. Surveys show that the life expectancy of Roma women is, in some areas, shorter than that of others.

Many Roma girls fail to complete primary education. The committee calls for measures at national level to ensure that women and girls have access on equal terms to quality education and for plans to end the separate, substandard education of Roma children.

A further burning issue, calling for positive measures, is the very high unemployment rates among Roma women - in several places, many times higher than that of the rest of the adult female population. According to the resolution, the situation of Roma women in candidate countries should be a key criterion for evaluation states of readiness for accession to the EU.

#### **- Perspectives of women in international trade (INI/2006/2009)**

**Rapporteur: Hiltrud Breyer (Greens/ALE)**

*Adopted in committee on 22 June 2006*

*Adopted in plenary on 28 September 2006*

The impact of trade and globalisation on women is the focus of this own-initiative report. It says international trade has the potential to contribute to gender equality and promote

women's economic, social, and political empowerment in both the productive and reproductive spheres. At the same time the trade globalisation process has contributed to the informalisation of labour relations, the increase in precarious work and the feminisation of unemployment in 'several sectors' of the economy. 70 % of the 1.3 billion people living in poverty are women. They generally experience more difficulties in gaining access to education, property credit, other resources and factors of production as well as political decision-making bodies. The report asks the Commission to operate a gender impact instrument (GIA) before concluding any trade agreements with third countries. The report points out the importance of gender budgeting in European trade policy as a strategy for contributing to gender equality. MEPs also propose measures to fight violation of human rights, particularly women's rights, and the inhuman exploitation of employees.

The report calls on the Commission to create a particular fund in the context of development cooperation policy to support women in the countries concerned by encouraging their access to credit, education and vocational training. The vast potential of 'micro-credits' is as an invaluable tool in alleviating poverty, promoting self-sufficiency and stimulating economic activity in some of the world's most destitute and disadvantaged countries. The report welcomes the Norwegian government's decision to impose by law a 40 % quota of women representation in the boards of joint stock companies. It calls on Member States to ensure that a gender perspective is taken into account in world trade negotiations.

**- Women's immigration: the role and place of immigrant women in the European Union (INI/2006/2010)**

**Rapporteur: Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (EPP-ED)**

*A public hearing on 25 April 2006*

*Adopted in the committee 13 September 2006*

*Adopted in the Plenary 24 October 2006*

The committee believes that EU policy on development and social cohesion should implement effective reception and integration policies for immigrants, stressing that all measures should take into account the particular nature of gender and the situation of women. Member States should strengthen the structures and social services which enable immigrants to settle in smoothly and to provide them with information about their rights and obligations in accordance with the principles and legalisation of the Member States, noting that integration is a two-way process which presupposes both a willingness on the part of the host society and the immigrants. Member States are further encouraged to incorporate measures to create favourable conditions for immigrant women to access the labour market and to balance their professional and private life, fight undeclared work and ensure respect for women's social rights.

The report stresses the importance of unconditional and even priority access for immigrant women to education and language training and invites Member States to introduce compulsory language training for immigrant women and girls, as a way of facilitating their integration, and to protect them from discrimination in the family and society. Member States should ensure that effective and deterrent penalties apply under their criminal codes to all forms of violence against women and children, particularly forced marriage, polygamy, crimes of honour and female genital mutilation..

Finally, MEPs call on the Member States to take due account of the circumstances of women immigrants who are victims of violence, and to simplify the procedures for granting a temporary or permanent residence permit to victims of the sex trade to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children and to adopt

measures to approve special residence permits in exceptional circumstances in order to enable foreign victims without legal status to escape from violence.

#### **- Public hearing on Gender Budgeting**

*4 October 2006*

The Public hearing, in which participated among others Ms Dalia Grybauskaite, Commissioner for financial programming and budgets, was aimed at better understanding of the concept of gender budgeting, why it needs to be done and how it should be done. Gender budgeting is gender mainstreaming applied to policy funding. The most efficient way to do it is to identify gendered financial winners and losers from policies using gender disaggregated data on finances and gender composition of activities and to assess if gender implications are appropriate. Experts in the hearing considered gender budgeting inevitable in order to promote gender equality and to improve efficiency of different policies.

#### **- Women in International politics**

**Rapporteur: Ana Maria Gomes (PSE)**

*Adopted in committee on October 5, 2006*

*Adopted in Plenary on November 16, 2006*

The report regrets that in spite of a large number of political statements and recommendations, programmes of actions adopted worldwide and specific legislation introduced at national level, inequality and gender discrimination and under representation of women in politics still persist in Europe and worldwide.

Numbers are not encouraging; of all parliaments worldwide (lower house and upper house combined) only 16.4 % are women (or 7,195 out of 43,961). This percentage indicates a fundamental democratic deficit both at European level and in the wider international context. The low participation of women in politics deprives Europe of a precious human potential.

The report notes that recent elections have brought women to the highest functions as Heads of State and Government in some Member States and third countries and congratulates the Head of Governments that have used objective and non-discriminatory criteria for the selection of the members of their cabinets.

The low level of participation by women in centres of decision-making and governance is often linked to problems with combining work and family life, to the unequal distribution of family responsibilities and to discrimination at work and in occupational training. The report proposes a number of measures at national, European and international level to come to terms with this issue and promote parity in politics.

The report also calls on political parties across Europe to promote balanced participation of both sexes on their lists of candidates. There is a need to look beyond numbers, and actually focus on how women active in politics influence the shaping of governance and conflict resolution.

#### **- Fight against breast cancer in the enlarged EU**

*Resolution adopted by the plenary 25 October 2006*

In adopting a joint resolution on breast cancer in the enlarged EU, MEPs call on the European Commission to present without delay the progress report, which it called for by 2006 in its resolution of 5 June 2003, on the steps taken by the Member States to lower breast cancer mortality rates. The resolution is based on three oral questions on to the European Commission by three committees (ENVI; EMPL; and FEMM).

The resolution reiterates call on the Member States to "introduce nationwide breast screening" whereby all women aged between 50 and 69 will be offered a mammogram in line with EU guidelines at two-year intervals. EU guidelines for breast cancer screening were first drawn up in 1992, still only 11 Member States offer nationwide mammographic screening (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, Spain and the United Kingdom).

Member States should ensure nationwide provision of interdisciplinary breast centres in accordance with EU guidelines by 2016. Specialised training of all medical staff is essential to the quality of early detection and treatment. Therefore Members call on the Commission to point out to the Member States to make use of the possibility to provide further training for medical personnel, in accordance with EU guidelines, via the European Social Fund.

The Commission should devote special attention to the problems of young women with breast cancer by providing information geared to their needs. The EP calls for stepped-up support for research into breast cancer prevention (including effects of harmful chemicals and environmental pollutants, nutrition, lifestyle, genetic factors, and the interaction of all these) and for the links between cancer and potential risk factors such as tobacco, alcohol and hormones to be investigated.

**- Educational discrimination against young women and girls (INI/2006/2135)**

**Rapporteur: Věra Flasarová (GUE/NGL)**

*Adopted in committee on November 13, 2006*

*Adopted in plenary on 1 February 2007*

The report addresses the causes and possible solutions to erase gender-based discrimination in educational systems.

Substantial progress has been made in the last decades to bridge the gender gap in education, yet some discriminations are still a reality in educational systems. In education and research, women outnumber men as graduates (59%), yet their presence decreases consistently as they progress on the career ladder, from 43% of PhDs down to only 15% of full professors.

Socio-economic context, perpetuation of gender stereotypes as well as lack of information on certain subject fields can lead to segregation in educational systems and later on into labour market. Women from minorities, especially Roma girls, face a double discrimination and do not have access to regular education systems, preventing them from fully integrating the hosting societies. Also, a lack of flexibility in lifelong learning programmes prevents a participation of women, especially those who look after children or elderly/disabled people.

The report addresses the role of Information and Communications Technology in bridging the educational gap, especially in a perspective of conciliation of professional, family and private life taking into account new forms of employment that are more flexible.

**- Role of women in social, economical and political life in Turkey (INI/2006/2114)**

**Rapporteur: Emine Bozkurt (PSE)**

*Adopted in committee on December 20, 2006*

*Adopted in Plenary on February 12-13, 2007*

Turkey's legal framework on women's rights has in general been satisfactory, but its substantive implementation remains flawed. The report emphasises that respecting human rights, including women's rights, is a 'conditio sine qua non' for Turkey's membership of the EU.

The report follows up Parliament's July 2005 resolution on women's role in Turkey and highlights key areas of concern. It welcomes the start of active EU accession negotiations with Turkey, but regrets the slowing down of the reform process in Turkey over the last year and the persistent problem with women's rights and reiterates Parliament's call for full and effective implementation of the Community acquis in the field of women's rights, particularly in the poorer regions of the country.

The report condemns violence against women, including honour killings, domestic violence, forced marriage and polygamy, and it also stresses systematic investigation and effective punishment, and training of police and judicial authorities in gender equality issues and the fight against violence.

Concern is expressed about the Commission's observation that women remain vulnerable to discriminatory practices in Turkey. UNICEF estimates that each year between 600,000 and 800,000 girls do not attend school. Members call on the Turkish government to ensure gender equality, especially in the south-eastern regions, in access to education and the labour market.

The report highlights the lack of accurate data on the situation, role and rights of women in Turkey. Political parties are urged to include more female candidates on the electoral list starting from the upcoming elections in 2007.

#### **- Report on gender mainstreaming in the work of the committees (INI/2005/2149)**

**Rapporteur: Anna Záborská (EPP-ED)**

*Adopted in committee on December 20, 2006*

*Adopted in the plenary 18 January 2007*

This report has the merit of being the first Parliament document devoted to a specific assessment of gender mainstreaming in the political work of Parliament's committees.

In order to obtain facts concerning the work of Parliament's committees, the rapporteur asked the vice-chairpersons responsible for the gender mainstreaming in respective committees to answer a questionnaire. The report analyses the replies received and draws some conclusions.

Another important input for the report were presentations made by the vice-chairpersons, when invited to the FEMM committee.

The report points out that gender mainstreaming involves the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated into all policies at all levels and at all stages by the actors normally involved in policy-making. It stresses that gender mainstreaming cannot replace specific policies which aim to redress situations resulting from gender inequality.

The report underlines the need for the parliamentary committees to be provided with appropriate tools to gain a sound understanding of gender mainstreaming, such as indicators, data and statistics broken down by gender, and the allocation of budgetary resources from a gender equality viewpoint.

The report congratulates the committees which have put gender mainstreaming into practice, and calls on other committees to do likewise. The implementation of gender mainstreaming in committees should be assessed every two years under the auspices of the FEMM committee.

**- Measures to reconcile family life and a period of study for young women in the EU (INI/2006/2276)**

**Rapporteur: Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou (EPP-ED)**

*Public hearing 26 February 2007*

*Adopted by the committee on 5 June 2007*

*Adopted in plenary on 19 June 2007*

According to the conclusions of the Green Paper on demography, the European demographic deficit is due in part to the various stages of life (education, work, family) being reached later. On the other hand, it also means more and more students have family responsibilities - in Sweden, 41% and in Finland, 31% of women had their first child before completing their education (explanatory statement). Report therefore calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote policies which make it easier to combine studying, training and family life, which support the balanced assumption of family responsibilities by young people without any form of discrimination, and which enable them to optimise their contribution to European growth and competitiveness.

The report encourage the Member states to be more aware of the situation of young men and women who have family responsibilities while they are in education or training, and particularly to make resources available to them that suit to their needs. It also call on the Member States and credit institutions to simplify and facilitate the provision of loans on beneficial terms to young people who combine family responsibilities with their studies. Moreover, the Member States are asked to count maternity and parental leave during a period of study towards women's aggregate time spent in work and their retirement pension entitlement periods, with a view to meeting fully the goad of genuine gender equality.

**- Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010 (INI/2006/2132)**

**Rapporteur: Amalia Sartori (PPE)**

*Adopted by the committee on 8 February 2007*

*Adopted in plenary on 13 March 2007*

Although the Parliament welcomes the wish of the Commission to pursue a long term gender equality strategy, the report highlights that the roadmap does not clearly allocate the share of responsibilities between the EC and the Member States in implementing the proposed measures, in particular the information to citizens ad the allocation of financial resources.

The Commission is invited to establish a global assessment framework for the policies and programmes concerned, as well as address the following priorities:

- work/life balance: reinforcement of parental leave, total ban of pay gap, internalisation of maternity cost by the community, accessibility of care services (for children and dependent persons)
- zero tolerance approach to all forms of violence against women
- *conditio sine qua non* of women's rights respect in external relations (accession, neighbouring and development policies), reinforcement of the coordination with UN (Beijing, Millennium Goals)

**- Situation of disabled women in the European Union (INI2006/2277)**

**Rapporteur: Esther Herranz García (EPP-ED)**

*Adopted by the committee on 19 March 2007*

*Adopted in plenary on 26 April 2007*

There are more than 235 million disabled women worldwide facing multiple or intersectional discrimination: They are discriminated because they are women and because they are disabled. Disability is therefore not gender-neutral. Within the European Union disabled women belong to the most disadvantaged groups in many Member states. This report stresses the importance to include disabled women in all activities in society, and it underlines the need for special support to disabled women.

It noted that nearly 80 per cent of women with disabilities are victims of psychological and physical violence and the risk of sexual violence is greater for them than for other women. Women with disabilities suffer discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, impairment and disability and are at greater risk of poverty and social exclusion. Parliament asserted that the equal treatment of women with disabilities and mothers of children with disabilities is a fundamental human right and an ethical obligation and it called on the Commission and the Member States to ensure the removal of existing barriers and obstacles, including architectural barriers, with a view to creating equal rights and opportunities for women and girls with disabilities to play a part in family, political, cultural, social and professional life.

**- Juvenile delinquency - role of women, the family and the society**

**Rapporteur: Ms Katerina Batzeli (PSE)**

*Public hearing held on 20 March 2007*

*Adopted by the committee on 5 June 2007*

*Adopted in plenary on 21 June 2007*

The report states that juvenile delinquency is becoming a matter for concern, and that it could be effectively combated only by adopting an integrated strategy at national and European level which would mesh three guiding principles: prevention, extrajudicial and judicial measures and the social inclusion of all young people.

Parliament stresses the particular importance of family and schools and school communities in shaping the character of children and adolescents. Parliament went on to emphasise the importance of the improving the quality of youth centres and enhancing their role as a meeting place for young people, the role of the media, and the value of introducing measures in the Member States which would provide alternative forms of punishment to confinement. In order to form a European strategy, Member States, in cooperation with the Commission, need to draw up a number of minimum standards and guiding principles in relation to juvenile delinquency. These should be based on the Beijing rules, the Riyadh guidelines, and the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Commission is called upon to lay down specific criteria for all Member States for the collection of national statistics in order to ensure that they are comparable and therefore usable during the planning of measures on a European scale. MEPs call on the Commission and the Member States as an initial measure to develop existing European resources to cope with juvenile delinquency and facilitate satisfactory social reintegration of perpetrators and victims. They call for an extension of the Television Without Frontiers Directive (Directive 89/552/EEC) to cover mobile telephony and the Internet.

## **- Equal Opportunity Report 2007**

**Rapporteur: Piia-Noora Kauppi (EPP-ED)**

*Adopted by the committee on 16 July 2007*

*Adopted in plenary on 27 September 2007*

The report is an annual report in reply to the Commission's Annual Report on equality between women and men. This year's report focuses mainly on the progress accomplished by women in the labour market.

Even though 3/4 of the eight millions new jobs created in the EU since 2000 are being taken up by woman, the persistence of gender-based stereotypes throughout the life-span of women, from education to family responsibility, to career goals, etc. hinders them to fully reach their potential.

In that perspective, the report pinpoints the issue of conciliation between family, professional and private lives as a key issue to be addressed in order to help men increase their family responsibilities and help women with interrupted career patterns to have more career perspective.

The report takes on board the main concerns of each opinion giving committee, namely, the need to fight gender stereotypes in education and the media, the need to address the situation of women in farming, both from the point of view of their economic contribution and from the point of view of the recognition of their status; and finally the need to support specific measures through the European Social Fund to improve women's access and participation in the labour market.

## **- Murders of women (femicides) in Central America and Mexico**

**Rapporteur: Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)**

*Adopted by the committee on 11 September 2007*

*Adopted in plenary on 11 October 2007*

The report followed the public hearing on femicide which was held at the European Parliament in April 2006 and it urged the countries of Central America to take all necessary steps to enable violence against women to be combated effectively. The governments of Mexico and Central America were urged to adopt the measures needed to achieve the United Nation's MDGs.

It calls on the Commission to promote the inclusion of a reciprocal obligation designed to create mechanisms for implementing the human-rights and democracy clause, whose formulation should be based on the obligations stemming from the international pacts signed by the EU member States, Mexico and the countries of Central America, with particular reference to respect for women's rights as stated in the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and its optional protocol and to the inter-American declaration of human rights. It urges the EU to ensure that both the political dialogue with Mexico's Federal Government and the Governments of the countries of Central America incorporate the issues of violence against women - in particular femicide - and of access to justice for victims' relatives and support groups.

## **- The role of women in industry**

**Rapporteur: Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**

*Adopted by the committee on 17 December 2007*

*Adopted in plenary on 17 January 2008*

On average, around 14% of women in employment in the EU work in industry, but this figure rises to 25% in some countries; of that average 21% are employed on a part-time basis and women represent 65% of part-time workers in this sector.

Women are over-represented in some sectors, such as textiles, garments, cabling, electrical and electronic equipment and food but under-represented in cutting-edge technology sectors.

MEPs regret the low proportion of women in the advanced technology sector and stress the importance of operational educational and training programmes in science and technology. They call on the Member States and the Commission to develop and implement strategies to address discrepancies in the work environment and the career development of women working in science and technology. The report also stresses the need for the Commission to promote professional training policies and programmes aimed at women. It encourages action to promote women's position in relation to wage equality, working conditions, career opportunities and vocational training.

The House calls on the Commission and the Member States to urge large companies to draw up and introduce their own-negotiated equality programmes. It encourages Member States to promote female entrepreneurship in the industrial sector and to provide financial support for women setting up companies. MEPs also ask the Commission and the Member States to encourage a balanced representation of women and men on the management boards of companies. The House urges Member States to take all the necessary measures effectively to combat the exploitation of women at work, which is most common in sectors such as the textile industry.

MEPs call on the Commission and the sectoral social partners to define high standards for health protection at work that take account of the gender dimension, and in particular maternity protection, at the level of research, control and preventive measures.

## **- PUBLIC HEARING on Sexual Harassment at the Workplace**

**21 November 2007**

One person in 10 has suffered from some form of bullying, harassment or violence at work. The most vulnerable are women and those who work on temporary contracts, although men are also vulnerable in the workplace.

The EU directive adopted by the Parliament and the Council in 2002 on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions, gave the following definition of harassment: "where any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature occurs, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment". A representative from the European Commission pointed out that the effectiveness of it was being compromised as the field of application is wide and the transposition into national legislation is taking too long.

The speakers invited were John Hurley of the EU's Dublin-based Foundation for the Improvement of Working and Living Conditions (EUROFOUND), Lara Lazzeroni, a Professor of Labour Law at Siena University, Jukka Takala, director of the European Agency for Health and Safety at work, Stefan Clauwaert, Senior Researcher at the European Trade Union Institute for Research, Education and Health and Safety (ETUI-

REHS), and Guusje Dolsma, Senior Adviser in charge of social affairs at the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers (VNO-NCW, The Hague).

**- The situation of women in prison and the impact of the imprisonment of parents on social and family life (INI/2007/2116)**

**Rapporteur Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, (EPP-ED)**

*A public hearing on 26 June 2007*

*A visit to prison in Brugge 18 September 2007*

*Adopted in committee on 28 January 2008*

*Adopted in plenary on 12 March 2008*

The report focuses on three main aspects concerning the situation of women in prison: conditions of imprisonment need to maintain family ties and social relations, and social and professional reintegration. It calls on the Commission and Council to adopt a framework decision, on the basis of Article 6 of the EU Treaty, on minimum standards to protect the rights of prisoners, taking into consideration the distinct needs of women. Recalling the 'specific nature' of women's prisons, the report insists that security and reintegration arrangements aimed at women be put in place (hygiene, maternity, pregnant women...)

The report recommends that alternative penalties to imprisonment should be favoured to a greater extent, particularly for mothers with children, provided that the sentence imposed is short and the risk to public safety low. It also recommends that Member States should adopt the measures necessary to ensure that all prisoners, male and female, are offered the chance of adequately paid and varied work, and access to personal guidance and mentoring for the planning, realisation and completion of their personal development and social reintegration.

**- The situation of women in rural areas of the European Union (INI/2007/2117)**

**Rapporteur Christa Kläß (EPP-ED)**

*A public hearing on 5 November 2007*

*Adopted in committee on 28 January 2008*

*Adopted in plenary on 12 March 2008*

Mainstreaming gender into the rural sector must be a key strategy not only for the promotion of equality between women and men, but also for sustainable economic growth. The report calls for the necessity to ensure that gender dimension is taken into account in the impact assessments of the EU rural development policies as well as into all budgetary processes linked to the implementation of rural development policies. Furthermore, to counterbalance an unbalanced situation there must be financial incentives to encourage local authorities to enforce specific measures.

Rural women everywhere are in a minority in decision-making and planning. The challenge for rural development programmes is to identify the constraints on women's full participation in the economic and public life at local level, and to develop specific initiatives in their favour. It is important to strengthen the entering and involvement of women in new economic sectors such as telecommunications, leisure services, and environmental improvement. By entering into self-employment and setting up small businesses women can be at the forefront on innovation and diversification in rural areas. Furthermore, the report states that the successful LEADER programme should continued as it have helped many women develop paying activities in the fields of tourism, crafts and regional products. EU should support the Member States to promote the reconciliation

of working and family lives in rural areas, especially in economically underdeveloped rural regions

**- Women in Science (INI/2007/2206)**

**Rapporteur Britta Thomsen, (PSE)**

*A public hearing on 18 December 2007*

*Adopted in committee on 14 April 2008*

Research is a key sector for the EU's economic development: Europe needs to recruit 700,000 additional researchers under the Lisbon strategy for growth and employment. Europe's scientific potential must be used to the full if this objective is to be attained. However, female researchers are in the minority in the EU, accounting for 35% of scientists in the public sector and only 18% in the private sector. The higher up the academic ladder one goes, the fewer women there are. Although women account for over 50% of European students and 43% of PhDs, they only hold 15% of senior university posts, which sharply reduces their influence over research decisions. The persistence of stereotypes in Europe's teaching systems, the low number of women in decision-making bodies and a lack of transparency in recruitment procedures are among the reasons for this under-representation.

MEPs argue that conventional yardsticks for assessing "excellence" and "performance" on the basis of number of publications may be discriminatory and restrictive. They also ask the Commission to see that scientific research programmes take account of women's participation by providing targeted gender-awareness training for those in decision-making positions, sitting on advisory boards and evaluation panels, drafting project calls and proposals and leading contract negotiations. To increase the participation of women in science, MEPs call on the Commission and the Member States to take positive measures to encourage female researchers and to develop support and mentoring schemes. The Commission and the Member States are also asked to support networking among women scientists at national, regional and EU levels. To bring more women into science, MEPs call on the Commission and the Member States to opt for more transparent recruitment processes and to require a gender balance in evaluation panels and selection committees, ensuring they consist of at least 40% women and at least 40% men.

**- PUBLIC HEARING on Sexual and reproductive health and rights**

**29 January 2008**

In the public hearing the following subjects were discussed: "Recent trends regarding sexual and reproductive rights in Central and Eastern Europe with special focus on Poland, presented by Wanda Nowicka, President of ASTRA network and the Polish Federation for Planned Parenthood, Poland; "Sexual and reproductive rights and access to health services", presented by Irene Donadio, Advocacy Officer, International Federation for Family Planning, Belgium; "Freedom and quality of choices in reproductive health services of the EU and worldwide", presented by Jana Tutkova, Director of the Centre of the reform bioethics, Czech Republic; "Boys will be boys - adult values on gender and sexuality", presented by Sandra Dahlén, author, gender and sexuality educator and consultant in collaboration with NGO, Sweden; and "Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights from the perspective of International Law", presented by Dr Douglas A. Sylva, Senior Fellow, Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute, United States.

**- How marketing and advertising affect equality between women and men (A6-0157/2007)**

**Rapporteur Eva-Britt Svensson (GUE/NGL)**

*Adopted in committee on 27 May 2008*

*Adopted in Plenary on 3 September 2008*

The purpose of the report is to highlight how advertising fuels and consolidates gender stereotypes and how this has a negative impact on equality. The very purpose of advertising is to influence each and every - women and men alike. The choices people make are influenced by a whole range of factors, with social class and gender being two of the most important, states the draft report. The images and concepts of gender and gender roles that are presented and communicated through advertising are still based on clichés and commonplaces.

The report refers to research which shows that the norms created by gender stereotypes in advertising objectify people, in the sense that both women and men - although women have suffered more up until now - are represented as objects. Reducing a human being to an object leaves the individual exposed to violence and insults. Members are convinced about the necessity to combat this structurally embedded phenomenon. The objective of gender equality policy is for everyone to have the power to shape society and their own existence.

**- Equality between men and women 2008 COM(2008)10 final**

**Rapporteur Iratxe García Pérez (PSE)**

*Adopted in committee on 16 July 2008*

*Adopted in Plenary on 3 September 2008*

The report considers that the participation of women in decision-taking at local, national and European levels is inadequate. It calls on the Commission, Member States and political parties to envisage positive action to improve the situation. The report also notes that the use of electoral quotas has had a positive impact on the representation of women.

It underlines its concerns about women disadvantages in the labour market which leads to them accumulating fewer individual rights to pensions and other social welfare payments, especially in systems where entitlement is based predominantly on an individual's record of employment contributions or earnings.

It calls on the Member States to put forward specific measures to combat inequalities between women and men caused by interrupted patterns of employment resulting in particular from maternity leave or leave to care for dependants, and to reduce their negative effects on careers, wages and pension entitlements.

## 7. LEGISLATIVE REPORTS (COD)

### **- Changes to action programmes on gender equality (COD/2004/0194)**

**Rapporteur: Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE-ED).**

*Adopted in committee (single reading) 26 April 2005*

*Adopted in the plenary (single reading) 26 May 2005*

The programmes in question relate to the Community strategy on gender equality 2001-2005 and to the promotion of organisations active in the field of equality between men and women. The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality unanimously adopted the draft report, which proposes the extension of the two programmes on equality until 2006. Originally, the two action plans were due to expire on 31 December 2005. The European Parliament adopted the report at its part-session on 26 May 2005.

### **- Commission proposal for a directive designed to simplify and improve legislation relating to the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast version) (COD/2004/0084)**

**Rapporteur: Angelika Niebler (PPE-ED).**

*Adopted in committee (first reading) on 26 May 2005*

*Adopted in plenary (first reading) on 6 July 2005*

*Adopted in committee (second reading) on 25 April 2006*

*Adopted in plenary (second reading) on 1 June 2006*

The purpose of the proposal is to help ensure legal certainty and clarity in the implementation of the principle of equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation, bringing together in a single text the seven of the main existing provisions in this area together with certain new elements based on consistent case law of the Court of Justice of the European Communities.

At its first reading, Parliament supported the recasting of the directive, but adopted a number of substantial improvements. The Members wish to see parental leave enshrined in the law as an individual right of each parent. They wish to put an end to any less favourable treatment of a woman related to pregnancy or maternity leave. Finally, the Parliament calls for the Member States to see to it that the social partners - without prejudice to their autonomy - promote equality between women and men and flexible working rules in order to help make it easier to combine work and family life.

At its part-session on 6 July 2005, the European Parliament adopted - on the basis of the report by the FEMM Committee - 98 amendments to the Commission proposal. The Council accepted 37 of Parliament's amendments, of which 24 relate to titles of articles, 10 were already included in the Council's general guidelines and only three - relating only to the recitals - represent a concrete contribution by Parliament.

The negotiations led to the adoption of the Directive in second lecture, and the Parliament accepted negotiated the Common Position of the Council without amending it.

### **- Establishment of a European Institute for Gender Equality (COD/2005/0017)**

**Co-rapporteurs: Amalia Sartori (PPE-DE), Lissy Gröner (PSE)**

*A public hearing held on September 13, 2005*

*Adopted in committee (first reading) on January 24, 2006*

*Adopted in plenary (first reading) on March 14, 2006*

*Adopted in committee (second reading) on 11 December, 2006*

*Adopted in plenary (second reading) on December 14, 2006*

The first reading report contained 55 amendments, notably on the tasks of the Institute, which should focus more on the analysis than on data collection, and on the exchange of best practices and comparable information. A telematic network bringing together all the actors of the field (administrative bodies, research centres, experts, etc) is also a proposal formulated by the Parliament. As far as the structure of the Institute is concerned, Parliament opted for:

- a small-sized Management Board that would be composed of nine members chosen by the Council in consultation with the Parliament, and a representative of the Commission.
- a nomination of the director involving the Parliament in a transparent and open procedure.
- a consultative forum dealing with exchange of information as well as planning of activities
- a strongly defined review clause enabling an abrogation of the regulation if the usefulness and efficiency of the Institute was not to be proven.

The common position adopted on September 18, 2006 by the Council took on board 35 amendments of the EP's first reading but did not share the views of the Parliament as regards the structure of the Institute.

The Council favoured a larger Management Board, which would represent all member states, and did not take on board the advisory forum. The larger board would be helped by a Bureau, composed of six members and ensuring the running of the Institute.

The Parliament and the Commission strongly argued that such a structure would be both inefficient and expensive.

After two informal trialogues, the Council, the Parliament and the Commission reached an agreement that contains a medium-sized Management Board (19 members) and a role of the Parliament in the nomination procedure of the director, as well as the reinstatement of the advisory forum, now called expert's forum.

The recommendation for second reading was adopted unanimously in FEMM on December 11, 2006 and then voted in Plenary by a large majority on December 14, 2006.

On December 19, 2006 the Council adopted the common position as amended by the Parliament and the regulation was finally approved. The indicative budget for the Institute is of EUR 52 million for the period 2007-2013.

#### **- DAPHNE programme**

**COD/2005/0037A**

**Rapporteur Lissy Gröner (PSE)**

Adopted in committee (first reading) on 15 May 2006

Adopted in plenary (first reading) on 5 September 2006

Adopted in committee (second reading) on 12 April 2007

Adopted in plenary (second reading) on 22 May 2007

Legal act: signed 20 June 2007 published in the OJ 3 July 2007

The DAPHNE programme proposes since 1997 a series of initiatives to combat violence against children, young people and women. It aims at the support of organisations preparing measures and undertaking actions to prevent or combat all types of violence as well as to protect victims and targeted groups.

In the new proposal, the Commission merged Daphne with the programme on Drugs, in a broader framework programme on "Fundamental Rights and Justice" for the period 2007-2013.

The Parliament decided to adopt two separate procedures, Drugs being dealt with LIBE and DAPHNE III with FEMM and to ask the Commission to withdraw the proposal and to reformulate two separate proposals.

After the adoption of the report in committee 15 May 2006, the Commission submitted the modified proposal, where DAPHNE III was treated separately from Drugs prevention and information programme.

The EP the first reading was completed 5 September 2006, and shortly after that a number of informal dialogues took place, resulting in the negotiated Council common position which was adopted 1 December 2006. EP received the Council common position on 5 March, and after the reception of the Commission communication proceeded to the 2nd reading, and adopted the Council common position without amending it according to the FEMM suggestion. The legal act was signed and published in OJ L 173 03.07.2007, p. 0019.

As a part of the compromise agreement the European Parliament and the Council issued a joint statement inviting the Commission to consider a possibility of a European Year of Combating Violence against Children, Young People and Women.

Daphne III programme has a considerably higher budget than Daphne II (116.85 millions euros for 2007-2013, around 50% increase from Daphne II which had 50 millions for 2004-2008), also there are several provisions which were not included in the previous programmes (for example, provisions for the helpdesk and for the think tank (EP initiatives)).

Since the legal act entered into force in July 2007, the Commission has experienced a delay with its implementation. Up till now two calls for proposals have been launched.

## **8. OPINIONS**

Traditionally, in order to consolidate the integrated approach to gender equality in the various political spheres the committee responsible for a report uses the tool of opinions from other committees relating to its report. FEMM opinions are concerned with ensuring that the gender dimension is taken into account in Parliament's reports and resolutions.

So far in the sixth parliamentary term the FEMM committee adopted 93 opinions (60% non-legislative/40% Legislative). On average, 45% of the amendments or suggestions contained in FEMM opinions have been adopted in the final resolution of the Parliament. There is a gap between the impact of FEMM amendments/suggestions in legislative (40%) and non-legislative (48%) resolutions. It is important to note that all of the resolutions on which FEMM has adopted an opinion have taken on board (in one form or another) gender specific issues. EMPL, LIBE and CULT committees are the main destinaries of FEMM opinions (42% of all opinions), and for all three committees the impact of FEMM amendments/suggestions is above the average, which means that a continuous cooperation can enhance the visibility of gender issues.

Detailed statistics on the impact of FEMM opinions on the parliamentary resolutions are available in the secretariat.