



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

2010/2138(INI)

11.11.2010

DRAFT REPORT

on equality between women and men in the European Union – 2010
(2010/2138(INI))

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Rapporteur: Mariya Nedelcheva

CONTENTS

	Page
MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION	3
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT	9

MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on equality between women and men in the European Union – 2010 (2010/2138(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 2 and Article 3(3), second subparagraph, of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and Article 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to the Commission report of 18 December 2009 on equality between women and men – 2010 (COM(2009)0694),
- having regard to the annual Commission reports on equality between women and men in the European Union for 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 (COM(2001)0179, COM(2002)0258, COM(2003)0098, COM(2004)0115, COM(2005)0044, COM(2006)0071, COM(2007)0049 and COM(2008)0010 respectively),
- having regard to Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast)¹,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 3 October 2008 entitled ‘A better work-life balance: stronger support for reconciling professional, private and family life’, (COM(2008)0635),
- having regard to the Commission report of 3 October 2008 entitled ‘Implementation of the Barcelona objectives concerning childcare facilities for pre-school-age children’ (COM(2008)0638),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 21 September 2010 entitled ‘Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015’ (COM(2010)0491),
- having regard to the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),
- having regard to the European Gender Equality Pact adopted by the European Council of 23 and 24 March 2006,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 March 2007 on a Roadmap for equality between women and men (2006-2010)²,

¹ OJ L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 23.

² OJ C 301 E, 13.12.2007, p. 56.

- having regard to the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and its opinion on the gender pay gap adopted on 22 March 2007,
 - having regard to its resolution of 3 September 2008 on ‘Equality between women and men – 2008’¹,
 - having regard to its resolution of 18 November 2008 with recommendations to the Commission on the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women²,
 - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality and the opinion of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (A7-0000/0000),
- A. whereas equality between women and men is a fundamental principle of the EU, recognised in the Treaty on European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights; whereas many inequalities between women and men remain,
 - B. whereas the European Union has not been spared by the economic and financial crisis, which has had equally devastating consequences for female and male employment and which could prove more damaging for female employment in the long term,
 - C. whereas gender-disaggregated data are necessary in order to compare the effects of the crisis on women and men; whereas the European Institute for Gender Equality could make a valuable contribution to that end,
 - D. whereas female unemployment is often underestimated because of the high rates of women who are either economically inactive (two-thirds of the 63 million inactive people between 25 and 64) or part-time unemployed,
 - E. whereas women are at a disadvantage on the labour market on account of being more likely to be employed on part-time or involuntary short-term contracts or at lower rates of pay than men; whereas this disadvantage puts women at a higher risk of poverty than men,
 - F. whereas there continue to be disparities in pay, which, despite the efforts and progress made, still average 18% in the European Union and even exceed 25% in some countries,
 - G. whereas motherhood should not hold women back in their careers, but statistics clearly show that women with children work shorter hours than those without, unlike fathers who work longer hours than childless men,
 - H. whereas, at the Barcelona European Council of March 2002, the Member States were asked to provide by 2010 childcare for at least 90% of children between three years old and the mandatory school age and at least 33% of children under three years old, but there are still not enough childcare facilities in many countries,

¹ OJ C 259 E, 4.12.2009, p.35.

² OJ C 16 E, 22.1.2010, p.21.

- I. whereas there is a correlation between the rate of female employment and women's family responsibilities; whereas over 20 million Europeans (two-thirds of whom are women) care for adult dependent persons, which stops them from having a full-time job; whereas this fact could aggravate the effects of population ageing,
- J. whereas there is a need to address stereotypes, which often push children into sectors traditionally seen as the preserve of either men or of women, and it is important to promote diversification of career choices,
- K. whereas not enough girls go into science, leading to severe gender segregation by sector,
- L. whereas there are generally more women than men graduating from universities (58.9% of degrees are awarded to women) but women are under-represented in corporate, administrative and political positions of responsibility,
- M. whereas the Network of Women in Decision-making in Politics and the Economy, set up in June 2008, can help improve the gender balance in decision-making positions,
- N. whereas greater representation of women at European, national, regional and local level is necessary for effective gender equality in our societies; whereas, in some Member States, the proportion of women in the national parliament is below 15%,
- O. whereas women are at greater risk of poverty than men as a result of their truncated careers and lower salaries and pensions; whereas, in the context of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, not enough attention has been paid to the underlying causes of poverty,
- P. whereas 2011 will be the European Year of Volunteering, and it is important to stress the potential benefits of promoting the principle of gender equality in volunteer programmes,
- Q. whereas minority women, especially Roma women, regularly experience discrimination and are at particular risk of social exclusion,
- R. whereas violence against women is a violation of their fundamental rights and an obstacle to equality; whereas 20-25% of women suffer physical violence in the course of their lives; whereas psychological violence is just as devastating as physical violence,
 - 1. Points out that male-dominated sectors, such as construction and manufacturing, were the first to be hit by the crisis but that the crisis has since spread to more gender-mixed sectors, thus leading to greater female unemployment;
 - 2. Calls for the impact of the crisis on women to be quantified by drawing up precise statistics with gender-disaggregated indicators that are regularly updated and reassessed; adds that such statistics should enable a more targeted response to cyclical and structural employment problems with a view to overcoming the crisis and fostering the spread of good practices;
 - 3. Points out that gender inequalities remain despite the increasing participation of women in the labour market; stresses that the economic and financial crisis should be seen as a

chance to put forward new and innovative proposals on employment, remuneration, working hours and the filling of positions of responsibility;

4. Points out that the emergence of new sectors with a strong potential for job creation, such as ecology, the environment or new technologies, needs to be taken into consideration when employment policies are being formulated; stresses in this connection that women have an important role to play in these sectors; calls on the Member States to encourage girls to enter these types of sector; encourages the Commission to issue regular communications on these new perspectives;
5. Points out that organisations active in the social economy (foundations, mutual associations and cooperatives) can play a key role in the economic recovery and that their employees are chiefly women; calls on the Member States to consider such organisations seriously when drawing up economic recovery policies;
6. Stresses that eliminating the pay gap is a priority, and therefore deplores the fact that the Commission did not do enough to relaunch this debate at European level, particularly by revising the existing legislation applying the principle of equal pay for men and women, as Parliament had requested in its resolution of 18 November 2009;
7. Calls on the Council and Commission to improve observance of the principle of gender equality in its Europe 2020 strategy and ensure that it is applied effectively in the various parts of the strategy;
8. Calls, in view of the continuing pay gap between men and women, for a Europe-wide debate to combat stereotypes linked to the respective roles of men and women;
9. Asks for concrete proposals with a view to achieving a better work-life balance, particularly with regard to help with care for dependent persons and child care;
10. Asks the Commission to ensure that the various European rules on work-life balance are correctly transposed by the Member States;
11. Calls on the Member States to set up and/or improve childcare facilities such as crèches and nurseries with a view to providing good-quality, affordable child care services to as many people as possible; believes that these facilities offer considerable support to parents and should make it easier for them to enter the workforce;
12. Stresses that education plays a key role in inculcating in children the notion of gender equality as early as possible; calls on the Member States to establish information and awareness-raising programmes on the values of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, particularly Article 23 thereof, for pupils throughout their school career;
13. Stresses the need for young people to be free to make their own career choices; points out, therefore, that teachers should not automatically guide pupils towards specific sectors for purposes of conforming to sexist stereotypes;
14. Calls on the Member States to take measures to ensure that girls are not pushed automatically into traditionally feminised sectors and careers;

15. Welcomes efforts made at European level to increase women's representation in politics; advocates, therefore, greater participation for women in all European institutions, particularly in positions of responsibility; stresses, however, that further efforts must be made at national, regional and municipal level;
16. Points out that only 3% of major companies are chaired by a woman; calls on the Member States to take effective measures to ensure greater representation for women in major listed companies and on the management boards of companies in general;
17. Calls on the Member States to identify companies which promote gender equality and a good work-life balance and to spread good practices extensively, in particular via chambers of commerce;
18. Encourages the regular exchange of information and experiences between stakeholders promoting gender equality, with a view to implementing good practices throughout society: at European, national, regional and local level and in both the private and public sectors;
19. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to pay particular attention to vulnerable groups of women – disabled, elderly, immigrant or minority women being specific groups in need of measures tailored to their circumstances; calls on the Commission to broaden the scope of the European Year of Volunteering in 2011 to include promotion of gender equality;
20. Points out that women with disabilities are often discriminated against in social, cultural, political and professional life; calls on the Commission and the Member States to make concrete proposals with a view to improving their situation;
21. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to pay particular attention to Roma women in the implementation of the EU strategy on Roma inclusion;
22. Advocates access for women and men to information on reproductive health and women's right to avail themselves of services in this area;
23. Points out that violence against women is a major hindrance to gender equality; calls on the Commission to start drawing up a proposal for a comprehensive directive on preventing and combating all forms of violence against women – whether physical, sexual or psychological – including trafficking;
24. Welcomes efforts made at EU and national level to combat violence against women but stresses that this remains a serious, unresolved problem; welcomes the resumption of debate on this form of violence, notably via the establishment of a European protection order; calls on present and future EU presidencies to make further progress;
25. Calls on the Member States to provide better training for staff in the health sector, social services, the police and judiciary and to set up structures capable of dealing with all forms of violence against women, including rare forms of serious violence such as acid attacks;

26. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, and to the governments of the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The current economic, financial and social crisis is having disastrous repercussions for employment, living conditions and our societies at large. Women have been severely affected by the crisis, particularly in terms of their working conditions, their access to employment, their place in society as a whole and gender equality. The Commission rightly listed, in its 2010 annual report, the remaining challenges we have to address regarding gender equality as we emerge from the crisis.

Your rapporteur stresses the need for a targeted response addressing the real effects of the crisis on women, which concerned, first and foremost, female employment. As a whole, women's employment was affected later than men's because women make up the majority of the workforce in sectors that were initially more resistant to the crisis (health, education, social welfare, etc.). The effects on these sectors, however, could well prove longer lasting, thus making women's employment less secure than men's. Women have therefore been hard hit in terms of their working or recruitment conditions and access to employment and could see their circumstances get worse if specific measures are not implemented quickly. Indeed, women remain relegated to part-time work on fixed-term contracts with often insufficient pay and are, for the most part, at a disadvantage on the labour market. Gender equality in employment needs to become an established reality, rather than merely a trend. It is therefore important that the governments of the Member States and the Commission continue to implement gender equality policies and refrain from reducing the budgets earmarked for them.

However, the crisis should not be seen from a wholly negative perspective. It should be seen as a chance for governments to ask the right questions and look at their policies in a new light. The crisis must be the catalyst for us to reconsider the respective roles of men and women in our societies, a process that would entail, among other things, fully incorporating gender equality into all policies. This ideal of equality should be achieved by means of concrete, lasting measures notably concerning education. Children must be familiarised with the principle of gender equality from a very early age so as to banish sexist stereotypes. Whether in the form of ongoing information programmes, awareness-raising campaigns or guiding boys and girls away from sectors traditionally reserved either for men or for women, education and training for young people is the key to equality.

Your rapporteur would also like to stress the importance of the role of women in decision-making positions, which are traditionally the preserve of men. Whether on the boards of publicly listed companies or in the world of politics, women must be able to attain posts in line with their skills. Although often better qualified than men, women are sometimes denied access to positions of responsibility, leading to a mismatch between their levels of training and their status.

There is also a need to strengthen the gender dimension in the fight against poverty. As 2010 is the European Year for Combating Poverty, particular attention should be paid to the most vulnerable groups of women. Specific measures should be taken to stop women vulnerable on account of a disability or their status as immigrants or minorities falling into precarious situations, and to facilitate their integration into society. Your rapporteur therefore advises the

Commission that a significant part of the EU strategy on Roma inclusion should concern the integration of Roma women.

The promotion of equality also involves combating violence against women. All forms of physical, sexual or psychological violence, however serious, must be combated and condemned. Combating gender-based violence entails launching awareness-raising campaigns and teaching children and young people about the horrors of this violence. Condemning gender-based violence entails defining it in the eyes of the law and ensuring that the punishment fits the crime. For example, acid attacks are a form of violence that is still regrettably prevalent in certain Member States. Taboos continue to be associated with certain forms of violence in our societies. Information on these forms of violence is scarce and there is, therefore, little awareness of their psychological or physical consequences which are, however, considerable.