Equal treatment and access for men and women in the performing arts

2008/2182(INI) - 20/01/2009

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality adopted an own-initiative report drafted by Claire **GIBAULT** (ALDE, FR) on equal treatment and access for men and women in the performing arts. It underlines the scale and persistence of the inequalities between men and women in the performing arts and the impact that the unequal way in which the sector is organised can have on society as a whole, given the particular nature of its activities. Members stress the absolute need to promote access for women to all the artistic professions where they are still in the minority. The proportion of women employed in artistic professions and in the official culture industry is only very small and women are under-represented in positions of responsibility in cultural institutions and in academies and universities. Member States are encouraged to remove all obstacles to women accessing top positions in cultural institutions and in academies and universities.

The committee stresses that discrimination against women holds back the development of the cultural sector by depriving it of talent and skills and notes that talent requires contact with the public in order to achieve recognition. It calls for the following:

- measures to increase the presence of women on the directors' boards of institutions, in particular by promoting equality within cultural undertakings and institutions and professional organisations;
- the actors in the field of culture to increase the presence of female creators and their works in programming, collections, publishing and consultation;
- whenever possible, applications should be anonymous. The committee emphasises the need to continue using screened-off auditions for recruiting orchestra musicians, which has helped women join orchestras.

The Commission and Member States are asked to consider immediately, as a first realistic step in the fight against inequality in the performing arts, ensuring that at least **a third of the people in all branches** in the sector are of the minority sex.

Member States are encouraged:

(a) to consider together with their cultural institutions how best to understand the mechanisms which produce inequalities so as to avoid any discrimination on the basis of sex as early as possible;

(b) to remove all obstacles to women accessing top positions in the most prestigious cultural institutions and organisations;

(c) to introduce to the sector new ways of organising work, delegation of responsibilities and time management which take into account the personal-life constraints of women and men;

(d) to recognise that in this sector, where untypical hours, high mobility and job insecurity are the norm and are more destabilising for women, collective solutions should be found for providing childcare (e.g. opening of crèches in cultural undertakings with hours adapted to rehearsal and performance times);

The cultural institutions are reminded of the absolute need to translate into fact the democratic notion that equal work by men and women must be matched by identical pay, which, in the arts as in many other sectors, is still not the case.

Lastly, the report encourages Member States to produce comparative analyses of the current situation in the performing arts, to draw up statistics in order to facilitate the design and implementation of common policies and to ensure that the progress achieved can be compared and measured.