Gender mainstreaming in the work of the European Parliament

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The European Parliament adopted by 453 votes to 173, with 79 abstentions, a resolution on Gender Mainstreaming in the work of the European Parliament.

Parliament recalled that achieving gender equality is central to the protection of human rights, economic growth, social inclusion and sustainability. However, progress in achieving gender equality in the EU is stagnating and at this pace will not be achieved for some time yet.

It stated that one of the competences of the committee responsible is to contribute to the implementation and further development of gender mainstreaming in all policy areas. Whereas the majority of parliamentary committees generally give importance to gender mainstreaming, others exhibit little or no interest in this matter.

General assessment of the existing institutional framework: Parliament noted that female representation in key decision-making positions at political and administrative level, including within Parliament's political groups, remains low. Different bodies are in charge of developing and implementing gender mainstreaming both at policy and working life level in the Parliament.

It regretted that the activities of these different bodies responsible for gender mainstreaming are not being coordinated or integrated within Parliament or with other institutions. It undertakes to establish effective cooperation between all actors in this institutional framework and recalled its commitment to regularly adopt and implement a policy plan for gender mainstreaming within Parliament.

Parliament called for ongoing development of the **gender mainstreaming network**, representing committees but also interparliamentary delegations, and its full involvement in regular monitoring of the state of play of gender mainstreaming across policy areas. It noted the need for greater and active participation by Members in the network and called for substitute Members to be added to the network in order to increase participation, as is the case for committees and delegations.

Parliament also called for a yearly analysis of the state of play of gender equality within Parliament, based on gender disaggregated data, at all levels of staff and political bodies, including parliamentary assistants, and for this reporting to be made public. In this respect, plenary deplored the fact that the targets for gender balance at senior and middle management level adopted by the Bureau in 2006 (Kaufmann report) were not reached by the 2009 deadline. It urged for effective, corrective and far-reaching measures to be taken so as to reach these gender equality targets within the shortest possible time frame.

Gender mainstreaming tools: Parliament stressed that the practice of using 'gender mainstreaming amendments'(GMAs) has proved to be more effective than opinions as they are more concise, can be more rapidly submitted and relate to key, specific and delimited issues. It reiterated its call on the competent committee to include this practice of GMAs in the Rules of Procedure, taking into account the specific role of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality in gender mainstreaming as a horizontal principle.

It regretted that despite the interinstitutional declaration on ensuring gender mainstreaming annexed to the Multiannual Financial Framework, no measures concerning gender budgeting have so far been taken. It also deplored that the gender budgeting exercise has revealed that the gender perspective is far from being

assumed in all policies, at all levels and at every stage of the policymaking process. In this context, it noted that it is particularly crucial to build up in-house capacity on gender-responsive budgeting in order to enhance Parliament's scrutiny role on these matters.

Parliament noted that the Commission is considering issuing a report on gender mainstreaming in the Commission in 2017. It also reaffirmed the need for sufficient allocation of resources also at Parliament level in order to develop gender impact assessments and gender-based analysis. It called on the Commission to **perform systematic gender impact assessments on new legislative or policy proposals**, on the basis of its reinforced assessment of their impact on fundamental rights and in order to guarantee that the EU is upholding women's rights.

Parliament noted that, in the replies to the questionnaires on the state of gender mainstreaming in the parliamentary committees, specific tools were highlighted as being effective in integrating a gender perspective in the work of committees, including:

- distribution of key documents and inclusion of gender equality issues in the terms of reference of studies commissioned;
- focusing attention on the use of specific terminology and definitions in relation to gender equality issues;
- promoting ex-ante and ex-post assessment of draft proposals for legislation and for future agreements;
- training and awareness-raising activities for Members, staff, political advisers and assistants.

Parliament expressed its full support for developing targeted and regular gender mainstreaming training, with adequate resources and tailor-made for Parliament specific needs, addressed to all Parliament staff working in policy fields. These training sessions should include information on the multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination. There is a need to ensure that all its services are aware of their responsibilities in implementing gender mainstreaming. On the other hand, plenary rejected the principle of an accreditation system to be established for those who undergo gender mainstreaming training at Parliament.

Gender mainstreaming in the work of committees: Parliament reiterated its call for the commitment to delivering a biannual report on gender mainstreaming in the work of Parliament to be met. It regretted that a large majority of the committees have neither adopted nor discussed an action plan on gender equality for their work. On the other hand, it rejected the idea of the establishing a standing report on gender mainstreaming in committees. It took the view that an internal monitoring body needs to be created in order to follow up and evaluate ex-post the implementation of tools and actions.

Interinstitutional cooperation to support gender mainstreaming: Parliament stressed that stronger interinstitutional relations will improve the gender balance in EU policy-making. It called on the Commission to propose an appropriate framework for establishing interinstitutional gender mainstreaming cooperation, such as the establishment of an interinstitutional high level working group on gender mainstreaming, and also involving other stakeholders in this field. In this regard, plenary called on the Commission to follow up on the results of the public consultation and the positions of Parliament and of the Council by immediately adopting a **communication on a new Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Rights post-2015** which addresses gender equality issues in line with the international agenda.

It recommended that data be provided annually by the European Ombudsman to Parliament's High Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity, as regards complaints about maladministration relating to gender equality in Parliament. It also called for the exchanges of best practice to be organised at all levels with other institutions and organisations. Regular interparliamentary meetings on gender mainstreaming should be organised.

It is also noted that an alternative motion for resolution proposed by more than 40 members was rejected in plenary.