Gender equality in the media sector in the EU

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The European Parliament adopted by 523 votes to 97, with 56 abstentions, a resolution on gender equality in the media sector in the EU.

Equality between men and women is a fundamental principle of the European Union, as enshrined in the Treaties in Article 8 of the TFEU. The media act as a fourth power, have the capacity to influence and, ultimately, shape public opinion. Media organisations have to be sensitised.

Women's presence in the media: Parliament recalled that women constituted 68 % of journalism and information graduates in the EU-28 in 2015, while employment data for the EU-28 over 2008-2015 show that **the percentage of women employed in the media sector on average is continuously languishing at around 40 %.**

Women are disproportionately under-represented in the news and information media and are even less visible in the domains of sport, politics, the economy and finances.

Moreover, the share of **women in decision-making** in media in the EU-28 in 2015 was still below the gender balance zone (40-60 %) at just 32 %, while the share of women as board presidents was a mere 22 %.

Gender pay and pension gaps are a persistent problem in the EU, and are evident in different economic sectors, including in the media, where the gender pay gap is 17 %.

Against this context, Members called on the Member States and media organisations to support and develop incentive measures, including **quotas**, for the equal representation of women and men in decision-making posts, and for the effective monitoring of such efforts to be given greater prominence in these organisations.

Parliament condemned the widespread occurrence of sexual harassment and other types of abuse, especially in online gaming and social media, and encouraged media companies to create safe environments that are responsive to any instances of harassment. It also condemned attacks on women journalists who courageously report on important political and criminal issues.

Public and private media organisations are urged to adopt internal polices such as equal opportunities and diversity policies which include anti-harassment measures, maternity or parental leave schemes, flexible working arrangements that support work-life balance allowing women and men to benefit equally from parental leave and encourage men to take up paternity leave.

Parliament encouraged the media and regulatory authorities to disclose the gender pay gap to introduce wage transparency obligations and to implement the principle of **equal pay for equal work** through binding measures.

Media content and women: Members called on the Member States to promote **content** on gender equality in public media. They highlighted that violent and sexist media content is **negatively affecting women** and their participation in society and it may be causing psychological or physical damage to children and young people.

The relevant stakeholders and authorities are urged to address the issue of **advertising** that indirectly encourages eating disorders such as anorexia, and to take other steps to protect particularly vulnerable persons, including girls and young women, against such content.

Parliament recommended that regulations put in place by the competent authorities set criteria to ensure non-stereotypical portrayal of **women and girls**, and provide for the possibility of removing or suspending offensive content.

Advertising could be an effective tool to challenge gender stereotypes, as well as gender mainstreaming in journalism school education modules.

Member States must ensure that the media, including online and social media, as well as advertising, is free from any incitement to violence or hatred directed against any person or group of persons.

Member States and the Commission are to promote self-regulation and co-regulation in the media through codes of conduct.

Examples of good practice: welcoming the various examples of good practice that can be observed in all Member States, Parliament called on the Member States to conduct **regular information and awareness-raising campaigns** aimed at detecting discriminatory content and to present regular reports on gender equality trends in the media.

The Commission is called on to **earmark special funding** for sub-programmes focusing on the advancement of women in the media industry and to establish an **EU award** for students in the media field for work related to gender equality.

Members called on:

- Member States to fully implement the existing legislation addressing gender equality, and to encourage regulatory bodies to pay attention to the presence and advancement of women and to non-stereotypical media content;
- the Commission to conduct further research into the participation of women in **senior positions** in the media;
- the Commission and the Member States to implement action programmes which ensure women's involvement in the design and implementation of effective and efficient gender-sensitive policies and programmes within media organisations;
- Member States to develop programmes to improve women's skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (**STEM**) subjects that are important for careers in the media sector with a more technical focus, such as sound and audio-visual technicians.