Resolution on the situation of women with disabilities

2018/2685(RSP) - 29/11/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution tabled by the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality on the situation of women with disabilities.

Noting that there are approximately 46 million women and girls with disabilities in the EU, comprising about 16 % of its total female population, Parliament highlighted the fact that women and girls with disabilities suffer from **double discrimination due to the intersection of gender and disability,** and may often even be exposed to **multiple discrimination** arising from the intersection of gender and disability with several other factors including class, migration status, age, religion or ethnicity. Members pointed out that women with disabilities are two to five times more likely to be **victims of violence** than other women, and 34% of women with a health problem or a disability have experienced physical or sexual violence by a partner in their lifetime.

General recommendations: Parliament called on Member States to fulfil their commitments regarding ratification of the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (CRPD), and to take all necessary measures to guarantee the rights of disabled people in particular in areas such as employment, education, health, social protection, housing, mobility, access to justice, culture, and participation in social and political life, as well as the specific responsibilities defined in the CRPD for the rights of women and children with disabilities. It called on the Commission and Member States to:

- **mainstream** women and girls with a disability perspective in their gender equality strategy, a gender perspective in their disability strategies, and both a gender and a disability perspective in all other policies;
- support **research and innovation** with regard to developing products and services to support persons with disabilities in their everyday activities;
- ensure the **collection of gender-disaggregated data** in order to identify the forms of intersectional multiple discrimination that are faced by women with disabilities.

Rights of women with disabilities: women with disabilities must be ensured the **full enjoyment of their rights** as regards access to quality, accessible and affordable education, healthcare, employment, mobility, and family life. Parliament stressed that women with disabilities must be **informed of their rights** and of the citizens' services available to them. Members also called on the EU to **remove barriers to the right to vote** for persons with disabilities, especially for the 2019 European elections.

Accessibility: Member States must develop **public transport policies** that facilitate mobility for disabled people, together with the removal of architectural barriers. Parliament asked for allocation of the necessary **EU funds** to support the development of such policies. It also expressed concern that women and girls with disabilities are far too often **denied access** to facilities in the area of **sexual and reproductive health and rights** and that they even face the risk of forced sterilization.

Labour: Members stressed the need for policies that promote the integration of persons with disabilities in the labour market, which should encourage **access to employment as a condition of social inclusion**, promoting equal opportunities. They also called for specific forms of labour regulation that address the **specific needs** of people with disabilities, especially as regards the regulation of working hours, pregnancy and maternity, safeguarding permanence in the labour market and ensuring labour protection.

Education: Parliament called for Member States to **improve public investment** in early childhood education and care for children with disabilities and also stressed the importance of integrating women with disabilities into

Health: the resolution highlighted the need for women and girls with disabilities to have **full access to medical and dental care** that meets their particular needs, in areas such as gynaecological consultation, medical examinations, sexual and reproductive health, family planning and adapted support during pregnancy, and trans-specific healthcare. It called on the Commission to introduce **targets for care services** for persons with disabilities, on similar lines to the Barcelona targets, with monitoring tools for measuring the quality, accessibility and affordability of these services.

Gender-based violence: Members called on the EU to swiftly ratify the **Istanbul Convention** on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. They asked the Commission to submit a **comprehensive European strategy** to fight violence against women with a proposal for a legislative act for preventing and combating gender-based violence, paying **particular attention to women and girls with disabilities.**

Digital and media inclusion: the resolution emphasised that more must be done to overcome **stereotypes and prejudice** about disability, and that women and girls with disabilities need to have greater visibility in the media in order to change prevalent exclusionary social norms. It called for programmes for women with disabilities, focusing on their digital inclusion.

Legislation: Parliament regretted that the **European Disability Strategy 2010-2020** currently in force has **failed** to boost the adoption of effective legislative acts, measures and policies to tackle the segregation and rejection of women with disabilities in the labour market, political life, and schools and learning environments. It called on the Commission to present a proposal for the European Disability Strategy 2020-2030 that **fully integrates the CRPD provisions** in future EU legislation, policies and programmes and is consistent with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019. It called for a genuine structured dialogue between the EU and organisations representing persons with disabilities for the drafting of the European Disability Strategy 2020-2030.

Funding: lastly, Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to optimise the EU Structural Funds, including the European Social Fund, in order to promote accessibility and non-discrimination for women with disabilities, and to increase the visibility of funding opportunities, e.g. for business start-ups and supporting entrepreneurship in general.