Gender Mainstreaming in the European Parliament - annual report 2020

2021/2039(INI) - 08/02/2022 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality adopted an own-initiative report by Irène TOLLERET (Renew Europe, FR) and Gwendoline DELBOS-CORFIELD (Greens/EFA, FR) on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament – annual report 2020.

Parliament should be a leader for other parliamentary bodies in its promotion of gender equality, learn from the best practices of other parliamentary bodies in gender mainstreaming its structures and processes and take into account good examples of gender-mainstreaming implementation in the public and private sectors and civil society. However, gender mainstreaming is still not yet fully integrated into Parliament's practices and rules. In the hearings organised by most of Parliament committees between the beginning of the current term and November 2020, women accounted for under 50 % of those present. For the Committees on Agriculture and Rural Development, Fisheries, Petitions and Employment and Social Affairs, among others, the proportion was below 25 %.

General remarks

Members regretted the fragmented implementation of gender mainstreaming across policy areas and institutions at the EU level. They stressed that gender equality is a joint responsibility that requires action by all EU institutions, Member States and agencies, in partnership with civil society, women's organisations, social partners and the private sector.

Noting the lack of quantitative and qualitative data on gender mainstreaming within the EU institutions, the report called for **comprehensive gender statistics** and for the creation of qualitative **indicators** on gender equality to collect additional gender-disaggregated data in order to continue improving gender equality.

Members welcomed the EIGE's 'Gender-sensitive parliaments' **toolkit** that focuses on five key areas to be addressed: equal opportunities to enter the parliament, equal opportunities to influence the parliament's working procedures, adequate space on the parliamentary agenda for women's interests and concerns, the production of gender-sensitive legislation and compliance with the symbolic function of the parliament. They also welcomed the adoption of **gender action plans** by all Parliament committees but noted the lack of monitoring and implementation of these plans.

Opportunities to enter Parliament

Members noted that the percentage of women Members has slightly decreased since the end of last term from about 39.6 % to 39.1 %. They welcomed Parliament's leadership in this area, nevertheless, including its progress on female political representation, which is higher than the 30.4 % average across the national parliaments of the Member States and is significantly higher than the worldwide average of 25.2 % for national parliaments.

The report encouraged national political parties to introduce **quotas** when deciding on electoral candidates, even if the law does not provide for it. The lack of gender-responsive recruitment procedures in Parliament is regrettable according to Members.

Opportunities to influence Parliament's working procedures

The report welcomed the fully gender-balanced Bureau of Parliament with 8 female Vice-Presidents out of 14 and 2 female Quaestors out of 5. However, it called for gender balance in the leadership of committees, delegations and political groups to be improved.

Members also welcomed the amendment to Rule 213(1) of Parliament's Rules of Procedure requiring the bureau of each committee to be **gender balanced**. They regretted, however, that this amendment will enter into force only at the opening of the first part-session following Parliament's next elections, due to be held in 2024.

Regarding **workplace harassment**, the report noted that despite all efforts taken so far to ensure a zero-harassment policy, there are still cases of sexual harassment in Parliament and efforts should be made to prevent sexual harassment.

The **work-life balance** measures should be revised. The report also called for increased non-transferrable maternity and paternity leave for Parliament's staff after welcoming a child, for a total of six months for each parent to be taken during the first year. Parental leave should be fully remunerated as opposed to a fixed allowance.

Parliament's services should examine the impact that **menopause** has on the working life of Parliament employees and Members called for menopause to be considered in sickness and attendance management policies.

Delivering legislation with a gender perspective

The report stressed the importance of gender impact assessments for the design of legislative proposals and gender-responsive evaluations of legislative initiatives. It regretted that gender impacts are rarely addressed as part of the Commission's impact assessments and asked the Commission to carry out and publish a gender impact assessment for each legislative proposal.

Members also regretted the Council's lack of commitment to delivering legislation with a gender perspective and reiterated requests to unblock the EU ratification of the Istanbul Convention, the horizontal anti-discrimination directive, which will ensure that the intersectional dimension is taken into account when combating gender discrimination, and the women on boards directive.