Gender Mainstreaming in the European Parliament - annual report 2020

2021/2039(INI) - 10/03/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 482 votes 139, with 68 abstentions, a resolution 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. However, gender mainstreaming is 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: (i) equal opportunities to enter the parliament; (ii) equal opportunities to influence the parliament's working procedures; (iii) adequate space on the parliamentary agenda for women's interests and concerns; (iv) the production of gender-sensitive legislation and (v) compliance with the symbolic function of the parliament.

Parliament also welcomed the adoption of **gender action plans** by all Parliament committees but called for better monitoring of the implementation of these plans. It also welcomed the new provision in the Parliament's rules of procedure adopted in 2019, which includes the obligation to adopt an action plan on gender equality aimed at integrating a gender perspective in all the Parliament's activities.

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 resolution insisted on the need to ensure gender balance through zipped lists or other equivalent methods in the upcoming revision of the EU electoral law, so that female and male candidates have an equal chance to be elected. It 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

Members 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.

Moreover, gender equality has not yet been achieved at all levels of the Parliament's administration. Members welcomed the fact that parity had been achieved at directors level, but regretted that women accounted for only 23.1% of Directors General and 39.3% of Heads of Unit. In this regard, they welcomed the Parliament's administration's targets to have 50% of middle and senior management positions and 40% of top management positions in the administration occupied by women by 2024.

Regarding **workplace harassment**, the resolution 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. Efforts should be made to prevent sexual harassment, including by requiring anti-harassment training for all Members as well as for all those who regularly work on its premises.

The **work-life balance** measures should be revised taking into account, *inter alia*, the effects of teleworking following the COVID-19 pandemic and balancing flexible working structures with the requirements of a well-functioning and strong Parliament.

The resolution 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.

Delivering legislation with a gender perspective

Parliament 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 and recommended that gender equality should be taken into account in policy making where it is 'proportionate' to do so. It also called for a systematic implementation of gender mainstreaming in the **EU budget**.

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.