Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities (mainstreaming)

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The committee adopted the report by Mrs KOKKOLA on the European Commission's communication on 'mainstreaming', which means the incorporation of the principle of equality of opportunities between the sexes in all Community actions and policies. The committee emphasises that the principle of mainstreaming is henceforth to be embodied in the future treaty of Amsterdam, where it provides for equal treatment between men and women in all Community activities and that all actions undertaken by the latter should seek to eliminate inequality between the sexes. Political representatives, both at national and at Community level, must maintain their awareness of mainstreaming in every field of activity, so that this concept might become properly established throughout the Union. The European Commission is called upon to define the criteria and instruments for evaluating ways in which equality between the sexes is being promoted: it should pay special attention to statistical data on mainstreaming when fixing the next multiannual programme on statistical information. Within the framework of Structural Fund activities, the committee calls for a more important role to be played by women in the management of the funds. Women should be allowed to play an increased role in every area of work: to this effect, social services associated with child care should be financed through the Structural Funds. The Commission should set up appropriate coordinating structures within those departments responsible for implementing the principle of mainstreaming; it is also called upon to incorporate the dimension of mainstreaming or 'gender perspective' (consideration of possible repercussions on the situation which exists between men and women) in all legislative proposals, in order that Member States might be obliged to take a stand on the policy of sexual equality.