Equal opportunities: women participation to the European scientific research

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The committee adopted the report by Eryl McNALLY (PES, UK) on the Commission communication "Women and science - Mobilising women to enrich European research" (consultation procedure). The report welcomed the Commission proposal, the aims and objectives of which it supported. It endorsed in particular the broad definition of "science" adopted by the Commission, the idea of compiling statistics on the involvement of women in different fields of science and research through closer cooperation between the Member States and the proposal to ensure greater representation of women at both EU and Member State levels on committees that set policies, select and evaluate projects and control funds (in particular it backed the Commission's aim of ensuring that at least 40% of those participating in European Research Forums, advisory groups, assessment and monitoring panels are women). The report also called for the establishment at European level of a database of female experts to publicise the scientific expertise of women. It asked the Commission and Member States to cooperate in the compilation of better statistics to help ensure a large attendance at the conferences planned for May 2000 (with national civil servants) and May 2001 (with women scientists). The report was critical of the obstacles in the education and training system that girls aged 16 and over and women have to surmount before entering the world of science and technology. To deal with this the Commission should take steps to combat the existing positive discrimination in favour of boys in educational and scientific policy with regard to both the world of work and higher education. Lastly, the report called on networks of women scientists to become better involved in the decision-making and policy-making process, at both EU and Member State level.