Follow-up to the Peking action platform

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The committee adopted the report by the co-rapporteurs, Miet SMET (EPP, B) and Lissy GRÖNER (PES, D), on the follow-up to the Bejing Declaration and Platform for Action - "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century". The report felt that it was crucial that the participants at the forthcoming UN Conference in New York in June should reach agreement on a Fifth UN World Conference on Women to be held in five years' time in order to assess the advancement of women in the areas of equality, development and peace. It also called for women's and girls' rights to be incorporated, as an integral part of universal human rights, into the future EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Respect for women's rights should be closely monitored in all external relations and cooperation. The committee recommended that the EU and its Member States should take strong action with regard to violence against women, and cooperate with the Council of Europe and NGOs in conducting a multiannual campaign on this issue. It also called for legislative initiatives to fight sex tourism involving children and child pornography on the Internet. The EU Member States should take measures to tackle gender gaps in employment, for example by evaluating the impact of part-time and atypical forms of working on social security contributions, retirement and the increase in poverty among women. The report advocated the use of quotas as a transitional measure to achieve a balanced representation of women and men in political life and at all levels of decision-making. It also expressed strong support for a more positive and realistic portrayal and image of women in the media. Finally, the report listed other top priorities for action at EU level, such as introducing into the Treaty a single coherent legal basis for equality for women and men in all policy areas, a fifth Community equal opportunities action programme, the setting up of a Commission Directorate on Gender Equality, and the application of gender mainstreaming in all EU negotiations, treaties and programmes concerning Central and Eastern Europe. It called for sufficient financial resources to be made available in order to implement all such measures.