Balances participation of women and men in the decision-making process (Recommendation 96 /694/EC). Report

2000/2117(COS) - 22/11/2000

The committee adopted the report by Anna KARAMANOU (PES, GR) which concluded that the Council's recommendation had been partially implemented by the Member States but that further efforts needed to be made to draw up a more global strategy. The report said that even though women made up at least half of the electorate in almost all countries, and had the right to vote and to be elected, they continued to be seriously under-represented as candidates for public office. The committee welcomed the good example of the European Parliament, where women held nearly 30% of seats following the last elections. However, it believed this level was insufficient and therefore called for the promotion of a gender balance in all policy fields and committees at EU and national level, a balance which should not be below 40% for each sex. The report urged Member States in which the participation rate of women in the decision-making process was low to contemplate a reform of their existing arrangements through various measures, which should be binding if possible - for example, a system of quotas or targets to be reached to ensure that large numbers of women came to hold positions of responsibility. Another important point was the need for women to be well placed on electoral lists, and the committee therefore suggested using the "zipper" system, whereby men and women would alternate on party lists. Political parties should also overhaul their organisational set-ups and their internal procedures so as to remove obstacles to the involvement of women in public life.