Representation of women among the social partners of the European Union

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The committee unanimously adopted the own-initiative report by Miet SMET (EPP-ED, B) on the representation of women in the social partners of the EU. The committee said that various Community measures designed to bring about balanced participation by women and men in the decision-making process seemed to have overlooked the role played by women in the decision-taking structures and organisations of the social partners. Women accounted for some 40% of the membership of trade unions in the EU but on average held less than 25% of the executive positions. On the employers' side, the percentage of women executives was minimal, varying between 1.51% and 20% depending on the Member State and organisation. The report called for strategies to boost the role of women and encourage the social partners to devise affirmative action programmes and to draw up targets, with deadlines, to increase the representation of women both in their internal organisations and in the collective bargaining process. The EU institutions were urged to adopt measures to achieve a balanced representation of the sexes in European staff representation organisations. MEPs pointed out that women were best acquainted with working conditions and inequalities. Women negotiators were more likely to address the issue of wage inequality between men and women and devote more attention to the balance between work and family life.