2004 elections: how to ensure balanced representation of women and men

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Lone DYBKJAER (ELDR, DK) on how to ensure balanced representation of women and men in the 2004 elections. It pointed out that women continue to be seriously under-represented in political decision-making. In particular, the low representation of women amongst the accession country observers in Parliament (14%) would seem to indicate that women would be less well-represented in the EP in the new legislature (2004-2009). MEPs called on the governments of all the Member States and accession countries to review the impact of electoral systems on the political representation of women in elected bodies and to consider adjusting or reforming those systems. Political parties were urged to agree on common policies providing for women candidates to make up at least 30% of their party lists in the European elections and to ensure that their media strategies take gender balance into account. The Member States and accession countries were also asked to develop policies aimed at combining work with family life, by ensuring access to appropriate and high-quality childcare. Lastly, the report urged the Commission, national governments and parliaments and women's organisations to fund and organise awareness-raising campaigns targeted at promoting the participation of women in political life with a view to the 2004 European elections. It stressed the need to take account of different national settings and, particularly, the special situation in the accession countries.