Equal opportunities for men and women in the European Union. 2002 7th annual report

2003/2011(INI) - 14/01/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Joke SWIEBEL (PES, NL) wwelcoming the efforts made by the Commission to promote equal opportunities for women and men in many policy areas of the Union. It regretted, however, that certain DGs and Services seem to be rather unwilling to incorporate gender mainstreaming into their policies or to undertake new specific policy actions. It called on the ten Commissioners with special responsibility in these fields to devote greater attention to the equal opportunities policy in their departments and policy areas and to submit a report to Parliament before 31 December 2004 on the measures which they have taken. Parliament also called on the Commission, to devote a separate chapter of the annual report to equal treatment legislation and to include an overview of the transposition of current equal opportunities legislation into national law in the Member States and in the accession countries, of any arrears and shortcomings and of the measures taken by the Commission to remedy the situation. Parliament went on to ask Member States and the accession countries to give higher priority to the problem of good and affordable childcare facilities so that the objectives established at the Barcelona European Council of providing childcare facilities for 90% of children aged between 3 and the mandatory school age and for 33% of children under three years of age may be attained by 2010. It asked the Commission to submit to Parliament an overview of the results achieved by the projects undertaken under the 2001 (Equal pay) and 2002 (Reconciliation of work and family life) priority actions, funded to the tune of EUR 8 million and EUR 7.5 million respectively, and to indicate the extent to which the objectives have been attained by these projects. With regard to the 2002 Work Programme, Parliament asked the Commission to explain why, despite the intention laid down in Decision 2000/407/EC, it appointed fewer women to serve on committees and expert groups in 2002 than it did in 2001, with the result that the disparity between the number of men and women in committees and expert groups became larger. It also asked the Commission to report on the feasibility study relating to the European Gender Institute. Parliament went on to emphasise that, in the final phase before accession in May 2004, the Commission must urge the accession countries to pursue an awareness campaign on gender equality so that they may inform their citizens about their rights. It also emphasised once again how important it is for the Commission to monitor Member State compliance with existing equal treatment legislation. The Commission should expand the network of legal experts in the field of gender equality as soon as possible by the inclusion of experts from the accession countries. Parliament welcomed the Commission proposal for a Council Directive implementing the principle of equal treatment for men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services (see COM (2003) 657), but felt that legislation on equal treatment for men and women must be brought into line with legislation to combat racial discrimination and that it must therefore also cover welfare protection, including health care, welfare benefits and education; Finally, Parliament was delighted by CommissionerDiamantopoulou's announcement of the publication of a Green Paper on the development of a comprehensive anti-discrimination policy. The European Union must pursue an anti-discrimination policy which provides an equal measure of protection against discrimination on various grounds.