The situation of women from minority groups in the European Union

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on an own-initiative report drafted by Maria Elena VALENCIANO MARTINEZ-OROZCO (PES, E) on the situation of women from minority groups in the European Union. Parliament urges the Member States to promote the fundamental rights of disabled women and, in particular, to ensure that Council Directive 2000/78/EC on equal treatment in employment and occupation is incorporated into law and implemented as soon as possible. It calls on the Council, the Commission and the Member States to take account of the interests and needs of disabled women in all relevant policies, programmes and Community instruments such as the European Social Fund, the Equal initiative, legislation and the action programme against discrimination, the action programme on equality between women and men, the combating of social exclusion, health and culture programmes, the Daphne programme, initiatives in connection with the information society, research, etc. It welcomes the Commission's action plan (2004-2010) for disabled people and calls on the Commission to take account of gender aspects in drawing up priorities for the plan and its implementation; in this connection, it stresses the need to include information on the situation of disabled women in future Commission reports on the situation of disabled people in an enlarged Europe. It calls on the Member States to encourage disabled women's access to education, training and employment in an ordinary environment, to assist their real integration in society and development of their autonomy, self-esteem and self-defence, in order to avoid the negative effects of excessive protection. It calls on the Member States to encourage the occupational reintegration of disabled women, whether in relation to training offered or the possibility of combining training and family responsibilities. Member States are urged to encourage the formation of networks of disabled women and support groups, at national, regional and local level, with a view to improving disabled women's means of expression and their involvement in social and political life and to providing premises, financial resources, transport facilities and facilities for the care of children or other dependent people. Parliament calls on the Member States to take measures to increase disabled women's involvement in political life and decision-making processes. Parliament also calls on the Member States to take vigorous measures against all forms of violence against disabled women and girls, especially those in institutions, and to undertake studies specifically on violence against disabled women, to determine the origin and scale of this violence and to ensure better defined measures. While Parliament welcomes the legislation and action programme against discrimination, it points out that these measures do not include equality between men and women; in view of multiple forms of sex discrimination, calls for equality between men and women to be integrated into policies, programmes and measures to combat racism, discrimination and social exclusion. It calls on the Member States and the Commission to do everythingpossible to ensure effective application of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and its optional protocol, and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. It calls on the Member States, with the Commission's assistance, to draw up a strategy with accompanying measures, to promote the integration of migrant women in host countries. It recommends that Member States and Community bodies take particular account of the situation of Muslim women in the EU and take measures to protect these women against violation of their human rights, in religious communities, and against practices that hinder their education, training, employment, advancement and, above all, integration in the host countries. It also calls for measures against female genital mutilation and forced marriages, and for measures that recognise this type of persecution as a legitimate reason for requesting asylum. It considers that migrants, including women, who hold a long-term residence permit in a Member State should benefit from rights and obligations comparable to those of European Union citizens, as the only appropriate means of combating all forms of discrimination and creating an inclusive society. The Parliament welcomes the EU's active support for efforts by public authorities, NGOs and other players who are working to improve the Roma's levels of integration and Roma women's situation in the Member States and acceding and candidate

countries. Nevertheless, it draws the attention of the Commission and governments concerned to the need to ensure (a) the effective application of policies implemented at Community and national level that are likely to improve Roma women's economic, social and political situation, their involvement in the decision-making process and protection of their human rights, (b) the inclusion of the issues concerning Roma populations in general, and equality of treatment and opportunity for Roma women in particular, in all relevant polices and programmes relating to employment policies and social inclusion, (c) consultation of Roma women when drawing up any programme or project likely to affect them and when adopting positive measures on their behalf. Parliament considers that the lack of adequate data and statistics in the Member States and acceding and candidate countries makes it difficult to understand the scale of discrimination against the Roma, especially Roma women, and acts as a barrier to devising effective policies and assessing the impact of policies that have already been implemented. It calls on the governments concerned to take measures to improve the reproductive and sexual health protection of Roma women, to prevent and put an end to forced sterilisation, and to promote family planning, alternative arrangements to early marriages and sex education.