Women and sport

2002/2280(INI) - 05/06/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on its own-initiative report by Genevieve FRAISSE (GUE/NGL, France) on women and sport. Parliament pointed out that in the EU, 29.5% of men, as opposed to 16% of women, and 63% of young men aged 15 to 24, as compared to 37% of young women of that age, say that they regularly take part in physical or sporting activity. Parliament felt that access to the practice of sport is a right and that sport is a means of self-expression and fulfilment, as well as a force for citizenship and solidarity. The regular practice of sport improves physical and mental health. Under these circumstances, Parliament called on Member States to guarantee women and men equal access to sporting activities, regardless of social background, particularly in the case of the mentally or physically disabled, who should be encouraged to take part in sport and physical activity. The European Convention must provide a legal basis for sport in the future Treaty of the Union, recognising its cultural, educational and social functions and including a reference to equal access for women and men to participation in sports. Furthermore, participation in sport by girls and women should be included as an operational objective in the future Community framework strategy on gender equality for 2006-2010. Parliament asked Member States, NGOs and other organisations to submit 'women and sport' projects in the context of the forthcoming call for submissions under the Community framework strategy on gender equality for 2001-2005, which will focus on the elimination of sexist stereotypes, particularly in sport. The Commission is requested to incorporate rules to combat discrimination in sport in the new gender discrimination outside the scope of the Work Directive, based on Article 13 of the Treaty. Member States should develop policies for the social integration of young people through sport, including girls among their target group, and use Objective 3 of the Structural Funds for this purpose. With regard to ensuring equal rights in top-level sport, Parliament stated that Member States and the sports movement must abolish the distinction between male and female disciplines in top-level sports recognition procedures. It called on national federations to give women and men equal access to the status of top-level athlete, ensuring equal rights as regards income, training and supervision, medical back-up, access to competitions, social welfare, vocational training and active social reintegration at the end of their sports careers. Finally, Parliament stressed the importance of protecting the health of female athletes. It urged sports federations and trainers to show the utmost vigilance as regards guidelines and conditions for the practice of sport. They must ensure that top-level sportswomen, particularly young women, are told of the effects of intensive training, use of doping substances or neglect of dietary rules on their physical, physiological, sexual and reproductive health. Special training is needed for medical and paramedical staff, together with the inclusion of more women in medical and paramedical teams.