Equal opportunities and enlargement

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The European Parliament, having regard to the contributions of the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities, calls on the governments of all the candidate countries to provide precise information or confirm their legislative timetable for transposition and implementation of individual directives as the enactment of legislation on equal opportunities and non-discrimination must be complemented by adequate enforcement mechanisms. Moreover, the Parliament requests the Commission to call on and help the governments of all the candidate countries to put in place procedures for the collection and dissemination of gender-disaggregated statistics relevant to gender, compatible to those used in the EC, to raise awareness of problems and facilitate comparison as well as serving as a benchmark for improvement. In addition, governments are called upon: - to improve women's effective access to information on their legal rights; - to encourage women to claim and test their rights before tribunals and courts to establish solid legal precedents for equality; - to raise awareness amongst the judiciary, practising lawyers, politicians and the public about gender issues. The public and private institutions in the candidate countries are called on by the Parliament to ensure mainstreaming of equal opportunities across the policy spectrum so that women's issues are not treated in isolation but integrated into all areas of social and economic life. Governments of the candidate countries are called on to establish or strengthen the so-called "national machineries" in order to stimulate or monitor such gender mainstreaming. On the other hand, the Parliament calls on the Commission to actively encourage all the candidate countries to participate in Community programmes on equal opportunities and in particular in the forthcoming 5th Framework Programme on gender equality (2001-2005) as well as the STOP and DAPHNE programmes to combat violence against women. It was also suggested that countries should adopt a comprehensive gender-sensitive employment strategy in order to eliminate sex-discrimination and sex-segregation on the labour market. Finally, measures need to be implemented to eliminate all forms of trafficking in women and to tackle the issue of domestic violence, including legislation against martial rape of women.