Gender equality: establishment of a European Institute for Gender Equality

2005/0017(COD) - 08/03/2005 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to establish a European Institute for Gender Equality.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

CONTENT: as part of the Social Policy Agenda, adopted by the European Council in Nice in 2000, the need to increase awareness, pool resources and exchange experience, in order to promote equality between men and women, in particular through the establishment of a European Institute for Gender Equality, was recognised. A feasibility study was subsequently carried to assess the need for the creation of an Institute, its aims and its organisational and administrative structure.

This proposal also takes account of the findings of recent evaluations on the functioning of other Community agencies, in particular those acting in the social policy field.

The Institute's main activities will be the Community-wide collection and pooling of information, the development of methodological tools and the dissemination of information.

The Institute will be an independent centre of excellence at European level. It will gather, analyse and disseminate reliable and comparable research data and information needed by policy-makers in Brussels and in the Member States. It will have a documentation centre and a library which will be open to the public.

The Institute will stimulate research and exchanges of experience by organising meetings between policy-makers, experts and stakeholders and it will raise awareness of gender equality policies with events including conferences, campaigns and seminars. Another vital task will be to develop tools for supporting the integration of gender equality into all Community policies.

The Institute shall work as closely as possible with all Community programmes and bodies in order to avoid duplication, in particular as regards the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, the Centre for the Development of Vocational Training and any future Fundamental Rights Agency.

The organisational structure should facilitate the involvement of the Institute's diverse stakeholders, independence from external pressures, transparency and accountability to the democratic institutions. It is therefore proposed to establish a Management Board consisting of six members appointed by the Council and six appointed by the Commission from the relevant services. It is further proposed that there will be a total of three representatives of relevant NGOs and the social partners at European level. These representatives, who will not have voting rights, will be appointed by the Commission.

The creation of an Institute for Gender Equality was requested by the European Council in June 2004 and has also been demanded by the European Parliament. It will start operating twelve months after the regulation establishing it has been adopted by Parliament and Council and should be up and running in 2007.