Role of women in Turkey in social, economic and political activities

2004/2215(INI) - 06/07/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Emine **BOZKURT** (PES, NL) on the role of women in Turkey in social, economic and political activities. (Please see the summary of 26/05/2005.) The resolution was adopted by 573 votes to 19, with 32 abstentions.

Women's rights and gender equality are embedded in the Community's basic principles and in much legislation which Turkey has to accept if it is to join the EU. Members emphasised that Turkey's progress in the field of legislation now needs to be implemented in practice.

Parliament acknowledged the positive role played by civil society in accomplishing the recent legislative reforms and recognised that, for democratic changes to be realised, information and mobilisation of the whole political class, civil society, religious communities and the media is needed. The Commission, and the Turkish government, must acknowledge the role of women’s rights organisations as partners of the government and support them and provide them with sufficient funding and to ensure their independence, in line with European Union practice.

Among other concerns is the involvement of Turkish women in politics, which remains weak - only 4.4% of members of parliament are women and around 1% of representatives at local level. Parliament suggests that the political parties should review their party structures and adopt adequate strategies to reach a better balance of women and men in elected assemblies, including positive measures such as quotas.

The protection of women’s rights is still insufficient in practice, especially as regards violence against women. Parliament urged the government to direct more attention to the implementation of legislation, among other things by urgently setting up shelters, supporting initiatives by civil society and providing adequate funds from national and municipal budgets for both government and NGO shelters, as well as mandatory gender- and violence-sensitivity training for public administrators, the police, the judiciary and health and educational personnel.

Parliament condemned instances of polygamy, forced marriage, crimes of tradition, honour crimes and violence against women in general, including sexual harassment at work. It asked the government to seek ways to prevent these crimes, to punish crimes of custom and crimes of honour equally severely and to participate in and organise campaigns for raising public awareness of these issues and to support NGOs’ campaigns on these issues financially.