

Women's immigration: the role and place of immigrant women in the European Union

2006/2010(INI) - 13/09/2006

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Rodi KRATSA-TSAGAROPOULOU (EPP-ED, EL) on the role and place of immigrant women in the EU. The report highlighted the "twofold discrimination" suffered by such women, based on ethnic origin and sex, and looked at ways to promote their access to economic, political, social and cultural life in the host country as well as actions to combat human rights violations against immigrant women and girls.

The committee pointed out that the number of women immigrants was constantly increasing in the EU, accounting for approximately 54 % of the overall number of immigrants and covering an increasingly broader range of categories (economic migration, immigration because of disasters, political refugees, asylum, family reunification, etc.). Member States were urged to strengthen the structures and social services which enable immigrants to settle in smoothly and to provide them with information about their rights and obligations in accordance with the principles and legalisation of the Member States. MEPs stressed that integration is a two-way process which requires mutual commitment on the part of the host society and the immigrants.

The report called on the Member States to create favourable conditions enabling immigrant women to access the labour market and to balance their professional and private life. Measures were also needed to fight undeclared work, ensure respect for women's social rights, provide language education, and ensure that young women immigrants were given access to education and training systems in the host countries.

The committee urged those Member States which have not done so "to ensure that effective and deterrent penalties apply under their criminal codes to all forms of violence against women and children, particularly forced marriage, polygamy, crimes of honour and female genital mutilation". The report called on Member States, on the basis of their national legislation and the International Conventions, to "guarantee respect for the fundamental rights of immigrant women, whether or not their status is regular, particularly access to justice, legal aid, accommodation facilities and health care."