Basic information

1994/2126(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Fourth United Nations International Conference on Women (September 1995, Beijing) **Subject** 4.10.04 Gender equality	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
FEMM Women's Rights	GRÖNER Lissy (PSE)	30/08/1994

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense Policy	AELVOET Magda G.H. (V)	21/03/1995
DEVE Development and Cooperation	JUNKER Karin (PSE)	24/03/1995

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Social Affairs	1872	1995-10-05

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
26/09/1994	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
12/06/1995	Vote in committee		
12/06/1995	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0142/1995	
14/06/1995	Debate in Parliament		
15/06/1995	End of procedure in Parliament		
03/07/1995	Final act published in Official Journal		
05/10/1995	Debate in Council		Summary

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1994/2126(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	FEMM/4/05936

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0142/1995 OJ C 166 03.07.1995, p. 0044	12/06/1995	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0293/1995 OJ C 166 03.07.1995, p. 0042-0092	15/06/1995	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	SEC(1995)0247	10/02/1995	Summary

Fourth United Nations International Conference on Women (September 1995, Beijing)

1994/2126(INI) - 15/06/1995 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In its resolution on the sixth World Conference on Women (Beijing), the European Parliament started by welcoming the Commission's initiative in making provision for transparent working documents on preparations for the conference but regretted that it had not been more closely involved with the preparatory conferences and the World Conference itself. Parliament called on the Council to include a majority of women in the Union delegation to the Beijing conference, together with representatives from NGOs. It specifically called on the Council to define a common Union position as the basis for negotiation at the Beijing conference and for the Union to make a clear and firm declaration in favour of human rights and affirm that women's and children's rights were an integral part of these fundamental rights. The European delegation should lobby for a categorical rejection of rape as a weapon of war and for effective prosecution of rapists before an international court. Sexual violence should be seen as a violation of human rights throughout the world and as legitimate grounds for granting asylum rights. The Member States of the Union should also lobby at the conference for the United Nations Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) to be recognized and signed. One of Parliament's specific demands was for the Commission to propose a European "emergency plan" to improve the situation of women in developing countries and, more specifically, in the refugee camps (fight against poverty, vaccination, access to hygiene etc.). Parliament again drew attention to the fact that urgent measures were needed so that women could reconcile work and family life. It also urged for equality between the sexes to be taught as a principle and for the Member States to make a real effort to raise awareness of this issue. Similarly, public awareness campaigns were needed on trafficking in women, child labour, economic exploitation of women and AIDS prevention directed specifically at women. Parliament also drew attention to efforts by NGOs working for women's rights so that their actions could be identified and taken into due account. Finally, Parliament roundly condemned: - coercive measures in China against women who wished to have more than one child or who were forced to have an abortion if their child appeared to be deformed; - the fact that forced abortions were mainly of female foetuses and that this practice was widespread in Tibet (resulting in disguised genocide of the Tibetan people).

Fourth United Nations International Conference on Women (September 1995, Beijing)

1994/2126(INI) - 10/02/1995 - Document attached to the procedure

With a view to the World Conference on Women (Beijing, September 1995), several preparatory meetings were held in order to determine the Union's position. The Union had a twofold interest in taking part in the Conference: it wanted both to identify the concerns and measures taken and to be taken by the Community to advance the situation of women and to look at the measures taken by the developing countries in this area. This document was the Commission's second working document on the Union's participation in the Conference and followed an initial document setting out the Union's position at an initial preparatory meeting (Vienna, October 1994). The working document considered the outcomes of the five preparatory regional meetings as well as the Vienna meeting and took up a number of issues the Union deemed essential. Those issues were to be raised at the final preparatory meeting in New York (March 1995) before the actual Conference and could form the basis of the Union's future position at the Conference. The essential issues in question were as follows. Human rights: women should be able to take part in political, civic and economic life on the same footing as men. In that connection, the Union could undertake to include specific clauses making respect of women's rights an essential element in third country agreements and a prerequisite for the provision of financial support. Women as dynamic players and not victims: the Union wanted to see women completely and effectively involved in the decisions that affect them, be they in the private or public domain. Women and the economy: the Union should support all initiatives designed to encourage women to reconcile work and family responsibilities, to stop them being segregated on the labour market and recognise the value of their economic contribution. Women and decision-taking: the Union should support measures designed to encourage women to take part in decision-taking processes in all public and private fora. Particular attention should be paid to the stereotypical portrayal of women in the media. Violence against women: the Union wanted to see specific measures taken to counter domestic violence against women, sexual harassment at the workplace, the rape of and trafficking in women. Solidarity against exclusion: the Union insisted that specific measures should be taken to stop women being excluded and to ensure that they are given priority in all anti-poverty programmes. Solidarity with the other regions and development cooperation: the Union was concerned about women's contribution to the future development of the developing countries and wanted a future Council resolution to highlight the issues of gender equality in development. Fourth Community framework programme for equality of opportunity: the Union must ensure that this programme was absolutely consistent with the Beijing conclusions. NGOs: the Union should support measures to involve more closely those NGOs that defend women's rights in the world. They should be given a specific seat at the Beijing negotiating table. National strategies: integration of women's concerns should be central to all international and national policies. Monitoring and implementation measures: if the Conference was to have a real impact, appropriate monitoring arrangements must be set in place, including financial assistance. Women's health and the role of women in the environment: those two problem areas should be added to the Conference's action platform.

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1994/2126(INI) - 05/10/1995

The Conference concluded with the adoption of a Platform of Action and a statement intended as a political message on the essential points of that Platform. The Council concentrated on the follow--up measures to fulfil the Platform of Action planned in the Member States and on those to be implemented at European Union level; it also considered the incorporation of the principle of equality between men and women in the Member States' policies and programmes (mainstreaming). In the course of the debate the Ministers and Commissioner FLYNN welcomed the results of the Beijing Conference. The following were among the points made in connection with the implementation of the results: - the major role played by the non--governmental organisations; - the need to apply existing Community legislation effectively throughout the European Union; - the need to achieve greater equality between men and women in all areas affecting employment; - greater involvement of women in decision--taking, both in politics and business. Several Ministers and the Commission felt that the adoption of the 'Fourth Programme on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women' would be an essential contribution to the implementation of the Beijing programme at Community level. The conclusions that the Presidency submitted on the close of the debate were as follows. 'The European Council noted that, together with combating unemployment, equal opportunities for women and men represents the prime task within the European Union. The Beijing Conference, organised by the United Nations, concluded with a Platform of Action establishing the rights of women and the girl child and laying down specific provisions with the aim of achieving the objective of equality between women and men. The Platform of Action is a document which will have positive effects for all, women and men, implementation of which will benefit society as a whole. The Beijing Conference has shown that empowerment of women and equality are preconditions for the development of peoples. We shall therefore be stepping up equal opportunities policies, particularly in the field of economic, political and social participation by women. The European Union attaches fundamental importance to policies on vocational training, labour market equality, combating wage discrimination and job segregation, promotion of entrepreneurship by women, balanced participation in decision--making, and the combining of working life with family life for women and men - in the final analysis, to improving the socio-economic status of women. Building the equal opportunities factor into the design of action in all social, economic, political and cultural fields is the only way to address effectively the full participation of women in public life. We shall therefore be bolstering national arrangements for equal opportunities and working to make policy on equality a leading plank in the programmes of our governments and political parties and in action by the social partners. We, the Member States of the European Union, are resolved to condemn and eradicate any form of violence against women, which must be regarded as a violation of their basic rights and freedoms, both domestic violence and violence in other areas of society. We shall have to step up development cooperation efforts, particularly for women in countries with economies undergoing transition, and give priority to programmes which include among their objectives equal opportunities for women and men. The Beijing Conference acknowledged the role of non-governmental organisations, which need to cooperate with governments in implementing the measures in the Platform of Action. At national level, all Member States have set in train measures to fulfil the Platform of Action: action programmes, declarations, follow-up measures and machinery for dialogue with non--governmental organisations to determine future action strategies. All Member States are firmly committed to equal opportunities. The European Union will continue to act as a driving force, as it did at the Beijing Conference. The fifteen Member States were able to speak with a single voice, which lent us considerable strength and political weight. The fourth medium-term Community

action programme on equal opportunities for women and men will provide a chance to put our commitments into practice within the European Union. One of the key aspects will be monitoring and evaluation of the application of the measures adopted and of those to be adopted in future by the European Union as a result of implementing the Platform of Action. Given the importance of putting into practice the Beijing Platform of Action, both in the European Union and in each of the Member States, the need is apparent for the Labour and Social Affairs Council to monitor and evaluate such application on a regular basis, with the inclusion of the matter on its agenda at least once a year.'