

Basic information	
2004/2159(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Equality between women and men in the European Union	
Subject 4.10.04 Gender equality	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality	ESTRELA Edite (PSE)	26/05/2005

Key events			
Date	Event	Reference	Summary
18/11/2004	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
14/02/2005	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2005)0044 	Summary
24/11/2005	Vote in committee		Summary
21/12/2005	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0401/2005	
01/02/2006	Debate in Parliament		
02/02/2006	Decision by Parliament	T6-0039/2006	Summary
02/02/2006	Results of vote in Parliament		
02/02/2006	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
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Committee dossier	FEMM/6/23610

Documentation gateway

European Parliament				
Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Amendments tabled in committee		PE362.726	12/10/2005	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0401/2005	21/12/2005	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0039/2006	02/02/2006	Summary
European Commission				
Document type		Reference	Date	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		COM(2004)0115 	19/02/2004	Summary
Non-legislative basic document		COM(2005)0044 	14/02/2005	Summary

Equality between women and men in the European Union

2004/2159(INI) - 14/02/2005 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : to present the second annual report on equality between women and men.

CONTENT : as requested by heads of state and government at the Spring European Council, in March 2003, this report is the first to cover the enlarged EU of 25 Member States. This report shows main developments of the relative situation of women and men in education, employment and social life. It focuses on immigrant women and men and addresses challenges for the further promotion of equality between women and men.

In terms of EU legislation, a recent success has been the extension of the Community acquis beyond the field of employment. In December 2004 the Council adopted the Directive on the principle of equal treatment between women and men in the access to and supply of goods and services based on Article 13 of the EC Treaty. The Directive applies to goods and services available to the public, which fall outside the area of private and family life. It lays down the principle that sex based actuarial factors should be eliminated.

The Commission has also adopted the recast proposal aiming at clarifying the principle of equal treatment between men and women in matters of employment and occupation by bringing together five existing directives in a single text. The Directive on the residence permit issued to third-country nationals who are victims of trafficking in human beings was adopted in April 2004, as requested in last year's report on equality between women and men. It calls for granting residence permits to victims who co-operate in the fight against trafficking in human beings or against action to facilitate illegal immigration.

The report gives the following figures on gender gaps:

- there is a positive trend towards closing gender gaps remains in education and employment in the enlarged EU 25, while the pay gap between women and men remains almost unchanged;
- women still outnumber men in education. The percentage of women graduates increased to 58 % in 2003, due to the higher level of education in the new Member States. Women now also represent 41 % of PhD graduates;
- the gender gap in employment decreased by 0.5 percentage points to 15.8 % between 2002 and 2003 in the EU-25. With the female employment rate at 55.1 %, the intermediate target of women's employment rate (57 % in 2005) still remains within reach. Apart from younger women aged 15-24, women's employment rates continued to increase for all age groups and particularly so for older women (by 1.5 p.p. to reach 30.7 % in 2003);
- the share of part-time employment is on average 30.4 % for women compared to only 6.6 % for men and the gap has slightly increased since 1998. This is one among many factors, which explains the gender pay gap. The new Member States have a much lower proportion of part-time jobs, partly due to labour market rigidity and partly due to the lower wage level, which makes this option less available;
- unemployment has slightly increased in 2004 but the gender gap is still significant as it remains the same as in 2003. Unemployment rates are 10 % for women and 8.3 % for men;
- reconciliation between work and family life remains a challenge for both women and men. Women with small children continue to show employment rates 13.6 % lower than women without children while men with small children show 10 p.p. higher employment rates than men without children.

- there is little evidence of progress in closing the gender pay gap, which remains stable in the EU-15 at approximately 16 %. The estimated figure for EU-25 is slightly lower, 15 %, when the pay gap in the new Member States has been taken into account;
- the gender gaps in overall poverty risks appear limited. Nevertheless, elderly women still have higher risks of poverty than elderly men. Furthermore, single parents, mostly women, tend to suffer from cumulative disadvantages and are particularly vulnerable to social exclusion;
- pension systems differ widely across the EU. In most countries they are designed to replace earnings from work in exchange for life-long contributions, rather than awarding benefits to all elderly people on the basis of residence. Women's entitlements are significantly lower than men's due to their reduced labour market participation. However, some countries are adapting their systems by awarding pension rights for periods of care for children, dependent elderly or disabled persons.

On immigrant men and women, the report gives the following figures:

- in 2003, immigration contributed to more than 80 % of the total population growth in the EU-15. Recent inflows were dominated by families reuniting and asylum-seekers in most Member States;
- the unemployment rate was more than twice as high among non-EU nationals compared to EU nationals. Immigrant men and women have similar unemployment rates, except for the high skilled where women tend to be unemployed more often than men. Women migrants are concentrated in low paid industries and occupations. The information available on wages shows that immigrant women are at a particular disadvantage. -In 2000, while women in the EU on average had 16 % lower pay than EU men, immigrant women (non EU nationals) earned 10 % less than EU national women. For men the pay gap between EU nationals and non-EU nationals was 4 %.

The report makes a series of recommendations to Member States under the following policy areas:

- strengthening the position of women in the labour market;
- increasing care facilities for children and other dependants;
- addressing men in achieving gender equality;
- integrating the gender perspective into immigration and integration policies;
- monitoring developments towards gender equality.

It also makes a series of recommendations to the European Council, concerning the avoidance of gender segregation in the labour market and increasing women's labour market participation.

Equality between women and men in the European Union

2004/2159(INI) - 02/02/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drawn up by Edite **ESTRELA** (PSE, PT) in response to the Commission's 2004 annual report on equality between women and men in the EU. It felt that the Commission's report was descriptive in nature and dealt with significant developments in the law in the Member States, but avoided mentioning shortcomings in transposition and the violations of Community law committed by the Member States and included no analysis or evaluation of the current situation. The report shows that the disparities between women and men have decreased in employment and education within the EU, but that the pay gap between the two sexes has remained virtually the same. It clearly demonstrated that there has been no real progress in the implementation of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, which was introduced thirty years ago by Council Directive 75/117/EC. In the Union of 15 the gap remained stable at about 16%, whilst the estimated figure for the Union of 25, which takes account of pay differences in the new Member States, is, at 15%, slightly lower.

Parliament called on the Member States and the accession and candidate countries to provide statistics on the gender pay gap in all areas of work and to pursue more vigorous and extensive measures to implement Community legislation aimed at reducing the pay gap, and to eliminate the gender divide on the labour market in order to increase the percentage of women working in senior posts commensurate with their qualifications. Member States and the Commission must also make sure that pension schemes were not discriminatory against women and that they did not reinforce existing patterns that already place women at a disadvantage in terms of benefits and contributions. Parliament stressed the importance of avoiding gender segregation in the labour market and called on the Member States, in their educational systems, to encourage young women to pursue studies in non-traditional fields.

It went on to emphasise how important it is that the Commission monitor compliance by the Member States with the *acquis communautaire* in the area of equality between women and men in all Union policies, particularly employment but also access to and provision of goods and services. The Commission was asked to carry out a study into how Member States implement Community legislation and to take appropriate action in the event of non-transposition or violation in view of Member States' actual implementation of the *acquis* in the area of equality.

In addition, Member States were urged to take measures to support the reconciliation of work and private life for working women, e.g. by providing facilities for the care of children, the elderly and dependants and devising more flexible working conditions. Member States were reminded of their commitments, agreed at the Barcelona European Council in 2002, to eliminate obstacles to the equal participation of women and men in the labour market and to introduce by 2010 childcare for 90% of children between three years old and the mandatory school age, and for at least 33% of children under three years old. Parliament called on the Member States to put forward similar targets for facilities for care for the elderly and sick relatives.

Parliament took the view that legislation on equal treatment between women and men should cover social protection, including health care, and education. The Commission was also urged to use the structural funds to promote equality between women and men, by ensuring that that aspect is included in operational programmes. Attention was drawn to the need to support the social integration of immigrant women, who are often the victims of two-fold discrimination because of their gender and national or religious origin. Integration must be through facilitating their access to education, supporting their business activities and incorporating them into European Social Fund programmes and the Equal programme aimed at improving the social position of migrants.

Parliament also recommended better coordination between the mainstreaming policy and the Lisbon, and the strengthening of the representation of women on decision-making bodies, which is an essential condition for the effective integration of the principle of gender equality into all policies.

Finally, it asked the Commission to include facts and statistics from acceding and candidate countries in future annual reports on equality between women and men.

Equality between women and men in the European Union

2004/2159(INI) - 19/02/2004 - Document attached to the procedure

PURPOSE : Commission report on equality between men and women 2004.

CONTENT : The European Spring Council of March 2003 invited the Commission to prepare an annual report on developments towards gender equality and orientations for gender mainstreaming of policy areas. This report responds to that request. It gives an overview of progress made so far regarding to the status of women and men in main policy areas and addresses key challenges for the further promotion of equality between women and men.

The report recalls the Lisbon targets and states that reaffirmed commitment by Member States to support the active participation of women in the labour market and to reduce the gender gaps in different spheres of life will play a key role. Higher active participation in the labour market in jobs of good quality will contribute to tackling the increasing challenge of our ageing society. The report confirms a positive trend towards narrowing the gaps between women and men in several policy areas. However, progress is too slow and enhanced efforts are needed to meet the Lisbon strategy targets. Member States are committed to achieving a substantial reduction in gender gaps in employment rates, unemployment rates and pay by 2010. This is confirmed by the new guidelines of the European Employment Strategy.

Inequality between women and men is a multidimensional phenomenon that has to be tackled by a comprehensive mix of policy measures. The challenge is to ensure policies that support equal opportunities for women and men in education, employment and career development, entrepreneurship, equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, better sharing of family responsibilities, balanced participation of women and men in decision-making and the elimination of gender-based violence.

The Commission recommends that special attention should be paid:

- to ensuring the rapid implementation in the Member States of the recently adopted legislation and the correct implementation of the Community acquis on equal treatment in the acceding States;
- to adopting the proposal for a Directive based on Article 13, before March 2005;
- to taking specific measures to reduce the gender pay gap in co-operation with the social partners;
- to supporting actively a balanced representation of women and men in the elections to the European Parliament in 2004;
- to strengthening the integration of gender equality in all policy fields, including employment and social policies, education, justice and home affairs, external relations, development co-operation, budget and financial policies;
- to working towards reaching the targets set in Barcelona on the provision of childcare:
- to developing further indicators, with a focus on indicators on sexual harassment in the workplace in 2004, aiming at identifying core indicators, and monitoring progress, including the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action; to this effect regularly collecting adequate, coherent and comparable statistics disaggregated by sex, particularly in areas where such data are missing;
- to ensuring that an emphasis is given to gender equality, including women's access to employment in all Structural Funds and that appropriate funding is allocated;
- to implementing gender mainstreaming in the European Research Area through active support to the network of high level national officials (the "Helsinki Group" on women and science).
- to combating violence against women and using the set of indicators on domestic violence for following-up of progress;
- to combating trafficking in women, in particular to adopting a proposal for a Directive on the short-term residence permit issued to victims of action to facilitate illegal immigration in human beings who co-operate with the competent authorities.

The statistical annex gives an overview of the situation of women and men, its evolution over time, and remaining gender gaps in the EU and, whenever possible, in the acceding countries.

Paid work - There is an employment gender gap of 17.2% in the EU-15 and of 16.3% in the EU-15+ACC, while the unemployment gender gap is equal to 1.8% in the EU-15 and 1.9% in the EU-15+ACC. Women form a majority of those working part-time. The share of women employees working part-time was 34% in the EU-15 and 30% in the EU-15+ACC in 2002. The corresponding figures for men were 7% both in the EU-15 and in the EU-15+ACC.

Income and pay - In 2001, the gender pay gap was 16%, while the risk of poverty was 3% higher for women compared to men.

Decision-making - Balanced participation in decision-making is looked at in the political and economic fields. 25.4% of parliamentary seats in the EU-15 are currently occupied by women. In 2002, a slightly higher percentage of women - 30% - achieved managerial positions in the EU-15 and 30% in the EU-15+ACC.

Knowledge - Women present higher educational attainment than men: the gap between women and men aged 20-24 attaining secondary educational level is 6 percentage points in the EU-15 and 5 percentage points in the EU-15+ACC. Traditional patterns are on the contrary present in the research field where women represented 6% and men 19% of academic staff who are Full Professors (or equivalent) in the EU-15 in the year 2000.

Working Time - The gap between average hours worked by women and men with children shows that women with children work 12 hours less than men with children in the EU-15 and 11 hours less in the EU-15+ACC.