Basic information

2004/2219(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Mid-term assessment of the Lisbon strategy from a gender perspective **Subject** 4.10.04 Gender equality	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality	ESTRELA Edite (PSE)	16/12/2004

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Economic and Financial Affairs ECOFIN	2638	2005-02-17
Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs	2644	2005-03-03
Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space)	2653	2005-04-18
Education, Youth, Culture and Sport	2639	2005-02-21

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
18/11/2004	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
17/02/2005	Debate in Council		
21/02/2005	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		Summary
03/03/2005	Debate in Council		Summary
18/04/2005	Debate in Council		Summary
24/11/2005	Vote in committee		Summary
08/12/2005	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0402/2005	
19/01/2006	Decision by Parliament	T6-0029/2006	Summary
19/01/2006	Results of vote in Parliament		
19/01/2006	Debate in Parliament		
19/01/2006	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2004/2219(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/6/24512

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Amendments tabled in committee		PE364.687	27/10/2005	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0402/2005	08/12/2005	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0029/2006	19/01/2006	Summary

Mid-term assessment of the Lisbon strategy from a gender perspective

2004/2219(INI) - 03/03/2005

In preparation for Spring European Council meeting, the Council held a discussion with the intention of defining its contribution to the European Council meeting in the fields of employment, social policy and equal opportunity. The Council highlighted key messages that the review of the Lisbon Strategy must confirm the interaction between policies on economic growth, quality job creation, the modernisation of social protection and the promotion of sustainable development, which reinforce each other.

In addition, the Council feels that the recent strategy on economic growth and job creation must be combined with the promotion of social and environmental objectives within the framework of the general sustainable-development strategy.

The Council feels that the employment aspect of the Lisbon Strategy must concentrate on the following four action priorities:

• attracting more people to and keeping them on the labour market;

• increasing the adaptive capacities of workers and undertakings;

• investing more, and more effectively, in human capital and making lifelong education and training a reality;

• ensuring the effective implementation of reforms through better governance.

As regards social protection, the Council feels that the lengthening of working life and increasing the rate of employment are still fundamental objectives.

Social inclusion measures must essentially aim at combating the deep causes of poverty and exclusion, and priority actions must include:

• the prevention of child poverty;

• supporting the caring capacity of families;

• promoting the equality of men and women and reconciling work and family life;

• the improvement of social services;

• treatment of the phenomenon of homelessness;

• the development of new approaches to the integration of ethnic minorities and immigrants.

Mid-term assessment of the Lisbon strategy from a gender perspective

2004/2219(INI) - 19/01/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Edite **ESTRELA** (PSE, PT) on the future of the Lisbon strategy from a gender perspective. (Please see the summary of 21/11/2005.) To recall, the Lisbon European Council set the objective, to be achieved by 2010, of an employment rate of 60% for women. The Stockholm European Council added an intermediate objective, for the end of 2005, of a 57% employment rate for women, and added an objective of a 55% employment rate for all older workers, both male and female. The recitals in the report recall some significant statistics: there has been a slight increase in the employment rate for women, which reached 55.1% in 2003 in the enlarged European Union, but the rate of increase has since slowed down. The new jobs created for women are generally precarious and badly paid, In the enlarged EU, the average pay gap is 15%, but this rises to as much as 33% in some countries. Women's level of education tends to be higher than that of men (58 % of university graduates and 41% of PhD graduates are women).

Parliament voiced its concern at the continuing disparities between women and men, particularly as regards the pay gap, access to employment, segregation on the employment market, and access to post-university education, lifelong training, new technologies and the information society. It called on the Member States to maintain their efforts in promoting quality employment for women of all age groups and in all sectors, and take more effective measures to promote a growth in employment for women, particularly in the poorest regions of the EU. This will help to put to good use the knowledge and skills acquired by women during their training, boost the viability of pension schemes, enable women to become financially independent and self-sufficient and ensure that they have their own satisfactory pension rights.

Parliament recommended better coordination between the policy of an integrated approach to equality between women and men, and the Lisbon Strategy, in the interests of taking systematic account of the gender perspective in realising the ambitious Lisbon objectives, particularly in the "broad economic policy guidelines", the "employment guidelines", environmental policy and internal market policy. It was regrettable that, up to now, collaboration for the purpose of achieving the Lisbon objectives had essentially been between governments. Parliament stressed that national, regional and local administrations, local authorities, businesses, educational and scientific institutions, the social partners and the whole of civil society must be involved.

The Member States must make the issue of reducing the pay gap between women and men an absolute priority on their political agenda and in their economic development strategy. Parliament called on the Member States to take initiatives to promote women as entrepreneurs. It stressed the need to improve the training of women in new technologies and increase their participation in research and technology programmes, which will enable them to become more competitive on the labour market and will reduce the current gender gap in technological and scientific skills. Parliament also recommended that the Member States adopt measures to ensure the most disadvantaged women, especially single parents, a "guaranteed minimum income", enabling them to live with dignity and to have access to professional training in line with the needs of the labour market.

The reorganisation of working time must result in a free choice for women. Parliament recalled that part-time working as an imposed solution can result in social exclusion and poverty. The rational implementation of part-time work practices would enable women who so wish to enter the employment market and to move within it, and would make it easier for them to combine a career and a family.

The Commission was asked to make reconciling work and private life one of its priorities in the roadmap for equality between women and men, which is currently under discussion, and to revise Directive 96/34/EC with regard to its adequacy and effectiveness. The review should focus on how to ensure that work and family life are reconciled, for both men and women, which could be a fundamental factor for achieving gender equality in all walks of life.

Parliament criticised the Member States for not having implemented properly the established quantified objectives for the establishment of day-care facilities as agreed upon by the Barcelona Council. Members States must provide childcare to at least 90% of children between 3 years of age and the start of compulsory schooling and for at least 33% of children under three in both urban and rural settings.

Parliament was concerned about the inadequate means of subsistence for older women, women belonging to ethnic minorities and women with disabilities, which means that they must seek jobs in an economy where the unemployment rate is high. It called on the Member States to take their situation into account in national action plans and to consider any legislative provision allowing discrimination on grounds of age null and void. Member States must continue their efforts to modernise their social protection systems with a view to bringing them into line within a system in which as many women are employed as men, with the same career potential and pension rights as men.

Finally, Parliament felt that Member States should take effective measures for the benefit of men, such as promoting appropriate systems of parental leave and organising awareness-raising campaigns with the aim of greater investment by men in the equitable division of family responsibilities. In this connection, more use should be made of the flexible organisation of working hours and new forms of employment which make it possible to reconcile professional, family and private life. It deplored the fact that men do not make sufficient use of the organisation of working time and new forms of employment which allow professional, family and private life to be successfully combined.

Mid-term assessment of the Lisbon strategy from a gender perspective

2004/2219(INI) - 21/02/2005

The Council adopted a series of conclusions on the the mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy with reference to education. In preparation for the next joint report of the Council and Commission to the European Council in 2006, further action be taken at European and national level, having regard to the Lisbon Mid-Term Review according to the priority levers of "Education and Training 2010", as they were stated in the 2004 Joint Interim Report, in particular with reference to actions for the development of human capital:

1) Focus reform and investment on the key areas for the knowledge-based society:

• Realise the Lisbon objective of a substantial increase in, and efficient use of public and private investment in education and training.

• Develop a culture of excellence as well as evaluation systems to ensure that EU education and training systems become a world quality reference.

• Improve governance at national level by involving all relevant stakeholders, including the social partners, and by improving coordination among the public authorities concerned.

• Strengthen synergies and complementarity between education and other policy areas such as employment, research and innovation, and macroeconomic policy.

2) Making lifelong learning a reality: National strategies for lifelong learning should aim to ensure that all citizens acquire the key competences they need in a knowledge society and that open, attractive and

accessible learning environments are created. The following measures, among others, can contribute to achieving these goals:

• Multiply opportunities of lifelong learning, for example by means of distance-learning especially through the use of ICT.

• Stimulate lifelong learning demand through measures to reconcile work and family life.

• Identify cost sharing models of continuing training (employers, employees and public service).

• Develop national strategies, aiming inter alia at filling the current gap in terms of access to lifelong learning opportunities between large and small companies, and between high and low skilled people.

• Adopt the future integrated action programme in the field of lifelong learning.

3) Establish a European area of Education and Training and strengthen the open method of coordination, for example by:

• working in "peer learning" clusters, allowing Member States to focus on their priority areas;

improving the scope, precision and reliability of education and training statistics;

• identifying indicators in new fields and making them operational, as envisaged in the Joint Interim Report, including the foreign language competence indicator requested by the Barcelona European Council, in March 2002.

4) Adopt common reference points at European level in fields such as key competences and the training of teachers and trainers.

• Strengthen the role of higher education institutions in the Lisbon Strategy and improve the quality of higher education in order to enhance its international attractiveness and the mobility of the students and staff.

• Enhance the synergy and the complementarity between Higher Education and Research to stimulate innovation and employment through the mobility of young researchers and the networking of centres of excellence.

• Develop by the end of 2006 a European Qualifications Framework as a common reference covering both VET and general education (secondary and higher), based on competences and learning outcomes.

Lastly, the European Council is invited to reaffirm that lifelong learning is and will remain a sine qua non for achieving the Lisbon goals. In this context, the successful implementation of the "Education and Training 2010" Work Programme is essential in order both to develop knowledge and innovation and to create more and better jobs. It is also invited to include the initiative of a European Pact for Youth, in the framework of the Mid-Term Review of the Lisbon strategy, in order to promote a generation of young Europeans with quality jobs, a higher level of education and undergoing training to

improve their adaptability and to define orientations for concrete measures for this purpose in the framework of "Education and Training 2010" and of existing programmes.

Mid-term assessment of the Lisbon strategy from a gender perspective

2004/2219(INI) - 18/04/2005

The Council held a debate on the topic "Human resources in R&D: Women in science, career and mobility of researchers". Following the debate, the Council adopted the following conclusions: it emphasised the need to continue developing, at the appropriate levels, coherent integrated strategies for human resources in the ERA, focussing on four main lines:

• substantially reinforcing funding for the training, mobility and career development of researchers, bearing in mind the Barcelona objectives;

• fostering the career prospects of researchers, thereby enhancing the EU's attractiveness for research talent from Europe and from all over the world, as well as developing the interest of young Europeans in research careers;

• promoting gender equality in science through national and European programmes and increasing the participation of women in science and in industrial research in Member States;

• improving the overall environment for researchers in Europe, in particular by broadening their skills base for multi-sectoral careers and by taking steps to remove obstacles to intra-Community and intersectoral mobility which still persist.

Member States are invited to:

• take into account as appropriate, in accordance with their legal system, the principles laid down in the Charter and the Code when formulating their Human Resources and Mobility strategies and funding programmes, such as institutional quality assurance mechanisms, funding criteria as well as auditing, monitoring and evaluation processes;

• raise awareness of the Charter and the Code within their own country, on a voluntary basis, engage actively with employers, funding organisations and researchers and other relevant parties on their application and where appropriate put in place monitoring mechanisms to accompany the different measures;

• encourage the further development of sex disaggregated data on the participation of women in research, including the collection of yearly recruitment statistics;

• formulate ambitious targets for the participation of women focussing on areas where women are seriously under-represented, and in particular increase significantly the number of women in leading positions, with the aim of reaching, as a first step, the goal of 25% in the public sector and boosting their participation in industrial research and technology;

• continue contributing towards working conditions which allow both women and men researchers to combine family and work, children and career; appropriate provisions for parental leave should be put in place in particular; reinforce gender research and the gender dimension in research, including analysis of the changing roles and life plans of women and men in Europe;

The Council invites the Commission to:

• report periodically on the experience in follow-up to the Charter and the Code, including information from Member States;

• continue improving the participation of women as researchers, evaluators, experts and advisory board members in the Framework Programmes and report regularly on progress on this;

• further develop the Gender Watch System by establishing regular progress reports, including the gender action plans.