Basic information

2007/2206(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Women and science **Subject** 3.50 Research and technological development and space 4.10.04 Gender equality	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality	THOMSEN Britta (PSE)	27/06/2007

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ITRE Industry, Research and Energy	DOVER Den (PPE-DE)	05/12/2007

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion	ŠPIDLA Vladimír

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
27/09/2007	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
14/04/2008	Vote in committee		Summary
22/04/2008	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0165/2008	
20/05/2008	Debate in Parliament		
21/05/2008	Decision by Parliament	T6-0221/2008	Summary
21/05/2008	Results of vote in Parliament		
21/05/2008	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2007/2206(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/6/53527

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE400.495	07/02/2008	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE402.909	06/03/2008	
Committee opinion	ITRE	PE400.662	09/04/2008	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0165/2008	22/04/2008	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0221/2008	21/05/2008	Summary

Women and science

2007/2206(INI) - 21/05/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 416 votes to 75, with 164 abstentions, a resolution on women and science.

The own initiative report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Britta **THOMSEN** (PES, DK) on behalf of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality.

The Parliament recalls that research represents a crucial sector for the economic development of the European Union but that, in this domain, women are a minority, as female researchers comprise an average of 35% of researchers working in the public sector and an average of only 18% of researchers working in the private sector.

As a result of this observation, the Parliament calls on Member States to promote science as an interesting field for both sexes, from an early age, particularly amongst women. It considers that it is essential to fight against gender stereotypes, which are still present in the research sector. It encourages universities and faculties to analyse all forms of implicit gender discrimination and to resolve these issues.

To encourage a better integration of women in the research sector and in the field of science in general, a series of measures have been put forward.

These measures can be summarised as follows:

- **combating terrorism**: a revision of the ‘good researcher’ model by identifying the differences between male and female scientific careers and by stressing that female researchers also contribute to the world of research;
- **better work-life balance**: measures are called for to offer them flexible working hours, improved child-care facilities, more favourable parental leave conditions,…;
- **study grants**: the establishment of a system for grants for doctoral studies which better respects the national maternity leave provisions (in effect, the age limits for the award of grants adversely affect young women who are mothers or who are looking after dependants; therefore, it is necessary to allow one year to be added to the deadline for applications for each year in which a dependant is looked after);
- **recruitment of women to decision-making positions**: a revision of recruitment procedures in order to increase the presence of women in senior posts in universities and education authorities (the Plenary criticises, in this respect, the unambitious and insufficient EU target of 25% of women in leading positions in public-sector research; gender equality should therefore imply a rate of at least 40% of women); furthermore, there are calls for more transparent recruitment processes and for an obligation to ensure gender balance in evaluation panels, selection and all other committees, as well as nominated panels and committees with a non-binding target of at least 40 % women (and at least 40 % men);
- **awareness**: it is necessary to raise awareness amongst the scientific community and policy makers of equal opportunities in science and research (top-level commitment is vital for achieving gender equality in research, and such a commitment must be expressed at national and institutional level); it is also important for universities, research institutes and private businesses to adopt and enforce equality strategies; Member States must also be encouraged to promote awareness-raising actions to inform and encourage girls to pursue scientific and technological university studies and degrees;

- **participation of women in scientific research programmes**: the Commission is called upon to ensure that attention is paid to the participation of women in scientific research programmes by providing targeted gender-awareness training for those in decision-making positions, those sitting on advisory boards and evaluation panels, those drafting invitations to tender as well as tenders, and those leading contract negotiations; the Commission is also called upon to ensure that in tenders submitted under FP7 there is a balanced representation of men and women and that gender action plans be developed at the proposal and evaluation stage of FP7;
- **promotion of professional careers for women in scientific domains**: it is also proposed to encourage female researchers and to further develop support and mentoring schemes, given that the development of support structures for career guidance and the provision of advice to female scientists would produce particularly positive results; it is also necessary to encourage greater participation of women in fields such as technology, physics, engineering, computer science and other domains;
- **remuneration policy**: it is vital that a fairer remuneration policy for female scientists be promoted and that research funds specifically targeted at women be provided to counter the under funding of women in research (the principle of equal pay should also apply to scholarships and grants);
- **networking among female scientists**: this should take place at national, regional and EU level; networks should be established to strengthen the position of women and to encourage them to participate in the policy debate.