Basic information

2008/2047(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Equality between women and men - 2008 **Subject** 4.10.04.01 Programmes and actions for gender equality	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality	GARCÍA PÉREZ Iratxe (PSE)	29/01/2008

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	HARKIN Marian (ALDE)	26/02/2008
CULT Culture and Education	BADIA I CUTCHET Maria (PSE)	13/03/2008

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion	ŠPIDLA Vladimír

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
23/01/2008	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2008)0010	Summary
13/03/2008	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
16/07/2008	Vote in committee		Summary
28/07/2008	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0325/2008	
02/09/2008	Debate in Parliament		
03/09/2008	Decision by Parliament	T6-0399/2008	Summary
03/09/2008	Results of vote in Parliament		
03/09/2008	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2008/2047(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/6/60340

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE405.944	08/05/2008	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE407.723	05/06/2008	
Committee opinion	CULT	PE405.962	25/06/2008	
Committee opinion	EMPL	PE405.894	26/06/2008	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0325/2008	28/07/2008	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0399/2008	03/09/2008	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2008)0010	23/01/2008	Summary

Equality between women and men - 2008

2008/2047(INI) - 23/01/2008 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : annual report 2008 on equality between men and women.

CONTENT : this is fifth annual report on equality between women and men, produced in collaboration with the Member States at the request of the European Council.

Gender gaps: between 2000 and 2006 employment in EU-27 grew by nearly 12 million, including more than 7.5 million women. The female **employment rate** went up each year, reaching 57.2% in 2006, 3.5 % more than in 2000, bringing the objective of 60% by 2010 within reach. However, several aspects of the quality of women's work remain problematic. The indicators for pay, labour market segregation and the number of women in decision-making jobs have not shown any significant increase for several years. The **pay gap** has remained steady at 15% since 2003, and has narrowed by only one point since 2000. **Sectoral and occupational segregation** by gender is not diminishing and is even increasing in certain countries, a sign that women who have recently joined the labour market have gone into sectors and occupations already dominated by women. The presence of **female managers** in companies has stayed at 33%, and the number of female politicians is rising only very slowly. Furthermore, gaps between women and men may persist in all other aspects of work quality, e.g. **reconciling professional and private life**, working arrangements which do not fully exploit people's skills and in the field of health and safety at work. More than three-quarters of part-time workers are women (76.5%), corresponding to one woman in three, as against less than one man in ten. Temporary employment contracts are also more common for women (15.1%, one point more than for men).

In other words, it would appear that the substantial efforts made in connection with the European Strategy for Growth and Jobs have proved more successful in terms of quantity than quality. Gaps also remain on the socialside which may reflect the gaps on the labour market.

More efforts need to be made to create more and better jobs, taking account of the importance of a flexicurity approach and bearing in mind the differing impact of employment policies on women and men during their lifetime. This approach must cover both the intrinsic quality of work and all the aspects affecting it, such as the development of infrastructures to allow everyone to enter and remain in the labour market, or the possibility for individuals to achieve their professional ambitions and personal choices outside all the stereotypes. It is also essential to create the institutional tools needed to ensure good governance and effective implementation of political commitments.

The Commission's recommendations concern the following issues:

Quality jobs to foster equal economic independence: the creation of more jobs must go hand in hand with an improvement in quality.

–The efforts directed at eliminating gender gaps in employment must be continued and intensified as part of the new cycle of the European Strategy for Growth and Jobs.

–Support for the reconciliation of professional and private life should be stepped up, for example through innovative and flexible work and leave arrangements.

–Advanced training for workers should be ensured.

–The approach to issues of health and well-being at work and quality of the work environment should take account of the specific situations and problems of women and men.

–The potential offered by the Structural Funds must be fully exploited in order to support policies aimed at creating more and better jobs.

Quality services making for reconciliation of work and private life: the quality aspects need the same attention as accessibility.

–Efforts to improve the availability and accessibility of childcare services and care services for dependent persons should be continued and intensified.

–The quality of services should be enhanced by providing continuing training and skills upgrading and by fostering job enrichment. The quality of services of general interest, in particular transport services and employment administration or services, should be ensured.

–The potential offered by the Structural Funds must fully exploited in order to support the improvement, accessibility and quality of services.

Tackling stereotypes, support for individual choices: getting rid of stereotypes is one of the priorities of the Roadmap and the European social partners' framework on gender equality.

–Action to combat gender-based stereotypes must start at a very young age and should promote behaviour models which value individual choices of education pathways.

–It is necessary to remove cultural barriers in order to facilitate access for women and men to non-traditional occupations, including decision-making jobs. Approaches to ongoing training, professional development and vocational guidance should disregard all stereotypes, and training professionals should be made more aware of this issue.

–The media must participate in efforts to tackle stereotypical images of women and men.

Institutional mechanisms in support of political commitments and implementation of legislation: the Roadmap attaches great importance to the good governance that is necessary in order to ensure effective means of implementing these commitments.

–It is important to develop training and implementation tools which will allow all stakeholders to include a gender perspective in their respective areas of competence. It is vital to ensure the effective use of existing tools, such as the manuals for gender mainstreaming of employment policies produced by the Commission.

–It is essential to develop the capacities of the main players working for gender equality, so that they have the skills, instruments and resources they need to implement their policies.

–The implementation and follow-up of policies must be ensured using quantity and quality indicators as well as gender-based statistics which are reliable, comparable and available.

Equality between women and men - 2008

2008/2047(INI) - 03/09/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 563 votes to 65, with 61 abstentions, a resolution on equality between women and men.

The own initiative report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Iratxe GARCÍA PÉREZ (PES, ES) on behalf of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality.

The Parliament welcomes the Commission's 2008 report on equality between women and men and reiterates the two-fold nature of policy on equal opportunities for women and men at EU level, which, on the one hand ensures equality between women and men in all policy areas (gender mainstreaming) and, on the other hand, puts in place targeted measures to curb discrimination against women, including awareness-raising campaigns, the exchange of best practice, dialogue with citizens and public-private partnership initiatives.

The Parliament outlines areas where improvements should be made:

Combating violence against women: the Parliament stresses the importance of combating violence against women and calls on the Member States and the Commission, therefore, to undertake concerted action in this field. It calls on the Commission to consider the possibility of new measures in this area and to fight firmly against organised crime and trafficking networks. The plenary calls, in particular, for the strengthening of legislative, administrative, educational, social and cultural measures that discourage demand for prostitution and invites the Member States to urgently ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

Women in the decision-making process: reaffirming its criticism that overall participation of women in decision making is insufficient, the Parliament calls on the Commission, the Member States and political parties to consider action to improve the situation, particularly the use of **electoral quotas** to increase the participation of women at relevant levels in the decision-making process. The same action should be taken in civil society and in the involvement of women in NGOs and trade unions.

Gender mainstreaming: the Parliament calls on the Commission and the Member States to take the necessary measures to implement gender mainstreaming in all social, employment and social security policies, as well as in the flexicurity strategy, and to combat all forms of discrimination.

Same work, same pay: the Parliament is concerned about the lack of progress as regards the gender pay gap between women and men. It urges the Union, therefore, to establish, in cooperation with the social partners, new measures to improve the situation. The Parliament supports the suggestion of the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities to render existing European legislation on the subject more stringent by inserting a requirement for employers to conduct wage audits and draw up action plans in order to close the pay gap. It calls for concerted action in this area, especially in the context of the new cycle of the European Strategy for Growth and Jobs. It recommends, in particular, the creation of an 'International Equal Pay Day', to be celebrated on 22 February each year. Furthermore, the Parliament calls on Member States to support the implementation of national measures aimed at applying equivalent rules as regards pension and social security regimes. At the same time, the Parliament is concerned about the slow development of women's careers compared to men in the labour market. It therefore calls on the Member States to take effective action designed to enforce the rules on welfare and employment, thereby ensuring that women earn decent wages and are entitled to health and safety at work, to social protection and to trade-union freedom. The plenary also calls for an assessment of the observance of the principle of equality, particularly as regards legal entitlements and pension and social security regimes.

Women and science: the Parliament proposes that the Commission consider adopting measures to encourage women to study scientific and technological subjects and to take further measures to improve women's participation in the labour market, especially in sectors in which they are still under-represented (high-technology, research, science and engineering), through Community funds and programmes.

Female spouses of self-employed workers: the Parliament calls on the Commission and the Member States to give consideration to the situation of spouses helping in handicrafts, trade, agriculture, fisheries and small family businesses, from the gender equality perspective, and calls on the Commission, as a matter of urgency, to amend Directive 86/613/EEC on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity (including agriculture) in a self-employed capacity. Other initiatives are called for to promote female entrepreneurship in the industrial sector, to facilitate maternity for self-employed women etc. At the same time, the Parliament invites the Commission and the Member States to take particular note of the situation of the increasing numbers of workers who are formally self-employed, but can in reality be categorised as 'economically dependent workers'.

Vulnerable groups of women: the Parliament calls for priority to be given to certain vulnerable groups of women, such as disabled women, elderly women, minority and immigrant women and women prisoners, and to develop targeted measures to meet their needs. In addition, measures have also been called for to improve the situation of women in precarious jobs. The Parliament calls, in particular, for measures to combat the situation of poor female workers and those at risk of exclusion (especially elderly women and single mothers). Measures should also be taken to promote immigrant women's access to education and employment.

Work-life balance: several initiatives have been called for to improve the work-life balance, recalling that any policy in this area must be based on the principle of free personal choice and adapted to different life cycles. Among these initiatives, the Parliament specifies actions to:

- improve the legislative and non-legislative frameworks for reconciling professional, family and private lives (relating to maternity leave and its inclusion in aggregate working time and to parental leave, for example);
- strengthen measures that facilitate paternity or parental leave;
- combat inequalities between women and men caused by interrupted patterns of employment resulting in particular from maternity leave or leave to care for dependants;
- disseminate best practice regarding an effective work-life balance and greater involvement of men in family life;
- strengthen all relevant national measures to improve the availability, quality and accessibility of childcare services and care services for dependent persons;
- implement flexible family policy measures in firms to make it easier for employees to return to work after a career break.

Targeted measures are also called for to promote the participation of women in sport.

Better implementation tools to measure the progress of equality: the Parliament calls on the Member States and the local authorities to ensure the effective use of existing tools and indicators to obtain statistics which are reliable, comparable and available when needed on the implementation of the gender dimension. It calls on the Commission and the European Institute for Gender Equality, to include facts and statistics from candidate and

potential candidate countries in future annual reports on equality between women and men to gain an overview of the situation of women in future Commission reports.

Note that the recommendations on the elimination of gender stereotypes in the media were deleted in plenary.