Basic information

2011/2198(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Women's situation in war **Subject** 4.10.09 Women condition and rights 6.10.04 Third-country political situation, local and regional conflicts 6.50 Emergency, food, humanitarian aid, aid to refugees, Emergency Aid Reserve	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality	NICOLAI Norica (ALDE)	30/11/2010
	Shadow rapporteur GARCÍA PÉREZ Iratxe (S&D) ROMEVA I RUEDA Raül (Verts/ALE) YANNAKOUDAKIS Marina (ECR) BLOOM Godfrey (NI) SINCLAIRE Nicole (NI)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
DEVE Development (Associated committee)	GRÈZE Catherine (Verts/ALE)	22/09/2011

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion	REDING Viviane

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary

29/09/2011	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
29/09/2011	Referral to associated committees announced in Parliament		
22/11/2011	Vote in committee		
30/11/2011	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0429/2011	Summary
02/02/2012	Decision by Parliament	T7-0028/2012	Summary
02/02/2012	Results of vote in Parliament		
02/02/2012	Debate in Parliament		
02/02/2012	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2011/2198(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	FEMM/7/06516

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE469.948	20/07/2011	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE472.060	21/09/2011	
Committee opinion	DEVE	PE472.333	08/11/2011	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0429/2011	30/11/2011	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0028/2012	02/02/2012	Summary

Women's situation in war

2011/2198(INI) - 30/11/2011 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality adopted the report by Norica NICOLAI (ALDE, RO) on women's situation in war.

The report states that the effects of wartime sexual violence, both physical (risks such as sterility, incontinence and sexually transmitted diseases) and psychological, are devastating for the victims. The underlying causes of women's vulnerability in conflict situations often lie in their limited access to, inter alia, education and the labour market and consequently **women's economic participation** on an equal basis is therefore a necessary precondition for combating gender-specific violence in armed conflicts.

Members highlight the role of women in armed conflict and propose a series of measures to improve their empowerment:

Women in peace and security leadership: the report calls for EU support for peace processes to be made **conditional on women's participation** in the international teams leading peace negotiations. It underlines the importance of political dialogue for the empowerment of women and calls on the Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Member States actively to promote and support the empowerment of women to participate in their relations with countries and organisations outside the EU.

The Commission and the Member States are asked to ensure that adequate technical and financial assistance is provided in support of programmes enabling women to participate to the full in the conduct of peace negotiations and empowering women in civil society as a whole. Members call for an increase in the number of women in the military and in civilian peace-keeping operations, especially in leadership positions, and to that end call for:

- national campaigns promoting the military and the police force as a viable option for women as well as men, in order to dispel possible stereotypes;
- a review of promotion policy in the military, in order to examine whether women have been disadvantaged when it comes to being promoted, despite, without regard to their gender, being equal to their male colleagues;
- the inclusion of women-friendly policies within the military, such as the possibility of maternity leave;
- the inclusion of more women, especially in civilian operations, in high-ranking positions;
- in-depth training of men and women involved in civilian interaction on gender related aspects, on the protection, special needs and human rights of women and children in conflict situations.

Moreover, Members call for **adequate EU funding**, including under the Instrument for Stability, for supporting women's effective participation in, and contribution to, representative institutions at national and local level and at all levels of decision-making in the context of conflict resolution, peace negotiations, peace-building and post-conflict planning.

The impact of armed conflict on women: Members strongly condemn the continued use of sexual violence against women as a weapon of war equal to a war crime and call for zero tolerance for the sexual exploitation of children and women in armed conflicts. They welcome the recent UN investigations into the allegations of sexual exploitation involving its peacekeepers in the Côte d'Ivoire UN Operation.

Members call for several specific measures in this framework:

- the mobilisation of political leadership with a view to putting forward a coordinated set of measures for the prevention and alleviation of the use of sexual violence (in particular in Congo at least 8 300 rapes were reported in 2009 and that at least 1 244 women reported being raped in the first quarter of 2010, which is an average of 14 rapes per day);
- promote the introduction of measures designed to limit the adverse effects of armed conflict on family life;
- stronger cooperation with local women's organisations in order to establish an early-warning system and possibly to enable them to prevent the abuses or reduce their occurrence themselves;
- support local civil society groups, particularly women's groups and those with a gender-sensitive agenda, through accessible funding and capacity-building in order to enable them to fulfil their role as a watchdog, especially in the context of failing states;
- awareness-raising campaigns to be introduced and/or stepped up as part of education programmes, bringing respect for women's dignity to the forefront;
- armed forces to run women's clinics to deal with sexual and psychological violence in war zones;
- the issue of impunity be a principal factor in peace negotiations;
- reliable and equitable justice to be delivered within reasonable time limits and with respect for the dignity of women who are victims of war.

The report calls for the EU and the Member States effectively to support the implementation of the **EU guidelines on violence against women and girls**, through specific measures such as: (i) the establishment of an effective system to monitor all legal proceedings and their follow-up relating to cases of such violence; (ii) the adoption of measures, strategies and programmes that focus not only on the protection and prosecution elements, but more importantly on prevention; (iii) programmes providing free health and psychological counselling to victims of violence in their native language and in line with their culture and customs, where possible by women practitioners; (iv) programmes providing health courses and easily accessible literature, targeting women and men; (v) specific steps to be taken to ensure that women in conflict situations have fair access to public health systems; (vi) developing witness protection programmes in order to protect victims and to encourage them, under the guarantee of protection, to come forward and testify against their aggressors.

The Commission, the EEAS and Parliament delegations are called upon to find ways to promote the **signature, ratification and implementation of the 1998 Rome Statute** (for the International Criminal Court) by those developing countries that have not already done so, as a necessary step towards protecting women's sexual rights during times of war and averting the impunity of perpetrators.

As regards the **victims**, the report calls on the Commission to examine the possibility of establishing rapid-response units made up of trained personnel (such as doctors, psychologists, sociologists and legal advisors) with a view to providing immediate in situ support to the victims of gender crimes and calls for an analysis of the possibility of adequate compensation for victims in accordance with the applicable international and national law. The Commission and the Member States are called upon to empower women in respect of their rights and access to land, inheritance, credit and savings in post-conflict situations.

Lastly, Members have made a series of **technical recommendations** which aim to:

- create a Special EU Representative on Women, Peace and Security within the EEAS, in order to mainstream the gender perspective and to liaise more efficiently with its counterparts in the UN;
- give special attention to gender mainstreaming in the context of peace research, conflict prevention and resolution, peace-keeping operations and post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction;

- encourage the EEAS, the Commission and the Member States to incorporate development issues – in particular the recognition of mothers' right to receive protection and support and to care for and bring up their children, as well as women's health and economic security;
- adopt, implement and monitor their National Action Plans on women, peace and security;
- ensure balanced recruitment in missions and operations and to promote more women to the leadership level;
- underline the importance of awareness-raising campaigns in the fight against stereotypes, discrimination (based on gender, culture or religion) and domestic violence;
- establish an adequate public complaint procedures in the context of CSDP missions, which would particularly assist the reporting of sexual and gender-based violence;
- set up specific budget lines for gender expertise, and projects and activities on women, peace and security in CSDP missions;
- increase the financial resources allocated for promoting gender equality and women's rights in the future Development Financing Instruments for the 2014-2020 period;
- improve the complementarity and timely mobilisation of all financial instruments for EU external action in order to avoid fragmentation of the EU's response to women's situation in war;
- support the various initiatives to create gender-specific early-warning and conflict surveillance indicators, such as those taken by UN Women, the Council of Europe, the Swiss Foundation for Peace, International Alert and the Forum on Early Warning and Early Response.

Women's situation in war

2011/2198(INI) - 02/02/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on women's situation in war.

Parliament highlights, firstly, the fact that the effects of wartime sexual violence, both physical (risks such as sterility, incontinence and sexually transmitted diseases) and psychological, are devastating for the victims. The underlying causes of women's vulnerability in conflict situations often lie in their limited access to, inter alia, education and the labour market and consequently **women's economic participation** on an equal basis is a necessary precondition for combating gender-specific violence in armed conflicts.

Parliament also highlights the role of women in armed conflict and proposes a series of measures to improve their empowerment.

Women in peace and security leadership: Parliament calls for EU support for peace processes to be made **conditional on women's participation** in the international teams leading peace negotiations. It underlines the importance of political dialogue for the empowerment of women and calls on the Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Member States actively to promote and support the empowerment of women to participate in their relations with countries and organisations outside the EU.

The Commission and the Member States are asked to ensure that adequate technical and financial assistance is provided in support of programmes enabling women to participate to the full in the conduct of peace negotiations. Parliament calls on the European Union and its Member States to actively support **increases in the number of women in the military and in civilian peace-keeping operations,** especially in leadership positions, and to that end calls for:

- national campaigns promoting the military and the police force as a viable option for women as well as men, in order to dispel possible stereotypes (e.g. open days);
- a review of promotion policy in the military, in order to examine whether women have been disadvantaged when it comes to being promoted, despite, without regard to their gender, being equal to their male colleagues;
- the inclusion of women-friendly policies within the military, such as the possibility of maternity leave;
- the inclusion of more women, especially in civilian operations, in high-ranking positions;
- in-depth training of men and women involved in civilian interaction on gender related aspects, on the protection, special needs and human rights of women and children in conflict situations.

Parliament also calls for **adequate EU funding**, including under the Instrument for Stability, for supporting women's effective participation in, and contribution to, representative institutions at national and local level and at all levels of decision-making in the context of conflict resolution, peace negotiations, peace-building and post-conflict planning.

The impact of armed conflict on women: Parliament strongly condemns the continued use of sexual violence against women as a weapon of war equal to a war crime and calls for zero tolerance to be exercised in this respect. Parliament points to the need to establish a **code of conduct** for EU personnel serving in military and civil missions which makes it clear that sexual exploitation constitutes unjustifiable and criminal behaviour. It welcomes the recent UN investigations into the allegations of sexual exploitation involving its peacekeepers in the Côte d'Ivoire UN Operation.

Parliament calls for several specific measures in this framework:

- the mobilisation of political leadership with a view to putting forward a coordinated set of measures for the prevention and alleviation of the use of sexual violence (in particular in Congo at least 8 300 rapes were reported in 2009 and that at least 1 244 women reported being raped in the first quarter of 2010, which is an average of 14 rapes per day);
- promote the introduction of measures designed to limit the adverse effects of armed conflict on family life;
- stronger cooperation with local women's organisations in order to establish an early-warning system and possibly to enable them to prevent the abuses or reduce their occurrence themselves;
- support local civil society groups, particularly women's groups and those with a gender-sensitive agenda, through accessible funding and capacity-building in order to enable them to fulfil their role as a watchdog, especially in the context of failing states;
- awareness-raising campaigns to be introduced and/or stepped up as part of education programmes, bringing respect for women's dignity to the forefront;

- armed forces to run women's clinics to deal with sexual and psychological violence in war zones;
- the issue of **impunity** be a **principal factor in peace negotiations**;
- reliable and equitable justice to be delivered within reasonable time limits and with respect for the dignity of women who are victims of war.

Parliament calls for the EU and the Member States effectively to support the implementation of the **EU guidelines on violence against women**, through specific measures such as: (i) the establishment of an effective system to monitor all legal proceedings and their follow-up relating to cases of such violence; (ii) the adoption of measures, strategies and programmes that focus not only on the protection and prosecution elements, but more importantly on prevention; (iii) programmes providing free health and psychological counselling to victims of violence in their native language and in line with their culture and customs, where possible by women practitioners; (iv) programmes providing **health** courses and easily accessible literature, targeting women and men; (v) specific steps to be taken to ensure that women in conflict situations have fair access to public health systems; (vi) developing witness protection programmes in order to protect victims and to encourage them, under the guarantee of protection, to come forward and testify against their aggressors.

The Commission, the EEAS and Parliament delegations are called upon to find ways to promote the signature, **ratification and implementation of the 1998 Rome Statute** (for the International Criminal Court) by those developing countries that have not already done so, as a necessary step towards protecting women's sexual rights during times of war and averting the impunity of perpetrators.

As regards the **victims**, Parliament calls for i) the adoption of *ad hoc* provisions affording **additional protection to women against rape, forced prostitution and any other form of indecent assault**, as well as particular care for expectant mothers and mothers of young children with regard to the provision of food, clothing, evacuation and transportation and medical facilities, in order to avoid unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, (as priority areas under the Development Financing Instrument for the 2014-2020 period); ii) the examination of the possibility of establishing rapid-response units made up of trained personnel (such as doctors, psychologists, sociologists and legal advisors) with a view to providing immediate *in situ* support to the victims of gender crimes; iii) the examination of the possibility of adequate compensation for victims in accordance with the applicable international and national law; and iv) the need to be addressed of complementing the image of women as vulnerable victims with an image of women as a highly differentiated group of social actors.

Lastly, Parliament made a series of **technical recommendations** which aim to:

- create a Special EU Representative on Women, Peace and Security within the EEAS, in order to mainstream the gender perspective and to liaise more efficiently with its counterparts in the UN;
- give special attention to gender mainstreaming in the context of peace research, conflict prevention and resolution, peace-keeping operations and post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction;
- encourage the EEAS, the Commission and the Member States to incorporate development issues – in particular, the recognition of mothers' right to receive protection and support and to care for and bring up their children, as well as women's health and economic security;
- adopt, implement and monitor their National Action Plans on women, peace and security;
- ensure balanced recruitment in missions and operations and to promote more women to the leadership level;
- underline the importance of awareness-raising campaigns in the fight against stereotypes, discrimination (based on gender, culture or religion) and domestic violence;
- establish an adequate **public complaint procedures** in the context of CSDP missions, which would particularly assist the reporting of sexual and gender-based violence;
- set up specific budget lines for gender expertise, and projects and activities on women, peace and security in CSDP missions;
- increase the financial resources allocated for promoting gender equality and women's rights in the future Development Financing Instruments for the 2014-2020 period;
- improve the complementarity and timely mobilisation of all financial instruments for EU external action in order to avoid fragmentation of the EU's response to women's situation in war;
- support the various initiatives to create gender-specific early-warning and conflict surveillance indicators, such as those taken by UN Women, the Council of Europe, the Swiss Foundation for Peace, International Alert and the Forum on Early Warning and Early Response.