

P7_TA-PROV(2011)0515

Gender mainstreaming in the work of the European Parliament

European Parliament resolution of 17 November 2011 on gender mainstreaming in the work of the European Parliament (2011/2151(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995, the Declaration and Platform for Action adopted in Beijing and the subsequent outcome documents,
- having regard to Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union, which emphasises values common to the Member States, such as pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between men and women,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, particularly Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 21 and 23 thereof,
- having regard to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
- having regard to the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),
- having regard to the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020) adopted by the European Council in March 2011¹,
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015’ (COM(2010)0491),
- having regard to the comprehensive report prepared by the 2009 Swedish Presidency of the European Union entitled ‘Beijing +15: The Platform for Action and the European Union’, which pinpoints the obstacles currently preventing the full realisation of gender equality,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 2-3 June 2005, in which the Member States and the Commission are invited to strengthen institutional mechanisms for promoting gender equality and to create a framework to assess the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, in order to create more consistent and systematic monitoring of progress,
- having regard to its resolutions of 15 June 1995 on the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing: ‘Equality, Development and Peace’², of 10 March 2005 on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women – Platform for Action, Beijing +10³, and of 25 February 2010 on Beijing +15 – UN Platform for Action for Gender Equality⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 March 2003 on gender mainstreaming in the European

¹ Annex to Council conclusions of 7 March 2011.

² OJ C 166, 3.7.1995, p. 92.

³ OJ C 320 E, 15.12.2005, p. 247.

⁴ OJ C 348 E, 21.12.2010, p. 11.

- Parliament¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 January 2007 on gender mainstreaming in the work of the committees²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 22 April 2009 on gender mainstreaming in the work of its committees and delegations³,
 - having regard to its resolution of 7 May 2009 on gender mainstreaming in EU external relations⁴,
 - having regard to the Council of Europe’s pioneering work on gender mainstreaming and specifically to the ‘Declaration on Making Gender Equality a Reality’ issued following the 119th Session of the Committee of Ministers⁵,
 - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (A7-0351/2011),
- A. whereas gender mainstreaming means more than simply promoting equality through the implementation of specific measures to help women, or the under-represented sex in some cases, but rather involves mobilising all general policies and measures for the specific purpose of achieving gender equality;
- B. whereas the UN has established UN Women, which as of 1 January 2011 has strengthened the institutional arrangements of the UN system in support of gender equality and the empowerment of women, with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as its framework⁶;
- C. whereas Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union lays down the principle of gender mainstreaming, stating that the Union shall in all its activities aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women;
- D. whereas Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union lays down the principle of gender equality, stating that the Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, and that these values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail;
- E. whereas the inclusion of a gender perspective in Parliament’s legislative and policy work can, in some cases, be best achieved through focused amendments to draft reports, tabled in the lead committee in the form of gender-mainstreaming amendments – a strategy that has been actively pursued by the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality since

¹ OJ C 61 E, 10.3.2004, p. 384.

² OJ C 244 E, 18.10.2007, p. 225.

³ OJ C 184 E, 8.7.2010, p. 18.

⁴ OJ C 212 E, 5.8.2010, p. 32.

⁵ 119th Session of the Committee of Ministers, Madrid, 12 May 2009.

⁶ UN General Assembly Resolution 64/289 of 21 July 2011 on system-wide coherence.

2009;

- F. whereas this procedure has been successfully used to gender mainstream recent resolutions of 18 May 2010 on ‘key competences for a changing world: implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme’¹ and of 8 June 2011 on the mid-term review of the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Union for research, technological development and demonstration activities²;
- G. whereas the Member States are parties to all major international frameworks on gender equality and women’s rights, and a number of policy documents exist at EU level; whereas, however, the practical commitment to furthering gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment needs to be strengthened, because progress with the implementation of the existing policy documents is modest and the budgetary resources for gender issues are insufficient;
- H. whereas the Commission has, in addition to its strategy for equality between women and men (2010-2015), identified key actions to be accomplished by each of its individual directorates-general – an indication that the EU is moving towards a more holistic and coherent approach to gender mainstreaming³;
- I. whereas the Commission has committed itself, within the framework of its Women’s Charter⁴, to strengthening the gender perspective in all its policies throughout its term of office;
- J. whereas the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is tasked with developing, analysing, evaluating and disseminating methodological tools in order to support the integration of gender equality into all Community policies and the resulting national policies and to support gender mainstreaming in all Community institutions and bodies⁵;
- K. whereas close cooperation is required with the EIGE in its role of disseminating accurate methodological tools and with a view to the more effective evaluation of gender mainstreaming in Parliament’s work;
- L. whereas the Commission aims to implement gender mainstreaming as an integral part of its policymaking, including through gender impact assessments and evaluation processes, and has developed a ‘Guide to gender impact assessment’ for this purpose⁶;
- M. whereas the policy of gender mainstreaming complements and is no substitute for specific equality policies and positive actions, as part of a dual approach to achieving the goal of gender equality;
- N. whereas discrimination on the grounds of sex or gender adversely affects transgender

¹ OJ C 161 E, 31.5.2011, p. 8.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0256.

³ Commission staff working document on ‘Actions to implement the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015’ (SEC(2010)1079/2).

⁴ Communication on ‘A Strengthened Commitment to Equality Between Women and Men: a Women’s Charter’ (COM(2010)0078).

⁵ Regulation (EC) No 1922/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on establishing a European Institute for Gender Equality, (OJ L 403, 30.12.2006, p. 9.)

⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=4376&langId=en>.

people, and whereas the policies and activities of the European Parliament, the Commission and several Member States in the field of gender equality increasingly encompass gender identity;

- O. whereas the majority of parliamentary committees generally attach importance to gender mainstreaming (for example in the context of their legislative work, their institutional relations with the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, the drawing-up of equality action programmes, etc.), although a minority of committees rarely or never take an interest in the matter;
 1. Commits itself to regularly adopting and implementing a policy plan for gender mainstreaming in Parliament with the overall objective of promoting equality between women and men through the genuine and effective incorporation of the gender perspective into all policies and activities, so that the different impact of measures on women and on men is assessed, existing initiatives are coordinated, and objectives and priorities, as well as the means of achieving them, are specified;
 2. Affirms that the main aim of its gender mainstreaming policy plan for the coming three-year period should be to achieve more consistent and effective implementation of gender mainstreaming in all Parliament's work, on the basis of the following priorities:
 - (a) a continued commitment at the level of Parliament's Bureau, through the work of the High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity;
 - (b) a dual approach – mainstreaming gender in Parliament's activities through, on the one hand, effective work by the committee responsible, and, on the other, integration of the gender perspective into the work of the other committees and delegations;
 - (c) awareness of the need for a gender balance in decision-making processes, to be achieved by increasing the representation of women on Parliament's governing bodies, on the bureaux of political groups, on the bureaux of committees and delegations, in the composition of delegations and in other missions, such as election observation, and by increasing the representation of men in areas where they are under-represented;
 - (d) incorporation of gender analysis into all stages of the budgetary process to ensure that equal consideration is given to women's and men's needs and priorities and that the impact of the provision of EU resources on women and men is assessed;
 - (e) an effective press and information policy which systematically takes gender equality into account and avoids gender stereotypes;
 - (f) continued submission of regular reports to plenary on the progress achieved in gender mainstreaming in the work of Parliament's committees and delegations;
 - (g) a focus on the need for adequate financial and human resources, so that Parliament's bodies are provided with the necessary tools, including gender analysis and assessment tools, with appropriate gender expertise (research and documentation, trained staff, experts) and with gender-specific data and statistics; calls on the Secretariat to arrange regular exchanges of best practice and networking as well as gender mainstreaming and gender-budgeting training for Parliament staff;

- (h) continued development of Parliament's Gender Mainstreaming Network, to which each committee has appointed a member responsible for implementing gender mainstreaming in its work;
 - (i) attention to the importance of employing specific terminology and definitions which comply with international standards when terms are used in relation to gender mainstreaming;
 - (j) methodological and analytical support from the EIGE;
3. Calls for its committee responsible to examine how the procedure whereby the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality adopts amendments to a specific report which highlight the gender implications of a policy area, in accordance with the deadlines and procedures laid down by the committee concerned, can be best incorporated into the Rules of Procedure;
 4. Calls on the Parliament committees responsible for the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the Structural Funds to assess the gender impact of the proposed spending priorities, sources of revenue and governance tools before the MFF is adopted, so as to ensure that the post-2013 MFF is gender-sensitive, and to guarantee that all EU financing programmes set gender-equality targets in their basic regulations and allocate specific funding for measures to achieve those targets;
 5. Congratulates Parliament's Gender Mainstreaming Network and the parliamentary committees which have put gender mainstreaming into practice in their work, and calls on the other committees to ensure that they are committed to the strategy of gender mainstreaming and put it into practice in their work;
 6. Stresses the need for the parliamentary committees to be provided with appropriate tools which enable them to gain a sound understanding of gender mainstreaming, such as indicators, data and statistics broken down by gender, and for the budgetary resources to be allocated from a gender-equality viewpoint, in such a way as to encourage the committees to take advantage of in-house expertise (secretariat of the relevant committee, policy department, library, etc.) and external expertise in other local, regional, national and supranational institutions, be they public or private, in small, medium-sized and large companies and in universities working in the area of gender equality;
 7. Welcomes the specific initiatives in this area taken by a number of parliamentary committees, including the own-initiative report on the role of women in agriculture and rural areas drawn up by the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and the public hearing on the role of women in the sustainable development of fisheries areas organised by the Committee on Fisheries;
 8. Concludes, on the basis of the questionnaire submitted to the chairs and vice-chairs responsible for gender mainstreaming in the parliamentary committees, that the gender mainstreaming work of Parliament's committees is highly variable and voluntary, with an intense focus on gender in some areas and little or no apparent activity in others;
 9. Welcomes the work of the interparliamentary delegations and election observation missions and their efforts, in their relations with third-country parliaments, to address issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment through more systematic monitoring and

pursuit of issues such as female genital mutilation and maternal mortality and by working more closely with the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality in arranging joint meetings and exchanging information in these areas;

10. Asks the Commission to address and prioritise gender inequalities in a more consistent and systematic manner when programming and implementing all policies, and insists that the mainstreaming of gender issues through all policies must be improved in order to achieve the goals of gender equality;
11. Reiterates the need to focus on gender relations between men and women that generate and perpetuate gender inequalities;
12. Takes the view that Parliament's gender mainstreaming work should also encompass gender identity and assess what impact policies and activities have on transgender people; calls on the Commission to consider gender identity in all activities and policies in the field of gender equality;
13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Council of Europe.