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# REPORT

on the social integration of women belonging to ethnic minority groups  
(2010/2041(INI))

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Rapporteur: Antonia Parvanova

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## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

### on the social integration of women belonging to ethnic minority groups (2010/2041(INI))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty on European Union,
- having regard to Part Two of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which sets out the obligation for the European Union to combat discrimination,
- having regard to Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin<sup>1</sup>, Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation<sup>2</sup>, Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast)<sup>3</sup> and Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, in particular Article 21,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>5</sup>, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)<sup>6</sup> and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities<sup>7</sup>,
- having regard to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR),
- having regard to the Stockholm Programme<sup>8</sup>,
- having regard to the Lisbon Strategy and the EU 2020 Strategy, which is currently under development,
- having regard to Decision No 1350/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 establishing a second programme of Community action in the

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 180, 19.7.2000, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> OJ L 373, 21.12.2004, p. 37.

<sup>5</sup> Adopted by General Assembly resolution 217A (III) of 10 December 1948.

<sup>6</sup> Adopted by General Assembly resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979.

<sup>7</sup> Adopted by General Assembly resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992.

<sup>8</sup> Council of the European Union document Nr. 5731/10 of 3 March 2010.

field of health (2008-13)<sup>1</sup>,

- having regard to its resolution of 1 June 2006 on the situation of Roma women in the European Union<sup>2</sup> ,
  - having regard to its resolution of 27 September 2007 on equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin<sup>3</sup> ,
  - having regard to its resolution of 24 October 2006 on women’s immigration: the role and place of immigrant women in the European Union<sup>4</sup> ,
  - having regard to its resolution of 14 January 2009 on the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union 2004-2008<sup>5</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 6 May 2009 on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market<sup>6</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 10 February 2010 on equality between women and men in the European Union – 2009<sup>7</sup>,
  - 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 (A7-0221/2010),
- A. whereas the Treaty on European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union set out the values on which the EU is founded, but whereas in practice not all people living in the EU benefit fully from the Charter of Fundamental Rights, especially women belonging to ethnic minority groups, including those who are victims of violence, trafficking and poverty; whereas, furthermore, these values are common to the societies of all the Member States, in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail,
- B. whereas Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union prohibits any discrimination based on membership of a national minority; whereas, however, numerous ethnic minority communities living in the EU are still victims of discrimination, social exclusion and segregation,
- C. whereas equal treatment is a basic right, not a privilege, of all citizens, and whereas tolerance should be a general attitude to life, not a favour granted to some; whereas all forms of discrimination must be fought with equal intensity,

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 301, 20.11.2007, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 298E, 8.12.2006, p. 283.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 219E, 28.8.2008, p. 317.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 313E, 20.12.2006, p. 118.

<sup>5</sup> OJ C 46E, 24.2.2010, p. 48.

<sup>6</sup> Texts adopted of that date, P6\_TA(2009)0371

<sup>7</sup> Texts adopted of that date, P7\_TA(2010)0021.

- D. whereas ethnic minority women are disadvantaged not only in comparison with majority women, but also in comparison with ethnic minority men,
- E. whereas an integrated EU approach is crucial for a coherent policy on the social inclusion of ethnic minority women, including measures that combat discrimination and help provide access to housing, employment, education, health care and social services, and foster respect for fundamental rights,
- F. whereas there is no universally accepted legal definition of ethnic minority groups; whereas the principles of equal opportunities and equal treatment based on mutual respect, understanding and acceptance should be a cornerstone of the EU's policies in respect of all its inhabitants, regardless of their background,
- G. whereas equal access for all to quality education enhances labour market inclusion and overall quality of life; whereas, however, in some Member States ethnic minority populations are excluded from full and equal participation in mainstream education systems; whereas, in order to ensure the development of a democratic, open-minded society within the EU, education systems must transmit the values of tolerance and equality,
- H. whereas integration policies for third country nationals benefit from a stronger gender perspective, which is essential in order to ensure that the specific needs of women belonging to ethnic minority groups are taken into account,
- I. whereas immigration and asylum policies and legislation should promote the inclusion of women belonging to ethnic minority groups,
- J. whereas a targeted approach to the social inclusion of women belonging to ethnic minorities is needed in order to avoid multiple discrimination, stereotyping, stigmatisation and ethnic segregation,
- K. whereas differences in culture, tradition and/or religion should not act as obstacles to the inclusion of women belonging to ethnic minority groups,
- L. whereas collecting disaggregated data is a prerequisite for protecting and promoting the human rights of women and ethnic minorities, and whereas, owing to the absence of statistics, many problems remain impossible to identify, meaning no targeted policy is adopted,
- M. whereas there is a wide range of suitable instruments and policies available for ensuring the inclusion of women belonging to ethnic minority groups, but whereas there is an implementation gap at national level and a lack of coordination at EU level,

- N. whereas in the majority of cases women belonging to ethnic minority groups face multiple discrimination and are more vulnerable to social exclusion, poverty and extreme human rights violations, such as trafficking in human beings and coercive sterilisation, than the women belonging to mainstream society and minority group men,
- O. whereas the lower socio-economic status of many ethnic minority women translates in practice into limitations on the exercise of their fundamental rights and lack of access to resources, including reproductive and sexual health resources, and makes the inclusion process more difficult,
- P. whereas the health status of women affects not only their own health but that of their children,
- Q. whereas women's active participation in society and the successful inclusion of women will have a positive effect on their children and on future generations,
- R. whereas social exclusion of women belonging to ethnic minorities can lead to difficulties in respect of economic independence, which may result in direct and indirect costs for the community and public budgets,
- S. whereas women from ethnic minority groups are more vulnerable to the different forms of male violence and exploitation when they are less integrated than women belonging to mainstream society,
- T. whereas social inclusion would benefit from increased, regular consultation of women belonging to ethnic minority groups at local, regional, national and EU level,
1. Stresses that there is no universally accepted legal definition of ethnic minority groups, and that this concept covers a wide range of situations faced by different ethnic groups within the EU Member States;
  2. Urges the Commission and the Member States, in collaboration with NGOs and civil society groups, to provide for the regular collection and analysis of gender- and ethnicity-disaggregated data in accordance with the Member States' rules on the protection of personal data relating to issues connected with social inclusion, such as access to education, the labour market, social security, the health system and housing;
  3. Takes the view that it is of primary importance to implement existing legislation in a timely manner, and thus to transpose the directives in the Member States; takes the view that more structured coordination of EU, national, regional and local policies concerning ethnic minority groups is needed in order to have a lasting impact and achieve better policies at EU, national, regional and local level, and encourages policy-makers at all levels to consult the women whose rights are affected, along with their communities and

organisations active in this field, on policies and measures designed to improve the social inclusion of ethnic minority women;

4. Highlights the importance of education on the acceptance of different cultures and the impact of discrimination and prejudice; notes that responsibility for effective inclusion lies with both ethnic minorities and mainstream society, both of which must make an effort to integrate with one another if social unity is to be achieved;
5. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to adopt measures aimed at preventing the de-skilling of women belonging to ethnic minorities by providing better access to the labour market, including access to affordable, high-quality childcare, and ensuring access to education, training and vocational training; calls for the effective implementation of policies that target women belonging to ethnic minority groups and introduce clear, speedy procedures for the recognition of skills and qualifications;
6. Notes the importance of role models in integration and supports the exchange of best practices from those Member States with more experience of preventing social exclusion; encourages policy-makers at EU, national, regional and local level to consult ethnic minority women's organisations on policies and measures geared towards the social inclusion of ethnic minority women; urges the Commission and the Member States to propose measures designed to promote the existence of intercultural and socio-cultural mediators within the EU;
7. Takes the view that the process of inclusion must be initiated at an early stage in life, in order effectively to provide alternatives to poverty and social exclusion; maintains, therefore, that it is necessary to provide an institutional framework for community-based social and educational services for children and families which meet regional and personal needs, guaranteeing equal access to high-quality services, calls on the Commission, therefore, to provide particular support for programmes geared to early inclusion;
8. Calls on the Commission to consider widening EU funding opportunities from the European Social Fund and the European Integration Fund and giving them a more strategic focus in order to play a role in the integration and reintegration of women from ethnic minority groups into the labour market, in particular in times of economic crisis; stresses the importance of differentiating between migrant and ethnic minority groups in the context of the European Integration Fund, and urges the Commission to develop measures that make EU funding more easily available to ethnic minority women;
9. Calls on the Commission, through the European Social Fund and the European Integration Fund, and on the Member States, through national social funds, to promote entrepreneurship opportunities specifically aimed at women from ethnic minority groups, by facilitating entrepreneurship seminars and workshops and publicising development projects;
10. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, in collaboration with NGOs, to carry out

awareness-raising campaigns aimed at ethnic minority women as well as the general public, and to ensure the full implementation of the relevant provisions in order to combat discriminatory cultural habits and patriarchal role models, to prevent polarisation and tackle the prevalent sexist stereotypes and social stigmatisation which underpin violence against women, and to ensure that there is no justification of violence on the grounds of customs, traditions or religious considerations;

11. Stresses that more cross-sectoral research and indicators in relation to the impact of discrimination and social exclusion on women belonging to ethnic minority communities within the EU are needed in order to inform targeted integration policies; encourages, in this regard, the Commission – especially its DG Research – to fund such research projects;
12. Encourages the active political and social participation of women belonging to ethnic minority groups in all areas of society, including political leadership, education and culture, so as to combat the current underrepresentation;
13. Points out that women's economic independence and empowerment are key factors in ensuring their full participation in mainstream society;
14. Calls on the Member States to respect the fundamental rights of all women, including ethnic minority women, and in particular their access to health care, justice, legal aid, legal information and housing;
15. Encourages the Commission, the Member States and regional and local authorities to make active efforts to improve and facilitate access to education, with particular emphasis on language learning (especially the official languages of the country in question) and access to lifelong learning and higher education, for women and girls belonging to ethnic minority groups in order to avoid a gender gap in education that may lead to labour market exclusion and poverty;
16. Stresses that women from ethnic minority groups need access to health care information in different languages; stresses the importance of intercultural training for health care providers in partnership with ethnic minority women's groups;

### **Gender equality**

17. Urges the Commission to take the gender aspect into account when deciding on policies and measures geared towards social inclusion;
18. Calls on the Member States to take measures to ensure access to support services aimed at preventing gender-based violence and protecting women from such violence regardless of their legal status, race, age, sexual orientation, ethnic origin or religion;
19. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that existing gender equality and anti-discrimination legislation is fully implemented, by making resources available for



targeted training and awareness-raising measures about the rights women belonging to ethnic minorities already have and the ways in which they may remedy any infringement of their rights;

20. Calls on the Member States to ensure the protection of victims of multiple discrimination, among whom ethnic minority women represent a big group, by adding explicit clauses and binding regulations on multiple discrimination to the legal system;
21. Insists on the active involvement of the European Institute for Gender Equality in collecting data and carrying out research on integration issues concerning ethnic minority women, consistently applying the principle of gender mainstreaming and promoting priorities in the area of social inclusion;
22. Calls on the Fundamental Rights Agency to include a transversal gender equality and women's rights perspective in all aspects of the multiannual framework and its subsequent activities, including those on ethnic discrimination and on the fundamental rights of Roma;
23. Calls on the European Institute for Gender Equality systematically to collect data disaggregated by gender and ethnicity as well as other grounds, and to present gender- and ethnicity-disaggregated results; emphasises the need for suitable data gathering and data protection mechanisms in order to prevent the misuse of data for purposes such as racial profiling;
24. Points out the crucial role of national equality bodies in providing support and assistance to victims of discrimination and informing them about their rights and obligations; calls on the Member States to ensure that national equality bodies are efficient and independent and to provide them with sufficient financial and human resources for each ground of discrimination, along with multiple discrimination; calls on national equality bodies to develop tools and training in relation to multiple discrimination, including the specific situation of ethnic minority women;
25. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

## EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

### Introduction

This report aims to evaluate social integration policies in the EU for women belonging to ethnic minority groups and to highlight where this works and where there are problems to help identify solution.

In order to consider the themes covers by the title of this report, there are three key aspects that are considered:

1. Role of integration policies in the European Union
2. Role of women in ethnic minorities
3. Gender equality policy

We live in a multicultural society, which includes several distinct cultural, ethnic and religious communities. In order to achieve an effective integration, different needs and demands, sometimes even conflicting with each other, should be reconciled. Therefore, it is crucial to identify those demands and to find the ways to reconcile them in order to satisfy legal aspirations of women belonging to ethnic minorities without losing the unity and continuity of their ethnic group.

### 1. Role of integration policies in the European Union

Social integration can be understood as ensuring access to resources, participation and belonging. Social integration policy sets conditions which broadly affect the capacity to cope with problems and barriers, to achieve participation and access, and to create a sense of belonging. Social integration policy includes not only legislative instruments, but also wide range of administrative and voluntary activities.

There is no legally binding EU policy on social integration at the European Union, mainly because the integration is the responsibility of the Member States. However, integration policy has become increasingly important at the EU level and there are efforts to develop a common approach for integration within a coherent European framework. The Commission stresses that the integration becomes even more important as the economic and social aspects of demographic aging become more significant and explicitly refers to migrant and minority women as a target group for integration policy.

Integration within the Member States of the European Union shall be seen from the perspective of the European citizenship. It should be emphasized that the structure of the EU is based on the citizenship and the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination. However, those EU rules and principles are applied, in majority of cases, only to EU citizens who are simultaneously citizens of the Member States. In view of this report, it means that minorities which are settled and have acquired a legal status of a citizen are protected by the rules and principles of the European Union. But what about people who have arrived to the EU relatively recently, i.e., migrants, and have not become citizens of any of the Member State yet? They are not protected by the EU instruments, such as Article 19 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (ex Article 13 TEC), Council Directive 2000/43/EC

on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin. There are certain rights conferred on them by the EU instruments related to immigration concerning the areas such as the labour market, social rights, and legal integration. However, a consistent EU policy on integration of migrants has not yet been found. Moreover, migrant women (as well as women belonging to settled minorities) are protected by general principles and legal instruments of international law. But the question is if it is sufficient and no further action should be taken at the EU level?

Taking into account the above mentioned one can see that the attention should be drawn to possible differences between settled or tradition minorities and newly established minorities, such as migrants.

In the report the rapporteur examines if there should be a specific action necessary to be taken at the EU level in order to enable better integration of women belonging to ethnic minorities. If yes, in what form should this action be taken. Should it be sharing of best practice/information among the Member States or should it be binding legislation.

Another possibility for the EU to clarify and better frame the integration policies could be to draft EU guidelines to help the Member States to enable women from ethnic minorities to have access to 1) the education system, 2) the healthcare system, 3) the long term care system, 4) social benefits, 5) employment and/or 6) financial assistance.

## **2. Role of women in ethnic minorities**

There is no a common legal definition of national or ethnic minorities in international law. The Council of Europe when speaking about national minorities in its documents<sup>1</sup> refers to ‘a group of persons in a state who reside on the territory of that state and are citizens thereof, maintain longstanding, firm and lasting ties with that state, display distinctive ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic characteristics, are sufficiently representative, although smaller in number than the rest of the population of that state or of a region of that state, are motivated by a concern to preserve together that which constitutes their common identity, including their culture, their traditions, their religion or their language.’ As one can see from this definition, the Council of Europe refers to settled minorities or people belonging to settled minorities who have already acquired the citizenship of the European Union and are thus protected by the EU law. However, legislation alone cannot create good relations and change attitudes. But it can set clear standards of acceptable behaviour and provide redress for those who have suffered injustice.

It is more difficult to define groups which have not been settled in the host country. A group could be referred to as an ethnic group if, in a larger society, it is set apart and bound together by common ties, including language, nationality, culture, perceived ‘racial’ characteristics, and a shared history.

However, in view of the aim of this report, it is not so crucial to define a group as a minority or as an ethnic group because the rights and protection of the EU law is conferred upon a person based on his/her legal status as a citizen of the EU and not as a member of a minority or ethnic group.

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<sup>1</sup> [European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages](#) and the [Recommendation 1201 \(1993\) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe](#)

In this regard the report will focus on identify existing problems related to ethnic minorities and female migrants, examining their situation in the sphere of citizen's rights as outlined in the first part of this working document: access to public services as education, social services, healthcare and to the labour market, which have a great impact on integrating women belonging to ethnic minority.

It is important to consider the integration dilemma within the European Union and to stress the fact that to be a woman of a particular ethnic group is not a handicap in a democratic society but it plays an increasingly important socio-economic role in the European Union.

It is difficult to examine the current situation of women belonging to ethnic minorities as gender disaggregated statistics on social integration of migrants and minorities are lacking. Women's experiences of, for example, racism and discrimination often differ from those of men because women and girls may suffer multiple forms of discrimination, both on the grounds of gender and on the basis of ethnic identity. The multiple discrimination faced by migrant and minority women makes it necessary to develop innovative ways to raise awareness about women's rights, to empower women and to inspire them to take on leadership roles in their communities to promote human rights.

Another difficulty in identifying common problems within the EU is that challenges faced by minority and migrant women in European are very diverse, depending on specificity of the Member State in which the women live, the history of migration in that country, existing legislation and laws governing migration, the ability and willingness of those countries to recognize and respect the presence of minorities and immigrants, and the openness of the society.

In discussing the role of women in integration policies, the role of men should not be forgotten. The rapporteur examines if the role of men from ethnic minorities need to be considered in order to promote the integration of women from ethnic minorities in the European Union.

The rapporteur draws attention to the issue of certain conditions and background factors which could hinder social integration of the women from ethnic minorities more than women belonging to the majority. Those issues are 1) educational level and language knowledge, 2) housing conditions, 3) health condition and/or 4) job quality and working conditions.

### **3. Gender equality policy**

European Union gender equality policy is meant to promote equality between men and all women, but are women from ethnic minority groups prevented from benefitting from policies because of a lack of social integration?

In the report the rapporteur examines if there should be specific measures taken to target gender equality among ethnic minorities.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	23.6.2010
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+:           21 -:            0 0:           11
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Edit Bauer, Emine Bozkurt, Andrea Češková, Marije Cornelissen, Silvia Costa, Edite Estrela, Ilda Figueiredo, Iratxe García Pérez, Jolanta Emilia Hibner, Mary Honeyball, Sophia in 't Veld, Livia Járóka, Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio, Philippe Juvin, Nicole Kiil-Nielsen, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Barbara Matera, Antonia Parvanova, Frédérique Ries, Raúl Romeva i Rueda, Joanna Katarzyna Skrzydlewska, Eva-Britt Svensson, Marc Tarabella, Marina Yannakoudakis, Anna Záborská
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Christa Kläß, Elisabeth Morin-Chartier, Mariya Nedelcheva, Norica Nicolai, Chrysoula Paliadeli, Joanna Senyszyn
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote</b>	Julie Girling