



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014 - 2019

Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

2014/2152(INI)

20.4.2015

OPINION

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

on the EU strategy for equality between women and men post 2015
(2014/2152(INI))

Rapporteur: Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Notes that justice and social cohesion are the primary drivers for the action still to be taken to eliminate the various forms of gender inequality; draws attention to the fact that further inclusion in the labour market of women, who represent 60 % of graduates, would make it possible to respond to the economic and demographic challenges faced by the European Union;
2. Emphasises that in the last decade the global economy has missed out on 27 % of GDP growth per capita owing to the gender gap in the labour market, and stresses that GDP would grow between 15 % and 45 % in the EU Member States if gender gaps in employment were eliminated;
3. Takes the view that gender equality, by increasing social and economic well-being, benefits not only women but society as a whole; recalls that effectively challenging gender stereotypes is crucial to increasing women's participation in all segments of the labour market; calls on the EU to be a champion in challenging gender stereotypes, especially in the area of education, work and further training; stresses that the new gender equality strategy should, in accordance with the Treaties, aim at reducing inequalities further;
4. Stresses that a post-2015 Gender Equality Strategy should propose action to: (a) decrease the gender pay gap; (b) increase the economic independence of women; (c) improve women's labour market accessibility and career progression; (d) fundamentally increase equality in decision-making; and (e) remove discriminatory structures and practices related to gender;
5. Takes note that, in the meantime, one fourth of all women remain in the category of unpaid contributing family workers, meaning they receive no direct pay for their efforts, and there is a clear segregation of women in sectors that are generally characterised by low pay, long hours and often informal working arrangements, factors which, taken together, lead to fewer monetary, social and structural gains for women than are offered the typical working male; remarks that there are still distinctive barriers to women's labour market participation and that, on average, women in the EU earn around 16.4 % less than men; points out, in light of these discriminatory structures and practices against women, that gender equality must be ensured in all areas, including in access to employment, career progression, reconciliation of work and private life, and promotion of equal pay for work of equal value;
6. Calls on the Member States to strengthen and enforce the full exercise of collective bargaining in the private and the public sectors, an indispensable tool for regulating labour relations, fighting wage discrimination and promoting equality;
7. Stresses that ending violence against women is a matter of upholding human rights, and that both the direct and indirect costs of violence against women, and of domestic

violence, have negative impacts on the labour market and the economy; takes the view that violence against women constitutes an obstacle for women to participate in society and fully realise their potential in the labour market, and may adversely influence their performance at the workplace and have a negative effect on their quality of life; calls on the Commission and the Member States to recognise the economic as well as other effects of violence against women by gathering relevant gender-disaggregated data, and stresses the need for effective measures to combat violence against women; considers that ending violence against women should be a priority within the post-2015 strategy;

8. Stresses that while gender equality is a fundamental right enshrined in the Treaties, it is far from being achieved in the EU, and takes the view that gender equality on the labour market, combined with quality jobs, is a necessary condition for meeting the Europe 2020 strategy's 75 % employment rate target, and is crucial for maintaining sustainable pension systems; calls, therefore, for inclusion in the Europe 2020 strategy of employment targets for both men and women that are equally ambitious and that should be taken into account in all aspects of the European semester;
9. Underlines the fact that affordable, accessible and quality childcare is an important prerequisite for gender equality and for women's participation in the labour market; calls on the Commission and the Member States to make the fulfilment of the Barcelona targets for childcare a priority ambition in the new strategy for gender equality; highlights that the targets were originally set for the year 2010 and that the targets have still not been met by a majority of the Member States;
10. Highlights the fact that while differences in employment and pay rates for men and women may have fallen slightly in recent years, this is not the result of an improvement in the position of women, but of the fact that men's employment rates and levels of pay have fallen during the economic crisis;
11. Highlights in particular the fact that the impact of cutbacks in public services for childcare and care for the elderly is most likely to be borne by women;
12. Stresses that economic growth and competitiveness in the EU are dependent on closing the gap between women's educational attainment (60 % of university graduates in Europe are women) and their participation and position in the labour market; highlights the need to fight all aspects of vertical and horizontal segregation, as such segregation limits the employment of women to certain sectors and excludes them from higher levels within the corporate hierarchy; stresses that existing legislation containing positive action, in particular in the public sector of some Member States, has improved gender equality at entry level, but that this needs to be extended to all career levels;
13. Stresses that discrimination in the labour market is one of the main causes of gender inequality and that equal opportunities in working life and women's economic independence are crucial; highlights the unequal and vulnerable position of women of minority and immigrant origin as regards their access to education and the labour market; calls on the Commission to propose in its new gender equality strategy clear measures against discrimination in the labour market based on gender and gender identity, as regards e.g. recruitment, equal pay and pensions, and to combat sexual harassment at the workplace more efficiently; notes that despite EU laws in place protecting individuals

from discrimination in employment based on sex, 30 % of trans job seekers experienced discrimination according to a 2012 study from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)¹; points out that this is a violation of the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights; calls, therefore, on the Commission closely to monitor the effectiveness of national complaint bodies and procedures in the implementation of gender equality directives;

14. Emphasises that the unequal division of family responsibilities is one of the main causes of the unequal position of women in the labour market; draws attention to the fact that many women do not return to work after giving birth; stresses that reconciliation of work and home duties are a key condition for gender equality, which should be promoted through:
- a) investment in public services that support the inclusion of women in the labour market, in particular affordable, accessible and high-quality care infrastructure for children (to facilitate the achievement of the targets adopted by the Member States and formulated in the Barcelona objectives) and for people with disabilities, dependent adults, elderly and sick, as women are primary carers and their employment is negatively affected by these unpaid duties;
 - b) measures encouraging men's participation in domestic labour by means of reinforced legislation on parental leave, available to both parents but with strong incentives for fathers, such as non-transferable parental leave, as well as legislation on paternity leave for both biological and adoptive parents; calls on the Commission and the Member States to give priority to both of these legislative measures, as well as to other measures enabling men, and fathers in particular, to exercise their right to reconcile their private and working lives;
 - c) the promotion of flexible working time arrangements, teleworking opportunities for both men and women and support for mothers to renew their job skills through training and courses after a career break;
 - d) the promotion of positive models of work-life balance arrangements for both women and men in educational materials in schools at all levels;

highlights that making progress towards a fair and equal division of these responsibilities requires a change of mentality; calls on the Commission to address these issues in the new gender equality strategy;

15. Takes the view that there is urgent need for a common position within the Council on the revision of the proposal for a directive on the implementation of measures to promote improvements in the health and safety at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding (COM(2008)0637), to ensure against unfair dismissal of employees during pregnancy;
16. Stresses that the feminisation of poverty is the result of several factors, including women's career breaks, the gender pay gap (16.4 %), the pension gap (39 %), gender inequalities in

¹ <http://fra.europa.eu/en/survey/2012/eu-lgbt-survey>.

career progression, the fact that women are often employed on non-standard contracts (such as involuntary part-time, interim or zero hours contracts), the absence of social security status for partners assisting self-employed workers, and poverty in households headed by single mothers; underlines that the reduction of poverty levels by 20 million people by 2020 can be achieved by anti-poverty and anti-discrimination policies that are grounded in gender mainstreaming, by action programmes that devote particular attention to disadvantaged women and that are supported by action targeting female poverty, and by the improvement of the working conditions in low-income sectors in which women are over-represented; underlines that the multiple discrimination that women face on the grounds of disability, racial and ethnic background, socio-economic status, gender identity and other factors contributes to the feminisation of poverty; stresses the importance of monitoring the gender effects of taxation and working time models on women and families;

17. Stresses that the gender pay gap arises from insufficient participation of women in the labour market, from vertical and horizontal segregation, and from the fact that sectors in which women are over-represented often have lower salaries; stresses the need to monitor the gender pay gap in both the public and the private sector and the need for transparency in acknowledging the gender pay gap in workplaces;
18. Draws attention to the fact that only 8.9 % of corporate executive board members, and only 15 % of non-executive board members, are women, and stresses the need for transparency and greater gender balance, based on identical and objective criteria in recruitment and promotion to decision-making positions in all spheres, in order to combat the ‘glass ceiling’ that can be identified in almost all Member States; considers that the EU strategy for equality between women and men post 2015 should include an action plan in this regard;
19. Takes the view that initiatives and measures must be taken – principally in the field of education and training, including higher education – to combat stereotyped perceptions of women’s employment; stresses the need to promote and support female entrepreneurship, especially mothers’ entrepreneurship, and career opportunities for women in science and in the ICT sector; underlines the importance of encouraging women to pursue studies in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, as well as of the involvement of women in high-growth industry sectors, particularly in R&D, which would significantly boost Europe’s economic growth and competitiveness;
20. Highlights the need to support transparent procedures for the appointment of women as non-executive members in company boards listed on stock exchanges; encourages the public and private sectors to envisage voluntary schemes to promote women in managerial positions, and calls on the European Council to finally adopt a common position after Parliament’s first reading of the Women on Boards Directive;
21. Highlights the fact that the high levels of undeclared work, and bogus self-employment, that affect a large proportion of women, particularly those in domestic employment, have a negative impact on women’s income and social security, undermine established social standards of health and safety at work, and reduce the EU’s GDP levels; calls for the creation of encouragement and facilitation mechanisms to improve the transition from the

informal to the formal economy; notes that the establishment of a European platform to strengthen cooperation for the prevention and deterrence of undeclared work represents a key lever in this respect;

22. Calls on the Member States to step up their efforts to combat undeclared employment and precarious work, including ‘mini jobs’ and false part-time jobs, and to ensure that all workers enjoy appropriate social protection; deplores, furthermore, the abuse of non-standard employment contracts to avoid compliance with employment and social protection obligations;
23. Recommends that, as the composition and definition of families change over time, family and work legislation be made more comprehensive with regard to single-parent families and LGBT parenting;
24. Considers that policies and instruments aimed at tackling youth unemployment, such as the Youth Guarantee and the Youth Employment Initiative, should meet the specific needs of young men and women in order to enable them to access the labour market; notes that the proportion of young women not in employment, education or training (NEET) is higher than that of young men; calls as well for the collection of gender-disaggregated data in the area of youth unemployment in order that tailored, evidence-based policies may be developed;
25. Encourages the Member States to recognise the potential of the latest public Procurement Directive as a tool for promoting and enhancing gender mainstreaming policy, and to consider setting requirements based on the existing legislation of Member States on equal treatment and gender equality as prerequisites for public procurement contracts where applicable; acknowledges that EU legislation on competition must be complied with in developing this idea.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	16.4.2015
Result of final vote	+: 38 -: 6 0: 9
Members present for the final vote	Laura Agea, Tiziana Beghin, Brando Benifei, Mara Bizzotto, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, David Casa, Ole Christensen, Martina Dlabajová, Elena Gentile, Arne Gericke, Danuta Jazłowiecka, Rina Ronja Kari, Jan Keller, Ádám Kósa, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Jean Lambert, Jérôme Lavrilleux, Patrick Le Hyaric, Jeroen Lenaers, Verónica Lope Fontagné, Javi López, Thomas Mann, Anthea McIntyre, Elisabeth Morin-Chartier, Georgi Pirinski, Terry Reintke, Maria João Rodrigues, Claude Rolin, Anne Sander, Sven Schulze, Siôn Simon, Jutta Steinruck, Romana Tomc, Ulrike Trebesius, Ulla Tørnæs, Renate Weber, Tatjana Ždanoka, Jana Žitňanská, Inês Cristina Zuber
Substitutes present for the final vote	Georges Bach, Elmar Brok, Lampros Fountoulis, Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto, Eva Kaili, Dominique Martin, Joëlle Mélin, Neoklis Sylikiotis, Ivo Vajgl
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Amjad Bashir, Enrique Calvet Chambon, Tania González Peñas, Maria Grapini, Ivan Jakovčić