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The future of the Lisbon strategy from a gender perspective

European Parliament resolution on the future of the Lisbon Strategy from the point of view of the gender perspective (2004/2219(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted in Beijing on 15 September 1995 by the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace and to its resolutions of 21 September 1995¹ on the same subject and 18 May 2000 on the follow-up to the Beijing Action Platform²,
- having regard to the conclusions of the European Councils held in Lisbon on 23 and 24 March 2000, Stockholm on 23 and 24 March 2001, Barcelona on 15 and 16 March 2002, Brussels on 20 and 21 March 2003, and Brussels on 25 and 26 March 2004,
- having regard to Articles 2, 3(2) and 141 of the EC Treaty,
- having regard to the Community Framework Strategy on equality between women and men (2001-2005)(COM(2000)0335), the Commission's programmes of work for 2001 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005 (COM(2001)0119, COM(2001)0773, COM(2003)0047, SEC(2004)0911 and SEC(2005)1044), and the annual reports on equality between women and men for 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004 and 2005 (COM(2001)0179, COM(2002)0258, COM(2003)0098, COM(2004)0115 and COM(2005)0044),
- having regard to the Commission communication to the European Council of spring 2005, 'Working together for growth and jobs, A new start for the Lisbon Strategy' (COM(2005)0024),
- having regard to the report of November 2003, entitled 'Jobs, Jobs, Jobs: creating more employment in Europe', by the Employment Taskforce, chaired by Wim Kok
- having regard to its resolution of 9 March 2004 on reconciling professional, family and private lives³,
- having regard to its resolution of 11 February 2004 on the organisation of working time⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 March 2003 on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament⁵,
- having regard to the structural indicators,
- having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,

¹ OJ C 269, 16.10.1995, p. 146.

² OJ C 59, 23.2.2001, p. 258.

³ OJ C 102 E, 28.4.2004, p. 492.

⁴ OJ C 97 E, 22.4.2004, p. 566.

⁵ OJ C 61 E, 10.3.2004, p. 384.

- having regard to the report of the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (A6-0402/2005),
- A. whereas the Lisbon European Council approved strategic objectives aimed at making the Union the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world capable of economic growth, social cohesion and poverty reduction; whereas the Gothenburg European Council of 15 and 16 June 2001 merged the Lisbon Strategy with a sustainable development strategy and acknowledged the three complementary pillars of the Lisbon Strategy: the economic, the social and the environmental pillars,
- B. whereas Lisbon made a clear commitment to full employment to be reached by 2010 with high-quality jobs, and greater social cohesion and social inclusion,
- C. whereas social inclusion within the Lisbon Strategy especially concerns women and their need to participate fully in all aspects of life; whereas the inclusive society is built on equality, solidarity, liberty, sustainable development and justice with access to rights, resources, goods, services, information and opportunities,
- D. whereas the mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy recentres the objectives on growth and employment, and provides for a new form of governance,
- E. whereas, the link between the Beijing Platform for Action and the Lisbon Strategy being obvious, the need to utilise the productive potential of the European labour force is a key to achieving the overall Beijing and Lisbon strategy goals,
- F. whereas the Lisbon Strategy has put in place common indicators and objectives requiring regular evaluation with a view to greater awareness of the progress made and the challenges to be met,
- G. whereas the Lisbon European Council set the objective, to be achieved by 2010, of an employment rate of 60% for women; whereas the Stockholm European Council added an intermediate objective, for the end of 2005, of a 57% employment rate for women, and added an objective of a 55% employment rate for all older workers, both male and female,
- H. whereas there has been a slight increase in the employment rate for women, which reached 55,1% in 2003 in the enlarged European Union; whereas the rate of increase has since slowed down; whereas the employment rate for older women remains especially low, owing in particular to the fact that a large number of such women have left their careers to take on family responsibilities, which has a detrimental effect with regard to their pension and insurance entitlements and makes them more vulnerable to the risk of poverty,
- I. whereas the new jobs created for women are generally precarious and badly paid,
- J. whereas the Commission estimates that for the enlarged EU-25 some 22 million jobs would need to be created in order to achieve the overall Lisbon employment targets,
- K. whereas the risk of poverty and social exclusion, which is particularly high for women, is closely linked to long-term unemployment and unpaid work, which is overwhelmingly performed by women,

- L. whereas women's pension rights are very much lower than those of men owing to their limited participation in the labour market; whereas some Member States adjust their schemes by granting pension rights for periods of childcare and care of elderly or disabled dependants,
- M. whereas, although the effective and responsible integration of immigrants in the labour market and society is a key factor for achieving the Lisbon objectives, the gender perspective is generally absent from integration policies, and this is making it impossible to fully utilise the potential of immigrant women on the employment market,
- N. whereas the slowdown in the world economy and the demographic challenge facing the European Union are reasons to make the most of the potential female work force,
- O. whereas many disparities between women and men continue to exist, particularly as regards difference in remuneration, access to and advancement on the labour market, post-university education and lifelong training, and pension rights,
- P. whereas in the enlarged European Union the average pay gap is 15%, but this rises to as much as 33% in some countries; whereas within the last 30 years there has in practice been no progress made in the implementation of the principle of equal pay for equal work; whereas reducing this gap is a way of making employment more attractive to women, which will help raise their employment rate, and of making full use of investment in human capital,
- Q. noting that the promotion of entrepreneurship and self-employment is central to the European Employment Strategy and that the statistics show that women make up 28% of the total self-employed, while women entrepreneurs with employees account for only 2.5% (compared with 8% for men) of that total,
- R. whereas women's level of education tends to be higher than that of men (58 % of university graduates and 41% of PhD graduates are women); whereas more and more women are continuing with their studies, so that they increasingly have degrees and are trained and qualified, despite continuing to experience difficulties in gaining access to employment and to face discrimination in terms of professional advancement and pay,
- S. whereas lifelong education and training contribute to women's and men's fulfilment, and give them adaptability on the employment market, enabling them better to meet the challenges of the knowledge-based economy,
- T. whereas in the education and training systems in most European countries, women make up an extremely low percentage of those studying the new information and communication technologies (less than 20%), and this leads to an even lower percentage of women starting their own businesses and occupying positions of responsibility in that sector, which reduces their competitiveness on the labour market,
- U. whereas the Lisbon European Council recognised the importance of improving equal opportunities in all areas, particularly by enabling family and professional life to be successfully combined; whereas the Barcelona European Council established quantified objectives for 2010 as regards the establishment of day-care facilities for at least 90% of children between three years of age and the start of compulsory schooling, and for at least 33% of children under three, in both urban and rural settings,

- V. whereas the absence of adequate data and statistics in the Member States on the establishment of facilities for childcare and care of dependent persons makes it difficult to evaluate implementation of the measures in question,
- W. whereas there are significant differences between Member States as regards the major issues relating to the reconciliation of work and family life, and in terms of the basic principles and their implementation, for example with regard to parental leave (transferability, duration), maternity leave, paid or unpaid leave, which creates confusion when compiling and studying the relevant rights at European level, and exchanging best practices,
- X. whereas reorganisation of working time may help to improve the quality of employment for women and facilitate the reconciliation of professional and family life; regretting that new and flexible forms of employment, such as teleworking and part-time work, are essentially used by women,
- Y. whereas the average rate of part-time employment among women is 30.4% compared with only 6.6% among men, and the gap has widened slightly since 1998,
- Z. whereas measures taken on behalf of women have an impact on men; whereas men can make positive contributions to combating family stereotypes,
- AA. whereas up to now collaboration on achieving the Lisbon objectives has essentially been between national governments; whereas, in order for the gender dimension genuinely to be taken into account, the whole of civil society, educational and scientific institutions, the social partners, businesses and administrations must pool their efforts,
- AB. whereas many jobs in the European Union, in particular in sectors such as family assistance (assistance to children and to elderly, sick or disabled people), medico-social work, the hotel trade, catering and agriculture, do not attract job-seekers from the Member States and are filled by workers from third countries, owing to wage levels, the precarious status of the jobs concerned or their demeaning social image,
- AC. having regard to the importance of the role of its Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality in promoting equality between women and men and taking account of the gender dimension in implementing the Lisbon objectives,
1. Affirms the need to take urgent measures to promote employment, quality of employment and social inclusion of women, with a view to achieving the Lisbon objectives bearing in mind the great economic potential in the involvement of more women in employment;
 2. Voices its concern at the continuing disparities between women and men, particularly as regards the pay gap, access to employment, segregation on the employment market, and access to post-university education, lifelong training, new technologies and the information society;
 3. Calls on the Member States to promote school guidance aimed at diversifying young girls' career choices in order to guarantee them better opportunities on the labour market;
 4. Calls on the Member States to maintain their efforts in promoting quality employment for women of all age groups and in all sectors, and take more effective measures to promote a

growth in employment for women, particularly in the poorest regions of the EU, which will help to put to good use the knowledge and skills acquired by women during their training, boost their participation in the economic world and the viability of pension schemes, enable women to become financially independent and self-sufficient and ensure that they have their own satisfactory pension rights;

5. Points out that the upward trend in women's participation in the labour market is a result of the increase in non-standard types of work, such as part-time work, flexible hours, shift work and fixed-term work;
6. Calls on the Member States to take account of the gender dimension in immigrant integration policies in order to make full use of immigrant women's potential on the employment market and thus to help achieve the Lisbon objectives;
7. Recommends better coordination between the policy of an integrated approach to equality between women and men, and the Lisbon Strategy, in the interests of taking systematic account of the gender perspective in realising the ambitious Lisbon objectives, particularly in the 'broad economic policy guidelines', the 'employment guidelines', environmental policy and internal market policy;
8. Views as regrettable the fact that, up to now, collaboration for the purpose of achieving the Lisbon objectives has essentially been between governments, and stresses that national, regional and local administrations, local authorities, businesses, educational and scientific institutions, the social partners and the whole of civil society must be involved;
9. Underlines the importance of fully involving the European Parliament, and particularly its Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, in the evaluation of the Lisbon Strategy from the gender perspective;
10. Remains mindful of the implementation of the interim target of a 57% employment rate for women by the end of 2005, and calls for an evaluation by the Commission on the basis of future statistics, with emphasis on an approach allowing assessment of the areas of activity which have contributed most to increasing the employment rate among women and the quality of the jobs thus created;
11. Stresses that the Member States must make the issue of reducing the pay gap between women and men an absolute priority on their political agenda and in their economic development strategy; calls also for the application of the relevant European legislation and the promotion of women to senior positions commensurate with their qualifications;
12. Calls on the Member States to take initiatives to support and measures to promote women as entrepreneurs in order to give women the opportunity to develop their entrepreneurial spirit and to contribute to economic development and competitiveness;
13. Reaffirms that lifelong education and training should be placed at the heart of the Lisbon Strategy; calls on the Member States to take the necessary measures to enable qualifications to be recognised in all Member states and all modes of learning to be certified;
14. Stresses the need to improve the training of women in new technologies and increase their participation in research and technology programmes which will enable them to become

more competitive on the labour market and will reduce the current gender gap in technological and scientific skills;

15. Affirms that reorganisation of working time may allow more and better-quality jobs to be created, as well as contributing to the reconciliation of professional, family and private life and the meeting of the Lisbon objectives;
16. Welcomes in this connection the agreement on teleworking concluded by the European social partners, and encourages its implementation in daily life;
17. Supports greater participation by the social partners, including NGOs, at local, national and regional level, in the development and implementation of gender equality policies, particularly in the areas of education, employment and pensions;
18. Stresses that the reorganisation of working time must result in a free choice for women; recalls that part-time working as an imposed solution can result in social exclusion and poverty; considers that the rational implementation thereof would enable women who so wish to enter the employment market and to move within it, and would make it easier for them to combine a career and a family;
19. Recommends that the Member States adopt measures to ensure the most disadvantaged women, especially single parents, a 'guaranteed minimum income', enabling them to live with dignity and to have access to professional training in line with the needs of the labour market;
20. Calls on the Commission to conduct a study in cooperation with the Member States and the social partners aimed at identifying more clearly these 'labour pools', in particular for women, in areas such as family assistance, medico-social work and catering, to analyse the reasons why they have become less attractive, to put forward ways in which they could be made attractive again and to study the relationship between such jobs and illegal employment; calls on the Member States to exchange best practice in this area;
21. Stresses the need for the Member States to introduce into their national action plans measures providing for the establishment of easily accessible, high-quality, affordable day care for children and care facilities for other dependent people, and urges the Member States to introduce into their national action plans guaranteed social protection for mothers raising children alone; stresses that such measures must enable women to return to, remain long-term in, and reintegrate into the labour market; stresses the role of the social partners in this area, particularly as regards the development of crèches in businesses;
22. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to collect sufficient data on unpaid work on which to base employment policies and the promotion of measures for a fairer distribution of unpaid work to enable women to participate more extensively in the labour market;
23. Calls on the Member States to continue developing key indicators to assess the progress of equality between women and men in all areas and, to this end, to collect adequate, consistent and comparable statistics on a regular basis, broken down by gender and age, and conduct a detailed analysis thereof;

24. Asks the Commission to make reconciling work and private life one of its priorities in the roadmap for equality between women and men, which is currently under discussion, and to revise, in collaboration with the Member States, the social partners and other stakeholders, Directive 96/34/EC with regard to its adequacy and effectiveness; considers that the review should focus on how to improve the situation of women and men in order to ensure that work and family life are reconciled, for both men and women, which could be a fundamental factor for achieving gender equality in all walks of life;
25. Criticises the Member States for not having implemented properly the established quantified objectives for the establishment of day-care facilities as agreed upon by the Barcelona Council; urges the Member States to provide childcare to at least 90% of children between 3 years of age and the start of compulsory schooling and for at least 33% of children under three in both urban and rural settings;
26. Considers it essential that Member States systematically gather and produce statistics on the establishment of facilities for the care of children and other dependent people;
27. Voices its concern at the inadequate means of subsistence for older women, women belonging to ethnic minorities and women with disabilities, which means that they must seek jobs in an economy where the unemployment rate is high, and calls on the Member States to take their situation into account in national action plans and to consider any legislative provision allowing discrimination on grounds of age null and void;
28. Calls on the Member States to continue their efforts to modernise their social protection systems, as set out in the 2002 national reports on pension schemes, with a view to bringing them into line within a system in which as many women are employed as men, with the same career potential and pension rights as men;
29. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to collaborate closely with the future European Institute for Gender Equality to guarantee the development of appropriate and comparable indicators, and monitoring thereof, and effective instruments for the promotion of equality, such as benchmarks, with a view to combating discrimination against women and promoting their access to the labour market while allowing them to reconcile professional and family life, taking account of the variety of possibilities offered by the Member States at local level;
30. Calls on the Commission to take into account and deal with the problem of different definitions and methods of calculating the workforce and the unemployed (seasonal unemployment, long-term unemployment, atypical work, etc.) in the various Member States, which impedes the charting and assessment of the real situation of women on the labour market, the drawing of comparative conclusions and the drafting of proposals and guidelines with which to tackle the problems;
31. Calls on the Member States to take effective measures for the benefit of men, such as promoting appropriate systems of parental leave and organising awareness-raising campaigns with the aim of greater investment by men in the equitable division of family responsibilities; considers that, in this connection, more use should be made of the flexible organisation of working hours and new forms of employment which make it possible to reconcile professional, family and private life;
32. Deplores the fact that men do not make sufficient use of the organisation of working time

and new forms of employment which allow professional, family and private life to be successfully combined;

33. Declares that it is in favour of the launching of a regular follow-up, under the aegis of its Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, in collaboration with the national parliaments, with a view to recording the progress achieved and the challenges still to be met;
34. Stresses the need to transform the Lisbon Strategy into a genuine solidarity and sustainable development strategy aimed at establishing new guidelines incorporating economic, environmental and employment policies and laying down objectives and targets for the European Union and the Member States; considers that the forthcoming 2007-2013 Financial Perspective should reflect this strategic objective;
35. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.