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Beijing +15 – UN Platform for Action for Gender Equality

European Parliament resolution of 25 February 2010 on Beijing +15 – UN Platform for Action for Gender Equality

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 adopted at the United Nations Beijing +5 and Beijing +10 Special Sessions on further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted on 9 June 2000 and 11 March 2005 respectively,
- having regard to the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),
- having regard to the United Nations General Assembly resolution of 14 September 2009, entitled ‘System-wide coherence’ (A/RES/63/311), which strongly supports the consolidation of various gender equality entities into a composite entity,
- having regard to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
- 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 Article 2 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 Article 19 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which refers to combating discrimination based on sex,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 1 March 2006 entitled ‘A Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010’ (COM(2006)0092),
- having regard to the Council Conclusions of 2 December 1998 establishing that the annual assessment of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action will include quantitative and qualitative indicators and benchmarks,
- having regard to the common declaration by EU ministers for gender equality made on 4 February 2005 in the context of the 10-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action, in which, inter alia, their strong support for, and commitment to, full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action are reaffirmed,
- having regard to the Council Conclusions of 2-3 June 2005 in which 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 the European Pact for Gender Equality adopted by the European Council in March 2006¹,
 - having regard to the Council Conclusions of 14 May 2007 on gender equality and women’s empowerment in development cooperation,
 - having regard to the comprehensive report prepared by the 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 its resolutions of 15 June 1995 on the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing: ‘Equality, Development and Peace’² and of 10 March 2005 on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women – Platform for Action, Beijing +10³,
 - having regard to the questions of 26 January 2010 to the Commission and to the Council on Beijing +15 – UN Platform for Action for Gender Equality (O-0006/2010 – B7-0007/2010, O-0007/2010 – B7-0008/2010),
 - having regard to Rules 115(5) and 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas despite the efforts made, the strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action have not been achieved and inequality and gender stereotypes persist, with women remaining in a position subordinate to men in the areas addressed in the Platform,
 - B. whereas gender equality is a fundamental principle of the European Union, enshrined in the Treaty on European Union, and one of its objectives and tasks, and whereas mainstreaming equality between women and men in all its activities constitutes a specific mission for the Union,
 - C. whereas the full enjoyment of all human rights by women and girls is an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights and is essential for the advancement of women and girls, peace, security and development,
 - D. whereas it is crucial that men and boys be actively involved in policies and programmes to promote gender equality and that men are offered realistic opportunities, especially in terms of paternity leave, to share family and domestic responsibilities with women on an equal footing,
 - E. whereas significant synergies in substantive content can be found between the CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action, as many of the critical areas of concern of the Platform are explicitly covered by the Convention,
 - F. whereas CEDAW has celebrated the 30th anniversary of its signing, on 18 December 1979, as well as the 10th anniversary of the Optional Protocol to the Convention, which empowers the CEDAW Committee to hear complaints of rights violations brought by individuals, and whereas to date, 186 countries have ratified CEDAW and 98 of these countries have ratified the Optional Protocol,

¹ Bull. EC 3-2002, point I.13.

² OJ C 166, 3.7.1995, p. 92.

³ OJ C 320 E, 15.12.2005, p. 247.

- G. whereas the theme decided on for the fifty-fourth session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (the so-called ‘Beijing +15 meeting’) is that of reviewing the Beijing Declaration for Action and contributing to shaping a gender perspective towards the full realisation of the Millennium Development Goals,
1. Stresses that, despite the progress achieved in the realisation of the strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action, inequality and gender stereotypes persist, with women remaining in a position subordinate to men in the areas addressed in the Platform;
 2. Views as regrettable the lack of timely, reliable, comparable data, at both national and EU level, for the indicators decided on for the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action, which have already been developed in many of the critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action, including women and poverty, violence against women, institutional mechanisms, women and armed conflict, and the girl child;
 3. Calls on the Commission to develop further the annual review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and to use the indicators and analytical reports effectively as a contribution to different policy fields, as well as as a basis for new initiatives aimed at achieving gender equality;
 4. Considers it necessary for the Commission to put forward a mid-term plan for the regular follow-up and revision of the sets of indicators already developed for the follow-up of the Beijing Platform for Action, using all available resources, including the expertise of the Commission’s High-Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming;
 5. Urges the Commission, when preparing its follow-up strategy to its Roadmap, to take into account the economic and financial crisis, the impact of climate change on women, sustainable development, ageing society, and the situation of women from ethnic minorities, especially Romani women, as well as the following current Roadmap priorities: equal economic independence for women and men, including subpoint 1.6 on combating multiple discrimination against women from ethnic minorities and migrant women; combining work, family and private life; equal participation of women and men in decision making; the eradication of gender-based violence; the elimination of gender stereotypes in society; and the promotion of gender equality in external and development policies;
 6. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to take further steps to advance women’s empowerment, gender equality and gender mainstreaming in development cooperation, including through the completion and adoption of an EU Gender Action Plan, in accordance with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action;
 7. Urges the Commission, when preparing its follow-up strategy to its Roadmap, to create stronger links to the Beijing Platform for Action, ensuring that there is greater coherence between the EU strategy for gender equality and efforts to achieve the objectives identified in the Beijing Platform from Action;
 8. Strongly supports the creation of the new United Nations gender equality entity, combining policy and operational activities, and calls on all UN Member States, particularly the EU States, to ensure that the new entity is provided with significant financial and human resources and led by a UN Under-Secretary-General with responsibility for gender equality;
 9. Stresses that sexual and reproductive health and rights are an integral part of the women’s

rights agenda, and that it is essential to step up efforts to improve women's reproductive rights and health, both in Europe and globally;

10. Stresses that sexual and reproductive health is an integral part of the women's health agenda;
11. Stresses that abortion should not be promoted as a method of family planning and that provision should be made in all cases for the humane treatment and counselling of women who have had recourse to abortion;
12. Calls on the European Union, within the new legal framework established by the Treaty of Lisbon, to become a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its optional protocol;
13. Encourages the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) to promote an exchange of knowledge between the Member States in all fields addressed in the Beijing Platform for Action via the programme for the exchange of good practice on gender equality, with a view to reinforcing implementation of the commitments set out in the Platform;
14. Requests that in the revision of the Lisbon Strategy in 2010 a strong gender equality priority/chapter, accompanied by new targets, be included, the links with the Beijing Platform for Action be strengthened and the Beijing indicators developed for the follow-up of the Beijing Platform for Action be used to reinforce the gender perspective in the National Reform Programmes and the National Reports on strategies for social protection and social inclusion;
15. Asks the Commission regularly to review the progress achieved on those critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action for which indicators developed for the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action have already been adopted;
16. Urges the Commission and the Member States to adopt and implement specific gender equality policies, including active measures, with a view to accelerating the achievement of de facto gender equality and promoting the full enjoyment of all human rights by women and girls;
17. Welcomes the importance accorded gender equality in the plans of the incoming Spanish Presidency;
18. Recognises that gender mainstreaming and specific actions to promote gender equality are mutually supportive strategies and that structures and methods need to be reinforced and effectively used at both national and EU level;
19. Encourages the European Institute for Gender Equality to further develop strategies and tools for gender mainstreaming, particularly in the areas of gender impact assessment and gender budgeting;
20. Reiterates the need for systematic implementation and monitoring of gender mainstreaming in legislative, budgetary and other important processes, and of strategies, programmes and projects in different policy fields, including economic policy, integration policies, the Open Method of Coordination for both employment and social protection and social inclusion, the European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development, the Framework of European

cooperation in the youth field, external and development policies, and the European Security and Defence Policy, and for the systematic use of indicators developed for the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action in all relevant policy areas and processes to be promoted;

21. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the Member States and the UN Secretary-General.