

Economic crisis: greater impact on women

Budget cuts and particularly cuts in social expenditures that affect women more than men should be stopped, said members of the Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee on Tuesday in a resolution on the impact of the crisis on women. The committee approved a set of proposals to address the impact of the crisis on gender equality. Investing in lifelong training and new jobs, in public transport, and developing child care facilities are among proposals to be taken.

Women have been punished twice

Women have been punished twice since the start of the economic crisis, by losing their jobs and working part-time. Austerity measures and cuts in the public budget, unemployment, temporary work and low salaries affected women more than men.

"Women are facing a silent pernicious crisis which worsens and weakens their condition. Before the crisis there were already more women affected than men by unemployment, precarious work, part-time, low wages and slow careers. Today, as a result of austerity policies, they suffer a double punishment. This is an issue at the heart of political equality and employment. I say stop to the decline of women in society", said rapporteur *Elisabeth Morin-Chartier (EPP, France)*.

As a result of cuts in social security benefits and to the budget for social welfare infrastructure, such as education, childcare, health and care services, women left employment or reduced their working hours, thus increasing the feminisation of poverty. Part-time employment has a long term impact, not only diminishing their income, but their pensions as well.

Committee members believe that, despite unemployment rates for men and women being comparable, the crisis affects the latter differently: working conditions for women have become considerably more insecure, their income diminished the growth of part time and fixed-term jobs to the detriment of more stable employment.

Recommendations to be considered

MEPs call on the Commission to stop budget cuts, especially in the public sector, in social security benefits and social welfare, education and childcare services. They also call for an action plan for better childcare, especially to develop company and inter-company crèches.

The committee reiterates a demand for promotion of female entrepreneurship by facilitating women's access to microcredit's as well as for improving a public transport policy enabling women to be truly mobile and to achieve a better work-life balance.

MEPs stress that female poverty has not just been caused by the recent economic crisis, but by a variety of factors: stereotypes, pay gaps between men and women, lack of a work-life balance, women's longer life expectancy and, in general, all kinds of gender-based discrimination which affect mainly women.

The economic crisis contributes as well indirectly to harassment and violence of all kinds with women as the victims, members agreed.

Procedure: non-legislative resolution

Rapporteur: Elisabeth Morin-Chartier

Vote in plenary: March

Link to the Report on the impact of the economic crisis on gender equality and women's rights:
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/femm/pr/921/921039/921039en.pdf

Events relating to 8 March International Women's Day

Workshop for journalists: "Women and the economic crisis" - 6 March, 10.00h-17.00h, PHS 3C50, European Parliament, Brussels

Inter-parliamentary Committee meeting of MEPs and national MPs - 7March, 09.00h -12.30h, Room Jozsef Antall 2Q2, European Parliament, Brussels

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