DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

on a Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010 (2006/2132(INI))

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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 in its motion for a resolution:

1. Agrees that gender equality is a fundamental right and common value of the EU, notes however that despite significant progress in this field, many inequalities between women and men remain;

2. Notes that the challenges faced by the Member States and the EU in the area of gender equality are increasing as one result of intensified global economic competition and the subsequent demand for an ever more flexible and mobile labour force; highlights that these requirements are likely to impact more on women than on men and directly interfere with women's right to reproductive self-determination;

3. Supports the key actions put forward in the Commission communication, a Roadmap for equality between women and men (COM(2006)0092) in the six priority areas of achieving economic independence for women, reconciling work and family life, promoting the equal participation of women and men in decision-making, eradicating gender-based violence and trafficking, eliminating gender stereotypes and promoting gender equality outside the EU; believes however that for these actions to be effective the EU's economic policies need to be altered so that all women, men and children can live in dignity and free from poverty;

4. Believes that by basing the measures outlined in the Roadmap on a policy that gives priority to market rule and concentrates on gaining a competitive edge for the EU in the globalised economy; promotion of gender equality will remain marginalised; expresses concern that policies that concentrate on enhancing the EU's competitiveness are likely to damage the interests of women in other parts of the world;

5. Believes that gender equality is a goal worth achieving for reasons other than pure economic efficiency;

6. Calls on the Commission to promote gender-sensitive language in all EU documents;

7. Requests the Commission to encourage Member States to recognise the economic, social and educational value of unpaid work in families and households, in particular by means of contributions to the welfare system and pension schemes;

8. Highlights that women have a higher risk of poverty than men and therefore calls on the Commission to develop strategies to reduce the feminisation of poverty and to implement these strategies in the social protection and social inclusion processes as a matter of priority.