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on non-discrimination based on gender and inter-generational solidarity
(2008/2118(INI))

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on non-discrimination based on gender and inter-generational solidarity (2008/2118(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the work carried out by the winner of the 1992 Nobel Prize in Economics, Gary Becker, particularly on human capital¹,
- having regard to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 1995 Global Human Development Report studying "The revolution for gender equality"²,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 December 2000 on the Communication from the Commission 'Towards a Europe for all ages - promoting prosperity and intergenerational solidarity'³,
- having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament 'Europe's response to world ageing - promoting economic and social progress in an ageing world - a contribution of the European Commission to the 2nd World Assembly on Ageing' (COM(2002)0143),
- having regard to its resolution of 9 March 2004 on reconciling professional, family and private lives⁴,
- having regard to the European Youth Pact adopted by the Brussels European Council of 22 and 23 March 2005,
- having regard to the Commission Green Paper 'Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between the generations' (COM(2005)0094),
- having regard to its resolution of 23 March 2006 on demographic challenges and solidarity between the generations⁵,
- having regard to the Commission Communication 'The demographic future of Europe – from challenge to opportunity' (COM(2006)0571),
- having regard to its resolution of 19 June 2007 on a regulatory framework for measures enabling young women in the European Union to combine family life with a period of studies⁶,
- having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament,

¹ Becker, Gary: *The Economic Approach to Human Behaviour*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1976.

² <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr1995/chapters>; particularly Chapter 4.

³ OJ C 232, 17.8.2001, p. 381.

⁴ OJ C 102 E, 28.4.2004, p. 492.

⁵ OJ C 292 E, 1.12.2006, p. 131.

⁶ OJ C 146 E, 12.6.2008, p. 112.

the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'Promoting solidarity between the generations' (COM(2007)0244),

- having regard to the Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the Communication from the Commission on 'Promoting solidarity between the generations'¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 27 September 2007 on equality between women and men in the European Union - 2007²,
- having regard to the Commission Staff Working document entitled 'Europe's demographic future: facts and figures' (SEC(2007)0638),
- having regard to its resolution of 21 February 2008 on the demographic future of Europe³,
- having regard to its resolution of 3 September 2008 on equality between women and men - 2008⁴,
- having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A6-0000/2008),

Man observations on everyday life

- A. whereas the Lisbon Strategy aims to ensure that 60% of women able to work are in employment; whereas efforts relating to the demographic challenge seek to promote higher birth rates to meet future requirements; whereas these two public policies target the same pivotal population group of women aged between 18 and 49, who are viewed both as workers and as mothers carrying life and bringing children into the world as well as taking care of the elderly; whereas the different policies now need to be built not just around the professional performance of workers but also around their role in society as human beings,
- B. whereas the various alternatives involved in the choice between formal employment and informal non market work do not have the same economic consequences, and the manifold but latent discrimination against women and men who would opt for informal non market work thus takes the form of having to chose between two alternatives which are not recognised as being equivalent in economic terms,
- C. whereas non-discrimination based on gender, *prima facie* and generally, relates not just to women/mothers but also to men/fathers; whereas political action in this field should no longer focus solely on women, and European and national policies should henceforth take into consideration the needs and abilities of men/fathers in this area,

¹ OJ C 120, 16.5.2008, p. 66.

² OJ C 219 E, 28.8.2008, p. 324.

³ Texts adopted, P6_TA(2008)0066.

⁴ Texts adopted, P6_TA-PROV(2008)0399.

- D. whereas the concept of inter-generational solidarity is not just limited to childcare but also extends to responsibility for the elderly and dependent and to nurturing the human capital of our citizens, particularly of future generations,
- E. whereas there is a 'sandwich generation' of 40 to 60 year olds in the European population who often combine the role of parents with that of children responsible for elderly and dependent family whilst being actively involved in the labour market,
- F. whereas the work of Gary Becker, the winner of the 1992 Nobel Prize in Economics, uses economic and mathematical models to highlight the economic value of household production by women, particularly in terms of housework, educating children, looking after dependents regardless of their age or state of dependency, or running inter-generational solidarity networks,
- G. whereas the monetisation of non-market informal work carried out by women/mothers and men/fathers is more than a question of justice, and economic science now attaches increasing importance to the creation of national wealth by the household economy,
- H. whereas attention should be drawn to the aforementioned 1995 UNDP Report which notes that if more human activities in the field of non-market informal work devoted to inter-generational solidarity were seen as market transactions in the same way as the prevailing wages, they would yield gigantically large monetary valuations for the work carried out by women/mothers and men/fathers; whereas this same report states that if national statistics fully reflected the 'invisible' contribution of women/mothers and men/fathers, it would become impossible for policy-makers to ignore them in their decisions on, particularly, policies to reconcile family life and 'formalised' working life,
- I. whereas the manifold but latent discrimination against women/mothers and men/fathers in this field is primarily manifested in the obligation of having to choose between two alternatives which are not recognised as being equivalent in economic terms (formal or informal work),
- J. whereas the manifold discrimination against women/mothers and men/fathers in the official recognition of their informal work is linked to a number of legal, social and economic factors which go beyond the single issue of equal pay for the same job and is due in particular to the fact that women/mothers or men/fathers are obliged to choose formal work simply because of the non-recognition of household work, even though formal work is burdened with the pay gap and upsets the balance between pursuing family plans and professional ambitions,
- K. whereas systems of national accounts (SNAs) in the Member States do not recognise the value of non-market informal work in its different forms even though, according to mathematical models, it accounts for one-third of national wealth in GDP,

Recognition of work performed outside the formal labour market

- L. whereas persons who devote their time and skills to looking after children or the elderly should receive social recognition and this could be done by giving such persons individual rights, particularly regarding social security and pensions,
- M. whereas the educational role played by women/mothers or men/fathers towards future generations and elderly and dependent persons is essential for the advancement of the common good and should be recognised as such by cross-cutting policies, including policies for women and men who make a free choice to devote all or part of their time to this activity,

Special role of 'young retirees'

- N. whereas there is a lack of recognition of the professional skills of persons aged fifty and over, as evidenced in particular by the higher rate of unemployment amongst this population,
- O. whereas these 'young retirees', despite their position on the margin of the formal labour market, very often have the wisdom, skills and knowledge required for the advancement of society and these should therefore be maximised for the benefit of the common good through specific policies aimed at this target group,

Specific responsibility of men/fathers

- P. whereas there is a key role to be played by men/fathers in achieving genuine equality that respects the differences and complementary skills of women and men,

Establishing conditions conducive to a free choice leading to a balance between family plans and professional ambitions

- Q. whereas working time arrangements in most parts of Europe do not seem to provide much support for people with children and employees with children seem to be less likely to work in jobs with flexible working arrangements than those without¹,
- R. whereas it is preferable to create the situation where women/mothers and men/fathers are free to choose how to look after their children, under equal conditions, and public funds allocated to looking after young children should, therefore, be directed towards a single straightforward allowance granted to each household depending on the number of children, which these households could use in whichever way they want: for example, to pay for a place in a crèche, pay for a child minder or compensate one of the parents who stops working,
- S. whereas the right balance can only be struck between family plans and professional ambitions if the persons concerned have genuine freedom of choice, in economic and social terms, without being penalised and if the requisite infrastructure is in place,

¹ Eurostat, *The life of women and men in Europe*, 2008, p. 89.

- T. whereas there is a risk of being 'forced' to work part-time, particularly for women/mothers, this choice often being imposed upon them due to the lack of viable childcare structures,

Giving tangible form to the invisible creation of national wealth

1. Calls on the national statistical institutes in the Member States to develop measures to include in their SNA the value, broken down by gender, of invisible work in the field of inter-generational solidarity and its contribution to national GDP;
2. Calls on Eurostat to develop measures to highlight the value of invisible work in the field of inter-generational solidarity and its contribution to the Union's GDP and, for this purpose, to work closely with the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Labour Office (ILO);
3. Calls on the Commission to present specific initiatives to validate the skills acquired in carrying out educational tasks, caring for dependent persons and household management so that these skills are taken into consideration upon re-entry into the labour market;
4. Calls on the Member States to take measures to recognise invisible and informal work in the field of inter-generational solidarity carried out by women/mothers and men/fathers at a legal, social and economic level (particularly as regards social security, professional status, earnings and equal opportunities for men and women);
5. Calls on the European Economic and Social Committee to undertake work on defining criteria and standards to record and evaluate the manifold aspects of informal non market work by women and men, on the basis of a uniform method for assessing and assigning a value to this work and the long-term economic and social usefulness of this activity and its contribution to GDP;
6. Calls on experts in the social sciences, economics and law, alongside those in philosophy, anthropology, neuroscience, child development science and geriatrics and gerontology, to draw up a clearer definition of the different terms to make them easier to understand and reduce the scope for misuse; calls for a comprehensive pan-European investigation into the nature, level and internal mechanisms of involvement in informal non market work which is not yet officially recognised, running inter-generational networks and funding for this purpose;

Promoting a balance between family plans and professional ambitions

7. Calls on the Member States to support and promote the operational programmes launched by the Commission in the context of the European Alliance for Families; asks the Commission to step up the development of tools for the systematic exchange of best practices and research in this field;
8. Calls on the public authorities to take the necessary steps to enable women/mothers and men/fathers to make better choices as to how they wish to reconcile work and family life;

9. Calls on the Member States to give priority to leave arrangements (parental leave, maternity leave, solidarity leave) applicable to persons wishing to interrupt their careers for the sake of a child or to look after a dependent;
10. Insists that all persons wishing to interrupt their formal careers or reduce the number of hours they work for the sake of inter-generational solidarity should be able to benefit from flexible working arrangements; calls therefore on small and medium-sized enterprises to cooperate more willingly and on the public authorities to exhibit greater financial flexibility in their State aid budget forecasts;
11. Calls on the Member States to ensure that all persons who have temporarily interrupted their careers to look after children or care for elderly or dependent persons can (re)enter the labour market and retain the right to return to their former position and level of career advancement;
12. Calls on the Member States to promote a fiscal policy that takes account of household financial obligations, and particularly the costs of childcare and looking after elderly and dependent persons through a system of taxation or tax breaks;

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13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Economic and Social Committee, the parliaments and national statistical offices of the Member States, the ILO, the OECD and the UNDP.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

(1) The concept of 'work' is not properly defined in the Lisbon Strategy and only relates to formal gainful employment, thus failing to recognise a substantial proportion of social and economic value added in the EU Member States.

The many interpretations of the concept of 'work' need to be adapted to the new requirements of European employment policy. The social context within which an activity is carried out conditions whether this activity can be regarded as 'formal gainful employment'.

This European Parliament own-initiative report deals with the social and economic recognition of activities carried out by both men and women that do not qualify as 'formal gainful employment'.

The rapporteur makes the case for the recognition not just of traditional forms of gainful employment, but also of the manifold forms of non-gainful employment carried out by women and men primarily in the field of voluntary work and domestic and family work, and for their inclusion in the Member States' systems of national accounts (SNA).

(2) The recognition of non-gainful employment is a question of fairness

'The man who rears pigs is a productive, the man who teaches men an unproductive, member of society'", asserted the German economist, Friedrich List, 150 years ago. The non-gainful employment of women and men who educate children, care for the elderly at home, provide inter-generational solidarity and work for the common good at the beginning of the 21st century is still not considered economic work to this day.

Discrimination occurs when women or men opt of their own free will to develop their personal potential by investing their efforts in nurturing the human resources of future generations, caring for dependents (regardless of their age or the extent of their dependency) or managing inter-generational solidarity networks¹. No system of national accounts (SNAs) takes that investment into consideration, despite its tangibility. It is ignored by employment statisticians. Lacking concrete statistical form, the informal work which women perform goes unacknowledged, even if all commentators are in agreement as to its actual existence in everyday life.

The Global Human Development Report 1995 on 'The revolution for gender equality'² makes the following introductory remarks: *'The monetization of the non-market work of women is more than a question of justice (...). If more human activities were seen as market transactions at the prevailing wages, they would yield gigantically large monetary valuations.'*³

¹ ARN, Christoph, *Hausarbeitsethik: Strukturelle Probleme und Handlungsmöglichkeiten rund um die Haus- und Familienarbeit in sozialetischer Perspektive*, Verlag Ruediger, Chur/Zürich, 2000; KREBS, Angelika, *Arbeit und Liebe. Die philosophischen Grundlagen sozialer Gerechtigkeit*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2002;

² <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr1995/chapters>; particularly Chapter 4.

³ http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr_1995_en_overview.pdf, p. 6

(3) The economic approach taken by Nobel Prize-winner Gary Becker

Household production forms a significant part of economic output in all countries, but household work is not recognised when calculating the goods and services that make up GDP. This results in the under-valuation of women who are responsible for the bulk of household production. Families and other households are effectively small companies that produce many valuable goods and services even in the most developed countries. They bring up children, prepare meals, provide shelter, care for the sick, look after and support the elderly, and fulfil many other useful tasks. Women dedicate over 70% of their time to these activities - even in egalitarian countries such as Sweden. Some feminists make a strong case for the view that the inclusion of household work in GDP would raise 'awareness' among women, particularly in less developed countries. Other feminists, however, are opposed to an explicit calculation of production by housewives, as this would clash with their aim of getting women away from the kitchen and into employment. It is time to recognise that household work forms part of the goods and services that make up GDP. Given the long working hours devoted to household work, household production accounts for a substantial proportion of a country's total production. All this work is only reflected in GDP calculations when a family employs somebody to look after the children, clean the house and cook, which is not the case when a parent does these tasks. There are various ways of quantifying and measuring household production. The value of household work can, for example, be measured by the costs that would be incurred if the services provided by the parent were to be purchased on the market. The inclusion of household work in GDP calculations would raise the self-esteem of women and men who stay at home to look after the children and the elderly and to carry out other household duties. It would also give a more accurate picture of GDP and economic growth and could lead to a more nuanced interpretation of public policy which influences the breakdown between household work and gainful employment.¹

(4) Update statistics and adapt SNAs: make the concept of work fit for the future and recognise the role of non-gainful employment by women and men in inter-generational solidarity

Work needs to be re-defined for the SNA to take non-gainful employment into consideration. The validity of the statistics can be enhanced by gaining a better understanding of the activity of women and their behaviour on the labour market. The most accurate possible comparison of the employment behaviour of women and men based on politically neutral questions would reveal the strengths and weaknesses of current statistics and offer insights into possible improvements and how to achieve these.

There are other reasons that justify such an initiative. Firstly, the users of these statistics - such as market researchers and policy-makers - would then be able to call on much more complete information, which is significant in that men are generally employed in jobs that differ substantially from those of women and are not therefore affected in the same way by fluctuations in the labour market. Users would also have the chance to understand and analyse the special position of women and the particular constraints they face compared to men. This would make it possible to develop sounder arguments in favour of equal opportunities in the

¹ Becker, Gary: *The economics of life. From baseball to affirmative action to immigration law, how real-world issues affect our everyday life*, New York :McGraw-Hill, 1997.

labour market. The contribution made by women is systematically underestimated and falsified, giving a false picture of a country's economy and its human resources and perpetuating the vicious circle of unequal gender treatment, which is exacerbated by inappropriate policies and programmes. It is thus of capital importance to find out which elements need to be included in work-related statistics in order to highlight all the similarities and differences that exist between the situations facing men and women in the labour market, and to offer women a genuine, discrimination-free choice based on age and lifecycle that allows them to optimise their personal development to the benefit of society as a whole.

(5) Promoting performance-related justice and freedom of choice

Manifold discrimination in the performance of non-gainful employment arises from the conflict between the logic of the market and the logic of human nature. The economic logic of the market dictates that any member of the public of reproductive age must be integrated into the employment market. The logic of human nature tells us, however, that a newborn child quite simply needs his mother and father to lay the foundations for the development of his or her human capacities¹. There has been no radical adaptation of European policies to meet these practical human requirements. There is still no reconciliation, in accounting terms, between professional and family life, and no overall view of the two spaces and times taken together. Women and men have been allowed to embark on formal professional activities without any thoroughgoing review of the ways in which businesses operate.

However, the various alternatives around which the choice between formal employment and non-gainful employment hinge do not have the same consequences. As soon as women and men have to choose between a formal job, commonly known as a 'professional career' and non-gainful employment, commonly known as 'nurturing human resources and inter-generational solidarity', manifold latent discrimination materialises in the form of having to choose between two alternatives that are not recognised as equivalent in economic terms².

Society's approach therefore consists of seeing to it that women and men can choose between the two logics, both of which have a *raison d'être*, by adopting a perspective broader than that of the market. This hinges around a requirement not to fall in with the easy economic logic of a market freed of any restrictions, but to further the common good and the future of society by focusing on full personal development. Indeed, Member States' SNAs and GDP contain no index for people's happiness or quality of life in the context of their various social relations. An increase in national revenue does not necessarily lead to an increase in collective wellbeing. It is no accident that the social science and economics communities have recently started work on defining an index that reflects the wellbeing of a country's inhabitants³.

¹ Cf. the work of Donald W. Winnicott, as cited in DAVIS, Madeleine and WALLBRIDGE, David: *Boundary and Space. An introduction to the work of D.W. Winnicott*, Brunner/Mazel (New York) and H. Karnac (London), 1981; For a contemporary view: LIMINSKI, Jürgen und LIMINSKI Martine, *Abenteuer Familie: Erfolgreich erziehen: Liebe und was sonst noch nötig ist*, Augsburg: Sankt Ulrich, 2002; LIMINSKI, Jürgen, *Die verrätene Familie. Politik ohne Zukunft*, Augsburg: Sankt Ulrich, 2007;

² NUSSBAUM, Martha, *Women and Human development, The capabilities approach*, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

³ See the latest work carried out by ILO and World Bank statisticians. A user-friendly Internet site explains the statistical principle: http://swz.salary.com/momsalarywizard/htmls/mswl_momcenter.html