



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

2013/2152(INI)

23.10.2013

OPINION

of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

on the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2012 and the European Union's policy on the matter
(2013/2152(INI))

Rapporteur: Mariya Gabriel

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality calls on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Reiterates that the promotion of women's rights should be a crucial part of human rights dialogues conducted by the EU with third countries; recognises the positive role played by the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights; encourages the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Commission to define, in partnership with each country, the problems to be addressed simultaneously so that funds and resources can be targeted in order to better fulfil the objectives;
2. Points out that the European Union has established a Special Representative for Human Rights and that this function should enable the EU to coordinate its action and to make it more comprehensible and visible, in order to promote human rights in the world, in particular women's rights;
3. Reaffirms its condemnation of abuse and all kinds of violence against women, especially the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, and domestic violence; therefore calls on all member states of the Council of Europe to sign and ratify the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and on the EU to engage in an accession process to the Convention in order to ensure coherence between EU internal and external action on violence against women; stresses the importance of information and awareness campaigns in communities where female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual abuse of young girls, early and forced marriages, feminicides and other gender-based human rights violations are practised, as well as of including human rights defenders already fighting for an end to these practices in the preparation and implementation of these campaigns ; encourages the EEAS and the EU Member States to continue to address the issue of FGM in their political and policy dialogue with partner countries where the practice is still perpetrated;
4. Urges the EU to enhance its action to end sex-selective practices by addressing and effectively uprooting all fundamental causes leading to son preference cultures, by combating gendercide, which is a rising and under-reported problem in countries in Asia, Europe, Africa and the Americas; insists that such preventive policies should be essential elements in the EU's approach to development cooperation;
5. Calls on the Commission to make the issue of women's rights central to the accession negotiations with all candidate countries, without exception;
6. Calls on the EU and its Member States to support women's full participation in political and economic decision-making, especially in peace-building processes, democratic transition and conflict resolution;
7. Encourages the Member States, the Commission and the EEAS to emphasise the economic and political empowerment of women in developing countries by promoting their involvement in small and medium-sized enterprises and agriculture, their access to land and their involvement in rural development projects;

8. Urges the Commission and Council, therefore, to further encourage third countries to take account of women's rights when drawing up national legislation and to ensure all relevant implementation;
9. Calls for efforts to be stepped up to ensure the fullest possible achievement, prior to the expiry of the deadlines, of the Millennium Development Goals as regards gender equality, maternal health and access to adequate health systems, education and sexual and reproductive health rights, especially for the most vulnerable groups such as girls and young women, on the basis of a solid commitment on the part of governments to enhance accountability and monitoring mechanisms for existing human rights obligations, promote access to justice for all and ensure effective participation for all, including the most marginalised and disadvantaged, in development, decision-making and implementation; strongly recommends that a standalone goal for women's rights and gender equality be included in the post-2015 Millennium Development Goals, with a strong emphasis on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights;
10. Notes that insufficient attention is still being paid to violations of sexual and reproductive rights, and that this undermines the efforts made to act on the commitments under the Cairo Programme of Action (ICPD) and to address discrimination, including gender discrimination and inequality, in population and development strategies; stresses that progress on reproductive health has been limited in some contexts by abuses such as child marriage and early and forced marriage and failure to enforce a legal minimum age of marriage, by coercive practices such as forced sterilisation or FGM, and by the denial to women and girls of the autonomy that would enable them to make decisions about their sexual and reproductive health free of discrimination, coercion or violence;
11. Urges the EU and the Member States to ensure that the ICPD+20 review process results in a comprehensive review of all aspects related to the full enjoyment of sexual and reproductive rights and to reaffirm a strong and progressive approach to the issue of sexual and reproductive rights for all in conformity with international human rights standards, as well as calling for greater accountability as regards achievement; also calls on them, in particular, to ensure that the review process is conducted in a participatory manner and provides opportunities for the different stakeholders, including civil society as well as women, adolescents and young people to participate in a meaningful manner; recalls that the framework for such a review must be based on human rights and must have a specific focus on sexual and reproductive rights;
12. Requests that the conclusions of the EU Election Observation Missions (EOMs) always be taken into account when drawing up programmes to support women's full and equal participation in electoral processes and in implementing the missions' recommendations.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	21.10.2013
Result of final vote	+ : 24 - : 0 0 : 0
Members present for the final vote	Regina Bastos, Marije Cornelissen, Edite Estrela, Iratxe García Pérez, Zita Gurmai, Mikael Gustafsson, Mary Honeyball, Silvana Koch-Mehrin, Ulrike Lunacek, Elisabeth Morin-Chartier, Norica Nicolai, Antonyia Parvanova, Joanna Senyszyn, Joanna Katarzyna Skrzydlewska, Britta Thomsen, Inês Cristina Zuber
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Minodora Cliveti, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Mariya Gabriel, Nicole Kiil-Nielsen, Christa Kläß, Antigoni Papadopoulou, Angelika Werthmann