



2018/2710(RSP)

26.9.2018

DRAFT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Question for Oral Answer B8-0000/2018

pursuant to Rule 128(5) of the Rules of Procedure

on Women's rights in Western Balkans
(2018/2710(RSP))

Biljana Borzan

on behalf of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

**European Parliament resolution on Women's rights in Western Balkans
(2018/2710(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 2 and Article 3(3), second subparagraph, of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence,
- having regard to the evaluation report of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) on Albania,
- having regard to the evaluation report of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) on Montenegro,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 September 2017 on the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion, by the European Union, of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence,
- having regard to the communication from the Commission on ‘A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans’,
- having regard to the European Council conclusions of 22 March 2018 on the Western Balkans and actions by Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea,
- having regard to the Sofia Declaration of the EU-Western Balkans summit of 17 May 2018,
- having regard to the Commission 2018 reports on Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,
- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Commission reports on Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,
- having regard to the Commission staff working document entitled ‘Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019’ (SWD(2015)0278),
- having regard to the Joint Staff Working Document EU Gender Action Plan II “Gender

Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020",

- having regard to the study by European Parliament Policy Department C entitled 'Women's rights in the Western Balkans', published in 2018,
 - having regard to the question to the Commission on Women's rights in Western Balkans (O-0000/2018 – B8-0000/2018),
 - having regard to the motion for a resolution of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality,
 - having regard to Rules 128(5) and 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A whereas countries in the Western Balkans – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Montenegro and Serbia are at different stages of the process to become Member States of the European Union; whereas the EU accession process aims to prepare the states for taking on the rights and obligations associated with membership;
- B whereas the mentality of both women and men regarding traditional gender roles is often identified as the biggest challenge for improving gender equality in the region;
- C whereas equal political and economic representation of women is a precondition for inclusive and representative societies and quality decision making, whereas political and economic representation for women is still low; whereas women have been largely excluded from post-war peace rebuilding processes;

General remarks

1. Highlights that gender equality is a fundamental right and enshrined in the Treaties, therefore is integrated part of the EU principles which all states have to commit to when entering the EU;
2. Stresses the need for women in Western Balkans to have a more prominent role in political, economic and social life at all levels;
3. Calls for increased measures to raise awareness through media, public campaigns and education programmes to eliminate gender stereotypes and promote women's active participation in all spheres of life;
4. Welcomes that these accession countries have adopted part of the legislation required for EU accession ; however notes with concern that implementation is lagging behind; stresses that EU financial mechanisms and programmes should be better used to foster gender equality; highlights the relevance of gender mainstreaming as tool to combat discrimination;
5. Is concerned with the insufficient financial and human resources allocated to governmental and non-governmental institutions dealing with gender equality; calls on

the governments to accompany legislation and action plans with adequate resources for implementation and to better use the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) for projects related to women's rights and gender equality;

6. Deplores that women are very much underrepresented in the labour market; calls on governments to introduce measures to tackle the high rate of female unemployment the gender pay gap and consequently gender pension gap; calls therefore on governments to adopt legislation that enables women and men to better reconcile professional and private responsibilities and that help fighting discrimination;
7. Highlights the importance of affordable, accessible quality education from early age; calls on authorities to promote the understanding about the gender equality also at school and university through adequate guidelines and to develop measures to encourage women's participation in STEM;
8. Stresses the need to develop and implement specific strategies to improve the position of women facing multiple discrimination such as LGBTI, women of ethnic minorities and older women;
9. Strongly condemns all forms of violence against women and girls; calls on governments to better regulate and enforce measures against all forms of violence, in particular gender based violence, domestic violence, sexual and labour exploitation and human trafficking;
10. Underlines women's crucial role in stabilisation processes and conflict resolution; calls for more women to be included in those processes; highlights the need for easy access to justice for women victims of wartime crimes;
11. Is concerned about restrictions on access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, especially for women and girls in rural areas and belonging to ethnic minorities;
12. Calls for better cooperation of national authorities with expert non-government organisations in the area of women's rights and gender equality;

Albania

13. Commends the development of the National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020;
14. Acknowledges the progress in women's political representation, but notes that it does not transfer to all levels of government and decision-making;
15. Deplores the continuing violence against women and girls; applauds the adoption of legislative amendments that could improve the protection for women who have suffered discrimination and violence (e.g., the Law on Free Legal Aid); expresses concern regarding the lack of implementation, including insufficient budget allocations to this end; expresses concern that more than 90% of social services for persons who have suffered violence are provided by CSOs with foreign funding instead of national funding and that such services are unavailable in several areas of the country;

16. Encourages the Government of Albania to urgently set aside state resources for emergency shelters and the national hotline for violence against women;
17. Strongly encourages the government of Albania to ensure access to justice for women, and to end impunity, including the violation of protection orders; recommends that the government urgently institutionalize ongoing training for officials dealing with victims; including for human trafficking;

Bosnia and Herzegovina

18. Encourages the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to use gender-sensitive language, incorporate a clear definition of gender equality and prohibit direct and indirect discrimination in the Constitution, as part of the constitutional review process;
19. Condemns that women fear challenging acts of discrimination and reporting poor working conditions for fear of losing their hard-to-secure jobs; urges the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to better implement the existing provisions of the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination and within the Gender Equality Law;
20. Urges the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to take urgent affirmative measures for increasing employment and self-employment of women;
21. Is concerned about the lack of systemic protection and access to justice for women survivors of gender-based violence at all levels; observes that free legal services and psychosocial assistance and support for women survivors are limited, and provided mainly by grassroots CSOs that are understaffed and lack public budget support;
22. Strongly encourages state/entities to develop a comprehensive approach to improve the status and position of all women victims of the war,

Kosovo

23. Strongly deplores women's continued and significant underrepresentation at all levels of government and strongly encourages the government of Kosovo to immediately take measures, including introducing gender quotas, to increase women's participation in political decision-making at all levels;
24. Welcomes the institutionalization of training for police in addressing domestic violence cases;
25. Calls on the Government of Kosovo to take a stronger stance in fighting human trafficking which affects women and girls disproportionately;
26. Observes women's significant underrepresentation in the labour market, especially in entrepreneurship; notes that the lack of accessible, affordable and quality childcare is a major factor hindering women's participation in the labour market and thus their economic independence;

27. Strongly encourages the Government of Kosovo to ensure the access to quality healthcare, including accurate information related to sexual and reproductive health and rights;
28. Encourages the Government of Kosovo to improve its collection and maintenance of gender-disaggregated data related to the informal economy, the gender pay gap by sex, ethnicity and sector, and educational enrolment and completion at all levels;

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

29. Observes the continued inadequate implementation of the Law and Strategy on Gender Equality; encourages the government to finalize, adopt, and set aside sufficient national resources for the implementation of the new NAP on Gender Equality (2018-2020);
30. Applauds the Ratification of the Istanbul Convention in March 2018, while noting that insufficient awareness of its content among institutions prevents its adequate implementation;
31. Underlines that women and women's rights organizations should be involved in all processes related to the EU Accession negotiations;
32. Observes women's low participation in the labour market, despite women's comparatively higher educational attainment; calls on the government to adopt policies to help reconciling professional and private obligations;

Montenegro

33. Welcomes that the Government of Montenegro has improved the legal framework by adopting policies aiming to enhance gender equality; expresses concern that the implementation of these measures remains problematic;
34. Is concerned about women's low political participation, the restoration of traditional policies in the area of social protection and labour rights;
35. Encourages the Government of Montenegro to support and collaborate with diverse NGOs, better including them in the process of accession reforms, as foreseen by GAP II;

Serbia

36. Strongly encourages the governments of Kosovo, Serbia, and EU actors involved in the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia to ensure that women participate both as experts and as citizens, contributing their views and expertise in this process in accordance with UNSCR 1325;
37. Condemns the continued challenges related to the trafficking of women in Serbia; encourages Government attention to the implementation of new Free Legal Aid Law;

38. Condemns continuing threats, attacks and political manoeuvring related to resourcing that seek to undermine the important work of autonomous CSOs and women human rights defenders;