



# Gender equality: eradicating poverty and spurring economic growth

Committees: Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

**To help eradicate poverty, a gender-specific perspective should be adopted in all EU common policies - GDP would increase by 30% if women's employment, part-time employment and productivity rates were similar to men's, said the Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee on 27 January. The committee passed two resolutions, one on tackling gender equality challenges, and the other on reducing female poverty in the EU.**

Only 3% of major companies are chaired by a woman. Member States should therefore take measures, such as quotas, to ensure greater representation for women in major listed companies and on the management boards of companies in general, say MEPs, citing Norway as a positive example, followed by Spain and France.

## Yes to binding targets

The committee also calls for binding targets to ensure the equal representation of women and men in politics at EU, national, regional and municipal levels.

## Improve childcare facilities

Child-related leave needs to be improved, said the committee, calling on the Council to lose no time in adopting its common position on Parliament's legislative resolution of 20 October 2010 on the revision of the "maternity leave" directive.

## Diversify education

EU Member States should encourage girls to take jobs in sectors such as ecology, the environment or new technologies, inter alia by promoting the diversification of school and career choices, says the resolution on equality.

## Enforce equal pay

The pay gap between men and women still averages 18% in the EU and even exceeds 30% in one Member State, notes the gender equality resolution, which urges EU Member States to implement equal pay for equal work laws in full and calls on the European Commission to impose sanctions on those that fail to do so.

## Eradicate poverty

Nearly 85 million people in the EU were at risk of poverty in 2008, and most of those living in poverty are women, note MEPs, who welcome the Commission's "European platform against poverty" initiative.

Member States should build the gender perspective into their economic recovery plans by promoting female employment, says the resolution on eradicating poverty. MEPs strongly favour measures designed to reduce the gender pay gap by 1% each year. However, Member States should also ensure that time spent bringing up children counts towards a pension, to enable women to benefit from full pensions, they add.

# Press release

The 2010 annual report on equality between women and men in the EU, drafted by Maria Nedelcheva (EPP, BG) was approved with 22 votes in favour, 2 against and no abstentions. The report on "The face of the female poverty in the EU", drafted by Rovana Plumb (S&D, RO) was approved with 23 votes in favour, 1 against and no abstentions. Both resolutions are to be put to a plenary vote on 7 March 2011.

In the chair: Edite Estrela (S&D, PT)

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