



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014 - 2019

Committee on Culture and Education

2014/2250(INI)

6.5.2015

OPINION

of the Committee on Culture and Education

for the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

on empowering girls through education in the EU
(2014/2250(INI))

Rapporteur: Ernest Maragall

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SUGGESTIONS

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

1. Recalls that gender stereotyping and sexism remain the greatest obstacles to achievement of gender equality, and highlights the importance of combating gender stereotypes in terms of field of studies, academic curricula and performance in and through formal and informal education at all educational levels; also recalls that gendered perception of field of studies and career choices is a main factor of decision on training options; highlights the importance of providing motivation and enhancing girls' participation in science, engineering, technology, rural industries, ICT, creative industries and arts and crafts, and welcomes all initiatives and programmes aiming to attract girls to those areas of study and the corresponding research careers;
2. Calls on the Member States to develop or reinforce national regulations with a view to countering the negative influence of stereotyped gender roles arising from values conveyed through the media and advertising, which too often undermine the work done in schools in these areas;
3. Stresses the importance of informal education and intercultural dialogue when it comes to tackling the issue of beliefs and traditional practices imposing limitations on girls in education, and calls on the Member States to ensure equal access to education for boys and girls, regardless of their ethnic, national, social, cultural or religious background, in order to achieve real gender equality in access to quality education, through measures including actions aimed at reducing drop-out rates among girls; stresses the need to focus on groups suffering from multiple forms of discrimination, such as migrants, refugees, people with disabilities, young carers and others; highlights the importance of ensuring that girls are not forced by family to leave school before completing their secondary education;
4. Calls for a renewed impetus to be given to accrediting informal education with a certificate of competence, and to providing a high-standard certificate of work-based learning in relation to vocational education, as this will assist girls and women in finding better jobs and entering or returning to the labour market, while ensuring that females are equated with males in terms of dignity and competence;
5. Stresses the need to provide a rights-based and gender-sensitive learning environment for all learners, both in terms of curriculum and pedagogy, in which children (girls in particular) can learn about their rights and experience democratic processes in schools and in informal learning environments; considers that this type of learning should pay special attention to gender equality, non-discrimination and European citizenship;
6. Considers that gender equality in education must include a range of issues, such as literacy, including media-literacy, bullying, including cyber-bullying, homophobic violence, hate speech, human rights and civic education;

7. Stresses that education must help boys and girls to develop into individuals who are aware, balanced, respectful of other people and capable of empathy and mutual respect, in order to prevent discrimination, aggression and bullying;
8. Stresses that schools should help to develop an intercultural approach to education, in contrast to one geared to assimilation or multiculturalism, in order to promote openness, mutual respect and intercultural and interreligious dialogue;
9. Acknowledges that teachers play a major role in the formation of educational identities and have a significant impact on aspects of gendered behaviour in school; recalls that much has yet to be done to empower teachers with regard to how they can best promote gender equality; insists, therefore, on the need to ensure comprehensive initial and ongoing equality training for teachers at all levels of formal and informal education, including peer-learning and cooperation with external organisations and agencies, in order to build awareness of the impact of gender roles and stereotypes on their students' self-confidence and their subject choices during their studies; stresses that girls need to have positive female and male role models in schools and universities so that they can identify and make the best use of their own potential without fear of discrimination or ambiguity on grounds of gender;
10. Stresses the importance of health and sexuality education, which must include teaching boys and girls about relationships based on gender equality, consent, respect and reciprocity, and teaching about women's and girls' rights, including those concerning reproductive and sexual health, as a way of preventing stereotypes and violence against women and girls;
11. Stresses the importance of including in development cooperation projects measures targeting the education of girls and women;
12. Recalls the need to ensure access to vocational education and training and adult education, both formal and non-formal, for women who have had to interrupt their education or quit their jobs in order to take care of family members, and for single mothers, regardless of their level of competence (referring to both high- and low-skilled women); insists that such training should be attractive and flexible; and encourages any measure that concretely helps women to balance family life with work or training;
13. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to remove barriers to access to formal and informal education, and to lifelong learning, by improving awareness and guidance, providing financial support and other types of support, such as childcare and care for the elderly, in order to enable women and men to participate in lifelong learning, adopting an intergenerational approach and fostering the role played by the European institutions;
14. Calls on the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and the Member States to collect comparable gender-disaggregated data (both quantitative and qualitative) in the field of education in all Member States;
15. Considers that the EU structural funds and particularly the European Social Fund must support educational projects with a gender-specific nature and gender-sensitive educational structures;

16. Recalls that educational strategies aimed at ensuring gender equality must actively include boys and men;
17. Emphasises that education is an important tool for enabling women to participate fully in social and economic development; stresses that lifelong learning measures are key to providing women with skills that enable them to return to employment or improve their job, income and working conditions;
18. Recalls that education is a tool for empowering women to attain economic independence, which plays a crucial role in preventing violence against women and girls;
19. Recalls that poverty and low economic status have a strong impact on gender equality in education and have a disproportionate effect on girls' access to schools and universities; therefore, encourages Member State initiatives aimed at reducing direct and indirect educational costs for families in need;
20. Stresses that measures must be taken to ensure that girls with disabilities are given equal opportunities to access education at all levels, thereby providing them with better opportunities when seeking employment and empowering them to overcome multiple forms of discrimination; emphasises that education is an important tool for giving girls from disadvantaged groups the possibility of living a life free from marginalisation and as active members of society;
21. Calls on the Member States to integrate childcare and early childhood education into their educational systems, in order to enable parents to balance work and family life, thereby allowing children to receive gender-equality-based education from the earliest age;
22. Recalls the role of educational teams in assisting and advising families in relation to children's school careers, with the aim of setting them on a path which matches their skills, talents and tastes; stresses that the stage at which advice on school careers is given is a decisive one and a time when gender stereotypes may come into play, which can lastingly affect girls' ability to pursue a professional career that will facilitate their personal development and emancipation.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	5.5.2015
Result of final vote	+: 22 -: 2 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Isabella Adinolfi, Andrea Bocskor, Silvia Costa, Damian Drăghici, Angel Dzhambazki, Giorgos Grammatikakis, Petra Kammerevert, Svetoslav Hristov Malinov, Curzio Maltese, Fernando Maura Barandiarán, Luigi Morgano, Momchil Nekov, Helga Trüpel, Sabine Verheyen, Julie Ward, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Theodoros Zagorakis, Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski, Milan Zver, Krystyna Łybacka
Substitutes present for the final vote	Therese Comodini Cachia, Marc Joulaud, Kshetu Kyenge, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Ernest Maragall, Emma McClarkin, Algirdas Saudargas, Hermann Winkler