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on a 2020 Perspective for Women in Turkey
(2011/2066(INI))

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on a 2020 Perspective for Women in Turkey (2011/2066(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol, which form part of international law and to which Turkey has been party since 1985 and 2002 respectively, and having regard to Article 90 of the Turkish Constitution, which states that international law takes precedence over Turkish national law,
- having regard to the conventions of the Council of Europe, such as the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence,
- having regard to Document 11372 and Recommendation 1817(2007) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, both entitled ‘Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women, mid term assessment of the Campaign’,
- having regard to the Community acquis in the field of women’s rights and gender equality,
- having regard to the decision of the European Council of 17 December 2004 to open negotiations with Turkey concerning accession to the European Union,
- having regard to the Commission’s Turkey 2010 Progress Report (SEC(2010)1327),
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2010-2011’ (COM(2010)0660),
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘EU 2020: a European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’ (COM(2010)2020),
- having regard to its resolutions of 6 July 2005¹ and 13 February 2007² on the role of women in Turkey in social, economic and political life,
- having regard to its resolution of 9 March 2011 on Turkey’s 2010 progress report³,
- having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (A7-0138/2012),

¹ OJ C 157E, 6.7.2006, p. 385.

² OJ C 287E, 29.11.2007, p. 174.

³ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0090.

- A. whereas Turkey, as a candidate country, is obliged to abide by the *acquis communautaire* and to commit itself to respect for human rights, including women's rights and gender equality; whereas Turkey is invited to continue carrying out and supervising the implementation of legislative reform, as well as organising awareness-raising activities to combat violence against women, including domestic violence;
- B. whereas gender equality policy holds great potential for reaching the objectives of Europe 2020 by contributing to growth and full employment;
- C. whereas Turkey is making limited progress in improving and implementing the legislative framework so as to ensure equal participation by women in social, economic and political life;
- D. whereas the Commission has emphasised in its 2010 and 2011 progress reports on Turkey that sustained further efforts are needed to convert the existing legal framework into political, social and economic reality; whereas the Commission has further stated that **gender equality, fighting violence against women, including honour killings, and combating early and forced marriages** remain major challenges for Turkey; whereas gender equality, women's rights and gender mainstreaming should be upheld in the new Turkish Constitution which is to be drafted;
- E. whereas concerted and coordinated action is especially needed in the areas of violence against women, education, work, and representation at national and local level;

Legislation, coordination and civil society

1. Calls on the Turkish Government to uphold and strengthen the principles of equality and women's rights by adopting and amending its legislative framework, including the planned process for a new constitution;
2. Stresses that economic and social underdevelopment in disadvantaged areas of Turkey, as well as problems stemming from immigration, poverty and prevailing patriarchal social structures, aggravate women's problems and undermine their position; calls for greater emphasis on the need to consider regional disparities when addressing women's rights and to formulate policies accordingly, while recognising that the problems and inequalities encountered by women of Kurdish origin are, in general, all the greater; calls on the Turkish Government to engage in all necessary reforms and to cooperate with local councils in order to ensure that all women, including those of Kurdish origin, enjoy equal rights;
3. Welcomes the appointment of a new Minister of Family and Social Policies and the establishment of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women within the Turkish Parliament, which is making successful efforts, in connection with important matters such as violence against women and child marriages, to conduct investigations, draw up reports and hold consultations with a range of organisations, including NGOs;
4. Emphasises the importance of effective coordination in ensuring gender mainstreaming;

welcomes, therefore, the efforts being made by the Turkish government to enhance cooperation on gender mainstreaming between state authorities; encourages the Turkish government to adopt further strategies, with the active and non-discriminatory participation of civil society, aimed at guaranteeing and effectively monitoring the implementation of full equality, including the elimination of the gender pay gap, and to put the results of this cooperation into practice;

5. Emphasises the need to translate existing gender-sensitive legislation into practice throughout the country, by allocating sufficient financial and human resources, providing for consistency, and developing monitoring mechanisms that are based on clear, measurable objectives;
6. Calls on the Turkish government to acknowledge the importance of civil society participation in the development and implementation of gender policies, and to ensure the involvement of NGOs at central and local level with a view to arriving at the most favourable policies for women;
7. Welcomes Turkey's progress in registering every child at birth, to a rate now standing at 93 %; underlines the need for consistent and systematic collection of gender-specific statistics in order to monitor progress in the sphere of the implementation of legislation or loopholes in national laws;
8. Wishes to know what progress the Turkish government has made in recognizing the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in public life;

Violence against women

9. Emphasises that, according to official data from the Turkish Statistical Institute, 39 % of Turkish women have encountered physical violence at some point of their lives; is deeply concerned at the regularity and severity of violence against women, including honour killings, early and forced marriages, and at the ineffectiveness of the existing remedies and the lenience of the Turkish authorities as regards punishing the perpetrators of gender-based crimes;
10. Calls on the Turkish government to take more effective action in combating honour killings, in the form of legislative, legal and financial measures to prevent such killings and punish the perpetrators, as well as all family members who silently condone violence against women, especially in the case of honour killings, and to assist the victims; asks the Turkish government whether the number of victims has shown any decrease in the years following the amendment to the Turkish Penal Code classifying honour killings as an aggravating circumstance in cases of murder; also asks it how often judges have ruled on honour killings and what the punishments have been;
11. Calls on the Turkish government to conduct a research on the sudden increase of female suicide cases in eastern Turkey and to undertake a thorough investigation of the phenomenon of 'honour suicide', as well as providing help and support for women who are under pressure from their families and those around them, with a view to preventing situations in which instead of committing honour killings families pressurise women into committing suicide;

12. Takes the view that any violence against women is unacceptable; calls on the Turkish government to adopt and implement a zero-tolerance policy towards violence against women, by adopting, supervising and implementing appropriate legislation to protect victims, punish perpetrators and prevent violence;
13. Stresses that the amendment of Law No 4320 on the Protection of the Family is needed, and that such an amendment should ensure a broad scope of application, effective legal remedies and protection mechanisms, and strict and immediate implementation of the legal framework with no concessions, in order to eradicate violence against women and introduce dissuasive and severe punishments for the perpetrators of violence against women; stresses the need to make domestic violence against women, including marital rape, a criminal offence, to make necessary provisions for the removal of violent spouses or partners, and to guarantee the victims' effective access to the courts and to protection measures;
14. Calls on the Turkish government to establish a monitoring system, with benchmarks and timelines, for the implementation of the National Action Plan to combat violence against women, and to make a strong commitment to the effect that it will fund the plan to a sufficient degree;
15. Advocates advanced training for police officers, health personnel, judges, prosecutors, religious personnel and other persons in official positions on the prevention of domestic violence; to complement these efforts, reiterates the need for a mechanism to identify and investigate those who fail to protect and assist victims and for the allocation of sufficient budgetary resources to protection measures;
16. Welcomes the establishment of a specialised domestic violence bureau within the Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office; stresses that by ensuring that the entire legal process in cases of violence against women is handled by public prosecutors who are experts in domestic violence, by granting this specialised bureau the authority to issue immediately effective direct orders to the police to arrest the perpetrator and protect the victim, including the immediate enforcement of protection orders and transfer to shelters, this office has achieved an important step in combating violence against women, protecting the victims and punishing the perpetrators; in order to extend this level of protection to the entire country, calls on the Turkish government to establish specialised public prosecutors' bureaus to deal with domestic violence in all the country's provinces;
17. Calls on the Turkish government to guarantee effective access of victims to suitable legal information, legal aid and appropriate judicial proceedings through which they can obtain justice, in such a way as to organise the defence of their rights without the threat of further violence;
18. Supports the position that protection mechanisms should be equally accessible to women of immigrant origin who face additional problems (such as language barriers, isolation within families, etc);
19. Welcomes the initiatives of the Turkish government in reorganising the system of shelters, in consultation with all stakeholders; notes that the 65 shelters for women who have been

victims of violence do not meet the needs of a population of approximately 70 million; calls on the Turkish government to set up shelters spread evenly throughout the country in sufficient numbers, in line with the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention of 11 May 2011 on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, thereby meeting the goal it set for itself with the Law on Municipalities, and to create a shelter in every municipality with at least 50 000 inhabitants; notes that shelters must be spread throughout the country, with a proper balance between rural and urban areas; emphasises the importance of introducing mechanisms for increasing security, capacity and supervision in the existing shelters and for imposing sanctions for non-compliance, of employing well-trained and well-paid social service personnel and ensuring, by means of professional training courses and other services, that women in shelters acquire adequate capabilities to build a new life for themselves and their children; stresses the importance of non-disclosure of the location of these shelters for the safety of the victims;

20. Underlines the importance of treatment of men with a tendency to violence; suggests, therefore, that men against whom a restraining order has been issued should be rehabilitated by probation bureaus;
21. Welcomes the setting -up of telephone helplines and the establishment of the Women Monitoring Centres, where victims of gender-based violence receive medical treatment and psychological counselling during their court cases in order to prevent repeated victimisation;
22. Calls on the Turkish government to criminalise forced marriage and to draw women's and men's attention, by means of information campaigns, to the right to freely choose one's partner; underlines the importance of awareness-raising in schools and for parents on the unlawfulness of forced marriages;
23. Is deeply concerned over the inferior legal status of single women, divorcees, women taken in illegal Islamic marriages and women from minority groups;
24. Points to the importance of fostering respect for women who are members of religious minorities and promoting inter-faith dialogue;

Education

25. Underlines the importance of education in empowering women and ensuring gender mainstreaming gender at all educational levels;
26. Notes that the right to education is a human right under Article 26 of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948;
27. Welcomes the fact that the participation of girls in primary education (grades 1-8) has been increasing and that the gender gap in primary education is now virtually closed; considers it regrettable, however, that the gender gap in secondary education has slightly widened, and urges the Turkish government to take all necessary action to diminish this gap and to introduce further measures to ensure that all children attend school;

28. Calls for the promotion within the education system of vocational schools that would give women the opportunity to learn a trade or train for occupations in the services sector;
29. Calls on the Turkish government to combat sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, domestic violence, poverty, illiteracy and the exploitation of girls, and to provide equal opportunities for access to education, without distinctions made solely on grounds of age, language, ethnicity or sex;
30. Is concerned that the proportion of pre-school enrolment among children in the 0-5 age group is still very low and that there is a lack of progress in the provision of childcare and pre-school education facilities; urges the Turkish government to allocate sufficient resources for the extension of affordable childcare services for this age-group; further calls on it to amend its regulation on childcare centres, which obliges workplaces employing more than 150 women to provide free-of-charge childcare, since this provision reflects a discriminatory approach implying that child-rearing is the sole responsibility of women and negatively influences companies' decisions as regards hiring more women;
31. Calls on the Turkish government to intensify its efforts and awareness-raising campaigns with a view to eradicating illiteracy and poverty among millions of women, especially those of Kurdish origin or from immigrant or Roma communities, and to pay specific attention to women living in rural areas;
32. Welcomes the initiatives of the Turkish government such as the Social Risk Mitigation Project (conditional cash transfer), which involves paying families in need a sum of money for each child attending primary school; notes that the amount given to families for girls is higher than that given to boys, and that this amount is handed to the mothers; welcomes the fact that in this way the issues of schooling of girls and empowerment of women within the family structure are addressed simultaneously; notes, however, that dropping out of school is still a concern, especially among seasonal workers' families and Roma children, and calls on the Turkish government to support and make full use of the early warning system for children at risk of dropping out, and to eliminate regional disparities in primary and secondary education;
33. Stresses that the problem of gender stereotyping can best be addressed within the education system; welcomes, therefore, the establishment of a Gender Equality Commission within the Ministry of Education; acknowledges its efforts in eliminating sexist language, pictures and expressions from educational material; notes, however, that the elimination of gender bias from textbooks in all levels of education and training requires further efforts, and therefore asks the Turkish government to review the progress being made to eliminate gender bias from educational material;
34. Calls on all higher education institutions to make gender equality courses compulsory in the curriculum for future teachers, and on the Turkish government to include this topic in in-service training programmes for teachers;
35. Stresses that in order to guarantee the participation of girls in compulsory primary education and to prevent them being deprived of their chances to study or being forced into early marriages, it is crucial that, as is currently the case, the entirety of the formal compulsory primary education system should consist of a block which cannot be replaced

by open learning or distance education; is concerned, therefore, at the recent legislative proposal which increases compulsory education from 8 to 12 years but while doing so also aims at introducing the possibility to opt for open learning alternatives after the first four years of primary education;

Participation in the labour market

36. Underlines the very low female participation in the Turkish labour force, which is well below the targets envisioned by the perspective of the EU's 2020 Strategy, and calls on the Turkish government to establish a national plan of action in order to ensure the greater participation of women in the labour market;
37. Calls for further action to be taken under the 'Active labour market measures' scheme, which is designed to curb unemployment among women and young people; calls on the Turkish government to dedicate more funding from its budget to getting unemployed women into work;
38. Calls on the Turkish government to spend EU funding as effectively as possible on the projects being carried out in Turkey; calls on the Commission to exercise due diligence with respect to the effectiveness of the spending;
39. Urges the implementation of Prime Ministerial Circular 2010/14 on increasing women's employment and achieving equal opportunity; in this connection, draws attention to the EU's strategies and measures aimed at achieving the balanced and fair representation of women in leading positions;
40. Calls on the Turkish government to encourage the active participation of women in the labour market by promoting, inter alia, measures to ensure better working conditions, equal pay for equal work, lifelong learning, flexible work schedules and a fair balance between family life and work;
41. Notes that while Turkey has recently improved its maternity leave legislation (with a rise from twelve to sixteen weeks), paternity leave exists only for civil servants and not for other workers, and that a widely applicable parental leave scheme is essential to ensure that parents share rights and responsibilities regarding childcare and for the reduction of gender inequality on the labour market; calls on the Turkish government to put in place a paid parental leave scheme for all workers, allowing fathers to fulfil their equal responsibility in childcare;
42. Encourages women to start their own businesses, using funding made available under loan schemes such as the Small Businesses Loan Programme, and to take advantage of KOSGEB's training programmes;
43. Stresses the importance of combating all forms of discrimination in the workplace, including gender discrimination in recruitment, promotion and benefits; reiterates its request to the Turkish government to collect relevant and accurate statistical data;
44. Stresses the importance of providing special training courses, funding and technical assistance for unemployed white-collar women and women entrepreneurs, in order to

ensure equal opportunities in terms of access to the labour market;

45. Stresses that the recent extension of the legal entitlement for maternity leave (with a rise from twelve to sixteen weeks) should be followed up with a pay increase, in order to better guarantee that families and women are not financially penalised for having children;
46. Urges the Turkish government to allocate funds to establish affordable and widely accessible childcare and care facilities for the elderly and the disabled, in order to increase women's employment;
47. Observes the low participation of women in trade unions and especially in their governing bodies; stresses the importance of making union activities more accessible in order to achieve more female participation;
48. Highlights the fact that women often work in poor conditions and in unregistered and unpaid circumstances in family businesses, and are therefore victimised and exploited; calls on the Turkish government to take all necessary action to combat the underground economy;

Political participation

49. Welcomes the increase in the number of female members of the Turkish Parliament, from 9.1 % in the 2007 elections to 14.3 % following the 2011 elections; notes, however, that this percentage is still low, and calls for a new law on political parties and elections which would establish a mandatory quota system ensuring the fair representation of women on electoral lists; is concerned at the generally limited representation of Turkish women in politics, managerial positions in public administration, and political parties;
50. Emphasises the need for the Turkish government and political parties to revise the current election law, with a view to the equal and democratic participation of men and women in politics, including a more gender-balanced presence of women in electable positions on voting lists;
51. Encourages all Turkish political parties to adopt comprehensive gender equality strategies and internal rules guaranteeing the presence of women at all levels;
52. Is concerned about the very low percentage of female political participation at local level, and invites all political parties to make sure that this situation changes with the 2014 local elections; in view of the fact that only 1 % of Turkish municipalities have a woman mayor and of the consequent need to encourage women's involvement in politics, not least at local level, calls for a quota system to be introduced for women on electoral lists;

A 2020 perspective

53. Invites Turkey, as an EU candidate country, to endorse the targets of the EU's 2020 Strategy, and to empower women to participate more actively in the labour market;
54. Calls on the Commission to make the issue of women's rights central to the negotiations with Turkey; stresses the importance for Turkey of fulfilling its legal and political

obligations stemming from the EU acquis and the relevant EU and ECHR decisions, in order to facilitate the opening of Chapter 23 of the accession negotiations, on the judiciary and fundamental rights, and in support of Turkey's reforms on women's human rights under that chapter;

55. Calls on Turkey to fulfil all its obligations stemming from the EC-Turkey Association Agreement and its Additional Protocol, which it has still not implemented for the sixth consecutive year, so that it shows its true commitment to becoming a fully-fledged pluralist democracy, with respect for and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of both men and women at its core;
56. Stresses that for the opening of Chapter 19 of the accession negotiations on social policy and employment, which is highly instrumental for improving women's social and economic situation and increasing their presence on the labour market, one of the benchmarks is for Turkey to provide the Commission with an action plan for the implementation of the acquis in each area covered by Chapter 19, including the adoption of a gender mainstreaming approach; proposes that the Directorate-General for the Status of Women be closely involved in this process;
57. Emphasises that the Positive Agenda, as introduced by the Commission to complement the accession negotiations with Turkey, should be utilised as a leading forum for promoting women's rights and gender equality in Turkey; calls on the Commission to ensure that in all the working groups of the Positive Agenda gender mainstreaming is secured;
58. Underlines the importance of re-evaluating the existing rigid values regarding women's role in the social structure, and stresses that ultimately a change in mentality is required to transform the legislative framework into reality;
59. Calls for awareness-raising campaigns to be organised, targeting all of society and focusing on women's rights and gender equality, the prevention of gender-based violence, the condemnation of honour killings, and gender bias in the media;
60. Calls for the active involvement of management and labour in promoting women's rights and roles in business, society and politics, and in including women in the dialogue between the two sides of industry;
61. Calls on the Turkish government to introduce, at all levels of education, gender equality and tolerance as compulsory subjects in school curricula;
62. Suggests the creation of a national project bringing together female and male role models, and young women and men, in a debate on the future of Turkey, so that women and men of all age-groups and political beliefs can work together on a strategy to successfully transform a patriarchally structured society into one where there is fair and socially accepted participation by women in political, economic and social life;
63. Acknowledges that a change in mentality can never be realised without the participation and involvement of men, and therefore calls on the Turkish government to set up public debates for the exchange of points of view between women and men from all sectors of

Turkish society, as a means of tackling the causes of gender violence and ultimately achieving genuine gender equality;

64. Believes that particular attention should be paid to the empowerment of women in the less developed regions of Turkey; welcomes, therefore, the Turkish government's projects such as that of offering vocational training courses within CATOMs (Multi-Purpose Society Centres) in south-east Turkey, but also underlines the need for more initiatives that respect and promote the rights of all women, focusing in particular on the social inclusion and empowerment of women in rural areas, unemployed women and women living in poverty;
65. Believes that if Turkey wishes to play a role as a model for the 'Arab Spring' countries, it should continue its reforms with determination and guarantee the implementation of the legislation voted; recalls that Turkey needs to achieve visible and concrete results in the application of the principle of equality and respect for women's rights;
66. Underlines the crucial role of the media in upholding women's rights, and encourages the inclusion of gender equality in the in-service training of media organisations; points out the importance of presenting an image of women in the media which avoids gender stereotyping;
67. Stresses the importance of gender budgeting, since none of the reforms can be implemented without adequate funds;
68. Calls on Turkey to increase its efforts in the sense of comprehensive reforms. to fulfil the Copenhagen criteria, for the sake of its own modernisation, and to establish a climate of mutual understanding and respect with all 27 EU Member States, thus making it possible to exchange best practice in the field of gender equality with all, for the benefit of the women of Turkey;
69. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, UN Women, the Director-General of the International Labour Organisation. and the Government and Parliament of Turkey.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The rapporteur has prepared her report based on both desk research and interviews.

The desk research she conducted involved analysing a wide range of data and opinions gathered from various governmental and civil society sources as well as legislation in the area of women's rights.

Next to the regular contact the rapporteur already has with diverse stakeholders due to her years of engagement in the women's movement in Turkey, the rapporteur has also conducted interviews specifically aimed at obtaining input for the present report. These interviews included:

- exchange of views with Štefan Füle, the EU Commissioner for Enlargement,
- two visits to Turkey to investigate the situation of women's rights:

During her first visit to Turkey in April 2011, the rapporteur gave a keynote speech at an international convention on gender equality organised by UNDP and the Turkish Parliament and interviewed prominent women in Turkish society including Güldal Akşit, who was at the time the Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Equal Opportunities; Nazik Işık, the Founder of the Women's Solidarity Association; Aynur Bektaş, the Chair of Women Entrepreneurs Board of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey; Yazgülü Aldoğan, columnist; Sertab Erener, artist; Gülay Aslantepe, who was then the director of ILO Turkey; Yakın Ertürk, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women. The rapporteur also visited women's shelters together with İlke Gökdemir, researcher and Mor Çatı women's shelter volunteer, and she interviewed women who have been victims of domestic violence. She also moderated a debate at a university with young girls (and boys) about their future.

During her second visit to Turkey in September 2011, the rapporteur had meetings with the EU Minister Egemen Bağış, the Minister of Family and Social Policies Fatma Şahin, the Minister of Interior İdris Naim Şahin, the Minister of Justice Sadullah Ergin, the Minister of Labour Faruk Çelik, the Minister of Finance Mehmet Şimsek, the Minister of Education Ömer Dinçer, the Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women Azize Sibel Gönül, the Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on EU Integration Mehmet Sayım Tekelioğlu, the Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Relations Volkan Bozkır, the co-president of the Joint Parliamentary Committee Turkey-EU Afif Demirkıran, the Vice-Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights Mehmet Naci Bostancı, the leader of the largest opposition party Republican People's Party (CHP) Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, representatives of the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions, Head of the EU Delegation to Turkey Ambassador Marc Pierini, President of the Turkish Industry and Business Association Ümit Boyner, and representatives from a wide range of women's organisations who got together at a round table meeting organised in Istanbul to provide for input for the present report,

- a public hearing at the European Parliament with the participation of Leyla Coşkun,

who was at the time the Director General on the Status of Women, Nur Ger, the Chairperson of the Gender Equality Working Group of Turkish Industry and Business Association, Handan Çağlayan, lecturer on human rights.

Legislation

The report takes note of the fact that the legislative framework on women's rights is to a great extent in place. The government has enacted laws, by-laws, strategy papers, national action plans and protocols on important issues such as the prevention of violence against women, on the schooling of girls and eradication of illiteracy among women, increasing women's participation in the labour market. However, the transformation of this legislation into practice had not been at satisfactory levels until recently. Furthermore, the lack of cooperation between the Turkish Government and civil society has also been the case in the area of women's rights, which is especially regretful since gender equality can only be realised with the coordinated efforts of the whole of the society.

The rapporteur has witnessed a positive change in these earlier tendencies, namely the lack of implementation of legislation and the lack of cooperation. Each of the relevant ministries are busy with bringing projects to life which give effectiveness to the legislation on improving women's standard of living. More importantly, these ministries are cooperating in the area of gender equality. In the centre of this cooperation structure is the newly established Ministry of Family and Social Policies. Now a fully-fledged ministry with its own budget, the Ministry of Family and Social Policies has immediately begun setting up structural cooperation with other ministries. The ministry is also organising civil society meetings to jointly decide on important issues such as how to restructure the system of women shelters.

This change is still at a preliminary stage, which is why the report, while acknowledging the positive move, is careful in not prematurely clearing Turkey's past deficiencies.

Concerning the collection of better statistics, progress has been achieved in recent years, however, gender specific data is not available consistently and in every area.

The most recent Constitutional amendment ensures that affirmative action cannot be considered as a violation of the principle of equality. However, this possibility has to be put into practice by implementing further legislation.

Violence Against Women

Violence Against Women is one of the most urgent problems of Turkey. Two or three women are killed each and every day by the hands of their husbands, boy friends, families or ex-spouses. The existing legislation, Law No.4320, does have deficits such as the lack of a mechanism which immediately removes the one resorting to domestic violence from the vicinity of the woman who has been subjected to violence. Furthermore, the police, the prosecutors and the judges are not always on one line when it comes to the scope of the law as well as the punishment to be given to the one who has applied violence. It is of utmost importance that next to amending the law in order to put in place more immediate and efficient remedies in domestic violence cases, a uniform interpretation and application of this law should be ensured among all authorities which are involved in the implementation

thereof.

The rapporteur observes on a more positive note that there is an ever increasing awareness in the Turkish society towards violence against women. The issue is being debated on a daily basis by Turkish newspapers, television programmes, and various NGOs which acts as an additional driving force behind government reforms in this area. The government has already acknowledged the existence of a serious problem and no longer asserts that cases of gender based violence are individual incidents. In an effort to eradicate violence against women the respective ministries are training the police, judges and prosecutors, health personnel and religious officers on their roles in fighting violence towards women. Both the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Family and Social Policies are busy with restructuring the system of women's shelters. However, there is a crucial need for more shelters. The Turkish Government is not yet close to the aim it set for itself of building a shelter in every area the population of which is more than 50.000. The realisation of this aim should be a priority for the government. The existing shelters should be made more secure with well-trained, well-paid personnel and vocational training courses should systematically be offered to women in shelters to support them in building a new life for themselves and their children when they leave the shelters.

Telephone help-lines have been set up to assist victims of violence. Enough resources should be allocated and the required restructuring should be made so that the applications made to these help lines after office hours are also handled immediately.

The rapporteur calls on the Turkish Government to adopt a zero tolerance policy towards violence against women. This would mean that violence against women would not go unpunished, and higher punishments will be given to those who resort to violence against women more than once. Once it becomes common knowledge that those who commit gender based crimes are punished with no exceptions, inevitably violence against women will diminish.

Education

As a result of consistent and continuous campaigns initiated by the Turkish Government and NGOs, the gender gap in primary school education is almost completely closed. However, a gender gap still exists in secondary education and the rapporteur stresses the importance of focusing on closing the gap at this level of education.

Concerning the content of the education, the Gender Equality Commission which is established within the Ministry of Education is doing important work in identifying sexist language and pictures in text books and replacing them with emancipatory content which is free of gender stereotyping, teaching children about gender equality and the sharing of family responsibilities.

Participation in the labour market

The employment rate of women has been around 24% for a number of years now. Although according to the data of the Turkish Statistical Institute the recent figure is close to 30%, this is still very low. Even though this issue has been addressed in the Prime Ministry Circular 2010/14, this document has not been implemented in a way as to give effect to the principles

contained therein.

The rapporteur has suggested a number of reforms in order to increase women's participation in the labour market. The setting up of a well functioning part-time work system would contribute immensely to increasing women's employment. Currently, it is the employer who decides on who will work part-time, and the social security rights of part-time workers are almost completely neglected.

The rapporteur regrets that services which are generally considered to be within the scope of responsibility of the social state such as child care, elderly and disabled care, are regarded in Turkey as challenges which have to be overcome exclusively by women. This contributes to the low employment rates of women. This is why the report calls on the Turkish Government to allocate sufficient funds to set up affordable and accessible day care services.

Political Participation

After the 2011 general elections the percentage of women parliamentarians in the Turkish Parliament has increased from 9.1% to 14.3%. Even though this is a step towards the good direction, this percentage is still low. The rapporteur calls on the drafting of a new law on political parties and on elections which will put in place a mandatory quota system.

The rapporteur observes that even though the women's organisations of political parties are very instrumental in the success of their parties, this does not translate into political careers for these women. Therefore she finds it necessary that the presence of women at all levels of party management should be ensured by internal rules of political parties.

A 2020 Perspective for Women in Turkey

Europe is going through a transformation in order to return to the growth path of before the crisis and raise its potential to go beyond it (Europe 2020), and one of the priorities which comprise the heart of Europe 2020 is inclusive growth involving a greater involvement of women as Europe will need all of its women by 2020 for a competitive European economy. In this regard, the rapporteur invites Turkey, as a candidate country, to join the gender aspect of Europe 2020 by committing to achieve actual gender equality since Turkey too will be facing similar challenges in its continuous effort to achieve further growth.

After having conducted an in-depth research concerning the situation of women in Turkey and having interviewed various persons from the public sphere and from NGOs the rapporteur has noticed that the one common plea pertaining to all of the input received is that a change in mentality is needed in order to transform the patriarchal structure of the society into a structure based on gender equality. This would be very instrumental in putting an end to gender based violence, increasing women's participation and empowering women in general. This is why the rapporteur makes a number of suggestions which would enable such a mentality change.

The rapporteur points out the indispensable role of the media in creating such a mentality change and proposes initiatives to be taken by the media. Moreover, the rapporteur is of the opinion that such a change can best be realised first of all by creating a mechanism to put female role models in active interaction with young girls concerning the future of Turkey and

the place women should have in that future; and secondly, by involving men in the process of transforming the mentality. According to the rapporteur this second aspect should be realised by a campaign to create an 'alliance of genders', in reference to the 'alliance of civilisations' which was an initiative co-sponsored by the Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	27.3.2012
Result of final vote	+: 28 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Regina Bastos, Edit Bauer, Emine Bozkurt, Andrea Češková, Iratxe García Pérez, Mary Honeyball, Livia Járóka, Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio, Nicole Kiil-Nielsen, Silvana Koch-Mehrin, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Astrid Lulling, Elisabeth Morin-Chartier, Siiri Oviir, Antonyia Parvanova, Joanna Senyszyn, Joanna Katarzyna Skrzydlewska, Angelika Werthmann, Marina Yannakoudakis, Inês Cristina Zuber
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Franziska Katharina Brantner, Anne Delvaux, Sylvie Guillaume, Mojca Kleva, Ana Miranda, Antigoni Papadopoulou, Eleni Theocharous
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	Elisabeth Jeggle