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on equality between women and men in the European Union - 2007
(2007/2065(INI))

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on equality between women and men in the European Union - 2007 (2007/2065(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 2, 3(2) and 141 of the EC Treaty,
 - having regard to the report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on equality between women and men - 2007 (COM(2007)0049),
 - having regard to the Community framework strategy on gender equality (2001-2005) (COM(2000)0335) and the Commission's annual reports for 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005 and 2006 (COM(2001)0179, COM(2002)0258, COM(2003)0098, COM(2004)0115, COM(2005)0044 and COM(2006)0071),
 - having regard to the European Pact for Gender Equality adopted by the European Council in March 2006,
 - having regard to the common declaration adopted on 4 February 2005 by the ministers of the EU Member States responsible for gender equality policies,
 - having regard to a Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010 (COM (2006)0092);
 - having regard to the Framework of actions on gender equality adopted by the European social partners on 22 March 2005,
 - having regard to Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union¹,
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and the opinions of the Committee on Regional Development, the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, the Committee on Culture and Education and the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (A6-0000/2007),
- A. whereas the Commission and the Member States have recently renewed their commitment to gender equality, namely with the above-mentioned roadmap for equality between women and men and the European Pact for Gender Equality,
- B. whereas there is a clear gender dimension in the demographic challenge that Europe is facing and gender equality policies are a fundamental means to meet that challenge,
- C. whereas reconciling professional, family and private lives for women and men is essential to promoting the entry, re-entry and permanence of women in the labour market,

¹ OJ C 364, 18.12.2000, p. 1.

- D. whereas segregation in education and the persistence of gender stereotypes in the choice of fields of study remains wide-spread and have negative consequences for the comparative position of women in certain sectors of the labour market, particularly those related to high technology,
- E. whereas during the Spring Council of 2006 the Council once again recognised that policies on gender equality are essential instruments for economic growth,
- F. whereas the Commission's report highlights the positive result for female employment rates that six million of the eight million jobs created in the EU since 2000 have been taken up by women, but states at the same time that there are significant variations in the employment rates of different age groups,
- G. whereas there is no substantial evolution from the previous report with regard to the gender pay gap (which average at 15% in the EU), which clearly demonstrates that there has been no real progress in the implementation of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, which was introduced thirty years ago by Council Directive 75/117/EEC of 10 February 1975 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women¹,
- H. whereas a 2003 Eurobarometer survey showed that the main factors deterring fathers from taking more domestic and family responsibilities are not only of financial nature but also concern the fear of negative consequences for career development,
- I. whereas employment rates for women with young children are on average lower than those for women without children while the data on men shows the reverse situation,
- J. whereas Member States that have adopted reconciliation policies for both women and men have higher birth rates, a higher percentage of women in the labour market and higher employment rates,
- K. whereas social partners play an important role in defining actions for gender equality at the European, national, regional, sectoral and corporate levels, and successful conciliation policies require a partnership between employers, employees and public authorities,
- L. whereas best practices show that reconciliation actions at the microeconomic level causes lower staff turnover and absenteeism, higher commitment and productivity, and attracting an efficient and motivated workforce,
 - 1. Welcomes the efforts of the Commission to intensify its actions promoting equality between women and men;
 - 2. Welcomes the focus of the Commission's report on employment issues such as the gender pay gap, conciliation and the equal treatment Directives since the economic independence for women is one of the priorities of the Roadmap for equality between women and men;
 - 3. Insists on the necessity of having a clear and permanent link between the annual reports on equality and the priorities defined in the Roadmap in order to implement an efficient

¹ OJ L 45, 19.2.1975, p. 19.

cycle of planning, monitoring and evaluation of gender equality policies; encourages the Commission to work towards this cycle;

4. Recalls its request in its resolution of 2 February 2006 on equality between women and men in the European Union¹ that the Commission monitor compliance by the Member States with the 'acquis communautaire' in the area of equality between women and men in all policies, particularly employment policies but also the access to and provision of goods and services; calls therefore on the Commission to carry out a study on how Member States implement Community legislation in the area of equality and to take appropriate action in the event of non-transposition or infringement;
5. Calls on the Member States to support the Commission in monitoring the implementation of national measures in order to assess the effectiveness of policies, in particular with regard to statutory entitlements and pension schemes;
6. Calls on the Member States to put forward specific measures to combat inequalities between women and men caused by interrupted patterns of employment and to reduce their negative effects on careers, wages and pension entitlements;
7. Welcomes the consultation procedure with the social partners launched by the Commission in order to improve both the legislative and non-legislative frameworks of conciliation between professional, family and private lives; encourages the Commission to launch without delay the second phase of the consultation;
8. Calls on the Commission to gather and disseminate best practices with regard to work environment policies which allow for an effective work-life balance;
9. Notes that reconciliation of work, private and family lives is an important issue and one of the key elements for increasing employment and reducing the burden of demographic ageing;
10. Notes that globalisation has been a single positive force empowering women all over the world to reach their potential;
11. Calls on the Commission to focus specifically on the barriers deterring women from accessing top jobs, in order to assess the structural dimension of this phenomenon;
12. Calls for specific attention to be paid to the situation of women belonging to ethnic minorities, as their marginalisation is reinforced by multiple discrimination from both outside and within their own communities;
13. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to intensify the exchange of best practices on non-discrimination in the labour market in order to foster the equality-efficiency dynamic in respect of national specificities;
14. Urges the Member States to mutualise the costs of maternity and parental leave allowances in order to ensure that women no longer represent a more costly source of labour than men;

¹ OJ C 288 E, 25.11.2006, p 73.

15. Notes with concern that despite all the progress made, women, especially elderly women and single mothers, are still at risk of exclusion and poverty;
16. Calls on the Member States to take action in order to end the practice of allocating permanent duties to part-time employees, which is most notably found in the public sector;
17. Welcomes the Commission's efforts to give new impetus to reaching the targets agreed upon by the European Council in Barcelona 2002, to eliminating obstacles to the equal participation of women and men in the labour market and to introducing, by 2010, childcare for 90% of children between the age of three and the mandatory school age and for at least 33% of children under three years old, namely through structural funds; encourages the Commission to present, as foreseen, in 2008 a communication setting out further steps to be taken at all levels in order to reach these targets;
18. Asks the Commission to include facts and statistics from acceding and candidate countries in future annual reports on equality between women and men;
19. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments of the Member States.