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REPORT

on poverty: a gender perspective
(2015/2228(INI))

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

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(*) Associated committee - Rule 54 of the Rules of Procedure

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(*) Associated committee - Rule 54 of the Rules of Procedure

MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on poverty: a gender perspective (2015/2228(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 2 and 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union,
- having regard to Articles 8, 9, 151, 153 and 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and in particular its provisions on social rights and on equality between men and women,
- having regard to the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),
- having regard to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention),
- having regard to the EU's growth strategy Europe 2020 and in particular to its objective of reducing the number of Europeans living below national poverty lines by 25 % by 2020, thereby lifting over 20 million people out of poverty, and to the need to fully deploy Member States' social security and pensions systems in order to ensure adequate income support,
- having regard to the Commission's 2013 Social Investment Package (SIP),
- having regard to the European Social Fund Gender Mainstreaming Community of Practice (GenderCop), and in particular the GenderCop working group on poverty and inclusion,
- having regard to Article 7 of the Common Provisions Regulation for the Structural Funds 2014-2020,
- having regard to the 2014 Annual Convention of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion,
- having regard to Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast),
- having regard to Council Directive 2010/18/EU of 8 March 2010 on implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC and repealing Directive 96/34/EC,
- having regard to the Commission Roadmap of August 2015 on a new start to address the challenges of work-life balance faced by working families,

- having regard to the Commission staff working document of 3 December 2015 entitled ‘Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019’ (SWD (2015)0278),
- having regard to the results of the EU lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender survey carried out by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and published on 17 May 2013,
- having regard to its resolutions of 13 October 2005 on women and poverty in the European Union¹ and of 3 February 2009 on non-discrimination based on sex and intergenerational solidarity²,
- having regard to its position adopted at first reading on 20 October 2010 with a view to the adoption of Directive 2011/.../EU of the European Parliament and of the Council amending the Maternity Leave Directive³,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 March 2011 on the face of female poverty in the European Union⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 5 April 2011 on priorities and outline of a new EU policy framework to fight violence against women⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 September 2011 on the situation of women approaching retirement age⁶,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 October 2011 on the situation of single mothers⁷,
- having regard to its resolution of 20 April 2012 on women and climate change⁸,
- having regard to its resolution of 24 May 2012 on the application of the principle of equal pay for male and female workers for equal work or work of equal value⁹,
- having regard to its resolution of 6 February 2013 on ‘The 57th session on UN CSW: Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls’¹⁰,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 March 2013 on the impact of the economic crisis on gender equality and women’s rights¹¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 March 2015 on progress on equality between women and men in the European Union in 2013¹²,

¹ OJ C 233 E, 28.9.2006, p. 130.

² OJ C 67 E, 18.3.2010, p. 31.

³ OJ C 70 E, 8.3.2012, p. 162.

⁴ OJ C 199 E, 7.7.2012, p. 77.

⁵ OJ C 296 E, 2.10.2012, p. 26.

⁶ OJ C 51 E, 22.2.2013, p. 9.

⁷ OJ C 131 E, 8.5.2013, p. 60.

⁸ OJ C 258 E, 7.9.2013, p. 91.

⁹ OJ C 264 E, 13.9.2013, p. 75.

¹⁰ OJ C 24, 22.1.2016, 8.

¹¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0073.

¹² Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0050.

- having regard to its resolution of 9 June 2015 on the EU Strategy for equality between women and men post 2015¹,
 - having regard to its resolution of 8 October 2015 on the application of Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 8 October 2015 on the renewal of the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development³,
 - having regard to the study published in April 2014 and commissioned by the Commission entitled 'Single parents and employment in Europe',
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs on meeting the anti-poverty targets in light of increasing household costs, and the attached opinion of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality,
 - having regard to Rule 52 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 Employment and Social Affairs and the Committee on Culture and Education (A8-0153/2016),
- A. whereas the latest Eurostat data show that the number of women in poverty remains permanently higher than that of men, with currently some 64.6 million women as against 57.6 million men⁴; whereas this shows that poverty has impacts differently on women and on men; whereas women were particularly affected by the risk of poverty in the EU-28 in 2014, with the rate standing at 46.6% before social transfers and 17.7% after such transfers; whereas poverty rates among women vary greatly between Member States; whereas regardless of how specific the groups at risk are, such as elderly women, single women, single mothers, lesbians, bisexual women, transgender women and women with disabilities, poverty rates among migrant women and women from ethnic minorities are the same throughout the EU; whereas 38.9 % of the population and 48.6 % of single women in the EU-28 are not in a position to cope with unexpected expenses; whereas the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reports that women form the majority of the world's poorest people and that the number of women living in rural poverty has increased by 50 % since 1975, that women work two-thirds of the world's working hours and produce half of the world's food, yet they earn only 10 % of the world's income and own less than 1 % of the world's property;
- B. whereas gender equality in the labour market, achieved by increasing social and economic wellbeing, benefits not only women but the economy and society as a whole; whereas the objective of ensuring equality between men and women dates back to the 1957 Treaty of Rome;

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0218.

² Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0351.

³ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0350.

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=t2020_50&language=fr

- C. whereas governments have committed, in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to ensuring that all boys and girls complete a full primary education; whereas Parliament organised an event entitled ‘Empowering girls and women through education’ on International Women’s Day in May 2015; whereas education, both formal and informal, is instrumental in overcoming marginalisation and multiple forms of discrimination by creating dialogue, openness and understanding between communities, and by empowering marginalised communities;
- D. whereas in times of economic recession people who are already at risk of living in poverty – who are more likely to be women – are in a vulnerable position in labour markets and with regard to social security, especially members of groups facing multiple discrimination; whereas the EU LGBT Survey finds that lesbians and bisexual and transgender women face a disproportionate risk of discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity, in employment (19 %), education (19 %), housing (13 %), healthcare (10 %) and access to social services (8 %); whereas this results in disproportionate risks to their economic and social wellbeing;
- E. whereas the austerity policies requested by the Commission and implemented by the Member States, in addition to the economic crisis of the past few years, have widened inequalities and affected women in particular, exacerbating poverty among women and increasingly excluding them from the labour market; whereas the network of public services and infrastructure providing care for children, the elderly and the sick, and the supply of high-quality, free public services of this kind have been reduced;
- F. whereas single-parent families are at greater risk of poverty or social exclusion (49.8 % compared with 25.2% of average households with dependent children, although there are large differences between Member States)¹; whereas according to Eurostat women accounted for 56.6 % of single-parent households in the Union in 2014; whereas poverty has a strong impact on the personal development and education of children and the effects can last an entire lifetime; whereas the educational gap between children from different socio-economic backgrounds has increased (in 11 countries, the provision of early childhood education and care to children between the ages of 0 and 3 reaches no more than 15 % coverage); whereas there is a strong probability of transmission of poverty over several generations; whereas the lack of quality education is a factor that significantly increases the risks of child poverty and the social exclusion of children, and a variety of factors related to family life – such as lack of stability, violence or poor housing conditions – significantly exacerbate the risk of dropping out of school;
- G. whereas women who live in rural areas are particularly affected by poverty; whereas many women who live in rural areas are not even registered on the labour market or as unemployed; whereas the rate of unemployment among women in rural areas is extremely high, and those who are employed have very low incomes; whereas women in rural areas have limited access to education, early detection of cancer and healthcare in general;
- H. whereas living at risk of poverty results in social exclusion and lack of involvement in

¹ Save the Children, ‘Child Poverty and Social Exclusion in Europe’, Brussels, 2014, p.14

the life of society in terms of access to education, justice, lifelong learning, primary healthcare services, decent housing and nutrition, water and energy, access to and participation in culture and information, sport and public transport; whereas investing in policies to support women also improves their families' living conditions, in particular those of their children;

- I. whereas only 11 % of mothers in Europe want to be in full-time employment and 63 % of women would like to have the option of more flexible working hours so that they can tailor them to their family responsibilities¹;
- J. whereas the gender pay gap stands at 16.3 %, and whereas the atypical and uncertain forms of work contracts (zero-hours contracts, temporary work, interim jobs, part-time working) also affect women more than men; whereas these insecure contracts put women at greater risk of poverty and result in a category of the 'working poor' being created;
- K. whereas, very often, women who intend to set up a business have difficulty in gaining access to credit because traditional financial intermediaries are reluctant to grant loans, as they consider women entrepreneurs to be more exposed to risk and less inclined to make their businesses grow and to make profitable investments;
- L. whereas women are often employed as domestic workers, in many cases outside the scope of national labour law; whereas undocumented women in particular run the risk of being forced to work and being exploited in this area;
- M. whereas women more often than men take the responsibility for the care of elderly, ill or dependent family members as well as for children, and put their careers on hold more regularly, resulting in lower participation and long periods of inactivity in the labour market; whereas the risk of impoverishment is reduced by the establishment of high-quality social services and facilities at affordable prices for early childhood education and care, or care for other dependent persons such as the elderly; whereas few Member States have achieved or surpassed the Barcelona objectives, which must be seen as essential for moving towards the equal sharing of caring responsibilities;
- N. whereas given the intergenerational dimensions of poverty, addressing the situation of girls and young women who are facing social exclusion and poverty is key to tackling the feminisation of poverty;
- O. whereas for the whole EU-27, 34 % of single mothers of active age are at risk of poverty, as opposed to 17 % in the case of other families of active age with children;
- P. whereas the pension entitlements gap averages 39 % as a result of the imbalances created by persistent inequalities in terms of wages and access to employment, discrimination, and the pay gap between men and women in the labour market; whereas this pension gap represents an obstacle to women's economic independence and is one of the reasons why women find themselves falling below the poverty line as they grow older; whereas action is needed to secure equal access to decent pension schemes for women; whereas the pension gap decreased over the period 2006 -2012 in those

¹ Results of 'Survey of Mothers in Europe 2011', Mouvement Mondial des Mères-Europe

Member States which implemented Directive 2006/54/EC¹;

- Q. whereas the increasing risk of poverty is closely linked to budget cuts affecting education, social security systems and care services; whereas women and children have been hardest hit by the crisis and the austerity measures taken in several European countries;
- R. whereas women are a key force for economic and social development, and a good education is one of the most effective strategies available for success in the job market and breaking out of the poverty cycle; whereas the considerable financial burden of non-free education, given the direct and indirect costs involved, is a significant barrier to people living in poverty becoming better qualified; whereas girls outperform boys in school but often encounter greater difficulties or are prevented from translating this educational success into professional accomplishment by familial and other pressures;
- S. whereas bullying has profound effects on educational achievement, and its psychological impact and effects on performance differ between boys and girls;
- T. whereas the stereotypes widely conveyed by society are rooted in patriarchy and leave women in a subordinate role in society, contributing to the feminisation of poverty; whereas these stereotypes are developed during childhood and are reflected in educational and training choices and on into the labour market; whereas women are still too often confined to ‘women-friendly’ tasks for which they are still not properly paid and remain under-represented in areas such as mathematics, science, business, ICT and engineering, as well as in positions of responsibility; whereas these stereotypes in combination with the male dominated sectors being normative in setting wages lead to gender-based discrimination;
- U. whereas there are shortcomings in the characterisation of the concept of ‘household’ in terms of data collection, since it assumes that all members of the household earn the same and distribute resources equally; whereas parameters other than ‘household’ are rarely used when considering income inequalities; whereas this concept of household does not allow the policymaking process to take into account the situation of women in terms of income or fiscal obligations;
- V. whereas the Europe 2020 strategy, which seeks to make the EU a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy, entails ambitious targets, such as a 75 % employment rate and a reduction of at least 20 million in the number of people affected by or at risk of poverty and social exclusion by 2020; whereas the strategy’s targets include a reduction in early school leaving rates to below 10 %;
- W. whereas one of the targets of the Europe 2020 strategy is to ensure that 40 % of 30- to 34-year-olds receive a university education, compared with the current average of 37.9 %; whereas the average figure for women has exceeded 42.3 %, compared with 33.6 % for men;
- X. whereas meeting the Europe 2020 anti-poverty target, as one of the strategy’s five measurable targets, requires significant new political impetus; whereas these targets

¹ [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/547546/EPRS_STU\(2015\)547546_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/547546/EPRS_STU(2015)547546_EN.pdf), pg.11

cannot be met unless anti-poverty policy includes a strong gender dimension, with the adoption of national policies to protect women, in particular, from the risk of poverty;

- Y. whereas poverty and social exclusion and women's economic dependency can be exacerbating factors for victims of violence against women, as well as vice versa since violence has consequences for women's health and frequently leads to losing jobs, homelessness, social exclusion and poverty; whereas this includes disproportionate vulnerability to trafficking and sexual exploitation; whereas, furthermore, many women suffering this form of violence continue to live with their abusers because they are economically dependent;
- Z. whereas gender equality provides a tool for combating poverty among women, as it has a positive impact on productivity and economic growth and leads to greater participation of women in the labour market, which in turn has numerous social and economic benefits;

Poverty and work-life balance

- 1. Underlines the crucial role of high-quality public services in combating poverty, especially female poverty, since women are more dependent on such services;
- 2. Stresses the need for the encouragement and commitment of men in terms of promoting gender equality in all fields and at all levels of the labour market;
- 3. Considers that Member States should prioritise the issue of reconciling private and professional life by introducing family-friendly working arrangements, such as adaptable working hours and the possibility of teleworking; notes that the lack of affordable high-quality childcare, care for dependent persons and the elderly, and in particular of creches, nursery schools and long-term care facilities, contributes to social exclusion, the gender employment gap, the pay gap and the related pension gap; emphasises that equal access to free high-quality early childhood education and affordable care, to formal, informal, and non-formal education and to family support services is central to encouraging women to enter and stay on the labour market, securing equal opportunities and breaking poverty cycles, as this helps women acquire autonomy and the qualifications that serve to secure employment;
- 4. Deeply deplores the austerity policies being pursued by the EU which, together with the economic crisis, are helping to increase the rate of poverty, particularly among women;
- 5. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to develop and use the available policy and financial instruments, including the Social Investment Package, in order to meet the Barcelona objectives; calls, in this context, for the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to be optimised, for priority to be given, in the use of social investments and the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) regulation, to the establishment of public and private facilities for care of and assistance to children and other dependent persons, and for the flexibility mechanism introduced in the context of the Stability and Growth Pact to be used for the financing of early childhood education and care (ECEC); proposes that the Commission allocate specific resources, through a cofinancing mechanism, to promote incentives for specific areas where there is a shortage of ECEC facilities and where the female employment rate is

extremely low;

6. Calls on Member States to implement policies that will protect, upgrade and promote free, high-quality public services, above all in the areas of health, education, social security and justice; points out that it is crucial for public services to have the necessary financial and human resources to fulfil their objectives;
7. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take the necessary measures to promote the reconciliation of work and private life, in order to enable women, particularly those most at risk of poverty, to pursue their careers on a full-time basis or, if they prefer, to have access to part-time work or work with flexible hours;
8. Calls on the Commission, in close coordination with the Member States, to undertake a comprehensive and global legislative initiative with a view to meeting the needs of mothers and fathers concerning the different types of leave, namely maternity, paternity, parental and carers' leave, in particular in order to help men play an active role as fathers, enabling a fairer distribution of family responsibilities and thus allowing women equal opportunities to participate in the labour market, which will in turn make them economically more independent; bears in mind that some Member States have already passed legislation on this issue that goes beyond the provisions of EU law; calls on the Member States to envisage legislation to safeguard or enhance maternity, paternity and parental rights; underlines the fact that in 2010 only 2.7 % of persons using their right of parental leave were men, which points up the need for concrete action to ensure the provision of individual and non-transferable parental leave rights on the most generous basis possible;
9. Reiterates its disappointment at the withdrawal of the maternity leave directive after years of effort aimed at unblocking the deadlock and thus ensuring better protection for European citizens; calls on the Commission to put forward a new proposal and to respect Parliament's position in favour of increasing the current minimum guaranteed period of maternity leave on full pay from 14 to 20 weeks and of a mandatory right to paid paternity leave; believes that specific measures need to be taken in all Member States to improve work-life balance for women; urges the Commission to incorporate both a more robust social dimension and workplace gender equality objectives into the European Semester;
10. Welcomes the proposal to introduce carers' leave, as foreseen in the Commission Roadmap on a new start to address the challenges of work-life balance faced by working families;
11. Calls for a move towards the individualisation of rights in social equity policy;

Poverty and work

12. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to implement policies to promote the employment of women and the integration into the labour market of socially marginalised groups of women, in the light of the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy, to strengthen and improve education, and to invest more in training and information campaigns, ensuring that qualification prevails in the subsequent integration of women into the labour market, with an emphasis on lifelong learning

since it provides women with the necessary skills to access high-quality jobs, and gives women the opportunity to re-skill in the ever-changing labour market; calls for an increase in the promotion of STEM subjects aimed at young girls in order to address existing educational stereotypes early and combat long-term gaps in employment and pay; calls for the development of affordable and high-quality public care services, adaptable but not precarious working-time arrangements that benefit both women and men, and measures to combat the segregation of men and women by occupation and sector, including in the world of enterprise and in positions of responsibility;

13. Emphasises that access to credit, financial services and advice is key to empowering women facing social exclusion in entrepreneurship, and to increasing their representation in the sector; calls on the Commission and the Member States to take effective measures to increase access to funding for women who want to start their own business or investment projects, and to promote female entrepreneurship since it contributes to general economic and social development, to facilitate access to credit, also through microcredit instruments, particularly with regard to vulnerable women facing multiple discrimination, and to develop and expand self-employment programmes in a non-precarious way; underlines the importance in this context of sharing and promoting best practices, mentorship, female role models and other forms of support for unemployed women;
14. Stresses the crucial importance of: reforming macroeconomic, social and labour market policies by aligning these with gender equality policies in order to guarantee economic and social justice for women; reconsidering the methods used to determine the poverty rate and developing strategies to promote the fair distribution of wealth; guaranteeing a minimum income and decent wages and pensions and creating more high-quality jobs, with entitlements, for women; and enabling women and girls to benefit from public services of a high standard, including in terms of narrowing gender gaps when it comes to the improvement of social welfare services;
15. Notes that women are more often employed in precarious and low-paid work and on non-standard employment contracts; notes that another facet of job precariousness is the extent of involuntary part-time work, which contributes to the risk of poverty and has increased from 16.7 % to 19.6 % of total employment; calls on the Member States to step up their efforts to combat undeclared work, precarious jobs and the abuse of atypical forms of contract, including zero-hour contracts in some Member States; highlights the high levels of undeclared work performed by women, which negatively impact on women's income and social security coverage and protection and have an adverse effect on EU GDP; urges the Member States to consider implementing the International Labour Organisation (ILO) recommendations intended to reduce the scale of precarious work¹, such as analysing and restricting the circumstances in which precarious contracts can be used and limiting the length of time that workers can be employed on successive contracts of this kind, after which they should be given the option of a permanent contract;
16. Calls on the Member States to monitor the rights of female workers, who increasingly work in low-paid jobs and are victims of discrimination;

¹ International Labour Organisation, Policies and regulations to combat precarious employment, 2011.

17. Points out that there are new categories of women in poverty, consisting of young professional women, especially in certain Member States whose tax policies do not take into account the difficulties encountered by these categories, and which therefore condemn a large proportion of young female graduates to a precarious working life and an income that rarely manages to rise above the poverty line (the 'new poor');
18. Reiterates its call on the Commission to revise the existing legislation in order to close the gender pay gap and reduce the pension gap between men and women; notes that measures to increase wage transparency are fundamental to closing the gender pay gap, and calls on the Member States to implement the Commission's recommendation of 7 March 2014 on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through transparency, including reversal of the burden of proof when it comes to challenging gender discrimination in the workplace;
19. Calls on the Commission to conduct a study of how procedures related to the official recognition of the gender reassignment of a person, or the absence of such procedures, affect transgender people's position on the labour market, particularly their access to employment, level of remuneration, career development and pensions;
20. Considers it urgent to develop an EU-level definition of work of equal value, taking into account ECJ case law, in order to ensure that factors such as working conditions, the responsibility conferred on workers and the physical or mental requirements of the work concerned are taken into account; considers it urgent to address the issue of equal pay for 'work of equal value' across different sectors so that a broader interpretation can be applied to cover differences in pay for work which may not appear comparable from the outset, for example, the nursing sector compared to the manufacturing sector;
21. Notes with concern that women often receive pensions that are worth barely more than the minimum subsistence level, there being various reasons for this such as their having taken a break in or stopped their working life to care for their family, the predominance of part-time contracts throughout their working life, or because they worked unpaid for their spouse, especially in commerce or in farming, and did not contribute to a social security scheme;
22. Welcomes the fact that the Commission considers 'equal pay for work of equal value' to be one of the key areas for action in its new strategy for gender equality; deplores, however, the fact that the Commission has only published only a staff working document, thus downgrading its strategy for gender equality to the status of an internal document; calls, therefore, on the Commission to adopt a Communication for a 'New Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Rights post 2015', so that the objectives and policies included can be effectively implemented;
23. Calls on the Member States to ensure that all persons who have temporarily interrupted their careers to bring up children or care for elderly persons can be reintegrated into the labour market and return to their former position and level of career advancement;
24. Invites the Commission to carry out an impact assessment of minimum income schemes in the EU, and to consider further steps that would take into account the economic and social circumstances of each Member State as well as an assessment of whether those schemes enable households to meet basic personal needs; invites the Commission to

evaluate on this basis the manner of and the means for providing an adequate minimum income above the poverty threshold of 60 % of national median income in all Member States, in line with national practices and traditions and respecting Member States' individual characteristics in order to support social convergence across the EU; once again urges the Member States to introduce a minimum national pension which cannot be lower than the risk-of-poverty threshold;

25. Notes that retired women are the most vulnerable group and often live in or are at risk of poverty; calls on the Member States to treat the issue of reducing the gender pension gap as an economic objective; calls on the Member States to reform pension systems with the aim of always ensuring adequate pensions for all with a view to closing the pension gap; considers that instruments to tackle the pension gap include the adjustment of pension systems to ensure equality between women and men, and adjustments to education, career planning, parental leave systems and other parenthood support services; calls on the Member States to consider providing shared pension rights in cases of divorce and legal separation, in line with the principle of subsidiarity; notes that occupational old-age pension schemes are increasingly run in accordance with insurance principles and that this might give rise to many gaps in terms of social protection¹; emphasises that the Court of Justice of the European Union has made it clear that occupational pension schemes are to be regarded as pay and that the principle of equal treatment therefore applies to these schemes as well;

Poverty: general recommendations

26. Notes that people living in poverty often pay a higher unit cost compared to the better-off for the same goods and services that are essential to their social and economic survival, particularly with regard to telecommunications, energy, and water; calls on the Member States to work closely with suppliers and operators on the development of support schemes and social pricing for the most deprived in society, particularly in regard to water and power supplies, so as to eradicate energy poverty in households;
27. Urges the Commission to refrain from recommending reorganisation and cuts in Member States' government departments or promoting greater flexibility in employment or the privatisation of public services, as those approaches have unquestionably served to weaken the social rights of workers and have made themselves felt more severely among women;
28. Reiterates the role of education in combating gender stereotypes, empowering women and girls in the social, economic, cultural and political fields and in scientific careers, and in ending the cycle of poverty through women's inclusion in sectors where they have been under-represented, such as science, technology, engineering, and entrepreneurship, and calls on the Commission to incorporate vocational training targets for women in the country-specific recommendations; emphasises the role of non-formal education; calls on Member States to include investment in the education of girls and women aimed at enhancing their potential as an integral part of their economies and recovery plans; encourages Member States to work to aid young women in the transition from formal education to the labour market; stresses the need for all

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/conference_sept_2011/dgjustice_oldagepensionspublication3march2011_en.pdf.

educational institutions to impart democratic values with a view to encouraging tolerance, active citizenship, social responsibility and respect for differences related to gender, minorities, and ethnic and religious groups; points out the importance of sport and physical education in terms of overcoming prejudices and stereotypes and their potential value in helping socially vulnerable young people put their lives back on track;

29. Expresses its concern that women with children are discriminated against in the workplace because they are mothers and not because their job performance is inferior to that of their peers; urges the Member States to actively promote a positive image of mothers as employees and to combat the phenomenon of the ‘motherhood penalty’ as identified by a number of research studies;
30. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the structural and investment funds, in particular the ESF, as well as the EFSI, are used to improve education and training with a view to improving labour market access and combating unemployment, poverty and social exclusion of women; highlights that the 20 % share of the ESF allocated to social inclusion measures and social innovation projects could be used more actively to support initiatives such as small-scale local projects aimed at empowering women experiencing poverty and social exclusion; urges the Member States to undertake more information campaigns on opportunities for participation in EU-funded projects;
31. Calls for funding mechanisms which incentivise the achievement of equal representation in areas where there is a gender imbalance, and stresses the need for gender-disaggregated data in order to better understand the situation for girls, boys, men, and women, and therefore be able to provide more effective responses to imbalances; asks the Commission to provide a breakdown by gender and age regarding participation in European educational mobility programmes, such as Erasmus+, Creative Europe and Europe for Citizens;
32. Recalls, in particular, the right of migrant and refugee children, both boys and girls, to have access to education, this being one of the priorities of European societies; stresses, therefore, that urgent measures in the field of migrant education should be taken both at EU and national levels in light of the persisting migrant crisis; emphasises that education is key to integration and employability, and that a failure of national education systems to meet this challenge may provoke further cultural segregation and deepen social divisions; points out that access to education, in both refugee camps and host municipalities, meeting the requisite quality standards and accompanied by linguistic and psychological support, must not be undermined by bureaucratic and administrative issues relating to recognition of refugee status;
33. Stresses the contribution of voluntary organisations and the tertiary sector in this area, and urges the Member States to support their efforts; recalls the high level of participation by women in voluntary education and other activities, and in supporting and improving educational opportunities, for example for refugees and deprived children;
34. Stresses that the effects of poverty and social exclusion on children can last a lifetime and result in the intergenerational transmission of poverty; stresses that in all Member States the risk of poverty and social exclusion among children is strongly linked to the

level of education of their parents, in particular that of their mothers, and to their parents' situation in the labour market, their social situation and the forms of family support provided by the Member States; recommends that Member States ensure that all young people have access to high-quality free public education at all ages, including early childhood; stresses the role of educational guidance for children aimed at allowing them to realise their full potential; stresses the need to support, with targeted programmes, the ongoing education of teenage mothers for whom leaving school early is a first step towards poverty; stresses the need to establish a comprehensive set of measures for tackling child poverty and promoting child wellbeing, to be based on three pillars: namely, access to adequate resources and reconciling work and family life; access to good quality services; and children's participation in decisions that affect them as well as in cultural, leisure and sporting activities; reiterates the need to ensure ease of access to information on an equal basis, especially with regard to social security, adult education, healthcare and available economic support;

35. Highlights that the lack of recognition of LGBTI families by many Member States results in lower incomes and higher living costs for LGBTI people, thus increasing the risk of poverty and social exclusion; believes that equal treatment legislation is a vital instrument to combat poverty resulting from marginalisation and discrimination affecting sexual and gender minorities; calls on the Council, in this regard, to adopt the 2008 proposal for a directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation; calls, furthermore, for the explicit inclusion in any future recast of the Gender Equality Directives of a ban on discrimination on grounds of gender identity; remains concerned that rights awareness and awareness of the existence of bodies and organisations offering support to victims of discrimination are low; calls on the Commission, in this regard, to closely monitor the effectiveness of national complaints bodies and procedures;
36. Calls for full implementation of Directive 2006/54/EC on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation, and for it to be revised with a requirement for companies to draw up measures or plans relating to gender equality, including actions on desegregation, development of pay systems, and measures to support women's careers;
37. Reaffirms the importance of economic and financial education at a young age, since this has been shown to improve economic decision-making later in life, including in managing expenditure and income; recommends the exchange of best practice and the promotion of educational programmes targeting women and girls in vulnerable groups and marginalised communities facing poverty and social exclusion;
38. Notes that the absence of a partner's income may be a major contributing factor to the poverty trap and to the social exclusion of women; notes the often precarious situation of widows and of divorced women and single mothers to whom judges have granted custody of children, for whom an adequate level of maintenance needs to be defined; notes that non-payment of maintenance can plunge single mothers into poverty; underlines the fact that divorced women are prone to discrimination and poverty, and that this is evidence of women not yet being fully economically independent, thus pointing to the need for further actions in the field of the labour market and the closing

of the gender pay gap;

39. Stresses that taxation policies have a gender dimension; calls, therefore, on the Commission to promote best practice on taxation policies that takes gender impact into account and furthers gender equality, particularly in terms of taxation of household income, which in some cases can subject lower earners to higher rates of taxation, including VAT, also by introducing a reduced VAT rate for goods that are essential for women, such as tampons;
40. Stresses that the collection of data on household expenses and income must be complemented by individualised data in order to account for gender-based inequalities within households;
41. Insists that macroeconomic policy must be compatible with social equality policy and must include a strong gender perspective; reiterates that financial institutions such as the ECB and national central banks must take into account social impacts, including impacts on gender inequalities, when modelling and deciding on macroeconomic monetary policies or financial services policies;
42. Reiterates its support for the initiative to formulate a guideline reference budget, and calls on the Commission to include gender-specific considerations when designing it, including the gender inequalities faced within households;
43. Reasserts the need to undertake research into female homelessness and its causes and drivers, as the phenomenon is inadequately captured in current data; notes that gender-specific elements that ought to be taken into account include gender-based economic dependency, temporary housing, and avoidance of social services;
44. Emphasises that violence against women continues to be a significant problem in the EU affecting its victims, and that there is an urgent need to involve the perpetrators thereof in measures to combat violence against women irrespective of their age, education, income level or social position, and that its impact on the risks of marginalisation, poverty and social exclusion is constantly growing; notes that women's economic independence plays a crucial role in their ability to escape situations of gender-based violence by taking proactive measures; calls on the Member States and regional and local authorities to ensure social protection systems guaranteeing the social rights of women who are victims of violence in any form, be it domestic violence, trafficking, or prostitution, and to take action to reintegrate them into the labour market, also making use of instruments such as the ESF; underlines the need for an increase in availability of information when it comes to legal services for victims of violence;
45. Stresses the need for determined efforts to combat domestic violence, particularly against women; notes that women's economic independence plays a crucial role in their lives and their ability to extricate themselves from situations of domestic violence, and that women who have exhausted their paid leave are at risk of losing their jobs and economic independence; notes that the recent introduction of domestic violence leave in Australia and the US has provided many workers with employment protection when dealing with the impact of domestic violence, for example by allowing the people concerned the time to manage medical appointments, court appearances and other processes that must be addressed in such situations; calls on the Commission and the

Member States to examine the feasibility and possible outcomes of introducing a system of paid special leave for victims and survivors of domestic violence where lack of paid leave is an obstacle to victims being able to maintain their employment while ensuring their privacy; also calls on the Commission and the Member States to introduce further measures to raise awareness of the problem of domestic violence and to help the victims of such violence, to promote better knowledge and defence of their rights, and to protect their economic independence;

46. Reiterates its call for the EU and all Member States to sign and ratify the Istanbul Convention, and asks for an urgent initiative in order to establish an EU directive on combating violence against women; calls once more on the Commission to present a European strategy against gender-based violence, to establish a European Year for combating gender-based violence, and to further legislative measures to define such violence as a concrete criminal act closely related to hate crimes;
47. Believes there is a need to work proactively to overcome violence against women by targeting norms which glorify violence; underlines that stereotypes and structures which are the foundation for men's violence against women must be combated by proactive measures through campaigns and ongoing education on the issue of macho cultures at national level;
48. Points out that new technologies should be regarded as a fundamental tool for creating new jobs and as an opportunity to bring women out of poverty;
49. Encourages the Member States, in cooperation with regional and local authorities, to help improve the quality of life of women in rural areas in order to reduce the risk of poverty while providing quality educational programmes aimed at empowering rural women, as well as quality employment conditions and decent incomes for this group; encourages the Member States to provide quality municipal, social and public infrastructure in order to improve general living conditions in rural areas;
50. Believes that many aspects of poverty, and especially female poverty, remain unrecognised, including for example the exclusion of women from access to culture and social participation, and therefore calls on the Member States to provide the support necessary to ensure that all women can enjoy the right to culture, sport, and leisure, paying particular attention to women living in poverty, women with a disability, and migrant women; considers that the existing indicators of severe material deprivation exclude the factors of access to culture and social participation, and therefore provide only an incomplete understanding of poverty; calls for more indicators to be developed for assessing exclusion in terms of social, cultural, and political participation, and particularly its influence on the vicious cycle of poverty, as well as its intergenerational impacts;
51. Calls for studies to be conducted to provide fresh statistics in this field to be used to create an enlarged, comprehensive and reliable database;
52. Notes that disabled women often suffer discrimination within the family environment and in education, that their employment opportunities are restricted and that the social benefits they receive are not sufficient to stop them falling into poverty; stresses in this respect that Member States and regional and local authorities should grant disabled

women the specialist care they need in order to exercise their rights, and should propose actions to aid their integration into the labour market through additional support measures, in particular as regards education and training;

53. Calls for more ambitious action to tackle energy poverty, which disproportionately affects single women and single-parent and female-headed households; urges the Commission and the Member States to establish a definition of energy poverty which takes into account gendered aspects of the phenomenon, and to include this in the future recast of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive; highlights the important role of community energy initiatives such as cooperatives in empowering vulnerable energy consumers, and particularly women who are facing poverty and social exclusion and marginalisation; stresses that climate change has a big impact on female poverty, as women are more dependent on natural resources and have less resources to protect themselves from the negative effects of climate change such as impacts on health, drought, natural disasters or displacement linked to environmental change; deplores the fact that a gender perspective has not been introduced systematically into the EU's climate policies, and calls for the Union institutions to include gender mainstreaming in all EU climate policies and legislation;
54. Reasserts its call on the Commission to strive towards establishing a European Child Guarantee that will ensure that every European child at risk of poverty has access to free healthcare, free education, free childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition; emphasises that such a policy must address the situation of women and girls, particularly in vulnerable and marginalised communities; notes that the Youth Guarantee Initiative must include a gender perspective;
55. Encourages the Member States and the Commission to collect gender-disaggregated statistics and to introduce new individual indicators in respect of women and poverty, as a tool to monitor the impact of broader social, economic and employment policies on women and poverty in order to develop exchanges of best practice on legislative and budgetary instruments for combating poverty, with a focus on those groups at particular risk of poverty, including among others migrant women, women from ethnic minorities, single women, older women, women with disabilities and women staying at home to care for a family member, and regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity;
56. Calls for the Commission's recommendations to be applied and for work to be conducted in cooperation with the Commission;
57. Highlights the role of social enterprises in empowering and including women facing poverty and social exclusion and multiple discrimination;
58. Emphasises the importance of the EU's policies, programmes and actions on development cooperation and aid being gender-sensitive so that women may be empowered and achieve independence through education and training, and in order to combat gender discrimination and all forms of violence against women, including trafficking and female genital mutilation;
59. Asks the Commission and the Member States to create stakeholder engagement processes that promote and facilitate the direct engagement of persons at risk of poverty and social inclusion, particularly women and girls, in policy-making on social inclusion

at all levels;

60. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to implement gender budgeting as a tool for ensuring that budgetary decisions take into account the gender dimension and address differentiated impacts;
61. Calls on the Member States to cooperate in the fight against poverty with NGOs which operate successfully in areas afflicted by extreme poverty and which have precious know-how in local communities; calls on the Member States to support effective cooperation at local level;
62. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to involve social partners (trade unions and employers) and civil society, including gender equality bodies, in the realisation of gender equality, with a view to fostering equal treatment; stresses that social dialogue must include the monitoring and promotion of gender equality practices in the workplace, including flexible working arrangements, with the aim of facilitating the reconciliation of work and private life; stresses the importance of collective agreements in combating discrimination and promoting equality between women and men at work, as well as of other instruments such as codes of conduct, research, exchanges of experience and good practice in the area of gender equality;
63. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The problem of female poverty and the social exclusion of women has been a matter of great concern to Parliament for several years. There have been numerous resolutions calling for the causes and consequences of the many facets of this insecurity to be addressed. However, it has to be stated that in 2015 little progress has been achieved despite the efforts made.

The economic crisis from which the Union is gradually emerging pushed up the statistics for the number of people, both men and women, who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

According to the latest statistics available on the distribution of monetary poverty and income inequalities in the EU, 16.6% of the EU-28 population were considered to be at risk of poverty after social transfers. This risk was 17.2% for women as against 16.1% for men. Admittedly, those figures conceal many differences across the Member States.

However, women are still on average always more affected than men, and all the more so if they are single mothers, pensioners, immigrants or disabled. They continue to be over-represented in insecure jobs, career breaks, 'women-friendly' occupations (health care, domestic work, etc.) and part-time jobs, and more due to the need to care for relatives than to deliberate choice.

The pay gap compared to their male counterparts and the pension gap which results from disrupting a career path in the attempt to combine private and professional lives place on the shoulders of women in financial difficulties a heavy burden and day-to-day uncertainty as to their economic independence.

This report identifies the persistent inequalities that women suffer. It highlights the efforts that need to be made by the EU and the Member States to give to all, without distinction of gender, equal opportunities in the field of employment, social security, pay, education, child care and culture. It recalls the means, particularly financial, already available to Europe and the Member States to stem the trend towards the impoverishment of half the population.

For the fight against female poverty is a matter of social justice. The public expenditure incurred by the Member States to reduce this injustice, whether direct or indirect, should not be seen as a waste or as a mere cost item, but as a wise and worthwhile investment which breaks the vicious cycle of poverty.

This expenditure would both liberate the workforce from the constraints of family obligations and sustain the domestic demand needed for the EU economy to recover.

Addressing the issue of female poverty would also offer, at least in part, a way of resolving the problem of child poverty in the long term, and thus global poverty.

21.3.2016

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS(*)

for the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

on poverty: a gender perspective
(2015/2228(INI))

Rapporteur: Lynn Boylan

(*) Associated committees – Rule 54 of the Rules of Procedure

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs 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:

- A. whereas gender equality in the labour market, achieved by increasing social and economic well-being, benefits not only women but the economy and society as a whole; whereas the objective of ensuring equality between men and women dates back to the 1957 Treaty of Rome;
- B. whereas employment rates are generally lower among women than among men: in 2014, the employment rate for men stood at 70.1 % in the EU-28, as compared with 59.6 % for women¹; whereas, according to the Commission, in 2015 women on average still earned 16 % less per hour than men for the same work; whereas the gender pay gap often leads to women receiving lower pensions than men and makes women more likely to fall into poverty after retirement, and whereas, on average across the EU, women's pensions are 39 % lower than men's; whereas the ICT sector in particular is characterised by both vertical and horizontal segregation, which is even higher in this sector than in many others, with the majority (54 %) of women occupying low-paid and low-skilled positions and a noticeable gap between women's educational qualifications and their positions;
- C. whereas the gender-specific employment gap, pay gap and associated pension gap,

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Employment_statistics&oldid=190559

women's overrepresentation in precarious work¹ and involuntary part-time work and interruptions in women's careers to care for children or other family members contribute to the situation whereby women are particularly affected or threatened by poverty; whereas single-parent families, especially families headed by single mothers, are at greater risk of poverty or social exclusion (49.8 % compared with 25.2 % of average households with dependent children, although there are large differences between countries, according to the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions)²; whereas parental poverty leads to child poverty and seriously affects children later in life; whereas enhancing women's labour market participation can help to address their increased risk of poverty and social exclusion;

- D. whereas encouraging more women to enter and stay on the labour market can also help counterbalance the effects of a shrinking working-age population projected in most EU Member States by enhancing labour supply, and whereas it would thereby help reduce the strain on public finances and social protection systems, make better use of women's skills and competences and boost growth potential and competitiveness;
1. Considers that men must be encouraged and engaged to promote gender equality in all areas and at all levels of the labour market;
 2. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to take steps to combat all forms of multiple discrimination on a gender basis, to ensure application of the principle of non-discrimination and equality in the labour market and in access to employment, and in particular to adopt social protection measures to ensure that women's pay and welfare entitlements, including pensions, are equal to those of men with the same or similar experience doing the same job or a job of equal value;
 3. Calls for full implementation of Directive 2006/54/EC on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation, and for it to be revised with a compulsory requirement for companies to draw up measures or plans on gender equality, including actions on desegregation, the development of pay systems and measures to support women's careers;
 4. Notes that women who have a disability or stay at home to care for a family member are disproportionately at risk of falling into poverty;
 5. Underlines that not only outright discrimination but also the persistence of stereotypical representations of masculinity and femininity in different sectors and professions on the labour market, which underlie and reinforce unequal power relations and structures between women and men, are a continuing problem that must be addressed;
 6. Stresses that discrimination in the labour market is one of the main causes of gender inequality in society at large, and that equal opportunities in working life and women's economic independence are crucial for gender equality in other areas; calls therefore on the Commission and the Member States to put forward strong measures against gender-

¹ McKay, Sonia; Jefferys, Steve; Paraksevpoulou, Anna; Keles, Janoj. April 2012. *Study on precarious work and social rights 2012*. Carried out on behalf of the European Commission.

European Parliament resolution of 19 October 2010 on precarious women workers (OJ C 70E , 8.3.2012, p. 1).

² Save the Children, 'Child Poverty and Social Exclusion in Europe', Brussels, 2014, p.14.

based discrimination in the labour market, covering various aspects such as recruitment, pay, social benefits and pensions; stresses furthermore the importance of taking into account, when addressing discrimination, the multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination affecting women with disabilities, migrant and ethnic-minority women, Roma women, older women, single mothers and LGBTIQ people;

7. Considers that closing the gender pay gap requires increased participation of women in the labour market, increased transparency in the payment process (including data broken down by sector) and implementation of the Commission's recommendations on wage transparency, gender-neutral job descriptions and classification, the reversal of the burden of proof when it comes to challenging gender discrimination in the workplace, compliance with the principle of equal opportunities for men and women, and enforcement of relevant EU legislation, as well as an end to the gender-based differentiation of the workforce and a strong emphasis on policies that promote the reconciliation of professional and private life;
8. Points out that the gender pay and career development gap persists for women working in the ICT sector; stresses that the principle of equal pay for equal work in the same workplace to ensure just and fair wages is being challenged, even though it constitutes one of the fundamental pillars of social justice in the labour market and should therefore be protected above all else; reiterates that inequalities should not be allowed to take root in the digital economy as regards equal pay and career development; stresses that increasing labour market participation of women and related investments in social inclusion policies will help to reduce the gender pay gap; highlights also the importance of collective bargaining in the digital market economy to safeguard quality and security of jobs in times of digitalisation;
9. Considers that the gender gap in pensions, which stands at 39 %¹ and is a determining factor of women's poverty risk in the EU, needs to be tackled by a wide range of comprehensive instruments; notes that women struggle to build up sufficient contributions across both the private and public pension systems as a result of the pay gap, precarious and low-paid work, providing unpaid care and being excluded from the labour market for long periods over the course of their lives; stresses the importance of combating indirect discrimination in pension schemes, not only in occupational schemes but also in the practices of statutory pension schemes; calls for the Member States to introduce 'care credits' for both women and men as equivalent periods for building up pension rights so as to ensure that those who take a break from employment to provide informal, unpaid care to a dependant or family member are not disadvantaged in doing so and that time spent as a carer is calculated into pension eligibility to reflect the contribution that these carers continue to make to society; notes in this context that most care in the EU is currently being provided by these informal, unpaid carers, but they are increasingly under pressure given demographic changes and the increasing care burden, and that 78 % of all caregivers are women;
10. Notes that retired women are the most vulnerable group and often live in or are at risk of poverty; calls on the Member States to treat the issue of reducing the gender pension gap

¹ European Parliament resolution of 9 September 2015 on the Report on the implementation, results and overall assessment of the 2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0309).

as an economic objective; calls on the Member States to reform pension systems with the aim of always ensuring adequate pensions for all with a view to closing the pension gap; considers that instruments to tackle the pension gap include the adjustment of pension systems to ensure equality between women and men, adjustments to education, career planning, parental leave systems and other parenthood support services; calls on the Member States to consider providing shared pension rights in cases of divorce and legal separation, in line with the principle of subsidiarity; notes that occupational old-age pension schemes are increasingly run in accordance with insurance principles and that this might give rise to many gaps in terms of social protection¹; emphasises that the Court of Justice of the European Union has made it clear that occupational pension schemes are to be regarded as pay and that the principle of equal treatment therefore applies to these schemes as well;

11. Notes that women are more often employed in precarious and low-paid work and on non-standard employment contracts; notes that another facet of job precariousness is the extent of involuntary part-time work, which contributes to the risk of poverty and has increased from 16.7 % to 19.6 % of total employment; calls on the Member States to step up their efforts to combat undeclared work, precarious jobs and the abuse of atypical forms of contract, including zero-hour contracts in some Member States; highlights the high levels of undeclared work performed by women, which negatively impact on women's income and social security coverage and protection and have an adverse effect on EU GDP; urges the Member States to consider implementing the International Labour Organisation (ILO) recommendations intended to reduce the scale of precarious work², such as analysing and restricting the circumstances in which precarious contracts can be used and limiting the length of time that workers can be employed on successive contracts of this kind, after which they should be given the option of a permanent contract;
12. Stresses that despite the fact that women are increasingly well qualified, even outperforming men in terms of educational attainment, they continue to be underrepresented in the labour market; points therefore to the need for further action towards comprehensive integration of a work-life balance approach into policy-making, including care facilities, leave and flexible working time arrangements, as well as tax and benefit systems free of disincentives for second earners to work or work more;
13. Calls on the Commission to break the so-called 'glass ceiling' that hinders women from accessing managerial and top positions; calls, therefore, for swift adoption of the Women on Boards Directive as an important first step for equal representation in the public and private sectors, and stresses the Commission's responsibility to take any action that could help break the deadlock in the Council regarding EU legislation addressing transparency and greater gender balance in recruitment for decision-making positions;
14. Highlights the role of entrepreneurship as one of the paths to women's economic independence; urges the Member States to increase the availability and awareness of opportunities such as microloans which represent a way to obtain funding without entering into excessive debt (usury);

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/conference_sept_2011/dgjustice_oldagepensionspublication3march2011_en.pdf.

² International Labour Organisation, Policies and regulations to combat precarious employment, 2011.

15. Stresses that reconciliation between professional and private life is key to achieving gender equality; calls therefore on the Commission and the Member States to proceed without delay with proposals on a Maternity Leave Directive and Carers' Leave Directive, and to reinforce legislation on paternity leave; underlines that the lack of accessible, affordable and high-quality childcare and child support services contributes to the gender employment gap, the pay gap and related pension gap, and the disproportionate number of women who are in precarious work and in or at risk of poverty; points out that this is especially the case in single-headed households, the majority of which are headed by women; underlines in particular in this regard the importance of reaching the Barcelona targets for childcare; highlights that these targets were originally set for the year 2020 and that they have still not been met by a majority of the Member States; urges the Member States to increase the presence of women in the labour market through measures which will improve work-life balance and take particular account of difficult family situations, and to ensure delivery on necessary and beneficial improvements to access to childcare and child support services by, for example, increasing expenditure on the provision of childcare services and/or subsidies to households, incentivising employer contributions to childcare costs, making better use of EU funds and drawing on inspiration from best practices in each Member State;
16. Considers that child poverty is linked to women's poverty, and therefore calls on the Member States to implement the Recommendation on Child Poverty and well-being¹ and to use the indicator-based monitoring framework therein;
17. Welcomes Parliament's vote to call on the Commission and the Member States to introduce a Child Guarantee so that every child in poverty can have access to free healthcare, free education, free childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition²;
18. Considers that austerity policies are resulting in the reprivatisation of care, which not only reduces access to care services but significantly increases the burden on women in terms of childcare and care for older people and people with disabilities by shifting the responsibility for care from society to women; calls on the Member States to restore high-quality and accessible public services including childcare and disability and elderly care;
19. Notes that the lack of affordable and high-quality care and support services for people with disabilities, elderly people and other dependent people not only reduces access to care services but significantly increases the burden on women; notes that cuts in public services and social infrastructure are disproportionately hitting women and having a detrimental impact on women's participation in the labour market, thereby increasing women's risk of poverty and social exclusion; calls on the Member States to ensure provision of high-quality and accessible public services including childcare and disability and elderly care, including by improving the attractiveness of employment in the health and social services sector for both men and women, in particular for young people;
20. Underlines the crucial role of high-quality public services, especially for women, as they are more dependent on such services; underlines the importance of universal access to

¹ European Commission Recommendation on investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage, Brussels, 20.2.2013 C(2013)0778.

² European Parliament resolution of 24 November 2015 on reducing inequalities with a special focus on child poverty (Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0401).

high-quality, affordable, conveniently located and demand-driven public services in the fight against poverty;

21. Stresses the need for determined efforts to combat domestic violence, particularly against women; notes that women's economic independence plays a crucial role in their lives and their ability to extricate themselves from situations of domestic violence, and that women who have exhausted paid leave are at risk of losing their jobs and economic independence; notes that the recent introduction of domestic violence leave in Australia and the US has provided many workers with employment protection when dealing with the impact of domestic violence, for example by allowing the people concerned to have time to manage medical appointments, court appearances and other duties that must be addressed in such situations; calls on the Commission and the Member States to examine the feasibility and possible outcomes of introducing a system of paid special leave for victims and survivors of domestic violence where lack of paid leave is an obstacle for victims to maintain their employment, while ensuring their privacy, to introduce further measures to raise awareness of the problem of domestic violence and to help the victims of such violence, to promote better knowledge and defence of their rights and to protect their economic independence;
22. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the structural and investment funds, in particular the European Social Fund (ESF), as well as the European Fund for Strategic Investments, are used to improve education and training with a view to improving labour market access and combating unemployment, poverty and social exclusion of women; highlights that the 20 % share of the ESF allocated to social inclusion measures and social innovation projects could be used more actively to support initiatives such as small local projects aimed at empowering women experiencing poverty and social exclusion; urges the Member States to undertake more information campaigns on opportunities for participation in EU-funded projects;
23. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to implement gender budgeting as a tool for ensuring that budgetary decisions take into account the gender dimension and address differentiated impacts;
24. Calls for the effective development of indicators on women's poverty and social exclusion on the basis of those developed in 2007¹;
25. Calls on the Member States to cooperate in the fight against poverty with NGOs which operate successfully in areas afflicted by extreme poverty and which have precious know-how in local communities; calls on the Member States to support effective cooperation at local level;
26. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to involve social partners (trade unions and employers) and civil society, including gender equality bodies, in the realisation of gender equality, with a view to fostering equal treatment; stresses that social dialogue must include the monitoring and promotion of gender equality practices at the workplace, including flexible working arrangements, with the aim of facilitating the reconciliation of

¹ Council of the European Union, Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs, 'Review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action – Indicators in respect of women and poverty' – Draft Council conclusions, December 2007, 13947/07 ADD.

work and private life; stresses the importance of collective agreements in combating discrimination and promoting equality between women and men at work, as well as other instruments such as codes of conduct, research or exchanges of experience and good practice in the area of gender equality.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	16.3.2016
Result of final vote	+: 44 -: 4 0: 4
Members present for the final vote	Laura Agea, Guillaume Balas, Tiziana Beghin, Brando Benifei, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Enrique Calvet Chambon, David Casa, Ole Christensen, Jane Collins, Martina Dlabajová, Lampros Fountoulis, Elena Gentile, Thomas Händel, Rina Ronja Kari, Jan Keller, Ádám Kósa, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Jean Lambert, Jérôme Lavrilleux, Jeroen Lenaers, Verónica Lope Fontagné, Javi López, Morten Løkkegaard, Dominique Martin, Anthea McIntyre, Joëlle Mélin, Elisabeth Morin-Chartier, Emilian Pavel, João Pimenta Lopes, Georgi Pirinski, Marek Plura, Terry Reintke, Sofia Ribeiro, Maria João Rodrigues, Claude Rolin, Anne Sander, Sven Schulze, Siôn Simon, Jutta Steinruck, Romana Tomc, Yana Toom, Ulrike Trebesius, Jana Žitňanská
Substitutes present for the final vote	Maria Arena, Georges Bach, Heinz K. Becker, Lynn Boylan, Karima Delli, Paloma López Bermejo, António Marinho e Pinto, Edouard Martin, Ivo Vajgl

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND EDUCATION

for the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

on poverty: a gender perspective
(2015/2228(INI))

Rapporteur: Silvia Costa

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:

- A. whereas governments have committed, in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to ensuring that all boys and girls complete a full primary education; whereas Parliament organised an event entitled 'Empowering girls and women through education' on International Women's Day in March 2015; whereas education, both formal and informal, is instrumental in overcoming marginalisation and multiple forms of discrimination by creating dialogue, openness and understanding between communities, and by empowering marginalised communities;
- B. whereas one of the targets of the Europe 2020 strategy is to reduce the number of Europeans living below the national poverty lines, thereby lifting over 20 million people out of poverty by 2020;
- C. whereas the targets of the Europe 2020 strategy include a reduction in early school leaving rates to below 10 %;
- D. whereas one of the targets of the Europe 2020 is to ensure that 40 % of 30- to 34-year-olds receive a university education, compared with the current average of 37.9 %; whereas the average figure for women has exceeded 42.3 %, compared with 33.6 % for men;
- E. whereas average participation in adult learning in the EU is 11 %, compared with the Europe 2020 target of 15 %, with lower participation among women, mainly due to the difficulty of combining such activities with the need to balance the demands of work and family life;
- F. whereas education for gender equality must aim to combat the 'feminisation of poverty' by overcoming gender stereotypes, and lead to an increased representation of women and girls and other genders in the economic, social, and political spheres;

- G. whereas austerity measures and the reforms of the national labour market implemented by Member States increased poverty, unemployment rates and the number of precarious and poor quality jobs; whereas women have been hit harder by these measures and reforms;
 - H. whereas poverty is a major factor with regard to equal access to education, given the direct and indirect costs involved;
 - I. whereas the economic crisis has affected women in particular, increasing their risk of poverty;
 - J. whereas bullying has profound effects on educational achievement, and its psychological impact differs between boys and girls as well as its effect on their performance;
 - K. whereas vocational and top-up training are helpful when it comes to entering employment;
1. Emphasises that equal access to affordable childcare is of key importance in maintaining a work-life balance that will prevent women from being obliged to work on a part-time or half-time basis or to give up working altogether and that access to free, high-quality education is central to securing equal opportunities for boys and girls, while breaking poverty cycles, especially for women;
 2. Notes that education and culture play a crucial role in challenging and changing attitudes and stereotypes and in helping women and girls achieve equality;
 3. Stresses that gender discrimination is an even more relevant factor, disadvantaging girls in terms not only of their access to education but also of the ultimate aim of education, which must be to encourage the development of their personalities, abilities and self-esteem, as well as their mental and physical aptitudes, by enhancing their potential;
 4. Highlights the immediate necessity to close the gap between the high levels of women's educational attainment in the EU and the professional opportunities available to them afterwards, resulting in a loss to society as a whole;
 5. Stresses the importance of ensuring support and investment for learning activities and opportunities in addition to those offered by formal education, especially for girls, giving them the opportunity to acquire soft skills and cross-cutting qualifications with a view to facilitating the development of European citizenship; emphasises also the importance of non-formal education in drawing people with low-level skills and at risk of poverty into the world of education and work;
 6. Stresses the need to extend vocational, top-up and other forms of training and guidance to adults, especially women, in order to enhance their integration or reintegration into the labour market and thereby reduce the risk of poverty;
 7. Highlights that gender equality in education implies that girls and boys, women and men, are afforded the same chances and treatment in access, process and outcome for high-quality education, as well as positive measures through which structural, cultural, and intersectional gender inequality is overcome so that women and girls can be empowered through education; points out that, although women make up 60 % of all graduates in the EU, unemployment remains higher among women than among men; stresses, therefore,

the need for sustainable responses that make gender equality a central consideration in careers guidance policies and policies to safeguard jobs and boost growth;

8. Stresses the importance of training teachers to be aware of the impact of gender roles and gender stereotyping and the importance of preventing this; stresses the need to examine the extent to which gender stereotypes are being challenged in the classroom;
9. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to remove barriers to access to formal and informal education, as well as to lifelong learning, by improving awareness and guidance, and by providing financial support as well as support such as childcare and care for the elderly to enable women and men to participate in lifelong learning, adopting an intergenerational approach and fostering the role played by European institutions;
10. Recalls that gender mainstreaming at all levels of the education system is needed, and stresses the need to combat stereotypes surrounding technical subjects, which narrow girls' career choices; notes the importance of women's representation in decision-making in educational institutions, including schools and universities;
11. Stresses that women and girls are free to decide on their choice of educational path, professional life and career;
12. Expresses concern that women who have children are discriminated against in the workplace because they are mothers and not because their job performance is inferior to that of their peers; urges the Member States to actively promote the positive image of mothers as employees and to combat the phenomenon of the 'motherhood penalty', as demonstrated by a number of research studies;
13. Calls for funding mechanisms which incentivise the achievement of equal representation in areas where there is a gender imbalance and stresses the need for gender disaggregated data in order to better understand the situation for girls, boys, men, and women, and to therefore be able to provide more effective responses to imbalances; asks the Commission to provide a breakdown by gender and age regarding participation in European educational mobility programmes, such as Erasmus+, Creative Europe and Europe for Citizens;
14. Stresses that in all Member States the risk of poverty and social exclusion among children is strongly linked to their parents' and carers' level of education, and in particular to that of their mothers', as well as their parents' situation in the labour market, their social conditions, and the family support services offered by states; points out that a lack of education is a major risk factor for child poverty and social exclusion; notes that a number of family-related factors such as family instability and lifestyle, single parenthood, poor living conditions, physical and mental health problems and domestic violence can, moreover, increase the likelihood of young people giving up education and training prematurely;
15. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to invest in formal and informal education and life-long learning to combat poverty and increase women's representation in traditionally male-dominated fields such as science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and entrepreneurship, which include positive female role models and peer-to-peer mentor networks, thereby overcoming gender stereotypes and prejudices;

16. Points out that poverty can consciously or unconsciously influence boys' and girls' educational choices by making money a factor; stresses, therefore, the important role that advice for families from educational guidance staff plays in allowing boys and girls to realise their full potential by helping them to make the right educational choices;
17. Points to the importance of sport as a character-forming tool and a vehicle for conveying values serving to overcome prejudices and stereotypes that prevent women and men from developing in line with their own expectations and their individual ability;
18. Calls on the Member States to lay greater emphasis on the importance of good physical education for both sexes and suggests that they devise the strategies needed to achieve this;
19. Points to the importance of education through sport and to the potential value of sport in helping socially vulnerable young people to put their lives back on track, and calls on the Member States and sports bodies to promote fair play policies in competitions;
20. Recalls, in particular, the right of migrant and refugee children, both boys and girls, to have access to education, this being one of the priorities of European societies; stresses therefore that urgent measures in the field of migrant education should be taken both at EU and national levels in light of the persisting migrant crisis; emphasises that education is key to integration and employability and that a failure of the national education systems to meet this challenge may provoke further cultural segregation and deepen social divisions; points out that access to education, in both refugee camps and host municipalities, meeting the requisite quality standards and accompanied by linguistic and psychological support, must not be undermined by bureaucratic and administrative issues relating to recognition of refugee status;
21. Recalls that migrant women and children are amongst the most vulnerable groups and at high risk of economic and social exclusion in terms of reduced access to primary healthcare services and decent housing;
22. Emphasises the importance of men and boys being actively engaged in the issue of gender equality, and that formal and informal education and lifelong learning programmes on gender equality must also engage boys and men in order to help overcome the social exclusion and discrimination which exacerbate female poverty;
23. Stresses that any education policy put in place to address the intersection of gender equality and poverty must specifically have a special focus on women and groups suffering from multiple discrimination;
24. Points out that, in comparison to girls, boys are twice as likely to leave school with low or no qualifications but that socio-economic background and status seem to be a stronger predictor of educational condition and achievement than gender alone, hence the need to focus on social and economic challenges in establishing high-quality educational opportunities for all and calls for appropriate educational support to be provided in order to redress this imbalance;
25. Stresses the importance of lifelong learning in providing fresh opportunities for adults who were obliged to leave school early or whose initial educational choices did not allow

them to realise their potential or their ambitions;

26. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to guarantee access to professional training programmes for young people and adults, and to promote those programmes; points to the important role played by the European Social Fund in helping people into employment by financing training policies, and calls on the Member States and local authorities to encourage the use of the fund;
27. Stresses the contribution of voluntary organisations and the tertiary sector in this area and urges the Member States to support their efforts; recalls the high level of participation by women in voluntary education and other activities, and in supporting and improving educational opportunities for refugees and deprived children for example;
28. Points out that the 2008 financial crisis put a brake on women's progression in, and access to, the labour market, where they are losing out to men with the same qualifications; calls on the Commission to take steps to ensure career equality and thus prevent women from experiencing slower career progression and falling into poverty; calls, with a view to increasing the number of women in all areas of the labour market and ensuring equal opportunities, for special support measures that will allow women to combine work and training and at the same time share family responsibilities with their spouses;
29. Maintains that the participation of girls in school life is a prerequisite in efforts to prevent early school leaving, given that girls acquire confidence through being given the opportunity to actively change their own lives and those of others for the better; notes that the involvement of girls may also help to change public perceptions of what they are able to do and ensure that they are perceived as citizens and as active members of society when it comes to upholding individual rights.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	25.1.2016
Result of final vote	+: 24 -: 4 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Isabella Adinolfi, Andrea Bocskor, Louise Bours, Nikolaos Chountis, Silvia Costa, Mircea Diaconu, Damian Drăghici, Jill Evans, María Teresa Giménez Barbat, Giorgos Grammatikakis, Petra Kammerevert, Rikke Karlsson, Andrew Lewer, Svetoslav Hristov Malinov, Curzio Maltese, Stefano Maullu, Luigi Morgano, Michaela Šojdrová, Yana Toom, Helga Trüpel, Sabine Verheyen, Julie Ward, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski, Milan Zver
Substitutes present for the final vote	Eider Gardiazabal Rubial, Dietmar Köster, Zdzisław Krasnodębski, Ernest Maragall, Algirdas Saudargas
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Gabriel Mato, Jaromír Štětina

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

Date adopted	19.4.2016
Result of final vote	+: 25 -: 2 0: 4
Members present for the final vote	Maria Arena, Catherine Bearder, Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Malin Björk, Viliya Blinkevičiūtė, Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Viorica Dăncilă, Iratxe García Pérez, Anna Hedh, Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio, Elisabeth Köstinger, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Angelika Mlinar, Maria Noichl, Marijana Petir, Pina Picierno, João Pimenta Lopes, Terry Reintke, Jordi Sebastià, Michaela Šojdrová, Ernest Urtasun, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Anna Záborská, Jana Žitňanská
Substitutes present for the final vote	Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Kostadinka Kuneva, Constance Le Grip, Evelyn Regner, Marc Tarabella
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Julia Reid, Marco Zanni

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

25	+
ALDE	Catherine Bearder, Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Angelika Mlinar
EFDD	Marco Zanni
GUE/NGL	Malin Björk, Kostadinka Kuneva, João Pimenta Lopes
PPE	Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Elisabeth Köstinger, Constance Le Grip
S&D	Maria Arena, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Viorica Dăncilă, Iratxe García Pérez, Anna Hedh, Maria Noichl, Pina Picierno, Evelyn Regner, Marc Tarabella
VERTS/ALE	Terry Reintke, Jordi Sebastià, Ernest Urtasun

2	-
EFDD	Julia Reid
PPE	Michaela Šojdrová

4	0
ECR	Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Jana Žitňanská
PPE	Marijana Petir, Anna Záborská

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention