



2017/2122(INI)

7.11.2017

OPINION

of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2016 and
the European Union's policy on the matter
(2017/2122(INI))

Rapporteur: Jordi Solé

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SUGGESTIONS

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

- A. whereas the EU is committed to promoting gender equality and ensuring gender mainstreaming in all of its actions;
 - B. whereas, in times of armed conflict, women and children, including female and child refugees, are among the most vulnerable groups in society;
 - C. whereas sexual and reproductive health and rights are grounded on basic human rights and are essential elements of human dignity; whereas these have not yet been secured in all parts of the world;
 - D. whereas violence against women and girls is one of the world's most widespread human rights violations, affecting all levels of society, regardless age, education, income, social position or country of origin or residence, and representing a mayor barrier for gender equality;
 - E. whereas the EU strategy for equality between men and women provides for the integration for gender equality into its trade policies;
1. Recalls that equality between women and men is a core principle of the European Union and its Member States, and that gender mainstreaming one of the Union's principal objectives as enshrined in the treaties; calls, therefore, on the Commission to integrate gender mainstreaming into all EU legislation, guidelines, actions and funding as a core EU principle, with a special emphasis on EU external relations polices; stresses the need to reinforce the role of the EU delegations, as well as the role of the EEAS Principal Advisor on Gender, by ensuring a specific budget dedicated to her area of competences;
 2. Recalls that the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development is one of the fundamental tools of the EU to improve gender equality in third countries and believes, therefore, that GAP2 should take the form of a Commission communication; calls on the Commission to take into account Parliament's resolution on the renewal of the GAP;
 3. Calls on the Commission to include, in free-trade agreements with third countries where women's rights are limited or non-existent, clauses calling on those states to implement active policies for the recognition of those rights;
 4. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to provide continued support to protect human rights defenders, women's organisations and women leaders as active actors committed to promoting, protecting and raising awareness of women's rights;
 5. Calls on the EEAS to ensure that the outcomes of the 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will be included in its policies, and will provide a renewed impetus in promoting 'women's economic empowerment' in addressing gender inequalities in the changing world of work;

6. Points at the positive contribution of women's empowerment in achieving an inclusive, equitable and peaceful society, and sustainable development; stresses that the focus on gender equality and women's empowerment is explicit across all the Sustainable Development Goals and that more efforts should be pursued to seek the full realisation of women's rights and the effective implementation of policies promoting economic and social empowerment and women's participation in decision-making processes; stresses that particular attention should be given to 'empowering indigenous women';
7. Points out that women should be encouraged to organise, via trade unions, and that they should not be discriminated against when seeking businesses financing;
8. Strongly recommends including education at the core of EEAS policies with the aim of ensuring full and equal access to education to all children, in particular in the context of conflict, and in humanitarian and migration crises, where children can be deprived of basic education; stresses that special attention should be given to girls' access to education without risks;
9. Calls on the EEAS to promote the role of women as peace-builders, to encourage women's participation in leadership and decision-making process, and to place these tasks at the core of the EU Global Strategy and Political Dialogues, particularly when it comes to conflict prevention and promoting human rights and democratic reform in post-conflict reconstruction;
10. Is concerned about the vulnerable situation of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, especially women and children, and members of marginalised groups, and calls for the urgent development of proper, safe and legal channels for migration, while taking all necessary measures to ensure their protection, such as access to legal counselling, psychological support, safe spaces for women and children and access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, including safe abortions, as well as other health services; stresses the need for family reunification procedures to afford individual rights for women and girls joining their families in the EU, ensuring that they do not have to depend on a possibly abusive relationship with a male family member for access to health, education or work;
11. Calls on the EU to support all women's associations that work on an everyday basis to support women in humanitarian crises and conflicts;
12. Condemns all forms of violence against women and girls, and all forms of gender-based violence, including trafficking in human beings, forced marriage, honour crimes, female genital mutilation and the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war; calls on the EU and its Member States to ratify the Istanbul Convention, the first legally binding international instrument seeking to prevent and combat violence against women, in all its parts in order to ensure coherence between EU internal and external action in this area; underlines that religious, cultural or traditional differences, or any other circumstances, can in no way justify discrimination or any form of violence; calls on the EU to implement active and effective policies to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women and girls and gender-based violence;
13. Stresses that one of the obstacles to women's economic empowerment is violence against women, in particular sexual harassment and sexism inflicted on many women in

their workplaces;

14. Condemns the fact that, in some third countries, marriages between adults and minors are legal;
15. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to tackle trafficking in human beings effectively and efficiently; notes that research has shown that the majority of victims of trafficking in human beings are women, who, once they have arrived in Europe, are forced into the prostitution market;
16. Emphasises that accessible health care and universal respect for, and access to, sexual and reproductive health and rights contributes to prenatal care and the ability to avoid high-risk births, reducing infant and child mortality; points out that family planning and access to adequate feminine hygiene products, and to maternal, prenatal and neonatal health care and safe abortion services, are important elements in saving women's lives and contribute to avoiding high-risk births and to reducing infant and child mortality;
17. Condemns and rejects laws, regulations and government pressure that impose undue restrictions on the freedom of expression, especially for women and other discriminated gender categories;
18. Finds it unacceptable that women's and girls' bodies, specifically with respect to their sexual and reproductive health and rights, still remain an ideological battleground; calls for the EU and its Member States to recognise the inalienable rights of women and girls to bodily integrity and autonomous decision-making, and condemns the frequent violations of women's sexual and reproductive rights, including the denial of access to family planning services, contraceptives and safe and legal abortion services;
19. Strongly condemns the reinstatement and expansion of the US 'global gag rule' and its impact on women's and girls' global health care and rights, including sex education and safe and legal abortions; reiterates its call on the EU and its Member States to fill the financing gap left by the US in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights, in particular through funding explicitly destined to ensure access to birth control and safe and legal abortions, using both national as well as EU development funding;
20. Condemns all forms of discrimination and violence against LGBTI people, especially the criminalisation of homosexuality in some third countries; calls on the EEAS to raise and promote global awareness on LGBTI rights through EU external action in order to end the discrimination they face on a daily basis;
21. Stresses that gender stereotypes are among the main reasons for violations of women's rights and inequalities between men and women, and calls, therefore, on the Member States to implement new public awareness campaigns to combat violence against women, sexual assaults, cyber bullying and gender stereotypes; emphasises the importance of the involvement of men and boys in these campaigns, both as targets and as agents of change;
22. Points out that the rates of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion are higher among women, and asks the Commission to increase its efforts to implement measures to combat poverty and social exclusion as part of its development policies.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	6.11.2017
Result of final vote	+: 14 -: 7 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Maria Arena, Malin Björk, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Arne Gericke, Mary Honeyball, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Florent Marcellesi, Angelika Niebler, Marijana Petir, Terry Reintke, Michaela Šojdrová, Anna Záborská, Jana Žitňanská
Substitutes present for the final vote	Kostadinka Kuneva, Edouard Martin, Jordi Solé, Marc Tarabella, Mylène Troszczynski, Julie Ward
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Ulrike Müller, Gabriele Preuß

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

14	+
ALDE	Ulrike Müller
GUE/NGL	Malin Björk, Kostadinka Kuneva
PPE	Anna Maria Corazza Bildt
S&D	Maria Arena, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Mary Honeyball, Edouard Martin, Gabriele Preuß, Marc Tarabella, Julie Ward
VERTS/ALE	Florent Marcellesi, Terry Reintke, Jordi Solé

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ECR	Arne Gericke, Jana Žitňanská, Mylène Troszczynski, Angelika Niebler, Marijana Petir, Michaela Šojdrová, Anna Záborská

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PPE	Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention