



2018/2098(INI)

5.9.2018

DRAFT 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 2017 and the European Union's policy on the matter
(2018/2098(INI))

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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:

1. Underlines the need for the EU, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the 2030 Agenda and the Gender Equality Action Plan 2016-2020 (GAP II), to continue to pursue its commitment to developing societies free from all forms of discrimination and violence and contributing to a secure, prosperous and sustainable world;
2. Highlights the affirmation of UN Secretary-General António Guterres that 'there is overwhelming evidence that investing in women is the most effective way to lift communities, companies and countries. Women's participation makes peace agreements stronger, societies more resilient and economies more vigorous';
3. Highlights the need to guarantee healthy living and well-being for all, as called for in SDG 3, and to promote access to affordable, safe and quality medicines;
4. Highlights the need to guarantee access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, to ensure that women receive the recommended natal care and to prevent child and maternal mortality;
5. Calls on the Member States to reinforce the implementation of policies that empower girls and women, combat poverty and social exclusion and within the framework of SDG 5 and the ILO's 2018 'Women at Work' initiative, focus on providing women and girls with equal access to higher education and training, decent work and equal pay, equal access to financial services and representation in economic and political decision-making processes;
6. Stresses the importance of making education and training in the STEM subjects accessible to women and girls, with particular emphasis on increasing their digital competences;
7. Welcomes the joint efforts and investments of the EU, together with the UN, in launching the 'Spotlight Initiative', aimed at eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, while reiterating that women around the globe remain the most vulnerable to domestic violence, mobbing, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, child and forced marriage, rape as a weapon of war and economic discrimination;
8. Urges the Member States to speed up negotiations on the ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention;
9. Emphasises that gender equality should be a key priority in all working relations, policies and external actions of the EU and supports the related coordinated efforts in the multilateral dialogues and activities of EU delegations such as election observation missions, as well as the work of the EEAS Principle Advisor on Gender in third countries, aimed at promoting peace, security and fundamental freedoms;

10. Welcomes the approach of integrating the gender perspective in EU Common Security and Defence Policy activities and underlines the importance of providing adequate gender sensitive training to healthcare professionals and humanitarian aid workers, including those working in emergency assistance;
11. Supports the EU's initiative on 'Preventing Violent Extremism: A Gender Sensitive Approach' and pushes for the promotion of gender sensitive projects that strengthen the roles of women and girls in peacebuilding, conflict prevention and humanitarian response;
12. Urges the EU to combat gender-based violence in its activities with third countries, to the best of its abilities and using all instruments available;
13. Condemns the atrocities practised on displaced people such as refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, especially women and girls, around the world, particularly in Venezuela and on members of the Rohingya minority in Myanmar.