

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1999



2004

Session document

FINAL
A5-0067/2002

27 February 2002

REPORT

on the report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions:
Annual Report on equal opportunities for women and men in the European Union 2000
(COM(2001) 179 – C5-0344/2001 – 2001/2144(COS))

Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities

Rapporteur: María Antonia Avilés Perea

CONTENTS

	Page
PROCEDURAL PAGE	4
MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION.....	5
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT	11

PROCEDURAL PAGE

By letter of 2 April 2001, the Commission forwarded to Parliament its report to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Annual Report on equal opportunities for women and men in the European Union 2000 (COM(2001) 179 – 2001/2144(COS)).

At the sitting of 3 September 2001 the President of Parliament announced that she had referred the report to the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities as the committee responsible and the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy and the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs for their opinions.

The Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities had appointed María Antonia Avilés Perea rapporteur at its meeting of 12 July 2001.

It considered the draft report at its meetings of 21 January 2002 and 26 February 2002.

At the latter meeting it adopted the motion for a resolution unanimously.

The following were present for the vote: Anna Karamanou, chairman; Marianne Eriksson, vice-chairman; Jillian Evans, vice-chairman; María Antonia Avilés Perea, rapporteur; Regina Bastos, Lone Dybkjær, Fiorella Ghilardotti, Lissy Gröner, Heidi Anneli Hautala, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Amalia Sartori, Miet Smet, Patsy Sörensen, Joke Swiebel, Helena Torres Marques, Feleknas Uca and Ilda Figueiredo (for Armonia Bordes).

The Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy and the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs decided, on 16 March 2001 and 17 May 2001 respectively, not to deliver an opinion.

The report was tabled on 27 February 2002.

The deadline for tabling amendments will be indicated in the draft agenda for the relevant part-session.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

European Parliament resolution on the report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Annual Report on equal opportunities for women and men in the European Union 2000 (COM(2001) 179 – C5-0344/2001 – 2001/2144(COS))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the report from the Commission (COM(2001) 179 – C5-0344/2001¹),
 - having regard to Articles 2, 3(2), 13, 137(1) and 141 of the EC Treaty,
 - having regard to its resolution of 5 October 2000 on the Commission annual reports 'Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the European Union - 1997, 1998, 1999'²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 18 May 2000 on the follow-up to the Beijing Action Platform³,
 - having regard to the final document of the United Nations Conference 'Beijing + 5' held in New York in June 2000,
 - having regard to its resolution of 15 November 2000 on the Community framework strategy on gender equality⁴,
 - having regard to the Council Decision of 20 December 2000 establishing a programme relating to the Community framework strategy on gender equality (2001-2005)⁵,
 - having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions⁶,
 - having regard to Rule 47(1) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities (A5-0067/2002),
- A. whereas, over the past years, the greatest efforts in the field of equal opportunities have been made in areas in which work had already been done before, without, however, eliminating discrimination, and it is therefore necessary to continue them while extending them to other areas,

¹ OJ C Not yet published in the OJ.

² OJ C 178, 22.6.2001, p. 281.

³ OJ C 59, 23.2.2001, p. 258.

⁴ OJ C 197, 12.7.2001, p. 178.

⁵ OJ L 17, 19.1.2001, p. 22.

⁶ CdR 349/2001 fin. adopted on 10.9.2001.

- B. whereas, with regard to gender mainstreaming, significant progress has been made in Community policies but less progress has been made in the national policies of the individual Member States,
- C. whereas the greatest efforts under the equality pillar of the European employment strategy were geared to reconciling family and working life, while not enough action was taken to reduce the gender pay gap,
- D. whereas a greater impetus is needed to promote equal opportunities in the other three pillars of the European employment strategy, i.e. employability, entrepreneurship and adaptability,
- E. whereas the unemployment rate for women in the European Union is three percentage points higher than that for men; whereas the labour market is still segregated both horizontally and vertically and women are concentrated in certain occupations and industries and are under-represented in well-paid managerial positions in all the sectors; whereas the employment rate for women in the European Union is still 18.2 percentage points below that for men; whereas, on average, women's pay amounts to around 77% of men's pay; whereas the pay gap between men and women remains substantial in the European Union and Directive 75/117/EEC on the application of the principle of equal pay is still not being correctly applied,
- F. whereas, as indicated by the Commission's Seventeenth Annual Report on monitoring the application of Community law 1999 (COM(2000) 92) and the European Parliament resolution of 4 September 2001 concerning it¹, legislation relating to equal treatment of men and women continues to be widely flouted,
- G. whereas, even though some candidate countries have already incorporated Community legislation on equal treatment and opportunities into their national law, there are still many countries in which much work remains to be done in order to apply it correctly, particularly with regard to the institutional and administrative capacity to apply and enforce legislation on equality,
- H. whereas the enlargement process is coinciding with the development of trafficking in women for purposes of sexual exploitation, particularly prostitution,
- I. mindful of the Commission's intention to propose a new directive on equality in the course of 2002, based on Article 13 of the EC Treaty,
1. Notes with satisfaction that the Commission's annual report contains a critical and systematic assessment of the Community and national initiatives undertaken during 2000 in the field of equal opportunities for women and men and therefore welcomes its content, which represents a qualitative improvement by comparison with the contents of the previous years' reports;
 2. Encourages the Commission to continue to submit annual reports, which provide an essential instrument for following up, assessing and monitoring the policy pursued by the Community and the Member States in a global and coherent manner, including the

¹ OJ C Not yet published in the OJ – Resolution A5-0250/2001.

effective application of Community legislation on equal treatment and opportunities for women and men;

3. Takes the view that the Commission should consider how to provide encouragement and ensure that the States comply with the principles of gender mainstreaming and the integration of gender equality in all their policies;
4. Notes the slight narrowing of the gender gap in the employment rate in 2000, but notes with concern that too large a proportion of women are still concentrated in part-time, unstable and low-skilled jobs;
5. Regrets that, within the framework of the European employment strategy, few Member States have made efforts to integrate gender equality in their national action plans (NAPs) for 2000 and that many measures are still considered to be gender neutral;
6. Calls on the Member States, in the light of the objective set by the Lisbon European Council of March 2000 aimed at raising the overall female employment rate to 60% by 2010, to: (a) integrate the gender dimension in the employment policies covered by the first three pillars of the employment guidelines when drawing up their NAPs to implement those guidelines, (b) set specific objectives and adopt rules on positive action to desegregate the labour market, (c) introduce precise quantitative objectives and deadlines for reducing the pay gap between men and women, and (d) bring in comparable indicators and procedures for monitoring and assessing equal opportunities in all areas of employment;
7. Stresses that reconciling working life and family life is crucial to real equality and welcomes the encouraging initiatives taken by the Member States in this area as regards childcare structures; takes the view, however, that this issue is not confined to improving childcare facilities but also involves care for other dependants such as elderly, sick or disabled people, where little progress has been made;
8. Is disappointed to observe that this annual report hardly mentions Commission measures to secure enforcement in/by the present Member States of existing legislation concerning equal treatment, and calls on the Commission to step up its on-going efforts in this field and report on them in the next annual report on equal opportunities;
9. Stresses the need to adopt innovative measures and set specific objectives, at Community and national level, aimed at promoting a balanced distribution of professional activity and domestic work between women and men by developing working arrangements which make it possible genuinely to reconcile family and working life, particularly as regards the organisation of working time, by reviewing the arrangements for parental leave, in particular for fathers, and for re-entry into employment, as well as reorganising public and private services, while fostering social equality between women and men by providing for individual-based social and tax entitlements;
10. Notes with concern that women make up only 20% of information and communication technologies students and that they are generally seriously under-represented in this area; notes that, owing to their limited access to new skills, women are prevented from securing highly qualified and the best-paid jobs in sectors broadly linked to information technologies; calls on the Member States, in accordance with the political guidelines laid

down by the Nice European Council of December 2000, to facilitate women's access to education and lifelong learning, in particular training in new technologies; draws attention, to that end, to the need to set national objectives for rates of participation in all levels of education and training and to take initiatives (special training programmes, information campaigns etc.) at national, regional or local level with a view to attracting women to the new technologies sector;

11. Notes the progress made as regards drawing up statistics, but takes the view that more efforts must be made, including in the candidate countries, as regards statistics broken down by sex, which can provide objective information for identifying differences and problems between women and men and which make it possible to assess the integration of the gender dimension by highlighting the impact on women and men of the various policies implemented; calls on the Commission, to that end, to make full use of the funding possibilities offered by the new action programme (2001-2005) on gender equality, with a view to the drawing-up and regular updating of statistics; calls on the Commission to do everything possible to ensure that appropriate financial and technical assistance is provided for the candidate countries so that they can develop their statistical methods and adapt them to those used in the European Community;
12. Suggests to the Commission, with a view to guaranteeing wider social repercussions and strengthening the Member States' commitment to equality between women and men, that, when statistics and comparative tables are drawn up, the order in which countries are listed should go from best to worst in line with their results in the concept measured and their consequences for gender equality, and not in alphabetical order or order of protocol; proposes, further, that the possibility of drawing up an index of gender development in the European Union be taken into consideration and debated;
13. Urges the Commission, bearing in mind that only 23% of businesses in the Union are owned by women, to tackle this issue directly by preparing a comprehensive report including precise and comparable data which will facilitate analysis and make it possible to identify the main problems in this area and propose possible solutions;
14. Calls on the Commission, bearing in mind the new rules on the Structural Funds (2000-2006) making the removal of inequalities and promotion of gender equality a central principle of Community policy and action, to draw up a progress report on the integration of the equal opportunities dimension in the Structural Funds;
15. Recalling its resolutions of 2 March 2000¹ and 18 January 2001², reiterates its position in favour of the balanced participation of women and men in decision-making processes as an indispensable element in guaranteeing the proper functioning of a democratic society; recalls that this issue is one of the five central priorities of the new framework strategy on gender equality (2001-2005), the scope of which covers equal participation in both political life and economic and social life;

¹ OJ C 346, 4.12.2000, p. 82 - European Parliament resolution on women in decision-making.

² OJ C 262, 18.9.2001, p. 248 - European Parliament resolution on the report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee on the implementation of Council Recommendation 96/694 of 2 December 1996 on the balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process.

16. Suggests to the Commission, consequently, that it submit innovatory proposals aimed at encouraging the States to improve balanced participation of women and men in decision-making at their internal levels and, in this context, regrets that the Commission report makes no mention of the mechanisms referred to in Parliament's resolution of 18 January 2001¹, such as quotas and zipper systems for drawing up election lists, among other things;
17. Concerned at the slow progress in increasing women's participation in positions of responsibility and in the decision-making process, in the political, economic and social fields, and given the situation in the candidate countries, highlights the need to draw up a global European strategy comprising research projects, exchanges of information and experience, awareness-raising measures and measures aimed at making it possible to reconcile working life and family life so as to promote the balanced participation of women and men in public and private decision-making bodies; calls on the Commission to give priority to the publication and systematic updating of comparable statistics in this area; calls for the issue of women's participation in the decision-making process to be addressed in the context of the accession negotiations;
18. Draws attention to the risk of taking the same methodological approach to domestic violence and trafficking in women, since even though there are some common features as regards combating these phenomena (such as criminal investigation, prevention, assistance and protection for victims), their nature and characteristics are very different and must be considered from different angles, which are lacking in the Commission report;
19. Takes the view that the enlargement of the European Union is currently a high political priority and that, in this context, Community policies in the area of equal opportunities, and also in the area of social and employment policy, must be used to promote women's rights and remove all inequalities, whether they be political, economic or social, in an enlarged European Union; stresses that respect for the *acquis communautaire* as regards equal treatment and opportunities for women and men is a condition *sine qua non* for accession;
20. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the *acquis communautaire* as regards women's rights is effectively transposed and to encourage the applicant countries to establish institutional and administrative structures to apply and guarantee respect for rights in the field of equal opportunities, particularly in the economic and social area;
21. Is concerned both by the boom in trafficking in women for purposes of sexual exploitation and by the increase in domestic violence in many countries, and calls on the European Union and the applicant countries to take urgent measures to provide for appropriate criminal penalties, update systems for providing support and protection to victims and tackle the structural causes, which are poverty and women's precarious position;
22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission.

¹ OJ C 262, 18.9.2001, p. 248.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

I. Introduction

The Commission has drawn up annual reports on equal treatment for men and women since 1996, which has quite clearly provided an excellent starting point for assessing developments and progress in this area.

Parliament did not draw up a written report in the first two years, 1997 and 1998, and in the past year it therefore took the opportunity to carry out an overall assessment of the results achieved both in 1999 and in the two previous years.

The current report for 2000 contains the following sections:

- The Community framework strategy on gender equality and the new programme 2001-2005
- Gender mainstreaming
- Gender equality in employment
- A gender perspective in EU human rights policies and external relations
- Equality in the enlargement process
- Promoting a gender balance in decision-making and the new programme 2001-2005.

II. The Community framework strategy on gender equality and the new programme 2001-2005

The new framework strategy on gender equality is chiefly characterised by the fact that it brings together, for the first time, all the programmes and initiatives which were previously dealt with separately, in most cases being implemented under different budget headings. This evidently represents a major step forwards, at least in terms of clarity.

Once again, the framework strategy uses the mainstreaming approach with the aim of integrating the gender perspective into all Community policies. That approach was already a feature of the medium-term Community action programme on equal opportunities (1996-2000), and remains one of the key elements of the new framework strategy. In parallel with mainstreaming, persisting inequalities continue to require the application of specific measures in favour of women, and the framework strategy is therefore based on a dual approach.

The action programme itself, which has a budget of EUR 50 million, is geared to awareness-raising measures and the analysis and evaluation of policies affecting equality.

III. Gender mainstreaming

Mainstreaming represents the EU's commitment to incorporating the goal of equality in all its policies, legislative measures and other activities.

Gender impact assessment and data and statistics broken down by sex are the main tools for the integration of equality and gender analysis. Gender impact assessment has already been introduced into a number of Community policies such as the Fifth Research Framework Programme and humanitarian aid. Some progress has also been made in gathering data and drawing up statistics. Nevertheless, much remains to be done and the Commission should do even more to encourage the Member State governments to introduce the principle of mainstreaming in all their national policies.

IV. Gender equality in employment

The Lisbon European Council of March 2000 set ambitious new targets for increasing female employment. One of the objectives set was to raise the female employment rate from its current level of 53% to 60% in 2010. At present, only five of the 15 EU countries meet this 60% target. They are Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

As in previous years, the employment guidelines for 2000 were divided into four policy areas or pillars: equal opportunities, employability, encouraging entrepreneurship and adaptability.

Most efforts in the field of gender equality were made under the first pillar, the equal opportunities pillar, despite the requirement that the gender perspective also be incorporated into the remaining pillars (*mainstreaming*). Nevertheless, much still remains to be done, particularly with regard to the difference in pay for men and women for work of equal value, given that the measures adopted to date have tended to be rather vague or based on purely voluntary compliance. As regards reconciling family and working life, and despite the enormous progress made, more still needs to be done, particularly in terms of developing care infrastructure for the elderly, given that most efforts have been concentrated solely on creating childcare facilities.

V. A gender perspective in EU human rights policies and external relations

Promoting gender equality is a significant element of the EU's external relations and development cooperation policies. In particular, promoting and protecting human rights specific to women forms part of Community policies on human rights in third countries.

An extraordinary session of the United Nations General Assembly entitled 'Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century, Beijing +5' was held in June 2000, when progress was analysed and ideas for future action were discussed. Some months before, a meeting had been held at EU level which reaffirmed the EU's commitment to the objectives of the Action Platform. Nevertheless, and despite the satisfactory results achieved, moving from commitment to action has proved more complex than expected, and the Commission working document on the application of the Action Platform in the Community¹ acknowledged that much still remains to be done.

¹ Working document drawn up by the Commission services on the application in the European Community of

The year 2000 was also the first year of implementation of the human rights regulations adopted in 1999¹, which provide the legal basis for all human rights and democratisation activities carried out under budget heading B7-70 on the 'European initiative for democracy and human rights'. Promoting and protecting women's rights was identified as a specific priority in the 2000 programming document for this European initiative.

VI. Equality in the enlargement process

The Nice European Council of December 2000 reiterated the crucial historic importance of the enlargement process and the political priority attached to it. The success of enlargement will depend, amongst many other things, on the candidate countries' ability to adopt the European social model, with its commitment to gender equality and equal opportunities.

The strategy paper on enlargement submitted by the Commission contains a timetable for the next two years. The negotiations on social policy and employment are scheduled to be provisionally completed in 2001 for most of the candidate countries. In the field of equal opportunities, there are nine directives which will need to be incorporated into national law. The Czech Republic, Lithuania, Hungary and Romania are the countries which are furthest ahead in incorporating the *acquis communautaire* in the field of equality. The application of Community legislation in this area has also made progress with the setting-up of more effective labour inspection services or the creation, in some countries, of specific bodies such as the equal opportunities ombudsman. Nevertheless, a greater effort still needs to be made to promote women's economic and social equality in these countries.

VII. Promoting a gender balance in decision-making and the new programme (2000-2005)

Democracy is one of the fundamental values of the European Union, its Member States, the countries of the EEA and the candidate countries. Its full achievement requires the balanced participation and representation of all citizens, women and men, in the economy, decision-making and social, cultural and civil life.

As can be seen from the Commission report² on the implementation of the Council Recommendation on the balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process³, progress is still too slow. In 2000, however, the new action programme funded a number of transnational projects promoting gender balance in decision-making.

the Action Platform adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 (May 2000).

¹ Regulations 975/1999 and 976/1999 - OJ L 120, 8.5.1999, p. 1.

² COM(2000) 120 final of 7.3.2000.

³ Council Recommendation of 2 December 1996 on the balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process, OJ L 319, 10.12.1996, p. 11.