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## **REPORT**

on a regulatory framework for measures enabling young women in the European Union to combine family life with a period of studies (2006/2276(INI))

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Rapporteur: Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou

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#### MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on a regulatory framework for measures enabling young women in the European Union to combine family life with a period of studies (2006/2276(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 2, 3(2) and 141 of the EC Treaty,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union which was proclaimed in 2000<sup>1</sup>, in particular Articles 9 and 14 thereof, on the right to found a family and the right to education,
- having regard to the conclusions of the European Councils of Copenhagen of 21-22 June 1993, Lisbon of 23- 24 March 2000, Stockholm of 23- 24 March 2001, Barcelona of 15- 16 March 2002, Brussels of 20-21 March 2003, Brussels of -26 March 2004, Brussels of 22- 23 March 2005, and Brussels of 23-24 March 2006 on the Lisbon Strategy for employment and growth,
- having regard to the Joint Declaration by European education ministers of 19 June 1999 in Bologna,
- having regard to the European Youth Pact adopted by the European Council of 22-23 March 2005,
- having regard to the Joint Declaration by the Council and Commission of 14 March 2007 on child care services,
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 30 May 2005 on European policies concerning youth, entitled 'Addressing the concerns of young people in Europe implementing the European Youth Pact and promoting active citizenship' (COM(2005)0206), which addresses the need to provide young people with good-quality education and training together with a better balance between family life and working life,
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 10 January 2003 entitled 'Investing efficiently in education and training: an imperative for Europe' (COM(2002)0779),
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 5 February 2003 entitled 'The role of the universities in the Europe of knowledge' (COM(2003)0058),
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 20 April 2005 entitled 'Mobilising the brainpower of Europe: enabling universities to make their full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy' (COM(2005)0152),
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 1 June 2005 entitled 'Non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all A framework strategy' (COM(2005)0224),

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> OJ C364, 18.12.2000, p.1

- having regard to Decision No 1672/2006 of the European Parliament and the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community programme for Employment and Social Solidarity – Progress<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 1 March 2006 entitled 'A Roadmap for equality between women and men (2006-2010)' (COM(2006)0092),
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 16 March 2005 entitled 'Green Paper "Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between the generations" (COM(2005)0094),
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 12 October 2006 entitled 'The demographic future of Europe – from challenge to opportunity' (COM(2006)0571),
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 12 October 2006 entitled 'First-stage consultation of European social partners on the reconciliation of professional, private and family life' (SEC(2006)1245),
- having regard to Council Recommendation 92/241/EEC of 31 March 1992 on child care<sup>2</sup>, which states that child care services should be made available to parents who are following a course of education or training with a view to entering the job market,
- having regard to its resolution of 9 March 2004 on reconciling professional, family and private lives<sup>3</sup>, its resolution of 9 March 2005 on the mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy<sup>4</sup>, its resolution of 16 January 2006 on the future of the Lisbon Strategy from the point of view of the gender perspective<sup>5</sup>, and its resolution of 1 February 2007 on discrimination against young women and girls in the field of education<sup>6</sup>,
- having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A6-0209/2007),
- A. whereas education and the family fall within national competence and responsibility,
- B. whereas education is a fundamental right for all and an essential precondition for an individual's personal development and participation in economic and social life,
- C. whereas the education system should include both the removal of the obstacles which make genuine equality between men and women difficult to achieve and the promotion of full equality between the sexes,
- D. whereas access to education, lifelong learning and high-quality training are essential if

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> OJ L 315, 15.11.2006, p.1

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> OJ L 123, 8.5.1992, p.16

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> OJ C 102 E, 28.4.2004, p. 492.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> OJ C 320, 15.12.2005, p.164

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> OJ C 287 E, 24.11.2006, p.323

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Texts adopted on that date, P6\_TA(2007)0021

- young men and women are to provide the skills that Europe needs, both with regard to boosting employment and growth and to solidarity between the generations and population renewal,
- Ε. whereas a better balance between family life and student life at all levels could enable young people, particularly young women, to develop their potential more fully and thus contribute to the 'knowledge society', economic competitiveness, social cohesion and the renewal of European society – aims set out in the revised Lisbon Strategy,
- F. whereas the future of Europe depends on its ability to foster societies that welcome young men and women, and whereas in this context, achieving the desire for parenthood or caring for dependent adults or the disabled, should not conflict with education or career choices or constitute a barrier to staying in or returning to education or pursuing a career,
- G. whereas higher education and training is a fundamental precondition for genuine access to the labour market and a means of guarding against poverty, which affects women in particular, and of aligning male and female pay,
- Н. whereas a longer time spent in education<sup>1</sup>, a lack of incentives to become fully independent and more difficult access to employment can lead young people to postpone the decision to start a family,
- I. whereas the opportunities provided by lifelong learning and longer periods spent in education are increasing the average age of men and women in education and training<sup>2</sup>,
- J. whereas increased life expectancy has an impact on relations between generations and within the family by increasing the number of dependent people,
- K. whereas the Commission's Communication on the reconciliation of professional, private and family life recognises that policies in this area should also cover young men and women who are still in higher education,
- L. whereas financial difficulties and discrimination of various kinds often make it difficult to gain access to, or continue in, education or training, and these difficulties are particularly acute for young men and women who have family responsibilities, and possibly also work responsibilities, in addition to their studies<sup>3</sup> or training,
- M. whereas, even if it is not for the Member States to influence individual choices on whether or not to assume family responsibilities, they should create a favourable social and economic environment for young parents and young people who have

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Francesco C.Billari, Dimiter Philipov, Education and the Transition to Motherhood: a comparative analysis of Western Europe, European Demographic Research Papers 2005

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> EUROSTUDENT Report 2005, Social and Economic Conditions of student life in Europe: the average age of students is 28 in the United Kingdom, 25.3 in Austria, 24.6 in Finland, 24.2 in the Netherlands and 24.1 in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> EUROSTUDENT Report 2005, Social and Economic Conditions of student life in Europe: 91% of all students in the Netherlands have jobs, 69% in Ireland, 67% in Austria, 66% in Germany and 65% in Finland §

- responsibility for dependent adults or for persons with disabilities, in view of the demographic challenges facing the EU,
- N. whereas statistics show that Europeans do not have the number of children that they would like<sup>1</sup> to have,
- O. whereas women, who are often the primary carer for dependents<sup>2</sup>, are more likely than men not to continue in education, to not complete their studies or never to return to education, which inevitably leads to lifelong de facto discrimination in gaining access to, and continuing in, education and training and to inequality between men and women in their working lives,
- P. whereas in most countries, where people have a job at the same time as pursuing a course of study, either they are ineligible for social assistance or the amount of assistance for which they are eligible is reduced, and whereas student status, particularly if the student has dependants, makes it considerably more complicated to obtain bank loans or credit,
- Q. whereas family responsibilities imply specific needs in a number of areas, particularly with regard to housing, childcare services, care for dependants and flexibility in the course of study,
- R. whereas the treatment of students with family responsibilities varies between countries and between higher education and vocational training establishments, which may constitute an obstacle to students' mobility and thus to them achieving their desired education and career, and whereas there is inequality in the way education systems take account of their needs and in the criteria for allocating student grants,
- S. whereas there are very few statistics and indicators available at Member State and EU level which illustrate the living conditions of young people with family responsibilities who are in education or training,
- 1. Points out that education and training for girls and women is a human right and an essential element of the full enjoyment of all other social, economic, cultural and political rights;
- 2. Points out that the recommendations that follow concern young people who are following a course of study or training and who have, or would like, to have family responsibilities either as parents or as carers for dependent adults or for persons with disabilities:
- 3. Points out that according to the conclusions of the Green paper on demography, the European demographic deficit is due in part to the various stages of life (education, work, family) currently being reached later than previously;

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Commission Communication of 16 March entitled: Green Paper 'Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between the generations' (COM(2005)0094))

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> EUROSTUDENT Report 2005, *Social and Economic Conditions of student life in Europe:* In Latvia the ratio of female students with a child to male students with a child is 13.8% to 5.3%, in Ireland 12.1% to 10.4%, and in Austria 11.5% to 10%.

- 4. Welcomes the Commission's recognition in the Communication on the reconciliation of professional, private and family life that policies aiming to achieve a better balance should be addressed to young women and men who are still in higher education, but regrets the lack of specific proposals in this regard;
- 5. Encourages the Commission and the Member States to promote policies which make it easier to combine studying, training and family life, which support the balanced assumption of family responsibilities by young people without any form of discrimination, and which enable them to optimise their contribution to European growth and competitiveness; points out that in education and research, women outnumber men as graduates (59%), yet their presence decreases consistently as they progress up the career ladder, from 43% of PhD candidates down to only 15% of professors;
- 6. Encourages the Member States to be more aware of the situation of young men and women who have family responsibilities in addition to being in education or training, and particularly to make resources available to them that suit to their needs;
- 7. In view of the fact that the task of caring for dependants falls mainly to women, who thus find it difficult to pursue their studies, calls upon the Member States to set up social services to promote for promoting personal independence and to provide care for people who are dependent upon others;
- 8. Encourages the Member States to offer affordable 'student insurance', and in particular social and medical cover, which could be extended to the student's dependents;
- 9. Suggests that Member States and credit institutions should simplify and facilitate the provision of loans on beneficial terms to young men and women who are combining family responsibilities with a period of study or training;
- 10. Calls on the Member States to reduce or put an end to the taxation of young men and women who both study and work and who have family responsibilities or responsibilities towards dependants;
- 11. Encourages the Member States, in partnership with local authorities and higher education and vocational training institutions, to adopt the necessary measures to enable students who are also parents to live in housing that is suited to their needs and to have access to sufficient and adequate childcare under the same eligibility criteria as working parents; calls on the Member States to make full use of the possibilities provided by Community funds and in particular the ESF in this area;
- 12. Welcomes the conclusions of the Barcelona European Council of 15-16 March 2002, which urged the Member States to provide childcare by 2010 to at least 90% of children between the age of 3 and the mandatory school age, and to at least 33% of children under 3 years of age; regrets the fact that the Member States have not yet made satisfactory provision in that respect;
- 13. Encourages higher education and vocational training establishments to set up childcare services on their premises and calls on the Member States to support initiatives of

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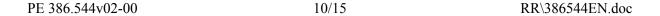
- this kind; stresses, furthermore, the importance of older family members (grandparents) and the major role they play in the process of bringing up children and in helping young parents who are working or studying;
- 14. Calls on the Member States to ensure that all students with children have access to, and can afford to use, quality local authority/State nursery schools;
- 15. Calls on the Member States to ensure that all students with older children have access to and can afford to use qualitative after-school facilities;
- 16. Calls on the Member States to relieve young people, particularly women, of the main responsibility for caring for dependents so that those women have the opportunity to study;
- 17. Calls on the Member States, in association with higher education and vocational training establishments, to propose more flexible ways of organising study courses, for example by increasing the provision of distance learning and the possibilities for part-time study, and by allowing more adults to continue their education, as part of lifelong learning;
- 18. Encourages the Member States and higher education and vocational training establishments to make more use of flexible learning techniques enabled by new technology and to make these available to all young people in education or training, particularly those with family responsibilities and persons with disabilities;
- 19. Calls on the Member States and higher education and vocational training establishments to ensure that pregnant students and mothers of young children enjoy equal treatment and non-discrimination in terms of access to, the continuation of and the return to education, and to take particular account of their needs;
- 20. Calls on higher education and vocational training establishments to make their teaching and other staff aware of the particular needs of students with responsibility for others, and if necessary to set up support and advisory services to make it easy for them to start, continue or return to a course of higher education or vocational training;
- 21. Calls on higher education and vocational training establishments to take account of the financial situation of young men and women who have family responsibilities when calculating course fees, and encourages them to provide appropriate assistance;
- 22. Calls on the Member States to establish a national certification scheme for the identification of higher education or vocational training establishments at which student life and family life may be combined, with a view to facilitating and encouraging the continuation or the resumption of studies in the case of people with family responsibilities;
- 23. Encourages employers to exercise corporate social responsibility by awarding study grants which students with family responsibilities could also apply for, and thus help to promote the employment of young graduates;





- 24. Calls on the Member States and social partners to encourage and facilitate lifelong learning by providing, inter alia, opportunities for paternal or maternal leave, or for leave of absence for reasons relating to legal guardianship or care of dependent adults, or for people with disabilities, and for greater flexibility in working conditions, particularly through the use of new technologies; calls, furthermore, on the Member States to count maternity and parental leave during a period of study towards women's aggregate time spent in work and their retirement pension entitlement periods, with a view to meeting fully the goal of genuine gender equality;
- 25. Calls on the Member States and higher education and vocational training establishments to continue to provide social benefits to persons with family responsibilities for six months after the completion of their studies, so as to make it easier for them to enter the labour market;
- 26. Calls on the Member States to put an end to restrictions on paid work by persons who are studying or on parental leave where the amounts earned are within the limits established by the Member States, without those persons being deprived of their entitlement to family benefits, which would enable them to remain in contact with their employers by working from home and thus make it easier for them to re-enter the labour market following a period of parental leave;
- 27. Points out that most carers for dependent people are women, which results in discrimination between men and women in education and careers; stresses the fundamental principle that men must assume greater responsibility for household work, children and other dependent persons if a greater number of young women are to have the opportunity to combine parenthood with studying; calls, therefore, on the Member States to recognise the value of family life and to promote the role of fathers and the greater sharing of family responsibilities, including during time spent in education and after the completion of a course of study, as a significant step to achieving equal opportunities between men and women;
- 28. Calls on the Member States to structure parental insurance in a manner that promotes the participation of men in childcare;
- 29. Recommends to the Member States, the Council and the Commission, in the Open Coordination Method and meetings of education ministers and social services ministers, that they exchange best practice with regard to support for students with family responsibilities and to take account of innovative arrangements in this area which some European countries have introduced;
- 30. Recommends that Member States facilitate the granting or extension of social benefits to students from other Member States who have dependent children;
- 31. Recommends to the Commission and the Member States respectively that, when devising and implementing Community and national programmes on education, they take account of the particular situation of students with family responsibilities, and draws attention to the importance of including in such programmes horizontal measures to make it easier to combine studying with family life; calls for the education system to be flexible so as to ensure that a mother, following her maternity

- leave, can continue with, and be reintegrated into, her studies at the same level as previously undertaken;
- 32. Calls on the Member States to consider, with reference to their national situation, whether a reform of their education system to encourage flexibility and better management of time spent in education would have the effect of enabling young people to begin their working lives at an earlier stage and to achieve their desire for parenthood;
- 33. Encourages EUROSTAT and the Member States to adjust existing indicators with a view to gathering data which would make it possible to determine at both MemberState and European level the number of students with family responsibilities, their living conditions and the extent to which family responsibilities are a factor in them abandoning their studies, particularly in the case of young women;
- 34. Stresses that the incentives for young women to study and start a family may also diminish because they are afraid of suffering discrimination at work at a later stage; calls, therefore, on the Member States to combat the discriminatory treatment of mothers by employers when recruiting and promoting staff;
- 35. Calls on the scientific and academic communities to take appropriate steps with a view to ensuring that men and women with family responsibilities have equal access to scientific and/or research careers, thus encouraging them to embark on, and remain in, such careers and keeping them within the scientific community;
- 36. Calls on the Member States to continue to seek to expand and promote professional training for persons with family responsibilities and those from marginalised or minority groups, so as to enable them to avoid long-term unemployment and to ensure that they have equal access to the labour market;
- 37. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, and to the Member States



#### **EXPLANATORY STATEMENT**

According to the objectives set out at the Lisbon European Council in 2000, by 2010, Europe should become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth together with a quantitative and qualitative improvement in employment and greater social cohesion. This strategy was conceived to enable the EU to return to full employment conditions and to increase cohesion by 2010. The Council also considered that the general aim of these measures was to increase the overall employment rate in the EU to 70% and the employment rate for women to more than 60% by 2010<sup>1</sup>.

The Heads of State and Government recognised at the European Councils in Stockholm<sup>2</sup> and Barcelona<sup>3</sup> that the future of the European economy and society depended on its citizens, particularly the younger generations, and their level of education. Therefore all young men and women should be able to enjoy good quality education and training in line with the new requirements of the market as well as ongoing updating of their skills to enable them to enter the world of work and make steady progress within it.

The level of education is an essential factor in the growth and innovation capacity of a society. An OECD estimate considers that adding an additional year to the average time spent in education increases the rate of growth by about 5% immediately and by about 2.5% in the long term<sup>4</sup>.

Education and training bring economic and social benefits by developing personal and civic skills at the same time as vocational skills. Investment in human resources is thus a key instrument for increasing social inclusion. An OECD study shows that in some countries where the average level of education is highest there is also the least inequality between individuals<sup>5</sup>.

The level of education also has an undeniable impact on employment, given that unemployment rates reduce as education levels rise<sup>6</sup>, and the corresponding social costs are proportionately lower. It is also clear that employment rates rise with the level of education achieved: looking at the whole population aged from 25 to 64, the employment rate of those with higher education qualifications was 84% in 2001, i.e. 15 points higher than the average of all levels of education and almost 30 points higher than for those who had not progressed further than lower secondary education<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Lisbon European Council, March 2000

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Stockholm European Council, 23-24 March 2001

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Barcelona European Council, 15-16 March 2002

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> De la Fuente and Ciccone, *Human capital in a global and knowledge-based economy*, final report for DG Employment and Social Affairs, European Commission, May 2002

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Programme for International Student Assessment, OECD, 2002

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> The unemployment rate of people with higher education qualifications was 3.9% in 2001, or three times less than that of people with a low level of qualifications.

<sup>7</sup> idem.

It is clear from the above that it is essential to invest in young people as human resources to enable them to make a full contribution to the economic and social sustainability of European society, but at the same time we must not forget the potential of these young people to bring about the demographic renewal of our societies.

Indeed, as the Commission indicated in its Green Paper on demography<sup>1</sup> and the Council in its European Youth Pact<sup>2</sup>, it is high time to create societies that welcome children and young people through improving vocational training and the quality of employment and also by creating a favourable environment for their social integration and achievement of their desires for a family.

All the statistics show that Europeans, particularly the more educated Europeans, do not have the number of children that they would like. Achievement of their real desire for a family is affected by social and economic factors which mean that they complete the various stages of life later: they spend longer in education, they become independent later, they spend time in vocational training and have more difficult access to employment; these are all factors which lead young people to postpone the decision to start a family.

As several recent studies<sup>3</sup> on fertility in Europe show, the babies born later will not be able to compensate for those not born when their parents were younger. Moreover, these studies show that deciding to start a family at an older age also entails costs for public health systems because of the greater medical risks for the mother and baby. In addition, biological factors connected with the age of the woman may prevent people from having the number of children that they want.

Although it is true that it is not up to the State to influence individual choices on whether or not to have children, States should have a duty to create the conditions to enable Europeans to have the number of children they want. One way to achieve this objective would be to create a favourable social, economic and educational framework to enable young Europeans to achieve their desire for a family at an earlier stage in life without this having an adverse impact on their opportunities for training or careers.

In its recent Communication on reconciling professional, private and family life<sup>4</sup> the Commission seems to recognise the good sense of this view because the section on work organisation states that public policies in this area should also be addressed to young women and men who are still in higher education.

Apart from making better use of young people's potential, the need to make it easier to combine family life with studying is exacerbated by the fact that a longer time spent in

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Commission Communication of 16 March 2005 entitled *Green Paper "Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between the generations"* (COM(2005)0094),

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Commission Communication of 30 May 2005 on European youth policies, entitled *Addressing the concerns of young people in Europe – implementing the European Youth Pact and promoting active citizenship* (COM(2005)0206).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Lutz, Skirbekk, How would 'tempo policies' work? Exploring the effect of school reforms on period fertility in Europe; Billari, Philipov, Education and the transition to motherhood: a comparative analysis of western Europe

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Commission Communication of 12 October 2006 entitled *First-stage consultation of European social partners on the reconciliation of professional, private and family life* (SEC(2006)1245),

education and the opportunities offered by lifelong training are helping to increase the average age of students. Thus, according to statistics in the EUROSTUDENT report 2005<sup>1</sup>, the average age of students is 28 in the United Kingdom, 25.3 in Austria, 24.6 in Finland, 24.2 in the Netherlands and 24.1 in Ireland.

Thus in many countries, students take on family responsibilities in parallel with their studies or choose to fulfil their desire for a family by having children before the end of their studies. Thus in Sweden, 41% of women had their first child before completing their education, 31% in Finland and 30% in Norway. The proportion of students who are also parents is significant in several European countries such as Ireland, which has 11.3% of students with children, 10.8% in Austria, 10.7% in Latvia and 8% in Finland.

Unfortunately in most European countries, except for some Nordic countries which have a range of social and economic measures to help students who are parents, students with family responsibilities face considerable difficulties in their university courses and in their daily lives. They have special needs in particular with regard to housing, child-care services and course flexibility, etc. However, in general these needs are not recognised or not sufficiently recognised by education systems and social security schemes, as is further shown by the lack of statistics and data on how these students live.

The fact that the particular situation of students with family responsibilities is not taken into account may thus account for discrimination in access to education at all levels and to lifelong training. The wide disparities in treatment that can be observed in the different Member States are an additional obstacle to pursuing educational and thus career ambitions, including mobility.

Women are particularly vulnerable because they are most likely to have family responsibilities, including while they are studying. Thus, still according to the EUROSTUDENT report, in Latvia the ratio of female students with a child to male students with a child is 13.8% to 5.3%, in Ireland 12.1% to 10.4%, and in Austria 11.5% to 10%.

Without adequate support, young women are thus more likely than men not to continue in education, to give up in the middle of a course or never to return to education, which inevitably leads to inequalities between men and women in their working lives and a loss of their potential.

#### Rapporteur's position

Your rapporteur welcomes the fact that the Commission, in its recent Communication on reconciling professional, private and family life, recognised that policies in this area should also be addressed to young women and men who are still in higher education, but regrets that the Commission has made no specific proposals in this regard.

In the context of demographic challenges and countries' commitment to create more childfriendly and youth-friendly societies, your rapporteur wishes to highlight the need to adopt public policies that would give more support to young people to enable them to achieve their ambitions for education and family in parallel, without one having to take

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> EUROSTUDENT Report 2005, Social and Economic Conditions of student life in Europe

#### priority to the detriment of the other.

To this end, your rapporteur proposes that more account be taken, by both education systems and social security schemes, of the expectations and needs of young men and women who in parallel with education or training have family responsibilities.

Among the measures advocated in this regard, your rapporteur recommends that the Member States provide young people with **specific social assistance suited to their needs**, and that the grant or amount of this assistance should not be reduced or called into question if they take on a job in parallel to their course of study.

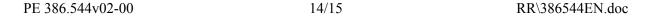
In addition, given the economic difficulties facing these students, your rapporteur suggests that higher education or vocational training establishments take account of their financial difficulties when calculating course fees and that credit institutions make it easier for them to obtain loans or credit.

Your rapporteur also calls on the Member States, together with local authorities and higher education or vocational training establishments, to increase the **supply of low-cost housing** suited to the needs of students (couples or single parents) with dependent children and also to **provide a sufficient number of affordable child-care services**.

Moreover, to make it easier to combine studying with family life, your rapporteur encourages the Member States and higher education or vocational training establishments to propose a more flexible organisation of courses (e.g. part-time courses), to make more use of learning techniques derived from new technologies and to make these available to all students, particularly those with family responsibilities.

Your rapporteur calls on higher education or vocational training establishments to make their teaching and other staff aware of the particular needs of these students and if necessary to set up support and advisory services for them, to make it easier for them to start, continue or return to higher education or vocational training.

Although policies on education and the family fall within national competence, your rapporteur recommends, under the Open Coordination Method, an exchange of best practice concerning support for students with family responsibilities and that account be taken of the innovative arrangements that have been introduced in some European countries.



## **PROCEDURE**

Title	A regulatory framework for measures enabling young women in the European Union to combine family life with a period of studies
Procedure number	2006/2276 (INI)
Committee responsible  Date authorisation announced in plenary	FEMM 29.11.2006
Committee(s) asked for opinion(s)  Date announced in plenary	
Not delivering opinion(s)  Date of decision	
Enhanced cooperation Date announced in plenary	
Rapporteur(s)  Date appointed	Marie Panayotopoulos- Cassiotou
Previous rapporteur(s)	20.12.2006
Discussed in committee	12.4.2007 5.6.2007
Date adopted	5.6.2007
Result of final vote	+ 14 - 0 0 1
Members present for the final vote	Katerina Batzeli, Věra Flasarová, Lissy Gröner, Zita Gurmai, Lívia Járóka, Astrid Lulling, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, Christa Prets, Karin Resetarits, Teresa Riera Madurell, Eva-Britt Svensson, Anna Záborská
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg, Mary Honeyball, Maria Petre
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	
Date tabled	7.6.2007
Comments (available in one language only)	