

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

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*Session document*

**A6-0035/2008**

11.2.2008

## **REPORT**

on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation  
(2007/2182(INI))

Committee on Development

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(\*): Procedure with associated committees - Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

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(\* ) Procedure with associated committees - Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

### on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation (2007/2182(INI))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Commission Communication of 8 March 2007 entitled Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Development Cooperation (COM(2007)0100),
- having regard to the Conclusions of the General Affairs and External Relations Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, adopted on 14 May 2007 on "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation",
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 806/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 on promoting gender equality in development cooperation<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to Articles 2, 3(2), 137 and 141 of the EC Treaty,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union proclaimed in 2000<sup>2</sup> and, in particular, Article 23,
- having regard to the United Nations Convention of 18 December 1979 on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),
- having regard to the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995, the Declaration and the Platform for Action adopted in Beijing as well as the subsequent outcome documents adopted at the United Nations Beijing +5 and Beijing +10 Special Sessions on further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action adopted respectively on 9 June 2000 and on 11 March 2005,
- having regard to the Millennium Development Goals, adopted at the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in September 2000, and in particular the MDG on promoting gender equality and empowering women as a prerequisite to overcoming hunger, poverty and disease, reaching equality at all levels of education and in all areas of work, equal control over resources and equal representation in public and political life,
- having regard to the Commission Report on the "Millennium Development Goals 2000–2004" (SEC(2004)1379),
- having regard to the Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels European Council of 16 and 17 December 2004, confirming the full commitment of the European Union to the Millennium Development Goals and to policy coherence,
- having regard to its resolutions of 12 April 2005 on the role of the European Union in the

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 143, 30.4.2004, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 364, 18.12.2000, p. 1.

achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>1</sup> and of 20 June 2007 on the Millennium Development Goals – the midway point<sup>2</sup>,

- having regard to its resolution of 17 November 2005 on a development strategy for Africa<sup>3</sup>, and of 25 October 2007 on the state of play of EU-Africa relations<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 29 November 2007 on "Advancing African Agriculture"<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 adopted on 31 October 2000, on women, peace and security (UNSCR 1325 (2000)), in particular paragraph 1, which urges Member States "to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions [...]",
- having regard to the Joint statement by the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on European Union Development Policy: 'The European Consensus' (The European Consensus on Development) signed on 20 December 2005<sup>6</sup> and the European consensus on Humanitarian Aid of December 2007<sup>7</sup>,
- having regard to the Partnership Agreement between the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, of the one part, and the Community and its Member States, of the other part, signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000<sup>8</sup> as amended by the Agreement amending the Partnership Agreement (the Cotonou Agreement), signed in Luxembourg on 25 June 2005<sup>9</sup>,
- having regard to the Rome Declaration on Harmonisation, adopted on 25 February 2003 following the High Level Forum on Harmonisation, and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, adopted on 2 March 2005,
- having regard to the International Conference on Development Funding held in Monterrey in March 2002, and to the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in September 2002,
- having regard to the final report adopted in March 2005 at the 49th session of the UN General Assembly Commission on the Status of Women,
- having regard to the UN Development Programme report entitled En Route to Equality dating from 2006,

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 33 E, 9.2.2006, p. 311.

<sup>2</sup> Texts Adopted , P6\_TA(2007)0274.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 280 E, 18.11.2006, p. 475.

<sup>4</sup> Texts Adopted , P6\_TA(2007)0483.

<sup>5</sup> Texts Adopted , P6\_TA(2007)0577.

<sup>6</sup> OJ C 46, 24.2.2006, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> The Statement on the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid was approved by Council on 19 November and the European Parliament on 29 November and was by the Presidents of the Commission, Council and European Parliament on 18 December 2007.

<sup>8</sup> OJ L 317, 15.12.2000, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> OJ L 209, 11.8.2005, p. 27.

- having regard to the United Nations Population Fund’s State of World Population reports of 2005 and 2006, entitled The Promise of Equality: Gender Equity, Reproductive Health and the Millennium Development Goals and A Passage to Hope: Women and International Migration, respectively,
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1905/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation<sup>1</sup> (‘Development Cooperation Instrument’ (DCI)),
- having regard to the Statistics based on the reporting by Members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on the Gender Equality Policy Marker 2004 - 2005 of the OECD, published in June 2007 and to the OECD 2006 Gender Equality and Aid Delivery Report,
- having regard to the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs of March 2000,
- having regard to the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, also known as the “Maputo Protocol”, which came into force on 26 October 2005 ,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 5 and 6 December 2007 on the review of implementation by the member states and the EU institutions of the Beijing platform for action and, in particular, the accompanying report developed by the Portuguese Presidency containing indicators on women and poverty;
- having regard to the UN International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in September 1994, the Programme of Action adopted in Cairo as well as the subsequent outcome documents adopted at the UN Cairo+5 special session on further actions to implement the Programme for Action adopted in 1999,
- having regard to the Brussels Call to Action to Address Sexual Violence in Conflict and Beyond (June 2006);
- having regard to the Maputo Plan of Action for the operationalisation of the Continental Policy Framework for sexual and reproductive health and rights 2007-2010, adopted at the special session of the African Union in September 2006,
- having regard to the Brussels framework for action and recommendations on health for sustainable development, adopted by the health Ministers of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) in Brussels in October 2007,
- having regard to the Declaration of “Gender equality: a core issue in a changing society” and the corresponding Action Programme adopted at the 5th European Ministerial Council,
- having regard to the Ministerial Declaration of the Conference of Ministers of Gender Equality held in Luxembourg on 4 February 2005,

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<sup>1</sup> OL L 378, 27.12.2006, p. 41

- having regard to Decision 14/04 of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), adopted on 7 December 2004 in Sofia, on the OSCE 2004 Action Plan for promoting gender equality,
  - having regard to the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015,
  - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Development and the opinion of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A6-0035/2008),
- A. whereas the Vienna Declaration, adopted on 25 June 1993 by the UN World Conference on Human Rights, states that 'The human rights of women and of the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights',
  - B. whereas the European Consensus on Development identifies gender equality as a common principle, stating that "the EU will include a strong gender component in all its policies and practices in its relations with developing countries" (Part I - Article 19), and the Cotonou Agreement clearly underlines the value of gender equality, affirming that "cooperation shall help improve the access of women to all resources required for the full exercise of their fundamental rights" (Article 31),
  - C. whereas the UN General Assembly has included universal access to reproductive health by 2015 as a sub-goal in the list of MDGs,
  - D. whereas the Beijing Platform for Action endorsed gender mainstreaming as an effective strategy to promote gender equality and stated that governments and other players "should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes, so that before decisions are taken an analysis is made of the effects on women and men respectively",
  - E. whereas approximately two thirds of the world's work is undertaken by women and girls, with a return for less than 5% of the income; whereas women's labour produces half of the world's food and almost 74% of non-employed women are primarily engaged in housework and family care at home, compared with 27% of unemployed men,
  - F. whereas 70% of the 1,3 billion people living in absolute poverty are women and poverty is not only a symptom but also a cause of the unequal distribution of income, property, resources, market power and power of disposal over property; whereas the EU is promoting gender equality and women's rights in its development cooperation through the twin-track approach of gender mainstreaming and specific actions targeting the promotion of women's rights and the empowerment of women,
  - G. whereas economic growth is essential to combating poverty, but is not in itself sufficient, because it does not generate enough new opportunities to establish businesses and create jobs,
  - H. whereas gender inequalities tend to lead to further inequalities, with negative consequences for women's well-being, their families, their communities and their personal development potential,

- I. whereas, in most countries, gender-related actions are not regarded as a high priority, gender being seen as a subsidiary issue and cultural, religious and socio-economic practices being used as excuses for obstructing progress in the area of gender equality and women's rights,
- J. whereas it has been proved that empowering women accelerates the meeting of all the other MDGs in reducing poverty and improving demographic, social and economic indicators,
- K. whereas gender mainstreaming can help societies to become more fair and democratic, where women and men are considered equal in all aspects of life, but does not replace specific equality policies and positive actions as part of a dual approach to achieving the goal of gender equality,
- L. whereas early education and training for girls and women (including comprehensive sex education) are crucial in the fight to eradicate poverty and widespread disease, ensuring that women increase their knowledge, skills and confidence in order to fully participate in society and politics,
- M. whereas women's full enjoyment of their sexual and reproductive health and rights is a prerequisite for achieving gender equality, as the ability of women to control their own fertility is fundamental to their empowerment and because women who can plan their families can also plan the rest of their lives, as healthy women can be more productive and because the protection of reproductive rights — such as planning their family in terms of birth timing and spacing and decision-making regarding reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence — provides the freedom to participate more fully and equally in society,
- N. whereas it is crucial to provide financial and technical support to women's organisations in order to promote programmes for the most vulnerable members of the population, including migrant, internally displaced and refugee women, in particular the supply of equipment and appropriate technology for food processing and workload alleviation, the facilitation of women's access to land, and improving girls' access to and attendance at schools,
- O. whereas women are vulnerable to marital discrimination and to discrimination in terms of access to immovable property and land ownership as well as to resources and control thereof,
- P. whereas many women are denied access to basic health care services, education at all levels, economic independence, careers and participation in decision-making processes ,
- Q. whereas, in certain cultures, traditional and religious prejudices still exist, restricting and discriminating girls' and young women's access to education,
- R. whereas at least 130 million women have been forced to undergo female genital mutilation or other violent traditional practices and another 2 million are at risk each year from these serious violations of their physical integrity and their human rights,
- S. whereas women migrants are more exposed to forced labour and sexual exploitation than men and are also more likely to accept precarious working conditions,

- T. whereas, in post-conflict countries undergoing processes of reconstruction and reintegration, institutional mechanisms and commitments to gender equality are effective first steps toward protecting and promoting women's rights; whereas the involvement of all relevant actors, such as governments and political representatives, NGOs, civil society groups and academics, as well as the direct participation of women's groups and networks, is the essential pre-condition to reaching shared and sustainable development,
- U. whereas, in sub-Saharan Africa, 57 per cent of adults with HIV are women, and young women aged 15 to 24 are more than three times as likely to be infected as young men,
- V. whereas there is an information gap between men and women on the ways of transmitting HIV/AIDS and on preventive measures that is reinforced by a climate of discrimination and gender-based violence; whereas sexual and reproductive health education and information and access to reproductive health services are the best guarantees for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases,
- W. whereas each year there are still 536 000 maternal deaths (95% of which occur in Africa and Asia) and for every woman who dies 20 or more experience serious complications, ranging from chronic infections to disabling injuries such as obstetric fistula, which could be easily avoided if there were universal access to basic and emergency obstetric care and reproductive health services,
- X. whereas, according to a study by the International Food Policy Research Institute, there is a clear link between the nutritional situation of children and the degree of authority exercised by women in the household and women whose status is low and who have no say in family affairs are more likely to be malnourished themselves; whereas better nutrition could prevent a large proportion of child deaths and would help to attain the MDG of reducing child mortality rates,
- Y. whereas the efficiency of some projects hitherto implemented has been hampered by weaknesses specific to various countries: fragile local and national administrative authorities, corrupt governments and a lack of expertise and trained personnel to deal with the problems relating to women's empowerment and gender equality,
- Z. whereas an increased risk of natural disasters and local and/or regional resource degradation processes has a disproportionately severe impact on disadvantaged population groups,
1. Welcomes the Commission Communication which it regards as a further step in the Programme of Action for the Mainstreaming of Gender Equality in Community Development Cooperation for the period 2001 to 2006;
  2. Deplores the fact that, since the Council, in its resolution of 20 December 1995, first declared consideration of the gender perspective in development cooperation to be a principle underpinning the development policy of the Community and the Member States, not enough has been done in practice;
  3. Points out that people's understanding of the role of women in post-war societies and of their contributions to post-war reconstruction must go beyond the universalistic narrative of "women's experience of war" and that the specificity and diversity of women's



experiences must be acknowledged;

4. Deplores the fact that most DCI Country Strategy Papers refer to gender as a cross-cutting area, without indicating any specific gender-related targets or activities; strongly calls for gender-specific targets and activities to be included in future strategies;
5. Welcomes the Commission's call for the EU to support third countries in complying with and implementing international obligations, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the Cairo Programme of Action (1994 and 2004), the Beijing Platform of Action (1999 and 2005), and the Declaration of the Millennium Development Goals (2000);
6. Endorses the Commission's view that the funding made available to support the integration of gender equality issues into development cooperation is insignificant when compared with the resources earmarked for other horizontal measures; regrets that only 5% of the DCI funds for the thematic programme 'Investing in People (2007-2013)' are allocated to gender equality and that regional and country strategy papers do not give an overview of budget allocation to gender equality since gender is only mentioned as a cross-cutting issue and thus no financial details are provided;
7. Expresses concern regarding the Commission's new aid architecture, which gives preference to budget support, since this can bring additional difficulties in the assessment of gender equality progress;
8. Commends the general approach of the Commission as a good basis on which the EU and Member States could factor gender issues into their development cooperation programmes in order to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women as the main instrument for enhancing human rights and combating poverty, but notes that there is room for improvement, especially in the analysis of data, so that measures which could hamper the position of women can be avoided;
9. Believes that the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming in development cooperation policies depends on sensitivity to gender issues on the part of the Member States and EU institutions involved; believes that this implies that achieving the goals in the Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010 (COM(2006)0092) within the EU is a necessary pre-condition for efficient gender mainstreaming in development cooperation;
10. Stresses the need to focus not only on women, but also on gender relations, especially social relations between men and women that generate and perpetuate gender inequalities; believes that as a consequence, projects should target men as well as women;
11. Emphasises that globalisation processes should offer poor countries new opportunities and take into account women's specific needs, as women are often unskilled workers and therefore, socially disadvantaged;
12. Calls on the Commission to put forward practical proposals as to how, in the context of an increasingly globalised world, jobs and livelihoods can be created for the large numbers of unskilled women in developing countries;

13. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take action in development cooperation with concrete and measurable effects on gender relations, amending laws, institutions and existing patriarchal patterns, increasing budgetary resources and improving social and economic conditions for women;
14. Calls on the Member States and the Commission, as employers in developing countries, to take account of the principle of work consistent with human dignity by increasing wages in accordance with Recommendation 135 of the International Labour Organisation concerning minimum wage fixing, with special reference to developing countries;
15. Welcomes the proposals to promote the protection of the labour and civil rights of casual workers and to promote the participation of women in trade union movements in order to better mitigate the difficulties women face at work;
16. Urges the Commission, when drawing up development cooperation policies, to support measures to strengthen the legal status of women, further promoting equal access to decent work as well as fundamental human and social rights, and paying particular attention to the increasing number of migrant women and their increasing vulnerability, so that women do not become the new exploited class of society;
17. Calls on the Commission to evaluate the potential effect of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) from the gender perspective;
18. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure coherence between development cooperation policy and other Community policies (such as trade policy and agriculture policy) in order to prevent adverse inter-policy interference, especially as regards measures designed to empower women;
19. Points out that the ability of women to influence the development of their own lives is contingent on their education; emphasises the importance of gender-sensitive education programmes targeting both women and men;
20. Calls on the Commission to undertake a gender analysis at every stage of policy design, implementation and evaluation so as to ensure that all forms of gender-based discrimination are eliminated and so as to protect and promote women's human rights;
21. Calls on the Commission to develop an assessment of the consequences that the new aid modalities have had on the situation of women, taking into account the fact that the focus on women and gender equality has lessened, partly as a result of this new development trend;
22. Welcomes the Commission's call for gender sensitive performance indicators to be developed and calls for the inclusion of such indicators in all DCI and European Development Fund Country Strategy Papers as well as in the assessment of outcomes during mid-term and final reviews of such strategies; calls on the Commission to develop low cost, transparent and readily interpretable parameters in the form of quantitatively measurable and qualitative indicators so that it can assess progress towards equality and the empowerment for women regularly and effectively; invites the Commission to raise in dialogues with third countries awareness of the importance of gender-aggregated and

comparable data; supports the gender disaggregated indicators in Annex VII as a good basis to develop a comprehensive instruments to measure results;

23. Welcomes the fact that the Commission's strategy takes into account the phenomenon of gender-based violence;
24. Stresses that violence against women is not only a women's issue and that it needs an approach that focuses on men as well as on women; while welcoming programmes addressing female victims, urges the Commission and the Member States to develop programmes addressing male abusers, thus addressing the causes and not merely the effects of this phenomenon;
25. Welcomes the Commission's initiative of raising awareness of violence against women by means of increased media coverage of this issue and the training of military, law-enforcement and judicial personnel; urges, however, that more attention be paid to measures targeting trafficking in human beings, torture and harmful traditional practices, with an emphasis on female genital mutilation, honour crimes and early and forced marriage, and insists on increasing the number of female personnel in institutions which directly assist victims of these practices.
26. Welcomes the express link between women and HIV (in terms of increasing rate of infection) spelt out in the abovementioned Commission Communication on gender equality and women empowerment in development cooperation; believes that an express call to Members States to meet the financial commitments they have made in this field should have been conducted;
27. Invites the Commission and the Member States to develop specific, time-bound and measurable commitments — backed by the allocation of adequate resources — to achieve universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support for all women and girls by 2010;
28. Welcomes the strong reaffirmation of the linkage between HIV/AIDS policies and programmes and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) policies and services in the abovementioned Commission Communication on gender equality and women empowerment in development cooperation;
29. Calls on the Commission to strengthen its political leadership role in SRHR policies and to increase funding for SRHR, in order to help countries to achieve the MDGs, in particular the goal of universal access to reproductive health under the MDG on improving maternal health (MDG 5), and to address currently neglected women's SRHR issues, such as obstetric and traumatic fistula;
30. Points out that the discrimination suffered by women and girls serves to increase their risk of contracting HIV, since their low social status makes it difficult for them to take their own decisions on matters relating to sexuality;
31. Deplores in the strongest possible terms the virtual chattel status of women trapped under Sharia Law, and regards this oppression as representing the diametric opposite of every principle this Report holds to be of paramount importance;

32. Welcomes the fact that the Commission Communication recognises the importance of supporting research into microbicides and vaccines (which are the most promising technologies for women) and calls on the EU to further ensure the inclusion of AIDS vaccine and Microbicides Research and Development within the broader development and gender equality agendas;
33. Considers that empowering women by ensuring full access to sexual and reproductive health information, services and supplies puts them in a better position to negotiate safe sex and protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV; supports the measures proposed by the Commission to protect women from STDs, especially the financial support for the development of microbicides and vaccines and the measures proposed relating to reproductive health and rights;
34. Encourages the Member States to promote the inclusion of prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) within the package of comprehensive approaches to combating HIV;
35. Emphasises the importance of putting women at the centre of water supply, sanitation and hygiene and emphasises, therefore, the importance of increasing access to safe drinking water, adequate sanitation and water for productive uses;
36. Criticises strongly the fact that measures to combat traditional practices involving violence against women are not part of the Commission's strategy; condemns any legal, cultural and religious practices that discriminate against women, exclude them from political and public life and segregate them in their daily lives, as well as those that condone rape, domestic violence, forced marriage, unequal rights in divorce proceedings, honour killings, any obligation against the woman's own will to observe specific dress codes, harassment for not conforming to gender-related norms or rules, trafficking and forced labour; urges the Commission and Member States to combat these practices in development cooperation policies; calls on the Commission to make strenuous efforts to support information and advocacy programmes that raise public awareness and change the climate of public opinion in country programming and to make the measures that are taken to fight against all forms of violence against women, including traditional harmful practices, a criteria of good governance of partner countries;
37. Notes with alarm the Report of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) on the State of the World Population last year, which admits there is a global deficit of 60 000 000 women in the world, and that these 'missing' females have been prenatally sex-selected, aborted, and infanticised out of existence;
38. Calls on the Commission and Member States to implement the Brussels Call to Action to Address Sexual Violence in Conflict and Beyond;
39. Urges the Commission to make sexual and reproductive health and rights in crises and conflict areas, including the fight against sexual violence, a priority in the humanitarian phase as well as in post-war reconstruction;
40. Stresses the need to complement the image of women as vulnerable victims with an image of women as a highly differentiated group of social actors, who possess valuable resources

and capacities and who have their own agendas; women influence the course of things, and they must shape the development process;

41. Considers that the participation of women in decision-making processes at all levels is a necessary condition for good governance and welcomes all kinds of support measures, such as incentives to meet quotas, support for women's movements and organisations and the active promotion of women's rights in the Country Strategy Papers; reiterates the need to increase the role of women in political decision-making and to ensure the full participation and involvement of women in all efforts for the promotion of peace and conflict resolution; furthermore supports the recommendations of UNSCR 1325 (2000);
42. Calls on the EU to increase efforts aimed at implementing UNSCR 1325 (2000), which calls for an increased participation of women at all decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes;
43. Stresses that rape has been used as a weapon of war and that this phenomenon needs to be addressed through support programmes for victims;
44. Calls on the Commission to make strenuous efforts to take full account of gender equality in country programming; stresses that considerable work is still needed to incorporate gender equality as a horizontal task into the day-to-day practice of EU development cooperation; calls on the Commission to pursue gender balance within Commission delegations by appointing more women, including in top positions such as Head of Delegation;
45. Emphasises the potential of micro-credit as a tool that development cooperation policies can use to promote the development of local communities and women's empowerment;
46. Calls on the Commission to develop policies that encourage women to form self help groups and set up on their own and, in collaboration with international organisations (such as Finance PlaNet), to expand the microfinance network so that more women can take out loans in order to improve their economic status;
47. Calls on the Commission to provide clear information on available mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the present strategy, including monitoring the financial and human resources that will be allocated to ensure effective implementation;
48. Points out that at national level, gender equality is more likely to be achieved if there are sufficient financial resources and qualified gender equality specialists, especially local specialists, as part of project teams;
49. Urges the Commission to give their staff members working in development countries training in gender issues;
50. Welcomes the measures proposed by the Commission in the field of education, considering that women's empowerment through an increased level of education improves the situation of both women and their children;

51. Stresses the need to further promote access to education and vocational training at all levels for girls, in order to prevent early 'dropout' and to support education policies that are equitable and of a high standard, by providing teachers with training in gender issues and supporting reform of the curriculum to include gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and women's empowerment issues, as in a majority of developing countries girls continue to face discrimination with regard to access to schooling;
52. Points out that the strategy in the area of EU actions at international and regional level regrettably includes no EU stance on the reform of the UN in the area of gender equality;
53. Welcomes the establishment of the EC/UN Partnership on Gender Equality for Development and Peace<sup>1</sup>, stresses its interest of the European Parliament in being informed and involved in the work developed by this Partnership;
54. Emphasises the importance of encouraging donor coordination for gender mainstreaming and, improving dialogue and communication to achieve a common understanding of gender concepts and appropriate methodology;
55. Welcomes the Commission's intention to link the disbursement of budget support funds to performance criteria assessed on the basis of gender-disaggregated outcome indicators; insists, however, that decisions penalising incompetent administrative authorities must be carefully taken in order not to affect adversely the final beneficiaries of aid, namely women;
56. Emphasises that participation alone does not serve to reduce women's inequality, but that only targeted, effective efforts on the ground can overcome all the obstacles to women's participation;
57. Points out that good governance includes respect for fundamental freedoms and treating women's rights and gender equality as basic fundamental rights and that these are central to achieving the MDGs and other development goals,
58. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Governments and Parliaments of the Member States.

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<sup>1</sup> The "EC/UN Partnership on Gender Equality for Development and Peace" is an initiative that involves the European Commission (EC), the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITCILO). It is a follow-up to the "Owning Development. Promoting Gender Equality in New Aid Modalities and Partnerships" conference that was jointly organized by the European Commission and UNIFEM in November 2005.

## EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

In fundamental terms, your rapporteur welcomes the Commission strategy. The Commission communication takes account of many of the recommendations made by civil society organisations. Nevertheless, your rapporteur feels that key aspects have been neglected and that many of the calls made in the communication are half-hearted. She draws attention to the need to scrutinise closely the way in which the EU and the Member States implement the communication, with a view to ensuring that its proposals do not simply look good on paper but are actually put into practice.

### Background

Gender equality and equal access to resources for men and women are of decisive importance to sustainable development. In Africa, for example, women make up 52% of the total population, but perform 75% of agricultural work and produce and market 60 to 80% of the food. Despite this, more than two-thirds of illiterate people in the world are women and in developing countries girls are 11% less likely than boys to attend a secondary school. In sub-Saharan Africa, women earn only 10% of income and own only 1% of assets. Women are also marginalised when it comes to decision-making. Although they make up half the electorate, they hold only 12% of parliamentary seats. Health statistics reveal an even more dramatic gulf between the sexes. In sub-Saharan Africa 60% of HIV-positive adults are women; girls account for 75% of all new cases of Aids infection among young people. In wars between States or in domestic conflicts, the first victims are always the weakest in society, i.e. women, children and the elderly. Women and young girls are vulnerable because their biological nature exposes them to risks relating to their reproductive health and sexually transmitted diseases, in particular Aids, whilst in times of war or conflict it is very difficult to gain access to reproductive health services.

### The updated Commission strategy

The strategy proposes practical measures in five areas fundamental to the promotion of equality: responsible governance, employment, education, health and violence against women. The strategy contains guidelines for the more systematic integration of gender equality issues into development policy and illustrates just how effective direct budgetary aid can be in supporting measures to foster gender equality.

As one of a series of measures designed to improve the coordination of the development aid provided by the Member States and the Commission, the communication entitled 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation' sketches out for the first time a European strategy to foster gender equality and women's empowerment. With a view to achieving that objective, the EU strategy identifies three areas for action: firstly, 41 practical measures are proposed in the areas of responsible governance, employment, education, health and violence against women. Your rapporteur welcomes the fact that the Commission has described the 41 measures in detail and makes strengthening the role of women central to effective governance. However, not all of the 41 measures have been clearly defined: whilst some parameters leave no room whatsoever for interpretation, in your rapporteur's view the wording of measures dealing with trade policy has deliberately been kept vague.

Secondly, the strategy calls for more effective account to be taken of gender equality as a horizontal task in political dialogue with partner countries. This goal should be achieved by establishing genuine partnerships for dialogue on gender-related issues and development involving governments, civil society, academics and international organisations. In this area, what is missing from the communication are practical proposals as to how sustainable dialogue with civil society can be developed.

Gender-related issues must be incorporated more effectively into development cooperation itself. In that connection, your rapporteur draws attention to the failure to include in the country strategy documents proper measures to implement gender mainstreaming. When cooperation strategies are devised and implemented, much greater account should be taken of the key role played by women in generating economic growth and fostering development. The strategy proposes that every measure should be assessed on the basis of its contribution to gender equality with a view to ensuring that individual development projects tackle gender-related issues more effectively.

As regards the accountability requirement, your rapporteur would like to point out that in its communication the Commission fails to highlight its own accountability vis-à-vis European citizens and the European Parliament. All the bodies and groups involved in development policy, from the media to national governments, are reminded of their responsibility and accountability, whilst the Commission skates over its own role.

Thirdly, the strategy assesses what additional benefits for gender equality budgetary aid for developing countries, or aid in specific areas such as health or education, can bring by comparison with the funding of individual projects. In that connection, your rapporteur points out that the communication fails to make clear where the money would come from and how it would be allocated. A reference to the funds involved would make the Commission's statements in the communication more convincing.

### **Significant criticisms**

At this point your rapporteur will briefly develop her most significant criticisms of the strategy:

#### *The strategy and economic and trade policy*

It is unfortunate that the strategy fails to mention the EPAs (Economic Partnership Agreements). At no point is reference made to the link between strengthening the role of women and the economic agreements between the EU and the ACP States – not even when the Commission makes clear its view that ‘although trade liberalisation has had a positive impact on most economies in the long term, it may also result in short-term negative consequences for vulnerable groups’.

#### *‘Harmful traditional practices’ – traditional practices involving violence against women*

Many traditional customs violate young girls' fundamental rights – to education, to personal development and to freedom from bodily harm. Genital mutilation, arranged marriages, honour killings, dowry killings – these human rights violations symbolise the massive discrimination suffered by women in societies where such traditions are maintained. Your



rapporteur deplores the fact that the 41 measures set out in the Commission strategy do not include efforts to combat these forms of violence.

*Women in weak states and the least-developed countries (LDCs)*

In the strategy, the Commission fails to comment on the specific role played by women in weak states and the LDCs. In weak states, women's already low social status is further undermined by instability and/or the non-existence of organisational structures designed to safeguard the well-being of the population.

*Women and agriculture – European agricultural policy*

The Commission strategy and the Council conclusions both refer to the key role played by women in agriculture. Your rapporteur criticises the fact that the analysis of this issue fails to take account of the EU's highly subsidised common agricultural policy, which is responsible, amongst other things, for destroying agricultural markets in the developing countries.

22.11.2007

**OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY  
(\* )**

for the Committee on Development

on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Development Cooperation  
(2007/2182(INI))

Draftswoman (\*): Gabriela Crețu

(\* ) Procedure with associated committees – Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

**SUGGESTIONS**

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

- A. whereas women are vulnerable to marital discrimination and to discrimination in terms of access to immovable property and land ownership as well as to resources and control thereof,
- B. whereas many women are denied access to basic health *care* services, education at all levels, economic independence, careers, participation in decision-making processes, etc.,
- C. whereas gender inequalities tend to lead to further inequalities, with negative consequences for women's well-being, their families, their communities and their personal development potential,
- D. whereas, in most countries, gender-related actions are not regarded as a high priority, gender being seen as a subsidiary issue and cultural, religious and socio-economic practices being used as excuses for obstructing progress in the area of gender equality and women's rights,
- E. whereas it has been proved that empowering women accelerates the meeting of all the other Millennium Development Goals in reducing poverty and improving demographic, social and economic indicators,

- F. whereas the efficiency of some projects hitherto implemented has been hampered by weaknesses specific to various countries: fragile local and national administration, corrupt governments or lack of expertise and trained personnel to deal with the problems related to women's empowerment and gender equality,
1. Commends the general approach of the Commission as a good basis on which the European Union and its Member States could mainstream gender in their development cooperation programmes in order to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women as the main instrument for enhancing human rights and combating poverty, but notes that there is room for improvement, especially in analysing the data in order to avoid taking measures which could hamper the position of women;
  2. Believes that the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming in development cooperation policies depends on sensitivity to gender issues on the part of the Member States and European Union institutions involved; this implies that achieving the goals set by the Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010 (COM(2006)0092) within the EU is a necessary pre-condition for efficient gender mainstreaming in development cooperation;
  3. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take action in development cooperation with concrete and measurable effects on gender relations (modifying laws, institutions *and* existing patriarchal patterns, increasing budgetary resources and improving social and economic conditions for women);
  4. Stresses the need to focus not only on women but also on gender relations, i.e., social relations between men and women that generate and perpetuate gender inequalities; as a consequence, projects should target men as well as women;
  5. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure coherence between development cooperation policy and other Community policies (e.g. trade, agriculture) in order to prevent negative interference, especially regarding measures designed to empower women;
  6. Considers that women's participation in decision-making processes at all levels is a necessary condition for good governance and welcomes all kinds of support interventions, such as incentives to meet quotas, support for women's movements and organisations, active promotion of women's rights in the CSPs, etc.; reiterates the need to increase the role of women in political decision-making and to ensure the full participation and involvement of women in all efforts for the promotion of peace and conflict resolution, and supports the recommendations of UNSCR 1325 (2000);
  7. Asks the Commission to develop an assessment of the consequences that the new aid modalities have had on women's condition, taking into account the fact that the focus on women and gender equality has lessened, partly as a result of this new development trend;
  8. Welcomes the Commission's intention to link the disbursement of budget support funds to performance criteria assessed on the basis of gender-disaggregated outcome indicators; insists however that decisions on punishing incompetent administrations

must be carefully taken in order not to affect the final beneficiaries of aid, i.e. women;

9. Calls on the Commission to develop policies that encourage women to form self help groups and set up on their own and, in collaboration with international organisations (such as Finance PlaNet), to expand the microfinance network, so that more women can access loans in order to improve their economic status;
10. Urges the Commission, when drawing up development cooperation policies, to support measures to strengthen the legal status of women, further promoting equal access to decent work as well as fundamental human and social rights, and paying particular attention to the increasing number and vulnerability of migrant women, in order to avoid women becoming the new exploited class of society;
11. Welcomes the measures proposed by the Commission in the field of education, considering that women's empowerment through a raised level of education improves the conditions of both women and their children;
12. Stresses the need to further promote girls' access to education and vocational training at all levels, to prevent early dropout and to support education policies that are equitable and of a high standard, by providing teachers with training in gender issues and supporting reform of the curriculum to include gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and women's empowerment issues, as in a majority of developing countries girls continue to face discrimination with regards to access to schooling;
13. Considers that empowering women by ensuring full access to sexual and reproductive health information, services and supplies puts them in a better position to negotiate safe sex and protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV; supports the measures proposed by the Commission, especially the financial support for the development of microbicides and vaccines which protect women from STDs, and the measures for reproductive health and rights;
14. Stresses that violence against women is not only a women's issue and that it needs an approach that focuses on men as well as on women; while welcoming programmes addressing female victims, urges the Commission and the Member States to develop programmes addressing male abusers, thus treating the causes and not merely the effects of this phenomenon;
15. Welcomes the Commission's initiative of raising awareness of violence against women through increasing media coverage and training military, law-enforcement and judicial personnel; urges however that more attention be given to measures targeting trafficking in human beings, torture and harmful traditional practices, with an emphasis on female genital mutilation, honour crimes and early and forced marriage and insists on increasing the number of female personnel in the institutions which directly assist victims.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	20.11.2007
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 16 -: 0 0: 7
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Edit Bauer, Hiltrud Breyer, Ilda Figueiredo, Věra Flasarová, Livia Járóka, Piia-Noora Kauppi, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Esther De Lange, Roselyne Lefrançois, Siiri Oviir, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, Zita Pleštinská, Anni Podimata, Christa Prets, Teresa Riera Madurell, Eva-Britt Svensson, Anna Záborská
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Jill Evans, Iratxe García Pérez, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg, Donata Gottardi, Anna Hedh, Filiz Hakaeva Hyusmenova
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote</b>	

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	29.1.2008
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+ : 18 - : 13 0 : 1
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Thijs Berman, Josep Borrell Fontelles, Marie-Arlette Carlotti, Corina Crețu, Marek Aleksander Czarnecki, Nirj Deva, Koenraad Dillen, Fernando Fernández Martín, Alain Hutchinson, Romana Jordan Cizelj, Madeleine Jouye de Grandmaison, Filip Kaczmarek, Glenys Kinnock, Maria Martens, Gay Mitchell, Luisa Morgantini, Horst Posdorf, José Ribeiro e Castro, Toomas Savi, Frithjof Schmidt, Jürgen Schröder, Feleknas Uca, Johan Van Hecke, Jan Zahradil
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Gabriela Crețu, Sorin Frunzaverde, Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez, Manolis Mavrommatis, Atanas Paparizov, Anne Van Lancker, Ralf Walter, Renate Weber
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote</b>	Catherine Neris