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# REPORT

on empowering girls through education in the EU  
(2014/2250(INI))

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Rapporteur: Liliana Rodrigues

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## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

### on empowering girls through education in the EU (2014/2250(INI))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child,
- having regard to Articles 2 and 3(3), second subparagraph, of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR),
- having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 18 December 1979,
- having regard to Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women on 15 September 1995 and to the subsequent outcome documents adopted at the United Nations Beijing+5 (2005), Beijing +15 (2010) and Beijing +20 (2015) special sessions,
- having regard to the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020), adopted by the European Council in March 2011,
- having regard to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) of May 2011,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 21 September 2010 entitled ‘Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015’ (COM(2010)0491),
- having regard to its resolution of 12 March 2013 on eliminating gender stereotypes in the EU<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation, and to Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services,
- having regard to Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2013)0074.

23 September 2002 amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions,

- having regard to its resolution of 10 March 2015 on progress in the European Union in 2013 with respect to gender equality<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to the independent report of 2009 commissioned by the Commission’s Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC),
  - having regard to Recommendation CM/Rec(2007) of 13 October 2010, by the Committee of Ministers to the Member States, on gender mainstreaming in education,
  - having regard to the ‘Compilation of good practices to promote an education free from gender stereotypes and identifying ways to implement the measures which are included in the Committee of Ministers’ Recommendation on gender mainstreaming in education’ (revised 12 March 2015), promoted by the Council of Europe,
  - having regard to Recommendation Rec(2003)3 of the Council of Ministers to the Member States on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making, adopted on 12 March 2003,
  - having regard to the communication from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) entitled ‘Women and the World of Work’, for International Women’s Day 2015,
  - having regard to the ‘European Union lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender survey’ published by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in 2013,
  - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality and the opinion of the Committee on Culture and Education (A8-0206/2015),
- A. whereas education is the foundation of responsible citizenship, is essential to ensure gender equality and empowerment of girls, and is a fundamental human right and the right of every child;
- B. whereas education and training of girls and women is an important European value, a fundamental human right and an essential element for the empowerment of girls and women on the social, cultural and professional levels, as well as for the full enjoyment of all other social, economic, cultural and political rights and subsequently the prevention of violence against women and girls;
- C. whereas education can transform a society and contribute to social, economic, political and gender equality;
- D. whereas according to a study conducted by Parliament’s Directorate-General for Internal Policies, 30 million girls of primary school age are excluded from the education system

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA-PROV(2015)0050.

worldwide;

- E. whereas poverty, social exclusion and the inadequacy or poor availability of pre-school, school and out-of-school networks are among the biggest obstacles preventing girls from gaining access to education;
- F. whereas only states are able to provide free compulsory universal education, which is a sine qua non for guaranteeing equal opportunities for both sexes;
- G. whereas budget cuts in the education sector, stemming to a large extent from the austerity policies advocated by the EU, are jeopardising free high-quality public education and thus serving to exacerbate inequalities;
- H. whereas quality public education should be free and available to all children, without any discrimination and regardless of their residence status;
- I. whereas poverty has a strong influence on equal access to education due to the costs, both direct and indirect, of sending children to school, and access to education, in particular higher education, is especially difficult for young people from low-income families, which leads to a reinforcement of the traditional preference for education for boys;
- J. whereas gender stereotypes assign different, determined and limited roles to women and men and these roles are shaped through a multiplicity of social variables and disseminated or reproduced by parents, education and media; whereas these gender roles are integrated by individuals during the socialisation phases of childhood and adolescence and therefore influence their lives and might limit women's and men's personal development;
- K. whereas the impact of gender stereotypes on education and training and decisions made by students at school can influence choices throughout their lives and subsequently has strong implications for the labour market, where women still face both horizontal and vertical segregation; whereas this contributes to certain sectors still being considered 'male' and their pay levels consequently being higher than those of sectors considered 'female';
- L. considering the significant influence of the social environment, family attitudes, peers, role models and teachers, as well as of centres for tutoring and advice on course choice, on the selection of students' study areas and changing gender stereotypes, and given that teachers as agents of social change, by their attitudes and teaching practices, are essential to the promotion of gender equality, diversity and mutual understanding and respect; also considering that schoolteachers can reach out to parents and raise their awareness on gender equality and their children's potential;
- M. whereas gender equality should be incorporated into all levels and facets of education in order to promote, among girls and boys, women and men, the values of justice and democratic citizenship, in order to build a genuine partnership between the genders with regard to both public and private spheres;
- N. whereas there is a need for more women role models in male-dominated fields such as science, engineering, technology, mathematics, and entrepreneurship, and mentoring

networks and peer-to-peer learning are effective in empowering girls in these fields;

- O. whereas the available data attest that women are less well rewarded financially for their qualifications and experience than men and women continue to be responsible for the greater part of care for family and other dependents, which limits their access to paid full-time employment; whereas gender equality should involve the recognition of all the work done by women and the education of boys and men in the tasks which are traditionally feminised; whereas progress on childcare support and maternity and paternity leave policies throughout Europe will contribute to women's employment prospects, economic empowerment, and the fight against gender stereotypes, thus empowering girls at all levels of education;
- P. whereas, even though more women have advanced secondary school diplomas and higher education degrees, both their educational fields and their professional activities are mainly related to tasks aimed at reproducing and extending existing social and economic structures, and there is a need to increase the presence of women both in vocational education and in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)-related sectors;
- Q. whereas a more equal allocation of educational resources would result in greater access for girls to the labour market, and a balanced participation of women and men in the working market could foster the EU's economic prospects;
- R. whereas European and national authorities should encourage gender equality in educational institutions by all possible means, and gender education should be a fundamental part of the curriculum and school programmes; whereas European and national authorities must ensure that teaching materials do not contain discriminatory content;
- S. whereas the formal curriculum reflects the cultural and social perspective of each Member State and influences the construction of girls' and boys' identity; whereas the informal curriculum complements the formal curriculum while the hidden curriculum is common to all situational definitions of the curriculum; whereas all these types of curricula are important in the construction of girls' and boys' identity, and local authorities, through their proximity to educational institutions, have a key role to play in informal education;
- T. whereas, in order to fight gender inequality, constant pedagogical supervision of curricula, development aims and learning outcomes, content, strategies, materials, evaluation, disciplinary programmes and lesson plans is essential, as well as monitoring and evaluation by educational research centres and specialists in gender equality;
- U. whereas violence against women is the main impediment to equality between women and men and can be combated through education; whereas not all Member States have ratified the Istanbul Convention and the EU has responsibilities in terms of initiating and funding projects that promote gender equality;
- V. whereas school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) includes acts of sexual, physical and/or psychological violence inflicted on children because of gendered stereotypes and social norms; whereas SRGBV is a major barrier to access, participation and attainment;

- W. whereas women and girls with disabilities and/or special educational needs are exposed to multiple discrimination; whereas the situation of girls can only be improved when access to high-quality education and training is equal and not determined or hindered by this discrimination and is fully in keeping with the principles of inclusion;
- X. whereas significant disproportionalities exist in the identification of special educational needs (SEN); whereas boys are universally more likely to be identified as having special needs, especially ‘non-normative’ difficulties such as attention deficiency syndrome (ADS) or dyslexia where professional judgment plays a larger role in identification;
- Y. whereas 17 % of adults worldwide, two-thirds (493 million) of them women, are unable to read or write;<sup>1</sup>

### **General recommendations**

1. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to implement and improve measures to apply gender equality at all levels of the education system, and to fully integrate improving awareness of gender issues into teacher training, but also for all categories of school professionals, e.g. school doctors, nurses, psychologists, social workers and pedagogues, as well as to ensure the creation of mechanisms throughout the education system to facilitate the promotion, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of gender equality in educational institutions;
2. Calls on the Member States to promote the democratisation of education and the other conditions necessary in order to ensure that education, whether provided through schools or by other means of instruction, helps to bring about gender equality and equal opportunities, overcome economic, social, and cultural inequalities, foster personal development and a spirit of tolerance, solidarity, and responsibility, and facilitate social progress and democratic participation in the life of the community;
3. Calls on the Member States to ensure that the goals of their education systems include education in respect for fundamental rights and freedoms and in equal rights and opportunities for women and men and that their systems’ quality principles include the elimination of the obstacles to genuine equality between women and men and the promotion of full equality between them;
4. Calls for the promotion of a holistic approach to formal and informal education in schools, and of a sensitive approach to the inclusion of human rights, human dignity, gender equality and the development of self-esteem and assertiveness which encourages autonomous and informed decision-making for girls and women, both at a personal and at a professional level; recognises that education for gender equality must complement civic education for democratic values, and be embedded in a rights-based gender-sensitive learning environment, where girls and boys can learn about their rights and experience democratic processes in schools and in informal learning environments by, for example, participating in the democratic governance of their schools;
5. Calls on educational policymakers in the Commission and the Member States to ensure

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<sup>1</sup> <https://europa.eu/eyd2015/it/eu-european-parliament/posts/every-girl-and-woman-has-right-education>

that the commitment to gender equality goes beyond declarations of principles and political intentions, and is manifested in substantial increases in the efforts and resources invested in it, recalling the primary importance of education in effecting cultural change;

6. Points out that while women represent the majority (60 %) of higher education graduates in the EU, their employment rate and promotion trajectories do not reflect their full potential; stresses that the achievement of inclusive and long-term economic growth depends on closing the gap between women's educational attainment and their position in the labour market, primarily through overcoming horizontal and vertical segregation;
7. Emphasises that education is an important tool for enabling women to participate fully in social and economic development; stresses that lifelong learning measures are key to providing women with skills that can enable them to return to employment or improve their employment, income and working conditions;
8. Calls on the Member States to increase essential investment in education in order that everyone may benefit from free public education of high quality;
9. Calls on the Member States to ensure that their education authorities guarantee an equal right to education for women and men by actively incorporating the principle of equal treatment into educational goals and actions, thus preventing the emergence of inequalities between women and men as a result of sexist conduct and associated social stereotyping;
10. Asks the Commission to ensure that this recommendation be put to the national institutions responsible for implementing central, regional and local education policies, school management bodies and regional and local authorities;
11. Stresses the need to promote equal gender representation in terms of the leadership and management of bodies responsible for the oversight and governance of educational establishments, especially among school managers and heads and where there is under-representation as in STEM subjects, as this will provide role models for girls;
12. Stresses that girls who are not allowed to attend school are more exposed to domestic violence;
13. Urges the Commission to initiate as soon as possible the procedure for EU accession to the Istanbul Convention; calls on the Member States to ratify the Convention, and also calls for the EU and the Member States to work together for gender equality in the Union's external relations; underlines the close links between gender stereotypes and bullying, cyberbullying and violence against women, and the need to fight these from an early age; stresses that the Istanbul Convention calls for signatories to include teaching materials on issues such as non-stereotyped gender roles, mutual respect, non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships, gender-based violence and the right to personal integrity, adapted to the evolving capacity of learners, in formal curricula and at all levels of education;
14. Encourages all Member States to invest consistently in information, awareness-raising and educational campaigns and to improve the provision of career guidance for girls and boys, addressing stereotyped perceptions of gender roles, as well as gender stereotypes in

vocational and professional orientation, notably in science and new technologies; recalls that this would reduce gender segregation on the labour market and strengthen the position of women whilst permitting them to benefit fully from the human capital represented by girls and women in the EU and promoting discussions of educational and career choices in schools and in the classroom;

15. Recalls the role of educational teams in assisting and advising families in relation to children's school careers, with the aim of setting them on a path which matches their skills, talents and tastes; stresses that the stage at which advice on school careers is given is a decisive one and a time when gender stereotypes may come into play, and that this can lastingly affect girls' ability to pursue a professional career that will facilitate their personal development and emancipation;
16. Calls on the Commission to organise, via the Member States, specific awareness training programmes targeting girls regarding their participation in higher education and possible courses of study, with corresponding job opportunities on the basis of their aptitudes, in order to encourage them to pursue career options which have been traditionally male-dominated and to boost the self-confidence of the new generation of women; underlines that informal education plays a key role in confidence-building for girls and young women;
17. Calls on the Member States to draw on ESI funds to support programmes which work actively with the parents of children from excluded communities and to encourage meaningful and stimulating activities outside school hours and during the school holidays;
18. Calls on the Member States to encourage the promotion of public networks of nurseries and creches, the pre-school education system, and public leisure services for children;
19. Calls on the Member States to improve the quality of education and professional training for people with disabilities and/or special educational needs (SEN), as well as reducing their high dropout rates, and to respect the principles of inclusive education, with an emphasis on these pupils' active participation, and to improve their integration in society and in the general education system where possible; calls for the immediate improvement of teacher training to this end and the integration of a gender perspective into such training, as well as in the identification of learning difficulties, including the development of gender-sensitive screening tools and of specific gender-mainstreamed education programmes in order to provide the women and girls concerned with better opportunities when seeking employment and to empower them to overcome multiple discrimination;
20. Calls on the Member States to ensure equal access to education for girls and boys, regardless of their age, gender, socio-economic status, cultural background or religion, and emphasises the need for European, national, and local institutions to promote specific programmes to integrate marginalised communities in general in schools as well as, in particular, girls from those communities, since they often face multiple discrimination, and all minorities in European society; highlights the importance of ensuring that girls complete their secondary education, and emphasises the need for financial assistance programmes for economically disadvantaged families in order to prevent students dropping out of school, particularly girls;

21. Calls on the Member States to provide the active support necessary to ensure that migrant women and their families can be taught the language of their host country in locally based, free public education services;
22. Calls on the Member States to develop specific programmes to ensure that Roma girls and young women remain in primary, secondary and higher education, and also to put in place special measures for teenage mothers and early school leaver girls, to support uninterrupted education in particular, and to provide work-based training; further calls on the Member States and the Commission to take these measures into account when coordinating and evaluating the National Roma Integration Strategies;
23. Stresses the importance of including in development cooperation projects measures targeting the education of girls and women;
24. Stresses the importance of focusing particular attention on the principle of equality between women and men within curricula and at all stages of education;

### **Curriculum and training**

25. Insists on paying proper attention to gender equality in all its forms, in curricula, development aims and learning outcomes, content, school programmes and lesson plans, as well as on the need to assess the place of women in school curricula in various disciplines, highlighting their role in the content taught; considers that gender equality in education should explicitly address the principle of equality and must include a range of issues, such as literacy, bullying, violence, hate speech, human rights and civic education;
26. Stresses that education must help girls and boys to develop into individuals who are aware, balanced, respectful of other people and capable of empathy and mutual respect, in order to prevent discrimination, aggression and bullying;
27. Stresses that schools should help to develop an intercultural approach to education, in contrast to one geared to assimilation or multiculturalism, in order to promote openness, mutual respect and intercultural and interreligious dialogue;
28. Encourages the competent authorities in the Member States to promote gender equality in their comprehensive sex and relationship education programmes, including teaching girls and boys about relationships based on consent, respect and reciprocity, as well as in sport and leisure activities, where stereotypes and expectations based on gender can affect the self-image, health, acquisition of skills, intellectual development, social integration and identity construction of girls and boys;
29. Recognises that sensitive, age-appropriate, and scientifically accurate sex and relationship education is an essential tool in the empowerment of girls and boys, helping them to make well-informed choices and contributing to wider public health priorities such as reducing unplanned pregnancies, reducing maternal and infant mortality, prevention and earlier treatment of sexually transmitted infections, and reducing the gaps in health inequality; encourages Member States to consider making age-appropriate comprehensive sex and relationship education compulsory in their school curricula for all primary and secondary school children, and stresses the importance of training of teachers with a special

emphasis on respect for girls and women as well as on gender equality;

30. Calls for the implementation of sex and relationship education in curricular programmes aimed at empowering girls through awareness and control over their own bodies, while calling for all other curricular subjects to maintain coherence with these principles;
31. Calls on the Commission to combat discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in educational settings; urges the Commission to support the inclusion of objective information on LGBTI issues in school curricula; urges the Commission to facilitate peer learning amongst Member States in tackling homophobic and transphobic bullying and harassment;
32. Encourages girls and boys in the education process to take an equal interest in all subjects, beyond gendered stereotypes, in particular as regards scientific and technical subjects, including boys' learning about activities regarded as female, in areas such as domestic work and care, whilst also encouraging equal participation and representation in collective decision-making and school management, as well as in all extracurricular activities; calls on those involved to ensure that funding for these effective activities is protected;
33. Notes the need for measures to encourage the specific promotion of women in the fields of culture and the production and dissemination of artistic and intellectual works, combating the structural and widespread discrimination experienced by women in this sphere, fostering a balanced representation of women and men in public artistic and cultural activities, and providing for financial support and positive actions to correct situations of inequality in these areas;
34. Calls for the development of equal access, use of, and education on Information and Communication Technologies for girls and boys from pre-school education upwards, paying special attention to children and young people from rural areas, marginalised communities, and those with special needs, in order to improve digital literacy, disseminate effective educational policy instruments and improve teacher training so as to increase the number of female students and graduates in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics; in this context, welcomes all initiatives and programmes aiming to attract girls to those areas of study and the corresponding research careers;
35. Stresses the importance of putting in place educational measures with a view to recognising, and teaching people about, the role of women in history, science, politics, literature, the arts, education, etc;
36. Calls for every effort to be made to ensure that employment in the area of early childhood education, primary education and care is promoted as a valuable occupation for both women and men;
37. Calls on the Member States to develop or reinforce national regulations with a view to countering the negative influence of stereotyped gender roles arising from values conveyed through the media and advertising, which too often undermine the work done in schools in these areas;
38. Calls for complementary activities which strengthen the formal curriculum with regard to

gender equality and training for entrepreneurship, as well as the implementation of informal education programmes for gender education in the community via local authorities;

39. Calls for a renewed impetus to be given to accrediting informal education with a certificate of competence, and to providing a high-standard certificate of work-based learning in relation to vocational education, as this will assist girls and women in finding better jobs and entering or returning to the labour market, while ensuring that females are treated equally with males in terms of dignity and competence;
40. Calls on the authors and publishers of educational materials to be aware of the need to make gender equality a criterion for the production of these materials, recommending the use of teams of teachers and students in the creation of training materials on gender equality, and to seek advice from experts in the field of gender equality and gender-aware tutoring;
41. Calls on the Member States to prepare and disseminate guidelines for schools, education policymakers, teachers and those responsible for setting the curriculum in order to embrace a gender perspective and gender equality, and to ensure the elimination of stereotypes and sexist distortions that textbooks and teaching materials may include in their content, language or illustrations, encouraging them also to combat this sexism in literature, film, music, games, media, advertising and other areas that can contribute decisively to changing the attitudes, behaviour and identity of girls and boys;
42. Acknowledges that teachers play a major role in the formation of educational identities and have a significant impact on aspects of gendered behaviour in school; recalls that much has still to be done to empower teachers with regard to how they can best promote gender equality; insists, therefore, on the need to ensure comprehensive initial and ongoing equality training for teachers at all levels of formal and informal education, including peer learning and cooperation with external organisations and agencies, in order to build awareness of the impact of gender roles and stereotypes on their students' self-confidence and their subject choices during their studies; stresses that girls need to have positive female and male role models in schools and universities so that they can identify and make the best use of their own potential without fear of discrimination or ambiguity on grounds of gender;
43. Stresses the need to integrate the study and application of the principle of equality between women and men into both initial and ongoing training of teachers, including strategies for reflection on teachers' own identity, beliefs, values, prejudices, expectations, attitudes and gender representations, as well as on their teaching practices, in order to remove any obstacles to realising students' full potential, irrespective of gender;
44. Strongly believes in the transformative potential of education in championing gender equality; recognises that formal and informal education programmes must address and fight against gender-based violence, gender discrimination, harassment, homophobia and transphobia in all their forms, including forms of cyberbullying or online harassment; recognises that education for gender equality and against gender-based violence depends upon school environments that are safe and free from violence;

45. Stresses the need to organise awareness-raising initiatives, training and integration of the gender perspective, for all involved in education policy and also for parents and employers;
46. Calls on the Member States to take an intergenerational approach to education, and to ensure equal access to formal and informal education by integrating the supply of affordable and quality childcare in their educational systems, as well as care for the elderly and other dependents; calls on the Member States to engage in initiatives that reduce direct and indirect educational costs and to increase the capacity of all nurseries and creches, pre-school, school and after-school networks, in due respect of the principles of inclusion for children living in poverty or at risk of poverty; emphasises the importance of this in order to help all women and men, including single parents, balance family life with work and guarantee women's participation in lifelong learning and vocational education and training whilst subsequently creating role models for girls' empowerment;
47. Emphasises that any strategy for promoting gender equality and for the empowerment of girls and women must actively involve and engage boys and men;
48. Highlights the importance of public authorities promoting courses about and research into the significance and scope of gender equality, as part of third-level education, notably by including gender equality-related subjects in syllabuses, introducing specific postgraduate courses and furthering specialised studies and research in the field;
49. Calls on the EU institutions and the Member States to make progress on the mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates and other evidence of vocational qualifications issued in the various Member States, and on coordinating and harmonising national rules on access to various professions, so that emigrant women from within or outside the Union can get jobs appropriate to their training and qualifications;

### **Investment, monitoring and evaluation**

50. Notes the need for monitoring and evaluation by independent bodies of the progress made as a result of the adoption of gender equality policies in educational institutions, as well as the need for ongoing communication of information to local, regional, national and European policymakers, on all measures taken and progress made in this area, and the urgent need to convert the gender perspective into an internal and external evaluation element of educational institutions;
51. Highlights the important role of cooperation among different educational administrative bodies and of exchanges of good practice in terms of developing projects and programmes for promoting awareness of the principles of co-education and meaningful equality between women and men, and disseminating them among members of the education community;
52. Calls on the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) to continue its work on putting together comparable gender-disaggregated data and scoreboards in all policy areas, including in the field of education, and reiterates the importance of conducting impact studies for educational policies to address gender inequalities, providing qualitative and quantitative instruments for the assessment of this impact, and following a

budgetary strategy based on gender in order to promote both access and the right to educational resources;

53. Recognises that it is of fundamental importance to assess the impact of future education legislation on gender equality and, where necessary, to revise existing laws in accordance with this principle;
54. Stresses that the monitoring procedures for implementing gender equality programmes and the respective assessment must be carried out by educational research centres in close cooperation with experts in gender issues, the bodies set up by the EU and local authorities; Calls for quantitative and qualitative gender-disaggregated data to be collected by the Member States and the Commission;
55. Suggests the creation of an Annual European Award for Gender Equality for educational institutions which have excelled in attaining this objective, and encourages Member States to do the same at national level;
56. Stresses the need to draw up plans of action and to allocate resources for the implementation of gender-specific educational projects as well as gender-sensitive educational structures, recommending the use of European instruments available for this purpose, namely the Investment Plan, the Horizon 2020 Programme, and the EU Structural Funds, including the European Social Fund;
57. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments of the Member States.

6.5.2015

## **OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND EDUCATION**

for the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

on empowering girls through education in the EU  
(2014/2250(INI))

Rapporteur: Ernest Maragall

### **SUGGESTIONS**

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

1. Recalls that gender stereotyping and sexism remain the greatest obstacles to achievement of gender equality, and highlights the importance of combating gender stereotypes in terms of field of studies, academic curricula and performance in and through formal and informal education at all educational levels; also recalls that gendered perception of field of studies and career choices is a main factor of decision on training options; highlights the importance of providing motivation and enhancing girls' participation in science, engineering, technology, rural industries, ICT, creative industries and arts and crafts, and welcomes all initiatives and programmes aiming to attract girls to those areas of study and the corresponding research careers;
2. Calls on the Member States to develop or reinforce national regulations with a view to countering the negative influence of stereotyped gender roles arising from values conveyed through the media and advertising, which too often undermine the work done in schools in these areas;
3. Stresses the importance of informal education and intercultural dialogue when it comes to tackling the issue of beliefs and traditional practices imposing limitations on girls in education, and calls on the Member States to ensure equal access to education for boys and girls, regardless of their ethnic, national, social, cultural or religious background, in order to achieve real gender equality in access to quality education, through measures including actions aimed at reducing drop-out rates among girls; stresses the need to focus on groups suffering from multiple forms of discrimination, such as migrants, refugees, people with disabilities, young carers and others; highlights the importance of ensuring

that girls are not forced by family to leave school before completing their secondary education;

4. Calls for a renewed impetus to be given to accrediting informal education with a certificate of competence, and to providing a high-standard certificate of work-based learning in relation to vocational education, as this will assist girls and women in finding better jobs and entering or returning to the labour market, while ensuring that females are equated with males in terms of dignity and competence;
5. Stresses the need to provide a rights-based and gender-sensitive learning environment for all learners, both in terms of curriculum and pedagogy, in which children (girls in particular) can learn about their rights and experience democratic processes in schools and in informal learning environments; considers that this type of learning should pay special attention to gender equality, non-discrimination and European citizenship;
6. Considers that gender equality in education must include a range of issues, such as literacy, including media-literacy, bullying, including cyber-bullying, homophobic violence, hate speech, human rights and civic education;
7. Stresses that education must help boys and girls to develop into individuals who are aware, balanced, respectful of other people and capable of empathy and mutual respect, in order to prevent discrimination, aggression and bullying;
8. Stresses that schools should help to develop an intercultural approach to education, in contrast to one geared to assimilation or multiculturalism, in order to promote openness, mutual respect and intercultural and interreligious dialogue;
9. Acknowledges that teachers play a major role in the formation of educational identities and have a significant impact on aspects of gendered behaviour in school; recalls that much has yet to be done to empower teachers with regard to how they can best promote gender equality; insists, therefore, on the need to ensure comprehensive initial and ongoing equality training for teachers at all levels of formal and informal education, including peer-learning and cooperation with external organisations and agencies, in order to build awareness of the impact of gender roles and stereotypes on their students' self-confidence and their subject choices during their studies; stresses that girls need to have positive female and male role models in schools and universities so that they can identify and make the best use of their own potential without fear of discrimination or ambiguity on grounds of gender;
10. Stresses the importance of health and sexuality education, which must include teaching boys and girls about relationships based on gender equality, consent, respect and reciprocity, and teaching about women's and girls' rights, including those concerning reproductive and sexual health, as a way of preventing stereotypes and violence against women and girls;
11. Stresses the importance of including in development cooperation projects measures targeting the education of girls and women;
12. Recalls the need to ensure access to vocational education and training and adult education,

both formal and non-formal, for women who have had to interrupt their education or quit their jobs in order to take care of family members, and for single mothers, regardless of their level of competence (referring to both high- and low-skilled women); insists that such training should be attractive and flexible; and encourages any measure that concretely helps women to balance family life with work or training;

13. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to remove barriers to access to formal and informal education, and to lifelong learning, by improving awareness and guidance, providing financial support and other types of support, such as childcare and care for the elderly, in order to enable women and men to participate in lifelong learning, adopting an intergenerational approach and fostering the role played by the European institutions;
14. Calls on the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and the Member States to collect comparable gender-disaggregated data (both quantitative and qualitative) in the field of education in all Member States;
15. Considers that the EU structural funds and particularly the European Social Fund must support educational projects with a gender-specific nature and gender-sensitive educational structures;
16. Recalls that educational strategies aimed at ensuring gender equality must actively include boys and men;
17. Emphasises that education is an important tool for enabling women to participate fully in social and economic development; stresses that lifelong learning measures are key to providing women with skills that enable them to return to employment or improve their job, income and working conditions;
18. Recalls that education is a tool for empowering women to attain economic independence, which plays a crucial role in preventing violence against women and girls;
19. Recalls that poverty and low economic status have a strong impact on gender equality in education and have a disproportionate effect on girls' access to schools and universities; therefore, encourages Member State initiatives aimed at reducing direct and indirect educational costs for families in need;
20. Stresses that measures must be taken to ensure that girls with disabilities are given equal opportunities to access education at all levels, thereby providing them with better opportunities when seeking employment and empowering them to overcome multiple forms of discrimination; emphasises that education is an important tool for giving girls from disadvantaged groups the possibility of living a life free from marginalisation and as active members of society;
21. Calls on the Member States to integrate childcare and early childhood education into their educational systems, in order to enable parents to balance work and family life, thereby allowing children to receive gender-equality-based education from the earliest age;
22. Recalls the role of educational teams in assisting and advising families in relation to children's school careers, with the aim of setting them on a path which matches their

skills, talents and tastes; stresses that the stage at which advice on school careers is given is a decisive one and a time when gender stereotypes may come into play, which can lastingly affect girls' ability to pursue a professional career that will facilitate their personal development and emancipation.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	5.5.2015
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 22 -: 2 0: 1
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Isabella Adinolfi, Andrea Bocskor, Silvia Costa, Damian Drăghici, Angel Dzhambazki, Giorgos Grammatikakis, Petra Kammerevert, Svetoslav Hristov Malinov, Curzio Maltese, Fernando Maura Barandiarán, Luigi Morgano, Momchil Nekov, Helga Trüpel, Sabine Verheyen, Julie Ward, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Theodoros Zagorakis, Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski, Milan Zver, Krystyna Łybacka
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Therese Comodini Cachia, Marc Joulaud, Kashetu Kyenge, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Ernest Maragall, Emma McClarkin, Algirdas Saudargas, Hermann Winkler

## ROLL CALL FOR FINAL VOTE

21	+
ALDE	Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Angelika Mlinar
GUE/NGL	Malin Björk, Stefan Eck
PPE	Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Elisabeth Köstinger, Elissavet Vozemberg
S&D	Inés Ayala Sender, Biljana Borzan, Viorica Dăncilă, Iratxe García Pérez, Anna Hedh, Clare Moody, Maria Noichl, Liliana Rodrigues, Marc Tarabella
VERTS/ALE	Jordi Sebastià, Ernest Urtezar

9	-
ECR	Branislav Škripek, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Jana Žitňanská
EFDD	Daniela Aiuto, Louise Bours
NI	Sylvie Goddyn
PPE	Marijana Petir, Michaela Šojdrová, Anna Záborská

0	0

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	16.6.2015
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+:                21 -:                9 0:                 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Daniela Aiuto, Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Malin Björk, Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Viorica Dăncilă, Iratxe García Pérez, Anna Hedh, Elisabeth Köstinger, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Angelika Mlinar, Maria Noichl, Marijana Petir, Liliana Rodrigues, Jordi Sebastià, Michaela Šojdrová, Ernest Urteaga, Elissavet Vozemberg, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Anna Záborská, Jana Žitňanská
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Inés Ayala Sender, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Biljana Borzan, Louise Bours, Stefan Eck, Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz, Sylvie Goddyn, Clare Moody, Branislav Škripek, Marc Tarabella