



*Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development
Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality*

2016/2204(INI)

17.10.2016

DRAFT REPORT

on women and their roles in rural areas
(2016/2204(INI))

Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development
Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

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(Joint committee meetings – Rule 55 of the Rules of Procedure)

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

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The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and Article 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to Articles 21 and 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to the Beijing Platform for Action,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted in 1979,
- having regard to Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and repealing Council Directive 86/613/EEC,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council of 17 December 2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EFARD) and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005,
- having regard to Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 on the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 March 2008 on the situation of women in the rural areas of the EU¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 5 April 2011 on the role of women in agriculture and rural areas²,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 September 2015 on family businesses in Europe³,

¹ OJ C 66 E, 20.3.2009, p. 23.

² OJ C 296 E, 2.10.2012, p. 13.

³ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0290.

- having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the joint deliberations of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality under Rule 55 of the Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A8-0000/2016),

Multifunctionality of women's roles in rural areas

- A. whereas social and economic circumstances and living conditions have changed substantially in recent decades and differ quite considerably between the Member States as well as within them; whereas the concept of multifunctionality has opened up new opportunities for women; whereas women are very often the promoters of the development of additional activities on or outside the farm beyond the scope of agricultural production;
- B. whereas women living in rural areas are not a homogeneous group, given that their situation, occupations, contributions to society and ultimately their needs and interests may differ;
- C. whereas equality between women and men is a core principle of the European Union and its Member States, and its promotion one of its principal objectives;
- D. whereas family farming is the most common operational farming model in the EU, and thus of great importance;
- E. whereas keeping the population in rural areas, with particular attention to areas with natural constraints, is essential to society, as the conservation of the environment and the landscape depend on it;
- F. whereas the ongoing crisis in European agriculture and the situation of young people from rural areas pose a serious challenge for the Common Agricultural Policy, which should ensure the development of rural areas while enhancing their potential;
- G. whereas it is necessary to maintain a sustainable and vibrant farming sector as the fundamental economic basis of rural areas, which contributes to rural development, food production, biodiversity and the creation of jobs;
- H. whereas the status of family farms as primary food producers can only be improved and their farming and livestock activities maintained through providing adequate financial resources and measures at EU level;
- I. whereas the promotion of diversification measures and the development of short supply chains can contribute to the sector's resilience, which faces the challenges of unfair trading practices and increasingly volatile markets;

Challenges for women in rural areas

- J. whereas women represent slightly less than 50 % of the total working-age population in

the rural areas of the EU, but only about 45 % of the total economically active population;

- K. whereas in 2014 women were responsible for about 35 % of total working time in agriculture, carrying out 53.8 % of part-time work and 30.8 % of full-time work, thereby making a significant contribution to agricultural production; whereas work carried out by spouses and other female family members on farms may constitute ‘invisible work’;
 - L. whereas about 30 % of farm holdings in the EU are managed by women; whereas fully recognising the role played by women in agriculture also involves increasing the proportion of farms managed or co-managed by them;
 - M. whereas the provision of adequate public services, including care for children and the elderly, are important for all inhabitants of rural areas; whereas such services are particularly important for women, given that they have traditionally played a leading role in looking after young and elderly members of the family;
 - N. whereas the provision of other basic services such as transport links, access to the Internet, energy provision and social, health and educational services are vital for making rural areas attractive and viable places to live; whereas women have a multifunctional role in rural areas and are therefore particularly dependent on such services in order to ensure a better work-life balance;
 - O. whereas women in rural areas are often under-represented in decision-making bodies such as agricultural cooperatives, trade unions and municipal governments; whereas increasing women’s representation in such bodies is highly important;
 - P. whereas women in rural areas also suffer from gender pay and pension gaps;
 - Q. whereas women’s participation in the use of the instruments available under rural development programmes until 2014 was low; whereas no thematic sub-programmes on ‘Women in rural areas’ have been created so far;
1. Recognises women’s contribution to the economy in rural areas as entrepreneurs, heads of the family business and promoters of sustainable development and their importance as stakeholders in the entire economic and social development of these areas; stresses, in particular, women’s fundamental role as members of family farms, which constitute the main socioeconomic cell of rural areas that cares for food production, preservation of traditional knowledge and skills, cultural identity and protection of the environment;
 2. Encourages the Member States to monitor the situation of women in rural areas and to make use of existing measures and specific instruments under the CAP in order to increase the participation of women as beneficiaries; recommends that the Commission keep the provision on thematic sub-programmes on ‘Women in rural areas’ when reforming the CAP in the future, as these sub-programmes can play a role in creating job opportunities for women in rural areas;
 3. Encourages the Member States, in the light of the conditionalities as regards equality between women and men and non-discrimination, to make greater and more synergistic

use of the instruments available under the EAFRD, Leader+ and the ESF for creating better living and working conditions in rural areas and to raise awareness of all possibilities offered to women in such areas under existing legislation;

4. Encourages the Member States to encourage the participation of female spouses or other family members in the joint management of farms;
5. Encourages the Member States to promote equality between women and men in the management bodies and representation of all types of organisations, associations and public institutions;
6. Calls on the Member States to fully implement the existing legislative acts relating to equal treatment of women and men in social security matters; calls on the Commission to monitor the transposition of their provisions in order to address the challenges faced by women living and working in rural areas;
7. Calls on the Commission, together with the Member States, to improve conditions for women in rural areas, and to provide not only adequate informational material on support possibilities specifically aimed at women farmers and women in rural areas, but also access to education and credit, while also promoting the establishment of associations and the provision of wide-ranging professional diversification advice;
8. Calls on the Member States to facilitate access to land for women;
9. Calls on the Member States and regional and local governments to provide good quality facilities and public services for everyday life in rural areas, including aid to victims of domestic violence and prevention measures tailored to the conditions existing in rural areas, as well as transport and broadband infrastructure;
10. Emphasises that rural areas within the Member States have a crucial economic and security role to play in our modern society, in which more than 12 million farmers provide a sufficient amount of healthy and safe food for half a billion consumers throughout the European Union; stresses that keeping these areas vibrant is of the utmost importance;
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.