Question for written answer E-012787/2013
to the Commission
Rule 117
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Subject: Evaluation of the 2013 Global Gender Gap Report

On 25 October 2013, the World Economic Forum published its eighth edition of the Global Gender Gap Report, according to which 86 countries out of 133 were able to bridge the gender gap in 2012 and 2013, particularly as a result of certain improvements in terms of economic equality and participation in political life.

The countries have been ranked according to their ability to bridge the gender gap in the areas of health and survival (96% of gaps have been bridged), education levels (global gap sits at 93%), participation in political life (gap reduced to 21%) and economic equality (gap reduced to only 60%). Iceland, Finland, Norway and Sweden have the smallest gender gaps globally and occupy the top positions, while countries such as France (45th place), Italy (71st place) and Greece (81st place) have greater variations in terms of gender equality. It is thus worth emphasising the significant disparities highlighted in the report between, on one hand, northern and western Europe, which have made the most significant advances, and southern and eastern Europe on the other hand. Furthermore, the report shows that while increasing political participation is helping to bridge the gender gap in 2013, further efforts are still required in order to integrate women into economic leadership positions.

Consequently, the Commission is requested to respond to the following questions.

1.   What are the reasons behind the size of the gender gap in the European Union, and particularly between northern and southern Europe?

2.   What initiatives does the Commission plan to undertake in order to bridge the gap between the sexes, and particularly in the areas of political and economic participation?

3.   What steps have been considered in order to promote cohesion between northern and southern Europe with regard to equality between the sexes?