



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

2012/2046(INI)

22.6.2012

OPINION

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

on women's working conditions in the service sector
(2012/2046(INI))

Rapporteur: Iliana Malinova Iotova

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SUGGESTIONS

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

- A. whereas the services sector represents over 70 % of economic activity in the European Union and a similar and growing percentage in total employment;
 - B. whereas currently nine out of ten jobs are created in the services sector, and studies indicate that further enhancement of the single market for services can help unlock a considerable potential for employment - jobs which the EU needs urgently in this time of crisis;
 - C. whereas the employment rate for women is 62.1 % compared to 75.1 % for men, which means that the primary goal of Europe 2020 of achieving an employment rate of 75 % by 2020 can be achieved only if more women have access to the labour market;
 - D. whereas policies permitting better balancing of work and personal life will help trigger a substantial employment potential for women and will facilitate a better matching of women to available jobs and thus boost economic growth, employment and innovation; whereas, moreover, women in the services sector work mainly in areas such as retail and hotels, but do not yet work in higher positions;
 - E. whereas flexible employment contracts - flexitime, part-time and short-term contracts - can help both male and female caregivers, if they have the ability to choose, to combine work and care, especially bearing in mind that the service sector offers many opportunities for such flexible options;
1. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take concrete steps towards a further deepening of the market for services in order to develop its significant jobs potential and to allow workers, both men and women, to benefit from the flexible working arrangements which are specific to many jobs in this sector, thereby enabling them to reconcile work and family life; highlights the importance of ensuring decent working conditions with respect to, inter alia, health and safety standards, accessibility, career prospects, further training, sustainable social security and lifelong learning;
 2. Calls on the Member States to effectively protect motherhood and fatherhood, combating the unlawful dismissal of pregnant women, those who have recently given birth and those who are breastfeeding;
 3. Calls on the Member States to adopt policies on integrating vulnerable workers into the labour market, with particular reference to low-skilled, unemployed, young and older workers, people with disabilities, those with mental disabilities and minority groups such as migrant workers and Roma, through targeted and tailored occupational guidance, training and apprenticeship programmes;
 4. Calls on the Commission and the Member States in respect of the principle of subsidiarity and in consultation with the social partners, to develop strategies for setting minimum

standards in the service sector, including regular contracts and collective bargaining and to try to tackle the negative consequences of horizontal and vertical segregation; stresses, therefore, the importance to enforce the principle of equal pay for women and men in the same workplace, as enshrined in Article 157 of the Treaty of Lisbon; recalls its resolution of 24 May 2012 and reiterates its request therein for a review of Directive 2006/54/EC, by 15 February 2013 at the latest;

5. Calls on the Member States to consider introducing a special regime for the personal and household service sector in order to regularise the widespread phenomenon of undeclared work – which particularly affects women – and thereby ensure decent working conditions; calls on the Member States to report on their efforts to combat undeclared work in their national reform programmes submitted under the Europe 2020 strategy;
6. Points out that the Fifth European Working Conditions Survey, published in April 2012, found that 18 % of workers reported having a poor work-life balance, and that in the EU as a whole 19 % of women and 7 % of men work ‘short’ (fewer than 20 hours a week) part-time, only 3 % of men aged between 35 and 49 are on ‘short’ part-time hours as compared with 18 % of women in the same age-group; notes also that part-time jobs are found mostly in particular sectors, with more than 38 % of part-time workers, both ‘short’ and ‘substantial’ (i.e. between 20 and 34 hours a week), being employed in education, health and social services, other services, or retail and wholesale; calls on the Member States, therefore, to adopt appropriate policies enabling the reconciliation of work and personal life, to apply also to part-time work, in order to encourage both parents to actively participate in conciliation measures and thus help rectify the existing gender imbalance in this regard;
7. Welcomes the working document of the Annual Growth Survey entitled ‘On exploiting the employment potential of the personal and household services’ and calls on the Member States, the social partners and other stakeholders to actively accept the invitation of the Commission to conduct a discussion on this issue;
8. Underlines the fact that, as many women continue to choose their training in the service sector and thus build up their commercial experience and knowledge of the trade, there is an ample scope for female entrepreneurship; welcomes, in this respect, the fact that Microfinancing is proposed to have a continuation as an own axis in the framework of the Programme for Social Change and Innovation, and highlights the importance of Microfinancing as an instrument to support female entrepreneurs and persons who are in a vulnerable labour market position in the service sector; welcomes the Commission communication on a ‘Social Business Initiative’ because women in particular are taking up work in the social business sector;
9. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to guarantee the protection of social and employment rights for the large number of mobile workers in the service sector, and to combat all forms of exploitation and risk of social exclusion while ensuring that information on workers’ rights is easily accessible; stresses that mobility should be voluntary;
10. Encourages the Member States to ratify without delay Convention No. 189 of the International Labour Organisation on domestic workers, adopted in 2011 by that tripartite

organisation with the aim of ensuring decent working conditions for domestic workers and the same basic labour rights as those enjoyed by other workers;

11. Stresses the need for all workers in the service sector, with attention paid to those belonging to the most vulnerable groups, to have access to permanent upskilling programmes and lifelong learning, in order to improve their future labour market opportunities and reduce the mismatch between skills and constantly evolving work duties;
12. Notes the low levels of women's participation in vocational training in the services sector in the context of lifelong learning, and calls on the Member States to take action on the matter;
13. Stresses the need for upskilling in the case of older workers and parents returning to the labour market after time spent caring for children or dependent relatives;
14. Stresses that the budget cuts in many Member States could significantly affect women workers, and calls on the Commission to collect data on the impact of austerity measures on women in the labour market, with particular emphasis on the service sector;
15. Stresses the challenges faced by workers in the service sector, especially women, in reconciling work and family life; calls, therefore, for affordable childcare services, compatible work schedules in order to ensure a better work-life balance and the promotion of gender equality as a precondition for increasing the labour participation of men and women;
16. Underlines the need to combat the gender inequalities still present in the labour market by adopting active policies that can reduce the real disadvantages affecting women;
17. Calls for a strong social dialogue and the involvement of employers' and workers' representatives in the setting of EU priorities in the field of the service sector with regard to the protection of social and employment rights, unemployment benefits and representative rights.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	21.6.2012
Result of final vote	+: 33 -: 2 0: 2
Members present for the final vote	Edit Bauer, Heinz K. Becker, Phil Bennion, Pervenche Berès, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Philippe Boulland, Alejandro Cercas, Derek Roland Clark, Minodora Cliveti, Marije Cornelissen, Andrea Cozzolino, Frédéric Daerden, Sari Essayah, Thomas Händel, Danuta Jazłowiecka, Ádám Kósa, Jean Lambert, Veronica Lope Fontagné, Olle Ludvigsson, Thomas Mann, Elisabeth Morin-Chartier, Csaba Óry, Siiri Oviir, Sylvana Rapti, Licia Ronzulli, Nicole Sinclair, Jutta Steinruck, Traian Ungureanu
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Georges Bach, Edite Estrela, Iliana Malinova Iotova, Silvana Koch-Mehrin, Svetoslav Hristov Malinov, Anthea McIntyre, Antigoni Papadopoulou, Evelyn Regner, Csaba Sógor