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Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

2006/2231(INI)

15.11.2006

OPINION

of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

for the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

on promoting healthy diets and physical activity: a European dimension for the prevention of overweight, obesity and chronic diseases
(2006/2231(INI))

Draftswoman: Anna Hedh

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SUGGESTIONS

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

- A. whereas young girls have a tendency to be more dissatisfied than boys with their own physical appearance, which can lead to eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia,
- B. whereas a multitude of factors such as professional demands and household responsibilities make it increasingly difficult to integrate physical activity into a daily schedule,
- C. whereas sport is an important element in the natural process of socialisation and whereas, on account of its educational role, it promotes positive values and personal development,
- D. whereas pregnancy and menopause are two critical stages in the development of excess weight in women and whereas these important milestones in a woman's life are given inadequate consideration by the national health services, in particular in nutrition counselling,
- E. whereas obesity-related mortality is lower among women, whereas the incidence of morbidity and health-related quality-of-life problems is several times higher among women and whereas, therefore, women suffer more from the consequences of obesity and have a lower tolerance than men, both physically and emotionally, of physical impairments resulting from obesity,
- F. whereas for many groups of women, especially those experiencing poverty, adopting a healthier lifestyle is a complex issue,
 - 1. Encourages the Commission to develop further its gender-based approach as regards obesity and weight-related conditions, diet and physical activity, in particular in terms of data collection, best practice dissemination and devising Community-wide communication strategies;
 - 2. Points out that schools are settings that can be used to influence children and young people's behaviour in a positive way; underlines that serving freshly produced meals, preferably from organic or regional agriculture, in school canteens should be encouraged;
 - 3. Calls on the Member States to include the nutrition and physical activity as compulsory daily subjects in primary education programmes and home economics in secondary education programmes; calls on the Commission to promote the exchange of best practices in those fields within the European education programmes;
 - 4. Underlines the fact that schools play an important role in influencing the lifestyles of children and young adults; recommends that consumer education, nutrition and physical activity be introduced in school curricula and that all students take part in these

activities;

5. Calls on the Member States to promote awareness-raising campaigns to encourage, motivate and enable individuals to lose weight through better nutrition and physical activity;
6. Recommends that, when developing their national health strategies, the Member States take into consideration the possibility of promoting the prescription of physical activity to patients as a preventive measure to help combat the health problems associated with obesity, as a weight maintenance measure or as a weight loss measure; calls on the Commission to promote the exchange of best practices in this field among the Member States;
7. Calls on the Member States, regional and local authorities and sports associations to stimulate, support and provide physical exercise and sports activities that are accessible by all and to ensure that girls and women have equal provision and access with men to sports infrastructures and activities, taking into account the different preferences of women and men;
8. Calls on the Member States and employers to stimulate their employees to participate in keep-fit and physical activities, especially women employed to do monotonous tasks which can lead to chronic diseases;
9. Calls on the Member States to further raise awareness amongst health-care professionals of weight-related diseases and conditions, including their psychological and/or physiological causes, in order to improve the quality of the treatment provided to patients;
10. Encourages the Member States and the Commission to raise public awareness of the benefits of a healthy diet and regular physical activity and the potential health dangers of a sedentary lifestyle;
11. Stresses the role played by the media in conveying eating habits; encourages Member States to cooperate with them in promoting a healthier nutrition;
12. Encourages social partners and employers to create a working environment which would enable the practice of a physical activity, thereby increasing the level of productivity;
13. Calls on all sectors of the food and nutrition industry - 'from farm to fork' - to participate in the ongoing debate and assume their responsibilities in the implementation of the decisions deriving from such debate, in particular as regards gender-based health research and development and nutritional information.

PROCEDURE

Title	Promoting healthy diets and physical activity: a European dimension for the prevention of overweight, obesity and chronic diseases
Procedure number	2006/2231(INI)
Committee responsible	ENVI
Opinion by Date announced in plenary	FEMM 28.9.2007
Drafts(wo)man Date appointed	Anna Hedh 12.9.2006
Previous drafts(wo)man	
Discussed in committee	19.10.2006 13.11.2006
Date adopted	13.11.2006
Result of final vote	+: 23 -: - 0: -
Members present for the final vote	Edit Bauer, Hiltrud Breyer, Maria Carlshamre, Ilda Figueiredo, Věra Flasarová, Lívía Járóka, Piia-Noora Kauppi, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Siiri Oviir, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, Marie-Line Reynaud, Teresa Riera Madurell, Raúl Romeva i Rueda, Amalia Sartori, Eva-Britt Svensson, Anne Van Lancker, Corien Wortmann-Kool, Anna Záborská
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg, Anna Hedh,, Zita Pleštinšká.
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	Albert Deß, Viktória Mohácsi
Comments (available in one language only)	...