

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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*Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality*

**2007/2269(INI)**

15.4.2008

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

on Turkey's 2007 progress report  
(2007/2269(INI))

Draftswoman: Emine Bozkurt

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## SUGGESTIONS

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

- having regard to its resolutions of 6 July 2005<sup>1</sup> and of 13 February 2007<sup>2</sup> on women's role in social, economic and political life in Turkey,
- 1. Emphasises that respecting human rights, including women's rights, is a *conditio sine qua non* for membership of the EU and calls on the Commission to make the issue of human rights, in particular women's rights a priority in its negotiations with Turkey;
- 2. Underlines the importance for Turkey of combating all forms of discrimination in line with Article 13 EC treaty, which requires equality for all regardless of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation;
- 3. Notes with concern the Commission's statement<sup>3</sup> that access to reliable data on the incidence of violence against women and of honour killings continues to be a problem; calls on the Turkish Government to provide specific and reliable data on these issues, as well as on the illiteracy rate among women, on equal access for women to education, and on problems related to the participation of women in the labour force;
- 4. Urges the Turkish Government to take up reforms concerning the achievement of de facto gender equality, women empowerment, social security, eliminating the feminisation of poverty and violence against women, increasing participation of women in the labour market, education, science, and economic, social and political life with urgency;
- 5. Calls on the Turkish Government to urgently enact the 'Equal Status Act' as stated in the Circular of the Prime Minister dated 4 July 2006;
- 6. Is alarmed by the fact that the number of children not registered at birth remains high, especially in the East of the country, and that the majority of those children are girls; considers that this hampers the fight against forced marriage and honour crimes, since the victims have no official identity; urges again the Turkish authorities to continue taking all necessary measures to ensure that all Turkish children are registered at birth;
- 7. Welcomes the initiatives and measures that have been taken by the Turkish Government; stresses, however, that further efforts to adopt measures against all forms of violence against women are necessary;
- 8. Notes with regret that the situation of women on the Turkish labour market deteriorated in recent years and stresses that Turkey needs to attract more women to the labour market and ensure good working conditions in line with the decent work agenda promoted by the International Labour Organization and the European Union;

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 157 E, 6.7.2006, p. 385.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 287 E, 29.11.2007, p. 174.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Turkey 2007 Progress Report of the Commission (SEC(2007)1436), p.18.

9. Considers it crucial that the new constitution should ensure gender equality and provides women with more, not fewer, rights, including full enjoyment of their right to work; that it should lay the foundations for equal representation at all levels of decision making, that it should avoid the use of vague criteria such as "General Morality"; that it should refrain from perceiving women primarily as family or community members or as a vulnerable group needing protection and that it should reaffirm women's human rights, including their sexual and reproductive rights, as their individual rights;
10. Reaffirms the importance of non-governmental organizations, as well as other civil society actors and therefore calls on the Turkish Government to ensure a strengthened coordinated and institutionalized dialogue with civil society and women's NGOs particularly in the drafting of the new constitution, and ensure that civil society is constantly involved in all areas of policymaking, including policy on social security and the negotiations with the EU;
11. Notes with satisfaction that the implementation of the ministerial circular to combat honour killings and domestic violence against women is underway; underlines the need for judicial proceedings of victims to be dealt with rapidly, confidentially and in a humane manner; is concerned, however, by the fact that domestic violence against women continues to be widespread and that honour killings, early and forced marriages still occur;
12. Commends the Turkish government on its support for successful cooperation projects between EU and Turkish partners, such as the twinning project which is preparing for an independent gender equality body and which is training 750 officials on gender mainstreaming, expects that such a gender equality body will be created without delay;
13. Notes with concern that political participation of women has not increased, considers the increase in female parliamentarians from 4.4% to 9% of the Parliament to be insufficient and points to upcoming local elections as an opportunity to remedy this through means such as quotas for women on elections lists;
14. Reiterates its frequent demands for a permanent Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee with full legislative powers in the Turkish Parliament; sees such a committee as an essential instrument for improvement of women's rights and gender mainstreaming in Turkey;
15. Calls on the Turkish authorities to further tackle the gender gap in primary education and to better monitor drop-outs, especially of girls.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	14.4.2008
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 20 -: 0 0: 1
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Emine Bozkurt, Maria Carlshamre, Zita Gurmai, Lívía Járóka, Piia-Noora Kauppi, Astrid Lulling, Siiri Oviir, Doris Pack, Zita Pleštinská, Karin Resetarits, Teresa Riera Madurell, Eva-Britt Svensson, Anne Van Lancker, Anna Záborská
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Gabriela Crețu, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg, Donata Gottardi, Anna Hedh, Marusya Ivanova Lyubcheva
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote</b>	Manolis Mavrommatis, Miroslav Mikolášik