

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

2008/2224(INI)

20.1.2009

OPINION

of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

for the Committee on Culture and Education

on an active dialogue with citizens on Europe
(2008/2224(INI))

Rapporteur: Claire Gibault

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SUGGESTIONS

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

- A. whereas, although citizens are increasingly well informed, they are still too often neglected by political institutions, in particular in connection with measures taken by and in the European Union,
- 1. Points out that a majority of women voted 'no' in the most recent referendums on Europe: 56% in France (Eurobarometer Flash 171), 63% in the Netherlands (Eurobarometer Flash 172) and 56% in Ireland (Eurobarometer Flash 245); believes that one of the factors behind the 'no' vote was the lack of involvement on the part of European institutions in the policies which directly affect women and which underlie the ongoing lack of equal opportunities for men and women, such as policies on reconciling work and family life or dependency support;
- 2. Emphasises that the 27 recommendations set out in the open letter from the participants in the closing conference for the six citizens' projects under plan D, entitled 'The future of Europe – A project for citizens', include a call on the Union to take more effective action in the area of social policy and social cohesion, in particular with a view to reducing wage disparities and fostering equality between women and men, and, more generally, to pay specific attention to equality-related issues, which are often neglected;
- 3. Calls for a comprehensive analysis of women's participation in the decision-making processes across Europe in order to identify and promote their role as an uniting factor in society;
- 4. Emphasises the role played by women in the Union and urges the European institutions to introduce, in cooperation with the Member States, long-term arrangements which take account of social relations and inequalities between men and women in all areas of public policy;
- 5. Calls for girls and women to be given better information on the concept of European citizenship and the rights pertaining thereto, particularly in socially and geographically isolated regions; stresses that the aim of these information campaigns should be to improve women's participation in political life and the decision-making process;
- 6. Congratulates the Commission on the choice of projects to be co-funded, under plan D, by its representations, which include many projects run by women's organisations and many projects involving women;
- 7. Calls on the European Commission to promote programmes and campaigns (such as "The world through women's eyes") for encouraging women's social, political, and cultural activeness, taking into account women's role for the dialogue between generations the sustainability and prosperity of society;

8. Encourages the European institutions to move on from communication and marketing campaigns and develop economic and social policies which meet the expectations and needs of the citizens of the Member States; in that connection, supports, for example, the Commission's proposals concerning parental leave, which seek to strengthen the principle of reconciling work and family life, thereby enabling Europeans to have as many children as they want and thus reduce the demographic deficit which is posing an economic and social threat to our continent.
9. Acknowledges the problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills of women, and urges the European Commission to include more women in task forces and working groups, engaged with the issues of family life, child care, education etc.;
10. Stresses the need to encourage citizens' participation when it comes to issues such as gender violence or human trafficking, where the involvement of society is vital if progress is to be made in resolving the problem;
11. Stresses the need to promote measures to overcome the gender digital divide so as to provide women with the tools to take part in the dialogue on Europe under equal conditions.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	20.1.2009
Result of final vote	+ : 16 - : 0 0 : 1
Members present for the final vote	Edit Bauer, Emine Bozkurt, Hiltrud Breyer, Edite Estrela, Ilda Figueiredo, Claire Gibault, Livia Járóka, Urszula Krupa, Roselyne Lefrançois, Siiri Oviir, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, Eva-Britt Svensson, Anna Záborská
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Gabriela Crețu, Iratxe García Pérez, Anna Hedh, Maria Petre