

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

2007/2206(INI)

9.4.2008

OPINION

of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

for the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

on women and science
(2007/2206(INI))

Draftsman: Den Dover

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy 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:

1. Welcomes the policies introduced up to now, such as direct support measures, preferential recruitment policies and funding schemes supporting research carried out by women, which are aimed at achieving more equal participation on the part of women in the various fields and sectors of science.
2. Points out that to comply with the Lisbon Strategy the EU needs 700 000 further researchers, and therefore calls on the Commission and the Member States to take specific measures, in accordance with the Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010, to ensure that by 2010 the participation of women and men in science and technology is more balanced;
3. Considers, however, that more efforts are needed in order to increase women's participation in top positions (on scientific boards and evaluation committees, for example) and in all areas of science including research, recruitment, training, education, information technology, engineering, commerce, communications, public relations, advertising and industrial relations, by providing innovative forms of flexible working time for women that will allow them to continue working after becoming mothers;
4. Is of the opinion that more action is needed in order to overcome the under-representation of women, particularly in scientific academic circles; to this end, recommends that direct support measures and grants be provided to encourage women to fill senior positions, as well as grants for programmes of coaching and mentoring, thereby helping young women to stay in scientific academic activities, carrying out research and participating in grant applications and projects and ensuring at the same time their own mobility and flexibility and that of their families;
5. Considers that networks of women scientists are an essential instrument for attracting a larger number of women to scientific and technological fields and promoting them in posts of responsibility; to this end, calls on the Commission and the Member States to set up networks at European, national and regional level and to support those that already exist, such as the European Platform of Women Scientists;
6. Considers that, in order to eliminate some of the barriers that women face in reaching senior positions in scientific careers, concrete measures need to be taken to promote a better understanding of the concepts of 'good research', 'excellence' and 'innovation', particularly as far as the criteria for the definition of a 'good researcher' are concerned, which should not be limited to the number of publications of the researchers;
7. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take appropriate measures to ensure that the contribution of women is not excluded from publications on the history of science and technology, not just because this would be a clear case of discrimination, but also because the absence of role models makes it hard to encourage a greater number of

women to enter such fields;

8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to remove all financial and administrative obstacles faced by women in scientific fields and to create more attractive and flexible working conditions for women in order to make it easier for them to combine working and family life and to stimulate their interest in pursuing careers in all areas of science by means of forms of support specifically for working mothers that will not affect budgets for scientific research; in addition, calls on the Member States to ensure equal shares of parental responsibilities by promoting equal use of parental leave and flexible working conditions both for men and women;
9. Points out that age limits for the award of grants adversely affect young people looking after dependants, and that these are for the most part women; therefore calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure, when such circumstances apply, that they include in their legislation measures to correct this anomaly, such as adding one year to the deadline for applications for each year in which a dependant is looked after;
10. Firmly believes that specific recruitment, training and public relations measures need to be introduced in order to promote and encourage greater participation on the part of women in fields such as technologies, physics, engineering, computer science and other domains which are still regrettably dominated by men;
11. Calls on the Commission to ensure that, in projects submitted in response to calls for proposals under the the Seventh Framework Programme for research, technical development and demonstration activities, balanced numbers of men and women in the applicant scientific group should be assessed positively; urges the Member States to make the same arrangements in their national and regional programmes;
12. Supports the aim of establishing and ensuring compliance with the principle of equal treatment for men and women with the same levels of education, skill and merit as far as identical scientific posts are concerned, in selection and recruitment procedures and throughout professional careers, this being a essential in order to enable women to pursue further training courses and obtain promotion in their professions based on their merit while, at the same time, contributing to balancing the participation of men and women in posts of responsibility; regrets that even though in the majority of the Member States the number of women with a university degree exceeds the number of men and women present a higher average level of academic qualification than their male counterparts, women are underrepresented in all academic and research establishments;
13. Believes that it is of the utmost importance to promote science as an interesting field for both sexes from early on; urges that this be taken into account when planning educational material and in teacher training; encourages universities and faculties to analyse their entrance selection systems in order to identify possible implicit gender discrimination and correct the selection system accordingly;
14. Calls on the Commission, as far as the Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration activities is concerned, to report to Parliament regularly on progress in the representation of women on assessment boards and selection committees; calls on the Commission to include the gender aspect in the

Framework Programme interim assessments and progress reports;

15. Calls on the Member States to analyse the factors underlying the low proportion of women (15 % on average in the EU) in senior posts in universities and educational authorities, a state of affairs that seriously reduces their influence over decision-making in research, despite the fact that 43 % of the doctorates awarded in the EU were awarded to women.
16. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to introduce effective policies to eliminate the gender pay gap; notes that in the field of science the principle of equal pay should also apply to scholarships and stipends;
17. Encourages universities, research institutes and private businesses to adopt equality strategies in their organisations and in their decision-making processes.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	8.4.2008
Result of final vote	+: 48 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Šarūnas Birutis, Jan Březina, Jerzy Buzek, Giles Chichester, Dragoș Florin David, Pilar del Castillo Vera, Den Dover, Nicole Fontaine, Adam Gierek, András Gyürk, Fiona Hall, David Hammerstein, Rebecca Harms, Erna Hennicot-Schoepges, Mary Honeyball, Ján Hudacký, Romana Jordan Cizelj, Anne Laperrouze, Pia Elda Locatelli, Eugenijus Maldeikis, Eluned Morgan, Angelika Niebler, Reino Paasilinna, Atanas Papanizov, Francisca Pleguezuelos Aguilar, Anni Podimata, Miloslav Ransdorf, Vladimír Remek, Herbert Reul, Teresa Riera Madurell, Mechtild Rothe, Paul Rübig, Andres Tarand, Britta Thomsen, Catherine Trautmann, Nikolaos Vakalis, Adina-Ioana Vălean, Alejo Vidal-Quadras
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Etelka Barsi-Pataky, Ivo Belet, Zdzisław Kazimierz Chmielewski, Robert Goebbels, Satu Hassi, Gunnar Hökmark, Pierre Pribetich, Vittorio Prodi, Esko Seppänen, Silvia-Adriana Țicău