

Equality between men and women in the committees' work

European Parliament resolution on gender mainstreaming in the work of the committees (2005/2149(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 2, Article 3(2), Article 13 and Article 141(4) of the EC Treaty,
 - having regard to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the revised European Social Charter and the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights,
 - having regard to the work of the Council of Europe's Directorate for Human Rights, and in particular of the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men,
 - having regard to the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995, the Declaration and the Platform for Action adopted in Beijing and the documents adopted at the subsequent United Nations Beijing +5 and Beijing +10 special sessions on further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, adopted respectively on 9 June 2000 and 11 March 2005,
 - having regard to Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002 amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions¹,
 - having regard to its resolution of 13 March 2003 on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament²,
 - having regard to the working document of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality on gender mainstreaming in the work of the committees, drawn up further to the analysis of the replies to the questionnaire sent to the chairmen and vice-chairmen responsible for gender mainstreaming, appointed by the 22 parliamentary committees,
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A6-0478/2006),
- A. whereas the majority of committees always or sometimes attach some importance to gender mainstreaming, whilst a minority of committees rarely or never take an interest in the matter,

¹ OJ L 269, 5.10.2002, p. 15.

² OJ C 61 E, 10.3.2004, p. 384.

- B. whereas equality between men and women is a fundamental principle of Community law and, in accordance with Article 2 of the Treaty, is one of the tasks to be promoted by the Community,
- C. whereas Article 3(2) of the Treaty lays down the principle of gender mainstreaming by stating that in all its activities the Community should aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women,
- D. having regard to the process set in motion in 2005 by its Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and the work of the High-Level Group on Gender Equality,
- E. whereas a chairman/chairwoman or vice-chairman/chairwoman responsible for implementing gender mainstreaming in the work of his or her parliamentary committee has actively participated in each meeting of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality,
- F. having regard to the continuous increase in the percentage of female Members of the European Parliament, from 17.5% in 1979 to 30.33% in 2004,
- G. whereas, within its administration, women are under-represented in positions of responsibility in bodies which are responsible for taking political decisions,
- H. whereas only two women have been appointed as director-general of one of its eight directorates-general, whereas the lack of applications from women for posts as director-general is a matter for regret, and whereas women should therefore be encouraged to give serious thought to applying for senior posts in its administration,
- I. whereas, even though the majority of committees express views in favour of gender mainstreaming, most committees have established their future political priorities without including any mainstreaming strategy,
- J. whereas until now no committee has laid down any practical objectives for implementing a mainstreaming strategy,
- K. whereas half the committees consider that their expertise is currently being built up, and the same proportion of committees are greatly interested in gender mainstreaming training in their secretariats,
- L. whereas political and administrative cooperation between the other parliamentary committees and the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality ranges from regular to sporadic,
- M. whereas, in accordance with Rule 46(6) of its Rules of Procedure, the majority of committees regularly invite the draftspersons of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality to attend meetings of the committee responsible when the report concerned is being discussed,
- N. whereas, with a view to improving lawmaking, a majority of committees are in favour of incorporating gender mainstreaming issues and half of them have already taken advantage of consultations with gender equality experts,

Assessment of gender mainstreaming

1. Stresses that the calls for gender equality must be translated into a practical approach which does not set women against men;
2. Stresses that gender mainstreaming will lead to positive developments for both women and men;
3. Points out that gender mainstreaming involves the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated into all policies at all levels and at all stages by the actors normally involved in policy-making;
4. Stresses that gender mainstreaming cannot replace specific policies which aim to redress situations resulting from gender inequality, and underlines that specific gender equality policies and gender mainstreaming are dual and complementary strategies and must go hand in hand if the goal of gender equality is to be achieved;
5. Thanks the Austrian and Finnish Presidencies for having stressed in the Council of Ministers the importance of men in the implementation of gender mainstreaming;
6. Points out that mainstreaming involves ensuring that equal treatment for men and women and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities – policy development, research, advocacy/dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects;
7. Undertakes to adopt and apply within its administration a gender mainstreaming strategy with specific targets in Community policies, and assigns to the committee responsible the task of developing that strategy by the end of the current legislative term at the latest;
8. Calls on the High-Level Group on Gender Equality to continue to encourage and promote this process overall, starting with the information regularly provided by the committees and by the chairwoman of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, and to encourage Member States to pursue a similar policy;
9. Stresses the important role the political groups can play to encourage and support women and make it possible for them to participate fully in public life by implementing and evaluating gender mainstreaming in their programmes and activities and by encouraging women to become more involved in European Parliament elections and national elections;
10. Congratulates the parliamentary committees which have put gender mainstreaming into practice in their work, and calls on the other committees to do likewise;
11. Encourages the Secretary-General to continue the training of officials in gender mainstreaming;
12. Takes note of the fact that the Directorate-General for Internal Policies has the highest percentage of female administrators, and invites all Parliament's directors-general to put into practice EU legislation on equal treatment of men and women in employment matters;
13. Calls for each committee secretariat in the directorates of the DGs for internal and

external policies to include an official who is specially trained in gender mainstreaming and to encourage networking amongst those officials, under the coordination of the secretariat of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, with a view to conducting regular exchanges on best practices;

14. Regrets the fact that the Staff Regulations of officials of the European Communities do not make provision for adequate measures to enable officials to make a genuine choice in terms of obtaining a work-life balance;
15. Calls for gender mainstreaming to be taken into account when vacancies are advertised in the EU institutions;

Future of the implementation of gender mainstreaming

16. Stresses the importance of employing specific terminology and definitions which comply with international standards when terms are used in relation to gender mainstreaming;
17. Stresses the need for the parliamentary committees to be provided with appropriate tools to gain a sound understanding of gender mainstreaming, such as indicators, data and statistics broken down by gender, and for the budgetary resources to be allocated from a gender equality viewpoint, in such a way as to encourage the committees to take advantage of in-house expertise (secretariat of the relevant committee, policy department, library, etc.) and external expertise in other local, regional, national and supranational institutions, be they public or private, in small, medium-sized and large companies and in universities working in the area of gender equality;
18. Calls on the chairwoman of the committee responsible to keep the Conference of Committee Chairmen regularly informed so that it may assess the progress made;
19. Stresses that the implementation of gender mainstreaming should take account of the specific features of each parliamentary committee; calls for the assessments to be carried out every two years under the auspices of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, on the basis of the questionnaire submitted to the chairmen and vice-chairmen responsible for gender mainstreaming in the 22 parliamentary committees, and including any shortcomings in the work of the committees and delegations as well as the progress made in implementing gender mainstreaming in each committee;

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20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Council of Europe.