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Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

**PROVISIONAL
2005/2001(BUD)**

8.7.2005

DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

for the Committee on Budgets

on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2006
(SEC(2005)0552 - C6-0000/2005 - 2005/2001(BUD))

Section III - Commission

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SUGGESTIONS

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

General observations

1. Notes that 2006 is the last year of the 2000 - 2006 Financial Perspective and the last year of several long-term programmes which should be implemented quickly but which should also indirectly contribute to the formulation of the new political orientations for the 2007 - 2013 Financial Perspective;
2. Believes that in spite of current difficulties in the budgetary procedure for 2006, it is important to maintain the EU's responsibility for a more social and competitive Europe and regrets the Commission's lack of ambition in this regard;
3. Observes with regret that the practice of gender budgeting has still not been implemented; notes that, in accordance with the principles set out in the Amsterdam Treaty, its Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality has examined a range of Community policies and measures from the point of view of equal opportunities and the protection of women's rights; in this connection, notes that gender mainstreaming should not only apply to specific measures designed to promote equal opportunities, but should also extend to the defence of the position of women and women's rights in the context of all budget items;
4. Stresses that under Article 3(2) of the EC Treaty, the promotion of gender equality is a fundamental objective of the Community and should be respected in all Community activities; stresses further that the Commission must ensure that gender equality is taken into account in the implementation of the budget and that any action should be evaluated from the perspective of the difference of its impact as between men and women;
5. Stresses that the Commission should develop a reporting system that shows the effects on men and women of various budget lines and that demonstrates both how budget expenditure has taken into account gender equality and what projects have been financed to achieve gender balance, especially for budget items which make particular provision for expenditure for the promotion of gender equality and the protection of women's rights, such as items in the fields of self-employment and social protection;
6. Points out that in view of the similar objectives already implemented in budget lines in previous years, as proposed by the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, the proposals for the 2006 budget aim mainly at attaining these objectives;
7. Acknowledges that the preliminary draft budget proposes an increase for some of the budget lines concerning gender equality and the protection of women's rights along the lines of the position taken by it last year, and is looking forward to the evaluation report on these financial instruments that will be published in 2005;

8. Regrets the approach of the Commission in merging programmes, as currently proposed; rejects the idea of bringing the gender equality programme under the PROGRESS umbrella and the integration of the specific programme "Fight against violence (Daphne) and drugs prevention and information" into the general programme "Fundamental rights and justice" (COM(2005)0122); is of the opinion that to include the more specific programmes as part of broader programmes risks marginalising both the impact and the visibility of the gender equality and women's rights policies; meanwhile requests that the budget allocated for the implementation of specific programmes and directives not be decreased.

Specific areas

1. Proposes increasing the financing of the second action programme aimed at combating violence against children, adolescents and women, Daphne II (item 18 04 01 02), in view of the accession of the new Member States; notes that the Daphne programme has proved to be an effective and important tool in combating violence, but in many cases possible partners from new Member States face difficulties and would benefit from additional support; is of the opinion therefore that additional funding is needed to provide information and assistance for potential partners in such new Member States;
2. Stresses the importance of further developing successful measures aimed at achieving equality between men and women, with particular reference to the following measures: in relation to the European Women's Lobby (item 04 05 01), believes that present funding levels are not adequate considering the new tasks the organisation faces in the enlarged Union of 25 Member States; in relation to Women's Organisations (item 04 05 03), believes that present levels of funding are not adequate considering the increased number of potential partners in the enlarged Union and their specific needs; believes further that funding in relation to these initiatives should be increased;
3. Stresses the necessity of taking preparatory steps for the setting up of the European Institute for Gender Equality, as demanded by the Conclusions of the Limerick Ministerial meeting of 7 May 2004 and the Conclusions of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council of 1-2 June 2004, and reaffirmed by the Conclusions of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council of 2-3 June 2005; proposes the creation of new budget line for this purpose (04 05 04 "p.m.");
4. Points out that while pre-accession assistance for Turkey (Article 22 02 04 01) keeps increasing, it is crucial to support Turkey's efforts to further improve protection of human rights, and especially that of women's rights, and to demand the fulfilment of the Copenhagen Criteria; notes that the Commission's 2004 Regular Report on Turkey's progress towards accession (COM(2004)0656) maintains that the protection of women's rights in Turkey is insufficient and that there is little progress in combating violence against women; suggests earmarking a certain percentage of funds for actions and programmes based on sufficient levels of financing and aimed at improving gender equality and protection of women's rights, especially those undertaken in common with women's organisations in the Member States;
5. Stresses that the budget should reflect the strategies as set out in the Beijing Platform

for Action and the Lisbon Strategy so as to achieve a balanced representation of women among social partners, increased involvement on the part of women in economic decision-making and increased access for women both to education and also to actions and programmes relating to research and technology; is of the opinion that funding levels for relevant programmes in this regard should be increased and a certain percentage be dedicated to actions aimed at improving gender equality in these areas;

6. Points out that to ensure the participation of women in the information society, it is essential to implement the principle of gender equality in this particular area of Community policy; is of the opinion that this objective should be complemented by specific expenditure aimed at improving the dissemination of information to citizens in this regard.