

Thursday 2 March 2000

7. Women in decision-making

B5-0180/2000

European Parliament resolution on women in decision-making

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 2, 3(2), 13, 137(1) fifth indent, and 141 of the EC Treaty,
 - having regard to International Women's Day to be celebrated on 8 March 2000,
 - recalling that the celebration of International Women's Day every 8 March was initiated in Copenhagen in 1910,
 - having regard to its resolutions based on reports from the Committee on Women's Rights and the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities since 1984, and especially its resolution of 11 February 1994⁽¹⁾ on women in decision-making bodies, containing proposals for an action programme,
 - having regard to the 1993 Vienna conference on human rights and the Platform for Action following the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing on 15 September 1995,
 - having regard to the seventh critical area of that Conference, where governments promised to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structure and decision-making,
 - having regard to the Council Resolution of 27 March 1995 and the Council Recommendation 96/694 of 2 December 1996 on the balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process,
 - having regard to the Ministerial Declaration of 17 April 1999 in Paris on women and men in power,
- A. whereas the Commission is due to submit a report on the balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process, in accordance with the request in the abovementioned Council Recommendation,
- B. whereas improving gender balance in public and private decision-making bodies across the European Union must overcome both the belated recognition of female suffrage and entrenched attitudes and behaviour in society at large which requires improving awareness, providing training for women who aspire to positions of responsibility and facilitating their access to such positions,
- C. whereas public and private institutions should set targets for correcting any gender imbalance; and whereas a reasonable target should be set at 40% participation whereby performance can be compared on an annual basis, as is currently the case with the employment guidelines,
- D. deeply regretting that inequality and gender discrimination and under-representation of women still persist in politics and in public and private institutions, in Europe and worldwide, in spite of a large number of political statements and recommendations, programmes and projects and specific legislation introduced at European and national level,
- E. noting that higher participation of women in political life is often explained by the systems of proportional representation applied in those countries,
- F. whereas the Amsterdam Treaty made significant progress in recognising positive action as a legitimate means to eliminate inequality between women and men in the workplace,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 61, 28.2.1994, p. 248.

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- G. noting that women continue to receive less pay than men for work of equal value, despite the fact that a directive establishing the principle of equal pay was adopted more than 25 years ago, are to be found more often than men in jobs characterised by irregular status and less security and take the bulk of family responsibility, while in professional life the decision-making function remains for the most part in the hands of men,
- H. welcoming the growing number of female Members of the European Parliament, who account for approximately 30% of the Members elected in July 1999, as opposed to 27% of those elected in 1994; welcoming also the fact that for the second time since the first direct elections in 1979 the European Parliament has elected a woman as its President;
- I. noting that women are still under-represented in decision-making bodies at all levels and in all EU Institutions, for example in the European Parliament where women represent only 20% of all administrators, 22% of the Directors, 15% of the Heads of Division and are not represented at all at Director-General level,
- J. noting that although a large quantity of statistics on mapping has been produced, significant gaps remain, especially with regard to women's roles in economic decision-making,
- K. whereas the persisting under-representation of women — who represent over half of the population — in the political, economic and social areas is unacceptable in a democracy,
- L. deeply regretting that women — major victims of human rights violations such as rape, sexual abuse, domestic violence, trafficking in human beings etc. — are under-represented on judiciary and legislative bodies judging on the crimes mentioned and deciding on legal provisions, with the consequence that little or no priority is given to these crimes often resulting in the non-prosecution of offenders, even those who are known,
- M. deeply regretting that the voices of women — who are among the major victims of armed conflicts — are absent from key decisions on peace-keeping efforts and from the design of post-conflict reconstruction programmes,
- N. convinced that women holding decision-making positions on an equal footing with men is a necessary condition not only for successfully putting an end to inequalities, gender discrimination and violence against women but for the benefit of the functioning of society as a whole,
1. Reiterates its abovementioned resolution of 11 February 1994;
 2. Requests the Commission to present before the end of the year a report on action actually taken and the result in statistical terms where appropriate, considering that six years have elapsed since the abovementioned resolution was adopted;
 3. Notes that the use of quotas as a transitional measure helps to even up the involvement of men and women in political life and calls for the provision of political training and information for women candidates by the parties so that they can take up political life with full confidence;
 4. Urges the Member States to seek actively to reach a more balanced participation of women and men in all the EU institutions;
 5. Welcomes the Commission's intention to present a proposal for a Fifth Action Programme on Equal Opportunities;
 6. Recalls that gender mainstreaming is a long-term transformative strategy which involves large-scale re-education about policy design and delivery and that it should be used to complement positive action measures;

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7. Notes the Commission's intention to promote women's participation in its committees and working groups and its commitments to increase the number of women in decision-making within its administration;
8. Calls on the Commission to make it a priority to improve the statistical data base to establish and maintain a full set of regularly updated statistics on women in decision-making throughout the EU;
9. Concludes that both men and women are necessary in the decision-making process while the special qualities of both sexes are complementary, which can only lead to better management;
10. Calls on the Member States to promote training for executives and leaders — men as well as women — in order to promote non-discriminatory working relationships;
11. Calls on the Member States to introduce capacity development with government agencies with a view to advancing career development for women;
12. Calls on the social partners to promote balanced participation by women and men in positions of responsibility and decision-making and, in order to achieve this, to take the necessary steps in the recruitment and professional training of their representatives in the various bodies of the social dialogue;
13. Calls on the Commission to use the existing Treaty provisions to encourage governments to develop and implement policies and programmes to establish gender balance in decision-making bodies and in the bodies and delegations involved in the enlargement process;
14. Calls on Member States to increase the number of women participating in peace-keeping, peace-making, peace-building and conflict-preventing activities with which Member States collaborate; instructs its competent committee to pay special attention to the role of women in these fields, and to make recommendations towards the mainstreaming of gender considerations into all aspects of conflict resolution;
15. Expects that the position defined by the European Union and the NGOs will play an important role in the forthcoming UN Conference on the follow-up of the Platform for Action 'Beijing plus five' in New York next June and that this will be decisively implemented by governments in order to fulfil their commitments through concrete measures;
16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the other EU institutions and bodies, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

8. Annual economic report

A5-0041/2000

European Parliament resolution on the Commission document 'The EU Economy — 1999 Review' (C5-0081/2000 — 2000/2046(COS))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission document (C5-0081/2000),
- having regard to the Commission report on the review of the single facility providing medium-term financial assistance for Member States' balances of payments (COM(1999) 628),
- having regard to Articles 99 and 104 of the EC Treaty,