

**Tuesday 12 March 2013**

18. Refers to the Annual Report 2011 of its Committee on Petitions, which stressed the need to ensure objectivity and impartiality with regard to EIAs; recalls that the Commission was asked to ensure that the EIA Directive would be 'strengthened by providing clearer parameters as regards the independence of expert studies, common EU thresholds, a maximum timeframe for the process, including effective public consultation, the requirement to justify decisions, the mandatory assessment of reasonable alternatives and a quality control mechanism';

19. Welcomes the Commission's proposal for a revision of the EIA Directive with a view to strengthening it; expresses its commitment to fully engaging with the Commission and Council in the procedure in order to ensure that this important directive serves its purpose in an ever more efficient and objective manner<sup>(1)</sup>;

20. Notes that the current directive does not contain requirements relating to the objectivity and impartiality of the authorities responsible for authorisation and does not set any such requirements for bodies which carry out an EIA; notes that it does not contain any provisions either about how to proceed when a project has already been implemented or is close to finalisation or about how the concerned public could, by means of a clear and non-bureaucratic procedure, obtain immediate clarification from the EIA authority responsible about the conformity with EU rules of such projects, which are very likely to infringe basic provisions of the EIA Directive; considers therefore that the review of the EIA Directive offers a good opportunity to introduce such requirements and provisions;

21. Considers that this case also shows that, in addition to measures to strengthen the provisions of the EIA Directive, clearer procedures are required for infringement proceedings, preferably through the adoption of a general regulation on administrative procedures for the EU's administration, thereby strengthening the position of the complainant; considers that such a regulation would be an appropriate means of clarifying the authorities' obligations when communicating with complainants in an infringement case or with bodies representing European citizens, such as the Petitions Committee and the Ombudsman, e.g. by introducing an obligation to respond as soon as possible to recommendations of the Ombudsman in order to avoid misinterpretations, such as those which occurred in the case at hand;

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22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European Ombudsman, the European Network of Ombudsmen and the parliaments of the Member States.

P7\_TA(2013)0073

## **Impact of the economic crisis on gender equality and women's rights**

**European Parliament resolution of 12 March 2013 on the impact of the economic crisis on gender equality and women's rights (2012/2301(INI))**

(2016/C 036/02)

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Articles 2 and 3(3), second subparagraph, of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and to Articles 8, 153(1), indent (i), and 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 18 April 2012 entitled 'Towards a job-rich recovery' (COM(2012) 0173) and the accompanying document on exploiting the employment potential of the personal and household services (SWD(2012)0095),

<sup>(1)</sup> COM(2012)0628.

Tuesday 12 March 2013

- having regard to the Commission proposal of 6 October 2011 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a European Union Programme for Social Change and Innovation (COM(2011)0609),
- having regard to the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020), adopted by the European Council in March 2011,
- having regard to the Commission's 2011 report on the Progress on Equality between Women and Men in 2010 (SEC(2011)0193),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 21 September 2010 entitled 'Strategy for equality between women and men — 2010-2015' (COM(2010)0491),
- having regard to the proposal for a Council decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States — Part II of the Europe 2020 Integrated Guidelines (COM(2010)0193),
- having regard to Directive 2006/123/EC of 12 December 2006 on services in the internal market <sup>(1)</sup>,
- having regard to Directive 2006/54/EC of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast) <sup>(2)</sup>,
- having regard to Directive 2004/113/EC of the Council of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services <sup>(3)</sup>,
- having regard to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 18 December 1979,
- having regard to its resolution of 6 May 2009 on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market <sup>(4)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 7 September 2010 on the role of women in an ageing society <sup>(5)</sup>;
- having regard to its resolution of 17 June 2010 on gender aspects of the economic downturn and financial crisis <sup>(6)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 October 2010 on precarious women workers <sup>(7)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 March 2011 on equality between women and men in the European Union — 2010 <sup>(8)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 March 2011 on the face of female poverty in the European Union <sup>(9)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 6 July 2011 on women and business leadership <sup>(10)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 September 2011 on women entrepreneurship in small and medium-sized enterprises <sup>(11)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 October 2011 on the situation of single mothers <sup>(12)</sup>,

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 376, 27.12.2006, p. 36.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 23.

<sup>(3)</sup> OJ L 373, 21.12.2004, p. 37.

<sup>(4)</sup> OJ C 212 E, 5.8.2010, p. 23.

<sup>(5)</sup> OJ C 308 E, 20.10.2011, p. 49.

<sup>(6)</sup> OJ C 236 E, 12.8.2011, p. 79.

<sup>(7)</sup> OJ C 70 E, 8.3.2012, p. 1.

<sup>(8)</sup> OJ C 199 E, 7.7.2012, p. 65.

<sup>(9)</sup> OJ C 199 E, 7.7.2012, p. 77.

<sup>(10)</sup> OJ C 33 E, 5.2.2013, p. 134.

<sup>(11)</sup> OJ C 51 E, 22.2.2013, p. 56.

<sup>(12)</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2011)0458.

**Tuesday 12 March 2013**

- having regard to its resolution of 13 March 2012 on equality between women and men in the European Union — 2011 <sup>(1)</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 24 May 2012 with recommendations to the Commission on application of the principle of equal pay for male and female workers for equal work or work of equal value <sup>(2)</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 11 September 2012 on women's role in the green economy <sup>(3)</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 11 September 2012 on women's working conditions in the service sector <sup>(4)</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 9 March 2011 on the EU strategy on Roma inclusion <sup>(5)</sup>;
  - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and the opinion of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (A7-0048/2013),
- A. whereas the European Union is facing the biggest economic and financial crisis since the depression of the 1930s and whereas unemployment rates in all Member States, and especially the southern Member States, have risen significantly as a result of this crisis; whereas the effects of this crisis are particularly serious for vulnerable people, and in particular for women, who are affected directly — through loss of their jobs or pay cuts or loss of job security — and indirectly through budget cuts in public services and welfare; whereas, this being the case, it is essential among other things that the dimension of gender equality in the handling of this crisis and the development of solutions be very seriously examined;
- B. whereas the right to work is an essential precondition if women are to enjoy effective equal rights, economic independence and professional fulfilment; whereas the current crisis is not only a financial and economic crisis, but also a crisis for democracy, for equality, for social welfare, and for gender equality, and is also being used as an excuse to slow down or even halt crucial efforts to tackle climate change and the environmental challenges ahead;
- C. whereas recent studies have shown that only 5 % of decision-makers in the EU's financial institutions are women, while all 27 central bank governors in the Member States are men; whereas gender studies have shown that women manage in a different way by avoiding risk and focusing more on a long-term perspective;
- D. whereas at the beginning the economic crisis had a greater impact on men than on women; whereas unemployment has risen since then at different rates for men and women; whereas women were not hit initially by the crisis but are now increasingly feeling its effects (higher and increasing number of precarious and part-time jobs, greater threat of redundancy, lower wages, reduced social protection cover, etc), and will be affected more enduringly; whereas this phase is far less well documented and there is a lack of reliable and comparable statistical data on it, and, consequently, the impact of the crisis on women tends to be underestimated;
- E. whereas women play a critical role in driving economic development; whereas further empowering women can have the economic effect of lifting communities and families out of poverty;

<sup>(1)</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2012)0069.

<sup>(2)</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2012)0225.

<sup>(3)</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2012)0321.

<sup>(4)</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2012)0322.

<sup>(5)</sup> OJ C 199 E, 7.7.2012, p. 112.

Tuesday 12 March 2013

- F. whereas in a crisis situation labour market policy tends to focus on influencing the general level of employment, and not on economically inactive women;
- G. whereas it should be noted that unemployed women are often not included in official statistics and that gender inequalities in terms of inactivity rates are often underestimated as women tend more frequently to withdraw from the labour market for various reasons (pregnancy, family responsibilities, time constraints) and to perform unpaid or informal work, often in the home or caring for dependents or serving the shadow economy, while few studies currently exist concerning the impact of cuts in public expenditure relating to gender equality;
- H. whereas budget cuts by governments implementing austerity plans are mostly affecting the public sector and its welfare services, which are staffed and benefited mainly by women — who make up some 70 % of public-sector employees — but also the private sector, with women now becoming the main victims of austerity measures; whereas to date no country has assessed the impact of the proposed cuts in public spending and of the consequences of fiscal consolidation from a gender perspective, be it the impact of the individual measures or their cumulative impact;
- I. whereas women are more dependent on social benefits which are being cut as part of austerity measures;
- J. whereas a crisis situation like the current one calls for deep structural reforms in the job market;
- K. whereas for women a fall in the number of jobs frequently goes hand in hand with the readjustment of work schedules, including longer working hours often involving different shifts; whereas it is extremely likely that recovery will be felt more rapidly in the industrial sector, thereby bringing about recovery in male employment, which will pick up faster than female employment; whereas austerity measures in the public services will have a more lasting effect on female employment, thus jeopardising in the long term the progress that has been made in the field of gender equality;
- L. whereas the crisis is leading to increasing exploitation of women in both the legal and the illegal economy; whereas its effects will impact in the longer term on those women who have a non-linear career path (including those in poorly paid temporary, part-time, intermittent, atypical, or even informal employment), often with part-time working imposed, resulting in women having an incomplete pension contributions record and in a higher percentage of women at risk of poverty; whereas women may end up with entitlement only to a very small pension and thus be pushed below the poverty line; whereas there is a risk of the emergence of a whole 'lost generation' of young people, both men and women, deprived of job opportunities, secure employment and, often, educational opportunities because of economic hardship;
- M. whereas the crisis is adding to the difficulties of reconciling career and family roles; whereas the impact on employment of having children differs between women and men; whereas the labour market participation rate for mothers is 12 % lower than that for women without children, while the employment rate for fathers is 8,7 % higher than for men without children;
- N. whereas the gender dimension has not been taken into consideration in the current and planned initiatives and policies aimed at exiting the crisis;
- O. whereas female employment is affected by gender stereotypes, such as the notion that male unemployment is a 'more serious' issue than female unemployment, adding to the already significant collection of gender stereotypes which impact negatively on women's chances of employment; whereas in practice the approach to male unemployment is different from that to female unemployment, since men are still considered as the breadwinners and women as the main family caretakers;
- P. whereas approximately 23 % of EU citizens were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2010<sup>(1)</sup>, and this impoverishment of the population affects women most of all, since they very often face a combination of difficulties, as in the cases of older women living alone and single-parent families (for the most part headed by women); whereas these include difficulties in keeping a job or finding a new one in these circumstances, difficulties in finding

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<sup>(1)</sup> Eurostat, 23 % of EU citizens were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2010 — Issue 9/2012.

**Tuesday 12 March 2013**

appropriate housing, taking on responsibility for dependants (children, parents, and sick or disabled people), and difficulties in reconciling work and family life arising from lack of appropriate support structures and variations in national policies on the matter between the 27 Member States;

- Q. whereas the crisis has further aggravated the social and economic condition of many disadvantaged communities and has contributed to an increased school dropout rate among girls and an even greater vulnerability to trafficking;
- R. whereas cutbacks in services and benefits have compromised women's economic independence, as benefits often constitute an important source of their income and as women tend to use public services more than men; whereas single mothers and single female pensioners face the biggest cumulative losses;
- S. whereas rising numbers of women are taking informal and unpaid work (voluntary or otherwise) with less social protection in order to escape the crisis; whereas according to an OECD study <sup>(1)</sup> domestic work accounts for 33 % of the GNP of the OECD member countries;
- T. notes that the decrease in the employment gap between men and women is more a reflection of a general degeneration in living and working conditions than of progress towards increased gender equality;
- U. whereas women entering working life are playing a leading role in the return to growth; whereas they enable the family income to rise, which brings about a rise in consumption and helps boost the economy; whereas gender equality therefore has a positive impact on productivity and economic growth;
- V. whereas the recent secondary analysis of the 5th EWCS ('Women, men and working conditions in Europe: Secondary analysis of the 5th European Working conditions survey', Eurofound 2012, to be published in 2013) shows that gender segregation is detrimental for both male and female workers; whereas both men and women report increased wellbeing at work and greater job satisfaction where they work with colleagues of both sexes; whereas scope nonetheless remains for combating gender segregation on the labour market, occupational gender polarisation, and the existence of 'mono-gendered' workplaces (given that three-fifths of workers in Europe are employed at a single-sex workplace);
- W. whereas gender equality measures have been cancelled or delayed and potential future cuts in public budgets will have a negative effect on female employment and on the promotion of equality;
- X. whereas the economic downturn should not be used as an excuse to slow down progress on work/life policies and to cut budgets allocated to care services for dependents and leave arrangements, affecting in particular women's access to the labour market;
- Y. whereas violence against women is a widespread phenomenon in all countries and all social classes; whereas economic stress often leads to more frequent, more violent and more dangerous abuse, and whereas studies have also shown that violence against women intensifies when men experience displacement and dispossession as a result of economic crisis;
- Z. whereas women benefited most from job creation in the EU between 1998 and 2008 (the respective female employment rates in the EU being 55,6 % and 62,8 %) <sup>(2)</sup>; whereas employment has risen by 12,7 % for women but only 3,18 % for men, the unemployment rate for women remaining slightly higher in 2012 <sup>(3)</sup> (10,7 % of women being unemployed as opposed to 10,6 % of men);

<sup>(1)</sup> OECD, Society at a Glance 2011, OECD Social Indicators, @OECD2011.

<sup>(2)</sup> Eurostat: female employment rate, EU-27.

<sup>(3)</sup> Eurostat: harmonised unemployment rate for men and women — September 2012, European Union.

Tuesday 12 March 2013

AA. whereas in 2011 31,6 % of women worked part-time as opposed to 8,1 % of men;

1. Recalls that gender equality is one of the core objectives of the European Union and that it must be a key consideration when defining the response to the current economic and financial crisis, including investment in the public sector, the welfare sector, and environmentally sustainable housing, transport, etc, as well as generating state revenue through more efficient taxation policies; deplores the fact that policy responses to the crisis, including recovery packages, have failed to acknowledge, analyse and rectify the gender impact of the crisis; condemns the fact that there has been virtually no mainstreaming of the gender perspective into the post-Lisbon strategy, and hence calls on the Council, the Commission and the Member States to mainstream gender equality, via specific targets in the macroeconomic and employment guidelines;

2. Invites the Commission to integrate the gender dimension into all policies, in particular those concerning: impact of austerity measures and recovery from the crisis; economic governance; sustainable development and green jobs; vocational education and training; migration, cooperation and development; health and safety; and measures to be planned or implemented to counteract or limit the effects of the crisis;

3. Calls on the Member States to review and highlight the immediate and long-term impact of the economic crisis on women, with particular reference to whether and how it is worsening existing gender inequalities, and to related consequences such as increased risk of gender-based violence, declining maternal and child health, and poverty among older women;

4. Recalls that, having seen the employment rate for women climb steadily for over ten years to reach a level of 62,8 % in 2008, the EU has now seen that rate fall slightly since the beginning of the economic crisis, to 62,3 % in 2011; stresses, therefore, the need for lasting responses that take the gender equality dimension into consideration in both EU and Member State policies to safeguard employment and renew growth;

5. Invites the Commission to consider a further adaptation of the Structural Funds, in order to ensure additional support for areas of women's employment likely to be affected by the crisis, as well as support for childcare, training and access to employment;

6. Stresses the importance of the flagship initiative 'Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion'; invites the Member States to make full use of the Europe for Citizens Programme and the upcoming Programme for Social Change and Innovation, especially with regard to the effective implementation of gender equality objectives; stresses the importance of the Daphne III programme, especially with regard to the protection of women against all forms of violence and the need to achieve high levels of health protection, wellbeing and social cohesion;

7. Stresses the fact that, despite unemployment rates for men and women being comparable, the crisis affects women differently; points out that working conditions for women have become considerably more insecure, especially with the increasing prevalence of atypical forms of contract, and that women's incomes have fallen significantly thanks to a number of factors, including the persistent wage gap (nearly 17 %) between men and women and the resultant inequality in their respective levels of unemployment benefit, the rise in compulsory part-time working, and the rise in the number of temporary or fixed-term jobs to the detriment of more stable employment; whereas with the persistent gender pay gap and the resultant inequality in unemployment benefit levels, the crisis has worsened women's situation in the labour market; points out that the experience of previous crises shows that the male employment rate generally recovers more quickly than that for women;

8. Calls on the Commission to submit, as soon as possible, a proposal for a directive setting out measures for overcoming the gender pay gap for equal or equivalent work;

9. Recalls that very wide disparities still exist between Member States, with the employment rate for women varying between 48,6 % and 77,2 %, and that the contrast in these situations calls for specific, tailor-made responses as part of an overarching European approach; emphasises, moreover, the need to have reliable common indicators, and thus reliable comparable statistics, so that differing situations can be assessed, needs determined and suitable responses found;

10. Recalls that even before the economic crisis, women were in the majority in temporary and part-time employment, and that the crisis has reinforced this trend, hence placing many women at a heightened risk of social exclusion; notes that this has been particularly the case in the southern Member States;



**Tuesday 12 March 2013**

11. Notes with concern that female youth unemployment increased from 18,8 % in 2009 to 20,8 % in 2011, and that the crisis will impact especially harshly on disadvantaged groups of women, including inter alia women with disabilities, immigrant women, women belonging to ethnic minorities, women with few qualifications, women who are long-term unemployed, single mothers, women without livelihoods and women caring for dependents; welcomes the Commission's package of measures aimed at tackling the present unacceptable levels of youth unemployment and social exclusion and offering young people jobs, education and training;

12. Believes that the right to work is an essential precondition if women are to enjoy effective equal rights, economic independence and professional fulfilment, and therefore insists that precarious employment should be eradicated by recognising and enhancing the right to jobs with rights;

13. Calls on the EU and the Member States to reformulate their current responses to the economic crisis in order to ensure that the measures undertaken are long-term in scope and do not undermine the welfare policies and public sector structures that are a precondition for greater gender equality, such as social services and care facilities, healthcare, education, and workers' rights;

14. Recalls that it is becoming increasingly difficult for women to make the transition from education to employment, and that this will ultimately lead to divergences in men's and women's assessment of their own skills;

15. Considers that the structural reforms arising from the handling of the current crisis offer an opportunity to correct certain types of gender discrimination which remain too common on the European job market;

16. Emphasises that women account for a larger proportion of the informal economy than men, partly because there is greater deregulation in the sectors in which women traditionally work, for example domestic service or care work; notes, on the other hand, that the informal economy has grown as a result of the crisis, although it is very difficult to obtain a clear picture of it in the absence of reliable data on incidence and impact;

17. Stresses that women have played a vital role in resisting the crisis; firmly believes that women offer considerable potential for the improved competitiveness and performance of business, particularly where they are in management posts; considers that involving women in the drawing-up and management of recovery plans to encourage social cohesion is, therefore, a matter of particular urgency;

18. Insists on the need to ensure that the current economic and financial crisis and the consequent budget restrictions do not jeopardise the progress achieved by policies promoting gender equality and do not serve as a pretext for reducing efforts in this respect; believes it should, rather, encourage Member States to incorporate gender equality policies into their employment policies, considering the latter as part of the solution to the crisis, in terms of harnessing and fully exploiting the skills and abilities of all Europeans; calls on the Member States to ensure that a gender mainstreaming aspect is included in all planned fiscal policies;

19. Stresses that women's rights should not be seen, understood or pursued as competing with men's rights, since the improvement of care services and public services for families is a precondition for both men's and women's participation in the labour market; points out that there is a need to promote the sharing of family and household responsibilities; invites the Member States to introduce measures or develop existing measures aimed at overcoming gender discrimination and the unequal assignment of roles, such as encouraging men in their right to care for children and sick or disabled relatives;

20. Stresses that the falling birth rate in the EU has been exacerbated by the crisis, given that unemployment, precarious situations and uncertainty regarding the future and the economy have led couples, and younger women in particular, to delay having children, thereby further reinforcing the trend to demographic ageing in the Union;

21. Stresses the importance of reforming macroeconomic, social and labour market policies in order to guarantee economic and social justice for women, develop strategies to promote the fair distribution of wealth, guarantee a minimum income and decent wages and pensions, reduce the gender pay gap, create more high-quality jobs for women coupled with rights, enable women to benefit from public services of a high standard, and improve welfare provision and neighbourhood services, including creches, kindergartens and other forms of pre-school education, day centres, community leisure and family support centres, and intergenerational centres;

Tuesday 12 March 2013

22. Recalls that cuts in public budgets are not gender-neutral but are, rather, the result of the Union's macrostructural economic policies, in particular the implementation of the measures contained in 'economic governance' and financial adjustment programmes which are causing and will continue to cause increasing gender inequalities, female unemployment and the feminisation of poverty; believes that a change in policy is therefore required, since women are in the majority in public-sector employment and are the principal beneficiaries of social policies; calls, therefore, for the relevant budget headings to be increased;
23. Calls on the Member States and the Union institutions to undertake gender impact assessment when planning austerity measures, so as to ensure that their effects are as gender-neutral as possible;
24. Calls on the Member States to introduce gender budgeting in order to analyse government programmes and policies, their effects on resource allocation and their contribution to equality between women and men;
25. Stresses that women face a greater risk than men of slower career development as a result of accepting starting positions at lower levels or working part-time, and that women in this situation are, therefore, more vulnerable, have unsatisfactory income levels and suffer more from poverty;
26. Calls on the Member States and regional and local authorities to ensure the proper provision of affordable, accessible and high-quality care services for children and other dependents, and that these are compatible with the full-time working schedules of men and women;
27. Stresses the importance of immediate action to implement 'return-to-work' policies and business sector insertion schemes for these public-sector employees, the majority of whom are women, whose jobs are under threat from cuts in the public-sector budget;
28. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to mainstream the global approach to gender equality in all employment policies, to take the measures needed to assist women in their return to work, not only at lower-level posts but also at management level, and to incorporate this approach in the Union's employment guidelines; insists on the need for proper gender budgeting, especially in the context of the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014-2020, in order to reach the objectives set in the Gender Equality Pact as well as in the 2020 Strategy;
29. Regrets the failure to include increasing the labour market participation of women in the Annual Growth Survey 2013 despite the fact that this is one of the EU 2020 headline targets; calls on the Council to add promoting female labour market participation as a priority when adopting this year's economic policy guidance in the framework of the European Semester;
30. Calls on the Member States to include and systematically address the issue of gender equality in all future national reform programmes;
31. Calls on the Member States to promote an active labour market policy, a strong social dialogue, job standards and social protection in order to safeguard the rights of women, including migrant women, fight against forced labour and combat undeclared work;
32. Calls on the Member States to take measures to encourage mothers to enter the labour market, for instance through teleworking, vocational training or reskilling policies, with a view to promoting an 'assisted' return to work after maternity leave;
33. Welcomes the proposal for a directive on a better gender balance among non executive directors of companies listed on stock exchange enabling women to enter higher-skilled and better-paid jobs, and calls on the Member States to support and prepare for its implementation; calls for similar binding legislation to be adopted by other employers, including European, national, regional and local public institutions, administrations and bodies, since these should set the example as regards gender equality in decision-making;
34. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop a strategy for promoting gender balance for small and medium-sized enterprises not covered by the above directive; condemns the fact that women are under-represented on the governing boards of financial institutions and are hence virtually excluded from the decision-making process in the financial field; calls on the Council, the Commission and the Member States to improve women's participation at all levels of decision-making, especially in the areas of budgeting and of governance arrangements for European financial systems, including in the European Central Bank; stresses, in this context, the need to promote financial literacy for girls and women;



**Tuesday 12 March 2013**

35. Calls on the Member States to introduce policies for extensive training for employees of those sectors that are more affected by the negative consequences of the crisis or of globalisation in order to prepare them for job changes and new jobs, bearing in mind the specific place of women and the fact that women are more frequently than men forced to interrupt their careers to look after children or older or sick family members, which has an impact on their career paths; calls for training plans to be implemented systematically in businesses in order to prepare employee retraining, propose individual job transfers, and offer training suitable for jobseekers and low-skilled workers; calls also for the creation of a complete register of labour shortages, broken down per sector, in order to allow women to prepare and search for jobs in a targeted manner;

36. Calls on the Member States to review their social protection systems with a view to individualising pension rights and rights under social security schemes in order to eliminate the 'breadwinner advantage', thus guaranteeing equal pension rights;

37. Underlines that the expenditure cuts in the care sector de facto redistribute work on to the shoulders of women and undermine gender equality; and calls on all Member States to develop plans for the provision of care services that can generate social justice and gender equality;

38. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote vocational training policies and programmes for women of all age groups, paying particular attention to the urgent need for lifelong learning programmes and the need to acquire new skills in new technologies and in the IT sector, in order to improve women's access to and increase their participation in the various business sectors, including the economic and financial sectors where women employees are few, also envisaging specific support measures so that women are able to combine workload, training and family life; recalls the important role played by the European Social Fund in assisting entry into employment through training policies, and suggests that Member States and local authorities promote recourse to this fund for the benefit, especially, of women who are more affected by the economic crisis;

39. Underlines the importance of investing in women and gender equality;

40. Calls on the Member States to promote the active inclusion or reintegration of women in the labour market and to encourage their employment in strategic development sectors, by adopting specific measures relating to flexible working hours, equal pay, and reform of taxation and pension schemes, as well as measures for lifelong learning aimed at ensuring the skills and qualifications that are needed in the light of the EU 2020 targets; stresses the importance of high-level training to encourage women to enter sectors where they are underrepresented, for example scientific research and technological development, especially now that Europe needs more researchers to foster innovation and strengthen its economy; invites the Commission to consider a further adaptation of the Structural Funds so as to ensure additional support for areas of women's employment likely to be affected by the crisis, as well as support for childcare, training and access to employment;

41. Recalls that in a great many Member States it has become more difficult since the start of the crisis for young women (aged between 15 and 24) to find their first full-time job, and that many of these young women are now prolonging their studies as a solution to this problem; observes that, despite this trend and the fact that better training gives women better protection on the whole, their status is not enhanced by their qualifications as much as would be the case for a man; calls on the Member States to focus on strategies that combine education and training policies with targeted employment policies for young women;

42. Calls on the Member States to ensure that secondary school curricula include a basic grounding in finance and entrepreneurship;

43. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to calculate the impact of the new pension systems on the different categories of women, focusing in particular on part-time and atypical contracts, and to adjust social welfare systems, especially where the younger generations are concerned;

44. Calls on the Member States to promote women's economic empowerment focusing on female entrepreneurship, by encouraging and supporting women, especially young women and immigrants, who set up companies, by facilitating women's access to finance, inter alia via microcredits, technical assistance and back-up measures, by promoting new financial and support tools and encouraging the development of female entrepreneurship and sponsorship networks and exchanges of best practice between Member States and economic operators; stresses that investment in women and gender equality is of great importance in order to ensure economic stability and prevent economic shocks;

Tuesday 12 March 2013

45. Calls on the Member States to improve women's participation at all levels of decision-making;
46. Calls on European Commission and the Member States to improve the promotion of women's entrepreneurship, including financial support for female entrepreneurs;
47. Calls on the Member States to promote female entrepreneurship in the green economy, which is a source of new jobs; notes that renewable energy can create new job opportunities for female entrepreneurs in remote and outlying areas of the EU where female unemployment is particularly high and there is great potential for exploiting alternative forms of energy such as wind or solar power;
48. Underlines the importance of active labour market policies, labour inspections and social dialogue, as well as skills upgrading, for the promotion of the greening of the economy;
49. Calls on the Member States to support job creation in the social economy, which is dominated by unpaid work carried out by women, and, especially, to seek out and implement new solutions that raise the profile of non-clandestine informal work;
50. Calls on the Member States to support the caregiving and health sector with the aim of creating conditions for achieving the EU 2020 strategy targets for women's employment;
51. Calls on the Member States to monitor and address the impact of cutbacks in public care and health services that lead to the reprivatisation of care, in order not to aggravate the care burden on women, since this would drag them back into a traditional family role; underlines that economies made in the areas of maternity, paternity and parental leave, child benefit, and other care- and family-related benefits have significantly reduced the income of all women with care responsibilities;
52. Recalls that stereotypes persist with regard to perceptions of women's and men's places in the labour market, and that women seek to reconcile their work obligations with their family life and are thus more vulnerable to employment changes than men;
53. Urges the introduction of public transport policies, and, in particular, the development and improvement of public transport services, on a basis that takes account of gender equality, thus enabling women to be more active in the labour market and in searching for work by making them truly mobile;
54. Is concerned at the situation of women who live in rural areas where access to a range of services has deteriorated; calls on the Member States to ensure that rural areas are provided with functioning public transport and medical and other essential services, in order to reduce migration to the cities and avoid marginalising peripheral areas;
55. Stresses the importance of effective action making it possible to combine work, private and family life, which will have the positive effect of increasing the participation of women from all sections of society in social and political life;
56. Emphasises that the EU programme 'Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs' should specifically support women's participation, so that they can acquire an equal degree of confidence and knowledge of businesses in the single market and the necessary skills for running and developing a business;
57. Stresses that cutbacks in public services providing childcare have a direct impact on the economic independence of women and on the work-life balance; calls on the Commission and Council to adopt an action plan to achieve the targets set in Barcelona for better childcare provision, via the development of company and inter-company creches; stresses the importance of collective bargaining between management and labour in order to improve the work-life balance at sectoral, national and regional levels and of relaxing the access and attendance conditions for childcare systems associated with categories of jobs performed by women, while also setting a minimum period of three month's notice for childcare placements so as to enable women to reconcile their family and working lives;
58. Calls for the promotion of adequate maternity, paternity and parental leave arrangements, for support for initiatives by companies to provide flexibility in working hours and in-house childcare services, and the allocation of increased resources to education, lifelong learning programmes and professional qualification and requalification programmes, as well as the introduction of adequate support for family carers, including provision of respite care;

**Tuesday 12 March 2013**

59. Underlines the need to invest in affordable quality services, such as full-time childcare, all-day school places and care for the elderly — that help promote gender equality, foster a better work-life balance and create a framework favourable to entering or re-entering the labour market;

60. Maintains that it is essential to set up new childcare facilities while also giving a professional character to informal care systems, by laying down quality standards, improving pay terms, and providing training for operators; also considers it necessary to allow for the specific needs of parents working atypical hours and single parents;

61. Stresses the need to enhance the responsibility of governments and employers in relation to generational renewal and maternity and paternity rights, which means that women must have the right to be both mothers and workers without forfeiting labour rights;

62. Underlines the need to reduce the effects of the economic and financial crisis on families (with particular reference to divorce, single mothers and situations where children are left in the care of relatives or authorities), taking into account that women are often expected to take charge of household tasks; stresses that women will as a result be placed at greater risk of poverty;

63. Stresses the fact that the decisions taken by some Member States to cut their budgets for childcare, education and extracurricular activities, school meals, transport subsidies and assistance for those caring for dependents have direct implications for women, who have to take on the majority of the additional tasks entailed; emphasises that this means women often have to move into part-time employment (with the accompanying social disadvantages in terms of lower income and reduced pensions); believes that the public network of day nurseries, crèches and public recreational activities for children needs to be expanded, along with the public support network for the elderly and a public network of community hospitals;

64. Calls on the Commission and Member States to address the particular needs of Roma women and girls by applying a gender perspective in all policies for Roma inclusion, and to provide protection for especially vulnerable subgroups;

65. Stresses that cutbacks in public services providing childcare have a direct impact on the economic independence of women; points out that in 2010 28,3 % of women's inactivity and part-time work was explained by the lack of care services, as against 27,9 % in 2009, and that in 2010 the employment rate of women with small children in the EU was 12,7 % lower than that of women without children, a gap greater than the 11,5 % registered in 2008;

66. Calls on the Member States to invest in the care sector as a potential growth sector for both women and men, in order to break with the traditional assignment of the role of carer to women, which leads to gender segregation in the labour market; emphasises that cuts in the care sector lead to a shift from public care to unpaid care within households; stresses the need for proper contracts and social protection for home-based personal care workers;

67. Pending EU-wide harmonisation of maternity, paternity and parental leave, calls on the Member States to maintain the relevant allowances and other family allowances at their existing levels, in order not to reduce women's income, and also to ensure that women's maternity leave rights are not infringed;

68. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to carefully monitor the increasing frequency of discrimination against pregnant women on the labour market which has been reported in several Member States;

69. Considers that female poverty is being caused not only by the current economic crisis but also by a variety of factors, including stereotypes, the pay and pension gap between men and women, insufficient redistribution mechanisms in the welfare system, an unsatisfactory work-life balance, women's longer life expectancy and, in general, all forms of gender-based discrimination which primarily affect women; stresses that the crisis is exacerbating this situation of continual inequality; highlights the need to combat stereotypes in all walks of life and at all stages of life, since these are one of the most persistent causes of inequality between men and women, impacting on their choices in education and employment and the distribution of domestic and family responsibilities, as well as on the pay gap, participation in public life and representation in decision-making positions;

Tuesday 12 March 2013

70. Calls on the Commission to undertake a review of Directive 2006/54/EC, especially with reference to the gender pay gap, as called for by Parliament in its resolution of 24 May 2012, which included recommendations to the Commission concerning application of the principle of equal pay for male and female workers for equal work or work of equal value;
71. Invites the Member States and the Commission to propose solutions that help women continue with their careers, and that combat, in particular, the wage inequalities arising from periods of maternity leave;
72. Draws the Member States' attention to the need for income-enhancing measures, including the development of minimum income schemes and social assistance programmes for persons having difficulty in meeting their basic needs, in particular those with children or care responsibilities and especially single parents;
73. Observes that the economic crisis contributes to harassment, abuse and violence of all kinds directed against women, and in particular to an increase of prostitution; stresses that women remain victims of the most widespread breaches of human rights worldwide, in every culture and at all social and economic levels; also stresses the need to increase the public, financial and human resources available for intervention on behalf of groups at risk of poverty, and in situations where children and young people, the elderly, people with disabilities or the homeless are at risk;
74. Calls on the Member States to review and highlight the immediate and long-term impact of the economic crisis on women, paying particular attention to whether and how it worsens existing gender inequalities, as well as to consequences such as increased risk of gender-based violence, declining maternal and child health, and female poverty in old age;
75. Stresses that in the current situation of economic crisis and budgetary austerity women have fewer resources to protect themselves and their children from violence, and that thus it is even more important to avert the direct financial impact that violence against women and children has on the judiciary and on health and social services;
76. Underlines that the institutional framework for gender equality policies, including equality bodies and women's organisations, is being adversely affected by cuts in funding; calls on the Member States to maintain their level of government funding for gender equality bodies and projects, women's shelters and women's organisations, since these provide effective means for finding sustainable solutions to the crisis and ensuring active participation in preparing future recovery measures; notes that cuts in funding for women's organisations undermine women's civic and political participation and make women's voices even less heard in society;
77. Calls on the European Institute for Gender Equality to undertake the ongoing and systematic monitoring and appraisal of the consequences of the economic crisis for women's working conditions, with reference to discrimination in recruitment, increased workload, pressure and stress at work, and bullying and psychological harassment; stresses that the existing data do not reflect the full harshness of the impact of the crisis on women; also calls on the Commission, therefore, to carry out a gender impact assessment of its economic policy measures and responses to the current crisis;
78. Calls on the Member States to strongly support gender budgeting, in order to increase gender equality by correcting negative impacts of revenue and expenditure and improving governance and accountability, in particular with respect to national budgets;
79. Invites the Member States to adopt budgetary instruments that reflect the need for gender equality;
80. Calls on all Member States to ratify the ILO Convention on Domestic Workers (Convention 189);
81. Underlines the importance of ensuring a proper balance between security and flexibility in the labour market, through the comprehensive implementation of flexicurity principles, and of addressing labour market segmentation by providing adequate social protection for those in periods of transition or on temporary or part-time employment contracts, as well as access to training, career development and full-time work opportunities;
82. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.
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