



2016/2060(INI)

11.10.2016

OPINION

of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

for the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

on rights of women in Eastern Partnership states
(2016/2060(INI))

Rapporteur: Pier Antonio Panzeri

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SUGGESTIONS

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

- having regard to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1979,
 - having regard to the UN Beijing Platform for Action (1995) for equality, development and peace,
 - having regard to UN Security Council resolutions 1820 (2008), 1325 (2000) and, most recently, 2242 (2015) on women, peace and security,
 - having regard to the resolutions of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality,
 - having regard to the Istanbul Convention of the Council of Europe of 2011,
 - having regard to the International Labour Organisation gender equality conventions, namely the Equal Remuneration Convention (No 100) of 1951, the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No 111) of 1958, the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (No 156) of 1981 and the Maternity Protection Convention (No 183) of 2000,
1. Calls for the equal allocation of power and representation between women and men at all levels of government and decision-making, including as regards promoting the participation of women in local elections, if necessary through the use of quotas; strongly supports empowerment projects aimed at promoting the participation of women in local elections such as the WiLD (Women in Local Democracy) project, which saw 70 % of its female beneficiaries elected during the 2013 and 2014 elections in Armenia; stresses the importance of women's systematic, equal, full and active participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, in the promotion of human rights and democratic reforms, and in peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction and democratic transition processes leading to lasting and stable political solutions;
 2. Points out that overall political stability and respect for human rights are generally a necessary precondition for enhancing women's rights and improving their situation in the countries concerned;
 3. Stresses the importance of women's equal, full and active participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts;
 4. Supports empowerment projects that raise women's self-confidence, guarantee their participation and increase their power and authority to take decisions in all areas affecting their lives; draws special attention to the role of freedom of expression and opinion in women's empowerment;
 5. Underlines the urgent need for gender mainstreaming as a strategy for realising gender

equality, and for positive action in the National Action Plans of the European Neighbourhood Policy;

6. Calls for equal access to education for all children, including at the levels of childcare and early, primary, secondary and university education, and in STEM subjects, paying particular attention to the education and training of girls in areas that represent a break with convention, including for girls living in rural areas; welcomes in this regard projects such as the project implemented in Ukraine by Sumy State University aimed at supporting equal opportunities for young-mother students in getting jobs in higher education establishments; calls for the opening up of all educational paths for women and for better access for them to higher education and to professions which are still banned for women;
7. Underlines that child labour remains a critical issue in some Eastern Partnership countries, especially in Moldova, Georgia and Azerbaijan; calls on these countries to set specific targets for eliminating all forms of child labour and to ensure the full enforcement of the relevant laws;
8. Encourages the enhancement of economic policies for women and the use of microcredits as a tool for economic independence, as well as the promotion of entrepreneurship skills; stresses the need to provide guidance and clarification to women on how macroeconomic policies can support their rights, and the need for women to have access to information on their social and economic rights;
9. Calls for women's involvement in decision-making and in the process of implementing economic policies, for the promotion of business programmes for equal opportunities for men and women in companies and enterprises, and for the implementation of local development projects aimed at the economic empowerment of women in Eastern Partnership states, such as the United Nations Development Programme's project currently implemented in Azerbaijan aimed at supporting the establishment of women-led businesses in the Masalli region; calls also for the adoption of specific economic policies aimed at helping women attain a work-life balance;
10. Stresses the need to promote women's entrepreneurship and access to finance, and more broadly women's participation in business, through the development of a strong women-in-business SME sector in the EaP countries, by facilitating access to finance and advice for women-led SMEs;
11. Welcomes the EU's contribution to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's Women in Business Programme in Eastern Partnership countries, which offers women-led businesses access to advice;
12. Welcomes the Council of Europe project aimed at identifying and supporting the removal of obstacles for women's equal access to justice in the Eastern Partnership countries;
13. Stresses the need for women to participate actively in trade unions, and highlights the urgent need to overcome legal and structural discriminatory barriers for women in the work environment in order to achieve equal pay for equal work, so as to eliminate wage and pension differences between the two sexes;
14. Considers it essential to devise practices and legislation whereby jobs may be preserved

for women during their pregnancy and for a given period thereafter in order, by means of state support, to maintain income at its earlier level for those whose earnings are reduced because they are bringing up children, and to facilitate a work-life balance;

15. Calls on the Eastern Partnership countries to encourage the media to pursue policies aimed at promoting equality between women and men and combating gender stereotypes;
16. Urges the Eastern Partnership states to ratify the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, since none of the countries concerned have ratified it, and calls on the authorities to put in place national strategies to prevent, investigate and punish acts of violence against women, promote protection and assistance for victims, and ensure their social reintegration;
17. Condemns the use of sexual violence against women and girls as weapons of war, including mass rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution and gender-based forms of persecution, including trafficking, as well as sex tourism, early and forced marriages, and all other forms of physical, sexual and psychological violence, and calls on the Eastern Partnership states to take steps as a matter of urgency to prevent and prosecute serious crimes of this kind committed within their jurisdiction, and even outside their own territory; underlines that early marriage remains an issue in Georgia and Moldova, where existing data shows that some 17-19 % of women were married before the age of 18; draws attention to the fact that gender-related crimes and crimes of sexual violence are classified in the Rome Statute as war crimes, crimes against humanity or constitutive acts with respect to genocide or torture; welcomes in this context UN Security Council resolution 2106 on the prevention of sexual violence in conflict, adopted on 24 June 2013;
18. Stresses the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 5 on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and with special regard to point 2 thereof, which calls for the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation;
19. Calls for specific protection for women seeking asylum, including mothers with small children, because women in particular may be fleeing gender-based violence but may be unable or unwilling to disclose relevant information during the Refugee Status Determination process; calls on the Commission in this regard to implement projects aimed at protecting vulnerable groups, as already done in Georgia in 2012-2014 with an EU-financed project;
20. Calls for the application of the Beijing Platform for Action in the fields of education and health as basic human rights, and calls for access for women, including women and girls with disabilities, to sexual and reproductive health services; stresses that family planning, maternal health, access to contraception and sexual and reproductive health services are important elements in saving women's lives; underlines the importance of the EU-financed project implemented in Moldova with a view to strengthening civil society organisations in HIV/AIDS prevention and care for women and juvenile prisoners;
21. Strongly condemns human trafficking and any other exploitative practice which violates the right to bodily integrity and inflicts violence; stresses the need to tackle human trafficking, the majority of victims of which are women who are exploited for sexual or

work purposes; supports the placing of those policies at the core of development cooperation in the EU neighbourhood policies;

22. Calls on the Eastern Partnership countries to design measures to ensure that the justice chain is gender-responsive and addresses the needs of the most disadvantaged women (poor, illiterate, from rural areas, minorities and those with disabilities);
23. Underlines the need for effective protection mechanisms for women human rights defenders;
24. Underlines the important role of parliamentary diplomacy in all of the above areas and the need to exchange best practices;
25. Calls as a matter of urgency for equality between women and men to be systematically included in political and human rights dialogues with Eastern Partnership states.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	10.10.2016
Result of final vote	+: 48 -: 2 0: 2
Members present for the final vote	Lars Adaktusson, Michèle Alliot-Marie, Petras Auštrevičius, Mario Borghezio, Elmar Brok, Klaus Buchner, Lorenzo Cesa, Aymeric Chauprade, Javier Couso Permuy, Andi Cristea, Mark Demesmaeker, Eugen Freund, Michael Gahler, Richard Howitt, Sandra Kalniete, Manolis Kefalogiannis, Tunne Kelam, Afzal Khan, Janusz Korwin-Mikke, Andrey Kovatchev, Eduard Kukan, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Ryszard Antoni Legutko, Arne Lietz, Barbara Lochbihler, Ramona Nicole Mănescu, David McAllister, Tamás Meszerics, Francisco José Millán Mon, Alojz Peterle, Tonino Picula, Kati Piri, Jaromír Štětina, Charles Tannock, Ivo Vajgl, Johannes Cornelis van Baalen, Geoffrey Van Orden
Substitutes present for the final vote	Neena Gill, María Teresa Giménez Barbat, Ana Gomes, Othmar Karas, Javi López, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Urmas Paet, Eleni Theocharous, Traian Ungureanu, Paavo Väyrynen
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Edward Czesak, Heidi Hautala, Emilian Pavel, Mylène Troszczynski, Michaela Šojdrová