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*Committee on Employment and Social Affairs*

**2006/2132(INI)**

11.10.2006

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

on a Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010  
(2006/2132(INI))

Draftswoman: Gabriele Zimmer

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## SUGGESTIONS

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

1. Agrees that gender equality is a fundamental right and common value of the EU, notes, however, that despite significant progress in this field, many inequalities between women and men remain;
2. Agrees that gender equality is a fundamental right and basic value of the EU; notes, however, that despite significant progress in this field, many considerable inequalities between women and men remain; considers that due to the unfavourable position of women in the social and economic field, with higher levels of unemployment and lower wages than men, women are at greater risk of exploitation and for this reason calls for the imposition of strict sanctions against exploitative employers;
3. Stresses that compliance with EC legislation on equal treatment of men and women, the effective use of the Structural Funds, and new funding mechanisms may improve training, boost employment and promote entrepreneurship;
4. Considers that the European institutions should communicate more about the policy developed at European level to promote gender equality and women's rights, and the advances that that policy has made possible;
5. Proposes that Member States develop an employment strategy that removes obstacles for the access of women to the labour market, promoting conditions of equal pay and taking actions against discrimination over pensions created by interruptions in work on the basis of maternity or parental leave;
6. Stresses the crucial role played by European and national institutions in promoting a society based on gender equality; calls on national institutions to organise information and public awareness campaigns on all aspects of inter-gender relations (as regards professional, family and political life, health, combating all forms of violence against women, including trafficking in women);
7. Stresses that undertakings, which are fundamental to economic development and job creation, should contribute, within the framework of corporate social responsibility, to eradicating discrimination of which women are frequently victims and in particular promoting access to employment, training and vocational development; insists on the importance of the role of the social partners and the social dialogue;
8. Recalls that the combination of economic competitiveness and social justice is at the heart of the European development model;
9. Notes that the challenges faced by the Member States and the EU in the area of gender equality are increasing as a result of intensified global economic competition and the subsequent demand for an ever more flexible and mobile labour force; highlights that

women continue to suffer from social, employment and other forms of discrimination and that these requirements are likely to have a stronger impact on women than on men; considers that this situation should not be permitted to undermine gender equality and women's reproductive rights;

10. Considers that the current challenges of demographic change could be better tackled if women had greater access to the labour market based on flexible working hours combined with job security, social security, educational opportunities and guaranteed and affordable childcare facilities, thus allowing a better work-life balance and an increase in employment opportunities for women;
11. Points out that the participation of women in the research sector, the sciences and technology may contribute to increasing innovation;
12. Supports the key actions put forward in the Commission communication, a Roadmap for equality between women and men (COM(2006)0092) (Roadmap) in the six priority areas concerning: the achievement of economic independence for women, underlining the fundamental role of the social funds for education overall in the field of new technologies reconciling work and family life; promoting the equal participation of women and men in decision-making; eradicating gender-based violence and trafficking with particular attention to slavery; eliminating gender stereotypes in society and promoting gender equality outside the EU; therefore expects the Commission to raise awareness through the exchange of good practices, support of research results and follow-up; believes, however, that for these actions to be effective the EU's social and economic policies need to ensure that all women, men and children can live in dignity and free from poverty;
13. Calls on the Commission to make every effort to ensure that the measures advocated in this communication are translated into action; stresses that, in the past, all the considerable amount of talk about gender equality has resulted in very few concrete measures, and it is now time effectively to apply the European legislation and the principles laid down in the communications and directives published on this subject; also considers it essential, to enable these different measures to be applied effectively, that partnerships with the Member States and civil society be enhanced;
14. Firmly believes that the achievement of the goals of growth and competitiveness laid down in the Lisbon Strategy requires that all means of production be tapped and that women must thus be encouraged to participate on an equal footing with men;
15. Believes also that the actions provided for in the Roadmap for equality between women and men must be incorporated in each economic policy and within this framework efforts must be taken to boost female entrepreneurship, better access to funding and the development of women's entrepreneurial networks;
16. Believes that gender equality, because it constitutes one of the most important basic values of the European Union, is a goal worth achieving not only for reasons of economic efficiency but particularly for reasons of social justice and for the achievement of a fairer and more balanced world. For this reason gender equality must be part of all policies of the Union and of Member States;

17. Points to the fact that gender equality in the workplace is closely linked to ensuring that rights of workers in flexible systems are respected;
18. Calls on the Commission to promote, in all EU documents, language that is gender-sensitive and capable of addressing all the cultures in play;
19. Asks the Commission to ensure that gender impact is considered properly when reviewing or developing EC legislation, such as the Working Time Directive, and that the Commission acts appropriately where a negative gender impact is likely, such as in the case of the Working Time Directive; calls on the Council to end the opt-out from the Working Time Directive, as it is more damaging to women than to men and makes it harder to reconcile work and family life;
20. Requests the Commission to encourage Member States to recognise the economic, social and educational value of unpaid work in families and households by creating mechanisms of contributions to the social welfare system and pension systems on a voluntary basis;
21. Asks the Commission to encourage - via actions and policies - female participation in traditionally male-dominated occupations with a view to promoting gender equality and equal pay;
22. Highlights that women have a higher risk of unemployment, exploitation and poverty than men and therefore calls on the Commission, as a matter of priority, to develop strategies to reduce the feminisation of poverty and unemployment and calls on the Member States to implement these strategies for women in the social protection and social inclusion processes;
23. Regrets that the Roadmap has underemphasised the role played in achieving full equality by training; considers in particular that more intensive training efforts should be aimed at women who are unemployed, in temporary employment, or working in lower-ranking jobs; believes, in addition, that stronger incentives should be offered for businesses to provide the necessary in-service training for women whose professional qualifications are of a lower level; considers, finally, that training should particularly be focused on women living in rural areas, especially as regards the use of new technologies;
24. Points to the importance of the role of the different authorities and the social partners (undertakings and trade unions) in pursuing positive actions to make life fairer and more balanced; maintains that it is essential to secure the involvement of the private sector and that the authorities should give the necessary encouragement so that firms which promote a work-life balance are given official recognition, whether at local, regional, national, or European level;
25. Considers it right, in view of recent experiences in Member States such as Spain, that the measures being recommended by the Commission should allow income-tax deductions to be made in favour of young working mothers; believes that, similarly, corporate tax deductions need to be allowed to benefit undertakings that set up day-care centres in the workplace;
26. Calls on the Commission to take specific measures to ensure that the suggestions made to

Member States in the Roadmap are genuinely taken on board, since it is the Member States which are responsible for integrating gender equality into government policy and, frequently, for applying European legislation;

27. Asks the European Union for specific policies and a monitoring centre to uphold the principle of equality for female immigrants, who are often subject to double discrimination, on the grounds of both race and gender;
28. Stresses the need for the European institutions to obtain reliable data and statistics in order to devise effective policies in the fields of employment and social affairs.

## PROCEDURE

<b>Title</b>	Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010
<b>Procedure number</b>	2006/2132(INI)
<b>Committee responsible</b>	FEMM
<b>Opinion by</b> Date announced in plenary	EMPL 15.6.2006
<b>Enhanced cooperation – date announced in plenary</b>	
<b>Drafts(wo)man</b> Date appointed	Gabriele Zimmer 15.3.2006
<b>Previous drafts(wo)man</b>	
<b>Discussed in committee</b>	13.9.2006      4.10.2006
<b>Date adopted</b>	5.10.2006
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 42 -: 2 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Jan Andersson, Jean-Luc Bennahmias, Emine Bozkurt, Iles Braghetto, Philip Bushill-Matthews, Milan Cabrnoch, Alejandro Cercas, Ole Christensen, Derek Roland Clark, Luigi Cocilovo, Jean Louis Cottigny, Harald Ettl, Carlo Fatuzzo, Ilda Figueiredo, Joel Hasse Ferreira, Roger Helmer, Stephen Hughes, Karin Jöns, Ona Juknevičienė, Jan Jerzy Kułakowski, Sepp Kustatscher, Raymond Langendries, Bernard Lehideux, Elizabeth Lynne, Thomas Mann, Mario Mantovani, Ana Mato Adrover, Maria Matsouka, Csaba Óry, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, Pier Antonio Panzeri, Jacek Protasiewicz, José Albino Silva Peneda, Jean Spautz, Gabriele Zimmer
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Mihael Brejc, Udo Bullmann, Françoise Castex, Richard Howitt, Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, Roberto Musacchio, Leopold Józef Rutowicz, Elisabeth Schroedter
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote</b>	Ari Vatanen
<b>Comments (available in one language only)</b>	