



2020/2135(INI)

11.11.2020

POSITION IN THE FORM OF AMENDMENTS

of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

for the Committee on Culture and Education

on shaping digital education policy
(2020/2135(INI))

On behalf of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality: Jadwiga
Wiśniewska (rapporteur)

PA_NonLegPosition

AMENDMENTS

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality presents the following amendments to the Committee on Culture and Education, as the committee responsible:

Amendment 1

Motion for a resolution

Recital A a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

Aa. whereas equality between women and men is a core value of the EU enshrined in Articles 8 and 19 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union;

Or. [en]

Amendment 2

Motion for a resolution Recital B a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

Ba. whereas there is a digital skills gender gap of 11 %¹; whereas women are significantly underrepresented in the information and communication technologies (ICT) sector (accounting for 17 % out of 8 million specialists in the EU) and among science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) graduates (36 %), with the share of men working in a digital sector being 3.1 times greater than that of women, despite the fact that girls outperform boys in digital literacy²; whereas the share of women in this sector is decreasing and the percentage of women in ICT careers still remains below 2 % of women's total share in the European labour market;

¹ *European Commission, 2019 Women in Digital Scoreboard.*

² *Commission communication of 5 March 2020 entitled 'A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025', COM(2020)0152.*

Or. [en]

Amendment 3

Motion for a resolution Recital C a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

Ca. whereas the average percentages of females working in AI and cybersecurity worldwide are 12 % and 20 %, respectively, despite the fact that the demand for labour in these two domains has increased drastically over the years; whereas the low numbers of women working in innovative technologies can have a significant impact on the design, development and implementation of these technologies, leading to the perpetuation of existing discriminatory practices and stereotypes and the development of gender-biased algorithms; whereas realising the full potential of women's digital skills can contribute significantly to boosting the European economy, especially given that there are around one million vacancies in Europe for digital experts, that 70 % of companies are delaying investments because they cannot find people with the right digital skills³ and that in some job categories, more than 90 % of jobs require specific types of digital skills⁴;

³ *Commission report of 17 June 2020 on the impact of demographic change.*

⁴ *Commission communication of 1 July 2020 entitled 'European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience', COM(2020)0274.*

Or. [en]

Amendment 4

Motion for a resolution Recital D a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

Da. whereas there is still a lack of interest among girls in pursuing ICT and STEM tertiary studies, which is leading to a loss of social and economic opportunities and is preventing a potential reduction in gender inequality and the gender pay gap; whereas girls become interested in STEM subjects around the age of 11 and lose interest at 15; whereas 73 % of boys aged 15 to 16 feel comfortable using digital devices that they are less familiar with, compared with 63 % of girls in the same age bracket;

Or. [en]

Amendment 5

Motion for a resolution Recital D b (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

Db. whereas attitudes towards STEM subjects do not differ between boys and girls during primary education, but cultural discouragement and a lack of awareness and promotion of female role models hinder and negatively affect girls' and women's self-confidence and their opportunities to pursue STEM and ICT studies, related careers and digital entrepreneurship, and lead to discrimination and fewer opportunities for women in the labour market, especially in future-oriented sectors, which offer higher-quality and better-paid jobs;

Or. [en]

Amendment 6

Motion for a resolution

Recital E a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

Ea. whereas women have lower confidence in their own digital skills, despite digital skills being needed in life and at work, especially now that COVID-19 lockdowns are forcing a significant number of people to rely on an internet connection to work, study or buy food;

Or. [en]

Amendment 7

Motion for a resolution

Recital F a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

Fa. whereas emphasis should be placed on the factors that motivate and help girls to become interested in STEM studies, related careers and digital entrepreneurship, such as promoting female role models, having the support of teacher-mentors, gaining peer group approval and developing creativity and practical experience;

Or. [en]

Amendment 8

Motion for a resolution Recital G a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

Ga. whereas the spread of COVID-19, the disruption of education caused by the closure of schools and other education facilities, and forced social isolation and restrictions, on the one hand sparked concerns about the impact of interruptions to education on vulnerable students because of their socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds or place of residence, such as girls in rural, remote and depopulated areas who face more barriers to enrolling in digital education and accessing good ICT infrastructure and services, including the internet and broadband, and on the other hand proved that there is a clear need for efficient, well-functioning and inclusive digital education with increased investment in digital literacy skills and online education, as well as a need to speed up the process of raising awareness and implementing new technologies;

Or. [en]

Amendment 9

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 1 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

1a. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, when developing digital education policies, to ensure that they address the digital gender gap – which is an economic, societal and cultural issue that slows down the growth of the EU economy – with multi-level and holistic policies, and to ensure that all students have the skills needed to carry out the tasks of future jobs in the changing labour market and have equal opportunities that enable them to tackle future challenges relating to global competitiveness and the digital economy, by promoting a human-centred approach to technology that respects fundamental values and gender equality; calls on the Commission to incorporate an institutional horizontal strategy in its Digital Education Action Plan to combat gender inequality; draws attention to the fact that the insufficient use of human capital associated with gender inequalities has a negative impact on research and innovation-related business and overall economic development, and also has harmful social consequences;

Or. [en]

Amendment 10

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 2 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

2a. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop high-quality, inclusive and non-discriminatory digital education which will ensure that the digital society includes everyone and is a pre-requisite for a successful digital transformation and the full implementation of the Digital Agenda for Europe, which will leave no one behind, will benefit everyone and will contribute to gender equality; stresses that increasing the number of young girls and women embarking on a digital education and entering the ICT labour market by employing more people with a wider skills and talent greatly contributes to the formation of an all-inclusive society, to the building of a more sustainable and inclusive economy through scientific, digital and technological innovation and to the closing of the gender pay gap; welcomes the Gender Equality Strategy's focus on gender equality in the digital transition, in particular the updated Digital Education Action Plan, the updated Skills Agenda for Europe and the Council recommendation on vocational education and training; underlines the need for gender mainstreaming across all EU policies regarding education, skills and digitalisation; welcomes the Commission's Women in Digital Scoreboard, which will monitor women's participation in the digital economy; encourages the Member States to add computer science education to their national curricula and implement changes that will make digital education appealing to girls as well as boys from an early age; stresses that digital education must be planned and created to allow boys and girls to express their interests and

*skills in the digital sphere and encourage their creativity and innovation;
encourages a more social approach to ICT and STEM education to underline the social impact of these careers through, for example, including introductory social science courses in each technical subject as part of digital education;*

Or. [en]

Amendment 11

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 5 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

5a. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to create new channels to connect with girls and to implement tools that encourage girls and women to engage with the various forms of digital education; stresses that persisting gender gaps within education need to be tackled by educating and training teachers and other educators at every stage of education in the process of forming expectations and biases towards digital skills and ICT careers, as from an early age women face discrimination and prejudice with regard to their digital skills and potential to participate in digital education and the ICT labour market; calls for efficient funding and strategies that include positive action, lifelong learning and active encouragement for girls to undertake studies in ICT and STEM subjects; underlines that the most efficient use of resources is to create a dedicated funding instrument to address the digital gender gap; emphasises the need to invest in reskilling and upskilling programmes for women in digital literacy and relevant digital skills; recalls that the digital sector is changing at an increasingly fast pace, and that it is therefore only prudent to implement policies creating lifelong learning opportunities for women and young girls;

Or. [en]

Amendment 12

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 6 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

6a. Insists that the next Digital Education Action Plan is fully gender-mainstreamed; stresses that digital education must play a substantial role in increasing the participation of girls and women in the digital age and, especially, in fields related to digital entrepreneurship, ICT and STEM, as well as in eliminating the digital gender gap and ensuring better digital inclusion and digital literacy by building on best practices; points out that the gender gaps in higher education persist in the job market as only 5 out of the 20 most common occupations in the EU are gender-balanced (40/60 ratio) according to the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)⁵;

⁵ <https://eige.europa.eu/news/education-key-breaking-gender-stereotypes> ,
<https://eige.europa.eu/publications/study-and-work-eu-set-apart-gender-report>

Or. [en]

Amendment 13

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 11 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

11a. Stresses that mechanical, technical and digital school subjects quite often have an unconscious male agenda and approach; highlights that education can be the key to breaking gender stereotypes and that these stereotypes should be challenged, not reinforced, in classrooms in order to create gender-sensitive approaches to education and teaching;

Or. [en]

Amendment 14

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 12 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

12a. Recalls that an important obstacle women face in participation in online activities and social networks is cyber violence and online harassment, which disproportionately affects girls and women; underlines that women and young girls also face hostility and prejudice throughout their participation in the ICT sector or digital education; notes that the Digital Education Action Plan should aim to provide skills and tools to girls, young women and men to help them to react to cyber violence, bullying, online harassment and to navigate disinformation; encourages the Member States to set strict codes of conduct and protocols for reporting all cases of harassment to the relevant authorities; stresses that the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence should be ratified and applied;

Or. [en]

Amendment 15

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 13 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

13a. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, as well as private actors, to find more attractive and creative ways to showcase female role models with successful careers in ICT and STEM, especially women leaders in digital and technology fields, in order to motivate, inspire and encourage girls to pursue ICT and STEM studies, break existing stereotypes, and boost women's confidence in their digital skills; emphasises that new and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics and virtual and augmented reality offer exciting new prospects that intrigue young women and encourage them to participate in the development and implementation of these technologies;

Or. [en]

Amendment 16

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 13 b (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

13b. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to put more effort into promoting digital competences among girls to encourage them to invest in digital skills and choose ICT and STEM career paths; stresses the need for awareness-raising to confront discrimination and prejudice against women and the need to promote policies that contribute to the creation of an inclusive environment, in order to maintain the highest possible number of women within the system, once engaged; calls for a bottom-up approach and an inclusive dialogue with the relevant stakeholders, such as private companies, non-governmental organisations, state institutions, policymakers and civil society, with a view to equipping girls with digital skills, providing inspirational role models, strengthening gender equality and ensuring the protection of women and girls' human rights to education, work and a decent livelihood; calls for information on best practice examples and success models to be collected and shared between Member States to ensure educators are aware of the digital education gender gap and its causes, and to incorporate such practices and recommendations into national education and labour market policies by including targeted measures in national action plans;

Or. [en]

Amendment 17

**Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 14 a (new)**

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

14a. Encourages various private educational initiatives to support girls undertaking digital studies and promote women in digital careers and the digital economy through viral stories on social media, professional European networks organised by women for women and tech company initiatives; stresses the importance of the Commission's 'Women in Digital' task force and 'Digital4Her' initiative;

Or. [en]

Amendment 18

**Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 14 b (new)**

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

14b. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take into account the situation of women and girls with disabilities and women and girls in outermost regions or rural areas and to ensure their full access to and inclusion in digital education in order to avoid a widening of the digital divide;

Or. [en]

Amendment 19

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 15 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

15a. Calls on the Member States to take into account ongoing concerns about the risk of COVID-19 spreading further, to ensure the highest level of health protection measures for teachers and trainers, to prioritise digital skill training initiatives, to address the issue of the lack of equipment by providing economic and/or material incentives for vulnerable students and students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, such as girls in rural areas, to adapt adequately to the current situation and to develop tools in order to ensure full access to and the smooth functioning of digital education; stresses that women undertake the majority of unpaid household chores and care work at home, a share that has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, and stresses that as a result, women are less likely to spend sufficient time using digital tools and participating in digital education; recommends that the efforts to boost women's participation and gender equality in the labour market and education are strengthened by promoting the equal sharing of care and household responsibilities between women and men and by supporting the equal take-up of parental and carers' leave by women and men; calls on the Commission to incorporate into its digital education policy flexible learning methods specifically designed for women carers and others who are unable to attend classes, but are able to participate in distance learning;

Or. [en]

Amendment 20

Motion for a resolution Paragraph 15 b (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

15b. Requests the collection of nuanced gender statistics to evaluate policy outcomes, and the collection of data disaggregated by gender and age to get a better picture of the digital gender divide; welcomes, in that regard, the decision to focus EIGE's Gender Equality Index for 2020 on work in a digital world;

Or. [en]

Amendment 21

**Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 15 c (new)**

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

15c. Notes that the Member States have a key role to play in ensuring the provision of public education in ways which enhance gender equality, provide the required digital skills for all and combat gender stereotypes for girls and boys, in particular in the area of ICT;

Or. [en]

Amendment 22

**Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 15 d (new)**

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

15d. Stresses that gender budgeting and mainstreaming must be part of any policy, including digital education policies;

Or. [en]