


Procedure file

Basic information		
CNS - Consultation procedure Decision	1995/0308(CNS)	Procedure completed
Balanced participation of women and men in decision-making process (Council Recommendation 96/694)		
Subject 4.10.04 Gender equality		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	FEMM Women's Rights	PSE CREPAZ Irene	23/01/1996
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Social Affairs	1974	02/12/1996
	Social Affairs	1930	03/06/1996
	Social Affairs	1892	05/12/1995

Key events			
29/11/1995	Legislative proposal published	COM(1995)0593	Summary
12/02/1996	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
24/04/1996	Vote in committee		
24/04/1996	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A4-0149/1996	
24/05/1996	Debate in Parliament		
24/05/1996	Decision by Parliament	T4-0307/1996	Summary
30/05/1996	Modified legislative proposal published	COM(1996)0252	Summary
03/06/1996	Debate in Council	1930	Summary
02/12/1996	Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament		
02/12/1996	End of procedure in Parliament		
10/12/1996	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1995/0308(CNS)
Procedure type	CNS - Consultation procedure
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Decision
Legal basis	EC before Amsterdam E 235
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	FEMM/4/07551

Documentation gateway					
Legislative proposal		COM(1995)0593	29/11/1995	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A4-0149/1996 OJ C 152 27.05.1996, p. 0005	24/04/1996	EP	
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report		CES0532/1996 OJ C 204 15.07.1996, p. 0021	24/04/1996	ESC	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T4-0307/1996 OJ C 166 10.06.1996, p. 0236-0269	24/05/1996	EP	Summary
Modified legislative proposal		COM(1996)0252	30/05/1996	EC	Summary
Non-legislative basic document		COM(2000)0120	07/03/2000	EC	Summary

Additional information	
European Commission	EUR-Lex

Final act
EP/Council Recommendation 1996/694 OJ L 319 10.12.1996, p. 0011-0015

Balanced participation of women and men in decision-making process (Council Recommendation 96/694)

- OBJECTIVE: the aim of the recommendation is to encourage Member States to consider the question of a balanced representation of men and women in decision-making in all sectors (political, social, economic and cultural) and in all its different forms (places and bodies where decisions are taken) and also to adopt a comprehensive and integrated strategy designed to promote such a balance. - SUBSTANCE: It was recommended that the Member States: * adopt a comprehensive strategy to promote the balanced representation of men and women in decision-making and to introduce suitable legislative and regulatory measures, and incentives, to achieve this; * provide for measures: . in education and training: to alert all levels of education to the role and contribution of women and the sharing of professional and family responsibilities, . in the media sector: to ensure that advertisements do not reinforce the unfair stereotyping of women, . in publicity campaigns: to alert public opinion to the importance of a more balanced society, . to encourage the social partners, political groups, associations, NGOs and the media to develop equal opportunities plans; * in the information sector: . to promote the publication of statistics illustrating how women are represented in the economy and in social and cultural life, . to develop studies on the legal, social and cultural obstacles barring the access of women to strategic decision-making posts, . to support initiatives for the dissemination of good practice in this area, * to take measures designed to ensure a fairer representation of women in decision-making posts through: . the promotion of a more balanced participation at all levels of government, . "mentorship actions" designed to encourage a more balanced political representation at European, national, regional and local level (particularly in committees, working groups, etc.), . equal opportunities plans for the public sector (especially on competition committees and selection boards), . the implementation of incentives in the private sector to increase the presence of women at all levels of decision-making, . the adoption by the media of measures to promote a balanced participation on executive bodies. The Commission is therefore called on: - to step up its efforts to alert public opinion and promote pilot projects aimed at a more balanced participation of women in decision-making, - to promote the exchange of experience and the evaluation of policies which are designed to achieve this objective, - to present a report to the Council within 3 years of the adoption of the recommendation on progress achieved in its implementation. ?

Balanced participation of women and men in decision-making process (Council Recommendation 96/694)

The Committee welcomes the proposal for a Council Recommendation. The Committee would urge Member States to set clear goals with specific measures. The reference to targets should at least be backed up by timetables and other monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Positive actions could be better highlighted in the text, particularly in the fields of education and training. The Commission proposal does not sufficiently underscore the need for measures to encourage men to take a fairer sharing of family responsibilities. Direct reference should also be made in the Recommendation to "employment" and to work organization and working time. Labour market segregation, unequal pay, unequal promotion possibilities and career structures and the casualization of women's employment should be addressed.?

Balanced participation of women and men in decision-making process (Council Recommendation 96/694)

In adopting the report by Mrs Irene CREPAZ (PSE, A), Parliament approved the proposal for a recommendation on the balanced participation of women and men in decision-making, with the following amendments: - the recommendation must be seen primarily as a platform for action to be undertaken in this area, the central objective being the establishment of democracy based on equality and full participation by women in decision-making; - the proposed measures must go hand in hand with an awareness both of the particular obstacles which women encounter and the special qualities they bring to society. In this respect, particular attention must be paid to the continuing segregation in the labour market, in the decision-making process, and even within the Community institutions; - there must be a change in attitude on the part of all those involved in the public and private domains and in economic, political and family life in order to improve the image of women. More specifically, pointing out that the governments of the Member States had pledged in Beijing to adapt their electoral systems with a view to achieving a better political representation of women, Parliament called for: - legislative, regulatory and administrative measures to be taken to promote balanced participation by women and men in the decision-making process at all levels of political, economic and cultural life, - women to assume greater responsibility in key positions in political life, - the countries of the Union to ensure that the principles of balanced participation and an equal share of responsibilities between men and women was encouraged in education and training, - specific measures to be taken to counteract stereotyping and the image of women and men presented by advertising, - campaigns to be run in conjunction with elections to show the advantages for society of a balanced participation by women and men in decision-making. In this respect, Parliament called for studies to be carried out on the effects of different electoral systems on the political representation of women and for appropriate adjustments to be implemented, - "equality" ombudspersons to be appointed to oversee the implementation of equal opportunities legislation, - in the private sector, measures to be taken to improve the position of women: better integration into personnel policy, promotion of female entrepreneurship, greater access for women to the professions and the legal sphere; - at Community level, measures to be taken to set a good example. ?

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In its amended proposal, the Commission took over only 9 of the 36 amendments adopted by Parliament in the House, namely those seeking to strengthen or widen the scope of the initial proposal as regards: - the importance of reconciling family and working life, - the close links between the decision-making process and women's involvement in the labour market as well as the necessary "equal opportunities" component to be incorporated into all policies, - the need to launch awareness campaigns aimed at the general public (especially at election times), - monitoring and assessing the objectives of the recommendation (not least with a view to achieving equal representation of women and men in the political sphere, particularly by means of research into voting systems and their effect on women's representation), - the promotion of entrepreneurial spirit in women. The rejected amendments: - clearly added nothing new or useful to the initial text (19 amendments including, for example, the amendment seeking to change the image of women in advertising or the amendment calling for studies on women's access to decision-making posts, and so on), - proposed very new concepts which had not yet been sufficiently developed by the Commission or the Member States (6 amendments including those calling for a change of attitude with regard to women in the public and private sectors, the appointment of "equality" ombudspersons to oversee the implementation of equal opportunities legislation, public contracts for which only women could tender, and access to every judicial office for women), - related to areas in which the Commission had a right of initiative (amendment on the measures to be taken by the Community institutions to promote equal opportunities) or called on the Commission to engage in activities outside its sphere of responsibility (amendment calling for a change in the Member States' electoral systems). ?

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The Presidency noted that one delegation still had difficulties concerning the content of the draft Council Recommendation submitted by the Committee of Permanent Representatives. Independently of this reserve, the UK delegation recalled its general position linked to the problem of BSE concerning decisions to be taken by unanimity. The Presidency expressed the wish that this text be adopted as soon as possible.?