

# Procedure file

## Basic information

COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	<a href="#">1996/2152(COS)</a>
Code of practice on the implementation of equal pay for work of equal value for women and men	
Subject 4.15.08 Work, employment, wages and salaries: equal opportunities women and men, and for all	

Procedure completed

## Key players

### European Parliament

Committee for opinion  
**FEMM** Women's Rights

Rapporteur for opinion  
Appointed  
09/09/1996

PPE [COLOMBO SVEVO](#)  
[Maria Paola](#)

### Council of the European Union

## Key events

17/07/1996	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1996)0336	Summary
05/09/1996	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
16/04/1997	Vote in committee		Summary
16/04/1997	Committee report tabled for plenary	<a href="#">A4-0143/1997</a>	
11/06/1997	Debate in Parliament		
12/06/1997	Decision by Parliament	T4-0335/1997	Summary
12/06/1997	End of procedure in Parliament		
30/06/1997	Final act published in Official Journal		

## Technical information

Procedure reference	1996/2152(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142; Rules of Procedure EP 050
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	EMPL/4/08084

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		COM(1996)0336	17/07/1996	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		<a href="#">A4-0143/1997</a> <a href="#">OJ C 150 19.05.1997, p. 0003</a>	16/04/1997	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0335/1997 <a href="#">OJ C 200 30.06.1997, p. 0105-0193</a>	12/06/1997	EP	Summary

## Code of practice on the implementation of equal pay for work of equal value for women and men

OBJECTIVE: adoption of a code of practice with a view to helping reduce the difference between women and men's incomes, for work of equal value. SUBSTANCE: the Commission document is a follow-up to the Memorandum on Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value, published in 1994. Its purpose is to provide concrete advice for employers and collective bargaining partners at business, sectoral or intersectoral level to ensure that the principle of equality between women and men performing work of equal value is applied to all aspects of pay. It aims to eliminate sexual discrimination whenever pay structures are based on job classification and evaluation systems. The Code is intended to be applied in the workplace both in the public and in the private sector. Employers are encouraged to follow the recommendations in the Code, adapting them to the size and the structure of their businesses. The nature of the approaches and measures set out in the Code is neither exhaustive nor legally binding. The Code, drawn up after intensive consultations with the social partners, essentially proposes two things: 1. that negotiators at all levels, whether on the side of the employers or the unions, who are involved in the determination of pay systems, should carry out an analysis of the remuneration system and evaluate the data required to detect sexual discrimination in the pay structures so that remedies can be found; 2. that a plan for follow-up should be drawn up and implemented to eliminate any sexual discrimination evident in the pay structures. ?

## Code of practice on the implementation of equal pay for work of equal value for women and men

The Committee adopted a report by Laura GONZALEZ ALVAREZ (EUL-NGL, S) on the code of practice for the implementation of equal pay for work of equal value. The Committee believes that the code of practice can help to eliminate pay discrimination between women and men, although it is unlikely to remove pay inequalities altogether. The social partners, the member states and the Commission should ensure that it is applied as widely as possible and to all the employees. First requirement for putting it into practice is job evaluation. The Commission should undertake research on "gender free" job evaluation schemes and prepare model job evaluation guidelines. Since the collective bargaining process is essential for establishing equal pay. Collective agreements must respect non-discriminatory principles. Women should be more involved in the collective bargaining process. The Committee called on the Commission to monitor the implementation of the code of practice and if it does not result in narrowing the pay differences within three years, the Commission should consider legally binding measures. ?

## Code of practice on the implementation of equal pay for work of equal value for women and men

When it adopted the report by Mrs Laura GONZALEZ ALVAREZ (GUE/NGL, E) on a code of practice on the implementation of equal pay, the European Parliament took the view that this code would help towards creating a more gender-neutral job-classification and job evaluation system and could serve as an instrument to reduce discrimination as regards wages. It emphasized that the code of conduct must apply to all employees including apprentices and those working for home) whether on full-time, part-time, casual or temporary contracts, regardless of length of service. An awareness and information campaign is vital to ensure that the social partners are aware of the code of conduct. Parliament called on the European Commission to provide information, training and guidance targeted at the social partners involved in decisions about pay. Parliament took the view that the public sector should set an example by implementing the code of conduct rapidly but emphasized that the first requirement for putting the code into practice was job evaluation with a view to detecting discrimination. The European Commission must therefore devise gender-free job evaluation schemes and draw up appropriate guidelines. For Parliament, it would also be useful if a clearer distinction were established between wage components which result from societal developments and those which are mainly bound to wage settlements where gender-biased arguments are more easily introduced in wages. Since negotiations between the social partners are essential for equal pay, collective agreements must respect the principles of non-discrimination, and women should be involved more closely. To facilitate the negotiations of the social partners, Parliament feels that the Commission should compile a database able to give advice to employers and employees and their representatives on equal pay for work of equal value. The Member States and the Commission are also called upon to encourage transparency in this field (particularly by comprehensible statistics on wage levels and better access to information on pay components). The Commission is also asked to collect examples of good practice in the Member States in this field and monitor the actual implementation of the code of practice. Should there be no reduction of inequalities as regards pay in the next three years, the Commission should envisage making the code of practice into a legally binding instrument. Recalling once again the importance of an equitable division of family duties between men and women, which is one of the root causes of segregation on the labour market, it once again expresses its wish to see Article 119 of the Treaty expanded in such a way that the right to equal pay for work of equal value is enshrined therein. Finally, it calls on the Member States to set up a network of experts responsible for verifying compliance with legislation on remuneration and for providing for court proceedings and penalties which will ensure that it is applied in practice. ?