


Procedure file

Basic information	
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic) 2000/2117(COS)	Procedure completed
Balances participation of women and men in the decision-making process (Recommendation 96/694/EC). Report	
Subject 4.10.04 Gender equality	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	FEMM Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities	PSE KARAMANOU Anna	26/01/2000
Council of the European Union			

Key events			
07/03/2000	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2000)0120	Summary
03/05/2000	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
22/11/2000	Vote in committee		Summary
22/11/2000	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0373/2000	
18/01/2001	Debate in Parliament		
18/01/2001	Decision by Parliament	T5-0034/2001	Summary
18/01/2001	End of procedure in Parliament		
18/09/2001	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2000/2117(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	FEMM/5/12599

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		COM(2000)0120	07/03/2000	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0373/2000 OJ C 232 17.08.2001, p. 0008	22/11/2000	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0034/2001 OJ C 262 18.09.2001, p. 0179-0248	18/01/2001	EP	Summary

Balances participation of women and men in the decision-making process (Recommendation 96/694/EC). Report

PURPOSE: To report on the implementation of the Council's 96/694 recommendation on the balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process. **CONTENT:** With the aim of increasing the number of women in the decision-making process, and thereby altering the content of decisions, the Council adopted the Recommendation on the balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process on 2 December 1996. The Recommendation calls on the Commission to submit a report on its implementation to the EP and the EcoSoc, for the first time three years after adoption. The overall objective of the Recommendation was to encourage the Member states to promote a more balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process, and to adopt specific measures to achieve this goal. Against this background, the report reveals that in spite of a host of different measures adopted by member states, the under representation of women in governments and Parliaments, and committees preparing decisions as well as in higher levels of the labour market has not changed considerably. The average percentage of women in government of all the Member states and EEA countries is 24.5% and 22.5% in the national parliaments, varying from 6.3% in Greece to 43.6% in Sweden. The number of women in committees preparing decisions is even lower. Even in those countries (Belgium and Germany) where data on the composition of committees is collected systematically and where laws provide for an equal or a minimum of a one third participation of the underrepresented sex in decision-making bodies, the percentage of women is only 18.68% and 12.2% respectively. A considerable number of committees do not have even one woman (28.7% in Germany). Whereas the Scandinavian countries and the United Kingdom target a 50% participation, most countries consider a participation rate of at least 30% to constitute the critical mass above which women or men can exercise any real influence. Substantive progress in women's participation has been shown in countries with longstanding traditions of equal opportunities policies such as Sweden and Finland with a participation of 52.6% and 44.4% of women in the governments respectively. 68% of Finnish public sector committees have a female participation of 44%. In general, what is needed to promote gender balance is a policy mix including - as the most important factor - long term political commitment, sound statistics, regular monitoring, appropriate structures - depending on the culture of the Member states - anchored in legislation and the provision of financial resources. There is growing awareness for the need to recruit and promote qualified women in most European institutions and many of them have adopted positive action policies to redress the staff balance. Less has been done however, on the gender balance in committees. While legislative measures have some impact on the public sector, the private sector needs particular attention and possibly a different approach. Austria, Belgium, Germany, Sweden, Finland and the United Kingdom are promoting projects aimed at making employees aware of the economic benefits of employing women. More progress also needs to be made regarding women in senior positions in the civil service and public sector bodies. The report has revealed a certain lack of comparable data submitted to the Commission which has not facilitated the systematic evaluation of developments. Discussion should be encouraged in the Council with view to improving the collection of data and an eventual decision on new action.?

Balances participation of women and men in the decision-making process (Recommendation 96/694/EC). Report

The committee adopted the report by Anna KARAMANOY (PES, GR) which concluded that the Council's recommendation had been partially implemented by the Member States but that further efforts needed to be made to draw up a more global strategy. The report said that even though women made up at least half of the electorate in almost all countries, and had the right to vote and to be elected, they continued to be seriously under-represented as candidates for public office. The committee welcomed the good example of the European Parliament, where women held nearly 30% of seats following the last elections. However, it believed this level was insufficient and therefore called for the promotion of a gender balance in all policy fields and committees at EU and national level, a balance which should not be below 40% for each sex. The report urged Member States in which the participation rate of women in the decision-making process was low to contemplate a reform of their existing arrangements through various measures, which should be binding if possible - for example, a system of quotas or targets to be reached to ensure that large numbers of women came to hold positions of responsibility. Another important point was the need for women to be well placed on electoral lists, and the committee therefore suggested using the "zipper" system, whereby men and women would alternate on party lists. Political parties should also overhaul their organisational set-ups and their internal procedures so as to remove obstacles to the involvement of women in public life.?

Balances participation of women and men in the decision-making process (Recommendation 96/694/EC). Report

The European Parliament voted 341 to 134 with 23 abstentions in favour of the resolution by Mrs Anna KARAMANOY (PES, GR) which calls for pro-active measures including quotas, where applicable, to increase the participation of women in key decision-making bodies. (Please refer to the previous document). In addition, the resolution calls for the creation of a European Network to promote women in decision-making and for the creation of a network of national committees on equal opportunities. Lastly, the Parliament calls on the Member States to propose at the next IGC amendments to the Treaty which promote gender balance in the EU institutions and all decision-making bodies. ?

