


Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2003/2047(INI)	Procedure completed
Women in the new information society		
Subject		
3.30.06 Information and communication technologies, digital technologies		
4.10.09 Women condition and rights		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	FEMM Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities		26/11/2002
		PSE KARAMANOU Anna	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	ITRE Industry, External Trade, Research, Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	CULT Culture, Youth, Education, Media and Sport	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Key events			
15/05/2003	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
10/07/2003	Vote in committee		Summary
10/07/2003	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0279/2003	
05/11/2003	Debate in Parliament		
06/11/2003	Decision by Parliament	T5-0485/2003	Summary
06/11/2003	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2003/2047(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	FEMM/5/19523

Documentation gateway

Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	A5-0279/2003	10/07/2003	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T5-0485/2003 OJ C 083 02.04.2004, p. 0020-0185 E	06/11/2003	EP	Summary

Women in the new information society

Ahead of the first ever World Summit on the Information Society, to be held in Geneva in December 2003, the committee adopted the own-initiative report by Anna KARAMANOÛ (PES, GR) on women in the new information society. It began by pointing out that, although the information society and access to information and communication technologies (ICT) were widely considered to be "gender neutral", this perception was misleading as studies and data in fact showed a persistent gender imbalance - to the detriment of women - in ICT-related education and jobs. In most European countries less than 20% of students in the ICT sector were female and there were even fewer women setting up their own businesses or being given positions of responsibility in this important sector. This trend was particularly disappointing given that the ICT sector had accounted for 60% of new job opportunities during the past 5 years. If the Lisbon objectives of creating a dynamic, knowledge-based society and increasing the employment rate were to be achieved, women needed to be fully involved at all levels in the information society, including policy-making and management of the ICT sector. The Commission and the Member States were therefore urged to pay particular attention to women at risk of being excluded from the benefits of the information society, such as older women, unemployed and low-income women, migrant women, women from ethnic minorities and women with disabilities, in order to prevent the emergence of a "two-speed society". The Commission was also asked to collect systematic data on structural differences in the ICT sector broken down by gender. The committee suggested a number of ways in which women could be helped to participate in the information society: - the Structural Funds and in particular the Social Fund should be used to finance training in ICT with a special emphasis on entry or return to the job market for unemployed women; - the Member States should encourage the inclusion of ICT into primary schooling from an early age, thus giving girls a more natural relationship to ICT and counteracting the gender-stereotyped attitude to ICT which may occur in later life; - school, university and vocational guidance services should take a more proactive approach to encouraging the participation of girls in technical and technological fields, including vocational training systems outside the school education system such as ICT apprenticeships; - access to ICT must be affordable. MEPs also urged the Commission to ensure that Community financial assistance for the new EU Member States, both pre- and post-accession, gave higher priority to ICT education and training programmes for unemployed women in order to increase their chances on the labour market. Lastly, the Commission was urged to promote ICT-related programmes in developing countries enabling women to take part in shaping the new economy and society. Together with industry, the Commission should study ways in which ICT technology and products could be made widely available in developing countries, as cheaply as possible, to avoid a growing divide between those who can afford to purchase expensive technology and the masses who cannot. ?

Women in the new information society

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on its-own initiative report drafted by Anna KARAMANOÛ (PES, GR) on women in the new information society. (Please see the summary of 10/07/03.) The resolution was adopted by 414 votes in favour, 18 against with 49 abstentions. Parliament added that Europe continues to see the under-representation of women in science and the ICT sector and is failing to make the most of its human resources and potential. As a result the gap between Europe and the US in terms of innovation and economic competitiveness cannot be reduced. The rapid growth of ICT is universally recognised as the most important factor in the development of any nation. New technologies, in the context of globalisation, offer new opportunities, which, however, are often least accessible to women. It is of the utmost importance that due attention be paid to formulating parameters as regards the participation of women in the ICT sector, not only in the current Member States, but also in new Member States, including Bulgaria and Romania. Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to devise policies, supported by sufficient financial resources, intended to include women - both young and old - in all sectors of the new ICT, with the objective of achieving a gender-balanced information society. The Commission and the Member States must ensure the full involvement of women in planning and decision-making on information society policies and promote the full and equal participation of women in the media, including management, programming, education, training and research.?