



Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2006/2057(INI)	Procedure completed
Women in international policy		
Subject 4.10.09 Women condition and rights		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality	PSE GOMES Ana	21/02/2006
European Commission	Commission DG External Relations	Commissioner FERRERO-WALDNER Benita	

Key events			
16/03/2006	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
05/10/2006	Vote in committee		
17/10/2006	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0362/2006	
15/11/2006	Debate in Parliament		
16/11/2006	Results of vote in Parliament		
16/11/2006	Decision by Parliament	T6-0497/2006	Summary
16/11/2006	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2006/2057(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/6/34541

Documentation gateway

Committee draft report		PE376.646	18/07/2006	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE378.624	14/09/2006	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0362/2006	17/10/2006	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0497/2006	16/11/2006	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2007)0054	11/01/2007	EC	

Women in international policy

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report by Ana Maria Gomes (PES, PT) on women and international politics. The report was adopted by 377 votes in favour to 77 against with 31 abstentions. Balanced participation by both sexes in decision-making was an essential condition for democracy. Bearing this in mind, Parliament deeply regretted that in spite of a large number of political statements and recommendations, programmes of actions adopted worldwide and specific legislation introduced at national level, inequality and gender discrimination and under-representation of women in politics still persisted in Europe and worldwide. The percentage of women elected to the European Parliament ranged from 58% to 0% depending on the Member State (with an average slightly above 30%). The percentage of women elected to Member States' national parliaments varied between 45% and 9%. Parliament noted that recent elections have brought women to the highest functions as Heads of State and Government in some Member States and third countries and it congratulated the Head of Governments that used objective and non-discriminatory criteria for the selection of the members of their cabinets.

Parliament went on to draw attention to the fact that the low level of participation by women in centres of decision-making was often linked to problems with combining work and family life, to the unequal distribution of family responsibilities and to discrimination at work and in occupational training. There was a need to look beyond numbers, and actually focus on how women active in politics influence the shaping of governance and conflict resolution, and how they contribute towards ensuring that governance reforms, accountability and the rule of law are highly. Member States must put in place measures aiming at the reconciliation of social, family and professional life in line with the conclusions of the Barcelona European Council and the Lisbon Strategy. Parliament called for the adoption of appropriate legislative or administrative measures to support elected representatives in the reconciliation of their family and public responsibilities and, in particular, encourage parliaments and local and regional authorities to ensure that their timetables and working methods enable elected representatives of both sexes to reconcile their work and family life.

The report proposed a number of measures on national, European and international level to come to terms with this issue and promote parity in politics. It strongly encouraged the inclusion of female police, civilian and military officers in EU and UN peace-keeping missions in order to enhance communication with women in local communities and local communities in general. Other measures proposed include :

- appointing more women to top positions in EU external delegations;
- using the EU external relations and development and cooperation policy instruments as vectors for the promotion of women in politics, in particular the participation of women as voters and political candidates;
- promoting educational programmes to make citizens, with particular attention to young people, aware of the equal rights of women to participate fully in political life from an early age;
- encouraging women to apply for high-level positions on the international scene and urges Member States to provide names of female candidates along the names of male candidates for high-level positions in international negotiations and policy making;
- analysing and disseminating best practices on international and national measures aimed at enhancing the participation of women in the highest-level positions of international politics;
- appointing more women to diplomatic careers and promoting gender balance for their delegations to the United Nations and other international meetings and conferences;

Parliament also called on political parties across Europe to promote balanced participation of both sexes on their lists of candidates. Parties were urged to remove all barriers that, directly or indirectly, discriminate against the participation of women, in order to ensure that women have the right to participate fully at all levels of decision-making in all internal policy-making structures and nominating processes and in the leadership of political parties on equal terms with men. Parliament welcomed the fact that a European Institute for Gender Equality is to be created, which should take the initiative to promote greater representation of women in international politics.

Lastly, Parliament encouraged the media to recognize the importance of women's participation in the political process, provide fair and balanced coverage of male and female candidates and also to pay attention to the impact of party programmes on promoting women's needs and rights and democratic representation.