

# Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	<a href="#">2007/2065(INI)</a>	Procedure completed
Equality between women and men - 2007		
Subject 4.10.04.01 Programmes and actions for gender equality		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	<b>FEMM</b> Women's Rights and Gender Equality		26/02/2007
		PPE-DE <a href="#">KAUPPI Pii-Noora</a>	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	<b>CULT</b> Culture and Education		10/04/2007
		ALDE <a href="#">RESETARITS Karin</a>	
	<b>REGI</b> Regional Development		20/03/2007
		PSE <a href="#">GURMAI Zita</a>	
	<b>EMPL</b> Employment and Social Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	<b>LIBE</b> Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	<b>AGRI</b> Agriculture and Rural Development		
European Commission	Commission DG <a href="#">Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion</a>	Commissioner ŠPIDLA Vladimír	

Key events			
06/02/2007	Non-legislative basic document published	<a href="#">COM(2007)0049</a>	Summary
26/04/2007	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
16/07/2007	Vote in committee		Summary
20/07/2007	Committee report tabled for plenary	<a href="#">A6-0290/2007</a>	
27/09/2007	Results of vote in Parliament		
27/09/2007	Debate in Parliament		
27/09/2007	Decision by Parliament	<a href="#">T6-0423/2007</a>	Summary
27/09/2007	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2007/2065(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure

Procedure subtype	Annual report
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54; Rules of Procedure EP P.F.
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	FEMM/6/47635

## Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		<a href="#">COM(2007)0049</a>	07/02/2007	EC	Summary
Committee draft report		<a href="#">PE388.386</a>	10/05/2007	EP	
Committee opinion	AGRI	<a href="#">PE388.377</a>	05/06/2007	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		<a href="#">PE390.630</a>	13/06/2007	EP	
Committee opinion	CULT	<a href="#">PE388.699</a>	25/06/2007	EP	
Committee opinion	REGI	<a href="#">PE388.703</a>	02/07/2007	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		<a href="#">A6-0290/2007</a>	20/07/2007	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		<a href="#">T6-0423/2007</a>	27/09/2007	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		<a href="#">SP(2007)5401</a>	18/10/2007	EC	
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		<a href="#">SP(2007)5763</a>	06/12/2007	EC	

## Equality between women and men - 2007

**PURPOSE:** to present the fourth Commission report on developments towards gender equality and orientations for gender mainstreaming of policy areas.

**CONTENT:** this report is the fourth that follows the request of the Spring European Council of March 2003 to report annually on developments towards gender equality and orientations for gender mainstreaming of policy areas.

**Main developments:** 2006 saw two major events with a bearing on gender equality in the EU: the adoption by the Commission of the Roadmap for equality between women and men for the period 2006-2010, and the adoption of the Pact for Gender Equality. These two key initiatives testify to the EU's continued commitment to achieving genuine equality between women and men. The Roadmap represents the Commission's commitment to continuing and intensifying its actions in this area. Detailed follow-up reports will be compiled annually. The Pact demonstrates the Member States' determination to implement policies aimed at promoting the employment of women and guaranteeing a better balance between professional and private life in order to meet the challenges of demographic change. In this context, it would appear essential to develop childcare services in order to achieve the Barcelona objectives.

The ageing of the population, combined with declining birth rates, raises considerable challenges for our societies, as demonstrated in the Communication on the demographic future of Europe (COM (2006)057.) It is clear that policies on gender equality will contribute significantly to meeting those challenges: on the one hand, by stimulating the employment of women, thus compensating for the forecast decline in the working population; and, on the other, by supporting the individual choices of women and men, including decisions on the number of children they wish to have. At the same time, the Commission launched a formal consultation among the social partners on the possible thrust of Community action regarding the reconciliation of professional, private and family life, including the promotion of flexible working arrangements, the development of crèche and care services and the possible revision of existing provisions regarding maternity leave and parental leave. The legislative framework for gender equality improved considerably with the adoption of Directive 2006/54/EC, which simplifies and updates existing Community legislation on the equal treatment of women and men as regards employment. As regards transposition of the Directive of 2002 on equal treatment, procedures for failure to fulfil an obligation were initiated against nine Member States, four of which were still open as at the end of 2006.

Regulation (EC) No 1922/2006 created a European Institute for Gender Equality. The Institute is required to provide significant technical support for the development of policies on equality between women and men. 2006 saw the adoption of the new regulation of the Structural Funds (Regulations (EC) 1081/2006 and 1083/2006) and of the Community strategic guidelines on cohesion for the period 2007-2013, which foresee both specific measures and the integration of the gender perspective in all actions. Poverty often affects women, particularly the elderly and single-parent households. Moreover, health and social welfare systems are not always attuned to the different needs of women and men. This is why the promotion of equality between women and men is among the overarching objectives of the new framework for the open coordination of social protection and inclusion policies adopted by the European Council in March 2006.

As regards violence and human trafficking, the Commission put forward a strategy to measure crime (including human trafficking, violence against women and domestic violence) and criminal justice. (COM(2006)0437). Gender equality is also recognised as a factor in economic development in the framework of the EU's External Affairs. By the beginning of 2007, the Commission will prepare a Communication on the

integration of gender equality in development cooperation. In addition, a five-year Action Plan designed to strengthen the role of women in Mediterranean societies was adopted in November 2006 as part of the Euromed partnership. This Plan provides a framework in which the EU and Mediterranean countries can cooperate in strengthening the role of women in the social, political, economic and cultural spheres.

The female labour force continues to be the engine of employment growth in Europe. Since the launch of the Lisbon Strategy in 2000, six of the eight million jobs created in the EU have been taken by women. In 2005, the rate of female employment rose for the twelfth consecutive year, to stand at 56.3%, i.e. 2.7 points above its 2000 level, compared with a 0.1 point rise in the rate of male employment. If this favourable trend continues, the Lisbon objective of 60% female employment by 2010 will be attained. Similarly, the rise in the rate of employment of women over the age of 55 has been significantly faster than that of men, and now stands at 33.7%, i.e. almost 7 points more than in 2000. Despite this positive trend, the increased difficulty which women are facing in reconciling their professional and private lives, and the unequal division of domestic and family responsibilities, remain very marked. In addition, the labour market remains largely partitioned. Occupational and sectoral segregation indices by sex show no sign of a significant decline. It would therefore appear that the increase in female employment is being achieved mainly in sectors of activity and in professions which are already dominated by women. Moreover, there continues to be an imbalance between women and men in decision-making positions, both political and economic. Less than one-third of managers are women, and the management boards of the 50 biggest listed European companies had only one woman for every ten men in 2005. One of the consequences of the differences and inequalities which women face on the labour market is the persistent gender pay gap. Women earn an average of 15% less than men for every hour worked.

Conclusions: building on this report and in line with the priorities set out in the Roadmap and the European Pact for equality between women and men, the European Council is invited to urge the Member States to urgently take up the challenges described above, in cooperation with the various stakeholders. Particular emphasis will need to be placed on:

- taking all possible steps to eliminate the gender pay gap;
- strengthening gender mainstreaming in the implementation of employment policies;
- continuing the efforts aimed at allowing men and women to reconcile their professional, private and family lives, and supporting the social partners in implementing measures in that area;
- adopting an approach to issues of demographic change which takes account of and supports gender equality;
- making full use of the potential offered by the Cohesion and Rural Development Policy to support the promotion of equality between women and men through programmes cofinanced by the Funds;
- acting promptly to transpose Directives 2006/54/EC on the equal treatment of men and women (recast) and 2004/113/EC on the equal treatment of women and men in the access to and supply of goods and services.

## Equality between women and men - 2007

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The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality adopted the own-initiative report drafted by Piiia-Noora KAUPPI (EPP-ED, FI) on the Commission report on equality between women and men in the European Union ? 2007. It welcomed the efforts of the Commission to intensify its actions promoting equality, but stressed that further efforts and further measures to overcome outdated decision-making and behavioural patterns, particularly in the administrative sector, are required in order to improve gender mainstreaming across policy areas.

The Committee pointed out that gender mainstreaming at EU level is being conducted as a dual strategy seeking to ensure, on the one hand, equality for men and women in all policy areas and, on the other, targeted measures to curb discrimination against women. It called on the Commission to propose, in addition to the gender mainstreaming approach, a series of specific measures, including awareness-raising campaigns, the exchange of best practices, dialogues with citizens and public-private partnership initiatives. It also insisted on the need to have a clear and permanent link between the annual reports on equality and the priorities defined in the Roadmap in order to implement an efficient cycle of planning, monitoring and evaluation of gender equality policies. Member States were asked to put forward specific measures to combat inequalities between women and men caused by interrupted patterns of employment resulting in particular from maternity leave or leave to care for dependants and to reduce their negative effects on careers, wages and pension entitlements.

The Committee went on to ask the Commission to do the following:

- carry out a study on how Member States implement Community legislation in the area of equality and take appropriate action in the event of non-transposition or infringement;
- find appropriate means to combat the gender segregation of the labour market and to facilitate women's entry into non-traditional sectors;
- develop gender analysis and mainstreaming on the impact of pension reforms on women's lives in the EU with the objectives of individualising pensions rights and social security and tax systems;
- disseminate best practices with regard to working environment policies which allow for an effective work-life balance and with regard to measures fostering greater involvement by men in family life;
- take measures to reduce the gender pay gap and promote parental leave for men and paternity leave;
- cooperate with Member States to collect relevant data and to enforce measures that could prevent human trafficking for sexual exploitation and forced labour;
- focus on instruments and mechanisms for preventing the exploitation of migrant workers.

The Committee moved on to note that globalisation has been a positive force, empowering women all over the world to reach their potential, namely through improved access to education and healthcare. However, trade liberalisation has created contradictory and simultaneous trends, on the one hand effectively promoting the formalisation of labour relations in a number of areas, and, on the other, expanding the informal economy with new types of work and income for women, such as home-based work, sub-contracting and microenterprises. One effect of increased globalisation is the feminisation of poverty. The Committee asked the Commission to ensure that all future trade agreements, for example those within the framework of the WTO, are also scrutinised in the light of gender issues.

Specific attention should be paid to the situation of women belonging to ethnic minorities and of women immigrants. The Committee recommended the adoption of national integrated action plans in order to tackle multiple discrimination, especially where different bodies deal

with discrimination issues in a particular Member State.

It asked Member States to do the following:

- develop specific gender equality objectives and targets within the EU Social Inclusion Strategy in order to combat poverty and social exclusion, including a set of policy actions to support non-traditional and one-parent families, and specific policy actions in support of groups of women who are at a high risk of poverty and social exclusion such as migrants, refugees, ethnic minority women, older women and disabled women;
- mutualise the costs of maternity and parental leave allowances in order to ensure that women no longer represent a more costly source of labour than men;
- combat, in conjunction with both sides of industry, discrimination against pregnant women on the labour market and to take all necessary steps to ensure a high level of protection for mothers. The Commission needs to make a more detailed assessment of compliance with Community law in this area and determine whether it needs to be revised.

The Committee insisted on the need to focus policies on combating gender stereotypes in education from an early age, eliminating them from school curricula and textbooks, providing awareness training to teachers and students and encouraging boys and girls to embrace non-traditional educational paths. It felt that the EU labour market in most EU countries does not adequately reflect higher average educational levels and better academic performance of women. Key competences, such as an entrepreneurial attitude and a scientific and technological approach should be reinforced, especially among women.

The need to improve the legal status of women working in agriculture was emphasised, both in relation to social security, and in relation to their role on the farms themselves, with particular emphasis on co-ownership of family farms, access to loans, and their rights in the context of inheritance law.

Lastly, the Committee observed the importance of having adequate comparable statistics and, in this context, deplored the invisibility of certain categories of person in European statistics, for example partners working on family farms, and asked EUROSTAT to include this category of person in its statistics.

## Equality between women and men - 2007

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Piia-Noora KAUPPI (EPP-ED, FI) on the Commission report on equality between women and men in the European Union ? 2007. The resolution took as its starting point the fourth annual Commission report on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in policy areas. Two major initiatives in 2006 had a bearing on gender equality in the EU: the Commission's adoption of the Roadmap for equality between women and men for 2006-2010, and the adoption of the Pact for Gender Equality. The report welcomed the efforts of the Commission to intensify its actions promoting equality, but stressed that further efforts and further measures to overcome outdated decision-making and behavioural patterns, particularly in the administrative sector, were required in order to improve gender mainstreaming across policy areas. As well as dealing with employment issues such as the gender pay gap and insecurity in the job market, the report called for specific measures to combat inequalities caused by interrupted patterns of employment resulting from maternity leave and leave to take care of dependants. It also urged Member States to mutualise the cost of maternity leave allowance in order to ensure that women no longer represent a more costly source of labour than men.

Parliament began by pointing out that gender mainstreaming at EU level is being conducted as a dual strategy seeking to ensure, on the one hand, equality for men and women in all policy areas and, on the other, targeted measures to curb discrimination against women. It called on the Commission to propose, in addition to the gender mainstreaming approach, a series of specific measures, including awareness-raising campaigns, the exchange of best practices, dialogues with citizens and public-private partnership initiatives. It also insisted on the need to have a clear and permanent link between the annual reports on equality and the priorities defined in the Roadmap in order to implement an efficient cycle of planning, monitoring and evaluation of gender equality policies. Member States were asked to put forward specific measures to combat inequalities between women and men caused by interrupted patterns of employment resulting in particular from maternity leave or leave to care for dependants and to reduce their negative effects on careers, wages and pension entitlements.

Parliament asked the Commission to do the following:

- carry out a study on how Member States implement Community legislation in the area of equality and take appropriate action in the event of non-transposition or infringement;
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- disseminate best practices with regard to working environment policies which allow for an effective work-life balance and with regard to measures fostering greater involvement by men in family life;
- take measures to reduce the gender pay gap and promote parental leave for men and paternity leave;
- cooperate with Member States to collect relevant data and to enforce measures that could prevent human trafficking for sexual exploitation and forced labour;
- focus on instruments and mechanisms for preventing the exploitation of migrant workers.

The report noted that the reconciliation of work, private and family life was an important issue and one of the keys to increasing employment and reducing the burden of demographic ageing. All policies in this area must be based on the principle of free personal choice and be geared to the various stages in life.

Parliament went on to note that globalisation has been a positive force, empowering women all over the world to reach their potential, namely through improved access to education and healthcare. However, one effect of increased globalisation is the feminisation of poverty. Parliament asked the Commission to ensure that all future trade agreements, for example those within the framework of the WTO, are also scrutinised in the light of gender issues.

The report also underlined the need to address the major democratic deficit relating to women's under-representation in political decision-making. Member States must investigate the factors that prevent women from participating fully in the political arena and from gaining

senior management roles in all levels of public administration. Measures must be taken to remedy such situations.

Specific attention should be paid to the situation of women belonging to ethnic minorities and of women immigrants. Parliament recommended the adoption of national integrated action plans in order to tackle multiple discrimination, especially where different bodies deal with discrimination issues in a particular Member State.

It asked Member States to do the following:

- develop specific gender equality objectives and targets within the EU Social Inclusion Strategy in order to combat poverty and social exclusion, including a set of policy actions to support non-traditional and one-parent families, and specific policy actions in support of groups of women who are at a high risk of poverty and social exclusion such as migrants, refugees, ethnic minority women, older women and disabled women;
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Parliament insisted on the need to focus policies on combating gender stereotypes in education from an early age, eliminating them from school curricula and textbooks, providing awareness training to teachers and students and encouraging boys and girls to embrace non-traditional educational paths. It felt that the EU labour market in most EU countries does not adequately reflect higher average educational levels and better academic performance of women. Key competences, such as an entrepreneurial attitude and a scientific and technological approach should be reinforced, especially among women.

Parliament observed the importance of having adequate comparable statistics and, in this context, deplored the invisibility of certain categories of person in European statistics, for example partners working on family farms, who, if they are women, are generally recorded as "housewives". It called on Eurostat to include this category of person in its statistics in order to raise the profile of women's work.

Lastly, the report drew attention to the high levels of poverty and degrees of isolation affecting women in some rural areas, and pointed to the need for effective measures to guarantee equal opportunities for women, an aim which should be central to all the measures provided for under the common agricultural policy and to other relevant Community policies.