

Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2012/2255(INI)	Procedure completed
Women's rights in the Balkan accession countries		
Subject		
4.10.09 Women condition and rights		
6.40.03 Relations with South-East Europe and the Balkans		
8.20.01 Candidate countries		
8.20.20 Enlargement's employment and social point of view		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality		18/07/2012
		Verts/ALE CORNELISSEN Marije	
		Shadow rapporteur	
		PPE JÁRÓKA Livia	
		S&D KLEVA KEKUŠ Mojca	
		ALDE NICOLAI Norica	
		EFD CYMAŃSKI Tadeusz	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	AFET Foreign Affairs		12/09/2012
		S&D BOZKURT Emine	
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations	FÜLE Štefan	

Key events			
25/10/2012	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
20/03/2013	Vote in committee		
04/04/2013	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0136/2013	Summary
20/05/2013	Debate in Parliament		
21/05/2013	Results of vote in Parliament		
21/05/2013	Decision by Parliament	T7-0202/2013	Summary
21/05/2013	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2012/2255(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	FEMM/7/10958

Documentation gateway					
Committee draft report		PE502.079	18/12/2012	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE504.178	30/01/2013	EP	
Committee opinion	AFET	PE504.045	08/03/2013	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0136/2013	04/04/2013	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0202/2013	21/05/2013	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2013)519	18/09/2013	EC	

Women's rights in the Balkan accession countries

The Committee on Womens Rights and Gender Equality adopted the own-initiative report by Marije CORNELISSEN (Greens/EFA, NL) on womens rights in the Balkan accession countries. It stresses the need for women in the Western Balkans to take a prominent role in society through active participation and representation at all levels of government and in political, economic and social life. Whilst the accession countries in the Western Balkans have adopted much of the legislation required in the EU accession process, Members note that this legislation is in many cases not being effectively implemented. They call on the Commission to make the implementation of womens rights, the mainstreaming of gender equality and the continuous fight against domestic violence a priority in the accession process of Western Balkan countries, by continuing to address these issues and to report on their implementation in progress reports.

The committee notes with concern that women are under-represented in economic and political decision making, that womens employment rates in the Western Balkan countries remain very low, that women entrepreneurs are frequently discriminated against when trying to secure loans or credit for their businesses.

Members recommend that Western Balkans governments:

- introduce quotas so to promote female representation, and, where necessary, to apply quotas effectively in political parties and national assemblies;
- introduce measures in order to reduce the gender pay gap and, consequently, the gender pension gap and to tackle high unemployment rates, focusing in particular on women, especially those in rural areas;
- establish a legal framework for equal pay for equal work for both sexes, to assist women in reconciling private and professional life, to secure better working conditions, lifelong learning, flexible work schedules and in addition to create an environment which stimulates female entrepreneurship;
- accompany measures and action plans with adequate resources for their implementation, including appropriate women personnel;
- use the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) for projects related to the promotion of womens rights and gender equality;
- develop specific strategies to improve the position of women faced with multiple discrimination, such as Roma women, lesbian, bisexual or transgender women, women with disabilities, women of ethnic minorities and older women.

The report goes onto note with deep concern that 30 % of the victims of cross-border trafficking in human beings in the EU are nationals of Balkan countries, and women and girls comprise the bulk of the victims detected. It calls on national authorities in the region to work together in creating a common front, and to provide sustained funding to combat trafficking.

Members consider that women play an essential role in stabilisation and conflict resolution, which is crucial to reconciliation in the region as a whole, and they welcome the efforts of networks such as the Regional Womens Lobby to support women in peace-building and to promote access to justice for women in post-conflict countries.

Members underline generally the importance of awareness-raising campaigns in the fight against stereotypes, discrimination (gender-based,

cultural, religion-based) and domestic violence. They call on the Commission and the governments of accession countries to foster awareness through the media, public campaigns and education programmes in order to eliminate gender stereotypes and promote female role models and womens active participation in all paths of life including decision making.

The EU delegations in the Balkan countries are asked to keep progress in the sphere of womens rights and gender equality under careful review in anticipation of future accession to the EU. Each delegation is asked to appoint a member of staff to deal with gender policies with a view to facilitating the exchange of good practice within the Balkan region.

The report then focuses individually on the seven countries in the Western Balkans Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Montenegro and Serbia which are at different stages of the process to become Member States of the European Union and formulates recommendations to address the gender equality issues in each country.

Women's rights in the Balkan accession countries

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on womens rights in the Balkan accession countries. It stresses the need for women in the Western Balkans to take a prominent role in society through active participation and representation at all levels of government and in political, economic and social life. Whilst the accession countries in the Western Balkans have adopted much of the legislation required in the EU accession process, Members note that this legislation is in many cases not being effectively implemented. They call on the Commission to make the implementation of womens rights, the mainstreaming of gender equality and the continuous fight against domestic violence a priority in the accession process of Western Balkan countries, by continuing to address these issues and to report on their implementation in progress reports.

Parliament notes with concern that women remain under-represented in the labour market as well as in economic and political decision-making. It welcomes quotas and calls on those countries that have not already done so to apply quotas effectively in political parties and national assemblies. Where gender quotas in political decision making have been introduced, they should be properly implemented and supplemented with effective legal sanctions.

Parliament recommends that Western Balkans governments:

- introduce measures in order to reduce the gender pay gap and, consequently, the gender pension gap and to tackle high unemployment rates, focusing in particular on women, especially those in rural areas;
- establish a legal framework for equal pay for equal work for both sexes, to assist women in reconciling private and professional life, to secure better working conditions, lifelong learning, flexible work schedules and in addition to create an environment which stimulates female entrepreneurship;
- accompany measures and action plans with adequate resources for their implementation, including appropriate women personnel;
- use the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) for projects related to the promotion of womens rights and gender equality;
- develop specific strategies to improve the position of women faced with multiple discrimination, such as Roma women, lesbian, bisexual or transgender women, women with disabilities, women of ethnic minorities and older women.

Parliament goes onto note with deep concern that 30 % of the victims of cross-border trafficking in human beings in the EU are nationals of Balkan countries, and women and girls comprise the bulk of the victims detected. It calls on national authorities in the region to work together in creating a common front, and to provide sustained funding to combat trafficking.

Members consider that women play an essential role in stabilisation and conflict resolution, and they welcome the efforts of networks such as the Regional Womens Lobby to support women in peace-building and to promote access to justice for women in post-conflict countries.

Members underline generally the importance of awareness-raising campaigns in the fight against stereotypes, discrimination (gender-based, cultural, religion-based) and domestic violence. They call on the Commission and the governments of accession countries to foster awareness through the media, public campaigns and education programmes in order to promote female role models and womens active participation in all paths of life.

The EU delegations in the Balkan countries are asked to keep progress in the sphere of womens rights and gender equality under careful review in anticipation of future accession to the EU. Each delegation is asked to appoint a member of staff to deal with gender policies with a view to facilitating the exchange of good practice within the Balkan region.

Welcoming the increase in cross-border regional initiatives in the area of womens rights, Parliament calls on governments and the Commission to encourage the exchange of good practices arising from them, inter alia by employing the pre-accession funds and by making sufficient grants available to these initiatives.

Parliament then focuses individually on the seven countries in the Western Balkans Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Montenegro and Serbia which are at different stages of the process to become Member States of the European Union and formulates recommendations to address the gender equality issues in each country.