Procedure file

Basic information

INI - Own-initiative procedure	2012/2273(INI)	Procedure completed
Gendercide: the missing women? Subject 4.10.09 Women condition and rights 6.30 Development cooperation		

Key players

European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality		24/01/2013
		S&D PAPADOPOULOU Antigoni	
		Shadow rapporteur	
		PPE ZÁBORSKÁ Anna	
		ALDE NICOLAI Norica	
		Verts/ALE ROMEVA I RUEDA Raül	
		ECR YANNAKOUDAKIS Marina	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	DEVE Development		22/04/2013
		S&D CREU Corina	
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion	PIEBALGS Andris	

Key events

25/10/2012	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
25/10/2012	Referral to joint committee announced in Parliament		
19/06/2013	Vote in committee		
28/06/2013	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0245/2013	Summary
07/10/2013	Debate in Parliament		
08/10/2013	Results of vote in Parliament		

08/10/2013	Decision by Parliament	T7-0400/2013	Summary
08/10/2013	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2012/2273(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	FEMM/7/12612

Documentation gateway

Committee draft report		PE510.639	02/05/2013	EP	
Committee opinion	DEVE	PE510.797	28/05/2013	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE513.118	05/06/2013	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0245/2013	28/06/2013	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0400/2013	08/10/2013	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2014)61	06/03/2014	EC	

Gendercide: the missing women?

The Committee on Womens Rights and Gender Equality adopted the initiative report by Antigoni PAPADOPOULOU (S&D, CY) on Gendercide: the missing women.

Members defined gendercide as a sex-neutral term referring to the systematic, deliberate and gender-based mass killing of people belonging to a particular sex. The practice of gendercide is most often found deeply rooted in cultures exhibiting son preference, gender inequality, persisting discrimination and stereotypes against daughters.

In this context, Members stressed that gendercide remains a crime and a severe violation of human rights that necessitates effective ways to eradicate it. They also stressed that all states and governments have an obligation to promote and safeguard human rights and to prevent discrimination as a basis for eliminating all forms of violence against women.

They invited governments to take the necessary measures to:

- devise and apply measures that promote fundamental changes in peoples ideas about and attitudes towards women, in order to tackle harmful beliefs and behaviour which perpetuate violence against women;
- specifically categorise feminicide or gendercide as a crime.

Members also called on the Commission to promote a thorough scientific investigation and examination of the root causes of sex-selective practices with a view to promoting research in this field.

Legislation against sex-selection: Members called for the drafting of legislation against sex selection, which should include social protection packages for women, better monitoring of the implementation of the existing legislation, and a stronger focus on the cultural and socio-economic causes of the phenomenon.

Members also urged:

- governments to provide economic, educational and political empowerment to girls and women;
- the Commission to support and encourage all types of initiatives to increase awareness on gender-biased discrimination, including gendercide, and to find effective ways to combat it by offering guidance, assistance, appropriate policies and funding.

Combating gender imbalance in society: Members stressed that, according to several studies, gender imbalance could lead to: increases in trafficking for the purposes of marriage or sexual exploitation: violence against women; child, early and forced marriages; and HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). They also stressed that gender imbalance thereby poses a threat to societal stability and security. Measures are required to address these circumstances, in particular the effective implementation of gender equality and non-discrimination legislation, particularly in low- and middle-income countries and transition countries.

Among the measures that should be taken, Members insisted that:

- appropriate sanctions must be imposed on those breaking the law;
- stricter guidelines be prepared for the self-regulation of clinics and hospitals, as an active measure to prevent sex selection as a business for financial gain;
- the fact that the improvement of levels of education, employment opportunities and integrated health care services, including sexual and reproductive health care services for women;
- all forms of stereotyping should be combated.

Members also called on the Commission and the Member States to identify clinics in Europe that conduct sex-selective abortions, provide statistics on this practice and elaborate a list of best practices for preventing them.

Better education in third countries: Members urged the Commission and relevant international organisations to support educational programmes that empower women. They called on the Commission, the EEAS and the governments of third countries to devise information campaigns that promote the principle of gender equality and that seek to raise awareness of the need for each member of a couple to respect the human rights of his/her partner, particularly the rights of property, employment and appropriate health care.

Governments of partner-countries and the Commission were also called upon to:

- reduce health care costs for the treatment of children, notably girls, who sometimes die as a result of the bad or inadequate care they receive;
- improve womens access to health care, in particular prenatal and maternal care, education, agriculture, credit and microloans, economic opportunities and property;
- reduce economic burdens on families and individuals, thus reducing their dependence on and preference towards male children;
- combat sex-selection practices that still persist even in prosperous regions with literate populations;
- stimulate debate and understanding of the equal value of girls and boys, using all available media and social networks;
- include a strong gender component, and a focus on the empowerment of women, in all the EUs partnerships and dialogues with developing countries;
- improve the monitoring and statistical data collection of sex ratios, and to take action to address possible imbalances;
- take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that practicing forced abortions and sex-selective surgery to terminate pregnancy without prior and informed consent or understanding of the procedure by the women involved is criminalised;
- ensure that legislation on sex selection is implemented effectively and that appropriate sanctions are imposed on those breaking the law;
- enhance cooperation with other international organisations and bodies to tackle sex-selective practices.

Members stressed, moreover, that the Commission and the EEAS, when discussing humanitarian aid packages, should prioritise gendercide as an issue to be addressed by the third countries concerned, enjoining them to commit themselves to make the eradication of gendercide a priority. Lastly, the EU was called upon to focus on womens empowerment in the post-2015 development policy agenda.

It should be noted that this report was the subject of a minority opinion which starts by defining gendercide as sex selective abortion based on the foetus' sex. It urges the Commission and EEAS to fully respect the reservations on SHRH and abortion expressed by States in international treaties, conventions and programmes.

Gendercide: the missing women?

The European Parliament adopted by 567 votes to 37, with 54 abstentions, a resolution on Gendercide: the missing women.

Parliament defined gendercide as a sex-neutral term referring to the systematic, deliberate and gender-based mass killing of people belonging to a particular sex, which is a rising but underreported problem in several countries, with lethal consequences. The practice of gendercide is most often found deeply rooted in cultures exhibiting son preference, gender inequality, persisting discrimination and stereotypes against daughters.

In this context, Parliament stressed that gendercide remains a crime and a severe violation of human rights that necessitates effective ways to eradicate it. It also stressed that all states and governments have an obligation to promote and safeguard human rights and to prevent discrimination as a basis for eliminating all forms of violence against women.

It invited governments to take the necessary measures to:

- devise and apply measures that promote fundamental changes in peoples ideas about and attitudes towards women, in order to tackle harmful beliefs and behaviour which perpetuate violence against women;
- specifically categorise feminicide or gendercide as a crime and to draw up and implement legislation so that feminicide cases are investigated, perpetrators tried and survivors ensured easy access to health care and long-term support.

Parliament also called on the Commission to promote a thorough scientific investigation and examination of the root causes of sex-selective practices with a view to promoting research in this field.

Legislation against sex-selection: Parliament called for the drafting of legislation against sex selection, which should include social protection packages for women, better monitoring of the implementation of the existing legislation, and a stronger focus on the cultural and socio-economic causes of the phenomenon.

Parliament called on the Commission to work intensively to prevent gender-biased sex selection, not by imposing restrictions on access to reproductive health services and technology but by promoting responsible use of it, to introduce and strengthen guidelines, to provide specialised training for medical staff to advise on and prevent sex selective practices, with the rare exception of justified cases for sex-linked genetic diseases, and to prevent the use and promotion of technologies for sex-selection and/or for profit purposes.

Parliament emphasised that legislation to manage or limit sex selection must protect the right of women to have access to legitimate sexual and reproductive health technologies and services without their husbands' authorisation.

Parliament also urged:

- governments to provide economic, educational and political empowerment to girls and women;
- the Commission to support and encourage all types of initiatives to increase awareness on gender-biased discrimination, including gendercide, and to find effective ways to combat it by offering guidance, assistance, appropriate policies and funding.

Combating gender imbalance in society: Parliament stressed that, according to several studies, gender imbalance could lead to: increases in trafficking for the purposes of marriage or sexual exploitation: violence against women; child, early and forced marriages; and HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). It also stressed that gender imbalance thereby poses a threat to societal stability and security. Measures are required to address these circumstances, in particular the effective implementation of gender equality and non-discrimination legislation, particularly in low- and middle-income countries and transition countries.

Among the measures that should be taken, Parliament insisted that:

- appropriate sanctions must be imposed on those breaking the law;
- stricter guidelines be prepared for the self-regulation of clinics and hospitals, as an active measure to prevent sex selection as a business for financial gain;
- the fact that the improvement of levels of education, employment opportunities and integrated health care services, including sexual and reproductive health care services for women;
- all forms of stereotyping should be combated.

Parliament also called on the Commission and the Member States to identify clinics in Europe that conduct sex-selective abortions, provide statistics on this practice and elaborate a list of best practices for preventing them.

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Governments of partner-countries and the Commission were also called upon to:

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Parliament stressed, moreover, that the Commission and the EEAS, when discussing humanitarian aid packages, should prioritise gendercide as an issue to be addressed by the third countries concerned, enjoining them to commit themselves to make the eradication of gendercide a priority. Lastly, the EU was called upon to focus on womens empowerment in the post-2015 development policy agenda.

In an amendment adopted in plenary, a small majority of Members asserted that, when implementing the specific clauses on the prohibition on coercion or compulsion in sexual and reproductive health matters agreed on at the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development, as well as the legally binding international human rights instruments, the acquis communautaire and the Union's policy competencies in those matters, Union assistance should not be provided to any authority, organisation or programme which promotes, supports or participates in the management of any action which involves such human rights abuses as coercive abortion, forced sterilisation of women or men, or determination of foetal sex resulting in prenatal sex selection or infanticide.