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Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2019/2169(INI)	Procedure completed
The EU Strategy for Gender Equality		
Subject 4.10.04 Gender equality		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	 Women's Rights and Gender Equality (Associated committee)	 NOICHL Maria	14/10/2019
	Committee for opinion	Shadow rapporteur	
	 Employment and Social Affairs (Associated committee)	 FRANSSEN Cindy	
	 Culture and Education	 TOLLERET Irène	
	 Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	 ANDERSON Christine	
		 KUHNKE Alice	
		 WIŚNIEWSKA Jadwiga	
		 PEREIRA Sandra	
		Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
		 RODRÍGUEZ PALOP Eugenia	10/12/2019
		The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
		 INCIR Evin	20/01/2020

Key events			
19/12/2019	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
19/12/2019	Referral to associated committees announced in Parliament		
09/11/2020	Vote in committee		
25/11/2020	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0234/2020	Summary

21/01/2021	Debate in Parliament		
21/01/2021	Decision by Parliament	T9-0025/2021	Summary
21/01/2021	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2019/2169(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/9/01533

Documentation gateway

Committee draft report		PE650.408	08/04/2020	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE652.642	05/06/2020	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE652.643	05/06/2020	EP	
Committee opinion	EMPL	PE646.871	22/07/2020	EP	
Committee opinion	LIBE	PE648.624	22/07/2020	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0234/2020	25/11/2020	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0025/2021	21/01/2021	EP	Summary

The EU Strategy for Gender Equality

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality adopted an own-initiative report by Maria NOICHL (S&D, DE) on the EU strategy for gender equality.

Members welcomed the adoption of the Commission communication A Union of equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, presented in the first 100 days of the new Commission. However, the Commission is invited to establish a concrete roadmap with timeframes, targets, an annual review and monitoring mechanism, clear and measurable indicators of success and additional targeted actions.

Members called on Member States to: (i) endorse the anti-discrimination directive and ensure that multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination are eradicated in all EU Member States; (ii) regularly exchange best practice and to commit themselves to achieving upward convergence and harmonisation of women's rights in Europe.

The report stressed the need to ensure reliable and adequate collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data as a basis for decision-making.

Eliminating violence against women and gender-based violence

The report highlighted the need for specific measures to address the existing disparities in laws, policies and services among Member States and the increase in domestic and gender-based violence during the COVID-19 outbreak. The report also highlighted the need for specific measures to address the existing disparities in laws, policies and services among Member States and the increase in domestic and gender-based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. It welcomed the Commission's intention to propose measures in 2021 to achieve the objectives of the Istanbul Convention if the EU's accession remains blocked. It called for preparatory actions to be taken now to put in place legally binding measures and an EU framework directive to prevent and combat gender-based violence as soon as possible.

Members called for:

- concrete measures at EU level to tackle the problem of moral and sexual harassment and introduce binding measures to define and prohibit violence and harassment in the world of work;
- new measures, including binding legislation to combat cyber-violence, which disproportionately affects women;
- the presentation, as soon as possible, of: (i) the strategic framework on equality of LGBTIQ+ persons; (ii) a proposal for a review of the Victims' Rights Directive with regard to international standards on violence against women; (iii) the EU strategy on the eradication of trafficking in human beings.

Women and the economy

Members want to ensure equal participation and opportunities in the labour market, including pay transparency, to make equal pay for work of equal value a reality and to achieve gender balance in decision-making positions. They called for the development of an ambitious new Action Plan on the gender pay gap by the end of 2020, which should set clear targets for Member States to reduce the gender pay gap over the next five years and ensure that these targets are taken into account in the country-specific recommendations.

Members also called for:

- the full implementation of the work-life balance directive by introducing measures such as fully paid leave, the promotion of men's equal role as carers, thereby tackling gender stereotypes in take-up of paternity and/or maternity leave;
- equal participation and equal opportunities for men and women in the labour market and addressing the feminisation of poverty in all its forms, in particular by increasing pensions and social benefits;
- the adoption of concrete measures for gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the Digital Agenda, preventing any negative impact of digitisation on women.

Gender mainstreaming in all EU policy areas

The report stressed that gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting are essential tools to assess and target the effects of different policy actions and budgetary use on men and women and should be used throughout the policymaking process and budgetary actions.

Members reiterated the need to increase resources for EU programmes dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and women's rights in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), in particular in the Next Generation EU Recovery Plan, and asked the Commission to include a gender mainstreaming clause in the revised proposal for the next MFF.

Countering backlashes against gender equality

Members called on the Commission to:

- put in place measures and provide additional support to ensure sexual and reproductive health and rights in the implementation of the current gender equality strategy and to include sexual and reproductive health and rights in its next EU health strategy;
- take account of health inequalities in the next EU health strategy, which should focus on access to preventive care at all stages of life and on women's health and safety in the workplace, and pay particular attention to gender equality in the European plan to combat cancer;
- rapidly adopt the new EU Gender Action Plan III to start the implementation of this instrument in 2021 as a key instrument for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in external relations.

The EU Strategy for Gender Equality

The European Parliament adopted by 464 votes to 119, with 93 abstentions, a resolution on the EU strategy for gender equality.

Members welcomed the adoption of the Commission communication A Union of equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, but regretted that the strategy remains vague on the issue of timelines for several, highly welcomed, measures and that it sets neither concrete gender equality targets to be achieved by 2025 nor clear monitoring tools.

The Commission was called on to:

- establish a concrete roadmap with timeframes, targets, an annual review and monitoring mechanism, clear and measurable indicators of success and additional targeted actions;
- present guidelines on how to effectively implement gender mainstreaming in EU policies, including in budget preparation;
- systematically incorporate a gender perspective into all stages of the response to the COVID-19 crisis, and to promote women's participation at all levels of decision-making.

Members called on Member States to: (i) implement the Anti-Discrimination Directive and guarantee that multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination are eradicated in all EU Member States; (ii) regularly exchange best practice and to commit themselves to achieving upward convergence and harmonisation of women's rights in Europe.

Eliminating violence against women and gender-based violence

Parliament highlighted the need for specific measures to address the existing disparities in laws, policies and services among Member States and the increase in domestic and gender-based violence during the COVID-19 outbreak. It welcomed the Commission's intention to propose measures in 2021 to achieve the objectives of the Istanbul Convention if the EU's accession remains blocked. It called for preparatory actions to be taken now to put in place legally binding measures and an EU framework directive to prevent and combat gender-based violence as soon as possible.

Members also called for:

- concrete measures to be taken at EU level to tackle the problem of moral and sexual harassment and to introduce binding measures to define and prohibit violence and harassment in the world of work, as well as to combat cyber-violence, which disproportionately affects women;
- the presentation, as soon as possible, of the strategic framework on equality of LGBTIQ+ persons.

Women and the economy

Members want to ensure equal participation and opportunities in the labour market, including pay transparency, to make equal pay for work of equal value a reality and to achieve gender balance in decision-making positions.

They invited the Commission to present a proposal for binding measures on pay transparency and called for an ambitious new action plan on the gender pay gap.

Stressing that 70% of health and social services workers worldwide are women, often receiving only the minimum wage and working in precarious conditions, Members called for the levelling up of wages and working conditions in sectors with a high female predominance, such as childcare, health and retail, and for the eradication of the gender pay and pension gap and labour market segregation.

They called for the development of an ambitious new Action Plan on the gender pay gap by the end of 2020, which should set clear targets for Member States to reduce the gender pay gap over the next five years and ensure that these targets are taken into account in the country-specific recommendations.

Members also called for:

- the full implementation of the work-life balance directive by introducing measures such as fully paid leave, the promotion of men's equal role as carers, thereby tackling gender stereotypes in take-up of paternity and/or maternity leave;
- equal participation and equal opportunities for men and women in the labour market and addressing the feminisation of poverty in all its forms, in particular by increasing pensions and social benefits;
- the adoption of concrete measures for gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the Digital Agenda, preventing any negative impact of digitisation on women.

Gender mainstreaming in all EU policy areas

The resolution stressed that gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting are essential tools to assess and target the effects of different policy actions and budgetary use on men and women and should be used throughout the policymaking process and budgetary actions.

Members reiterated the need to increase resources for EU programmes dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and women's rights in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), in particular in the Next Generation EU Recovery Plan.

Countering setbacks in gender equality

Parliament expressed its deep concern about the setbacks in women's rights and gender equality in some Member States and, in particular, the attempts to further criminalise abortion and to hinder young people's access to comprehensive sex education in Poland, and the reform adopted in Hungary, which undermines the rights of transgender and intersex people.

It called for continuous monitoring of the situation with regard to women's rights and gender equality, including misinformation and regressive initiatives in all Member States, and the establishment of an alarm system to highlight regressions.

The Commission was invited to put in place measures and provide additional support to ensure sexual and reproductive health and rights in the implementation of the current gender equality strategy and to include sexual and reproductive health and rights in its next EU health strategy.