

Tuesday 13 March 2012

I

(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RESOLUTIONS

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Equality between women and men in the European Union - 2011

P7_TA(2012)0069

European Parliament resolution of 13 March 2012 on equality between women and men in the European Union - 2011 (2011/2244(INI))

(2013/C 251 E/01)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 2 and Article 3(3), second subparagraph, of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),

- having regard to Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,

- having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 18 December 1979,

- having regard to European Parliament and Council Directive 2011/36/EU of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA ⁽¹⁾,

- having regard to the 1949 UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others,

- having regard to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women on 15 September 1995 and to the subsequent outcome documents adopted at the United Nations Beijing+5 (2000), Beijing +10 (2005) and Beijing +15 (2010) special sessions,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 101, 15.4.2011, p. 1.

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- having regard to the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020), adopted by the European Council in March 2011 ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 5 March 2010 entitled 'A Strengthened Commitment to Equality between Women and Men: A Women's Charter' (COM(2010)0078),
- having regard to the Commission Staff Working Document of 11 February 2011 entitled 'Report on the progress on equality between women and men in 2010' (SEC(2011)0193),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 21 September 2010 entitled 'Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015' (COM(2010)0491),
- having regard to the Fundamental Rights Agency's Report on Homophobia, Transphobia and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity (2010),
- having regard to the EU Victims' Package comprising the Commission communications of 18 May 2011 entitled 'Strengthening victims' rights in the EU'(COM(2011)0274), 'Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime' (COM(2011)0275) and 'Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on mutual recognition of protection measures in civil matters' (COM(2011)0276),
- having regard to the Commission communication 'EU 2020: a European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' (COM(2010)2020),
- having regard to the Commission report of 3 October 2008 entitled 'Implementation of the Barcelona objectives concerning childcare facilities for pre-school-age children' (COM(2008)0638),
- having regard to Directive 2004/113/EC on implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services and the related judgment of 1 March 2011 of the Court of Justice of the European Union in the Test-Achats case (C-236/09) ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 October 2005 on women and poverty in the European Union ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 3 February 2009 on non-discrimination based on sex and inter-generational solidarity ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 February 2010 on equality between women and men in the European Union – 2009 ⁽⁵⁾ and of 8 March 2011 on equality between women and men in the European Union – 2010 ⁽⁶⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 6 July 2011 on women and business leadership ⁽⁷⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 5 April 2011 on priorities and outline of a new EU policy framework to fight violence against women ⁽⁸⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 March 2011 on the face of female poverty in the European Union ⁽⁹⁾,

⁽¹⁾ Annex to Council Conclusions of 7 March 2011.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 130, 30.4.2011, p. 4.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 233 E, 28.9.2006, p. 130.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 67 E, 18.3.2010, p. 31.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 341 E, 16.12.2010, p. 35.

⁽⁶⁾ Texts adopted P7_TA(2011)0085.

⁽⁷⁾ Texts adopted P7_TA(2011)0330.

⁽⁸⁾ Texts adopted P7_TA(2011)0127.

⁽⁹⁾ Texts adopted P7_TA(2011)0086.

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- having regard to its resolution of 17 June 2010 on gender aspects of the economic downturn and financial crisis, ⁽¹⁾
 - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A7-0041/2012),
- A. whereas equality between men and women is a fundamental principle of the European Union, enshrined in the Treaty on European Union, and whereas the Union has set itself the specific task of mainstreaming gender equality in all its activities and whereas, despite the gradual progress in this area, many inequalities between women and men still remain;
- B. whereas at times of economic crisis, strengthening women's position in the labour market and economic independence is not only a moral imperative, but also an economic necessity; whereas the EU 2020 Strategy includes the headline target of aiming to raise to 75 % the employment rate for women and men aged 20-64;
- C. whereas Europe's future economic competitiveness and prosperity depends crucially on its ability to fully utilise its labour resources, including increased participation by women in the labour market; whereas one of the Europe 2020 priorities is to get more women to work in order to reach a 75% employment rate for women by 2020; whereas comparatively more women than men work in part-time jobs or on temporary contracts and will therefore be more easily made redundant in crisis periods and there is a risk that the current recession will delay advances, or even reverse progress towards gender equality; whereas, however, part-time work opportunities in some cases and for a certain period can have a positive effect for women and men in order to reconcile work family and private life;
- D. whereas the objective of gender equality entails better political representation of women; whereas women's representation in political decision making has not sustained any linear improvement in recent years - the gender balance in national parliaments across the EU has remained unchanged at 24 % women and 76 % men and the percentage of female members of parliament in certain Member States does not exceed 15%, with women accounting for only 23 % of ministers overall; whereas the number of female vice-presidents of the European Parliament has decreased in the second half of the parliamentary term 2009-2014;
- E. whereas initially the economic crisis mainly hit male employment, but cuts in public spending are expected to have a disproportionate impact on female employment and wage difference, as many more women than men are employed in the public sector; whereas the particularly critical sectors dominated by women are health, education and social care; whereas it is important to pay attention not only to employment rates, but also to equal employment conditions and employment quality, including career opportunities and wages;
- F. whereas violence against women including psychological violence is a prime obstacle to equality between women and men, is a violation of the fundamental rights of women and remains the most widespread violation of human rights within the EU despite measures taken by politicians to counter it; whereas economic recession creates conditions associated with increased violence in intimate relationships, and austerity measures affecting support services leave women victims of violence even more vulnerable than usual;
- G. whereas economists and demographers (World Bank, OECD, IMF) use economic and mathematical models to highlight the economic value of household production – carried out mainly by women – and whereas women's contribution to GDP would be even higher if their unpaid work were factored in, which proves the discrimination that exists against women's work;
- H. whereas budget cuts in social services, such as childcare, further hinder women's participation in the labour market;
- I. whereas access to services providing care for children, elderly and dependent persons is essential for achieving equal participation of women and men in the labour market and in education and training; whereas home caregivers remain discriminated against in terms of the failure to count their years of work towards pensions and entitlements;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 236 E, 12.8.2011, p. 79.

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- J. whereas 2012 is the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations and it is important to stress that more women than men in their later years live in single households due to longer life expectancy;
- K. whereas the European Parliament adopted in October 2011 its position on the proposal for a new Directive on Maternity Leave, extending maternity leave to 20 weeks with full pay and also establishing paid paternity leave of at least 2 weeks;
- L. whereas access to capital is severely limited by the banking crisis, a problem that is likely to hit women entrepreneurs disproportionately, as women increasingly work in a self-employed capacity so as to better combine work and family life;
- M. whereas the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data are paramount in implementing equality between women and men in the European Union;
- N. whereas progress in achieving gender equality has been excruciatingly slow, in particular economic equality; whereas political leaders must do more than pay lip service to it, rather making it a priority in their economic strategies;
- O. whereas disparities in the pay received by women and men are still very high (in some cases exceeding 25%), and whereas despite the efforts and progress made the pay gap is not becoming smaller but rather stagnating;
- P. whereas employment rates are lower in rural areas and, moreover, a large number of women do not figure in the official labour market and are therefore not registered as unemployed or included in unemployment statistics, causing specific financial and legal problems in connection with maternity and sick leave entitlements, the acquisition of pension rights and access to social security, as well as problems in the event of divorce; whereas rural areas are disadvantaged by the lack of high-quality employment opportunities;
- Q. whereas on average 3 in 10 households in the European Union are single-person households, the majority of them comprising women living alone, particularly elderly women, and the percentage is rising; whereas these households are more vulnerable and more at risk of poverty, in particular at times of economic adversity; whereas single-person or single-income households in most Member States are treated unfavourably, both in absolute and relative terms, with regard to taxation, social security, housing, health care, insurance and pensions; whereas public policies should not penalise people for – voluntarily or involuntarily – living alone;
- R. whereas women's sexual and reproductive health and rights are human rights and should be guaranteed for all women, regardless of their social status, age, sexual orientation or ethnicity;
- S. whereas many women such as disabled women, women caring for children, elderly and disabled women, women from ethnic minorities and especially Roma women and immigrant women suffer from multiple and intersectional discrimination and are more vulnerable to social exclusion, poverty and extreme human rights violations;
- T. whereas families in the European Union are diverse and comprise married, unmarried and partnered parents, different-sex and same-sex parents, single parents and foster parents who deserve equal protection under national and European Union law;
- U. whereas the ECJ judgement in the Test-Achats case demonstrates the need for precise, clear and unambiguous provisions in gender equality legislation;
- V. whereas the gender gap is smaller before family formation and increases when individuals form a couple; whereas a drop in the employment rate occurs for women at first childbirth and the labour market disadvantages accumulate in the earlier stages of their life cycle, connected to child-care, which at a later stage changes into care of elderly people, which often flows into in-work poverty;

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- W. whereas positive actions aimed at women have proved to be fundamental for their full incorporation in the labour market and in society in general;
- X. whereas women in rural areas suffer from even greater discrimination and gender stereotypes than women in urban areas and the employment rate of those women is much lower than of those in the cities;
- Y. whereas victims of human trafficking are mostly women and girls;

Equal economic independence

1. Calls on the Member States to ensure that their marriage and divorce and matrimonial property laws do not directly or indirectly constitute a financial 'trap' for the spouses, in particular women, and to ensure that couples who seek marriage are fully informed in a suitable time-frame of the legal and financial implications of marriage and divorce;
2. Calls on Member States to invest in affordable, high-quality facilities for the care of children, the sick, the disabled, the elderly and other dependent persons, making sure that they have flexible times and are accessible so that as many people as possible can combine professional and private life; calls on the Commission and Member States to ensure that men and women caring for children or the elderly receive recognition by giving them individual social security and pension rights; invites the social partners to present specific initiatives to validate the skills acquired during a care-related leave period;
3. Calls on the Member States to move towards individualised systems of social security, in order to increase women's individual autonomy and position in society;
4. Emphasises the importance of developing the legal concept of shared ownership - in order to ensure full recognition of women's rights in the agricultural sector, appropriate protection in the field of social security and recognition of women's work - and the need to amend the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) Regulation, so as to make it possible, as is the case under the European Social Fund (ESF), to take positive action for women in the future 2014-2020 programming period, bearing in mind that this was feasible in earlier periods but cannot be done in the current one and that such measures will have very beneficial effects on female employment in rural areas;
5. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to elaborate proposals for the mutual recognition of civil unions and of same-sex families across Europe between those countries which already have the relevant legislation in place, so as to ensure equal treatment with regard to work, free movement, taxation and social security, protecting the incomes of families and children;
6. Welcomes the adoption of Directive 2010/41/EU on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and calls on the Member States to ensure its full and timely implementation;
7. Regrets the implementation by some Member States of restrictive definitions of 'family' in order to deny legal protection to same-sex couples and their children; recalls that EU law applies without discrimination on the basis of sex or sexual orientation, in accordance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;
8. Stresses that fiscal consolidation without consideration for gender equality risks leading to increased gender segregation in the labour market, increased precarious work among women, a wider gender pay gap, increased feminisation of poverty and more difficulties in combining caring and working;
9. Calls on the Council to move forward on the European Parliament's position concerning the amendment of the Maternity Leave Directive, particularly with regard to pay for women who have recently given birth, so as to ensure continuity of women's economic independence during this period.
10. Calls on Member States to actively promote and closely monitor the implementation of the Social Partners' Framework Agreement on Parental Leave, particularly with regard to the non-transferable period, and to ensure that all barriers are removed so as to increase men's take-up rate;

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11. Stresses that income and high-quality gainful employment for women are the key to their economic independence and to greater equality between men and women in society as a whole;
12. Calls on the Member States and the social partners to include especially female workers in training and vocational training in 'green jobs' which are regarded by the EU Commission as a 'key growth segment' of the European labour market;
13. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to analyse and eliminate the barriers to (re-)entering the labour market and self-employment for Roma women, and furthermore to place proper emphasis on the role of women in the economic empowerment of marginalised Roma and in launching businesses;
14. Calls for action to be taken at national and European level to promote women's entrepreneurship, by setting up training and careers and legal advice services and facilitating access to public and private funding;
15. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to assess the gender impact of the economic and financial crisis through gender impact assessments and subsequent gender budgeting measures;
16. Calls on the Member States to invest current Structural Funds spending for the period 2007-2013 in the development of care services to enable both women and men to combine professional and private life;

Equal pay for equal work and work of equal value

17. Notes that, despite countless campaigns, targets and measures in recent years, the gender pay gap remains stubbornly wide, women across the EU earn 17.5% less on average than men and there has only been a marginal reduction of the gender pay gap in the last few years; calls on the Member States to redouble their efforts to put European measures in place with the aim of closing this gap;
18. Calls for a multifaceted strategy from European institutions, Member States and the Social Partners to tackle the full range of causes of the persistent gender pay, including a European equal pay target to reduce the pay gap by 10% in each Member State to ensure equal payment for women and men for the same work and for the same qualifications, and welcomes the Commission's initiative of launching a European Equal Pay Day (EPPD); regrets that no legislative proposal has been put forward by the Commission since the adoption of the European Parliament resolution of 18 November 2008 and its recommendations;
19. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to take appropriate measures to reduce the gender pension gap as a direct consequence of the gender pay gap and to assess the impact of the new pension systems on various categories of women, paying special attention to part-time and atypical contracts;
20. Calls on the Member States to take targeted actions in order to provide a better and fairer financial status for social employment; takes the view that jobs in education and care must be placed on an equal financial footing with other jobs, and that there must be no financial disadvantages arising from the fact that men and women choose social occupations;
21. Expresses concern that the economic crisis and budget cuts will exacerbate the problem, as women will be disproportionately affected, and calls on Member States' governments as well as on social partners to devise an action plan and concrete, ambitious targets;
22. Calls on the Member States to make better use of the skills of highly qualified female migrants and to provide access to education and training including language courses in order to avoid de-skilling and to ensure equal job opportunities and promote the integration of migrants; calls on the Member States to give attention to the adoption of measures for migrant women and encourages the consultation of NGOs and migrant women's organisations on policies and measures geared towards their social integration;
23. Is concerned about the legislation in some Member States which does not expressly prohibit the handing of pre-signed resignation letters to employers when women are recruited, which has the effect of enabling maternity laws to be circumvented;

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Equality in decision-making

24. Considers that active participation and full inclusion of women in the European labour market not only has a positive effect on business but also benefits the economy and society as a whole and is an issue that concerns fundamental rights and democracy: women represent 60% of new university graduates, but continue to be under-represented in economic decision-making posts;

25. Regrets that economic recovery projects still focus mainly on male-dominated employment; calls on the Member States and the Commission to address gender equality in a consistent manner when implementing the EU2020 Strategy and National Reform Programmes, and to give high priority to addressing barriers to women's participation in the labour market with particular emphasis on women with disabilities, migrant and ethnic minority women, women in the age group 54-65 years and Roma women; points out that women and men must have access to flexible forms of employment, including teleworking, in order to achieve a good balance between work and family life and become financially independent; notes that women are under-represented in sectors that are likely to expand such as the renewable sector, science and technology-intensive jobs, and therefore invites the Council, the Commission and the Member States to formulate job creation policies concerning the balanced representation of men and women in these new sectors;

26. Calls for support to be given to initiatives and campaigns which break down stereotypes about the low effectiveness of female employees and their lack of management skills; calls also for women to be supported in their career development and efforts to reach managerial positions;

27. Regrets the lack of progress towards increasing the number of women on company boards as demonstrated in the European Commission's 2012 report on women in economic decision-making; notes that, within the EU, on average only 13% of the executives of the major listed companies are women, with only 3% female chairs;

28. Calls on the Commission to present, as soon as possible, comprehensive current data on female representation within all types of companies in the EU and on the compulsory and non-compulsory measures taken by the business sector as well as those recently adopted by the Member States with a view to increasing such representation; notes that, according to the Commission's report on women in economic decision making, steps taken by companies and the Member States are found to be inadequate; welcomes the announced consultation on measures to enhance gender balance in economic decision making; is disappointed, however, that the Commission is refraining from taking immediate legislative measures, as it had committed to do should the targets not be met; believes the meagre progress made in 2011 merits more concrete measures than a mere consultation; reiterates, therefore, its call from 2011 for legislation, including quotas, to be proposed by 2012 to increase female representation in corporate management bodies to 30% by 2015 and to 40% by 2020, while taking account of the Member States' responsibilities and of their economic, structural (i.e. company-size related), legal and regional specificities;

29. Stresses the need for Member States to adopt measures, in particular through legislative means, to set binding targets to ensure the balanced presence of women and men in positions of responsibility in business, public administration and political bodies; refers to the successful examples of Norway, Spain, Germany, Italy and France;

30. Recalls that the European Elections in 2014, followed by the appointment of the next Commission and the nominations for the senior administrative positions within the European institutions, are a chance to move towards parity democracy at EU level;

31. Calls on the Member States to support parity by proposing a woman and a man as their candidates for the office of Commissioner; calls on the nominated President of the Commission to aim at parity when forming the Commission; calls on the present Commission to publicly support this procedure;

32. Points out that the use of electoral quotas has positive effects on women's representation and welcomes the legislated parity systems and gender quotas introduced in France, Spain, Belgium, Slovenia, Portugal and Poland; calls on the Member States with particularly low representation of women in political assemblies to consider introducing equivalent measures;

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33. Welcomes the significant increase in the numbers of female chairs of parliamentary committees and the number of female MEPs in the legislative term 2009-2014 but regrets the decrease of female EP vice-presidents in the second half of the term; therefore proposes measures for absolute gender balance regarding the vice-presidents' posts;

34. Calls on the Member States to promote female entrepreneurship and to provide financial support, vocational guidance and training to encourage women setting up their own companies;

Dignity, integrity and an end to gender-based violence

35. Urges the Commission to include homophobic and transphobic violence and harassment in its action programmes against gender-based violence;

36. Welcomes efforts, both at Community and national levels, to combat violence against women, men and children such as the European Protection Order, the Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and the legislative package to strengthen the rights of victims in the EU, but stresses that this phenomenon remains a major unresolved problem; calls on the Commission and the Member States to adopt and implement policies to combat all forms of violence against women including all sexual, physical and psychological abuse, domestic violence, harassment and the need to include the fight against gender-based violence in EU external and development cooperation policies; stresses the need to ascertain the real extent of the problem of gender-based violence in the EU; notes the important work to be done in this area by the European Observatory on Gender-Based Violence and calls therefore, for the Observatory to be made operational as soon as possible;

37. Reiterates the need for the Commission to present an EU-wide strategy to end violence against women including a legislative criminal-law instrument to combat gender-based violence as requested by Parliament in several resolutions; calls on the Commission to establish 2015 as the EU Year to End Violence against Women;

38. Encourages Member States to establish information programmes concerning harassment and mobbing at work, so that women who are subjected to such treatment can take effective counter-measures;

39. Defines domestic violence as including all sexual, physical and psychological abuse; points out that gender violence claims many lives across the EU each year; thus calls for adequate measures to be taken so that gender-based violence is treated as a public security issue rather than as a private, domestic issue and as a violation of fundamental rights, by ensuring, amongst other things, access to forms of prevention, legal protection and assistance, including with regard to stalking;

40. Expresses satisfaction with the recent adoption of the European Protection Order Directive - which aims to protect among others the victims of gender violence - and invites the Member States to transpose it into national law at an early date in order to allow for the proper functioning of the European Protection Order;

41. Notes in this context the EU Victims' Package; calls on Member States to include in this package specific actions and resources to combat all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual violence, harassment, so called honour killings, Female Genital Mutilation, forced marriages and other forms of violence and violation of individual rights;

42. Calls on Member States to introduce rehabilitation and psychological programmes for perpetrators of physical abuse, which would reduce the incidence of such abuse; draws attention, furthermore, to the increase in aggressive behaviour among girls;

43. Calls on the Commission to implement its commitment to mainstream gender equality in the Common European Asylum System.

44. Stresses the need for Member States and regional and local authorities to take measures, via instruments such as the ESF or the PROGRESS programme, to help women who have been victims of gender violence to get back into the labour market;

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45. Points out that the enhancement of social and economic independence as well as sexual and reproductive health autonomy and the freedom to choose a partner are important preconditions for fighting against violence;
46. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to recognise the gender dimension in health as an essential part of EU health policies and further step up their efforts to adopt a dual strategy with gender and age mainstreaming and specific gender-related actions in EU and national health policies;
47. Reiterates its position on sexual and reproductive health rights, as stated in its resolutions of 10 February 2010 and 8 March 2011 on equality between women and men in the European Union – 2009 and 2010; expresses concern in this respect about recent funding cuts to family planning and sexual education and also restrictions on access to sexual and reproductive health services in some Member States, in particular pregnancy and maternity protection and safe and legal abortion; stresses that all women must have control over their sexual and reproductive rights including by having access to affordable high-quality contraception;
48. Expresses concern over the rising incidence of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmissible diseases, in particular amongst women; points out that 45% of young women and girls who are newly infected with HIV are between the ages of 15 and 24 years old; urges the Commission therefore to place increased emphasis on prevention in their strategy for the fight against HIV/AIDS, to increase general awareness about the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases through the inclusion of sex education, free access to condoms and HIV tests, and to reduce the number of new HIV infections;
49. Calls for a debate at European and Member State level on how to combat stereotypes relating to the respective roles of women and men; stresses, in this regard, the importance of promoting the representation of the female image in a way that respects women's dignity, and of combating persistent gender stereotypes, in particular the prevalence of degrading images, whilst fully respecting freedom of expression and freedom of the press;
50. Calls on the EU and its Member States to integrate into all their policies, as part of the gender mainstreaming requirement, a specific focus on women with specific needs.
51. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to pay special attention to vulnerable groups of women: disabled women, women of advanced age, women with little or no training, women with dependent persons in their charge, female immigrants and women belonging to minorities, all of whom constitute specific groups on whose behalf measures adapted to their circumstances must be taken;
52. Calls on national, regional and local bodies responsible for ensuring equality to introduce integrated approaches to improve their response to, and management of, cases of multiple discrimination; stresses, furthermore, that these bodies should offer training to judges, lawyers and staff in general to allow them to identify, prevent and manage cases of multiple discrimination;

Gender equality beyond the Union

53. Calls for human rights for women and the ability to use them effectively to be given the highest priority in the EU's external policies; calls also for the implementation of Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims;
54. Expresses its concern - while welcoming the moves towards more democracy and freedom in countries of the Southern Mediterranean - that women's rights may actually emerge weakened from the Arab Spring; calls on the Commission to develop specific support measures for gender equality in those countries;
55. Deplores the fact that rape is still used in certain regions of the world as a weapon; calls on the European Union, in the form of the European External Action Service, to include this phenomenon as a priority on its political agenda;
56. Notes that this year the world population has reached 7 billion; expresses its conviction that family planning should be at the top of the political agenda;

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57. Expresses its concern about the slow progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, in particular towards MDG5: Improve Maternal Health, and about the fact that progress towards a three-quarters reduction of the maternal mortality rate is lagging far behind and that the aim of achieving universal access to reproductive health by 2015 is still far from being achieved; notes that about 1 000 women still die each day from entirely avoidable pregnancy- or childbirth-related complications;

58. Urges political and religious leaders to publicly throw their weight behind MDG5 and support modern sexual and reproductive health services;

59. Calls on Member States to uphold their political and financial support for the MDGs, and even step up efforts to achieve MDG5, despite times of economic downturn;

60. Welcomes the recent decision of the United Nations to create an International Day of the Girl Child on 11 October, which is a powerful way to highlight the particular needs and rights of girls, and to advocate greater action and investment to enable girls to reach their full potential in line with international human rights standards and obligations, including the Millennium Development Goals;

61. Reminds the Commission and the Member States of their commitment to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and urges the provision of EU humanitarian aid to be made effectively independent from the restrictions on humanitarian aid imposed by the USA, in particular by ensuring access to abortion for women and girls who are victims of rape in armed conflicts;

Governance

62. Calls on the incoming Council to unblock the Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation with a view to adoption during the Danish Presidency;

63. Requests the Commission to deliver on the European Parliament's resolution on the Stockholm Action Plan;

64. Calls on the Commission to take into account the implications of the Test-Achats case in future legislation in order to improve legal certainty, notably and urgently in relation to Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services;

65. Calls on the Council, within the on-going negotiations on the EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020, to introduce gender-responsive budgeting in the EU budgetary process and to guarantee predictability and no reduction in the level of EU funding for activities on women's rights and gender equality - including combating violence against women - as related to both internal and external policies;

66. Regrets the lack of progress by Member States on plans to modernise legislation on maternity and paternity leave and calls for a balanced compromise with the future Danish Presidency of the EU, with a view to adoption in the first half of 2012, to respond to the needs of European families and of the European economy; calls on the Commission to put forward proposals for leave arrangements for care for elderly or sick relatives;

67. Calls on the Commission to put forward a comprehensive communication on the situation of single-person households in the EU, with policy proposals to achieve fair treatment in areas like taxation, social security, housing, healthcare, insurance and pensions, based on the principle of policy neutrality with regard to household composition;

68. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to collect, analyse and publish reliable gender-disaggregated data and qualitative gender indicators so as to be able to properly evaluate and update the Commission's Strategy for equality between Women and Men (2010-2015) as well as to monitor the cross-cutting nature of gender equality in all policies;

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69. Reiterates its call on the Commission for a Road Map on Equality for LGBTI people, analogous to the Gender Equality Road Map;

70. Expresses its deep concern about media reports on victims of human trafficking being treated as criminals instead of getting support, and calls on the Commission to investigate the treatment of victims of human trafficking, sexual slavery and forced prostitution in the Member States;

71. Calls for attention to be given to the situation of institutional mechanisms involving gender equality in the Member States, so that the economic downturn, ongoing reforms and other restructurings do not have a particularly negative effect on these mechanisms, without which the horizontal priority of male and female equality with its management specificity is unlikely to be effective;

72. Stresses the need to improve arrangements for the cooperation and involvement of women's organisations, and civil society as a whole, in gender mainstreaming processes;

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73. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

Women in political decision-making

P7_TA(2012)0070

European Parliament resolution of 13 March 2012 on women in political decision-making – quality and equality (2011/2295(INI))

(2013/C 251 E/02)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on European Union, in particular Articles 2 and 3(3) thereof,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, in particular Articles 21 and 23 thereof,
- having regard to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
- having regard to the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),
- having regard to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women on 15 September 1995 and to the subsequent outcome documents adopted at the United Nations Beijing+5 (2000), Beijing +10 (2005) and Beijing +15 (2010) special sessions,
- having regard to the Agreed Conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women of 2006 on 'Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels',
- having regard to the Commission on the Status of Women Agreed Conclusions 1997/2 on the Critical Areas of Concern of the Beijing Platform for Action 1996-1999,