29. Asks the Commission to report to Parliament annually on the implementation of the EU tax governance policy, starting in October 2010;

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30. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

Equality between women and men in the European Union — 2009

P7_TA(2010)0021

European Parliament resolution of 10 February 2010 on equality between women and men in the European Union – 2009 (2009/2101(INI))

(2010/C 341 E/08)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to Article 2 and Article 3(3), second subparagraph, of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and Article 157 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 Commission report of 27 February 2009 on equality between women and men – 2009 (COM(2009)0077),

— having regard to the Commission communication of 7 June 2000 entitled 'Towards a Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality (2001-2005)' (COM(2000)0335) and the Commission's annual reports on equality between women and men in the European Union for 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 (COM(2001)0179, COM(2002)0258, COM(2003)0098, COM(2004)0115, COM(2005)0044, COM(2006)0071, COM(2007)0049 and COM(2008)0010) respectively,

— having regard to Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast) [1],

— having regard to its resolution of 19 February 2009 on Social Economy [2],

— having regard to the Commission communication of 3 October 2008 entitled 'A better work-life balance: stronger support for reconciling professional, private and family life' (COM(2008)0635),

— having regard to the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and repealing Directive 86/613/EEC (COM(2008)0636), presented by the Commission on 3 October 2008,

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[1] OJ L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 23.
[2] Texts Adopted, P6_TA(2009)0062.

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— having regard to the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 92/85/EEC on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding (COM(2008)0637), presented by the Commission on 3 October 2008,

— 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 the state of progress with ratifications of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No 197),

— having regard to the framework of actions on gender equality, adopted by the European social partners on 22 March 2005,

— having regard to the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),

— having regard to the European Gender Equality Pact adopted by the European Council of 23 and 24 March 2006,

— having regard to its resolution of 26 November 2009 on the elimination of violence against women ([1]),

— having regard to its resolution of 24 October 2006 on women's immigration: the role and place of immigrant women in the European Union ([2]),

— having regard to its resolution of 25 November 2009 on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council – An area of freedom, security and justice serving the citizen – Stockholm programme ([3]),

— having regard to its resolution of 13 March 2007 on a Roadmap for equality between women and men (2006-2010) ([4]),

— having regard to the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and its opinion on the gender pay gap adopted on 22 March 2007,

— having regard to its resolution of 3 September 2008 on Equality between women and men – 2008 ([5]),

— having regard to its resolution of 18 November 2008 with recommendations to the Commission on the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women ([6]),

([1]) Texts Adopted, P7_TA(2009)0098.
([2]) OJ C 313 E, 20.12.2006, p. 118.
([3]) Texts Adopted, P7_TA(2009)0090.
([4]) OJ C 301 E, 13.12.2007, p. 56.
([5]) OJ C 295 E, 4.12.2009, p. 35.
([6]) OJ C 16 E, 22.1.2010, p. 21.

— having regard to Rule 48 and Rule 119(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A7-0004/2010),

A. whereas equality between women and men is a fundamental principle of the EU, recognised by the Treaty on European Union and by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union; whereas in spite of the significant progress made in this field, many inequalities between women and men remain,

B. whereas the European Union is currently experiencing a major economic, financial and social crisis that has specific consequences for women in the labour market,

C. whereas motherhood and fatherhood must be viewed as fundamental rights central to social stability; whereas the EU has a directive on maternity leave ([1]) and a directive on parental leave ([2]), but no legislation of any kind has been produced to date on paternity leave,

D. whereas, because of gender segregation by occupation and sector, and according to the data available, in general the crisis initially hit men harder than women, but the situation is different in some countries and in some sectors, especially in traditional industries employing large numbers of women, in which, in many cases, firms are shutting down and multinationals are relocating; whereas the proportion of the female workforce in part-time employment is 31,1 % as against a corresponding figure of 7,9 % in the male workforce; whereas women occupy the majority of jobs in some sectors of the public service and, according to the Member States, account for up to two-thirds of the workforce in the education, health and social welfare sectors; whereas, therefore, they are particularly likely to lose out in the event of budget cuts in these sectors,

E. whereas women are traditionally at greater risk of poverty – especially single mothers and women aged over 65, who are often in receipt of pensions barely above the minimum subsistence level for various reasons such as having taken a break from or stopped work to take on family responsibilities, or having worked in their husband's undertaking, particularly in the business and agriculture sectors, without remuneration and without social security affiliation, and whereas most policies aim to support families with children, despite the fact that up to 35 % of households consist of a single person, which in the majority of cases is a woman,

F. whereas the female employment rate is 59,1 % on average, with considerable variation (ranging from 37,4 % to 74,3 %), the steady increase in that rate since 2000 has not improved women's conditions of employment, and women still suffer the effects of gender segregation by occupation and sector,

G. whereas social economy enterprises are a success story where female employability is concerned, to the extent that they enhance women's social status, promote their financial independence, and help them to achieve work-life balance, not least by offering them care services for children, older people, and people with disabilities,

H. whereas, since 2000, the average gender pay gap has remained stubbornly wide (between 14 % and 17,4 %) despite numerous measures taken by the Commission and commitments entered into by the Member States,

I. whereas Article 157 of the TFEU provides that 'Each Member State shall ensure that the principle of equal pay for male and female workers for equal work or work of equal value is applied' and that principle has been consistently reaffirmed in the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union,

([1]) Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding (OJ L 348, 28.11.1992, p. 1).

([2]) Council Directive 96/34/EC of 3 June 1996 on the framework agreement on parental leave concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC (OJ L 145, 19.6.1996, p. 4).

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J. whereas, in the above-mentioned resolution of 18 November 2008, it asked the Commission to submit to it, by 31 December 2009, a legislative proposal for revision of the existing legislation relating to the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women,

K. whereas men, too, are losing out, though not as significantly, as a result of gender segregation by occupation and sector and sexist stereotyping,

L. whereas the sharing between women and men of domestic and family responsibilities, notably through greater recourse to parental and paternity leave, is a *sine qua non* for the advancement and achievement of equality between women and men, regrets however, that the Social Partners' Framework Agreement on Parental Leave (July 2009) fails to address the issue of paid leave which would have a decisive impact on the take-up rate of men and the equal sharing of professional and family responsibilities between women and men,

M. whereas access to services for the care of children, the elderly and other dependants is essential for equal participation of women and men in the labour market, education and training,

N. whereas, at the Barcelona European Council of 15 and 16 March 2002, the Member States were asked to provide childcare by 2010 for at least 90 % of children between three years old and the mandatory school age and at least 33 % of children under three years old, but more than half of them are still a long way from meeting those targets,

O. whereas 58,9 % of the university qualifications awarded in the Union in 2008 went to women and women outnumber men in business, management and law faculties, yet they are in the minority in corporate and political positions of responsibility; whereas few women have IT, engineering or physics degrees and women are consequently under-represented in the private sector, with its crucial role in economic recovery; whereas the gender gap between women and men's employment in the IT sector has tended to widen rather than narrow over time,

P. whereas the proportion of female MEPs rose from 32,1 % in the 2004-2009 parliamentary term to 35 % after the elections of 7 June 2009 and there were increases, too, in the proportion of female chairs of parliamentary committees, up from 25 % to 41 %, and the proportion of female EP vice-presidents, up from 28,5 % to 42,8 %, but the number of female quaestors fell from 3 to 2,

Q. whereas the conditions of some groups of women who often face several combined difficulties and risks as well as double discrimination — in particular disabled women, women with dependants, elderly women and minority and immigrant women — show signs of deterioration,

R. whereas migrant women are doubly discriminated against in the labour market – on account of both their gender and their migrant status; whereas one in five highly qualified migrants is in a low-level job and migrant women employed in the domestic, CHR/Horeca and agricultural sectors are particularly vulnerable,

S. whereas, for both men and women, employment rates are lower in rural areas, and, in addition, a lot of women are never active in the official labour market and, therefore, are neither registered as unemployed nor included in unemployment statistics, which leads to particular financial and legal problems in relation to the right to maternity and sick leave, the acquisition of pension rights and access to social security, as well as problems in the event of divorce; whereas rural areas are badly affected by the lack of high-quality employment opportunities,

T. whereas minority women, especially Romani women, regularly experience multiple forms of discrimination on the basis of race and gender; whereas National Equality Bodies should properly address the phenomena of multiple or compound discrimination,

U. whereas trafficking in human beings is a modern form of slavery, and most victims of trafficking are still women and girls,

V. whereas the above-mentioned resolution of 3 September 2008 called on the Member States to ratify without delay the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, which is the strongest European legal instrument in the fight against that trafficking, which constitutes a crime and a violation of human rights and impugns the dignity and integrity of the human being; whereas only 16 EU Member States have so far ratified that Convention,

W. whereas violence against women, in all its forms, is a major hindrance to equality between women and men and is one of the most widespread human rights violations, knowing no geographical, economic, or social limits; whereas it is a severe problem in the Union, where some 20-25 % of women suffer physical violence, and more than 10 % sexual violence, in the course of their adult lives; whereas the Spanish Presidency of the Council has made it a priority to combat such violence,

X. whereas sexual and reproductive health implies a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes, whereas recognition of the full physical and sexual autonomy of women is a precondition for any successful sexual and reproductive health rights policy, as well as for policies combating violence against women,

Y. whereas the European Institute for Gender Equality was officially established in 2006 and was supposed to have begun functioning by 19 January 2008 at the latest but is still not fully functioning,

Z. whereas the Lisbon Strategy has aimed to ensure that 60 % of women able to work are in employment and efforts relating to the demographic challenge seek to promote higher birth rates to meet future requirements; whereas equal opportunities between men and women and the work-life balance remain central to the debate on demographic change,

1. Congratulates the Commission for emphasising, in its 2009 report on equality between women and men, the importance of strengthening gender equality policies at a time of economic upheaval, but points to the need for further practical action and new policies;

2. Is critical of the fact that economic recovery projects mainly focus on male dominated employment; underlines that support for the future of men's rather than women's employment increases rather than decreases gender inequality, insists that gender equality must be mainstreamed in European, national and international plans for economic recovery;

3. Urges the Council, Commission and Member States to defend social rights and to guarantee that the economic and financial crisis will not lead to cuts in social benefits and social services, in particular child care and care for the elderly; points out that care policies and the provision of care services are intrinsically related to the achievement of equality between women and men;

4. Points out that the economic, social and financial crisis might offer an opportunity to make the Union, as an economy, more productive and innovative and, as a society, more mindful of gender equality, if the right policies and measures were to be put into effect;

5. Calls on the Commission to supply detailed statistics on how the crisis is affecting women and men, taking account of unemployment rates and trends in part-time working and in temporary and open-ended contracts, and on how policies to tackle the crisis are affecting public services;

6. Maintains that the Commission and the Member States must develop, support, and strengthen the role of women in the social economy, bearing in mind the high female employment rate in that sector and the importance of the services which it offers to promote work-life balance;

7. Calls on those Member States having to implement fiscal consolidation policies to ensure that women are not disproportionately affected, and calls on the Commission and the Member States to prepare recovery policies that reflect the specific needs and circumstances of women and men, particularly through the use of gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting;

8. Is critical of the fact that gender mainstreaming in the current Lisbon Strategy is basically non-existent and calls on the Council and Commission to include a gender mainstreaming chapter in its post-Lisbon 'EU 2020' Strategy;

9. Calls on the National Equality Bodies to introduce integrated approaches in order to improve their response to and handling of cases of multiple discrimination; insists furthermore that National Equality Bodies establish training for judges lawyers and staff in identifying, preventing and responding to multiple discrimination;

10. Welcomes the fact that the target of a 60 % female employment rate by 2010, set at the Lisbon European Council of 23 and 24 March 2000, will soon be reached, but notes that a high proportion of the jobs concerned are, regrettably, insecure and poorly paid; deplores also the major disparities among the Member States, with rates ranging from 37,4 % to 74,3 %; asks the Member States, therefore, to take the measures needed in order to apply Directive 2006/54/EC effectively;

11. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to give consideration to the situation of spouses helping in handicrafts, trade, agriculture, fisheries and small family businesses, both from the gender equality perspective and taking into account the fact that women are in a more vulnerable position than men; calls on the Member States to develop the legal construct 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 their work;

12. Calls on the Council, the Commission and the Member States to introduce measures and positive action to integrate women in projects and programmes on ecological transformation, i.e. in the renewables sector, and in science and technology-intensive jobs;

13. Encourages the Member States to promote female entrepreneurship in the industrial sector and to provide financial support, vocational guidance structures and appropriate training for women setting up companies;

14. Points out that women's personal income and paid employment remains key to their economic autonomy and to greater equality between women and men in society as a whole; underlines that in the light of the ageing society in particular, both men and women are needed in order to prevent labour shortage;

15. Notes that women are exposed to a higher risk of poverty because the gender pay gap has remained stubbornly wide and that there are many differences among the Member States in this regard; asks the Member States, therefore, to apply Directive 2006/54/EC immediately and, in particular, to promote the principal of 'equal pay for equal work' or that of 'work of equal value';

16. Considers that action should also be taken with a view to reducing pension disparities between women and men with regard to pensions, given that women still bear the bulk of family responsibilities, leading to discontinuous careers and, more generally, less professional involvement than men;

17. Deplores the fact that the Commission has not yet responded to the above-mentioned EP resolution of 18 November 2008 with a legislative proposal for revision of the existing legislation relating to the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women; calls on the Commission, therefore, to present such a proposal without delay;

18. Supports the Commission in the infringement proceedings it is taking in relation to transposition of the directives in force; considers that Member States which have not yet done so must transpose the gender equality directives without delay and, in particular, ensure that they are properly implemented;

19. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to run awareness-raising campaigns in schools, workplaces and the media in order to promote diversification of career choices, especially for girls and combat persistent sexist stereotyping and degrading images, with particular emphasis on campaigns that highlight men's role in better sharing of family responsibilities and in work-life balancing;

20. Calls on the Member States to acknowledge companies that take action to promote equality between women and men and facilitate work-life balance, in order to foster the spread of good practices in this area;

21. Emphasises the importance of pre-school childcare provision, child-minding services and the provision of assistance to elderly persons and other dependants for better work-life balancing; commends the Commission's approach of making available, in a timely manner, high-quality comparative statistics and in putting specific recommendations to each Member State; calls on the Member States to do their utmost to achieve the above-mentioned Barcelona European Council targets on pre-school childcare provision;

22. Congratulates the Commission on the steps it has taken and particularly on its proposals for revision of Directive 92/85/EEC in relation to maternity protection and Directive 86/613/EEC in relation to self-employed workers and 'assisting spouses' in family businesses; considers, however, that the Commission's proposed revision of Directive 92/85/EEC falls short of what would be desirable from the point of view of promoting work-life balance for men and women;

23. Maintains that paternity leave is an issue that needs to be addressed and calls on the Commission to support any moves to establish paternity-leave entitlement on a Europe-wide basis; believes that maternity leave should be linked to paternity leave so as to afford better protection to women on the labour market and in that way combat stereotypes within society regarding the uptake of leave in the latter category;

24. Asks the Member States and the social partners to encourage a better gender balance in corporate, administrative and political positions of responsibility; therefore calls for binding targets to ensure the equal representation of women and men; notes in this regard the positive effects of the use of electoral quotas on the representation of women;

25. Welcomes the Norwegian Government's decision to increase the number of women on the boards of private and public companies to at least 40 %, calls on the Commission and the Member States to take the Norwegian initiative as a positive example and to start moving in the same direction;

26. Calls on the Member States to launch campaigns aimed at female secondary school graduates to promote the choice of a career in engineering, in order to increase parity of women in traditional male technical professions;

27. Welcomes the significant increase in the numbers of female chairs of parliamentary committees and female EP vice-presidents as well as the less substantial, though nonetheless real, increase in the number of female MEPs following the June 2009 European elections;

28. Considers in this regard that the proportion of women Commissioners-designate (representing 33 % of the total) - achieved with great difficulty - is the bare minimum; is of the view that the composition of the Commission should better reflect the diversity of the European population, including the gender aspect; calls on Member States, in future nominations, to put forward two candidates, one of each gender, so as to facilitate the composition of a more representative Commission;

29. Asks the Member States to scrutinise their policies on migration in order to put the skills of highly qualified migrants to better use and to provide social security cover for female workers in domestic and other sectors where it is not available, with a view to promoting the integration of migrants while also ensuring that they are given access to education and training, especially vocational training and courses in the language of their host country;

30. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to give priority to and take particular note of more vulnerable groups of women – disabled women, women with dependants, elderly women, minority and immigrant women and women prisoners – and to develop targeted measures to meet their needs;

31. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to adopt and implement the necessary measures to support women with disabilities so that they may progress in those areas of social life and the world of work, culture and politics in which they are still under-represented;

32. Calls on the Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Hungary, the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden to act at once to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings;

33. Points out that violence against women is still a major problem that needs to be eliminated using every means available to the Communities and the Member States, and once again calls on the Commission to establish a European Year for combating violence against women; congratulates the Spanish Presidency of the Council on making it a priority to combat such violence and invites future Council Presidents to do likewise;

34. Endorses the Spanish Presidency's proposals to introduce the European protection order for victims and a common EU-wide telephone helpline for victims;

35. Stresses the importance of combating violence against women to achieving equality between women and men; calls on the Commission to start drawing up a proposal for a comprehensive directive on preventing and combating all forms of violence against women, including trafficking;

36. Emphasises that women must have control over their sexual and reproductive rights, notably through easy access to contraception and abortion; emphasises that women must have access free of charge to consultation on abortion; supports, therefore – as it did in its above-mentioned resolution of 3 September 2008 – measures and actions to improve women's access to sexual and reproductive health services and to raise their awareness of their rights and of available services; invites the Member States and the Commission to implement measures and actions to make men more aware of their responsibilities in relation to sexual and reproductive matters;

37. Notes that the European Institute for Gender Equality is still in the process of being established, and expects to see it fully operational as soon as possible;

38. Calls on the Commission to pursue its new 'Beyond GDP' strategy and to include in its work strategies to measure the contribution to Member States' GDP of work by women and men in the field of intergenerational solidarity;

39. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission and to the governments of the Member States.