18 July 1997 A4-0251/97

REPORT

on the Communication from the Commission - Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities - "mainstreaming"
(COM(96)0067 - C4-0148/96)

Committee on Women's Rights

Rapporteur: Mrs Angela Kokkola

C O N T E N T S

Page

Procedural page 3

A. MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION 4

B. EXPLANATORY STATEMENT 11

Opinion of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs 18

Opinion of the Committee on Regional Policy 24

Opinion of the Committee on Institutional Affairs 28

By letter of 27 February 1996 the Commission transmitted to Parliament a communication - Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities - "mainstreaming".

At the sitting of 11 March 1996 the President announced that he had referred the communication to the Committee on Women's Rights as the committee responsible, and to the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs for its opinion. At the sitting of 23 October 1996 the President announced that he had also referred the communication to the Committee on Regional Policy for its opinion. At the sitting of 13 June 1997 the President announced that he had also referred the communication to the Committee on Institutional Affairs for its opinion.

At its meeting of 21 March 1996 the Committee on Women's Rights appointed Mrs Angela Kokkola rapporteur.

It considered the Commission communication and the draft report at its meetings of 30 May 1996, 2 July 1996, 21 May 1997, 17 June 1997 and 14 July 1997.

At the last meeting it adopted the motion for a resolution unanimously.

The following were present for the vote: van Dijk, chairperson; Fouque, 1st vice-chairperson; Bennasar Tous, 2nd vice-chairperson; Torres Marques, 3rd vice-chairperson; Kokkola, rapporteur; Blak (for Ahlqvist); d'Ancona (for Crawley); Eriksson; García Arias (for Frutos Gama); Gröner; Hautala; Izquierdo Rojo (for Ghilardotti); Kestelijn-Sierens; Lenz (for Banotti); Lulling; McNally; Ojala (Rule 138.2 for Ribeiro); Sornosa Martínez; Van Lancker; Waddington; Zimmermann (for Read).

The opinions of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, the Committee on Regional Policy and the Committee on Institutional Affairs are attached.

The report was tabled on 18 July 1997.

The deadline for tabling amendments will be indicated in the draft agenda for the relevant part-session.

A
MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

Resolution on the Commission Communication - Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities - "mainstreaming" (COM(96)0067 - C4-0148/96)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission's Communication on incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities - "mainstreaming" (COM(96)0067 - C4-0148/96)[1],

- having regard to the new provisions of the Amsterdam Draft Treaty: Articles 2, 3, 6a, 118, 119 and 5 (of the new Title on employment) of the Treaty establishing the European Community,

- having regard to the Fourth Medium-Term Community Action Programme on equal opportunities for men and women (1996-2000)[2],

- having regard to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, Beijing, 15 September 1995,

- having regard to Council Regulation(EEC) No. 2081/93 amending Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2052/88 on the tasks of the Structural Funds[3],

- having regard to the report of the Committee on Women's Rights and the opinions of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, the Committee on Regional Policy and the Committee on Institutional Affairs (A4-0251/97),

A. whereas the Commission first introduced the concept and policy of "mainstreaming" in the Third Action Programme for Equal Opportunities in 1990,

B. whereas this policy was further developed as a strategy with concrete means in the Fourth Action Programme, which constituted a more positive policy approach rather than proposing measures to solve a problem,

C. whereas the Commission presented its policy on "mainstreaming" as its main contribution to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995,

---

[1] OJ C

[2] OJ C 323, 4.12.95

[3] OJ L 193, 31.7.1993

D. whereas, pending the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty, Article 119 of the Treaty establishing the European Community is the only specific reference, with direct implications, to equal opportunities for men and women,

E. whereas six directives and recently other agreements concluded under the Social Protocol have increased the areas of policy at European level in which equal opportunities and anti-discrimination have been important elements,

F. whereas the implementation of any Community action on equal opportunities for men and women requires clear legal bases ,

1. Welcomes the Commission's Communication on "mainstreaming" as a huge step forward in recognising that women, who make up over half of the European population have so far not enjoyed, except perhaps in the letter but certainly not in reality, their full share of society's benefits;

2. Notes the following changes made by the Amsterdam Draft Treaty:
   - the addition in Article 2 of the EC Treaty of equality between men and women to the tasks of the Community,
   - the addition of a new subparagraph to Article 3 of the EC Treaty, specifying that in all activities referred to in that article the Community has the aim of eliminating inequalities and promoting equality between men and women,
   - the insertion of a new Article 6a in the EC Treaty allowing the adoption of measures aimed at outlawing all discrimination, including gender-based discrimination,
   - the insertion of a new Title on employment, Article 5 of which provides a new legal basis for the adoption of incentive measures,
   - inclusion of the Social Protocol and, more specifically: Article 118(1), fifth indent (equality between men and women with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work) and Article 119 on equal pay for male and female workers;

1

3. Notes that the incorporation of equal opportunities for men and women into all Community policies and activities should be pursued as a principle which now forms part of the Amsterdam Draft Treaty;

4. Welcomes the insertion of a new non-discrimination clause in Article 6a of the Amsterdam Treaty, but deplores the fact that the procedure referred to requires unanimity in the Council and consultation only of the European Parliament;

5. Stresses the fact that in the area of social and employment policy the new provisions of the Amsterdam Treaty require the codecision procedure for the application of the principle of equality of opportunity (Articles 118 and 119) and for the adoption of incentive measures in the field of employment (Article 5 of the new Title on employment);

6. Takes the view that, in accordance with the concept of transparency and improved quality of Community legislation vis-à-vis citizens, a clear definition of the expression 'mainstreaming' (which has been adopted only in English) should be supplied, possibly in the form of 'policies for equality';

7. Calls for an interinstitutional working party to be set up in order to make the objective of equality between men and women a concern in all Community activities;

8. Agrees with the Commission that to put "mainstreaming" into effect will require abolition of century-old conceptions and prejudices concerning women's contribution to society, in particular in their professional activities;

9. Is aware that the concept of mainstreaming is still unfamiliar to all but a small minority already working on equal opportunities between women and men;

10. Realises therefore that "mainstreaming" involves a most necessary awareness and information process, which will necessitate an active, perhaps even combative and permanent dialogue with decision-makers in all policy areas in order to achieve equal opportunities and equal rights;

11. Believes, however, that the Commission and Member States should pursue a two-pronged approach promoting mainstreaming of gender and equal opportunities alongside positive action measures for women where they are still disadvantaged;

12. Reminds competent authorities, whether at local, regional or national level, that European efforts, while important as a catalyst and in providing a model, remain nevertheless limited to areas of competence enshrined in the Treaties and derived legislation , and therefore calls on the Member States to implement a policy of mainstreaming in their local, regional and national policies;

13. Stresses that equal opportunities must necessarily start in the private and professional lives of citizens and warns against seeing women as those willing to pick up the pieces left over, be it on the labour market when crises hit, be it in private responsibilities for family life and

its organisation, or in being viewed as a reserve to draw on when necessary or when space is available;

14. Calls on the European Commission to define assessment criteria and instruments for the promotion of equality between the sexes;

15. Notes that there is an economic need for greater participation in the workforce, particularly by women, to compensate for the expected ageing of the EU population; notes this must not result in a further increase in the double burden borne by women;

16. Warns that considerations of cultural values and traditions, rigid societal structures, or the demands of competitiveness must not be allowed to stand in the way of a proper follow up to "mainstreaming";

17. Underlines that the priority area for women in which to obtain equal rights remains that of occupational and professional activities so as to achieve financial independence; experience shows blatantly that dependence results too easily in further disadvantage to the more vulnerable sections of society;

18. Is therefore convinced that far more investments, financial investments included, must be made to improve considerably the availability of support structures (like care for dependents, means of communication including transport, educational and learning facilities in general) in order to enable women to play a more active role professionally and not least to enable women to reintegrate in the labour market when they have been forced, for gender-specific reasons, to take a break in their careers;

19. Considers that, in order to break down the divisions in the labour market, it is just as important to encourage men to enter the caring and child- rearing sectors dominated by women as it is to encourage women in the areas of technology and science;

20. Notes that in order to reconcile family and working life there is a need for social services, such as care for children and the elderly, school meals and public transport, all of which should be financed by the Structural Funds;

21. Draws attention to the fact that the combination of family and professional life requires a genuine sharing of tasks; as well as increasing women's participation in employment, attention must equally be paid to men's involvement in work in the family, so that the responsibility for caring for others does not devolve exclusively on women and the authorities and policies on care also take account of men's personal responsibility;

22. Insists that substantial efforts must be made as regards education and training in order to increase the qualification of women and facilitate their access to employment; remains preoccupied at the insufficient learning and reeducation facilities specifically geared to women's needs with a view to facilitating reintegration into the labour market following career breaks, which women to a much larger extent than men, have to accept for family reasons; proposes that the Community give priority to women's access to re-integration

measures when deciding on financial support under structural funds and when deciding on criteria for funding;

23. Calls on the Commission to devote careful attention, as a matter of priority, to be assessed by means of specific indicators of mainstreaming policy, to the programming of the Social Fund, calling on the Member States to incorporate mainstreaming in their priorities;

24. Considers that structural policy measures and the eligibility criteria for all programmes should take account of women's particular interest areas , estimates concerning the attainment of quantity and quality objectives and efforts aimed at broadening the professional choices of women and dismantling the gender division of the labour market; and that studies and research should be carried out to assess the effects of applying mainstreaming;

25. Urges the Commission to set a good example by increasing women's participation in structural policy and by making recommendations to the Member States on increasing women's participation both at national and at regional level in the planning, adoption and assessment of projects supported by the structural funds;

26. Recognises that statistics for individual projects within the mainstream structural funds are held at Member States rather than Commission level and calls therefore for improved equal opportunities assessment to be built into all Member State monitoring reports;

27. Urges the Commission to arrange education on equality issues for those responsible for taking decisions on the structural funds at national level, in order to ensure that the mainstreaming principle is put into practice in the funds' operations;

28. Urges the Commission to study the reasons why women are not appropriately involved in the management and the implementation of EU structural policy, and to speed up the development of gender-sensitive indicators to assess the effect which projects have on equality between men and women;

29. Urges the Commission to tackle the problem of discrimination against women in scientific and technical disciplines, high-level intellectual work, and innovative professions - especially when using structural means designed for pilot actions, innovative development programmes and training;

30. Reiterates that women's positions and situation in society should be taken more into consideration when advancing policies to support the internal market, and not least policies to support EMU; recalls that women are more vulnerable than men to policies pursued in order to meet the convergence criteria for EMU, as women face a segregated labour market, horizontally as well as vertically;

31. Calls on the Commission to study ways in which fiscal measures and specific social security benefits could be used to help bring work in the family into the official economy;

32. Considers that the issue of equal pay should continue to be actively promoted - particularly by developing non-discriminatory work assessment procedures - and urges the Commission to adopt binding provisions on the matter if its recommendations have not already been put into effect;

33. Urges the Commission to speed up its measures to enable the family members of EU nationals to be granted an individual right of residence, following a reasonable residence period, where this is not covered by existing legislation;

34. Recalls further that reducing public deficits and striving for increased competitiveness hits women on the labour market to a higher degree than men; remedies for the negative effects of these policies shall not be sought in social policies but rather by integrating women properly into the labour market, with the aim of achieving equal opportunities and equal rights;

35. Is satisfied that the Commission recognises that equal rights and equal opportunities are objectives to be strived for across the board and within the competences given to it; requests the Commission to remind Member States of their obligations in this area as it is recognised that the main bulk of work remains with Member States;

36. Expects the Commission, at the latest in time for the next annual report on equal opportunities, to set up a catalogue of indicators and criteria for formulating, implementing and evaluating equality objectives and results and stresses that the effectiveness of the implementation of policies for equality depends on the existence of statistics at all levels of its application;

37. Considers that statistics and data broken down by gender are an essential instrument in demonstrating the different impact of policy measures on women and men; hopes that the Commission will devote particular attention to this when establishing the forthcoming multiannual programme on statistical information;

38. Requests the Commission to set up proper coordination structures within their services responsible for implementing mainstreaming; proposes that one official in each relevant unit within directorates general is appointed, who will be entitled to assess whether mainstreaming criteria have been met and to suggest improvements; reminds the Commission that a "mainstreaming" remark was introduced by Parliament to a broad range of relevant budget lines during the budget procedure for 1997;

39. Considers it important that equal numbers of men and women should be elected to the Council and Commission preparatory working groups and committees of experts;

40. Urges the Commission to prepare a proposal concerning special education on equal opportunities for Community decision-makers and officials;

41. Urges the Commission to remove remaining obstacles to women's applications for posts at the Commission, such as for example age limits, which can be a form of covert discrimination, in particular against women who spend time raising children;

42. Expects the Commission to introduce the mainstreaming criterion or the gender perspective in all forthcoming legislative proposals in the future so as also to force Member States to take a position on equality policies;

43. Reminds the Commission that the integration of equal opportunities must be an important aspect in development cooperation agreements; considers that, in the context of strengthening 'partnership', it is essential that women in developing countries should play a larger role in the preparation, devising and monitoring of the measures to be carried out;

44. Calls on the Commission to draw up guidelines for the analysis of legislative proposals in order to ascertain their gender-specific impact, by analogy with the existing impact assessments in the spheres of business and the environment;

45. Reminds the Commission that mainstreaming should be an important element in the enlargement negotiations shortly to be initiated with countries in Eastern- and Central Europe; recalls that equality policies, though existing in the letter, have hardly been taken into consideration in these countries during the recent years of structural change and upheaval;

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

THE ISSUE

1. The Commission last year submitted its communication on "Mainstreaming" or, as defined by the Commission, its strategy on "incorporating equal opportunities for men and women into all Community policies and activities". The term "mainstreaming", taken from the terminology of ecologists, is perhaps a slightly unfortunate one as it makes the valuable concept of advancing equal opportunities confusing to those concerned. The word is not readily understood nor are the different elements of its meaning easily identifiable.

2. Let it be stated clearly, however: mainstreaming is of concern to everybody, from the man and woman in the street to heads of government. Your rapporteur would have preferred the term "Equality policies" in line with for instance economic policies, social policies etc. This would have indicated that equal rights, equal opportunities and equality unfortunately still need to be considered as separate issues in most areas, although this may depend on the issue under consideration. Though equal rights are guaranteed in the letter, in most cases the reality is quite a different story.

3. It is for this reason that the rapporteur has had some difficulties in accepting the overall philosophy (sometimes well hidden) of the Commission's Communication: that incorporation of equal opportunities also applies to men. It should have been stated quite simply that the policy is to be seen as a strategy and an approach to be introduced in all the Community's activities given that true equality does not exist. Community efforts in this field, be it the long existing Article 119 of the Treaties or the six directives on equal opportunities adopted or derived from Article 119, or be it the agreements, declarations, recommendations or resolutions, they have all been adopted in order to rectify a most unsatisfactory and unfair situation. Women still find themselves in a regrettable equality deficit in society.

4. The Commission states on many occasions that "a partnership pact" between men and women or "a pact of confidence" is being sought, and further that respective priorities and needs of men and women must be taken into consideration. This would "provide a forward-looking solution to the demographic and family changes with which they are confronted and which, given the ageing population, transform women's employment into a definite advantage for the economy..."(p. 3).

   The rapporteur has difficulty in accepting partnership contracts as a forward-looking strategy as long as women are not on an equal footing with men, and she certainly does not accept the approach whereby women are seen as a "reserve" to be drawn on when necessary.

5. The above remarks, it is felt, had to made. Otherwise the so-called "pacts" could be interpreted as indicating that the Commission itself has not quite overcome the stage of philosophical thinking, where existing conditions are considered normal in need of small corrections only. This impression could be confirmed by the listing of existing Community policies, which are seen by the Commission not just as horizontal, sectoral policies but also as important contributions to equal opportunities, not least the Communities social policies.

This is of course correct as long as these policies are for all citizens and consequently also for women. But apart from some specific programmes, like NOW under the structural funding, most Community policies cannot be seen as specific for advancing women's position where corrections have to be made.

THE STRATEGY

6. On a more positive note, where the above remarks are perhaps to be seen more as a warning than criticism, the Commission in its paper lists a rather comprehensive catalogue of policies already carried out and goes on to list some of the policies and activities to be formulated in the future, where more equal opportunities and equal rights for women can be achieved. The Commission certainly has to be congratulated for having elaborated a useful tool, which focuses the attention on policies which have to be either corrected and can be corrected. Though the Commission does not state this clearly it is evident that the Communities' possibilities remain limited.

7. The areas of competences, where the Union is allowed to act without hampering subsidiarity, remain restricted. So do the budgetary powers, as still only a little over 1% of the Member States' GNPs are at the disposal of the Union to advance its aims. Still, by listing the existing areas of possibilities, the philosophy outlined and instruments at the Union's disposal, the Communication is certainly to be welcomed as a tool and an example for the purpose of information. It is essential that citizens are made aware of the equality deficits.

8. Through the listing of policies adopted or approved in the past two decades at Community/EU level, it also becomes evident that the <u>main responsibility for arriving at equality</u> and indeed improving the rather appalling state of equal opportunities <u>remains within Member States</u>, be it at local, regional or national level. It is still in limited areas that the Community has authority, rights and resources to change things. It remains a hope, however, that the Intergovernmental Conference and the revision of present Treaties will to a large extent change this situation. The Commission can only go as far as it is allowed by Member States, as witnessed time and time again.

9. This was last seen when Member States, following the adoption of the most comprehensive policy action programme for advancing the situation of women, the Fourth Action Programme on Equal Opportunities, severely cut the attached budget. The Parliament had to fight hard to go even some way towards reinstating the budgetary means judged necessary to carry out the programme.

10. It is perhaps correct to explain, as the Commission does, that unsatisfactory conditions will not change dramatically unless major shifts take place in <u>traditions and attitudes</u> which are very much at the root of the problem of inequality. But the fact should not be ignored that so-called traditions or traditional values and attitudes have served for decades as an excuse from some decision-makers, in whatever capacity, for not changing the status-quo, and in some cases simply been repeated in order to keep their own positions.

PROSPECTS

11. The Commission systematically lists the policies pursued, activities carried out/approved and prospects for the future for women in seven areas, where the Community has possibilities to influence policies and make a difference:

1. Employment
2. Women/spouses as entrepreneurs in particular in SMEs
3. Education/Training
4. Rights of persons
5. External relations
6. Information/awareness
7. Commission's staff policy.

12. These areas, of course, at the same time indicate the areas where the Community has some scope for action because they fall within EU competences. These areas also clearly indicate the limits for action. Collectively and individually these areas constitute a minimum and only a very small proportion of the equality equation. In the first three areas in particular, the lack of equality but even more so equal opportunities, must be overcome.

13. One example of this is in the reconciliation of family and working life. The recent adoption of the agreement on parental leave under the Social Protocol is certainly a most welcome advancement of women's (and men's, though most often only mentioned in passing) possibilities in the labour market. Even so, women find themselves changing roles between periods of professional activity and periods of absence from the labour market depending on family obligations. The reintegration of women into the labour market ranges from being very difficult to well-nigh impossible. It is necessary, therefore, to take special measures for these periods of time so that, for example, the birth of a child does not constitute an obstacle to the woman in pursuing her wish to take up a professional career. At the same time, it should be taken into account that men have an important role to play in the family structure; they should, therefore, be given the opportunity to play their real role in the family by ensuring equal distribution of roles in the family.

14. Another area where massive "investment" has to be made is in education. Education, training and life-long learning are tools for employment. Help is necessary to narrow the gap between those having increased access to information and continuous career development, and those being excluded through unemployment or career breaks. This applies in particular to creation of new jobs in sectors corresponding to the new needs of our societies like the environmental and ecological sectors, in services and in our cities. These employment sectors all require a high level of qualifications for the workers involved.

15. The Commission's Communication would have gained considerably in value if far more statistics had been provided to illustrate the magnitude of the problem. Only through hard facts to underpin the statement about large inequalities can it be hoped to change things. More evidence is necessary to support the objective of advancing women's participation in creating societies' wealth so that they too can enjoy equally the benefits of the wealth created.

STRUCTURAL FUNDS

16. The Commission quite rightly states that one of the more effective instruments at its disposal to advance equality is the programming and implementation of the Structural Funds. This is certainly true as they constitute some 35% of the EU's budget. It should be recalled, though, that these monies are not spread evenly across the EU as 70%, quite rightly, are spent in the Union's most disadvantaged regions. Further, most funds - at least at present - are used for projects where investments are decided with a view to benefiting the development basic economic development and structural change at large. The investments are of importance to all citizens in the target area. Even so, large sums are invested in areas where equality can be taken into consideration. It would also be possible, to a greater degree than at present, to "distribute" Structural Funds in a far more aggressive way with a view to advancing women's "participation" in projects funded by public money.

17. The main decision-makers for the use of Structural Funds are in fact the Member States. They must guarantee that the EU criteria (at times very general) for funding are fulfilled and adhered to, including that equal opportunity criteria are taken into consideration. Member States are thus also the ones which decide who the main recipients will be. It is an area where this Committee would like to promote the inclusion of the equal opportunities criteria far more than is the case in the current regulations. One way would be through quantifying expected results of EU structural funding whereby concrete participation by women in project realisation becomes a criterion or that more investments are decided, which facilitate women's professional activities.

18. This Committee would also insist that equality policies, including equal rights and equal opportunities, are not just seen as an appendix to social policies, however worthy. Women must have just the same accessibility as men to funding via, for instance, regional and agricultural funds. This might involve positive, conscious actions as a criterion for funding which Member States must rigorously observe in order to receive funding.

19. Realistically, the **policy of mainstreaming** in the short term should perhaps be seen as **primarily an awareness campaign and a process,** whereby the goal remains equal opportunities and equal rights, and where the EU commits itself, in its policies and its activities, to work towards equal opportunities and equal rights within the powers and with the means given to the competent authorities. It remains a fact that the overriding powers and possibilities lie with the Member States of the Union.

THE UNION'S MEANS OF ADVANCING MAINSTREAMING

20. **Article 119** of the Treaty on equal pay, where there is still a very long way to go with an existing pay gap between men's and women's salaries of some 20-30% still to overcome, (a gap which in some cases is widening), remains the Union's most powerful instrument.

    Six directives on equal opportunities and rights have been adopted in the last two decades, which are specifically directed at advancing women's position:

- equal pay;
- equal treatment in respect of access to employment, vocational training, promotion and working conditions;
- equal treatment in social security;
- equal treatment in occupational social security schemes;
- equal treatment of men and women engaged in a self-employed capacity;
- on improvement of the safety and health at work for pregnant workers/ breastfeeding workers.

Other **agreements** under the **Social Protocol**, adopted or under discussion, like parental leave, sexual harassment/dignity at work, working time etc.

Several **resolutions** like 'Women in decision-making', the Essen declaration on employment, ' women in advertising',etc. These are, however, more declarations of intent rather than actual measures to be implemented.

Specific **programmes**, like the "4th Action Programme", Beijing Platform and others.

Specific actions, notably **structural funding** and specifically targeted Social Fund actions (NOW among others).

* **Proposals for amending the Maastricht Treaty** (at the time of writing) at Amsterdam, strengthening Article 119 to include equal pay for equal work and work of equal value, and incorporating equal opportunities into Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty (goals and activities of the Union) in particular. These are important as they would give the Union legal justification for mainstreaming and therefore the ability to pursue in court those who fail to implement this policy.

21. The Commission lists areas of Community policies where mainstreaming is pursued and can be pursued further: in particular in employment, education, information, personal rights and a couple of less tangible issues like external relations.

22. The rapporteur therefore expects the Commission to introduce equal opportunities as a specific issue in all proposals for directives and regulations to be forthcoming. This would be not only welcomed but also expected and Parliament might reserve its position on legislative proposals, if mainstreaming is not introduced wherever relevant.

When the Commission is preparing legislation and undertaking consultation it is therefore of the utmost importance that the Commission take the advice of the numerous NGOs, which for years have been active in this field. It goes without saying that NGOs, in the widespread fields they represent, can give direct and valuable information on what is happening "on the ground", and are in constant touch with those whom mainstreaming primarily concerns.

A special occasion presents itself shortly where the Commission can prove its intentions, namely by making a special effort to advance mainstreaming in the forthcoming negotiations on enlargement. It is important that the issue is taken up from the beginning of the process

of enlargement, also in order to avoid later accusations of "mainstreaming-dumping". It would be fair to mention that mainstreaming does not come cheaply. The Commission is also reminded that "mainstreaming" must be a part of decisions contained in agreements with countries in Central- and Eastern Europe.

23. These areas also cover pretty much the only areas where the Community has some instruments and means to invest in the policy of mainstreaming. This can only be endorsed. The question remains as to where or in which areas then to reinforce policies and efforts to improve the present record of insufficient equality.

24. Still it is felt that the Commission could perhaps strengthen even more its efforts in areas where women have the most to gain in actions and results: namely on equal pay and access to employment. **Equal rights and equal access to full professional activities, and equal pay for those activities** result in the most important element of rights, that is, in **independence, including economic independence.**

Women are no different from men in this respect.

25. All other activities and policies should be seen more as **supporting policies** for real mainstreaming than objectives in themselves, however important. As supporting policies, **education** and vocational **training are vital**, in particular in modern technologies as a means of adapting to a rapidly changing working world. Most often women see access to the labour market blocked after career breaks because the development of technologies has moved on in the meantime. Their qualifications are no longer sufficient and up-to-date. It is mainly the responsibility of Member States, but it is absolutely necessary to undertake investments in **supporting employment facilities**, (child care, arrangements for work organisation, flexible working time, work in the home etc.). New and more flexible work arrangements would enable women (and men) to combine private and professional activities to a higher degree than at present.

26. This perhaps constitutes a more modest conception of mainstreaming than the one put forward by the Commission, but also a more realistic one. What is missing in the Commission's strategy paper is an outline of a method for an actual assessment of achievements to be expected in the area if the policy of mainstreaming is successfully implemented. Equal opportunities and rights in professional activities can be measured **by stating in real terms if equality has been obtained**. Ante- and post evaluation of mainstreaming must be measured **quantitatively and qualitatively** and not any longer just in fine words.

CONCLUSIONS

27. The Commission, in taking both a vertical and horizontal view of using its policies and activities to advance women's participation in the running of the Community is a very welcome step. This strategic objective must become the "norm" in formulating and implementing EU policies. Only by raising awareness can much be gained. The Commission correctly states that not before analytical indicators and procedures have been

established can Community programmes be formulated, implemented and evaluated with a view to achieving proper equality. This requires the massive task of collecting comparable information which is often not readily available. It also means that the project is a longer-term one, but it should not stop responsible bodies from pursuing the goal. It should be remembered, however, that the main task remains, for the moment, within the Member States.

28. It is also for this reason very valuable indeed that the Commission submits an annual report on equal opportunities policies in the EU and in the Member States. This seems an appropriate and timely approach.

29. In parallel to the remarks on the Commission's stipulated actions, the rapporteur would further like the Commission to propose the following:

a) As it is evident that there is a deficit regarding the implementation of this ambitious policy, as outlined by the Commission, a special service, bureau or office at the General Secretariat of the Commission should be created whose main role would be the follow-up of the implementation of this policy, through the coordination of policy formulation and implementation in the relevant directorates-general. In some cases it might be sufficient to appoint an identifiable official, who would be responsible for mainstreaming in the different Directorates General.

It might equally be necessary to set up targeted educational courses for officials in order to make officials acquainted with the purpose and means of mainstreaming. Some Member States have set up such courses, from which useful experiences could be gained.

b) The Commission has not foreseen special funds that would cover these needs and the implementation of the targets of mainstreaming. For this reason, it is recalled that Parliament, during the budget procedure of last year, introduced a remark to a broad range of relevant budget lines, which gives the justification and obligation for pursuing mainstreaming.

c) Equality between women and men is the target that we are trying to reach. To achieve this, positive actions constitute a tool which has proven effective in approaching equality targets. Consequently, these positive actions should continue to exist in parallel to the implementation of "mainstreaming".

d) For every programme and for every action that is suggested or initiated, assessment of its repercussions on equal opportunities must take place in advance and, most certainly, afterwards.

O P I N I O N

(Rule 147 of the Rules of Procedure)

of the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment
for the Committee on Women's Rights

Draftsman: Mrs Stenius-Kaukonen

At its meeting of 19 March 1996 the Committee on Social Affairs and Employment appointed Mrs Stenius-Kaukonen draftsman.

It considered the draft opinion at its meetings of 26 June 1996, 27 June 1996 and 24 July 1996.

At the last meeting it adopted the following conclusions unanimously.

The following were present for the vote: Hughes, chairman; Menrad, vice-chairman; Stenius-Kaukonen, rapporteur; Blak, Boogerd-Quak, Cabezón Alonso, Carniti, Colombo Svevo (for Fourçans), Correia, Filippi (for Mather), Ghilardotti (for Andersson), Glase, Hernandez Mollar, Kerr, Mann, Mendonça, Peter, Podestà (for Crowley), Pronk, Ribeiro, Theonas (for Bertinotti), Schiedermeier, Schörling, Skinner, Wim van Velzen, Vieira, Waddington (for McMahon) and Weiler.

Introduction

The adoption of the principle of mainstreaming has represented a great step forward in the EU's equality policy - perhaps the greatest since the article on equal pay was first enshrined in the Treaty of Rome. Mainstreaming means that the promotion of equality between the sexes is included in a visible way in all areas of policy and programmes at all levels. Thus the preparation of all proposals, plans and programmes relating to general or sectoral policy should include a separate assessment of the impact of the proposed decisions on each sex before these decisions are taken.

However, it is one thing to enshrine a principle in writing and another to put it into practice. As the Commission states in its communication: 'such a change requires not only progress in the field of legislation but also nothing short of a cultural transformation of individual behaviour as much as of attitudes and collective practices, and determined political action based on the broadest possible mobilization.' (p. 1). In order to achieve real results it is important for education on equality to penetrate all levels of education, both general and vocational.

A telling example of the difficulties of putting the mainstreaming principle into practice is given by the Commission's proposal adopted in the spring of 1995 for a medium-term social action plan for 1995 to 1997. In that proposal equality issues were isolated under a separate heading instead of being dealt with as a part of the programme in each sector. Parliament's Committee on Social Affairs and Employment pointed out this shortcoming in its report on the programme. Parliament asked the Commission to apply the mainstreaming principle in assessing its social programme too.

However, the mainstreaming principle should not be used as an argument for giving up separate equality measures. Mainstreaming does not in any way mean that demands for equality can be summed up by saying that 'work on equality is already contained in all other activities'. In addition to the inclusion of equality as an aspect of all policies, there is still a need for separate equality measures, equality units, workers and resources. Only in this way will it be possible to ensure that the mainstreaming principle is really implemented in practice.

One aspect of the practical implementation of the mainstreaming principle is ensuring that women are sufficiently involved in the preparation and implementation of decisions. The Commission's account gives a very broad and thorough explanation of the way in which equality is taken into account in its own staffing policy. However, it completely fails to mention the Commission and Council working parties and committees of experts comprising representatives from the Member States, which nevertheless have an important role to play in the preparation of decisions. It would be possible to achieve a more equal representation of the sexes on these working parties if the Member States were always asked to propose both a man and a woman as representatives, one of whom would be chosen in such a way that both were adequately represented. For example, the current Finnish equality law provides for a procedure of this nature in appointing state committees and commissions, and this has had very positive results.

In order to put the mainstreaming principle into practice it is essential to ascertain the current situation with regard to equality between the sexes, the objectives of equality policy and the development of impact assessments. It is particularly important that both decision-makers and officials should have sufficient information about equality matters. This requires special equality

education which unfortunately current decision-makers and officials have not yet received as a part of their training.

Follow-up has an absolutely crucial position in the promotion of equality in accordance with the mainstreaming principle. This question is indeed dealt with very commendably in the Commission's communication.

Labour and the labour market

Pay and other issues relating to working life are the only aspect of equality policy in which the EU has specific powers. The article on equal pay has been a part of the EU Treaty since 1957. That being so, achievements so far in this area have been particularly modest. Although the principle of equal pay has been enshrined in the legislation of all Member States, the real pay differentials between men and women remain great in all Member States - at least 20%.

Most worrying is the fact that pay differentials are not narrowing at all but have started to increase again as a result of the recession in many countries. The issue of equal pay should therefore be promoted more forcefully, and development of non-discriminatory work assessment procedures should be encouraged. If the recommendations about the implementation of equal pay are not rapidly put into effect, the Commission should adopt more binding provisions in this area.

The employment situation of women is also still much more insecure than that of men in most European countries. Even in those countries where women's unemployment has been lower - such as Finland - it has been growing again strongly during the recession. Because men and women work in different sectors, different measures are required to promote the employment of women than that of men. The main employers of women are private and, in particular, public services such as the care of children, the sick and the elderly.

Among the measures proposed in the Commission communication with a view to promoting equality at work (p.7) one of particular importance is the endeavour to individualize rights relating to social security at the same time as promoting equal opportunities in the employment field and breaking down the divisions in the labour market.

The Commission's list of measures should, however, also include the development of the social services essential in order to reconcile family and working life.

General education and vocational training

The Commission has dealt widely and thoroughly with vocational training for women and in particular with increasing women's participation in technical and scientific areas. This is particularly important in view of the still growing role of information technology. Women are being left behind by this development in a worrying way. For example in Finland, where the educational level of women is even higher than that of men, recent investigations show that 87% of information network users are men. To encourage girls to take a greater interest in studying mathematics and physics, the teaching of these subjects must be made to correspond more closely to their world of experience.

- the addition of a new indent to Article 3 of the EC Treaty, specifying that in all activities referred to in that Article the Community has the aim of eliminating inequalities and promoting equality between men and women,
- the insertion of a new Article 6a in the EC Treaty allowing the adoption of measures aimed at outlawing all discrimination, including gender-based discrimination,
- the insertion of a new Title on employment, Article 5 of which provides a new legal basis for the adoption of incentive measures,
- inclusion of the Social Protocol and, more specifically: Article 118, first paragraph, fifth indent (equality between men and women with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work); Article 119 equal pay for male and female workers.

AMENDMENT 5

Paragraph 1b

1b. Notes that the incorporation of equal opportunities for men and women into all Community policies and activities should be pursued as a principle which now forms part of the Amsterdam Treaty;

AMENDMENT 6

Paragraph 1c

1c. Welcomes the insertion of a new non-discrimination clause in Article 6a of the Amsterdam Treaty, but deplores the fact that the procedure referred to requires unanimity in the Council and consultation only of the European Parliament;

AMENDMENT 7

Paragraph 1d

1d. Stresses the fact that in the area of social and employment policy the new provisions of the Amsterdam Treaty require the codecision procedure for the application of the principle of equality of opportunity (Articles 118 and 119) and for the adoption of incentive measures in the field of employment (Article 5 of the new Title on employment);

AMENDMENT 8

Paragraph 1e

1e. Takes the view that, in accordance with the concept of transparency and improved quality of Community legislation vis-à-vis citizens, a clear definition of the expression

'mainstreaming' (which has been adopted only in English) should be supplied, possibly in the form of 'action for the incorporation of equality' (AIE);

AMENDMENT 9

Paragraph 1f

1f. Calls for an interinstitutional working party to be set up in order to make the objective of equality between men and women a concern in all Community activities.