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*Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality*

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# **DRAFT REPORT**

on empowering girls through education in the EU  
(2014/2250(INI))

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

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## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

### on empowering girls through education in the EU (2014/2250(INI))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to Articles 2 and 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 the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR),
- 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 Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- 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 (2005), Beijing +15 (2010) and Beijing +20 (2015) special sessions,
- having regard to the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020), adopted by the European Council in March 2011,
- having regard to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), of May 2011,
- having regard to the Commission’s Communication of 21 September 2010 entitled ‘Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015’ (COM(2010)0491),
- having regard to its resolution of 12 March 2013 on eliminating gender stereotypes in the EU<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of 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, and 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,
- having regard to Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002 amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment,

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2013)0074.

vocational training and promotion, and working conditions,

- having regard to its resolution, of 10 March 2015, on progress in the European Union in 2013 with respect to gender equality<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to the 2009 independent report commissioned by the DG EAC, European Commission,
  - having regard to Recommendation CM/Rec(2007), of 13 October 2010, of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on gender mainstreaming in education,
  - having regard to the 'Compilation of good practices to promote an education free from gender stereotypes and identifying ways to implement the measures which are included in the Committee of Ministers' Recommendation on gender mainstreaming in education' (revised 12.3.2015), promoted by the Council of Europe,
  - having regard to Recommendation Rec(2003)3 of the Council of Ministers to Member States on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making, adopted on 12 March 2003,
  - having regard to the communication from the International Labour Organization (ILO) 'Women and the World of Work' for International Women's Day 2015,
  - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and the opinion of the Committee on Culture and Education (A8-0000/2015),
- A. whereas education is the foundation of responsible citizenship and is essential to ensure the equality and empowerment of girls through education arising from the rights of children and human rights;
- B. whereas the concept of gender is a social construct linked to issues of social class, ethnicity, religion, culture, sexuality and age which lead to economic, cultural and educational injustices, and that social representations of gender are replicated at school;
- C. considering the significant influence of family attitudes, of peers and teachers in the selection of students' study areas and changing gender stereotypes, and given that teachers as agents of social change, by their attitudes and teaching practices, are essential to the promotion of gender equality;
- D. whereas a gender perspective and gender equality should be incorporated into all levels of education in order to promote, among girls and boys, women and men, the values of justice and democratic citizenship, in order to build a genuine partnership between the genders with regard to public and private spheres;
- E. whereas unskilled and poorly paid work is commonly attributed to women and they continue to be responsible for most of the care within the family, which limits access to

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA-PROV(2015)0050.

paid full-time employment, and that gender equality cannot be reduced to providing women with the standard of success defined by men, but involves the recognition of all the work done by women and the education of boys and men in the tasks from which they are traditionally excluded;

- F. whereas, even though women have more secondary and university education, their professional activity is mainly related to tasks aimed at reproducing and extending traditional social and economic structures and there is a need to increase the presence of women both in vocational education and in Mathematics, Science, Engineering and Technology;
- G. whereas European and national authorities should encourage gender equality in educational institutions by all means possible, and gender education should be a fundamental part of the curriculum and school programmes, and teaching materials may contain discriminatory content;
- H. whereas the formal curriculum reflects the cultural and social perspective of each Member State in the construction of girls' and boys' identity, the informal curriculum is a complement to the formal curriculum and the hidden curriculum is common to all the situational definitions of the curriculum and all of these are important in the construction of girls' and boys' identity, and local authorities, through their proximity to educational institutions, have a key role to play in informal education;
- I. whereas, in order to fight gender inequality, constant pedagogical supervision of curricula, objectives, content, strategies, materials, evaluation, disciplinary programmes and lesson plans is essential, as well as monitoring and evaluation by educational research centres and specialists in gender equality;
- J. whereas not all EU countries have ratified the Istanbul Convention and the EU has responsibilities in the initiative and funding of projects that promote gender equality;

### **General recommendations**

1. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to implement measures to apply gender equality at all levels of the education system and in teacher training and the creation of mechanisms, throughout the education system, to facilitate the promotion, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of gender equality in educational institutions;
2. Calls on educational policy makers to ensure that gender equality goes beyond the level of political intentions and becomes a reality by substantially changing the efforts and resources invested in it;
3. Asks the Commission that this recommendation be taken to the political institutions responsible for implementing central, regional and local education policies, school management bodies and regional and local authorities;
4. Stresses the need to promote equal gender representation in terms of leadership, especially among school managers and heads;

5. Urges that all EU countries, and the EU itself as an institution, sign the Istanbul Convention and work together for gender equality in countries outside the EU, on a trans-European basis;
6. Calls for all EU countries to invest consistently in the production of information and motivational campaigns for girls and boys to choose non-stereotyped professions, as well as reflecting on the influence of gender identities and perceptions on girls' life plans, promoting discussion of educational and career choices in the classroom;
7. Calls for the promotion of a holistic approach to formal and informal education in schools, a sensitive approach to the inclusion of human rights, human dignity, gender equality and the development of self-esteem, encouraging informed decision-making for girls and women, both at a personal and professional level;
8. Emphasises the need for national and local institutions to promote programmes to integrate migrant communities in schools and all minorities that make up the European social space, as well as financial assistance programmes for needy families in order to prevent students dropping out, particularly girls;

### **Curriculum and training**

9. Insists on giving special attention to the gender dimension in all its forms, in curricula, content, school programmes and lesson plans, as well as the need to assess the place of women in school curricula in various disciplines, highlighting their role in the content taught;
10. Calls for the promotion of a gender perspective in education on sexuality and the emotions, in sport and leisure activities, where stereotypes and expectations based on gender can affect the self-image, health, acquisition of skills, intellectual development, social integration and identity construction of girls;
11. Encourages girls and boys to try new roles, activities and educational areas, encouraging equal participation of girls and boys in collective decision-making and school management as well as in all extracurricular activities;
12. Calls for the development of equal access and use of Information and Communication Technologies for girls and boys from pre-school education upwards, paying special attention to children and young people from rural areas, to improve digital literacy, and disseminate effective methodologies to increase and improve the presence of women in the areas of Mathematics, Science, Engineering and Technology;
13. Calls for complementary activities which strengthen the formal curriculum with regard to gender equality and training for entrepreneurship, as well as the implementation of informal education programmes for gender education in the community via local authorities;
14. Calls on the authors and publishers of educational materials to be aware of the need to make gender equality a criterion for the production of these materials, recommending the use of teams of teachers and students in the creation of training materials on gender

equality;

15. Underlines the need to prepare and disseminate guidelines for schools, teachers and those responsible for setting the curriculum in order to embrace a gender perspective and gender equality, and asks teachers to analyse and eliminate stereotypes and sexist distortions that the teaching materials may include in their content, language and illustrations, encouraging them also to combat this sexism in literature, film, music, games and other areas that contribute decisively to changing the attitudes, behaviour and identity of boys and girls;
16. Calls for the need to include, both in the initial and ongoing training of teachers, strategies to reflect on their own identity, beliefs, values, prejudices, expectations, attitudes and gender representations, as well as on their teaching practices, in order to remove any obstacles to realising girls' full potential;
17. Stresses the need to organise awareness-raising initiatives, training and integration of the gender perspective for all involved in education policy and also for parents and employers;
18. Calls for every effort to be made to ensure that employment in the area of early childhood education, primary education and care is promoted as valid work for both women and men, reflecting on the relevance of using a system of quotas for men in these areas in the transitional arrangements;

#### **Investment, monitoring and evaluation**

19. Notes the need for monitoring and evaluation by independent bodies of progress made as a result of the adoption of gender equality policies in educational institutions, ongoing communication of information to the relevant authorities on all measures taken and progress made in this area, and the urgent need to convert the gender perspective into an internal and external evaluation element of educational institutions;
20. Reiterates the importance of conducting impact studies for educational policies on gender, providing qualitative and quantitative instruments for the assessment of this impact, and using a budgetary strategy based on gender to promote both access and the right to educational resources;
21. Recognises it as fundamental to assess the impact of future education legislation on gender equality and, where necessary, to revise existing laws in accordance with this principle;
22. Stresses that the monitoring procedures for implementing gender equality programmes and respective assessment be carried out by educational research centres in close cooperation with experts in gender issues, the bodies set up by the EU and local authorities;
23. Suggests the creation of an Annual European Award for Gender Equality for educational institutions and encourages Member States to do the same at national level;

- 24 Stresses the need to draw up plans of action and to allocate resources for the implementation of a gender equality programme, recommending the use of European instruments available for this purpose, namely the Investment Plan, the Horizon 2020 Programme and Community funds;
25. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments of the Member States.