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A3-0035/94

R E P O R T

of the Committee on Women's Rights

on women in the decision-making process

Rapporteur: Mrs Jessica Larive

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**PE 205.666/fin.
nl.-Or.en/nl.**

- * Consultation procedure
simple majority
- **I Cooperation procedure (first reading)
simple majority
- **II Cooperation procedure (second reading)
simple majority to approve the common position
absolute majority of Parliament's component Members to reject or amend the common position
- *** Assent procedure
absolute majority of Parliament's component Members to give assent
except for simple majority under Articles 8a, 105, 106, 130d and 228 EC

- ****I Codecision procedure (first reading)
simple majority
- ****II Codecision procedure (second reading)
simple majority to approve the common position
absolute majority of Parliament's component Members either to adopt a declaration of intent
to reject the common position or to amend or confirm the rejection of the common position
- ****III Codecision procedure (third reading)
simple majority to approve the joint text
absolute majority of Parliament's component Members to reject the Council text

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At the sitting of 11th February 1993 the President of the European Parliament announced that he had forwarded the motion for a resolution tabled by Mrs Dury on women in the decision-making process, pursuant to Rule 45 of the Rules of Procedure, to the Commission on Women's Rights as the committee responsible.

At its meeting of 24th March 1993 the committee decided to draw up a report and appointed Mrs Larive rapporteur.

At its meeting of 23rd September 1993 the committee decided to include in its report the following motion for a resolution which had been referred to it:

- B3-0843/93 tabled by Mrs Hermans on women's participation in the decision-making process; announced in plenary sitting of 15th July 1993; responsible: Committee on Women's Rights.

At its meetings of 5th October 1993, 1st December 1993 and 26th January 1994 the committee considered the draft report.

At the last meeting it adopted the resolution unanimously.

The following took part in the vote: Crawley, chairwoman; Domingo Segarra, second vice-chairwoman; Gröner, third vice-chairwoman; Larive, rapporteur; André-Léonard (for S. Martin); van den Brink; Dury; Lenz; Lulling; Mebrak-Zaidi (for Belo); Oddy (for Catasta) and Van Hemeldonck (for Pollack).

The report was tabled on 27th January 1994.

The deadline for tabling amendments will appear on the draft agenda for the part-session at which the report is to be considered.

A
MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

Resolution on women in decision-making bodies

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the motions for a resolutions by:
 - (a) Mrs Dury on women in the decision-making process (B3-1672/92),
 - (b) Mrs Hermans on women's participation in the decision-making process,
 - having regard to the Council resolution of 21st May 1991 on the third medium-term Community Action Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (1991-1995), and in particular to paragraph 3(3),¹
 - having regard to its resolution of 16 September 1988 on women in decision-making centres,²
 - having regard to the 'Survey of EC Member States for the European Women's Lobby on Strategies for the Promotion of Women in Politics', Dublin, October 1992,
 - having regard to the statement adopted at the first European summit of women in influential positions, held in Athens on 3 November 1992,
 - having regard to the Council of Europe's proposal entitled 'Ways and Means of Improving the Position of Women in Political Life',
 - having regard to other detailed studies of the under-representation of women in political office, commissioned by, *inter alia*, the United Nations, UNESCO and the Commission,
 - having regard to rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Women's Rights (A3-0035/94),
- A. whereas decisions which affect a large number of citizens, both men and women, are taken daily in all types of sectors and at different levels,
- B. whereas women, half of humankind, are involved to only a small extent in such decision-making in representative bodies and national governments, as well as in other sectors, such as the private sector, the financial sector, the media, the judiciary and social organizations and advisory bodies,
- C. whereas, whilst the allocation of positions of political and administrative responsibility varies considerably from country to country within the European Community, women are under-represented everywhere,
- D. whereas the systematic under-representation of women in decision-making positions conflicts with the democratic principle that the citizens of a political system must be able to influence public decision-making on an equal footing and that decision-making bodies must be accessible to all citizens,
- E. whereas the equal representation of men and women on decision-making bodies will enhance the legitimacy and quality of such decision-making,
- F. whereas, the concept of European citizenship means that the European Union has an obligation to represent as effectively as possible the interests of women, who make up more than half of the population of Europe,
- G. whereas, although over the last few years women have continued to gain ground in terms of education and have entered the labour market in greater numbers, and while more opportunities have been opened up for women to enter the public domain, this has not yet resulted in comparable numbers of women in decision-making positions,
- H. whereas political parties play a decisive role in determining the lists of candidates for elections to representative bodies, as well as in determining the composition of national governments and nominating candidates for public office,

¹ OJ C 142 of 31.05.1991

² OJ C 262 of 10.10.1988

- I. whereas, since the power of office is at stake where these decision-making positions are concerned and the possession of power is characterized by unwillingness to relinquish it promptly or voluntarily, there is no reason to expect that equal representation will be achieved in the short term, unless temporary binding measures are taken to increase women's participation,
1. Welcomes the establishment by the Commission in 1992 of a network of experts on women in the decision-making process;
2. Urges the Commission, the network of experts and national and European women's organizations to work together closely to draw up European policy to supplement and support national policy;
3. Regrets that women's participation in public decision-making is not developing sufficiently; for all the EC Member States, the average proportion of women in national parliaments is 11%, whilst women account for slightly more than 10% of top civil service posts;
4. Notes that there is an urgent need for a package of specific measures to increase women's share in public decision-making over the next five years;
5. Urges the European Institutions as employers to introduce target figures for the recruitment of women and the number of women in top posts and if these target figures are not achieved by the year 2000 to introduce a quota system and urges the Commission to take the lead in this respect;

PROPOSALS FOR AN ACTION PROGRAMME

6. Calls on the Commission to step up implementation of the equal opportunities policy set out in the third Community action programme, to combat individual obstacles which hinder women from taking part in decision-making;
7. Calls on the Commission to urge the Member States to help girls and women acquire a wider range of skills in order to facilitate their access to the labour market in all sectors and at all levels, to create suitable and adequate child-minding facilities;
8. Calls on the Commission to increase opportunities specifically for women within the ESF, such as further training and management courses, and to insist that regional labour exchanges give some thought to the percentage of women participants in EC projects;
9. Calls on the Commission, on the basis of comparative studies concerning the participation of women and the allocation to them of posts in political, public and socio-economic sectors, to draw up a memorandum defining measures and actions to promote greater participation by women in the decision-making process;
10. Calls on the Commission to ensure, as far as possible, equal representation of men and women on advisory committees and working parties including its own internal committees;
11. Calls on the Commission to organize a conference for the government departments concerned to exchange knowledge and experience of public policy aimed at increasing the number of women in decision-making positions, and on this basis to draw up a policy programme for each Member State, with a view to improving the position of women;
12. Calls on the Commission to allocate extra resources to the formulation of actions and measures, in cooperation with the Member States and political parties, with a view to increasing the number of women elected to the European Parliament;
13. Calls on the Member States to launch a major information and awareness campaign so that the electorate, the political parties and the decision-makers are not only aware of the under-representation of women in political and administrative office, but also consider this to be an undesirable situation;
14. Calls for more women to be appointed on recruitment and selection boards in order to break with traditional patterns;
15. Calls for target figures to be set for the number of women to be appointed by a given deadline to decision-making positions whose incumbents are appointed by a government body, such as the office of mayor, the Supreme Court, and so on and, if these target figures are not met by the year 2000, for a quota system to be introduced;
16. Calls on the Member States to introduce similar rules on the membership of national advisory bodies;
17. Calls on the Member States to urge the two sides of industry, the trade unions and employers' organizations to promote positive measures within their own organizations and in undertakings in the public and private sectors to guarantee access for female candidates to vacant posts in which women are under-represented, target figures should be borne in mind when posts fall vacant and if the target figures are not achieved by the year 2000 a quota system should be introduced;

18. **Calls on the Member States in awarding public contracts, to give preference to companies which endeavour to improve the position of women;**
19. **Calls on the Member States to ensure that the criteria for all public decision-making posts are made explicit and public, as women are more likely to apply through open recruitment and selection procedures;**
20. **Calls on the Member States to introduce a system of supervision and guidance for women commencing their careers in government bodies;**
21. **Calls on the Member States to design their electoral systems in such a way that as many women as possible are elected to representative bodies;**
22. **Calls on the Member States to set up data banks concerning women employed in government organizations, national advisory bodies and social organizations, who might be encouraged to apply for posts of responsibility;**
23. **Calls on the Member States to compile statistics on women's share in public decision-making positions and to publish these every two years, to monitor the progress made and increase public awareness of them;**
24. **Calls on the Member States to introduce legislation to ensure equal representation when appointing members of councils, boards or committees requiring the authorities or organizations nominating members of the councils, boards or committees to nominate both a man and a woman;**
25. **Calls on the Member States to ensure a balanced distribution of Commissioner posts between men and women, for example by requiring countries with more than one Commissioner to select both a man and a woman;**
26. **Calls on the political parties to establish a positive action policy in order to achieve balanced democratic representation and involve more women in politics, elect more women to political posts and increase the visibility of the women already active in the field in order to ensure a substantial presence of women on electoral lists and in politically important posts;**
27. **Calls on the political parties to draw up a list of women with specialist skills for administrative, political and social appointments;**
28. **Calls on the political parties, where selection is decentralized, to reach agreements with regional and local party bodies setting out target figures, a time frame and an action plan;**
29. **Calls on the political parties to check the criteria used in drawing up lists of candidates, to see whether any of them are gender-specific, and, if necessary, to adjust them;**
30. **Calls on the political parties to set up management courses for women members interested in running for party or representative office and to set up a register of experts, composed of women members;**
31. **Urges women to show more solidarity with each other and to act together to defend their common interests;**
32. **Calls on women in decision-making posts to provide supervision and guidance for women beginning their careers so as to reduce the numbers leaving and improve their opportunities;**
33. **Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and political parties of the Member States.**

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTDecision-making in the public domain

1. Decisions which affect large numbers of citizens are taken in a number of fora; this is what we mean by decision-making in the public domain. A number of different levels (local, regional, national and Community) and sectors may be distinguished. They include politics and public administration, the private sector, the judiciary, the financial sector and the media.
2. At all these levels and in all these sectors, actors of different types are involved in different ways in public decision-making. The first of these are the citizens, who can influence decision-making in the public domain by voting in elections, taking opportunities to participate in public inquiries, seeking contact with the decision-making process and through protest activities of all kinds.
3. Other major actors are the political parties. The parties aim to organize activities which will mobilize citizens to join and take part in activities within the party. Parties focus citizens' wishes and desires on the basis of a coherent ideology. They form part of the process of public decision-making, in that they put forward candidates for seats in the European Parliament, the national parliaments and the regional and local representative bodies.
4. Then we come to the politicians, who actually take the decisions. The political parties determine the criteria which the candidates must satisfy and the selection procedure for drawing up lists of candidates for each election. They decide which women and men to select for seats where they have a chance of being elected.
5. In making decisions, politicians use information from other decision-making sectors: the private sector, the judiciary, the financial sector and a large number of social organizations and advisory bodies. The degree of access to such decision-making positions varies from sector to sector. Specific educational qualifications and professional experience are required in these sectors to a greater extent than for political offices.
6. There are no formal de jure barriers in the Member States to prevent women from participating to the same extent as men in the public decision-making process outlined above. Women had to fight long and hard to win the right to vote and to stand for election. Reluctance to grant women political rights sprang from the idea that women did not belong in the dirty world of politics. The view was that it was not woman's vocation to participate in public administration, that it would be injurious to her inner life, sully her grace and taint her honour and glory. Now, in 1994, virtually no-one believes that women do not belong in the world of politics. The current debate focuses on the question of how to promote women's de facto participation in political decision-making.
7. Nor are there any formal barriers to prevent women from becoming judges or managers in the private sector. Thanks largely to international law, most posts which involve decision-making are - in formal terms - open to men and women alike.
8. De facto, however, women are grossly and persistently under-represented in decision-making bodies. They are involved only marginally in public decision-making. Women account for an average 11 % of the members of national cabinets and parliaments in the Member States. The proportion of women in the European Parliament is 19.3 %. The figure is 15 % for the regional parliaments and councils. At local level, women account on average for 5 % of mayors, 8 % of aldermen (deputy mayors) and 19 % of local councillors. Fewer than a quarter of posts involving decision-making in trade unions and fewer than 10 % in employers' organizations are held by women. The proportion of women in official social and economic advisory bodies is 7 %, while the average proportion in the highest-ranking civil service posts is 9 %.

More women in posts involving decision-making

9. The fact that far fewer women than men take part in decision-making in the public domain is unsatisfactory. One of the basic principles of democratic systems, after all, is that citizens must have equal opportunities to influence public decision-making and that decision-making bodies must, as a matter of principle, be open to all citizens. The equality of opportunity which ought to be characteristic of a democracy would seem to be less in evidence while women - half of humanity - are systematically and grossly under-represented.
10. The second argument concerns the legitimacy of public decision-making. Women's under-representation may jeopardize the legitimacy of the decisions to be taken, as it widens the gap between decision-makers and citizens - especially women.
11. Those who have a hand in public decision-making and hold a political appointment are able to influence such decision-making and thus to represent particular interests when it comes to the allocation of scarce resources.
12. The fourth argument is that an increase in women's participation in public decision-making could change form and content of the latter for the better. There are indications that women decision-makers, if present in sufficient numbers, differ from their male colleagues in the priorities they set in their work and their outlook on certain issues.

13. The final argument here has to do with making efficient use of the knowledge and experience which may be present. No country can afford to make minimal or no use of half of its population in matters of concern to society as a whole. Whilst men and women continue to be socialized differently and to perform different tasks as groups, it will be necessary to involve both groups in equal proportions in the decision-making process.

Why so few

14. What is the explanation for this very low rate of participation in public decision-making? The obstacles which hold women back from gaining or holding political office may be divided into two categories: individual and institutional. The first category comprises mainly the personal characteristics and qualities of potential politicians, whilst the second relates to aspects of the social and political system.
15. The individual characteristics can be broken down further into structural, situational and psychological characteristics, most of which can be traced back to the existing division of labour by sex. The term 'structural factors' usually refers to people's educational level and professional status. Education, professionalism and experience in comparable public positions are regarded as major advantages in the world of politics. The number of such advantages which individuals have largely determines their chances of being selected for a political post.
16. Studies of politicians' backgrounds reveal that they have a far higher average level of education than the general population. A degree almost seems to be a necessary condition for eligibility for political office. In most countries, women still lag behind men in terms of education. Women are thus less likely to end up in the 'pool' of electable candidates than men.
17. The requirement of experience in the world of work works against women in two ways. To begin with, fewer women than men have paid work outside the home. The second aspect has to do with the type of work which women generally perform. Women working outside the home are concentrated in occupations which offer few opportunities for organizing working hours independently. Most working women are to be found in the caring professions, teaching, services and administrative occupations - all occupations which offer little scope for flexible organization of working hours. Yet one of the characteristics of holding political office is that it demands a certain degree of flexibility in the organization of the politician's working hours. Finally, would-be politicians with experience in the world of work have social contacts which benefit their candidacy.
18. The second category of obstacles - situational obstacles - generally refers to circumstances linked to the fact that family responsibilities are still shared unsatisfactorily between the partners and that, in the case of those who are single, it is mostly assumed that the women will care for sick members of the family. Small children, above all, are a hindrance to gaining political office. The combination of responsibility for small children and political office is extremely time-consuming. One of the problems is dividing up the tasks concerned. Childcare must be organized, and a politician's working hours cannot always be predicted in advance.
19. The third group of individual characteristics are the psychological effects of gender-based socialization, particularly political socialization. Political socialization is the process whereby politically relevant values, feelings, knowledge, character traits and skills are acquired. As a result of the distinction drawn between the public and private spheres, the concomitant ideas about the social position of women and men and the fact that politics are defined as belonging to the public sphere, political values and attitudes are passed on to girls and women to a lesser extent than to boys and men. This can lead to women regarding themselves as being unsuited to politics and to situations in which women with ambitions for political office are given little encouragement with their choice.
20. In addition to the individual factors, there are a large number of institutional factors which play a significant role in determining access to a political system. Factors which adversely affect the recruitment of women for political office include the horizontal and vertical division between women and men where work and education are concerned, the inadequate amount of childcare available and the limited length of maternity leave.
21. Women's access to representative bodies depends equally on the political system itself. The electoral system, for instance, affects the proportion of women in the representative bodies concerned. Women's chances of being selected are significantly smaller under a first-past-the-post system based on constituencies than under a system of proportional representation with lists. Under majoritarian systems, ideas about the supposed greater electoral attraction of male candidates work against female candidates, as the party's electoral success under such a system depends largely on the one candidate it selects. Under proportional representation systems, other criteria come into play in drawing up the list of candidates, including the wish to appeal to as many different kinds of voters as possible, which can have a positive effect on women's candidacy. Another reason is the idea that women are less suited for or less experienced in aggressive campaigning. And it is precisely under a majoritarian, constituency-based system that this is regarded as being a necessary quality.
22. Within a single electoral system, the selection procedures used determine women's chances of achieving political office.

The proportion of women in representative bodies depends largely on which party body is ultimately responsible for the selection of candidates. For instance, the degree of centralization - the power of the party executive to determine the order of the list of candidates - affects the proportion of women in electable positions on the lists. It is the party executive which seeks to ensure balance in the composition of the group standing for parliament, with

regard to the knowledge and experience of the would-be MPs, their supporters (e.g. trade union members), age and sex. Regional or local sections have less of an overall view of the candidates and are therefore less influenced by the criterion of balance. Regional executives support their own candidates first and foremost in negotiations with other regions and do not specifically back women.

23. Within a single electoral system, the criteria used in selection are important. The criteria applied in recruiting and selecting candidates for posts involving decision-making are clearly tailored to male characteristics. Too little account is taken of differences in men's and women's activities. Where representative positions at local level are concerned, in particular, administrative experience acquired in social organizations or women's associations should be taken into account in the selection process just as much as experience gained through political office of another kind, in the civil service or industry.
24. The third significant factor in the selection process is to what extent parties have taken specific measures to increase the proportion of women represented. The Scandinavian countries have had positive experiences with setting quotas; ten parties had established quotas by 1988. The representation of women in politics is significantly higher in these countries than elsewhere. In general, quotas increase the percentage of women, if only because the selection boards have their attention drawn to women candidates. Your rapporteur's personal preference is for setting target figures.
25. In conclusion, the main problems are:
 - obstacles arising from the way in which society is organized at the moment, particularly the restricted opportunities which exist for women with family responsibilities to work outside the home;
 - differences in political socialization;
 - differences in educational level and experience of paid work;
 - obstacles arising out of women's responsibilities within the family;
 - obstacles within the electoral systems;
 - a gender bias in the selection criteria;
 - obstacles in the selection procedures.
26. Many of the above-mentioned obstacles also apply where access to decision-making positions in sectors other than politics and public administration are concerned, although certain top posts require highly specific qualifications.
27. The total number of obstacles varies from one country to another. Disparities between men's and women's levels of education have virtually disappeared in a number of European countries. In most countries, too, increasing numbers of women have paid jobs outside the home and it is socially accepted for women to hold political office. At the same time, opportunities for women to enter the public sphere have increased to some extent, one of the reasons being that there is now more childcare available. These developments have undoubtedly been instrumental in increasing the proportion of women holding political office over the last few years. However, this increase has been far smaller than it might have been.
28. Explanations for the great disparities in men's and women's relative participation in decision-making should therefore also be sought in the fact that such posts are associated with power. It is characteristic of power that those who hold it do not relinquish it quickly or voluntarily. Moreover, those who decide 'what the game is about' also decide who can play. In fields currently dominated by men, men also regulate access to the positions concerned. It is thus not to be expected that this group will simply hand over power. Without a change in policy, women and men are unlikely to be equally represented in public posts within the foreseeable future.

Measures

29. Since women have little share in public decision-making and their rate of participation is scarcely increasing, there is a need to draw up practical measures to ensure a better balance between women and men in decision-making positions within the next five years.
30. The individual obstacles which bar women's access to posts involving decision-making exist in all the Member States, albeit in varying degrees. Efforts to promote an equal opportunities policy, as set out in the Third Community Action Programme, must therefore be continued unabated. The successful integration of women in the labour market and the improvement of women's position in society (two of the Action Programme's main objectives) have positive implications - both directly and indirectly - for the aim of increasing the proportion of women in public decision-making. After all, many of the posts concerned required specific qualifications and professional experience.
31. Institutional obstacles also exist in all the Member States, although their form and substance depend on the way in which recruitment and selection for decision-making posts are organized in the country in question. The Member States differ in their electoral systems, in the regulations governing access to other political positions and in the way in which candidates are selected within the political parties. However, a number of general rules may be formulated on the basis of the general analysis above.
32. The gulf between ordinary citizens and the world of politics continues to widen, a phenomenon which is borne out by election turnouts of under 50%. Constitutional innovations are under consideration in a number of countries, with a view to involving citizens more in party political concerns. The Member States are asked to take full account of any effects which such constitutional changes may have on the participation of women, when taking a decision on

the matter. The introduction of a first-past-the-post electoral system based on constituencies, for instance, would adversely affect women's chances of being elected.

33. In drawing up practical measures, a distinction should first of all be drawn between decision-making posts to which candidates are appointed and those to which they are elected. In both cases, the bodies responsible for appointment or the political parties concerned should explicitly state the criteria which candidates must satisfy. Research shows that women are more likely to stand for office if open procedures are used for recruitment and selection and the criteria are known.
34. Appointments are often made by government bodies or authorities, such as a minister or government department or the Cabinet. Examples of such posts include the chairmanship of regional executives, mayorships (in some countries) or membership of advisory bodies. The authorities concerned can set target figures for the appointment of women to such posts. The bodies which carry out the selection procedure are responsible for putting forward enough qualified women as candidates. Laws can be introduced on the composition of advisory bodies, along the lines of the Danish 'Act on Equality in Appointing Members to Public Committees', adopted in 1985, which states that women and men must be as equally represented as possible on advisory bodies. The number of women in advisory bodies has tripled since its adoption. Laws can be adopted to ensure that new advisory bodies take the aim of equal representation into account.
35. A database with a list of talented women should be set up to help fill vacancies for women in decision-making bodies. Appointing authorities and delegate bodies can then consult the database when seeking suitable women candidates. Whilst the government could provide financial support with the setting up of such a database, it would ultimately have to be self-financing.
36. Political parties should establish target figures for the representation of women on all representative bodies. The level of the target figures would depend on the existing situation and the figures should be established for a given period of time. To meet such targets, the policy to be developed should include:
 - registering party members according to gender;
 - setting up a list of experts composed of female party members;
 - organizing training sessions for women members interested in running for party or representative office;
 - examination by the party executive of the selection criteria applied when drawing up lists of candidates, to check whether any are gender-specific;
 - the drawing up by the party executive of a profile of the parliamentary party or other representative group to be elected, for use in nominating candidates. This profile should include a mention of the desirability of achieving a balance between male and female representatives;
 - where selection is decentralized, pacts laying down target figures and a time-frame for meeting them should be concluded between the party executive and the regional and local party bodies.
37. Reports and evaluation are of great importance for the success of all the above measures to increase women's participation in public decision-making bodies. Statistics on the number of women in decision-making positions are essential. However, in many countries they are inadequate, if they are available at all. Such statistics should be collected, kept up-to-date and published annually.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION pursuant to Rule 45 of the Rules of Procedure by Mrs DURY on women in the decision-making process (B3-1672/92)

The European Parliament.

- A. deploring the fact that the role of women in decision-making bodies is not evolving in a sufficiently positive way,
- B. whereas this is the case in both the political and the economic fields,
 - 1. Calls on the Commission to draw up a plan of action to promote the presence of women in decision-making posts;
 - 2. Calls on the Commission to take account, more specifically, of the approach of the 1994 European elections.

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