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Gender budgeting as a tool for safeguarding women's health

Committee Opinion¹

Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee

Rapporteur: Ms Carina OHLSSON, Sweden, Socialist Group

A. Conclusions of the committee

1. The Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee welcomes the initiative taken by Ms Ingrida Circene to highlight the issue of gender-budgeting as an essential component of gender-mainstreaming processes in the public health sector.
2. The committee wishes, however, to present three amendments to the draft recommendation to better take into consideration some of the practical tools generated by Council of Europe activities in recent years on the issue of gender budgeting and to provide more precision regarding future action to be taken.

B. Explanatory memorandum by Ms Ohlsson, rapporteur

1. I would like to welcome Ms Circene's initiative to emphasise the importance of gender-budgeting as an essential step when it comes to the implementation of gender-mainstreaming strategies at national level. As already confirmed by the Committee of Ministers in its response to [Recommendation 1739 \(2006\)](#) of the Parliamentary Assembly on gender budgeting ([Doc. 11024](#)), I am also convinced that it is only by incorporating a gender perspective into the budgetary process that gender mainstreaming strategies will be duly applied.
2. I also support Ms Circene on her idea that gender mainstreaming, and subsequently gender-budgeting, should be essential elements of a modern, gender-balanced and human-rights based health policy and that the implementation of both concepts at national level should be effectively promoted. I am, however, convinced that any further recommendation to be made at this stage should clearly refer to the valuable tools already prepared in the framework of Council of Europe activities in this field in recent years. The recommendation should also contain suggestions concerning the methodological approach to be followed.
3. Any recommendation addressed to the Committee of Ministers at this stage should therefore refer to the 2004 report on gender budgeting and the 2009 handbook on "Gender budgeting: practical implementation", both prepared by the Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG).
4. The Assembly should further recommend that information be collected as regards "best practice" of member states with a view to producing clear guidelines on the efficient use and implementation of the concepts of gender-mainstreaming and gender-budgeting. The approach taken should be interdisciplinary at both European and national levels.

1. Reference to Committee: [Doc. 11836](#), Reference 3545 of 29 May 2009. Reporting committee: Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. See Doc 12231. Opinion approved on 27 April 2010.



5. Finally, from a social point of view, the concept of gender-budgeting should be set into a broader context. Any effort made in view of its promotion should take into account the current obstacles and stereotypes hindering a truly gender-balanced health policy in all Council of Europe member states.

C. Amendments proposed to the draft recommendation

Amendment A (to the draft recommendation)

In the last sentence of paragraph 3, replace the words “safeguarding women’s health” by the words “safeguarding women’s and men’s health”.

Amendment B (to the draft recommendation)

Replace paragraph 7.3 with the following:

“allocate adequate resources to and instruct the competent committees to ensure a follow-up to Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)1 with a view to preparing specific guidelines for the public health sector based on the Handbook on the Practical Implementation of Gender Budgeting and on positive action identified amongst member states, and to promoting the application of such guidelines at national level;”.

Amendment C (to the draft recommendation)

After paragraph 7.3, add the following new paragraph:

“instruct the competent committees to ensure an interdisciplinary follow-up of the issue of ‘gender-budgeting in the public health sector’ by involving both the aspects of equal opportunities for women and men and of innovative public health policies in Council of Europe member states, and also accordingly relevant expertise from both fields;”.

Amendment D (to the draft recommendation)

After paragraph 7.3, add the following new paragraph:

“encourage member states to commit to promoting the concept of gender-mainstreaming, including gender-budgeting, in the health sector, employing focused support measures where appropriate such as specific training programmes.”