Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1146 (1991)[1]

Equal opportunities and equal treatment for women and men on the labour-market

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Throughout Europe it is the same : the situation of women on the labour-market remains unsatisfactory and the right to economic independence is not, in practice, the same as that of men.

2. The Assembly considers that, to guarantee equality of opportunity for women on the labour-market, equality of treatment must be established in national legislations and in international legal instruments such as the European Convention on Human Rights ; it is sad to note that even today, among our member states, women do not everywhere have the right to vote. One of the key obstacles to equality of opportunity is the lack of those conditions which would enable both men and women to reconcile their professional, private, family and parental responsibilities.

3. The Assembly therefore strongly hopes that the governments of member states will urgently take suitable measures or initiatives for equality between the sexes, particularly in the following areas, so that women and men are enabled to be gainfully employed while sharing family and parental responsibilities :

3.1. compatible hours and conditions of work ;

3.2. parental leave for both parents, which can be taken either together or alternately ;

3.3. improved and expanded provision of child-care facilities and school services which are timed appropriately and accessible in terms of cost ;

3.4. equality of treatment in regard to pay for work which is the same or of equal value and pensions, social security and health care ;

3.5. the drawing up, as a general rule, of employment offers in terms which are applicable both to women and to men ;

3.6. the responsibility for state and local authorities to set an example as employers ;

3.7. the elimination of stereotyped presentations of the roles of men and women in professional life.

4. The Assembly also believes that it is indispensable for governments of member states to take initiatives, in particular :

4.1. to remove progressively any obstacles which at present obstruct the appointment of women to positions of responsibility in equal proportion to men, especially in key areas of decision - subject to comparable qualifications and experience ;

4.2. to examine all government policies - in particular, for demography and for transport - all programmes and all budgetary dispositions from the point of view of their consequences for the realisation, in actual practice, of equality between the sexes, following, where necessary, consultation of the competent agencies ;

4.3. to ensure that policy objectives are known and pursued as widely as possible, and that periodical reports on the consequences of government measures for women and men are published ;

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1. See Doc. 6251, report of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee, Rapporteur : Mrs Hubinek. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 11 March 1991.

4.4. to support and promote non-governmental organisations which work towards equality between women and men ;

4.5. to take political action in conformity with the appropriate international standards, notably those of the European Social Charter and its protocol, to pursue the application thereof and to assess the results ;

4.6. to establish special projects in support of particular groups of persons ;

4.7. to avoid or to resolve problems arising from unlawful discrimination on grounds of gender or from measures and practices having a discriminatory effect, without prejudice to judicial areas of responsibility ;

4.8. to guarantee implementation of the relevant standards and basic principles, in particular by means of the regular reports to be made on measures taken at all levels to apply in practice the long-term strategy agreed at Nairobi for improving the situation of women, with a view to evaluating this strategy through the five-yearly reports of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women for 1990, 1995 and 2000 ;

4.9. to implement special measures of fixed duration for the accelerated introduction of de facto equality and the removal of systematic discrimination, for example through programmes of positive action for women ;

4.10. to ensure that the tasks of national equality institutions are widely understood and publicised, that timely recourse is had to their services in all appropriate cases and that links are established with other departments or agencies.

5. The Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers follow the above proposals as far as the intergovernmental work programme and the functioning of the Secretariat General are concerned.