



Doc. 13892

30 September 2015

Gender equality and child maintenance

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Ms Gisela WURM and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

A decline in the marriage rates, the doubling of divorce rates, the growing trend towards non-conventional family patterns have led to an expansion in the number of single-parent families over the last two decades. This trend in the family structure raises the question of the crucial importance of financial contributions by the non-custodial parent for the wellbeing of the child, and enhancement of the family policy orientation in alignment with the fundamental premise of gender equality values and children's rights.

As the majority of single and custodial parents are women, whereby male non-custodial parents are obliged to financially support the child, it is more frequent that single mothers alone deal with the problems emerging from non-payment by the non-custodial parent, undertake the volatile task of collecting maintenance, pursue legal action against the father, and finally have to ask for advance payments from the State. Furthermore, taking into consideration the existing gender pay gap, the lower employment rate of women and the difficult socio-economic situation of single-parent families, single mothers are often in a particularly difficult situation.

The current child maintenance systems, in almost all member States, provide a basic legal net. However, in some States, legislation is required towards harmonisation of the existing maintenance regulations with the service of advance of maintenance. This would shift the responsibility for collecting child support to the government so as to ensure automatic and regular payments.

The Parliamentary Assembly should appraise the situation of single-parent families in greater accordance with gender equality and non-discrimination, in order to eliminate the conflicts single-parents have been facing and assure them of an adequate standard of living.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
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SOC: Socialist Group