



Doc. 11714

19 September 2008

Action against sexist representations in the media

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Ms Doris STUMP and other members of the Assembly

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

On television and in the print and electronic media, women are still all too often victims of sexism: they may be described or perceived as weak, vulnerable, dependent, confined to their role as mothers or wives. Conversely, women who are successful in the world of work are depicted as career-minded social climbers with “masculine” qualities. Media treatment of female candidates for political or economic posts of responsibility speaks volumes in this context: they are judged by their appearance and criticised for those qualities – or failings – traditionally associated with womanhood, or motherhood. Such sexist attitudes are discriminatory.

It has to be said that the stereotyped images portrayed by the media affect the view that women and men have of the division of tasks and duties between them within society. One result of this is that women – and men – are confined to the stereotypical roles that are traditionally theirs in society, thereby perpetuating both the inequality of women and men and the legitimate status of some forms of violence against women, including violence within the couple. Another is the obvious influence that this sexist portrayal has on the shaping of the identity of girls, young women and men. It influences their life and career decisions. Thus women are encouraged into what are considered “feminine” jobs which offer limited career prospects, whereas men are directed towards research and scientific and technical jobs which offer better prospects of progression.

The media, with their power to reach into so many households, help to shape attitudes and set standards. They have a particular responsibility in the fight against sexist representations and in the promotion of equality between women and men.

The Parliamentary Assembly is endeavouring to find out whether, and if so how, the media (print media, television and electronic media) are, in the different countries of Europe, aggravating or combating in their various products (political reports, surveys, soap operas, children’s programmes, etc) the sexist stereotyping of women and men.

The Assembly calls on member states to take all necessary steps to:

- combat all forms of sexism in the media;
- engage in consultation with the – private and public – partners of the media profession to draw up codes of conduct, prohibit sexist practices and imagery and promote an editorial policy which encompasses the gender dimension;
- strengthen the role of the media in promoting equality between women and men;



- focus on programmes aimed at young people to combat both the stereotyping of women and men and sexist attitudes in society.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed¹:

STUMP Doris, Switzerland, SOC
BILOZIR Oksana, Ukraine, EPP/CD
BONDARENKO Olena, Ukraine, EPP/CD
ČURDOVÁ Anna, Czech Republic
ERR Lydie, Luxembourg, SOC
GĂLETEANU Monalisa, Romania
GROSS Andreas, Switzerland, SOC
HÄGG Carina, Sweden
KELEŞ Birgen, Turkey, SOC
L'OVOCHKINA Yuliya, Ukraine
SÁNDOR Klára, Hungary
UNGUREANU Vasile Ioan Dănuţ, Romania

1. EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group