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REPORT

on Women in international politics
(2006/2057(INI))

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Rapporteur: Ana Maria Gomes

PR_INI

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on Women in international politics
(2006/2057(INI))

The European Parliament,

– reaffirming the principles laid down in Articles 2, 3(2), 13, 137(1)(i), and 141 of the EC Treaty,

– having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union proclaimed in 2000[1], and, in particular, Article 23 thereof stating that "Equality between men and women must be ensured in all areas, including employment, work and pay. The principle of equality shall not prevent the maintenance or adoption of measures providing for specific advantages in favour of the under-represented sex",

– having regard to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1950[2],

– having regard to the recommendations of the Council of Europe and in particular its resolution and action plan adopted at the 6th European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men in Stockholm on 8-9 June 2006, and in particular Part I, point F of the Annex, concerning the balanced participation of women and men in decision-making,

– having regard to the Ministerial Declaration of Athens in 1992 at the European conference on Women in Power, which proclaimed that "women represent half the potential talents and skills of humanity and their under-representation in decision-making is a loss for society as a whole",

– having regard to the Ministerial Declaration of Paris in 1999 at the European conference on Women and Men in Power - a caring society, a dynamic economy and a vision for Europe,

– having regard to the Final declaration of the Annual conference of the Network of Parliamentary Committees for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (NCEO) adopted in Rome on 21 November 2003,

– having regard to the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs, of March 2000, and in particular its emphasis on the positive impact that gender-sensitive economic policies will have on the overall strategy for growth and competitiveness of the EU,

– having regard to its resolutions of 18 January 2001 on the Commission report on the implementation of Council Recommendation 96/694 of 2 December 1996 on the balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process[3] and of 2 March 2000 on

[1] OJ C 364, 18.12.2000, p. 1.
[2] http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/005.htm
[3] OJ C 262, 18.9.2001, p. 248,

Women in Decision-Making[1],

– having regard to the Council Resolution of 27 March 1995[2] and the Council Recommendation 96/694/EC of 2 December 1996 on the balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process[3],

– having regard to the Ministerial Declaration of the Conference of Ministers of Gender Equality held in Luxembourg on 4 February 2005,

– having regard to the Commission roadmap for equality between women and men (2006-2010)(COM(2006)0092) and in particular its proposal to support a network of women in decision-making,

– having regard to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948,

– having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1979, which states, *inter alia*, that signatory states shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of their country,

– having regard to the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW, adopted in 1999, stating that individuals or groups of individual claiming to be victims of a violation of any of the rights set out in the Convention may submit communications under the jurisdiction of a signatory state,

– recalling that the Convention on the Political Rights of Women of 1952 states that women shall be on equal terms with men and shall be, without any discrimination, entitled to vote in all elections, eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies established by national law and entitled to hold public office and to exercise all public functions established by national law,

– recalling the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, and in particular its Article 25, which states that every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives and to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections,

– having regard to the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995, the Declaration and the Platform for Action adopted in Beijing as well as the following outcome documents adopted at the successive United Nations Beijing + 5 and United Nations Beijing +10 Special Sessions on further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action adopted respectively on 9 June 2000 and on 11 March 2005,

– having regard to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in particular MDG3 on promoting gender equality and empowering women as a prerequisite to overcoming

[1] OJ C 346, 4.12.2000, p. 82,
[2] OJ C 168, 4.7.1995, p. 3.
[3] OJ L 319, 10.12.1996, p. 11.

hunger, poverty and disease, reaching equality at all levels of education and in all areas of work, equal control over resources and equal representation in public and political life,

– having regard to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 adopted on 31 October 2000, in particular paragraph 1, which urges Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict, as well as the Presidential Statement adopted on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of UNSC Resolution 1325 in October 2005,

– having regard to its resolution of 30 November 2000 on participation of women in peaceful conflict resolution[1],

– having regard to its resolution of 1 June 2006 on the situation of women in armed conflicts and their role in the reconstruction and democratic process in post-conflict countries[2],

– having regard to the Conclusions of the General Affairs and External Relations Council meeting of 23 and 24 May 2005 on the European Security and Defence Policy and to the draft guidelines on the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 in the context of ESDP, approved by the European Council on 16 December 2005[3],

– having regard to the decision by the Norwegian government to introduce by law a 40% quota for women's representation on the governing boards of joint stock companies,

– having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,

– having regard to the report of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A6-0362/2006),

A considering the milestone reached by the 1995 Beijing conference in advancing the gender equality agenda including with regard to women's representation in politics,

B. considering that women's full and equal participation in the political process and decision-making will more accurately reflect the composition of society and is essential for future generations and the proper functioning of democratic societies,

C. whereas good governance includes respect for fundamental freedoms and treating women's rights as basic fundamental rights,

D. whereas the situation of women in international politics depends primarily on the situation of women nationally and on the strategies for the advancement of women put in place at national level,

E. considering the significant role that the United Nations Secretary-General plays through his staffing policy in setting an example for a more gender-balanced political scene

[1] OJ C 228, 13.8.2001, p. 186.
[2] *Texts Adopted* of that date, P6_TA(2006)0245).
[3] http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_5495_en.htm

worldwide,

F. whereas of the 191 countries that are currently members of the United Nations, only 47 are signatories and 115 are parties to the Convention on the Political Rights of Women of 20 December 1952 and whereas, as a result, women cannot fully exercise their political rights and are banned from participating in elections or from holding public office in a number of countries,

G. whereas of the 191 countries that are currently members of the United Nations, women hold the highest office (Head of State) in only seven, are Head of Government or Prime Minister in eight and hold the position of Foreign Minister in seventeen and of Defence Minister in nine,

H. whereas of 191 States represented at the United Nations, only 18 women currently serve as Ambassadors to the United Nations in New York and 11 as Ambassadors accredited to the United Nations in Geneva,

I. whereas, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, of the 43961 members of parliaments worldwide (lower house and upper house combined), only 16.4% are women (i.e. 7,195); whereas Scandinavian countries have the highest number of female MPs (40%), followed by the Americas (19,6%) and Europe (OSCE countries, excluding Scandinavian countries) for an average of 16,9 %, slightly above sub-Saharan African (16,4%), Asia (16.3%) the Pacific (12%) and the Arab States (8.3%),

J. whereas this marks a fundamental democratic deficit both at European level and in the wider international context,

K. whereas, in spite of the existence of de jure equality in most European countries and worldwide, de facto inequalities remain regarding the distribution of power, responsibilities and access to economic, social and cultural resources between women and men due to the persistence of prevailing traditional gender roles and their impact in the unequal sharing of family responsibilities and the obstacles to the conciliation of family and professional lives for most women,

L. whereas despite Community and national legislation introduced over the past 30 years, today's remaining gender pay gap across the EU is on average 15% for jobs of equal value,

M. whereas today more women than men hold a university degree,

N. whereas procedures in electoral systems and political institutions, including political parties, have a decisive impact on strategies to achieve a gender balance in politics and on whether such a balance is achieved,

O. whereas a requirement to introduce gender-balanced candidate lists would not be effective if the women were all placed at the bottom of the lists and whereas a perfectly zippered list may not achieve the desired results if the country uses an "open list" voting system, which allows voters to change the order of the candidates on the list,

P. having regard to the crucial role played by political parties in preventing the increase in or in increasing women's representation in politics through various means, including quotas policies; noting that while more and more political parties claim that their general membership is gender balanced, the upper levels of political parties seldom reflect this, with only 11% of party leaders worldwide being women,

Q. noting with great interest that, besides quotas, a whole range of other tools are available to ensure increased participation of women in politics, such as positive discrimination measures aiming at ensuring women's presence and activity in parliaments and other elected positions,

R. further noting, in that respect, the example of Rwanda, which ranks first in the world in terms of the number of women parliamentarians (Lower House) with 48.8% of women parliamentarians, following the October 2003 elections, and the adoption of a new Constitution, changes in the electoral system and the introduction quotas within political parties,

S. stressing that countries that have been the scene of conflict and have had their electoral systems designed and elections organized by the UN are more likely to have more women holding elected office (such as Rwanda, Afghanistan and East Timor) because of the UN imposition of a more balanced gender representation,

T. considering the importance of changing the cultural acceptance of balanced decision-making through awareness-raising campaigns and whereas achieving gender balance in politics often requires changes in public attitudes,

U. bearing in mind the fact that the sharing of family responsibilities between women and men has an impact on the full participation of women in politics,

V. recognising the key role of non-governmental and voluntary associations in attempting to influence society as a whole to accept a more equitable gender balance in politics,

W. considering that women can and have made a positive contribution to bringing about a culture of change on gender issues and on essential societal and political issues as a whole through their involvement at grassroots level,

X. considering the importance of early education and training to ensure that women develop the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to fully participate in society and politics,

Y. considering the contribution made by women in shedding light on the particular needs of women (such as the reconciliation of professional and private lives, the influence of the gender pay gap on policy-making across all sectors of society, the needs and aspirations of women in areas of conflict) so that future policy integrates a gender perspective and better serves democracy as a whole,

Z. stressing that women's recognition by their peers for their positive contribution to international politics is essential in contributing to a more gender-balanced political culture and noting that only 12 of the 92 Nobel Peace Prize Laureates have been women,

1. Recalls that it has already been recognised at European level[1] that balanced participation by both sexes in decision-making is an essential condition for democracy;

2. Welcomes the results of recent elections that brought women to the highest functions as Heads of State in Finland, Liberia and Chile, and the appointment of women as Heads of Government in Germany, Jamaica and South Korea;

3. Welcomes the recent appointments of women as Vice-President of the Government in Spain, Foreign Minister in Austria, Greece, Israel and the UK, and as Defence Minister in Chile;

4. Applauds the gender parity policy of the Government of Spain headed by Jose Luis Zapatero, which led namely to the appointment of an exemplary Executive with as many women as men;

5. Deeply regrets that in spite of a large number of political statements and recommendations, programmes of actions adopted worldwide and specific legislation introduced at national level, inequality and gender discrimination and under-representation of women in politics still persist in Europe and worldwide; notes in particular that the percentage of women elected to the European Parliament ranges from 58% to 0% depending on the Member State (with an average slightly above 30%) and that the percentage of women elected to the Member States' national parliaments varies between 45% and 9%;

6. Draws attention to the fact that the low level of participation by women in centres of decision-making and governance is often linked to problems with combining work and family life, to the unequal distribution of family responsibilities and to discrimination at work and in occupational training;

7. Stresses the need to look beyond numbers, and actually focus on how women active in politics influence the shaping of governance and conflict resolution, and how they contribute towards ensuring that governance reforms, accountability and the rule of law are highly placed on the political agenda at national and international level;

8. Stresses that the low proportion of women in politics deprives Europe of a precious human potential;

9. Supports the work carried out by the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the Inter-Parliamentary Union towards a more gender-balanced political scene;

10. Welcomes the inclusion of the issue of equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels in the work programme of the CEDAW for 2006 and is looking forward to its findings and recommendations; requests that the Commission and the Council Presidency brief the Parliament on the CEDAW negotiations;

11. Regrets the under-employment of women as Special and Personal Representatives and Envoys, and Personal and Special Advisers of the United Nations Secretary-General and

[1] European Parliament resolution on women in decision-making (OJ C 346, 4.12.2000, p.82).

in other high-level positions in the United Nations as a whole;

12. Notes that the position of UN Secretary-General has never been filled by a woman; deeply regrets that following the departure of a woman as UN Deputy Secretary-General, that position was filled by a man; strongly calls for the position of UN Deputy Secretary-General to be filled by a woman if the Secretary-General is a man and vice-versa;

13. Encourages the UN Secretary-General to appoint more women to the positions of Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Representative or Special Envoy, Personal and Special Advisers; calls upon the UN Secretary-General to request from UN Member States that names of female candidates, alongside names of male candidates, be submitted when considering filling in such high-level positions;

14. Encourages Security-Council delegations to include women, to ensure a gender focus in all peace-keeping, conflict resolution or peace building missions, and also to meet with women's organisations at local level while on visits to conflict areas;

15. Welcomes the Council decision to send out a questionnaire to the Member States requesting information on steps that they have taken towards the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325; and calls on the Council to share its findings with the Parliament;

16. Calls upon the EU's High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the Commission and all the Member States to recruit more women as civilian military and police officer, as well as to appoint a gender focal point in all ESDP missions;

17. Strongly encourages gender-specific training for all staff deployed as part of ESDP missions; also encourages the publication of a gender tool-kit dedicated to the implications of gender in conflict and post-conflict situations for all staff part of ESDP operations;

18. Welcomes the higher number of women commissioners under Commission President Barroso but deplores that full parity is not yet attained at Commissioner level to set an example in Europe and worldwide;

19. Welcomes the Commission's new roadmap for gender equality, in particular its decision to promote a network of women in decision-making;

20. Welcomes the decision to create a European Institute for Gender Equality, which should take the initiative to promote a greater representation of women in international politics;

21. Calls on the Commission to keep it regularly informed of the progress of the work of the Commissioners Group on Fundamental rights, Anti-discrimination and Equal opportunities;

22. Deplores the fact that out of 107 EU third-country delegations, only 7 women are currently serving at the level of Head of EC delegation; urges the Commission to appoint more women in top positions in external delegations;

23. Calls on the Commission to use the EU external relations and development and

cooperation policy instruments as vectors for the promotion of women in politics, in particular (deletion) the participation of women as voters and political candidates, the inclusion of gender issues on political parties' programmes during election campaigns, as well as while dealing with other regional organisations, in particular with respect to capacity-building;

24. Calls on the Commission to increase its support for projects aiming to ensure women's participation in political life in and outside the EU, namely in developing countries;

25. Recommends that its competent committee establish and support permanent and regular cooperation between female Parliamentarians from all over the world and provide resources so that they could meet at least once a year and for other joint activities of this cooperation;

26. Calls on the Member States and the Commission whereas appropriate to promote educational programmes that sensitise citizens, with particular attention to young people, to the equal rights of women to participate fully in political life from an early age;

27. Calls on the future European Institute for Gender Equality to report regularly to the European Parliament about its collection of data and the impact of national parity legislation and gender equality policies carried out by Member States and the best practices of European and national political parties;

28. Calls on the future European Institute for Gender Equality to monitor and evaluate progress in achieving balanced participation of women and men in political and public life across Europe by setting up and applying indicators for the monitoring and evaluation on the basis of internationally comparable gender-segregated data, and then publish reports on the measures taken and progress made in women's involvement in decision-making and disseminate these reports widely;

29. Calls on the future European Institute for Gender Equality to liaise with independent bodies, such as a parity observatory or a special independent mediation body established at national level, with a view to monitoring governmental policies in the field of balanced participation of women and men in political and public life;

30. Encourages the future European Institute for Gender Equality to collaborate with research institutions to further study the barriers to women's access to high-level public appointments and political life including through research on stereotypes of women in politics;

31. Encourages the future European Institute for Gender Equality to look beyond numbers, and actually measure how women influence political agendas, at both national and international level, namely in promoting good governance, accountability and the rule of law;

32. Acknowledges that states are the main motor for effective change in political representation; urges all states to follow up on their commitments under the Declaration and the Platform for Action adopted in Beijing in September 1995 and during the Beijing

+5 and Beijing + 10 meetings, as well as their commitments under international law, in particular with regards the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 and the Lisbon Strategy;

33. Strongly encourages the UN to call for a new World Conference on Women, ensuring the creation of an appropriate worldwide forum to address women's rights and maintain momentum, ten years after the Fourth World Conference on Women that took place in Beijing in 1995;

34. Calls on all Member States to encourage women to apply to high-level positions on the international scene and urges Member States to provide names of female candidates along the names of male candidates for high-level positions in international negotiations and policy making, namely in international organisations;

35. Calls on the Commission to analyse and disseminate best practices on international and national measures aimed at enhancing the participation of women in the highest-level positions of international politics;

36. Calls on the governments of the Member States to review, where necessary, their national legislation in order to promote parity in politics; calls on the governments of the EU, where applicable, to review their national action plans on gender equality in order to lay down practical measures aiming at achieving parity in politics;

37. Calls on Member States to attract, train and appoint more women in diplomatic careers and to promote gender balance for their delegations to United Nations and other international meetings and conferences;

38. Calls on the governments of the EU to counter negative societal attitudes about women's capacity to participate equally in the political process at national and international levels be it by introducing legislative change of by campaigning in favour of an increase in women representation in politics as well as to promote the goal of gender balance in all public positions;

39. Calls on the Member States to review their constitution, legislation and practice, with the aim of ensuring that gender equality be enshrined as a fundamental principle in the constitutions of the Member States and to review the differential impact of electoral systems on the political representation of women in elected bodies and to consider the adjustment or reform of these systems to ensure balanced participation;

40. Calls on the Member States to put in place measures aiming at the reconciliation of social, family and professional life in line with the conclusions of the Barcelona European Council and the Lisbon Strategy thereby creating an enabling environment for women's full participation in politics;

41. Calls on the Member States to adopt appropriate legislative and/or administrative measures to support elected representatives in the reconciliation of their family and public responsibilities and, in particular, encourage parliaments and local and regional authorities to ensure that their timetables and working methods enable elected representatives of both sexes to reconcile their work and family life;

42. Calls on the Member States to consider taking legislative and/or administrative measures aiming at encouraging and supporting employers to allow those participating in political and public decision making to have the right to take time off from their employment without being penalised;

43. Calls on the Member States to offer women more training opportunities to enable them to acquire the skills needed to make it easier to pursue a career in politics and attain high-level posts;

44. Calls on political parties across Europe to set a bracket of a minimum of 40% and a maximum of 60% for representation of both sexes on their lists for any collective organ, to ensure parity;

45. Calls on the Member States to link party funding to the achievement of lists based on parity between the sexes;

46. Encourages political parties across Europe to remove all barriers that, directly or indirectly, discriminate against the participation of women, in order to ensure that women have the right to participate fully at all levels of decision-making in all internal policy-making structures and nominating processes and in the leadership of political parties on equal terms with men;

47. Urges political parties to provide training in conducting campaigns and public speaking to their female activists;

48. Urges political parties to include qualified women and men on party lists for elective office;

49. Encourages the development of strategies to appeal to women voters and to raise awareness of the specific needs and aspirations of women in political party programs;

50. Encourages external delegations of the Parliament to raise awareness of the issue of female representation in politics;

51. Reaffirms its commitment to its gender mainstreaming approach and to a gender-balanced representation on all delegations and missions, including election observation missions;

52. Encourages Election Observation Missions headed by some of its Members to be particularly attentive to the issue of women participation in political campaigns, be it as candidates or as voters;

53. Encourages the promotion of young women in civil society organizations to enable them to acquire experience, skills and capacities that are transferable to the field of political participation;

54. Encourages the establishment of non-governmental organizations that provide training in leadership, decision-making, public speaking skills, use of information and communication technologies, confidence-building and political campaigning and the support of such NGOs where they exist;

55. Encourages the media to recognize the importance of women's participation in the political process, provide fair and balanced coverage of male and female candidates and also to pay attention to the impact of party programmes on promoting women's needs and rights and democratic representation;

56. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the other EU institutions and bodies, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the EU and the UN, as well as to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

From myth (Greek myth of the Amazons) to ancient history (legendary Queens of Ethiopia - BC 4530-3240) and modern history, women's participation in political life - be it direct, by holding public office, or indirect, by being in influential positions - much has been said and written on the role of women in politics. Still today it is interesting to notice the words in the media: the adjectives/nouns "female" or "woman" will be used systematically on the election/appointment of a politician in a top job, if it is a woman. The same is not true if it is a man.

A woman's right to vote and to hold public office has slowly gained ground through the XX Century. American women were the first to obtain the right to stand for election in 1788. New Zealand was the first country to officially grant women the right to vote in 1893. Followed, to name only a few, by Australia (1902), Finland (1906), Norway (1907), Portugal (1931), France (1944), Switzerland (1971). Such same rights have only recently been introduced in Kuwait, or re-instated in Afghanistan following the fall of the Taliban. In a few remaining countries today, women are still not allowed to vote or to stand for elections[1]. One should also note that restrictions to a woman's right to vote (to women holding university degrees, for example) have progressively been lifted, to reach full equality with men in the great majority of countries today.

This report presents a panorama of the situation of women in international politics at the turn of the XXI century. And it is crucial to recall that women's rights are basically human rights for more than half of the world's population. Which international positions do women occupy today? What kind of political responsibilities with an external/foreign affairs dimension have they been entrusted with? What difference does their presence make or should make for the promotion of women's rights as basic human rights and for policy-making for societies as a whole?

Thanks to the landmark Beijing Summit of 1995, awareness has increased over the remaining obstacles for women to fully enter politics. Beijing marked a turning point in bringing anti-discrimination issues to the forefront of the political agenda. Public opinion and decision-makers have since then been more receptive to the prospect of women holding high office. Parity legislations, the introduction of quotas or its mere threat followed. How much of an impact have they had?

Recent developments seem encouraging: the visibility of women on the world scene has increased in recent years with the accession of women such as Madeleine Albright and Condoleezza Rice (United States), Megawati Soekarnoputri (Indonesia), Corazon Aquino and Gloria Arroyo (Philippines), Angela Merkel (Germany), to the highest functions as Heads of State or Government. And some women were appointed ministers in areas traditionally headed by men, such as Defence or Finance (for example, Michele Alliot-Marie in France and Manuela Ferreira Leite in Portugal). More recently, in the first months of 2006, Finish President Tarja Kaarina Halonen won re-election for a second term. Michelle Bachelet of

[1] In the United Arab Emirates, where the Parliament is officially appointed, neither men nor women have the right to vote or to stand for election. In Saudi Arabia, men took part, in 2005, in the first local elections ever held in the country. Women however were not allowed to exercise their right to vote or to stand for election on that occasion. Kuwaiti women voted and ran as candidates for the first time in a municipal election in April 2006. http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/suffrage.htm

Chili and Hellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia became the first ever female presidents on their respective continents. In South Korea Han Myeong Sook was appointed Foreign Minister last March. Israel and the UK, who both had women Prime Ministers, also recently appointed women Foreign Ministers. As recently as early June, Susan Schwab was appointed US Trade Representative. Today, when a new Secretary-General of the United Nations is about to be selected, there is a widespread perception that there are plenty of experienced and qualified women who could take that position.

However, a closer look at today's figures of female political representation does not give us much ground to rejoice. Obstacles of non-legal nature still hamper women's full participation in public life and the issue of women in politics still needs to remain high on the political agenda, both at international and national levels. Despite expressions of good will and existing International Conventions, Security Council Resolution 1325, European Parliament resolution 2025 of November 2000, the number of women is still relatively low comparatively to men on the international stage. Women are still not seen as playing equal with men, and yet, women are at the heart of any lasting solution to any conflict (see Véronique de Keyser's report on the situation of women in armed conflicts and their role in the reconstruction and democratic process in post-conflict countries).

Recognition about the positive contribution that women bring to Peace and Security is still crucially lacking today, if the Nobel Peace Prize is anything to go by (since its inception in 1901, the Nobel Prize was awarded to only 12 women out of 92 laureates).

Out of the current 191 Member States of the United Nations, we count currently 7 women Heads of States and 8 women Heads of Governments.

In a recently published survey, the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) highlights that out of the 43, 961 members of parliaments worldwide (lower house and upper house combined), only 16.4% are women (i.e. 7,195). Scandinavian countries have the most MPs (40%), then the Americas (19,6%) and Europe (OSCE countries, excluding Scandinavian countries) for an average of 16,9 %, slightly above sub-Saharan African (16,4%), Asia (16.3%) the Pacific (12%°) and the Arab States where only 8.3% of elected MPs are women.

Interestingly, countries that have recently entered a post-conflict era have a high number of women holding public office, despite the fact that before they had no such tradition and were actually very patriarchal societies. This is the case in Afghanistan, Rwanda and East Timor. What made the difference was the fact that the organization of the elections in those countries was entrusted to the UN, who imposed a more balanced gender representation to the political and electoral strategies. These experiences prove that all countries could also dramatically change the representation of women in politics, if political determination existed from these I command of the political/electoral process.

But one needs to look beyond numbers, and actually measure how women influence the political agendas, both at the national and international levels. It is the Rapporteur's view that as we move from numbers to influence in women’s role in politics, issues such as good governance, governance reforms and the rule of law will be placed firmly and higher on the political agenda at national and international level.

In recent years, the positive contribution that women bring to diplomacy, conflict resolution, peacekeeping, peace negotiations, as well as in areas such as policing and the judiciary, has been widely acknowledged. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 of October 2000 is a testament to this awareness, by highlighting not only the well-known impact that

conflicts have on women, but, as importantly, the impact that women, at all levels, may have on conflicts, namely in shaping their resolution and in sustaining reconciliation mechanisms and long-term development strategies. Hence, the need to include women in peacekeeping missions (and not just as gender advisors) and at any peace negotiating tables.

Far from being exhaustive, this report concentrates on the most "visible" posts in the international political arena where women can have an impact in peace and security matters: Heads of States, Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers, Defence Ministers, as representatives of regional organisations institutions (concentrating on the European ones – the EU, the OSCE and the Council of Europe) and of the United Nations.

It is worth noting the political significance of indicators and data or the lack of it. Collecting data and gender policies established in other regional organisations has been a challenge while writing this report. For finding out which public office positions women are currently holding or which top jobs women hold in international organisations, and even more difficult, for finding of data concerning regional organisations outside the "western" area. The Rapporteur's main recommendations are targeted mainly at the governments of the EU Member States, as primary depositories of all legislative texts adopted at international level. The EU and its Member States have to set the example at international level and in particular at the United Nations. Governments of EU Member States, and all EU institutions namely the Commission and the Council, are urged to submit the name of one female candidate for each male candidate they propose to fill positions at EU (such as Special Representatives for CFSP) and at the international level, in particular within the United Nations. A more active role is also recommended for the EU's external delegations in promoting gender balance in political and development programs in third countries, as part of the EU's overall strategy to implementing the Millennium Development Goals and in particular the crucial aspects addressed by MDG3 in "promoting gender equality and empowering women".

The Rapporteur also lists a set of recommendations for action by the United Nations Secretary General, as she views the essential role that he can play in setting the example for a fairer distribution of high-level positions between men and women through the UN's recruitment policy.

The role of political parties in each country is also pivotal in redressing the gender balance. The Rapporteur urges political parties across Europe to embrace measures ensuring that the representation of the either sex falls into a bracket of a minimum of 40% and a maximum of 60 % for any political collective organ. She also urges political parties to provide adequate training for women politicians to fill in the current gender gap. The EU's Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs highlights women's full participation in economic life is essential. The Rapporteur recalls that the Lisbon Strategy firmly places gender sensitive economic policies at the heart of the overall strategy for growth and competitiveness of the EU. It is the Rapporteur's view that women's full participation in politics is an essential requisite to achieve gender sensitive economic policies.

PROCEDURE

Title	Women in international politics
Procedure number	2006/2057(INI)
Committee responsible Date authorisation announced in plenary	FEMM 16.3.2006
Committee(s) asked for opinion(s) Date announced in plenary	 0.0.0000 0.0.0000
Not delivering opinion(s) Date of decision	 0.0.0000
Enhanced cooperation Date announced in plenary	 0.0.0000
Rapporteur(s) Date appointed	Ana Maria Gomes 21.2.2006
Previous rapporteur(s)	
Discussed in committee	12.9.2006 5.10.2006
Date adopted	5.10.2006
Result of final vote	+ 12 - 9 0 0
Members present for the final vote	Edit Bauer, Hiltrud Breyer, Edite Estrela, Věra Flasarová, Lissy Gröner, Lívia Járóka, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Urszula Krupa, Astrid Lulling, Siiri Oviir, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, Marie-Line Reynaud, Teresa Riera Madurell
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Iratxe García Pérez, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg, Ana Maria Gomes, Karin Resetarits, Feleknas Uca
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	Manolis Mavrommatis, Margrietus van den Berg, Karin Scheele
Date tabled	17.10.2006
Comments **(available in one language only)**	