

For debate in the Standing Committee — see Rule 15 of the Rules of Procedure

Doc. 10743

14 November 2005

Mechanisms to ensure women's participation in decision-making

Report

Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

Rapporteur: Mrs Minodora Cliveti, Romania, Socialist Group

Summary

Despite the undertakings made, women continue to be under-represented in the political and economic decision-making process, both in the individual Council of Europe member states and in international organisations. And yet, balanced participation of men and women in decision-making is a precondition for the improved functioning of democracy and society and is part of the overall sharing of responsibilities between women and men.

The Parliamentary Assembly is advocating a series of positive measures to strengthen institutional mechanisms – such as framework laws, governmental programmes, national action plans and the setting up of gender equality committees in elected assemblies – in order to make up for lost time in this field. It stresses that political parties have a responsibility to promote women's access to decision-making positions and that the media have a role to play in informing public opinion about the place of women in society.

The Assembly should call on Council of Europe member states to introduce institutional mechanisms guaranteeing women's participation in the decision-making process, ensure such mechanisms are implemented in practice, set the objective of achieving a minimum 40% representation of women on decision-making bodies, particularly within elected assemblies, and promote women's participation in all sectors of social and economic life.

The Assembly should also recommend that the Council of Europe pursue the implementation of its Recommendation Rec(2003)3 on balanced participation by women and men in political and public decision-making, draw up at the earliest opportunity the "Charter for Electoral Equality", ensure women's participation in decision-making bodies and appoint an ombudsperson responsible for implementing the principle of equality between women and men in the Council of Europe member states.

I. Draft resolution

1. In spite of the progress being made in Europe in terms of improving equal opportunities and rights for women and men, the Parliamentary Assembly notes a persistently low level of participation by women in decision-making processes. Women remain under-represented in Europe in national and regional parliaments, municipal councils, governments and posts of responsibility in political parties, the civil service and industry.

2. The Assembly considers that balanced participation by women and men in decision-making is a precondition for improving the functioning of democracy and society, as are respect for women's rights, their financial autonomy and their education, in a context of shared responsibilities between women and men. Ongoing under-representation of women in political and economic decision-making reflects a basic democratic deficit in both the member states of the Council of Europe and the broader international context.

3. The adoption of legislation or action plans and the introduction of institutional mechanisms aimed at equal opportunities between women and men seldom result in any real increase in female participation at the highest national and international decision-making levels. Many European countries fail to prioritise gender equality and even where the prohibition of discrimination against women is enshrined in legislation it is not always implemented in practice. This means that legislation on equality or gender balance has only very seldom achieved the anticipated results.

4. Persisting stereotypes and traditions or discrimination in terms of access to the labour market or political life – and “career progression” within one's chosen profession - are so many obstacles to female participation in the decision-making process. Few member states have achieved the objective set out in Committee of Ministers' Recommendation Rec(2003)3 on balanced participation by women and men in political and public decision-making, namely that “the representation of either women or men in any decision-making body in political or public life should not fall below 40%”.

5. The Assembly is now convinced of the need to make up for lost time. In view of the under-representation of women in decision-making bodies, it is a matter of urgency to promote positive measures because those adopted hitherto to promote women's participation in decision-making have had but limited impact. The Council of Europe and its member states must therefore identify the requisite mechanisms and good practices to promote the implementation of Recommendation Rec(2003)3 and alert the European decision-making bodies and public to the need for female participation in decision-making.

6. The Assembly therefore invites Council of Europe member and observer states to:

6.1. set the objective of achieving a gender balance in decision-making processes, with the initial target of a critical mass of at least 40% women in all governmental and parliamentary bodies;

6.2. with this in mind, prioritise the implementation of Committee of Ministers' Recommendation Rec(2003)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making which cannot be successfully put into practice without creating or reinforcing national and international mechanisms for promoting balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making processes and making this a priority in all ministries by implementing gender mainstreaming;

6.3. ensure gender-balanced participation in international delegations;

6.4. monitor and assess progress by regularly collecting, analysing and disseminating quantitative and qualitative data on women and men at all levels in the various public and private sector decision-making posts and making public the number of women and men employed at the various civil service levels on an annual basis;

6.5. raise the awareness of the media on the issue of gender equality in order to prepare them for the role which they play in forming public opinion of the place of women in society and the impact of the media image of women on their level of participation in public and political life;

6.6. associate non-governmental organisations with the implementation of these information campaigns;

- 6.7 . encourage access by women to decision-making in all spheres of public life by smashing the “glass ceiling”;
 - 6.8. reinforce institutional mechanisms;
 - 6.9. revise the rules, procedures and, if necessary the electoral systems, in order to include the gender equality dimension with a view to achieving, by 2020, a minimum 40% representation of women in parliaments and other elected assemblies by urging early preparation of the “Charter for Electoral Equality” proposed by the Assembly in its Recommendation 1676 (2004) on women’s participation in elections;
 - 6.10. give financial incentives to those political parties which achieve the aim of a minimum 40% representation of women in the party’s decision-making bodies and amongst candidates elected;
 - 6.11. take account of the equality dimension when adopting national, regional and local budgets;
 - 6.12. ensure the appropriate implementation of existing legislation on gender mainstreaming strategy;
 - 6.13. adopt a framework law and a governmental programme on gender equality and introduce machinery to assess the implementation of the law and the programme and provide for their decentralised implementation;
 - 6.14. appoint a specialist on gender equality issues to any existing mediation bodies;
 - 6.15. ensure that public institutions set the reasonable objective of ensuring a proportional number of 40 % of women in top posts in order to remedy any imbalance in representation of women and men;
 - 6.16. promote participation by representatives of the civil society, particularly by those who show a keen interest in gender equality issues, in all political debate, thus creating a “bridge” for women between civil society and political life.
7. The Assembly invites all national and regional parliamentary assemblies to set up committees on equality between women and men.
 8. The Assembly decides to ensure full implementation of the principle of balanced participation by women and men in decision-making processes in the Council of Europe and its organs and bodies and therefore decides:
 - 8.1. to reaffirm its Resolutions 1366 (2004) and 1426 (2005) on candidates for the European Court of Human Rights, in which it decided not to take account of lists of candidates that do not include at least one candidate of each sex, except where the candidates belong to the sex under-represented in the Court, ie representing less than 40% of the total number of judges;
 - 8.2. not to consider lists of candidates submitted by the Committee of Ministers for the post of Commissioner for Human Rights that do not include at least one candidate of each sex;
 - 8.3. to proceed in the same manner for any other election for which the Assembly is responsible involving more than one candidate ;
 - 8.4. to continue implementing Resolution 1348 (2003) and reinforce it with binding provisions, amending the Assembly Rules of Procedure if necessary;
 - 8.5. to encourage female parliamentarians to work together, above and beyond any national and political divisions, within the informal group of female Assembly members, in order to increase their representation in such posts of responsibility as committee, sub-committee and national delegation chairpersons and encourage them to put their names forward for rapporteurships and to add their names to lists of speakers;

- 8.6. to invite the Bureau to propose solutions to problems identified by the Committee on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, notably the under-representation of women in the bureaux of political groups, national delegations and committees, and the shortage of female rapporteurs;
- 8.7. to encourage its political groups to take account of the gender equality principle in appointing the members of committee bureaux and speakers taking the floor on their behalf during debates;
- 8.8. to encourage the national delegations to appoint more female Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and Chairwomen of the national delegations themselves;
- 8.9. to encourage the committees to appoint more female rapporteurs.

II. Draft recommendation

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to Resolution ... (2005) on mechanisms to guarantee women's participation in decision-making.
2. The Assembly invites the Committee of Ministers to:
 - 2.1. continue its follow-up action on Committee of Ministers' Recommendation Rec(2003)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making and ensure in particular that indicators are introduced to gauge the efficiency of the institutional mechanisms and national action plans put in place in the member states of the Council of Europe;
 - 2.2. in particular, invite the Steering Committee on Equality to conduct studies on the selection criteria used for public appointment procedures in order to pinpoint the factors that exercise a negative influence on female appointments and recommend measures to eliminate such factors;
 - 2.3. implement without delay the Assembly's Recommendation 1676 (2004) on women's participation in elections by drawing up a "Charter for Electoral Equality" aimed at giving women a genuine opportunity to accede to posts in political and public life and at combating family voting;
 - 2.4. ensure participation by women in its steering committees and its other working bodies at the levels mentioned in its own recommendation, namely at least 40%;
 - 2.5. continue its policy of promoting equal opportunities in the Council of Europe Secretariat and adopt further measures, taking account of the under-representation of women in the Organisation's top posts and in middle management;
 - 2.6. instruct the competent steering committee to define the duties and terms of reference of a Council of Europe gender equality ombudsperson with responsibilities covering all aspects of promotion of equal opportunities for men and women in Europe, including gender balance in decision-making, who would ensure implementation of the principle of equality between women and men in the member states of the Council of Europe, in co-ordination with the Commissioner for Human Rights.

III. Explanatory memorandum, by Mrs Cliveti

I. Introduction

1. In spite of the progress being made in Europe in terms of improving equal opportunities and rights for women and men, the Assembly notes a persistently low level of participation by women in decision-making processes. Women remain under-represented in Europe in national and regional parliaments, municipal councils, governments and posts of responsibility in political parties, the civil service and industry.

2. The Assembly considers that balanced participation by women and men in decision-making is a precondition for improving the functioning of democracy and society, as are respect for women's rights, their financial autonomy and their education, in a context of shared responsibilities between women and men. Ongoing under-representation of women in political and economic decision-making reflects a basic democratic deficit in both the member States of the Council of Europe and the broader international context.

3. The adoption of legislation or action plans and the introduction of institutional mechanisms aimed at equal opportunities between women and men seldom result in any real increase in female participation at the highest national and international decision-making levels. Many European countries fail to prioritise gender equality, and even where the prohibition of discrimination against women is enshrined in legislation, it is not always implemented in practice. This means that legislation on equality or gender balance has only very seldom achieved the anticipated results. Persisting stereotypes and traditions or discrimination in terms of access to the labour market or political life – and “career progression” within one's chosen profession - are so many obstacles to female participation in the decision-making process.

4. The Council of Europe may be considered as a pioneer in promoting the balanced representation of women and men in decision-making processes. I particularly welcome the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe of Recommendation Rec(2003)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making.

5. The Assembly has also addressed several aspects of the machinery for female participation in decision-making. Recommendation 1413 (1999), for instance, deals with equal representation in political life. In its Recommendation 1676 (2004) on women's participation in elections, the Assembly advocated a series of measures to eliminate family voting and increase the minimum representation of women in parliament and other elected assemblies at the local, regional, national and supranational levels to at least 40% by the year 2020.

6. Nevertheless, we cannot overlook the fact that little significant progress has been recorded in member States since the adoption of these texts by the Council of Europe: female participation in decision-making remains low at all levels in Europe. Few member States have achieved the aim of balanced participation by women and men, which Committee of Ministers Recommendation R (2003) 3 defines as follows: “the representation of either women or men in any decision-making body in political or public life should not fall below 40%”.

7. The Assembly is convinced of the need for affirmative action measures which cannot be called into question on the basis of the principle of equality of all citizens, in view of the under-representation of women in decision-making bodies. This is a deficit which we must tackle as a matter of urgency. For all the progress made, particularly in the Council of Europe, the measures to promote female participation in decision-making have had limited impact. The Council of Europe and its member States are invited to identify the requisite mechanisms and good practices to promote the application of Recommendation R (2003) 3 and alert European decision-making bodies and citizens to the need for female participation in decision-making processes.

II. A new awareness at European level, but limited advances

8. For ten years now, the question of women's participation in decision-making has been a priority for many international organizations. Following the 4th World Conference on Women held in Beijing on 15 September 1995, the participating States undertook to ensure equal access to and full participation by women in power structures and decision-making. In its Resolution 1216 (2000) on follow-up action to the United Nations 4th World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), the Parliamentary Assembly again advocated measures to promote increased participation by women in the decision-making process and

parity at political and public level, in particular by asking political parties to draw up lists containing equal numbers of women and men and proposing making their funding conditional upon the achievement of this objective.

9. The Council of Europe has adopted a series of texts and measures to improve women's participation in decision-making, particularly within its own subordinate bodies. However, despite all these efforts, women remain under-represented at this level in most Council of Europe member States. In order to boost women's access to decision-making at both the international and national levels, the conditions must be created for improving the apportionment of responsibilities at the professional and political levels, and new institutional or party-political mechanisms and support measures are needed in order to raise public awareness of the issue of female participation in decision-making.

A. In the Council of Europe

1. *The Committee of Ministers Recommendation on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making*

10. At the Fourth Conference of European Equal Opportunities Ministers organised by the Council of Europe in Istanbul in 1997 a Declaration was adopted on equality between women and men as a fundamental criterion of democracy, together with multidisciplinary strategies aiming at the balanced representation of women and men in all spheres of life, including political life.

11. Committee of Ministers Recommendation Rec(2003)3 is a comprehensive strategic guideline for the implementation by European governments of the commitments into which they entered on ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (the CEDAW Convention). The text of this recommendation provides member States with a basis for drafting or updating their legislation and national practices in order to achieve the desired gender balance. The Committee of Ministers recommends that the governments of member States promote and encourage special measures to stimulate and support a desire by women to participate in political and public decision-making, and facilitate access to such decision-making positions.

12. The measures proposed in the Recommendation break down into three parts: legislative and administrative measures, supportive measures, and a monitoring system. The real innovation contained in this Recommendation is the monitoring system which it advises the member States to apply to their governmental policies in the field of balanced participation of women and men in political and public life.

13. Member States are invited to introduce and apply the indicators proposed in the Recommendation for monitoring progress in the field of balanced participation of women and men in decision-making. The indicators include collecting statistics on the composition of political and public decision-making bodies, such as the number of female and male elected representatives in parliaments, according to their political affiliation at all levels; the percentage of women and men in national delegations to such assemblies as the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, and to other international organisations and forums; the composition of governments at all levels; the percentage of the highest-ranking female and male civil servants, judges on the supreme court, party leaders, and members of employers' associations, trade unions and professional organisations.

14. All these indicators should be made public and reported to national parliaments in order to encourage national debates on progress made and on action needed to remedy imbalances in the apportionment of women and men in decision-making posts.

15. The relevant support measures should include a special emphasis on educational and training activities for young people relating to gender equality, and on campaigns to encourage the sharing of responsibilities between women and men in private life.

16. In order to illustrate the policy thrusts advocated in the Recommendation, the Steering Committee on Equality (CDEG) has published a very useful report on good practices designed to achieve balanced representation of women and men in political and social decision-making, which has been translated into

several languages¹. Furthermore, the CDEG has assessed² national machinery, actions plans and gender mainstreaming in Council of Europe member States since the 4th World Conference on Women³, and is now working on gathering the corresponding statistical data.

17. The Assembly notes with satisfaction the work and decisions of the Committee of Ministers geared to promoting women's participation in its structures, and encourages it to continue its efforts, notably in order to ensure balanced participation by women and men in its working groups and steering committees⁴, on the model of the system applied in the European Commission⁵. The Rapporteur considers that the Council of Europe, as the pioneer organisation in the field of human rights and promotion of gender equality, should set an example in terms of female participation in its various bodies.

18. It has to be acknowledged that the Council of Europe has a major responsibility in terms of promoting women's participation in public and political life in all its member States. Its policy on promoting equality between women and men is an aspect of respect for human rights and democracy.

19. The Assembly would point out that vigorous efforts are needed to eradicate the practice of family voting, which persists in some member States, preventing women from exercising their right to vote freely, in person and in secret. It also urges the Committee of Ministers to ensure the early drafting of the "Charter for Electoral Equality" proposed by the Assembly⁶. This Charter should lay down all the necessary measures to outlaw and eliminate family voting, and also set the aim of increasing to 40% the minimum proportion of female representation in parliaments and other elected assemblies by the year 2020. In this connection I welcome the Venice Commission's position on the proposed Charter, which is that "the adoption of a Charter on Electoral Equality geared to eliminating family voting and aspiring to gender parity on elected bodies would help make gender equality in this field a practical reality."⁷

2. The Parliamentary Assembly

a. Improving women's participation in the Parliamentary Assembly's working structures

20. In 1999 the Assembly adopted Recommendation 1413 on equal representation in political life, in which it invited its national delegations to urge their governments to introduce specific measures to correct the under-representation of women. Besides such institutional measures as setting up parliamentary committees, delegations for women's rights or public bodies responsible for equal opportunities, the Assembly recommended establishing gender balance in political parties and making the latter's funding conditional upon the achievement of this objective.

21. Figures collected at the end of 2003 show that in the 45 member states of the Council of Europe, women represented 17.9% of members of parliament⁸. In 11 member States men represented over 90% of MPs, and 7 governments still had no female ministers at all.

22. In 2004, women accounted for 18.9% of all parliamentarians in the Council of Europe member States. Only Sweden has over 40% of women MPs. Nine States have under 10% of women in their parliaments, namely Albania, Armenia, Hungary, Italy, Malta, the Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Turkey and Ukraine. 18 States have under 20% (Andorra, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina,

¹ *Towards Gender Equality*, Council of Europe Publications, 2002, and Document EG-S-BP (2001) 1.

² See Council of Europe Document EG (2004) 4, "National machinery, action plans and gender mainstreaming in the Council of Europe member States, www.coe.int/equality/en.

³ See Document CDEG (2004) 19, Study of the effective functioning of national mechanisms for equality between women and men in the member States of the Council of Europe, www.coe.int/equality/en.

⁴ On 1 August 2005, 9 of the 46 Permanent Representatives with the Council of Europe (19.6%) were women. They represent, in the Committee of Ministers, Andorra, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Finland, Georgia, Serbia and Montenegro, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and the "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia".

⁵ Article 2 of the European Commission Decision of 19 June 2000 on gender balance in committees and expert groups established by it: "The Commission commits itself to creating a gender balance in expert groups and committees established by it. The aim in the medium term is to reach at least 40 % of members of one sex in each expert group and committee. For expert groups and committees already in existence, the Commission will aim to redress the gender balance upon each replacement of a member and when the term of a member of an expert group or committee comes to an end."

⁶ See paragraph 6 of Recommendation 1676 (2004) on women's participation in elections.

⁷ See Appendix 1 (Opinion of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission)) to the Committee of Ministers' reply to Recommendation 1676 (2004), Document 10512.

⁸ Council of Europe, 2003, Genderware-the Council of Europe and the participation of women in political life, appendices, p.71-72.

Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Georgia, Greece, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, "the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and the United Kingdom). In other words, 27 of the 46 Council of Europe member States have under 20% female MPs.

23. In 2003 the Assembly adopted Resolution 1348 (2003) on gender-balanced representation in the Parliamentary Assembly, which concerns the specific problem of women's under-representation in the national delegations to the Assembly and the Assembly's decision-making bodies.

24. The adoption of this unprecedented resolution has led to the relevant changes being made in the Assembly's Rules of Procedure. A provision has been introduced requiring national delegations to include at least the same percentage of the under-represented gender as is present in their parliaments, with a minimum of one representative of each gender.

25. The political groups of the Parliamentary Assembly have also been invited to respect the principle of gender equality when nominating candidates for Assembly committees, and the national delegations have been asked to take account of the principle of gender equality when nominating Assembly vice-presidents.

26. Although the challenge to the credentials of the Maltese and Irish delegations during the Assembly's January 2004 Session was a practical instance of the application of Resolution 1348 (2003) on gender-balanced representation in the Parliamentary Assembly - which in fact resulted in an amendment to the Assembly's Rules of Procedure - little progress has been made in terms of gender-balanced representation overall in the Parliamentary Assembly. In 2005 the percentage of women in the Parliamentary Assembly (22.4%) was similar to that noted in 2003 (19.4%)⁹.

27. The entry into force of Resolution 1348 (2003) has thus hardly affected the percentage of female office-holders in the Assembly. On the contrary, the situation has considerably worsened as regards committee chairs (the percentage of chairwomen has been more than halved), while remaining more or less stable in other offices. It should be noted that the political groups appear to have the greatest difficulty in applying the gender equality principle – even though the Assembly committees are not completely immune to the problem¹⁰. I would urge the Assembly to initiate a more dynamic, and probably more binding process in order to implement the provisions of Resolution 1348 (2003).

28. From this angle, the Assembly should continue its efforts to persuade the chairs of national delegations and political groups to implement the provisions of Resolution 1348 (2003). It should also continue to debate equality issues and endeavour to raise parliamentarians' awareness of them. I would propose that the Committee on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men initiate dialogue with the ten delegations comprising the lowest ratios of women in order to pinpoint the difficulties encountered and possible measures to improve women's participation in national delegations and the Assembly's working structures.

29. The European Caucus of Women Parliamentarians, which was set up last year to work out general strategies on decision-making parity and promote equal participation by women and men in political and public life, is also geared to informing female parliamentarians about the issues involved in equal opportunities for women and men, *inter alia*, within the Assembly itself.

30. However, it is time the Assembly launched a more dynamic process. I would like to see the Bureau of the Assembly putting forward the appropriate recommendations to the political groups, national delegations and committees, on the basis of the problems identified by our committee. Our committee should if necessary also consider proposing a resolution on follow-up to Resolution 1348 (2003) at the institutional level, with a view to amending the Rules of Procedure, and lay down binding provisions to reinforce the mechanism set out in Resolution 1348 (2003) (for example where a committee has failed to appoint at least one rapporteur of each sex).

⁹ Parliamentary Assembly Document 9870, Report by Mr Kroupa (Czech Republic, EPP/CD) of the Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunities, on "Gender-balanced representation in the Parliamentary Assembly" (9 July 2003).

¹⁰ See Document AS/EGA (2005) 13.

b. Encouraging women's participation in structures for whose operation the Parliamentary Assembly is responsible

31. One of the Parliamentary Assembly's specific duties is to appoint judges to the European Court of Human Rights. In its Resolution 1366 (2004) and Recommendation 1649 (2004) on candidates for the European Court of Human Rights, the Assembly decided to emphasize the importance of restoring balance and "not to consider lists of candidates (...) not containing at least one candidate of each sex". Furthermore, this year, noting that "women are clearly still under-represented in the Court today, as only 11 of the 44 judges currently in office are women"¹¹, it adopted Resolution 1426 (2005) which introduces the possibility of having single-sex lists under a special rule relating to the under-represented sex in the Court, and amends paragraph 3.ii of Resolution 1366 (2004) as follows:

"3. The Assembly decides not to consider lists of candidates where:

ii. the list does not contain at least one candidate of each sex, except when the candidates belong to the sex which is under-represented in the Court, that is the sex to which under 40% of the total number of judges belong."

32. As regards the election of the Commissioner for Human Rights, for which the Assembly is also responsible, Article 9 of Committee of Ministers Resolution (99) 50 stipulates that "the Commissioner shall be elected by the Parliamentary Assembly by a majority of votes cast from a list of three candidates drawn up by the Committee of Ministers". I would suggest that the Assembly should not consider lists of candidates drawn up by the Committee of Ministers that do not comprise at least one candidate of each sex, leaving it to define the appropriate means of achieving this aim.

33. The Assembly should adopt the same procedure for any other election for which it is responsible, where it is called upon to choose among more than one candidate.

3. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

34. The current Charter of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) provides that "the membership of each member state's delegation to the CLRAE shall be such as to ensure equitable representation of women and men on the statutory bodies of local and regional authorities in the member state" (Article 2.d)¹². Resolution 120 (2004) adopted by the Congress specified that the national delegations "should aim to include a minimum of 30% women" and that no national delegation, even if small in size, could be accepted unless it included representatives of both sexes.

35. Moreover, in order to keep track of the progress towards an equitable representation of women and men in the CLRAE, "national delegations shall inform the Bureau of the CLRAE of the percentage of women and men present in the statutory bodies of local and regional authorities in their respective country"¹³.

36. In May 2005 women represent 24.4% of the national delegations to the Congress. 17 of the 46 delegations have achieved the objective of a minimum 30% female members (June 2005). Croatia, Finland, Monaco and Norway have secured an exact gender balance (50%). Sweden (66.67%) and San Marino (75%) have the best rates of female representation in the Congress. Three delegations (Azerbaijan, Hungary, and Slovakia) have a level of at least 10% of women in their national delegations¹⁴.

37. Women are blatantly under-represented in local and regional structures in Europe. According to a survey by the association United Cities and Local Governments using a panel of representatives of 28 European States, women only account for 24% of all municipal councillors and 10.5% of mayors¹⁵. In its Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government, United Cities and Local Governments undertook

¹¹ Paragraph 3 of Resolution 1426 (2005) on Candidates for the European Court of Human Rights.

¹² See appendix to Statutory Resolution (2000) 1.

¹³ Rules of Procedure of the Congress, Rule 2.3.

¹⁴ Document CG/BUR (11). Average figures on representation of women members and substitutes in the Local and Regional Chambers.

¹⁵ 28 July 2005 statistics. The countries covered by the survey were Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and the United Kingdom; see www.cities-localgovernments.org.

to “strengthen (their) efforts to make equal the number of women and men in decision-making bodies at all levels and in all policy areas, and (their) efforts to ensure women's qualitative participation in councils, committees and other groups related to decision-making in local government”¹⁶.

38. I welcome the adoption by the Congress of Recommendation 162 (2005) on the revision of the Charter of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, which invites the Committee of Ministers to amend Article 2.2.d of the Charter of the Congress to ensure “equitable representation of women and men on the statutory bodies of local and regional authorities in the member State, meaning that all delegations must include, within the next three years (2008), representatives of both sexes with a minimum participation of at least 30% of the under-represented sex”. The Assembly should encourage the Committee of Ministers to approve this proposal.

4. The Secretariat of the Council of Europe

39. In all categories - both male and female dominated- women are mainly concentrated in the lower grades and men in the senior positions. Statistics from November 2003 show that in the highest positions (in A4-A7 categories) there were only 17% women, although by December 2004, this percentage had risen to 31.4%. And even though women accounted for 39.4% of all A4 grade staff, there was only one woman among the ten A7 grade staff members¹⁷. All the female A6 grade staff members were deputies to male colleagues. While the Assembly welcomes the Council of Europe policy to promote equal opportunities, it nonetheless stresses that our Organisation's careers policy should encourage balanced representation of men and women in the highest positions.

40. In concluding this section, I welcome all the action that has been taken in the Council of Europe organs and subsidiary bodies. However, in order to make these measures more effective, we ought to consider introducing a more efficient monitoring system to highlight any continuing difficulties in the member States. The Assembly should therefore reiterate its proposal¹⁸ to institute a Council of Europe Ombudsman on equal opportunities for women and men, whose main duties would include monitoring the progress of member States in implementing balanced participation by women and men in public and political decision-making. The Ombudsman could work in close co-operation with the Commissioner for Human Rights, whose visits to various countries also take in gender equality issues and cases of discrimination or violence specifically affecting women. The Assembly should inform the Committee of Ministers of its willingness to define the Ombudsman's terms of reference and powers and to consider the type of co-operation that might be established with the Commissioner for Human Rights or the European Union's future European Institute for Gender Equality.

B. In the European Union

41. The level of participation by women in the decision-making bodies of the European Union remains low: the percentage of women in the “college” of Commissioners is only 29%. In the Committee of the Regions women account for 16% of all local and regional elected representatives, with 25% in the Economic and Social Committee¹⁹.

42. If the number of women in the European Parliament has been increasing ever since 1984 (they currently account for 30% of all parliamentarians, as against 17% in 1984), their participation is limited within the internal governing bodies: women only represent 15% of parliamentary committee chairs, 20% of political group presidents and 30% of Bureau members²⁰. It should be noted that ten of the 25 Union member States have less than 30% of women in their parliamentary delegations to the European Parliament, including Cyprus and Malta (six and five representatives in the European Parliament, respectively), which have no female delegates at all²¹.

¹⁶ Paragraph 20 of the UCLG Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government, which was adopted in 1998 and has been ratified by 23 national associations of local authorities worldwide.

¹⁷ “Equal opportunities and gender mainstreaming at the Council of Europe, 204 annual report”, prepared by the Committee on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men of the Council of Europe.

¹⁸ See paragraph 13.ii of Recommendation 1413 on equal representation in political life.

¹⁹ Figures from the European Commission's database on women's participation in decision-making.

²⁰ European Women's Lobby, “Beijing +10”, November 2004, p. 64.

²¹ IPU, situation at March 2005.

43. Where the Secretariat of the organs of the European Union is concerned, women hold 22% of A grade posts in the European Parliament, and 23% of representatives of national governments in the Council of Ministers and 23% of civil servants in the European Commission are women²².

44. The Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) was set up in March 2004 under the Barcelona Process. No data is yet available on the composition of this Assembly or the percentage of women represented. The European Parliament delegation to the EMPA includes 44% women. Article 2.4 of the Rules of Procedure requires member parliaments to undertake to “ensure that women parliamentarians are represented in their delegations, in accordance with the legal provisions of each country”²³. In its Resolution on Economic and Financial Issues, Social Affairs and Education, the EMPA calls for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on women’s issues, and expresses the wish for women to be more equitably represented in the committees²⁴, a proposal which has also been adopted as one of the political priorities for the EP Presidency of the EMPA²⁵. I can only back this resolution, and would recommend the adoption of specific measures to ensure women’s participation not only in the member delegations of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly but also in its working structures.

III. Identifying and setting up mechanisms to guarantee the effective participation of women in decision-making

45. The promotion of women’s participation in decision-making is based on institutional mechanisms enabling member states to adopt a framework for action. However, the establishment of such mechanisms must be backed up with an awareness and incentive campaign for political parties, decision-making bodies (in political parties, government departments and enterprises) and the media, with a view to changing attitudes and creating the requisite conditions for equal access by women and men to decision-making.

46. In order to ensure the success of this approach, it might be based on the concept of gender mainstreaming, which means organising or reorganising, improving, elaborating and evaluating political processes to ensure that the operators who generally participate in the political decision-making process incorporate gender equality into all their policies at all levels and at all stages. Committee of Ministers Recommendation No. R(98)14 on gender mainstreaming points out that “the implementation of the strategy of gender mainstreaming will not only promote effective equality between women and men, but also result in a better use of human resources, improve decision-making and enhance the functioning of democracy”.

A. National mechanisms and action plans

47. The Council of Europe’s Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men has identified the national mechanisms for promoting gender-balanced participation and taken stock of the situation²⁶. This work has pinpointed a wide variety of institutional mechanisms for gender equality in Europe. The great majority of the mechanisms consist of departments, divisions, services, committees and working groups operating under the responsibility of a specific Ministry or State Secretary’s office – gender equality often comes under the “social policies” heading²⁷.

48. The study conducted by Regina Tavares da Silva has shown that some countries have opted for Ministries, Ministers, Deputy Ministers or State Secretaries mandated exclusively (Hungary, Italy, Denmark, Luxembourg, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom) or partly (Austria, France and

²² European Women’s Lobby, op. cit., pp. 64 and 65.

²³ Rules of Procedure of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly as adopted on 22 April 2004, http://www.europarl.eu.int/intcoop/empa/assembly_documents/rules_en.pdf. The EMPA is made up of delegation from the national parliaments of European States, national parliaments of ten Mediterranean partners (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey), as well as the European Parliament.

²⁴ Resolution on Economic and Financial Issues, Social Affairs and Education, adopted in Cairo on 15 March 2005, paragraph 8, http://www.europarl.eu.int/intcoop/empa/committee_econ/cairo03_05_final_resol_en.pdf.

²⁵ Paragraph 4 of the “Political Priorities for the EP Presidency of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly “ (March 2005 – March 2006, EP 335.004, 21 April 2005, http://www.europarl.eu.int/intcoop/empa/home/politicalpriorities_en.pdf.

²⁶ See Document EG (2004) 4 and CDEG (2004) 19, op. cit.

²⁷ CDEG (2004) 19, op. cit. p. 14.

Germany) to deal with women's or gender equality issues. Other mechanisms have also been identified: institutes, boards or national commissions and, in virtually all Council of Europe member States, interdepartmental structures promoting gender mainstreaming at the national and also the local level²⁸.

49. Furthermore, I welcome the increasing numbers of institutional mechanisms being introduced into national parliaments, with the setting up of committees and commissions or sub-commissions in Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Spain and, more recently, Albania, Croatia, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia and Romania²⁹.

50. National gender equality action plans have been adopted in most Council of Europe member States. These plans have alerted the public authorities to such issues as women's access to decision-making, particularly in political life³⁰.

51. The concept of gender mainstreaming, which facilitates consideration of gender issues in all public policies, is making distinct headway. On the other hand, the effort to incorporate a gender perspective into the budgeting process is a more recent phenomenon, and seems more difficult, although it does enable the legislator to give practical expression to gender mainstreaming and the gender dimension. Our Committee is currently preparing a report on this subject.

52. I agree that the success of national mechanisms and action plans for promoting women's participation in decision-making will depend on the political will and the financial resources earmarked for the purpose, as well as the monitoring of such mechanisms.

B. Institutional mechanisms: quotas, electoral systems and equality ombudsmen

53. Promoting women's participation in decision-making necessitates positive measures to open up decision-making posts to women. Female participation in elections is a key element in this strategy. The Assembly has paid particular attention to the presence of women in national parliaments, as this is "one of the clearest indicators of women's participation in political processes"³¹. The use of quotas in electoral lists or in political parties' selection procedures helps increase the number of female representatives in parliaments and other elected assemblies, provided the quotas are properly implemented³².

54. The Assembly has also stressed the importance of the choice of electoral system and the impact of this choice on women's access to political life. A closed list proportional representation system is more conducive to female access to elected office, because it facilitates the "zipper system" (alternating between male and female candidates on electoral lists), guarantees women's access to eligible positions and prevents them from being "downgraded" if elected³³. The recent Assembly recommendation advocating the preparation of a "Charter for Electoral Equality", which has been welcomed by the Venice Commission, should be implemented as a matter of priority.

55. The introduction of an equality ombudsman dealing with complaints and other problems concerning equality, which is a longstanding Scandinavian traditional institution, would appear to be spreading to the countries of central and eastern Europe (Lithuania, Croatia, Romania, Slovenia and Estonia). Other countries have developed equality mediation in such specific fields as employment (a new Equality Court in Ireland, a Committee for Complaints concerning Gender Equality in Iceland, a Defender of equal opportunities for women and men in Slovenia, etc). I am convinced that the ombudsman institution is extremely useful in promoting gender-balanced participation in decision-making, guaranteeing practical follow-up to complaints at the European level and thus combating discrimination. I would therefore reiterate the proposal made by the Assembly in its Recommendation (1999) 1413 on equal representation in political life to appoint a European ombudsman to restore the balance in gender representation (see paragraph 40).

²⁸ Ibid., p. 15.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 17.

³⁰ Op. cit., pp. 22 and 25.

³¹ Silovic, Darko, United Nations Report on Human Development: regional study on human development in central and eastern Europe, November 1999, in "Women's participation in elections", Parliamentary Assembly Document 10202, Rapporteur: Mr Mooney.

³² "Women's participation in elections", Parliamentary Assembly Document 10202.

³³ Op. cit.

56. Women are still under-represented in the top civil service posts in Europe. In France, increasing numbers of women are acceding to posts of responsibility in the central government departments (women held 21% of managerial posts in 2002), but this trend is much less marked in the decentralised government departments (where women only held 10% of managerial posts)³⁴. In 2004 the British Prime Minister set the following objectives for the civil service by the year 2008: 3% women executives and 30% of the top posts for women; 4% of executives from racial minorities and 3.2% persons with disabilities³⁵.

57. Nevertheless, despite the importance of the adoption of a legislative framework conducive to female participation in public and political life and the introduction of national mechanisms, it should be noted that such mechanisms also have to be effective on the ground. In my view the Council of Europe needs to develop indicators which can be used for accurately evaluating the efficiency of institutional mechanisms to promote women's participation in decision-making, and I invite the Committee of Ministers to continue its work along these lines.

C. The role of political parties

58. Political parties play a vital role in promoting women's access to elective political office. This means that they must fully realise their responsibilities in terms of equal participation by women in decision-making particularly where the top posts are concerned. Public funds granted by the State to political parties should be made conditional on compliance with the principle of alternating male and female candidates on lists (the "zipper system), where possible, and at least 40% participation by both sexes in the parties' decision-making bodies.

59. Establishing institutional mechanisms in political parties or in the electoral field is not always enough to change people's attitudes. In Armenia, despite all the efforts over the last decade, Parliament still only comprises 5.3% women MPs. The Electoral Law does lay down that 15% of those standing for election must be women, but the latter are included at the bottom of the list, with no chance of being elected. The involvement of women in non-governmental organisations is not matched by any corresponding activity in political parties or female access to elective posts. This means that we must endeavour to build a "bridge" so that civil society activists can move over to elective posts.

D. Support measures

60. In addition to the institutional mechanisms, female participation in decision-making can and must be encouraged by means of awareness-raising and support measures to create the right conditions for women's participation in the decision-making process.

1. Setting up exchange and training networks

61. Many non-governmental institutions and organisations are endeavouring to enhance the role of women in political life by setting up networks of female politicians and helping their members to get elected to Parliament and/or appointed to governmental or political organisations. This trend also enables women to set up their own networks, which is vital in career management and access to positions of responsibility, given that co-opting procedures have perpetuated male-dominated political classes and socio-economic elites.

62. Where international elected assemblies are concerned, the Parliamentary Assembly decided to launch a network of female parliamentarians in October 2004. Other organisations have also set up similar networks. Ever since 1986, meetings of female parliamentarians have been held to highlight the concerns of women in the Inter-Parliamentary Union, leading to new provisions being added to the IPU statutes and rules of procedure with an eye to ensuring female participation in the IPU governing bodies and the national delegations of IPU members³⁶.

³⁴ "Lente féminisation de la haute fonction public en 2002", Point Stat No. 4-2004, Statistics, Research and Assessment Office, French Ministry of the Civil Service and State Reform.

³⁵ Quoted by Dominique Versini in "Radiographie de l'emploi public" ("X-ray of government employment"), http://www.emploi-public.com/actualite/dossiers/radiog_ep/radio_1.asp.

³⁶ See <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-f/meeting.htm>.

2. Women's participation in decision-making in all spheres of socio-economic life

63. Promoting female participation in decision-making necessitates creating the right conditions. For instance, the problem of reconciling family life, work and elected or voluntary duties constitutes an obstacle to women's empowerment. The objective inability of women to accede to decision-making posts prevents them from having any real control over career choices or over the way in which such choices affect women in particular. As an illustration, I might mention the limited presence of women in the decision-making bodies of sports federations and clubs in Europe, a situation which definitely helps perpetuate discrimination against women and girls in sports activities³⁷.

64. Institutional mechanisms should also strive to change attitudes in the economic field. It is vital for States to establish and implement the principle of equal pay for equal work, whether performed by women or men. In the occupational field, women face a "glass ceiling" which in practice excludes them from the higher posts in companies or the civil service³⁸. Women are in the minority in positions of responsibility in the European private sector. They account for only 11% of all persons occupying the top decision-making posts in the fifty biggest enterprises in the enlarged European Union, and only 24% of CEOs in the fifteen "old" EU member States³⁹.

65. Special attention should be paid to migrant women and minorities, who must also be represented at all decision-making levels in order to ensure that their needs and interests are catered for.

3. Promoting public awareness and information campaigns

66. The under-representation of women in decision-making positions in the areas of art, culture, sports, the media, education, religion and the law have prevented women from having any significant impact on many spheres of life.

67. National parliaments should be actively involved in promoting mechanisms for the implementation of women's participation in decision-making. They should accordingly organise debates on this issue, encourage the setting up of Committees on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in all national and regional parliamentary assemblies, where they do not already exist, and adopt the requisite legislation to establish effective machinery for female participation in decision-making.

68. It is also vital to back up the adoption of provisions to promote female participation in decision-making with information and awareness-raising campaigns, which could be conducted by the national gender equality mechanisms (such as the competent Ministries, Parliamentary Committees and/or specialist Observatories, where these exist). Such campaigns should focus on determining and applying the indicators proposed in the Recommendation (2003) 3 for the evaluation of the situation in each country in the field of political and public decision-making. The collection of relevant data and information will also help to identify persisting obstacles to women's effective participation in decision-making.

69. Various women's groups have conducted highly effective public awareness campaigns. In Sweden, the pressure exerted by women, which has attracted extensive media coverage (notably the threat of creating an exclusively female political party), has encouraged political parties to ensure the balanced representation of women, who now represent 48% of the membership of the Swedish Parliament. In the Netherlands, the International Women's Alliance has campaigned for a preferential vote to be granted to women, and lobbied the media to denounce the absence (with one exception) of female ministers from the previous government and to improve their representation in the subsequent government, which now includes 30% women.

70. Non-governmental organisations are vital partners for the national mechanisms in conducting such campaigns. Fuller information could be made available on the opportunities provided by the various NGOs which organise training programmes for female politicians, disseminate the corresponding information and mobilise public opinion.

³⁷ See Recommendation (2005) 1701 on discrimination against women and girls in sports activities and Document 10483.

³⁸ See Resolution (2005) 1700 on discrimination against women in employment and on the labour market.

³⁹ Memorandum by Pascal Joannin as published by the Robert Schuman Foundation, "Europe, a chance for women" (May 2004), quoted by the European Women's Lobby, "Beijing +10", November 2004, p. 65.

4. The vital role of the media in changing attitudes

71. I should also like to mention the important role played by journalists in ensuring impartial media coverage of women's participation in elections⁴⁰ and gender-balanced participation in decision-making and equal representation of women and men in the media⁴¹. Journalists have the particular task of combating stereotypes and portrayals of women as being subject to the authority of or dependent on their husbands. The media have a capacity for focusing on women's skills and responsibilities and shunning stereotyping or sexism.

72. For the record, Committee of Ministers Recommendation Rec(2003)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making also stresses the media's responsibility for putting across a balanced image of women and men, an idea based, *inter alia*, on the Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation on the image of women in the media, which invites governments to adopt and implement a policy against sexist and stereotyped images, and also to set up more bodies responsible for monitoring the situation⁴².

5. The importance of schools and non-formal education

73. Education plays a central role in shaping attitudes towards equality between women and men in political life. Young people should be educated from school age onwards in gender equality issues and the importance of participating in the social and political life of their country.

74. Formal educational systems alone cannot respond to rapid social, political and economic changes in society: they should be reinforced by out-of-school educational practices. Youth and community organisations have always been considered the main experts in non-formal education, and they have indeed chalked up some outstanding successes in this field. The activities of these organisations enable young people to acquire leadership skills, providing them with important practical experience in the processes of democracy, decision-making and responsible democratic leadership.

75. Education can also play a vital role in enhancing women's capacity as citizens/voters and in strengthening their self-esteem and awareness of their civil and political rights. Women, especially at the grassroots level, should be taught to understand and exercise their equal right to political participation, including their right to vote.

IV. Proposed resolution and recommendations

76. The Assembly could invite member and observer States of the Council of Europe to:

- a. set the objective of achieving a gender balance in decision-making processes, with the initial target of a critical mass of at least 40% women in all governmental and parliamentary bodies;
- b. with this in mind, prioritise the implementation of Committee of Ministers Recommendation (2003) 3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making, which cannot be successfully put into practice without creating or reinforcing national and international mechanisms for promoting balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making processes and making this a priority in all ministries by implementing gender mainstreaming;
- c. ensure gender-balanced participation in international delegations;
- d. monitor and assess progress by regularly collecting, analysing and disseminating quantitative and qualitative data on women and men at all levels in the various public and private sector decision-making posts, and making public the number of women and men employed at the various civil service levels on an annual basis;
- e. alert the media to the role which they play in forming public opinion of the place of women in society and the impact of the media image of women on their level of participation in public and political life;

⁴⁰ Women's participation in elections, Parliamentary Assembly Document 10202, p. 16.

⁴¹ As mentioned by Ms M.J. López González in Document 9394.

⁴² Recommendation 1555 (2002) on the image of women in the media.

- f. associate non-governmental organisations with the implementation of these information campaigns;
- g. reinforce institutional mechanisms, including:
- h. revising the rules, procedures and, if necessary the electoral systems in order to include the gender equality dimension with a view to achieving, by 2020, a minimum 40% representation of women in parliaments and other elected assemblies by urging early preparation of the "Charter for Electoral Equality" proposed by the Assembly in its Recommendation 1676 (2004) on women's participation in elections;
- i. make the funding of political parties conditional upon achievement of the aim of a minimum 40% representation of women in the party's decision-making bodies and on the electoral lists;
- j. take account of the equality dimension when adopting national, regional and local budgets;
- k. ensure the appropriate implementation of existing legislation on gender mainstreaming ;
- l. adopt a governmental programme on gender equality and introduce machinery to assess the implementation of this programme and provide for its decentralised implementation;
- m. set up Committees on equality between women and men in all national and regional parliamentary assemblies ;
- n. appoint a specialist on gender equality issues to any existing mediation bodies;
- o. encourage access by women to decision-making in all spheres of public life by smashing the "glass ceiling";
- p. ensure that public institutions in the Council of Europe member States set the reasonable objective of ensuring a proportional number of women in top posts in order to remedy any imbalance in representation of women and men;
- q. promote participation by representatives of the civil society, particularly by those who show a keen interest in gender equality issues, in all political debate, thus creating a "bridge" for women between civil society and political life.

77. The Assembly might recommend that the Council of Europe:

- a. continue its follow-up action on Committee of Ministers Recommendation (2003) 3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making and ensure in particular that indicators are introduced to gauge the efficiency of the institutional mechanisms and national action plans put in place in the member States of the Council of Europe;
- b. in particular, invite the Steering Committee on Equality to conduct studies on the selection criteria used for public appointment procedures in order to pinpoint the factors that exercise a negative influence on female appointments, and recommend measures to eliminate such factors;
- c. implement without delay Recommendation 1676 (2004) on women's participation in elections by drawing up a "Charter for Electoral Equality" aimed at giving women a genuine opportunity to accede to posts in political and public life and at combating family voting;
- d. ensure participation by women in its steering committees and its other working bodies at the levels mentioned in its own recommendation, namely at least 40%;
- e. continue its policy of promoting equal opportunities in the Council of Europe Secretariat and adopt further measures, taking account of the under-representation of women in the Organisation's top posts and in middle management;

f. instruct the competent steering committee to define the duties and terms of reference of a Council of Europe gender equality ombudsman with responsibilities covering all aspects of promotion of equal opportunities for men and women in Europe, including gender balance in decision-making, who would ensure implementation of the principle of equality between women and men in the member States of the Council of Europe, in co-ordination with the Commissioner for Human Rights.

78. The Assembly should also decide :

a. to reaffirm its Resolutions 1366 (2004) and 1426 (2005) on candidates for the European Court of Human Rights, in which it decided not to take account of lists of candidates that do not include at least one candidate of each sex, except where the candidates belong to the sex under-represented in the Court, ie representing less than 40% of the total number of judges;

b. not to consider lists of candidates submitted by the Committee of Ministers for the post of Commissioner for Human Rights that do not include at least one candidate of each sex;

c. to proceed in the same manner for any other election for which the Assembly is responsible involving more than one candidate ;

d. to continue implementing Resolution 1348 (2003) and reinforce it with binding provisions, amending the Assembly Rules of Procedure if necessary;

e. to encourage female parliamentarians to work together, above and beyond any national and political divisions, within the informal group of female Assembly members, in order to increase their representation in such posts of responsibility as committee, sub-committee and national delegation chairpersons, and encourage them to put their names forward for rapporteurships and to add their names to lists of speakers;

f. to invite the Bureau to propose solutions to problems identified by the Committee on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, notably the under-representation of women in the Bureaux of political groups, national delegations and committees, and the shortage of female rapporteurs;

g. to encourage its political groups to take account of the gender equality principle in appointing the members of committee bureaux and speakers taking the floor on their behalf during debates;

h. to encourage the national delegations to appoint more female Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and Chairwomen of the national delegations themselves;

i. to encourage the committees to appoint more female rapporteurs.

Reporting committee: Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

Reference to Committee: Doc 9865 and Doc 9866, reference N°2861 of 8 September 2003 (extension of the deadline until 7 October 2005)

Draft resolution and recommendation unanimously adopted by the Committee on 12 September 2005.

Members of the Committee: Mrs Minodora **Cliveti** (Chairperson), Mrs Rosmarie **Zapfl-Helbling** (1st Vice-Chairperson), Mrs Anna Curdova (2nd Vice-Chairperson), Mrs Svetlana Smirnova (3rd Vice-Chairperson), Ms Birgitta **Ahlqvist**, Mrs Edita **Angyalova**, Mrs Željka Antunović, Mr John Austin, Mr Oleksiy Baburin, Mr Denis Badré (alternate: Mr Jean-Guy **Branger**), **Mrs Gülsün Bilgehan**, Mrs Marida Bolognesi (alternate: Mr Fausto **Giovanelli**), Mrs Grazyna Ciemiak (alternate: Mr Piotr **Gadzinowski**), Mrs Ingrida **Circene**, Mr Brendan **Daly**, Mrs Krystyna Doktorowicz, Mrs Lydie **Err**, Mrs Catherine Fautrier, Mrs Maria Emelina Fernández Soriano, Ms Sonia Fertuzinhos, Mr Guiseppe **Gaburro**, Mrs Alena **Gajdůšková**, Mr Pierre Goldberg, Mrs Claude Greff, Mrs Arlette Grosskost, Ms Gultakin Hadjiyeva, Mrs Carina Hägg, Mr Poul-Henrik Hedeboe, Mr Ilie **Ilascu**, Mrs Halide **Incekara**, Mrs Eleonora Katseli, Baroness Knight of Collingtree, Mrs Synnove Konglevoll (alternate: Ms Jorunn **Ringstad**), Mrs Monika Kryemadhi, Mrs Minna Lintonen, Mrs Danguté **Mikutiene**, Mrs Fausta Morganti, Mrs Christine **Muttonen**, Mrs Hermine Naghdalyan, Mr Hilmo Neimarlija, Mrs Vera **Oskina**, Mr Ibrahim **Özal**, Mrs Patrizia Paoletti Tangheroni (alternate: Mr Gianpietro **Scherini**), Ms Elsa Papadimitriou, Ms Riorita Patereu, Mrs Fatma Pehlivan, Mrs Antigoni **Pericleous-Papadopoulos**, Mr Leo **Platvoet**, Mrs Majda **Potrata**, Mr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando, Ms Valentina Radulović-Šćepanović, Mr Andrea Rigoni, Ms Maria de Belém Roseira, Mrs Claudia Roth, Mrs Marlene Rupperecht, Mr Össur Skarphédinsson (alternate: Ms Margrét **Frimannsdóttir**), Mrs Rodica-Mihaela **Stănoiu**, Mrs Darinka Stantcheva, Mrs Rita **Streb-Hesse**, Mr Michal **Stuligrosz**, Ms Agnes Vadai, Mr Vagif Vakilov, Mrs Ruth-Gaby **Vermot-Mangold**, Mrs Williams, Mrs Willot, Mrs Gisela **Wurm**, Mr Andrej **Zernovski**.

N.B. The names of the members who took part in the meeting are printed in bold.

Secretaries of the Committee: Mrs Kleinsorge, Mrs Affholder, Ms Devaux