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23 March 2006

Equality between girls and boys in Europe

Motion for a recommendation
presented by Mrs Pehlivan and others

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

1. Girls, surely, should be considered as children and human beings with full rights, to be treated on an equal footing with boys. Nonetheless, everywhere in Europe, girls are subject to discrimination, both direct and indirect.
2. For example, in the education and training field, subject and career guidance remain sexist. We therefore need to look again at the approach of our education systems which, by reinforcing stereotypes, do not offer everyone the same chance of individual and vocational self-fulfilment. Furthermore, despite higher rates of schooling than in the past, it must be acknowledged that in many Council of Europe member states, girls do not have access to education under the same conditions as boys. Some, forced into marriage or kept at home to carry out domestic tasks or look after their sisters and brothers, are taken out of school. Still others have never gone to school.
3. Girls' health is also often neglected in families in favour of boys. In the field of reproductive health there is the problem of teenage pregnancies which can have serious consequences for the health and well-being of girls whose bodies are not at that stage sufficiently developed to cope with pregnancy and labour. Traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation, a flagrant example of violence against women and girls and a serious violation of their fundamental rights, continue to exist in certain immigrant communities.
4. Moreover, girls are also prone to risks such as anorexia and suicidal tendencies often brought about by a failure to accept themselves as they are because they might not correspond to the standard image conveyed by the media.
5. The Assembly reasserts that children's rights and human rights apply to all children whatever their sex. It further notes that inequalities lead to structural disadvantages which reinforce each other and remain with individuals throughout their lives.
6. Accordingly, the Assembly invites the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to draw up a recommendation to member states calling on them:
 - 6.1. to draw up and implement action programmes for equal opportunities between girls and boys in the education system by:
 - 6.1.1. ensuring free education up to the age of 16;
 - 6.1.2. improving career guidance in schools for girls so that they can choose their future path in full knowledge of the facts and uninfluenced by stereotypes;

- 6.2. to draw up health programmes which take due account of the specific needs of girls and which take all appropriate measures to eliminate any bodily harm to them;
- 6.3. to create educational programmes and tools enhancing the image of girls.

*Signed*¹:

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AUSTIN, John, United Kingdom, SOC
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JAZŁOWIECKA, Danuta, Poland, EPP/CD
LINTONEN, Minna, Finland, SOC
MORGANTI, Fausta, San Marino, SOC
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PAPADIMITRIOU, Elsa, Greece, EPP/CD
VERMOT-MANGOLD, Ruth-Gaby, Switzerland, SOC
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¹ SOC: Socialist Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democratic Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: not registered in a group