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REPORT

on women's immigration: the role and place of immigrant women in the
European Union
(2006/2010(INI))

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

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PR_INI

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on women's immigration: the role and place of immigrant women in the European Union (2006/2010(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Council Directive 2004/81/EC of 29 April 2004 on the residence permit issued to third-country nationals who are victims of trafficking in human beings or who have been the subject of an action to facilitate illegal immigration, who cooperate with the competent authorities¹,
- having regard to Article 13 of the EC Treaty on combating discrimination,
- having regard to Article 63 of the EC Treaty which confers on the Community powers and competences in the fields of immigration and asylum,
- having regard to the conclusions of the Presidency of the European Council held in Tampere on 15 and 16 October 1999, the European Council held in Laeken on 14 and 15 December 2001, the European Council held in Seville on 21 and 22 June 2002 and the European Council held in Thessaloniki on 19 and 20 June 2003, which stressed the importance of developing cooperation and the exchange of information in the context of the recently established group of national integration contact points, in particular with a view to stepping up coordination of the relevant policies at national and European Union level,
- having regard to the Commission's Green Paper entitled 'On an EU approach to managing economic migration' (COM(2004)0811),
- having regard to the Commission's Green Paper entitled 'On the future of the European migration network' (COM(2005)0606),
- having regard to the Commission Communication entitled 'On immigration, integration and employment' (COM(2003)0336),
- having regard to the Commission Communication establishing a framework programme on solidarity and the management of migration flows for the period 2007-2013 (COM(2005)0123),
- having regard to the Commission Communication entitled 'Migration and development: some concrete orientations' (COM(2005)0390),
- having regard to the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Refugee Fund for the period 2008-2013 as part of the General programme 'Solidarity and management of migration flows' (COM(2005)0123 - 2005/0046(COD)),

¹ OJ L 261, 6.8.2004, p. 19.

- having regard to the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the External Borders Fund for the period 2007-2013 as part of the General programme ‘Solidarity and management of migration flows’ (COM(2005)0123 - 2005/0047(COD)),
- having regard to the proposal for a Council decision establishing the European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals for the period 2007-2013 as part of the General programme ‘Solidarity and management of migration flows’ (COM(2005)0123 - 2005/0048(CNS)),
- having regard to the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Return Fund for the period 2008-2013 as part of the General programme ‘Solidarity and management of migration flows’ (COM(2005)0123 - 2005/0049(COD)),
- having regard to the Commission Communication entitled ‘A common agenda for integration. Framework for the integration of third-country nationals in the European Union’ (COM(2005)0389),
- having regard to the Commission Communication entitled ‘Policy plan on legal migration’ (COM(2005)0669),
- having regard to the Commission Communication entitled ‘Priority actions for responding to the challenges of migration: first follow-up to Hampton Court’ (COM(2005)0621),
- having regard to the Commission Communication entitled ‘Thematic programme for cooperation with third countries in the areas of migration and asylum’ (COM(2006)0026),
- having regard to Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin¹,
- having regard to Council Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 on the right to family reunification²,
- having regard to Council Directive 2003/109/EC of 25 November 2003 concerning the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents³,
- having regard to Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third-country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection and the content of the protection granted⁴,
- having regard to the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Community statistics on migration and international protection (COM(2005)0375 - 2005/0156(COD)),

¹ OJ L 180, 19.7.2000, p. 22.

² OJ L 251, 3.10.2003, p. 12.

³ OJ L 16, 23.1.2004, p. 44.

⁴ OJ L 304, 30.9.2004, p. 12.

- having regard to its resolution of 13 October 2005 on integrating immigrants in Europe through schools and multilingual education¹,
 - having regard to its resolution of 9 June 2005 on the links between legal and illegal migration and integration of migrants²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 15 January 2004 on the Commission Communication on immigration, integration and employment³,
 - having regard to its resolution of 9 March 2004 on women from minority groups in the European Union⁴,
 - having regard to the Hague programme adopted by the European Council on 4 November 2004 which set the objectives to be implemented in the area of freedom, security and justice in the period 2005-2010,
 - having regard to the informal ministerial meeting in Groningen on 9 November 2004 at which ministers responsible for the integration policy met for the first time,
 - having regard to the common basic principles on integration adopted by the Council of the European Union on 19 November 2004, which represent a coherent set of recommendations that should constitute the foundations of the European Union's integration policy,
 - having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and in particular Articles 18, 20, 21 and 22 thereof,
 - 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 (A6-0307/2006),
- A. whereas the number of women immigrants is constantly increasing in the EU, accounting for approximately 54% of the total number of immigrants and covering an increasingly broader range of categories (economic migration, immigration because of disasters, family reunification, political refugees or those fleeing armed conflicts, irregular immigration, asylum),
- B. whereas there is no proper organised and coordinated European immigration policy, and the Union and its Member States need to devise a policy for regulating immigration in collaboration with third countries,
- C. whereas women immigrants, as a general rule, encounter significant problems in integrating, primarily in terms of difficulty in accessing the labour market, low employment rates and high rates of unemployment, employment in temporary or low-paid

¹ Texts Adopted, P6_TA(2005)0385.

² Texts Adopted, P6_TA(2005)0235.

³ OJ C 92 E, 16.4.2004, p. 390.

⁴ OJ C 102, 28.4.2004, p. 35.

jobs often without social and economic protection or in sectors of the 'grey' economy and undeclared employment, limited linguistic skills, a low rate of participation in basic and, above all, tertiary education, limited participation in social, political, trade union and cultural life of the host country, poverty and social exclusion; whereas, nonetheless, a by no means negligible number of young woman graduates from the higher education systems of their countries come to take relatively unskilled jobs in the European Union, for example as domestic staff, as a consequence of the high rate of female unemployment in their countries and the low pay for the professions and jobs of their skills and qualifications,

- D. whereas women immigrants often encounter severe discrimination as individuals dependent on their spouse's legal status, on the basis of Directive 2003/86/EC (non-autonomous status, restricted access to the labour market, insecure residential status in the event of widowhood, divorce, etc.) and because of the mentality, negative stereotypes and practices brought with them from their countries of origin and which are prevalent in the host society as well; notes, moreover, that in some immigrant communities, they face critical problems such as marginalisation, forced marriages, female genital mutilation and crimes of honour,
- E. stressing that in very many cases the integration of immigrant women into society determines the integration of members of the second and third generations of citizens descended from immigrants,
- F. whereas women immigrants are more exposed to abuse, both psychological and physical, either because of their financial and legal dependence or because women immigrants with no legal status are more susceptible to abuse and sexual exploitation in the workplace and to human traffickers; whereas, in the case of immigrant women whose status is irregular, this lack of legal status within the territory of the State where they reside particularly exposes them to the risk that their fundamental rights may be denied, and for the same reason they are more frequently victims of discrimination and violence in everyday life,
- G. whereas integration is a two-way process which presupposes both a willingness on the part of immigrant women to take responsibility for integration into their host society and a willingness among EU citizens to accept and integrate immigrant women; whereas in this connection integrated measures to influence patterns of behaviour both of immigrants and of the host societies at all relevant levels and to mobilise resources on both sides must be planned and implemented; whereas this two-way process requires mutual commitment, consisting of rights and obligations for the host society and for immigrants,
- H. whereas it would seem according to the latest reports evaluating national policies for the integration of immigrants, that the gender dimension has not been systematically taken into account either at the level of harmonised policies or at the level of data collection,
- I. whereas human rights violations against immigrant women and girls in the form of so-called honour crimes, forced marriages, genital mutilation, or other violations cannot be justified on any cultural or religious grounds and should in no circumstances be tolerated,
- J. whereas the new Financial Framework for 2007-2013 provides not only for the strengthening of existing programmes and Funds for the integration of immigrants but

also for new initiatives such as the Framework Programme on solidarity and the management of migration flows (which includes the Integration Fund for third-country nationals, the External Borders Fund and the Refugee Fund) which must incorporate the gender dimension and the best possible integration of women immigrants,

- K. whereas it has been observed that there are numerous links between trafficking in women and economic migration,
1. Believes that European Union policy on development and social cohesion should implement effective reception and integration policies for immigrants, in particular women immigrants, who now represent the majority of those migrating to the EU for an increasing variety of reasons (economic, refugee, asylum, family reunification); welcomes the Commission's initiative to publish guidelines on the 'common framework programme for the integration of third-country nationals in the EU', stressing that all measures should take account of the particular nature of gender and the situation of women;
 2. Recognises the difficulties faced by newly arrived immigrants, particularly women, who are the most vulnerable category because they suffer twofold discrimination based on ethnic origin and on sex; calls on the Member States to strengthen the structures and social services which enable immigrants to settle in smoothly and to provide them with information about their rights and obligations in accordance with the principles and legislation of the Member States;
 3. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to make provision for the funding of programmes specifically for women providing information on the preconditions for immigrants to enter and reside in the European Union; also calls for the strengthening of consular and diplomatic structures to tackle the needs of immigration more effectively;
 4. Calls on immigrant organisations to encourage women members in particular, but also their families, to work actively to integrate and to take advantage of the opportunities for integration which the host countries provide, in order to support the integration efforts of the host societies;
 5. Stresses that Directive 2003/86/EC has not yet been satisfactorily implemented by all Member States, leaving substantial scope for discriminatory treatment of women immigrants; calls on the Commission, in the context of the evaluation report which it is required to submit, to put forward proposals for amendments to the relevant articles aimed at reducing significantly (if possible within one year of their arrival) the time required for a partner to acquire autonomous and independent status of that of their spouse, ensuring that they retain it in the event of their bond with their spouse being broken (separation, divorce, widowhood, etc.) and eliminating the possibility of imposing restrictions on access to the labour market and all social services;
 6. Calls on Member States, on the basis of their national legislation and the International Conventions, to guarantee respect for the fundamental rights of immigrant women, whether or not their status is regular, particularly access to justice, legal aid, accommodation facilities and health care;
 7. Calls on Member States, in compliance with their national legislation and the International

Conventions, to grant immigrant women whose status is irregular and whose children are attending school normally the right to family benefits (child allowances, right to housing;

8. Calls on the Member States to ensure, through bilateral labour agreements relating to the entry of third-country nationals or via other methods, that women immigrants enjoy secure legal and labour status in the host countries and that they do not suffer discrimination on the basis of either gender or origin, in accordance with the Community acquis;
9. Calls on the Member States to take effective action to combat all forms of violence against women immigrants by providing adequate medical, legal and social support to the victims of violence, implementing social rehabilitation programmes for them, offering victims of the sex trade access to refuges, taking due account of their needs for safety and protection, and by providing preventive information to women immigrants concerning their rights in the host country;
10. Calls on the Member States, in compliance with Directive 2004/81/EC, when considering applications for autonomous legal status, to take due account of the circumstances of women immigrants who are victims of violence, in particular victims of physical and psychological violence including the continuing practice of forced or arranged marriage and to ensure that all administrative measures are taken to protect such women, including effective access to assistance and protection mechanisms; calls on the Member States to simplify the procedures for granting a residence permit to victims of the sex trade and to adopt measures to approve special residence permits in exceptional circumstances in order to enable foreign victims without legal status to escape from violence;
11. Calls on the Member States to ensure that bilateral agreements with third countries must be negotiated and concluded on the basis of respect for the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and/or the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, in particular with regard to the status of persons in the event of marriage, divorce, child custody, repudiation or polygamy;
12. Calls on the Council, the Commission and the Member States to establish a legal framework guaranteeing immigrant women the right to hold their own passport and residence permit and making it possible to hold a person criminally responsible for taking these documents away;
13. Calls on the Member States to incorporate, in their national action plans on employment and social integration, measures to promote the participation of women immigrants in the labour market, fight undeclared work, ensure respect for women's social rights (equal pay, social security, pension rights, etc.), provide support for entrepreneurship, ensure that elderly women immigrants do not suffer poverty and exclusion and promote the role of the social partners and trade unions, in the process of women's social and economic integration;
14. Calls on the Member States to ensure that women immigrants receive adequate and essential education in the form of language lessons and information concerning fundamental human, political and social rights and democratic principles in the host country, which will facilitate their smooth social integration into the host country and protect them from discrimination in the family and society;

15. Calls on the Member States to promote the access of young women immigrants to education and training systems in the host countries, and to promote their participation in the integrated action programme in the field of lifelong learning 2007-2013, which includes the Erasmus, Leonardo Da Vinci, Comenius and Grundtvig programmes, and in the Socrates, Culture 2007-2013 and Youth in action 2007-2013 programmes; considers that it is particularly important to recognise the professional qualifications and skills of women (particularly scientific diplomas) and to ensure that they have access to language training, which will enable them to integrate better;
16. Calls on the Member States to promote immigrant women's access to employment and to ensure adequate vocational training, adopting positive measures to combat the two-fold discrimination suffered by immigrant women on the labour market and creating favourable conditions for them to access the labour market and to balance their professional and private life, especially by putting into place accessible child-care facilities;
17. Calls on the Member States to show particular sensitivity in encouraging the participation of women immigrants in social and political life in accordance with national legislation and the opportunities deriving therefrom;
18. Points out that parents' preventing immigrant girls from taking part in sports, swimming and school classes must not be tolerated and cannot be excused on cultural or religious grounds; calls on schools and authorities to ensure that immigrant girls take part in school education and enforce the compulsory school attendance in accordance with national rules;
19. Stresses that local and regional authorities are called upon to play an ever-expanding role in the process of integrating women immigrants, and calls on the Member States and the European Union to support these efforts financially and by means of exchanges of information so that, in particular, problems such as housing, 'ghettoisation', crime, access to public and social services, health services, childcare, etc. can be tackled, and stresses also the role of organised immigrant communities and of the NGOs, which provide advice, information and support for immigrant women;
20. Calls on the Council, the Commission and the Member States to take all necessary action to protect the rights of immigrant women and immigrant girls and to combat the discrimination they face in their community of origin, by refusing all forms of cultural and religious relativism which could violate women's fundamental rights;
21. Calls on Member States either to implement specific legal provisions on female genital mutilation or to adopt such laws and to prosecute those who carry out genital mutilation;
22. Calls on Member States to introduce compulsory recording by healthcare workers of all cases of female genital mutilation, including the recording of actual cases and cases in which there is a suspicion that genital mutilation may take place;
23. Calls on Member States to speak out against tradition-based violence against women, to condemn family-induced violations of immigrant women and girls' human rights, and to check which laws are applicable to hold family members responsible, especially in the

case of so-called honour crimes;

24. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and the countries of origin to provide their populations with systematic and responsible information about the EU's immigration policies and challenges, the opportunities and obligations of immigrants, both men and women, in the host countries, with the aim of preventing the negative impact of illegal immigration, and the marginalisation and economic and sexual exploitation of women immigrants in the host countries;
25. Calls on the Commission, in the context of the proposed regulation on Community statistics on migration and international protection, to include reliable indicators and comparable data on immigrant women so as to give a specific idea of their situation and the problems they face;
26. Calls on the Commission to carry out a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the harmonised policies and measures implemented on behalf of women immigrants via the existing financial instruments and programmes (European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, the European Refugee Fund, the EQUAL initiative, the Daphne programme to combat violence against children, young people and women, European programmes in the fields of education, employment, combating social exclusion and discrimination);
27. Welcomes the Commission's initiative under the common framework programme for the integration of third-country nationals into the EU to issue guidelines on the integration policies which the Member States should pursue, and notes that it specifies expressly that the actions to be taken should take account of the particular factors relating to gender and the situation of women, young people and the children of immigrants;
28. Calls on the Commission to collect gender-related data on immigration into the EU and to arrange for the analysis of that data by the European Institute for Gender Equality in order to highlight further the particular needs and problems of women immigrants and the most appropriate methods of integrating them into the societies of the host countries;
29. Welcomes the fact that one of the main specific goals of the European Integration Fund is the obligation on Member State bodies that provide services to improve the way in which they meet the needs of various groups of third-country nationals, including women and children; in this framework for action, requests that free advisory services be provided for immigrant women on the subjects of women's rights, health, sexual and reproductive rights, employment and other related issues;
30. Welcomes the reference to the afore-mentioned Commission Communication on the common basic principles (CBP) and calls on the Finnish Presidency to give the principles priority on its agenda;
31. Welcomes the decision to designate 2007 as the European year of equal opportunities for all and 2008 as the year of intercultural dialogue, which are to be used to raise awareness of discrimination (violations of fundamental rights) against women and girls and provide society with a wider range of information on the position and role of women immigrants, their culture and their aspirations in the host countries; notes that there should be a two-

way process of promoting information and the participation of women immigrants in European social events;

32. Stresses that national, regional and local authorities should conduct a more intensive open dialogue so as to communicate and cooperate with immigrant communities and networks to forestall and tackle practices adversely affecting women and to promote proactive policies to integrate them;
33. Condemns forced marriages and calls on the Member States and, within its remit, the Commission, to take all necessary steps to punish the perpetrators, even when the forced marriages are contracted by Union residents acting outside the Unions' territory;
34. Urges the Council and the Commission, in the framework of a European common immigration and asylum policy, to include the risk of being subjected to female genital mutilation among the reasons for requesting the right of asylum;
35. Urges the Member States which have not done so to ensure that effective and deterrent penalties apply under their criminal codes to all forms of violence against women and children, particularly forced marriage, polygamy, crimes of honour and female genital mutilation, and to increase the awareness of police and judicial authorities on those issues;
36. Calls on the Commission to draw up a communication on women's migration containing comparative qualitative and quantitative statistics and studies on the position and role of women immigrants in the EU and to put forward specific proposals and policies to improve and make more effective the integration of women immigrants into the host societies;
37. Calls on the Member States to enforce policies that ensure the equality of all people, such as that of the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees, so that measures taken against illegal migration by the Member States are fully compatible with the principles of non-discrimination;
38. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The entry of immigrants into the EU is a historical reality but is also bound to be a feature of the future. Our objectives of development and social cohesion are therefore directly related to the ability to manage migration flows, and to make use of immigrants and integrate them into our societies.

The social disorder apparent in many European cities is related to the failings of research, study and policy in this area. In particular, the situation and the problems of women immigrants have remained on the margins and overshadowed. It is your rapporteur's aim to highlight the various aspects of and opportunities afforded by women's immigration together with the instruments of European policy which can protect the rights of women immigrants and help them make better use of their opportunities.

A. SUMMARY OF WOMEN'S IMMIGRATION INTO THE EU

(a) General numerical data

It must be noted that, both at Member State and EU level, we have encountered great difficulty in collecting and recording data and statistics on migration flows into Europe and, in particular, on women's migration¹. According to the figures of the International Organisation for Migrants, women represent 45% of immigrants to the developed countries.

In the enlarged EU, there is a trend towards a continuous rise in the number of women immigrants, making up approximately 54% of the total number of immigrants². According to the latest available statistics³, legal women immigrants in the European Union amount to 4% of its total population.

(b) Qualitative data

Women's immigration into the EU covers a wide range of categories, such as:

- family reunification
- economic migration
- refugees
- illegal immigration.

Despite the policies implemented by the EU, a large number of immigrants currently live on the margins of society. Their access to public, political and economic life remains extremely limited and, according to Council of Europe data, women immigrants are the victims of double discrimination on grounds of gender and ethnic origin. Such discrimination also takes place on two levels - in the host society and in the immigrant community in which they live⁴.

An immigration policy must take account of gender and the differences between the

¹ See proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on community statistics on migration and international protection [COM(2005) 375 final - Not published in the Official Journal].

² European Community Labour Forces Survey (Eurostat).

³ Eurostat, Statistics in Focus, Theme 3-2/2003, p. 1.

⁴ See Resolution 1478(2006) on the integration of immigrant women in Europe, paragraph 1.

immigrant communities because the problems and the discrimination are not the same or on the same scale across the board. In some, principally Muslim, communities, women immigrants, once married, generally stay at home without having the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the host society and to learn the language, which increases their isolation. In the event of their working, they occupy positions which are considered 'lower level' or they do jobs which are undeclared or in the 'grey' economy (agriculture, catering, cleaning services, household work) which does not allow them any financial independence and security.

The employment rate for legal women immigrants is only 44%, while the unemployment rate is 19%.¹ There is also a wide disparity in employment (16.9%) between immigrant women from third countries and those from EU Member States, while the same disparity for male immigrants is 11%. The disparity in employment between third-country immigrant women with high qualifications and immigrants from EU Member States is considerably greater (23.2%)². In 2000, the earnings of third-country women immigrants was some 10% lower than the corresponding earnings of women migrants from EU Member States. For men, the disparity was only 4%.

The main problem facing women immigrants remains education, taking account of the fact that 50% of women immigrants do not go beyond compulsory education, while approximately 17% go through tertiary education³.

The situation of women immigrants in many cases depends on the legal status of their spouse or they are considered in legal terms to be dependent persons, which has adverse consequences in the event of divorce or the death of the spouse and, in particular, in cases of polygamy, which channel them into 'illegal' or 'black' work and deprivation of social protection and dignity.

In some communities, negative female gender stereotyping as a rule gives rise to severe discrimination against those women, often culminating in violence, both mental and physical, sometimes going as far as crimes of honour. According to NGO statistics, 5 000 women fall victim to crimes of honour every year, a large number of whom are immigrant women who are members of Muslim communities in Europe. The Commission does not have reliable statistics on the extent of the phenomenon in Europe but it has undertaken to publish a communication soon on establishing a system of comparative statistics on crime and criminal justice.

B. COMMUNITY POLICY ON IMMIGRATION - THE FEMALE DIMENSION

(a) Legal basis

The promotion of fundamental rights, the absence of discrimination, and equal opportunities for all are basic features of integration policies. EU legislation lays down a rigorous framework of provisions for equal treatment based on Article 13 of the EC Treaty. Article 63

¹ Eurostat, Statistics in Focus, Theme 3-2/2003, p. 1.

² See report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on equality between women and men, (COM (2005) 44 final), of 14 February 2005, page 6.

³ Eurostat, Statistics in Focus, 3-2/2003, p. 1.

of the EC Treaty confers powers and competences on the European Community in the fields of immigration and asylum.

(b) Community legislation and initiatives

The European Council meeting in Tampere (1999) laid down the framework for a strategy for the necessary effective management of migration flows with a resolute policy of integrating national of third countries residing legally on the territory of a Member State.

The main legal acts and initiatives within this framework are:

Directive 2000/43/EC defining and prohibiting direct and indirect discrimination on grounds of ethnic origin and Directive 2003/109/EC laying down the status of and equal rights for third-country nationals who are long-term residents.

Directive 2003/86/EC regulates an important issue which directly concerns women immigrants, the right to family reunification, in accordance with the obligation to protect the family and respect family life. A right which the spouse of the applicant for reunification can now request. In addition to a residence permit of equal duration to that of the applicant, the members of his family have access to education, employment and vocational training. After five years of residence at the latest, the spouse or the unmarried partner, and any child which has become of age in the meantime, are entitled to a personal residence permit.

In early 2005, the Commission published a Green Paper on an EU approach to managing economic migration and, in December of the same year, a Communication on 'a draft policy on legal immigration' which laid the foundations for a number of proposals for directives (conditions of entry and residence of specially skilled migrants, seasonal workers, intra-corporate transferees, paid trainees) etc.

As mentioned above, a significant group of women immigrants are economic migrants. EU policy in this field should, therefore, take this dimension seriously into account. It is positive that the Commission Communication (September 2005) on 'a common agenda for integration. Framework for the integration of third-country nationals in the European Union' expressly stresses that the measures to be implemented should take account of the specific nature of gender and the situation of women, young people and children of immigrants.

Proper use should also be made of the opportunity offered by the financial instruments for measures on behalf of women or by women immigrants (European Social Fund, EQUAL, European Regional Development Fund, European action programme for education).

The Commission's proposals to designate 2007 as the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All and 2008 as the Year of Intercultural Dialogue are major awareness-enhancing initiatives which will help achieve the objectives of mutual understanding, integration and the promotion of equality of women immigrants.

(c) Current situation

In 2003, the Commission published a general communication on immigration, integration and employment and, in 2004, drew up an initial annual assessment report. Most Member States do not seem to have taken systematic account of gender issues in relation to immigration

either at the level of policy or data collection, as appears from the evaluation of the national integration policies (reports of the national integration contact points, national action plans for employment, national action plans for social integration). Various practices and innovative measures relating particularly to women are worthy of note, as follows:

As regards the problem of language skills, most Member States are taking measures to improve this situation (particularly for newly arrived immigrants). Special efforts are being made to improve vocational guidance. Efforts are being made to promote the participation and commitment of the social partners in this area. Greater emphasis is being given to education of the public, providing information on the basic rights and obligations of immigrants, including equality between men and women, and on the rules and values applying in the host countries. As regards unemployment, poverty and social exclusion, areas in which women immigrants are quite vulnerable, many countries do not seem to have made an in-depth analysis as yet of the factors which result in these situations.

Some Member States are making efforts to provide affordable accommodation and to combat the adverse effects of 'ghettoisation' and the run-down urban areas where immigrants are the overwhelming majority.

Promotion of participation in decision-making processes continues to develop in line with Member States' national legislation; most of the 25 Member States have already granted some electoral rights to immigrants at local level (in the sense of granting 'civic rights').

C. PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE ACTION

1. Assessment and review of policies implemented

The Commission's reports and the social impasses created in many countries with substantial immigrant communities demonstrate the need for a serious assessment of the policies implemented and a review of the take-up rate and utilisation of Community resources.

2. Preparation of immigrants

Your rapporteur takes the view that it is essential to take a number of measures to improve immigrants' knowledge and acceptance of the fundamental values and rules of the host societies and to encourage them to learn the language of the country of destination in cooperation with the European countries.

3. Targeted integration policies

The main priority for your rapporteur is access to the labour market and vocational training for women immigrants, with equal labour rights (pay, insurance, pension) factors which ensure their autonomy and independence.

Emphasises the responsibility and the role of the Member States in encouraging women's access to the labour market and respect for their labour rights, the role of the social partners and the role of the Commission in monitoring the application of the Community acquis.

4. Integration into the education system

The special problems of young women immigrants should be taken into account through measures aimed at preventing failure and abandonment of school education. At the same time,

improving the access of young women immigrants to higher education through the use of positive discrimination may provide an incentive for that group.

As regards vocational training, current legislation should be supplemented by providing for new forms of recognition of the professional qualifications, training and/or professional experience of newly arrived immigrants.

5. Social participation - networking

Strengthening the participation of women immigrants in all forms of social life will extricate them from their sense of isolation and alienation from the host society. Promotion of participation in public life at all levels and with all the opportunities afforded by national legislation is essential. In addition, an improvement in dialogue between the various groups of third-country nationals and the authorities, the social partners and NGOs in the host societies is an important part of their social integration,.

At the same time, there is a need to encourage the establishment of immigrant organisations, which are in a position to provide information and support for newly arrived immigrants, and the participation of their representatives in programmes as educators. It is particularly useful for women immigrants to develop contacts with newly arrived women. In addition, these organisations should constitute a point of dialogue with the host society, which is precisely the reason why the participation of women in those organisations is considered to be essential.

6. Raising awareness in the host society

Achieving our goals calls for a positive attitude and cooperation on the part of the host society. Measures to raise the awareness among the peoples of Europe of the importance of immigration, the role of women immigrants, their particular problems and ways of dealing with them should therefore be promoted.

7. Exchange of good practice

In the Member States of the EU, there are various experiences and policies in the field of immigration. In the endeavour to implement a European immigration policy based on common objectives and challenges, the EU should promote the exchange of good practices and issues for consideration, which also includes the gender dimension.

PROCEDURE

Title	Women's immigration: the role and place of immigrant women in the European Union
Procedure number	2006/2010(INI)
Committee responsible Date authorisation announced in plenary	FEMM 19.1.2006
Committee(s) asked for opinion(s) Date announced in plenary	
Not delivering opinion(s) Date of decision	
Enhanced cooperation Date announced in plenary	
Rapporteur(s) Date appointed	Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou 24.1.2006
Previous rapporteur(s)	
Discussed in committee	21.6.2006 13.9.2006
Date adopted	13.9.2006
Result of final vote	+ 21 - 0 0 3
Members present for the final vote	Edit Bauer, Edite Estrela, Věra Flasarová, Claire Gibault, Lissy Gröner, Zita Gurmai, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Piia-Noora Kauppi, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Urszula Krupa, Astrid Lulling, Siiri Oviir, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, Christa Prets, Marie-Line Reynaud, Raúl Romeva i Rueda, Amalia Sartori, Eva-Britt Svensson, Britta Thomsen, Anna Záborská
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil, Ana Maria Gomes, Zita Pleštinská, Karin Resetarits
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	
Date tabled	27.9.2006
Comments (available in one language only)	