

Report on non-discrimination based on gender and intergenerational solidarity  
(2008/2118(INI))

Rapporteur : Anna Záborská

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A6-2008-0492+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

<b>Overview of the most important points of the resolution</b>
--

The Záborská resolution promotes the recognition of the non market work of women and men as question of social justice within EU policies. If more human activities were seen as market transactions at the prevailing wages, they would yield gigantically large monetary valuations.

The alternative motion for a resolution of the Greens Group does not recognize this approach. Their alternative resolution limits the future of equality between women and men as a pure question of the labour market. But this is wrong.

Please support the Záborská report against the "Alternative Motion" of the Greens group because:

**(1) The Záborská resolution highlights that the concept of ‘work’ is not properly defined in the Lisbon Strategy and only relates to formal gainful employment, thus failing to recognise a substantial proportion of social and economic value added in the EU Member States by the informal work of women and men.**

This European Parliament own-initiative report deals with the social and economic recognition of activities carried out by both men and women that do not qualify as ‘formal gainful employment’. The many political interpretations of the concept of ‘work’ within the EU employment strategy need to be adapted to the new requirements of European employment policy.

The rapporteur makes the case for the recognition not just of traditional forms of gainful employment, but also of the manifold forms of non-gainful employment carried out by women and men primarily in the field of voluntary work and domestic and family work, and for their inclusion in the Member States’ systems of national accounts (SNA).

The social context within which an activity is carried out conditions whether this activity can be regarded as ‘formal gainful employment’. The manifold discrimination against women/mothers and men/fathers in the official recognition of their informal work is linked to a number of legal, social and economic factors which go beyond the single issue of equal pay for the same job and is due in particular to the fact that women/mothers or men/fathers are obliged to choose formal work simply because of the non-recognition of household work, even though formal work is burdened with the pay gap and upsets the balance between pursuing family plans and professional ambitions.

**(2) The Záborská resolution points out that the recognition of non-gainful employment is a question of fairness. The non-gainful employment of women and men who educate children, care for the elderly at home, provide intergenerational solidarity and work for the common good at the beginning of the 21st century is still not considered economic work to this day.**

Discrimination occurs when women or men opt of their own free will to develop their personal potential by investing their efforts in nurturing the human resources of future generations, caring for dependents (regardless of their age or the extent of their dependency) or managing intergenerational solidarity networks. No system of national accounts (SNAs) takes that investment into consideration, despite its tangibility. It is ignored by employment statisticians. Lacking concrete statistical form, the informal work which women perform goes unacknowledged, even if all commentators are in agreement as to its actual existence in everyday life.

**(3) The Záborská resolution claims to recognize the informal work of women and men within the EU policies.**

The resolution points to the need to find appropriate medium- and long-term solutions to avert the risk that young people and women will be denied a proper pension and hence exposed to a greater risk of poverty. Záborská calls for careful analysis to be brought to bear on the studies which suggest that *the employment contract should be replaced by an activity contract so as to allow for mobility, alternation, life cycles, and career breaks*, as regards both employment and work in a self-employed capacity, accounted for by training or caring.

The Záborská resolution further calls for ways to be found to prevent female employment on the labour market being adversely affected by measures to support, enhance the status of, and put a price on, caring. The resolution calls, therefore, for assessment in order to determine how society and female employment might be affected by measures serving to confer recognition on caring, not least by means of symbolic calculation for pension purposes. It also calls on the Member States to take measures to recognise invisible and informal work in the field of intergenerational solidarity carried out by women/mothers, men/fathers and carers at a legal, social and economic level (particularly as regards social security, professional status, earnings and equal opportunities for men and women).

**(4) The Záborská resolution pledges for update statistics and adapt Systems of National Accountability (SNAs) to make the concept of work fit for the future in Europe and recognise the role of non-gainful employment by women and men in intergenerational solidarity.**

Work needs to be re-defined for the SNA to take non-gainful employment into consideration. The validity of the statistics can be enhanced by gaining a better understanding of the activity of women and their behaviour on the labour market. The most accurate possible comparison of the employment behaviour of women and men based on politically neutral questions would reveal the strengths and weaknesses of current statistics and offer insights into possible improvements and how to achieve these.

The contribution made by women is systematically underestimated and falsified, giving a false picture of a country's economy and its human resources and perpetuating the vicious circle of unequal gender treatment, which is exacerbated by inappropriate policies and programmes. It is thus of capital importance to find out which elements need to be included in work-related statistics in order to highlight all the similarities and differences that exist between the situations facing men and women in the labour market, and to offer women a genuine, discrimination-free choice based on age and lifecycle that allows them to optimise their personal development to the benefit of society as a whole.

#### **(5) The Záborská resolution promotes performance-related justice and freedom of choice**

Manifold discrimination in the performance of non-gainful employment arises from the conflict between the logic of the market and the logic of human nature. The economic logic of the market dictates that any member of the public of reproductive age must be integrated into the employment market. The logic of human nature tells us, however, that a newborn child quite simply needs his mother and father to lay the foundations for the development of his or her human capacities<sup>1</sup>. There has been no radical adaptation of European policies to meet these practical human requirements. There is still no reconciliation, in accounting terms, between professional and family life, and no overall view of the two spaces and times taken together. Women and men have been allowed to embark on formal professional activities without any thoroughgoing review of the ways in which businesses operate.

#### **(6) The Záborská report highlights the importance of "young retirees"**

There is a lack of recognition of the professional skills of persons aged fifty and over, as evidenced in particular by the higher rate of unemployment amongst this population. The early retirement policies implemented in many Member States have produced a new category of persons, 'young retirees', who, despite their position on the margin of the formal labour market, very often have the wisdom, skills and knowledge required for the advancement of society, and their involvement should therefore be secured through specific policies aimed at this target group. Solidarity between generations must, above all, become a social link for the benefit of all, all generations having something to offer each other. Taking into account increased longevity, and in order to allow young retirees who so wish to maintain their social integration and financial independence vis-à-vis their families, the Commission and the Member States should promote policies allowing older people to keep their jobs or to return to the labour market, including through measures aimed at combining employment and a retirement pension. The Záborská resolution therefore calls on the Commission and the Member States to take account of the extraordinary potential represented by young retirees, from both a social and an economic point of view, and encouraging them to promote all policies relating to intergenerational solidarity that

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the work of Donald W. Winnicott, as cited in DAVIS, Madeleine and WALLBRIDGE, David: *Boundary and Space. An introduction to the work of D.W. Winnicott*, Brunner/Mazel (New York) and H. Karnac (London), 1981; for a contemporary view: LIMINSKI, Jürgen und LIMINSKI Martine, *Abenteuer Familie: Erfolgreich erziehen: Liebe und was sonst noch nötig ist*, Augsburg: Sankt Ulrich, 2002; LIMINSKI, Jürgen, *Die verratene Familie. Politik ohne Zukunft*, Augsburg: Sankt Ulrich, 2007;

are slanted towards voluntary work, by including older people in the structure of associations and non-governmental organisations.

### **(7) The Záborská resolution strength the specific responsibility of men/fathers**

There is a key role to be played by men in achieving genuine equality. The Záborská resolution highlights the importance of emphasising the role of fathers in projecting a positive image of the wife/mother. It promotes the conclusions of the first European Conference for Fathers, organised by the Austrian Council Presidency in Vienna on 15 and 16 September 2004.

### **(8) The Záborská resolution suggests best practices for EU Member states**

The Záborská resolution calls on the Member States to give priority to leave arrangements (parental leave, adoption leave, solidarity leave) applicable to persons wishing to interrupt their careers to look after a dependant.

It encourages the Member States to provide in their national policies for the introduction of maternity leave of one year, allowing mothers who so wish to foster the fundamental bonding relationship with their children.

It believes that steps need to be taken to improve the treatment not just of maternity leave, but also of paternity and parental leave, with particular reference to the leave taken by working fathers, bearing in mind that in all of the Member States only a small percentage of men make use of their leave entitlements.

The Záborská resolution finally insists that all persons wishing to interrupt their formal careers or reduce the number of hours they work for the sake of intergenerational solidarity should be able to benefit from flexible working arrangements; calls therefore on small and medium-sized enterprises to cooperate more willingly and on the public authorities to exhibit greater financial flexibility in their State aid budget forecasts.

The Záborská resolution also asks the Member States to develop policies that promote multigenerational activities, such as ‘bridge-between-generation’ centres where older adults are paid to take care of children.

The Záborská resolution finally calls on the Commission to promote in the Member States, by way of exchange of best practices, the model of the ‘universal service employment cheque’, which is designed to facilitate aid services for individuals and is currently one of the best examples of best practice, which should be disseminated and encouraged in all the Member States