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REPORT

on women's role in social, economic and political life in Turkey
(2006/2214(INI))

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on women's role in social, economic and political life in Turkey (2006/2214(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission's Communication of 8 November 2006 entitled “Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2006-2007” (COM(2006)0649), and especially to the progress report on Turkey contained therein,
- having regard to the Commission's Communication entitled “2005 enlargement strategy paper” (COM(2005)0561),
- having regard to its resolution of 27 September 2006 on Turkey's progress towards accession¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 6 July 2005 on the role of women in Turkey in social, economic and political life²,
- having regard to the decision of the European Council of 17 December 2004 to open negotiations with Turkey on accession to the European Union on 3 October 2005,
- having regard to the Community acquis in the field of women's rights and gender equality,
- having regard to the Recommendation Rec(2003)3 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member states on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making,
- having regard to the ILO's Home Work Convention No 177 of 1996,
- having regard to the 'Women and Employment' report of the EU-Turkey Joint Consultative Committee of the European Economic and Social Committee, produced in Kayseri (Turkey) on 14 July 2006,
- having regard to the Turkish Parliamentary Commission report on custom and honour killings and violence against women and children,
- having regard to the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights of 10 November 2005 on Turkey's regulations on wearing the Islamic headscarf in higher education institutions³,
- having regard to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol, which form part of international law and to which

¹ *Texts Adopted*, P6_TA(2006)0381.

² OJ C 157 E, 6.7.2006, p. 385.

³ *Leyla Şahin v. Turkey*, Application No. 44774/98.

Turkey has been party since 1985 and 2002 respectively, and having regard to Article 90 of the Turkish Constitution which states that international law takes precedence over Turkish national law,

- 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 (A6-0003/2007),
- A. whereas adoption of the Community acquis is obligatory for candidates for accession to the European Union and whereas women's rights and gender equality are part of the Community acquis,
- B. whereas the Commission's report on Turkey's progress towards accession, contained in its 2005 enlargement strategy paper of 9 November 2005 (COM(2005)0561), identifies, as regards the situation of women, the following main areas of concern, inter alia: violence against women, particularly domestic violence and crimes in the name of honour, a high illiteracy rate, a low level of participation by women in parliament and in local representative bodies, and the low level of women's participation and the prevailing discrimination in the labour market, given that economic independence of women is essential for their emancipation and should be of particular concern to Turkey,
- C. whereas the Commission has concluded, in its 2006 progress report on Turkey, that the legal framework as regards women's rights is satisfactory overall, but that the implementation thereof remains a challenge,
1. Emphasises that respecting human rights, including women's rights, is a *conditio sine qua non* of membership of the EU and calls on the Commission to make the issue of women's rights central to the negotiations with Turkey;
 2. Welcomes the fact that the active phase of the accession negotiations between Turkey and the European Union has begun; regrets, however, the slowing-down of the reform process in Turkey over the last year and the persistent problems with women's rights;

Implementation of legislation and coordination

3. Notes that the legal framework on women's rights has in general been satisfactory but considers that its implementation remains flawed; therefore, reiterates its call for full and effective implementation of the Community acquis in the field of women's rights, particularly in the poorer regions of the country;
4. Urges the Turkish Government to speed up implementation of the new legislation on women's rights so as to ensure that it is absolutely in line with the requirements of the Community acquis and that it is effectively implemented in practice;

5. Points out that the new Penal Code, which entered into force in June 2005, substantially strengthens the basic rights of women, but that the European directives on the equality of men and women have still not been completely transposed; notes with concern the (unsuccessful) attempts made to repeal legislation on women's rights;
6. Deplores the fact that, in parts of south-east Turkey, girls are not registered at birth, and that this hampers the fight against forced marriage and crimes in the name of honour, since the victims have no official identity; urges the Turkish authorities to take all necessary measures to ensure that all Turkish children are registered at birth;
7. Emphasises that the Turkish Government should maintain and establish, where necessary, its countrywide legal registration of marriages so as to guarantee the full entitlement of every man and woman to the benefits of citizenship, such as access to education and to healthcare;
8. Welcomes, in this respect, the establishment in Turkey of an Advisory Board on the Status of Women ("the Board") which will provide advice on the planning and implementation of state policies related to women's rights;
9. Emphasises the need to include social partners, representatives of bodies and non-governmental organisations dealing with gender equality issues and representatives of trade unions within the Board, which is not currently the case, and urges the authorities concerned to use the Board effectively in order to achieve efficient coordination between stakeholders;

Civil society

10. Notes its continuing concern in relation to cooperation between non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the Turkish Government;
11. Calls for all NGOs, including free and autonomous women's organisations, to be treated in the same way;
12. Considers that the meeting of Turkey's State Minister in Charge of Women's Rights with the representatives of 55 women's organisations in Turkey, together with the decision to establish more structured cooperation and effective coordination between the ministry and NGOs, constitute good practices which should be repeated regularly; expects to see this political will assume practical expression in future in the form of specific initiatives and measures;
13. Calls on the Commission and the Turkish Government to acknowledge the role of non-governmental women's rights organisations as fundamental and essential partners through official and permanent structures and institutions and to involve NGOs in the process of negotiating EU accession in a structured manner on the basis of the procedures laid down;
14. Calls on the Turkish authorities to launch a large-scale campaign to convey to the whole of society the image of women as players driving economic and social development;

15. Acknowledges the problems women's rights NGOs may face during the extensive procedures for obtaining grants from the EU and while conducting the projects for which they obtained grants;
16. Welcomes the establishment of the STGM (Civil Society Development Centre), which works on helping civil society development;
17. Calls on the Commission to provide additional assistance, inter alia by building up the capacity of other assistance centres;

Data, benchmarks and goals

18. Notes that there is still a lack of accurate data on the situation of women in Turkey and that existing data do not yet cover all problems relating to the situation, role and rights of women;
19. Welcomes the EU-Turkey joint project entitled “Promoting gender equality”, the objective of which is to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders to protect women from domestic violence, and welcomes, as part of the project, the initiative entitled “National research on the causes and consequences of violence against women”, which is designed to set up a database on violence against women;
20. Calls on the Turkish Government to provide specific and reliable data on the illiteracy rate among women, on equal access for women to education, on problems related to the participation of women in the labour force, on violence against women and on honour killings and forced marriages;
21. Calls on the Commission, in its reports to the European Council on the pace of reforms, to come up with clear benchmarks and precise short, medium and long-term goals for women's rights;
22. Calls on the Turkish Government to ensure that women belonging to the Kurdish minority are also involved in women's rights programmes;
23. Is alarmed at the Commission's observation that the Law on the protection of the family is only partially applied, and calls upon the Turkish authorities forthwith to implement it correctly and effectively, since this will contribute to protecting the position and rights of women within the family;

Violence against women

24. Notes that violence against women is still a problem and condemns instances of violence against women, including honour killings, domestic violence, forced marriages and polygamy;
25. Takes note of the Commission's remark that, despite the provisions in the new Penal Code listing "moral killings" as an aggravated circumstance for the crime of murder, the sentences issued by courts remain lenient; calls on the judicial authorities to apply and interpret correctly and effectively the provisions of the Penal Code in order to avoid this kind of crime;
26. Is deeply concerned about the fact that suicides committed by women due to the influence of the family continue to occur, especially in the regions of the East and the South-East; urges the Turkish authorities to protect women from this kind of pressure exerted upon them by their families and to submit specific and reliable data on suicide among women, particularly in those regions;
27. Calls on the public institutions (the judiciary, the administration, the police, the health system, etc.) to ensure that women affected by violence in Turkey receive all necessary protection;
28. Stresses that, in cases in which there has been a failure to protect and assist victims, a judicial investigation should be initiated through the public institutions and efforts made to bring criminal charges against those responsible;
29. Welcomes the official circular issued by the Prime Minister following a Turkish Parliamentary Commission report on custom and honour crimes and violence against women, instructing all ministries, public institutions and local administrators to enforce proposed solutions to deal with violence against women; calls on the Turkish Government to formulate binding and practical instructions for the implementation of that official circular and to spell out the consequences of non-compliance;
30. Welcomes the initiative designed to provide soldiers in military service with education on the prevention of violence against women and to include in the curriculum of police schools issues such as women's rights as part of human rights, gender equality, violence against women and honour crimes;
31. Calls on the Turkish Government and the Commission to tackle violence in general and honour crimes in particular as a priority and to set up special high-security shelters, including in regions in south-east Turkey, so that women have shelters in their own neighbourhood; calls for support and assistance measures for the free women's advisory centres in south-eastern Turkey, for example KA-MER, urges economic development that focuses on women in regions in which women are vulnerable to violence; stresses the importance of systematic investigation and effective punishment and therefore the training of police and judicial authorities in gender equality issues and the fight against violence; points out the need to instruct judges to apply new laws to severely punish violence in general and honour crimes, forced marriages and polygamy in particular and the importance of the protection of witnesses; urges the Turkish Government to conclude a special agreement with the Commission on participation in the Daphne programme and to

set aside the necessary financial resources in the national budget for this purpose;

32. Points out that women must be offered not only protection but above all psychological care and advice; demands that such services be provided in women's shelters and on the ground in regions with high rates of suicide among women and violence against women;
33. Calls on Turkish institutions to build alliances with all groupings – civil, social or religious – in society so as to initiate campaigns, targeted in particular at the young, to spread awareness that violence against women and children is a serious breach of human rights, and to generate repugnance for all forms of violence;

Shelters

34. Notes that the shelters in Turkey for women who have been victims of violence, which are reported to have capacity for 469 women and which have thus far provided services for 5 512 women¹, do not meet the needs of a population of approximately 70 million, while even the modest possibilities afforded under the law in force, namely a shelter in all municipalities with over 50 000 inhabitants, are not being sufficiently utilised;
35. Calls on the Turkish Government to ensure the efficiency, security and availability of sufficient numbers of shelters for the needs of women;
36. Welcomes the establishment of the “183 Family, Woman, Child and Handicapped Social Services” telephone helpline to report violence and also welcomes the establishment of a nationwide urgent assistance line, 157, for the victims of human trafficking, and believes that these helplines may serve as a good example for the EU;
37. Once again calls on Turkey to ratify Additional Protocol No 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights²;
38. Calls on the Turkish Government to carry out structural and personnel improvements in women's shelters and to eliminate shortcomings that have given rise to complaints;
39. Encourages the Turkish Government to do more to promote cooperation between state institutions/local authorities and independent women's organisations; urges it also to provide financial support for independent and autonomous women's shelters;

Political participation

¹ Source: Nimet Çubukçu, Turkey's State Minister in Charge of Women's Rights.

² <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/euro/z31prot12.html>.

40. Notes that the political participation by women in Turkey is too low; underlines the fact that discrimination against women can sometimes best be remedied by temporary positive discrimination measures, as allowed by, inter alia, CEDAW, and that there is an absolute need for female role models in positions of power and decision-making;
41. Suggests the adoption of a mandatory quota system ensuring fair representation of women on election lists as the best possible way to improve female participation in Turkish politics in the short term;
42. Suggests the proposal of measures to ensure appropriate representation of women on election lists as the best way to improve female participation in Turkish politics in the short term;
43. Calls on the Turkish political parties to adopt internal rules guaranteeing the presence of women in their management bodies at all levels;
44. Urges the political parties in Turkey, starting from the upcoming elections in 2007, to include more female candidates on election lists, to give women an appropriate role in the party hierarchy and to raise awareness of the importance of female political participation;
45. Strongly regrets that a standing committee on women's rights and gender equality has still not been established within the Turkish Parliament; emphasises that promises made by the Turkish Government and by some political parties in their party programmes should be upheld and underlines that the committee should be established as soon as possible;
46. Is concerned by the Commission's comment that women remain vulnerable to discriminatory practices, due inter alia to a lack of education and a high illiteracy rate in the country, and calls on the Turkish Government to ensure gender equality in access to education and the labour market, especially in the south-eastern regions; calls, in this regard, for measures in the educational sector in order to equip teaching staff with gender competence and to maintain a system of incentives to keep girls in school; calls also for schoolgirls and schoolboys to be made aware of equal rights for men and women and women's rights to self-determination, including through gender-sensitive education manuals;

Education

47. Notes that, according to UNICEF estimates, each year between 600 000 and 800 000 girls who have attained the mandatory age for going to school are either prevented by their families from doing so or do not attend school because of logistical difficulties;
48. Welcomes the girls' education campaign entitled "Let's go to school, girls", which has resulted in the enrolment of 222 800 girls in school; also welcomes the "Campaign to Support National Education" that reached almost 5 million adults in four years, most of whom are women from rural areas and girls who could not attend school;

49. Underlines the importance of education and its potential contribution to the economic independence of women; calls on the Turkish authorities to establish a monitoring system to keep girls in the education system;

Participation in the labour market

50. Notes that the percentage participation of women in the labour market remains exceptionally low, below 25%, and is very low compared to the average women's employment rate in the EU-25 of 55%, and that the female employment rate has dropped to around 20%, in contrast to the rise of women's participation in the informal sector, which is often the result of a combination of the low level of education of many women, the lack of an institutionalised, widespread, accessible and affordable system of care facilities for children, elderly and disabled relatives and the gender division of labour in society;
51. Highlights the Commission's remark, as regards equal opportunities, that alignment is required in respect of the Community acquis, in particular concerning parental leave, equal pay, equal access to employment and statutory and occupational social security;
52. Welcomes, in the light of the above, projects such as the joint Dutch-Turkish project entitled "Strengthening Equality in Employment" and the forthcoming project entitled "Support for Women's Entrepreneurship", and the cooperation between Garanti Bank and KAGIDER (Female Entrepreneurs Association) concerning credit facilities of up to \$30 000 and free training provided for women entrepreneurs;
53. Calls on the Turkish Government to establish a body or bodies for the promotion, analysis, monitoring and support of equal treatment on the labour market, including vocational training within the meaning of Article 8a of Directive 2002/73/EC¹;
54. Calls on the social partners and the Turkish Government to take all necessary measures to ensure the transition of the informal economy to the formal economy; asks the Commission to make support for this effort one of its priorities;
55. Requests the Turkish Government to provide accurate data on discrimination against women, including the access of women wearing headscarves to the formal labour market, in order to establish whether there is a risk of indirect discrimination based on gender;
56. Calls on the Turkish Government to improve the situation of home workers, most of whom are women; in this connection, urges Turkey to sign and ratify ILO Home Work Convention No 177 and to expand the Turkish Labour Code in order to cover home workers;

¹ Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002 amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions (OJ L 269, 5.10.2002, p. 15).

57. Once again calls on the Turkish Government to draft and implement national action plans on women and employment with a limited time-frame and concrete goals, as is currently the practice in the Member States of the EU;
58. Calls on the Turkish Ministry of Labour and the social partners to include gender equality issues in their policies and in the collective labour agreements, and calls on the Turkish trade unions to organise labour in the informal sector and to train union representatives on gender equality issues; welcomes in this respect the initiatives of the trade union confederation Türk-IS;
59. Stresses the important role of the social partners in promoting women's rights and their participation in economic, social and political life; encourages the social partners to do more to promote women's participation in bodies engaged in social dialogue;
60. Decides to evaluate, on a regular basis, progress in the field of women's rights in Turkey in addition to, and in conjunction with, the yearly progress report of the Commission, and to measure Turkey's progress in the field of women's rights in accordance with the benchmarks established in the progress report;

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61. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, the Director-General of the International Labour Organization and the Government and Parliament of Turkey.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

In preparing her draft report, the rapporteur has been in regular contact and has had in-depth discussions with a whole range of stakeholders in Turkey and the European Union, both in public and private. This work has included:

- Attending the conference of the Turkish Employers Organisations (TISK) on Women and Employment on the 10th of February 2006.
- Attending the International Women's Congress on 'The Role of Women in the Alliance of Civilizations', in Istanbul, on the 28-29th of the January 2006.
- A visit to Turkey to investigate the current situation of women's rights, which included discussions on women's rights with Prime Minister Erdoğan, Minister for Women's Rights Çubukçu, Minister for Social Affairs Başesgioğlu, employers organisation TISK, trade union confederation Türk-IS, trade union confederation HAK-IS, Women's NGOs, the women's branches of most of the political parties and individual members of the Turkish Parliament.
- A meeting with Professor Yakın Ertürk, the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on violence against women in July 2006.
- Meetings with Olli Rehn, EU Commissioner for Enlargement and Vladimir Spidla, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.
- A planned mini-hearing in the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality on the issue.

Civil society

The report stresses the importance of an open attitude of cooperation and effective coordination between different layers of the Turkish government, NGOs and the European Union institutions. In this respect, it welcomes the establishment of an Advisory Board on the Status of Women in 2005 which is designed to give advice on the planning and implementation of state policies related to the status of women. However, it emphasises the necessity to include also the trade unions who are not at present represented within the Board.

The rapporteur especially calls on the European Commission to determine specific goals; and to set up reasonable, proportionate and feasible benchmarks, preferably in its regular report on Turkey. This would clearly show Turkey which criteria it needs to meet and also it would also facilitate the monitoring and assessment procedure by the European Parliament. Another important problem is the growing concern of the women's NGOs about the extensive procedures for obtaining financial support and funding from the EU. Due to the complicated procedures that have to be followed by the NGOs to be eligible for EU grants, many women's NGOs hesitate to apply and benefit from a critically important resource. In this regard, the European Commission is encouraged to provide additional assistance by organising

information sessions on EU project funding that involves all the concerned parties.

Violence against women

Although some important steps were taken since last year, there are still many cases of violence against women in Turkey that oblige the authorities to intensify their efforts. The extent and the importance of the problem require effective coordination, use of reliable data and sufficient funding. Considering the existence of very little accurate and independent data on violence against women as one of the main problems, the report welcomes the EU-Turkey joint project to set up a database on violence against women. However, the reluctance of Turkey to conclude a special agreement with the European Commission concerning participation in the Daphne II Programme on combating violence against women is very regretful.

The rapporteur acknowledges the work of Prof. Yakın Ertürk, the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, who conducted an official fact finding mission in Turkey from 22 to 31 May 2006, following the extensive media coverage of suicides of women in Batman. Her work aimed at assessing whether high suicide rates which were interpreted as disguised honour killings or forced suicides were linked to tougher laws against honour crimes. Based on the findings of Prof. Ertürk, showing the lack of a precise direct link between the new legislation and the rise of the suicides of women, the European Parliament rapporteur did not mention the subject in this report.

Turkey is a party to all major international human rights instruments. Its domestic legislation provides for the equality and human rights of women and addresses violence against women. In practice, however, there needs to be a political will to implement these laws and protect women from violence. There is a need to change the mentality of people in order to fully implement the existing laws.

During the preparation of the report, due to the different data given by various sources, it was very difficult to get the accurate information about the shelters for women who have been victims of violence; namely the numbers of the shelters, the locations, the capacity, the general standards and the qualifications of the personnel who work in the shelters. In this light, Turkish authorities are requested to provide a complete and detailed list of the existing shelters in Turkey.

Political participation by women

Political participation by women in Turkey still remains dramatically low, as there have not been any elections since the last report on women's rights in Turkey. Turkish authorities are constantly encouraged to take sustainable measures to increase the representation of women in elected and appointed bodies. The temporary measures of positive discrimination, notably the adoption of a mandatory quota system for the election lists are seen as the best possible way to improve women's participation in the parliament and in representative municipal bodies. NGOs and female politicians alike are calling for the introduction of quota systems. The upcoming elections in Turkey represent an important opportunity to increase women's participation in politics by including more female candidates on the election list and by giving

them leading roles in the party's organisational structure beyond the women's branches.

Although a proposal has already been prepared and several promises were made by the Turkish government, a standing Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality with full legislative powers in the Turkish parliament has not been established yet. Regretting the inaction of the authorities, the rapporteur is of the opinion that a serious problem requires a serious committee. In this regard, the establishment of the Committee will be a concrete indicator of the Turkish government's commitment to women's rights and it will address gender mainstreaming within the Turkish legislation.

Education

More than half a million girls do not attend school each year, even though in Turkey it is compulsory to receive education for at least 8 years. In principle, there is not an obstacle for the access of girls to the school. Article 42 of the Turkish Constitution states that '*Primary education is compulsory for all citizens of both sexes and is free of charge in state schools*' and Article 4 of Basic Law of National Education states that '*Education institutions are open to everyone without any discrimination based on language, race, sex and religion.*' However there is a complex range of economic and social factors that contribute to the non-attendance of girls at school. One of the main reasons is the reluctance of families to send girls to school. Especially in the South East, where the number of girls attending school is disproportionately large, schools are often situated far from home and many parents do not want their children, especially girls, to travel far mainly for security reasons. Many families suffer economic hardship; therefore they try to augment domestic income by keeping children at home to work. Among the other reasons, there are the traditional gender bias of families that favours the needs of men and boys over those of women and girls and the fact that many parents consider the early marriage of their girls to be more important than their education. Furthermore, the shortage of schools and classrooms and the poor physical state of the schools are other reasons for low interest at education.

In the last years, some important education projects have been launched in order to tackle this problem and they had positive effects on the enrolment rate of the girls. Some of them are 'Dad send me to school', 'Let's go to school girls', 'Snowdrops' and 'Pick your sibling'. The 'Campaign to support national education' has reached 5 million adults in 4 years, most of whom are women from rural areas and girls who couldn't go to school. The share of the budget of the Ministry of National Education and The Council of Higher Education in the total consolidated budget has risen from 9.8 % in 1996 to 13 % in 2005. In 2003, the government set up the 'Let's go to school girls' campaign together with UNICEF and with support from NGOs, the EU, the World Bank, the private sector and media with the goal to close the gender-gap in primary school enrolment. According to UNICEF, the campaign has resulted in the enrolment of 177,000 girls and 87,000 boys in 53 provinces. The Ministry of National Education decided to expand the campaign to all the country's 81 provinces. The campaign has done much to raise awareness about the gender gap in education and women's rights. Besides, within the context of the 'Social Risk Mitigation Project' of the World Bank and the Turkish government, families with great financial problems are given what is called 'Conditional Cash Transfers'. This means that the families get financial incentives provided that they send their children to school and extra amount of cash transfers are provided for

sending girls to school.

The European Union has limited competence in the field of education and it has no common policy concerning education and the headscarf issue. Furthermore, the ECHR has ruled that *'the interference in issue was justified in principle and is proportionate to the aims pursued, and could therefore be considered to have been necessary in a democratic society'*¹. In this light, the rapporteur did not touch upon the issue except considering the risk of indirect discrimination based on gender in the formal labour market.

Participation of women in the labour market

According to OECD data², the Turkish employment rate of women is currently around 24.3%. According to studies by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, this number was still at 27% in 2004, whereas in 1998 the figure was still 35%. This points to a chronic decrease in the participation of women in the Turkish official labour market. For women to be able to claim the rights they have on paper, it is necessary for them to have a degree of (economic) independence. With more and more women losing out on the labour market, this independence seems difficult to realise. This trend needs to be stopped, and reversed. The reasons for the decrease in women's participation are diverse. Economic growth in Turkey is not followed by an increase in job opportunities. Many women have a low level of education, hindering their access to the labour market. Discrimination of women in the labour market and gender division of labour also remain problems, revealing the underlying biases of a society which is to some degree still patriarchal. Because of a possible risk of discrimination of women wearing headscarves, which might amount to indirect discrimination based on gender, the report asks the government to provide data on this subject.

The absence of women in the official labour market is to some extent also explained by the representation of a lot of women in the informal labour market, in which they often work as unregistered home workers. Women often are unable to leave the informal sector or prefer to do flexible part-time paid work at home because of the combination of several factors: their level of education might be too low, the traditional gender roles put limitations on women's choices, women are house-bound and responsible for care work because of the lack of an institutionalised, wide-spread, accessible and affordable system of care facilities for children, elderly and disabled relatives, the discrimination when it comes to hiring workers in the formal sector and the lack of awareness of their equal rights as equal individuals. That is why this report calls for attention for access to education for women, sufficient facilities for childcare and a firm anti-discrimination stance. Furthermore the Turkish authorities and social partners should do anything in their power to ensure the transition of the informal sector into the formal economy.

Labour legislation has already been improved, and the European Commission has several projects which seek to improve the number of women who are gainfully employed, such as vocational training programmes and programmes supporting women entrepreneurs. The fact

¹ Press release issued by the Registrar, Grand Chamber Judgment Leyla Şahin v. TURKEY
<http://www.echr.coe.int/Eng/Press/2005/Nov/GrandChamberJudgmentLeylaSahinvTurkey101105.htm>

² OECD, Employment Outlook 2005.

that the number of women in the labour force is still dropping is therefore worrying and surprising, since in some areas women are doing very well, with around 30% of lawyers, academics and doctors being women. Trade unions could play an important role in organising women already in the labour force and those seeking to be gainfully employed, so that it becomes easier for women to take part in the labour market. In this light this report also calls for unionisation of the informal sector and training of union representatives concerning women's rights issues.

Conclusion

In short three main stadia in the developments of women's rights in Turkey can be discerned.

The first has been changing and improving legislation on women's rights, which, besides some points which are still lacking, has overall been a success, although care must be taken that legislation is not rescinded.

The second stadium is creating an environment in which legislation can be implemented, such as establishing an Advisory Board which coordinates implementation of legislation between Ministries. While this environment is being created, some elements are lacking, such as a standing Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality in the Turkish Parliament, a sufficient budget to address the problems and a holistic approach to tackling problems concerning women's rights.

Because the second stadium has not been finished completely, the third has not yet been fully reached. This being that women actually see practical improvement of their situation in their daily lives, and do not only *have* rights but are also able to *claim* them in practice. While Turkey is therefore on the right track, improving women's rights is still an ongoing process.

Last year's report on the role of women in Turkey in social, economic and political life concluded that there were important improvements in legislation but practical implementation was lagging behind. In this year's report, the rapporteur has to conclude that while the implementation is still an issue, the women's rights on paper are also at risk of being overturned. The efforts to revise legislation on prosecuting violence against women were only dropped after the incident where a Turkish deputy used violence against his wife. In order to stop these kinds of efforts, in the present report, the rapporteur emphasises that the practical implementation needs to remain as a priority and it should be speeded up to ensure endurance of the new women's rights legislation. The report welcomes that Turkish authorities by giving support to various initiatives, projects and campaigns about women's rights acknowledge the importance of the problem. The report prepared by the Turkish Parliamentary Commission on Custom and Honour Crimes under the chairmanship of Fatma Şahin, is welcomed as an important initiative showing the willingness by the Turkish authorities to find a concrete solution to the problem of violence against women. Following the Commission's report, an official circular (circular no. 2006/17) was issued by Prime Minister Erdoğan to all ministries, public institutions and local administrations instructing them to enforce proposed solutions to deal with violence against women. Furthermore, the circular, among other proposed solutions, states that positive discrimination should be accepted as a state policy until equal treatment of men and women is established within the society. Another important step is the meeting of Nimet Çubukçu, Turkey's State Minister in Charge of Women Affairs with the representatives

of 55 women organisations and the decision to have a more structured cooperation and an effective coordination between the ministry and NGOs.

PROCEDURE

Title	Women's role in social, economic and political life in Turkey
Procedure number	2006/2214(INI)
Committee responsible Date authorisation announced in plenary	FEMM 7.9.2006
Committee(s) asked for opinion(s) Date announced in plenary	
Not delivering opinion(s) Date of decision	AFET 13.9.2006
Enhanced cooperation Date announced in plenary	
Rapporteur(s) Date appointed	Emine Bozkurt 25.4.2006
Previous rapporteur(s)	
Discussed in committee	23.11.2006 20.12.2006
Date adopted	20.12.2006
Result of final vote	+ 32 - 0 0 0
Members present for the final vote	Edit Bauer, Emine Bozkurt, Edite Estrela, Ilda Figueiredo, Věra Flasarová, Lissy Gröner, Zita Gurmai, Esther Herranz García, Lívia Járóka, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Urszula Krupa, Angelika Niebler, Doris Pack, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, Christa Prets, Teresa Riera Madurell, Raül Romeva i Rueda, Eva-Britt Svensson, Britta Thomsen, Corien Wortmann-Kool, Anna Záborská
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Ana Maria Gomes, Anna Hedh, Elisabeth Jeggle, Christa Klauf, Zita Pleštinská, Karin Resetarits, Zuzana Roithová, Heide Rühle, Bernadette Vergnaud
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	Dorette Corbey, Hanna Foltyn-Kubicka
Date tabled	11.1.2007
Comments (available in one language only)	