

European Parliament report highlights impact of digitalisation on gender equality

(19 February 2016) EPSU welcomes the adoption of the Women's Rights and Gender Equality committee draft report titled “proving gender equality and empowering women in the digital age” which took place on 18 February 2016. The motion, submitted by German Green/90 MEP Terry Reintke sought to address the wide range of issues now facing women all across Europe as a result of digitalisation, in both social and economic terms. The report was adopted by an overwhelming 24/6 majority, with some minor amendments.

The vast majority of amendments proposed by various right-wing alliances, EPP, ECR, AFDD MEPs were mostly rejected with some exceptions. The adopted amendments do not seem to have altered the general, positive thrust of the draft report. For example amendment 52 submitted by the EFDD adds several lines to Recital G regarding the positive consequences of digitalisation in regards to its promotion of direct democracy, while the EPPs amendment 55 only adds to Recital H content highlighting the positive and negative effects new channels of media consumption can have for young female users.

Those amendments submitted by Social Democratic, left and liberal alliances, (S&D, Greens/EFA, GUE/NGL and ALDE) were mostly adopted, and in many cases strengthened the fundamental purpose of the report. Amendment 123 submitted by Reintke added a sentence to paragraph 10 on “the importance of collective bargaining at all levels [...] effected by digitalization” and the S&Ds Amendment 184 which simply expanded the paragraph 22 to include not only “violence” but also other online acts of harassment against women.

Without access to the content of the adopted compromise amendments, its not possible to make a final conclusion, but generally it seems clear that whatever the final details may be, the draft report was adopted with the majority of its content in tact and remains an important step toward seeing the Commission and Member States take serious action on a wide variety of issues from the underrepresentation of women in the ICT sector, the gender pay gap, skills gap to taking account of data protection and online harassment and violence.

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