



**FEMM**

Women's Rights and Gender Equality

## DECEMBER 2015

### Note from the Chair



December will be a very busy month for the FEMM committee and we will discuss many important themes such as social dumping in the EU, women domestic workers and careers in the EU, the discharge procedures for 2014 of EIGE and of the EU general budget. Furthermore, we will vote on the draft report on external factors that represent hurdles to European female entrepreneurship, the draft opinion on the implementation of the 2010 recommendations of Parliament on social and environmental standards, human rights and corporate responsibility in addition to the draft opinion on the implementation of the EU-Central Asia strategy. Moreover, the draft reports on gender equality and empowering women in the digital age and on the application of the Council Directive 2010/18/EU as well as the draft opinions on workers representation on board level in Europe and on meeting the antipoverty target in the light of increasing household costs will be considered. Besides we will receive a visit from the Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, Ms. Vera JOUROVÁ to share the Commission's policy priorities in the area of gender equality. Finally, there will be an exchange of views on the question for written answer on mail-order bride industry and a hearing on the situation of women refugees and asylum seekers in the EU. There will be two meetings that will take place on 3 December (Brussels), from 9.00 to 12.30 and from 15.00 to 18.30 and on 14 December (Strasbourg) from 20.00 to 21.00. We invite you to follow us through web-streaming.

Iratxe GARCIA PÉREZ

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## Social Dumping in the European Union

**Rapporteur: Ms. Evelyn REGNER (S&D)**



On 3 December FEMM members will discuss the [draft opinion](#) of Ms. Evelyn REGNER (S&D) on the EMPL report on "Social Dumping in the European Union". The rapporteur stresses that in order to ensure the principle of equal pay for equal work and to avoid the discrimination of women as well as the risk of poverty and social exclusion the Commission needs to make an evaluation of the sectors in which women face social and wage dumping and to reinforce measures and sanctions for employers in which women are victims of social dumping. Moreover, the draft opinion highlights the need to establish a network of information and a website providing assistance and information on the rights of women workers transferred or posted to another Member State and employers' obligations.

**Implementation of 2010 Recommendations of Parliament of Social and Environmental Standards, Human Rights and Corporate Responsibility**

**Rapporteur: Ms. Malin BJÖRK (GUE/NGL)**



On 3 December, FEMM committee will on the [42 amendments](#) tabled to the [draft opinion](#) drafted by Ms. Malin BJÖRK on the INTA report on the "Implementation of the 2010 recommendation of Parliament on social and environmental standards, human rights and corporate responsibility". The opinion highlights the differentiated impact of trade agreements on women and men and the importance of integrating a gender equality perspective into the EU's trade policy. It also emphasises the need of strong support to the practice of including legally binding human rights clauses, with a particular focus on women's rights in the EU's international trade agreements and calls for the elaboration of gender assessments in parallel or prior to the negotiation of trade agreements as part of a broader human development impact assessment.

## Poverty: a Gender Perspective

Rapporteur: Ms Maria ARENA (S&D)



FEMM Members will have an exchange of views on the [working document](#) on "Poverty: a gender perspective" drafted by Ms. Maria ARENA (S&D). The rapporteur believes that many aspects of female poverty remain unrecognised, including the exclusion of women from access to culture and social participation. Therefore, the report should take into account the causes of female poverty such as the gender pay gap, new family structures or female poverty in old age. The strengthening of both legislative and budgetary instruments and the exchange of good practices are solutions to be considered. The exchange of views will take place on 3 December.

## Women Domestic Workers and Carers in the EU

Rapporteur: Ms. Kostadinka KUNEVA (GUE/NGL)



On 3 December FEMM Committee will discuss the [165 amendments](#) tabled to the [draft report](#) on "Women Domestic Workers and Carers in the EU" drafted by Ms. Kostadinka KUNEVA. The report proposes several measures to address the

problem of precariousness of domestic work and care in different policy sectors in both a national and European level focusing on its major victims, women (most of which are migrant women). These measures include the creation of common rules for domestic work and care in the EU, the professionalization of domestic work, the establishment of easy but legal labour relationships between employers and domestic workers, the inclusion of domestic work and carers in all national labour and anti-discrimination laws, the involvement of trade unions and the promotion of inspections in order to eliminate mistreatment and violence and financial exploitation against domestic workers.

## Gender Equality and Women in the Digital Age

Rapporteur: Ms. Terry REINTKE (Verts/ALE)



The FEMM committee will discuss the [draft report](#) on "Gender Equality and Women in the Digital Age" drafted by Ms. Terry REINTKE (Greens/EFA). The report emphasises the potential that information society, ICT and the internet have to promote

women's empowerment. Its influence can help to improve the participation of women in decision-making processes as well as the promotion of gender equality in the labour market. In order to do so, further education and training in ICT, the investment and funding for female entrepreneurs in ICT-related businesses are needed. The draft report also stresses the need to fight against violence against women in the context of a digitalised world, where cyber-bullying, cyber-stalking, trafficking in human beings through the internet or hate speeches represent a serious threat to women and ultimately their empowerment.

## Implementation and review of the EU-Central Asia Strategy

Rapporteur: Ms. Julie GIRLING (ECR)



On 3 December FEMM Members will vote on the [44 amendments](#) tabled to the [draft opinion](#) to the AFET report on the "Implementation and review of the EU-Central Asia Strategy" elaborated by the rapporteur for opinion Ms Julie GIRLING (ECR). The draft opinion recognizes the steps taken by individual Central Asian countries to promote gender equality and calls the Commission to further support the Central Asian countries to develop their women's rights agenda. The draft opinion expresses concerns about 29 per cent of women in the region becoming victims of physical or sexual violence and calls on the EU's anti-trafficking Coordinator to support Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in combating trafficking in human beings. The opinion emphasises that tertiary education, and the promotion of equal access to information and communication technologies in Central Asia countries must be improved in order to ensure women's growth potential in local and global economies.

## Hearing on the Situation of Women and Asylum Seeker in the EU

Rapporteur: Ms. Mary HONEYBALL (S&D)



On 3 December both a hearing and the presentation of a [draft report](#) on "The Situation of Women Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the EU" will be held. The Rapporteur, Ms. Mary HONEYBALL (S&D), considers that women and girls fleeing conflicts and war face various forms of gender based violence in their journey towards a hosting country, as well as multiple discrimination due to widespread prejudices about women refugees and asylum seekers. The hearing will have the contribution of four experts: Ms Rachel Reilly from the Women's Refugee Commission, Ms Andrea Vonkeman from UNHCR, Ms Debora Singer from Asylum Aid and Ms Christina Merker-Siesjo, Chair of Yalla Trappan. The hearing will take place on 3 December, in Altiero Spinelli building, room 1G3, from 15.00. The programme can be found [here](#).

### Meeting Antipoverty Target in the Light of the Increasing Household Costs

### Visit of Ms. Věra JOUROVÁ, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality

Rapporteur: Ms. Julie WARD (S&D)



On 3 December, FEMM Members will discuss the [draft opinion](#) to the EMPL report on "Meeting the Antipoverty Target in the Light of the Increasing Household Costs", drafted by Ms. Julie WARD (S&D). The

draft report underlines that the gender aspects of poverty must be addressed at both national and EU level with a fresh political impetus for drastic action to tackle energy poverty, which affects single-parent and female-headed households in a disproportional way. The report recognises that the anti-poverty targets will stay out of reach unless female poverty is addressed as gender equality and the economic empowerment of women are necessary for upward convergence in poverty reduction.



On 14 December, FEMM committee will have an exchange of views with Ms. Věra JOUROVÁ, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality in order to present the Commission's policy priorities in the area of

gender equality for the year of 2016. FEMM Members will have the opportunity to have an exchange of views with Commissioner Jourová following the EPSCO Council Meeting which takes place one week before, on 7 December 2015.

### Mail-Order Bride Industry



On 3 December, the FEMM committee will hold an exchange of views with Commission representatives on the oral question for written answer on the widespread problem of the mail-order bride industry, tabled on 30 March of 2015 by Ms. Catherine BEARDER (ALDE), Ms. Mary HONEYBALL (S&D) and Ms. Maria ARENA (S&D), in order to obtain further information about the European Commission's research and plans to address this issue. Mail-order bride agencies' form an industry that recruits women from less-developed countries

as life partners for men from wealthier nations. Such companies are responsible for bringing thousands of migrant women into the EU in search of stable life. However, these marriages quite often lead to abuse, isolation, exploitation and even human trafficking owing to the absence of regulation of such agencies. The crucial root causes for this vulnerability are the lack of information provided to women about their rights and responsibilities and the lack of accountability demanded of the mail-order bride industry within the EU.



Rapporteur: Ms. Barbara Matera (EPP)



On 14 December, FEMM committee will discuss two discharge procedures: one concerning the [EU general budget](#) and the other from [EIGE](#). The draft opinions drafted by Ms. Barbara MATERA stress that equality between women and men must be integrated in all policy areas, which means that gender budgeting should be included in stages of the budgetary process. It also emphasises the importance of gender-specific indicators in order to allow better assessment of the implementation of the budget from the gender perspective, and calls the Commission to include the gender perspective in its future reports on the evaluation of the Union's finances and to ensure full implementation of the budget for the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme.

## External Factors That Represent Hurdles to European female Entrepreneurship

Rapporteur: Ms. Barbara Matera (EPP)

On 14 December, FEMM members will vote on the [106 amendments](#) submitted to the [draft report](#) by Ms. Barbara MATERA (EPP) on "External Factors that Represent Hurdles to European female entrepreneurship". The report sets as priorities the empowering effect of social entrepreneurship on mainstream entrepreneurship as well as the need of affordable care for children and the elderly in order to help female entrepreneurs exploit their full potential. A great relevance is also given to funding opportunities for female entrepreneurs, among other aspects related to women's access to finance, including the potential persistence of stereotypes with regards to the success of female entrepreneurs.

Application of Council Directive 2010/18/EU of 8 March implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC and repealing Directive 96/34/EC

Rapporteur: Ms. Iratxe GARCIA PÉREZ (S&D)



FEMM Members will discuss the [draft opinion](#) drafted by Ms. Iratxe GARCIA PÉREZ (S&D) on the EMPL report on the "Application of Council Directive 2010/18/EU of 8 March implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC and repealing Directive 96/34/EC". The opinion defends that social partners should activate the review-clause and calls for the revision of the Directive in matters such as the introduction of adequate and incentive-based financial compensation for lost income for parents taking up parental leave. Besides, the opinion stresses that family-related policies should be designed as individual, non-transferable entitlements in order to improve their efficiency and take-up rates, especially among men, and supports the extension of the minimum 4-month entitlement to 6 months. The discussion of the draft opinion will take place on 3 December.

## European Institute for Gender Equality Launches White Ribbon Campaign



On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), together with the Luxembourg Ministry of Equal Opportunities launched the 2015 White Ribbon Campaign in Luxembourg. President of the Parliament, Mars di Bartolomeo, Prime Minister, Xavier Bettel and several ministers made their official White Ribbon pledge at the launch - to never commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women. Men must play a key role in ending violence against women and EIGE encourages men across Europe to become agents of change. Anyone wanting to show their commitment to this important campaign can [sign the White Ribbon pledge](#) on EIGE's web page. To read the full press release, click [here](#).

The next FEMM committee meeting will be held on Monday 18 January 2016 in Strasbourg and on Thursday 28 January from 9.00 to 12.30 and from 15.00 to 18.30 in Brussels.

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