

P5_TA(2003)0323

Gender budgeting

European Parliament resolution on gender budgeting - building public budgets from a gender perspective (2002/2198(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the EC Treaty, in particular to Articles 2, 3(2), 13 and 141(4) thereof,
- having regard to Article 23(1) of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights¹,
- having regard to the UN Convention of 18 December 1979 on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)²,
- having regard to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, as adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993³,
- having regard to the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in 1994,
- having regard to the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development and its 2000-2005 update⁴,
- having regard to the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing on 15 September 1995⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 May 2000 on the follow-up to the Beijing Action Platform⁶,
- having regard to the Commission's communication of 7 June 2000 entitled 'Towards a Community framework strategy on gender equality (2001-2005)' (COM(2000) 335) and to its resolution of 3 July 2001⁷ on the work programme for 2001,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 April 2003 containing the comments accompanying the decision concerning discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the year 2001⁸, in particular paragraphs 1 and 5 thereof,

¹ OJ C 364, 18.12.2000.

² <http://www.unifem.org>

³ <http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf>

⁴ <http://www.thecommonwealth.org/gender>

⁵ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch>

⁶ OJ C 59, 23.2.2001, p. 258.

⁷ OJ C 65, 14.3.2002, p. 43.

⁸ P5_TA(2003)0150.

- having regard to the hearing on gender budgeting in the European Parliament held by the Committee on Women’s Rights and Equal Opportunities on 23 January 2003 in Brussels,
 - having regard to Rule 163 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Women’s Rights and Equal Opportunities (A5-0214/2003),
- A. whereas equality of men and women is a fundamental principle of Community law according to Article 2 of the Treaty and thus part of the Community acquis; whereas equality between women and men is established by Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights,
- B. whereas Article 3(2) of the Treaty stipulates that equality between men and women must be promoted in all EU activities and that the Community shall aim to eliminate inequalities,
- C. whereas the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights clearly imposes the obligation to promote the full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life, at the national, regional and international levels, and declares the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex as a priority objective of the international community (Article 18),
- D. whereas the Beijing Platform for Action endorsed gender mainstreaming as an effective strategy to promote gender equality and stated that governments and other players ‘should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes, so that before decisions are taken an analysis is made of the effects on women and men respectively’,
- E. whereas gender mainstreaming means incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities and has thus been implemented in the work of the Commission, including the European Employment Strategy, the European Strategy for Social Inclusion, the research policy, the European Structural Funds, the policy for cooperation and development, the external relations,
- F. whereas since 1996 the Commission has adopted a policy of gender mainstreaming and incorporation of equal opportunities for women and men in all Community activities and policies,
- G. whereas gender budgeting can be identified as the application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process and, as such, places emphasis on the analysis of the impact of public policies on women and men, incorporates the gender perspective at all levels of the process of building public budgets and aims at restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality,
- H. whereas the Commission has signalled its commitment in this respect by the decision to set up a working group within the framework of its Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men to carry out a survey inside the EU Member States and to promote the implementation of gender budgeting in the EU and national budgets,

- I. whereas the Commission has signalled its commitment in this respect through Commissioner Schreyer's statement to the Women's Right and Equal Opportunities Committee during its public hearing on gender budgeting,
- J. whereas a working group of experts on gender budgeting has also been created in the Council of Europe and has produced a preliminary background paper,
- K. whereas the Belgian Presidency of the Council, together with the OECD, UNIFEM, the Commonwealth and the Nordic Council of Ministers, held a seminar on this issue in October 2001,
- L. whereas gender budgeting initiatives are already being taken in a number of EU countries, both at national and regional level, e.g. in Ireland, England, Scotland and Spain, and at local level, e.g. in some communes in Italy, and have already long existed in other parts of the world, e.g. in Australia, Canada and South Africa; recalling also that, in a number of countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, gender budgeting initiatives are being tried out in specific sectoral policies,

Definition, aims and scope of gender budgeting

1. Endorses the definition of gender budgeting, as the application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process – proposed by the informal network on gender budgeting organised by the Council of Europe; this entails a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality;
2. Emphasises that gender budgeting does not aim to produce separate budgets for women, but rather to influence public budgets, since they are not gender-neutral, as they have a different impact on women and men both from the revenue and from the expenditure perspective; with this in mind gender budgeting implies that in all budget programmes, measures and policies, revenue or expenditure in all programmes and actions should be assessed and restructured in order to ensure that women's priorities and needs are taken into account on an equal basis to those of men, the final aim being to achieve equality between men and women;
3. Highlights that, by defining and implementing budgetary policies, public authorities take specific political decisions affecting society and the economy; public budgets are not mere financial and economic tools, but are the basic framework within which the model of socio-economic development is shaped, criteria of income re-distribution are set and political aims are prioritised;
4. Recalls that gender budget strategies must be implemented in a broader macro-economic context which bolsters the development of human resources and human capital; according to the principles and objectives set at the Lisbon European Council, social development and human empowerment should be promoted as long-term investments in the framework of the European policies for employment and economic growth in order to create a competitive European economy based on knowledge;
5. Emphasises that successful implementation of gender budgeting requires a political commitment to achieving equality between women and men; this means that all

institutions defining public policies must promote political and institutional representation of women at all levels, support a wider presence of women in all decision-making processes both in public and private sectors and develop public sensitivity and concern for equal opportunities and human capital development;

6. Stresses the fact that macro-economic policy can contribute to narrowing or widening gender gaps in terms of economic resources and power, education and training and health; by promoting gender equality and by implementing policies in the framework of gender budgeting, public budgets also achieve major political objectives such as:
 - equality, fair and balanced budgetary policies aimed at reducing inequalities and promoting equal opportunities according to the different roles of women and men in the economy and society,
 - efficiency, more efficient use of resources, higher quality and effectiveness of public services according to the different needs of female or male citizens,
 - transparency, a better understanding of public revenue and expenditure among citizens and thus greater transparency and accountability of national and local governments;

Tools and methods of gender budgeting

7. Reiterates its support for greater efficiency in public spending, both at EU and Member State level, and an improvement in the functioning of the internal market; reaffirms the need to promote employment, as stipulated in the Lisbon summit, to enhance gender perspective in all policies, and to promote women's participation in the decision-making process; in this respect, gender budgeting can serve to improve the achievement of these aims while promoting a more equal distribution of financial burdens and benefits among citizens;
8. Specifies that building a public budget from a gender perspective means:
 - identifying how different citizens benefit from public expenditure and contribute to public revenue, highlighting the difference between women and men by using qualitative and quantitative data and benchmarking,
 - evaluating the different impact on women and men of budgetary policies and redistribution of resources in terms of money, services, time and work of social and family care/social reproduction,
 - analysing gender impact in all sectors of public intervention and incrementally introducing gender budgeting in all policies, including education, welfare and social services, health assistance, actions and measures for employment, transport, housing, etc.,
 - developing a bottom-up budgetary process and promoting the involvement and participation of all citizens - men and women - and actors concerned (associations and NGOs) with the aim of identifying different specific needs and appropriate policies and measures to respond to them,

- verifying that the allocation of resources corresponds in an appropriate and equal manner to the different needs and demands of women and men,
 - ensuring that gender analyses and impact are thoroughly taken into consideration in all phases of the budgetary process, including project, definition, implementation, monitoring and evaluation,
 - using public budgets to define meaningful political priorities and identify specific tools, mechanisms and actions in order to achieve equality between women and men through public policies,
 - redefining priorities and reallocating public expenditure without necessarily increasing the total amount of a public budget,
 - verifying/accounting for the efficacy and efficiency of public expenditures in respect of established priorities and commitments, in general terms, and, specifically, with regard to respect for equal opportunities between women and men in the re-distribution of public resources and services;
9. Points out that gender budgeting strategies require interministerial coordination linking ministries for the budget, economic affairs and finance with the ministry and/or departments and organisations responsible for equal opportunities, involving all the departmental heads and sectoral officials taking part in drawing up the public budget, in order to ensure that the gender perspective is incorporated in the definition of revenue and expenditure in all budget policies;
 10. Emphasises that gender budget strategies are based on complex and diversified methodologies which encompass aims, tools, actions and measures specific to gender and to the context of implementation; this means that gender budgeting methodology must tackle socio-economic inequalities between women and men according to the different realities at local, regional, national and European level, in order to be appropriate and successful in achieving gender quality;
 11. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to draw up and maintain gender-specific data for all policy areas;

Objectives of the report on Gender Budgeting

12. Calls on the Member States to monitor and analyse the impacts of macroeconomic and economic reform policies on women and men, and the development of strategies, mechanisms and corrective measures to address gender imbalances in key areas, with the aim of creating a broader economic and social framework in which gender budgeting could be positively implemented;
13. Calls on the Commission to promote the creation of a European network of entities carrying out gender budgeting and experts/managers dealing with the subject, in particular women, to be linked to the network of parliamentary committees for equal opportunities; this network may contribute to developing and disseminating knowledge of the methods, processes and mechanisms of gender budgeting, to promoting the exchange

of best practice and positive experience, and to providing governments, parliaments and budgetary authorities with a framework for action and strategies of reproducible experience, in order to help them incorporate the objective of equality between men and women in all budget policies, programmes and measures;

14. Calls on the Commission, the Member States, and local and regional governments to carry out gender budgeting and stresses that the gender budgeting strategy should become a 'parliamentarised procedure' within the European Parliament and national, regional and local parliaments, with particular reference to the countries about to join the EU; to this end stresses that the parliamentary committees for women's rights must play a key role;
15. Calls on the Commission to apply the findings and principles of the opinion from the European Commission's Advisory Committee Working Group to the EU budget;
16. Asks the Commission, with a view to spreading knowledge of strategies and methodologies of gender budgeting through all institutions at European, national, regional and local level, to produce and distribute extensively a brochure explaining instruments and methods for incorporating gender budgeting and making available to all actors potentially concerned with budgetary processes and policies - i.e. institutions, governments, public authorities and administrations, associations and NGOs – a guide providing information on aims, strategies, mechanisms and tools of gender budgeting;
17. Calls on the Member States to use and promote the application of gender budgeting instruments and methods (accompanied by specific statistics broken down by gender, and indicators and benchmarks on equality between the sexes) so that budgetary revenue and expenditure policies may be structured and carried out with the aim of promoting equality between women and men;
18. Calls on the Commission to initiate a wide-ranging information campaign on the subject of gender budgeting, targeting the general public and national and regional governments and parliaments, distribute the brochure on gender budgeting and disseminate the experience acquired in developing and carrying out gender budgeting according to the results of the inquiry carried out by the working group on gender budgeting set up by the Commission;
19. Requests the Commission to produce within two years a communication on gender budgeting and draw up indicators or benchmarks, taking into consideration the results of the work of the Expert Group on GB, in order to provide an overview of the process and to shape a strategy for action for the EU and the Member States; calls also for the inclusion, in the implementation of the second part of the Fifth Programme for Equal Opportunities, of gender budget policy within the objectives, tools and mechanism of the Framework Strategy for Equality, following the mid-term review scheduled for December 2003;
20. Calls on its Committee on Budgets to implement gender budgeting in the process of EU budget definition in order to develop a gender-responsive budgetary policy in the EU; instructs its committee responsible with promoting and monitoring the implementation of gender budgeting in the EU budget with respect to definition, construction, implementation and evaluation of all EU budgetary policies;

o
o o

21. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and the governments of the Member States.