

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Working Documents

1982-1983

29 June 1983

DOCUMENT 1-477/83

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

tabled by Mr SASSANO, Mr GHERGO and Mrs PHLIX
pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

on the legal recognition of housework

The European Parliament,

- A. whereas Article 14 of the Council of Europe's European Convention on Human Rights lays down that all rights and freedoms shall be fully enjoyed without discrimination, particularly that based on sex,
- B. having regard to the world conference in Mexico City which led to the proclamation of the United Nations decade for women (1976-1985),
- C. having regard to the United Nations convention on the abolition of all forms of discrimination against women, signed by 50 countries on 17 July 1980 during the opening ceremony of the world conference in Copenhagen,
- D. having regard to the establishment by the Council of Europe at the beginning of 1980 of a committee of experts on the position of women, which adopted a six-year action programme in the field of human rights,
- E. whereas housework is recognized as genuine work only in motion for a resolution No. 28 of the Council of Europe (Committee of Ministers) of 12 November 1975, and neither the European Community nor any of the Member States has seen fit to grant this recognition in recent years,
- F. whereas a great many women, consciously or unconsciously, choose to work outside the home because housework is not considered as real work and is therefore undervalued,
- G. whereas it should be noted that, as pointed out by a UN conference working document, women:
- represent half of the world's population;
 - represent one-third of the registered workforce (those receiving payment for their work);
 - account for over 60% of all working hours;
 - receive only 10% of total earned income in the world;
 - possess less than 1% of the world's wealth (property, capital, means of production, etc.),
- H. whereas it is unjust that women who devote themselves to housework, despite having responsibility for children, the sick and the elderly in addition to their

continual everyday workload (since they never leave their place of work), should be more or less excluded from the economic system,

- I. whereas it is easier and less expensive for the community to deal with certain problems within the context of the family rather than to increase external social services which are much less personalized and more difficult to maintain,
 - J. whereas, finally, consideration of this problem in the context of the widespread unemployment afflicting Europe and the other countries of the world cannot but be helpful in drawing conclusions and finding solutions,
1. Calls for the problem of women engaged in housework to be tackled before the end of the United Nations decade for women (1985), with the firm resolve to achieve legal recognition for this kind of work;
 2. Believes it necessary to adopt the well-formulated Resolution No. 28 of 12 November 1975, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, though with an amendment to paragraph E of the resolution, which was not accepted by some Member States because it called for the same economic rights to be granted to housewives as to women engaged in a specific profession;
 3. Stresses, nevertheless, that it is necessary even in the present difficult economic situation to recognize at last as real work work undertaken within the family nucleus in all the Member States;
 4. Believes it necessary (by way of replacing paragraph E) merely to make an appropriate reassessment of the family allowance due to an unpaid spouse who can show that she has no other income and works exclusively in the home;
 5. Calls for this allowance to be made directly payable to the spouse concerned, as a symbolic recognition of the work performed;
 6. Calls also for the continuing payment of this allowance to housewives who are separated, divorced or widowed, in addition to any alimony or pension when this is of modest size, as recognition of the work they have personally performed;
 8. Hopes that the Council and Commission of the European Communities will undertake the same commitment to resolve this problem as the Council of Europe has done with its Resolution No. 28 of 1975;
 9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission of the European Communities and the Governments of the Member States.