



Gender equality at school: support education as a tool for change!

Joint call to support the Rodrigues report

Civil society and human rights organisations call Members of the European Parliament to support the report on "[Empowering girls through education in the EU](#)" in the plenary vote on 8 September.

This report proposes actions to ensure that all national education systems promote gender equality, raise girls' profiles and skills and ultimately improve their personal and professional development.

Besides equal access to education for boys and girls regardless of their socio-economic status, cultural background or religion, this report calls Member States to implement educational measures aiming at:

- Fighting gender stereotypes (conveyed by media, advertisement, textbooks etc.) that often affect girls' and boys' self-image, health, acquisition of skills, social integration and professional life;
- Encouraging girls and boys to take an equal interest in all subjects beyond gender stereotypes in vocational and professional orientation;
- Teaching equality, human dignity and self-esteem to encourage autonomous and informed decision-making for girls and boys;
- Educating girls and boys about sexuality and relationships with a rights-based, gender-sensitive, age-appropriate and scientifically accurate curriculum to help them making well-informed choices and to reduce unwanted pregnancies, maternal and infant mortality and sexually transmitted infections;

- Promoting girls and women's awareness and control over their own bodies;
- Tackling homophobic and transphobic bullying and help fighting discriminations on ground on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

Regressive anti-human rights NGOs like the French "La Manif pour Tous" [have called MEPs to reject the report](#) on the false pretense that education falls within the exclusive competence of parents and EU Member States. It must be reminded that the EU is bound to contribute to the development of a quality education in Europe by supporting and supplementing Member States' actions in this area (article 165 TFEU) and by its long standing commitment and policies on gender equality.

The undersigned organisations have no doubt that MEPs will ignore this misleading argumentation which is nothing else but a grotesque attempt to undermine girls' rights and freedoms and promote an ultra-conservative view of the role of women in society.

Ensuring that all girls access education is not enough: public education must also help them becoming autonomous citizens who fully enjoy their social, economic, cultural and political rights. Education must be a tool that effectively helps girls and boys embracing the career they want and choosing freely over their personal and sexual lives.

On 8 September, we hope that MEPs will commit to defend gender equality and girls' rights and therefore firmly support the report as it stands.

Signatories:

European Humanist Federation

European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development

ILGA-Europe

European Women's Lobby

International Planned Parenthood Federation- European Network