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## **Positions and opinions of political groups in the European Parliament and European social movements on civil, political and social rights for women, migrants and minorities**

**Document Identifier**

D9.5 Report on the perceptions of political parties in the European Parliament and social movements

**Version**

1.0

**Date Due**

30.04.2015

**Submission date**

10.06.2015

**WorkPackage**

9 Balancing Gender and Generational Citizenship

**Lead Beneficiary**

6 AAU

**Dissemination Level**

PU



Grant Agreement Number 320294  
SSH.2012.1-1



### Change log

version	Date	amended by	Changes
1.0	10.06.2015	Lise Rolandsen Agustín (Aalborg University), Anita Nissen (Aalborg University)	Final document delivered

### Partners involved

number	partner name	People involved
6	AAU	Lise Rolandsen Agustín, Anita Nissen



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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ALDE	Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
COFACE	Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union
CSO	Civil society organisation
ECR	European Conservatives and Reformists
EFD	Europe of Freedom and Democracy
ENoMW	European Network of Migrant Women
EP	European Parliament
EPP	European People's Party
EWL	European Women's Lobby
EYF	European Youth Forum
FEMM	Committee of the European Parliament on Women's Rights and Gender Equality
Greens/EFA	The Greens-European Free Alliance
GUE/NGL	European United Left-Nordic Green Left
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MINT	Mathematics, Information technology, Natural sciences and Technology
NI	Non-attached Members; Members not belonging to any political group
S&D	Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats

## **AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE DELIVERABLE**

The central aim of this deliverable is to analyse the positions and opinions of political groups in the European Parliament (EP) and European social movements on civil, political and social rights for women, migrants and minorities in order to understand their views on family-related rights and values, in particular the position of the Committee of the European Parliament on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM). The deliverable focuses on the policy issues of free movement of young women, migration and elderly care, and how they are affected by EU level policies, positions and opinions. In this way, we are able to address gender, age, and generation issues, which are key foci of WP9, and, at the same time, link to the distinction between citizens/non-citizens of WP10. Aalborg University has coordinated and executed this task.

The working process included several steps:

- Desktop research to select relevant themes for the analysis.
- Reading and coding all of the relevant policy documents (reports and opinions; see appendix) drafted by the FEMM Committee regarding free movement of young women, migration and elderly care from 2009 to 2014, using a critical frame analysis approach.
- Mapping positions and opinions of political groups on the selected issues and identifying key frames.
- Desk top research on positions and opinions of political groups and civil society organisations (CSOs) on the selected issues as these are communicated on their respective web sites.
- Policy tracing key reports within each area in order to analyse the policy process (debate and amendments in Committee, plenary debate and voting results as well as explanations to votes).
- Conducting, transcribing and analysing interviews with politicians (FEMM Committee MEPs) and civil society representatives (major European organizations in the field).
- Producing data on the descriptive representation of women in the EP and the FEMM Committee.
- Presenting an overview of existing literature related to the work, function and dynamics of the FEMM Committee.

## INTRODUCTION

This deliverable analyses the positions and opinions on civil, political and social rights for women, migrants and minorities in relation to the policy areas of freedom of movement for young women, migration, and elderly care as they are articulated by political groups and MEPs in the 7<sup>th</sup> legislature of the EP (2009-2014) as well as by relevant European CSOs in the field. We focus particularly on the FEMM Committee addressing policy contents of reports and opinions drafted by the Committee in relation to the three selected issues as well as policy processes at committee and plenary level.

The FEMM Committee addresses gender equality issues and is therefore selected as the main focus of this deliverable since we aim to shed light on gendered perspectives on rights (in combination with age and generation). However, the Committee is also biased in the sense that we would expect to find the most gender progressive ideas being articulated in this institutional setting as it has gender equality and women's rights as its specific focus. We seek to counterbalance this by including plenary debates and votes, thus comparing articulations at Committee level, with a clear focus on gender issues, and at plenary level, which would be expected to adopt a more generic approach.

We have chosen to focus on the 7<sup>th</sup> legislature as it is the most recent, finalized legislative period; this enables us to get a relatively updated and, at the same time, comprehensive picture of the positions and opinions articulated by the political groups throughout the period. Subsequently, we will be able to link the findings with deliverable 9.7 (to be published in May 2016), focusing on the EP elections in 2014 and the 8<sup>th</sup> legislature (2014 onwards).

Within the overall perspectives of WP 9 (intersection of (elderly) care and migration regime, gender equality, marriage and parenthood related rights, and rights of free movement of young Europeans), we selected the themes of free movement for young women, migration and elderly care for the analysis of the EU level policies, positions and opinions. In this way we are able to address gender, age, generation (WP9) and citizens/non-citizens (WP10) by focusing on women, migrants and minorities as well as family rights and the way in which these are framed and combined in EU level policies.

The analysis has been conducted on the basis of a coding of all policy documents (reports and opinions) drafted by the FEMM Committee regarding the selected issues in the period from 2009 to 2014. Policy documents have been selected on the basis of the three selected themes. Six reports from the FEMM Committee and their subsequent debates in the EP plenary have been selected for the primary document analysis using critical frame analysis (see appendix). This covers one report on free movement for young women, two on migration and three on elderly care. Furthermore 13 opinions of the FEMM Committee were analysed (four on freedom of movement for young women, three on migration and six on elderly care) (see appendix). As these opinions shed light on the gendered aspects of report themes addressed by other committees, they are particularly relevant to our theme selection since it most often refers to the area of other committees.

The coding was based on critical frame analysis, focusing on identifying policy frames. Verloo defines policy frames as an "organising principle that transforms fragmentary or incidental information into a structured and meaningful problem, in which a solution is implicitly or explicitly included" (2005: 20). In accordance with this, all policy proposals contain a diagnosis (representation of the problem), which is, in turn, related to a prognosis (proposal for a solution). One of the main purposes of critical frame analysis is to deconstruct the multiplicity of meanings of gender equality, which are articulated in policies (Dombos, Krizsán and Zentai, 2008; Verloo, 2007). In the coding of the policy documents we pay particular attention to gender equality, intersectionality (i.e., the interaction between different inequality creating categories, such as gender, age, race/ethnicity, class, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and nationality), public/private divide and (civil, political and social as well as individual and family-related) rights and the way in which they are integrated in the construction of the diagnosis and prognosis of the policy frames. Thus, these notions were included as code categories together

with problems and solutions. Included in the coding were also interpretation of silences (what was left out of the policies?) and overall normative framework. The resulting analysis includes a mapping of positions and opinions as well as identification of framings of the policy content with specific emphasis on the ways in which gender equality, intersectionality and rights were articulated in the documents as part of the representation of the problems. The identification of frames was made on the basis of the code categories with the main focus on problem frames, i.e., frames were labelled in accordance with the most prominent representations of problems within each document. The coding was supplemented with tracing of the parliamentary processes resulting in the final reports and opinions. This part of the analysis includes amendments, debates, voting results and explanations to votes in order to identify tensions and consensus between political groups during the policy process. Data on votings in the EP plenary was obtained online from VoteWatch Europe, in the cases where these had been registered electronically in the EP.

In order to strengthen the explanations and contextualisations of the findings, as well as to highlight silences in the policies, we added interview data to the analysis. Interviews with three MEPs, one EP official with knowledge on the FEMM Committee, and representatives of five European CSOs were carried out (see appendix). The CSOs represent the dimensions of gender, migration, family and age (European Women's Lobby; European Network of Migrant Women; International Planned Parenthood Federation; European Youth Forum; and AGE Platform), thus covering the selected policy issues. All interviews referred to the 7<sup>th</sup> legislature, i.e. we interviewed MEPs with a seat in the EP during the 2009-2014 period and/or questions referred to policy documents and policy-making processes carried out during the same period. Whereas the interviews conducted with representatives from major European CSOs cover all the grounds of discrimination, which are included in the report (gender, age, generation, migrant status), we were not able to conduct nearly as many interviews with MEPs as we had aimed for. This was mainly due to difficulties in gaining access to MEPs and to their busy time schedules, which in some cases did not allow them to set up interviews for this particular research project. To some extent, it proved easier to get interview appointments when the MEP in question had a strong political interest within the thematic area. The MEPs interviewed represented the three major political groups in the EP and in the FEMM Committee: EPP, S&D and ALDE. As an alternative strategy, we supplemented the MEP interviews with an administrator from the EP Policy Department on Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs: this strategy proved very successful as the policy overview and insights related to policy dynamics within the EP, in general, and the FEMM Committee, in particular, provided in this interview were highly significant and useful for the elaboration of the report and its analysis of the institutional context and policy-making processes. All in all, and given the limited number of interviews, we decided to only use the interviews to supplement the analysis of policy documents and instead strengthen the contextualization of these documents by expanding our focus on policy-making processes (amendments, debates, voting results and explanations to votes), thus shedding further light on significant policy dynamics.

The interviews were conducted in person, via Skype or, in cases where the interviewees did not have the time available for a personal interview, in writing and via email. Whereas the option of conducting the interviews via email was a feasible way to gain interview data, the method is less effective, as interviewees tend to reveal less information about contestations, controversies and potential conflicts in this manner of 'interviewing'. The interview guidelines included questions regarding the content of and contestations about the reports analysed within the three policy areas, the policy process leading to adoption of the report in question, and opinions on the role, function and dynamics of the FEMM Committee within the EP. In all cases, we approached MEPs from the FEMM Committee, who had been involved in the policy process on the selected issues either as rapporteur or in another key position. Civil society representatives were selected on the basis of their specialized knowledge of the specific policy field.

In addition, web site data about the positions and opinions of the political groups and the CSOs as well as quantitative data on the gender composition of the political groups of the EP and the representation of political groups in the FEMM Committee were used together with existing literature on the work, function and

dynamics of the FEMM Committee. All in all these additional data provided a framework for understanding the institutional context within which positions and opinions were articulated.

The deliverable is structured around three main chapters. *Chapter 1 on Gender Equality, Women's Rights and the European Parliament* sets the stage for the analysis, by providing key information on the composition of the EP and the FEMM Committee, as well as an overview of existing literature related to the work, function and dynamics of the FEMM Committee. *Chapter 2 on Positions and Opinions on Civil, Political and Social Rights for Women, Migrants and Minorities* analyses the political groups' positions and opinions on freedom of movement, migration and elderly care as these are articulated on their respective websites and in the reports and opinions drafted by the FEMM Committee (including during the policy process). Finally, *Chapter 3 on Civil Society Perspectives on Women's Rights* addresses the positions and opinions of key CSOs of the three selected policy issues. The conclusion summarizes the findings, interprets the role, function and dynamics of the FEMM Committee, makes comparisons across political groups and policy areas, respectively, and addresses the issues of silences, intersectionality, and member state differences.



## 1 GENDER EQUALITY, WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The EP is organized around eight political groups, all of which are represented in the FEMM Committee: the European People's Party (EPP); the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D); the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR); the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE); the European United Left-Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL); the Greens-European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA); Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD); and the Non-attached Members (NI), who are MEPs that do not belong to a political group. In the following, we provide an overview of the numerical or descriptive representation of women in these political groups in the EP and the FEMM Committee, which is one of 22 standing committees of the EP, in the 7<sup>th</sup> legislature (2009-2014). We also describe the composition of the FEMM Committee by political groups. Furthermore we provide an overview of existing literature on the work, function and dynamics of the FEMM Committee. All in all, the chapter sets the stage for the subsequent analysis of policy positions and opinions by explaining the specific institutional context and framework within which these positions and opinions are developed and articulated.

### 1.1 Representation in the European Parliament and the FEMM Committee

In the 7th legislature (2009-2014), the female representation in the European Parliament amounted to 35%. The Greens/EFA group had the highest representation of women with 52.7% whereas EFD only had 3.7%. The two largest political groups, EPP and S&D, had 34.1% and 39.9% respectively (see figure 1 below). Looking at the composition of the FEMM Committee in particular, women made up 86% of its 35 members when the legislature was initiated in July 2009; it is in other words a small committee with a strong gender imbalance. Eva-Britt Svensson (GUE/NGL) was elected chair of the Committee at the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> legislature; she was replaced by Mikael Gustafsson (also GUE/NGL) in October 2011, and he remained in that position for the rest of the legislature. The EPP was the largest group in the Committee with 35.3% MEPs (one of which was male) followed by S&D (23.5%; one male), and ALDE (11.8%; none male) (see figure 2 below).

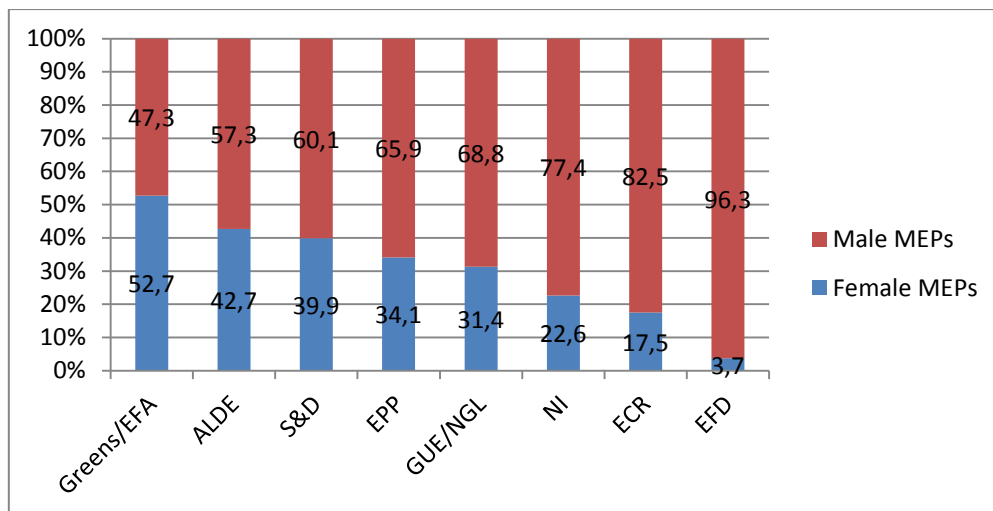
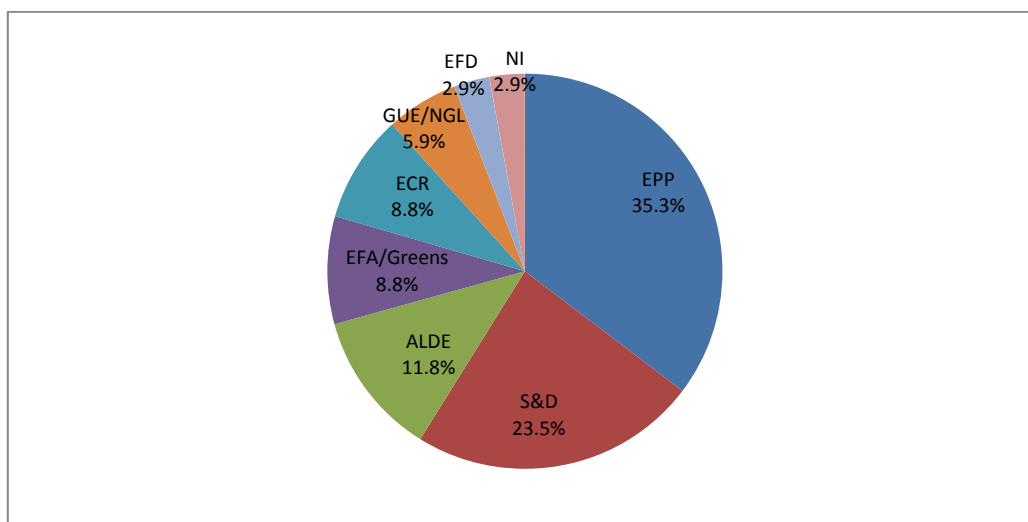


Figure 1. Gender composition of political groups in the EP, 7th legislature



**Figure 2. Composition of the FEMM Committee by political groups, 7th legislature**

### 1.2 Overview of existing literature on the FEMM Committee

The institutional role and origin of the FEMM Committee has been described in various publications: an Ad Hoc Committee on Women’s Rights was established within the EP in 1979 with Yvette Roudy of the French Socialist Party as chair, a Committee of Inquiry was set up in 1981, and finally in 1984 the Committee on Women’s Rights gained permanent status (European Parliament, 2013). The Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (the FEMM Committee), as it is now called, is considered to be one of the key players within the gender equality infrastructure of the EU (Ahrens, 2008; Rolandsen Agustín, 2013). It is in charge of defining, promoting and protecting women’s rights and equal opportunity policies in the EU. On several occasions it has been faced with opposition to the extent of putting its continued existence at risk (Kantola, 2010): in 1998, the Committee was ‘called into question’ (Rømer Christensen, 2011) and “challenged as to its necessity, role and added value in the EU policy agenda” (Stratigaki, 2005: 11). It survived thanks to the mobilization of parliamentary forces (especially the Finnish president of the Committee, Heidi Hautala from the Greens/EFA group) and extra-parliamentary forces, namely the European Women’s Lobby (EWL) (Rømer Christensen, 2011; Stratigaki, 2005; Woodward and Hubert, 2007).

The FEMM Committee is a horizontal committee, in the sense that it holds competences on gender equality in relation to all policy fields. It is rarely in charge of legislative documents, but focuses its work mainly on non-binding own-initiative reports. These reports may, however, be useful in order to highlight the gendered content of policy areas otherwise considered to be gender-neutral. Membership of the committee is additional or voluntary, in the sense that it does not come at the expense of membership in another committee. The power and prestige of the Committee is limited but the members usually show a strong commitment and the networking and alliances across political groups within the Committee are significant (Ahrens, forthcoming; EP, 2014; Kantola, 2010; Rolandsen Agustín, 2012). The Committee has been characterized as a feminist-oriented committee, which provides support for the EWL (Kantola, 2010), and as progressive and an instrument in support of policies and agenda-setting on violence against women (Montoya, 2013). According to Van der Vleuten (2007; 2012), the FEMM Committee has kept gender equality on the EU agenda, and it has put pressure on the European Commission as regards gender equality. It has worked to ‘widen the scope’ of gender equality competences within the EU (Woodward and Hubert, 2007). The Committee has supported the EWL financially and strengthened women’s advocacy by providing access (and the potential for influence) to the institutional sphere for CSOs (Locher, 2007; Montoya, 2013; Van der Vleuten, 2007; 2012; Strid, 2009). Whereas the FEMM Committee during the 90s was considered a feminist stronghold, the enlargement changed

this to some extent, since the power balance shifted to the right, and a conservative chairperson, Anna Zaborska (EPP), took over after the elections (Montoya, 2013; Rolandsen Agustín, 2012; Woodward and Hubert, 2007). During the 00's, the previously dominant discourses on gender equality, formed mainly around feminist MEPs and the EWL, and thriving in the Committee, became challenged, through the inclusion and legitimation of new CSOs articulating a conservative and family-oriented understanding of women's interests. Thus, issues of who was considered, and invited as, gender experts at committee hearings and EU funding for CSOs became contested, and new alliances were forged between actors inside and outside the Parliament (MEPs, CSOs and member state officials) (Rolandsen Agustín, 2012). The networks between the FEMM Committee and its parliamentary and extra-parliamentary contexts, as well as the alliances made across political groups within the Committee have been analysed in detail by Ahrens (2011), Montoya (2013), and Rolandsen Agustín (2013) as well as by Sawyer et al (2013), focusing on velvet triangles, i.e., interaction between feminist bureaucrats, academics and representatives of women's movements (Woodward, 2004). Montoya highlights the simultaneous importance of national dynamics and links to CSOs: "Some of the strongest advocates in the Parliament have been those with experiences and continuing links with their national movements" (2013: 63). In her exploration of the policy process around the Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010, Ahrens (2014) argues that the Committee's work was wrought with inter-party group tensions, which led to problems in developing a common stance of the FEMM Committee.

Whereas the EP is usually characterized by a high level of voting cohesion within the political groups (see Yordonova, 2013), findings on the FEMM Committee shows that internal divisions within the groups (and a resulting low level of cohesion) to a large extent dominate in gender equality policies (Kantola and Rolandsen Agustín, forthcoming). Similarly, the FEMM Committee has been considered a consensus-oriented committee; this enhances its potential for deliberation and for forming new policy agendas (Pristed Nielsen and Rolandsen Agustín, 2013). Consensus depends, however, to a large extent on the policy area debated and, in general, gender equality policies often prove to be divisive to political groups, not least the EPP and ALDE. However, the degree of consensus remains higher in the FEMM Committee than in the plenary sittings of the EP (Ibid.). The former chairperson of the FEMM Committee, Mikael Gustafsson (GUE/NGL), even highlights the alliance between ALDE, S&D, Greens/EFA, and GUE/NGL as something that ensures a majority in the Committee and contributes to neutralizing the far right wing parties at least to some extent (Ausserer and Gustafsson, 2014). Ahrens (forthcoming) argues that the FEMM Committee has used its neutral role as a strategic advantage. This has for one been done through institutional persistence (continuity of the Committee and commitment of its members, backed by its voluntary nature and its politically homogeneous nature). Yet, it has also involved thematic inclusion: gender equality is part of many policy areas although conflicts arise with other committees, and the Committee often lacks the necessary power for its perspectives to gain prevalence when faced with opposition. Furthermore organizational attention in the planning of the parliamentary calendar as well as networked integration have also served as strategies for the FEMM Committee. The latter especially concerns 'informal flow of information', which strengthens the FEMM Committee's level of knowledge of the policy content of other committees (Ibid.).

Different policies and policy processes of the FEMM Committee have been scrutinized thematically in research such as for example sexual and reproductive health and rights (Kantola and Rolandsen Agustín, forthcoming; Rolandsen Agustín, 2012); the financial crisis (Kantola and Rolandsen Agustín, forthcoming); gender quota (Pristed Nielsen and Rolandsen Agustín, 2013); violence against women (Kantola, 2006; Lombardo and Rolandsen Agustín, 2012; Lombardo and Rolandsen Agustín, forthcoming; Montoya, 2013; Montoya and Rolandsen Agustín, 2013; Walby, 2011); the roadmap on equality between women and men (Ahrens, 2014); and the equal treatment directive (Galligan and Clavero, 2015). There seems to have developed a growing consensus on the issue of quotas, and the debate has extended from representation of women in politics to representation of women on company boards (Pristed Nielsen and Rolandsen Agustín, 2013). The issue has gained saliency transnationally due to the exchange of best practice examples from the national level. In this sense, the FEMM Committee works as a 'transnational nesting box for mutual learning based on member state

policy experiences' (Ibid.). The Committee can thus be characterized as a learning environment and a transnational catalyst for promoting gender equality policies by making use of the windows of opportunity presented at the transnational level for issues, which cannot be discussed in (all) national contexts (Ibid.).

Other studies have focused on gender mainstreaming in the FEMM Committee and in the EP at large. The FEMM Committee plays a role as 'gender mainstreaming enforcer' in the Parliament (Sawer et al, 2013). Ahrens (forthcoming) argues that the FEMM Committee is a 'main driver for gender mainstreaming in the EU' since it ensures gender commitment in all committees by having a FEMM Committee MEP in each committee making sure that gender perspectives are included. According to an indepth study commissioned by the EP itself (2014), the success of the FEMM Committee in its efforts to include gender perspectives in the work of other committees depends on the role attributed to the Committee in the policy-making process, and the reputation and authority of the rapporteur in question. Possibilities of success thus increase when the FEMM Committee acts as a joint committee (instead of simply drafting an opinion) and/or the rapporteur shows a high degree of expertise, capacity for (informal) networking (within and across political groups and committees), political prestige and commitment to gender equality. For alliances to be fruitful, personal contacts and shared gender convictions are more important than affiliation with the same political group. When trying to amend reports of other committees through the drafting of opinions, a higher proportion of amendments get adopted when they refer to topics already recognized and accepted inside and outside of the EP as gender-related (i.e., when there is a degree of resonance), or when they do not touch sensitive issues. Issues that do get accepted typically refer to gender data and tools, as well as social and economic empowerment of women, whereas gender quotas and gender budgeting tools are not passed. Since 2009, a tool of gender mainstreaming amendments has been introduced, whereby the Committee refrains from drafting an actual opinion and instead focuses on making a few amendments to add a gender perspective to the report of another committee, typically by introducing 'gender', 'female', 'women', etc. to the text. This has proven to be a more efficient strategy, because it is concise and rapidly agreed upon and submitted. The majority (85%) of the gender mainstreaming amendments thus gets accepted following this procedure. The report concludes that it is generally easier to influence issues, which are high on the political agenda, because of the public attention, which it attracts, and the desire of MEPs to leave a mark on visible policy issues (Ibid.).

Turning to our own research on the work, function and dynamics of the FEMM Committee in relation to the elaboration of this report, our interviewees considered it to be relatively easy to reach agreements within the FEMM Committee as members, across the major political groups, generally share the concern for gendered problematics, and therefore agree on gendering of policies (MEP, ALDE, interview April 2015; MEP, EPP, interview April 2015; MEP, S&D, interview December 2014). Some interviewees characterize the Committee as feminist: "I think we have a lot of consensus in the gender equality committee. This I have to say. We are hard-core feminists all of us. And we know what this is about and we know what we are up against." (MEP, S&D, interview December 2014). Only abortion, prostitution and homosexuality were highlighted as issues, which are considered to be controversial and where decisions are not easily made. The dividing lines on controversial issues are attributed to ideology, national belonging and, regarding abortion, East/West differences (MEP, EPP, interview April 2015; MEP, S&D, interview December 2014). An increase in MEPs with conservative views on gender relations is mentioned as one of the reasons for the strengthened division on issues like sexual and reproductive health and rights:

"You have really these two [...] strands on the two sides of the spectrum: on the one hand, those who want to get rid of this whole gender equality discourse, and who even dare to argue against parts of women's rights, [...] and on the other hand, you have not only representatives from the Nordic countries, but also for example from France and from Spain, who know these discussions from the national level, and who are quite well armed rhetorically to respond to this, and who have very much advanced ideas of gender equality" (Administrator, EP, interview March 2015).

The role of coordinators of the various political groups in terms of successfully creating consensus in the Committee as well as the importance of the capacity of the chairperson to gather people were also highlighted (MEP, S&D, interview December 2014). The Committee is considered to be active but marginalized due to its lack of legislative power, and subsequently less weight of their proposals with the Commission and the Council (MEP, EPP, interview April 2015).

## **2 POSITIONS AND OPINIONS ON CIVIL, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN, MIGRANTS AND MINORITIES**

This chapter analyses the positions and opinions on civil, political and social rights for women, migrants and minorities in the EP by focusing on the policy issues of free movement of young women, migration, and elderly care as these have been developed through reports and opinions drafted by the FEMM Committee and subsequently debated in the EP plenary. First, the chapter provides an overview of the positions and opinions on these issues by the political groups in the EP as they have addressed the issues on their websites. Then an issue-by-issue analysis follows, focusing on policy contents and policy processes. Whereas the analyses of the policy content first identifies frames in the documents and then addresses rights, genderedness and intersectionality, respectively, the analyses of the policy process focuses on differences and tensions between political groups as these are expressed in debates, amendments and votes in Committee and plenary.

Thus, the analysis is based on reports, resolutions and opinions produced by the FEMM Committee. As part of the policy-making process in the EP, committees draft reports. These may be of legislative or non-legislative nature, or produced by own initiative within the committee in question. Non-legislative and own-initiative reports include a motion for a resolution to be submitted to voting in the EP plenary. The committee may also solicit the opinion of another committee to be included in the report.

All names referred to in parenthesis in the analysis are MEPs.

### **2.1 Political Groups in the European Parliament**

Before embarking on the analysis of policy positions and opinions as these are articulated within the FEMM Committee and subsequently in the EP plenary we provide a brief overview of the positions and opinions on the three issues (freedom of movement of young women, migration and elderly care) as these are articulated by the eight political groups in the EP on their respective web sites, thus highlighting initial differences between the groups.

As the table shows, there is a strong focus on migration policies across the political groups. The ECR's stance towards migrants is quite different from the other groups though, as the group does not concentrate on the well-being of the migrants, but rather on the control of their numbers, and the member states' sovereign rights in this field. Oppositely, the other groups highlight the need to adhere to fundamental and human rights of individuals, and ALDE would like the EU to be in charge of devising a common immigration policy for the member states. The political groups focus on different areas with regards to youth mobility, yet there is a broad agreement that it should be encouraged, even though particularly the Greens/EFA is concerned about the potential brain drain that youth mobility may lead to for the sending country. Regarding elderly care, there is a general consensus that the ageing population will lead to strains on the social and health systems of the member states, and that more should be done to promote older workers' longer participation on the labour market. Also the reduction of older women living in poverty, reforms to the pensions systems, and the provision of sufficient health care are goals for all political groups.

**Table 1. Positions on policy issues of the political groups of the European Parliament**

	<b>Youth Mobility</b>	<b>Migrants</b>	<b>Elderly care</b>
<b>EPP</b>	Focus on education and training (linguistic skills, among others) in relation to labour mobility (EPP, 2012).	Migrants play a vital role in the economy, and their possibility of working is part of their integration. Migrants should abide by laws of the receiving country, participate in local and national communities and learn the language in order to be empowered. Parallel societies, which disregard core values, such as individual freedoms and gender equality, are a problem. Migrants' human rights must be respected. EU should not have power over legislation in the field of migration (EPP, 2012).	Portability of social rights should be promoted. The longer life expectancy has consequences for pensions and health insurance systems. Promoting healthier lifestyles and preventive health care is positive for productivity and competitiveness. Combating poverty among elderly and fomenting wellbeing of the ageing population as well as solidarity between generations are important aims (EPP, 2012).
<b>S&amp;D</b>	Relaunch job creation in Europe with aim of decent work for all (better wages, secure positions etc.) (S&D, 2012).	Migrants' fundamental rights need to be protected, and it is problematic that many immigrant women are amongst the poorest of society (S&D, 2013). Legal migrants should thus be given the opportunities to be full members of European society, through participation and citizenship. The asylum policy must be sustainable, and be based on human rights and fundamental freedoms. The problems that force people to migrate or seek asylum should be tackled (S&D, 2012).	Older women are more likely to be poor than men, due to the gendered nature of the labour market. The pensions systems must be equal, and decent care provisions should be ensured, so that men and women have the same conditions in old age (S&D, 2013).
<b>GUE /NGL</b>	Focus on combatting discrimination in regards to mobile workers' nationality (Händel in GUE/NGL, 2014).	Freedom of movement is a fundamental right for all, and Europe has a historical obligation to ensure that migrants receive equal treatment in regards to fundamental and human rights. The "EU's repressive approach to immigration", the criminalisation of migrants and refugees, and the development of a "Fortress Europe" are all rejected. Instead, the EU member states should align their asylum systems to provide the best protection possible. Women should have the right to claim asylum due to gender-based persecution (GUE/NGL, 2012b). Migrant and ethnic minority women are often discriminated against, so the	Health policy, and especially preventive healthcare, should be an EU priority, so that people stay healthy longer, and are better equipped to make savings for life in retirement. More should be done to prevent age discrimination, and the promotion of women's equal rights is important, also for their independence in later life. There is a need for more accessible and affordable care services EU-wide, and they should not be cut away because of the financial crisis. This also includes the provision of nursing homes and home care (GUE/NGL, 2013a; 2012a)



	Youth Mobility	Migrants	Elderly care
		migration and integration policies should aim at strengthening their rights (GUE/NGL, 2012a).	
<b>Greens/EFA</b>	Focus on equal opportunities for all, notwithstanding financial status or educational level (ERASMUS and programmes for non-university students and apprentices). Reduce brain drain from sending country, and encourage the return of workers by providing job opportunities at home. Mobility must be voluntary (Greens/EFA, n.d.).	Immigrants are a gain for the European societies, both in terms of labour force and cultural enrichment (Greens/EFA, 2009, p.85), and they should be recognized as such. Mechanisms must be instated that allow the migrants to enter and work legally in the member states, and the migrants are to have equal rights as the national citizens. Their integration necessitates access to social, education and health services, and special attention should be doted to migrant and ethnic minority women, who are likely to end up being poor and/or socially excluded. All discrimination should be combatted, especially against ethnic minorities and stateless persons, such as the Roma. The criminalization of migration is not good, as this leads to an increase in irregular migration and trafficking (ibid, p.88). Instead, more measures for legal migration should be developed, and irregular migrants need to be regularized, as they form a very vulnerable group of citizens. The EU has a moral duty to provide asylum, and asylum policies should focus on the human rights of asylum seekers. (Greens/EFA, 2009)	Women are more likely to live in poverty in old age, as their “non-standard” working lives, and/or their pensions are based on their husbands’ employment history, which can lead to lower pensions. Provisions should therefore be made to: introduce a life-course approach to pensions; allow older workers to remain longer in employment; and combat age discrimination. However, the retirement age should only be raised, if proper labour market conditions are provided for the older workers. Universal access to affordable services of general interest is seen as an EU duty (Greens/EFA, 2009, p.38). The ageing population will lead to more women being obligated to take on care responsibilities. This conflicts with their work schedules, a problem that needs addressed (Greens/EFA, 2009, p.94).
<b>ALDE</b>	More focus is needed on mobility across member states (ALDE, 2009). Mobile workers’ civil rights in the host country must be safeguarded, also in areas like succession rights and divorce settlement (ALDE, n.d.). There is a need to further the mutual recognition of qualifications between the member states (ELDR, 2010), and the sense of an EU citizenship needs to be strengthened (ALDE, 2009).	Whilst borders must be protected, and illegal immigration prevented, it is also vital to uphold the fundamental rights of the migrants, especially in regards to asylum rights and respect of non-refoulement (Malmström, as cited in ALDE, n.d.). A multiple entry system should be introduced for seasonal workers, in order to avoid their status becoming irregular, once their contracts expire. Brain	The EU should prioritize the ageing society’s effect on public healthcare systems, and the housing, security and environmental needs of older people. Pension schemes need reformed, so that the older people can live decent lives in retirement (ALDE, 2009). Older people’s employment and volunteering opportunities should be promoted, for example through flexible working hours, and other tailor-



	Youth Mobility	Migrants	Elderly care
		<p>circulation, and not brain drain, should be the goal of labour migration, and this could be fostered through short term Green cards, as they aim at exchanging experiences and know-how.</p> <p>The EU should have a coherent immigration policy, where all member states offer the same basic rights to migrants. The different member states are responsible for the integration process. This includes: the promotion of migrants' fundamental rights, non-discrimination and equal opportunities; constructive intercultural dialogue; the provision of access to the labour market, education, and social and health-care services; and the migrants' general participation in society. This should close the social and economic barriers for migrants that exist today. (ALDE, 2009).</p>	<p>made working structures and conditions. There should be no mandatory retirement age in the EU, the workers should be allowed to work for as long as they wish (ALDE, 2009, p.3).</p>
<b>EFD</b>	WEBPAGE DID NOT INCLUDE INFORMATION		
<b>ECR</b>		<p>There can be no common EU immigration policy, as the member states are too diverse. The member states should thus have the sole right to determine whether a migrant can stay or not, and there should be no introduction of a European quota system for immigrants. Immigration should be more effectively controlled through stronger external border controls, and the abuse of asylum procedures is to be prevented (ECR, 2011b, p17). All illegal labour should be punished across the EU, and the EU needs to coordinate the member states' fight against trafficking. Asylum seekers, who are victims of prosecution at home must be received by the member states through a coordinated effort, "making use of best practices, with clear rules and fair procedures" (ibid., p.17).</p>	<p>(Public consultation..., p3, 6) The combination of more medical research and innovative applications will lead to a healthier population. To limit the ageing population's detrimental effects on the social security schemes, older workers need to stay longer in employment, and this could for example be ensured by extending the mandatory retirement age (ECR, 2011b). Social policy remains a member state competence, and there is an EU-wide need for structural reforms to the pension and health care systems (ibid., p12).</p>

## 2.2 Freedom of Movement for Young Women

Freedom of movement for young women was addressed by the FEMM Committee in one report and three opinions during the 7<sup>th</sup> legislature: Report on the Educational and Occupational Mobility of Women in the EU (A7/0164/2013), Opinion on the Exercise of Rights Conferred on Workers in the Context of Freedom of Movement for Workers (FEMM\_AD(2013)516697), Opinion on Tackling Youth Unemployment: Possible Ways Out (FEMM\_AD(2013)508138), Opinion on Promoting Workers Mobility within the European Union (FEMM\_AD(2011)462600), and Opinion on Developing the Job Potential of a New Sustainable Economy (FEMM\_AD(2010)440172). The following analysis focuses on the report and the first three opinions. While the fourth opinion was also coded in the research process of this deliverable, it was excluded from the final analysis, as it only marginally deals with mobility and young people.

### 2.2.1 Report on the Educational and Occupational Mobility of Women in the EU (A7-0164/2013)

In May 2013, the FEMM Committee drafted the Report on the Educational and Occupational Mobility of Women in the EU (A7/0164/2013). Licia Ronzulli (EPP) was the rapporteur, and the report was adopted unanimously in the committee. The overall aim of the report is to enhance gender equality in intra-EU mobility and employment, thus increasing the level of mobility among (young) women, thereby seeking to reduce the worrying levels of unemployment among youth in general, and young women in particular. The report takes a broad perspective on gendered mobility by addressing labour market rights and education perspectives of the issue, while simultaneously maintaining a marginal economic focus (i.e., how increased mobility will lead to greater efficiency of the internal market, and therefore result in economic benefits). The proposals for solution remain rather general.

In the report, we identify four different problem frames: 1) unequal social rights and benefits; 2) unequal labour market access; 3) lack of awareness; and 4) insufficient cross-border action (networks, services and programmes).

The *unequal social rights and benefits* are addressed as an obstacle to (young) women's mobility insofar as family benefits differ from one member state to another. This may negatively influence the decision to seek occupation across member state borders. Care facilities, reconciliation policies (i.e., how to balance work and family life), flexibility in working arrangements, (public) healthcare, and social security are all considered decisive elements with the potential to enhance the levels of mobility. The report also mentions the notion of 'portable social security rights': "enabling women moving abroad to enjoy portable social security rights is essential to ensuring that they effectively benefit from the prerogatives they have acquired" (p7). In this regard, the report addresses the need to strike a balance between transferring pension rights and respecting the diversity of regimes across member states.

The gender pay gap, educational and occupational gender segregation, women's poor working conditions, gender stereotypes and discrimination are all recognised as obstacles to women's mobility, since they reflect the *unequal labour market access* experienced by women and men respectively. Measures to counteract these problems are addressed, and specific attention is given to a dual perspective on segregation. On the one hand, women should be more adaptable to a labour market, which has changed with the crisis, by acquiring new skills. On the other hand, initiatives should be taken to attract women to the MINT professions and sectors (mathematics, information technology, natural sciences and technology). They should also be made more attractive, for instance by providing better care options. Similarly, the educational system should be more gender-sensitive, so as to avoid segregation based on stereotypes produced at an early age. Whereas these measures are the responsibility of the member states in particular, the importance of gendering collective agreements, and encouraging employers to act, are also underlined in the report.

Another obstacle related to the unequal access to mobility is the lack of awareness of rights, policies and services in the country of destination. Member states should be responsible for improving the information for mobile workers and their families on access to employment, social rights, health care, education and social security, while at the same time emphasizing the opportunities which mobility entails in terms of career and personal development. This highlights the interplay between creating appropriate structures and enhancing citizens' motivation for using their right to freedom of movement within the EU, which is upheld by the report.

The need for increased cross-border action is a strong element in the solutions proposed by the report, and can be considered a pragmatic frame in comparison with the relatively normative substantive frames explained above. Funding for networks, services and programmes should enhance mobility levels by facilitating educational and occupational mobility for women, as well as their social integration in the country of destination. Diplomas should be recognised across member states, young women's early educational mobility should be fostered, learning outcomes from mobility experiences validated, and financial options clarified. Specific attention is placed on language and vocational courses for family members, as well as other measures to facilitate their integration into local communities, "in order to ensure their independence and dignity" (p10). This is considered to remove one of the obstacles of workers' mobility, i.e. their families' lack of integration into the new social and cultural environment.

As reflected above, *social rights* are extensively addressed in the report through a significant focus on (portable) social security rights, including family benefits, care, education, pensions, health care, employment services and community services. Likewise, the family perspective remains strong in the report, as the conditions and opportunities of mobile workers are clearly seen from the context of the family. Women workers with care responsibilities are to a certain extent taken to be the norm (men are not articulated as carers, but are implicitly always considered workers), thus addressing the need for care facilities and social networks in order to make mobility feasible. As a consequence, the need to ensure rights and services for family members is emphasized. *Civil rights* are addressed as non-discrimination, and the potential abuse of the rights of mobile workers due to their lack of knowledge of the language and laws of the country of destination. *Political rights*, however, are not articulated.

The report combines a focus on non-gendered problems of access to mobility with attention to gendered problems of unequal access to the labour market, which are not particular to mobility issues, and specific, gendered problems of unequal rights and benefits, which impact access to mobility. Furthermore, the *genderedness* of the issue is highlighted in two other ways. First, the report places a significant focus on work in the domestic services and care sector, and refers to those working in this sector as 'highly mobile women at risk': "women moving abroad for jobs in domestic service and involving care for children or disabled or elderly people are often employed without a contract or work illegally, and consequently have no rights or entitlement to social security, health care, an adequate pension or other benefits in relation to pension contributions" (p6). The establishment of contact points for mobile domestic and care workers is among the network solutions proposed, as well as monitoring of employment agencies offering illegal or precarious work. Care chains are not articulated as a problem, but the challenges faced by mobile workers with children in the country of origin are addressed through the need for flexible working time. Secondly, the report has a dual focus on women: on the one hand, as mobile workers, and on the other hand, as dependant mobile citizens (following a working spouse). It thus addresses both gendered occupational mobility directly (women workers) and indirectly (dependant spouse). The problems of the latter refer to career breaks (when they are unable to find work in the country of destination), and the need for social integration, in order to avoid a rupture in the mobility patterns of the spouse. This is mentioned above in relation to language and vocational courses, etc. Teleworking is suggested as a potential solution towards avoiding career breaks (i.e., maintaining work in the country of origin). Whereas labour market participation is addressed as an aim in the report, measures for facilitating spouses' integration socially and culturally are also underlined. The issue of women as mobile workers is addressed in terms of women's rights on the labour market, and with a particular focus on female-

dominated sectors such as care and domestic work, as mentioned above. Problems pertaining to 'brain-waste' and underuse of qualifications are mentioned, as is the tendency for women to take work in the lowest ranking sectors, when it comes to pay, prestige and working conditions.

As concerns *intersectionality*, a number of discrimination grounds are addressed in the report with reference to 'disadvantaged groups,' such as young women, older women, disabled women, single mothers, women with few educational qualifications, women with a low income, and women from minority communities. Apart from basic attention to pension rights and poverty among older women, as well as access to educational mobility programmes for women from disadvantaged backgrounds, no real articulation of the intersectional relations is developed. This means that several discrimination grounds are mentioned, but the way in which double discrimination impacts women in the target groups is not made explicit.

Overall, the report takes a reactive approach to the issue of freedom of movement for (young) women by wanting to reduce obstacles, as well as a proactive approach by trying to actively encourage and promote women's increased access to mobility and employment. There is a focus on gendered differences and women's care responsibilities, and at the same time, there is an attempt to break with the male norm of the labour market by addressing the need for alternative working arrangements and structural factors impacting labour market participation, such as care facilities. However, women are largely assumed to be the ones responsible for caretaking. The aim of increasing women's mobility is thus addressed through references to the challenges of care and reconciliation, the difference in social rights and benefits across member states, and the lack of awareness of these rights in the country of destination.

#### *Positions and opinions of the political groups in the EP*

Based on the amendments to the draft report on educational and occupational mobility of women in the EU presented by members of the FEMM Committee, the plenary debate and vote on the report, as well as the oral and written explanations of vote submitted by MEPs, we can identify a number of tensions, or diversity of positions and opinions on the issue of gender and mobility, as these become apparent in the policy-making process.

The plenary debate of June 10, 2013 showed some elements of convergence between the two largest political groups, EPP and S&D: both groups emphasized women's social rights (and the risk of women losing the latter by moving), as well as the need to combat gender discrimination, as a cause and a consequence of the low level of women's mobility. EPP identified a gap between the law and reality, when it comes to equality. Labour market integration and, in connection with this, the need for reconciliation policies were highlighted, and the situation of women with children, with regards to mobility opportunities, was a concern to both groups. This largely calls for an interpretation of the problem as structural, inasmuch as it requires structural solutions. Both groups emphasized the economic advantages of mobility, its role in strengthening the internal market and creating growth, and women as a resource and a potential to be used to the fullest, in order to realize both goals. In this regard, the EPP underlined the need to qualify women in order to avoid segregation. The EPP emphasized the family perspective on the issue, and thus, the rapporteur Ronzulli argued that: "We must start from the primordial nucleus of European society: the family, the engine around which the social, cultural and economic life of our continent develops." S&D placed more weight on labour market rights and equality, in combination with the economic framing, as mentioned above. The S&D group also made reference to fragile groups, such as care workers, seasonal workers and migrants.

In general, and taking into account the amendments presented in Committee, as well as the explanations to the plenary votes, the policy process showed a high degree of consensus on the content of the report and, consequently, it was supported by the political groups in their majority. Whereas the report mainly used a

rights framing, the EP debate showed an equally strong focus on economic development. Similarly, the matter of education and training was emphasized. The question of portability and transfer of rights was only marginally discussed during the policy process, and therefore considered rather uncontroversial. Mélenchon (GUE/NGL) is the only one to problematize the absence of references to harmonization of wages and social dumping in the report. The framing of the problem as unequal social rights was made, on the one hand, by the EPP group, as it emphasized differences in family benefits and social rights between member states (Zaborska) and, on the other hand, by GUE/NGL underlining the need to ensure the transfer of pensions, while recognising the diversity of pension regimes, as mentioned above (Zuber). The same framing thus includes two different opinions on rights: whereas the former focuses on the family perspective, the latter is more clearly articulating pension rights of women as individuals. Similarly, the ECR group focuses on the rights of family members (Češková), and in the plenary debate, Jazłowiecka (EPP), while emphasizing the need for men to take on household duties, argues that women's occupational mobility depends on a well-functioning family model. On a different note, the reference to 'right to family reunification' causes concern among some MEPs in the plenary debate; however, neither strong debate nor separate voting on the issue followed.

Whereas mobility is framed as an economic issue, increasing the 'efficiency of the single market' (Angelilli, EPP), it is also referred to as a means to achieve cohesion, solidarity, citizenship and identity across Europe (Cliveti, S&D; Matera, EPP). The S&D group addresses the particular problems related to the domestic and care sector, as well as seasonal work, and in general emphasizes the need for reconciliation policies (García Pérez; Papadopoulou; Ivan). Reconciliation is also brought up by MEPs from several other political groups in the EP debate. The labour market framing is dealt with in different ways in the amendments: S&D focuses on the need for women to be adaptable to the labour market in their occupational choices (Nevedalová), and Angelilli of the EPP group underlines the elements of personal development and career planning in relation to mobility. The two groups both emphasize flexibility: EPP proposes teleworking as a way to avoid career breaks (Le Grip; Morin-Chartier), and S&D warns against separation of families, and argues for the importance of flexible working time, especially if children are living in the country of origin. In relation to the latter, in the plenary debate, Mészáros (EPP) mentions the disadvantages felt by children, when spending less time with the family due to the mother's mobility. MEPs from GUE/NGL are strongly concerned about the way in which mobility is used as a euphemism for 'forced emigration,' when this is actually a strategy of economic survival. Consequently, they call for the women's right to decide on how to reconcile work and family life, thus rejecting the idea of flexibility and teleworking as something necessarily beneficial to women. Similarly, GUE/NGL stood out for emphasizing the need for public infrastructure in terms of care facilities, healthcare and social security, the importance of collective bargaining, and the right to family reunification.

The S&D group introduced several references to multiple discrimination, by including for instance women from disadvantaged backgrounds and women with low income (Nevedalová), while the focus on single mothers is common both to S&D and EPP.

When submitted to vote in the plenary, the most controversial aspect of the report was a single paragraph supporting quota on company boards, which actually had marginal relevance to the theme of mobility. The paragraph required a separate vote in which 63% voted in favour, 30% against and 7% abstained. The level of cohesion (i.e., voting in line with the political group) was low for GUE/NGL (30%) and EPP (33%). The findings on the quota question adds two dimensions to the existing literature on the EP and the FEMM Committee: on the one hand, the consensus on quotas definitely seems to have vanished, as this is now considered one of the most controversial issues in this context; and, on the other hand, the analysis confirms recent research showing the lack of cohesion in the EPP group in particular (Kantola and Rolandsen Agustín, forthcoming), thus placing certain gender equality policies as a divisive issue within a political group, which is otherwise characterised as being largely cohesive.

The issue of mobility rights within the EU is one of the core elements of the European integration process, and this partly explains why there is such a high degree of consensus on the issue. Another explanatory factor is the convergence which is created around the emphasis on social rights. The same frame thus serves different purposes, as it is used both to articulate family-related concerns, and women's employment possibilities. It resonates broadly, and political groups therefore converge around the frame. Furthermore, key gender equality issues are addressed (such as labour market segregation, care systems, and domestic workers), and an implicitly feminist agenda is furthered, not least by the largely structural perspective on the problems identified. However, important silences are also identifiable: the role of men as carers is left rather untouched, as are the potential solutions to the need to find a balance between the consensus on portable rights, and the strong divergences among member state regimes and foreseeable member state resistance in this regard. Only GUE/NGL raises a critical voice in relation to the idealisation of mobility and flexibility on the labour market.

Our interview material shows that it was a challenge to reach an agreement on the issue of mobility, despite the overall discourse on labour market mobility and equality as contributing to economic growth:

"We have to highlight that factors related to family, the considerable differences between family benefits available in the various Member States, social networks, care facilities for children and other dependents – particularly the absence or inadequacy of public networks of day nurseries, crèches and public provision of free-time activities for children – housing and local conditions, and other obstacles (language, lack of awareness of rights) are additional barriers preventing women from exercising the right of free movement, residence and work throughout Europe" (MEP, EPP, interview April 2015).

Interviewee responses on gender equality and family rights range from equal right and equal opportunities to a focus on gendered structures and the importance of tradition and culture. The latter calls for the need for public daycare institutions and elderly care, in order to reduce the burden of care for the women, who have entered the labour market. There should be no incentives to stay at home, but parents with young children should be compensated for their care duties with reduced working hours (MEP, S&D, interview December 2014). The former, more liberal, approach refers to individuals' free choice:

"It is a personal choice for everyone, and given economic realities, it is always something that, I believe, a person has to decide for themselves, and not the state. [...] We should make sure, at the same time that they are not discriminated for their choice [...] but also that there are no positive quotas, whereas less skilled workers can take the places of those more adequate. [...] In an ideal world, both men and women would equally choose to stay at home, eliminating the gender part of this debate" (MEP, ALDE, interview April 2015).

The same interviewee argues that family status should not influence rights and opportunities (MEP, ALDE, interview April 2015). However, family is considered by some to have become a key notion:

"People are looking for certainties; a lot of people have lost their work, because of the austerity measures, the social security benefits are also not important enough, so that everybody has to fall back on the family, so the family out of a Southern national thought has gained in importance during the last years. [...] And this also has a bit of a splitting the citizens in two; some, who have very individualistic lifestyles, and who are convinced that only with their individual rights as a citizen they can pursue their lives as they want, and then the others, who think that yeah, okay, I am an individual, but who am I without my family? So this is very ambiguous, also because these policies of austerity and the reactions to the crisis might reinforce this kind of thinking" (Administrator, EP, interview March 2015).

Furthermore, the interviewee explains that those MEPs, who emphasize family over women's individual rights are 'more or less the same, who do not want to have any legislation on the European level' due to the progressiveness of EU policies in terms of individual rights (Administrator, EP, interview March 2015).



### **2.2.2 Opinions drafted by the FEMM Committee**

The three opinions drafted by the FEMM Committee in relation to freedom of movement for young women during the 7<sup>th</sup> legislature (on Freedom of Movement drafted by Cornelissen of the Greens/EFA, AD(2013)516697; on Youth Unemployment drafted by Angelilli of the EPP, AD(2013)508138; and on Workers' Mobility drafted by Češková of the ECR, AD(2011)462600) largely resonate with the analysis laid out above in terms of focus and framings. The report analysed above was drafted after the adoption of two of these opinions, and therefore it is expected that the report draws on the content of the latter. They were all adopted with full or close-to-full majorities in committee. They address obstacles to women's mobility and labour market access with a strong focus on the family, and address women as workers and as spouses. They touch upon issues and proposals similar to those of the report, such as labour market and social security rights, the care and domestic services sector, brain waste, need for information on rights and benefits, language courses for spouses, specific attention to single mothers, and education.

The Opinion on Promoting Workers' Mobility within the EU (AD(2011)462600) is more detailed, and goes a bit further as regards social rights and benefits by referring to the "existing differences between Member States on family allowances, especially for large families, which cause discriminatory effects in implementing the principle of freedom of movement for workers" (p4). The opinion even tends towards harmonization of social security policies, as it urges member states to "enable social insurance contribution records to be combined for the purpose of establishing entitlement to social security and welfare benefits" (p4), again with the aim of making mobility feasible and efficient.

The Opinion on Exercise of Rights conferred on Workers in the Context of Freedom of Movement for Workers (AD(2013)516697) lists 'tax advantages and disincentives for the worker's partner' as well as 'tax and benefits relating to childcare and pensions' rights' among the information that member states should make more available to mobile citizens (p9). There is nevertheless no discussion of the public and political debate on welfare tourism and challenges to the welfare state as a consequence of intra-EU mobility, even though it is argued that "Member States should make sure that free movement is never exploited with a view to unequal treatment, wage and social dumping" (p15). In the same opinion, references are also made to vulnerable groups and multiple discrimination (as compared to the report): while still being vague on the exact intersectional relations, the opinion does refer to the dual discrimination of gender and nationality for mobile women workers; the need for targeted measures for mobile single mothers, mothers with disabled children, and women 'caring for elderly relatives'; it introduces sexual orientation as a discrimination ground in mobility rights (as legal partnerships are not recognised in all member states); and it enhances the notion of vulnerable workers by including seasonal, domestic and sex workers in the group.

Whereas there is a strong rights frame in the opinions dealing explicitly with mobility, the Opinion on Tackling Youth Unemployment: Possible Ways Out (AD(2013)508138) has a stronger economic frame, as it emphasises the economic implications of the 'underuse of skills of highly qualified women'. The opinion performs a kind of gender mainstreaming of youth employment policies, and proposes state interventions, such as for instance tax incentive schemes, to promote youth employment. It also underlines that cuts in social benefits, as a reaction to the crisis, has led to a new kind of discrimination, given that women take up a larger share of social benefits than men. It also refers to studies which show how stereotypical opinions on women's lack of flexibility in the labour market are thriving.

### **2.3 Migration**

We are focusing on two reports on the topic of migration: the Report on the Social Integration of Women Belonging to Ethnic Minority Groups (A7/0221/2010) from 2010, which was drafted by Parvanova (ALDE), and

the 2014 Report on Undocumented Women Migrants in the EU (A7/0001/2014), which had Nicolai (ALDE) as its rapporteur. Both of the reports strongly emphasise the need to ensure that the human rights of the specific women are not violated by the EU member states, and the main goal is thus to ensure their general well-being, disregarding the, at times, irregular nature of their stay. Even though the reports were accepted by a majority of the FEMM Committee members, neither of the votes was unanimous: Whereas 5 out of 37 members voted no to the 2014 report and two abstained, 11 out of 32 did not vote on the 2010 report. The analysis also includes three opinions on migration, likewise drafted by the FEMM Committee: Opinion on the Situation of Unaccompanied Minors in the EU (FEMM\_AD(2013)504151); Opinion on the Integration of Migrants, its Effects on the Labour Market and the External Dimension of Social Security Coordination (FEMM\_AD(2012)496521); and Opinion on the Condition of Entry and Residence of Third-Country Nationals for the Purposes of Seasonal Employment (FEMM\_AD(2011)452884).

### **2.3.1 Report on the Social Integration of Women Belonging to Ethnic Minority Groups (A7-0221/2010)**

The 2010 report on the social integration of women belonging to ethnic minority groups strongly focuses on the fundamental rights of the women, and ways to improve their integration into the host society. We identify four main frames in the report: 1) lack of fundamental rights (intersectionality); 2) discrimination and social exclusion; 3) unequal education and labour market access; and 4) need for increased member state and Commission action (law implementation, awareness-raising and funding).

The *lack of fundamental rights* is identified as being more severe for ethnic minority women, due to their intersecting roles of being both women *and* part of an ethnic minority. They are thus argued to be more exposed to human rights violations, especially in regards to violence, trafficking and poverty (p4). It is the responsibility of both the hosting EU member states and the ethnic minority communities themselves to improve this situation, as the ethnic minority women and their organisations should be consulted in the policy creation process. The member states are thus encouraged to respect the fundamental rights of *all* women, and because these women often have a lower socio-economic standing, their “access to health care, justice, legal aid, legal information and housing” (p8) should be improved. Furthermore, those ethnic minority women, who are (potential) victims of gender-based violence, should be given better access to support services. It is also suggested that the Fundamental Rights Agency should have a bigger focus on the gender aspects of ethnic discrimination.

The occurrences of *discrimination and social exclusion* of ethnic minority women are identified in several fields, but especially regarding their lack of equal access to education; their problems of obtaining economic independence; stigmatization; and ethnic segregation. It is suggested that the inclusion of ethnic minority members ought to be fostered through education, both by educating the national citizens on “the acceptance of different cultures and the impact of discrimination and prejudice” (p7), but also by enrolling the ethnic minority members into the educational system from an early age. The report also finds that there is a low implementation level of already existing legislation on this matter, and this should be rectified, for example through; the sharing of best practice cases between the member states; information about judicial reproaches and training; and awareness-raising about these problems.

Another way to foster the social integration of ethnic minority women is to improve their *unequal education and labour market access*. This unequal distribution is not only leading to a process of de-skilling, but also to their exclusion from the labour market, which could end in an ensuing life in poverty. The solution is therefore to grant the children (particularly girls) access to education, so as to obtain the qualifications to get a job later in life. However, adult women migrants also face problems obtaining employment, because of either the non-recognition of qualifications or a lack in skills. Women with already acquired qualifications should be recognised much more efficiently, and the member states should encourage the ethnic minority women to



become entrepreneurs. The improvement of skills is suggested to be attained by “ensuring access to education, training and vocational training” (p7), including lifelong learning and higher education.

Finally, the report strongly emphasizes the *need for increased member state and Commission action*, in order to counter the many obstacles ethnic minority women face, partly due to the large policy implementation gaps in the member states; faulty law implementation; and the lack of gender disaggregated statistics on ethnic minorities. The alleviation of these problems is partly to be performed by the Commission and the member states themselves through; more funding (the European Social Fund and the European Integration Fund); the transposition of EU directives in the member states; and a “more structured coordination of EU, national, regional and local policies” (p6). Moreover, as more research is required on the topic of ethnic minority women, the rapporteur also wishes to include the work of two of the EU’s own anti-discrimination bodies; the European Institute for Gender Equality and the Fundamental Rights Agency. However, the member states and the Commission are also encouraged to involve ethnic minority representatives at the national, regional and EU level, so as both to empower the women, but also to improve the legislative means to foster their social inclusion.

As outlined above, the report has a strong focus on the *civil rights* of ethnic minority women, particularly regarding anti-discrimination based on gender and/or race, but also in a more general sense. It is for example stated that “equal treatment is a basic right, not a privilege”, and that “tolerance should be a general attitude to life, not a favour granted to some” (p4). Furthermore, “the principles of equal opportunities and equal treatment based on mutual respect, understanding and acceptance should be a cornerstone of the EU’s policies in respect of all its inhabitants, regardless of their background” (p5). The report also highlights that ethnic minority women often suffer from financial hardships, and calls for an improvement of their *social rights*. This should be done through better “access to housing, employment, education, health care and social services”, and also through gender disaggregated data about the “labour market, social security, the health system and housing”.

The report mainly sees the ethnic minority women as *individual* subjects, as hardly any of the proposed measures discusses the women’s potential problems related to family issues. This is in fact only mentioned in regards to women with a bad health status, which could affect their children detrimentally (p6). Also, when it comes to the actual problems that ethnic minority women face due to their *gender*, the report is rather vague. It frequently explains how the intersection between being a woman and part of an ethnic minority increases the likelihood of being discriminated against; yet, it is not really explained in which way this discrimination takes place. However, it is emphasised that measures to further the social inclusion of ethnic migrant women should “take the gender aspect into account,” (p8) and the issue of gender should generally be more considered in relation to integration policies. It is also wished that more research is conducted through gender and ethnicity disaggregated data, promoting the role of the European Institute for Gender Equality in this process.

However, the most important emphasis of the report regarding gender is the problems that are caused due to the *intersectionality* with ethnicity. Women are thus represented as being more prone to be victims of multiple discrimination, due to their status of being both a woman and part of an ethnic minority in a given member state. This makes them “more vulnerable to social exclusion, poverty and extreme human rights violations, such as trafficking in human beings and coercive sterilisation” (p6). The report highlights Roma as a specific ethnic group to consider, but nothing is mentioned about the specific problems this group encounters. Moreover, the ethnic minority women are also seen as potential victims of discrimination from within their own ethnic communities, due to the “cultural habits and patriarchal role models,” and “the prevalent sexist stereotypes and social stigmatisation which underpin violence against women” that are argued to exist in these milieus (p8). As ethnic minority women are found to be more at risk of gendered violence and/or exploitation

when they have not yet integrated to the host society, the report argues that they should be encouraged to participate more in the political and social spheres, and integration policies should be properly implemented.

Overall, the report is clearly written with the aim of improving ethnic minority women's social standing and the ensuing social integration. It is mainly framed as a question of fundamental rights, yet, it is also explained that ensuring their economic independence is crucial to avoid "direct and indirect costs for the community and public budgets" (p6). Also, as there is a need for their hands during the economic crisis, funding should be directed at their integration on the labour market. It is emphasised that not only the EU and the member states must have a role in ensuring the women's social integration, but the ethnic minority women must also play a part, for example through an "active political and social participation (...) in all areas of society" (p8). However, many of the problems that are identified are not further explained; it for example remains rather unclear what exact obstacles it is, that the women face on the labour market, or when accessing healthcare services.

#### *Positions and opinions of the political groups in the EP*

The plenary debate of the 6<sup>th</sup> September, 2010 on the Report on the Social Integration of Women Belonging to Ethnic Minority Groups shows that the different political groups strongly agree that migrant women face numerous obstacles to become socially integrated in the EU member states, and that it is up to the member states and the EU to give them the appropriate means to attain this goal. In fact, only Obermayr (NI) does not focus on the member states' role in improving the women's rights, but rather frames it around the threat that the ethnic communities pose to the EU cohesion, and how the Europeans should "take some first concrete legal steps by introducing an EU-wide ban on the burkha and making forced marriage a criminal act in all the Member States" (p4). As mentioned, the other participants in the debate all agree that the women need to obtain access to social rights, and generally be supported in their integration process. Yet, the means proposed vary greatly. The three MEPs from the EPP (who dominated the debate with participation from just three other MEPs: one from S&D, Greens/EFA and NI respectively) even differ in their views. Whereas one wants to strengthen the image and role in society of ethnic minority women, in order to make it more acceptable that they obtain the same rights as the national citizens, another emphasizes the acute need to treat them equally, and with the same opportunities as the citizens of the given member state, and thus the same access to education, employment and social services. This latter view is shared by Skrzydlewska (EPP), who also wants them to engage more in political and social activities as a way to avoid discrimination. The S&D agrees that the responsibility should be placed at the national levels, but sees the problem as a question of accommodating cultural differences, which should be done by improving the citizens' acceptance and understanding of other cultures.

The debate thus frames the issue of social integration of ethnic minority women around the question of particularly social rights and equal opportunities, strongly emphasizing access to education, the labour market and political representation, whilst also underlining the cultural differences existing between the majority population and the ethnic minority groups. These arguments strongly correlate with the actual findings of the report.

With the notable exception of the EFD, the ECR and certain non-inscribed MEP's, the report is met with a broad consensus, both when considering the proposed amendments, the EP debate, and the explanation of votes. It is thus generally felt that the report is justifiable, and that further action is needed on the matter. Yet, in the explanations of votes, some inter-group disagreement in the EPP and S&D is witnessed about the responsibility for furthering the social integration: Some call on the member states to improve the access to social rights, whereas others want to place responsibility to act in the hands of the ethnic migrant women themselves (just as is the case in the report). Thus, Roithová and Fernandes (EPP), Blinkevičiūtė and Guillaume (S&D) and

Figueiredo (GUE/NGL) focus on the need to provide better access to social rights (such as the labour market, education, social services and healthcare), but particularly the access to education and the labour market is emphasized by both Fernandes, Blinkėvičiūtė and Guillaume, as they all see this as the best way to ensure social integration. This strong focus on education and training can also be witnessed in the proposed amendments, where several of the FEMM Committee members wish to add this to the promotion of equal job opportunities (p7), and especially GUE/NGL keep emphasising its importance (see Ernst's amendments). Estrela (S&D) and da Graça Carvalho (EPP) both want to further the integration process by encouraging the active participation of ethnic minority women in the different societal spheres, so as to empower the women to improve their situation by themselves.

Moreover, and related to this disagreement in measures, both a member of the EPP and the S&D point to one specific ethnic minority, namely the Roma. This particular group is argued to be more detrimentally affected by a lack of gender equality than "their non-Roma counterparts" (Járóka, EPP), and to be victims of extreme racist discrimination, including from the side of the authorities (Plumb, S&D). Both the EPP and S&D wish to improve their access to education and employment, and S&D also wants the Roma population to be included in the various public spheres of society.

Almost all of the MEPs who state that they have voted in favour of the report call for more, or more efficiently implemented, EU social policies, if the situation for ethnic minority women is to improve. Thus, in order to combat the multiple discriminatory practices of both the member state governments, but also the common citizens, several MEPs want the EU to produce more targeted policies. Moreover, Delvaux (EPP) and Estrela and Stihler (S&D) all call for a more gender-specific approach, when devising policies. Oppositely this demand for more EU policies, the ECR group is "fundamentally opposed to any move in the direction of a common immigration and asylum policy and we feel that parts of this report address immigration and asylum policies which are best made and executed at national level" (Yannakoudakis). This forms part of the group's rationale for rejecting the report.

One of the most contentious topics of the debate is regarding the discrimination against ethnic minority women from within the ethnic minority group itself, and how this problem should be alleviated. GUE-NGL places all responsibility in the hand of the member states, which should be much more accommodating towards cultural differences, and shy away from xenophobic, prejudiced and racist actions. The EPP also highlights the issue, and finds that the report should help in the protection of the females, particularly the girls, who are the "silent victims of practices and traditions which we simply cannot accept" (Feio, EPP). Do Céu Patrão Neves (EPP) also problematizes this issue, and focuses on the patriarchal family-relations within certain ethnic minorities, calling for further developments of EU gender equality policies to combat this. Yet, whereas the EPP and GUE-NGL see the report as a way to combat these practices, Gollnisch (NI, Front National) perceives it as a reason to reject the entire report, stating that the ethnic minorities have no interest in assimilating to the host society, and even "intend to impose their own laws and customs on us" (p4). He therefore calls for an end to further EU immigration policies. Claeys (NI, Vlaams Belang) argues very similarly when saying that: "many of the principles held by Islam cannot be integrated into our European society", and that no integration progress can be made, before the European Parliament escapes the "denial stage" it is currently in (p1).

Despite the fact that we do not have the exact voting results because of the EP voting procedures, it can be deduced from the EP debate and the voting statements that most political groups favoured the report, except for the EFD and the ECR groups, and a number of the non-inscribed MEPs.

In both policy content and policy process, the ideas of fundamental rights and economic independence coexist: the (civil and social) rights frame is the strongest one, whereas the economic frame can be perceived as secondary, or less prominent. The logic of independence as resulting from education and labour market participation is predominant. There are traces of concerns regarding political representation as well, but no

explicit mention of political rights as such. Individual rights are emphasized and there is no strong family focus. There is a consensus on the aim of facilitating access to social rights and providing support in integration; the means are compatible, but vary among the political groups. There are internal disagreements within the EPP and S&D groups as to where to place the responsibility for social integration, i.e. whether the member states are responsible for granting it, or the migrant women themselves are considered to be the principal agents in the process. Integration is, in any case, seen as the solution (as was the case with intra-EU mobility, as analysed above). ECR, EFD and NI resist the idea of an EU development in social and immigration policies. NI MEPs most strongly set an anti-migration agenda, as they consider integration to be impossible. Contention is also found in relation to discrimination from within the ethnic minority communities: GUE/NGL argues that member states should accommodate cultural differences, whereas the EPP argues for the protection of women as victims of patriarchal family relations.

### **2.3.2 Report on Undocumented Women Migrants in the EU (A7-0001-2014)**

In December 2013, Nicolai (ALDE) presented the Report on Undocumented Women Migrants in the EU (A7-0001-2014). The report aims at ensuring that undocumented migrants' human rights are upheld, with a special focus on undocumented women. It does not, however, concentrate very much on the gendered aspects of migration, but rather has the aim of improving the women's civil rights in the EU member states. Much of the responsibility for limiting the obstacles that they face is thereby placed at the member state level.

The report is written around the overarching frame of *lack of fundamental rights*, as the main emphasis lies in ensuring that the women are given the appropriate means to have a relatively decent life, despite their irregular status. The member states are thus encouraged to ratify several international agreements, and to: "Recognise undocumented women migrants explicitly as a vulnerable social group exposed to trafficking, discrimination and exploitation on the labour market" (p14; the phrasing was not adopted by the plenary). One can deduce several sub-frames, that all pertain to the issue of fundamental rights, namely the undocumented migrant women's 1) *lack of legal status*; 2) *limited labour market rights*; 3) *lack of access to basic services*; 4) *vulnerability to different forms of abuse*; and 5) *the situation in detention centres*.

Many of the problems related to undocumented migrant women's *lack of legal status* revolve around the issue of lacking identification, particularly when needing to access education and shelters. Due to the risk of having their irregular status exposed, and/or being reported to the immigration services, many undocumented migrants do not seek access to public institutions, such as medical centres, education and shelters, leaving them highly vulnerable and unprotected. Therefore, the most vulnerable undocumented migrant women should be allowed to enter shelters without providing documentation, while children and youth of undocumented parents should have the same right when obtaining education. Schools should also not be required to report their enrolment. Another problem affecting some undocumented migrants is the situation of legal limbo, which is when it has been decided that they must return to their country of origin, but this still has not been executed, and they have not obtained any documentation about the postponement of the return. This leaves them vulnerable to arrest or detention and often without any access to their rights. The report suggests improving this situation by fully implementing the Returns Directive (2008/115/EC), and its "requirement to issue an official postponement of removal" (p13). In order to ensure that the human rights of irregular migrants (particularly children and pregnant women) are upheld, the report also wants to amend the Returns Directive.

Furthermore, undocumented migrants often fall victims to labour exploitation, either in the shape of abuse from the employer, or the withholding of pay, and due to their irregular status, they are left without any legal recourse. Thus, the report emphasises that their *limited labour market rights* need to be improved, so as to end

the maltreatment. One particular problem for *all* undocumented migrants is regarding article 6 of the EU's Employer Sanctions Directive, which still has not been properly implemented in the member states. The undocumented migrants are thereby left without a means to make claims for pending remuneration. To alleviate this problem, the member states should not only "ensure correct implementation of the safeguard in art. 6" (p8), but also organise awareness campaigns about this right for the undocumented migrants. Regarding the problem of abusive employers, the undocumented migrants should have the possibility of lodging anonymous formal complaints, either through CSOs or trade unions, and the report suggests that this should be part of the Employer Sanctions Directive. Furthermore, to curb violations, the report also suggests the introduction of labour inspections, and that the member states all ratify the UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, "recognising the human rights of migrant workers and promoting their access to justice and to humane and lawful working and living conditions" (p9).

Certain labour market problems have a rather gender-specific nature. For one, many of the undocumented women come to the given member state under false promises of their job prospects, and some are even kidnapped and sent to the EU for sexual exploitation. This is strongly condemned in the report, and the member states should "step up their efforts to combat these abusive and inhuman practices". Furthermore, it is also suggested that development aid to the migrants' countries of origin should be focused on women's education and rights, yet the reasons for this are not further explained. Another problem is regarding the many undocumented migrant women, who work in the domestic and care sector. They are argued to be "most vulnerable to low pay, mental abuse, withholding of wages and passports and sometimes even physical abuse at the hands of their employers" (p6), and also often work involuntarily. This latter point should be alleviated by implementing the ILO Convention no 29 on Forced Labour, and their protection should generally be ensured. Moreover, the member states ought to acknowledge the contribution by undocumented women's work to the host society. Yet, it is not explained how this acknowledgement should take place.

The report also highlights the fact that undocumented migrants have a *lack in access to basic services*, such as housing, education, and emergency healthcare. Regarding housing, the access to social housing is limited to all undocumented migrants, leaving them dependent on the private housing market, where particularly the female migrants are at risk of being victims of abuse by the landlords. The report wants to provide the undocumented migrants with the possibility of renting on the free market, by getting the member states to apply the Facilitation Directive. The big member state variations in access to healthcare are also pointed out as being problematic. In some countries, the irregular nature of the migrant women's stay infers that they cannot obtain subsidised care, thus exposing them to the risk of extremely high medical bills. It is also found that many of the undocumented migrant women are not aware of their health care entitlements. The access to healthcare provisions is particularly pertinent from a gender perspective, as pregnant women need access to ante- or post-natal services, and at times end up giving birth without the assistance of medical personnel. This, together with access to education and legal recourse, should be ensured through the uncoupling of immigration policies from these areas, as they "are fundamental rights and undocumented migrants are entitled to them despite their residential or legal status" (p12). Moreover, many undocumented migrants lack the financial resources to buy sufficient nourishment, leading to malnutrition and poor health, and they need to find "unacceptable solutions to secure the means of subsistence" (p5). This problem is further worsened for those women, who not only need to provide for themselves, but also their children.

The undocumented woman migrants' *vulnerability to different forms of abuse* is closely related to the frame of *legal status*, as the migrant women are prohibited from reporting the crime, due to their fear of being detected, and the perpetrators are well aware of this situation. It is therefore suggested that the member states should "uncouple the prosecution of violence (...) from immigration control so that victims can safely report crimes" (p8). Undocumented women are also found to be "liable to fall prey to sexual exploitation and to trafficking in human beings in general" (p5). These women should also be offered help, without having to

worry about expulsion from the member state. Moreover, it is proposed that the EU member states introduce a common legal framework against organised crime. At a more general level, the member states should ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention), and “victims of abuse or gender-based violence” should be “considered to have particular reasons to be granted asylum or residence permits on humanitarian grounds” (p9).

One of the key points of the report is regarding the *situation in detention centres*. Not only do they often offer indecent, prison-like conditions, but there are also occurrences of violence against the female detainees. The conditions should be bettered by finding “more humane alternatives” (p13), for example via the help of CSOs working in that particular field. The report also draws attention to the Returns Directive, and the obligation that it poses on the member states to “treat third-country nationals in detention centres in a ‘humane and dignified manner’ which fully respects the detainees’ basic human rights” (p10). However, as this has still not been accomplished, a future evaluation of the Directive should aim at strengthening detained migrants’ rights, and it must be ensured that the member states investigate all claims of physical abuse against detainees.

As to the report’s approach to *gender*, the majority of the text focuses on the problems that undocumented women migrants face, due to their dual role of being women and undocumented migrants. This intersection means that the gender-based problems, that national female citizens already face, are exacerbated by undocumented women’s irregular legal status. They are therefore more likely to fall victims to violence, general abuse, human trafficking and the potentially ensuing prostitution.

Thus, the report very clearly explains the specific problems related to intersectionality, particularly the double, if not triple, discrimination that these women face, due to their gender, legal status and race or ethnicity. This is further explained in the following citation:

“Migrant women are more vulnerable to physical abuse in general, but undocumented ones are even more so because their legal status puts them in such a position where they cannot reach to the police or hospitals or shelters for help and their abuser knows this and exploits this situation” (p12).

The specific intersection dealt with is thus rather explicit and articulated. The problem is very similar when it comes to the access to health services and shelters. Due to their gender, they have special health requirements, especially regarding ante- and post-natal care, but they have difficulties obtaining these, because of their irregular legal status. They are also more likely than their male counterparts to want to seek remedy in shelters, but their lack of identification prevents them from doing so. The report also identifies a problem regarding women migrants, whose residence status depends on their marital status. In the event of marriage dissolution, the woman would be left in an irregular legal status, and this is something the rapporteur wishes to remedy by granting “an autonomous residence permit” to her (p9), in order to enhance women’s independence. A problem is also identified for migrant women within certain ethnic communities themselves – a topic which is only raised once in the entire report, and to which no solution is offered. Thus, it is stated that:

“Gender stereotypes are more deeply rooted in immigrant communities and migrant women are more often victims of the various types of violence against women, especially forced marriages, female genital mutilation, so-called ‘honour crimes’, ill-treatment in close relationships, sexual harassment in the workplace and even trafficking and sexual exploitation” (p5).

It is not made explicit, which immigrant communities the report refers to, but the quotation shows that specific problems of gender equality are related to these communities. Another issue, which only is mentioned once, is the interrelation between gender, legal status and sexual orientation, as the irregular status of some lesbian, bisexual and transsexual migrants further “adds to their complicated situation” (p7). This statement is rather vaguely formulated, as the actual problems that they experience are left out, and thus the intersectional relation is not made explicit.



The main emphasis of the report lies on the *individual rights* of the undocumented (women) migrants, both regarding legal recourse, access to basic services and protection against violence. This is also the case for children of undocumented migrant women, whose individual rights should be upheld regarding their access to education and protection of fundamental rights (see the paragraph on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (p10)). However, in this same section, the Commission should find a way to “allow children to remain with family members and/or guardians”, instead of being placed in detention. Pregnant women, or women with small children, are seen as more vulnerable, and thus requiring special attention. Yet, this is never articulated as being specifically related to their role as mothers, but rather due to their more fragile health, or the economic burden that a child poses for an undocumented migrant woman, who might already have problems earning enough for her own well-being (see p5).

The report is very progressive regarding the particular *rights* that it wishes to grant the undocumented women, both regarding *social* and *civil* provisions. Particularly the most vulnerable of the undocumented women should thus be provided with better access to housing, education and basic services in general, and their legislative rights should also be increased. In fact, the report almost exclusively sees the problems around undocumented migrants as issues that need to be improved for *their* sake, and not because of member state interests. There is actually just one statement saying that it is also good for the member states themselves, namely that “illegal migration can be reduced through a common legal framework” (p7). Yet, as already mentioned, the overarching ambition of this report is to make people aware of the undocumented migrant women’s need for increased fundamental rights provisions, disregarding the fact that they are actually in the EU irregularly.

#### *Positions and opinions of the political groups in the EP*

As earlier mentioned, this report was adopted with a large majority vote in the FEMM Committee (30 to 5 victory). However, the MEPs in the EP only accepted it with a very small margin (327 to 303), probably due to its very liberal provisions to the undocumented migrants, and the fact that some MEPs hold that migration policy ought to be a matter of national jurisdiction.

The plenary debate of February 3, 2014, is characterised by the almost uniform consensus that undocumented migrant women constitute a very vulnerable group, which requires special protection, particularly in the shape of access to basic services. Most MEPs, both during the plenary session, and the ensuing explanation of votes, thus frames the issue around undocumented women’s lack of fundamental rights, and the need to offer them better legal protection (ALDE) and/or access to basic services (S&D and EPP). S&D (Borzan) also highlights the undocumented migrants’ need for more information about their rights, for example with regards to healthcare access, so that they do not need to be afraid of contacting the authorities. Both S&D and the EPP emphasise the need for the EU and the member states to recognise undocumented women as constituting a particularly vulnerable social group. The focus on improving undocumented migrants’ fundamental rights is also the overarching frame in most of the proposed amendments to the report within the FEMM Committee itself, where several members propose even more liberal/progressive wordings of the different paragraphs.

Both the EPP and S&D point to the problematic intersection of being both a woman, and thus already at risk of becoming the target of gendered violence and abuse, *and* having an irregular status, something that adds to the vulnerability of the women, as they have no legal recourse and fear expulsion. The Greens/EFA (Lunacek) ensures the inclusion of the multiple discrimination of “lesbian, bi- and transsexual immigrants without legal documents” as part of the report.

One of the contentious issues of the debate is regarding the actual women pertaining to the group of undocumented women. Abela Baldacchino (S&D) focuses on African, and thus third country, migrants, whereas both Picula (S&D) and Morvai (NI, Jobbik) point to the fact that many of these women originate from EU

countries, especially the women, who fall victims of human trafficking. Yet, while Picula suggests to tackle the immigration problem in the women's source countries (p2), Morvai (NI) uses this problematisation as part of her argument that it should be the responsibility of the "colonising" Western European countries to solve the problems, as opposed to the ex-Communist Eastern European countries, where many trafficked women derive from. The Commission should thus mainly worry about the undocumented *inter-EU* migrants, and then those from third countries.

The question of whether or not irregular migrants should be granted the social and/or fundamental rights, which the report outlines, exposes a fundamental disagreement between at least some of the MEPs of the two main groups. Whereas S&D does not wish to make any distinction between the citizens, Houillon (EPP) states that it would be wrong to grant all undocumented women asylum, just because they do not have any papers, and that due to their irregular status, they should also not have special rights. This is seen quite differently by the S&D, who argues that access to justice should be guaranteed, even if it is done through "anonymous denunciations of irregular situations people find themselves in" (Costa). GUE-NGL takes a similar stance in regards to the access to healthcare services, where irregular migrants should be granted this right, without fear of expulsion, and this sentiment is shared by Jakovina (S&D), who calls for an uncoupling of migration policy from healthcare, education and crime processing.

When looking at the votes cast in the EP, a clear division among the political groups emerges: whereas the majority of the MEPs from ALDE, the Greens/ALE, GUE-NGL and S&D voted in favour of the report, the ECR, EFD, EPP and most NI-MEPs were against. This is a left/right divide, but it is rather hard to ascertain exactly why so many EPP MEPs chose to reject the report, especially because most of the EPP members, who participated in the plenary debate, actually spoke about it in supportive terms: Plenkovic (EPP) states that this matter is not only an EU issue, but the UN, the Council of Europe and ILO should also be involved. And in order to offer women legal protection, the EU should devise recommendations to the member states regarding the legislation on healthcare, detention centres and the labour market. Záborská (EPP) emphasizes that the primary responsibility towards the women lies with the member states, whereas Bănescu (EPP) finds it to be an EU priority to make up the "legal lacunae" existing on the subject, and urges the Commission to strengthen women's fundamental rights. Yet, she still chose to abstain from voting. In fact, it is only Houillon (EPP) and Yannakoudakis (ECR), who clearly state that they do not agree with the basis of the report (written statements regarding the voting have not yet been published, they might shed further light on the reasoning behind the votes against the report). The ECR frames the question around the irregular nature of the women's stay, and argues that if irregular migrants are given "incentives" and "rewarded", despite their irregular status, this would not only mean that the EU supports a dangerous system of illegal migration, but also send out the wrong message to those migrants, who actually come to the EU legally, and following the correct procedures. So it is turned into a matter of protecting the civil rights of regular migrants. Furthermore, Yannakoudakis also proposed an amendment to the report, ascertaining that "Member States have ultimate competency within their borders to decide on what assistance may or may not be required to undocumented women migrants" (p31).

The report and debate clearly emphasizes fundamental rights, in particular women's civil and social rights. The approach to the issue is comprehensive in that it covers a number of rights issues, such as lack of legal status, limited labour market rights, lack of access to basic services and vulnerability to abuse. The rights-based approach is thus combined with a structural perspective on basic services. There is a focus on the individual rights of undocumented female migrants, and the need to protect their rights. Indeed, there is consensus on the need for providing special protection for undocumented female migrants as a vulnerable group, and ensure their access to basic services in particular. Disagreements arise on two fronts: the definition of the target group as third country nationals or intra-EU migrants, and the granting of rights and access to justice and basic services for all citizens, versus the risk of granting asylum to undocumented migrants as a potential pull factor for further migration flows. There is a significant difference in this case between a large majority in Committee



and the small margin with which the report was passed in plenary, thus potentially illustrating the role of forged alliances among gender equality concerned MEPs at Committee level, as opposed to the clear left/right divide of the plenary where ALDE, Greens/EFA, GUE/NGL and S&D voted in favour of the report and ECR, EFD, EPP, and NI against, expressing concern over illegal migration, and support for member state competence in the field. As regards intersectionality, in comparison to the previous reports analysed, it is made more explicit here, since the gendered problems faced by all female citizens are considered to be exacerbated in the case of undocumented migrant women due to their lack of legal status, and consequent greater risk of falling victims to abuse.

The issue of domestic workers was highly debated in our interviews as well: A 'dividing line' was identified between EU and non-EU domestic care workers, and specific vulnerabilities of the latter was highlighted: "In cases of abuse and exploitation, it is difficult for au pairs to change and improve her situation, because her residence permit is closely tied to the employer, and not tied to her as an independent individual" (MEP, EPP, interview April 2015). Worker legislation to improve living conditions, ensure protection and security, and prevent labour exploitation exists, but needs to be improved (MEP, S&D, interview December 2014; MEP, ALDE, interview April 2015). This is contested however: "There is a sensitive balance between better protection but also the legalisation and normalisation of the lives of people who, nominally, are not legally allowed in the EU" (MEP, ALDE, interview April 2015). One suggested solution would be for member states to offer tax returns to families, who employ domestic workers. This idea is supported by some interviewees, though hesitantly: it "should be well monitored, but it should only last the first years after the arrival in the country in order to facilitate their adaptation to the new society. A long term reimbursement, in my opinion, will create bad feelings for the citizens of the country against them" (MEP, ALDE, interview April 2015). Contestation also revolves around implementation and member state differences: The migration issue in itself, rather than its gendered dimensions, is considered to be controversial. This is due to the different migration problems faced across member states, and the need of adaptation to national contexts (MEP, ALDE, interview April 2015), as well as the need for solidarity among member states when sharing responsibility for refugees (Administrator, EP, interview March 2015).

### **2.3.3 Opinions drafted by the FEMM Committee**

The FEMM Committee's three opinions on migrant women in the EU (AD(2011)452884 on the Proposal for a Directive of the EP and of the Council on the Conditions of Entry and Residence of Third-Country Nationals for the Purposes of Seasonal Employment drafted by Papadopoulou of S&D; AD(2012)496521 on the Integration of Migrants, its Effects on the Labour Market and the External Dimension of Social Security Coordination drafted by Senyszyn of S&D; and AD(2013)504151 on the Situation of Unaccompanied Minors in the EU drafted by Matera of EPP) vary highly in their focal points compared to the two reports above. All three were drafted in the years between the two reports, i.e. in 2011, 2012 and 2013 respectively, but several of the arguments used, and diagnoses made, concur with the findings of the two reports, despite the fact that they centre on different migrant groups. This is particularly the case for the opinion on unaccompanied minors, which has strong resemblances with the report on undocumented women, as they both frame the problems around a lack of fundamental rights. The opinion on seasonal employment and the opinion on unaccompanied minors were almost unanimously adopted in the FEMM Committee, and only had one and five abstainers respectively. The opinion on the integration of migrants, on the other hand, was only adopted with a small majority, as 12 were in favour and 8 against it.

The opinions address the women rather differently; whereas the opinion on seasonal employment discusses the women as workers, and thus outlines their labour market rights, the unaccompanied minors focus on the civil rights of the girls as citizens, and finally, the opinion on the integration of migrants considers the women's

roles as both general citizens and part of the labour market. All three opinions mainly attempt to improve the women's *individual rights* in the given member states, and it is again only really in regards to pregnant women or women with children that *family rights* are mentioned.

The Opinion on Seasonal Employment (AD(2011)452884) was drafted as a response to the Commission's proposal regarding "common EU admission and residence requirements, as well as the rights of seasonal workers from third countries". It strongly focuses on the labour market rights of *all* seasonal workers, whilst also underlining their importance for the EU economy. Due to the intersection of gender and legal/occupational status, female workers are argued to be more vulnerable, as they face similar gender-specific problems considering employment as undocumented women, namely the risks of forced prostitution, human trafficking, and labour market exploitation. The opinion also emphasises that female seasonal workers often live in poverty, and have inadequate insurance coverage, welfare benefits and skills, and due to the intersection of their gender, race and/or religion, they are often victims of prejudices and stereotyping. To ameliorate this situation, FEMM wishes to improve their access to, and knowledge of, the conditions for entry and residence, and their labour market entitlements in the shape of social provisions and legislative measures.

As stated, the Opinion on the Integration of Migrants (AD(2012)496521) looks at both the labour market and civil rights of migrant women. Many of its focus points correlate with the report on the social integration of ethnic minority women, but particularly regarding the labour market conditions, it equates the findings of the report on undocumented women. Hence, migrant women are often found to be "the most vulnerable victims of discrimination, stereotypes, unfair treatment and labour exploitation, in many cases lacking access to social services and legal protection and being subjected to physical, psychological, economic and sexual abuse" (p3). This abuse is particularly seen in the case of trafficking of not only women, but also girls, for the sake of either sexual or labour exploitation. Furthermore, in accordance with the report on the social integration of ethnic minority women, the migrant women workers are often found to be working in the lowest ranking jobs, partly because of the non-recognition of their academic and professional qualifications. Many migrant women thus end up working in the informal care sector, a sector which some member state's social security systems do not recognize, leaving the women without access to decent pensions. Moreover, just as was the case in both of the reports above, the opinion highlights the intersection of gender and ethnicity as regards the discrimination from within the ethnic minorities themselves. Due to all of these risks facing migrant women, FEMM wishes to ensure that they obtain safe and legal access to the EU labour market and society in general, and that they are offered the same social service provisions and entitlements as the EU citizens.

Finally, the Opinion on Unaccompanied Minors (AD(2013)504151) aims at improving the fundamental and civil rights of this group of citizens, who face obstacles due to the intersectionality of gender, age and legal status or ethnicity. Unaccompanied girls are thus argued to be particularly vulnerable, due to the oft gender-specific nature of trafficking, and the fact that they are more prone to fall victims of different kinds of abuse, including violence. Interestingly, unlike the other documents, this opinion is very specific about the ethnicity of certain of the unaccompanied girls. It is thus ascertained that "specific profiles" must be made for girls from sub-Saharan countries, Eastern Europe and of Roma origin, who are all at a higher risk of falling prey to various types of abuses, and also "girls who have migrated to meet relatives whom they do not know" (p5). The member states are encouraged to not only uphold the girls' rights, but also to inform them about their social rights and legislative entitlements. A big emphasis is placed on gender-sensitivity in the work with these girls, so all staff that comes into contact with them should preferably be female. Moreover, due to the girls' different originating countries, reasons to come and available means, all processing of their situation should be based on the individual stories. Furthermore, as was the case in the report on undocumented woman migrants, unaccompanied girls should have their residence request granted, whether they arrived legally or not, especially if they are victims of trafficking or other forms of abuse. The opinion also discusses detention centers, and finds it problematic that their provisions differ depending on the member states. Therefore,

FEMM wants to ensure a common EU legal framework on the adherence to the fundamental human rights of the detainees.

Thus, one can identify several similarities between the three separate opinions and the two reports. The frame of fundamental rights access is recurring in all five documents, whilst being mixed with social and labour market rights to various extents. It is thus clear that the FEMM Committee's main emphasis is on the well-being of the migrants, even those who have an irregular legal status.

## 2.4 Elderly Care

The analysis of policy positions and opinions within the area of elderly care covers three reports and six opinions. In the 7<sup>th</sup> legislature, the first report on the issue was the Report on the Role of Women in an Ageing Society (A7/0237/2010). It forms the basis of the analysis, in the sense that the content of the subsequent reports (Report on the Situation of Women Approaching Retirement Age, A7/0291/2011, and the Report on Prevention of Age-Related Diseases of Women, A7/0340/2012) are only included to the extent to which their contents differ from the initial 2010 report. We thus comment briefly on the coherence between the three reports in the analysis, but focus our attention on divergences, in order to provide an exhaustive overview of the way in which the issue was articulated by the FEMM Committee from 2009 to 2014. The analysis of the opinions groups them into three categories, and thus summarizes the content as regards health care provisions, pension reform, and female labour market participation respectively. The analysed opinions are: the Opinion on the Impact of the Crisis on Access to Care for Vulnerable Groups (FEMM\_AD(2013)508058); Opinion on the Agenda for Adequate, Safe and Sustainable Pensions (FEMM\_AD(2013)502102); Opinion on the Demographic Change and its Consequences for the Future Cohesion Policy of the EU (FEMM\_AD(2011)458821); Opinion on Towards Adequate, Sustainable and Safe European Pensions Systems (FEMM\_AD(2010)448857); Opinion on Reducing Health Inequalities in the European Union (FEMM\_AD(2010)448914); and Opinion on Demographic Challenge and Solidarity between Generations (FEMM\_AD(2010)442891).

### 2.4.1 Report on the Role of Women in an Ageing Society (A7-0237/2010)

In July 2010, the FEMM Committee adopted a report on the role of women in an ageing society (A7/0237/2010). Pietikäinen (EPP) was the rapporteur, and the report was adopted in committee with 27 votes in favour and 1 against. The report focuses on gender inequalities in older age, and the difficulties facing older women in an ageing society.

In the report, we identify four different problem frames: 1) *discrimination and disempowerment*; 2) *lack of (economic) recognition of (gendered) care work*; 3) *low quality of care services*; and 4) *institutionalization of care*.

The report clearly adopts a rights-based approach to ageing, by framing the problem as *discrimination and disempowerment* of older women. It explicitly criticizes the way in which ageing is typically perceived in negative terms and highlights instead the positive role older people play as 'an economic resource and a fund of experience'. The framing of the older women (and older people in general) as an economic burden on society is related both to discrimination (including on the labour market) and disempowerment: "The ageing population is seen as a future burden for national economies and the potential of the elderly is often ignored as they are more often seen as passive objects than active subjects" (p11). Consequently, the aim is to create positive attitudes through awareness-raising regarding the role of older people and, in particular, their economic potential. One of the ways in which to enable women to play an active role is to facilitate part-time work and promote 'small trades and crafts', thus underlining the economic and employment focus. The

empowerment of older people also concerns older people's right to independently choose where they want to live, i.e. ensuring older women's free choice in terms of their place to live, as well as their active participation in decision-making in care institutions, and as concerns 'the choice and the design of the care and social services'.

The *lack of (economic) recognition of (gendered) care work* frame contains several elements. It addresses the (individual) economic consequences of caring duties, which result in accumulated gendered disadvantages over a lifetime, including inequality in pensions. This means that the unequal care responsibilities, for instance when taking care of children at an earlier age, will affect women in their older age as well, and potentially put them at risk of poverty. Thus, the frame also relates to the unequal responsibility for care for children and dependents, and the lack of reconciliation between paid work and unpaid (care) work. Likewise, the lack of recognition of the value of care work, as well as the working conditions and (social security) rights of care workers (most of whom are women), are covered by this framing of the problem. In terms of solutions, the report proposes to; introduce new types of leave for caring duties other than m/paternity; promote equal gendered division of unpaid/informal care work; ensure the accumulation of pension rights in order to counteract the unequal share of caring duties; and support policies for informal carers and the improvement of their working conditions.

The report also addresses the *low quality of care services* as a central framing of the problem. This problem is particularly gendered, due to older women's greater dependency on (health) care services. Several ways to enhance the quality of public and private care services are envisaged, while ensuring its accessibility and affordability: more resources, training and evaluation of care workers, and adapting services and products to the needs of older people and their (informal) carers. Furthermore, it is emphasized that physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse must be combatted.

Throughout the report, the need to address older people's choice of housing is emphasized with a focus on making it possible to live at home for as long as possible, thus problematizing the *institutionalization of care*: the report "encourages the transformation of nursing homes usually operating as hospitals to friendly establishments where the model of family is applied, as a way to avoid institutionalisation" (p8; the formulation was introduced into the report through a committee amendment suggested by Paliadeli of the S&D group). Services need to be in place to enable long-term care at home, which is seen as the aim in the report. This includes a flexible demands-based approach to the provision of care services, adapted to the needs of the older women and their (potential) desire to live at home and independently.

The report is clearly framed within a fundamental *rights* approach, underlining notions of dignity, independence, and antidiscrimination. It also addresses specific issues, such as the right to choose where to live, and the right to basic income. Social rights are articulated in relation to access to basic care and health care services, and as regards social security rights and benefits of care workers. A political perspective on rights is addressed in terms of participation in decision-making at several levels (as mentioned above). Rights are mostly framed in individual terms, though a strong family perspective underlies the entire report, seeing the older women in a family context, and at the same time highlighting the value of family.

The report deals with *gendered problems* by addressing care work, which is mainly performed by women; care services (including institutionalization), which are used by more women than men; and discrimination and disempowerment, which affect women more than men - all according to the report. Except for the aspect of care work, these issues are general problems for older people, which affect women more severely nevertheless. In this regard, it is interesting to consider the roles attributed to women in the report. On the one hand, women are addressed as the ones being cared for, and thus the receivers of care services. On the other hand, women are seen in their role as carers: informally, by taking care of their children, grandchildren and other dependants, and formally, as care professionals. The report does not take an explicit stance as regards the preference for public or private care services. They are mentioned together, and no prioritization is made. It is underlined that informal care 'should not make up for social care deficiencies', thus emphasizing the need

for remunerated care, but within this framework no preference is made regarding public or private provision of care services. Furthermore, it is highlighted that older people should be able to choose freely between formal or informal care, again with an emphasis on the need for remuneration in any case: "... calls for policies to be promoted to provide support within nuclear families, enabling people to decide whether to opt to care for elderly family members themselves or to call on supplementary social services; such assistance should be equally remunerated in both cases"(p7. The formulation was introduced into the report through a committee amendment suggested by Jiménez-Becerril Barrio of the EPP group). A significant silence in the report in this regard concerns the effects of the privatization of care services, and a structural perspective on care services and care regimes, as these differ from one member state to another.

The report mentions several forms of multiple discrimination of relevance to the policy area of elderly care, but intersectionality remains inarticulate, except for the key intersection of age and gender, inasmuch as the specific relation between the grounds of discrimination is unaccounted for. A proposal is made for age and gender to be combined in a mainstreaming strategy in all relevant fields. Specific reference is made to older LBT women and older migrant women, but again without specifying the particular problems faced by these groups. Other grounds mentioned are: disability, ethnicity, religious orientation, state of health, marital status, and social disadvantage.

#### *Positions and opinions of the political groups in the EP*

The resolution was adopted with a large majority in the plenary: 84% voted in favour, 12% against and 4% abstained. All groups except the EFD (due to a high number of abstentions) showed high levels of cohesion. The EFD and ECR voted against the report, and all others in favour. The Committee amendments, the EP plenary debate and the oral and written explanations to the voting also show, that there was a high level of consensus around the content of the Report on the Role of Women in an Ageing Society. The majority of the political groups addresses notions such as dignity, independence and rights, and the need to guarantee social services. S&D emphasizes the need to strengthen the quality of care services. Economic framings also run through the debates and proposals set forward by the MEPs during the process. This concerns the promotion of the 'silver economy' and older women as an economic resource, as well as the economic value of care and care as work. GUE/NGL emphasizes a demands-based approach, highlighting consumer rights and the adaptation of service provision to actual needs.

However, four issues stand out as being revolved with tensions. Firstly, the attention towards older LBT women, which had been introduced in the report through committee amendments set forward by Cornelissen of the EFA/Greens group, was strongly opposed by the EFD group and several members of EPP. Secondly, the report argues in favour of the right to basic income across member states; Češková (ECR) tried to delete the reference in committee, and a group of Swedish EPP members explicitly opposed this in the plenary debate. Thirdly, the ECR fought against EU intervention in member state affairs in both committee and plenary, by arguing that proposals regarding new types of leave (for caring duties other than parental leave), accumulation of pension rights, healthcare, education, retirement age and nursing homes are contrary to the principle of subsidiarity, and should thus be dealt with nationally. New types of leave were also criticized by the group of Swedish EPP members on the same grounds. Finally, proposals on positive discrimination were mentioned as a reason for voting against the report (Swedish EPP members and Mölzer, NI).

More so than the report, the EP plenary debate and the explanations for voting applaud, and to a certain extent idealize, the image of the older woman caring for her family: "women often still care for their parents and also their grandchildren in old age, for which they receive no pay and on which they spend all of their income or savings. [...] In the 'extended families' of the past, everyone had their own function and role, and older people were not excluded and condemned to live in poverty" (Dušek, S&D). EPP and S&D agree to

underline the 'great importance of older women' and the 'appreciation of their role' for European society and for the family. The sacrifice of older women is highlighted, and proposals to develop policies to support women with care responsibilities for grandchildren, while their parents are working, or women of the 'sandwich generation' with dual care responsibilities for grandchildren and parents or other dependent family members, are emphasized. Older women's caring role, with the purpose of enhancing reconciliation for young women in particular, is explicitly highlighted as an alternative to welfare solutions by Feio of the EPP group. The EPP talks about 'pro-family policy' in this regard; EFD also places the emphasis on the improvement of family services, in order to relieve women of their care duties in the family; and ALDE endorses the notion of intergenerational solidarity like defined in the report as "plans to support women who care for grandchildren while the parents are absent due to employment reasons" (p9). Paliadeli (S&D) goes further by suggesting that member states establish "the status of a foster grandmother, as a term to define elderly women taking care of children, during the absence of their parents for employment reasons, who are entitled to payment, security and health insurance". This amendment was, however, not approved in committee.

Cornelissen (EFA/Greens), members of S&D and members of GUE/NGL add multiple discrimination perspectives to the report through amendments (both as lists and as examples). Matera (EPP) explicitly discusses the triple discrimination faced by older women living alone. Liotard (GUE/NGL) proposes an actual age and gender mainstreaming approach to policies in the field.

The report and the policy process around it is largely silent about the financial responsibility for care services, i.e., who should pay for them. The question is addressed implicitly by pointing to poverty among older women, suggesting that they would not be able to afford private services. García Pérez (S&D) underlines that public services in particular need to be affordable, and McGuinness (EPP) emphasises that "we should not allow profit to be made from older people being moved into the private care sector". As mentioned, there is, to a large extent, a lack of prioritization between public and private services, which suggests that the issue of normatively evaluating which model to follow, and how to finance it, is not dealt with at the EP level. All groups consider this a public matter, but public and private services are equally legitimized and supported. Structural issues and the future of the welfare state, as well as the differences in care regimes, are only addressed in very general or implicit terms. However, Kolarska-Bobińska (EPP) does discuss the problems in countries with inefficient social and healthcare systems, where demographic changes will lead to further care responsibilities for women (for parents and relatives). Institutions need to be adapted and the access to public and private care services facilitated, in order to alleviate care responsibilities within the family. Other members of the EPP group call for policies to support care at home instead of in institutions (McGuinness), free choice between family care and social services (Jiménez-Becerril), and emphasizing the need for remunerated care, whether public or private, formal or informal (Jiménez-Becerril, Pietikäinen).

Older women are perceived as receivers of care services and as carers themselves. 'Intergenerational solidarity' is used to positively discuss the value of the care work carried out by older women, whereas the challenges of the 'sandwich generation' address dual care responsibilities, and the need for support policies in this regard. The report emphasizes rights framings, while at the same time articulating notions of economic framings both at the level of society, by discussing the negative approach to the 'care burden', and at the individual level, by addressing the economic consequences of the unequal division of care duties. Furthermore, an economic focus is present in terms of the potential of the 'silver economy'; economic value of care work and the need for its remuneration; older women's role on the labour market; as well as market supply and demand of products and services. Beyond this, the report is addressing flexibility (of needs, choices, and services), as well as the public responsibility of setting the framework to ensure rights, quality of services, reconciliation, freedom of choice, and independence at home for as long as possible. The logic of accumulated gendered disadvantages, whereby unequal responsibility for care affects women's labour market participation and pension entitlements, is articulated. The lack of recognition of the value of care work and the poor working conditions of care workers are also highlighted. Social rights, social security and basic care services are mentioned extensively, and



political rights are addressed indirectly by promoting participation in decision-making in care institutions. In the report, an individualized rights frame is predominant, and coexists with a strong family perspective. No priorities are made between public and private care services, though the public responsibility for providing access to services is made clear. However, an important silence in the report is the lack of discussion on privatization of care services, structural perspectives on the latter, as well as attribution of financial responsibility, and the differences in care regimes at member state level. There is a high degree of consensus on the issue. Tensions include older LBT women, the right to a basic income, member state vs. EU competences and resistance against positive discrimination measures.

#### **2.4.2 Report on the Situation of Women Approaching Retirement Age (A7-0291/2011)**

In 2011, Bauer (EPP) drafted the Report on the Situation of Women Approaching Retirement Age (A7-0291/2011), which was adopted with 26 votes in favour, 1 against, and 3 abstaining. It is written with the aim of furthering and accommodating older women workers' equal labour market participation, as a means to avoid that they end up living in poverty and/or isolation when retiring.

The frames of this report are rather similar to those of the report on the role of women in an ageing society (see above). However, there are certain differences, due to this report's stronger focus on *labour market* discrimination against older women, and their ensuing financial difficulties. Thus, the following frames are identified: 1) *labour market discrimination*; 2) *lack of (economic) recognition of (gendered) care work*; 3) *low quality of care services*; and 4) *lack of possibilities for ageing with dignity*.

In a response to the challenges of demographic ageing for the EU, and to foster intergenerational solidarity, one of the key aims of the report is to ensure "that people stay longer on the labour market and remain healthy, active and autonomous for longer after they retire" (p12). Accordingly, the report aims at combating the different types of *labour market discrimination*, that older women face because of the intersection of their gender and age. Older women workers are more likely to suffer from unemployment, the gender pay gap, and part-time employment than both men and younger women. Also, due to the women-specific work trajectories, that include career breaks at earlier stages of their life, they now face a "labour market disadvantage (...), which leads to the persistency of in-work poverty, to early retirement and inactivity, and to the permanence in low-skilled and low-paid jobs" (p12). Many solutions are offered to these problems, both in regards to curtailing the gender and age discrimination, but also to ensure a higher employment rate amongst older women. Thus, ageist attitudes should be tackled by the employers through; better equal opportunity initiatives; "age-friendly and gender-sensitive" workplace policies; and a greater recognition of older women workers' skills and experience. It should also become easier to sanction employers, who discriminate against older women workers, and the Commission and the member states should find ways to close the gender pay gap, whilst the member states also need to introduce a life-cycle approach to work, considering both young and old women's disadvantaged positions. In order to keep the older women in employment, they should have improved access to further training and education, a higher quality of working conditions, and better promotion opportunities and career prospects. Women are also encouraged to set up their own businesses, and should be provided with financing opportunities for this.

With regards to the frame of *lack of (economic) recognition of (gendered) care work*, the report identifies rather similar problems as the 2010 report considering the effects of unequal care responsibilities, which lead to detrimental economic outcomes for the women in later life, particularly regarding pensions. The report also considers the underappreciated nature of older women as carers, and the fact that their roles as grandmothers often make them be considered as carers, and this conflicts with their work responsibilities. The proposed solutions are almost identical in their aims as the ones offered in the 2010 report. Yet, besides improving the female informal caregivers' provisions and entitlements, this report also highlights the importance of a better

provision of quality care services for children, older people and other dependents. This is partly to ensure that working women will not have to leave the labour market for care duties. Thus, even though most measures are aimed at enforcing the rights of, and provisions for, the informal carers, formal caregivers are also deemed important, as a means to ensure the women's labour market participation.

Similarly to the previous report, it is also the aim here to improve the *low quality of care services* across the EU member states, due to the gender differences between men and women, which make women more vulnerable to health problems in old age. Thus, whilst ensuring the "quality, accessibility and affordability" of care services (for example by making use of the Structural Funds), the member states should gender mainstream their health policies, provide gender equal access to both short and long-term care, and improve the skills of white sector employees. As in the previous report, no preferences are articulated as to whether the care services should be private or public. Furthermore, the report takes a pro-active approach by encouraging better health and safety measures in the work place, so that the women will not suffer from ill health in old age.

Finally, the report focuses on the *lack of possibilities for ageing with dignity*. Due to the unequal pensions entitlements and the fact that women live longer than men, women are more prone to live in poverty and isolation when retired. This problem is exacerbated by the financial crisis, as budget cuts limit their access to basic care services. The solution to the problems regarding differing pensions is to introduce more gender-sensitive pension policies, whereas the older women's social isolation should be prevented through their higher involvement in civil society, participation in inter-generational projects, and by introducing them to new digital technologies, which will "increase their interpersonal and communication skills and their ability to manage their independence and their interests" (p7). Moreover, the report also identifies problems regarding women, who live by themselves. They are argued to be more likely to be dependent on others, and feel insecure and isolated. One way to solve this is by considering various "accommodation options and supporting community groups and organisations" (p10). Furthermore, the report also calls for more action on violence against older women, an occurrence which is rather underestimated, and needs urgent attention. The older victims should get the appropriate assistance after the assault, "in order to ensure full enjoyment of human rights and achieve gender equality" (p11).

The report is thus written both within a framework of improving women's rights and conditions on the labour market and in old age, but also with a view to improve the EU's future economic competitiveness:

"Europe's future economic competitiveness, prosperity and inclusiveness depend crucially on its ability to effectively improve the use of its labour resources, not only by extending the employment period of life but also by creating the working conditions and social security systems which both support an improvement in working and living conditions and benefit the economy, whereas this also includes appropriate policies to reconcile work, family and private life and to tackle direct and indirect discrimination and gender stereotypes which lead to gender gaps in the labour market" (p2).

As explained above, this report focuses on the *gender* differences on the labour market, which lead to women's detrimental financial situations in old age. Thus, almost all of the diagnoses and prognoses identified mention gender as one of the key reasons for the problem, strongly highlighting the need to gender mainstream policies, both in regards to the labour market and the pensions systems. The traditional division of women and men's roles on the labour market and in households should also be changed, in order to curb the unequal share of care obligations. Like the 2010 report, this report also considers women in various roles; namely either as being the *carer* for dependents, or as being the *dependent person*.

As the report concentrates on women reaching retirement age, it identifies several problems related to the intersectionality of gender and age, especially regarding the labour market, but also in relation to health issues and diseases that mainly affect older women. To counter this, the Commission should collect gender- and age-specific data; most policy fields should undergo gender and age mainstreaming; and the dimension of age and



gender should be part of active ageing strategies. As regards other intersections, the report points to the intersection of gender and occupation, when discussing the accumulation of pensions, as women who work in family businesses “without being paid or having a social security scheme” will have problems in this regard. Moreover, the report identifies cases of multiple discriminations, for example considering older migrant or disabled women and their employment levels (yet, the exact problem remains unspecified). Women without work experience and migrant, minority, disabled, low-educated, and imprisoned women are also referred to as pertaining to “the most vulnerable categories” of women, but it remains unclear why they belong to this category.

As was the case in the 2010 report, this report concentrates on the fundamental and social rights of the older women, both in regards to their labour market conditions and their life in retirement. Their political rights are also addressed, as women are encouraged to partake in decision-making processes. And, as above, the rights are considered to be individual, yet, the family perspective also plays a big part, especially in regards to the question of care.

#### *Positions and opinions of the political groups in the EP*

The EP plenary debate on the report on the situation of women approaching retirement age, September 12, 2011, shows a very broad consensus among the political groups on the need to improve older women’s labour market conditions. Almost all political groups emphasise the double discrimination of older women workers due to their gender and age, yet their reasons for calling for better conditions for these women vary: Whereas all groups highlight the need to improve the situation for the women from a gender perspective, i.e. ensuring their rights, several of the EPP and S&D MEP’s also point to the EU’s ageing population, and its potential consequences on the pensions systems, as the rationale for favouring the report. Furthermore, the EU 2020 strategy of obtaining an employment level of 75% and the eradication of poverty is also highlighted as an important goal by the EPP, S&D and ALDE.

All political groups frame the issue around women’s fundamental right to have a good life when retired, and most of the utterances thus revolve around the ways to improve older women workers’ labour market conditions, so as to ensure that they enter retirement with decent pensions. One way to do this is through gender mainstreaming of labour market policies. Palicki (S&D), on the other hand, sees a great opportunity for women in SMEs and as entrepreneurs in general, and he thus calls for better EU policies in this area. Moreover, the EPP, S&D, ALDE and EFD also emphasise the important source that older women are as workers. For one, through intergenerational solidarity, the older women workers can help develop the skills of the younger generations, due to their cultural, social and professional abilities, and they should thus be considered a valuable economic resource. Furthermore, all political groups call for more training and skill development opportunities for the older women workers, in order to ensure that they can remain competitive in their job sector. The main focus is thus on empowering women to stay on the labour market.

As was the case in the report, women are both referred to as carer and cared for in the debate. As carer, S&D, ALDE and EPP agree that a woman’s care obligations during her career should not impact on her pension entitlements, and especially the EPP call for measures to reconcile work and care, for example through more flexible employment forms. One of the amendments to the report by the EPP is regarding the life-cycle approach, which is also applauded by Záborská, who argues thusly:

“We want young women to have more children. We are concerned about labour shortages. When women claim their statutory maternity leave, however, they are punished for it. It is a paradox – we ask women to have more babies, but we are unwilling to acknowledge their contribution”.

The role of retired women as carers for relatives is also seen as important both by EPP and S&D, as they thereby alleviate working women from taking on this role, and it was a S&D member (García Perez), who introduced the notion that the “care services (...) constitute a substantial source of jobs that could be filled by older women” to the report. This idea is shared by Pirillo (S&D), who proposes that the member states should legally recognise the role of women as care-givers, as this could create forms of official employment, that make it easier for women over 50 to stay in work. Handzlik (EPP), on the other hand, sees action in this field as an opportunity to improve the financial situation for Polish women working illegally in the care sector of other EU member states. Finally, in regards to the women, who have reached retirement age, it is generally held that there is a need for quality public services, including provisions for long-term care. Also, in order to avoid that they end up living in poverty, a great focus is placed on the need to reform the pensions system, and particularly gender mainstreaming is seen as the way forward by all political groups during the debate. EFD and EPP encourage the use of actuarial calculations, while S&D amends the report by including the idea of aggregation arrangements of all the different incomes that a worker has had during his or her career.

There is hardly any mention of intersections in the debate, except by a few EFD members. Thus, Fontana does not agree that female immigrants should have better working conditions, when the aim is to encourage EU citizens to find jobs, and Rossi does not wish to provide Roma and non-EU women with specific assistance programmes, as they should not be favoured vis-à-vis the European citizens.

Even though we do not have the exact voting result from plenary, it can be deduced from the different statements that the report was accepted by a large majority amongst the political groups. However, some MEPs questioned whether the EU has the necessary competences to decide on national matters in this particular field. This is observed both in the EFD and ECR groups, but also, somewhat surprisingly, by an MEP from ALDE (Rohde). This was nevertheless far from a shared sentiment amongst the MEPs.

Significant focus is placed on the labour market, and the way in which unequal share of care responsibilities and labour market segregation lead to financial challenges at old age is addressed. Unequal pension entitlements and the risk of poverty and isolation should be combated through participation and gender-sensitive pension policies. There is a strong consensus on the need to improve labour market conditions though the reasons vary (from women’s rights and risk of poverty to employment levels and pensions systems). There is a strong resonance between the framings of this report and the previous one from 2010; thus, improving women’s rights and strengthening EU’s economic competitiveness are articulated as simultaneous goals. Older women should be seen as a source of experience, as well as an economic resource. Their role as caregivers should be recognized, and the rights of both formal and informal caregivers ensured, in order to enhance women’s labour market participation. In terms of rights, the emphasis is placed on social rights, and political rights are addressed as participation in (local) decision-making. Individual rights are underlined, though, in relation to care, family perspectives are mentioned as well. During the debate, resistance arose especially around the issue of competence and subsidiarity.

### **2.4.3 Report on Prevention of Age-Related Diseases of Women (A7-0340/2012)**

In October 2012, the Report on Prevention of Age-Related Diseases of Women (A7-0340/2012) was adopted in the FEMM Committee. Angelilli of the EPP drafted the report, which was passed with 31 votes in favour, none against and one abstention. The report was passed in plenary in December 2012.

While focusing on gender-specific diseases, and the ways in which women are more affected than men by certain diseases (due to ‘gender-related biological differences’), the report mainly emphasizes the gap in health expectancy between women and men; the need for active and healthy ageing to combat this tendency; and improve older women’s quality of life through information and prevention measures. In terms of care, the

report largely reproduces the frames identified above: *discrimination and disempowerment* of older women, by addressing rights, participation and a positive attitude towards ageing; *low quality of care services*, including training of staff, adaptation of services to the needs of older people, and prevention of all forms of abuse; and *institutionalization of care*, by highlighting care and independent lives at home for as long as possible. The home is thus highlighted as normatively better than institutions. In comparison to the 2010 Report on the Role of Women in an Ageing Society, the present report focuses less on the *lack of (economic) recognition of (gendered) care work*, except for references to the way in which unequal care responsibilities lead to gendered pay and pensions gap, and consequently to higher risk of poverty for older women. The report focuses much less on family, and phrases the issue more in terms of care for dependants than care for family members.

The report also reproduces the very general approach to multiple discrimination by mentioning gender, age and ethnicity without making the intersectional relation between the grounds of discrimination explicit. However, the particular problems of access to services experienced by older migrant women and older women with mobility difficulties, and the challenges faced by older women in rural areas as regards lack of access, due to shortage of professionals and of facilities, are highlighted. Older women living alone (single-person/single-income households) are often isolated and discouraged by the difficulties in accessing healthcare services (due to lack of guidance, waiting lists, etc.), and they are treated unfavourably in taxation, social security, housing, healthcare, insurance and pensions. In sum, an additional frame of *lack of access to health care services* is identified in the report, and it is paired prognostically with solutions in terms of individualized assistance (at home), telemedicine, e-health services, and support for caregivers.

Some aspects, which were present in the 2010 report, are further emphasized or deepened here. This includes emphasizing that pension gaps affect spending possibilities on health provisions; the risk that older women with dual care responsibilities (grandchildren and own parents) take less care of their own health; special attention given to women, who take care of dependants while facing health problems themselves; and the right of older people to a decent, independent and participatory life. Furthermore, the report underlines the need for sustainability and effectiveness in the (health) care system, and the need to find a balance between austerity measures (after the financial and economic crisis) and adequate funding for health and social care. The report adopts an individual perspective on the effects of ageing, while also referring to social services and welfare protection schemes (and much less so the economic effects).

#### *Positions and opinions of the political groups in the EP*

In the amendments proposed by members of the FEMM Committee, we find several proposals (regarding independence, participation, multiple discrimination, life-course approach, and dual care responsibilities of older women) along the lines of the 2010 report, set forward by its rapporteur Pietikäinen of the EPP group, thus creating continuity within the policy area. Similarly Gabriel (EPP) emphasizes rights and combating discrimination, whereas Paliadeli (S&D) introduces the critique of institutionalization, which was also present in the 2010 report. As regards multiple discrimination, members of the EPP, ALDE and S&D groups (Gabriel (EPP), Klass (EPP), in't Veld (ALDE); Țicău (S&D), in the plenary debate) emphasize the situation of older women living alone, whereas members of the Greens/EFA group in particular bring the attention to older migrant women. Oviir (ALDE) is more specific in her explanation of the particular problems faced by older migrant women, thereby articulating more clearly the intersectional relations between discrimination grounds, since she highlights how the living situation could affect the mental health; the need to pay attention to genetic conditions; and the risk of being overlooked and not receiving the needed assistance. Several EPP members, Oviir (ALDE) and Țicău and Cliveti (S&D) call attention to women living in rural and/or remote areas and the need for specific measures to affront their needs, such as telemedicine and online health services (access and quality of services), measures which are also relevant for women, who are isolated due to lack of mobility (Morin-Chartier, EPP), and to improve older women's independence in general (Cliveti, S&D; Oviir, ALDE). The

interaction between age, gender, (ethnicity) and socio-economic factors in creating health inequalities is also mentioned by EPP members Mészáros and Coelho.

The financial and economic crisis was addressed during the policy-making process. Members of the EPP group introduced amendments in committee regarding the need to strike a balance between measures to combat the crisis and fund the necessary (health) care services. Morin-Chartier (EPP) referred to the need for welfare protection schemes and Angelilli (EPP) to the aim of sustainability and effectiveness of care arrangements. Yannakoudakis (ECR) made proposals for amendments highlighting member state responsibility for health services and medical care, thus arguing in line of resistance towards EU intervention and favouring the principle of subsidiarity. In the plenary debate the GUE/NGL group criticize the contradictory attitude of the Parliament, insofar as the measures of the report towards improving healthcare ('a catalogue of good intentions') are adopted alongside austerity policies leading to cuts in public services. Zuber (GUE/NGL) specifically argues that: "on the one hand, [the European Parliament] adopts measures to improve the lives of millions of people, and on the other, it approves economic and financial policies that prevent their implementation." Similarly in the explanations to vote, Ferreira (GUE/NGL) argues in favour of a universal, quality, free public health service with long-term sustainability (as opposed to the current cuts). Zuber states that only public health services will guarantee health care access for all citizens.

The plenary debate and the explanations to vote show consensus on the major issues of the report: independence, quality of life, dignity, quality healthcare, healthy and active ageing, intergenerational solidarity, access to services, health expectancy gap, and information and prevention as solutions. The economic costs for society (social security and medical care) when older women are inactive are highlighted by Werthmann (ALDE). Members of the EPP group emphasize economic issues in another way, by referring to economic discrimination of women; prevention costs being lower than treatment costs; consequences of the pensions gap (due to pay gap, care responsibilities and accumulated gendered disadvantages) leading to less resources for medical care and therefore resulting lower health levels; as well as the way in which productivity and economic prosperity are conditioned by a healthy population, and health sector costs thus should be seen as an investment. Older women's scarce resources for health care are also mentioned by Țicău (S&D), and Werthmann (ALDE) argues that services should also be available for older people facing financial hardship. The EPP argumentation presupposes paid care, i.e. it is contrary to the claims on universal public services as defended by the GUE/NGL group. In general, the policy process is largely silent about the discussion on universal (health) care and, as mentioned in relation to the report in itself, the aspect of financing services.

Bilbao Barandica (ALDE) and members of the EPP group underline the need to recognise women's domestic tasks; Bilbao Barandica refers to the "women who have given everything in order to construct our welfare state" in line with the way in which older women were applauded also in the discussion on the 2010 report. The contribution of older women as informal carers of family members is also underlined by Peterle (EPP). Michel (ALDE) highlights the right to health and the right to a decent life as fundamental rights, and Coelho (EPP) and Smolková (S&D) highlight solidarity and equality as basic principles of the EU sustaining the protection of health and health care.

The analysis of the policy content and the policy process shows significant continuity within the policy area of elderly care. Across the reports, there is consensus on the major issues, such as independence, dignity, access to and quality of services, intergenerational solidarity, unequal care responsibilities and pension's gap, positive attitude towards ageing, etc. The rights frame is still the most prominent; economic elements are introduced without being articulated as an actual frame. There is less focus on the family in this case ('dependants' are used as a more generic term). An individual perspective on ageing is combined with a focus on social services and welfare protection. Articulated notions of intersectionality are found in relation to the situation of older women living alone, and the lack of access to health care that they experience (with related proposals for technological solutions). Major tensions between political groups revolve around the issue of subsidiarity (ECR)

and the inconsistency of combining austerity measures with aims regarding adequate funding for care (GUE/NGL). Universal health care provisions and the financing of care services are largely silenced, yet the GUE/NGL group does argue for the need for public health services, in order to guarantee universal access for all citizens.

In our interview material, elderly care is described as not being high on the political agenda in the EU, because it is a policy area of member state competence, and therefore the national agenda prevails and efforts are relegated to the open method of coordination (Administrator, EP, interview March 2015).

#### **2.4.4 Opinions drafted by the FEMM Committee**

The six opinions, which we are concentrating on, were almost all adopted by a large majority vote in the FEMM Committee, except for the Opinion on Reducing Health Inequalities in the European Union (2010-448914), which had 14 in favour, 6 against, and 2 abstaining. They can broadly speaking be divided into three categories: health care provisions; pension's reform; and female labour market participation.

The Opinion on Reducing Health Inequalities in the European Union, and the Opinion on the Impact of the Crisis on Access to Care for Vulnerable Groups (2013-508058), which were drafted by Guillaume (S&D) and Zuber (GUE/NGL) respectively, both consider the *access to health services* for vulnerable groups, including older women. Both opinions frame this access as a fundamental rights issue, as health care should be a right for all, disregarding gender, legal status, economic status, age (both children and older people), religion, disability, ethnicity, etc., and the current financial crisis should not lead to further cuts in this sector. The Opinion on Reducing Health Inequalities focuses on the treatment of different life-style and gender-specific diseases and conditions. In regards to older women, it wants to introduce a "life-span approach to healthy ageing in order to reduce the impact of chronic diseases and disabilities that burden older women's quality of life" (p6). The Opinion on Access to Care for Vulnerable Groups takes a very similar approach to the problem. For one, free, universal and quality healthcare and regular medical monitoring should be guaranteed to all vulnerable groups. Yet, this opinion also points to the vulnerable citizens' specific problems in regards to: gaining information about the health system and the prevention of diseases; administrative questions; and not being physically able to access the services. In order to reach these people, the role of CSOs is highlighted as important in their assistance. The opinion also draws attention to the care obligations of women, which often has detrimental effects on their health insurance status. Hence, "women's burden of caring" should not be intensified "by returning them to their traditional family role" (p4). It can thus be seen that both opinions consider the social rights of people (health services), which are seen as individual rights.

The Opinion on 'Towards Adequate, Sustainable and Safe European pension systems' Pension Systems (2010-448857), the Opinion on Demographic Change and its Consequences for the Future Cohesion Policy of the EU (2011-458821), and the Opinion on an Agenda for Adequate, Safe and Sustainable Pensions (2013-502102), were drafted by Matera (EPP), Záborská (EPP) and Bastos (EPP) respectively. They all closely relate to the Report on the Situation of Women Approaching Retirement Age, as they also focus on women's more limited access to adequate pensions, due to both the gendered division of care, which leads to career breaks, but also the gender differences pertaining to the labour market. The Opinion on the Commission's Green Paper 'Towards Adequate, Sustainable and Safe European Pension Systems' offers very detailed solutions as to how to *reform the pensions system*, for example through the introduction of a EU-wide minimum pensions level. It served as inspiration for FEMM's Report on Women Approaching Retirement Age. A special emphasis is placed on "people who devote their time and skills to bringing up children or caring for the elderly," (p3) who should not only be recognised for their contribution socially, but also in relation to their pensions, where time spent with care work should count towards the pensions. Furthermore, the opinion wants to combat social security reforms, like cuts in elder-care facilities, which could inflict on women's employment conditions. The opinion

on an agenda for adequate, safe and sustainable pensions focuses on the sustainability of public finances, and more specifically member states' pension schemes. It identifies the same problems regarding women's care and work duties as the opinion above, but adds women's higher propensity to work in low-paid, low-ranked, or undeclared jobs, such as domestic and care work. The proposed solutions also vary somewhat to the other opinion: The aim of this opinion is also to encourage the member states to reform their pensions systems, but in doing so, they should analyse the effects of different pension indexation formulas, so that they do not end up being detrimental to certain parts of the population. Ageing people are identified as often requiring long-term care, and this should form part of the considerations, when pensions are reformed, to ensure that they "are able to receive an adequate pension and live with dignity" (p4). Also, as a means to accommodate informal care work, the opinion suggests the introduction of care credits EU-wide, as has already been witnessed in certain member states. Finally, the opinion also points to the member states' need to provide public care facilities for both children and older people, so that women are not forced to leave the labour market.

This latter point is also emphasised in the Opinion on Demographic Change and its Consequences for the Future Cohesion Policy of the EU, which concentrates on ways to accommodate *female labour market participation* in light of the demographic challenge of an ageing population. Its contents are also very similar to the report on women approaching retirement age. It thus outlines retired women's higher likelihood of living in isolation, poverty and dependence, and wishes to improve older women's access to healthcare and public health services. As the main aim of the opinion is to increase the level of women in employment, it strongly focuses on the alleviation of care obligations, both in order to improve women's pension's entitlements, but also to foster gender equality.

The Opinion on the Demographic Challenges and Solidarity between Generations was drafted by Bauer (EPP), and adopted with a 28/1 majority in the FEMM Committee. It addresses both pensions and female labour market participation, by focusing on: intergenerational solidarity; quality of life; active ageing (valuing the role of older women as carers and volunteers); quality of (accessible and affordable) care services; integrated networks of services for children, older people and disabled and dependant people; reconciliation and shared care responsibilities; as well as individually based social security and pension rights recognizing unpaid care work. The latter implies considering 'corrective factors' in view of gaps in pensions contributions, due to temporary employment and leave periods.

Thus, all of the six opinions consider older women and their health and care provisions from both a fundamental and a social rights perspective, and the majority of the solutions are directed at the women as individuals, particularly those pertaining to pension's entitlements. Certain care arrangements are directed at the family though. In regards to care, it is mainly the women's role as carer, which is highlighted, due to the opinions' great emphasis on improving working women's conditions, so that they are not affected by low pension's entitlements in old age. Yet, while attempting to instate policies that accommodate women's access to the labour market, many proposals also aim at improving the financial status for people, who do take on care responsibilities. As an example of this, the two opinions which consider the pension reforms both propose insuring the care periods, so that they do not affect the pension rights later on. Accordingly, it is clearly evident that the FEMM Committee attempts to include all the different choices that women are likely to take, considering the combination of work, care and private life.



### 3 CIVIL SOCIETY PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

CSOs are playing an increasingly important role in influencing EP policy-making, due to their lobbying activities in various committees. In the following section, we will take a closer look at six major European CSOs within the fields covered by the deliverable, i.e., freedom of movement of young women, migration and elderly care. Thus, we will examine the positions and opinions of the European Women's Lobby (EWL), the AGE Platform, the Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union (COFACE), the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), the European Network of Migrant Women (ENoMW), and the European Youth Forum (EYF).

#### *The European Women's Lobby*

The EWL was created in 1990 as an umbrella organisation for women's associations across the EU, and is arguably the strongest lobby organisation for women's rights and gender equality. It has "a vision of a peaceful, social and democratic European Union built on a culture of respect for human rights, equality, peace and solidarity, in Europe and globally" (EWL, web). However, one of the central rights of EU citizenship, namely the right to free movement, is not equal for all because social security (such as family allowances) is a national competence, and it has different gendered consequences (representative, EWL, interview December 2014). The main aim of the EWL is to defend women's interests in the EU, due to the ever-expanding policy developments in fields that directly affect women. The organisation thus wants a more gender-equal division of resources, care and family roles, and political representation. All gendered violence should be eliminated (EWL, Mission). Often times the burden of child care is put on women and women are the target of reconciliation policies, with consequences for pay and pensions gap. Specific measures to take care of older people are also needed in order to avoid that the burden of care is placed on women (representative, EWL, interview December 2014).

#### *The European Network of Migrant Women*

EWL draws in intersectionality in its policy work, as it wants to include "different groups of women, and the diverse experiences of women at all stages of their life cycle" in its policy work. In 2010, the organisation for example worked on a project entitled "Equal Rights. Equal Voices. Migrant Women in the European Union". This led to the creation of another CSO, the European Network of Migrant Women (ENoMW). It aims at promoting "equal treatment, equal rights and better integration for migrant women in Europe" (ENoMW, n.d.). As its name suggests, this CSO centers on migrants in the EU, with a special focus on gendered dimensions. In other words, the organization combines a focus on migration policies with gender equality policies:

"On the one hand you have gender equality measures, that miss out on migration issues. And on the other hand, you have migration measures, or integration measures, that is missing out on gender equality issues [...] And then effectively you have migrant women, specific groups of migrant women, who kind of fall off both the agendas" (representative, EnoMW, interview April 2015).

EWL and ENoMW now cooperate on initiatives in regards to the gender perspectives of EU migration policies, such as the overrepresentation of migrant women in private domestic care, the lack of recognition of domestic work as a proper activity, and problems related to lack of recognition of diploma for migrant women, for instance (representative, EWL, interview December 2014). ENoMW wishes to ensure that migrant women's human rights are adhered to by the member states, which are encouraged to live up to their international commitments. They find the way in which EU discourse at times victimizes third country nationals problematic: it is "not healthy, it doesn't lead anywhere. But we also don't not want to say: Okay, no, they are doing great and they don't need any help" (representative, ENoMW, interview April 2015). ENoMW's identification of



problems that migrants are exposed to in the EU correlates highly with the analysed reports and opinions of the FEMM Committee. Hence, just as FEMM, the ENoMW identifies migrant women's working conditions, labour market access, healthcare provisions, exposure to gender violence, and political participation in society as particularly important focus areas.

#### *The Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union*

COFACE was created in 1958, and it is an umbrella organisation for CSOs focusing on family rights. Its goal is to ensure that all families have "sufficient financial resources, available quality services and adequate time arrangements in order to live and enjoy their family life in dignity and harmony" (web page). It also supports the fostering of gender equality, particularly with regards to the reconciliation of work, care and private life. Amongst its specific policy fields are: migrant families, family carers, the improvement of childcare and health services, and the impact of the economic crisis on families.

#### *The International Planned Parenthood Federation*

The IPPF focuses on policies related to the healthcare sector with a focus on sexual and reproductive health. Its work consists of both educating and informing citizens about "family planning, abortion, maternal and child health, and STI and HIV treatment, prevention and care", and the promotion of policies, which ensure the fundamental human right to these areas of family life.

#### *The AGE Platform*

The AGE Platform integrates European CSOs that aim at improving the conditions for the older segments of the European population, both in regards to those, who are still active on the labour market, and those, who are retired and/or in need of care. The organisation holds that older people should be considered a cultural and professional resource, whose contribution to society ought to be recognised. AGE thus concentrates on several policy fields, where older people are discriminated against. For one, as many retired people struggle financially, the pensions and benefits should be indexed, and it also proposes the introduction of family wages for persons, who have left the labour market due to care responsibilities. As many older people have difficulties participating in civil society, due to their low financial standing, limited access to social rights and employment, and no social networks, AGE finds it crucial to ensure their social integration. A key area for AGE is healthcare provisions for older people, who are often discriminated against in the healthcare sector, due to their age. As a response to this, the organisation promotes home healthcare and the role of the family in this area. AGE thus wants to improve the means for carers of dependants to reconcile work and care, and also emphasises that the older dependant must have a say in the decision about his or her care arrangements.

#### *The European Youth Forum*

The EYF was formed in 1996 as the successor of the Youth Forum of the European Union, the Council of European National Youth Committees (CENYC) and the European Co-ordination Bureau of International Non-governmental Youth Organisations (ECB-BEC). It wishes to be considered the "voice of young people in Europe" (EYF web page), and promotes youth participation in all spheres of society. Unlike most of the other organisations, the EYF is remarkably quiet when it comes to the gendered aspects of youth policies. Yet, it does

focus on the equal access to quality education and the labour market, and wishes to ensure that enough funding is available for accommodating the needs of young people in the EU. The organisation supports the free movement of young people, but its main emphasis is on non-EU citizens, and their opportunities to enter the EU member states. EYF thus addresses liberalisation of visa and residence permit legislation.

### *Civil society views on the FEMM Committee*

According to our interviews, European CSOs consider the EP to be transparent, open to advocacy and easily accessible. The FEMM Committee in particular is considered progressive and apt at keeping gender equality issues on the agenda. CSOs are heard in the work of the FEMM Committee and they often times play a relatively influential role. However, some interviewees highlight the resources needed to carry this out and therefore organisations that are not explicitly gendered, prioritizes advocacy efforts directed at other committees (the targeted areas of direct interest such as youth policies in the case of the European Youth Forum). In these cases, cooperation with the FEMM Committee instead becomes adhoc when reacting “to strategically important dossiers in line with our priorities” (representative, EYF, interview April 2015). Some organisations prefer to work with the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs because the FEMM Committee has an advisory, rather than a legislative, role (representative, EnoMW, interview April 2015). Another disadvantage mentioned in the interviews is the fact that the FEMM Committee is a small committee and that it is not given priority by the political groups.

The feminist oriented MEPs are considered to be easy to approach: “There are very strong feminists within the European Parliament, and you know it’s always easier to work with feminists” (representative, EnoMW, interview April 2015). Especially the centre-left wing (GUE/NGL, Greens/EFA, S&D) is considered to be natural allies to certain civil society groups (Ibid.). EWL has initiated training sessions for MEPs and their assistants in order to exchange experiences and information as well as conduct targeted lobbying:

“We have very good contacts with the FEMM Committee, of course. We are organizing regular meetings with our MEPs and the European political advisors [...] we are trying to reach new MEPs, so we are in the process of organizing regular meetings with some targeted MEPs, and we try to reach the maximum of political groups” (representative, EWL, interview December 2014).

These efforts cover MEPs who the EWL would usually be in contact with (the ones who also approach the EWL for advice, feedback or information material) but also MEPs who would not be the typical target group of the EWL:

“We are really trying to build contacts with MEPs who are not especially involved with women’s rights. That are involved in other topics, who are extensions of women’s rights. [...] we are trying to influence the MEPs who are not, let’s say, our usual suspects” (representative, EWL, interview December 2014).

These efforts potentially extend the contacts and channels available to the EWL as a key CSO in the field of gender equality and EU policies on the matter but it can also be seen as part of a gender mainstreaming strategy:

“If we know that one MEP is a member of the FEMM Committee and, you know, he is also a member of the budget committee, then it is very interesting, because we can organize a meeting and explain that gender opportunities are important, and it’s very important to [...] put a gender perspective, in economic, financial and so on” (representative, EWL, interview December 2014).

This is a challenge mentioned in several interviews, i.e., seeing women’s rights issues as something separate from other policy issues or problems and therefore difficult to integrate broadly.

**CONCLUSION**

This deliverable has provided an analysis of the positions and opinions of political parties in the EP and European social movements regarding civil, social and political rights of women, migrants and minorities. Three issues were selected: freedom of movement for young women, migration and elderly care. All reports and opinions drafted by the FEMM Committee regarding the selected issues in the 2009-2014 period (7<sup>th</sup> legislature) were coded and analysed using the method of critical frame analysis. Both the content of the policy documents and the policy process (debates, amendments, votes) were covered by the analysis. Interviews with MEPs and civil society representatives were included in order to provide interpretations and explanations of the main tendencies and tensions.

In this concluding section, we address three main aspects of the analysis: the way in which our findings contribute to the analysis of the work, function and dynamics of the FEMM Committee; comparison between political groups, emphasizing consensus and contestation within the three selected policy areas; and comparison across the three policy areas in order to identify differences and provide potential explanations. The conclusion furthermore addresses the key issues of silences (in policy content and policy process), intersectionality and differences between member states according to the way in which the issues were framed in policies. In other words, the conclusion summarizes the findings of the report and contextualizes them.

Across the three issues, a number of themes are recurrent and a dominant discourse on the issues prevails. There seems to be consensus among the majority within the Committee, particularly, about the way in which key issues should be framed. This also results in a relatively high level of continuity both within each policy area and across the three areas. Continuity is mainly based on consensus and strengthened by the fact that opinions and reports build on each other and arguments are therefore reproduced within the policy dynamics of the Committee. The following table illustrates the frames identified through coding and analysis in relation to the three selected themes.

<b>Freedom of movement</b>	<b>Migration</b>	<b>Elderly care</b>
Unequal social <i>rights</i> and benefits	Lack of fundamental <i>rights</i>	
Unequal labour market <i>access</i>	Unequal education and labour market <i>access</i>	
	<i>Discrimination</i> and social exclusion	<i>Discrimination</i> and disempowerment
		Lack of (economic) recognition of (gendered) care work
		Low quality of care services
		Institutionalization of care
Lack of awareness		
Need for increased cross-border <i>action</i>	Need for increased member state and Commission <i>action</i>	

Returning to the specific dimensions of rights, gender equality, intersectionality, and public/private divide (in terms of attribution of responsibilities), which we paid particular attention to in the coding of the selected documents, as regards the ways in which these dimensions were articulated in the diagnostic framing of the policies, we emphasize in the following a series of findings based on the overview provided in the table above.

The rights and antidiscrimination perspective clearly dominates the picture, as does the focus on labour market access as key determinant for women’s integration (in the case of migrants), women’s financial independence

also in old age (individual level), and EU's economic progress (on the social level). Across the policy documents logics of chains of dependence and discrimination with ramifications can be identified. This is particularly the case regarding the way in which the economic consequences of unequal care responsibilities and accumulated gendered disadvantages are articulated through the way in which women's exclusion from the labour market and/or the gendered segregation of the labour market impact gaps in pay and pensions as well as the risk of poverty in old age. Looking at the table, specific framings related to elderly care but with implications for other fields as well (quality of services, recognition of informal work) dominate this policy area. Throughout the policy areas, emphasis is placed on (individual) civil and social rights, with only minor (indirect) references to political rights. There is a relative degree of convergence around the emphasis on social rights in the sense that the rights frame allows for different subjacent reasonings, thus allowing for a combination of family-related and individual perspectives, on the one hand, and care and labour market integration concerns, on the other. Family-related rights are underlined to a large extent but most prominently in relation to freedom of movement and elderly care and less so in relation to migration (of third country nationals mainly). All in all, the rights-based framing is the most dominant across the policy issues and it is articulated in combination with economic perspectives but never clearly and predominantly subsumed to them. Within the policy area of elderly care the economic perspectives are more nuanced or varied, addressing both negative and positive aspects (such as the economic consequences of the care burden as opposed to the silver economy and the economic potential of older women on the labour market and in care roles). In general, responsibility is attributed to the state or public level as governments are defined as the main actor in providing solutions.

The role of women is articulated very differently across the policy areas: whereas third country national migrant women are mainly seen as victims whose rights need protection, older women are predominantly perceived as active empowered subjects, whose freedom of choice and right to independence are emphasized. Intra-EU female migrants are seen both as dependent spouses and, to a lesser extent, independent mobile workers (with care responsibilities). In general the migration issue is more contested and meets much stronger opposition from particular groups (ECR, NI mainly) than the issue of freedom of movement, which is a cornerstone of European integration.

Structural understandings of the identified problems are very visible in the material; this concerns for instance attention to the need for access to basic services and the development of adequate care systems (both for children and for older people). These aspects are not explicitly articulated as feminist framings but they do rest (implicitly) on a feminist, or at least gender-conscious, interpretation of the importance of structural concerns and understandings. Similarly, facilitating access to services is articulated as a key objective across the policy areas. This would suggest that MEPs go beyond equal opportunities in their opinion on gender equality and instead wish to address the conditions for creating equality of outcome (like equal access to services despite differentiated conditions and possibilities).

There is a general lack of articulation of intersectional relations; in accordance with existing literature we find that intersectionality is largely treated in very general term and is therefore still rather 'embryonic' at the EP level in the 7<sup>th</sup> legislature (Lombardo and Rolandsen Agustín, 2012; forthcoming). However, in relation to a few specific examples we do find rather articulated notions of intersecting grounds of discrimination and explication of the relation between the grounds; this concerns the problems faced by undocumented migrant women due to their lack of legal status and their greater risk of falling victims to abuse, as well as the situation of older women living alone and the challenge of accessing health care. The intersection of gender and generation is also addressed implicitly through the attention to grandmothers with dual care responsibilities. Other grounds of discrimination, such as religion, are not addressed in the policies.

Across the policy processes analysed a high degree of consensus is detected. Most of the reports have been adopted with large majorities, but we do find a difference between the Committee and the plenary level, as reports are passed more easily (and with a higher level of cross-party support) in the Committee than in

plenary. This supports the idea of the FEMM Committee as a consensus-seeking committee and the significance of cross-party alliances around policies on gender equality.

It is important to bear in mind that the political setting of the European Parliament, and especially non-legislative documents, calls for idealistic thinking where many ideas are set forward with limited political impact as texts are non-binding. However, this is combined with the fact that documents are the result of intense political negotiations in the context of the EP, which sometimes in itself leads to vague or broad consensual formulations. Contestation does arise around particular and often times very specific issues. This concerns for instance quotas and other positive discrimination measures, rights of LBT women, as well as right to basic income. Contestation around these particular issues is, in several cases, strong enough to motivate abstaining votes or rejections of reports. Apart from disagreements regarding the migration issue (as explained above), the one major controversy among political groups concerns the distribution of competences between the EU and its member states; the principle of subsidiarity is articulated and defended especially by the ECR group and the Non-attached Members.

Important silences have been identified across the policy areas analysed. They concern especially the lack of development of arguments around welfare services and provisions and the way in which they should be structured. As mentioned above, structural understandings of the problems prevail to a large extent; however, policy documents remain silent on issues such as privatization of care services, care infrastructure, attribution of financial responsibility, as well as its universal or non-universal nature. Similarly men's role as carers is only marginally addressed. Member state differences in terms of care regimes, and the level of coverage, for instance are not addressed either despite the diversified approaches to individual and family rights and responsibilities for dependants (to be assumed by the family or the state) in this regard. Since a lot of emphasis is placed on the role of grandmothers as informal carers, the Southern European model is to a certain extent taken as the point of departure in these debates and articulations. The same can be said about differences in (women's) labour market participation and labour market models across member states, or migration system, integration policies and the differences between sender and receiver countries. Differences in welfare systems, member state resistance to EU intervention in social policies, and the challenges of portable social security rights as well as debates on welfare tourism and welfare chauvinism are also left largely untouched. Major obstacles to mobility are identified (unequal social rights and benefits across member states, unequal labour market access, and lack of awareness of rights) but the clash between mobility and social rights is not sufficiently addressed in the material as significant solutions are not provided (beyond broad formulations of transferring rights while respecting member state diversity, for instance).

The gendered institutional context of the EP shows large differences in the gender composition of the political groups but no clear left/right divide is present, except for the very low levels of representation of women, which is characteristic of the ECR and EFD groups. Both in the analysis of the websites and policy documents of the political groups as well as in the critical frame analysis of EP policies in the three selected fields, we find a large degree of consensus across the political groups, especially in relation to the issues of elderly care and freedom of movement for young women as well as mobility at large. Similarly, the major European CSOs do not provide much fuel for contestation as their opinions and positions are largely in line with the dominant framings of the FEMM Committee policies. EWL addresses obstacles to mobility for instance by highlighting national differences in social security schemes and their gendered consequences and the AGE Platform presents one of the few more innovative proposals by suggesting the implementation of family wages to compensate for care burdens. The partially feminist character of the FEMM Committee and the non-legislative nature of its policy documents call for gendered agenda-setting and domination of rights-based framings provided by gender-oriented alliances among FEMM Committee MEPs. However, contestation arise at plenary level where these alliances loose weight and, even within the FEMM Committee, in relation to the migration issue where the divergence on these matters in general prevail and gendered aspects are considered secondary in the policy-making process. The lack of consensus also comes to the fore in relation to the division of

competences between the EU and member state levels. Consensus in relation to mobility, elderly care and especially social rights is to some extent built on silences regarding potential implementation challenges due to large member state differences in welfare and migration regimes as well as labour market and care arrangement models. Gender-oriented alliances thus thrive in the niche of the FEMM Committee where gendered agenda-setting is vital but the broader impact of the policies adopted tend to vanish.

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APPENDIX

<b>Document selection (FEMM committee reports and opinions, 2009-2014)</b>			
1	Report A7-0001/2014 EP debate 03.02.2014	Undocumented Women Migrants in the EU	Migration policies
2	Report A7-0164/2013 EP debate 10.06.2013	Educational and Occupational Mobility of Women in the EU	Freedom of movement for young women
3	Report A7-0340-2012 EP debate 10.12.2012	Prevention of Age-related Diseases of Women	Elderly care
4	Report A7-0291/2011 EP debate 12.09.2011	Situation of Women Approaching Retirement Age	Elderly care
5	Report A7-0237/2010 EP debate 06.09.2010	Role of Women in an Ageing Society	Elderly care
6	Report A7-0221/2010 EP debate 06.09.2010	Social Integration of Women Belonging to Ethnic Minority Groups	Migration policies
1	Opinion FEMM_AD(2013)516697	Exercise of Rights Conferred on Workers in the Context of Freedom of Movement for Workers	Freedom of movement for young women
2	Opinion FEMM_AD(2013)504151	Situation of Unaccompanied Minors in the EU	Migration policies
3	Opinion FEMM_AD(2013)508138	Tackling Youth Unemployment: possible ways out	Freedom of movement for young women
4	Opinion FEMM_AD(2013)508058	Impact of the Crisis on Access to Care for Vulnerable Groups	Elderly care
5	Opinion FEMM_AD(2013)502102	Agenda for Adequate, Safe and Sustainable Pensions	Elderly care
6	Opinion FEMM_AD(2012)496521	Integration of Migrants, its Effects on the Labour Market and the External Dimension of Social Security Coordination	Migration policies
7	Opinion FEMM_AD(2011)462600	Promoting Workers Mobility within the European Union	Freedom of movement for young women
8	Opinion FEMM_AD(2011)458821	Demographic Change and its Consequences for the Future Cohesion Policy of the EU	Elderly care
9	Opinion FEMM_AD(2011)452884	Condition of Entry and Residence of Third-Country Nationals for the Purposes of Seasonal Employment	Migration policies
10	Opinion FEMM_AD(2010)448857	Towards Adequate, Sustainable and Safe European Pensions Systems	Elderly care
11	Opinion FEMM_AD(2010)448914	Reducing Health Inequalities in the European Union	Elderly care
12	Opinion FEMM_AD(2010)442891	Demographic Challenge and Solidarity between Generations	Elderly care
13	Opinion FEMM_AD(2010)440172	Developing the Job Potential of a New Sustainable Economy	Freedom of movement for young women

Interviewees		
1	MEP, EPP and member of FEMM Committee	Via email, April 2015
2	MEP, S&D and member of FEMM Committee	Face-to-face, December 2014
3	MEP, ALDE and member of FEMM Committee	Via email, April 2015
4	Administrator, EP Policy Department C: Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs	Telephone, March 2015
5	Representative, European Women's Lobby	Telephone, December 2014
6	Representative, European Network of Migrant Women	Telephone, April 2015
7	Representative, International Planned Parenthood Federation	Via email, December 2014
8	Representative, AGE Platform	Via email, March 2015
9	Representative, European Youth Forum	Via email, April 2015