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International Women's Day: Too few women at the helm

 Tue, Mar 08 2011 17:56 CET | by [The Sofia Echo staff](#) | 420 Views | [1 Comment](#)


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Hebe de Bonafini, leader of the human rights group Madres de Plaza de Mayo, stands with other members of the group during an event to commemorate International Women's Day in Buenos Aires.

The European Parliament marked the centenary of International Women's Day (on March 8) with a debate and vote on two resolutions tabled by the Women's Rights Committee: one on gender equality and the other on female poverty. A third resolution, on reducing health inequalities, was also adopted.

In a special ceremony held on March 8 to commemorate 100 years of campaigning for women's rights, EP President Buzek said "There are too few women in the European Parliament: 35 per cent is not enough, even though this is slightly more than in national parliaments. It is up to national parliaments to ensure higher representation in the EP. Member states should therefore adopt relevant decisions and a legal framework to boost the presence of women in the EP".

The need to narrow the gender pay gap, to get more women in decision-making positions and to raise the female employment rate are among key points in the resolution accompanying the 2010 annual report on equality between women and men in the EU, drafted by Mariya Nedelcheva, a European People's Party MEP from Bulgaria, and adopted by 366 in favour, 200 against and 32 abstentions. The importance of better child care facilities and child-related leave was also highlighted.

Only three per cent of major companies are chaired by a woman. It was agreed that member states should therefore take effective measures, such as quotas, to ensure greater representation for women in major listed companies and on the management boards of companies in general, say MEPs. Norway was cited as a positive example, followed by Spain and France.

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