

Madam Speaker,

I welcome this discussion on “Promoting parliaments free of sexism and sexual harassment”, but would like to make a remark, somewhat on a different note from those made by parliamentarians that talked before me.

The reason for this is that I am very familiar, on a personal level, with the events described in paragraph 44 of the report. Without going into much detail, I must say that I hope the rest of the report is more firmly founded than the part I am referring to.

I want to make clear that Parliamentarians, despite being a species? of limited rights when it comes to private matters, must have certain rights to privacy and a reasonable demand for fairness at times of political turmoil. We must not allow ourselves to jump onto a political correctness wagon every time it passes and act in an opportunistic way when complicated matters arise.

When I say this, I am certainly not implying that discussions about sexism in parliaments should be viewed as such, but rather to say that there is always a risk that political opponents use the opportunity to exaggerate and make things worse than they really are, to further their own political agenda. Somewhat along the line that can be seen in Paragraph 44, as I mentioned before.

In the case of the six MP’s that were at the infamous bar in Iceland last fall, it took us almost four months to get the relevant information to paint a realistic picture concerning what actually took place that evening. To put it mildly, the picture that arrives from the transcript of the whole discussion, and the viewing of the security tapes from the bar, paint a completely different picture from what had been described in the months before.

We must act carefully when it comes to ideas of sanctions, sanctions that, as outlined are to be „proportional to the gravity of the case“. I have my doubts that a body made up of political opponents can be seen as an objective platform for assessing what the gravity of a case might be, if the assessment is to be swift, and effective, then the risk is that you sacrifice fairness towards what really happened.

The criticism that Madam Rapporteur puts forward in paragraph 44, regarding the simple wish of the parliamentarians concerned to have the matter fully exposed shows how likely it is that a parliamentarian will misuse his or her position to give a political opponent a blow, a political blow that is not called for, when all the info has been taken into consideration and words spoken or recorded put back into perspective.

I urge you all to move slowly and carefully in this matter.

We must all work together to fight sexism in all aspects of our lives. Personally, I will do my best.