

A large, stylized female symbol (a circle with a vertical line and a horizontal crossbar) is rendered in a dark red color against a lighter red background. The symbol is positioned on the right side of the page, with its top curve overlapping a large white circle on the left.

*EUROPEAN
WOMEN'S
LOBBY*

ANNUAL REPORT 2004



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The voice of women in Europe

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) brings together over 4,000 women's organisations working to achieve equality between women and men to ensure that gender equality and women's human rights are taken into consideration in all European Union policies. EWL is a democratic organisation with transparent procedures of communication, decision-making and accountability. EWL recognises the diversity of women's lives and experiences and aims to include the interests of the many women who face multiple discrimination.

EWL has consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and with the Council of Europe.

Budget : for the financial year 2004, the EWL budget was 937,500 Euro. EWL receives 80% of this amount as a grant from the European Commission and the remaining 20% is made up of membership fees and other independent sources of funding.



Editorial

As the newly elected President of the European Women's Lobby, I am very proud to introduce the Annual Report for 2004, a year in which, as ever, we acknowledge the challenges that we have faced and celebrate the achievements of women activists in Europe and around the world. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the former members of the Executive Committee and in particular to the former President, Lydia la Rivière-Zijdel. I know that her contribution to the success of the work of EWL is widely recognised by the members of EWL and by the many partner organisations, NGOs and European Institutions with which we work. My thanks also go to the very hard working Secretariat whose commitment and dedication ensure that the work of EWL goes from strength to strength.

One of the highlights of the year and a cause for celebration for EWL was the welcoming of six national co-ordinations from the new Member States and the Turkish national co-ordination into full membership. These new members bring fresh energy and new perspectives to our work and represent a combined strength, which we will call on in the near future to bring about more wide-ranging and quicker action for gender equality throughout Europe.

Working with young women has been a priority for EWL for many years and in 2004 we co-organised a conference entitled "Power and Participation, how can young women create the Missing Link in Europe?" A clear message from the conference was that a radical change must take place in the traditional political process for young women to consider playing an active role in politics as voters let alone as leaders. On this same issue, the decision by the Spanish government in April 2004 to appoint an equal number of women and men as Ministers was very encouraging. However, if we consider the results of the European elections and the nomination of a new European Commission, women's representation has not increased significantly within the institutions.

Monitoring and contributing to the Intergovernmental Conference preparing the new European Constitutional Treaty was an important part of the work of EWL throughout the year, as is the current ratification process. While we were pleased to acknowledge that some progress was made in the Treaty in relation to strengthening the legal framework for gender equality, we were disappointed that this unique opportunity did not result in an even stronger commitment to achieve equality between women and men, most notably in relation to parity democracy and the fight against all forms of violence against women.



More generally, concerns about the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming within the EU remained high on our agenda and we therefore were very pleased to publish an overview of gender budgeting, which we hope will act as a useful resource for NGOs and decision makers in introducing gender budgeting as part of the EU gender mainstreaming strategy. EWL also welcomed the final political agreement on the establishment of a European Institute for Gender Equality in June 2004. We will however make an assessment of its progress, in relation to both its budget allocation and effectiveness, as the concrete work of setting up the Institute begins during 2005/6.

EWL has played a leading role in its work with European NGOs at international level since the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing. As a result, EWL began preparations for the 10-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action taking place in 2005. The Beijing+10 Report, drafted by EWL, reveals some progress concerning the implementation of Beijing, with for example comprehensive legislation in relation to gender equality in employment introduced by the European Union. However, many gaps still remain.

One of the issues of particular importance to me in this work at international level is the role of women in peace-keeping and conflict resolution. I believe it is essential for women to be fully involved in decision-making concerning conflict resolution and all aspects of reconstruction and humanitarian aid. One of the main messages of EWL in relation to crisis situations, such as in the wake of the Tsunami disaster, was the need for the effective implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which demands equal participation of women in decision-making in conflict resolution, peace building and reconstruction.

Women in Europe have some reasons to be proud of the achievements of the European Union and its Member States in relation to gender equality. However, much remains to be done before all European women are able to live a secure and independent life, free from the threat of violence. In 2005, European women expect their governments and the EU to build on the existing success in relation to women's rights, and to fully implement the commitments made 10 years ago in Beijing. Women in Europe and throughout the world also expect the EU to take a lead in all areas of development cooperation and in all international agreements so that women's human rights are fully respected. In my role as EWL President, I will do my utmost to fulfil the expectations of EWL members across Europe and to make sure their voices are heard at all levels of decision-making in the EU.



Kirsti Holthoff
President of the European Women's Lobby

EWL welcomes seven new national co-ordinations of women's organisations

EWL extended a very warm welcome to women's NGOs from the new Member States as 10 more countries join the European Union.

On 17-18 October 2004, the European Women's Lobby held its Annual General Assembly. It was an historic event where seven new national co-ordinations of women's organisations from the new EU Member States and accession countries were welcomed into full membership of EWL. This means that EWL now includes national co-ordinations of women's NGOs from 25 countries in Europe, as well as some 22 large international networks. This strength will come into force in the coming years to achieve more widespread and quicker action for gender equality throughout Europe.

EWL remains fully committed to extending our support and to networking with women's NGOs in accession countries as well as to and with women's NGOs in those countries that are now on the borders of bordering the EU. Through the work of the Membership Committee, we will continue to make every effort to ensure that our membership procedures are clear and transparent.



The new EWL full member organisations are :

- National Co-ordination for EWL in the Czech Republic
- Lithuanian Women's Lobby
- Malta Confederation of Women's Organisations – MCWO
- Polskie Lobby Kobiet (PLK) – Polish Women's Lobby
- Slovenská zenska loby – Slovak Women's Lobby
- Eesti Naisteühenduste Ümarlaud – Estonian Women's Associations Roundtable
- National coordination of women's organisations for Turkey – KADER



Interview with new EWJ members :

Selma Acuner, National coordination of women's organisations for Turkey – KADER
Jurgita Peciuriene, Lithuanian Co-ordination for EWJ



What do you see as the main challenges for gender equality at the moment ?

Jurgita: The main challenge for achieving gender equality in Lithuania at the moment is the absence of women in politics and decision-making, especially of women who are actively working to bring about gender equality and women's empowerment. There is still little understanding on the part of senior officials about gender mainstreaming and a low level of awareness about gender equality in society as a whole. Moreover, gender stereotypes still persist in education and daily life. Violence against women is the most painful problem facing women and girls in Lithuania today. Women NGOs are also fighting against the escalating sexualisation of women in the media.

Selma: The mainstreaming of gender into national and international agendas is still a very complex and difficult task. Strong patriarchal understandings, reflected in gender discriminatory traditions and practices and a gender-based division of labour lead to gender inequalities in the access to power and resources. Women are strongly under-represented in political decision-making in many countries and Turkey is no exception to that.

For women in Turkey, persistent regional disparities in socio-cultural as well as economic conditions further complicate equality issues and despite significant improvements over time, the rate of illiteracy is still considerably high. Violence against women is another challenge to be tackled.

The above fundamental challenges hampering gender equality are inextricably linked to the economic power of women and to the eradication of poverty. The economic dependence of women is a primary problem area, which reflects itself in low and decreasing labour participation, higher urban unemployment rates and a high proportion of women as unpaid family workers.

A GREAT ACHIEVEMENT OF WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS IN TURKEY : THE REFORM OF THE PENAL CODE

Gender equality is viewed as a fundamental principle of democracy and a prerequisite for sustainable human development among Turkish women's NGOs. Most believe that the realisation of gender equality is indispensable for an increased participation of citizens in public life and it is a widely accepted fact that women's NGOs play an effective role in monitoring the performance of State institutions. In this line, the increased sensitivity of the Turkish State to gender equality owes much to the effective intervention of women's NGOs.

For example, the reforms of the Civil and Penal Code in Turkey are tremendous and the role played by women's NGOs in these achievements was immense. The new Penal Code now ensures that the crimes perpetrated against women or the girl child are no longer treated as crimes perpetrated against the family or society but as crimes committed against "the individual". This is a paradigm change and this momentous shift is largely due to the work of the women's movement in Turkey.

What do you expect from the European Union in relation to these challenges ?

Selma: Turkey - EU relations are going through historical times and gender equality issues constitute a very important component of this process, even if the debate on gender equality among policy-makers still doesn't get the attention it deserves.

It is very obvious that the EU legislation has effected profound changes in many policy areas including gender equality in Turkey. The long and powerful struggle of women in Turkey to amend the discriminatory articles in the Civil Code and the Penal Code with a gender equality perspective has reached positive ends partly due to the 'expediting force' of the *acquis communautaire*.

It is crucial to keep this momentum now, and to extend it to improving the implementation, enforcement and monitoring of equality provisions. The struggle for effective access to justice for women continues and it needs the vigilant support of the EU in both EU Member States and accession countries. Needless to say, the continued cooperation and solidarity between women's NGOs, governments and the EU institutions is of critical importance at this stage.

Jurgita: We have very high expectations that the positive and joint work of many women's organisations, the sharing of best practice and working together will overcome barriers and bring about gender equality faster.



What are the characteristics of the women's movement/civil society in your country?

Jurgita: The present-day women's movement has been active for over 14 years in independent Lithuania. The movement presents a united front in terms of sharing strategies for improving the position of women, organising joint conferences and campaigns as well as disseminating and sharing information. Women's organisations in Lithuania work professionally in various areas and are very committed to their goals. The most pressing problem that we face is the funding of non-governmental organisations, as the government has not foreseen any funds in its budget for women's NGO activities nor for the money needed to co-finance EU projects. This puts Lithuanian women's organisations at a disadvantage in comparison to other similar organisations in Europe.

Selma: As in any country, a number of traditions, worldviews and gender norms coexist in Turkey. This is reflected in women's organisations themselves. Women's organisations are trying to turn this diversity into an opportunity by ensuring that all the different viewpoints are heard.

Changing trends, prevalent in women's NGOs in Turkey today, can be described as moving from elite, charity, and volunteer-based organisations to organisations involved in self-help, advocacy, fundraising, networking, professionally conducted joint activities, and globally oriented agenda-setting.

Why is it important to be a member of the European Women's Lobby - and how do you see future collaboration with EWL and with women's organisations across the EU?

Selma: Most women's NGOs in Turkey consider it very important to establish and maintain joint action platforms and activities with women from the EU Member and candidate countries. These platforms can strengthen the transformative process for full gender equality in Turkey as well as in all other countries.

The close cooperation of women's NGOs from Turkey and EU Member and accession countries within the European Women's Lobby stands as a very fruitful example of such collaboration. Struggling for women's rights and establishing de facto equality has no borders, and EWL is a very good example of 'working for equality without borders'.

Jurgita: Membership of EWL offers great opportunities to participate in a united and powerful women's rights activist organisation. Sharing information on women's issues and exchanging professional experience will help us achieve our aims more quickly and more fully than if we were working alone. The collaboration between Lithuanian women's organisations and EWL will be a very active one and will be based on professional confidence, partnership and friendship. Women's NGOs from all across Europe have very valuable experiences and strategies that we can all learn from and share.

Renewal of the European institutions in 2004 : standstill in the number of women represented in decision-making

Despite intense campaigning by EW and women's organisations throughout Europe, the June 2004 elections resulted in a standstill in the number of women represented in the European Parliament.

European Parliament : no progress in the number of women represented and large gaps in the internal sharing of power

While the percentage of women members of the European Parliament (MEPs) rose gradually from only 17.3% in the 1984 elections to 31% in 2003, it reached only **30.3% in the 2004 elections**. This is partly due to the absence of consistent measures to ensure the representation of women in all EU Member States: each country applies its own rules for the European elections and not all Member States have quotas or parity laws.

After Cyprus and Malta, who have not sent a single woman to the Parliament, Poland has the worst record of female representation with only 7 women MEPs out of a total of 54 MEPs (13%). Sweden is the only country whose country representatives are mostly female (57.9 %).

The situation is **disappointing in terms of women's representation in the EP internal decision-making bodies**. For example women only represent **15% of chairpersons of parliamentary committees** and only 6 of the 20 members of the EP Bureau are women (30%). So despite the fact that the "critical mass" of women (30%) is reached, men still occupy most of the internal power positions within the EP, which limits women's influence in terms of setting the agenda and the general management of the Parliament.

A slight increase in women in the European Commission

For the 2004-2009 legislative period, seven women out of 25 members have been nominated to the Commission, which **increases the presence of women from 25% to 28%**. However, only one of the five Vice-Presidents is a woman and the EC President has never been a woman.



European Parliament 6th term 2004-2009 :
Percentage of women per Member State
 Data from : August 2004

Rank for women's Representation	Member States	Number of seats	Women	% women	Compared to 5 th term ¹
1	Sweden	19	11	57,9	▲▲ ²
2	Luxemburg	6	3	50	▲▲
3	The Netherlands	27	12	44,4	▲
4	France	78	34	43,5	▼
5	Slovenia	7	3	42,9	▲▲
6	Austria	18	7	38,9	▲
7	Lithuania	13	5	38,5	▲
8	Ireland	13	5	38,4	▲
9	Denmark	14	5	35,7	▼
10	Finland	14	5	35,7	▼
11	Slovakia	14	5	35,7	▶
12	Estonia	6	2	33,3	▲▲
13	Hungary	27	8	33,3	▲
14	Spain	54	18	33,3	▶
15	Germany	99	31	31,3	▼
16	Belgium	24	7	29,2	▼
17	Greece	24	7	29,1	▲▲
18	Portugal	24	6	25	▼
19	United Kingdom	78	19	24,3	▲
20	Latvia	9	2	22,2	▲▲
21	Czech Republic	24	5	20,8	▲▲
22	Italy	78	15	19,2	▲
23	Poland	54	7	13	▼
24	Cyprus	6	0	0	▼▼
25	Malta	5	0	0	▶
TOTAL		732	222	30,3	▼

¹ For new Member States, the figures are compared to the number of Observers in the EP.

² ▲▲ or ▼▼ indicate a raise or decrease of more than 10 overall percentage points.

The European Constitution and new Directive on Equality between Women and Men : recent legal developments to be monitored

Two important processes, which EWL had been monitoring for several years reached a conclusion in 2004 : the signing of the European Constitutional Treaty and the adoption of the first Directive on gender equality outside employment.

The European Constitution : some progress but the information gap with European citizens still needs to be reduced

The European Women's Lobby monitored and worked to influence the drafting and adoption process of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe. In the end, the EU Treaty Articles on equality between women and men have been slightly strengthened, although not as extensively as EWL had anticipated. The European Constitution **retains all the existing provisions on equality between women and men, and it also provides for a number of improvements** such as : in article I-2, equality is mentioned among the Union's values and in addition, article I-2 mentions equality between women and men as an element characterising EU society; the **scope of gender mainstreaming** has been extended to cover Foreign and Security Policy and Justice and Home Affairs. Additionally, there is a new provision of general application to combat discrimination based on grounds other than nationality (among others, discrimination based on sex) and there is explicit reference to women and sexual exploitation in two of the **articles on combating trafficking**. Finally, a new Declaration (not legally binding) stresses the need to combat all kinds

of **domestic violence**. The Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe can therefore be viewed as one more step along the road to achieving full equality between women and men in European society.

However, EWL recognises that a well thought-out **EU communication strategy** regarding the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe is essential in order for European women and men to be able to exercise their democratic right to be fully informed, to form their own opinion and to cast their vote as they see fit. Therefore, **EWL will run an information campaign** through all member organisations, in the hope that millions of women will become engaged in this challenging debate about the future of Europe, and that each woman will in the end be in a position to make up her mind, based on her own assessment of what is good for Europe and about what is good for her as a woman in Europe.



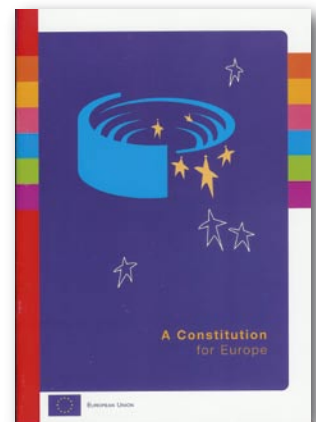
A weak new gender equality directive despite strong lobbying

On 12.12.2004, the EU Council of Ministers adopted a new directive on “*Implementing the principle of equal treatment between women and men in the access to and supply of goods and services*”. EWL had been lobbying since 2000 for a strong directive covering a broad range of areas. However the result is a text limited to the area of goods and services. It represents some progress for gender equality but still allows Member States to opt-out on the most problematic issue: the elimination of discrimination against women in the insurance sector.

In 2004, EWL launched **several lobbying actions** with women’s organisations across Europe. Actions first focused on the European Parliament and were quite successful as the Parliament adopted a positive report on the directive. After March 2004, the EWL actions focused on EU governments and on the follow up of negotiations within the Council of Ministers.

EWL worked in particular on the issue of the **use of actuarial factors based on sex in relation to insurance policies**, arguing that sex-based discrimination should be eliminated in the insurance sector. EWL also created a **coalition with other NGOs** (consumers’ organisations, the European Disability Forum and the AGE platform) in support of the directive.

Due to pressure from the insurance industry and the lack of commitment of some Member States, the final text adopted was disappointing in relation to the exception to the right to gender equality in the insurance sector. However, the directive allows for limited progress: although it will still be possible for private pensions and life insurance policies to discriminate, **discrimination will be illegal in all matters relating to maternity and pregnancy**. This implies that, for example, it should be illegal not to cover the “risk” of pregnancy from insurance contracts. In relation to the monitoring of the implementation of the directive, EWL insists that women’s organisations are involved in the bodies set up by the European Commission for this purpose. The directive must be transposed at national level by December 2007.



The future of European gender equality policies : the need for a comprehensive political framework and strong institutional instruments

Whereas, the political agreement was reached to establish a specific European Gender Institute in 2004, a number of other developments seemed to raise questions about the level of commitment to European gender equality policy. EWL monitored these developments very closely.

The relationship between European policies on equality between women and men and general non-discrimination policies

In June 2004, the European Commission published a “**Green Paper on Equality and Non-Discrimination in an Enlarged Union**”, and asked all stakeholders to give their comments on this paper. This Green Paper asked the question “what should the framework for European anti-discrimination as well as gender equality policies look like in the future?”

In August 2004, EWL sent its submission to the European Commission Green Paper in which it affirmed that further development of EU equality and anti-discrimination policies are an absolute prerequisite for a Europe Union that is closer to its citizens, and for creating a Union based on social cohesion and solidarity.

EWL recommended that the EU institutions focus on the means to maintain and further develop specific EU legislation and institutional tools for equality between women and men, and at the same time develop and strengthen the EU’s anti-discrimination actions and institutional mechanisms.

The results from the Commission’s consultation on this Green Paper confirmed the EWL position, as a strong majority of the respondents (84%) agreed that it is necessary to specifically tackle sex-based discrimination and the promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming.



The Social Policy Agenda : EWL presents its vision

The Social Policy Agenda is a strategic document outlining the priorities for the coordination of social policies between Member States, as well as priorities for European level action. The European Women's Lobby presented its proposal for the new Social Policy Agenda (2006 – 2010) in October 2004. Key areas included in the EWL proposal were: **a new EU Framework Strategy on Equality between Women and Men**; the future European Gender Institute; new EU Legislation on gender equality outside the area of employment and gender mainstreaming.

Throughout 2004, EWL lobbied for a new European Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality as the current strategy is due to end in 2005. By the end of 2004, the forecast did not look good, as no official commitment had been made to draft a new strategy. Nonetheless, EWL continued to stress the need to adopt a comprehensive, forward-looking new Framework Strategy for Gender Equality addressing the main challenges to achieve equality between women and men in Europe. This strategy must build upon the current European dual strategy of specific measures for women and more effective and visible gender mainstreaming.

The Future European Gender Institute : an opportunity not to be missed

Throughout 2004, EWL lobbied for the creation of a European Institute for Gender Equality. This new Institute represents an important opportunity to reinforce and give further political impetus to EU gender equality efforts. EWL put forward its vision of what an effective Gender Institute would look like: it must in particular be **adequately resourced and incorporate the expertise of various political actors, academics in the field of feminist research, and women's rights NGOs.**

Activities of the Institute should include: supporting the development of EU gender equality policies; monitoring the implementation of EU directives at national level; providing guidance and training to the European Parliament and the European Commission on gender mainstreaming; developing a strategy for data collection and distribution of gender indicators in the EU and playing a role in awareness raising and communication in relation to gender issues. The creation of such an Institute is an opportunity to fill the gap that exists in the monitoring of the situation of women in Europe and the identification of the needs as well as the exchange of knowledge, data and information on best practices across the 25 Member States of the EU.

The integration of a gender perspective in economic and social policies : the only way forward

The Lisbon Strategy, adopted in 2000, set out to bring about “ economic, social and environmental change in the EU ”. Throughout 2004, the European Women’s Lobby worked to influence the Lisbon process and stressed the importance of integrating a gender perspective into European economic and social policies to achieve social justice and equality.

Strengthening gender equality, strengthening the Lisbon process

EWL presented its recommendations to strengthen gender equality within the Lisbon process to the European Spring Council in March 2004. Despite some limited progress, the implementation of gender equality mainstreaming in the Lisbon Strategy is very weak. EWL therefore stressed that gender equality principles and actions must be significantly strengthened in both economic and social policy in order to attain the Lisbon goals.

The Commission report on gender equality 2004 - A first step

In 2003, the European Spring Council invited “the Commission to prepare (...) an annual report to the European Spring Council [the following year] on developments towards gender equality and orientations for gender mainstreaming of policy areas”. In 2004, the first Commission report on gender equality

was presented to the Spring Council. EWL welcomed this report as a first step, but recommended that future gender equality reports to the Spring Council must take a much more ambitious approach – including a **comprehensive analysis of the different EU policy areas from a gender equality perspective**, including consideration of financial policies, research policies, the structural funds as well as external relations, budget, education, and development co-operation policies.

Gender equality: an essential element of social Europe

Throughout 2004, EWL stressed that any reform of social protection systems must include a gender-sensitive analysis of those systems, in order to tackle gender-based inequalities and to strengthen the European Social Model. Special attention should be paid to the situation of specific groups of women, for example lone parents, disabled women, migrant and ethnic minority women, older women etc. Achieving equality



between women and men must be a key objective within any European strategy for the reform and development of social protection systems. Such a reform should therefore include the following measures: individualised rights to social protection and social services; improved parental leave regulations, including paid and longer parental leave; and strengthening social rights for atypical, part-time and flexible workers.

Women's employment, as a key to women's economic independence

European employment policies are an essential tool in achieving equality between women and men. In 2004, EWL called on decision-makers dealing with European employment policies to take into account the specific problems faced by women in the labour market, for example women's unemployment and lower labour market participation, the gender pay gap, women's working conditions and the need for an equal sharing of care and domestic work between women and men. In order to promote gender equality in the labour market, an **integrated approach** is essential and must include issues of social protection, poverty and social exclusion and the understanding of societal responsibility for care.

Introducing gender budgeting at EU level

The association of the words “gender” and “budget” is rather new and may seem surprising. Thinking about “gender”, people usually think about women's rights and equality between women and men, issues that are rarely put very high on the political agenda. On the contrary, budgets are considered “hard” political issues, which are considered “gender neutral”. However, **budgets are not neutral** as they affect different people differently, depending on their level of access to resources and their needs. Women today still have less access to resources than men and have different needs (different employment situations, different needs in terms of mobility, health and life-style etc). The methods of **gender budgeting take into account those different needs and situations, so that public budgets can serve all people, women and men alike.**

EWL issued a **publication**, which provides information on current analysis and work on gender budgeting with a special focus on the EU as its contribution to the introduction of gender budgeting methods at European Union level. The EWL publication also gives an overview of existing gender budgeting initiatives in EU Member States.



From local to international level, EWL increases its action to eliminate violence against women

The EWL Policy Action Centre on Violence against Women (PAC) provides a permanent monitoring structure with the overall mission of contributing to the achievement of equality between women and men by eliminating violence against women. All forms of violence against women and girls in the private and public sphere must be addressed and understood as basic violations of human rights.

Influencing European policy and action on violence against women

EWL actively participated in the Irish Presidency conference on violence against women held in May 2004, which called for *“a proposal for a legal base on violence against women, so that an EU-wide binding Directive tackling all forms of violence against women may be drafted and implemented with urgency”*.⁴

Another step forward was the integration of a **Declaration** on Article III-116 (equality between women and men) in the European Constitutional Treaty, stating that *“the Union will aim in its different policies to combat all kinds of domestic violence”* and that *“Member States should take all necessary measures to prevent and punish these criminal acts and to support and protect the victims”*. This Declaration provides another opportunity to place the issue of male violence against women on the EU political agenda, EWL will therefore continue to lobby for an all encompassing legal base at European level to address the different forms and ongoing nature of male violence in women’s lives.

Monitoring Member States policies on violence against women

The EWL **European Observatory on Violence against Women**, which brings together national experts, was enlarged in 2004 to include members from the new Member States and accession countries, namely: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Turkey.

The European Observatory met twice in 2004 with a focus on **working with men**, including standard guidelines for the implementation of perpetrator programmes and **indicators on violence and women’s health** in collaboration with the World Health Organisation.

Supporting NGOs in their work on violence against women - National Observatories

Developing National Observatories on Violence against Women is part of the ongoing work of the EWL-PAC. Set up to provide an independent critical voice and composed of a coalition of women’s NGOs working in the area of violence against women, the role of National Observatories is to monitor national policies and actions. A National Observatory

⁴ Recommendations from EU Presidency Conference on Violence against Women, Dublin May 2004.





Monitoring the commitments of the EU and Member States to women's human rights in relation to United Nations mechanisms

on Violence against Women was launched in Finland in November 2004. There are now **five National Observatories** in the EU: in **Ireland, Greece, Denmark, France and Finland.**

The **Irish National Observatory on Violence against Women** produced the first **National Report on Violence against women.** Launched in May 2004 during the Irish EU Presidency Conference on Violence against Women, the report focuses on the prevalence of violence against women in Ireland, it monitors how the State addresses the issue and highlights critical emerging issues, including prostitution and trafficking.

Other national observatories on VAW have worked on their national report, for example the **Danish Observatory** published "Men's violence against women - the extent, characteristics and measures to eliminate violence", focusing on recorded data and on the seven indicators which were adopted under the Danish EU Presidency in 2002. The Report from the **Greek Observatory** is to be finalised soon.

EWL adopted a **position paper on Women and armed conflict** and organised a seminar on this issue at the 2004 United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). Codes of conduct for military and humanitarian aid workers to protect women and girls against sexual exploitation in areas of conflict and war were demanded as central to this work.

The issues of violence against women and trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation were raised in the context of discussions about the second theme of the CSW in 2004, namely "**Working with men and boys to achieve gender equality**".

Integrating a gender perspective in human rights

As part of the follow-up to its campaign on women asylum seekers (2000-2001), EWL was invited to speak at a panel discussion on “Presentation of the Regional Comparative Analysis of Gender-Related Persecution in European National Legislation and Practice”, organised by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva in October 2004.

EWL had meetings with **Amnesty International** (AI) representatives, specifically on violence against women and played a role in facilitating the collaboration between experts of the EWL Observatory on Violence against Women and national sections of AI on the Amnesty International campaign on violence against women.

EWL also participated and contributed to the **EU Human Rights’ Contact Group**, and sent contributions to the reports of the **EU Network of Independent Experts in Fundamental Rights** outlining the need to integrate a gender dimension into their work.

Trafficking in human beings: a global issue

The UN estimates that between one and four million women and children, mostly girls, are victims of trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation every year around the world and approximately 500,000 of these are transported to Western Europe. EWL continued its work to raise awareness about **the link between trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes and the increasing poverty and degrading socio-economic situation of women** in countries of origin. The EWL Centre on Violence was involved in the EU Forum on Organised Crime and expressed its concerns about some aspects of the report of the EU Expert Group on Trafficking, notably the partial use of the UN Protocol definition of trafficking and the lack of prevention strategies and recommendations.

During 2004, the EWL participated as an observer in the drafting of a **new Council of Europe Convention on trafficking in human beings**, which aims at ensuring the protection of victims. Despite the lobbying actions and pressure of EWL, other NGOs and members of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, the draft Convention still lacks a number of essential elements to fulfil its aim.

In December, EWL started a **joint project with the Coalition against Trafficking in Women (CATW), on Promoting Measures to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings**, which will include awareness raising measures and actions to address the situation of women and girls in countries of origin who are victims of trafficking for sexual purposes, focusing on measures to promote equality between women and men. The project will be developed in 12 countries in the Baltic area, Central and Eastern Europe, and in the Balkans.



Seminar : “Power and Participation, How can Young Women create the Missing Link in Europe ?”

The conference “Power and Participation, How can Young Women create the Missing Link in Europe?”, organised in September 2004, was the result of a unique cooperation between EWL and two major NGOs: the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) and the

European Youth Forum. The conference took place over three days in Brussels and gathered 40 participants from EU Member States and Central & Eastern European countries, to analyse the barriers to the full participation of young women in society and to find solutions to overcome them.



The main recommendations which came out of these discussions were :

- **Positive action measures** in relation to political decision-making should be taken, such as parity laws, gender quotas or zipper systems, in order to support the participation of women.
- **Gender roles and stereotypes** should be deconstructed through education at formal and non-formal levels.
- **Gender sensitive language** should be used in all official documents.
- All forms of **violence against women** and gender discrimination should be eliminated.
- The **media** should be regulated with ethical codes to avoid gender violence and “visual harassment”, such as the presence of degrading images of women in the public space.
- A **network** should be established to support young women at local, national and European levels.
- Young women should become more active by **joining youth and women’s NGOs**.

The recommendations from the conference were presented at a closing session in the European Parliament and a debate took place between participants and MEPs.

Beijing Platform for Action 1995-2005 : 10 years since commitments

Where are we in relation to gender equality 10 years after the Beijing World Conference on Women in 1995? Commitments to progress in achieving women's human rights in twelve important areas were made by all EU governments in Beijing. What are the gaps and the new challenges for women's rights in the world 10 years later? In 2004, EWL began its work on the 10-year review to begin to answer these questions.



The commitments made by governments in Beijing were reiterated in 2000. 2005 will therefore be the time not only to **reaffirm those commitments**, but also to look again at the Beijing Platform for action (BPfA) in light of **new developments** and concerns that have arisen in the 10 years since it was adopted, while also taking into account newly established international commitments such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Beijing review process also serves as an important indicator of the level of global and national commitment to the achievement of equality between women and men.

EWL taking a lead in the Beijing+10 process

The European Women's Lobby was present and active in Beijing and at the special Beijing+5 meetings in 2000 as well as at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York each subsequent year. In its work at international level, EWL aims to monitor and influence the actions of the European Union and the Member State governments in the area of gender equality, and also to support and coordinate actions by European women's NGOs.

In relation to the Beijing+10 process, EWL is the **NGO focal point for the European Union and in this role, acted as an information and resource centre**, disseminating information about meetings and other developments to member organisations and other interested parties across Europe.


EWL also initiated a **dialogue and coordination amongst Brussels-based NGOs** dealing with gender issues, in order to discuss current challenges and particular issues of interest for the region. Organisations such as the International Planned Parenthood Federation, the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts Europe Region, WIDE and the European Youth Forum took part in these activities.

EWL also played an important role in the UN Economic Commission for Europe meeting and NGO Forum on 12-15.12.2004, which was the preparatory meeting for the Beijing review process for the UN European region.

were made... Women demand action now!

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The EWL Beijing+10 report : assessing progress made by the EU in implementing Beijing.



EWL undertook the drafting of a Report on the “*Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for action by the European Union*”. The report follows up on the Beijing + 5 Regional Alternative Report for the European Union published by EWL in May 2000 and focuses on **legislation, policies and programmes implemented by the European Union** institutions in relation to gender equality since 2000. The main part of the report is **an analysis of EU activities for each of the twelve critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action**. EWL examined both existing and new legislation as well as the EU programmes and then identified obstacles and shortcoming in each area. Each section contains a set of recommendations addressing decision-makers at all levels, which have been agreed by the EWL membership.

The report highlights that **some positive developments** have taken place at European level in relation to women’s rights, in particular the strengthening of gender equality in the EU Treaty, new institutional mechanisms and the dual approach adopted by the EU, combining specific measures on gender equality and gender mainstreaming. However, **other developments** such as globalisation, privatisation and the growth in the influence of religious fundamentalism and in trafficking in women in Europe **pose serious threats to women’s rights**, notably in terms of employment, social services and the protection of women’s human rights.

Some of the main recommendations of the EWL Report concern :

- The fact that Member States must **fulfil the international commitments** made by signing the Beijing Platform for Action and ratifying the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.
- The protection of **women’s sexual and reproductive rights**.
- The need to implement new legislation and ensure that **existing European gender equality legislation** is implemented correctly in particular in the area of employment.
- The need to integrate a gender perspective in **European economic policies**.
- That while **gender mainstreaming** has been applied in a number of areas of EU policies; to be successful the strategy would need to be more visible and to have concrete timeframes, objectives, monitoring tools and reporting mechanisms.
- The need for the EU to develop legally binding measures in areas where a strong European legislative framework is still lacking such as **women in decision-making**, the protection of women’s dignity in the **media and violence against women**.
- The need for the governments of the Member States to ensure that gender equality initiatives, targets and indicators are fully integrated into all strategies adopted to achieve the United Nations **Millennium Development Goals**.

EWL will continue to work for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action throughout 2005, in particular through its campaign : “Beijing Platform for Action, 10 Years on... Women demand action now !”



4,000 women's organisations working together in Europe :

EWL Executive Committee (elected in October 2004)



President : Kirsti Kolthoff
Vice President : Karine Henrotte-Forsberg
Vice President : Iluta Lace
Vice President : Annette Lawson
Treasurer : Lene Bertelsen

EWL Board of Administration (elected in October 2004)

Board of Administration :
members representing national co-ordinations

Austria : Sabine Oberhauser
Belgium : Marguerite Blancke
Bulgaria : Iliana Balabanova Stoycheva
Czech Republic : Marie Bohacova
Denmark : Lene Bertelsen
Estonia : Julia Kovalenko
Finland : Taina Riski
France : Martine Levy
Germany : Brunhilde Raiser
Greece : Efthimia Ioannidou
Hungary : Judit Wirth
Ireland : Therese Murphy
Italy : Ludovica Bottarelli-Tranquilli Leali
Latvia : Iluta Lace
Lithuania : Jurgita Pecuriene
Luxembourg : Marie Josée Bivort
Malta : Romina Bartolo
Poland : Agnieszka Gryzbek
Portugal : Maria Do Mar Pereira
Slovakia : Olga Pietruchova
Spain : Marta Ortiz
Sweden : Kirsti Kolthoff
The Netherlands : Audrey Ruth Vreugd
Turkey : Selma Acuner
United Kingdom : Annette Lawson

Board of Administration :
members representing European organisations

Committee of Agricultural Organisations in the EU :

Marianne Dondelinger-Pesch

European Centre of the International Council of Women :

Laura Finne-Elonen

University Women of Europe :

Karine Henrotte-Forsberg

European Business and Professional Women :

Eufémia Ippolito

International Council of Jewish Women :

June Jacobs

European Disability Forum :

Lydia la Rivière Zijdel

International Alliance of Women :

Marilyn La Tona

European Trade Union Confederation :

Catelene Passchier

EWL Secretariat 2004

General Secretary : Mary Mc Phail

Staff : Malin Björk, Mary Collins, Clarisse Delorme,

Colette De Troy, Cécile Gréboval, Juliette Kamper,

Marie-Anne Leunis, Virginie Niyonzima, Mary Ann Struthers,

Gabrielle Tzelepis (accountant)



EWL membership

EWL member organisations

National co-ordinations of EWL

Austria: Bund Österreichischer Frauenvereine; Österreichischer Frauenring

Belgium: Coordination Belge du Lobby européen des femmes (Nederlandstalige Vrouwenraad; Conseil des Femmes Francophones de Belgique; Comité de Liaison des Femmes)

Bulgaria: Bulgarian Coordination for EWL

Czech Republic: National Coordination for EWL in the Czech Republic

Denmark: Women's Council in Denmark

Estonia: Estonia Women's Association Roundtable (EWAR)

Finland: NYTKIS - Coalition of Finnish Women

France: Coordination Française du Lobby européen des femmes (CLEF)

Germany: Deutscher Frauenrat

Greece: Coordination of Greek Women's NGOs for EWL

Hungary: Hungarian Women's Lobby

Ireland: National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCII)

Italy: Coordinamento Italiano della Lobby Europea delle Donne (LEF Italia)

Latvia: Latvian Coordination for EWL

Lithuania: Lithuanian Women's Lobby

Luxembourg: Coordination Luxembourgeoise du LEF (Conseil National des Femmes du Luxembourg; Commission Féminine du Mouvement Européen Luxembourg; Fédération Nationale des Femmes Luxembourgeoises)

Malta: Malta Confederation of Women's Organisations (MCWO)

The Netherlands: Nederlandse Vrouwen Raad, Vrouwen Alliantie, TIY International

Poland: Polskie Lobby Kobiet (PLK) (Polish Women's Lobby – National Women's Information Centre “OSKA”)

Portugal: PPDM – Plataforma Portuguesa para os Direitos das Mulheres

Slovakia: Slovenská zenska lobby (Slovak Women's Lobby)

Spain: Coordinadora Española para el Lobby Europeo de Mujeres (CELEM)

Sweden: Swedish Women's Lobby

Turkey: National Coordination of Turkey - KADER

United Kingdom: UK Joint Committee on Women [National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO); Northern Ireland Women's European Platform (NIWEP); Engender (Scotland); Wales Women's European Network].

European member organisations of EWL

Committee of Agricultural Organisations in the EU (COPA)

Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CCRE)

European Centre of the International Council of Women (CECIF)

European Confederation of Trade Unions (CES – ETUC)

European Council of WIZO Federations

European Disability Forum (EDF)

European Federation of Business & Professional Women (EFBPW)

European Federation of Women Working in the Home (FEFAF)

European Forum of Left Feminists

European Network of Women (ENOW)

European Network of Women Entrepreneurs (FEMVISION)

European Women's Network for Intercultural Action and Exchange

International Federation of Women in Legal Careers (IFWLC)

International Alliance of Women (IAW)

International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW)

Medical Women's International Association (MWIA)

Soroptimist International Europe

Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland

University Women of Europe (UWE)

Women's Committee of the International European Movement

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)

World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO)

Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA).

Associate member organisations of EWL

EWL has 59 Associate member organisations in Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Morocco, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

Individual supporting members

Over 130 individuals across Europe are supporting members of EWL.

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EWL structure according to its new Statutes

4,000 member organisations in Europe

EWL General Assembly

meeting once a year

Delegates from national and European member organisations

elects every 2 years

EWL Board of administration

25 representatives of national co-ordinations

8 representatives of European organisations

elects every 2 years

EWL Executive Committee

President

3 Vice-Presidents

Treasurer

Different membership categories within EWL

In order for the organisation to be as open as possible, there are 4 categories of members within the European Women's Lobby :

1. Full member organisations :

The status of full member is open to

- **National co ordinations of non-governmental organisations**, which have to be representative of a broad range of women's organisations across the whole of the Member State/country (one national coordination per country).
- **European wide non-governmental organisations** which are represented in at least 50% + 1 of the countries in membership of the EU, the European Economic Area and countries in the formal process of acceding to the European Union.

2. Associate member organisations

EWL Associate members are non-governmental women's organisations or the women's sections of NGOs that are committed to the purpose and aims of the association.

3. Individual supporting members

Individual supporting members are individuals who accept EWL's purpose and aims.

4. Supporting organisations

Supporting organisations are organisations, which accept EWL's purpose and aims.

To find out more about becoming a member of the European Women's Lobby, please consult our website for the appropriate membership application, or contact the EWL Secretariat.



EWL Mission Statement (Article 3 of the EWL Statutes)

The European Women's Lobby represents the concerns, needs and interests of women in dialogue with national, European and international institutions.

The mission of EWL is to promote the empowerment of women in all their diversity; to advance gender equality; to combat all forms of discrimination and violence against women and to ensure full access for all women to their human rights through their active involvement in society and in policy development and implementation.

EWL, through its member organisations, aims :

- to work within democratic, open and transparent procedures of communication, decision-making and accountability in order to support the involvement and empowerment of all women.
- to provide regular input on all areas of EU policy development and implementation that have an impact on women's lives and on the promotion of equality between women and men.
- to monitor the development and implementation of gender mainstreaming in order to ensure that mainstreaming encompasses the full integration of women's human rights, needs and aspirations in all areas of EU policy.
- To take into account the needs and perspective of different groups of women, at all stages of their life cycle.

Contributors to the EWL Annual report 2004

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Despite progress made in the last 50 years, women still face major obstacles in all areas of life and don't enjoy equal rights globally⁴:

- **Education:** Of the 150 million children aged 6 to 11 not in schools, more than 90 million are girls. **2/3** of the world's 875 million **illiterate adults are women.**
- **Property rights:** About 1/3 of the world's women are homeless or live in slums; **women own about 2%** of all **land** but produce **half the food** grown.
- **Aids:** In Africa, more than 57% of the HIV/AIDS victims are women; rates among girls aged 15-19 are 5 times higher than boys the same age, in part due to forced early marriages to older men.
- **Maternal mortality:** In developing nations, **1 woman dies** from complications in pregnancy or childbirth **every minute** with a total of 529,000 each year.
- **Trafficking:** 90 percent of foreign prostitutes in the Balkans are victims of trafficking; at least **700,000** people, mostly women and children are trafficked each year across international borders.
- **Abortion:** At least **70,000 deaths** occur each year from the 20 million or so unsafe abortions. Many victims are adolescent girls and young women.



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⁴ Source : United Nations Department of Public Information; UN agencies.