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European Women's Lobby Response to the Consultation on the Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010 and follow-up strategy

This document represents the response of the European Women's Lobby to the Consultation on the Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010 and follow-up strategy. The response has been drafted on the basis of a questionnaire sent to EWL member organisations. Contributions by other related organisations have also been used, including those from WIDE and the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

The document is divided in two parts: Part I contains the EWL replies to the European Commission questionnaire and Part II contains EWL specific more detailed recommendations for the different policy areas.

Part I - EWL answers to the questionnaire

1. Overall assessment of the performance of the Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010

The Roadmap has been more an internal coordinating mechanism for European Commission rather than a binding policy document and has been relying on "voluntary" inputs from individual Commission services. In the context of the proposal of President Barroso to adopt a European Women's Charter, the EWL proposes that that the future EU strategy for Equal Opportunities should be stronger in order to reinforce and complement the future Charter in progressing at a quicker pace towards de facto equality between women and men in all areas. The new strategy should therefore rather be a **Strategic Action Plan for Effective Equality between Women and Men, with concrete commitments and measures and strong accountability mechanisms.**

A real commitment will be shown when these political commitments are implemented with **adequate and increased resources**: the Action Plan needs to be given a specific budget.

Do you think the Roadmap 2006-2010 has made a difference and contributed to more equality between women?

The EWL with its members welcome the following strengths in the Roadmap 2006-2010:

- It combines gender mainstreaming with specific actions.
- It recognizes the need to realise equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities between women and men in all areas of life.
- The priorities go beyond the areas of employment and social policies and include some measures in relation to violence against women, women in decision-making, education, and specific actions to promote gender equality in development cooperation / external policies.



At the same time, the EWL would like to highlight the following challenges in relation to the Roadmap 2006-2010 and aspects that could be improved:

- The new Strategic Action Plan should be accompanied by a **specific budget**.
- The content of the actions should be **stronger and more concrete**.
- There is a need **for coherence between policy declarations and practice** with regard to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.
- The new Strategic Action Plan or the annual implementing work programmes should specify for each initiative, the Directorates General to be responsible for the achievement of the initiative and establish targets, time frames and benchmarks for its effective implementation and use relevant indicators to evaluate results and progress achieved. **Involving all services in the Commission** has been a challenge even though the Roadmap clearly extends beyond the sole competencies of the Employment Directorate General.
- The **indicators** used to monitor progress in the 2006-2010 Roadmap need to be evaluated to see if they are relevant to evaluate the objectives and actions in the policy area. The lack of availability of relevant gender-disaggregated national and/or Eurostat statistics represent often a main obstacle to evaluate effectively the progress towards gender equality and general quantitative data might lead to misleading assumptions about the progress made.
- Effective gender mainstreaming which brings transformative results presupposes **training** for Commission officials, continuous and rigorous **gender impact assessment** and gender budgeting, but none of were discernible in a systematic way.
- The Roadmap has not been **visible / well known enough at the national** or the regional level although it some Member States draw inspiration from it to draft national level instruments (e.g. Latvia, Lithuania & Cyprus).

2. Future challenges for gender equality

What are in your view the main medium and long term challenges that a new strategy for gender equality should address?

Challenges related to the current economic and financial crisis

The crisis economic, financial and social crisis impacts on women, gender equality policies and on women's organisations in different ways, and eventually could result in a detrimental effect on progress towards realising equality between women and men. The EWL membership has identified the current economic crisis (and in this context, ensuring women's economic independence) as one of the main challenges for the coming years.

While it is still difficult to assess the full impact on the financial crisis on women at this stage, as time evolves, a more encompassing assessment and analysis of the impact of the economic crisis on women can be expected and therefore the future framework for action would need to take the outcomes of these on board, including the hidden costs of the crisis.



At this stage, particular attention should be paid to the following issues:

- Ensure no regression and **no financial cuts** in relation to the policies and the functioning of the structures aimed at achieving equality between women and men at all levels in the governmental and non-governmental sector including women's organisation for internal and external policies; such financial cuts have already taken place in some countries including for example Ireland, Latvia or Denmark.
- Ensure that **recovery plans (at both national and European levels) and structural adjustment programme undergo a gender impact assessment** (ex post assessment if such assessment has not been made ex ante) and integrate a gender perspective. Those should include gender disaggregated data and statistics.
- **It is essential to integrate a gender perspective in a new financial and economic architecture and policies**, which means promoting structural changes to establish a balance between the production system and non-profit oriented activities, which cares for the environment and in which the financial market is subordinated to the productive economy, social reproduction and the reproduction of nature.
- Strike a **balance between economic rationalisation and growth and social priorities**, including safeguarding child, dependants and elderly care provision and services, quality (public) health care and social services in general and the protection of the environment.
- Analyse and counteract the **negative effects of tax cuts and reducing in public spending and social benefits** including in a context of cutting on public spending at the local level: are these reinforcing gender stereotypes? For example, care issues – are women being left with a disproportionate burden of care (child, elderly, dependent persons), closure of hospitals or shorter stays– transferring the care of patients to households and therefore women. These type of measures can potentially deepen inequalities between women and men and among women, for example, the lack of care policies and infrastructures has led to an increase in Female Migrant Domestic Workers filling these gaps in private homes without access to social protection and work-related protection and benefits (and often without any legal status because of the national migration regimes).
- Assessment of **social protection models** and how these can better mirror women's lives (particularly working lives and pensions) and how these models should be sustained – what new methods of funding are required (particularly in light also of demographic trends)
- **Input of women in solution and decision-making relating to the financial/ economic crisis** from both within the EU context and the international context and impact on women, including a gender equality/ gender budgeting perspective in macro-economic policies.

Other challenges

Equality between women and men must be an end and not the means to other political ends:

One of the challenges consists in ensuring that a **far reaching and long term vision for equality between women and men** can be secured in the next decade with the political commitment of all involved, i.e. European and national decision institutions and policy makers, social partners, civil society and the private sector. This long term



vision should be encapsulated in a new Strategic Action Plan involving all relevant services of the European Commission, including external relations, and accompanied by a budget, precise targets and a calendar of the concrete initiatives to be undertaken and an annual monitoring of the progress achieved on the basis of indicators, and the description of the remaining obstacles. The **dual approach** to gender equality adopted by the EU comprising specific measures for the promotion of women's rights and gender mainstreaming should be maintained.

Co-ordination at the Member State level:

In order to ensure coordination, visibility and impact at the national level, the new program document should be **endorsed by the Member States through a Council decision** and regular monitoring / follow up.

Equality between women and men must not be lost in debates on equality for all:

The tendency to **shift the agenda from equality between women and men to one that focuses on equality for all**, which comprises multiple layers of gender-based inequalities, requires ongoing monitoring to avoid the erosion of the gender dimension of (in)equality.

Equality between women and men relates to all policy areas and not only to specific ones:

One of the related challenges has been that the gender angle is often forgotten in policy areas that are not seen as related to gender equality, e.g. disability, Roma inclusion or integration, migration and asylum, while in turn this other policy angle is overlooked in gender equality policies. This shows the need to increase policy coherence and effectively monitor gender mainstreaming in other policy areas while there is also a need to strengthen **the intersectional approach** in the new Strategic Action Plan, which should include the integration of the needs and perspective of different groups of women and discrimination grounds, in particular the grounds mentioned in Article 13 TEC. Without the effective implementation of an intersectional approach, the specific needs of some groups of women (examples include Roma, ethnic minority, disabled women, lesbians) might be overlooked in the policy areas covered by the Strategic Action Plan. The indicators used to evaluate the Strategic Action Plan should encompass also an intersectional perspective enabling the monitoring of progress of policies for different groups of women e.g. the proportion of women with disabilities in the employment market should be monitored.

Equality between women and men to be present in all current socio-political debates:

Generally speaking, the (other) main challenges for gender equality include: the persistence of inequalities between women and men and gender stereotypes in all areas of life; current demographic changes and the integration of a gender equality perspective in policies to tackle them; the lack of a gender perspective in European and national migration, integration and asylum policies and legislation. In relation to the financial crisis, it will be more challenging to tackle European and global trends affecting women's rights, such as the growing poverty and social exclusion of women, growing militarization and human security threats; undermining of women's rights related to sexual and reproductive health, the rising of fundamentalist movements; persisting gender-based violence including the sexual exploitation of women and girls and the under-representation of women in decision-making in all areas and at all levels.



3. Main policy priorities for gender equality

- It will be crucial to **ensure a coherent strategy across all areas**, one which is backed by all the political actors both from the European and national level as this will guarantee an ongoing political vision for gender equality in the EU.
- It will also be important to ensure a **proactive view of gender equality** in the EU with policies actively aiming at realising equality between women and men in practice and not only at fighting de jure discrimination, which corresponds to the Treaty obligations as reinforced by the Lisbon Treaty.
- Given the fact that gender equality has been recognised as an essential component of well-being and growth, it is also vital to ensure **sufficient human and financial resources for policies** and the **functioning of the structures** aimed at achieving gender equality and to counteract the cuts / regression that have already been observed in some Member States.
- For each area, the future Strategic Action Plan should take into account **intergenerational aspects**, including issues related to girl children as well as an intersectional perspective reflecting the **specific inequalities faced by different groups of women**. This includes the integration of a strong gender equality perspective in anti discrimination policies and legislation and measures, including positive action measures, to tackle the multiple discrimination that many women face.
- As stressed above, a **stronger intersectional approach** will be essential in the new Strategic Action Plan, which should include the integration of the needs and perspective of different groups of women particularly those belonging to the groups mentioned in Article 13 TEC
- There is currently a lack of **reliable and systematic statistics** in most EU countries on the situation of women from different groups. Data therefore needs to be broken down not only by gender, but also by different groups. It is essential in this regard that the studies that do not look specifically at gender undertaken by the Fundamental Rights Agency and the European Commission gather gender-disaggregated data and present their results in a gender-disaggregated way when relevant while gender-specific studies have to also cross gender data with other data such as race, age or disability and present their results in an intersectional way.
- **A consistent implementation of EU gender equality legislation must be ensured** throughout the EU: measures against Member States in breach of harmonization requirements should be accelerated and made public and the Commission should scrutinize not only the transposition of the directives, but set more effective mechanisms (e.g. a strategic plan) in place to hold MSs responsible for the broad implementation and public knowledge of legal measures on the national level, including involving women's NGOs at the national level and supporting their work in this regard.



Are the six priority areas defined in the Roadmap still relevant (see point 2.1)? Which new priorities should be considered?

The **6 domains** of the initial Roadmap are still important to pursue with stronger and concrete measures in each area. The EWL would also like to suggest one new area of action, namely **immigration, integration and asylum**, and **a much stronger focus on a. Violence against women b. Poverty and social exclusion c. Health.**

In Part II of this document, you can find the specific EWL recommendations for the different policy areas.

How can gender mainstreaming and specific actions be made more effective / Recommendations related to governance / implementation of the future strategy

The **dual approach** combining gender mainstreaming and specific actions for gender equality is **crucial** to the realisation of gender equality but the gender mainstreaming strategy should **in no way lead to the disappearance of specific measures for gender equality**. For example, evaluations of the Lisbon strategy on Growth and Jobs show a negative trend in the focus on gender equality in Member States programmes in particular since the removal of the specific equal opportunities guideline, this is important to be corrected in particular in the context of the current crisis.

In addition, while the gender mainstreaming strategy is to be welcomed, the challenges it poses do not necessarily allow space to question or challenge structures in place with the result that the **transformative output expected from gender mainstreaming** has not yet been achieved, while women-specific measures and institutional mechanisms are being downscaled. The “male” component of the gender mainstreaming equation is also emerging which is positive in some way but shouldn’t leave to less visibility or protection for women’s rights. The EU must go further in the strategy of gender mainstreaming, as a mere technical tool. The **goal of gender equality is a goal of justice**.

General EWL recommendations to improve the governance and institutional mechanisms for gender equality:

- The new **Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Civil Liberties** must have a proven track-record in the area of fundamental rights, fight against discrimination, women’s rights and collaboration with civil society. A strong connection and regular structured coordination between relevant Directorate Generals and the new DG Justice and Fundamental Rights is key to the proper enforcement of legislation and other policies on equality between women and men.
- Ensure adequate **human and financial resources** to policies and institutional mechanisms for women’s rights and gender equality at all levels.
- The European Community should accede to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), as it acceded to the UN Convention on People with Disability
- Ensure a strong institutional **link between commitments at the European and national level**, for example through the endorsement of the new gender equality strategy or a new more binding gender pact by the Council of ministers and regular monitoring at the national and council levels.
- Ensure a **better monitoring system and systematic gender impact assessment**.



- At least one of the **meetings of the Commissioners' Group on Equal Opportunities** per year should continue to be devoted to equality between women and men only
- Create a **women's information service within** the Commission to deal with awareness raising activities and public information
- Improve the **EC web site on gender equality**, in all official languages
- Make sure that the new **European Institute for Gender Equality** is a strong actor contributing to more visibility of gender equality policies, more efficient gender mainstreaming and de facto equality between women and men in all areas.
- Engage with women's organisations at all levels.

EWL recommendations in relation to gender mainstreaming:

- The obligation to mainstream the gender perspective in all activities of the Community contained in Article 3, 2 EC should be further clarified and refined in an **implementing instrument** (tools, structures, and budget) especially in view of the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, which reinforces the gender mainstreaming obligation.
- Ensure systematic **gender mainstreaming in the work of different councils**, through training of decision-makers and officials and the involvement of experts.
- Permanent **positions of gender equality and gender mainstreaming advisors** should be created to support gender mainstreaming in each European Commission Directorate and attached to directors.
- The existing **Commission Inter-Service Group on Gender Mainstreaming** should have a secretariat, be specifically and fully funded, more visible inside and outside the Commission and strengthened through: consistency in membership, proven expertise and commitment to gender equality of its members and regular gender equality training of its members.
- A **chapter on gender mainstreaming in each Commission Directorate General** should be included in the Commission's Annual Report on Gender Equality, whose content should be closely related to the implementation of the new Strategic Action Plan.
- Set up a systematic a priori **gender impact assessment procedure for all new legislative proposals adopted by the European Commission**
- **Better consistency in the implementation of a gender mainstreaming** -including gender budgeting- strategy: more consistency is needed between specific strong commitments / policy work on gender equality and other areas, including macroeconomic policies, the renewed Lisbon strategy etc where the gender equality perspective is lacking / absent. The impact on the situation of women and men of all new legislative proposals adopted by the European Commission should be systematically and a priori screened.



- Set up mandatory **gender mainstreaming and gender awareness training for Commissioners**, for the highest levels of civil servants, and within all management training for European civil servants and make information about the training publicly available.
- Ensure that the **Fundamental Rights Agency** includes a transversal gender equality and women's rights perspective in all the thematic areas of the Multi-Annual Framework and subsequent activities.

EWL recommendations on gender budgeting (GB):

- Establish **GB guidelines at European level and set up also a Gender Budgeting Working Group** within the Budget Directorate General to back up the work of the Inter-Service Group on gender mainstreaming.
- Carry out a **separate gender impact assessment of the EU budget each year**, and introduce a budget heading for activities on gender equality in the budget of each Commission unit.
- Set up a permanent **gender impact assessment procedure for all European Structural Funds, Cohesion Funds and funds related to the European Neighbourhood Policy** with a special attention to fields other than employment. Include a gender clause as part of the specifications in all agreements between the Commission and external contractors, whereby the contractor is obliged to mainstream gender in the tasks assigned (impact assessment, studies etc.) with the support of an expert.

In what policy areas could new gender targets be defined? Which targets should be quantified?

The EWL stresses the need for new targets, which should be both quantitative and qualitative, including:

- Include a European **equal pay target** over 5 years (which could be a target in terms of reducing the pay gap of 10 percentage points in each Member States) and serious monitoring in the revision of the Lisbon Strategy
- Introduce a new target in relation to **care services for dependants other than children** and renew commitments for the realisation of the Barcelona targets.
- Introduce a new target in relation to the **share of parental leave taken by men**.
- Introduce a new target in relation to the **share of part time work done by men**.
- Indicators on **Women's Poverty** – follow-up to the Council's "Review of the implementation by the member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action – Indicators in respect of Women and Poverty" – Draft Council Conclusions", December 2007, 13947/07 ADD 1
- Introduce targets for the **equal representation of women and men in decision-making** at all levels within the European Commission members and amongst officials and experts / working groups / delegations.
- Introduce a target for the improved **representation of women in firms' boards**
- Concrete results on the implementation and monitoring of the **7 indicators on domestic violence** (2002 Danish EU Presidency)



Targets related to **EU funds dedicated to Gender Equality in External and Development Policies**:

- Percentage of funds dedicated to capacity building on mainstreaming gender perspectives in public finances for Finances Officials.
- Percentage of funding for meeting women's specific needs, for example violence against women or sexual and reproductive rights.
- Percentage of EU's funds dedicated to support women's organisations and gender advocating in CSOs in Europe and developing countries.

How can complementarities and synergies between the Commission's initiatives, the actions by the Member States, the actions by Social Partners and organisations representing civil society, both at European and national level, be achieved?

The efficiency of the Strategic Action Plan should be enhanced through a **better coordination between the European Commission and Member States**, especially where actions are shared between the European and national levels, for example for programmes which were referred to as tools in the Roadmap but had to be implemented at the national level.

It would be very important to introduce a system to ensure a **strong institutional link between commitments at the European and national level**, for example through the endorsement of the new Strategic Action Plan by the Council of ministers and regular monitoring.

Especially given the financial crisis and a possible stagnation of available resources, the European Commission should be a model for Member States in relation to be innovative in its financial management and budgetary policies and start to really implement a **gender budgeting strategy**.

Develop coherent strategies on issues for which the EU does not have a direct competence but nevertheless are linked to other competent policy areas. There are a number of intergovernmental initiatives and political commitments that demonstrate the need to reinforce these at EU level (e.g. Barcelona targets on child care, Open Method of Co-ordination on health, long term care and pensions, the effectiveness of the Lisbon strategy particularly in relation to women's employment targets depends on ensuring a broader framework of conditions, such as child-care and addressing violence against women, to enable full participation in the labour-market; reconciliation measures, targeting both women and men, looking at the increasing demand for immigrant domestic workers & the direct link with the gendered factors that influence the immigration process and with the need for improvement of policies promoting the reconciliation of work and private life in the EU.)

In the case of **external relations and development policies**, better coordination between the European Commission and Member States is even more necessary as it is a domain that falls usually out of women's rights or equal opportunities bodies and organisations both at EU, national and local levels. National women's machineries in member states must have the capacity and mandate to participate in external relations and development policies planning and budget allocations for gender equality and women's rights.



What types of improvements should be aimed at concerning the monitoring and the reporting on progress made?

All actors involved and responsible for the achievement of the initiatives listed should be clearly identified and mentioned in the new plan in order to enhance efficiency and cooperation between the services of the European Commission.

Monitoring is of crucial importance but needs to take into account **both quantitative and qualitative dimensions** as the latter is vital in determining issues related to quality and therefore indicators that relate to both are needed, particularly in areas where EU competence is limited. It would be crucial to review and further develop the indicators used to review progress in different areas. The new Strategic Action Plan could include activities linked to the development of such indicators, to be proposed to the Council.

The EU Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men (2006-2010) **has focused mainly on EU internal policies. The objectives set in the Roadmap referring to EU external and development policies are quite general and there are no specific indicators, which make it difficult for measuring progress.** Moreover, **in relation to the area of external relations it does not include any gender equality actions in the area of EU trade policy**, contrary to all others external policies and this despite we know trade policies have a great impact on gender equality, women's empowerment and women's rights worldwide.

The Annual **Reports on Equality between women and men prepared by the Commission** represents the main reporting mechanism of the implementation of the EU's general gender equality strategy. This **report** should involve all relevant services of the EC and be linked to / touch upon all areas of the Strategic Action Plan. Generally, the actions included in those reports linked to gender mainstreaming in external relations are addressed in a rather superficial and fragmented way. **The 2009 Annual Report Equality between Women and Men -2009 (COM(2009)77 final) submitted by the Commission does not include any mention to development, trade or external policies.**

In the area of **Gender Equality in EU Development and External Relations policies**, develop gender-sensitive indicators, tools and methodologies for the evaluation of the quality and development effectiveness of aid, in support of mutual responsibility and accountability for gender equality on the part of both donors and recipients; with resources being allocated to enable women's rights advocates meaningfully participate in national, regional and international processes.



Part II - Specific EWL recommendations for the policy (sub) areas for equality between women and men

The EWL highlights hereunder some of the actions that should be included for each area. Certain areas are more developed than other because they referring to newer aspects of the EU work and require very specific initiating/developing actions by the European Union.

1. Women's Economic Independence

1.1. Improve the relevant EU gender equality legislation

- Review and amend EU gender equality legislation in order to eliminate gaps in the areas covered to ensure at least the same level of legal protection against sex-based discrimination than for other discrimination based on race including concerning discrimination in social protection/ social advantages.
- Eliminate all derogations and exceptions remaining in EU gender equality legislation notably in the field of social security (both statutory and occupational) and goods and services including financial and insurance services (review of article 5 of directive 2004/113).
- Enable victims of multiple-discrimination to be effectively protected through the inclusion of a multiple discrimination clause in gender equality and anti-discrimination legislation.

1.2. Implement stronger action to eliminate the gender pay gap

- Include a new guideline in relation to gender equality and a target related to the elimination of the gender pay gap in the European employment strategy.
- Establishing a European Equal Pay Day
- Continue the previous European Commission campaign on equal pay and create a European Equality award for employers.
- Implement indicators in respect of women and poverty as a tool to monitor the impact of broader social, economic and employment policies on women and poverty
- Address the gender pay gap, including full pay for women during statutory maternity leave and gaps in pension rights.

1.3. Tackle the gendered aspect of poverty and social exclusion¹

¹ Poverty and social exclusion are intrinsically gendered. The pervasive nature of gender inequalities and the uncontested disadvantage of women's position render them more vulnerable than men to poverty. This is because of women's unequal position on the labour market and in relation to unpaid work, their dependency status in social protection systems and their limited pensions. However, the full extent of women's poverty and social exclusion remains hidden. Also, income poverty continues to be measured in terms of household earnings, on the assumption that equality is inherent within the household, obscuring gender inequalities within these units. Poverty also interlinks



- **Follow up actions on the European Year** against poverty and social exclusion should fully integrate a gender equality perspective.
- Guarantee a **minimum income for all**: Income-related poverty is measured against national levels of income below which income poverty threshold is defined; women and men falling below these levels must be guaranteed a minimum income as a means of making a decisive impact on reducing income related poverty.
- Develop an **EU Directive** on Minimum Income, building on the 1992 Recommendation² and the Active Inclusion Recommendation endorsed by the EPSCO Council in December 2008³
- Guarantee **individualised rights** with regards to taxation and social protection entitlements in order to eliminate women's dependency status.
- Assess and redress reform of social protection systems to progress towards gender equality, especially regarding pension rights.
- Guarantee individualised social protection coverage to self-employed workers and their assisting partners.
- Strengthen the Social OMC and in particular the strands relating to long term-care, health and pensions.
- In national reporting, joint report, systematically provide gender disaggregated data and information

2. Reconciliation of Work and Private Life for Women and Men

- The European Commission should propose and the Member States should adopt new legislation in relation to paid paternity leave and other types of family leave
- The targets established during the European Council in Barcelona, which concern the creation of care services for at least 33% of children between 0 and 3 years and 90% of children between 3 years and the age of compulsory education should be pursued and fulfilled as soon as possible
- The EC and Member States should establish new targets for affordable and quality care services for dependants other than young children.

with other gendered phenomena, including violence against women and trafficking, as poverty is one of the factors that propel women and girls into prostitution and trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation. The economic crisis has exacerbated gender inequalities and impacted disproportionately on the female face of poverty and social exclusion. The gendered nature of poverty and social exclusion is further compounded by the urban-rural divide, class, ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, disability and other factors that combine the multiple identities of women.

² 1992 Council Recommendation on "Common criteria concerning sufficient resources and social assistance in social protection systems", 92/441/EEC

³ Commission Recommendation on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market, Brussels, [30.09.2008] C(2008)



- Member States should adopt legislation in relation to paid parental leave, including strong measures to encourage men to avail of such leave provisions.
- Member States should integrate in policy measures encouraging migrant women in employment, specific measures to guarantee access of migrant women to care services for all dependants (children, older people, disabled persons).
- In the drafting of the new regulations on the European Structural Funds, the European Commission should include resources to fund care services and support for families of dependent persons.

3. Promoting women's health⁴

- Work actively to put sexual and reproductive health and rights on the EU agenda, both in internal and external policies. Guarantee all women, irrespective of their legal status, in Europe an equal access to the best standards of sexual and reproductive health and rights. Ensure that international cooperation and assistance respects and supports the realization of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights through the provision of adequate levels of resources.
- Address health issues that affect women directly in European public health policies and integrate a gender equality perspective in the activities of the European Commission the DG on Public Health
- Bodies in charge of gender equality within the EC should establish closer cooperation with the DG on Public Health and support or monitor each others' actions in this area; develop programmes together
- The European Commission through its OMC must encourage Member States to continue to collect statistical information on gender-related health inequalities, and to develop or exchange efficient policies practices in eliminating or diminishing gender-based health inequalities
- By monitoring Member States' policies in the area of social inclusion, advice how to eliminate gender-based differences in access to health and most importantly gender combined with other socioeconomic characteristics, like ethnicity, disability, nationality, location, age and access to health
- The EC should encourage sharing of best practices on culturally sensitive health services developed by service providers to improve the access to health of specific groups of women such as Roma or migrant women
- The EC should continue to support research programmes in the area of health that are focused on specific issues connected to women's health or diseases that affect women more than men or that include a gender dimension.

⁴ The Roadmap 2006-2010 included a small section on gender equality and health but no concrete action was undertaken in this area⁴. In the same way, several important documents adopted at the EU level, like Council Conclusions and European Commission programmes in the area of public health, start to recognise gender equality as an important determinant of health but without implementing specific measures. Thus, the broad gender equality agenda promoted at the EU level should be more consistent and introduce measures related to health, especially women's health.



- Provide regular evaluation and reports on the status of women's health in the EU, having included several other determinants: disability, age, education, professional qualification, employment, civil status, ethnicity, race, location (rural-urban).

4. Equal participation of women and men in decision-making

- **European Commission (EC):** introduce a system whereby each Member States nominates both a woman and a man as candidate commissioners and adopt a rule ensuring that the EC President nominates a European Commission where women and men are equally represented.
- **European Committees and Expert Groups:** Amend Article 2 of European Commission Decision relating to Gender Balance within the Committees and Expert Groups established by it of 19/06/00, to set a 50% women target and a deadline for achieving this target.
- **Staff of the European institutions and of European agencies:** All European institutions and agencies should implement positive action measures for areas and at levels where one sex is under-represented in decision-making and introduce targets and a deadline for achieving these targets
- **Develop and support mentoring programmes,** as well as confidence building, leadership and media relations training for women within the European civil service as well as for groups of women experiencing lower participation in decision-making (e.g. Ethnic minority women, disabled women, migrant women).
- By monitoring Member States policies in this area, ensure that **migrant women** do not face indirect discrimination through procedures of permanent status and citizenship.
- The European Commission should create a **European funding programme** for the empowerment of women within political parties and trade unions.

5. Eradicating all forms of violence against women

In Europe today, one in four women is a victim of violence: domestic abuse, rape, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, pornography, female genital mutilation, prostitution. Violence against women is the most intolerable form of negation of women's human rights. Violence against women takes different forms and crosses across all countries and social classes. Violence against women is a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and the prevention of women's full advancement⁵. Violence against women is an obstacle to the realisation of equality between women and men and requires therefore strong action on the part of the Member States and of the European Commission.

The European Union and its members should take all necessary measures to address and eradicate all forms of violence against women as an inherent part of gender equality strategy, policies and actions.

⁵ Beijing Platform for Action, paragraph 118



- Consolidate the legal base within the current EU structure to ensure that all forms of violence against women are addressed through a broad and feminist definition of male violence against women.
- Bring forward a Directive on Violence against Women that ensures protection and support for women and sanctions for the perpetrators of violence.
- Develop a European Action Plan on violence against women, with specific funding, which expresses an enhanced holistic understanding of male violence against women and its link to issues relating to gender (in)equality, including specific measures to make protection available to all women such as disabled or migrant women, irrespective of their legal status.
- Within the European Action Plan on violence against women, recognise and support the role of women's NGOs working with victim support services, and set precise targets and funding for service provision to victims.
- Ensure that the revision of the family reunification directive guarantees that abused migrant women do not remain legally dependent on the perpetrators of violence

The European Union should ensure ongoing and systematic monitoring to measure progress in relation to the fight against all forms of violence against women.

- Set up a European monitoring framework and mechanism on violence against women to measure progress in relation to the EU commitments and identify gaps and critical emerging issues.
- Designate a Regional European Union Rapporteur on Violence against Women to assist the UN Rapporteur on violence against women in her task at international level.
- Produce annual statistics and data on all forms of violence against women.
- Develop research opportunities on violence against women within the existing EU programmes.

The European Union should prevent and protect women victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, and prosecute buyers and pimps.

- Set up mechanisms to ensure that the gender dimension of trafficking in human beings is part of all policies aimed at preventing and combating trafficking.
- Ensure that women victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation get strengthened rights and support, as well as access to residence permits given the violation of their human rights.
- Address the reduction of demand for sexual exploitation by supporting actions targeting education for equal and respectful relationships between women and men, awareness campaigns especially targeting men, and by sanctioning buyers and pimps.
- Support networking of organisations, especially NGOs, involved in the provision of assistance to victims, rehabilitation and repatriation of women victims of trafficking.



Finally, the European Union should work actively to put **sexual and reproductive health and rights** on the EU agenda, both in internal and external policies. Guarantee all women, irrespective of their legal status, in Europe an equal access to the best standards of sexual and reproductive health and rights. Ensure that international cooperation and assistance respects and supports the realization of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights through the provision of adequate levels of resources.

6. Promoting gender equality in immigration, integration and asylum policies

Despite the gender mainstreaming requirement of the EC Treaty, in practice most of Member States and the European Union fail to effectively integrate a gender perspective in their policies on immigration, integration and asylum. We have nevertheless seen an increasing acknowledgement of this need to integrate a gender perspective in recent policy papers at the EU level⁶, but how this will be done still remains to be seen and will be one of the main challenges in the future. The gender bias of current policies needs to be urgently addressed. A close look at immigration, integration and asylum policies show that:

- Immigration policies seem to still adopt a gender-neutral approach that might have an indirect discriminatory effect on women ex: high-skilled workers migration included in the Policy Plan on Legal Migration for 2007-2009 and selections systems favouring men.
- Integration policies seem to pay much more attention to migrant women, but mostly to strengthen their integration in the labour market and lack a comprehensive picture of integration beyond employment.
- There is a great disparity in the recognition of gender-based persecution among EU Member States, which is very problematic in the current Dublin system which obliges asylum seekers to apply in the first country they entered the EU.

Recommendations:

- As highlighted by the OSCE (2009), there is an **urgent need to frame gender-sensitive labour migration policies** which develop enabling environments that provide equality of employment opportunity and access to benefits to both migrant men and women; follow a “two-way” approach, encompassing general migrant protection provisions and those specifically targeting female migrant workers in order to empower them with choices, access resources and claim rights; Introduce temporary special measures to compensate for past discrimination that may adversely affect female migrants' current situation.
- Member States should ensure that **labour market needs assessment carried out in their countries take into account the needs for domestic and private care-related work.**

⁶ See for example: The European Commission's Communication on “A common agenda for Integration” COM (2005) 389; The European Parliament Kratsa report on Immigrant women in the EU (2005); The “Roadmap for equality between women and men” (2006); The Recommendation 1732 and Resolution 1478 (2006) of the Council of Europe; European Commission Policy Plan on Asylum COM (2008) 360 and Vichy Ministerial Declaration on Integration (2008).



- **Gender-impact assessment of bilateral labour agreements and all migration policies**, including family reunification, must be conducted to ensure that these policies do not discriminate indirectly or directly migrant women
- **Establish a Gender Unit within the European Asylum Support Office** Such a Unit would prove vital in providing an institutional framework to co-ordinate gender specific issues within the broader asylum support system.
- Member states should adopt and the European Commission should promote **Gender-sensitive asylum guidelines**. Within the framework of Practical Co-operation, an EU ad-hoc gender expert group should be established and promote EU gender-sensitive asylum guidelines with the aim of assisting asylum determination authorities in interpreting gender-specific asylum claims.
- The European Commission should ensure that **benchmarking indicators of integration policies integrate a gender equality perspective** and pay specific attention to the different needs of migrant women
- **Develop gender-disaggregated data and studies**. It is particularly urgent in the context of the Dublin system to undertake a study on the disparities between Member States concerning the grant of protection on the basis of gender-based persecution and the forms this protection takes.

7. Eliminating gender stereotypes including in education and media

- In the context of the review of the implementation of directive 2004/113, the Commission should fill the existing gap in scope between European legislation on racial and on sex-based discrimination and propose **new legislation prohibiting sex-based discrimination in education and the media**. Member States should support this legislation through the legislative process.
- The European Commission should put together best practice in relation to **gender sensitive education material and curricula** at all levels including for the training of teachers and promote these across the Member States.
- Ensure that **life-long learning** opportunities are available to women that support the development and recognition of broad pre-labour-market skills such as: empowerment, capacity building, support systems and basic skills training: reading-writing, language, digital learning including the internet.
- Member States should fully transpose and implement directive 2007/65 on audiovisual media services, including the prohibition in commercial communications of discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.
- Establish a European Media Monitoring Group with a specific gender equality branch and expertise in order to receive complaints from the public, to grant gender equality awards to media and advertisement professionals, to study and report on the question of women in the media and to carry out regular, systematic monitoring of gender images in media content.
- Develop and encourage training programmes on stereotypes and anti-discrimination for media professionals.



- Develop research and recent comparable data concerning women & media.
- In the context of the European Presidencies, give political support to combating sexism and the stereotyping of women in the media and undertake concrete initiatives to raise awareness on this issue.
- Member States should develop safeguards (in the form of ombudspersons or media watch authorities which should include gender equality experts) to ensure that industrial codes of conduct include a gender equality perspective are being adhered to and to ensure that the public can lodge complaints if necessary.
- Ensure that all initiatives on media and diversity, including the ones developed by the Fundamental Rights Agency, pay specific attention to combating the gendered representations of different groups of women and to the need to have women media professionals in high-level positions as well as making the media

8. Promoting gender equality outside the EU

The gender mainstreaming obligation is reinforced by the Lisbon Treaty. European actions, policies and programmes in relation to development, security and foreign policies should therefore contain a gender equality perspective and actively contribute to the promotion of women's rights and gender equality worldwide.

- The EU approach to gender in development in practice must **avoid giving women an instrumental role**. The EU anti-poverty programmes, proposed to alleviate the impact of neo-liberal reforms, have shown a tendency to reinforce conservative views of the role of women in the family, giving rise to a language of vulnerability and exclusion. The approach to gender equality in development policies should rather be grounded on women's rights and historical social inequality, which reflects systems and practices resulting in different forms of social inequality and discrimination.
- **The Gender Action Plan on Gender Equality and Development (GAP)** that is currently being draft must be linked to the new EU Strategic Plan of Action for Equality in terms of coherence and accountability mechanisms.
- **The priority area of EU External Relations needs an increase of resources to be implemented**. The funding made available to support the integration of gender equality issues into development cooperation is insignificant when compared with the resources earmarked for other horizontal measures. Only 5% of the DCI funds for the thematic programme 'Investing in People' (2007-2013) are allocated to gender equality (57 million out of 1 billion) and regional and country strategy papers do not give an overview of budget allocation to gender equality since gender is only mentioned as a cross-cutting issue and thus no financial details are provided⁷. The EU provides over half of global aid it therefore has a responsibility to take a leadership role by radically improving the quantity and quality of its aid.
- The EU and member states must **fulfill their commitments to increase the quantity and quality of Official Development Assistance (ODA)**, including addressing the negative effects of the crisis in developing countries, particularly on gender equality and women's empowerment.

⁷ EU Parliament Resolution of 13 March 2008 on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation.



- **It is also necessary to improve tools and mechanism for promoting transparency in the allocation of the funds:** to date, no agreed system-wide tracking mechanism exists to assess the amount of aid allocated to gender equality or women's empowerment
- Reinforce the gender perspective in the **EU Common Security and Defence Policy**. Condemn all forms of gender-based violence in situations of armed conflicts and post-conflict societies.
- The EU and Member States should reaffirm commitment to implement **UN Security Council resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889** through a European Action Plan and adequate and sustainable funding for women's equal participation in peace building, conflict prevention and conflict resolution processes.
- In order to assure women's economic and social empowerment and sustainable development it is important to address the **relationship between gender and trade and to link the macro-economic perspective to the micro and meso level perspective**⁸ in developing countries.
- **The EU must increase the funds to support women's and women's rights organisations** as key actors in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide. Women's organisations should receive substantial, predictable and multi-year core funding.

⁸ Enterprise, communities, local authorities, etc.