



19 April 2010

European Women's Lobby 12 Priorities for the Belgian Presidency of the European Union

On 01 July 2010, the Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU) will pass from Spain to Belgium. The European Women's Lobby (EWL), with more than 2500 member organisations the largest association of women's organisations in the EU, calls on the Belgian Presidency to continue to be a driving force for women's rights in Europe and, in particular, to ensure the consistent and effective implementation of European Union legislation guaranteeing equality between women and men, including as regards the new provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon, which came into force on 01 December 2009.

Furthermore, the EWL hereby expresses its hope that the Belgian Presidency will provide during its tenure progressive and ambitious leadership to the Council of the European Union in its policy and legislative tasks, and ensure concrete and significant advances in equality between women and men throughout the EU.

The European Women's Lobby calls on the Belgian Presidency to:

1. Take the lead in ensuring the adoption of a **strong new Strategic Action Plan for Effective Equality between Women and Men** to replace the current Roadmap¹, covering a broad range of areas and including specific measures, targets and a budget and the adoption of a **strong accompanying instrument by the Council of Ministers** to follow up on the Gender Pact.
2. Come up with a **concrete proposal of a European Strategy on eradicating all forms of male violence against women** in Europe and call on the European Commission and the Council to work on legal instruments as part of this Strategy for a Europe free of all forms of male violence against women (including prostitution). Ensure that the work of the European Commission on trafficking in human beings includes a gender equality dimension and propose further measures to prevent trafficking in women for sexual exploitation and to protect, assist and support victims.
3. **Take a leadership role in the Council negotiations for the swift adoption of the new anti-discrimination Directive** on grounds of religion or belief, age, disability or sexual orientation building on the European Parliament Resolution² and the proposals made by the EWL and anti-discrimination networks. Support, in the context of the review of the 2004 Goods and Services Directive, a proposal towards the elimination of all derogations and exceptions remaining in EU gender equality legislation.
4. Ensure that the promotion of equality between women and men, quality employment for women and men, social services and sustainable social development are at the core of the implementation, reporting and monitoring mechanisms of the **Europe 2020 Strategy**. This includes the inclusion of a **specific gender equality**

¹ For more details, see the EWL response to the EC consultation on the future of European gender equality policies (October 2009) see: http://www.womenlobby.org/site/1abstract.asp?DocID=2617&v1ID=&RevID=&namePage=&pageParent=&DocID_sousmenu=&parentCat=15

² European Parliament legislative Resolution of 02 April 2009 on the proposal for a Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (COM(2008)0426 – C6-0291/2008 – 2008/0140(CNS)), available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2009-0211+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>



priority and of **new gender equality-related targets**, notably on closing the gender pay gap, improving the participation of women in boards of enterprises and in entrepreneurship and on the provision of care services for all dependants. Also, ensure that any measures are gender mainstreamed, including provisions on life-long learning and professional training, on green jobs, on restructuring.

5. Ensure the adoption of an ambitious **EU maternity leave Directive** by the Council to grant to all women in Europe at least 20 weeks maternity leave, paid to the level of the last monthly salary. This Directive should also ensure better legal protection from dismissal and more flexible working-time arrangements for mothers.
6. Ensure the adoption by the Council of the **Directive on self-employed workers** (repealing Directive 86/613 on self-employed workers and assisting spouses).
7. Take concrete steps for the introduction of efficient and binding measures for the **equal representation of women and men within the European Institutions**.
8. Ensure that health inequalities in Europe are tackled and that all women benefit from the highest standards of **sexual and reproductive health and rights**, in particular women from vulnerable groups who are at risk of discriminatory practices (forced sterilisation, forced genital mutilation, lack of access to safe abortion, lack of access to family planning, etc.).
9. Ensure that the EU commits to the implementation of the United Nation Security Council Resolutions on **Women, Peace and Security**, including Resolutions 1888 and 1889 adopted in September 2009, through a **European Action Plan**, the use of the indicators contained in Resolution 1889, the nomination of an **EU Special Representative** to liaise with the new UN Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security, and the celebration of the 10th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 in 2010.
10. Ensure the strong integration of a gender equality perspective in the **new strategy on integration of Third Country Nationals** as well as in the negotiations around the Asylum Recast Directives on qualification and procedures. Support and actively promote the establishment of a Gender Unit in the European Asylum Support Office. Ensure the full consultation of civil society, including migrants' organisations, in these processes.
11. Take the lead in ensuring the swift creation of a **strong composite United Nations entity (combining policy and operational activities) focused on women's rights and gender equality**, provided with adequate resources and under the direction of an Under Secretary-General.
12. **Take steps to address current cutbacks in resources for EU level and governmental and nongovernmental work on women's right and gender equality** in internal and external policies and in relation to public services, ensuring that there is no regression in the progress made over the last decades and that women do not serve as a buffer for the direct and indirect effects of the economic, social and financial crisis. In this context, introduce rules to ensure that at least **20% of Official Development Aid** at the national and European level, including in the context of Neighborhood Policy Programmes and pre-accession assistance are devoted to women's rights and gender equality.