



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S  
LOBBY  
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

# STATEMENT

16 February 2012

## European Women's Lobby key messages to the EPSCO Council on the Annual Growth Survey 2012

### Gender equality is a prerequisite for economic and social development in Europe

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) continues to closely monitor the overall implementation of the 2020 Strategy at EU and national levels from a women's rights and gender equality perspective. The EWL recalls that the EPSCO Council adopted in March 2011 the **European Pact for Gender Equality 2011-2020**, inviting the Commission and the Council to *incorporate a gender equality perspective into the Annual Growth Survey, the Country Opinions and the Country Specific Recommendations*. The EWL regrets that the Commission did not follow this invitation in the Annual Growth Survey 2012. To bridge this gap, the EWL proposes the following recommendations as a contribution to the European Semester process to ensure that gender equality is central to the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy and mirrored at the national level in the National Reform Programmes and National Stability and Convergence Programmes, as well as in all policy guidance and the Flagship Initiatives at EU level.

### EIGHT KEY MESSAGES

1. **Gender is a structural macroeconomic factor, not an issue of discrimination or a minority issue.**
2. **EU's macroeconomic reality is strongly gendered particularly with regards to employment, growth, innovation, demographic developments, poverty and social exclusion.**
3. **Short sighted austerity measures have long term repercussions for employment, innovation, growth, demographic developments, poverty and social exclusion. Women's situation in Europe is getting worse because of the impact of the crisis and subsequent austerity measures.**
4. **Growth and innovation can only happen when all of the talent pool is included. This requires removing persistent obstacles to women's equal participation and representation, taking into account all different groups of women.**
5. **Facilitating female labour market participation requires addressing entrenched gender gaps, with regards to: pay, care, labour-market segregation and patterns of work, economic decision-making.**
6. **The full potential for growth and innovation is undermined by the underuse of and highly educated female talent pool.**
7. **Demographic trends depend on valuing care and meeting commitments, particular reaching the Barcelona Targets on childcare, commitments for the care of elderly and/or dependent family members and support to independent living.**
8. **The impact of pension reforms in the absence of a gender equality perspective directly effects women's economic independence and the feminisation of poverty and social exclusion.**



## EWL recommendations to policy makers

The European Women's Lobby agrees with the Commission's view expressed in the introduction to the Annual Growth Survey 2012 (AGS) that *too much political time and energy is being spent on emergency measures and not enough time is being devoted to implementing the policy changes that will bring our economies back to higher growth levels*<sup>1</sup>.

In particular attention must be drawn to the fact that short sighted austerity measures which disregard gender as a structuring socio-economic factor have long term repercussions for employment, innovation, growth, demographic developments, poverty and social exclusion.

### The EWL calls on:

1. The European Council to promote **gender sensitive economic analysis and tools** in all policy guidance to member states.
2. The Member States to apply **gender mainstreaming** in their National Reform Progress and National Stability and Convergence Programmes.
3. Member States and the European Commission to assess austerity measures from a gender perspective particularly with regards to employment, innovation, growth, poverty and social exclusion by:
  - Developing and using **gender disaggregated data** throughout the European Semester, particularly in National Reform Programmes, Country Specific Recommendations and National Stability and Convergence Programmes;
  - Assessing the **macroeconomic impact** of women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work in terms of employment rates and **net GDP losses**.
4. The European Commission to:
  - Rigorously integrate a gender socio-economic perspective into the future Annual Growth Surveys as stated in the **European Pact for Gender Equality 2011-2020**;
  - Ensure that commitments to **gender mainstreaming** are translated to practice by applying gender impact assessments and gender mainstreaming tools throughout the European Semester processes including in NRP assessments, Country Specific Recommendations and Progress Report.

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) is the largest umbrella organisation of women's associations in the European Union (EU), working to promote women's rights and equality between women and men. EWL membership extends to organisations in all 27 EU member states and the three candidate countries, as well as to 20 European-wide bodies, representing a total of more than 2000 organisations.

<sup>1</sup> Annual Growth Survey Introduction p 2, COMM(2011) 815 final VOL. 1/5