



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S  
**LOBBY**  
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

Attn: Heads of State of EU Member States attending the European Council of 24 and 25 March 2011

**RE: Economic governance without a women's rights and gender equality perspective undermines the inclusive objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy**

Brussels, 21 March 2011

Your Excellency,

The European Women's Lobby (EWL), the largest coalition of women's organisations in the European Union (EU), is closely following the first steps of the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the first European Semester and believes that the priorities chosen in the coming months will set an example for the future implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy, and determine where European women and men will be socially and economically ten years from now.

The EWL regrets that the proposals made in the Annual Growth Survey about the measures Member States should implement to reach the Europe 2020 targets focus on short-term economic recovery through further austerity cuts and on a traditional short-sighted concept of growth, thus ignoring the inclusive objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Furthermore, the gender-blindness of this policy guidance risks having drastic implications for European women who already bear the brunt of the effects of the crisis and of the subsequent austerity measures. Ahead of the European Council of 24 and 25 March 2011, the EWL wishes to make three recommendations to better integrate equality between women and men into the governance and implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy, and to lay solid foundations for the inclusive and social dimension of this Strategy to really deliver for European women and men:

1. To counter the effects of the crisis and the austerity measures on women and to avoid further calamities, a women's right and gender equality perspective must be integrated into all aspects of economic policy coordination between the EU and the Member States.
2. The labour market reforms proposed in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy fail to address long-standing gender inequalities in the labour market; more focus on women's differentiated needs for quality employment and social protection and the development of a care economy is needed to ensure gender equality and inclusive growth.
3. Further austerity cuts on public spending risk aggravating women's poverty; addressing women's poverty and social exclusion requires integrating women's needs and situations in poverty-related measures as well as better policy coordination.



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The forthcoming Spring European Council is expected to endorse the renewed European Pact for Gender Equality 2011-2020, adopted on 7 March 2011 by the Employment, Social, Health, and Consumer Affairs Council. The EWL welcomes the renewed commitment of the Member States to the fulfilment of the EU Treaty ambitions in relation to equality between women and men through the adoption of this new Gender Pact. However, the EWL regrets that no binding concrete measures, including targets, are foreseen in the Pact, except the renewed commitment to the Barcelona childcare objectives. The EWL also regrets that the issue of equality between women and men is approached through this predominantly economic perspective, which is of course important, but this issue is therefore not put in the framework of human rights, which are at the core of European values, aiming at reaching equality between women and men and guaranteeing women's rights and human rights for all, ensuring dignity, democracy justice and integrity.

The European Women's Lobby welcomes the requests made in the Gender Equality Pact to integrate gender equality in the governance and implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy. We trust that the Council and the Member States will without delay take the necessary steps in line with this commitment. This will require mainstreaming gender through the whole process of implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy, including as regards the policy guidance that the forthcoming European Council will give to the Member States. We also expect that the Member States integrate the commitments made in the Gender Pact in their National Reform Programmes to be finalised in April and introduce concrete measures to promote women's rights and gender equality, as well as a timeline to achieve the Barcelona childcare targets.

The EWL's three recommendations as regards the Europe 2020 Strategy are detailed in the EWL Statement "Economic governance without a women's rights and gender equality perspective undermines the inclusive objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy." The EWL Statement on the European Pact for Gender Equality provides detailed comments on the different sections of the Pact, regarding governance, labour market, conciliation of private and working life and violence against women. We attach both statements for your attention.

I thank you warmly for giving our recommendations the consideration they deserve.

Sincerely yours,

Brigitte Triems  
EWL President