



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
LOBBY
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

President of the European Commission José Manuel BARROSO
European Commission

Cc: Vice-President Viviane Reding
Commissioner László Andor
Ms Catherine Day, European Commission Secretary General
Mr Aurel Ciobanu-Dordea, Director for Equality of DG Justice
Ms Daniela Bankier, Head of Unit Equality between Women and Men
Head of Cabinet of Commission President Barroso
Head of Cabinet of Vice-President Reding
Head of Cabinet of Commissioner Andor

RE: Integration of a gender equality perspective in the Annual Growth Survey 2012 and the next European Semester

Brussels, 18 November 2011

Dear President Barroso,

We write on behalf of the European Women's Lobby, the largest umbrella organisation of women's associations in the EU, represented in 30 countries, to call on you to ensure that a gender equality perspective is firmly integrated into the forthcoming Annual Growth Survey, scheduled to be adopted by the Commission on 23 November 2011.

I wish to recall the commitments made by the Council in March 2011¹ in adopting the 'European Pact for Gender Equality 2011-2020,' to take the gender perspective into account in the mechanisms of the Europe 2020 Strategy:

Specifically, the Pact states:

'When developing and implementing their National Reform Programmes, the Member States are encouraged to apply a gender equality perspective and to promote gender equality policies, especially concerning the Employment Guidelines, and invited to make appropriate use of agreed gender equality indicators developed within the Joint Assessment Framework and within the follow-up of the Beijing Platform for Action in all relevant policy areas and processes.'

The Commission and the Council are also invited to incorporate a gender equality perspective into the Annual Growth Survey, the Country Opinions and the Country Specific Recommendations.'

The European Women's Lobby closely followed the first European Semester. Despite the commitments made in the Pact for Gender Equality, the outcomes did not meet our expectations. Most National Reform Programmes addressed gender equality in a narrow sense with the aim to increase women's employment rate and did not

¹ Council of the European Union Council conclusions on the European Pact for gender equality for the period 2011-2020, 3073th Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs, Council meeting Brussels, 7 March 2011.

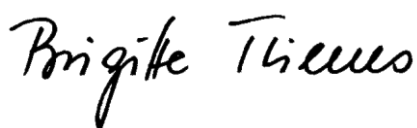
implement gender mainstreaming across all the policy areas involved. We very much welcome the fact that many of the Country Specific Recommendations proposed by the Commission mentioned childcare, reconciliation of work and family life and the gender pay gap, but we would like to see equality between women and men addressed in a more consistent manner, including in relation to assessing the gender impact of all recommendations.

In order to ensure that the outcomes of the European Semester 2012 will be in line with the commitments of the Pact for Equality between Women and Men, the Annual Growth Survey 2012 should:

1. Firmly establish gender equality as an overall principle, as enshrined in the Treaties articles 2, 3(3), 8 and 141.
2. Require the Member States to address the gendered impact of the current crisis and the gender inequalities in and outside of the labour market to address barriers that prevent women from participating in the labour market on an equal standing with men and contribute to their social exclusion.
3. Be gender sensitive to ensure that the policy guidance will not have a disproportionate negative impact on women.

We very much hope that you will be able to give this issue your utmost attention.
We look forward to the adoption of a gender-sensitive Annual Growth Survey.

Sincerely yours,



Brigitte Triems
President



Cécile Gréboval
Secretary General