



Ministry of Labour
And Social Policy
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Trio Presidency Declaration

Poland, Denmark and Cyprus, the Member States holding the Presidency during the 18-month period from July 2011 to December 2012, hereby present this joint declaration at the informal meeting of the Ministers for Gender Equality and Family Affairs on 21 October 2011 in Cracow.

WHEREAS

- Equality between women and men is a fundamental value of the European Union enshrined in the Treaties and is one of the objectives and tasks of the European Union, and mainstreaming the principle of equality between women and men in all its activities represents a general aim for the Union.
- Ensuring equal opportunities in practice is an urgent priority in a broad range of policy areas. Gender equality needs to be part of horizontal strategies as well targeted policies in specific areas. Also, it is a prerequisite for ensuring growth, prosperity and welfare; in particular, gender equality is a prerequisite for meeting the headline targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy, especially in the field of employment.
- There is a need to ensure that both women and men can make full use of their abilities and qualifications, in order for gender equality to become a win-win situation for all.
- The European Union cannot afford to waste its human capital. Too many women and men are still denied the chance to realise their full potential and face barriers and difficulties in their work life and in the educational system.
- There is a need to think innovatively if Europe is to compete successfully on the global stage. The contribution of all European women and men is needed, regardless of their racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, age or sexual orientation, and whether or not they have a disability.
- It is necessary to make further progress on gender equality, including by ensuring equal access to the labour market, equal pay and quality jobs for all, as well as by encouraging boys and men to enter and remain in education. Efforts are needed to break down gender stereotypes that lead to horizontal and vertical segregation. Encouraging both women and men to participate fully in the sharing of domestic responsibilities will also help families to reconcile work and private life, which will raise the birth rate and thus contribute to meeting the demographic challenges.



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RECALLING

- The Commission's Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015, which suggests a wide range of activities to promote gender equality in regard to equal economic independence; equal pay for equal work and work of equal value; equality in decision-making; dignity, integrity and an end to gender-based violence; and gender equality in external relations; and which highlights horizontal issues such as the importance of gender mainstreaming as a working method and the role of men in the promotion of gender equality.
- The European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020) in which the Council acknowledged that "equality between women and men is a fundamental value of the European Union and that gender equality policies are vital to economic growth, prosperity and competitiveness". The Council also stated that five years after the adoption of the first European Pact for Gender Equality, a new impetus is needed, particularly in order to reaffirm and support the close link between the Commission's Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015 and the Europe 2020 Strategy.
- The Beijing declaration and Platform for Action and the twelve critical areas of concern identified therein.

STRESSING THAT

- A gender perspective is needed in the Europe 2020 Strategy. Women represent 60% of university graduates; however they are not yet able to make a corresponding contribution in the labour market. Smart growth needs to be based on the contribution by both women and men. The ambitious headline target of aiming to raise to 75% the employment rate of women and men aged 20-64 cannot be reached without significantly boosting women's participation in the labour market.
- Allowing women to fulfil their potential is also a prerequisite for strengthening competitiveness and social cohesion, including in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Over the last decade, studies have shown the positive impact of gender equality on economic development. Gender equality can be a productive factor and female participation in the labour market is beneficial both for economic and social development. Indeed, studies suggest that, if the labour market participation of women equalled that of men, economic growth would be boosted, increasing GNP by as much as 27%.
- It is crucial to promote innovative work-life balance policies in order to facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life for both women and men and to reduce labour market segmentation. In line with the Commission's Annual Growth Survey and Joint Employment Report adopted in January 2011, a number of issues require immediate attention at EU and national level, including the lack of care services for children and other dependants; the unequal sharing of child care responsibilities and domestic chores between women and men; and the need for flexible working arrangements for those returning from parental leave.



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THE TRIO PRESIDENCY:

UNDERLINES

- That the strong correlation between gender equality and economic competitiveness should be brought to the attention of policy-makers, the social partners, the EU institutions, decision-makers and civil society organisations, with a view to helping them to incorporate gender equality into their local, regional, national and EU priorities.
- The need to pursue a dual approach: *gender mainstreaming* by integrating the gender perspective into all policy areas, combined with *specific measures*.
- The need to ensure the effective dissemination of information relating to the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees in matters concerning gender equality.

EMPHASISES THE NEED TO ENSURE PROGRESS IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

- *Tackling educational choices predetermined by gender, combating gender stereotypes and reaping the benefits of increased gender diversity in all spheres of life.* In the European Union, education and career choices are still unduly influenced by gender stereotypes. Although women generally have attained high levels of education, they still face a gender-segregated labour market and barriers on the way to management positions. In Europe today, women represent only 30 percent of all scientists. Although men still have a higher employment rate, they are largely confined to traditional male jobs. Boys face difficulties within the school system; indeed, across Europe, an increasing number of boys are dropping out of the education system altogether. In order to utilise the full potential of both women and men, there is a need for further awareness-raising and for action to combat stereotypes in education, the media and public life. In order to ensure equal opportunities for men in the education system it is essential to promote targeted policies and programs as well as the exchange good practice. Gender sensitive goals for education should be set, in order to ensure that the gender dimension and equality of opportunity in all areas of life are emphasised as part of the school curriculum, since gender equality is a principle that needs to be implemented from an early age. Increased gender diversity will also help to create a more flexible and competitive labour market
- *The need to ensure equality at all levels of decision-making.* It is necessary to increase the number of women in top management and public life, including in order to reflect the increased complexity and diversity of the global economy.
- *Promoting work-life balance in order to allow both women and men to participate in the labour market.* A better sharing of care responsibilities, including through concrete measures to promote the reconciliation of work, family and private life, will give women a better chance to participate in the labour market; this is necessary if Europe is to reach the goal of a 75% employment rate for both women and men, which in turn



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will contribute to economic growth and social progress. Encouraging more fathers to make full use of paternity and parental leave will allow women to better balance their work, family and private life, and will help to challenge the misconception that having children is women's responsibility alone.

- *Including a gender perspective when addressing the demographic challenges in the EU.* The European population is ageing and this will affect women and men differently, including within health and security systems. A gender perspective should hence be applied when addressing the demographic challenges in the EU.

ACTIVITIES TO BE CARRIED OUT DURING THE POLISH, DANISH AND CYPRUS PRESIDENCIES

The Trio Presidency will encourage discussion and ensure the exchange of good practice in the above-described areas.

New knowledge and new indicators for monitoring progress will be presented at the EU level, and political discussions on the way forward will take place in all appropriate fora, including the EPSCO Council.

POLAND

- As part of the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action, Poland has taken up the critical area "*Women and the economy*", with a specific focus on gender equality and the reconciliation of work and family life. A background report on the situation in the Member States prepared by the European Institute for Gender Equality based on existing EU indicators has been presented and a set of Conclusions will be adopted by the EPSCO Council on 1 December 2011.
- To ensure the continued cooperation between the Member States and the Commission, Poland hosted a meeting of the High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming on 5-6 September 2011 in Warsaw.
- To enrich EU discussion on gender equality, during the Third European Congress of Women on 17–18 September 2011 in Warsaw, a special EU Ministerial Round Table on "*Women in the labour market*" was organised. The discussion focused on the reconciliation of work and family life for women and men, closing the gender pay gap and increasing the number of women in decision-making positions, including company boards.
- At an Informal Meeting that took place on 21 October 2011 in Cracow, Ministers for Gender Equality and Family Affairs held a political discussion on the issue of reconciliation policy. An expert conference was organised in parallel on 20-21 October, which focused on "*Mechanisms for reconciling work and family life for women and men as a chance to actively participate in the labour market*".
- The Equality Summit will be held in Poznań on 14-15 November 2011.
- Strong support for the European campaign against domestic violence will be given at the Conference: "*I love, I do not hit – Europe without domestic violence*" in December 2011 in Warsaw.



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DENMARK

- Gender segregation within education presents a challenge for many countries. Too often, girls and boys are unable to choose their education freely, based on their competences, interests or talents, as they are under pressure to meet outdated gender-based expectations. Best practices on how to widen the choices available to each girl and boy will be developed during the Danish Presidency and shared with partners.
- Specifically: women often shy away from science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), disciplines which are the basis for the skills of the future, as we seek to make our economies greener and more sustainable. In order to design more targeted and diverse policies on climate change and the green economy, there is a need to recruit more women into the sector. The Danish Presidency will facilitate political discussions on future EU measures and priorities. In addition, the question of how to increase the number of women in green jobs will be addressed through concrete examples and the exchange of good practice at seminars and conferences.
- As part of the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action, Denmark will take up the critical area "Women and the environment," with a specific focus on gender equality and climate change. A report on the situation in the EU Member States will be prepared and indicators will be presented in a set of Conclusions to be adopted by the EPSCO Council.
- In close cooperation with the European External Action Service, the Danish Presidency will ensure a strong EU commitment at the 56th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.
- To ensure the continued cooperation between the Member States and the Commission, Denmark will host a meeting of the High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming on 26-27 January 2012.

CYPRUS

- As part of the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action, Cyprus will take up the critical area "Violence against Women," with a specific focus on victim support. The report on the situation in the Member States and the review of the existing EU indicators will be presented as part of a set of Conclusions to be adopted by the EPSCO Council.
- To ensure the continued cooperation between the Member States and the Commission, Cyprus will host a meeting of the High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming in Nicosia, in September 2012.
- A Conference on Violence Against Women, aiming at the review of progress at the EU level and the exchange of good practice between the Member States in this field, will be organised in Nicosia, in November 2012, with the participation of all stakeholders.
- A tripartite Conference will be organised for the exchange of good practice with respect to reducing the gender pay gap. Governmental officials, trade unions and employer organisations will be participating. "Challenging gender stereotypes in occupations by eliminating segregation" will be the thematic priority of the Conference.