



European Economic and Social Committee

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The roadmap for equality
between women and men
(2006-2010) and follow-up
strategy

Brussels, 17 March 2010

OPINION

of the

European Economic and Social Committee

on

The roadmap for equality between women and men (2006-2010) and follow-up strategy

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In a letter dated 25 September 2009, the Vice-President of the European Commission Margot Wallström asked the European Economic and Social Committee to draw up, under Article 262 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, an exploratory opinion on

The roadmap for equality between women and men (2006-2010) and follow-up strategy.

The Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship, which was responsible for the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its opinion on 23 February 2010.

At its 461st plenary session, held on 17 and 18 March 2010 (meeting of 17 March), the European Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion by 137 votes to three, with five abstentions.

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1. **Recommendations**

- 1.1 In addition to being an aim in itself, equality between women and men is a prerequisite for meeting the EU's aims for growth, employment and social cohesion.
- 1.2 The Mid-term assessment of the roadmap for equality is taking place at a time of economic crisis. It is important to note the impact and consequences of this crisis on women and men, given their different positions in society.
- 1.3 Equality should be mainstreamed into all policies, especially social and employment policies, and efforts should be furthered to remove barriers preventing women and men from participating fully and equally in the labour market.
- 1.4 To ensure and improve women's financial independence, both the quantity and the quality of female employment should be improved, including support for the self-employed. The risk faced by women of falling into a precarious situation must be addressed and a fair distribution of family and domestic responsibilities encouraged.
- 1.5 Unequal pay has structural causes: the undervaluing of skills traditionally viewed as female, occupational and sectoral segregation, precarious employment, breaks in working life, etc. Legislation and collective agreements are effective instruments for tackling the issue of unequal pay, with the need for all economic and social stakeholders to be involved.

- 1.6 The greater presence of women in business and political activities fosters equality, women's economic independence, victory over gender stereotypes and the promotion of women in the decision-making process.
- 1.7 Women are particularly vulnerable to social exclusion and poverty. Tailoring social rights to individual needs, a guaranteed minimum income and taking into account periods of inactivity and reduced working hours enabling women to take care of a relative/dependent are measures that improve social protection and lower the risk of people falling into poverty.
- 1.8 Reconciling family life and work is crucial to achieving equality and improving jobs for women: high-quality public social services and improvements to existing maternity, paternity and parental leave. Progress needs to be made on all social stakeholders accepting responsibility for ensuring that household and caring tasks are fairly divided.
- 1.9 The EESC considers that the equal representation of women in decision-making must be promoted and that the Member States should, therefore, make a greater commitment, by setting clear goals and implementing effective measures such as positive action, equality plans, etc.
- 1.10 Given the persistence of gender-based violence and human trafficking, the Committee is of the view that current legislation should be enforced and national action plans should be drawn up, coordinated by a global European strategy, and that specific programmes in the field should be boosted.
- 1.11 To combat sexist stereotypes the EESC considers it is essential to educate society along non-sexist lines, offering training to both men and women, encouraging more women to study science and technology, attaching greater value to jobs traditionally viewed as 'female' and avoiding sexism in the media.
- 1.12 Use should be made of the EU's foreign and development policy to promote women's rights on the international stage, improving their skills and empowerment.
- 1.13 The EESC considers that gender analysis needs to be fully mainstreamed into all of the Commission's spheres of activity and should be recognised in European and national budgets. Staff trained in equality issues will be needed to ensure this, in addition to indicators broken down by gender that help show the situation affecting women and men and assess the degree of compliance with the equality plan.
- 1.14 In the new equality strategy to be followed from 2010 the objectives cannot become mere recommendations from the Commission to the Member States. Instead, they should be binding directives with quantifiable objectives. Greater political involvement is therefore required at all levels. The EU institutions must lead by example, looking at a proactive review of work done and an impact assessment on implementation.

2. General comments

- 2.1 The Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010 demonstrates the European Commission's commitment, working together with the Member States, to making progress on equality. At the Commission's request, the EESC is carrying out a review of the roadmap for equality, studying the impact of the measures adopted and the extent to which they have been achieved, and is also making proposals for action for the new strategy in 2010.
- 2.2 The EESC acknowledges the EU's wide-reaching commitment to equality: the 1957 Treaty of Rome introduces the principle of equal pay, the 1999 Treaty of Amsterdam adopts a dual approach which combines a cross-sectoral method with specific measures and the Treaty of Lisbon gives an explicit commitment to eliminating inequalities and promoting equality.
- 2.3 At the international level, the EU has signed up to the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Goals, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which places women firmly at the centre of human rights concerns.
- 2.4 Despite this broad regulatory framework, the stated aims have not been achieved and inequality between women and men is still a reality. No significant progress has been made in any of the six priority areas for political action set out in the roadmap for equality between women and men (2006-2010). In light of this, real political will to make change has to be questioned. Incorporating the principle of gender equality, which is a key factor for competitiveness and growth, should be a priority for the EU's new 2020 Action Strategy.
- 2.5 The evaluation of the roadmap for equality between women and men (2006-2010) is being carried out during an economic downturn, and the implications of the crisis for women need to be studied, given their different position in the labour market and in public social spending policies, especially those concerning social services, which are the policies that most affect women.
- 2.6 The crisis has affected in the first place sectors traditionally occupied by men, such as construction, transport and industry, and has subsequently spread to other sectors where a larger proportion of women work (banking services and the commercial sector for example). In many families the women's salary thus becomes the only source of income, which is generally lower than men's because women tend mostly to be employed in the service sector, on part-time or temporary contracts, or in the hidden economy. All of these factors in turn have a detrimental effect on the national economy, as they inhibit private consumption and thus slow down recovery.
- 2.7 The crisis also has an effect on social policies; women receive fewer unemployment benefits in terms of both amount and duration, due to their often weaker position in the labour market.

Furthermore, basic public services such as healthcare, education and social services in general provide less coverage just when families, and especially women, need it most. As these are also sectors in which the female workforce is concentrated, this will again have a knock-on effect on women's employment.

- 2.8 Measures to combat the crisis cannot be gender-neutral and where necessary, the new policies to achieve economic recovery and the current Structural Funds programmes must take account of the different positions that men and women occupy in society.
- 2.9 Equality should be a priority, not only in order to address the current crisis and the longer-term recovery, but also to deal with the demographic and economic challenges that affect the European social model and that have an impact on women and their financial independence.
3. **Specific comments – Part I: Priority Areas of Action for Gender Equality**

The 2006-2010 Roadmap for equality outlines the commitments and measures deemed necessary to make progress on equality and to eliminate inequalities.

The first part of the plan sets out six priority areas for political action, with their corresponding indicators:

1. Achieving equal economic independence for women and men
2. Reconciling work with private and family life
3. Promoting equal participation of women and men in decision-making
4. Eradicating all forms of gender-based violence
5. Eliminating sexist stereotypes
6. Promoting gender equality in external and development policies.

The second part focuses on improving governance.

3.1 **Achieving equal economic independence for women and men**

3.1.1 **Reaching the Lisbon employment targets**

- 3.1.1.1 Many countries are still failing to meet the Lisbon Strategy's target of having 60% of women in employment. While 70.9% of men are employed, only 58.8% of women are in employment¹, and in the over-55 age bracket, 36.8% of women are employed compared with 55% of men. Women are more likely to be unemployed, but the gap is decreasing as the economic crisis develops (9.8% in comparison to 9.6% of men).

¹ Source: Eurostat (LFS), employment as of February 2009 and unemployment as of September 2009.

- 3.1.1.2 There is a need to improve both the number of jobs available to women and the quality of these jobs, as women are over-represented in low-paid sectors and in jobs that are more likely to be precarious. Part-time work is predominantly feminine (31.5% women compared with 8.3% men) and 14.3% of female employees are employed on a temporary contract. Furthermore, when women are also mothers, their rate of employment falls by more than 10 percentage points which reflects the unequal distribution of family tasks and the insufficient care infrastructure.
- 3.1.1.3 The EESC recommends making a joint study of women's unemployment rates and the rate of women's inactivity for family reasons². Due to their role as carers, women often do not meet the criteria to be considered "unemployed", with inactivity thus becoming a form of hidden unemployment.
- 3.1.1.4 A multidisciplinary approach is required, as this would help supplement employment policies with educational and social measures, a form of education that eradicates stereotypes in employment, high-quality public social services that guarantee care for dependent persons and campaigns to raise awareness about the division of domestic work between women and men.
- 3.1.1.5 The Commission should include and promote equality in all its programmes (as it does with the PROGRESS programme. The Structural Funds provide the ideal framework; they help to provide information on how countries are achieving this goal, carry out an annual assessment of the gender impact of such measures by country and also to establish appropriate measures and penalties for countries which do not ensure the quantity and quality of jobs for women.

3.1.2 **Eliminating the gender pay gap**

- 3.1.2.1 Achieving wage parity is crucial to achieving equality but despite the advances made in legislation, the pay gap between women and men has gone up to 17.4%, and is as high as 30% for women over 50.
- 3.1.2.2 The wage gap is structural in origin: segregation into undervalued economic sectors and low-paid professions, a greater presence in the hidden economy and in precarious jobs, and career breaks or working fewer hours for family reasons are factors which all have detrimental effects on women's salaries.
- 3.1.2.3 The EESC³ recommends that each Member State scrutinises its legislation on contract conditions and pay in order to avoid direct and indirect discrimination against women.

² The rate of inactivity on the grounds of providing family care (children or dependents) for women between 25 and 54 stands at 25.1%, compared with only 2.4% for men. 19.2% of women, compared to 2.9% of men are inactive due to other family responsibilities (Source: LFS, Eurostat, 2008).

³ [OJ C 211, 19.8.2008, p. 54.](#)

3.1.2.4 Legislation should incorporate control mechanisms that will detect gender discrimination, promoting transparent job classification systems so that the qualifications, experience and potential of all staff are valued and rewarded equally.

3.1.2.5 Collective bargaining is a useful tool for incorporating non-sexist criteria for rating jobs, training leave for women's career advancement, career breaks and special leave for family reasons, flexible working hours, etc. that reduce differences in salaries.

3.1.3 **Women entrepreneurs**

3.1.3.1 Despite being highly qualified, women still form the minority in management positions within companies. The Commission has promoted equality in the framework of Corporate Social Responsibility, increased State aid for women's start-ups (Regulation (EC) No 800/2008), and has given its support to the European Network to promote Women's Entrepreneurship. In addition to governments and official bodies, this network should involve relevant civil society organisations with a view to benefiting from the exchange of experiences and good practices.

3.1.3.2 It is suggested that the recommendations of the EU Entrepreneurship Action Plan on increasing women's start-ups be implemented through measures such as providing better access to finance and credit, developing entrepreneurial networks that provide organisational and advisory services, appropriate vocational training and re-training, promote good practices, etc.

3.1.4 **Gender equality in social protection and the fight against poverty**

3.1.4.1 Women are especially vulnerable to social exclusion and poverty. Women's unequal position in the labour market and their dependency on social protection systems are factors that contribute to this situation.

3.1.4.2 Conditions of access to social protection should be made the same for women and men. Shorter working days for family reasons, the use of maternity and/or parental leave to look after children, part-time or temporary work, segregation and wage discrimination are factors that reduce the amount and duration of the future social benefits received by women, especially as regards unemployment benefits and retirement pensions. To mitigate this situation partially, measures should include recognising time spent carrying out unpaid work, working shorter hours and stopping work for family reasons as fully paid up tax periods.

3.1.4.3 Public social protection should guarantee a decent minimum income that reduces the risk of poverty by focussing in particular on elderly women, widows who are in receipt of a derivative pension, and single-parent families headed by women.

3.1.4.4 Special attention should be paid to the private pension schemes established in some countries, since future pensions are determined by individuals' income and life expectancy, which penalises women in particular.

3.1.4.5 2010 is the European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion, and also marks the end of the Lisbon Strategy and the implementation period for the Open Method of Coordination. The EU's new 2020 Strategy should set specific objectives and measures that are more effective in both the short and long terms, to combat poverty, especially poverty affecting women.

3.1.5 **The gender dimension in health**

3.1.5.1 The EESC considers that a new health strategy is needed which takes account of the different health requirements of men and women, but points out that no tangible measures have been provided for to achieve this. Further work is therefore needed on researching women's health and the illnesses affecting them.

3.1.5.2 The ageing population coupled with women's participation in the job market will increase the demand for long-term care services in future. The Member States should guarantee high-quality public health and social services: the lack of such coverage has a particularly negative impact on women, as they are primarily responsible for providing care.

3.1.6 **Combating multiple discrimination, in particular against immigrant and ethnic minority women**

3.1.6.1 The EESC reiterates the need to mainstream the gender perspective into migration and asylum policy. Closer attention should be paid to immigrant women and women from ethnic minorities, as they suffer the greatest inequalities and are in a particularly vulnerable position, especially given the current economic crisis⁴.

3.1.6.2 The increasing number of women migrants is directly linked to the demand for workers in the domestic and care work sectors, due largely to the lack of social infrastructure. Significant numbers of women immigrants are employed in sectors where casual and precarious jobs are typical. There is a need to "professionalise" and regularise these jobs, and promote professional qualifications to ensure women immigrants are better incorporated into the job market.

3.2 **Reconciling work with private and family life**

3.2.1 Where women's employment is concerned, the targets set in the Lisbon Strategy have been reached, despite the failure to meet the Barcelona Objectives for childcare facilities (33%

⁴ See the opinions in OJ C 182, 4.8.2009, p. 19 and OJ C 27, 3.2.2009, p. 95.

coverage for children under the age of 3 and 90% for children aged between 3 and 6). A care service infrastructure is essential, with available places and a flexible range of services that guarantees a tailored, high-quality approach: arrangements for out-of-hours and holiday periods, canteens and specialist centres to cater for different degrees of dependency. Investment in social services not only has positive effects on the economy and especially employment; it is also of great social benefit.

- 3.2.2 Caring for children and dependent persons requires flexible working hours and working time thus needs to be reorganised to meet people's family and work requirements and also to be equally accessible to women and men.
- 3.2.3 Many women use part-time work as a means of reconciling working life and family life, partly due to the lack of care facilities. The increasing proportion of women in part-time work, however, is due not only to family obligations but is also in many cases the only way in which women can access the labour market⁵.
- 3.2.4 As regards leave, the individual rights of men and women should be put on an equal footing, regardless of the type of employment contract they have (freelance, temporary or open-ended contract for example). The EESC therefore welcomes the agreement reached between ETUC, BusinessEurope, CEEP and UEAPME to extend parental leave⁶, although it deems it crucial to continue working towards full equality. The EESC welcomes the Commission's initiative to improve protection for workers who are pregnant, have recently given birth or are breastfeeding and agrees that paid maternity leave of at least 18 weeks should be guaranteed⁷.
- 3.2.5 A clear commitment should be given to ensuring that all social stakeholders share responsibility for domestic work and care, which in the main is carried out by women, and thus ensure that the best use is made of all human capital. A campaign is needed to encourage households to share domestic work and caring (one cause of inequality), as is a re-assessment of this type of work.

⁵ In 2008, in the EU, 31.5% of women in employment held a part-time job, as opposed to 8.3% of men. 27.54% of women in part-time jobs claimed that this was because they were the carers, either for young children or older dependents and 29.2% because they could not find a full-time job (compared with 3.3% and 22.7% of men respectively). Source: EFT, Eurostat.

⁶ Parental leave is extended from three to four months, with one month not transferable for the father, and applies to all workers regardless of the type of contract they have.

⁷ [OJ C 277, 17.11.2009, p. 102.](#)

3.3 Promoting equal participation of women and men in decision-making

- 3.3.1 A firmer commitment is required to achieve gender equality in the decision-making process⁸ in the economic, political, scientific and technological spheres. The situation facing women has barely changed in recent years. Clear targets should therefore be set, with deadlines for achieving them, in addition to specific policies and effective measures (such as positive action, equality plans, specific training, participation quotas, awareness-raising campaigns, etc.).
- 3.3.2 Ensuring men and women are on an equal footing in politics should be a cornerstone for building Europe. In the elections of June 2009, women held 35% of seats in the European Parliament; 10 Members of the Commission are female, whilst 17 are male. Women hold 24% of seats in national parliaments and 25% of ministerial portfolios in national governments⁹. At the EESC, 23.6% of current Members are women, whilst 76.4% are men, and in senior management posts (directors, deputy directors, deputy secretaries-general) women account for only 16.7%, whilst the figure is 83.3% for men. Equal representation between men and women should be a top priority for achieving equality at all levels.
- 3.3.3 Progress has been slow in the field of public sector research (39% of posts are held by women), and only minor improvements have been seen in the economic and financial sectors (no directors of central banks are women and only 17% of central bank board members are female) with the figure being barely 3% for the boards of management of major companies.

3.4 Eradicating gender-based violence and trafficking in human beings

- 3.4.1 Violence against women and girls remains a serious problem. This is a global and systemic phenomenon, taking many different forms and shapes. Like the Commission, the EESC is extremely concerned at the number of women who suffer violence, the scale of trafficking in women and prostitution, especially among immigrants and the persistence of acts of violence committed under the cloak of traditions and religion¹⁰.
- 3.4.2 The appropriate social, economic and legal measures need to be used to reduce and eliminate the various factors that foster violence against women, such as a lack of material resources, financial dependence, low levels of education, persistent gender stereotypes, and difficulties in accessing the job market.
- 3.4.3 Women immigrants require particular support as they are more vulnerable, either due to their irregular situation or because they are isolated from their social surroundings. The language barrier, social and cultural differences, or simply not knowing about the support structures in

⁸ 10 years ago, at the Conference on Women and men in positions of power, held in Paris in 1999, the European Union signed an agreement to move towards a more representative Europe with men and women taking a more equal role in decision making.

⁹ Figures from October 2009.

place, sometimes prevent them from asking for help when they are victims of domestic violence. The situation is worse still for undocumented immigrant women: specific measures should be put in place so that the obstacles these women face can be removed and their rights guaranteed.

- 3.4.4 Specific programmes are required (as well as continuing with those already in place, such as Daphne) to prevent and combat violence against women. Funding for these programmes should be increased. National action plans should be drawn up as part of a strategy coordinated at European level, containing both practical measures and deadlines to ensure that they will be properly implemented. It must be a priority for Member States to enforce current legal frameworks regarding domestic violence prevention and the protection of victims and those at risk, including children. Additionally, indicators are needed to provide a detailed picture of all aspects of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment and people-trafficking. Statistics harmonised at the EU level are essential to monitor and assess developments in this field.
- 3.4.5 Given the worrying number of violent acts among young people, including gender-related violence, the Committee welcomes the Commission's timely decision to include the fight against gender violence in the projects forming part of the 'Youth in action' programme. There is also a need however to incorporate a culture of non-violence and respect for the rights of all people into all education and training programmes for children and young people.

3.5 **Eliminating sexist stereotypes in society**

- 3.5.1 Sexist stereotypes are cultural and social views which assume that there are 'male' or 'female' roles and tasks. These stereotypes have an impact on training and job options and lead to segregation in the job market. Stereotypes make it harder to achieve equality and the full participation of women and men in the decision-making process.
- 3.5.2 Despite the high educational levels they attain, women are still concentrated in economic sectors (healthcare and social work, teaching, the commercial sector, public administration, business services, hotels and restaurants, etc.) and professions that have traditionally been viewed as "female" (sales assistants, domestic help, care providers, as administrative staff, etc.)", on the lowest rungs of the career ladder, with little potential for moving up to better positions. This segregation has remained almost unchanged over the past few years, because the increase in the number of women in employment has taken place in sectors that are already dominated by women.

10 [OJ C 110, 9.5.2006, p. 89.](#)

3.5.3 In order to combat gender stereotypes, there is a need to:

- Educate children and young people using non-sexist role models, especially by monitoring educational material and teachers that promote these stereotypes. The EESC would welcome the inclusion of gender equality as a specific priority in EU education and training programmes.
- Promote the presence of women in scientific and technological education, where they are under-represented, thereby enabling them to access better jobs, and improving the balance between men and women in all areas of knowledge; .
- Encourage entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity amongst women in all sectors, self-employed, employees and the unemployed. as an important tool to highlight the strengths women bring to society.
- Ensure that women are able to participate in the labour market on an equal footing, especially when they are mothers and have dependent minors.
- Value the work done by women, especially in the field of caring, promoting ongoing training.
- Eradicate sexist stereotypes from the media and the advertising industry, paying particular attention to the portrayal of violence and degrading images of women.
- Increase the number of women in decision-making positions in the media in order to promote non-discriminatory treatment and a realistic vision of women and men in society.

3.6 **Promoting gender equality outside the EU**

3.6.1 The Commission should continue to promote women's rights at the international level through its foreign and development policies. The gender dimension should be included in all aspects of cooperation, with specific measures for women, promoting their involvement in decision-making processes and their sense of initiative, and the capacity of developing countries to take on the task of promoting equality should be boosted.

3.6.2 The gender dimension should form part of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), for action in crisis situations. In the field of humanitarian aid (ECHO), the Commission should pay particular attention to women with children or dependent relatives in the event of natural disasters and to women who have suffered violence at the hands of men in times of upheaval.

4. **Part II: Improving governance to incorporate gender equality**

- 4.1 Gender analysis should be mainstreamed into all of the Commission's spheres of action, including the budget, and the progress on equality within its own walls should be assessed. This would require staff to be trained in gender equality and robust disaggregated indicators that would give an accurate picture of women's situation.
- 4.2 The Commission should hold open and ongoing talks with women's organisations, the social partners and other civil society organisations to gain a better understanding of problems relating to inequality.
- 4.3 The EESC calls on the Commission to urge all of its units to use non-sexist language in all documents, in official texts, in interpreting into all languages and on its web pages.

5. **Part III. Follow-up strategies for 2010 onwards**

At the Commission's request, the EESC is developing a series of proposals regarding the new Roadmap for equality to be implemented from 2010 onwards.

- 5.1 A global approach should be used to tackle equality between women and men. EU policies should aim not only to strengthen the involvement of women in all spheres, deal with demographic challenges and improve children's wellbeing for example. Measures should rather focus explicitly on reducing the lack of equality in the distribution of family, care and domestic responsibilities between men and women specifically, and more generally between all social stakeholders.
- 5.2 The Commission should ensure gender equality is mainstreamed across all sectors as a priority across all its areas, units, measures, policies and directorates. Gender is not an issue of concern only to the Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs.
- 5.3 Specialists in gender issues are needed who can provide the training and materials required to raise awareness and increase the knowledge and skills of European staff about equality. Eurostat must continue to break statistics down by gender, improving existing methodologies and incorporating new indicators that provide better information on the situation facing women and thus give a comprehensive overview of the situation in the EU.
- 5.4 The gender perspective should be recognised in European and national budgets. Studies are also necessary to assess the impact of public measures relating to gender.
- 5.5 The Structural Funds offer an ideal framework for the Member States to include gender equality in their operational programmes and in the different stages of the funds' implementation, with the assessment of the gender impact in each priority policy area or sphere of activity of these programmes. Better coordination and collaboration is required

between the Structural Funds and the bodies responsible for equality in each country in order to achieve better results.

- 5.6 The Commission should ensure the legislation is complied with, providing examples of good practice and sanctioning Member States that fail to respect the principle of equality between women and men. Gender equality must be overseen and assessed in all policies and in all departments. An evaluation method is required that enables the level of compliance with the established objectives to be noted and rated, together with achievements and any backward steps. An evaluation unit should be set up that supervises and assesses the actions of the different Member States in a systematic way using the indicators set out in the roadmap for equality.
- 5.7 If amendments are made to the future roadmap, the Committee would recommend adapting area 1. This area needs to be subdivided as it covers a variety of different issues (employment, health, immigration), and different methods are therefore required to tackle them. It would also be useful to develop a new area for "women and the environment", because women play a fundamental role in sustainable development, given their particular concern for ensuring the quality and sustainability of life for current and future generations¹¹.
- 5.8 The EESC wishes to emphasise the important role placed by the social partners in promoting equality through social dialogue and collective bargaining. One good example of this is the 2005 framework strategy on gender equality.
- 5.9 The European Institute for Equality should play a key role in improving governance and revising current legislation on raising awareness and equality. The institute should monitor and guarantee that all policies include and promote equality, and foster the involvement of Europeans in a more responsible and more inclusive gender policy.

¹¹ As stated at the Fourth Platform for Action in Beijing, 1995.

- 5.10 Europe's economic and financial problems and demographic changes should not affect the goal of equality and should not be used as an excuse to relegate it to second place.

Brussels, 17 March 2010.

The President
of the
European Economic and Social Committee

Mario Sepi