

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 16 May 2007

Reconciling professional and family life: No need for further EU regulation

EUROCHAMBRES Women Network (EWN) welcomes the declaration by the Trio Presidency at the Informal Meeting of Ministers for Gender Equality and Family Affairs concluding today, reaffirming the importance of gender equality and outlining concrete actions to tackle the issue in the future.

As far as the reconciliation between professional and family life is concerned, EWN does not see the added value of adopting a common EU legal instrument at this time. Progress on this can be achieved by implementing already existing measures, such as flexible working arrangements, but especially by addressing the preconception about the role of women and men still persisting in the society.

Sophia Economacos, President of EWN, said: *“Those directly affected by caring tasks – be it for children or other dependent persons – are women by a significant majority. To a large extent, this has to do with traditional mindsets according to which women have to care for the family while men pursue a professional career. For reconciliation policies to be successful, they need to tackle not only the questions of child or dependents’ care, parental leave schemes and flexible working arrangements for both women and men, but also take care of changing mindsets, away from traditional ideas and stereotypes.”*

EWN – 4 years addressing the concerns of women in the economic environment

Launched in 2003, EUROCHAMBRES Women Network is currently carrying out its third project, “On Board”, aiming to addresses in parallel three main areas of concern, among which the question of reconciliation:

1. Women in economic decision-making: the first working group looks into the situation of **Women on Chamber boards**. It is to analyse the reasons for the under-representation of women on Chamber boards and to develop guidelines for increasing the female participation.
2. The reconciliation of work and family life is being dealt with by the second working group: **Linking local actors**. In this group, the project partners will establish links between Chambers and other stakeholders that should lead to a better understanding and handling of the reconciliation question.
3. **Access to finance** for female start up entrepreneurs. The objective of the third working group is to improve the business environment for female entrepreneurs-to-be by making better Chamber services in the field of access to finance available at local level.

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EUROCHAMBRES - The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry represents 46 members, a European network of 2000 regional and local Chambers with over 19 million member enterprises in Europe.