

## NOTES FROM THE CHAIR



### **A global and European agenda for women's rights and gender equality**

In less than two weeks' time the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is meeting to focus on the [15-year follow-up to the Beijing world conference on women's rights](#). Unfortunately, we have to recognise that there is still a long way to go to fulfil the objectives identified in the Beijing Platform for Action in the European Union. The European Parliament Committee on women's rights and gender equality will be present at the meeting of CSW with a sizeable delegation. Our aim is to make sure that there will be a continued and strengthened commitment to women's rights and gender equality on a global, as well as at European level. The Beijing platform is not only an important target and vision for women's rights throughout the world; it is also used by women's movements and grass root organisations in changing the realities for women on the ground. It is our task as politicians, in partnership with women's activists and civil society, to make sure that the international community, the European Union, and its individual Member States increase their efforts to realise the visions set out in Beijing fifteen years ago!



Eva-Britt Svensson

### **23 FEBRUARY - MEETING AGENDA IN BRIEF**

- ⌚ Ms Virginija Langbakk, Executive Director of the European Institute for Gender Equality - exchange of views
- ⌚ Commission communication on Action against Cancer: European Partnership - adoption of draft opinion
- ⌚ Improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding - adoption of draft report

**Date:** Tuesday, 23 February, 15.00-18.30

**Venue:** ASP 3E2 Meeting room

**Live web streaming of the meeting [here](#).**

### **MS VIRGINIJA LANGBAKK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE FOR GENDER EQUALITY**

*Exchange of views*

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) opened its doors in Vilnius, Lithuania on 16 December 2009 to start playing its fundamental role in developing equality policies across Europe through its expertise. The agency's main activity will be the collection, analysis and dissemination of information on gender equality on a European level. Methods will be developed to grant the objectivity, comparability and reliability of this information. EIGE will organise activities to promote the gender dialogue between relevant stakeholders, as well as to raise public awareness. For the sake of transparency, EIGE will publish an annual report on its activities. By the invitation of the committee, Ms Langbakk, the Director of the Institute will share her experiences with the Members of the FEMM committee about the first steps of the agency.

### **ACTION AGAINST CANCER: EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP**

*Adoption of draft opinion*

After the consideration in January, FEMM committee will now vote on its draft opinion to the ENVI committee's Report on the Commission communication on Action Against Cancer: European Partnership. The draft opinion and the 33 amendments tabled to it reflect the important gender dimension of the problem. The drafts person calls for more research on the connection between cancer and gender and insists on the application of the EC guidelines and cooperation in order to tackle inequalities in treatment between Member States. She also pays special attention to the prevention of breast cancer and cervical cancer, which are the two most common types of cancer in women. Several amendments highlight the need for assuring equal access to affordable prevention and treatment with increased attention to the vulnerable position of disadvantaged groups.

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**Draftsperson: Britta Thomsen (S-D)**



### **Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality is responsible for:**

- Definition, promotion and protection of women's rights in the Union and related Community measures;
- The promotion of women's rights in third countries;
- Equal opportunities policy, including equality between men and women with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work;
- The removal of all forms of discrimination based on sex;
- The implementation and further development of gender mainstreaming in all policy sectors;
- The follow-up and implementation of international agreements and conventions involving the rights of women;
- Information policy on women.

**IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK OF PREGNANT WORKERS AND WORKERS WHO HAVE RECENTLY GIVEN BIRTH OR ARE BREASTFEEDING**

*Adoption of draft report*

After having considered the draft report and the amendments, FEMM committee will vote on the draft report on the so-called Maternity-leave Directive at its meeting on 23 February. Members have tabled 96 additional amendments to the 73 proposed by the Rapporteur in her draft report. In order to bring different positions closer to each other, Ms Estrela has proposed 14 compromise amendments. The vote will decide on key issues, such as the extension of the maternity leave, the level of payment and the inclusion of paternity leave.

*Rapporteur: **Edite Estrela** (S-D)*

**THE COMMITTEE WILL VOTE ON:**

- Draft opinion on the **Report on the Commission communication on Action against Cancer: European Partnership**
- Draft report on the **Improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding**

**PLENARY FOLLOW-UP**



**EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN IN THE EUROPEAN UNION - 2009 - Adoption of a resolution**

After a lively debate in Plenary, the European Parliament adopted its annual [resolution](#) on equality between men and women in the EU.

The resolution calls for greater efforts to eradicate violence against women, recognizes the full physical and sexual autonomy of women and calls for the ratification of Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by all Member States. Furthermore, the resolution supports the establishment of the right to paternity leave which should be linked to maternity leave. As the resolution was drafted in the context of the financial, economic and social crisis, it highlights its impact on women. In relation to this, the issues of equal pay, gender imbalance in high-level positions, and the vulnerability of migrant women are also addressed.

*Rapporteur: **Marc Tarabella** (S-D)*

**Details of the next meeting**

**Monday, 15 March, 2010 (15.00-18.30)**

**Tuesday, 16 March, 2010 (9.00-12.30) - Celebration of the International Women's Day with the participation of the Network of National Parliaments**

**For more information, please contact**

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FEMM website: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/committees/homeCom.do?language=EN&body=FEMM>

Link to committee meeting documents:

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009\\_2014/organes/femm/femm\\_7leg\\_meetinglist.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/organes/femm/femm_7leg_meetinglist.htm)