

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3104/03

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to the Council

Subject: Funding EQUAL projects and sexual orientation discrimination

Article 13 of the EC Treaty, Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and Article 1 of Directive 2000/78/EC¹ establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation prohibit discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation. At Community level there is an integrated strategy to combat discrimination and social exclusion. Focusing on the labour market, EQUAL forms part of that strategy. Member States shall formulate their strategy for EQUAL on the basis of thematic fields in the four pillars of the European Employment Strategy. Within these fields Member States shall ensure that their proposals principally benefit those subject to the main forms of discrimination (based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation) and inequality.

We are informed that under the current EQUAL programme, only four partnerships out of 1400 are related to sexual orientation discrimination. Could the Council inform us whether this information is correct?

Could the Council inform us whether all Member States have included sexual orientation discrimination in the national call for proposals under the current EQUAL programme? If not, could the Council give us an explanation for these omissions by the individual Member States?

The next round of EQUAL will be launched in spring 2004. Could the Council inform us whether all Member States, including the accession countries, intend to explicitly mention in their national call for proposals discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation? If not, what action is the Council prepared to undertake to increase the number of applications focusing on sexual orientation?

¹ OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16.