

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3105/03

by Marianne Eriksson (GUE/NGL), Piia-Noora Kauppi (PPE-DE) and Joke Swiebel (PSE)  
to the Commission

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/EC<sup>1</sup> 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 (in particular that based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation) 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 Commission inform us whether this information is correct?

Could the Commission 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 Commission give us an explanation of what action the Commission took to increase the number of partnerships with a focus on sexual orientation discrimination?

Will the Commission see to it that the discrimination ground of sexual orientation will be explicitly mentioned in the EQUAL programme and in the call for proposals in the current Member States as well as in the accession States for the next round of EQUAL in spring 2004?

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16.