



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **MARGINALIZATION OF GENDER EQUALITY ISSUES IN THE EU**

In September 2010, the European Commission adopted the “Strategy for Equality between Men and Women 2010-2015”, as a result of its commitment to implement substantive equality between men and women. The Strategy constitutes the framework under which the EU promotes gender equality policies in the Member States and beyond. After the end of the Strategy period 2010-2015, there was a process of consultation and reflection for the preparation of the new Strategy.

In the course of this process and despite the effort and support of the majority of the EU Member States, including Greece, it seemed that the Commission was unwilling to continue with the prospect of a new Strategy for Gender Equality. Under the initiative of the Latvian Presidency in cooperation with France, Sweden and Germany, a Letter of Ministers responsible for Gender Equality was signed, citing arguments in favor of the adoption of a new Strategy for Equality between Men and Women. The letter was addressed to Commissioner Vera Jourova in early June 2015. On behalf of the Greek Government, the letter was also co-signed by Ms Foteini Kouvela, Secretary General for Gender Equality.

Despite all efforts, in the last EPSCO Council held in Brussels on December 7, 2015, a simple staff working document was presented, which reproduces the five priority areas of the previous Strategy: increase of female participation in the labor market, elimination of wage and pension gap, promotion of equality between men and women in decision-making, eradication of violence against women and promotion of gender equality and women's rights around the world. It is disappointing the fact that the nature of the text does not bind the European Commission to implement the objectives and actions outlined and puts aside the issues of gender equality.

The Commission considers that the five priorities of the previous Strategy remain relevant and commits to their implementation. However, the Commission neglects the fact that coordinated and sufficient-targeted action and support are needed from a politically powerful binding framework with predetermined priorities and objectives, rather than a simple working document (staff working document).

On the sidelines of the Council of Ministers of 7 December, 2015 a Declaration was signed by the forthcoming trio EU Presidency (the Netherlands, Slovakia, Malta), which underlines the need for a new initiative by the European Commission for the creation of a Strategy for Equality between Men and Women 2016- 2020, coupled with the EU 2020 Strategy and the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.

The General Secretariat for Gender Equality has already expressed its discontent over the degradation of the Strategy by the Commission and sent briefing notes before the EPSCO Council with the aim of support of a new more politically binding document. In particular, in times of economic crisis, in which women are disproportionately affected in relation to men, the European Union cannot remain idle and leave the issues of gender equality in their fate.

Information: <http://www.isotita.gr>  
Tel: 30- 2131511102

The Press Office, 15/12/2015

E-mail: [gramggif@isotita.gr](mailto:gramggif@isotita.gr)