



## **7<sup>th</sup> PES Congress Porto, 7-8 December 2006**

### **PES WOMEN ACTIVITY REPORT October 2004 – December 2006**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

PES Women brings together women - MPs, MEPs and activists - from PES member parties to discuss and promote gender equality within and outside the PES. It promotes gender equality on two different levels.

Firstly, PES Women has strengthened the policy and campaigning dimension of its work, in terms of formulating and advocating policy recommendations on various issues. PES Women also actively contributes to PES policy papers and declarations to ensure that the gender dimension is taken into account across the PES policy spectrum.

Secondly, PES Women pushes for equal representation in PES bodies (such as working groups and high level groups) and supports the increase of women in decision-making in PES member parties and governments. The PES Women President is a full member of the PES Presidency and thus has the right to vote on PES decisions.

Since the last PES Congress and the subsequent PES Women elections, PES Women has reinforced its role in both of these respects and has entered a period of reinforced cooperation amongst its members. Its activities and campaigns, outlined in this report, demonstrate this positive evolution.

#### **ELECTION OF PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENTS AND BUREAU**

At the first meeting (19 October 2004) of this new period for PES Women, Zita Gurmai MEP was elected President. Several changes were made to PES Women's Standing Orders, in particular the introduction of an annual conference on a specific theme. Members also elected three new vice-Presidents (Anna Karamanou, Inger Segelström, Olga Zrihen) and an eight-member bureau which assists in the preparation and follow-up of meetings (see annex for list of the whole Executive which comprises the President, Vice-Presidents and Bureau).

#### **THE LOSS OF FIORELLA GHILARDOTTI**

During this first meeting, members thanked the incumbent President, Fiorella Ghilardotti, for all her excellent work during her time in office (from 1997 - 2004). Following the election of the new President, Fiorella was active as a member of the PES Women's Executive, attending meetings and was also present at the second Global Progressive Forum event just days before her sad death on 13 September 2005.



Losing Fiorella was a loss to the movement but her work will always serve as a tremendous inspiration to us. In a statement shortly after her death, the PES and PES Women Presidents paid tribute to Fiorella's life-long and tireless commitment to greater gender equality.

## **STATUTORY MEETINGS**

PES Women members, who are nominated by PES member parties, meet three times a year to:

- Discuss strategic initiatives and specific policy themes.
- Agree on campaigns and resolutions.
- Share information on relevant European and national policies.

### Violence against women (30 November 2004)

Two high level speakers from the Spanish government and the Spanish Socialist Party, PSOE, presented the new draft legislation on violence against women. Soledad Murillo, Secretary of State for Equality in the Spanish government, and Maribel Montaña, National Secretary for Equality on the Federal Executive Committee of PSOE, explained the background and the parameters of the new legislation.

### Beijing+10 – the 10 year review of the international platform for action (17 January 2005)

PES Women adopted a resolution calling on world leaders to reaffirm the values and commitments made in Beijing in 2000. Specifically, it demanded a focus on the empowerment of women, so that through gender mainstreaming we can build a better world of social justice, equality in status and equal opportunities for women and men. The resolution was sent to EU equality ministers prior to the United Nations meeting in New York in February 2005 which considered the ten year review of the Platform for Action agreed by governments from across the world in Beijing 10 years ago.

### Communication with women voters (30 June 2005)

In the wake of the negative results in the Constitutional Treaty referenda in France and the Netherlands, PES Women focused on communication with women voters and how to persuade women that PES parties are their natural home. Commissioner Margot Wallstrom spoke about the current crisis in Europe and the period of reflection. She explored the reasons for the 'no' votes in France and the Netherlands to the Constitutional Treaty, in particular, the reaction against the political establishment and the effective use of the internet by the 'no' proponents in France. In this context, she presented the European Commission's new Communication strategy and the new plan D – debate, dialogue and democracy.

### Meeting on the fringes of the UK Presidency Conference on gender equality (7 November 2005)

We held a successful meeting for the first time on the fringes of a Presidency conference on gender equality. Speakers included Meg Munn, UK Deputy Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Mary McPhail, Secretary General of the European Women's Lobby. Members also had a heated debate regarding a draft resolution which, with several amendments, was adopted. It called for Member States governments and the Commission to renew their efforts to reach and go beyond the Lisbon objective of a women's employment rate of 60% and to set targets to eliminate the gender pay gap. The PES Women President attended the UK Presidency gender equality conference and represented PES Women on several panel debates, as well as conveying the resolution to the PES gender equality ministers prior to their informal meeting.



Preparation of anti-trafficking campaign for international women's day 2006 (23 February 2006)

In anticipation of 8 March 2006, PES Women agreed on a campaign to call for immediate action to stop the predicted mass trafficking of women and girls into Germany in the context of the World Cup in June and July 2006 (see "Campaigns" section for more details). In addition, an academic gave a presentation on the causes and possible solutions to the gender pay gap.

PES Women Statutory Meeting on the fringes of the Finnish Presidency Conference on Men and Gender Equality (Helsinki – 7 October 2006)

Prior to the PES Women Statutory meeting, PES Women Executive Members met with the PES Ministers for Gender Equality, including Ms Tuula Haatainen, Finnish Minister of Social Affairs and Health, and Mr Spidla, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. They discussed the establishment of Gender Institute, the Daphne Programme and Women and decision-making in the economy sector.

During the Statutory Meeting, PES Women prepared PES Women elections and the fringe meetings that will take place at PES Congress early December. Moreover, PES Women had the opportunity to receive Commissioner Spidla and Maribel Montaña, Federal Secretary of gender equality of PSOE as guest speakers for the debates on the EU Gender Roadmap and the Gender Equality Legislation in Spain. PES Women concluded their session with voting on a Resolution against violence on women, which will be sent out on 25 November 2006, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

**ANNUAL CONFERENCES**

More and better jobs for women – an EU priority? (Friday 18 March 2005)

PES Women held its first annual conference in Brussels a few days before European Heads of State and Government reviewed the mid-term progress of the Lisbon strategy at the annual Spring Summit.

The conference considered the need to increase the participation rate of women in the labour market and to improve the quality of women's employment. There was a broad consensus among participants that these two objectives should be a priority and the panel discussions enabled the development of ideas as to how to more effectively push forward with these aims.

Several high level and expert speakers, such as Commissioner Spidla, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, addressed the conference from the EU institutions and beyond. It attracted a high number of participants – with over 80 representatives in total from 25 PES member parties, NGOs, trade unions and the media.

Women, religion and culture in Europe: will women be the battleground of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (24 May 2006)

Over 100 people gathered in Copenhagen - from 27 countries across Europe and many people from all over Denmark - to attend the PES Women conference on the controversial topic of women, religion and culture. The leader of the Danish Social Democratic party, Helle Thorning-Schmidt gave the introductory speech about the clash of civilizations and women becoming the pawns in this clash. She also addressed the issue of violence against women which is still prevalent in our societies, with many women losing their lives at their hands of their partners.



The first panel discussed the harmful role of extreme interpretations of religion and how these groups are trying to roll back the progress of women's rights. The second panel addressed the role of Muslim women in their communities and the racism and multiple discrimination (on the grounds of their gender and ethnic origin). The third panel considered whether there was a potential non-religious backlash in terms of the objectification of women in advertising and in the sex industry.

## **CAMPAIGNS**

### PES Women pledge card

On international women's day (8 March 2005), PES Women launched their first pledge card. It serves as a communication tool to raise awareness of the work of PES Women and to convey five priorities:

- more and better jobs for women
- equal opportunities and equal pay
- better childcare
- an end of all forms of violence against women
- women's rights and empowerment

### Anti-trafficking campaign in the context of the World Cup

On 1 March 2006, PES Women and the PES launched an online petition to called on the European Commission President, in close cooperation with member state government to take urgent action to stop the trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation in the context of the World Cup. The campaign slogan was "Celebrate the World Cup, Fight sexual slavery". Over 22,000 signatures from across the EU and beyond were collected and presented to the Justice and Home Affairs European Commissioner, Franco Frattini. The PES and PES Women President also presented the campaign to Commission President, Jose Manuel Barroso.

PES Women used its extensive network to collect these signatures and also secured the signatures of several prime ministers and PES party leaders.

PES Women sent a letter to PES Justice and Home Affairs ministers (see annex) before the Council meeting on 27 April 2006 calling for concrete action and presenting specific recommendations.

Prior to 27 April Council meeting (at which the issue of human trafficking was an agenda point), PES Women organized a preparatory meeting for PES justice and home affairs ministers. All ministers present were deeply concerned about the issue and the evident link between the World Cup and an increase in trafficking into Germany. The meeting enabled ministers from our political family to support each other during the Council discussions and to strengthen the resulting Council conclusions.

PES Women also contacted Europol, the German Police Union and various NGOs to find out more information about the situation on the ground. PES Women President sent a letter to the President of FIFA to raise this issue, but his reply stated that FIFA does not take responsibility for occurrences outside stadiums.



On the eve of the World Cup, PES Women President together with the Vice-Chair of the biggest Danish Trade Union 3F, met with Commissioner Franco Frattini, Commissioner for Justice, Freedom and Security to handover over 23,000 PES collected signatures and nearly 100,000 signatures from the Danish Trade Union's campaign. They discussed the need for EU's action regarding anti-trafficking legislation and better cooperation between the institutions on anti-trafficking actions.

## PES WOMEN PRESIDENT

PES Women President, Zita Gurmai, was present at all PES Leaders and Presidency meeting. Apart from these regular PES meetings, she also attended conferences and seminars on behalf of PES Women on topics ranging from Social Europe, to Energy, ECOSY Seminars and several meetings with Commissioners to discuss gender issues.

<b>2004</b>	
November 12-13	SIW Meeting, Johannesburg (Russia)
November	Conference on EU Constitution, Poitier (France)
December 18	SLD Congress, Warsaw (Poland)
<b>2005</b>	
January 23-27	World Social Forum, Porto Alegre (Brazil)
April 5	Social Democratic women's network, Sofia (Bulgaria)
April 21-22	Solidar meeting at WTO Symposium "Women Talk!" Project, Geneva
May 14	LSDP Congress, Vilnius (Lithuania)
May 21-22	Congress of Swedish Social Democratic Women, Eskilstuna (Sweden)
May 27-29	Congress of Socialist Women, Limassol (Cyprus)
December 2	Meeting with Commissioner Spidla, Brussels (Belgium)
December 3	BSP Congress, Sofia (Bulgaria)
<b>2006</b>	
January 27	PES Initiative - People's Dialogue Conference, Dublin (Ireland)
January 27-28	SIW Meeting 'Promoting universal values in a world of different cultural realities, Athens (Greece)
February 12	Labour Party Spring Conference, Blackpool (UK)
February 24	Conference, Lisbon (Portugal)
March 7-8	ECOSY Winter University
March 15	Meeting with José Manuel Barroso, President of the Commission, PES Anti-Trafficking Campaign
April 7	PES Women meeting, Budapest (Hungary)
May 8	Women's organisation of SPÖ, Vienna (Austria)
June 8	Press Conference, Liège (Belgium)
July 27	ECOSY Summer Camp, Alicante (Spain)
August 24	PS Summer University, La Rochelle (France)
October 16	International Conference on Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health, Lisbon (Portugal)
November 24	Conference 'Women's Place, Kitchen or Politics?', Pärnu (Estonia)



## **INCREASING WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION**

At the PES Council meeting in Vienna (June 2005), PES Women's principal and lasting achievement was the double nomination system, adopted in the PES Reform paper. This stipulates that PES member parties have to nominate 1 man and 1 woman for each PES working group, thus enabling the final composition (1 representative from each party) to be gender-balanced.

## **GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE PES**

PES Women actively contributes to PES policy documents in order to guarantee that the gender dimension of all policies is taken into account. A specific adviser in the PES Secretariat is the reference point for these contributions under the direction of the PES Women President. This adviser was particularly involved in the party's work on the New Social Europe, and previous to that the PES report on demographic challenges.

The PES Priorities paper for the EU Policy Agenda in 2006 and 2007 were gender sensitive with several priorities relating to gender equality. In the paper on the 2006 EU policy Agenda, two out of the seven priorities were related to gender equality: calling for "more effective European anti-discrimination legislation and implementation in the workplace, in particular, with regard to equal pay between men and women and the conciliation of professional and family life." and "more effective legislation to eradicate violence against women in society, as well as in conflict and crisis situations, and the trafficking of women and children." In the paper adopted this year for the 2007 EU policy agenda, a strong emphasis is given to improving the investment in and provision of childcare.

PES Women nominated a member of the PES High Level Group on Turkey, Emine Bozkurt MEP, and is thus following closely this extremely important process. Emine Bozkurt (PvdA – the Netherlands) successfully kept women's rights on the agenda in the period 2005-2006 and will continue to do so in the future. Her work as Rapporteur for the European Parliament on the issue of Women's Rights in Turkey helped to link that information and experience within the High Level Group. In October 2005 Ms Bozkurt took part in its working visit to Turkey, where the group spoke to different representatives of women's rights NGOs located in Ankara and Istanbul. In July 2006, the High Level Group had a fruitful meeting with Commissioner Rehn, Commissioner for Enlargement. Three months later, she joined the second working visit of the group, this time in Izmir and Ankara. One whole day of her programme was devoted to the subject of Women's Rights in Turkey.

Anne Sofie Allarp (SD – Denmark) represented PES Women at the Lisbon Network meetings. Since she left in September 2006, she has been replaced by Anne Van Lancker MEP (Sp.a – Belgium).



## INTERNATIONAL WORK

### Global Progressive Forum

PES Women organised a panel on Women and Globalisation at the second annual event of the Global Progressive Forum in Milan on 9-10 September 2005. The panel considered how to ensure women's reproductive rights and tackle the spread of HIV AIDS, violence against women and trafficking of women.

Given the decision to focus the GPF's activities on decent work, PES Women is leading a project on the gender equality dimension of decent work which should be at the forefront of the GPF's activities, given the increasing feminisation of work. The project will focus on women working in the informal economy and export processing zones, and the increasing numbers of women that migrate to send back remittances to their families. A publication with contributions from key stakeholders will be published in early 2007 which will then be launched at the next Committee of the Status of Women meeting in New York (February – March 2007).

### Socialist International Women

Socialist International Women (SIW) President, Pia Locatelli, and PES Women President, Zita Gurnai, agreed about ex-officio of SIW President on PES Women Executive in order to enhance the complementary work delivered by both parties. SIW President has been informed and invited to all PES Women activities and PES Women Executive meetings.

### Euromed Conference

In February 2005, the Euromed Conference took place in Alger, which was linked to the Barcelona summit organised three months prior to the congress and which was directly in line with the programme initiated in Malta in November 2004. Olga Zrihen, Vice-President of PES Women, was designated as representative for PES Women at the Euromed Conference.

Convinced about the need to promote an open, egalitarian dialogue without taboos between the North and the South, the participants adopted a declaration on a common vision for the future to encourage all desirable reforms by civil society from the two sides: promoting information which is in favour of dialogue, education giving equal opportunities for women and men, an active participation of civil society to political processes and promoting dialogue between the citizens with different values and from different cultural backgrounds of the Euro-Mediterranean Region in order to fight stereotypes.

