



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

from : Permanent Representatives Committee (Part I)
to : COUNCIL (EPSCO)

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Subject : Review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action
– "Beijing + 15": A Review of Progress
= Draft Conclusions of the Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council

In the context of the follow-up of the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted during the United Nations World Conference on Women in 1995, the Presidency has produced a report entitled "Beijing + 15: The Platform for Action and the European Union", in view of the fifteen-year review of the Platform.¹

Delegations will find in the Annex a set of draft Council Conclusions on "'Beijing + 15": A Review of Progress", on which the Permanent Representatives Committee confirmed its agreement on 13 November 2009.

¹ The Presidency's report is to be found in doc. 15487/09 ADD 1.

HU maintained a linguistic scrutiny reservation pending distribution of the Hungarian version of the draft Conclusions.

The Council of the European Union, and the representatives of the governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, are invited to adopt the Conclusions as set out in the Annex.

**DRAFT CONCLUSIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES,
MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL**

**on the review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the
Beijing Platform for Action**

“BEIJING +15”: A REVIEW OF PROGRESS

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES, MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL

1. RECOGNISE that gender equality is a fundamental principle of the European Union enshrined in the EC Treaty and one of the objectives and tasks of the Community, and that mainstreaming equality between women and men in all its activities represents a specific mission for the Community².
2. REAFFIRM that the full enjoyment of all human rights by women and girls is an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights and is essential for the advancement of women and girls, peace, security and development.
3. CONSIDERING that:
 - (a) following the UN’s Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, the Madrid European Council (15-16 December 1995) requested an annual review of the implementation in the Member States of the Beijing Platform for Action;

² See Articles 2 and 3(2) of the EC Treaty.

- (b) on 2 December 1998, the Council agreed that the annual assessment of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action would include a proposal on a set of quantitative and qualitative indicators and benchmarks;
- (c) since 1999, sets of quantitative and qualitative indicators have been developed by successive Presidencies in some of the 12 critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action³, and each year the Council has adopted Conclusions on these indicators;
- (d) in line with the request from the European Council of 20-21 March 2003, the European Commission prepares, in collaboration with the EU Member States, an annual report to the Spring European Council on developments towards gender equality and orientations for the gender mainstreaming of policy areas;
- (e) in the context of the 10-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action, the EU ministers responsible for gender equality, meeting in Luxembourg on 4 February 2005, adopted a common declaration which, *inter alia*, reaffirms their strong support for, and commitment to, the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; on 2-3 June 2005, the Council invited the Member States and the European Commission to strengthen institutional mechanisms for promoting gender equality and to create a framework to assess the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, in order to create a more consistent and systematic monitoring of progress, and invited the Commission to include the assessment of relevant indicators, developed for the follow-up of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, in its annual report to the Spring European Council;

³ Women in power and decision-making (1999); Women in the economy (reconciliation of work and family life) (2000); Women in the economy (on equal pay) (2001); Violence against women (2002); Women and men in economic decision-making (2003); Sexual harassment at the workplace (2004); Women and health (2006); Institutional mechanisms (2006); The education and training of women (2007); Women and poverty (2007); The girl child (2008); and Women and armed conflicts (2008).

- (f) on 14 May 2007 the Council adopted conclusions on gender equality and women's empowerment in development cooperation⁴;
- (g) in 2008 the Council approved the EU Guidelines on Violence against Women and Girls and Combating all Forms of Discrimination against them⁵, as well as the Comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security⁶;
- (h) in June 2005 the Council confirmed the important role of the High-Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming in the strategic follow-up of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action⁷;
- (i) the European Institute for Gender Equality, established in December 2006, will offer further opportunities for improving follow-up mechanisms, in accordance with Regulation 1922/06/EC⁸ and the Institute's annual work programmes, as one of its tasks is to develop methods to improve the comparability and reliability of data related to gender equality;
- (j) on 17 December 2008 the Council invited the Commission and the Member States to carry out a general review of all the critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action. The previous general review ("Beijing + 10"⁹) having taken place in 2005, the Swedish Presidency of the European Union has undertaken an analysis of progress made over the past five years, presenting a comprehensive report that pinpoints the obstacles currently preventing the full realisation of gender equality and also identifies the major challenges for the future.

⁴ Doc. 9561/07.

⁵ Doc. 16173/08 + COR 1.

⁶ Doc. 15671/1/08 REV 1.

⁷ Doc. 9242/05.

⁸ OJ L 403, 30.12.2006, p. 9.

⁹ See doc. 9242/05.

4. NOTE that tackling the current global economic and financial crisis is one of the most important challenges the European Union has ever faced and that this global crisis is likely to affect the employment and economic status of women and men differently, in the European Union as well as in its partner countries.
5. STRESS that:
- (a) despite the progress achieved in the realisation of the strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action, inequality and gender stereotypes persist, with women remaining in a disadvantaged position compared to men in many of the areas addressed in the Platform;
 - (b) concrete measures to counteract gender stereotypes, and to implement gender mainstreaming in the further development of integration and migration policies, are needed in order to ensure that all women and girls, men and boys have the possibility to fulfil their potential in all spheres of society;
 - (c) although gender equality and gender mainstreaming are recognised in the Lisbon Strategy as being essential for progress, the National Reform Programmes (NRPs) for 2008 reveal that gender mainstreaming is not always sufficiently implemented across policy domains¹⁰;
 - (d) there is still a lack of timely, reliable, and comparable data, both at national and EU level, for the indicators already developed in many of the critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action, including women and poverty, violence against women, institutional mechanisms, women and armed conflicts, women and health, and the girl child;

¹⁰ The National Reform Programmes 2008 and the gender aspects of the European Employment Strategy:
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=748&langId=en&moreDocuments=yes>

- (e) gender mainstreaming and specific actions to promote gender equality are mutually supportive strategies, that structures and methods need to be reinforced and effectively used at both national and EU level, and that strategies and tools for gender mainstreaming, including, for example, gender impact assessment, gender budgeting and gender training, should be further developed, with the effective support of the European Institute for Gender Equality.
6. REAFFIRM their strong support for, and commitment to, the full implementation of the Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Beijing + 5 Political Declaration and Outcome Document of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, and the Political Declaration adopted by UN Member States in March 2005 at the 49th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women.
 7. TAKE NOTE of the report “Beijing +15: The Platform for Action and the European Union” presented by the Swedish Presidency of the European Union, with a view to the forthcoming 54th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in 2010, which will mark the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action.
 8. CALL ON THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION:
 - (a) to support national and EU statistical offices and encourage cooperation and efficiency, also using the capacity of the European Institute for Gender Equality, with a view to further improving the collection, compilation, analysis, dissemination and use of timely, reliable and comparable data disaggregated by sex and age, thereby shedding light on problems and issues related to women and men and the promotion of gender equality; and with this goal in mind to take steps to ensure that statistics, data and information on the relevant indicators relating to the Beijing Platform for Action are made readily available and regularly updated;

- (b) to implement and monitor gender mainstreaming more systematically, where appropriate, including in legislative, financial and other key processes, strategies, programmes and projects in different policy fields, including economic policy and integration policies, in the Open Method of Coordination for both employment and for social protection and social inclusion, in the Renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy, in the Framework of European cooperation in the youth field, in external and development policies, and in the European Security and Defence Policy, especially in the context of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889¹¹; to assess the impact of gender mainstreaming in all these fields; and to encourage the systematic use of the indicators developed for the follow-up of the Beijing Platform for Action in all relevant policy areas and processes;
- (c) to recognise that some of the indicators developed for monitoring progress in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action could offer a valuable tool for reinforcing the gender perspective in the monitoring mechanisms of the Lisbon Strategy post 2010, and to take them into account where relevant;
- (d) to further develop the annual review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and to utilise the indicators and the analytical reports effectively, where relevant, as a contribution to different policy fields, as well as for reinforcing gender mainstreaming in Council formations and when considering new initiatives aimed at achieving gender equality;

¹¹ Malta reaffirms its stance in respect of Security Council Resolution 1889 on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women and peace and security, and specifically its reservation on paragraph 10 of the Resolution, as set out in the letter of 7 October 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, addressed to the Secretary General and the President of the Security Council of the United Nations (doc. ref. A/64/483-S/2009/512).

- (e) to develop, adopt and implement, in cooperation with the social partners, civil society and other relevant stakeholders, appropriate measures to ensure that men and boys, whose role is critical in achieving gender equality, are actively involved in policies and programmes to promote gender equality and that men are offered opportunities and encouragement to share family and domestic responsibilities with women on an equal footing;
- (f) to continue the active cooperation with, and promote the involvement of, the social partners, civil society actors and the private sector in the realisation of equality between women and men;
- (g) to take further steps to advance women's empowerment, gender equality and gender mainstreaming in development cooperation, including through the completion and adoption of an EU Gender Action Plan and in accordance with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action;
- (h) to continue to adopt and to implement specific gender equality policies, including active measures, with a view to accelerating the achievement of *de facto* gender equality and promoting the full enjoyment of all human rights by women and girls.

9. CALL ON THE MEMBER STATES

- (a) to develop indicators, using the capacity of the European Institute for Gender Equality, on "Women and the Environment" and "Women and the Media", which are among the critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action that have yet to be thus addressed, and to review the sets of indicators already developed, in accordance with the mid-term plan to be developed by the Commission;

- (b) to support the Commission in its preparation of the future strategy for gender equality, following the current Roadmap for equality between women and men - 2006-2010¹², and to reaffirm the European Pact for Gender Equality adopted by the European Council in March 2006¹³.

10. CALL ON THE COMMISSION:

- (a) to develop a mid-term plan for the regular follow-up and revision of the sets of indicators already developed for the follow-up of the Beijing Platform for Action, using all available resources, including the expertise of the High-Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming;
- (b) to continue to promote the exchange of knowledge between the Member States in all fields addressed in the Beijing Platform for Action through the programme for the exchange of good practice on gender equality, with a view to reinforcing the implementation of the commitments set out in the Platform, and to use the capacity of the European Institute for Gender Equality;
- (c) building on the six priorities of the current Roadmap for equality between women and men - 2006-2010¹⁴, to prepare a follow-up strategy, taking into account existing tools, and with due regard to current issues and challenges such as the economic and financial crisis, the environment and climate change, sustainable development, the ageing society and increased migration, the situation of women from ethnic minorities, and the role of boys and men in bringing about gender equality.

¹² Doc. 7034/06.

¹³ Doc. 7775/1/06 REV 1, para. 40 and Annex II.

¹⁴ Equal economic independence for women and men; the reconciliation of work, family and private life; the equal participation of women and men in decision-making; the eradication of gender-based violence; the elimination of gender stereotypes in society; and the promotion of gender equality in external and development policies.

11. UNDERTAKE to regularly review progress achieved on those critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action for which indicators have already been adopted and CALL on the Commission to take the outcome of these reviews into account in its annual report to the Spring European Council on Equality between Women and Men.
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