

EWLA

Second Statement

on

**2007 –European Year of Equal Opportunities
for All**

15 November 2007

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The European Women Lawyers Association (EWLA) presents the following statement upon the Closure Conference of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All in Lisbon, 19-20 November 2007:

Having regard to

- the EP and Council Decision to launch a European Year of Equal Opportunities for All,¹
- EWLA's Statement on 2007 - European Year of Equal Opportunities for All,²
- the First Equality Summit of the EU in Berlin, on 30-31 January 2007,
- EWLA's Resolutions on Gender Mainstreaming and on Age Discrimination, and its Second Resolution on Reconciling Employment and Family Life, all of 12 May 2007,³
- as well as the subsequent developments,

EWLA welcomes

- the political will of EU institutions to implement effectively the fundamental principles of non-discrimination and gender equality in all areas, and to assist Member States in achieving this implementation, as expressed in the Decision to launch a European Year of Equal Opportunities for All in 2007,
- the decision to hold a Closing Conference of the Year in Lisbon on 19-20 November 2007 to assess the achievements made and to identify the future challenges,

EWLA recalls

- the preamble of the EP and Council Decision establishing the European Year emphasizing that **the elimination of gender inequalities and the promotion of gender equality is imposed by the Treaty as an essential task and a horizontal aim of the Community,**
- the objectives of the European Year: Rights – Representation – Recognition – Respect,
- that **women are neither a group nor a minority, but one of the two forms of the human being and more than half of the European population,** viz. half of the European voters.

Therefore, ***EWLA stresses*** that

- **measures to ensure equal opportunities for all must address the persistent problem of gender discrimination** within the other grounds of discrimination because women suffer disproportionately from multiple discrimination, in particular discrimination based on ethnic origin, age, or disability;
- **these measures, however, cannot replace measures designed specifically at combating discrimination based on sex;**
- **these measures must cover all aspects of life** – in particular public, economic, and social;

Consequently, EWLA calls upon all responsible actors – the Member States, the European Institutions, and Civil Society,

- not to lose sight of the pervasiveness and specificities of gender discrimination when designing measures to combat discrimination and to further equality for all;
- to strengthen the protection of maternity and the reconciling of family and work by men and women as means to achieve real gender equality, to fulfill the Lisbon social and economic goals and to address the acute demographic problems, in particular by
 - promoting the monitoring of relevant EC law,
 - updating Directives 92/85⁴ and 96/34⁵,
 - extending the prohibition of gender discrimination to areas already covered by the other European anti-discrimination directives,
- to address, with priority, the problem of the gender pay gap, which still persists in the member states;
- to take measures for the promotion of women in decision-making positions, public and private;
- to set up benchmarks for evaluating the achievements in each of the areas concerned.

¹ Decision 771/2006/EC of 17 May 2006, (2006) OJ L 146/1 of. 31.5.2006.

² Available at: <www.ewla.org>.

³ All available at: <www.ewla.org>.

⁴ Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 Oct. 1992 concerning the implementation of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of pregnant workers, workers who have recently given birth and women who are breastfeeding, (1992) OJ L 348/1 of 28.11.1992.

⁵ Council Directive 96/34/EC of 3 June 1996 on the framework agreement on parental leave concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC, (1996) OJ L 145/4 of 19.6.1996, as amended by Directive 97/75/EC of 15 Dec. 1997, (1998) OJ L 10/24 of 16.1.1995.