



ASSEMBLÉE DES RÉGIONS D'EUROPE
ASSEMBLY OF EUROPEAN REGIONS
VERSAMMLUNG DER REGIONEN EUROPAS
ASAMBLEA DE LAS REGIONES DE EUROPA
ASSEMBLEA DELLE REGIONI D'EUROPA



Generalitat de Catalunya
Institut Català de la Dona

Barcelona, 26th October 2002

Barcelona Conference

The future of Europe depends on gender equality

The conference organised in Barcelona by the Assembly of European Regions (AER) and the Institut Català de la Dona on 25th and 26th October 2002 under the heading "Women in decision-making in the Regions of Europe: women and men sharing power" led to several steps forward being made in terms of gender equality:

Women in politics...

"The balanced share of responsibilities and equal opportunities must be fully planned for, assessed and resolved. If we do not manage to reconcile the pillars of society, i.e. paid work and family obligations, via enhanced action for the reconciliation of politics and family life, female participation in this field will remain tedious and difficult" declared Carin Palmcrantz, President of the Equal opportunities for men and women group.

Participants unanimously criticised the bad example provided by the EU: the Convention on the future of Europe, responsible for drawing up the future Constitution, has very few female members. *"It is our duty to put pressure on Convention members to ensure that the future Constitution pertinently includes gender equality. We must make the proposals of the Regions heard"* stated Teresa Freixes Sanjuán, Professor in Constitutional law and President of the European Law Institute. This comes in addition to the AER survey showing significant change in terms of gender representation: in 1997, only 10% of members had Equality action programmes against 55% in 2002.

... and economics

"Claims for gender equality do not only concern women, all members of society are affected" stressed Margarida Álvarez i Álvarez, President of the Institut Català de la Dona. *"The struggle for gender equality is not simply a question of justice, it's profitable"* she continued. World Bank statistics prove that countries which protect women's rights and develop access to financial assistance achieve more rapid economic growth than other countries.

Participants generally agreed on the critical nature of re-organising labour systems in order to adapt the current situation and allow both men and women to live fulfilled professional and personal lives.

The AER Equal opportunities group now intends to distribute the final Declaration adopted in Barcelona to the European Institutions and to the regions themselves. They will also ensure the follow-up to their recommendations (The Barcelona Manifesto is available on the AER web site: www.a-e-r.org)

Institut Català de la Dona Contact: Marta Font, Press Attachée, Tel: +34 93 495 16 03, E-mail: mfont@correu.gencat.es

AER Contacts:

Eric Milesi, Equal opportunities group, Tel.: +33 3 88 22 74 41, E-mail: e.milesi@a-e-r.org

Barbara Skoczylas-Thauront or Francine Huhardeaux, Press & Communications Service, Tel.: +33 3 88 22 74 46 or 49, E-mail: infopresse@a-e-r.org

Created in 1985, The AER is a political organisation of the regions in Europe and the speaker for their interests at European and International level. Its mission: bring together the regions of Europe and allow them to be, together, actors in the construction of Europe and European integration. The AER has 250 member regions and 12 member interregional organisations.

Immeuble Europe, 20 place des Halles, F – 67054 STRASBOURG Cedex (France)

Téléphone (+33) 3 88 22 07 07 – Téléfax (+33) 3 88 75 67 19

E-mail : secretariat@are-regions-europe.org ou infopresse@are-regions-europe.org