



LOBBY EUROPEEN DES FEMMES EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY

EWL SEMINAR 20.10.2006 – Prague

MANIFESTO “WHO CARES? CARE SERVICES FOR ALL WOMEN AND MEN IN EUROPE!”

The lack of affordable, accessible and high quality care services in the EU is a major obstacle to women's full participation in all aspects of economic, social, cultural and political life. This reveals the lack of a real choice about how to combine work and private life as well as the persistence of gender stereotypes that continue to underpin the division of tasks between women and men both at home and within society at large. Care policies and the provision of care services are therefore conditions for the achievement of equality between women and men.

EWL is leading a Campaign on Care, which aims to raise awareness on issues related to care that need to be addressed in order to achieve gender equality in European societies, including: 1) gender stereotypes, 2) the economics of care, 3) care and the labour market; 4) migrant domestic care workers; 5) European Union policies

We, the undersigned, representatives of over 4000 European women's associations and participants gathered in Prague on 20 October 2006 at the EWL seminar “Who Cares: care issues in Europe from a gender perspective” have adopted the following Manifesto:

We call for a European Union where both women and men are equally considered as carers and full actors in all areas of public and private life...

We note that the historical assignment for care and domestic work to women continues to be underpinned by gender stereotypes, the expression of religious beliefs, conservative education and public policies.

We call upon the EU and its Member States to take strong policy action for the reconciliation of work and private life and to implement policies for the elimination of stereotypes about gender roles in the home, notably through education at all levels.

We call upon the media to promote a non-stereotypical portrayal of women and men, and to promote an image of people with additional support needs, which does not focus on dependency but on independence and interdependence.

We stress that gender equality cannot be achieved without men taking up equal responsibilities for care and domestic work, including taking full advantage of their right to paternity and parental leave; and hence we ask that gender disaggregated statistics on paid and unpaid care giving be collected.

We call for a European Union where affordable, accessible and high quality care services are available to all women and men...

We affirm that caring for all children and people with additional support needs is a responsibility for society as a whole; governments must recognise their responsibility and take an active part in ensuring public funding, along with training and inspection to support increased care needs across Europe.

We stress that affordable good quality care structures for children, older people, persons with disabilities and other dependents must be central elements of an EU social model and should be provided primarily by the public sector and be available in urban and rural areas to all who need them taking into consideration the human rights, independence and empowerment of the care-recipients.

We call upon the EU to ensure that future European policies on social services recognise the specific status of care services and their vital role for society and gender equality.

We call upon Member States to achieve the Barcelona childcare targets to provide childcare by 2010 to at least 90% of children between 3 years old and the mandatory school age and at least 33% of children under 3 years of age; this must include the guarantee of appropriate and sustainable public funding and provision of after-school childcare supervision at children's respective schools.

We call upon private sector employers, employer organisations, occupational organisations and unions, to demonstrate a concrete commitment to sharing the responsibility for provision of care services. In particular, we call upon them to allocate

financial, material and human resources as a complement to government funds to enable the provision of widespread and high quality care services.

We call for a European Union where informal workers and professional carers have equal access to quality work and life-long education and where all dependents enjoy quality care services of their personal choice...

We note that the manner in which care work is carried out in society and in the private sphere impacts heavily on women's labour market engagement.

We note that care services as an employment sector is overwhelmingly female, assumed to be of low value with low skills required, and is usually low paid with constrained career prospects: this has detrimental effects on women as well as on care-recipients.

We call upon the EU and Member States to adopt policies that support informal carers, including measures to compensate for the impact of caring on professional duties.

We call upon Member States to enhance the quality and flexibility of care services through increased professionalisation and funding and through creative partnerships between people with additional support needs and other actors in the care sector.

We call for a European Union where migrant care workers enjoy decent working conditions and basic human rights, regardless of legal status...

We note that in many countries, in order to overcome the lack of care services, more and more migrant women, sometimes undocumented and often under-paid, are employed as domestic workers.

We call upon the EU and Member States to adopt migration policies and immigration laws that recognise the increasing demand for care services, in order to avoid making migrant female labour in the care sector vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

We call upon Member States to develop strategies for social integration, which include granting residency and work permits and vocational training, aiming to enable migrant care workers to change employer or to move into a different sector of employment.

We call for a European Union that takes a lead in achieving equality between women and men and strengthening the European social model...

We recall that the EU has played a key role in adopting important legislation for gender equality, in particular in the labour market.

We call upon the EU and Member states to improve legislation regarding maternity, paternity and parental leave, including making the parental leave period non-transferable and shared between parents, entitling women on maternity leave to an income equivalent to full salary and adopting a directive on paternity leave.

We call upon the EU and Member States to implement the Beijing Platform for Action, the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the European Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men.