

Who we are:

Founded in 1990, the European Women's Lobby (EWL) is the largest alliance of women's non-governmental organisations in the European Union, bringing together thousands of member organisations in Europe. Our influential voice makes a significant difference as we work together to achieve equality between women and men in all areas of public and private life; actively addressing issues of economic and social justice for women, women in leadership and decision-making, women's human rights, violence against women, and women's diversity.

The EWL works within **democratic, open and transparent procedures** of communication, decision-making and accountability, including financial accountability.

The EWL works to influence the institutions of the European Union and is in **consultative status with the Council of Europe and the United Nations Economic and Social Committee.**

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Editorial

I invite you to read through the European Women's Lobby Annual Report for 2007 in the hope that you will find this motivating enough to further work towards eliminating sexism and the multiple levels of discrimination against women both, of which continue to demonstrate the failure of societies in Europe to protect the rights of women.

In 2007, the EWL was at the forefront of the public policy debate in relation to the legal protection of women against discrimination. The EWL was particularly active in the framework of the European Year on Equal Opportunities for All and in the emerging debate on flexicurity. For those issues and many others, the EWL was in active dialogue with the European Commission and other European decision-makers.



Following our commitment to ensure a stronger and more diverse voice at the European level, the EWL has grown even further with the inclusion of national co-ordinations from Slovenia and Romania. We continued to empower our members both by reacting to their demands and also by proactively engaging in a systematic communicative process with them whereby briefings, various tools, de-

tailed information on possible funding and training has been distributed.

Our membership has put in place an exciting new format for our General Assembly. The aim for this new initiative was for meetings to become more dynamic and to provide EWL member organisations with more space to deepen or initiate reflection and to shape EWL policies in the long term. One of the key features of the new General Assembly structure was the introduction of Issue Groups which were proposed and facilitated by member organisations.

As for every year, EWL actively participated in the 51st session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York dealing with the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child.

As part of its commitment to promote women's human rights, the EWL organised in May 2007 a one-day seminar in Potsdam on the relationship between women and religion in Europe. The EWL also continued its successful Nordic Baltic Project aiming at protecting women victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Finally, I am delighted to introduce Myria Vassiliadou who took over as Secretary General of the EWL from 1 October 2007. Myria worked previously as a university professor in

the area of gender studies, as the Director of the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies and as a National Expert for the European Commission. She replaces Mary Mc Phail, who left the Lobby after six very fruitful years. The Board and the Staff wish Myria best of luck with the future in our large European family and extend their thanks to Mary for her great work and to Cécile Gréboval for her excellent work as the interim Secretary General from February to September 2007.

On behalf of the European Women's Lobby, I would like to thank our membership and other stake-holders for making our work possible. The European Commission, the Nordic governments, the Sigrid Rausing Trust, and the Network of European Foundations for Innovative Cooperation (European Programme on Migration and Integration), have been instrumental in ensuring the sustainability and consistency of our strong voice at the European level and contributing towards equality of women and men.

On a final note, I would like to personally thank the staff at the EWL Secretariat and the Executive Committee for the drive, commitment and hard work they have demonstrated during this challenging, transition year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'K. Kolthoff'.

Kirsti Kolthoff

President of the European Women's Lobby

The European Commission's Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010 was launched in March 2006. The EWL had drafted its own Roadmap in 2005, in order to highlight the needs and priorities of women across Europe. The EWL is also committed to monitor the full implementation of the objectives set in the Roadmap and in this context, published a first monitoring Report in October 2007.

EWL Analysis of the Implementation of the European Commission Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men after One Year

The European Commission Roadmap: an Ambitious Political Framework

The European Commission Roadmap is an ambitious political framework, as **it partly shares the feminist analysis of gender inequalities** given by the EWL and it reaffirms the commitments made by the European Union in relation to gender equality. The Roadmap confirms the central place of gender equality in European law and policy. Moreover, it is positive that issues such as the unequal sharing of caring responsibilities between women and men and imbalances in taxations and social security systems are mentioned as obstacles to the realization of equality between women and men. The fact that the European Commission reaffirms its commitment to the dual approach combining specific measures for gender equality in the areas defined in the Roadmap and gender mainstreaming is another positive factor.



The **priority areas** defined by the Commission for its action for the period 2006-2010 cover 1) the economic independence of women, 2) reconciliation of private and professional life, 3) the equal representation of women and men in decision-making, 4) the eradication of gender-based violence and trafficking, 5) the promotion of gender equality outside the EU and 6) the elimination of gender stereotypes in society. This **vast area of action goes beyond the area of employment** traditionally tackled by the EU and it also goes beyond earlier EC strategies in the area of gender equality as for the first time, it also covers the promotion of gender equality outside the EU for example.

The EWL Implementation Report

The goals of the EWL Report published in October 2007 were twofold. The first goal was to provide EWL member organisations as well as other interested actors with information about the realisation of the objectives of the Roadmap after one year of implementation by the European Commission. The Report therefore **highlights progress**

made, but it is also a lobbying document calling for further actions, as it shows the differences between the actions undertaken by the Commission and the EWL recommendations for each area. While the European Commission itself will produce a report on the state of implementation of the Roadmap in 2008 and in 2010, it seemed important to EWL to produce its own report, in order to **highlight the gaps identified by women's organisations**.

EWL Concerns in Relation to the Roadmap

The EWL highlighted some concerns, in relation to the implementation of the Roadmap after one year, which are relevant for all areas. Firstly, it appears difficult to involve all services in the Commission even though the Roadmap clearly extends beyond the sole competencies of the Employment and Social Affairs Directorate General. Secondly, **effective gender mainstreaming that brings transformative results**, which is at the core of the Roadmap strategy, would presuppose a reallocation of resources, training for Commission officials, continuous and rigorous

gender impact assessment and gender budgeting, but these are not discernible in a systematic way. Finally, proposals for **new legislation or policies in some areas are slow to come forward** in some fields in spite of a demonstrated need for them, for example in relation to violence against women, women in decision-making or discrimination in education and in the media.

However, despite those gaps, the **Commission's Roadmap contains a series of very positive initiatives**, some of which have already been implemented, such as the adoption of a communication on the gender pay gap, another on gender equality in development cooperation and a manual on gender mainstreaming in employment. The large area covered by the Roadmap also **gives actors interested in gender equality issues a broad potential for action.**

Cécile Gréboval,
EWL Secretariat



Flexicurity: the Risk of a potential Widening of Gaps between Women and Men in Employment?

The concept of *flexicurity* – combining flexibility and security – was launched in 2007 as a means of addressing the challenges of demographic change and subsequent impact on changing work patterns in a rapidly changing economic environment. The Social Affairs and Employment Council meeting in December 2007 adopted a set of *flexicurity principles* one of which relates to equality between women and men.

The EWL believes that these principles are **not strong enough** to address the **structural dimensions of women's unequal positioning** on the labour market and **over-representation in unpaid work**. This will therefore require careful monitoring of how the principles will be applied in practice. Member States are invited to include these in their 2008 National Reform Programmes as part of the growth and jobs Lisbon Strategy.

The EWL regrets that the flexicurity model does not **seize the opportunity to challenge the dominant male-model approach to employment** which remains intact, albeit implicitly, and which **fails to address commitments set out in the Gender Pact and the Commission's Roadmap**, namely to achieve the economic independence of women.

Promoting Diversity and Equal Opportunities: The Need to Integrate Women's Needs and Perspectives

In 2007 the EWL led a specific project with migrant women in the European Union. The aims of this project were to give space to migrant women to articulate their experiences, to organise themselves and to speak out in order to promote their rights to European decision-makers.

EWL Project "Equal Rights – Equal Voices: Migrant Women in the European Union"

A three day event organised in Brussels in January 2007 brought together for a public seminar **migrant women activists** from across Europe and European political actors in the field of migration / integration. This was followed by workshops sessions to discuss issues of concern to migrant women throughout the EU. Given the importance of migration in the EU and the lack of a women's perspective in policies relating to immigration and integration, the seminar provided a starting point from which migrant women living in the EU began to **articulate their own experiences, concerns and priorities**, which were published in a **report** afterwards. These outcomes serve as a basis to reinforce the gender dimension in the implemen-



tation of the **Common Basic Principles on Integration** adopted by EU Member States in 2004 as well as a guide for future policies in the area of migration.

The seminar also confirmed the **EWL commitment to facilitate and strengthen migrant women voices at national and European level** and to ensure that the diversity of women is mirrored in policies, programmes and decisions. As part of this commitment, the EWL General Assembly dedicated its annual seminar (October 2007) to the theme of women and migration with particular focus on follow-up at national level.

In 2008, EWL will continue its project with the development of pilot projects at national level. The ultimate objective is to ensure that the voices of migrant women in the EU begin to shape the outcome of policies and that the diversity of women is built on equality for all women.

Some of the recommendations made at the seminar 'Equal Rights, Equal Voices - Migrant Women in the EU':

- **Ensure independent legal status** as an individual right
- **Document women's voices** and experiences to shape the outcome of policies
- **Guarantee** protection from **female genital mutilations**
- **Reject cultural relativism** to justify all forms of violence against migrant women
- **Guarantee the right to work** – eradicate all forms of discrimination in employment
- Provide **gender-disaggregated statistics** and data on migration
- Provide for the legal recognition and protection of **care workers**
- Adopt and ratify the **UN Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers**
- Facilitate access to **European citizenship**
- **Reinforce capacity building** of migrant women's grass root organisations
- Develop partnership and **co-operation with countries of origin**

In 2007, the EWL continued to monitor developments in the area of asylum, where the EWL priority is to ensure that asylum systems are equally accessible to women asylum seekers.

Guaranteeing the Rights of Women Asylum Seekers

The EWL is calling for the adoption of **gender asylum guidelines** particularly in relation to the European Directives on **Qualification and Procedures**. This work aims to ensure that authorities are equipped to understand that gender-based persecution is fully within the remit of the European directives and international law and can therefore be legitimately used to grant asylum. It is also imperative that no barriers prevent women from accessing the asylum procedures.

In order to assist monitoring of the national transposition of these two directives, **the EWL produced a practical guide** – protecting women seeking asylum, the need for gender guidelines to implement the Qualification and the Asylum Procedures Directives”, in November 2007.

Mary Collins,
EWL Secretariat



EWL and the European Year on Equal Opportunities for All 2007



In 2007, the EWL worked to ensure the integration of a gender perspective in the European Year on Equal Opportunities for All. The EWL highlighted the concerns of its member organisations notably during the opening and closing conferences and in particular, the need for more visibility of women in the activities linked to the European Year. Many EWL members were involved in national activities.

Some of the Issues Facing Women Seeking Asylum in the EU, a Testimony

“My husband was a very violent man, he even raped me a number of times. I kept going to the police but they kept telling me that my place was with my husband. In my country the state doesn’t protect women from such domestic violence. (...)

The information about the asylum procedure was very difficult to understand. What was even more difficult was that the interview was with a male immigration officer. In my country we aren’t used to having conversations with men without a family member being present, let alone about such personal experiences.

My claim got refused. By the appeal, I got a lawyer. I was afraid that my story would be exposed in such a way that I would feel once again violated. But my lawyer was very supportive and she helped me prepare for the appeal. (...)
But then the immigration judge said that although I couldn’t go home to my family, I could go back to my country and live somewhere else (...) they don’t seem to realise what life is like if you are a woman on your own in my country. You have no status without a man. You have to have a husband or a father or a son to do anything, to sign a contract, to go to court, to get a passport (...). There are hardly any jobs that women are allowed to do so you can’t have any independence as a woman. (...)”

Women still carry the main responsibility for the care of children, elderly people and other dependent family members. The difficulties, which many women face when balancing between their jobs and care and domestic responsibilities, affect their decisions on having children, and the type and length of both their paid and unpaid work. In the worst case women have no real choice to reconcile their work, family and private life in a satisfactory way. Better reconciliation policies including legislation for both women and men are necessary to achieve equality between women and men.

Improving Reconciliation of Work, Family and Private Life is a Matter of Gender Equality

In most EU Member States as well as on the European level, reconciliation policies are insufficient or even non-existent, or target only women. To improve this situation, the EWL is lobbying for the **improvement of**

the European legislation, notably in relation to maternity, paternity and parental leave, and for the provision of affordable and accessible good quality care services.

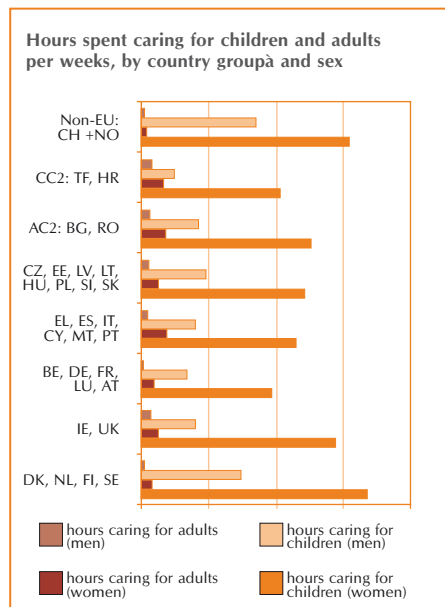
Increasing men's participation in unpaid care work and eliminating gender stereotypes to make their participation socially accepted including within enterprises and in relation to men taking up paternity or parental leave, is a goal intertwined with all other actions. Achieving equality in the private sphere is an indispensable part of reconciliation policies, which truly advances gender equality.

security and independence while they care for someone else. It is important that the legislation encourages the participation of men in unpaid care work in the private sphere. Legislative proposals should also take into account the different forms of families existing in European societies, and guarantee the equal treatment of, for example, same-sex, non-married or single parent families, or underage mothers. Legislation must also be based on the real needs of women and men.

Based on these principles, **the EWL recommends updating the existing European legislation on maternity and parental leave.** These forms of leave should be made longer and the mother or the parent on leave should be entitled to an allowance that guarantees economic independence. Part of the parental leave should be made non-transferable between the parents, and **other types of family leave**, such as leave to care for ageing parents, should be recognised. It is also important that legislation on working time is in line with the commitments to a better conciliation of work and private life and ensure that women and men are able to adapt their working hours and patterns according to their needs. In addition to changes in existing regulation, **the EWL supports the idea**

Improving European Legislation on Reconciliation of Work, Family and Private Life

In 2007, the EWL inputted into the **consultation between the Commission and Social Partners** on reconciliation of work, private and family life in particular in view of legislative proposals to be put forward by the European Commission in June 2008, which should deal with maternity, paternity and parental leave. The EWL emphasised that the revision of the existing European legislation and **any possible new legal tool must guarantee women's and men's financial**



Source: Fourth European Working Conditions Survey, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2007.

of new legislation on paternity leave and other forms of care leave.

Equal Access to Care Services for All Dependants

The provision of **accessible, affordable and good quality care services** is an important corollary of reconciliation policies, and they are crucial to guarantee women's full participation in economic, social, cultural and political life. Therefore Member States should be responsible for organising and financing quality public care services for all dependants regardless of household income. The EWL lobbied for the provision of care services by disseminating the material produced in the framework of its **Campaign "Who Cares?"** to decision makers at both EU and national level, notably during ministerial meetings that took place in 2007.

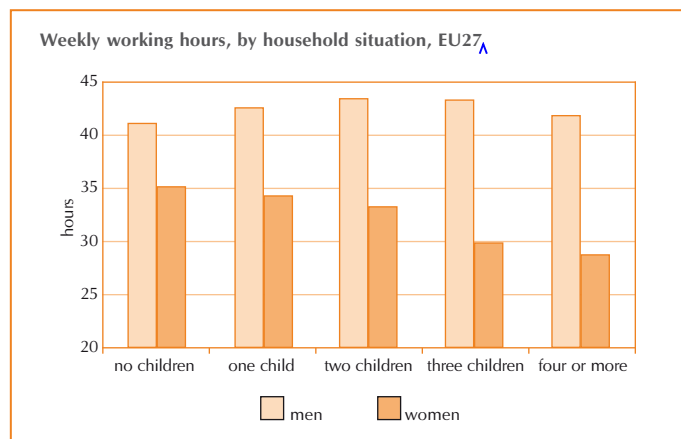
The EWL and its member organisations continued to promote and make visible its **petition on care services** throughout the year 2007. In March, the EWL presented the signatures of the petition to European Commission President José Manuel Barroso in the form of an open letter, and EWL members presented the petition to their Ministers.

Highlighting the Gender Equality Dimension in the Discourse on Employment and Demography

EU level discussions on employment and demography emphasize the need for better reconciliation policies, and there is now evidence that **good reconciliation policies targeting both women and men result in a rise of birth rates and in the participation of women in paid employment.** However, these discussions tend to frame the issue of reconciliation in terms of increasing competitiveness, a perspective, which may collide

with the goal of advancing gender equality. The voice of the EWL and its membership is therefore needed to ensure that new solutions to improve reconciliation of private and working life take into account and advance equality between women and men. It is important to introduce women's experiences, concerns and needs at the core of any new policies or directives, since policies in the field of reconciliation still have an impact on women in a ~~proportionally higher way~~ than men.

Anna Elomäki,
EWL Secretariat



Source: Fourth European Working Conditions Survey, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2007.

The EWL has been calling for European legislation on violence against women (VAW) for many years, and moved a step forward in 2007 by examining the needs and feasibility of such legislation in line with the recommendation from an important EU Presidency conference on violence against women (Dublin, May 2004)¹ and as a result of continuous requests by NGOs.

Violence against Women: It Is Time for a Strong EU Legislation

In 2007, the **National Alliance of Women Organisations in the UK, supported by the EWL Observatory on Violence against Women organised a European consultation with the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women**, where the preliminary results from the Observatory's mapping exercise were presented and discussed². The participants called for recognition by their governments of all forms of VAW, the adoption of international standards and indicators to hold governments accountable and a strong EU legislation on VAW.

The EWL then gathered a working group with legal experts (including Prof. Vogel Polsky and representatives of Amnesty International Europe) to examine the ar-



gumentation generally opposed to this proposal, based on the idea that the EU would not have a competency to act in this area. A first general conclusion of the working group is that **there is a need for a strong European legislation, that there is legal basis for demanding strong European binding law on violence against women, and that a Directive would be most appropriate instrument.**

Why is a European Legislation Needed?

Despite the efforts of the UN, Council of Europe and EU to compel governments into implement their commitments to eradicate violence against women, the lack of a comprehensive legal instrument on VAW at international or regional level results in an **ad hoc approach by Member States, characterised by low prioritisation of the issue.**

Domestic violence is the form of VAW that allows a narrow ap-

proach and gender neutral language. Focus on this form of VAW is promoted and countries often advertise having progressed with combating VAW, while all that has really happened is that **they adopted a narrow and/or gender-neutral approach to combating domestic violence only.**

A **broad European legal definition of VAW is therefore necessary**, that would affect criminal and civil law definitions, in order to ensure a coordinated approach and the harmonising of domestic legal systems. Furthermore, European legislation could regulate issues of prevention (awareness raising, education), protection and prosecution (criminal and civil procedural law, support to victims, etc). The best example of the consequences of the ad hoc approach to VAW is the known problem of variations in the definitions used and the lack of reliable and comparable data on VAW. The rates, prevalence and incidence of VAW depend on the inclusion or not of components in the definition of VAW, namely whether a narrow or broad definition is adopted.


¹ The Conference notably called "to produce without delay a proposal for a legal base on violence against women, so that an EU wide binding Directive on tackling all forms of violence against women may be drafted and implemented with urgency".

² See "Reality Check: when women's NGOs Map Policies and Legislation on Violence against Women in Europe", the result of the mapping exercise led by the EWL Observatory on VAW in 27 countries of the EU and neighbouring countries, www.womenlobby.org

Defining VAW at the European Level has an Added Value

European action can be justified, according to the principle of subsidiarity, which establishes that EU action is necessary if the objective of the proposed action cannot be achieved satisfactorily at national level and can be achieved better at Community level. So, is that the case with VAW?

The legal instrument establishing the Daphne III Programme, while it doesn't provide a specific definition of VAW, gives some argumentation. It states that "(...) the European Union can bring added value to the actions predominantly to be undertaken by Member States" (through the dissemination and exchange of information, experience and good practices; the joint establishment of priorities; etc).

Moreover, it  "Since the objectives of this Decision, namely to prevent and combat all forms of violence against children, young people and women, cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member

States because of the need for an exchange of information at the Community level and for the Community-wide dissemination of good practices, and *can be better achieved at Community level due to the need for a coordinated and multidisciplinary approach* and by reason of the scale or impact of the programme, the Community may adopt measures, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity as set out in Article 5 of the Treaty."

More to Go...

The prohibition of gender discrimination and the ensuing obligation of Member States to ensure equality in practice between women and men require Member States to adopt measures to combat VAW. However, explicitly looking at VAW as a form of gender discrimination is absent in the current official interpretation of European law. It is also mostly absent in national legislations: the EWL Mapping Exercise has revealed that it is recognised in only three national legal systems (Spain, Sweden and Germany).

The key objective of the EU policy regarding equality between women and men is to eliminate inequalities and promote gender equality throughout the European Community in accordance with Articles 2 and 3 of the EC Treaty (gender mainstreaming) as well as article 141 (equality between women and men in matters of employment and occupation) and article 13 (sex discrimination within and outside the work place).

The elimination of VAW is a prerequisite for the promotion of gender equality. The European Treaty objective to promote gender equality can therefore not be fulfilled without a European legal action on violence against women.

The existing legal basis on equality between women and men in EC law is therefore sufficient to introduce VAW legislation, if VAW is explicitly interpreted as a form of gender discrimination, including according to the CEDAW Treaty obligations that all EU Member States have ratified.

Colette De Troy & Georgia Tsaklanganos,
EWL Secretariat

The Nordic-Baltic Pilot Project, with EWL as regional coordinator, started in 2005 and is a 3-year pilot project taking place in the Nordic-Baltic region. The Project is now well underway and can show successes in providing support to victims and being a model for the fight against trafficking beyond the Nordic-Baltic region.

The EWL Working to Support Women Victims of Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation: The Nordic-Baltic Pilot Project

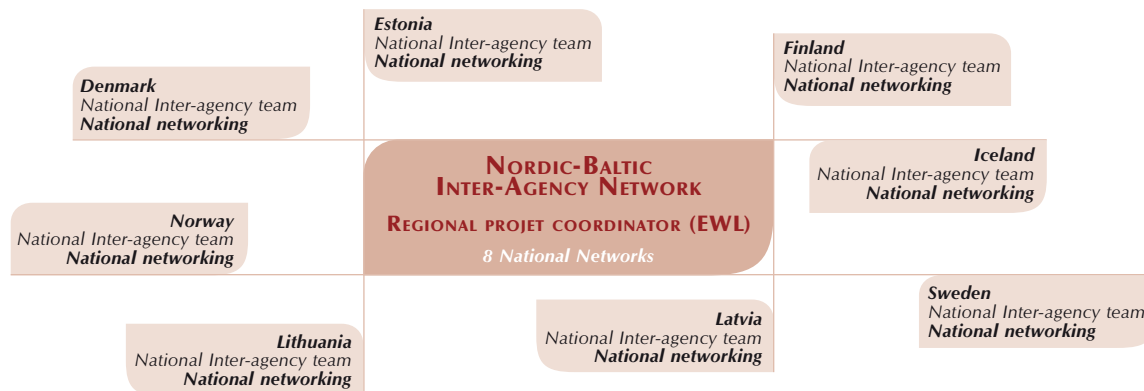
The overall aim of the EWL coordinated Pilot Project is to **develop victim-centred models for support to women victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation in and between the Nordic and Baltic countries.** Its overall objectives are to create a regional programme for the assistance and protection of women victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation; to act as a starting point for long-term change in the region when it comes to victim support and durable solutions regarding victim assistance; and to strengthen the gender equality perspective policies in anti-trafficking policies and practice.

The characteristics of the Project:

- Its **focus on victim support** and assistance
- Its focus on **trafficking in women for sexual exploitation**
- Its **inter-agency approach**: national inter-agency teams have been created in all 8 countries, consisting of three key actors from 1) service providing organisations, 2) government agencies, and 3) a resource actor, often a women's organisation
- Its **regional approach**, enabling in-depth cooperation.

Outcomes of the Pilot Project in 2007

A **Nordic-Baltic Inter-Agency Network** has been set up and is cooperating in questions of victim assistance and support. This regional network of 8 national inter-agency teams in the Nordic-Baltic region consists of public agencies and NGOs working with support to and protection of women victims of trafficking. At national level, closer inter-agency cooperation also takes place, which is of great importance for the impact of the project.



As a new resource and networking tool for the Project, the **website www.nordicbaltic-assistwomen.net** was launched in 2007. It aims to facilitate sharing of experiences and news between the partners in the Nordic-Baltic region, and to serve as a platform for information and resource sharing with organisations and policy-makers from Europe and beyond.

One **regional network meeting** was held in Vilnius, Lithuania in 2007, where the inter-agency network met to update each other on the situation in the respective countries, share success, models of good practice and ideas to increase the standard of victim support in the region.

The Nordic-Baltic network held a larger **international conference** in Vilnius in 2007, entitled *“Strengthened cooperation against trafficking in women – from national to regional strategies”*, focusing on victim-centred anti-trafficking approaches and strategies to combat trafficking in women for sexual exploitation.

At the first regional network meeting in 2006, the network defined regional **guiding principles and standards** in key areas to victim assistance, building on international law such as the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. These standards and principles were of continued use for the work undertaken within the project during 2007, and the documents were disseminated at European level.



Providing Concrete Support to Victims

An important part of the Nordic Baltic pilot project is the **support of the concrete work to provide assistance and shelter to women who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation**. This has taken place through the development of shelter networks in the countries and funding of shelters in the three Baltic states. The shelters have a special focus on assistance to women victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, and also undertake preventive and outreach work and manage hotlines. Models of support and assistance are under development.

Areas of Assistance to Victims

The key areas of the assistance process cover:

1. **Identification** of women victims of trafficking
2. **Residence/legal status and reflection delay**
3. **Shelter** and specialised services
4. **Referrals and safe returns/resettlement**
5. **Victim protection** and data protection
6. **Compensation** and Financial assistance

The Nordic-Baltic Pilot Project will be finalised in 2008, hoping to have a long term impact in the Nordic-Baltic region regarding victim-centred models of support to women victims of trafficking, responding to the specific needs of women who have experienced sexual exploitation and trafficking. **This Pilot Project provides a model that can be used also beyond the Nordic-Baltic region, in the struggle against trafficking in women,** and for responding to the need for victim-centred support and assistance to the women who have fallen victims to the sex trade.

Lisa Kerker,
EWL Secretariat

Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings

The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings got its 10th country ratification in 2007, and **entered into force on 1st February 2008**. The Convention requires States to take measures to prevent trafficking in human beings, to prosecute the traffickers, and to give protection to victims of trafficking and safeguard their human rights. The Convention sets high standards for victim protection, while acknowledging that the inclusion of a gender perspective in the actions is required.

With an aim to make the EWL General Assembly more participatory for member organisations, and to give members a new opportunity to shape EWL policies in the long term through recommendations for action to the Board, a new format was introduced in 2007, including the organisation of "Issue Groups" coordinated by member organisations.

EWL Member Organisations Discussing Central Policy Issues: Issue Groups Taking Place during the 2007 General Assembly

Five issue groups on 1) *Women in decision-making*; 2) *Women's entrepreneurship*; 3) *Violence against women and migrant women*; 4) *Prostitution and trafficking* and 5) *Conflict prevention and gender*, were prepared and coordinated by member organisations and allowed for in depth discussions on those issues, the exchange of good practice and proposals for strategies in those areas.

Advancing Women in Decision Making at National and European Level: the Need for Immediate Action!

The purpose of the Issue Group on women in decision-making was to provide participants with an opportunity to:

- Explore and reflect on **models**, which have been developed globally to advance the position of women in decision making.
- Identify **actions and strategies** which must be pursued at UN, EU and national levels to advance the position of women in decision making.
- Build **solidarity**, contacts and links with each other towards on-going communication and collaborative action on this issue.
- Further develop and strengthen the **mandate** of the European Women's Lobby to promote action on this issue.

In planning the Issues Group, we felt it was very important to hear the views of as wide a range of people as possible. We

therefore invited a broad range of speakers from different countries (Malta, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Ireland, Hungary, Latvia) and organisations (University Women of Europe and International Council of Women) to address the Issue Group.

We were fortunate to have present Sonja Lokar from the Women's Lobby in Slovenia, who has considerable experience and expertise in working on this topic. Sonja presented for us, the **experiences of transition countries** in addressing the issue of women in decision making and ways in which this experience can be used by the EWL.

With **European elections in 2009** and given the fact that no binding mechanism exist at the moment to ensure the equal representation of women and men in decision making in the European institutions, it was

felt that 2008 could provide a timely opportunity to develop of a **European wide strategy and campaign for parity democracy**. This could be done through a coalition of cross sectoral actors to put pressure on the EU decision-makers and political parties to take action. The need to develop **public awareness especially among at women voters** and encouraging them to vote for women was also stressed. The Group felt that one of the role of **national EWL coordinations** could be to encourage more women to enter political life and take up women's issues. Finally, the future **European Gender Institute** was mentioned, as it could undertake projects and research in the area of women in decision-making.

Thérèse Murphy,
National Women's Council of Ireland



Facilitating and Publicizing Women's Entrepreneurship

The percentage of women entrepreneurs has been frozen at 30% for several years; the participants in the Issue Group therefore explored ideas to improve the situation. They agreed to highlight good practices in **accessing funding**, a key factor in setting up new companies. Actions should be developed to tackle the **lack of confidence and access** facing women seeking funding from the banks.

The women entrepreneur, sector produces **micro enterprises** and often involves women who create their job before their business. In this regard a very interesting discussion took place on the **access to the profession** and on the difficulties associated with the legal status of assisting spouses especially in the craft and agriculture sectors.

Access to training and conditions favouring taking up of this training guarantees the continuity of the business. It is the **development of networks of women entrepreneurs** which will enable the success of this access to training. The need for visibility of

rural women of whom 25% are managing a farm was also highlighted.

The Group looked at how to make women entrepreneurship possible and highlighted the need to facilitate access to funding through **generalizing guarantee funds and access to micro-credit and to simplify the procedures** associated with the creation of businesses and to support information and training for women.

The **promotion of equality between the two members of the same company** was seen as essential, as well as the revision of the Directive 86/613 on the status of the assisting spouse. Institutions and bodies promoting entrepreneurship should also be made more aware of the **gender dimension of entrepreneurship**.

The **publicizing of women's entrepreneurship** is also important and could be done through requesting parity of candidatures for the enterprise prizes and use professional trade



airs to recognize the entrepreneurial ability of women. Linking with the media to combat stereotypes was also seen as a useful tool.

Finally, the Group felt the need to **make policies sensitive to women's entrepreneurship**, through using and be present in the places where business and inventions are developed by relying on the networks of women entrepreneurs. A contribution to this could be to ask the future European Gender Equality Institute to compile **gender-aggregated statistics and good practice** in the area of legislation and taxation matters.

*Martine Lévy,
French Coordination
for the European Women's Lobby*

Fighting against Violence against Women and Migrant Women

One in two migrants in Europe is a woman. Migrant women come to the UE under family reunification clauses or independently due to a variety of reasons. In all cases, they pursue a better life for themselves and for their children. Whatever their legal status in the host countries, migrant women are likely to face multiple discrimination. The purpose of this Issue Group was to discuss the current situation of migrant women, and their specific needs in terms of protection from gender-based violence.

Violence against women (VAW) is the result of gender inequality and has serious consequences in all areas of life. VAW crosses boundaries of class and ethnicity, however, migrant women, and even more so undocumented migrant women, are more likely to be exposed to violent traditional practices.

Increasing the visibility of migrant women both in terms of policy and public opinion was seen as essential as well as gathering

data about their situation and needs. In the same way, the Group felt that it was important to **promote a positive image of migrant women in the media.** Migrant women are often stereotyped and sexualised, which is a significant form of discrimination, more efforts must be made in this area.

Another obstacle identified by the Group was the incomplete **implementation of existing legislation and the fact that it is not inclusive enough.** Indeed, a number of countries adopted National Action Plans either against VAW or against trafficking. Those are often not well implemented or properly monitored. In most cases, they do not include migrant communities as a target, and when they do so, undocumented migrants are omitted. **Migrant communities and women's NGOs should be involved in**

the definition, implementation and monitoring of National Action Plans against VAW.

In the same way, it is necessary to **guarantee specialized services for migrant women victims of violence**, who should have free access to medical and legal aid. Because of language barriers, translation services should be guaranteed. Counseling services and shelters, as well as police and legal services, have to address issues of multiculturalism. Health, legal professionals and social workers must be trained to identify cases of gender violence.

Education against gender violence through the inclusion of subjects such as human rights, gender violence and gender equality in school curricula and integration programmes for immigrants was seen as very important by the Group.

Liliana Azevedo,

Portuguese Platform for Women's Rights



Issue group on Prostitution and Trafficking: Developing Stronger Arguments to Support the Criminalisation of the Buying of Sexual Services

This Issue Group was coordinated by the Swedish Women's Lobby, the Danish Council of Women and NYTKIS, the Finnish national coordination.

The Issue Group on Prostitution and Trafficking, focused on the the links between prostitution and trafficking in women and the different aspects of the issue. **It aimed to encourage and develop stronger arguments to respond to those opposing the criminalisation of prostitution/buying sexual services.**

Views on prostitution and its strong links to men's violence against women and to trafficking can be very divisive within the EU Member States. Further and stronger arguments need to be developed to prevent those arguing/lobbying for a legalisation and normalisation of prostitution, which fuels an increased demand in girls and women. **Prostitution and trafficking is a severe form of violence against women.** Most EU members agree upon the fact that trafficking in human beings is a kind

of slavery and must be prohibited but it is different when it comes to prostitution.

Eva Fager from Sweden gave a short introduction, Colette De Troy from the EWL Secretariat then spoke about the EWL position on prostitution and trafficking considering that there is no such thing as legal prostitution. Tanja Auvinen from Finland spoke about the lobbying campaign in Finland favouring the Swedish model to combat prostitution and trafficking, which focuses on the demand side.

The discussions led to a series of recommendations, notably to make prostitution and trafficking one of the priority focuses of the new EWL structure to fight violence against women (VAW) and to maintain trafficking and prostitution as highly visible issues for the EWL. Participants also felt it was necessary to develop and distribute key tools to support members work on prostitution and trafficking, such as analysis of evidence regarding the effects of Swed-



ish law, analysis of evidence coming from countries where prostitution has been legalised and arguments refuting the legalisation of prostitution and supporting the criminalisation of buyers of prostitution.

The need to designate adequate resources in budget to take this work forward was also highlighted. Finally, participants stressed the necessity to work with migrant women at all levels to integrate their perspectives into anti-trafficking and anti-prostitution work.

Eva Fager,
Swedish Women's Lobby

Conflict Prevention and Gender: the Need for a Greater Involvement of Women

The Issue Group on Women in Conflict Situations started with three excellent presentations which set the context on the kind of work being done in Europe on this topic. Marie Hainsworth of the EWL Irish Coordination talked about the cross border peace work being done in Ireland. She emphasised that reconciliation needs to be at the heart of this kind of work. Monique Halpern from the EWL French Coordination told us about the development of the International Women's Commission with high profile women from



the Palestinian Authority and Israel who must rely on women outside of the Middle-East for support. Evre Kaynak from the EWL Turkish Coordination made a presentation on Winpeace, a group that works with Turkish and Greek women on the Cyprus issue and which stresses the need for peace education in both communities.

All three agreed about the **need for people to get to know each other**, preferably on neutral territory. They all focussed on the need to acknowledge their past without agreeing on what that was. It was agreed that **civilians suffer the most** and that when peace accords are agreed that does not mean that a conflict is over.

Conflict prevention was seen by the group as an extremely important and overlooked part of United Nations Security Council 1325. We looked at what needs to be done in the EU and in our individual countries and



explored direct opportunities for the involvement of women for conflict prevention and conflict resolution. There is also a need to reflect and act upon the interface between a **diversity of issues linked to conflict situation and treat them holistically**.

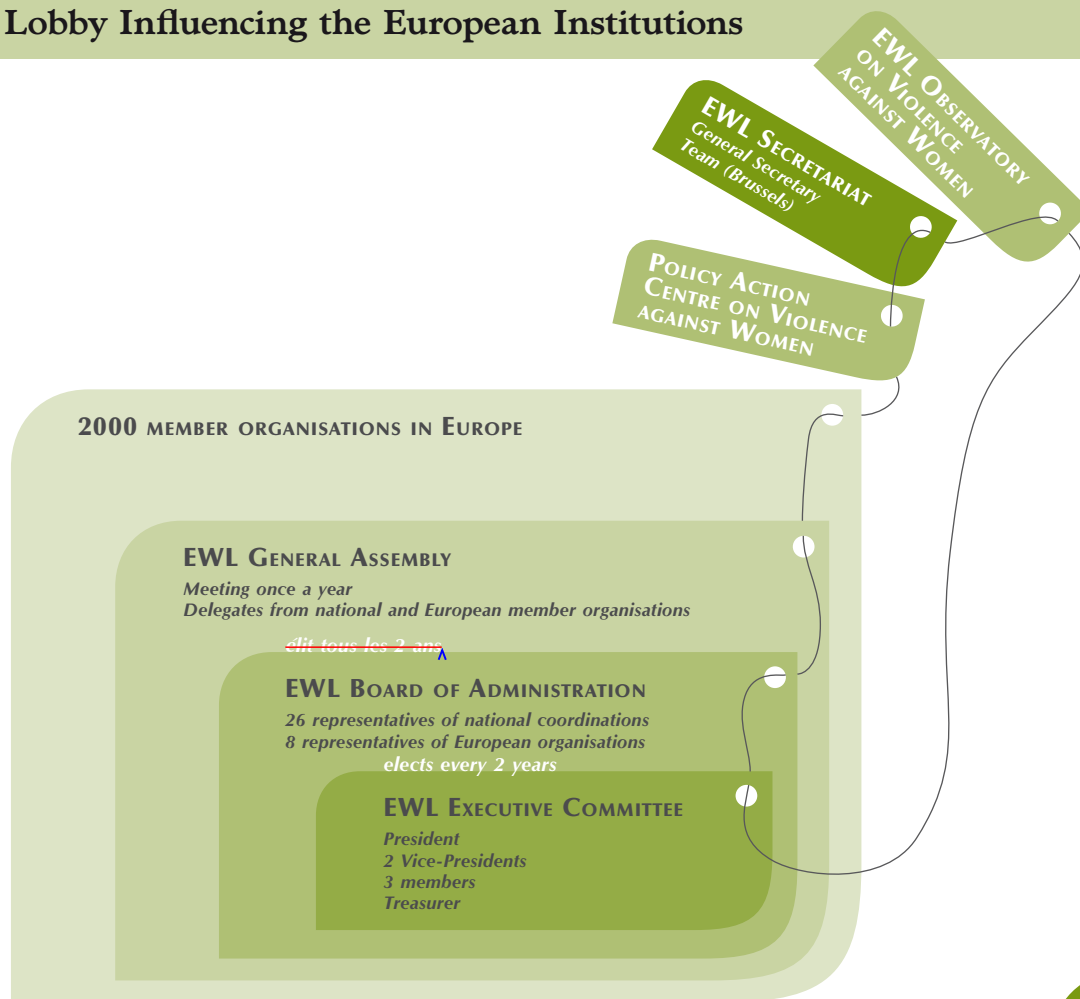
We were very concerned about the **rise and role of militarism within the EU** and as a global issue and the direct effects it has on women's human rights. The Group saw the common European defence and security plan, as enshrined in the 'Lisbon Treaty' as a dangerous move towards a European army. We discussed **redefining security from a human security perspective**, which focuses less on weapons and more on socio-economic opportunities, education and mobility. We all agreed that the EWL needs to strongly support a **strong human rights framework on the European level with a feminist perspective**.

Martha Jean Baker,
*Women's International League
for Peace and Freedom*

The European Women's Lobby Influencing the European Institutions

The European Women's Lobby through its member organisations, aims:

- To support the **active involvement of women** in working to achieve equality between women and men ensuring the representation of women from different parts of the European region.
- To **support member organisations to actively engage with EU policy** shaping and implementation of legislation at national level.
- Through analysis, evaluation and monitoring to **provide regular input on all areas of EU policy development and implementation** that have an impact on women's lives and on the promotion of equality between women and men.
- To take into account **the needs and perspective of different groups of women**, and the diverse experiences of women at all stages of their life cycle.



Who we are: the EWL Membership across Europe



EWL Executive Committee (term October 2006-October 2008)

President - Kirsti Koltthoff
Vice President - Iluta Lace
Vice President - Martine Lévy
Member - Brigitte Triems
Member - Thérèse Murphy
Member - June Jacobs
Treasurer - Tanja Auvinen

EWL Board of Administration (term October 2006-October 2008)

Board of Administration:
26 Members Representing National Co-ordinations

Austria - Marlene Parenzan
Belgium - Maïté Abram
Bulgaria - Iliana Balabanova Stoycheva
Croatia - Bojana Genov
Czech Republic - Lenka Bennerova
Denmark - Esther Oluffa Pedersen
Estonia - Eha Reitelman
Finland - Tanja Auvinen
France - Martine Lévy
Germany - Brigitte Triems
Greece - Efthymia Ioannidou
Hungary - Kinga Milankovics
Ireland - Thérèse Murphy
Italy - Ludovica Bottarelli-Tranquilli Leali
Latvia - Iluta Lace
Lithuania - Jurgita Pecuriene
Luxembourg - Marie-Paule Graul-Platz
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - Daniela Dimitrievska
Malta - Anna Borg

Portugal - Liliana Azevedo
Slovakia - Eva Mladekova
Spain - Marta Ortiz
Sweden - Kirsti Koltthoff
The Netherlands - Margit W.F. Van der Steen
Turkey - Selma Acuner
United Kingdom - Marsha Scott

OBSERVERS

Romania - Dina Loghin
Slovenia - Mojca Kleva

Board of Administration: 8 Members Representing European-wide or International Organisations

Committee of Agricultural Organisations in the EU - Karen Serres
European Centre of the International Council of Women - Grace Wedekind
University Women of Europe - Renée Gérard
European Business and Professional Women - Eufémia Ippolito
International Council of Jewish Women - June Jacobs
European Disability Forum - Gunta Anca
International Alliance of Women - Marilyn La Tona
Medical Women's International Association - Waltraud Diekhaus

EWL Member Organisations

NATIONAL CO-ORDINATIONS OF EWL

Austria - Österreichischer Frauenring
Belgium - Coordination belge du LEF:
 - Conseil des Femmes Francophones de Belgique
 - Nederlandstalige Vrouwenraad
 - Comité de Liaison des Femmes
Bulgaria - Координация на Европейското женско лоби в България
Croatia - Ženska mreža Hrvatske

Czech Republic - Česká ženská lobby
Denmark - Kvinderaadet
Estonia - Eesti Naisteühenduste Ümarlaud
Finland - NYTKIS - Naisjärjestöt Yhteistyössä - Kvinnoorganisationer i Samarbeta
France - CLEF - Coordination Française pour le Lobby Européen des Femmes
Germany - Deutscher Frauenrat
Greece - Ελληνική Αντιπροσωπεία του Ευρωπαϊκού Λόμπυ Γυναίκών
Hungary - Magyar Női Erdekérvényesítő Szövetség - MaNESZ
Ireland - National Women's Council of Ireland - NWCI
Italy - Coordinamento Italiano della Lobby Europea delle Donne
Latvia - Latvijas Sieviesu Organizāciju Sadarbības tīkls
Lithuania - Lietuvos moterų lobistinė organizacija
Luxembourg - Coordination Luxembourgeoise du LEF - Conseil National des Femmes du Luxembourg, Fédération Nationale des Femmes Luxembourgeoises
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - Македонско женско лоби
Malta - Malta Confederation of Women's Organisations - MCWO
 Il-Konfederazzjoni Maltija ta' l-Ghaqdi tan-Nisa
Netherlands - Nederlandse Coordinatie EWL - NCEWL
Portugal - Plataforma Portuguesa para os Direitos das Mulheres - PPDM
Romania - Romanian Women's Lobby
Slovenia - Ženski lobi Slovenije
Slovak Republic - Ženská Loby Slovenska
Spain - Coordinadora Española para el Lobby Europeo de Mujeres - CELEM
Sweden - Sveriges Kvinnolobby
Turkey - Avrupa Kadın Lobisi Türkiye Koordinasyonu
United Kingdom - UK Joint Committee on Women:
 - Engender, Scotland
 - National Alliance of Women's Organisations - NAWO
 - Northern Ireland Women's European Platform - NIWEP
 - Wales Women's National Coalition - WWNC

EUROPEAN-WIDE AND INTERNATIONAL MEMBER ORGANISATIONS OF EWL

Committee of Agricultural Organisations in the EU - COPA
 European Centre of the International Council of Women - ECICW
 European Confederation of Trade Unions - ETUC
 European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions - CESI
 European Council of WIZO Federations

European Disability Forum - EDF
 European Federation of Business & Professional Women - EFBPW
 European Federation of Women Working in the Home - FEFAF
 European Network of Women Entrepreneurs - FEMVISION
 International Federation of Women in Legal Careers - IFWLC
 International Alliance of Women - IAW
 International Council of Jewish Women - ICJW
 International Romani Women's Network - IRWN
 Medical Women's International Association - MWIA
 Soroptimist International Europe
 University Women of Europe - UWE
 Women's Committee of the International European Movement
 Women's International League for Peace and Freedom - WILPF
 Young Women's Christian Association - YWCA

ASSOCIATE MEMBER ORGANISATIONS OF EWL

EWL has **39 Associate member organisations** in: Andorra, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, United Kingdom and Ukraine.

EWL Secretariat 2007

Interim General Secretary (February- September 2007) - Cécile Gréboval
General Secretary (October-December 2007) - Myria Vassiliadou

Staff - Malin Björk, Mary Collins, Clarisse Delorme (until August 2007), Colette De Troy, Cécile Gréboval, Georgia Tsaklanganos (until June 2007) Marie-Anne Leunis, Virginie Niyonzima, Mary Ann Struthers, Gabrielle Tzélèpis (accountant), Judit Wirtl (July-December 2007).

Interns at the EWL Secretariat in 2007 - Núria Francolí Sanglas, Pia Kastrop Anderson, Lisa Kerker, Valérie Kinoo, Sigrid Melchior, Sara Müller, Mette Norgaard Poulsen, Marianne Rasmussen, Sofia Strid, Claire Valette.

Financial information

Balance Sheet (euros)

Assets	2007	2006	Liabilities	2007	2006
Fixed assets	13 981	18 353	Losses		
Receivables			Reserve	23 910	23 910
Commercial liabilities	18 995	30 842	Report result	-109 116	-83 738
European Commission	160 000	160 000	Liabilities		
Cash and banks	210 072	442 802	Suppliers	25 201	40 581
Regularisation accounts	19 872	30 337	Social debt	74 891	102 387
	422 920	682 334	Regularisation accounts	408 034	599 194
				422 920	682 334

Income and expenditure (euros)

Expenditure	2007	2006	Income	2007	2006
Various services			European Commission	800 000	750 000
Administration	481 224	318 481	Projects		
Meetings	333 518	334 981	Nordic Baltic Project	357 331	163 025
Salaries and social costs	520 161	599 496	Trafficking Project		103 535
Depreciation	12 145	13 245	Sigrid Rausing Trust	50 199	66 444
Running costs	163	749	EPIM	25 000	25 000
Financial costs	14 651	9 472	Membership Fees	49 327	46 312
Exceptional costs	32 503	1 613	Other income	65 255	85 427
Result transfert	-25 379	-7 143	Financial income	10 440	6 153
	1 368 986	1 270 894	Exceptional income	11 434	24 998
				1 368 986	1 270 894

Acknowledgements

Staff in the EWL Secretariat



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Sigrid Rausing Trust

