



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
LOBBY
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

**2010 BUILDING A
EUROPE FOR ALL**
www.endpoverty.eu



The European Women's Lobby calls on European leaders to address the feminisation of poverty and social exclusion

Poverty/social exclusion in Europe - predominantly female

1. Gender inequalities continue to be the most pervasive form of inequality. Unequal positions in the labour market, in political systems, in legal codes including divorce; dependency status in social protection systems, limited pensions, lack of quality affordable child care and a European average gender pay gap of 17.4% put European women at a greater risk of poverty than men.

2. Women are part of every group at risk of poverty and social exclusion, and in most cases, they are **affected more strongly.** Only 56.3% of European women with disabilities are employed (compared to nearly 75% of men). Women in rural areas experience higher unemployment: 10.6%, compared to men's 7.9%. 22% of women over the age of 65 are at risk of poverty.

3. Poverty and social exclusion severely impede upon women's empowerment. The consequences lead to severe gender inequalities, inadequate incomes, poor housing and homelessness, poor access to health, including reproductive health, and other social services,

lack of child-care services, poor work options and opportunities, as well as male violence against women, including prostitution and trafficking. The feminisation of poverty/social exclusion compromises equality between women and men.

Did you know...?

- In every age group, more women are living in poverty than men and face a much higher risk of poverty in situations of separation, divorce or death of their partner.
- One third of single-parent families in Europe, most of which are headed by women, are living in poverty.
- The employment rate for women aged 55-64 is 36.8%, 18.2 percentage points lower than men in the same category.
- European women are four times more likely to work part-time, more likely to have fixed term contracts and are more often part of the informal economy characterised by the absence of working contracts.
- The employment rate of women with children under the age of 12 drops by 11.5% whereas it increases by 7% for men in the same situation.
- Women in seven European countries earn 20% less than their male counterparts.

The European Women's Lobby calls for:

- ✓ **A Human Rights Framework** to combat poverty and social exclusion: every woman, man, girl and boy living in the European Union have the right to a dignified life.
- ✓ **Visibility** to address women's poverty and social exclusion: revise the household unit measure used to determine income-related poverty assuming that resources are distributed equally within households; develop a framework to establish a minimum income for all.
- ✓ **Individualised rights** with regards to taxation and social protection entitlements: guarantee gender quality in social protection systems, especially pensions.
- ✓ **Affordable, good quality and accessible care structures**, including child care and the care of dependent persons.
- ✓ **No gender gaps in wages**; protection of women's rights at work, including rights during pregnancy, maternity leave and breastfeeding
- ✓ **Strengthened collective mechanisms of solidarity** – no two-tier system which relegates women to the margins of economic power, social justice, compromising their participation in all spheres of life.