



June 2008

**EWL calls the European Commission  
to ensure a uniform protection for all grounds of discrimination**

**EWL welcomes the commitment of President Barroso in 2004 to initiate work on new legislation on the basis of Article 13 of EC Treaty to enlarge protection to all forms of discrimination.** As the College of Commissioners will be discussing the coverage of a new anti-discrimination directive on 11<sup>th</sup> of June, EWL would like to remind the European Commission of its commitment and ask therefore the EC to ensure a uniform protection for all grounds of discrimination, including in relation to European gender equality legislation in order to avoid a hierarchy of rights between the different grounds of discrimination.

The European Women's Lobby is the largest alliance of women's non-governmental organisations in the European Union, bringing together thousands of member organisations in Europe. EWL has been working for many years to prevent and combat sex-based discrimination in all areas of public and private life.

**Regarding the current negotiations on a new anti-discrimination directive,** EWL would like to:

- Express support to the campaign calling the European Commission to adopt a comprehensive anti-discrimination directive that will provide a higher level of protection in respect to all grounds of discrimination currently covered in the Employment Equality Directive (disability, age, religion or belief and sexual orientation).
- Stress that a gender perspective is indispensable and should be mainstreamed in any new anti-discrimination directive.

**Regarding gender equality legislation,** EWL recognizes that the adopted directive on goods and services was a first step in addressing discrimination between women and men outside employment. However, we need to emphasize that sex-based discrimination is not yet fully protected. In fact, there exist important shortcomings in the material scope of the gender equality legislation (for example on health, media and education). EWL stresses its concern that media and political discourses in the last weeks have been spreading the misleading and false assumption that gender equality is fully protected under EU legislation while this is far from being the case. **EWL calls therefore the European Commission to level-up gender equality legislation in the future to ensure that there will not be any hierarchy of rights between sex-based anti-discrimination legislation and the anti-discrimination legislation on other grounds.**