Equality between women and men: roadmap 2006-2010

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PURPOSE: to present a Roadmap on equality between women and men covering the period 2006-2010.

CONTENT: the current Roadmap is based on six priority areas for EU action in the field of gender equality for the period 2006-2010. For each area, it identifies priority objectives and actions. The Commission cannot alone achieve these objectives, as in many areas the centre of gravity for action lies at Member State level. Thus, this Roadmap represents the Commission's commitment to driving the gender equality agenda forward, reinforcing partnership with Member states, and other actors.

This Roadmap builds on the experience of the Framework Strategy for equality between women and men[1] for the period 2001-2005. It combines the launch of new actions and the reinforcement of successful existing activities. It reaffirms the dual approach of gender equality based on gender mainstreaming (the promotion of gender equality in all policy areas and activities) and specific measures.

Gender inequality in the EU will be tackled by 21 specific activities over the next five years. Commission activities include helping to set up a new EUR 50 million European institute for gender equality, reviewing all existing EU gender equality law, increasing awareness of gender inequality, ensuring gender equality is considered in all policies and pressing for better statistics. The roadmap aims to, inter alia, tackle the pay gap between men and women, support better work/life balance, eliminate violence and trafficking, support gender budgeting and promote gender equality both within and outside the EU.

The roadmap sets out six priority areas for action in the 2006-2010 period:

- achieving equal economic independence for women and men;
- enhancing reconciliation of work, private and family life;
- promoting equal participation of men and women in decision-making;
- eradicating gender-based violence and trafficking;
- eliminating gender stereotypes in society and;
- promoting gender equality outside the EU.

Each objective is followed by specific key actions designed to bring the goal nearer. Actions include:

- increasing awareness of gender equality in schools;
- promoting female entrepreneurship;
- establishing in 2007 an EU network of women in economic and political decision-making positions;
- publishing a Communication on the gender pay gap and highlighting gender issues during the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for all.

Financing: as well as the funds for the new gender institute, the proposed new EUR 650 million PROGRESS programme will fund some of the activities outlined in the roadmap. EU Structural funds and financial programmes in various policy areas will also help to provide funding for both roadmap and other EU gender equality activities.

The new network of national gender equality bodies will be established under the provisions of EU gender equality Directive 2002/73/EC. They promote, analyse, monitor and fight discrimination on grounds of sex in Member States, by providing assistance to victims of discrimination and helping them to pursue their complaints.