

EWLA

Contribution in Reply to the Consultation with the European Commission On the Future “EU 2020” Strategy

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The European Women Lawyers Association (EWLA) is grateful for the opportunity of contributing to the Consultation of the European Commission on the future “EU 2020” Strategy.

General Information:

Name of organization: European Women Lawyers Association (EWLA)

Policy area and main activities: Fundamental Rights, Equality and Non-Discrimination.

EWLA pursues the co-operation of European women lawyers, both on an individual level and through national women lawyers associations, in order to combine their specific expertise in monitoring law and politics seen from the angle of fundamental rights. It acts on the European level as a pressure-group to promote the effective guarantee of fundamental rights by means of law, as for instance by giving expert opinions to European institutions and by lobbying EU and national institutions, by proposing and even outlining drafts for EC/EU primary and secondary legislation, by informing and empowering people to claim their rights, by campaigning and by carrying out specific training programmes for legal practitioners in its fields of activities.

EWLA published numerous statements and resolutions on various topics including the European Constitution, the Charter and the Agency of Fundamental Rights of the EU, the Period of Reflection on the future of the EU, the drafting or amending of EU directives, gender-based violence, trafficking, reproductive rights, immigration etc. EWLA also participates in public hearings at EU and national levels.

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1. EWLA welcomes the publication of Commission Working Document – Consultation on the future “EU 2020” Strategy and endorses the proposed concept of collective action envisaged for European recovery which sees “*The point of entry into recovery based on a new sustainable social market economy, a smarter, greener economy, where our prosperity will come from innovation and form using resources better, and where the key input will be knowledge*”, EWLA states the above vision has omitted the contribution of “equality”. The above should read as “*a new sustainable social market economy, a smarter, greener more equal economy....*”
2. EWLA states that the economic advantage of the equal participation of women is essential for financial recovery and is in keeping with the Lisbon strategy and the new “EU 2020” Strategy. Failure to capitalise fully on the higher educational standards, specialist knowledge and skills of women and failure to fully promote women into decision making positions is of huge economic loss and a further loss in terms of creativity, dynamism and innovation. The early loss of women, in whom there has been huge financial investment in terms of education and training, from the workforce, has had, and is having negative economic effect on the European Economy.
3. EWLA calls for the actions in the Roadmap for Equality (2006-2010) between Men and Women to be implemented forthwith. Women must be promoted into decision making roles. The economic drain of women from the workforce must be reversed with adequate policies for the reconciliation of private and professional life. The costs invested in the implementation of European Equality legislation and gender mainstreaming policies must be recouped through the economic rewards of full participation of women in economic recovery.

4. The advantage of equal participation of women in the workforce must be formally named in the three thematic priorities named in Com(2009)647 fin. of (1) *creating value by basing growth on knowledge* (2) *empowering people in inclusive societies* and (3) *creating a competitive, connected and green economy*. EWLA further states that the equal participation of women must be named as in the priority theme *Development of knowledge* through the key constituent areas of education and **research, innovation and creativity**. EWLA also states that the equal participation of women must be named in the priority theme of *Empowering people in inclusive societies* through the constituent areas of **flexicurity, skills, poverty and exclusion** and **self employment**. Lastly EWLA states that the participation of women must also be named in the priority theme of *Creating a competitive, connected greener economy* through the constituent areas of **productive, transport and energy** and **industrial policy**.
5. EWLA calls for the formal recognition of equality and gender balance in the area of enhanced interdependence through the named objectives of increased policy co-ordination; better synergies through effective subsidiarity and strengthened partnership between the EU and Member States in the design and delivery of public policies.
6. While the context of a new service- driven single market, underpinned by internet selling will drive future economic growth, EWLA states that investing in green technologies, ICT and smart grids alone are not the only way forward. A structural reform agenda must take cognisance of international developments in recovering economies, such as US where women's workforce participation is now greater than that of men and where only 25% of those who have lost jobs since the recession began have been women. In the EU women have filled 6m of the 8m new jobs created since 2000.
7. The Stability and Growth Pact must be modified to include equality with the named objectives of enhanced investment in people and productive capacity and modernising existing structures including the enhancement of the efficiency of public administration and regulatory reform.
8. The reflection of the agreed priorities in public budgets must be done in such a way to formally give recognition to gender equality.
9. Having regard to the establishment of clear governance to make the new strategy effective through a partnership approach EWLA states that this must be done through the clear naming and implementation of a gender balance perspective.