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### **Consultation on the Future “EU 2020” Strategy - Comments on the Commission’s Working Document.**

The exit from the current economic and environmental crises and the entry into a “new sustainable social market economy” are targets of the “EU 2020” strategy. Key drivers in this process are:

“Creating value by basing growth on knowledge”,  
“Empowering people in inclusive societies”, and  
“Creating a competitive, connected and greener economy”.

Within the second key driver, there is explicit reference to migration and integration. The Working Document recognizes the challenge of “the integration of an increasing immigrant population” as well as the challenges “presented by European demography” and “solidarity between generations in the context of aging society” ( p. 3). In order to meet the challenge of demographic changes and increasing social exclusion the EU 2020 Strategy Working Document stresses the need to increase employment rates of men and women, and to modernise social protection systems. What is missing in this Working Document is reference to the substantial role of care for a sustainable social market economy, the care crisis in European societies and the role of the increasing feminization of migration for the structure of the emerging care work labour markets.

In the last decades, feminist researchers have highlighted the need to tackle the crisis of care related to the downsizing of the welfare systems, the persistence of the traditional gendered division of labour while women increasingly enter paid work, and the ageing of the population. A policy of gender equality is indeed crucial for tackling the care crisis. However, beyond the gender inequality, the care crisis is interrelated with gendered migration processes as migrant women working in households and in the health systems of the EU countries become a major but invisible support of the welfare systems. Therefore, in order to achieve a sustainable social market economy and a sustainable inclusive society, both in the short run and the long run, besides fostering gender equality, care should be taken, both to realize effective integration policies and to revalue care work.

Responding to the challenges and dilemmas of integration policy, the EU-founded project “Integration of Female Immigrants in Labour Market and Society. Policy Assessment and Policy Recommendations (FeMiPol)” (6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme, 2006-2008) assessed the impact of different policies on the position of new female migrants both with and without legal status. On this basis the project has formulated recommendations for more appropriate policies that foster integration of new female migrants – among others migrant domestic workers – and produce greater social cohesion. In this way the FeMiPol project has investigated core aspects of the care crisis in relation to the migration of women. Moreover,

the FeMiPol project has investigated the integration processes of new female migrants in several other sectors of the economy, and discussed policies that take in to account “the potential of migration” (Working Document, p.6) both at EU and national level.

The FeMiPol project took into account the increasing diversity of new female migrants in terms of legal status. The high demands for migrant women’s labour and the pertaining income gaps between the host countries and the countries of origin lead us to expect European societies to continue to receive migrants who will be channelled to the informal labour markets. While the global economic crisis brings about increasing levels of unemployment, the demand for female migrants in domestic and care sectors remains, due to its nature as a structural demand related to the shortcomings of the welfare systems.

New female migrants with a legal status, however, are most likely to be hit by unemployment. For creating an “inclusive society” (Working Document p. 6) policies should be created for the support of the integration of these migrants and for the improvement of the life conditions of the large proportion of undocumented persons working informally. For achieving this objective, policy will have to operate on many different levels. The specific shortcomings of policies for the provision of sufficient integration support in the different fields need to be overcome. These problems relate to the compartmentalization of policies and their insufficient interlinking, as well as their absence, including the fact that policies focus on other objectives rather than integration, for instance controlling immigrant populations.

In many ways the FeMiPol project showed that broader social and economic structures producing conditions of exclusion need to be adjusted for promoting the integration of female migrants. These factors include on the one hand the devaluation of domestic and care work and on the other hand economic structures concerned with profitability both fostering informal labour markets. From this perspective, the EU 2020 strategy should seriously take into account effective correctives to the flexibilization of labour markets in order to foster the social protection of the populations (see “Flexicurity”, p. 6).

On the basis of the research results, the FeMiPol project formulated recommendations for better integration policies. The following recommendations touch upon the objectives of the EU 2020 strategy to create inclusive societies (Working Document, p. 6), to better benefit from the potential of migrant men and women, especially to benefit from skills and qualifications that disappear through the mismatch of skills and jobs (ibid.) and to create better jobs with higher quality (Working paper, p. 7).

*Create immigration channels in order to offer chances of legal immigration and limit informal labour markets:* Future policy has to recognize the existing demand for female migrant labour in different sectors of the economy. Immigration channels should be established, and quotas should be adjusted to the real demands of the labour markets. Effective policies for formalization of work relations in the domestic sector should be intensified. Moreover, there is a need to develop and generalize flexible policies for the regularization of undocumented migrants already living and working in European countries.

*Revaluate, formalize and professionalize domestic and care work:* In view of the fact that some migrants experience work conditions which are highly divergent from today’s standards of work quality there is a pressing need to offer migrant domestic workers a legal status, accord this work with rights and recognize the work as being not only proper but also a skilled occupation. Counteracting the gendered devaluation of domestic and care work is a precondition for creating conditions that facilitate the integration of migrant domestic workers and for transforming “bad” jobs to decent jobs, securing well performing labour markets. The integration of female migrants in domestic and care work is an indispensable step towards the

enhancement of the quality of care in European societies and improvements in social cohesion.

*Re-examine policies which downsize the welfare system, such as support for the unemployed and care provisions – Decouple integration policies and control objectives:* Having a legal status is an indispensable but not sufficient condition for integration. Policies that have to be strengthened are re-integration policies for the unemployed including vocational training and counselling. Policies downsizing the welfare state should be re-examined in relation to the way they promote dis-integration and counteract the goal of integration. These negative effects are due to the implicit pursuit of several contradictory objectives, whereby the aim of controlling the unemployed overrides the goal of integration. Therefore, it is most important to separate integration objectives from control objectives, both those entailed in general policies for the re-integration of the unemployed in the labour market, as well as in relation to integration policies for migrants. The public offer of care facilities for all and particularly for migrant women should be improved in order to alleviate the difficulties migrant mothers experience in labour market participation.

*Enable utilization of human capital and educational resources – offer language courses:* A large proportion of new female migrants are affected by deskilling. The failure of the EU countries to utilize the skilled labour potential of migrant women places them at a distinct disadvantage. As European economies are dependent on recruiting skilled labour, attention should be paid to these issues so that the skills of migrants are not wasted. Policy should safeguard the human capital of migrant women and should further its utilization.

*Strengthen civil society agents:* NGOs, being the most knowledgeable about this target group, offer valuable support to new female migrants and should be granted more support to work effectively.

For more information about the results of the FeMiPol project, please visit the project webpage: [www.femipol.uni-frankfurt.de](http://www.femipol.uni-frankfurt.de)