

Contribution of Universidad de Málaga to the public consultation on the future EU 2020 Strategy

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The Lisbon European Council (2000) set as a priority that the European authorities, achieved a 60% of female employment rate for 2010 as part of the so-called Lisbon Strategy, with the overall objective of, becoming *"the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion"*.

Furthermore, the European Commission systematically repeated those objectives and requirements in their annual reports on gender equality. Thus, the 2004 Report notes that "The need to fully utilise the productive potential of the European labour force is key to achieving the overall Lisbon strategy goals... The promotion of women's participation in the labour market and efforts, aiming at eliminating gender gaps in all spheres of life are crucial for success"

Although we have made great strides in achieving equal rights in some fields, in others, however, the real and effective gender equality is far from being real in the terms proposed, reduced to a mere declaration of intentions.

This fact is particularly worrying when, in the EU Strategy 2020, the objective of achieving full gender equality seems not to be explicitly stated as clearly as in the Lisbon Strategy. Little significance has been given to the role that women can and must play to identify and solve the key challenges Europe is facing (innovation, climate change, education, etc.), and to the voice of women in science. Neither there is a clear reference to gender mainstreaming, or the effort to eliminate the gender differences that still persist in all spheres of life, which would imply a step back in their achievements.

However, it is indeed mentioned in the Working Document of the EU Strategy 2020 that, to create a new social economy based on sustainable growth, it is essential to reach an agreement on a program that put people and responsibility in the first place. For that purpose, a socioeconomic model needs to be developed, with the ability to take advantage of all the tangible and intangible resources.

In the knowledge-based society, the investment in human and social capital will be the basis for long-term growth in Europe. Consequently, future interventions should focus on preventing the exclusion of women from these areas, with particular emphasis on two priorities:

- The first one is the commitment to promote entrepreneurship among women, which is essential for the promotion of training for high quality employment, lifelong learning and skills of women in nontraditional sectors, especially the new technologies.
- The second priority is consistent with a greater commitment to achieve the integrated participation of women at all levels and with the same rights as men in the field of scientific research and technological development, which remains particularly low in these areas.

The issue of women and science is essential to build the European Research Area. Women are underrepresented in all fields of science, although they account for more

than 50% of the school population, are still far from achieving this researchers proportion within the university education in the European Union. Actually, despite the fact that the proportion of women concluding university studies is significant (and sometimes a majority), the share of women decreases through the different steps of the scientific career, to become almost symbolic in the top of the hierarchy.

The full participation and integration of women in all disciplines at all levels and with the same rights as men will consolidate the progress and excellence of the European science. Furthermore, it would be harmful to lose the enrichment that would imply a greater involvement of women in research, from the standpoint of methods, topics of interest and the objectives assigned to the research effort.

To sum up, several conclusions have been drawn about that, in our opinion, should be taken into account for the development of the Strategy EU2020:

- In research and science: the balance of higher ranked positions among teaching and research staff at universities and research facilities, e.g.: professorship (tenure, associate professor), principle investigators, head of department ... is very much shifted towards male, whereas the number of women in these positions is underrepresented and minimal. This inequality will vanish over time, taking in consideration the number of women currently enrolled at universities and those realising post-graduate studies. The before-mentioned can already be observed in some areas, like social sciences, health sciences and humanities. In these areas the percentage of women holding executive positions is higher as if compared to, e.g. experimental or technical sciences. In order to level out the balance, positive measures have to be implemented to facilitate female candidates' access to and the subsequent occupational opportunities in these areas.
- Professional training has to be re-evaluated. The typical stereotyping of "women's work" and "men's work" has to be eliminated. Jobs considered "women's work" have to be elevated regarding their reputation, especially their importance for the society.
- Gender related differences should not be reduced to physical conditions. It is unacceptable, that the fact of being "a woman" is considered a handicap, resulting in a lower remuneration and diminished chances for a promotion. To go one step further, new job opportunities based on female strongholds have to be created, focussing on sustainability, environmentally oriented, involving creativity and innovation. In this respect, the role of women in education might become more relevant.
- The concept of division of family and job needs to be revised in favour of the concept of "Co-responsibility", distributing obligations and rights with respect to their origin, family on one and personal needs on the other side. This implies changes to a variety of laws, regarding the decision of men who want to or have to take over family care-taking responsibilities.
- Flexible working hours. Special focus on a career design leaving room for professional formation and personal interests in parallel to the job, through a – public or private – social security system or through different time management systems.
- Rules are needed to regulate the day-to-day life of the citizens. Aim is to look into the management of public and private needs of the citizens in order to improve the efficiency in the use of resources and the minimization of the negative impact on the environment. E.g.: Alignment of school hours and office hours reducing the need for transport to and from school. Facilitate the citizen's access to the public administration, public health services and other services like banks, though the introduction of late office hours.

- Special attention to sectors in a marginal social context, where the number of women living under poor conditions is much higher than that of men. Special programs, e.g.: professional formation, re-use of existing programs, may be a good way to reintegrate these women into society.
- Farm work and women in the farming business should be considered. The value of the crops must be assessed in terms of quality and respect for the environment and not its intensive nature. Appropriate training is urgently needed in these areas to prevent the uncontrolled use of chemicals and synthetics. The European countryside is a major source of employment but low-quality employment and unskilled. An harmonious relationship with nature should be reached in both the agricultural and the food sectors. Here too, women can play an essential role.