

## Documenting - Analysing - Giving Impetus: EIGE's Role for Gender Equality Policy in Europe

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Commissioner,  
Directors,  
Ambassadors,  
Dear Virginija,

First of all I would like to thank you, Virginija, and the staff of the European Institute for Gender Equality for organising this international seminar today. I am sure that it will be a stepping stone on the way to the full establishment of the Institute.

Then I would like to thank Commissioner Reding for taking the time to be here with us today on this important day for the Institute. The institute is proud of having your support and sympathy.

I - as Chair of EIGE's Management Board and also as Head of the Department for Gender Equality within the German Government - warmly welcome the new Commission's strategy for gender equality. The five identified priority areas of the strategy are also in my view the fields of action that need our special attention if we want to go forward on the way to de facto gender equality.

The European Institute for Gender Equality is committed to promote the implementation of the strategy. In the strategy's working paper itself the role of the institute is described in relation to the founding regulation. The institute should:

- Provide support to the development and up-date of indicators in the critical areas of Beijing Platform for Action
- Set up a documentation centre

- Provide support to the development of mainstreaming tools and methods
- Develop a gender equality index
- Establish a virtual European Network on Gender Equality.

2011 will be the first year that the Institute will begin with a complete crew and the first year that efforts can be mainly devoted to the operational tasks.

2011 will be the crucial year to develop a moulded self-understanding of the institute and to develop its role in cooperation with the important actors.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Documentation –  
Analysing  
Giving impetus.

These are the three steps that EIGE will do not only 2011 to become an engine for sustainable progress in the field of Gender equality politics.

The Institute's work programme for 2011 that will be adopted in a short while sets a good framework for concentrating the resources on these **priority tasks** that are necessary to fulfill the Institute's commitments to the implementation of the Commission's Strategy and to support the Commission and the Member States in their gender equality work.

Concentration is necessary, because a small institute can only be strong with a clear concept of what has to be done, what can be done and within a network of cooperating actors.

With roughly 30 people EIGE is the smallest of the European agencies but on the same time one of those on which a lot of expectations lie and – we need to face it – it is acting in the

field of gender equality that typically deals with a broad range of topics. Therefore in the coming years it will be a big challenge for the Institute

- To establish the relationships and bonds that are important for EIGE's work but to be careful not to be paralysed by trying to hold a hundred threads at the same time
- It is important to deal with the main questions of gender equality but not to be overwhelmed by all the ideas about what EIGE could do.

EIGE was founded to be a platform for gathering, analysing and distributing sound and reliable information. So:

- 1) The **collection and documentation** of data and good practices is the first step to become such a platform.

Therefore the main task in 2011 will be to build up a sound data- and knowledge-base.

For the young team that means:

- Firstly, the building-up of a good overview over the existing data-resources on gender equality in Europe and the cooperation with Eurostat and statistical offices to open and broaden the data-collections for the purposes of the institute.
- Secondly, the collection of the existing material that was produced by the gender equality policies in Europe and in the Member States during the last years.

All data and material collected will be organised and systematically made available within the documentation centre of the Institute. I am convinced that such a documentation centre that makes the material of campaigns, strategies and action plans available not only virtually, but also physically is a big chance for all those - researchers and practitioners – to learn from concrete experience within Europe.

## 2) **Analysing**

The second step after the collection and documentation of data and material on gender equality policies is the analysis. And:

Analysing figures and data in the field of gender policy has a programme: The institute will make suggestions on how to complement and improve the Beijing-indicators, that means how to complement and improve indicators in the fields of action described in the platform of the 4<sup>th</sup> international women-conference in 1995.

Women in the economy, women and poverty, gender based violence, women in the media are some of these areas and we all know that it is not easy to decide upon key indicators in all these fields.

On the basis of vital and convincing Beijing-indicators the next steps of a profound analysis of figures and data will be the development of a gender equality index.

Analysing the collected material from the member states on gender mainstreaming policies means: identifying best-practices not on an abstract level but in a precise correlation between the point of departure and the promising methods, tools and strategies.

Learning from each other in the field of gender policies is not trivial. You need to look on the cultural and historical circumstances to understand under which terms and conditions so called "best practices" could be successful.

For EIGE this analysis is an important part of its job and can only be done on the basis of a good collection and documentation of gender policy material from the member states.

- 3) Documentation and analysis are the preconditions to make EIGE an institute that very soon will be able to give real support and **impetus** to European gender equality policy.

For building-up a data- and knowledge-base EIGE will of course need and seek support from those institutions that already have been active in data-collecting and processing for a longer

while within Europe. Also support will be given from those that have long been active in gender equality policy making.

Therefore I am very glad that a big part of this day is devoted to the discussion of opportunities for cooperation and synergies

- with the statistical offices and institutions,
- the members of national gender equality institutes
- and of course the other EU agencies.

I warmly welcome the agreements on cooperation that are going to be signed a little later this day and I want to say a big thank you to all those who made these agreements possible.

With the work programme for 2011 and the cooperation agreements signed today important steps are made on the way for EIGE to become THE European competence centre on gender equality issues within the European Union.

Another great step for the establishment and visibility of EIGE will be made this morning with the presentation of the new and positive logo that shows how men and women in Europe reach for the stars based on a fair and equal partnership.

I want to take the occasion to especially welcome the winner of EIGE's logo-competition who is here with us today and going to be awarded in a little while.

So I do not want to put things on hold any longer. To finish I want to stress that the Management Board will continue to give EIGE any support needed from its side also in the coming year.

I wish all a fruitful seminar and a pleasant day.