



Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri
Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità

**Opening speech by Ms Patrizia De Rose,
Head of the Department for Equal Opportunities
of the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers
at the Regional Meeting on the Gender Equality Index**

Rome, 15 May 2013

Ms Murphy,

Dear guests,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome the representatives of the European Institute for Gender Equality and all experts from Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Malta, Romania and Slovenia gathered here today.

As you may know, today's meeting has been organized by EIGE and is hosted by the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

When some months ago Ms Anna Rita Manca proposed me to host this important meeting at our Department, I accepted without hesitation, aware of the reliability and commitment shown by EIGE all over these years in addressing the many aspects of gender issues.

The European Institute for Gender Equality was set up to contribute to and strengthen the promotion of gender equality, including gender mainstreaming in all Community

policies and the resulting national policies by providing technical assistance to EU institutions, in particular to the Commission and the authorities of the Member States.

To this end, since its establishment in May 2007, EIGE has been supporting the European Union and its Member States in their efforts to promote gender equality, to fight discrimination and raise awareness on gender equality issues.

I am sure that today's work will help further strengthen the already existing cooperation among the Ministries for Equal Opportunities of the EU Member States and the European Institute for Gender Equality.

As you already know, the aim of this Conference is to illustrate the use and potential of the Gender Equality Index: an indicator which is not only useful, but also essential especially for professionals working within the Departments for Equal Opportunities of the EU Member States.

The need to concretely develop a gender equality index was first introduced by the European Commission in the "Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men 2006-2010".

In this document, the Commission outlined six priority areas for the EU action on gender equality, namely

- 1) The equal economic independence for women and men;
- 2) The reconciliation between private and professional life;
- 3) The equal representation in decision-making;
- 4) The eradication of all forms of gender-based violence;
- 5) The elimination of gender stereotypes; and
- 6) the promotion of gender equality in external and development policies,

and highlighted the need to further develop indicators, which are necessary to fully achieve gender equality.

Subsequently, key actions to be taken to improve the place of women in the labour market, in society and in decision-making positions were described in the “Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015”, presented by the European Commission to the European Parliament.

Equality between women and men is a fundamental value of the European Union, which is enshrined in its treaties and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Mainstreaming the principle of equality between women and men is a crucial part of all its activities and represents the general approach to the implementation of all EU policies.

Nevertheless, the position of women still considerably differs from that of men. For instance, women’s employment rates are lower; they have less political power and are more prone to poverty than men. In the light of this, an effective monitoring of gender equality, based on a common set of indicators, is essential. Such indicators can identify strong or weak aspects of a specific situation in the Member States and facilitate useful comparisons among the different countries.

I am fully aware of the importance of identifying and monitoring over time the progress made in the field of gender equality. That is why I chose to take part in this initiative and thank the European Institute for Gender Equality for what it did, is doing and will continue to do to ensure equal opportunities for women and men.

I wish you all successful and fruitful work and give the floor to Ms. Murphy.

Thank you