

Brussels, 15 October 2009

## **Gender equality to boost economic growth by 15% - 45% of GDP**

*A meeting of ministers responsible for gender equality and for finance and economics will take place on 16 October in Stockholm in the margins of the EU Presidency conference 'Does gender equality boost economic growth?'. The conference will discuss how and why gender equality is important in achieving long-term, sustainable economic growth in the EU also with a view to the future shape of the EU's strategy for growth and jobs after 2010. Vladimír Špidla, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities will represent the Commission.*

EU Commissioner for Equal Opportunities Vladimír Špidla said: "In many countries, there are clear links between high GDP per capita and higher labour market participation by both women and men. Those countries with the highest female employment rates and more women in top jobs are often the stronger economic performers. To overcome the economic crisis we must use all potential and involve everybody's talents."

Over the last decade, much progress has been made in female participation in the labour market, with the employment rate for women having increased from 52% in 1998 to 59.1% in 2008, close to the Lisbon target set for 2010. However, compared to the rate for men, large gaps remain in quantitative (13.7 percentage points) as well as qualitative terms (gender pay gap, involuntary part-time, gender segregation of the labour market).

According to a study discussed during the conference, there are major benefits to be gained from enhancing gender equality. Calculation of a maximum value of these gains shows that there is a potential for increased GDP of between 15 and 45% in the EU Member States if gender gaps in employment were eliminated.

The conference will look at which equality policy initiatives are required to improve the situation of women in the labour market. It will also discuss how to maintain good gender equality policies even in times of deep economic crisis.

### **Background**

Nyamko Sabuni, Swedish Minister for Integration and Gender Equality, and Cecilia Malmström, Swedish Minister for EU Affairs, will host the meeting. The Presidency conference – running from 15-16 October – is being co-financed by the European Commission.

In parallel, ministers for gender equality and ministers responsible for the EU's strategy for growth and jobs from the current and upcoming trio presidencies (France, the Czech Republic, Sweden, Spain, Belgium and Hungary) will meet to discuss the same issues. Their discussions will feed into the process of preparing the EU's future growth and jobs strategy after 2010.

## **Further information**

Conference and ministerial meeting

[http://www.se2009.eu/en/meetings\\_news/2009/10/15/what\\_does\\_gender\\_equality\\_mean\\_for\\_economic\\_growth\\_and\\_employment](http://www.se2009.eu/en/meetings_news/2009/10/15/what_does_gender_equality_mean_for_economic_growth_and_employment)

Analysis note on the economic case for gender equality:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=3971&langId=en>

Swedish expert report

[http://www.se2009.eu/polopoly\\_fs/1.17994!menu/standard/file/EUstudie\\_sidvis.pdf](http://www.se2009.eu/polopoly_fs/1.17994!menu/standard/file/EUstudie_sidvis.pdf)

Statistical figures on equality between men and women

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=SEC:2009:0165:FIN:EN:PDF>

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