

Brussels, 23 January 2008

## More women in work, but 'better' jobs needed too

***Women are continuing to drive employment growth in Europe, but remain disadvantaged on the labour market in relation to men, says a report adopted by the European Commission today. Despite higher educational attainment, women continue to be employed less and paid less than men. The 2008 report on Equality between women and men will be transmitted to EU leaders at the Spring Summit on 8-9 March.***

"Our strategy for growth and jobs has been successful in creating more jobs for women in the EU," said Equal Opportunities Commissioner Vladimír Špidla. "But ongoing challenges like the pay gap, labour market segregation, and work/life balance mean we still have some way to go to make those jobs 'better' jobs too. Overall, despite their better educational attainment, women's careers are shorter, slower and less well-paid: it is clear that we need to do more to make full use of the productive potential of the workforce."

The Commission report highlights that the quantitative progress of women on the labour market has not yet been matched in qualitative terms. On the one hand, more than 7.5 out of the 12 million new jobs created in the EU since 2000 have been taken by women. Their employment rate now stands at 57.2%, or 3.5 points above its 2000 level, compared with a less than one point rise in the rate of male employment over the same period. Similarly, the rise in the rate of employment of women over the age of 55 has been significantly faster than that of men, and now stands at 34.8%, i.e. a 7.4 points increase on 2000.

On the other hand, several aspects of the quality of women's work remain problematic. Despite the fact that women represent 59% of university graduates and have a better educational attainment, their employment rate remains lower than men's (by 14.4 points) and they continue to earn on average 15% less than men for every hour worked<sup>1</sup>.

Women also face greater difficulties in reaching decision-making positions. The presence of female managers in companies is progressing very slowly and stands at only 33%. Work/life balance is one area where major differences persist between women and men. The employment rate of women with young children is only 62.4%, compared with 91.4% for men with children. And women have a disproportionately high recourse to part-time work (32.9%) compared with men (7.7%), underlining the imbalance between men and women in the use of time.

The report underlines that more efforts need to be made to create more and better jobs. The creation of more jobs must go hand in hand with an improvement in quality. Quality jobs attract workers and allow them to fully exploit their productive potential and contribute to improving the quality of life in society as a whole. Equality between women and men is an essential quality component of work, says the report. Special attention should also be given to improving both the supply and quality of

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<sup>1</sup> The Commission recently adopted a Communication on "Tackling the pay gap between women and men" (COM(2007)424 final)

services to help people balance professional and private life, in order to allow men and women with dependants to (re-)enter and stay on the labour market.

In addition, getting rid of stereotypes is essential to promoting equality between women and men, as they continue to influence the choice of education, training or employment, participation in domestic and family duties, and representation in decision-making jobs.

**2008 Report on equality between women and men:**

[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/gender\\_equality/news/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/gender_equality/news/index_en.html)