

18. ACKNOWLEDGES the Commission's proposed preparatory action on security research and TAKES NOTE of the ongoing work leading to the planned creation of an inter-governmental agency in the field of defence capabilities, development, research, acquisition and armaments.

Agreement and the Action Plan for implementing the European Space Policy <sup>(1)</sup>;

— pursue the ongoing efforts in relation to the European Aviation Safety Agency becoming fully operational;

In response to the foregoing considerations:

— take the necessary steps, as appropriate, to continue to back the implementation of the agency in the field of defence capabilities development, research, acquisition and armaments, including continuing the efforts of the Member States in liaison with the Commission towards the creation of an internationally competitive EU defence market, as appropriate.

19. INVITES the Member States and the Commission, within their respective competences, to:

— continue, in cooperation with ESA, the ongoing efforts to develop a coherent European space policy, taking into account the provisions of the EC-ESA Framework

<sup>(1)</sup> See doc. 14886/03 RECH 211 COMPET 62 IND 164 TRANS 293 POLARM 36.

## COUNCIL RESOLUTION

of 27 November 2003

### on equal access to and participation of women and men in the knowledge society for growth and innovation

(2003/C 317/03)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

linked with ICTs and in particular groups such as unemployed women; and

1. RECALLING:

that one of the objectives of the European Union is to eliminate inequalities and to promote equality between men and women in all its activities;

the Lisbon Strategy, which drew attention to the importance of equipping all citizens with the skills needed to live and work in the knowledge-based society, and to the need to raise the present employment rate of women;

the European Councils in Brussels (March 2003), Seville, Barcelona and Nice, which in turn:

— WELCOMED the strengthening of the implementation, coordination and follow-up of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the European Union and requested that employment guidelines should address *inter alia* entrepreneurship and gender equality;

— ENDORSED the objectives of the Commission's Action Plan for eEurope 2005 — an information society for all, thereby addressing the need to provide the workforce with the key skills required for the knowledge-based society;

— CALLED UPON the Council to ensure that all citizens are well equipped with basic qualifications, especially those

— UNDERLINED that the European Social model includes the fight against all forms of discrimination, that gender equality at work must underpin the transformation to the knowledge-based economy and that more and better jobs are the key to social inclusion;

the Council Resolution of June 2001 on Science and Society and on Women in Science <sup>(1)</sup>, which invited the Commission to continue and intensify its effort to promote the role of women in science and technology, and in particular within the sixth framework programme;

the Council Conclusions of March 2003 on the Promotion of Entrepreneurship and small firms <sup>(2)</sup>, which stressed the need to encourage women entrepreneurs in order to create more new innovative and competitive firms;

the Council Conclusions of May 2003 on Adapting e-Business Policies in a Changing Environment <sup>(3)</sup>, which underlined the need to narrow and close e-skills gaps and the need for inclusiveness of the entire available potential labour pool addressing in particular the severe under-representation of women in the ICT workforce;

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ C 199, 14.7.2001, p. 1.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ C 64, 18.3.2003, p. 6-8.

<sup>(3)</sup> OJ C 149, 26.6.2003, p. 7-9 and Doc. 9857/03.

the Council Resolution of July 2003 on Social and Human Capital <sup>(1)</sup>, which stressed the need to address the current gender gap in access to ICT-related education, jobs and the use of ICT, and to encourage more women to pursue higher-education studies in subjects related to the information society;

the conclusions of 14th March 2003 of the UN Commission on the Status of Women which noted that a focus on the gender dimensions of ICTs is essential for preventing an adverse impact of the digital revolution on gender equality.

## 2. RECOGNISING:

the important role that gender equality can play in the context of the Lisbon strategy for contributing to the European Union 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 and the key role that the social partners and NGOs can play in reducing gender inequalities and the digital divide.

## 3. UNDERLINING:

the need to foster equal participation of men and women in the knowledge society paying particular attention to:

- skills for the knowledge society;
- employment, research, innovation and entrepreneurship;
- social and regional inclusion.

## 4. INVITES Member States:

in general to:

- enhance the possibilities for achieving gender equality and for the economic, political and social empowerment of women in the context of a more widespread use of ICTs including infrastructures and, while recognising that women are large consumers and users of ICTs and multimedia, to further promote their participation in and influence on all levels of production, research and innovation;
- integrate gender perspectives in national policy making concerning the ICT sector, *inter alia* in the design and

implementation of e-Government initiatives, and to ensure early and full participation of women therein, and, in this context, to take into account the needs of vulnerable groups;

in the area of skills for the knowledge society to:

- evaluate the need for increasing efforts regarding existing policies and initiatives addressing the current under-representation of women in ICT-related education, *inter alia* by adapting ICT education at all levels to take into account the needs of female students and support research into women's use of ICT, in particular their information needs and interests;
- consider the usefulness of reinforcing initiatives, such as awareness campaigns and digital literacy courses, starting from the early stages of education, aimed at shaping attitudes and combating negative stereotypes and paying specific attention to women belonging to disadvantaged groups and areas;

in the area of employment, research, innovation and entrepreneurship to:

- further develop, *inter alia* by using the Structural Funds, initiatives aimed at training women in ICT, in particular for entry, re-entry and re-skilling in the labour market, also exploiting the added-value resulting from public-private partnerships and from the involvement of local communities and digital networks;
- promote suitable work organisation arrangements and new ways of reconciling work and family life for both men and women in order to combat low representation and retention rates of women in the ICT sector as well as in research and technological development;
- foster greater participation of women in research-based activities and businesses, as a tool for enhancing innovation;
- encourage, in particular through awareness campaigns and support of start-ups, the creation and ongoing development of enterprises by women, especially in knowledge-intensive sectors, as well as the equal participation of men and women in policy and decision making in the ICT and media sectors;

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ C 175, 24.7.2003, p. 3.

in the area of social and regional inclusion to:

— pay specific attention to women belonging to all groups at risk of digital exclusion, in order to increase their participation in social and working life in the knowledge society;

— exploit the possibilities offered by new technologies for the inclusion and economic development of disadvantaged regions, *inter alia* by improving the opportunities to reconcile work and family life for both men and women, for example through telework;

— recognise the importance of establishing appropriate infrastructures, including broadband connections, and of providing facilities for equal access of women and men, adequate basic training and *e*-learning, in particular for the development of remote and sparsely populated areas;

5. NOTES the commitments already undertaken by the social partners and RECOMMENDS them to pay specific attention to:

— improving training of women and men for the knowledge society, as well as providing equal access to it;

— increasing cooperation with the educational system in order to ease the transition to work and promote lifelong learning;

— developing family-friendly work organisational forms so that men and women can reconcile work and family life, thus facilitating women's participation and retention in the ICT sector;

— addressing gender equality in the knowledge society through corporate social responsibility.

6. INVITES the Commission to:

— pay special attention in its ongoing policies and initiatives to the three areas and to the specific aspects identified above;

— monitor, in cooperation with the Member States, progress in this field and continue the analysis of the different factors underlying current gaps and possible solutions, including the collection and dissemination of information on good practices;

— foster the development of partnerships among relevant stakeholders, including civil society, to facilitate the participation of women in the knowledge society;

— in collaboration with Member States and without creating unnecessary bureaucratic burdens, develop, collect and publish gender-disaggregated statistics, as well as statistics related to gender equality, on different aspects of the knowledge society;

— to report on progress of the Women in Industrial Research (WIR) initiative in the context of research, development, innovation and entrepreneurship.

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