Reply  
(27 September 2001)

In the area of asylum and migration the Council is pursuing the programme laid down in Title IV of the Treaty and more particularly in Article 63, which lists the measures to be adopted by the Council in the short term in this area.

(2001/C 364 E/042)  
WRITTEN QUESTION E-1048/01  
by Camilo Nogueira Román (Verts/ALE) to the Commission  
(3 April 2001)

Subject: Women's employment in the Spanish state

As part of the coordination of Member States' employment policies provided for in the Treaty of Amsterdam, what measures has the Spanish state put forward to overcome its serious deficit as regards female employment, which would require it to create 3,2 million additional jobs for women if it is to achieve the goal set within the Union, i.e. a rate of 60 % for women's employment?

Answer given by Mrs Diamantopoulou on behalf of the Commission  
(7 June 2001)

The Lisbon European Council in March 2000 concluded that the average employment rate of women in the Community should increase to more than 60 % by 2010 in support of the target of an overall employment rate of 70 %, reflecting the long term goal of full employment. Progress since the Lisbon European Council was reviewed in the Commission Communication (1) to the Stockholm European Council in March 2001, where agreement was reached on an intermediate target for a Community female employment rate of 57 % by 2005.

The Employment Guidelines for 2001 (2) refer for the first time to the Lisbon targets in the horizontal Guideline A. The Guidelines also indicate that Member States should consider setting national targets for raising the rate of employment, in order to contribute to the overall European objective for 2010.

In considering the situation in Spain, the following factors have to be borne in mind:

(i) the above mentioned targets are to be interpreted as Community-wide averages — consequently the figure of 3,2 million additional jobs has only an indicative value;

(ii) Member States' individual contributions to the overall targets have to take into consideration their different starting positions;

(iii) progress against the targets will be assessed in the forthcoming Joint Employment Report for 2001, which will review the implementation of the Employment Guidelines for 2001.

In the annual assessment of the Spanish National Action Plan by the Commission and the Council in the framework of the Joint Employment Report for 2000, it appeared that Spain had the lowest employment rate for women in the Community (37,6 %) and the widest gender gap in employment (30,3 percentage points). The Report also noted that, despite this, Spain had introduced only limited measures to improve the situation. Therefore, the Report concluded that Spain should intensify its efforts to raise the female employment rate.

Consequently, the Recommendations addressed to the individual Member States (3) in the context of this most recent annual assessment of national employment policies, included a recommendation to Spain to do more to support mainstreaming of equal opportunities in order to bring the female employment rate up towards the average.
The forthcoming Joint Employment Report for 2001, based on the analysis of National Action Plans on employment to be submitted by Member States in May in line with Article 128 of the EC Treaty, will offer an opportunity to review the progress achieved by Spain in response to the Employment Guidelines and Recommendations.


The European Social Fund (ESF) is the Community’s main financial tool for supporting the European Employment Strategy. Concerning the fourth pillar of the Employment Guidelines (equal opportunities between women and men), there are two types of initiatives to boost the participation of women in the labour market: horizontal and specific initiatives. The former makes special reference to women in all priority areas. The latter are only addressed to women: about € 124 millions (6 % of the budget concerning Objective 3) and about € 232 millions (3 % of the budget concerning Objective 1) will be made available through ESF over the period 2000-2006. This includes measures such as vocational training for women, support for entrepreneurial projects, and initiatives which facilitate family and working life. The Fund will also finance measures to combat occupational segregation and wage discrimination.