



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008  
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008  
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

Information by Equal Opportunities Office

### **Conference on "Elimination of Gender Stereotypes: Mission (Im)Possible?" and informal meeting of ministers for gender equality**

Undoubtedly the central events during Slovenia's Presidency of the Council of the European Union regarding gender equality are the informal meeting of ministers and the conference to be hosted by Slovenia on 30 and 31 January 2008.

On 30 January 2008, at the conference on gender equality, approximately 200 representatives from politics, public administration, academic fields, non-governmental organizations and the media will, as a first topic, discuss toddling in the gender-stereotyped world (on gender stereotypes in early childhood) – the role of various institutions and practices in socialization and the consequences of certain gender-fixed behaviour and practices resulting in the later relations, decisions and possibilities of women and men. The second topic will examine recognition of and resistance to gender-determined roles and stereotypes, focusing on the issue of how education, training, leisure activities, culture and the media continue to convey gender-related stereotypes, and how they influence further education and career choices. The central topic of the afternoon session will be the impacts of stereotypes on adult life and how to manage them. Discussion will be held on (re)producing traditional gender roles and stereotypes in the labour market, decision-making processes, family and private lives, and the media.

A special contribution to the conference will be made by the round table, where the ministers of Slovenia, Ireland, Luxembourg and Finland will speak about their private experiences of socialization and the impacts of gender-related stereotypes on their lives.

The objective of the conference, organized with the support of the European Commission, is to review progress so far and pinpoint the key challenges faced when eliminating gender stereotypes, in particular in education and training, employment, private and family life, participation and decision making, and the media. By convening this conference, the Slovenian Presidency wishes to promote and bolster further efforts to eliminate gender stereotypes – one of the priorities of the European Union's policy on gender equality and a common thread running through the programmes of the German, Portuguese and Slovenian Presidency trio.

Following the conference, an informal meeting of ministers for gender equality will be held on 31 January. Ministers will address women's participation in society and strengthening the role and status of women. This theme will provide ample scope to discuss matters of the balanced representation of women and men in political decision making, enhancing the role and position of very young girls with a view to achieving gender equality, and the importance of gender equality policies in development cooperation. Why the focus on these three issues? Balanced participation of women and men is an integral part of the principle of equal opportunities and at the same time also a precondition for the achievement of real gender equality, as well as a generally recognized condition for democracy and the evidence of its effective operation. Addressing the issue of strengthening the position of very young girls and women, the ministers will discuss the elimination of gender differences in education; in addressing the issue of gender equality policies in development participation, a debate will

be held on promoting gender equality through policies and programmes and on realizing human rights to achieve commitments by international instruments (e.g. Beijing Platform for Action, Cairo Plan of Action and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women).

The Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, EU and EFTA ministers, ministers of the EU candidate countries and representatives of the Secretariat-General of the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament will attend the meeting.