

COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES  
THE CHAIRPERSON

Bureau of the Convention  
Mr Valéry Giscard d'Estaing  
p/o Council of the European Union  
175, Rue de la Loi  
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02-COM.FEMM/ES/ml/(02)/D/35985

Brussels, 11 October 2002

Dear Mr President,

May I refer to the earlier letters I addressed to you on 15 February and on 3 June, summarising the concerns and demands of the European Parliament Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities with regard to the promotion of women's rights and gender equality in the Convention.

First, let me tell you how much the Committee and myself appreciated the message you sent to our second meeting on "Building a democratic Union – Women's Convention", which the Committee held on 2 October. Your message was read out by Klaus Hänsch, and we all share your aim of the Convention to create an efficient framework for developing solidarity and equality.

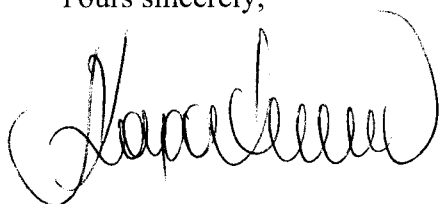
The discussion during the meeting was constructive and useful, and a number of common aims and conclusions were shared by Members of the Committee, Commission representatives, Parliamentarians from Member States and Candidate Countries and representatives of the civil society. I would like to summarise to you some demands which seem necessary to be taking into account in the further work of the Convention.

- Equality of women and men and the strengthening and promotion of fundamental rights are ultimate aims of the European Union and prerequisites for democracy. These aims should therefore be included in the first part of the Constitution.
- The Charter of fundamental rights should be incorporated in the new Constitutional Treaty in a way that preserves the *acquis communautaire* of gender equality.
- Any discrimination on the basis of sex should be prohibited. This provision should have direct effect, in the same way as the existing provision which prohibits discrimination on grounds of nationality (article 12TEC).

- Women's and men's rights to reconcile work and family life should be ensured in a Treaty provision of direct effect.
- Full equality of women and men in practice requires positive actions aiming at improving the situation of women.
- The principle of gender equality should be visibly incorporated in all policies, at all levels at all stages and by all participants in political activity. Gender mainstreaming should not be limited to the list of policies referred to in the current article 3 TEC, but it should be extended to all pillars, thus also to the Common Foreign and Security Policy and to Police and Judicial Cooperation.
- A logic consequence of applying this principle of gender mainstreaming is that a systematic gender impact assessment should be made of recommendations to be made by the Convention, as well as of decisions to be taken by the IGC.
- All forms of violence are fundamental violations of human rights and persistent obstacles for women's rights to equality. Therefore, the future Treaty should include a provision in order to make it possible to combat all forms of violence including trafficking, forced prostitution etc.
- A new Title on Equality of women and men should be introduced in order to provide a firm basis for an integrated European legal framework and give the means to take effective actions. In that way, the policy on gender equality will have the same legal status as other policies of the European Community.

Copies of this letter is sent to all your Colleagues in the Convention.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna Karamanou', written in a cursive style.

Anna KARAMANOU