

INFORMATION FROM THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

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1. One Highlight of the winter session 2010 at the Council of Europe was the exhibition in honour of **ANDREI SAKHAROV**,

“Like any other member of the Russian Intelligentsia, ANDREI SAKHAROV hated hatred. And as a social thinker he perfectly well understood that hatred flaring up between different communities - whether ethnic, religious, social, racial or political - was one of the main causes of human disunity.

As a committed internationalist, he found religious enmity and national or racial prejudices abhorrent; as a committed rationalist, he found them incomprehensible.

He was particularly unforgiving towards state incitement to hatred - propaganda inciting hatred of "others", depicting others as enemies - and also state institutionalisation of hatred and the various forms of violence this generated: discrimination, apartheid, terror, not to mention various types of genocide.

He believed that the instigators of hatred were small-minded, self-serving people motivated by selfish or narrowly interpreted fleeting group interests. He could not entertain the idea of a clever, committed, selfless and highly educated intelligent person preaching hatred of others. But SAKHAROV had no hatred of those afflicted with the disease of hatred.

He saw them as victims of malevolent propaganda and a meagre education, and, to his mind, the most effective remedy for this serious illness was a call to reason, to the humanity in the human being.“ - Quotation from the exhibition.

http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/News/2010/Sakharov_Exhibition2010.pdf

- 2.) The European Women’s Lobby in cooperation with Oxfam International has published a GenderWorks Paper, in March 2010, on

“Women’s poverty and social exclusion in the European Union at a time of recession: An Invisible Crisis?”

The report describes the impact of the economic recession on the lives of the women in the European Union with special regard to

- Poverty and standard of living
- Changing employment patterns
- Discrimination against women in the workplace
- Unpaid work and care economy
- Women of migrant and ethnic origin
- Violence against women
- Trafficking, prostitution and poverty
- Social benefits
- Access to essential services (health, education, childcare)

The authors suggest that the disadvantages experienced by women are underestimated due to insufficient statistical data, partly because the data available lags behind the reality and moreover because of deficiencies in collecting gender disaggregated data and lack of gender analysis.

The report closes with recommendations to governments and policy makers.

http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/policy/economic_crisis/downloads/rr_gec_an_invisible_crisis_240310.pdf

2. Convention on “preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence”.

The Council of Europe is actually working on the draft of a new Convention on “preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence”. This could be a great step forward in eradicating violence against women within the Council of Europe Member States, but also outside Europe, since this Convention is meant to be an open one.

The Convention will become open for discussion after publication of the next (last?) version of the draft, which is expected to happen in early summer.

The European Women’s Lobby has welcomed this Council of Europe Initiative to develop a legally binding international human rights instrument intended against all forms of violence against women.

The EWL wants to insure through lobbying that women’s voices be heard, including those of migrant women, women with disabilities, older women, lesbian women etc., and that the future Convention be based on a strong feminist analysis of the structural (patriarchal) nature of male violence against women and that it legislates on all forms of violence against women.

Therefore the European Women’s Lobby recently has developed a special

Lobbying Tool Kit,

which all NGOs concerned are asked to use in order to achieve the above mentioned goals and to further ensure that the Convention includes provisions for consultation with NGOs, and NGOs’ role in monitoring the implementation of this Convention.

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