

University Women of Europe

Newsletter Summer / Autumn 2010

Dear All,

I hope you have had a nice summer. It has been a busy one for UW activities.

First, in June there was the European Women's Lobby annual meeting in Madrid. There was a seminar on the first day which was on "Feminisms of the Twenty-first Century". Interesting speakers included one from Women on Waves, on advances in transforming healthcare and how this will help women especially those who might undergo unsafe abortions. It is possible to take a pill in the first 9 weeks of pregnancy which will then induce a similar experience to miscarriage. This is safer than most avoiding measures. There was also a speaker on Roma women who face violence. The Catalan Conference of Women have taken this to the universities and are being successful and are being successful in breaking the silence on gender violence. UK Feminista spoke on grassroots feminism, especially among young women concerned about the rise in sexism, pornography and prostitution; and Susie Orbach challenged the culture that makes women and girls hate their bodies and see themselves as commodities rather than as equal social beings.

There was a business meeting. The dues for European NGOs stays at E400. National reports included Hungary where there is lots of activism but it is backward in many ways; and a description of the feminist network in Spain which emphasised work done with African and Latin American women.

Remarks on the EU 20-20 strategy: this does not include gender equality aspects; letters have been sent on the poverty and social exclusion policy; there has been lobbying on maternity leave, and on ageing and intergenerational solidarity; a paper on women's health and advocacy on violence with the European parliament.

Two weeks later was the UWE meeting in Bochum, Germany. As always, it was very nice to meet everyone and to talk. It was disappointing that we could not sort out our dues problems and they had to be postponed till next year's meeting. Please; if you want to make a proposal on dues or on anything else do it **in time** not at the last minute, which was part of the problem this time. If you do not have an annual meeting in your country in time you will have to make arrangements to come to an agreement about your decisions beforehand.

We had some interesting presentations from the mayor of Bochum and the Secretary of State for Intergenerational Affairs, and one on the levels of religious practice and religiosity

of Moslem women in Germany. There was also a panel on immigration and prostitution in Germany.

Many of us attended the IFUW Conference in Mexico City in August and enjoyed it. We had a useful UWE meeting discussing EU legislation and how to publicise it, since many people get confused about European legislation and UN treaties like CEDAW which operate differently even if the conditions were drafted to be in line with each other. We also talked about the stonings of women in Iran which we all deplore, but what to do is difficult, apart from signing petitions, and possibly talking to our own governments. The member from Israel raised the question of the Israeli association joining UWE. I think opinions are mixed on this especially in view of the UWE constitution. Please let me know what you think on this and anything else since we have a Board meeting in November.

We look forward to the next UWE meeting in Turkey next year. In view of the fact that the next IFUW meeting will take place in Istanbul in 2013 it has been decided to move the UWE meeting to Antalya (Anatolia) where it is hoped that we can stay and have our meetings in a hotel by the beach and do trips to the historic remains in that part of Turkey. We decided this in principle in Mexico and the details are still to be worked out. We are very grateful to the Turkish Association for being flexible about this. The date is still the last weekend in June 2011.

With all good wishes

Griselda Kenyon