

Dear All,

It is some time now since our meeting. I hope you all had a nice summer. Those of us who went to Mexico had an interesting time and there was a meeting of the UWE group. We discussed the problems of getting information about EWL and the Council of Europe and the various treaties and the debates in these fora out to members. We discussed the recent stoning of women in Iran, which we all deplored, but it is difficult to know what to do about this. Our governments will only protest when they think it is worth it. The Israeli Association would like to join UWE but our present constitution prevents it. They are welcome to come to our meetings as observers since they are members of IFUW.

The UWE Board met in Brussels at the beginning of November. We discussed the meeting in Bochum where the business meeting was less than satisfactory. The board decided that in any agenda item delegates should be able only to speak twice and only for 3 minutes, to allow time for everyone to contribute.

We are worried about the "sleeping" NFAs in Europe who do not communicate with us and are not very active. We shall continue to send them information and we were wondering whether neighbouring NFAs could invite them to meetings or to join activities. The same applies to independent members, individuals, whether they would like to come on friendship trips and so on. The French association runs a very successful public speaking event for schools L'Olympe de la Parole, and wonders if neighbouring associations would like to be included in this or run their own. Details from the French Association.

There will be a lot of elections at the UWE meeting in Antalya next year. Neither the treasurer, Elsbeth von Navarini nor the Secretary, Gerda Leushuis wish to continue, so there will be elections for these posts. Please look round your associations for candidates. The two vice-presidents, Vera John Mikolajewski and Marie Jose Jonczy will have done their three years and are eligible for re-election but if anyone wishes to challenge them, they are very welcome.

Both the European Women's Lobby and the Council of Europe have been doing work on violence against women. There will be a meeting in Poland, and the COE is drawing up a Convention on Violence against Women. There is a working group on violence with 2 UK representatives. The European parliament has been discussing maternity leave. I am ashamed to say that the MEPs in my area of England voted very largely against the proposals (I looked them up on the net) and it might be useful to check what your representatives did. The Council of Europe proposals on Doctors right to conscientious objection to abortion was sunk by 187 amendments. This procedural manoeuvring was much deplored by our observer, Vera. Vera is also worried about the future of NGOs at the Council of Europe, since the budget for NGOs has been severely cut.

The UWE meeting next summer will be in Antalya, Turkey from June 23-June 26th. The theme will be: Women and Poverty in the concept of Women's Human Rights. The place of the meeting is a nice seaside resort village, but early booking in January will be essential to get a good rate for rooms. Official literature will be available shortly.

Since we are approaching the end of the year, I wish you all a pleasant holiday season and a happy new year

Yours sincerely,

Griselda Kenyon