

Statement

For women's rights, for equality, NO to this Europe

Friday 7 July 2006, by [Attac France](#) (Date first published: January 2005).

Those that support the European constitution argue that Europe represents an opportunity for women. But who can believe this when they see concretely how neoliberal policies implement European directives on equality between men and women?

The European neo-liberal conception of equality between men and women is one of regression!

- In the name of this equality night work has been extended to women, whereas progress would have involved restricting it for everybody, allowing it only for public service tasks where a permanent watch is socially necessary.
- In the name of this "equality" we see challenges to the pensions regime and the family allowances accorded to women as compensation (albeit insufficient) for parental tasks, 80% of which they remain responsible for!
- In the name of equality a European Directive is prepared authorising higher payments for contributions for old-age and supplementary sickness for women because they present a greater "risk" in living longer (this already exists in certain European states)!

The Constitution brings nothing new to women's rights... on the contrary:

- There are no rights to contraception, abortion, sexual orientation of one's choice, to divorce, to live without violence, or the right of asylum on the basis of violence or persecution
- The principle of secularism disappears, opening the door to the retrograde pressure of the churches
- Immigrant women will be still subject to the oppressive traditions of their country through codes of personal status

Laws and Directives imposing equality already exist. But what do they amount to in reality? The average wage of women in Europe still only represents 75% of that of men. Their rate of unemployment is higher by 2% than that of men. And these gaps are not really closing! It is necessary now to translate these laws into reality. But the Constitution envisages no such approach - very much the contrary.

...it means the aggravation of neoliberal policies whose consequences women are already suffering!

Increases in insecurity, small jobs, and delocalisation, the challenging of social minima and public services, the development of prostitution, which is only seen as a very profitable potential market! The right to employment disappears along with the "right to a decent standard of living", which is nonetheless essential for women who make up the majority of those in insecure employment.

Only a social Europe where fundamental rights and public services will be superior values to those of competition can guarantee the rights won by women and push equality forward.