



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

from : The Presidency
to : COUNCIL (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs)

Subject : Information from the Spanish Presidency on the Conference "European Forum Beijing + 15" (Cadiz, 4-5 February 2010) (Any other business item)

Delegations will find attached a note from the Presidency.

Information from the Spanish Presidency on the Conference "European Forum Beijing + 15" Cadiz, 4-5 February 2010

On 4 and 5 February, in the framework of Spain's Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the European Women's Forum: Beijing +15 was held in Cadiz. The Forum brought together representatives of the governments of the Member States of the European Union, the European Economic Area, candidate countries, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the principal European women's associations working for equality between men and women.

The main objective of the Forum was to analyse and assess the extent of the achievement of the strategic objectives and the measures introduced in the critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action by the Member States of the European Union. One of the principal reference documents was the follow-up report "Beijing +15: The Platform for Action and the European Union".

The Forum discussed some of the most important subjects of the Beijing Platform for Action and of the twelve critical areas, concentrating on the following topics: Decision-making, Future Challenges for the European Union (for which a high-level panel was formed), Health and Violence, Economy, and Education and Communication Media (for which a discussion group was formed).

Some of the most prominent ideas were:

- the importance of incorporating gender mainstreaming in all spheres, as a prior and necessary condition for the achievement of the objectives of growth, development and sustainability in the EU, together with the need to harmonise normative and political instruments;
- in the context of violence against women and health, it was stressed that all the Member States need common strategies and statistical data if violence against women is to be eradicated;

- it was recognised that there was a need for a new, sustainable economic order that would include women, and a gender perspective, in the analysis of both the causes of the economic and financial crisis and of its solutions;
- education and communications media were decisive factors in the cultural change that was needed to bring about true justice, and the EU and its Member States had to adopt measures to this end;
- with regard to decision-making, it was stressed that women should have better access to, and remain in decision-making positions.
