COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Brussels, 25 February 2008 (26.02)
(OR. en,es)

6770/08

SOC 125

NOTE

from : Spanish delegation
to : Council (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs)
Subject : Language arrangements at the European Institute for Gender Equality (Other business item)

Delegations will find attached a note by the Spanish delegation on the above subject with a view to the Council meeting (EPSCO) on 29 February 2008.
COUNCIL MEETING (EPSCO)
(29 February 2008)

SPAIN: Other business item to consider the situation created following the second meeting of the Management Board of the European Institute for Gender Equality

The European Institute for Gender Equality was created by Regulation (EC) No 1922/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006, and Article 16 of that Regulation provides that the Institute's language arrangements will be governed by Regulation No 1 of 15 April 1958 (as amended by Regulation (EC) No 920/2005).

In accordance with Article 16 of Regulation No 1922/2006, it was planned that at the Management Board meeting in Vilnius on 6 February 2008 there would be full interpretation into Spanish; however, at the meeting the Commission advocated the most limited interpretation arrangements possible, adducing grounds of a budgetary nature.

Although Article 10 of Regulation No 1922/2006 provides that the Board of Management shall adopt the Institute's internal rules and its rules of procedure, it is obvious that what is laid down pursuant to that Article cannot adversely affect what is laid down in Article 16 of the same Regulation regarding the language arrangements, which in turn refers back to Regulation No 1/1958.

The decision adopted consequently poses a problem that is legal, institutional and political. It is legal in that it voids of content Article 16 of the Regulation that set up the Institute, and contravenes Community Regulation No 1/1958. It is institutional in that it was the Commission that unilaterally proposed amending the language arrangements approved in Regulation No 1922/2006, adopted by this Council and the European Parliament. It is political in that it concerns a matter of enormous sensitivity.

Finally, for all the above reasons, we have requested the addition of this item to the agenda for this Council meeting in order both to draw the Commission's attention, most specially, to this matter and to prevent this totally unacceptable situation from reoccurring.