

**2008 HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING  
WARSAW, 2nd October 2008**

**Speech of Professor Isabella Rauti, Head of Department for Equal Opportunities - Presidency of the Council of Ministers**

The Ministry for Equal Opportunities, through a specific economic allocation, is responsible for any issues dealing with equality and contrast to any forms of discrimination.

The Ministry has the task not only to promote human rights and protect human rights of women and girls, but also to prevent and eliminate any factors of discrimination established by the European Community.

Equal opportunities for all and social inclusion of all, nobody excluded, are an objective that become crucial in a society as our more and more global society.

In our VII working session I will limit to allude only to equality between women and men which is one of the Ministry mission.

A gap between de iure equality and de facto equality, between legislative equality and social equality is found also in Italy. The Italian rules of equality and equal opportunities – collected in a unique Code in 2006 – have a solid and rational structure, updated for some aspects, even if critical elements and real disparities still persist. The weakness can be found in the implementation, the respect of the application of laws and also in a typical cultural and close-minded opposition.

In order to fill this gap and to achieve the effective equality, the Ministry is strongly committed on many fronts; in the battle against gender stereotypes, but also in the identification of concrete measures of worklife balance, also to encourage the sharing of roles in the family related to the assignment of the so-called care job.

The Ministry is moreover committed in the diffusion of organizational models of job, more family friendly and more flexible, but always with a flexsecurity perspective and respect.

The Ministry is also arranging a “rules package” to encourage reconciliation between work and life time, to foster the increase of female employment, women’s percentage in the top decision-making positions and in career advancement and finally to strengthen the protection of maternity and encourage mother workers.

The Ministry for Equal Opportunities is fully engaged in the struggle against domestic violence and any forms of violence against women. Since 2001 in

Italy there is a law containing “measures against violence in family relations” and the Ministry finances projects of assistance and reception of abused and mistreated women.

Furthermore the Ministry finances specific projects of protection, assistance and integration for the victims of trafficking in human beings for sexual and working exploitation.

In the last four months the **Minister for Equal Opportunities Hon. Maria Rosaria Carfagna** has presented an important draft bill to introduce for the first time in Italy the crime of stalking. Another draft bill has been proposed with the aim to strengthen the protection of victims of sexual violence, to increase the punishments within criminal justice procedures and to introduce new provisions in order to accelerate the time of judgment.

Furthermore the Minister has presented another draft bill establishing measures against prostitution, in order to effectively fight the phenomenon of prostitution and its exploitation perpetrated by criminal organizations.

Finally, the Ministry is concretely committed in the promotion and support of female entrepreneurship that, in Italy, registers a very positive trend. A positive signal in this sense is also the recent nomination of two women as presidents, respectively, of the National Confederation of the Industrialists (CONFINDUSTRIA) and of the Confederation of the Young Industrialists.

The achievement of *de facto* equality, both substantial and social, belongs to the processes of democratization of societies and policies. The ODIHR can create an exchange network among the national and local best practices, which are exportable and sharable models, and it can request statistic data, disaggregated for gender, which are useful to identify targeted policies and to elaborate appropriate strategies.

Finally the ODIHR can strongly contribute to the empowerment of gender mainstreaming in the political actions for equal opportunities, perceived not as sector-based policies, but involving the whole system and becoming a crucial point in the government agenda.