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COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
- CHAIRPERSON -

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Ms Anna DIAMANTOPOULOU
Commissioner
European Commission
Brussels
Fax : 02/ 2982099

Brussels, 16 July 2003

Dear Ms Diamantopoulou,

I have pleasure in sending to you the attached open letter signed by Parliamentarians in support of the sexist attacks on you in connection with your efforts to combat sex discrimination outside the working life.

Yours sincerely,

Anna KARAMANOU



Brussels, 10 July 2003

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, would like to express our solidarity with Anna Diamantopoulou, Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, who has been the target of sexist attacks by media. Anna Diamantopoulou represents at the highest possible level of The European Union women's struggle to achieve their full rights and gender equality.

We fully support her strong commitment to fight discrimination on the basis of sex in order to guarantee gender equality in all areas of economic, social and political life.

We are well aware of the fact that special interests are behind the sexist attacks, mainly from insurance companies and media industries. This put into great danger the adoption of a new proposal for a directive aiming to eliminate sex discrimination.

Veronique De Keyser
Kapachianou Anna KARAMANOU - Chairperson
of the Committee of Women's Rights
and Equal Opportunities

DE KEYSER V. MPEPS. V. De Keyser
Marie Anne Eriksson / Vice chair.

Ida Sigurdsson
PEP Coordinator
Umaratonen
PATSY SØRENSEN GREEN/EPA COORDINATOR

Wolfgang
Thomas

Eleonora Vignacciano - MEP
MIFT SMET
Genevieve Fraisse
Jilly Evans, Vice Chair
Fiorella Gualandotti



L. Morantini
(MORANTINI)

Ertyl McNally
(ERTL McNALLY)

Helena Torres Marques

Mano Rodriguez Ramos

Members of the European Parliament express solidarity with Commissioner Diamantopoulou after media reaction to draft paper on gender discrimination

MEPs and coordinators from different political groups involved in the Women's Rights Committee, as well its Chairperson Anna Karamanidou today a declaration of solidarity with Anna Diamantopoulou, Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs. This position was triggered by recent media as a reaction to a Commission consultation paper on sex discrimination eventually leading to a draft directive under article 13 of the Treaty (discrimination).

The EP declaration states that special interests are behind sexist attacks on the Commissioner, "mainly from insurance companies and media puts in great danger the adoption of a new proposal for a directive aimed at ending sex discrimination". Anna Diamantopoulou "represents at the highest point the European Union women's struggle to achieve their full rights and goals".

Press articles were published in a great number of newspapers, around June, with titles like: "Big sister is watching you - Feminist Eurocrat with 'sexist' TV shows and adverts" and others of the kind. The Commission immediately, publishing her own article in the Financial Times: "Europe from a sexist directive". Anna Diamantopoulou raises different issues in sectors such as insurance and pensions calculate risk and set prices; they make distinctions on the basis of gender; and how the media and advertising view men and women. On 25 June, Anna Karamanidou, Women's Rights Chairperson, had already reacted to a "press campaign which seems orchestrated against the upcoming directive".

The main issues are sex-neutral insurance policies and, in general, discrimination, with implications for the media, advertising and insurance policies using gender as a basis for setting premiums, on the assumption that women live longer. But, says Anna Diamantopoulou, the consultation paper "means that the end is nigh for sex discrimination".

European Parliament, Brussels, 10 July 2003

Press enquiries: Eva Bacelar - tel. (32-2) 28 43535 or e-mail: [femm-press](mailto:femm-press@parliament.europa.eu)