

EUW Council Meeting Poitiers 2013

Family and Social Affairs Commission Report

The Impact of the Economic Crisis on Women from their perspective.

Employment affects family life.

"It is difficult to determine the immediate and long-term impact of the Economic crisis on Women (which was a disaster created by men). Impoverishment of the population of Europe will have affected women most of all, since they face a combination of difficulties, particularly in the cases of older women living alone and single mothers. There are the obvious related consequences such as declining maternal and child health and poverty for the most vulnerable.

1. **PERSONAL DEBT** According to the IMF, private debt is a bigger drag on Europe's growth than government debt. It is a recognised fact that women worry more about money than men. It is usually they who have to manage the household budget with less money and increasing prices. An illustration of this is the large increase in Food Banks throughout UK. Supermarkets have become aware of the necessity of helping the poor and vulnerable and are helping the Food Banks now. Women are more dependent on social benefits which are being cut throughout Europe as part of austerity measures. Benefits often constitute an important source of their income. Older women tend to be forgotten in statistics and the crisis has affected them in many ways - the interest on their savings has decreased; their pensions have not kept up to date with inflation; cost of living and housing has increased; they tend to live longer, need more care and are often isolated and lonely.

2. **EMPLOYMENT** Though the labour market behaviour of women has been similar to that of men, more women have to work and they tend to be on temporary employment contracts, part-time and receiving minimum wages. Women are increasingly the effects of the crisis with less job protection, threats of redundancy and reduced social protection cover. They will be affected more enduringly.

3. **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE** Sadly the crisis is leading to increasing exploitation of women in both the legal and the illegal economy. Stress caused by money worries, often lead to domestic violence and alcoholism. Poverty contributes to an increased school dropout rate among girls and an even greater vulnerability to trafficking. The charity, Refuge, in the UK report on the increase of vulnerable women coming to their refuge centres."

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