



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 26 May 2004

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NOTE

From : Presidency
To : Council (EPSCO)
Subject : **Agenda item 17(i)**

– Indicators on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Delegations will find attached a note from the Presidency on the above subject.

The associated Presidency Report is to be found in ADD 1 to this note.

Note from Presidency to Council

Report on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

The Irish Presidency has pleasure in presenting this Information Note to the Council which briefly outlines the background and context to its work in producing the attached Report on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace.

Since 1998, successive European Presidencies have undertaken research leading to the development of indicators to facilitate the effective evaluation of the advances made by the EU in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action on violence against women.

In this period, EU Presidencies have worked in partnership so that research undertaken across the Member States and compiled by one Presidency has then been analysed and translated into indicators by the next Presidency. This approach has produced a range of research and indicators, providing effective tools to combat violence against women, both at Member State and at EU level.

During the Irish Presidency, from January to June 2004, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform initiated a research programme on sexual harassment in the workplace across the enlarged European Union. Questionnaires were developed and circulated to 149 organisations in the 25 Member States. The organisations contacted comprised relevant Government Ministries, specialist bodies, including equality promotional/enforcement bodies and employment adjudication bodies, and trade union/employee and employer bodies.

The high respondent rate (64 %) has enabled a comprehensive and reliable information resource to be created in terms of on the ground practice and levels of awareness and action in the Member States. This information is considered particularly timely as it reflects the position in

the Member States shortly before the required date for implementation of Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002 amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions.

Directive 2002/73/EC will be applicable across the Member States from October 2005 and will provide a catalyst for new or amended legislation in this area and a new consistency and clarity which can be expected to impact positively on future progress.

The Irish Presidency recognises that the development of indicators which build on the findings of the Report will be the subject of future work. At least three different sets of indicators to monitor the prevention of sexual harassment/harassment based on sex are suggested from the collected data. These include indicators on benchmarking, on context and on policy and practice.