

Report of National Round Table – Portugal / Alentejo

The Portuguese Roundtable held on 19th April 2011, in the CCDR Alentejo (Évora), between 9:00 and 17:30, whose main objective was to discuss and collect inputs about the implementation of policies about gender equality in areas that integrate the project, in order to present proposals to the Community authorities that are elaborating the next Community Framework, to prevail after 2013.

Included in this round table was, also, organized a Dissemination Seminar which integrated presentations of the Vice-President of the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG), Dr. Manuel Albano, representing the Secretary of State for Equality, Dr.ª Elza Pais, and the Portuguese National Gender Experts, Professor Fernanda Henriques and Professor Domingos Braga.

Beyond the regional partners (CCDR Alentejo and University of Evora), were present in this initiative, representatives of the following organisations: Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality – CIG; Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment – CITE; Office of Employment and Vocational Training – IEFP; Association of Local Development Monte; Municipalities of the Region; Regional Development Agency of Alentejo – ADRAL; and of Portuguese Association of Women Entrepreneurs - APME.

The Initiative was opened by Dr.ª Lina Jan, Vice-President of CCDR Alentejo and by one representative of University of Évora.

The Vice president of the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality – CIG, Dr. Manuel Albano, reported to the national vision in the following National Plans:

- ✓ IV National Plan for Equality, Gender, Citizenship and Non-Discrimination;
- ✓ IV National Plan Against Domestic Violence;
- ✓ II National Plan Against Trafficking of Human Beings.

Dr.^a Sandra Ribeiro, president of the Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment - CITE, revealed that the CITE is available for protocol with the future centre, an extension of the services that the Commission provides in Lisbon. She also said that sees in these protocols an opportunity to bring out of the capital, a number of support services, which otherwise would be confined only to Lisbon.

The Office of Employment and Vocational Training - IEFP, by its Director of Services, Dr. Jose Costa, gave account of the Protocols that have come to be signed with different regional partners.

The representative of Portuguese Association of Women Entrepreneurs – APME, Dr.^a Gabriela Paiva, referred to the enormous difficulty of mobilizing women in the region for training and other initiatives involving this public-target. This is a problem of enterprise culture and attitude that matters try to change, in addition to the difficulty of reconciling work and family life. Dr.^a Gabriela Paiva mentioned the project's interest and the availability of APME to collaborate with the future Resource Centre.

The main conclusions of the National Round Table are presented below:

- The Women Resource Centre should constitute itself as an integrated centre. Should be created a network of partnerships in order to create services that address the needs diagnosed by women and other local and national actors, with experience in gender equality, in issues such as access to the labour market, conciliation of professional and personal life, schooling, among other matters;
- The importance of developing awareness activities among young people, aiming to provide them with direct contact with the realities of other countries in order to expand their horizons about gender equality and instil them another vision of the business world;
- The formative offers (either at the level of higher education or at the level of vocational education), need to be in articulation with the needs of the labour market, with particular emphasis on the issue of entrepreneurship;

- In areas of low density with development problems, associativism can be a catalyst for the development of female entrepreneurship activities (similar to what happens in other regions partners in this project);
- The certification of local products, associated with an incisive Territorial Marketing, can be a factor of empowerment of entrepreneurship in Alentejo;
- The exchange of experiences among entrepreneurs in the region, but also involving other stakeholders, which may be from other national territories or even Spain, can be a good practice for the consolidation of existing businesses as well as awareness of other women in creating their self-employment;
- Voluntary service, especially in initiatives such as the "Bank of Time", may be of particular relevance in the necessary conciliation of family and professional life;
- The importance of the contact with good practices in other countries in various fields of economic and social activity, so that they can be implemented in the region.

The balance of this initiative was fruitful, particularly in regard to organizations outside the project that were involved and also, to their very active participation and pertinent contributions to the aims of the Project.