

Brussels 24/03/2006  
D(2006)400

Dear Ms Nowicka,

Thank you for your letter and for your interest in the new initiative of the Commission on gender equality. I am pleased to inform you that the Commission has adopted a Communication "A Roadmap for equality between women and men, 2006-2010" on 1 March 2006. The Communication sets out the Commission actions and policies to contribute to the achievement of gender equality.

The Communication confirms the dual approach of gender equality based on gender mainstreaming and specific measures. It reaffirms its commitment to the principles of the Beijing Platform for Action, and other internationally recognised principles, in particular the Cairo Program of Action and the Millennium Declaration.

The Roadmap identifies the eradication of gender-based violence and trafficking as one of the six priority areas for action. The Commission undertakes to lend support to NGOs and Member States' efforts to eradicate gender-based violence, including customary or traditional harmful practices. The Commission will promote awareness-raising campaigns and support networking, exchange of good practices and research. Member States are encouraged to establish national action plans to tackle these issues.

Female genital mutilation is an appalling form of violence against women and a violation of human rights. I attended a conference organised by the Austrian Presidency in January 2006 on this subject. On this occasion, I renewed my personal commitment as well as that of the Commission to do our utmost to help abolishing this intolerable practice.

I am convinced that the Roadmap for equality between men and women will make a key contribution to tackling the crucial issues raised in your letter

I thank for your personnel commitment and that of your organisation.

Yours sincerely,



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