

CONCLUSIONS OF THE III MEDA WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS FORUM

Casa Llotja de Mar, Barcelona (Spain) – 25th of November 2011

AFAEMME, the Association of Organisations of Mediterranean Businesswomen, has co-organized with the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce and the Association of Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASCAME) the III MEDA Women Entrepreneurs Forum. The event, which took place in the framework of the V Mediterranean Week of Economic Leaders, provided women entrepreneurs from the Mediterranean area with the opportunity to make business contacts in key sectors for the economic development of the Mediterranean as well as to exchange success stories, share good practices and know-how and to analyze the role of women in the development of the regional economies.



Speakers of the III MEDA Women Entrepreneurs Forum together with some of the Presidents of AFAEMME's member organisations

The main conclusions which were drawn from the Forum have been the following:

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

FACTS:

- SMEs are the main pillars of the Mediterranean economy
- Financial independence leads to personal independence and through this we can achieve personal gender equality at home and in the society by encouraging more equality policies and equal opportunities in the labor market
- Female entrepreneurs face more difficulties in setting-up a company than men (access to funding, balancing work and family)
- Women often give up their professional careers for family reasons as women who work outside of the home are frowned upon (E.g Italy)
- Religion is a determining factor in the south-eastern Mediterranean societies (Islamic countries) and a tool for political change
- We need more statistics about women in the labor market, so that Governments take note

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ To strengthen social policies in order to achieve mutual respect between genders and co-responsibility
- ✓ To encourage the entrepreneurial spirit E.g. by creating women entrepreneurs training schools
- ✓ Training, information and programmes which support entrepreneurship are essential
- ✓ Female Mentoring is important for motivating women entrepreneurs
- ✓ To create professional networks and Associations which engage women



The speakers of the inaugural session of the III MEDA Women Entrepreneurs Forum: Mrs. Najoua Attia, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Cap Bon (Tunisia) and of the Women Entrepreneurs Committee of ASCAME; Mr. Miquel Valls, President of the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce; Mrs. Joana Ortega, Vice-president of the Catalan Government; Mrs. M^a Helena de Felipe, President of AFAEMME; and Mrs. Cecilia Attard-Pirota, Deputy Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

FACTS:

- A 1% increase of women in ITC education leads to a 0.37% increase in the country's GDP
- Women are majority in the Media sector but Media are lead by Men
- The news over the world still accentuate female stereotypes
- The role of new technologies (E.g. Facebook, Twitter) in the "Arab Spring" is making women more visible

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ To work to overcome technological illiteracy
- ✓ Women should become more integrated into the technological change (men create products for men)
- ✓ To encourage young women to choose technical careers, to be more competitive and create new specific tools for women in order to help them to better manage their time
- ✓ To use Internet as an effective tool for discussion and to promote the visibility of women.

FEMALE TALENT

- Women are progressing slowly in achieving decision making positions
- Female Quotas are required to achieve more female role models in companies

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