



Mr. Jimmy Jamar (Deputy Head of Unit Employment Services), Mrs. Ana Záborská (Chair of the Women's Committee of the European Parliament) and M^o Helena de Felipe Lehtonen (President of AFAEMME) in the Final Large-Scale Conference in the European Parliament (Brussels) to present and Disseminate the results of the studies on the Community level. Photo by: Lourdes Acedo.

1.-Afaemme is the only Mediterranean Businesswomen Association, When did it start?

I funded Afaemme in Barcelona in 2002, with the help and support of Mr. Rodrigo Rato, the current Director of the International Monetary Fund.

2.-Why did you create Afaemme?

There are a lot funds available in Europe and also in the world, to increase business and gender equality opportunities, and I wanted to create a platform of businesswomen associations in the Mediterranean, to access these funds with businesswomen projects to improve the situation of women in labour market.

3.-What do you think are the main obstacles that businesswomen have today in Spain?

Finance, because it's difficult to get large business loans from banks particularly if you're a woman, and balancing work and personal life because in Spain we have a very long work timetable, from nine o'clock in the morning until eight o'clock at night, with two hours off at lunch time; some gender psychologists says that in the labour market Spanish women are the most stressed women in Europe.

4.-What are the differences between Spain businesswomen and those in the rest of the Mediterranean?

Spanish women are very entrepreneurial, determined and creative. This is shown in the ratio they have with men for starting up new businesses 60:40 (Barcelona Activa report 2004)

5.-What objectives would you like to achieve with the project of Afaemme?

First of all, I want to strengthen the network and to enlarge the relations between Mediterranean businesswomen associations, Secondly through this network we can develop the associations, and reinforce the role of women in economic life, and lastly to make effective use of the funds that Governments and Institutions allocate in develop this area.

M.Helena de Felipe Lehtonen

- AFAEMME (Mediterranean Businesswomen Organization) President
- ACEE (Catalan Businesswomen Organization) President
- OMEGA (Spanish Businesswomen Organization) Vicepresident
- FIDE (Iberoamerican Businesswomen Organization) Treasurer