

**Fact-sheet for CEDAW-Committee – by Dutch NGO's
Tuesday 26-1-2010**

Answers to questions of members of CEDAW 25-01-2010

- **Maternity allowance**

Employees in public and private sector employees (full-time and part-time) participate both in the social security system that provides maternity allowance. A new maternity allowance system for entrepreneurs has been introduced in June 2008, after the previous system had been abolished in 2004.

The only women that have been deprived of a maternity benefit are those self-employed and entrepreneurs that were pregnant between 2004-2008.

- **Labour Inspectorate (LI)**

From July 2009 onwards the Labour Inspectorate is responsible for the enforcement of the implementation of (prevention) policies in private and public sector with respect to discrimination. It is not yet known (to the NGO's) how the LI will monitor and report. It will not be possible for workers to file individual complaints. Individual workers or unions can signal the LI about workplaces in which workers are being discriminated – then the LI can investigate and (after some warnings) fine the employer.

The NGO's hope that establishing the monitoring-process with regard to discrimination will be instrumental to the improvement of the monitoring of (sexual) harassment, leading to the availability of disaggregated data (gender and ethnicity), or in other words: facts and figures – which are non-existent now.

Shadowreport p. 22.

- **Coöperation NGO's – government**

As is mentioned in the shadowreport the relationship between government and the NGO's has improved in some respects. The degree of improvement differs between the ministries. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs appreciates the critical role of women's rights organisations more than other ministries, like the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Ministry of Gender Equality shows an ambiguous attitude towards women's rights NGO's: limited funding (no core funding, only projects), no funding for critical NGO's and/or Black Migrant and Refugee Women NGO's. The institutional knowledge and expertise about gender and women's rights is mainly lost or limited to NGO's without (paid) staff, so only available in a voluntary basis.

- **Provincial and Municipal Level**

Most of the Gender Equality Institutions on provincial and municipal level had to close down due to a comparable subsidy shift of provincial and local level as with regard to the national funding strategies. However the shift of the national subsidy policies was also instrumental in the crumbling down of the gender equality infrastructure at local level. The national government shifted the gender equality funds to local governments for programmes under 1001 Strengths, targeted at “vulnerable ethnic-minority women” and other project related to this target group. Consequence was that local government dismantled local gender equality advisory councils, diminished or even abolished small subsidies for (BMR) women's rights NGO's, self-organisations of disabled women, women in social protection schemes etc.

- **Disabled women**
In addition to what already has been answered orally we would like to point at certain paragraphs in the Dutch Shadow-report that provide information about the very weak income position of this group:
- Part. 2 Art 1&2, paragraph 6 (Changes in social security). About women loosing their Invalidity Benefit en the gender differences in disability benefits for handicapped young persons.
- **ESF-Equal Project ‘The Glass Wall’**
The NGOs are afraid that the ESF-Equal Project had hardly any exposure – it only involved 150 female participants. Hardly any NGO was involved in the project. The NGOs are not aware of any follow-up activities, related to the government’s explanation to distribute the approach more broadly, nor what budget will be available.
In the view of the NGO’s it is imperative that civil society is involved in projects of the like, especially with the view of anchoring results for the future.
- **Contraceptive pill again excluded from the basic health insurance?**
At p. 68 of the Dutch Shadow report we explained that the reintroduction of the contraceptive pill in the compulsory health nuance in 2008 was partly made undone in 2009, by introducing a compulsory ‘own risk’.
In 2010 again there is a threat that the contraceptive pill will be excluded from the basic health insurance. Very recently the advisory College of Health Insurance (CVZ) advised this to the government (The NGOs have received on 26 January 2010 a critical press release of a Dutch reproductive health institution). The NGOs think that this measure, which affects only women and limits their access to contraception and thereby their sexual and reproductive freedom, would be a violation of CEDAW. Free access to contraception is a very important measure of prevention of unwanted pregnancies.
- **Equal Pay**
In the answer to Q 18 the governments assures the Committee that it organises with the help of social partners and so, a yearly Equal Pay Day.
In our shadowreport the NGO’s stated that this Equal Pay Day is rather bleak, suggesting stepping up of efforts is imperative. Some two weeks ago the deputy minister wrote to the parliament that there will be no Equal Pay Day in 2010. So the NGO’s are worried that equal pay policies are evaporating due to the economic crises.
Unless the Committee encourages or even urges the government to step up it efforts.