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Parlement européen - Bruxelles - Salle JAN 6Q2. European Parliament - Brussels - Room JAN 6Q2

Athens, 13 May 2011

"More Europe" for Women: the European Citizens' Initiative

On Friday, 13 May 2011, at the auditorium of the B & M Theocharakis Foundation for the Fine Arts and Music (Athens, Greece), the Konstantinos Karamanlis Institute for Democracy and the Robert Schuman Foundation inaugurated in Greece a debate on the linkage of EU policies on gender equality with the *European Citizens' Initiative* which was introduced by the Lisbon Treaty.

The event took place in the context of the programme *European Citizens' Initiative*, a policy established by the Lisbon Treaty as a new means of effective participation in EU policy making. The *Initiative* enables citizens, numbering no less than one million, and nationals of at least one quarter of the Member States, to call directly to the Commission to submit proposals on issues of interest to them and in the fields of EU competence.

The project by the Konstantinos Karamanlis Institute for Democracy and the Robert Schuman Foundation introduces public dialogue with the civil society for promoting EU policies on gender and equality. A similar event will take place in Brussels on 21 September 2011.

The event emphasized the familiarization of women with the *Initiative* and its connection with issues tackling their daily life, such as:

- Reconciliation between private and professional life
- Access to positions of responsibility
- Wage inequalities
- Education
- Social inclusion and so on.

The event was addressed by the President of the Konstantinos Karamanlis Institute for Democracy Evangelos Meimarakis and the Secretary for Women Issues of Nea Demokratia Katerina Papakosta. In their speeches, the Head of the Greek EPP Delegation Marietta Giannakou went over the institutional innovation that the *European Citizens' Initiative* consists, whereas the Vice President of the European Parliament Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou referred to the EU policies on gender issues. Laura Alipranti-Maratou, Researcher at the National Centre for Social Research presented the role of gender in the identity of the European citizen, whereas the Deputy Secretary for Social Cohesion and Solidarity of Nea Demokratia and Vice President of Women's Political Association Teta Diamantopoulou underlined the need to enhance the participation of European women in decision-making centres. Finally, the Deputy Secretary for Women Issues of Nea Demokratia Chara Karagiannopoulou analysed the potential alliances on gender issues opened up by the *European Citizens' Initiative*. The event was chaired by the Associate Professor at the University of Peloponnese and Director General of the Konstantinos Karamanlis Institute for Democracy Konstantina E. Botsiou.