



REPORT ON THE IWDU IDU Executive, June 2003, *Thessalonica, Greece*

Dear Colleagues,

Since 28 September 2002, I am the chairman of the International Democrat Union of Women (IWDU), succeeding Joy Mein, former Vice-President of the Commonwealth of Australia.

With this leaflet, we wish to share with you some ideas for future organizational changes in the IWDU. We have discussed these changes thoroughly and believe they can empower the women's section of our Union. Furthermore, we have included the IWDU agenda and future actions for the years 2003-2004. Your comments and contributions are more than welcome.

We would like to congratulate our members who recently joined the European Union. Now, we all have to work together in order to establish the IWDU as a truly global and influential organization and focus on achieving our common goals in the context of our political family.

There is lots of hard work ahead of us. Our promise is to rise up to the challenge ahead, work the issues and suggest solutions, in the great tradition of the International Democrat Union.



**Fanny Palli-Petralia,
Member of Parliament, Greece**

*Fanny Palli-Petralia, Richard Normington,
Executive Secretary of the IDU, Joy Mein*



Organizational structure

• Creation of an IWDU executive board:

The executive of the IWDU will comprise 7 members: the Chairman of the IWDU, the Executive Secretary of the IDU Richard Normington and five women, members representing the Regional Unions.

They will be responsible for contact and transmitting of information with each country member of their Regional Union, and communicating with the IWDU on policy issues.

- As agreed with the executive secretary of the IDU Richard Normington, on all the committees of the IDU, there will be a participant of the women's section - including the International Young Democrat Union.

Conferences and seminars

- We aim to organize two conferences each year, around a topic of global interest, related to women's issues. Conferences are important as they enable us to bring together an international group that adheres to the IDU philosophy and campaigns for our principles. Participants should include women involved in politics, but also, women from non-governmental organizations. As a next step, we plan to hold a London Conference next November.
- We aim to organize one Conference every two years, involving all women politicians (prime-ministers, ministers, members of parliaments, party members) from around the world. We propose this Conference to be a 'meeting uniting all women in decision-making positions from every corner of the globe'.

Agenda

Issues of concern for us are :

• Employment

- Women unemployment rates are significantly higher than men's worldwide
- Women earn less than men in all countries and economy sectors
- Young women have more difficulty than young men in securing jobs
- Women worldwide are a minority among administrative and managerial workers

• Representation

- Despite calls for gender equality and relevant law acts, women are significantly under-represented in parliaments, governments and political parties.
- Men have easier access than women to decision-making centers

• Education

- Two-thirds of the world's illiterates are women; the number of illiterates is not expected to decrease significantly in the next twenty years

- More women than men lack the basic literacy and computer skills needed to enter professions in the technology sector
- Women have significantly less access to lifelong learning and retraining programs

• Families

- In the majority of nations the number of births is declining; the developed world countries present the largest decrease
- Births by unmarried women have dramatically increased in developed regions
- Worldwide indicators of domestic violence and women abuse inside the families point to the need of a drastic reaction

• Human rights

- Our Union should pay special attention on the human rights of women, in a global scale.
- Admitted physical and sexual abuse affects millions of girls and women worldwide although seriously under-reported
- Gender-related persecution not only must be condemned but decisively acted upon
- Women and minors trafficking and exploitation affect many areas of Europe and Africa, and have repercussions in all countries. Estimates put the number smuggled each year from Eastern Europe and Africa into the developed countries to more than one million, pointing to the greatest indication of the global disregard to the human rights of women. Through our organization and international network we intend to achieve real progress in increasing public awareness over trafficking and the exploitation of women.

Women victims of trafficking trade:

- 3% do not know in which country they are living in
- 5% do not know in which town they are
- 50% do not know in which part of the town they are located
- 33% do not know the day
- 50% do not know the month
- 4% do not know the year they are living in

Creating communications networks

- A questionnaire will be distributed to all women members of the IWDU and will help us gather important information. This questionnaire is a good opportunity to establish an up-to-date mailing list and informed database.
- All Regional Unions are requested to send information on current events and points of concern. Mailing address: 28, Academias Street, Athens, 106 71 Greece and e-mail: fpetral@otenet.gr. You can also check the IWDU section at the IDU web site (www.idu.org).



- The **International Democrat Union** is a working association of over 80 Conservative, Christian Democrat and like-minded political parties of the centre and centre-right from over 60 countries. Formed in 1983, it is the only international organization of its kind with full members from both Russia and the USA. Many of its members come from democracies newly established during the 1990s. The Chairman of the IDU is Prime Minister of Australia John Howard and the Executive Secretary is Richard Normington.
- **The IWDU comprises the women sections of the IDU political parties and has a formal role within the IDU framework.**

The objectives of the IWDU include:

- to provide a link for women supporting Conservative, Centre-Right and like-minded parties world-wide
- to encourage and promote the participation of women in politics and the political process
- to promote freedom and free enterprise particularly as they relate to and concern women and women's affairs
- to promote and support the principles of the IDU in all women's fora
- to promote interest within the IDU in the impact of politics and the political process on women.

The IWDU works for:

- a practical exchange of ideas on matters such as Party Organization and policy
- assisting women to get into politics
- influencing women in single issue groups
- setting a human face on political issues

Contact

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www.idu.org

