

No discrimination of women in sport

Press release – 26 January 2009

"Sport does not discriminate, but women in sport are in practice discriminated against; this practice has to end" claims Emine Bozkurt, Socialist Member of the European Parliament for the Netherlands. During a conference in the European Parliament today, Bozkurt engaged in a debate with European sport managers and politicians on finding ways to treat women equally in sport. Bozkurt pleads for equal pay for sportswomen, more attention for them in the media and more career opportunities for women in sports management.

"We don't want to wait another 30 years for change, now is the time for action", claims Bozkurt.

The first European think-tank for sports policy, *Sport et Citoyenneté*, supports Emine Bozkurt in her efforts. In their joined efforts in setting up the debate they called together for more dedication and more resources to stimulate and support women in sport. It is commonly known that women are lagging behind in sport, but the problem has never been properly researched. Therefore, Emine Bozkurt and *Sport et Citoyenneté* are asking the European Commission to come with a proper research, as well as to see to that the European legislation is being respected, which prescribes equal pay between men and women, also in the world of sport. Sports managers are being called on changing their mentality, to give women a chance to fulfil management positions.

Also the Moroccan Minister for Sport and Member of the Executive Committee of the OIC, Nawal El Moutawakel, spoke at the conference today. She pleads for introduction of quota in order to involve more women in different areas of sport.

Brussels Minister for Sport, Emir Kir, thinks that education should play a bigger part, in order to encourage women at a young age to think about a profession in sport. He has taken the initiative to involve migrant women more actively in sport by subsidising local sport associations in Brussels.

"It is especially difficult for migrant women to set a step into a sport club" according to Bozkurt. *"Sport associations have to become more aware of this and to become more involved in including those women in their structures. It is not only good for the women's health, but also for their integration"* thinks Bozkurt.