

European Coordinators of the World Women's Conference of Rank-and-File Women

Monika Gärtner-Engel and Halinka Augustin

Angélica Urrutia, Maria Hagberg – deputy European coordinators

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To the delegates of the 3rd European Conference

To the international coordinators in Asia, Africa and observers in Latin America

To the Kämpferischen Frauenrat (militant women's council) in Germany

Report of the European coordinators

on the 3rd European Conference on 8 February 2014 in Paris

In preparation for the 2nd World Women's Conference 2016 in Kathmandu, Nepal

The 29 delegates of the 3rd European Conference from 14 countries were:

From **Austria** two representatives from WIDE – network for women's rights from a feminine perspective and from Women's Solidarity

From **Bosnia** a representative from Lawyer Women Without Borders

From **Denmark** two representatives from the Gender Equality Center and EMKR/NVKA

From **France** three representatives from the Association Femmes de L'Île, of Femmes en Lutte 93 and the Fédération des Associations Kurdes de France

From **Germany** three representatives from Kämpferischer Frauenrat/Frauenverband Courage, Basta Women's Committee at Opel and Demokratische Frauenbewegung in Europa/ADKAH

From **Great Britain** a representative from the Democratic Women Movement in Europe

From **Greece** three representatives from the women steel workers of Aspropyrgos

From the **Netherlands** three representatives of the Wereldvrouwen der Jong en Strijdbaar and from Mevrouw Schoonmaakster/President of the Trade Union of Cleaning Ladies in the Netherlands

From **Romania** two representatives from RCP/Romanian Communist Party

From **Russia** two representatives from the women's movement

From **Spain** a representative from the Centro Social y Cultural Plataformias Solitarias

From **Sweden** three representatives from the Network Against Honour-Related Violence, International Committee for Women, KIBELE/Grast rott feminist

From **Switzerland** two representatives from Weltfrauen in der Schweiz(worldwomen in Switzerland)

From **Ukraine** a representative from the Coordination Council of Men and Women Workers (The European coordinators know the names and email addresses)

Women from **Albania**, **Serbia** and the **Czech Republic** are involved in the process of the World Women's Conference but were unfortunately not able to attend.

Representatives from 6 countries (Austria, France, Germany, Netherlands, Romania, and Ukraine) took part in the **Podium of Young Women**.

A total of **140 people from 25 countries** attended the conference with **many women and some men as guests**.

Greetings came from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Spain and Courage, Germany, the ICOR Europe and also from the Asian coordinator Sheila and the African coordinator Bulelwa.

At the opening ceremony the mayor of L'Île St. Denis, Paris, welcomed the conference participants and stated: "France has still to become the country of women's rights". The major newspaper "Le Parisien" sent a journalist.

The women's group from L'Île-Saint-Denis, Paris spent many months working hard with commitment and talent to produce the whole framework of the conference all by themselves and with great care. It was perfect. Also men supported the Conference.

The 3rd European Conference was presided over by the European coordinators Monika Gärtner-Engel (Germany) and Halinka Augustin (Netherlands) and the deputy Angélica Urrutia (Germany).

The European conference was **very successful**. The world women's process in Europe is **growing and expanding** and the conference took important decisions for the preparation of the **2nd World Women's Conference in Nepal**. All the decisions were passed **unanimously** by the delegates with no abstentions, the resolutions unanimously or with a large majority.

The **main results**:

- **50 percent of the delegates** were here for the first time. Women from **new countries** (Bosnia, Great Britain, Romania, Sweden) and **organisations** have joined. 17-18 countries in Europe are now represented in the world women's process.
- **The composition has grown wider**. The delegates represent more than **25 different organisations**. Among other Lawyer Women Without Borders, which is represented in 24 countries, have joined. WIDE – **WIDE** the network of development from a feminine perspective, the Network for Women's Rights and feminist perspectives, the Women's Solidarity from Austria which do active radio work, a network of 10 different organisations in Sweden and other organisations from Denmark, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Romania
- There were **moving reports from the 14 countries**: of increasing poverty of many women and their families as in Greece; of the bad situation in the care of old and sick people and the carers; of the situation of migrants and refugees as in Sweden; of increasing suppression of woman as in Spain through the law against abortion; of pay inequality between men and women.
- But the militant **women's movement in Europe is growing stronger**: Protests by the cleaning and care workers in the Netherlands, referendum for abortion to be financed by health insurances in Switzerland, efforts to develop non-party women's organisations in Greece. All these struggles are about the future of youth which is very important for world women
- But there is also a **massive reactionary polarisation** against the militant women's movement often initiated by ultrareactionary and fascist groups like in the Ukraine, in Greece, France, and Switzerland. This should be studied more closely as should the best way to develop resistance.

- For the first time **young women from Europe** organised an item on the agenda themselves. They discussed what contribution they can make in the preparation of the World Women's Conference. One suggestion to the world coordinators is to open the general assembly of the delegates of the World Women's Conference in Nepal to young women in a similar way. This showed that young women are indeed conscious about the necessity of a worldwide and organized women's movement.
- After discussion and unanimous passing of the **Report of the Europe coordinators** Halinka Augustin (Netherlands), Monika Gärtner-Engel (Germany) and the deputy coordinator Angélica Urrutia, the focus was on the preparation of the **2nd World Women's Conference in March 2016 in Nepal**.
- The conference unanimously welcomed the course decided on by the **world coordinators in October 2013 for the World Women's Conference in Kathmandu, Nepal**. They decided to win women from **all European countries** for the 2nd World Women's Conference and to strengthen the militant women's movement
- **Maria Hagberg from Sweden** was elected as another deputy European coordinator thus strengthening the well-working team.
- The women enthusiastically accepted the suggestion to hold next year's **4th European Conference in February 2015 in Athens**.
- **Financial independence** is very important for European women and the financing of further meetings in 2014/2015 will be arranged together and with solidarity and support. For the **Asia Conference** in Kathmandu in April 2014, **€10,000** support was agreed on, for the **Africa Conference** in August 2014 in Johannesburg **€ 8000**, for the **3rd World Meeting** in October 2014 in Germany **€7000** and for the **4th European Conference** in Athens in February 2015, **€5000**. The Conference also decided: ***Financial independence of the world women's conference is our common task. We are developing a range of financial initiatives in our countries to finance our work and support coordination on other continents and regions.***
- The conference decided: ***"We will strengthen our initiative in all our countries to hold the three days of action and protest (8 March, 1 May, 25 November) in order to strengthen the militant women's movement in our countries in the awareness that we are part of the world wide militant women's movement. We will use every activity to spread the idea of the world women's conference and win new supporters."***
- The European world women will **host the 3rd world meeting of the coordinators** from 6 to 9 October 2014 on the occasion of the women's political meeting in Germany and will be happy to take joint responsibility.
- It was suggested that, if possible, every country should name one woman for a **European homepage team** to administrate the website www.worldwomensconference.org. Here in particular the competence and creativity of young women is necessary. Reports on the activities and days should be sent to the website as well as other important information and experience.
- A photo-documentation about the 3rd European Conference made by Florian Aicher/Switzerland is available on www.artofax.ch

The successful conference closed with dance, songs, poems, delicious food and a wonderful celebration.

As always the meeting was rounded off by culture: on Sunday the weather was beautiful and knowledgeable activists took us on a tour of Paris in the footsteps of Olympe de Gouges and the women of the commune. Young and old and internationally we moved closer together towards the liberation of women!

The whole conference was simultaneously translated on a elevated level by interpreters working on a honorary basis working in six languages: English, French, Dutch, German, Greek and Russian. We are very gratefully thanking the more than 20 interpreters and students, the coordinator of translation, the tireless helpers and last not least the transporter-driver, technician and guardian of the translation-installation.