



NGO-Koordination post Beijing Schweiz · ONG-Coordination après Pekin Suisse  
ONG-coordinazione post Beijing Svizzera · ONG coordinaziun suenter Beijing Svizra

## Oral Statement Lunch Briefing 07-24-2009 NGO Shadow Report Switzerland On the 3rd Country Report on the implementation of CEDAW

### 1. Oral statement Patrizia Mordini

Thank you for the opportunity to present our views. My name is Patrizia Mordini, and I will speak about how to combat gender stereotyped roles in education.

#### **Combating stereotyped roles (Art. 5 CEDAW), education (Art. 10 CEDAW)**

*Please see shadow report 5.2. Article 5 to figure 2.*

The **education system** could bring about significant improvements in combating stereotyped roles. Many Cantons<sup>1</sup> have included the issue of stereotyped roles in their Education Acts and/or on the syllabus and taken some measures in vocational training as well (the Cantons' measures are outlined under article 10). **But:** Only very few Cantons have tackled implementation systematically and integrated gender equality into the process of school development as an interdisciplinary issue. Also, the responsibility for gender equality is often unloaded onto the teaching staff whom often are untrained in gender competence. Moreover, school text books continue to portray active boys/men predominantly, and not active girls/women.

#### **Recommendations:**

- ***Gender equality needs to be systematically and bindingly included in the education system at policy and implementation level. Schools need to clearly promote alternative role models and actively combat stereotyped roles with gender competent teachers and non-stereotyped books (cantonal level).***
- ***Equality must be enshrined in the Education Acts of ALL 26 Cantons, and financial resources need to be given by the Confederation and Cantons for the realisation of education against (gender) stereotyped roles. The realised efforts must be assessed and evaluated.***
- ***Practically, gender mainstreaming must be achieved on every educational level through mentoring or coaching for gender-atypical jobs and studies/ research.***

#### **Education (Art. 10 CEDAW)**

*Please see shadow report 8.1. Article 10 to figure 1.*

**Higher Education:** Stereotyped roles also apply on university level. Switzerland has a **very low rate of female young researchers and professors**. Women still face the „glass ceiling“ and drop out more on every transition (i.a. from Bachelor to Master, from Master to Phd) than men - the „leaky pipeline“. The rate of female professors at Swiss universities was at only 7% in 1998. The “Swiss Federal Equal Opportunity at Universities Programme“ 2000-2003 (CHF 16 million), 2004-2007, and 2008-2011 aimed at changing and preventing this. Since the programme started, there has been a rise in female professors to 15%. What sounds like a success story also has a **downside:** Included in the counting are ordinary AND extra-

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<sup>1</sup> Switzerland consists of 26 Cantons, comparable to British counties, which each has its own parliament (federalism).



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ordinary professors – they don't have the same possibilities and funding. Moreover, the rate of female professors still is growing too slowly, and is threatened further by posts not being refilled after existing post-holders retire.

#### **Recommendations:**

- *In the future we will need a twin strategy: First, the category gender must be integrated into all relevant processes in order to achieve mainstreaming – in developing curricula, in research programmes, in promoting junior staff, in network projects and in the political decision-making process. Second, in the context of Swiss Higher Education, it is key that targeted initiatives for gender programmes be launched and to build up gender competence in academia and research, and to demand and promote gender equality efforts at universities and within the political institutions dealing with higher education.*
- *In order to continue promoting women on an academic level, financial resources to prolong the “Swiss Federal Equal Opportunity at Universities Programme” another four years (2012-2015) are needed.*
- *Mentoring programmes should target female researchers on doctoral and post-doctoral level, but also at Bachelor and Master level. (There seems to be a preference to rather promote “excellence” programmes instead).*
- *The institutionalisation of equality offices, mentoring/ coaching programmes, and other instruments co-funded with the Federal Programme, must be envisaged by the Swiss Government in the medium and long term.*
- *The Government must also support and push Women and Gender Studies, as the research done in this area has an impact on combating stereotypes and provides necessary knowledge on gender issues in our society.*
- *Especially research programmes are needed on the topic of modern working hours models not based on the breadwinner model. Women's career patterns and the factors influencing success must be investigated so that the results can be used to inject new input into promoting the (academic) careers of women.*

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**NGO Coordination post Beijing Switzerland  
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**Patrizia Silvia Mordini** – NGO-Coordination post Beijing Switzerland and Association Femmes Féminisme Recherche Suisse (FemWiss - Science organisation),  
www.postbeijing.ch, postbeijing@gmx.ch, patrizia.mordini@gmx.ch



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## 2. Oral statement Vivian Fankhauser-Feitknecht

### Work life, reconciliation of family and work life (Art. 2, 5, 7 und 11 CEDAW)

In the world of work women still face wide-ranging discrimination. One serious point is **equality of pay**. Furthermore, over 50 % of women work part-time which results in multiple discrimination (in terms of social insurance, further training, overtime pay etc.) and women work disproportionately often in situations lacking job security (low-wage sectors, non-secure employment relationships).

I'd like to talk to you about **reconciliation of family and work life**. That's a serious problem and I know it by own experience. My husband is working part-time since our son was born fourteen years ago. I work 100 % as a judge since twelve years. It's the same mother looking after our (and her) children since then.

Reconciliation of family and work life and equal sharing of domestic and family tasks are still very difficult in Switzerland. Big problems are missing childcare places and public pressure that the mothers should stay at home with their children. One of the big problems is the current taxation of married couples and their impact on the perpetuation of stereotypical expectations for married women as it is to disadvantage partnership-based and egalitarian roles. As long as the wages from the married couples are jointly taxed and that happens in a progressive way there doesn't stay a lot of the wage from the second spouse after having payed the taxes. Splitting by so far hasn't had a chance in Switzerland. That's why the unmarried couples, where each person is taxed separately, pay far less taxes than the married. Up to now costs for child care aren't regarded as acquisition costs in the taxation system. Therefore a lot of the cantons don't allow the deduction of costs for child minding by third parties even though it's obvious that the parents of little children can't go working and earning if no one looks after their children. Of course the people looking after the children professionally have to pay taxes on their salaries, so actually the same money is taxable twice! It's a scandal that on the other hand for example deduction for the costs of a car to get to a workplace even hours away is unlimited.

The federal government is planning a reform that should bring about an improvement in the situation of families with children. No point of discussion is the introduction of splitting. The proposed measures are an increase in the deductions allowed for children in direct federal tax and the introduction of a deduction for child minding by third parties. Furthermore, the taxation of single-parent families and of parents who are separated must reflect the earning power of those concerned. The parliament is going to discuss those plans on August 10 and 11 2009. As the parliament is rather conservative it isn't sure at all that the proposed changes become reality soon. A second problem is that the taxes on cantonal level are much higher. Changes there are far more important. That's why the federal parliament should give the cantons targets that have to be followed. As long as the cantons don't allow deductions for child minding by third parties the problem isn't solved. A new problem coming up is, that politicians bring up the idea to reward parents looking to their children by themselves. They want to allow them deductions for the own child care even though they don't have any expenses. That's wrong in the Swiss taxation system because they have lower wages because of looking to the children and therefore lower taxes to pay while the other parents couldn't earn their higher wages without paying for the child minding by third parties. A further problem is that as long as payed child care doesn't allow a deduction there is the risk of insecure



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and clandestine employment of the childminders because whether the employer nor the employee are interested in making their employment official. Both can avoid paying social insurance and the employee avoids paying taxes.

**We ask for following recommendations and questions:**

- *Crèche places and other structures need to be put in place in sufficient number, in order to allow both parents to combine professional and family life.*
- *The taxation system has to be changed so people pay taxes according to their economic performance (splitting, consideration of costs for child minding by third parties, no deductions for not existing expenses).*

### **Questions for the Swiss government**

- *Does the federal government have the primary responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the convention at all levels and providing leadership to the cantons and municipal governments?*
- *How does the state ensure that uniformity of results in the implementation of the Convention is achieved throughout the state's territory?*
- *Does the federal government take responsibility to introduce a taxation system that doesn't disadvantage married couples living partnership-based and egalitarian roles?*
- *Does the federal government take responsibility to introduce a taxation system with a deduction for child minding by third parties.?*

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**NGO Coordination post Beijing Switzerland  
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**Vivian Beatrice Fankhauser-Feitknecht** – executive member of the NGO Coordination and delegate of Swiss Guide and Scout Movement