



27 January 2009

**No Czech Ditching EU Childcare Targets
Statement by PES Women Executive on 27 January 2009**

PES Women Executive express their deep misgivings about a Czech Presidency proposal to open a debate about the “relevance” of the EU’s childcare targets.

The matter is due to be raised at the informal ministerial meeting of ministers responsible for family policy on 5 February in Prague. A Presidency paper claims the debate is necessary for “the best interest of the child and best quality of early care” but makes no reference to stepping up efforts to increase childcare services. PES Women fear it is an excuse to ditch commitments made in 2001 to increase pre-school childcare.

PES Women do not wish to prevent any debate about childcare, but states its continuing support for improved childcare, and urges the Council to consider how to meet the targets, and how to improve the quantity and quality of childcare rather than questioning the targets themselves.

PES Women believe that investing in public childcare benefits society as a whole. In 2007 the PES ran a childcare campaign showing that providing good quality, accessible and affordable childcare contributes towards the long-term educational and social development of the child. Moreover, childcare creates jobs for women and men, giving women and men a real tool to combine professional and private life, which contributes towards the development of the economy, something we cannot be neglected in today’s economic crisis. PES Women also reminds the Czech Presidency about the commitments of the Lisbon Strategy for Jobs and Growth, which promotes the creation of jobs especially for women and the investment in education such as childcare.

The Czech Presidency paper refers to home childcare, but PES Women believe this is a matter of choice for parents and home care should not be at the detriment of public childcare services.

PES Women will strongly oppose any watering down of the EU childcare targets.

