Speech Director of the

Virginija Langbakk, Director of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

Hellenic Presidency of the EU Council Conference

"Women and Girls Go Digital"

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to be with you today in this «Women and Girls go digital» Conference, representing EIGE and EIGE's Director, Virginija Langbakk, who could not unfortunately attend this event. I am therefore speaking on her behalf, and representing the Institute that assists the European Institutions and the Member States in promoting gender equality across all Community policies and the resulting national policies.

The drive for engendering the Information and communication technologies (ICT) environment dates back to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. The BPfA identified gender mainstreaming as a critical strategy for the advancement of women and the improvement of their quality of life. This process was expected to be applied to all arenas, including that of information and communication technologies (ICTs). The BPfA drew attention to the emerging global communications network and

its impact on public policies, and private attitudes and behaviour. It called for the empowerment of women through enhancing their skills, knowledge, access and use of information technologies. It also included a strategic objective: "Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication".

Since the start of the operations of EIGE in June 2010, we have been monitoring the progress of the EU towards the accomplishments of the commitments

regarding the BpFA1 and, based on EIGE's reports, the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council[1] - EPSCO has been adopting conclusions; we look forward to the moment when a Presidency Country will request EIGE to monitor the situation of EU MS regarding women and ICT. This strand of EIGE's work relates with our objectives to gather and analyse comparable and reliable data on gender issues.

As you all know, equality between women and men is a principle, an objective and a fundamental right in the EU. To achieve gender equality, the EU has adopted a two-pronged approach, combining specific measures with gender mainstreaming.

Within EIGE's work on gender mainstreaming, a decision was taken recently by our Management Board for EIGE to focus on sectoral information on Gender Mainstreaming[2]. In this regard, I am pleased to share with you that the sector chosen was Research, Innovation and Technology. In this context, EIGE is already working on an online tool for gender mainstreaming which will include

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[1] Since 2010 EIGE produced the following progress reports on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States: Effectiveness of Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Gender Equality (Lithuanian Presidency – 2nd semester of 2013); Advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organisations (Irish Presidency – 1st semester of 2013); Violence against Women Victim Support: Report (Cypriot Presidency – 2nd Semester 2012); Gender Equality and Climate Change (Danish Presidency – 1st Semester 2012); Reconciliation of work and family life as a condition of equal participation in the labour market (Polish Presidency – 2nd Semester 2011). EIGE has just finished a report on Gender equality and economic independence: part-time work and self-employment for the Greek Presidency of the Council of the EU. At the moment EIGE is extensively involved in the review of all 12 areas of concern under Beijing +20 for Italian presidency.

Links to all review reports of the BPfA developed by the Presidencies since 1999, as well as all Beijing indicators, data and conclusions endorsed by EPSCO can be found in EIGE's database on Women and Men in the EU: Facts and Figures, accessible through EIGE's homepage.

[2] Until now EIGE has been focusing on making available Methods, Tools and Good Practices on gender equality and gender mainstreaming, mainly in relation with gender equality training, women and the media, domestic violence and female genital mutilation. EIGE is currently working on female entrepreneurship.

policy specific information on gender and the digital agenda. This tool will be made available in autumn 2014.

The Digital Agenda for Europe (DAE) - one of the seven flagships of the Europe 2020 Strategy -, if fully implemented, is expected to increase European GDP by 5%. Currently, in terms of jobs, up to one million digital jobs risk going unfilled by 2015 without pan-european action, while 1.2 million jobs could be created. This would rise to 3.8 million new jobs in the economy in the long run. Furthermore, if women participated in the

EU digital sector at the same rate as men, the gain for the European GDP each year would be around 9 billion EUR according to the Commissions' most recent study[3].

The current underrepresentation of women as developers, users and beneficiaries of the technology means that we are risking a strong digital gender gap if a technology policy is not implemented with a gender perspective.

Nowadays women only make up approximately 32% of the total work force in the ICT sector; they are underrepresented in decision making positions, and in entrepreneurship in this area. Gender segregation in education and employment is an important issue in EIGE's research, tackled in several Beijing reports and the Gender Equality Index. The evidence shows that horizontal segregation has had a tendency to shift towards fewer differences over time, with an increase in the proportion of women in most sectors. However, some sectors, such as science and technology, still lag behind.

Women also tend to use the computer and the internet less than men. If code is the most important language of the 21st century, women are mostly passive consumers instead of curators and creators of the internet. This has a direct impact on their access to information.

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[3] European Commission – DG Communications Networks, Content & Technology (2013). Women active in the ICT sector. Report prepared by Iclaves S.L.

On the other hand, women and men make different use of computers and the internet e.g:

- E-commerce: what are the factors hindering the development of e-commerce from a gender perspective? Women spend more time than men browsing shopping websites (in a household women are generally responsible for shopping). The type of products bought and the forms of payment used differ between women and men. The perception of safety in online purchases is also distinct for both sexes.
- EU-wide indicators of digital competences and media literacy: the digital behaviour and skills are different between women and men. Establishing EU-wide indicators is important for assessing the situation in all MS. Over 50% of Europeans use the internet daily, but 30% have never used it at all. Who are they? Mainly female or male? The wealthy information that can be retrieved from monitoring indicators will only be useful if it singles out the challenges that need proper measures and if it provides sex-disaggregated data.
- Ambient Assisted Living: The gender dimension in ageing translates in women having a higher life expectancy, but with more years of disability than men and at a higher risk of experiencing chronic diseases. In addition, women's pensions are usually lower than men's, which might hinder women's access to technologies that can improve their lives at an advanced age.

Gender analysis is very important to understand and meet the different needs of women and men, so that better products and services are designed.

Finally, but not less important, the new social media, being powerful and highly influential communication tools, might also magnify gender stereotypes and promote new forms of violence, which might affect more one sex than the other, or in different ways. Stereotypical representations of women and men are broadly accessible in the World Wide Web and online social networks. The internet magnifies the negative impact of these stereotypical representations because they are so easily accessed and transmitted.

The Digital Agenda for Europe encompasses an action to encourage a higher participation of young women and women in the ICT workforce through support for web-based training resources, game based eLearning and social networking

(Pillar 6 – action 60). This conference of the EU Presidency and the actions at the EU level signal a strong commitment to incorporate equality between women and men. And, in our times, equality must also mean digital equality.

At EIGE, we are also trying to be a part of this movement and highlight good practices. In EIGE's Calendar and resource pool of Wo/men inspiring Europe[4] of 2014, the month of August portrays Linda Liukas, the Digital Champion of Finland[5], therefore contributing for the visibility of role models for young women and women to engage and progress in ICT.

EIGE was also tasked with the goal to set up a Resource & Documentation Centre (RDC) for the EU on gender equality, allowing access through a single online access point to multiple resources on gender equality that were previously scattered across a multitude of sources. EIGE's RDC online increased the number of resources available from 26.000 in November 2012 to more than 249.000 today[6] due to the possibilities of the digital tools. We invite you to make use of this very powerful knowledge society tool for gender equality information.

We also invite you to take advantage of the possibilities for online collaboration and action that we rolled out last year when we created EuroGender – the European Network on Gender Equality. As we speak, a community of more than 12.000 online users is registered in this online collaboration platform. We invite

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[4] On 8 March 2010 - the International Women's Day - EIGE announced the launch of the Women Inspiring Europe initiative: Resource Pool and Calendar. Aiming to highlight the achievements of some of Europe's most remarkable women and to promote their positive influence on breaking gender stereotypes, the Women Inspiring Europe Resource Pool and Calendar collect and present their real-life stories.

[5] In an effort to promote Europe's digital economy, each Member State selected a 'Digital Champion' – people who actively promote the development of digital skills and an inclusive digital economy. Finland's Digital Champion, Linda Liukas, takes this a step further by combining the objectives of the European Commission's 'Digital Agenda for Europe' while also opening new doors for women in the digital sphere.

[6] EIGE's Resource and Documentation Centre (eige.europa.eu/rdc) is being built with a network of partnerships covering already 9 MS, including Greece, and an EU level organisation. Further information available at: http://eige.europa.eu/content/eiges-rdc-partners.

you to know more about it and to participate in shaping an engendered knowledge society boosted by this digital era: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5o3RXpfTKLU.

Because this digital era is much more than infrastructure, it is also about whether the available information is relevant to you as a woman or as a men; in your language; if you have the technical skills and an enabling environment: it is very important to take a gendered look, and prioritize equal participation in the labour market, in decision making and equal access to information in order to boost simultaneously corporate growth, social development and citizen participation.

Thank you