

RESOLUTIONS OF THE SECOND EUROPEAN WOMEN'S SYNOD

Preamble

We, more than 700 women from throughout Europe and the world - from East, West, South, North; black women, white women, from different ethnic origins, social backgrounds, sexual orientation, religious faith, of different ages, (dis)abilities, economic status - gathered in Barcelona from August 5 – 10 2003, for the Second European Women's Synod, having as our theme "Daring Diversity", address ourselves and our respective social, political and religious institutions and all people of good will, in order to express our concerns, desires and commitments, so as to continue the construction of the Europe we long for.

European women are reinventing, redefining and renegotiating our individual and collective identity as a fluid identity springing from an altruistic or collective individualism.

Constant risk and uncertainty overshadow these times. Despite the fact that it often seems to be impossible to negotiate our way in the uncertainty in which we live - one of unemployment, violence, ecological unbalance, war, discrimination, corruption, fear, insecurity, - we seek alternatives to our present situation.

We suffer different forms of violence – economic, social, political, academic, sexist - arising from our overlapping identities as women with different ethnic origins, sexual orientation and religious beliefs. This violence causes us great suffering and anger. We have decided not to look on ourselves as victims any longer, and will now transform our fears and anger into creative thinking and action.

Women actively participate in the processes of change in Europe. As part of our diversity and as collective individuals, we try to create an alternative to the established power and its negativity. We take on the process of change, working with it rather than resisting it. We need to create a new language to describe what is happening. We are pushing for the emergence of new European political parameters.

We reaffirm the resolution of the 1st. European Women's Synod, with its theme "Women change Europe", which we now continue to develop.

Resolutions

1. Social and Economic

Neoliberal principles invade all areas of life. The money-making objectives of economic growth threaten the basic fabric of our lives, damage the earth, compound misery and increase the number of people living in exclusion and poverty. Women are those who suffer most in the process.

We commit ourselves to:

- change the present dominant free market system to a more just and sustainable system
- continue the struggle to improve the quality of life, freedom and economic security for all women, promoting public policies to ensure more equal distribution of wealth.
- make careful use of the resources of the earth, and urge public services to more ecological ways of operating

- demand migration policies which offer women better conditions of life and greater democratic participation.

2. Politics

Political institutions systematically practice different forms of violence and discrimination against women.

We understand politics as the art of achieving consensus of different interests through dialogue. This dialogue transforms our behaviour and our communities.

We commit ourselves to:

- develop a democratic system based on values which guarantee the participation of women.
- denounce all discrimination and violence against ourselves - legal, political sexist, educational, religious, especially the trafficking and abuse of women
- support non-violent methods of conflict resolution, work for peace and prevent wars
- denounce religious and political fundamentalism
- encourage and support women in political leadership
- build societies which are open to cultural and religious diversity
- work for the elimination of homophobic and heterosexist structures in society, in religious institutions and in the media
- raise awareness of the prevalence and effects of 'white terror' in our culture, politics and economics, and of our collective failure in not challenging these
- encourage actions which counteract the discrimination in legislation and institutions against lesbians and same sex unions.

3. Personal identity and development

We are aware that in order to discover our individual identities and grow as women we must develop and strengthen our self esteem, trust our experiences and make our own decisions.

We commit ourselves to:

- continue developing womens networks which help us in our personal lives, relationships and work, especially valuing solidarity
- use these networks to share our experiences, and pass them on to our daughters as our mothers passed them on to us.
- ask the churches and political and education institutions to implement a gender perspective
- demand a change of structures in churches, educational and political institutions, so that they make women visible and active in the processes of control and decision making.

4. Spirituality

We, here present, consider spirituality central to our lives, a spirituality diverse in origin and expression, connected to the way we we experience life as women.

We commit ourselves to:

- explore and network around our spiritual interests and needs
- accompany and support one another in developing self awareness and reflection.
- encourage women of the traditional religions to use what helps them and leave what oppresses them
- think critically and challenge any extremist tendencies
- denounce all forms of abuse, especially sexual abuse, in our faith communities and seek support and reparation for the victims and others affected
- celebrate and live out our spirituality in open and inclusive communities
- demand from the religions/churches
 - alternative forms of worship
 - inclusive language, including language about God
 - accept and welcome rather than blame and condemn
 - open up all forms of ministry to women.

We will not give up, because everywhere one can feel the desire of women to move themselves and the world.

Barcelona, 10th August 2003