

FEMINISM IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION. BETWEEN RIGHTS AND STEREOTYPES

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Abstract

Feminism[1] still represents dynamic and controversial phenomenon, manifested at interdisciplinary level, from the political area to the socioeconomic and juridical area, where woman has successfully created her own identity, overcoming obstacles of all kinds, in order to identify a balance between career and family. Legal regulations have been the main instrument in outlining today woman’s status and planning the equality policy, the law being characterised by its dynamics in its continuous re-dimensioning depending on the social, historical, cultural, political and economic context, while still keeping its moral values based on which it has been substantiated and still developed, heading, in its evolution towards a “moral ideal”. Equality between men and women has become a fundamental right, a common value and a prerequisite for the achievement of economic growth, employment and social cohesion objectives, and the democratic society has successfully created full and equal citizen’s rights for all, men and women enjoying the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all spheres of life. In spite of these administrative, legislative efforts and approaches, the question still remains whether the gender equality objective has really been achieved? Has this phenomenon been turned into a constant protection topic, which can have a negative effect on woman’s image, who would thus become a “victim of society”? Are we heading towards protection policies or towards policies on developing a woman able to build values and contribute to the social, economic and cultural development?

Keywords: *feminism, equality of opportunity, equality between women and men, economic, social and cultural rights, European law, feminist policies.*

BRIEF INCURSION IN TIME

Throughout the history of the feminist movement, three important waves have been highlighted, three key stages which have marked the evolutions concerning the institutionalization of feminism in the western countries and the expansion of the emancipation movement in Muslim countries, as well as in countries undergoing democratization, the ideological feminist accents being revitalized in different historical

contexts, which outlined principles such as the respect of women's dignity and autonomy by promoting women's rights as human rights.

The feminist movement started in the Illuminist-revolutionary period, being connected to the name of a feminist martyr, Olympe de Gouges, the author of the Rights of Women and the Female Citizen, in 1791 (France), as well as to the emergence of the first feminist treaty "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman", drafted by the British writer Mary Wollstonecraft in 1792, the Illuminist spirit marking the understanding of women's role in the society and on the cultivation of their reason through education[2]. This first wave of feminism was focused on obtaining the right to education, liberty and equality, culminating in the success of the suffragette movement in Great Britain, and also in other countries, whose finality was to obtain women's right to vote, substantiated in almost all countries throughout the 20th century.

In Romania, the feminist movement was strongly connected to the international movement, through personalities such as Elena Văcărescu or Alexandrina Cantacuzino, and the change in the woman's civilian, political and economic status was very controversial at that time for ideologists and politicians, who were opposing this trend. Moreover, the political agenda of the Romanian feminists was quite complex, being subsequently synthesized on areas by Eleonora Stratilescu[3] (1919), more specifically, the economic area, who evokes the equal pay for equal work, the protection of women's work and of its results, the cultural field, which was reflecting women's access to all forms of training and all types and hierarchical levels of a career, settling the career-maternity conflict, growing in the same system of values and conditions regardless of gender, the marriage and family field, which required creating equality between spouses through law and education, and last, but not least, the social and political field, which evokes equal civil and political rights, women's participation in all institutions, dignities and public functions, and women's political preparation for the exercise of their rights.

The second feminist stage began in the middle of the 20th century and was represented by two writers, namely Betty Friedan and Simone de Beauvoir, who marked the history of the feminist movement through the publications "The Feminine Mystique", and "Le Deuxieme Sexe", respectively, bringing to the forefront woman's identity problem

and the need to abandon the housewife's myth by identifying a balance between the time dedicated to the family and the time allocated to education, career, thus initiating important changes through the adoption of new laws, the establishment of organizations and associations for women (such as National Organization for Women in America).

After the 1990s we can already speak of an acceleration of the globalization process that initiated a revival of the feminist movements, both at national level, as well as worldwide, by creating international mechanisms aimed at protecting women's rights and pressure instruments used by women's organizations in advancing the gender equality agenda, the World Conference on Women, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 representing real opportunity windows for the increase of the visibility of the feminist ideology at global level, in a new political, social and economic context influenced by globalization. Thus, the world of global capitalism, information technology, postmodernism and colonialism triggered a reality different from that in which the feminists of the second wave of the years 1960-1970[4] militated. In this context, feminists such as Camille Paglia and Naomi Wolf renounced the idea of a "victimizing" feminism of the second wave, considered harmful and false, promoting a feminism of power and glorifying the idea of over your own life and the idea of individual choice.

In post-communist countries, the assumed feminism was an isolated ideological approach, gender problems appearing on the political agenda under the pressure of the adhesion of the new democratic countries to the European Union and less under the pressure of women's internal movements. Thus, in the conditions of a political space still dominated by the former regime, women shifted to the private sector and to the civil society, generating an academic and activist feminism, to the detriment of a political feminism.

Currently, a fourth feminist wave is emerging, focused on equality of opportunity and equal pay, in relation to which psychologists and sociologists identify an increased interest in woman's personal development, the restoration of a balance between career and family, and on exceeding all gender obstacles [5].

EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN - A MULTILATERAL OBJECTIVE IN INTERNATIONAL, EUROPEAN, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

The principle of gender equality was based on moral considerations shared at global level, and was initially included in the content of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, substantiated in 1976 through the entry into force of International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and re-dimensioned, reevaluated and clarified since 1993 by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), by adopting General Comment no. 16 on The Equal Right of Men and Women to the Enjoyment of All Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, following a comprehensive assessment of the normative content of art. 3 in the content of ICESCR[6]. As a matter of fact, this General Comment succeeded in creating a veritable *acquis* in the field of gender equality, covering all its aspects and dimensions reflected in the range of rights, such as non-discrimination, equal treatment, global opportunities or human dignity that actually provide a “multifaceted” guarantee. In order to provide this balance of rights in *globo*, CDESC also indicates the possibility of positive discrimination of the underrepresented gender, the member states having the right to adopt measures meant to ensure specific advantages, an idea also found at the European Union level, art. 23 paragraph (2) in the European Charter on Human Rights which suggested that this principle cannot be interpreted restrictively.

Interpreted extensively, the principle of equality between women and men can also be found in the complementary sphere of civil and political rights, being resized according to the social progress and the attempt to gradually eliminate traditional customs characterised by the discrimination against women, while many countries proved to be still refractory in the real implementation of this principle.

Starting from the idea of placing this principle in the context of the other rights approached in diversity, we evoke in a concise and intercultural manner the voice of woman’s rights manifested in Africa, based on the data obtained following an survey on-site carried out in Se Village, Mono Department south of Benin [7], which provide a real, authentic perspective which highlights once more woman’s trajectory in outlining her own identity by its unavoidable comparison to the system of values, culture, traditions and past

and present practices that influence this sinuous journey. This time, equality between women and men is related especially to the ownership right, more specifically, to woman's situation in the real property field, because in recent years, woman's role has acquired new meanings in the development process. Thus, despite the situation of inequality between men and women still perpetuated in Africa, we are witnessing an intensification of the fight for women's rights, especially in relation to the access to real property. From this point of view, an important set of problems is that of the nature of the reference system the inhabitants of Se Village use to define women's access to ownership, because the current legal framework interacts with the rules of the traditional system, and the inhabitants of Se Village or Benin actually live in a context of transition between the traditional law and the modern law. As a matter of fact, a basic characteristic of the policy in Africa is represented by "the multiplicity and diversity of the political institutions, cultures and logics, in short, of the manners of governing" [8]. This highlights the fact that the state is no longer able to impose his norms, which leads to a relative autonomy of the local political arenas. "We must say that at Benin there is a law that is official, the law that is officially recognized but apart from that, at the level of each family, at the level of each community, tradition is the one that prevails..." –Department Chief ("Il faut dire qu'au Benin il y a la loi qui est officielle, la loi qui est reconnue officiellement mais en dehors de ça, au niveau de chaque famille, au niveau de chaque collectivité, il y a la tradition aussi qui prime... » - Chef de l'Arrondissement"). The analysis of the land system in Western Africa is focused on the encounter between land systems characterised by what we could call traditional law (le droit coutumier) and the modern land law (droit foncier moderne)[9]. Thus, in Benin, persons act according to a double scale of values, namely that of the traditional law, substantiated through "le Coutumier du Dahomey (1930)", and on the other hand, to that of modern law (le droit moderne), and the problem of woman's right to land ownership is "paralysed" and "corseted" by the traditional system of values, and women still fight to win their right to property, especially in the rural environment, where the traditional law prevails, which means that man is entitled to own land. In the evolution of the legal framework of Benin, an important role was played by all international ratified legal instruments, such as: la Charte africaine des droits de l'homme et des

peoples (African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights), adopted in 1981 and ratified by Benin on 20th January, 1986, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 217 A III of 10th December, 1948, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - ICESCR, ratified in 1966, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, signed by Benin on 11th November, 1981 and ratified on 12th March, 1992.

The promotion of the rights of the women in Benin-Africa has also stood out due to the activity of certain institutions and bodies created especially for this purpose, namely: the Ministry of Woman, Child and Family, the Observatory on Family, Woman and Child, the organization "The Woman in the Rural Development" ("l'organisation Cellule "Femme dans le développement rural") and the National Committee for Woman's Promotion. In this legislative context, we should admit that the current level of the recognition of the dignity of women of Benin - Africa enables them to reach their full capability at social, economic and political level. Nevertheless, the reality shows another social facet, as women are still fighting to win and have them respected, and are forced to resort to justice and endure lengthy trial periods in order to clarify countless rights limited by the traditional practices, a phenomenon present especially in the rural environment. Moreover, the doctrine in the African environment has been increasingly invoking the need for a just policy by observing the same rights and liberties for all, through the effective application of the legal norms and the cultivation of social peace meant to allow for the substantiation of the development policy [10].

Leaving the African area, we are again turning our attention to the international law, bringing to the forefront the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which enshrines the right to equality before the law and the elimination of discrimination in the category of universal rights. At the same time, in international context, the international Labour Organization plays an essential role in prohibition of discrimination in employment and occupation.

In the light of a narrower framework, namely the European community, gender equality is an integral part of human rights and a criterion for democracy, as advocated

by the Council of Europe. As a matter of fact, the most important juridical instrument for the social and economic rights guaranteed by the Council of Europe, the European Social Charter, revised, reinforces equality between women and men, highlighting in the content of article 20 that "With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to equal opportunities and equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation without discrimination on the grounds of sex, the Parties undertake to recognise that right and to take appropriate measures to ensure or promote its application in the following fields: access to employment, protection against dismissal and occupational reintegration, vocational guidance, training, retraining and rehabilitation, terms of employment and working conditions, including remuneration, career development, including promotion."

The right to equal opportunities is a fundamental right within the European Union as well, and all necessary measures are being taken in this respect to combat discrimination and promote equality between women and men. In fact, the principle of equality between women and men is one of the objectives of the European Union, the legislation, jurisprudence and amendments to the treaties contributing to its consolidation and implementation. The European Union promotes equality between women and men, article 2 and article 3 paragraph (3) of TEU establishing that „the Union shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child". Moreover, article 8 of TFUE confers on the European Union the task of eliminating inequalities and promoting equality between men and women through all its activities, a concept also known as „gender mainstreaming"[11].

These objectives are also enshrined in articles 21 and 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which became mandatory from the legal point of view, after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, and the right to equal treatment was thus recognized in the external sphere of labour relationships. On a derived level, the aforementioned principles were applied in a gradual and complex manner through the adoption of certain measures, for the most part through ordinary legislative procedure, out of which we remind here the most important ones: Directive 79/7/EEC of 19 December 1978 which compels member countries to gradually apply the principle of

equal treatment between men and women in the field of social security, Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 introducing measures to improve the safety and health at work of pregnant workers, workers who have recently given birth or who are breastfeeding, Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between women and men for the access to goods and services and to the provision of goods and services, Directive 2006/54/EC of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation, a directive the content of which is to be reviewed in relation to the provisions on equality and remuneration, the Parliament adopting an implementation report based on several surveys commissioned by the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) [12], Council Directive 2010/18/EU of 8 March 2010 implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC, Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity, including agriculture, in a self-employed capacity, and on the protection of self-employed women during pregnancy and motherhood, Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims.

The European Union has intensified its preoccupation with the development of the social dimension by improving working conditions and living standards, promoting equality between women and men and guaranteeing basic and equitable rights that are harmonized at the level of the legislation of all member states. Among the measures adopted by the European Union in the field of equality between men and women there is the "Rights, Equality and Citizenship" Programme, which finances projects aiming to achieve gender equality and to eradicate violence against women. Thus, for 2017, budget line 33 02 02 - Promoting non-discrimination and equality-had 35 064 000 EUR allocated in commitment appropriations and 24 000 000 EUR as payment appropriations, which is a significant increase in payments compared to the previous years and, at the same time, shows progress in the implementation of this programme. Moreover, budget line 33 02

01 was allocated 26 451 000 EUR in order to contribute, among other objectives, to combating and protecting against all forms of violence against women, a budget allocated, as a matter of fact, following a survey carried out at the request of the FEMM Committee[13] and published in the autumn of 2016, through which an overall image of the European Union budget spent for gender equality is provided.

At European Union level, ever since 2006, European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is also operational, with the office at Vilnius, in Lithuania, with a strategic role in the promotion of gender equality, combating discrimination based on gender, and raising awareness of gender equality, by providing technical assistance to the EU institutions.

Another representative document in this sector is the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, aimed at improving the promotion of equality between men and women in Europe and worldwide. These principles are implemented and developed through strategic measures and engagements, thus, in December 2015, the Commission published Strategic engagement to gender equality 2016-2019, in order to continue the Commission's Strategy for equality between men and women (2010-2015), focused on five key areas of action: increasing female labour-market participation and the equal economic independence of women and men; reducing the gender pay, earnings and pension gaps and thus fighting poverty among women; promoting equality between women and men in decision-making; combating gender-based violence and protecting and supporting victims; and promoting gender equality and women's rights across the world.[14]

In 2015, the Council also adopted the „Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020” based on the Joint Staff Working Document of the Commission and European External Action Service (EEAS) on „Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations (2016-2020)”, underlining the need for women to fully and equally enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as the need to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. The „Achievement of gender equality and empower all women and girls” is also, in fact, one of the 17 sustainable development goals (SDG) on the 2030 Agenda

entitled „Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”[15], adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization.

This brief overall presentation of the regulations, institutions, organizations, and mechanisms that have created a veritable “engine” for the promotion, implementation and awareness of women’s rights reflected at transdisciplinary, cross-sector level, by overcoming the economic, political, social, cultural boundaries, with the beginning of the globalization process, presents us with an ideal status of today's woman.

Nevertheless, equality between women and men remains a principle far from being reality, despite all legislative and administrative efforts displayed at international, national, and sectoral level, and gender stereotypes continue to deeply mark the feminine gender that persists in its poor representation on the labour market and in the economic and political decisional process. However, the statistical data obtained at European Union level show an improvement in the unemployment rate among women and an improvement of the increase of woman’s presence in the labour market[16]. In 2016, 44% of the women aged between 30 and 34 years had a degree in higher education compared to 34% of the men of the same age and one in three parliamentarians was represented by women. On the other hand, a pay gap between women and men of 16.3% was identified and a five-fold increase over men's house hold responsibilities, which is why a much higher number of women has opted for part-time work, these disadvantages, specifically highlighted by recent statistical data (end of 2016), counterbalance the attainment of the maximum capacity for women's development and the realization of established rights, a 16.3% remuneration difference was identified between women and men, as well as an allocation by women of five times more time to household responsibilities compared to men, which is why far more women chose a part-time job, and these disadvantages, highlighted in practice by recently collected statistical data (the end of 2016), counterbalanced the attainment of woman’s maximum development capacity and the realization of her consecrated rights.[17]

WOMAN’S IMAGE REFLECTED IN NATIONAL REGULATIONS. GENDER STEREOTYPES

The ever more profound and accentuated visibility of the feminist ideology worldwide, reconfigured in a new political, social and economic context through the international interinstitutional cooperation in the globalization era, triggered a veritable legislative reform at national level, as Romania transposed, as a priority, the Directives adopted at European Union level on woman's rights.

The Constitution of Romania enshrines the principle of equality in the content of Article 16 – Equality of rights – paragraph (1) stipulating that „Citizens are equal before the law and the public authorities, without privileges and without discrimination", which is supplemented by paragraph (3) that guarantees equal opportunities between women and men in relation to in the occupation of civil, military or civilian functions and dignities. Moreover, article 41 – Labour and social protection of labour - paragraph (4) enshrines the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of gender in terms of remuneration and provides that for equal work, women and men have equal pay The Labour Code – Law no. 53/2003, as amended and supplemented, also stipulates in the content of article 5 that the principle of equal treatment of all employees and employers operates within labour relationships.

National regulations on equality between women and men were multilaterally developed through the adoption of numerous normative acts, the implementation of strategies for equal opportunities, action plans for employment and the establishment of institutions, commissions for the protection of the under-represented gender. For example, the adoption of Ordinance no. 137/2000 on the prevention and punishment of all forms of discrimination, republished in March 2014, had an important role, as it includes in the definition of discrimination the gender criterion as well, followed by Framework Law no. 202/2002, republished in June 2013, which regulates gender equality and promotes equal opportunities between women and men, for the elimination of all forms of discrimination based on gender, thus taking over the provisions of the European Directives on the principle of equal treatment between women and men in the field of labour relationships. In relation to the protection of the protection of the job of the pregnant women or women who have recently given birth, as well as mothers' rights at the workplace, among others, the national legislation has many regulations in this field,

among which: Government Emergency Ordinance no. 158/2005 on sick leaves and medical allowances, Government Emergency Ordinance no. 96/2003 on the maternity protection at work, with the specific Application Norms, Government Emergency Ordinance no. 111/2010 on parental leave and child care monthly allowance, as amended and supplemented. These regulations confer the right to maternity leave, the right to parental leave, leaves during which the dismissal is forbidden (an interdiction that extends for a period of 6 months after the woman's return to her workplace, as well as in the period of the payment of the insertion incentive), the right to a free work day per year for child health care etc. Many of these rights can also be exercised by the father, but in most cases, tradition and culture have deeply rooted the image of the woman dedicated exclusively to the family, above the professional life.

In fact, in the labour market, gender inequalities, gender stereotypes are still manifest, despite obvious progress, especially legislative ones, in the direction of ensuring equal opportunities and treatment. The doctrine^[18] highlights the role of the so-called "double workload" in creating this imbalance in the labour market, as women continue to undertake almost all family tasks, a fact reflected in their lower availability in carrying out professional activities, opting often for part-time work, the chance to hold leadership positions being obviously decreased with the lower possibility to benefit from professional training, with an unavoidable impact on the chances of promotion and incomes obtained. We cannot deny that the employer is always confronted with a representation concerning the woman's unavailability to work overtime, as well as with her need for flexible working hours in certain situations, which is why it will hesitate to hire and promote her, or to give her a leadership position. Thus, although the Labour Code regulates the employer's possibility to set flexible working hours or individualized working hours as an alternative to normal working hours, with the agreement or upon the request of the employee in question, employers are still reluctant to address such regulations, which can be found more often in the strategies of multinational companies that are very interested in creating strategic advantages for their employees. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development shows that in 84.5% of the cases, Romanian employees are compelled to come to work based on fixed working hours set exclusively

by the employer, unlike, for example, in the Northern countries, such as Sweden and Denmark, where only 36%, and 43.5% of the employees, respectively, have to observe working hours imposed by the companies they work for, the others being free, to a greater or lesser extent, to set their own working hours. [19]

Our research[20] proves that gender stereotypes limit integration in the labour market, prejudice and discriminatory attitudes against women remaining widespread, including in relation to undertaking new roles in the professional sphere and in the public life. The stereotype according to which woman is responsible for the household chores, domestic tasks, and men remain those who have the main right to undertake leadership positions and positions in the public and professional area, persist in the centre of social dialogue promoted at European Union level, and in 2017 there have been several such debates for the improvement of the imbalance created in the labour market between women and men, as a measure included in the strategic ensemble approached in balancing the often negative effects of globalization, and the European union created its own corpus of global integrative rules, able to filter external policies in a manner that is beneficial for its own citizens, own economic, social policies etc. [21].

Certainly,,the substantial equality between men and women will never be achieved by the mere adoption of normative acts or policies that are obviously gender-neutral” [22], but only by what we call positive discrimination, which implies specific unequal measures meant to eliminate or at least restore the balance of the real situation concerning gender equality and the inclusion of this principle in the broadened sphere of rights and liberties.

On the other hand, our opinion is that all these policies on protecting woman should not slip in a wrong direction, perpetuating the weaker sex stereotype, and outlining a false image of the woman always in the position of a victim of the society, who becomes the permanent object of protection. Legal regulations, which we mentioned exhaustively, due to lack of space, often create this impression among the population, outlining the image of the woman who needs help, support, being many times cast in the category of socially assisted and consumers of resources. Nevertheless, the object of protection of these regulations are maternity, life, family, not the woman herself, and the required

support is indeed provided with the purpose of finding a balance between family and professional life. The society needs a real awareness of women's rights that allows for the actual transposition of theory into practice, but also the knowledge of the correct and concrete dimension of these rights, by giving up protection policies and promoting women's development policies, able to build values and to contribute to the social, economic and cultural development.

A balanced participation in the labour market of both women and men, in terms of employment, wages, promotion and participation in life long learning, is substantiated by taking into account the family context, which is why it is necessary to outline and apply consistent policies meant to stimulate this process of reconciling the professional life and the family and private life, not only on the light of the economic dimension, but also in the light of the social and cultural one, in which gender stereotypes are perpetuated and reflected in the unequal allocation of the economic and political power in the society and in the limitation of women's access in various spheres of the social life, certain professional areas being promoted as "naturally masculine".

Through the implementation of the National Strategy in the field of equal opportunity between women and men and of the general Action Plan for the 2014-2017 period, carried out under the authority and coordination of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly through the Employment and Equal Opportunities Department, the intervention areas taken into account were: the labour market, through the promotion of the gender perspective in the labour employment, mobility and migration policies, the increase in the awareness concerning the legal provisions on equal opportunities between women and men, the difference in the wages between women and men, encouraging the integration of women vulnerable to the discrimination phenomenon into the labour market, the balanced participation to the decision by monitoring the balanced participation of women and men to the decision-making process, the integrative gender approach by introducing the gender perspective in the national policies, but also gender violence, by combating the phenomenon of sexual harassment at the workplace and of the gender violence. In fact, according to Romania's commitments related to the achievement of the targets of Europe 2020 Strategy, which include reaching the 75%

percentage concerning the employment rate, at national level, a strong motivation is required so that policies can continue to be strongly focused on the use of the unexploited or under-exploited potential of women who are outside the labour market or do not capitalize their full potential in the labour market for the increase in their employment rate up to 70%[23].

Although women's participation to the economic life has contributed to the revival of the women's statute and quality of life, laying the foundations for a society in which gender equality really exists, they still face an increased risk of social exclusion, being confronted with many obstacles to employment as can be inferred from the data on the long-term inactivity and unemployment. In such context it is necessary to take social and political attitudes and behaviours in the spirit of gender equality that are reflected in the actual overcoming of the "customary" barriers, of the gender clichés, which have corseted the evolution of feminisms over time.

CONCLUSIONS

Feminism was outlined at multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and even transdisciplinary level becoming a triggering factor for social and economic strategies and policies in the context of globalization. This article highlights women's rights counterbalanced by gender stereotypes still present worldwide, as well as the relationship between the two essential dimensions characteristic of women, namely the mother role and the "career woman" one, the international and national legal norms succeeding in creating a balance when both dimensions come to be equally demanding. In the context of globalization, the international, union, national, regional institutions and bodies have outlined a veritable "range" of rights transposed and reflected in the complementary sphere of the civil and political rights, women's rights being gradually reconfigured and redimensioned by legislative harmonization and the adoption of an integrative vision of social, economic, political and cultural realities. The society needs what the European Commission has recently promoted: "A new start to address the challenges of work-life balance faced by working families".[24]

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