

Delegation of the All Chinas Women's Federation in Germany

From 10 to 16 July 2006 a delegation of the All China Women's Federation led by Ms Wang Naikun visited the Federal Republic of Germany. The All China Women's Federation is the largest women's organization in the People's Republic of China that promotes women's rights and equity for all women. The promotion of women in economy, family and society is the core of the cooperation with the Hanns Seidel Foundation. The theme of the delegation's dialog program in Germany was 'equal opportunities for women in economy, society and politics'.



High-ranking delegation of the All China Women's Federation in front of the German Bundestag

De jure, formal equality of sexes exists in both countries, the People's Republic of China as well as the Federal Republic of Germany, however de facto equal opportunities for men and women still haven't been reached. Within the scope of the extensive Chinese reform processes, the situation of girls and women has partly deteriorated. The current family political discussions in Germany about the compatibility of job and children clearly show that Germany is still, compared to for instance the Scandinavian countries, disadvantaged.

The delegation participants exchanged views with German partners on the equality of sexes and on effective measures that aim at breaking up the socially and culturally determined roles of the sexes. Ms Carlotta Koester-Brons of the Union of German Employer's Associations (BDA) lectured on manpower policies and concepts for the promotion of women. She focused on the transformation of the classical promotion of women towards the promotion of family life. New business concepts point towards the compatibility of job and family, aiming at the reemployment of women who gave birth. Long absence from the job means a gap in woman's curriculum vitae as well as the loss - or at least the temporary loss- of competent employees for companies. The compatibility between job and family shall be put at ease by engaging flexible working times and suitable care facilities.

The Vice Chairwoman of the German Trade Union Association (DGB), Ms Ingrid Sehrbrock, outlined the historical development of women's politics in Germany and set out the current situation. The two top associations, the DGB and the BDA, have adjusted their outlook concerning family political issues. Both organizations stand for a family friendly world of business. Therefore, an institutional framework consisting of numerous local political and economical agreements were called into existence. The social change is clearly visible. Many fathers want to participate in child-raising and family friendly policies have to take account of both sexes. The parenting money which will be introduced the following year is a step towards this direction.



Ms Ingrid Sehrbrock, Vice-DGB Chairwoman and Leader of the delegation, Ms Wang Naikun, member of the secretariat, the highest council of the ACFV

The delegation exchanged views with Dr. Engelen-Kefer, Member of the Administrative Council of International Business Organizations (ILO) and former Vice Chairwoman of the DGB, on the work of both organizations and social and economical developments in China. Dr. Engelen-Kefer introduced the 'decent work concept' to the delegation.

At the Free University Berlin, Prof. Dr. Gertraud Krell, Chair of Management and Manpower Policy at the Department of Economics, lectured on empirical results regarding the topic 'Do women lead differently?' Afterwards, a discourse analytical approach was taken that demystified the original question and opened up new and in fact more promising spheres like gender mainstreaming and management diversity, to reach the ultimate aim: gender equality. During the discussion Chinese studies and research results were presented.



Seminar with Prof. Dr. Gertraude Krell on the topic 'Do women lead differently?'

Ms Helga Hentschel, Director of the Department for Women's Politics of the Administration for Economy, Work and Women of Berlin held a speech on the topic 'Children and Career: Dream or reality?' Leading from results of unfavorable women's politics, the structural causes of the lower level of unemployment compared to other EU-countries were elaborated on and the current family political discussions were outlined. The high level of employment of women in Berlin compared to the other Länder, is a result of the good system of care for children. The longer drop-out of women for their children means for most of them a cut in their career that results in financial consequences.

In Munich, the Chinese delegation informed themselves about a Women's Project in the financial sector. Ms Astrid Hastreiter, Chairwoman of the Woman's Assets Administration AG, lectured on the topic: 'A bank for women- concept and realization' Women in general don't like financial issues. The financial sphere is male dominated and specific needs of women are not taken care off for example the fact that woman prefer risk free investments. The Women's Bank targets women who want to take care of their financial issues while own interests and needs are taken into account.

Concerning the topic 'Women at universities', an exchange of views took place with local academics, including Prof. Dr Ulla Mitzdorf, Women's Representative of the Bavarian Universities. Both sides outlined the current situation and spoke about ongoing measures and initiatives to reach gender equality in the academic sphere.

At the Prinz-Carl-Palais the delegation was received by Ms Emilia Mueller, Minister of State for Federal-and European Issues and Chairwoman of the CSU Women's-Union. The Minister of State spoke about women's political situation and set out the European initiatives for gender mainstreaming, including the establishment of a European Institute for Questions on Equality.

During the seminar on the topic 'Women's network and mentoring program' at the Hanns Seidel Foundation, Ms Isabelle Kuerschner, Women's Representative of the Women's-Union, presented her institution and lectured on the set up and tasks of women's networks. The journalist, Ms Sabine Saphoerster-Heimbach, presented a monitoring program, through which young women shall be introduced into active politics.

In Upper Bavaria, the Chinese Delegation met representatives of the Local Women's Union of Weilheim/Schongau and the Youth-Union. Next to the work of the Women's Union, the compatibility of family and job in Germany was discussed.

The Chinese participants got a glimpse into the reality of women's role and life in Germany. The situation of women in China and in Germany is different but the problem issues are comparable. 'An intensive subjective exchange is not only interesting but also stimulating for our work in China' said Prof. Dr. Chen of the China Women's University'.



Meeting with the women of the first German women's delegation of the Hanns-Seidel-Foundation to China (2005) on invitation by the ACFV. From left to right: Dr Anna Elisabeth Mayer, judicial vicar of the diocese Munich and Freising, Emilia Mueller, Bavarian Minister of State for Federal-and European issues, XIE Qiong, Vice-President of the Women's Federation of Qinghai province (Western China), Regina Hellwig-Schmidt, Lecturer of Art and freelancing Artist.