



*Announcement at Global Forum, Shaping the Future:
Users Empowerment in the Global Digital Economy
Athens, 21-22 October 2008, Athens Greece*

**THE NEW EUROPEAN CENTER FOR WOMEN AND TECHNOLOGY
(ECWT) OPENS THE WAY TO LINK GLOBAL ICT INITIATIVES:
EDUCATION, WORKFORCE, LEADERSHIP AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**
www.womenandtechnology.eu

Dr. Irene Kamberidou, ECWT-Greece

I would like to inform you about the newly established EUROPEAN CENTER FOR WOMEN AND TECHNOLOGY (ECWT) and I would like to invite you to join us. What is the ECWT?

The Center is one of the first of the TEN Regional Centers to be established that will be working towards ensuring women and men are fully engaged in the information society. The European Centre for Women and Technology (ECWT) was established by multi-stakeholder representatives who share the common vision of firstly, increasing the participation of women in the knowledge-based economy in Europe and globally, and secondly promoting retention. In other words, eliminating the glass-ceiling and the leaky-pipeline, retaining women in their careers in science and technology, in R&D, increasing their participation in leadership—from decision-making to execution phases—thereby reproducing engagement. Specifically, dealing with and eliminating the life-work imbalance, the glass ceiling, the leaky pipeline, gender-constrained educational choices and attitudes, anachronistic perspectives, among other things, that have contributed to the declining interest of women in science and technology and their under-representation in ICT related fields.

The European Center is a non-profit organization, registered under Norwegian law. It's a sustainable European multi-stakeholder partnership representing high-level expertise in women and technology development— from business, government, the academia and the non-profit sectors. The Center was officially established on July 18, 2008. In July, at a three-day meeting in Drammen, Norway (17-19 July 2008), representatives of ITF (the International Taskforce on Women and Information and Communication Technology) and its European group, ITF-Europe, approved and signed the Statutes of the European Centre for Women and Technology (ECWT). (For the minutes of the meetings see www.womenandtechnology.eu)

What will the European Centre do? It's global framework consists of four thematic focus areas: education, workforce, entrepreneurship and leadership. The plans for setting-up such a European Centre in Europe were launched four months earlier in Brussels, in March 4-7, 2008, through a series of activities, such as:

- the High-level meeting of the e-skills Industry Leadership Board, held March 4th, led by the Vice-President of the European Commission, Mr. Günther Verheugen.

- during the EU Conference entitled: “Move out of the Shadow: Seize the OpportunITy!” , hosted on March 6th by Viviane Reding, European Commissioner for Information Society and Media. At this conference the importance of designing a common policy framework for gender awareness at EU level was urged through DG INFO’s recent study on Women and ICTs.
- the sponsoring by the Commission’s DG INFOS of the 1st Multi-Stakeholder Partnership meeting hosted by the ITF in Brussels on March 7.
- One month later, in April 2008, in Brussels, 17 key European stakeholders met and created *ITF-Europe*, (the International Taskforce for Women and ICTs in Europe). ITF-Europe was established as a temporary group until 2010, in order to assist in the start-up and the continuing work of the European Centre for Women and Technology (ECWT).
- The decision to establish the ECWT was taken one month later, on the 9th of May 2008 by ITF-Europe (the International Taskforce for Women and ICTs (ITF)).

Finally, two months later, on the 18th of July, in Drammen, Norway the members of ITF-Europe approved and signed the statutes. Representatives of the ITF leadership and ITF-Europe as well as regional champions who are also in the phase of starting-up Regional Centers in Africa, Australia and Latin-America were also present. Altogether 27 participants from 16 countries took part at the meeting in Drammen (Spain, Bulgaria, the UK, Georgia, Hungary, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, Africa and the USA met in Drammen, Norway, Sweden....)

ECWT functions as the European Regional Point of Contact (R-POC), one of the Ten Regional Centres presently being established around the world, which all together constitute Global Women and Technology (GWT)._The ECWT advocates the start-up of a National Point of Contact (N-POC) in each country functioning as a national platform of multi-stakeholders to ensure women's full participation in and contribution to the knowledge-based economy. The European Center of Women and Technology (ECWT) carries out its activities based on the customized global framework in guiding the work of the ten regional centres globally, in four focus areas: education/the academia, workforce, entrepreneurship and leadership, lead by representatives of stakeholders with high level of expertise in the relevant areas. The Secretariat of the European Centre for Women and Technology (ECWT) is located at the regional innovation centre Papirbredden in Drammen, Norway and Eva Fabry, the Director of ECWT is a member of the board of the newly forming Global Women and Technology (GWT). The work of ECWT is lead by an Executive Group responsible for the operational activities and a High-level Advisory Committee that functions as a knowledge pool for support. Both the Executive Group and the High-Level Advisory Committee are built on multi-stakeholder representations and they have documented experience in working with women and technology and/or innovation issues.

** For detailed information about ECWT, or if you would like to download the Statutes, the Membership Agreement, the Minutes of the Meetings in Drammen, or Registration/Application form, etc., please visit our website at: www.womenandtechnology.eu, or contact Eva Fabry, Director of the ECWT (Norway) and Chair of Global Women & Technology (GWT) at eva.fabry@womenandtechnology.eu, or Dr. Irene Kamberidou, University of Athens and member of ECWT, at ikamper@phed.uoa.gr.