

**INTERVIEW WITH FRIDERIKI VOUKALI – President of SEGE**  
**Thessaloniki 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2005**

**Frideriki Voukali is the President of SEGE, the most important association of women entrepreneurs in Greece. She is a woman-entrepreneur, she manages her own business, a heavy engineering company. This allowed her to become aware of the problems businesswomen have to face and also encouraged her to take a step forward to improve the status of women.**

**Q: As a businesswoman yourself in Greece, How would you describe a businesswoman in your country?**

A: I would describe her as a woman in any other part of Europe, facing problems in every day life, in business, coping with pressure from her family and the usual problems concerning women stereotypes.

**Q: Which actions does SEGE plan to implement in order to intervene in this situation?**

A: Developing gender equality policies, intervening wherever we feel it is necessary to intervene as to these issues. We are also involved in all the projects that have to do with women entrepreneurship, we work with Ministries that have shown a positive interest in order to adopt and to change some policies and to take into considerations proposals that we have made. Now we are going through a very important process with the Chambers of Commerce here in Greece, which are 59. There have been created special committees that bring together businesswomen and this is great for us because we have the opportunity to reunite and have some information of their influence. It is a great achievement both for SEGE and for women entrepreneurs in Greece, since it is a good way to bring them together too.

**Q: What is the main thing in common and the main difference between a businesswoman in Greece and in the rest of Europe?**

A: There is an important difference as to the percentage, in Greece the percentage of women entrepreneurs is 15%, in Europe I think is higher - 35%. On the other hand, funding is a common problem, family responsibilities, stereotypes, support from the family and also lack of information.

**Q: Can you tell me of one specific stereotype here in Greece?**

A: When a woman here in Greece has an idea to do something, the first answer of her family is: "You are a woman, you cannot do that."

**Q: What are the objectives you would like to achieve at the end of this project?**

A: We want to promote the results of this project to all the bodies where we have influence, it is something that we had in mind before and we believe we can disseminate the results of this project. Something similar happened with another project that we had about promotion of women entrepreneurship in connection with a program of the Ministry of Development for women to start a new business. This project has been in force for two or three years now and we had some disagreements as to the way the program was built and the way proposals were accepted, the way the whole system was working, the criteria and everything. We intervened and our proposals were very well accepted and taken into consideration by the Ministry and this is what we intend to do with the results of this project. They have already contacted us from the General Secretary for Gender Equality and the Ministry of Development and they are expecting to receive from us the results of this meeting.