



A word from Mrs. Monica CARLSSON
President of AER Observatory on Gender Issues

The war in Vietnam, the student revolt in France and the miners strike in Kiruna, northern Sweden was the starting point of my political commitment. The increasing political awareness among young people in the late sixties and the certainty that we could change the world to become a better and fairer place to live in convinced me to take active part in that political movement during my university studies in Umeå.

I was born in June 1946 in a small industrial town in the north of Sweden, Örnsköldsvik. The family consisted of mother, father and three daughters. Contrary to other fathers of his generation my father took a very active part in encouraging my interests in social issues and human values. To find arguments and to question common conceptions of society was a constantly recurring part of our discussions at home.

I left my home town for university studies at the University of Umeå, 100 kilometres north of Örnsköldsvik, in the late sixties. I graduated a few years later with an MA, Master of Arts degree in modern languages. After working as a teacher for some years I finished my occupational studies at a teachers training college and worked as a language teacher at upper secondary school in Kiruna, 600 km north of Umeå. I married in 1974 and had three children, two daughters and a son.

I joined the Left Party in 1974 during a period when there was an awakening awareness of the inequality between men and women in the party and in society. Political discussions and studies in the local party organisation, full-time teaching and some minor political appointments in the local council was just enough during those first years. When I had my third child there was little time for active parliamentary work.

In the nineties I was elected for the regional county council and before the election in 2002 I got a seat on the county council executive committee as one of two representatives for the Left party. The election in 2002 led to a coalition government in the county. The majority consisting of the Social Democrats, the Left party and the Green party continued to rule even after the election in 2006.

One of my main responsibilities in the county council is gender equality. After the election in 2002 I first set out to impose an equality policy for the organisation. The work with violence in close relations and equality in health care are my main priorities now.

In 2003/4 I was elected as alternate member of the AER Bureau and joined the working group Equality between men and women. I am still on the Bureau and was appointed vice

AER Brussels Office - Bureau de Bruxelles	Head Office – Siège central
Place Sainctelette 2 B-1080 BRUXELLES	6 rue Oberlin - F-67000 STRASBOURG
Tel : + 32 (0)2 421 85 12	Tel: +33 (0)3 88 22 07 07
Fax : +32 (0)2 421 83 69	Fax: +33 (0)3 88 75 67 19
E-mail - Courriel : s.cools@aer.eu	E-mail: secretariat@aer.eu

Website: www.aer.eu

president for the Observatory of Gender Issues in Valencia in 2008 and president in Tammerfors in 2008, replacing the former president Michèle Sabban, who became president of the AER.

Monica CARLSSON

