

UK Women's Land Rights Petition to the European Union

*Patricia Ann Mallaby, Co-ordinator, Women's Land Reform
Group*

October 2005

Marital discrimination by United Kingdom (UK) institutions is facilitating the ousting, defrauding, divestment and dispossession of landowning women farmers through the divorce courts (where the proceeds of these crimes are laundered) to ensure male succession to land and title. A petition to the European Parliament seeking equal treatment under the law has been lodged by the Women's Land Reform Group.

Request for Enforcement Proceedings to be taken against the United Kingdom due to serious and persistent breaches of the European Directive on the Equal Treatment in Self-Employment.

Petition 572/2001 – Women’s Land Rights

Family lawyers and accountants assist male farming partners to fraudulently acquire women farmers proprietary title to land (and hence quotas). Such treatment of self-employed women is in breach of the European Union (EU) Directive 86/613 (Equal Treatment in Self-Employment). Any opposition by women farmers results in their being victimised and blacklisted by the legal profession and the judiciary. The UK Government is neither willing to acknowledge these offences, assist women to repossess their farms, compensate them (and their children), nor legislate to safeguard potential victims of this organised crime.

The UK’s Department of Constitutional Affairs has a conflict of interest in these matters due to the monarchical policy of cognatic (male-preferred) primogeniture and opposition to equal primogeniture. Other Member States also operate this policy.

The UK Government states that it will not act until the European authorities have considered these matters. The Women’s Land Reform Group therefore urges the European Parliament to press the European Commission to initiate enforcement proceedings against the UK, without further delay, to ensure compliance with the Directive and equality between men and women.

Discriminatory treatment of self-employed women farmers in business partnership

Non-marital business partnership	Marital business partnership
Farm registered in joint proprietorship	Fraudulently registered in man’s name
Advised to sign partnership contract	Not advised to do so
Partnership accounts in partnership format	Partnership accounts in sole trader format
Disputes resolved by Alternative Dispute Resolution or referral to commercial court	No Alternative Dispute Resolution or referral to commercial court: enforced litigation in divorce court
Formal partnership dissolution	Fraudulent or no formal dissolution
Financial crimes exposed, reported and prosecuted	No action taken on financial crimes

Dissolution accounts produced	No dissolution accounts
Determination of tax liabilities	No determination
Payment of tax by all partners	Non-payment of tax
Winding-up process completed	No completion
Partnership assets/capital distributed according to partnership law	Partnership assets/capital distributed according to UK Crown policy/judge's whim
Equal opportunities for both partners to continue to farm and vest their children with land	Female partner dispossessed and impoverished

Further Information and Solidarity

The petition is currently being considered by the following European Parliamentary Committees:

- The Committee on Legal Affairs; and
- The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

To support this initiative or to obtain further information contact the ***Women's Land Reform Group*** coordinator **Ann Mallaby** at:

E-mail: info@womenslandrights.org

Web: <http://www.womenslandrights.org>