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Research project: Portugal and ILO – Dynamics of a relationship from 1919 to the present. Who were the Portuguese female delegates to the ILC?

Time frame: 1951 to the present

Abstract: This research project is part of a broader investigation which aims to analyze the relationship between Portugal, as founding member, and the ILO since 1919. The project has a gender perspective. It attempts to analyze Portugal’s membership in the ILO through the lens of the participation of Portuguese women in the ILC since 1951 when a Portuguese woman came for the first time to the ILC as an adviser to the Portuguese government delegation. In other words, for 32 years no Portuguese women participated in the ILC, despite all the GB recommendations to have women in the delegations, especially when women’s issues such as maternity protection were on the agenda.

The guiding question of this research project focuses on who those women were, how the tripartite Portuguese delegations dealt with women’s issues, in what commissions they participated and what kind of participation they had. Did they experience a kind of paternalistic treatment or were they recognized as equals?

This research will be based on official ILO documents, archival materials, as well as other documents from the Portuguese organizations related with the ILO, such as employers’ organizations, trade unions and government institutions.

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