



«FRAMEWORK OF ACTIONS ON GENDER EQUALITY»

First follow-up report

2006

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Foreword

In March 2005, the European social partners adopted a framework of actions for gender equality¹.

They identified four areas for priority actions. These priorities are:

- to address gender roles,
- to promote women in decision-making,
- to support work-life balance,
- to tackle the gender pay gap.

The member organisations of BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC² agreed to promote the framework of actions in Member States at all appropriate levels taking account of national practices.

The social partners also decided to draw up an annual report on the national actions carried out on the four priorities identified. After three annual reports, the social partners will evaluate the impact on both enterprises and workers. This evaluation may lead to an update of the priorities identified and/or an assessment on whether or not additional action is required in one or more of the priority areas.

The present document is the first annual follow-up report. It was adopted by the European Social Dialogue Committee on 7 November 2006. It describes how the framework of actions has been introduced in the social partners' activities on gender equality and gives useful information on the first follow-up actions taken at European, national, cross-industry, sectoral and company levels.

¹ The framework of actions adopted in March 2005 can be found at annex

² The ETUC delegation includes representatives of the EUROCADRES/CEC Liaison Committee

Chapter I – Main trends

This follow-up report is based upon the information collected from national social partners in 19 EU Member States and Norway. At this point in time, given that this report is the first to be published, it is too early to identify clear trends in the social partners' follow-up actions taken at different levels.

However, the introduction of the framework of actions in the various national contexts has provided a new impetus for debates between the social partners on gender equality.

Regarding the follow-up actions taken, it is possible to distinguish between

- **Activities to disseminate the framework of actions.** The framework of actions has been jointly translated in seven countries (The Czech republic, Germany, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and Sweden) and social partners in almost all countries have organized the dissemination of the text for example through meetings to inform, analyse and discuss the priorities, via internet etc.
- Discussions on the framework of actions between social partners and the **integration of the priorities in collective agreements.** These collective agreements have been concluded at different levels: national, sectoral, regional or company levels.
- Promotion of the approach and priorities of the framework of actions through **tripartite concertation.** In most countries, social partners participate in advisory committees or structures with public authorities to discuss national strategies in the field of gender equality. In some countries, in parallel with the social partners' work, public authorities have taken legislative initiatives on which social partners were consulted.
- **Projects or initiatives** which tackle one or more priorities in a more focused way, either jointly between social partners or separately. A significant part of the projects mentioned are being funded through EU Structural Funds, notably the EQUAL initiative, and EU Commission budget lines. In addition, some **trade union and companies' practices** or policies are being presented which correspond to the elements highlighted in the framework of actions.

The report presents a selected number of initiatives and does not claim to be exhaustive. Nevertheless, it gives an idea of the most frequently reported initiatives by the social partners during the first year of the follow-up and indicates the areas on which social partners have most concentrated since the adoption of the framework of actions.

The highest number of initiatives reported concern the field of **work-life balance** and in particular, tools to ensure that work organization responds both to workers' and companies' needs. Social partners have for example worked on the introduction or extension of care leave, on the prevention of long working hours, on the promotion of flexible and innovative forms of working such as telework.

In a number of countries, emphasis has been placed on increasing the take-up of these facilities by men or on minimizing the adverse effects the use of such arrangements can have on women's careers. Interesting initiatives have been reported which concern for

example funds to mutualise the costs of maternity leave across several enterprises, reevaluation of pension rights attached to maternity leave or care breaks, systems to ensure a "normal" career progression for women using leave arrangements, earmarking a proportion of the child care leave to be taken up by the father. In many cases, these issues have been included in collective agreements.

The European social partners were consulted by the European Commission on the issue of reconciliation of work, family and private life in October 2006 and it is likely that their responses to this first stage consultation will take account of the many experiences outlined in the report, in this way, showing the added value of the Framework of Actions in helping to identify some possible measures to be used in this area.

The second highest number of reported initiatives concern **equal pay between women and men**. Different types of activities have been taken to close the gender pay gap.

In some countries, the emphasis has been on providing guidance (leaflets, training, tool kits, equal pay days etc.) for workers and/or trade unionists on their rights, as well as training for enterprises on their obligations to comply with these rights.

In some others, studies have been carried out and/or statistics collected to better understand the underlying causes of the remaining gap. In some companies, benchmarks and progress indicators were developed to accompany internal strategies aimed at closing the gap.

A number of trade union organizations have developed websites to enable wage comparisons to be carried out.

A few countries reported on agreements that have been reached whereby a pot of money (calculated as a % of the total payroll) has been put aside specifically for equal pay.

The third highest number of initiatives aims at raising awareness on the benefits of having **greater gender mix** in professions where one gender is underrepresented. Among the instruments used were, for example, the development of educational programmes in schools, the organization of career fairs or girls' days in enterprises, the dissemination of information, the development of dedicated apprenticeship schemes. Some sectors in Member States such as the logistics, telecom and postal sectors were particularly active in trying to attract more women.

Social partners report the fourth highest number of initiatives in the field of **promoting women in decision-making**. Social partners' actions in this regard aimed at better using the competences of women in enterprises by helping them to take up senior positions or seats on the board and/or aimed at making the talents of women more visible within the enterprise through mentoring, networking and monitoring. A number of trade unions reported on specific initiatives to promote women within their internal structures.

Among the other initiatives reported, it is worth noting that quite a number of actions concerned the promotion of female entrepreneurship on the one hand, and on the other hand the promotion of companies good practices in the field of gender equality or family friendliness through awards or labels.

In addition, quite a few reports commented on the importance of gender mainstreaming collective bargaining. In this respect, efforts were made to train negotiators on various aspects of gender equality such as equal pay, to involve more women in the actual negotiations and in the follow up and monitoring stage.

This first report on the follow-up to the framework of actions confirms the interaction between activities and proposals of social partners at European and other levels.

When the framework of actions was being prepared, the discussions were enhanced through the use of specific case studies and good practice examples from social partners at national, branch and company levels (some of these good practices were published in the annex to the framework of actions). This first follow-up report shows how the framework of actions and all four priorities identified at European level have proved their relevance and have in turn enriched the discussions of the social partners in the different countries.

The joint work programme of the European social dialogue 2006-2008 foresees the continuation of this work in the years ahead. Further dissemination activities will be required, not only at the national level but also at the European level, via the sectoral social dialogue. In addition, member organisations are expected to continue their joint work on the four priority areas identified in the framework of actions.

Chapter II – National evaluation reports

Austria

Sources of information

- Workers: ÖGB (Austrian Trade Union Federation), member of ETUC
- Employers: IV (Federation of Austrian Industry), member of BUSINESSEUROPE; WKÖ (Austrian Federal Economic Chamber), member of UEAPME; CEEP Austrian section / VÖWG (Verband der Öffentlichen Wirtschaft und Gemeinwirtschaft Österreichs), member of CEEP

INDIVIDUAL SOCIAL PARTNER INITIATIVES

- Federation of Austrian Industry

The initiative of the Federation of Austrian Industry "Industry gets female" concentrates on the participation of young women in technical oriented education. Special marketing strategies and the shaping of opinions of pupils, parents, teachers, employers and politics increasingly point out the chances of women in technical professions. For this purpose a website has been created: <http://www.industriekarriere.at/> as well as 3 information folders (the "womenfolder" – that points out the initiative; the "companyfolder" – that contains motivating messages of employers for interested girls and women and a checklist for employers concerning a future-oriented HR-management in relation to female employee potential). This is a national, as well as a regional and operational measure to promote the comprehension of certain roles and the reduction of stereotypes. (Priority 1: to address gender roles)

- Austrian Federal Economic Chamber

Compendium – Equal Treatment Act 2004: containing practical tips for employers to prevent discrimination and promote diversity. The compendium ought to act as an easy understandable guidebook on the complex subject area of the equal treatment act and thereby helps to avoid discrimination.

Women in business: "Woman in Business" has been the contact partner within the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber for 100,000 female entrepreneurs in Austria. One focal point is lobbying for a better reconciliation of family and entrepreneurship. One initiative of "Women in business" is the project "Chambers against stereotypes" which targets to identify prejudices that keep women off entering male dominated professions. "Rolemodels" ought to be identified and women step by step integrated in the labour market. (Priority 1: to address gender roles and Priority 4: to tackle the gender pay gap)

- Chamber of Labour

Profession-Baby-Education: Annually Information-Fair for employees on parental leave. On this two day event information and advice concerning re-entry, labour market and legal parameters for the special needs of parents in parental leave are given. An informationfolder about the fair is posted to all Viennese parents in parental leave. (Priority 1: to address gender roles and Priority 3: to support work-life balance)

For its members the Viennese Chamber of Labour has published an informationfolder on the Equal Treatment Act as well as a brochure on "Antidiscrimination on company level" for

works committees together with the Austrian Trade Union. (<http://www.arbeiterkammer.at/pictures/d33/Gleichbehandlung1.pdf>, <http://www.arbeiterkammer.at/pictures/d26/Antidiskriminierung.pdf>.)

- Austrian Trade Union

With the Income-Campaign "Full wage instead of things by halves" Lets close the gap!" the Austrian Trade Union women pointed out the enormous pay-gaps between men and women and created a requirement catalogue to eliminate the pay-gap. They distributed folders, with the request, to support the requirements they addressed to the federal ministers Bartenstein and Rauch-Kallat with collected signatures. On the 29th of June 2005 they presented the ministers packages of 13.783 signatures and requested them, to take action, so women can receive a fair income. (Priority 4: to tackle the gender pay gap)

The Trade Union "Metal-Textile" published a project-guidebook with the title "To set a good example", that deals with Gender Mainstreaming in collective agreements. The main purpose of the book is sensitisation and through that the prevention of indirect discrimination in collective agreements. (Company level and sectoral level)

JOINT MEASURES OF THE SOCIAL PARTNERS WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF 2 OR MORE INTEREST GROUPS

FIT – Women and girls in technics and trade: (<http://www.fit.sid.at/>) Target group are girls and young women, who in an advice- and orientation-phase should be lead to choose a non-taditional profession. FIT contributes to strengthen gender-democratic structures in technical parts of universities, economy and industry. FIT acts sensitizing through directed marketing in schools and in the media. FIT is a measure taken in certain regions of Austria with different levels of cooperation through the social partners. (Priority 1: to address gender roles)

Girl´s Day: Girl´s Day (<http://www.girlsday-ooe.at>) is a national – though regionally operated activity day, to change the one-sided choice of profession by girls. For detailed information see below – good practice example. In Vienna you find for this purpose the so called "Daughter´s day (Töchtertag)", <http://www.toechtertag.at/011/Home>). (Priority 1: to address gender roles)

Participation of the social partners as strategic partners in the EQUAL- development partnerships with a special gender focus:

Klara – Network for Equal Pay and Gender-Equality on the labour market (<http://www.netzwerk-frauenberatung.at/klara/>) Aim is to create a tool-set on income-fairness directed to employees and employers, as well as an Equal-Pay-Course as an offer in further education for 15 multipliers, who want to enlarge their knowledge concerning how to reduce the pay gap. (Priority 4: to tackle the gender pay gap)

Parental leave and Career – the project active parental leave for men and women (<http://www.karenzundkarriere.at/>) has its main focus on the reconciliation of work and family life. It serves to develop innovative combinations on the interfaces between fathers, mothers and companies. (Priority 3: to support work-life balance)

Learn forever – Lifelong learning in the age of a society that depends on information – new ways with women (<http://www.learnforever.at/>) Further education and qualification are the focal points. (Priority 2: to promote women in decision-making)

Qe-gm – Quality development Gender Mainstreaming (<http://qe-gm.at/>) Identification of equalisation and discrimination on all levels (this happens on one hand through statistical inquiry for sensitisation and on the other hand through module 4 further education and executives the interface for women in a leading position). (Priority 2: to promote women in decision-making - national and regional levels)

Alternative Self-employment – Women Company: Social partners are strategic partners and the aims are:

- Reintegration of women with care responsibilities back into working life
- To achieve a secure existence alternative to an employed activity
- To facilitate the formation of a company for women with care responsibilities
- Development of financing possibilities tailor made for the target group of company foundresses
- Aftercare of young female entrepreneurs

(Priority 2: to promote women in decision-making and Priority 3: to support work-life balance Point 2 and 3 - regional level)

Audit FAMILY & PROFESSIONAL CAREER – helps a company with the use of an intensive criteria catalogue, to check its level of family-friendliness, evaluate the results of taken measures and further develop its level of family-friendliness. The Audit Family & Professional Career is therefor a check-up of the whole company culture regarding family-friendly and operationally reasonable solutions. The point is not to implement all measures immediately and completely. Important is, that with the help of the Audit an internal process starts with the target to implement appropriate measures within a period of 3 years in terms of a family-conscious personnel policy. For this reason it is possible to restructure companies in a family-friendly way (eg. flexible placement of employees and the work place). (Point 3 national and operational)

Equal Treatment Commission – due to national law (Equal Treatment Act 2004) the equal treatment commission, consisting of 3 senates has been established. The main purpose of the commission is to scrutinise cases of possible discrimination. The legal task of the equal treatment commission is to deal with all questions in order to preserve the commandment of equal treatment. It is put aside as a special entity to the Labour- and Social courts as well as the civil courts. (Priority 1: to address gender roles and Priority 4: to tackle the gender pay gap)

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

- Girl´s day

The main task of the girl´s day is to change the one-sided choice of profession by girls. By offering to try out an unknown profession one day long, they try to spark interest in future-oriented technical professions.

In Austria you find 270 apprenticeship-professions, 216 of these have a technical or trade-oriented direction. Girls rarely choose these professions and so there are only 54 choices left for them. Half of all the girls choose from 3 possible professions: office clerk, trained retail saleswomen and hairdresser.

Girls between 13 and 17 years of age are allowed to work one school day long in a company, they've chosen by themselves online. Partners from public institutions, the economy and industry are necessary to make this day possible.

The girl's day is held in different regions of Austria. In this example we have a closer look on the region upper Austria. More than 1000 girls from 112 schools spent a day on a work place untypical for women on the 27th of April 2006. Around 300 companies offered the therefore necessary work places and guided the girls through their day giving them advice and information on job-profiles and working conditions. These workplaces were presented on the projects website www.girlsday-ooe.at and the girls could choose the workplace they want for themselves online between the 23rd of March and the 7th of April.

The girls were guided by mentors all day, produced work-pieces, took part in meetings, went on construction sites, handled stones, did carpenters work, welded and programmed...

Since the girl's day started in 2001 more than 4000 girls took part in the initiative.

All of the social partners were part of the upper Austrian Girl's day:

The Upper Austrian Economic Chamber welcomed the project and considers the initiative as an activity towards the reduction of the shortage of skilled employees and as a sensitisation of companies. The girl's day also helps companies to find interested and qualified apprentices.

The Federation of Upper Austrian Industry pointed out that it is vital to enthuse girls for technics at an early stage.

A central concern of the Chamber of Labour and the Austrian Trade Union is to raise the labour-force participation rate of women. They support the Girl's day as a valuable contribution to reduce discrimination at the work place.

Belgium

Sources of information

- Trade unions: FGTB-ABVV (General Federation of Labour in Belgium), ACV-CSC (Confederation of Christian Trade Unions) and CGSLB (General central of liberal trade unions of Belgium), members of ETUC
- Employers: VBO-FEB (Federation of Belgian enterprises), member of BUSINESSEUROPE ; UNIZO (Union of self entrepreneurs) and UCM (Union of middle classes), members of UEAPME, Boerenbond, CENM

Various actions are under way in this framework, at both federal and regional level. The examples quoted in this note are not exhaustive but are given by way of illustration.

1. ADDRESSING GENDER ROLES

Belgium has a clearly defined legal framework which guarantees the principle of equal access to employment and promotion possibilities. The institute for gender equality is responsible for monitoring this framework.

On the ground, sectoral organisations are taking various initiatives which encourage women to choose their studies or their profession by breaking with traditional roles. For instance, the social fund for the goods transport sector is conducting an advertising campaign which encourages women to choose a course of study and a job in the logistics sector. In Wallonia, female entrepreneurship is encouraged and supported by the project Diane, which organisations representing the self-employed have helped to put in place. Similarly, a number of sectors have adopted a code of non-discrimination which is incorporated in collective labour agreements. Some companies have diversity plans.

2. PROMOTING WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

With regard to promoting women in decision-making, the royal decree dated 14 July 1987 provides that companies must produce a report on equality of opportunity between men and women each year. It also offers companies the possibility to draw up equal opportunity plans. The federal authorities have announced additional support in this framework and will annually award a label attesting to diversity and equality.

With a view to improving the role of women in the social dialogue, on 23 September 2004 the three Belgian trade unions signed a charter on gender mainstreaming. In it, they undertake to improve the trade union involvement of women at all levels and systematically to incorporate the gender dimension in their future trade union practices. In 2005 this charter was given concrete form through actions and action plans by the three trade unions. In this framework, a day of study was held by the trade unions, IISA and the institute for gender equality on progress and the follow-up.

For two years now, training courses for elected trade union officials have ceased to be residential, with a favourable effect on the participation of female elected officials who in the past declined to attend principally due to family reasons.

3. SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

In 2002, the system that allowed workers to break their careers totally or partially on a temporary basis was replaced by a new system, time credit, on which the social partners concluded a collective labour agreement in the National Labour Council. Along the same lines, in 2005 the social partners concluded a collective labour agreement on telework in the National Labour Council.

In addition, Belgian trade unions are raising the awareness of their members so that they can contribute, through social dialogue, to their companies taking greater account of families. An instrument has been devised to measure the extent to which the company takes account of this aspect.

4. TACKLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

Belgium has a clearly defined legislative framework which imposes the principle of equal pay for the same or equivalent work. In addition, the social partners have undertaken to narrow the pay gap. Hence, they recognise in collective labour agreement 25 guaranteeing equal pay that systems for evaluating functions must under no circumstances involve discrimination. Furthermore, the sectors have been invited to review their systems for classification of functions in a range of cross-sectoral agreements. To support them in this exercise, the project EVA (analytical evaluation) has been put in place. Its objective is to develop a gender-neutral evaluation of functions. On the occasion of the "Equal Pay Day", the federal government announced additional support measures to this end.

Each worker organisation has developed an Internet site to allow comparison of pay. The intention is to make pay more transparent and reduce the gap between the sexes.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Breaking with traditional roles of men and women

Brief description: integration of women in construction trades

The project "integration of women in construction trades" has been put in place by the government of Wallonia and the cabinets of ministers Marcourt (economy, employment and external trade) and Arena (training) in partnership with representatives of the construction sector, representatives of the guidance profession, representatives of occupational and technical training, and employment services.

This project fits in with a European context, i.e. the Lisbon strategy and regional strategy ("Marshall Plan"), and is financed by the European Social Fund.

The aim of this project is to enable women who have chosen to exercise a trade in the construction sector (mason, painter, carpenter, heating engineer, tiler, etc.), to find work in this sector. In addition, this sector also targets professional desegregation and combating stereotypes.

The various partners taking part in the project come from three basic sectors in the process of making a choice of profession:



In concrete terms, this project currently relates to three trades:

- painting (blue-collar)
- tiling (blue-collar)
- costing (white-collar)

In order to better identify the possibilities for integrating women in these three trades, two platforms have been constructed in Liège and Charleroi, in two regions where unemployment is particularly high.

This project takes account of different obstacles which confront women who want to work in this sector, for instance:

- mentalities and stereotypes
- image of the sector
- legislation on sanitary obligations
- mobility
- etc.

The priority objective is to put in place processes for information/guidance/training/integration in the three trades in question in the two regions covered.

This project started in February 2006 and will terminate in February 2007.

Contact(s):

Houda Bennani

Projet Femmes de la Construction/Jobcoaching

houda.bennani@ffc.be

FVB/FFC

45, rue Royale, 1000 Bruxelles

02/210.03.29

Czech Republic

Sources of information

- Trade unions: CMKOS (Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions), member of ETUC
- Employers: SPCR (Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic), member of BUSINESSEUROPE; Union of Employers' Associations of the Czech Republic, member of CEEP

Social partners endorse the general principles expressed in the Framework of Actions on Gender Equality signed at the European level on 1 March 2005 and consider this Framework as a good basis for further steps of their own activities in this field.

The social partners in the Czech Republic collaborated in the translation of the Framework of actions and agreed on the Czech version.

The members of the Czech social partners' organisations were acquainted with the Framework of actions; this Framework of actions was made public via their electronic networks and information documents.

The both social partners find social dialogue as a good way for implementing of this Framework of actions.

1. ADDRESSING GENDER ROLES

Czech social partners state that over the past few years, especially during the pre-accession period and during the membership of the Czech Republic in the EU, a general awareness of the need to promote gender equality has been on the rise. This has also been due to the social partners who, by the intermediary of their members, have been aiming at the implementation of the principle of gender mainstreaming at all levels – national, branch and enterprise. Specialised structures work within their umbrella organisations (CMKOS Committee for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and Task Force of the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic respectively) and have a consulting position in the decision making process in their organisations. Documents relevant in this domain were adopted by these structures. The issues of gender equality are an integral part of the programme of education and training of the social partners at different levels. Representatives of the social partners aspire after the elimination of stereotypical attitudes towards the women and men roles – for instance in the media.

Czech social partners have been represented in the Government Council for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, also dealing with the "Government priorities and procedures for the enforcement of the equality of men and women".

2. PROMOTING WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

In order to break the above mentioned stereotypes the Czech social partners organisations and their affiliates have developed their above mentioned educational systems willing to help

women in their situation on the labour market and with their careers. The CMKOS' system of legal services offers legal assistance to women (and also men) in various difficult employment and other situations.

The SP CR is cooperating with the Association of the Women-Entrepreneurs in order to promote women into the leading positions, to foster their entrepreneurial spirit and encourage them to take risk in business. The Czech Managerial Association (member of the SP CR) awards each year the best female and male managers.

Social partners monitor gender statistical data in their own organisations concerning the representation of men and women in decision making structures at different levels. These data reveal that the representation of women does not reflect their numbers in the organisations yet.

Nevertheless, in April 2006, the 4th CMKOS Congress elected a woman to the position of Vice-President – for the first time ever.

3. SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE, AND 4. TACKLING GENDER PAY GAP

In their own strategies (policies) the Czech social partners support work-life balance approach and try to reduce gender gap. (for example CMKOS in its new programme for 2006-2010 adopted by 4th Congress in April 2006).

The Czech social partners have been strongly involved in the tripartite concertation (The Council of Economic and Social Agreement), where all the most important legislative proposals have been discussed. Recently, they played a vital role during the debate on and the adoption of the amended laws such as Law on employment, Law on wages (for private sector), Law on salaries (for public sector). The law on sickness insurance could serve as a good example for application of work-life balance approach in practice stipulating the possibility for an employee to alternate in caring of the depending family member (for example mother can be alternated by father in care of their sick child).

The main important legislative standard in this respect remains actually adopted Labour Code that creates a firm basis for promoting concrete gender approach in labour relations.

The Czech social partners are active also at the European and international level. Through their respective umbrella organisations they comment different standards and instruments (acquis, conventions, Beijing platform).

The social partners were involved in the EU project EQUAL under the title "Conditions for conciliation of the professional and family life", where the CMKOS was a partner.

The representatives of both partners take part also in the actions organized by the national or international structures (NGOs, FES, ILO) at various levels.

The gender pay gap still remains main challenge in the Czech Republic. The social partners recognise that social dialogue plays an important role in this area and find that for instance a balanced participation of women and men in negotiating teams at all levels could lead to improvement of the situation. For this reason both partners developed their own projects focused on gender mainstreaming in collective bargaining. For example the CMKOS takes part in the project provided by the ICFTU CEE and NIS Women's Network. Within this

network a manual on gender mainstreaming in collective bargaining was worked out and is used by the CMKOS affiliates.

As main actors in the labour market, social partners are involved in the active labour market policy. They are represented in all relevant structures as are advisory bodies of labour offices and in regional tripartite Councils established especially in the regions with extremely high level of unemployment. Since women are one of disadvantaged groups many projects are aimed at their reintegration into labour market.

Denmark

Sources of information

- Trade unions: LO (Danish Confederation of Trade Unions), FTF (Salaried Employees' and Civil Servants' Confederation), AC (Danish Confederation of Professional Associations), ETUC members
- Employers: DA (Confederation of Danish employers), member of BUSINESSEUROPE; KL (Local government Denmark), Amtsrådsforeningen (Committee of Danish Regions), and Personalestyrelsen (State Employer's Authority), members of CEEP

In accordance with the joint letter from CEEP, BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME and ETUC of 3 March 2006 the Social Partners in Denmark have prepared the present joint text on the national actions carried out on the priorities identified in the Framework of Actions on Gender Equality.

The issue of gender equality has been given high priority at all sector levels during several years – both through initiatives launched jointly by the social partners and through actions taken within individual organisations. The adoption of the "Framework of Action on Gender Equality" in March 2005 has thus contributed to the further development of the initiatives, which have already been launched in this area.

In the following, the social partners within each sector have described recent initiatives of specific relevance in relation to the different priorities identified in the Framework of Actions on Gender Equality.

PRIVATE SECTOR

During the summer of 2002, The Confederation of Danish Employers (DA) and The Danish Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) agreed to establish a joint analytical framework for the analysis of equal pay. The objective of the DA/LO report was:

- To carry out a joint analysis of the gender segregated labour market and the reasons for the differences in pay between men and women
- To create a common standard for analyses on equal pay for future monitoring purposes

The study was finalized and published in August 2003.

Among other things, this analysis has served as a point of departure for the initiatives taken by the social partners during the past years, for instance by contributing to revealing the factors that influence men and women's pay.

In connection with the analysis, DA and LO have carried out extensive research. The two organisations see great potential in the methodology on which the analysis is based and believe it to be a suitable foundation for the EU-Commission's white paper on equal pay released in 2004. DA and LO continue to work with spreading knowledge on this method among the social partners at the European level through presentations at conferences etc.

As a result of the analysis, the Minister for Gender Equality has formed an inter-ministerial group that will analyze the reasons for the gender segregated labour market. This working group presented its report to the Minister for Gender Equality in March 2006. The report contained a number of possible measures to be launched by the social partners with a view to dismantling the gender-segregated labour market.

In accordance with the collective bargaining results of 2004, the DA/LO area is covered by parental leave equalisation schemes, which ensure that the companies are reimbursed for the costs incurred in connection with employees taking parental leave, etc. As of 1 July 2005, a parental leave equalisation scheme has been established for the DA/LO areas not already covered by parental leave equalisation schemes. Approximately 20,000 companies employing more than 280,000 workers are covered by parental leave equalisation scheme.

The Minister for Gender Equality, the Minister for Employment, DA and LO are currently finalising a guideline for companies on how to work with the issue equal pay at the company level. The guideline is a voluntary tool for companies and may be used to the extent to which the companies find it necessary.

It is believed that such measures, together with the DA/LO analysis, could successfully form part of an overall European framework for action.

We consider it to be vital that we are allowed to continue to conclude our own local agreements, without being limited by the potentially harmful effects of an imposed EU-directive.

STATE SECTOR

1. ADDRESSING GENDER ROLES

State sector workplaces are under an obligation not to discriminate on the basis of gender. Gender equality is regulated by law, and it is an integral part of the State Sector Personnel and Management Policy. Furthermore, mainstreaming is used as a tool to incorporate equality into day-to-day activities.

2. PROMOTING WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

The State Employer's Authority is working proactively at raising the number of women in managerial positions in connection with the efforts to enhance the professionalisation of management. A number of initiatives have been taken, for instance the introduction of a "mentor-scheme" for female managers.

3. SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

According to the collective agreement concluded in 2005 by the social partners in the state sector, the number of (paid) special cares days to care for young children (of up to 7 years) were increased from a total of 10 to a total of 16 (2 days per year). In addition, parents now have the right to a max of 5 days paid leave in connection with admission to hospital with children of up to 14 years of age (5 days per child per 12 months).

4. TACKLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

According to the collective agreement concluded in 2005 by the social partners in the state sector, the period of pension rights during unpaid parental leave is extended. This has important gender equality implications (in terms of closing the gender pension gap), because far more women than men make use of the possibility to take unpaid parental leave in prolongation of paid maternity/paternity leave. As from 1 April 2005 employers pay in the full pension contribution (normally employers pay a 2/3 share and a 1/3 share is drawn from the employee's salary) for employees on unpaid parental leave for a maximum period of 32 weeks.

Additionally, the social partners at central level encourage in a joint statement the social partners negotiating new pay systems at local level to ensure a balanced pay formation and that no pay inequalities based on gender are developed.

At the Ministry of Finance's Negotiation Database statistical information concerning the state sector personnel, for example on pay levels distributed over gender, is open to the public.

LOCAL/REGIONAL SECTOR

1. ADDRESSING GENDER ROLES

Local/regional sector workplaces have an obligation not to discriminate on the basis of gender. On annually basis, the local government and the Regions are obliged by the Danish Government to report for the work for gender equality. The distribution of the occupied women and men in the local/regional sector is: 76,6% women and 23,4% men. The local/regional sector represents a total of around 25 % of the total labour marked in Denmark.

2. PROMOTING WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

Since the year 2000 the Social Partners at local and regional level have produced statistics on equal pay. Table 1 is taken from these statistics.

Table 1

Groups of employees	of	Women per cent, year 2000	Men per cent Year 2000	Women per cent Year 2005	Men per cent 2005
Management regions	in	18,4	81,6	27,9	72,1
Management Municipalities	in	20,0	80,0	27,3	72,7
Total distribution of employees in sector		76,0	24,0	76,6	23,4

Source FLD special run

As it can be seen more women has come into management jobs during the years up to 2005.

3. SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

According to the collective agreement concluded in 2005 by the social partners in the local/regional sector, every municipality and region is obliged to establish a parental leave equalisation schemes. The parental leave equalisation schemes must be established not later than the 1 January 2007, and the equalisation schemes ensure that every workplace in each municipality and region are reimbursed for the costs incurred in connection with employees taking parental leave.

In addition, parents now have the right to a maximum of 5 days paid leave in connection with admission to hospital with children of up to 14 years of age (5 days per child per 12 months).

4. TACKLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

According to the collective agreement concluded in 2005 by the social partners in the local/regional sector, the period of pension rights during parental leave is extended. As from 1 October 2005 employers pay in the full pension contribution for employees on unpaid parental leave for a maximum period of 22 weeks (for women the paid parental leave is: 8 weeks before birth, 14 weeks after birth. For men its 2 weeks immediately after birth, and 2 weeks before the child are 46 weeks. After the child is 14 weeks the parents have 10 weeks to share). The extended period of pension right during parental leave has important gender equality implications (in terms of closing the gender pension gap), because far more women than men make use of the possibility to take unpaid parental leave in prolongation of paid maternity/paternity leave.

According to the collective agreement concluded in 2002 by the social partners in the local/regional sector, every municipality and region is obliged to produce statistics of the development in the wages distributed on gender.

The Social Partners produced in 2004 a report (statistic project about the gender pay gap in the private and local sector), which shows that gender pay gap has almost fade away in the local sector when you correct for different age, different functions and different education. Furthermore, the report conclude, that the average wages is higher in the private sector than in the local sector.

Finland

Sources of information

- Trade unions: SAK (Central organisation of Finnish trade unions), STTK (Confederation of Salaried Employees) and AKAVA (Confederation of Unions for Academic Professionals), members of ETUC
- Employers: EK (Confederation of Finnish Industries), member of BUSINESSEUROPE; VTML (Office for the Government as Employer) and The Commission of Church Employers, members of CEEP

ACTIONS TAKEN AT NATIONAL LEVEL

The Finnish Social Partners (listed above) translated the Framework of Actions in 2005. The text is available on most of the Social Partners' website.

The Finnish centralised Incomes Policy Agreement for 2005-2007 contains a specific reference to the Framework of Actions. The Agreement contains the following provisions relating to the promotion of gender equality:

- Equal pay programme

A tripartite working group agreed in May 2005 on an extensive programme to promote equal pay for men and women. The programme is currently implemented in tripartite cooperation between the Government and the Finnish Social Partners.

One of the main objectives of the programme is to bridge the gap between women's and men's pay and to implement the equal pay principle in line with the amended Act on Equality between Women and Men (Gender Equality Act; amendment entered into force on 1 June 2005). The programme aims at eliminating unjustified pay differentials and promoting a pay policy which would treat women and men equally. The Gender Equality Act lays down detailed provisions on gender equality plans and on employer-specific pay surveys. By means of the equal pay programme, the Social Partners aim at jointly attaining these objectives.

The programme proposes that measures are taken in relation to horizontal and vertical segregation, women's career development, temporary employment, gender equality plans, reconciliation of family and work, pay systems, general pay and employment contract policies, development of statistics and cooperation in statistics as well as social responsibility of enterprises and communities.

A concrete objective for the programme is to diminish the gender pay gap, calculated on the basis of regular monthly working hours, from the present approx. 20 percent by at least 5 percentage units by 2015.

The equal pay programme covers all the four priorities of the Framework of Actions.

- A handbook on gender equality plans

The amended Gender Equality Act specifies the contents of the requirements for gender equality planning at workplaces. This generated a need to compile a handbook on the requirements of the Act on gender equality plans. The handbook was drafted by a tripartite working group and is designed to be used at workplaces.

The handbook covers priorities 2- 4.

- Assessment of the gender effects of the collective agreements

The Social Partners recommended to their member unions that they should assess the gender effects of collective agreements at union-level negotiations with regard to the status of women and men. The central organisations will present their observations on this in the meeting of the Round Table on Gender Equality in September 2006. The Round Table will monitor this process.

This assessment relates to priorities 1, 3 and 4.

- Revision of family leaves legislation

The Social Partners have been negotiating with the government on the revision of legislation on family leaves. The main proposals include the lengthening of the parental leave and childcare leave of adoptive parents, enabling the parents of disabled children and children having long-term illnesses to have part-time childcare leave and to clarify the regulations on the rights for childcare leaves of parents living apart from their children.

Another tripartite committee has recently produced a proposal on how to share the costs of family leaves more equally between all employers. Among others, it proposes the level of maternity leave allowance as well as the level of parental leave allowance paid to the father to be raised.

This process relates mainly to priority 3.

ACTIONS TAKEN AT SECTORAL LEVEL AND/OR COMPANY LEVEL

There are several actions taken at sectoral and company level. These include for instance a two-year project to encourage young women to become leaders by developing their management skills, advancing their career development and by encouraging their networking (Delfoi Academy). There are also projects to promote female entrepreneurship by making the financing more accessible.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

- Gender Equality Plan of Neste Oil Oyj

Neste Oil Corporation is one of the leading oil refining and marketing companies in the Nordic countries. According to the gender statistics, the company employs 2705 men (71,8 %) and 736 women (28,2 %).

There are 302 different job titles in the company. Of these 101 jobs are performed by both women and men (so-called common jobs), 48 jobs are performed by women only and 153

jobs are performed by men only. Of the common jobs, 50 jobs are equal jobs, i.e. jobs in which men and women are represented in 70-30 relation. About 11 % of staff are employed in equal jobs (157 women, 228 men).

The gender equality plan of the company sets as targets the principle of equal pay for equal work and the increase of equal jobs from 11 % to 20 % by 2010. The equal pay principle is implemented by:

- trying to diminish gender pay gap 1,5-2 % per year by using equality allowance
- keeping pay classifications up-to-date
- increasing awareness of pay systems
- ensuring equal opportunities to develop professional skills and to career advancement.

The increase of equal jobs is implemented by:

- choosing of equal candidates for a job the candidate which represents the minority sex at the workplace
- by increasing the number of women in management teams
- by encouraging in the recycling of jobs the members of staff to look for tasks in which they would represent the minority sex
- by guaranteeing summer training posts especially for female students in technical fields.

The implementation of the gender equality plan is monitored by means of the following indicators:

- pay statistics women/men according to staff groups and pay groups
- pay classifications classified/unclassified
- recruitment statistics
- number of staff in equal jobs
- summer trainee statistics.

France

Sources of information

- Trade unions: CFDT/UNSA (French democratic confederation of work), CGT (General confederation of work), CFTC (Confederation of Christian trade unions), members of ETUC
- Employers: MEDEF (Federation of enterprises of France), member of BUSINESSSEUROPE; CGPME, UPA, members of UEAPME

Many legal and negotiated texts on equality between women and men at work already existed in France, for instance the May 2001 law and the March 2004 national cross-sectoral agreement on equality at work. The "Equality at work" label was put in place in March 2005 – this is awarded to small, medium or large businesses and is currently held by seventeen enterprises.

Then, in March 2006, a new law was passed with a view to ensuring equal pay for women and men by 2010. It should be noted that the original provision designed to set quotas for women on company boards and electoral lists was withdrawn because it was deemed incompatible with the Constitution.

The latter law institutes an obligation to negotiate at company level on elimination of pay disparities, on the basis of an annual status report comparing general conditions of employment and training for women and men. The law on equal pay also creates a guarantee on pay rises following maternity or adoption leave, stipulating the application of general increases awarded during these periods of absence as well as the average of individual increases awarded to employees in the same job category.

However, there has not been any particular joint action or communication between employees and employers in order to promote this framework of actions specifically.

Nevertheless, organisations have carried out actions independently:

CFTC: establishment of the project "Mixité-Egalité-Qualité de vie au travail" designed to promote women on the labour market. It runs for three years (2005 to 2007) and receives support from the European Social Fund.

CFDT: the framework of actions was presented during training courses for activists for equality at work. It should be noted that CFDT has since 1985 included in its statutes quotas which require the inclusion or parity of women in its own working structures.

CGT: the framework of actions has been presented as a tool for mobilisation in the "new statute for paid work" it wishes to develop, but also in the project "TIMETIS".

MEDEF: negotiations on this issue in professional sectors have been successfully concluded in telecommunications, distribution of pharmaceuticals, medication firms, electricity and gas producers, etc.

Concluding, it is difficult at the present time to assess any results arising specifically from the framework of actions. The four priority actions it contains are also priorities for the 2004 national cross-sectoral agreement.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

The examples set out below may predate the framework of actions. Nevertheless, we thought it a good idea to highlight them. This list is certainly not exhaustive:

1. ADDRESSING GENDER ROLES

The agreement reached by La Poste on 4 April 2005 makes provision for training actions and awareness-raising in the area of job equality targeting trainers, recruitment personnel and all managers.

The agreement reached in the telecommunications sector on 23 September 2005 seeks to stimulate collective awareness of the benefits of gender mix and job equality, both in internal communication tools and in external communication vis-à-vis students and schools. Institutional communication incorporates the development of actions on the image of different trades.

2. PROMOTING WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

The agreement reached by BNP on 21 December 2005 makes provision for a service designed to attenuate the impact that advanced training of managers can have, notably in the area of childcare. This assistance represents 30% of agreed expenditures.

The above-mentioned agreement by La Poste targets balanced representation between women and men in selection boards, for both recruitment and promotion.

The agreement reached by PSA Peugeot has given rise to a marked increase in women in management positions: 13% of promotions in 2005 against 9.9% in 2004.

3. SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The AFPA agreement (18 April 2003) and the CETELEM agreement (15 February 2005) provide for meetings to be organised during normal working hours.

The above-mentioned agreement in the telecommunications sector provides innovative solutions in the area of personnel services with the agreement of the works council or in partnership with local communities. One example is assistance with development of the service job cheque to facilitate assistance to schoolchildren and childcare.

The agreement by La Poste provides for schooling-related services: financial assistance and assistance with finding local solutions after-school care and reservation of nursery places.

4. TACKLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

The agreement reached by the firm Bio Mérieux on 3 June 2003 puts in place a special envelope earmarked for equal pay. Similarly, the agreement reached by the social support

organisation , "Pas de Calais habitat" has an envelope equal to 0.3% of total payroll which will be spent on equal pay.

The agreement reached by I.E.G. (Industries Electriques et Gazières) on 5 March 2004 specifies measures for wages to catch up by 1.5 points over three years.

Under the agreement reached by La Poste, samples of new recruitments of women and men will be monitored in different trades and at different points in the career structure in order to measure any gaps and eliminate the causes.

Germany

Sources of information

- Employers: BDA (Confederation of German employers' federations), member of BUSINESSEUROPE; ZDH (Central federation of German craft), member of UEAPME; CEEP/Verband kommunaler Arbeitgeber (VKA)
- Trade unions: DGB (Confederation of German Trade Unions), member of ETUC

The activities of the social partners in the area of equality of women and men in the Federal Republic of Germany are also geared towards the focus on the issues laid down by the respective Federal German Government. Since the year 2002, the federal German policy on the subject of equality of women and men concentrates very much on the area of "Compatibility of Family and Job". For instance, the "Alliance for the Family" was established together with the social partners, under whose umbrella initiatives, projects and strategic cooperations for a better balancing of family and the working world have been bundled since mid 2003. That is the reason why the third Action Point of the Framework of Actions – the "Compatibility of Family and Job" – forms a focus of this balance report.

1. ADDRESSING GENDER ROLES

- Social partner agreement between the Federal Employers' Association of the Chemical Industry and the Mining, Chemical and Energy Industrial Union

The Federal Employers' Association of the Chemical Industry and the Mining, Chemical and Energy Industrial Union adopted common principles for an equal-opportunity and family-conscious human resources policy in May 2006. In this agreement, the social partners appeal to the companies, their male and female employees as well as the works councils to further promote the implementation of equal opportunities and compatibility of job and family.

- Girls' Day

Since the year 2002, the DGB and the BDA together participate actively in conducting the Girls' Day- the Girls' Future Day. It is the aim of this Girls' Day for young girls and women to acquaint themselves with the wider range of different job opportunities, especially in the technical field. On every fourth Thursday in April, companies, scientific institutions and other organisations open their doors in order to enthuse girls and young women for promising jobs with interesting programmes and join-in activities. From the point of view of the German social partners, the 2006 Girls' Day, on which 7,085 events were offered for 121,681 girls, rendered an important contribution towards changing the understanding of roles among young people. The social partners are active members of the Girls' Days Steering Group, and they call on their members to participate actively and also host events themselves at their premises.

- "ChanGe – equal and just opportunities for women and men in companies"

At the initiative of the DGB, its member unions and the German Federal Ministry of Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Young People (BMFSFJ), the project "ChanGe – equal and just opportunities for women and men in companies: creating new practices and developing new

tools" was launched in the year 2004, in order to support the many grass-root level players who are working for implementing aspects of equal opportunities.

It is the aim of the project to initiate good practices in the companies and process the findings gained for other companies. Recently, the DGB published a material for human resources management, comprising all the experience of the past project years with many practical examples, concrete issues and advice on the legal basis.

- "idee_it"

"idee_it" is a project that aims to convince girls and young women for entering the IT industry. Companies, associations, chambers and networks of working women in informatics and multimedia provide information about future job opportunities.

- "1blick" data base

The database "1blick" of the West German Chamber of Crafts Conference enables girls and companies to exchange information quickly and comprehensively about internships in crafts. At the moment, there are 2,413 internships available. The platform offers both companies and girls the possibility of seeking an internship or of advertising one, respectively.

2. PROMOTING WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

The social partners currently change ideas about possible joint activities/projects on this specific subject during the Framework of Actions.

At the moment, there are the following initiatives, which have been initiated by the employers' side first and foremost.

- Women in the Economy Forum

The members of the Forum "Women in the Economy" comprising Women and Diversity Representatives, as well as Equal Opportunities Representatives from large German Companies, who are developing ideas and solutions on the compatibility of family and job. The companies thus benefit from the network of the women and are able to exchange experience. The outcome of these activities are beneficial for a total of more than 1.1 million staff members.

- "genderdax"

"genderdax" is an information platform for highly qualified women. The platform offers a comprehensive overview of the employment possibilities and development opportunities at selected large companies and medium-sized companies in Germany. The companies have to apply for acceptance to the genderdax.

- Mentoring projects

The numerous mentoring projects that are conducted by companies in Germany are rendering an important contribution to promoting the new female generation in a targeted manner. An experienced executive personality supports the professional and personal development of a promising junior staff member.

- “Nexxt” corporate succession initiative

“Nexxt” is a corporate succession initiative for medium-sized companies, uniting 28 top associations and institutions of the economy, banking and free-lance professions.

3. SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

- Alliance for the Family

In 2003, the Federal German Government launched the “Alliance for the Family” together with the social partners, under whose umbrella initiatives, projects and strategic cooperations for a better balancing of family and the working world are being bundled.

- “Balance” Cooperation Group

The Cooperation Group “Balance” of the German Federal Ministry of Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Young People (BMFSFJ), with the participation of the social partners, supports the work of the Alliance for the Family at a professional level and plays a leading role in the implementation of projects and initiatives of the Alliance.

- “Local Alliances for the Family”

In order to trigger concrete improvements for the family at a local level, the Federal German Ministry of Family launched the initiative “Local Alliances for the Family” at the beginning of 2004. Representatives of federal and local politics, companies, associations, churches, independent charities and parents’ initiatives are working together in local alliances, in order to advocate the concerns of the families on site through common projects. Concrete agreements are drawn up in these alliances and put into practice together. The initiative has developed into a model of success that has spread throughout Germany and is driving a sustained change of mentality. Meanwhile, 300 towns and cities, municipalities, districts and regions in Germany have come together as strong partners in local alliances for the family, in which more than 1,200 companies are involved.

- “Right of Way for the Family”

The compatibility of family and the job has been an issue for trade unions for a long time. Within the framework of the DGB project “Right of Way for the Family”, a great wealth of activities and measures has been implemented. For instance, a tool case was developed making available comprehensive materials on central issues of action in the compatibility of family and job, such as return models for employees following paternity leave or family-friendly work-time models. These concepts comprise tools for supporting the employees in designing family-friendly measures as well as advocating their benefit, and it provides advice for a speedy practical implementation. Best practice examples, contact data and links round off the practice-oriented presentation. This initiative is embedded in the local alliances for the family. Within the framework of the project, qualification workshops are also being offered for “Regional Managers for the Compatibility of Family and Job”.

It is the aim of the workshops to train and network trade unionists interested and involved in local alliances in a sustained manner as well as active works council members who are advocating a better compatibility of family and job at a grass-root level.

- “Family conscious human resources policy – rendering job and family compatible”

This is an initiative of the Mining, Chemical and Energy Industrial Union with the aim of concluding several company agreements and/or family policy role models for companies in every federal district by the end of 2007.

- “Success Factor Family 2005” corporate competition

366 companies and institutions from the entire country took part in the corporate competition “Success Factor Family 2005”, which was launched in September 2004. This is about five times as many as for the last competition in 2000.

- “Family – a success factor for the economy” conference

The German Federal Ministry of Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Young People, the Federal Association of German Employers’ Organisations and the charitable Hertie Foundation initiated the event “Family – a success factor for the economy” in the year 2005, in order to gather the experience from the economy and generate ideas for new concepts for a family-friendly corporate culture. There were issues such as corporate flexibility, staff satisfaction, cost-benefit ratio for the companies and concepts of company childcare on the agenda.

4. TACKLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

The analyses of the social partners on wage differences between women and men do not coincide. Whereas the employers analyse income-determining factors such as working time, age, industry career, qualification, professional position and duration of employment with the company for wage differences and point to the precept of equal pay (Section 612 Para 3 BGB – German Civil Code) and the negotiated wages, which do not differentiate between men and women either, the DGB, on the other hand, points to the fact that the discriminating mechanisms are also to be seen in these structural characteristics. For instance, due to the different eligibility as regards the structural elements of the income, the pay of a West German female employee is 40% below that of a West German male employee (WSI WomenDataReport 2005). And, over and above, these statistically measurable differences in income on the basis of the various criteria, there is still one part of the wage difference (11% and 24%) between women and men that remains unexplained. According to the DGB, this is due to the practice of putting women at a disadvantage already on employing them, for the reason of which the DGB is still demanding a Law on Equality for the Private Economy. The trade unions estimate that there is still a lot of work to be done in the area of developing discrimination-free work assessments and gender-neutral wage systems.

Due to the differing assessment of the wage differences, there have not been any joint activities of the social partners in this area of action to date.

- “(Gender)-just remuneration based on performance”

The services trade union ver.di has developed a guideline dealing with the remuneration under the aspect of gender equality. There are a number of performance criteria that are impacted by gender stereotypes. It is the aim to implement the equal remuneration opportunities through transparency and the greatest possible objectivity in remuneration systems based on performance. The guideline provides a practice-oriented overview of the pertaining labour law standards, shows up ways leading to gender-just remuneration based

on performance and imparts how regulations and corporate practice may be designed in conformity with the law.

Hungary

Sources of information

- Trade unions: member of ETUC
- Employers: MGYOSZ (Confederation of Hungarian Employers and Industrialists), member of BUSINESSEUROPE

GENERAL OVERVIEW

In December 2004, a draft of an Act was submitted to Parliament for the amendment of the Equality Act. The Act acknowledging every person's right to live as a person of equal dignity, intending to provide effective legal aid to those suffering from negative discrimination, enacted an general, all the cases covered legislative provision. Supporting the aims of the Act a new Authority (Equal Treatment Authority) – a public administrative body with the overall responsibility – was established in January 2005 ensures compliance with the principle of equal treatment. The Authority works under the instruction of the Government, under the supervision of a member of the Government. The amendment also aims to provide a more detailed regulation of the status of the Equal Treatment Body (the consultative body elected to advise the ETA) and its members and elevates the rules concerning this Body to the level of an Act of Parliament rather than that of a Decree as was previously the case.

In Hungary, the situation of women is partly similar to that experienced in the Member States. But because of the different historical development it also differs from it in several areas, especially regarding their labour market situation. Women's employment indicators compared to men's show a mixed picture; some of their labour market indicators are more favourable, while others are poorer than the European average. The employment level of women of 15 to 64 years of age has grown somewhat in recent years as against the rate of men. Hence the difference between the two genders has dropped to 13.7 percentage points, a figure considerably lower than the community average of 18.5%. The women's employment rate of 49.8% is lagging less behind the European average than that of men, and their employment calculated on a full time basis is approximately 4 percentage points higher than the EU average.

The reason for this is that while in the EU one-third of the women work on a part-time basis, in Hungary this ratio is only 5-6 per cent. From the very start, women were hit less hard by unemployment than men, and therefore - unlike in most Member States - their unemployment rate is lower than that of men (5.0% and 6.3%, respectively). Among other things, the more favourable unemployment indicator of women is explained by the fact that economic transformation has hit less hard those branches characterized by high female employment. However, besides the relatively better unemployment indicators, one also has to take into consideration that women's inactivity rate is outstandingly high: close to 47% of women in the active age group was inactive in 2002. This is a consequence partly of the lower retirement age of elder female age groups, and of the longer period spent in education.

Nevertheless, every fourth inactive woman was inactive due to other reasons, i.e. they did not study, nor received pension, child care allowance or home-care benefits.

In addition to the inequalities that can be expressed in statistical figures, some signs of

latent discrimination can also be perceived against certain groups of women. Mothers with young children and women wanting to find a job after long years of absence due to child-raising or other causes and also elder women having lower schooling, experience difficulties in returning to the labour market. One of the reasons is the discrimination, but the lack of access to opportunities in acquiring or renewing competitive knowledge and skills, also plays a role.

1. ADDRESSING GENDER ROLES

Similarly to the situation in other EU Member States, the employment of Hungarian women is characterised by both horizontal and vertical segregation. The former is manifested in the high concentration and over-representation of women in certain sectors and occupations characterised by wages below the average or are less prestigious.

2. PROMOTING WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

Vertical segregation is most evidently shown by the fact that women's professional/employment structure significantly differs from that of men despite women's higher participation rates in higher education. For example in the private sector, only approximately one tenth of the managers representing the top of the employment hierarchy and as much as 30% of the entrepreneurs are women.

In the Hungarian Parliament since 1990 the female MP representation increased from 8.5% to 16.7%. The 2006 Parliamentary elections didn't bring considerable changes but in comparison with the 2002 figures there has been a minimal decrease of 1.1%. Women's role amongst the decision makers didn't change in the economic sphere. The statistical figures are the same from the previous years. Women under age of 30 years represent only 5% in the large and medium sized companies. This ratio becomes better with women over the age of 50, when the rate is 17%.

3. SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The basic conditions of women's labour market participation and the reconciliation of family life and work are on the one hand access to appropriate quality child-care services and other care services providing for the care of old or ailing family members, and on the other hand the availability of work organisations and forms of employment, primarily part-time work, that allow more flexibility in combining family and work. The number of available places at nurseries caring for children of 0 to 3 years of age has dropped dramatically first as of 1990 and then at a smaller rate later on. Simultaneously with the decreasing number of places, new types of care like family day-care or home childcare were not created at a sufficient extent. In the field of services caring for sick or old family members (home care based on a signaling system, providing assistance at home), extremely large shortfalls and the difficulty of access can be experienced.

A good practice has been introduced through the Family Friendly Workplace Award. Numerous companies participate in program, thus supporting work life balance for women in employment

4. TACKLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

The gender pay gap has decreased until the second half of the nineties, and since then it has stabilised at a level lower than the Community average. In spite of their higher schooling ratios, the gross average earnings of women reach 19.5% (EU: 28%) and in comparable jobs their earnings are about 13% lower than those of men.

Ireland

Sources of information

- Trade unions: ICTU (Irish Congress of Trade Unions), member of ETUC
- Employers: IBEC (Irish Business and Employers Confederation), member of BUSINESSEUROPE

The period in Ireland was a very busy one with the negotiation of a new national Agreement, Towards 2016 (<http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/index.asp?locID=181&docID=2755>) agreed at National Level.

This contains many significant commitments in relation to gender equality, including:

People of Working Age Vision:

“Every person, irrespective of background or gender, would enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination”.

This vision is further developed in a section on equality which includes further commitments towards the achievement of a fairer society and equality for all citizens as a key principle of the partnership approach acknowledging that the achievement of true equality necessitates a holistic approach and a society-wide understanding of the complementary roles and skills of both men and women. In particular, the Government is committed to promoting gender equality across all stages of the lifecycle through a range of measures including the forthcoming National Women’s Strategy.

Noting that the introduction of a strong body of anti-discriminatory legislation and other supporting mechanisms has contributed to the reduction of gender inequality in Ireland over the past thirty years, there is still evidence which shows that we have some way to go to achieve true gender equality.

Key priority actions to be pursued in the national Agreement, Towards 2016 include:

- Implementing policies to increase employment levels with the goal of exceeding the EU Lisbon employment rate targets for 2010 of 70% overall, 60% for females and 50% for older workers.
- Further support linked, as appropriate, to the forthcoming National Development Plan for innovative actions building upon the achievements of the NDP Equality for Women Measure. This will also link with the gender equality focused initiatives to be developed under the National Women’s Strategy, to be published later this year.
- Focusing on actions by the social partners to encourage greater numbers of women to advance to the higher levels within their chosen careers through training and cost effective reviews of equality policies within organisations.
- Further exploring the causes of the gender pay gap in order to reduce it further.

- Collecting data to support policies for the promotion of equality of opportunity across the nine grounds covered by equality legislation.

There are also specific commitments to the continuation and development of two very important Committees:

- National Framework Committee for Equal Opportunities at the level of the Enterprise

“9.1 The parties are agreed that the National Framework Committee for Equal Opportunities at the level of the Enterprise will continue its work in developing and disseminating practical supports for the equal opportunities workplace, supporting individual projects and engaging with cost effective equality planning and equality reviews.”

- Section 10. National Framework Committee for Work Life Balance Policies

“10.1 Work of the National Framework Committee for Work Life Balance, initially established under the PPF, will continue. The Committee will continue to support and facilitate the development of family friendly policies aimed at assisting in the reconciliation of work and family life at the level of the enterprise. The activities of the Committee will continue to be supported by a specific budget”.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

- Improving the representation of women in Dublin Bus, An Post and Iarnród Éireann

Women at Work, a project carried out in 2005 by Dublin Bus, An Post and Iarnród Éireann, was funded by the National Framework Committee for Equal Opportunities at the Level of the Enterprise. It sought to improve the gender balance in the grades and jobs where women are under-represented and to examine barriers to the recruitment, retention and progression of women in the three workplaces. Dublin Bus, An Post and Iarnród Éireann are three large public sector organisations that share many commonalities. They are workplaces that have been traditionally male with jobs that have been viewed as ‘heavy work’. They also share similar union structures, whose origins come from male dominated craft unions. The three organisations have been good at retaining staff, many of whom stay within their organisation for all of their working lives. However, there have not been such good retention levels of women workers, particularly during women’s childrearing years.

A particular emphasis was to examine the perceptions of staff in the three organisations by exploring how existing policies, practices, procedures and systems in each organisation impact on gender balance. Through an audit of the position of women in each organisation, by consulting with staff and managers, and by examining best practice models, the project went on to identify how the representation of women can be improved in grades and jobs where women are currently under-represented. Each organisation prioritised actions that could be developed during the course of the project as follows:

- Dublin Bus: to find ways to attract more women into bus driving and into Inspector positions; address the deficit of women at senior management levels.
- An Post: to find ways to attract more women into postperson positions and into more senior positions within the organisation.

- Iarnród Éireann: to find ways to attract more women into DART driving and to address the under-representation of women in senior positions within the organisation.

The main activities of the project were as follows:

- Analyse data and policies and procedures of each organisation
- Consult with representative groups of employees to identify perceived barriers that exist in relation to women in the organisations
- Compare data, practices and policies between the organisations
- Share experience and learning in the three organisations
- Identify and highlight models of good practice

The recommendations from the project cover the following five areas:

- Senior management who can be equality champions and who can shift traditional perceptions about gender balance and champion changes in work organisation.
- Implementing equality policies and improved opportunities for flexible working for all staff
- Supporting women into leadership positions and positions where they are under-represented
- Workplace actions to combat vertical and horizontal segregation.
- Integrating gender into collective bargaining and partnership working.

Latvia

Sources of information

- Trade unions: Free Trade union confederation of Latvia (LBAS)
- Employers: Employers' Confederation of Latvia (LDDK)

1. ADDRESSING GENDER ROLES

Following the initiative of LDDK Ministry of Welfare elaborated guidelines on implementation of gender equality in companies' human resources management. Guidelines explain employers' and workers' rights and obligations establishing employment legal relationships, as well as during the period of existence of employment legal relationships, in particular when promoting an employee, determining working conditions, work remuneration or occupational training, as well as when giving notice of termination of an employment contract. Target audience: employers and human resources managers.

Guidelines were distributed to all members of LDDK.

2. PROMOTING WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

No specific activities.

LBAS commentary: LBAS members (women) consist around 60% of all members. Around half of all 23 leaders of LBAS affiliates are women, more than 50% women trade union leaders on local level.

3. SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

During last years this issue take more and more serious place on the agenda of LBAS activities. There are more and more points written in the collective agreements about flexible work time, about role of fathers (children care). In order to better understand problems related to the gender issues, several seminars, information days were organised. Together with LDDK, local municipalities, other institutions special activities as regards equality at enterprise, branch and regional level were organised. Main purpose of those activities is to ensure better participation of women and youth in the trade union movement in order to protect their labour rights and to guarantee their social rights; to promote women participation in the process of elaboration, implementation and supervision of collective agreements; to promote further development of the institutions of gender equality on local and regional level, to ensure equal rights for man and women to participate at the social, political and economical life of country

Several information materials, information leaflets, brochures were distributes. In the scopes of ESF- project special booklet: "Gender equality: What has to be taken in mind in labour relations?" In cooperation with Ministry of Labour special publication: Respecting Labour Rights were created and published (ESF equal project)

LDDK elaborated Guidelines on implementation of telework and guidelines on flexible working time arrangements in order to facilitate work – life balance. In order to have the common understanding Guidelines were negotiated with trade unions, government representatives (Ministry of Welfare) and Members of Parliament.

Guidelines are distributed to members of LDDK, governmental institutions and trade unions' members.

4. TACKLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

No specific activities.

LBAS commentary: The difference in salaries for women and men in Latvia is connected with the concentration of women in certain spheres of labour market and the choose of a particular education. Women mostly choose the spheres of education, services, culture and health care, which in general have lower wages but include social guarantees. These spheres are financed from the state or municipal budgets.

Luxembourg

Sources of information

- Trade unions: CGT-L (Confédération Générale du Travail au Luxembourg) and LCGB (Confédération Luxembourgeoise des Syndicats Chrétiens)
- Employers: FEDIL (Federation of Luxembourg's Industrialists), member of BUSINESSEUROPE, Fédération des Artisans (Federation of Craftsmen) and Chambre des Métiers du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, members of UEAPME

1. ADDRESSING GENDER ROLES

Active participation of the social partners in the Girls' Day on 11 May 2006 (contact day for young girls). This project also had a "Boys" section in which boys were invited to discover trades and professions which are regarded as being "atypical" for men because few men work in these sectors. 500 places available.

Increase in the number of apprentices:

- in discussions at national level in the Tripartite Coordination Committee, employers undertook to offer a larger number of apprenticeships, notably also in technical professions for persons belonging to the under-represented sex;
- joint actions by the social partners in order to motivate girls to enter technical professions, notably through apprenticeship councils attached to employers' and workers' professional chambers.

Organisation by employer organisations (ABBL, POG) in cooperation with the Ministry for Equal Opportunity of the conference "Gender Diversity: vector of competitiveness" on 10 and 11 November 2005.

Active participation of social partners in the conference "Role of men in promotion of equality between women and men" on 23 and 24 October 2006.

Committee for Female Work: close cooperation between social partners and government (incidentally, there is a good balance between the sexes in the composition of the Committee).

2. PROMOTING WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

In the framework of the Girls' Day 2006 there was a new aspect under the heading "mentoring: women in decision-making" and in which the trade union organisations OGBL and LCGB joined a few public administrations to welcome a number of young women.

Promotion of entrepreneurship: creation in 2006 of the "Woman Business Manager of the Year Award" on the initiative of the bank Dexia BIL in cooperation with Fédération des Femmes Cheffes d'Entreprise du Luxembourg, the Ministry for Equal Opportunity, the Ministry for Economy and the Ministry for Small Business, the Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Trades. The prize will be presented on 8 November 2006.

First year of the project coordinated by the Ministry for Equal Opportunity "Cross-mentoring project for women in leading positions", active participation of many companies from various sectors, SMEs and large companies.

Regular administrative support for Fédération des Femmes Cheffes d'Entreprise du Luxembourg from employer organisations.

Promotion of participation in education and continuing training: the principles and practical arrangements are set out in the agreement on individual access to continuing training.

3. SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Supporting the work-life balance:

- conclusion of an agreement on telework dated 21 February 2006;
- discussion of part-time work for family reasons as a priority issue in the framework of the interprofessional social dialogue; negotiations on part-time for individual access to continuing training.

4. TACKLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

Participation of the social partners in the framework of a study on the initiative of the Ministry for Economy on the causes for differences in pay between men and women in order to update the latest statistics dating from 2000 and with a view to meeting the criteria set at European level.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Creation of in-company crèches, notably in the banks Dexia BIL and Fortis as well as Hôpital du Kircherg, Centre hospitalier de Luxembourg and Imprimerie Saint Paul.

A joint project between the Ministry for Family and a number of banks with a view to creation of a crèche in Luxembourg-Kirchberg is envisaged.

Malta

Sources of information

- Trade unions: CMTU (Confederation of Malta Trade Unions), member of ETUC
- Employers: FOI (Malta Federation of Industry), member of BUSINESSEUROPE

At the outset it is important to stress that in view of the size of the island of Malta and its limited human and financial resources there are a considerable number of constraints on the social partners to carry out relevant activities and actions except at national level.

1. ADDRESSING GENDER ROLES; 2. PROMOTING WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING; 3. SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE & 4. TACKLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

With reference to all the priorities of the framework of actions under review, the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality for Men and Women (NCPE) was established in full consultation and collaboration with the social partners in January 2004. It is an autonomous body, regulated by Chapter 456 of the Laws of Malta entitled 'Equality for Men and Women Act', and fully supported by all national social partners at Sectoral and co level. Its main aim is to promote equality in spheres where it may be lacking.

The NCPE is composed of a chairperson; the Commissioner for the Promotion of Equality, and six other members, of whom three are women. The function of the Commissioner, with the assistance of the Commission, include the following:

- To identify, establish and update all policies related to issues of equality for men and women,
- To identify the needs of persons who are disadvantaged by reason of their sex and to propose appropriate measures in order to cater for such needs in the widest manner possible,
- To monitor the implementation of national policies with respect to the promotion of equality for men and women,
- To keep direct and continuous contact with local and foreign bodies working in the field of equality issues, and with other groups, agencies or individuals as the need arises,
- To work towards the elimination of discrimination between men and women,
- To investigate complaints of a more particular or individual character and, where deemed appropriate, to mediate with regard to such complaints,
- To inquire into and advise or make determinations on any matter relating to equality between men and women,
- To provide assistance, where and as appropriate, to persons suffering from discrimination in enforcing their rights.

In practice, NCPE provides assistance and information to the general public regarding among others:

- Family friendly measures,

- Provisions in Maltese legislation regarding equality, gender equality issues, employment, equal pay for work of equal value, women's participation in politics and women in decision making levels.
- With reference to the same priorities above mentioned, the FOI draws up articles to feature in its journal and local newspapers, promoting these issues.
- Trade Unions also contribute in a similar manner

4. TACKLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

From official EU Statistics, Malta enjoys a good ratio in so far as the gender pay gap is concerned. It is important to note that in collective agreement negotiations, Social Partners representing both employers and workers, agree on the necessity to reduce even further such gap.

With this in mind the NCPE has commissioned a national study (financed from the European Social Fund) on the actual gender pay gap locally. Results are expected to be published by September 2006.

3. SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The Gender Unit of the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) is constantly participating in and coordinating various projects related to Gender Equality, with specific reference to Equality at the workplace. One of such projects, financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) is entitled Increasing female participation through childcare services at the workplace. This project aims at increasing the supply of quality, accessible and affordable childcare service facilities at the place of work, thus supporting work-life balance and consequently enabling more mothers to remain in the labour market. This will in turn increase the female employment rate and the up-take of training and lifelong learning.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

The good practice example below has been taken at national level and the priorities to which it is linked are as follows:

- Promoting Women in Decision Making
- Supporting Work-Life Balance

The good practice example under review concerns an EU funded project entitled, 'Promoting Equal Opportunities through Empowerment'. The aim of this project is to reach out to the inactive segment of the Maltese population, particularly women, and invite them to be part of (or remain as the case may be) and advance in the labour market by promoting the uptake of opportunities to this end. It is also addressed towards promoting women in decision making and supporting work-life balance.

The project is co-coordinated and monitored by the NCPE in addition to its role as development partner. The other development partners are all local social partners amongst which one can mention FOI, 'Union Haddiema Maghqudin' (UHM), General Workers Union (GWU) and the Malta Employers' Association (MEA).

The duration of this project is from May 2005 till September 2007.

The Netherlands

Sources of information

- Trade unions: FNV (Federation of Netherlands Trade Union) , MHP (Trade Union Federation for Intermediate and Higher Employees) and CNV (National Christian Trade Union Confederation), members of ETUC
- Employers: VNO-NCW (Confederation of employers and industries), member of BUSINESSEUROPE; MKB-Nederland (Royal Dutch Association of SMEs), member of UEAPME; LTO (Dutch Association for Agriculture and Horticulture)

In February 2006 the Labour Foundation called attention to the (four priorities of the) European Framework of actions and the activities of the national social partners. In this document (Actieprogramma gelijke behandeling en gelijke kansen van mannen en vrouwen) social partners underline the importance of equality between men and women and recommend companies and parties engaged in collective bargaining to pay attention to the priorities indicated in the European framework. In this document reference is made to the European framework of actions on gender equality and the Dutch translation of the text and the annex is part of the document.

Furthermore explicit references are made to several current recommendations and other actions of the Labour Foundation or its constituents.

A brief summary of these actions and recommendations are described under the heading of the four priorities distinguished in the Framework of actions.

The above mentioned document is distributed among the members of the Trade Unions and Employers organisations. It is also to be found on the website of the Labour Foundation (www.stvda.nl).

1. ADDRESSING GENDER ROLES

- Jet-Net (Youth and Technology Network); cooperation between education, business and government to make education in science and maths more attractive and to better show professional perspectives in industry and technology.

2. PROMOTING WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

- VNO-NCW is actively participating in the 'Ambassador's Network Glass Ceiling'; a yearly changing group of top business leaders devote themselves to give an extra impetus to the career development and promotion of women to higher occupational and decision making positions.
- VNO-NCW yearly grants an award to a company that performed exceptionally with respect to diversity management, in particular for top positions.
- MHP initiated research on career development of women and the possibility to work part-time in these jobs.
- FNV initiated a 4-year project to improve the position of women, ethnic minorities and youth in their organisation.

3. SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

- Recommendations Labour Foundation to promote part-time work (1993).
- Recommendations Labour Foundation to reconcile work and family life (child-care facilities, leave facilities for care reasons and differentiation of working patterns) (1997).
- Brochure Labour Foundation that provides practical guidance for the introduction of part-time work (1998).
- Labour Foundation: Policy paper "Towards a productive economy, with respect to working time management" (2005).
- FNV provides its members with a whole range of information regarding possibilities to reconcile work and family life.

4. TACKLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

- Checklist equal pay, recently revised by the Labour Foundation
- National social partners participate in the Working Group Equal Pay, an initiative of the government. The aim of this working group is to promote the implementation in practice of equal pay and to give guidance on the subject to companies and parties engaged in collective bargaining.
- FNV is partner in the Foundation The Wage Indicator, aiming at the elimination of the gender pay gap. The FNV and two of its affiliates are participating in an European Equal project "Close the Gender Pay Gap "

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Recently, several activities are initiated to tackle the gender pay gap. The gender pay gap is relatively broad in the Netherlands. The Labour Foundation has revised the Checklist Equal Pay to emphasize the significance of this topic for companies and collective bargaining agreements. The checklist has been adapted to new legislation and jurisprudence. It contains a list of practical suggestions and brings to attention and explains the principle of equal pay.

Furthermore, social partners participate in the National Working Group Equal Pay, an initiative of the government. This official working group, installed for one year, is going to develop practical instruments for employers and employees to check their pay. It will organize conferences and meetings with stakeholders about several aspects of equal pay, f.e. salary systems, collective agreements, indicators. There will be a special 'Equal Pay Day'.

The working group could make recommendations to the government, social partners and others at the end of the year.

Norway

Sources of information

- Trade unions: LO (Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions), YS (Confederation of Vocational Unions), Unio (The Confederation of Unions for Professionals), members of ETUC
- Employers: NHO (Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise), member of BUSINESSEUROPE; HSH (Norwegian Association of Trade and Services); KS (The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities), members of CEEP

1. ADDRESSING GENDER ROLES; 2. PROMOTING WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING; 3. SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE & 4. TACKLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

- A working group consisting of representatives from the above mentioned social partners has been established at national level.
- The process of developing a Norwegian translation of the Framework of Actions has been started.
- A workshop aimed at producing ideas for future bipartite actions will be organised on August 29, 2006 (national level)
- During the 2006 negotiations, a paragraph referring to the Framework of Actions on Gender Equality was included in the basic agreement between the social partners in the private sector (National and local levels).
- The Social Partners NHO and LO has an ongoing network project on enterprise level in the food industry. The project is called SorIA MorIA and is focusing on enterprise development, innovation, and cooperation, and will continue throughout 2006. As a part of this project, there was also executed a gender equality project. After certain criteria two of the main project's enterprises were selected as main target. In the first company their internal training system were focused, in the second company it was their collaboration tradition between the management and the union. Both practices represented so-called "good work practice" especially supporting the women employees' situation as less trained and lowest paid. The researcher role was primarily to map, describe, and discuss their practice together with the employees involved, but also to give a presentation at the network's conferences. This was done to provide inspiration to the other participating enterprises in the branch network, in assurance that this focus would raise consciousness and improve the practice itself (company level).

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

- Female Future – mobilizing talents

Objective: The Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO) launched the project Female Future in 2003, to promote women in decision-making and to increase the number of women on company boards of directors and in management. Female Future is based on the

argument that greater diversity in boardrooms and management will improve corporate competitiveness.

Main features: The aim of the Female Future Project is to involve corporate managements in making female talents visible, opening up established meeting places and creating new networks and meeting places, and support female talents with relevant competence.

- Commitment through letter of intent: We challenge enterprises that are members of NHO, to take ownership of this project and commit themselves through a letter of intent to initiate efforts to increase the proportion of women in management and on the board of directors in their own company. For its part, NHO is committed to administrate the network and provide projects, activities and events to support it.
- Pearl diving and mobilizing talents: The companies which joins the Programme starts searching for talents in their own organisation, the so called pearl diving. The challenge is to find talents with ambitions and potential to be a good leader and with interest and qualifications to join a board of directors. The top management nominates the candidates to attend the Female Future Programme and NHO's network of management and board candidates.
- Tailored human resource development: The human resource development contains one obligatory part which is competent board training and five management seminars. The candidates are also offered the opportunity to attend several courses on a voluntary basis. They may choose between courses in media training, storytelling, economy for non-economists, coaching and management mentors. Additional courses are developed during the Programme, in dialogue with the participants.

Outcome: NHO first launched the Female Future Programme in 2003. There was one nationally headed Programme for public limited companies, and two regional projects implemented by NHO's regional offices in two counties. 36% of the women attending the national Programme received an invitation to join a board of directors during the Programme or after. As much as 60% of the participants of the regional Programme in the two counties received the same invitation to join a board of directors. The Programme was elected by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) as one of 10 best practice projects on gender equality.

Female Future was evaluated in June 2005. The evaluation lead to an escalation of the project, including a larger number of enterprises in 10 counties, with 10 local project leaders, several local partners and a budget estimated at EUR two million over a period of two years. The model will be implemented through NHO's regional offices. The project period has just started and will end in December 2008. In the county of Trøndelag, the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) is invited to participate as an equal partner in the administration and management of the Programme.

Poland

Sources of information

- Trade unions: NSZZ "Solidarnosc" (Independent and Self-Governing Trade Union "Solidarnosc"), member of ETUC
- Employers: PKPP Lewiatan (Polish Confederation of Private Employers), member of BUSINESSEUROPE; ZRP (Polish Association of Craftsmanship), member of UEAPME; KPP (Confederation of Polish Employers), member of CEEP

Polish Confederation of Private Employers Lewiatan is promoting equal opportunities for men and women. PKPP Lewiatan is engaged in the project GENDER INDEX – a practical instrument to analyze women's situation in the workplace. Gender index will be a tool to define level of gender equality/gender discrimination in enterprises. Women's discrimination in the workplace is partially researched and known, however, there is no instrument of checking companies and their gender policy case by case. PKPP Lewiatan is of the opinion that in order to combat women's discrimination effectively, it is necessary to know well the complexity of women's situation in enterprises, and to be able to define the best "gender" practices among companies. The strategy is to identify "gender" leaders and make them examples to other stakeholders on the labour market.

Polish Confederation of Private Employers Lewiatan is also involved in the legislation process which is due to change the regulation of maternity/parental leave into a more women's friendly system. The PKPP Lewiatan tries to introduce into the Polish law a system of parental leave i.e. obligatory "maternity" leave for men lasting approximately one week. This regulation will provide more equality between men and women (as far as parental leave is concerned).

PKPP Lewiatan promotes temporary work – in close cooperation with the member Association of Temporary Work Agencies (ZAPT) - as a means to promote equality between men and women, especially as far as the maternity/parental leave is concerned.

Confederation of Polish Employers is also involved in many ways in the promotion of equal opportunities for men and women, including involvement in the legislation process.

A representative of the KPP Confederation participates in the meetings of the initiative called „Against Discrimination for Diversity” (Confederation of Polish Employers is the only Polish employers' organization in this initiative). This initiative is a part of a European Action Programme to combat Discrimination.

There is a representative of the Confederation of Polish Employers in the Monitoring Committee of the EQUAL Initiative. Among other issues EQUAL is dealing with:

- Promotion of the labour market opened to all, through enabling discriminated people to enter or to re-enter the labour market.
- Supporting work-life balance and reintegration of men and women to the world of work through development and promotion of the flexible forms and organization of work.

The Legal Education Association together with the faculty of law of the Warsaw University invited the KPP representative to participate as a panellist to the conference entitled: „Economic and social justification of the equality of men and women in the labour market” (October 26, 2005).

The Bureau of the Government’s Plenipotentiary on the Equal Status of Men and Women asked the Confederation of Polish Employers to participate in the conference held on April 5, 2005 on the implementation of the provisions of the Chapter 8 of the Labour Code (provisions regarding parental privileges).

The Confederation of Polish Employers issued its opinions on the „Green Paper of the demographic change” and other documents of the EU where it stresses the importance of the temporary work for improvement of the activity of women in the labour market and to the balancing work with personal and family life.

Association of Temporary Work Agencies (SAZ) – a member of the KPP Confederation - is invited to become a side in a partnership under the project supported by the European Social Fund. The Project called: „To work and to raise” is promoting innovative ways of work for people on maternity/parental leave.

Polish Craft Association has prepared an opinion on governmental draft regulation on maternity leave. In the subsequent stages PCA was involved in the legislation process through the participation of its representatives in working out common position of employers' organisations. Finally, PCA was engaged in opinion making process within parliamentary work.

In 2004 PCA issued an opinion on governmental draft regulation concerning works prohibited to young apprentices, in which PCA payed attention to gender inequality. Among 90 thousands young apprentices more than 30% are girls. In some professions such as hairdressing, confectionery and underwear making girls are the dominant group. Polish labour law system as far as vocational training is concerned does not differentiate rights and obligations depending on gender.

One of our member association of PCA: Chamber of Crafts and SMEs in Katowice is involved in the project under the Community Initiative EQUAL: "Job for both". The project is addressed to woman who after a childbirth have a problem to return on the labour market. Among partners apart of the craft chamber there are also: NSZZ Solidarnosc and OPZZ (both from Silesia Region).

The other member association of PCA (Pomorska Craft Chamber of SMEs in Gdansk) is involved in a project related to women: "A Women in Business" under the Leonardo da Vinci Program (together with partners from Germany, France, Sweden, Latvia and Bulgaria). The main goal of the project is to promote innovations in vocational training and support women on the labour market by assisting them in starting own businesses, family busienesses and in development of professional skills. The other goal of the project is to develop a model system of advisory for women.

PCA has also a member and its deputy in the Monitoring Committe of the Equal Initiative. PCA representatives actively participated in the conference held in Warsaw "For Diversity - Against Discrimination" - Annual Conference on the Community Action Programme to combat discrimination (24-25 April 2006)

The Independent Self-Governing Trade Union "Solidarnosc" concentrated its efforts on information and training related to three out of four stated priority areas. The activities of "Solidarnosc" were based on the training material on negotiations of gender issues in the workplace. The pilot program was partly financed by the union and partly by International Labour Organization. The goal of the program is to train a group of trainers and with their help then train groups of trade union negotiators in the regions and on the level of workplace.

The content of the training kit draws attention to the importance of providing conditions in the workplace that would in practice implement the idea of work-life balance. It also strongly stresses the necessity to put in place mechanisms that would ensure equal access to professional training and equal possibilities for promotion. Trainings were – and still are - addressed to both men and women, hoping to have gender balanced groups.

The European Framework of Actions on Gender Equality has not been formally implemented or even jointly discussed by social partners in Poland yet. The main reason is a visible lack of platform for the autonomous negotiations. Therefore we can only present separate activities of each organisation.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Several examples of good practice could be discussed, such as for example Polish Post and Nordea Poland Life Insurance Company. Due to restricted space allowed in this document Provident will be presented as a case study.

Actions and policies applied by Provident – a member company of the Confederation of Polish Employers and Polish Confederation of Private Employers Lewiatan - are linked to supporting work-life balance. Women count for 38% of the employed staff. During interviews management never ask about marital status and family plans of the applicants. Female employees are young. Their average age is 29. Many of them decide to have children. It is company's policy to help them to balance their professional career with their family-life. In the code of conduct of the company, in the chapter titled "Maternity", there are clear provisions that an employee cannot be treated any worse then others employees because of her pregnancy or maternity leave.

A woman who gets pregnant can be sure to be able to come back on her previous post. In the absence of the pregnant employee, the company employs someone for a temporary contract.

Women on maternity leave have the same employment conditions as other employees. They get the raise based on the inflation rate and gift cards. They also are entitled to services financed from social fund. In most cases they keep the company's car and company's mobile phone. It must be stressed also that the company Provident is proud to have three women in the management board.

Portugal

Sources of information

- Trade unions: UGT (General Workers Union), CGTP-IN (General Confederation of Portuguese Workers-National Inter Trade Union), members of ETUC
- Employers: CIP (Confederation of Portuguese Industry), member of BUSINESSEUROPE, and APOCEEP (CEEP Portuguese Association)

1. ADDRESSING GENDER ROLES

At national level, the UGT has developed the Standard Agreement for Collective Bargaining. The clauses from this Standard Agreement are the basis for the trade union proposals and counterproposals, in observance of trade unions' autonomy. By drawing up the Standard Agreement and by training the trade union negotiators, but mainly by implementing it, the UGT's trade unions managed to achieve some positive results and set up as a priority to eliminate the differences in the access to jobs; in the access to training; in the promotion in jobs; in wages and in reconciling family and professional life.

3. SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

At national level, and due to a big lack of information on this subject in interior areas of the country, the UGT organised 3 seminars in the frame of the project "the reconciliation we have, the reconciliation we want".

4. TACKLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

At sectoral level, the CGTP-IN is currently developing, in the frame of a partnership with ARESP (Portuguese Association of Restaurants and Similar Activities), and other entities, namely the Labour Inspection and the International Labour Organisation, the Project "Revaluating Work to Promote Equality", included in the Community Initiative EQUAL. Being developed in 6 Districts, its objectives are: to develop and test a methodology of Job analysis centred in the labour value that allows the implementation of the principle "equal pay for equal work or work of equal value"; to design training modules aimed at trade unionists and human resources staff. It will involve around 7,500 male and female workers in 1666 establishments.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

1. ADDRESSING GENDER ROLES; 3. SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE & 4. TACKLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

At company level, the CGTP-IN, in the frame of the Equal Project – Acting towards Equality (a tripartite partnership), has established a protocol with the enterprise Robert Bosch Travões relating to the implementation of positive actions towards gender equality. This protocol includes commitments from the parties relating to the elimination of discriminations and the balanced professional distribution of women and men; the elimination of wage

inequalities between women and men when performing “equal work or work of equal value”; a new organisational culture which adopts the principles of equal opportunities. In one year, the following objectives have been achieved: Vocational training – the enterprise created a pocket of about 30 internal trainers, in order to facilitate the enterprise’s worker training; Family support – implementation of scholarships in a larger number than the agreed; methodology of differentiation in wage increase. Thus, the wage differences decreased from 25% to 12%, reducing the wage differential and contributing to the progressive elimination of the existing discrimination.

1. ADDRESSING GENDER ROLES

At company level, the bank “Montepio Geral” establishes, as its top priority, the creation of a humanist organisational culture, based upon values such as equality, solidarity, team spirit, and shared leadership. “Montepio Geral” equal opportunities policy is one of the values most appreciated by their clients. This type of policy led to an increase in the percentage of women that participate in vocational training actions. Nowadays, the number of women with superior qualifications is larger than the number of men. The bank promotion practices of equal opportunities have already been distinguished twice (in 2000 and in 2006) with the award “Equality is Quality” by CITE³.

At company level, “CTT – Correios de Portugal” (Portuguese Post), has been encouraging the female population to apply to a postman’s job and a few have been recruited as such, but this post is still by far occupied by men. The company makes a positive discrimination when recruiting staff that will be in direct contact with the public, as in post offices, by selecting women rather than men for these posts. All actions have been taken within the scope of the whole company.

3. SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

At company level, in “CTT – Correios de Portugal” (Portuguese Post), women and men are allowed to take 3 non-remunerated days leave a month, until the child is one year old, without falling in a situation of non-compliance. This benefit granted by the Company exceeds the obligations stated by the National Labour Law.

At company level, “CP – Caminhos de Ferro Portugueses, E.P.”, (Portuguese Railways) directly explores two kindergartens and one summer camp.

4. TACKLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

At company level, in “CTT – Correios de Portugal” (Portuguese Post), in general terms men and women are paid equally for equal work.

At company level, the “CP – Caminhos de Ferro Portugueses, E.P.” (Portuguese Railways) paying system doesn’t make any discrimination between women and men.

³ CITE (The Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment) is a tripartite entity under the authority of the Minister of Labour and Social Solidarity, responsible for: equality and non-discrimination between women and men in labour, in employment and in vocational training; protection of maternity and paternity; reconciliation of work and family life.

Slovenia

Sources of information

- Trade unions: ZSSS (Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia), member of ETUC
- Employers: ZDS (Employers' Association of Slovenia), member of BUSINESSEUROPE; OZS (Chamber of Craft of Slovenia), member of UEAPME; GZS (Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia) and ZDODS (Association of Employers for Craft Activities of Slovenia)

Both ZSSS and ZDS are partners in an EQUAL development partnership "Young-Mother/family-friendly Employment" (web site: <http://equal.zavodekvilib.si>) on national and also on international level. The purpose of the partnership project: The main aim of the development partnership Young-mother/family-friendly employment is to decrease hidden discrimination of young women-(potential) mothers – due to maternity – in the labour market. The target group – the one which we intend to help – are (potential) parents and in particular young women. Sex discrimination in the labour market cannot be prevented only by good normative (legislative) regulation. One should aim at changing business, cultural, psychosocial and other social norms and patterns. In order to be as effective as possible, we will use the results of targeted research to develop appropriate tools for influencing various key actors. It is expected that such tools may be effective also in the wider social context.

ZSSS Presidency has adopted an action plan for ZSSS: to promote and create equal opportunities for women and men, to reduce by at least half the shortfall in female representation in membership and decision-making bodies ZSSS, to establish data records on the structure of membership and trade union bodies also by gender, to systematically incorporate into trade union training also the capacity-building to recognise all forms of direct and indirect discrimination at the workplace etc. The guidelines have been prepared for collective bargaining at all levels: provisions for reconciliation of family and working life, on professional promotion and on protection of workers from violence, intimidation and sexual harassment at the workplace.

GZS promotes first NGO association of women entrepreneurs in Slovenia, named GIZ Podjetnost (Member of F.C.E.M, web site: <http://www.podjetnost.org>). There is an institute for research and development of family and women entrepreneurship (META) in Ljubljana, to develop a service network for women in Slovenia for their economic empowerment.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Slovenian wage system is determined by sector collective agreements that have no element that could cause discrimination of women. According to official statistical data (Statistical Office of the Republic Slovenia, web site: <http://www.stat.si>) the gender pay gap at national level in Slovenia was in the year 2003 only 7%; The gap was largest in the service sector where in average a woman received 77% of the man's wage. In civil service the wage gap was smallest – only 6%. The wage gap in Slovenia on average is one of the smallest in EU.

Spain

Sources of information

- Trade unions: CC.OO. (Trade Union Confederation of Workers Commissions); UGT (General Union of Workers); ELA-STV (Basque Workers' Union), members of ETUC
- Employers: CEOE (Confederation of Spanish employers), member of BUSINESSEUROPE

NATIONAL LEVEL:

UGT-CCOO's Contributions

On 8th July 2004, the Spanish government, CEOE, CEPYME, CCOO and UGT signed the declaration on social dialogue in Spain. This process of social dialogue (which has not finished yet) was the first of its kind to approach equal opportunities for women and men in the labour sphere. A table of equality was constituted in this context, with the intention of debating the measures to be adopted in order to improve the situation of women with regards to access and permanence in employment.

The trade union organisations representing the majority of workers drafted a joint document with specific proposals, which fully match the four priority axes included in the European framework agreement. The Government presented some proposals regarding employment to the negotiation table and finally, on February 6th 2006, they were presented to us, the social agents, with a bill proposal for a Law on Equality which would fulfil the obligation of transposing Community Directive 2002/73/CE, which modified directive 76/207/CEE on equal treatment for women and men and Directive 2004/113/CE on the application of the principle of equality between men and women and their access to goods and services. With this bill the Government was also fulfilling an electoral promise. This bill includes some of the trade union proposals made by UGT and CCOO.

At the social dialogue table, CEOE – CEPYME proposed the European framework agreement, which we, the trade union organisations, considered to be insufficient, so we intended to negotiate more specific and effective proposals.

No agreement was reached as a result of this process and the Government has decided to carry on with the bill for the Law on Equality. The trade union organisations, during the process of parliamentary procedures, will meet with representatives of parliamentary groups to try to introduce improvements.

In parallel with this, the Declaration for social dialogue in Public Administrations was signed on September 21st 2004 by the Administration, the trade union organisations UGT, CCOO and CSI-CSIF. As a result of this agreement, the Concilia Plan was signed on December 7th 2005. This is a series of measures for the conciliation of professional, personal and family life, amongst which it is worth highlighting flexible work times and the creation of paternity leave. Another very important aspect of the agreement which is going to have an indirect influence on women's employment is the elimination of temporary employment and the consolidation of employment. Temporary employment in the public sector has increased in our country in the last few years.

CEOE's contributions

In 2004 the new Government agreed with Social Partners to foster Social Dialogue. Consequently a tripartite Declaration was signed in 2004 dealing with a variety of issues to be discussed in the following years. One of the most important points of this Declaration was the need to intensify reforms in the labour market.

With that aim and with some particular issues on the table, Social Dialogue started. One of the issues to be dealt was the promotion of women's labour integration and the improvement of their working conditions as well as the support of work life balance.

CEOE presented the European Framework of Actions on Gender Equality as a kick off for negotiations and at the same time finding the particular situation as the best time to implement it in Spain. This implementation of the Framework of Actions, based on the four priorities, would have contributed to effectively improve gender equality within the framework of Social Dialogue. This proposal was not accepted by the Trade Unions considered it to be insufficient and so, that is why just in the middle of negotiations, the Government launched a Bill on Equality. Therefore, we consider Social Dialogue was not being respected in this issue.

CEOE rejected this Bill (at the present time, it is in process to become an Act) because of the rupture of social Dialogue itself (in this issue), then considering binding measures as not reflecting the approach of the European Framework of Actions on Gender Equality.

Far from analyzing the Spanish Project of Law in this follow-up report, we wanted to describe the situation we have been through in our country in order to explain the reasons why we could not develop any actions together the Social Partners in Spain.

ELA contributions

In ELA we think that the Social Dialogue should serve to improve the sociolabor conditions of the workers and not to sustain agreements as the labour reform that has been signed in the Spanish State. This reform doesn't approach the problematics of the increasing insecurity in the employment, but it has been favourable to the business sector as it gives them more power and more economic benefits. Unfortunately, women, immigrants and young people will continue suffering precariousness.

NATIONAL LEVEL, SECTORAL LEVEL AND COMPANY LEVEL:

CCOO, UGT and CEOE's Contributions

The trade union organisations representing the majority of workers, CCOO and UGT and the employer organisations CEOE all reached an agreement (Interconfederal Agreement for Collective Bargaining – ANC) in 2005 which was renovated for the year 2006 to introduce guidelines in collective agreements with regards to equal opportunities for women and men. This process to include guidelines with regards to equal opportunities for women and men started in 2002, with the decision of including in the agreements examples of Good Practices extracted from collective agreements in force. It is worth mentioning the fact that measures aimed at making it easier for women to exercise the rights included in the Law of Measures for Integral Protection against Gender Violence were also included in ANC 2005. Their scope includes preventive, educational aspects which have an influence on the labour sphere. The measures included in the agreement in force match the priority axes of the European

framework agreement and are materialised through adaptation to the specific needs of our country.

1. ADDRESSING GENDER ROLES

CCOO, UGT and CEOE's Contributions

The ANC includes several specific measures:

Study and establishment of selection, classification, promotion and training systems based on technical, objective and neutral criteria with regards to gender.

UGT-CCOO's Contributions

The bill for the Law on Equality includes the creation of a paternity leave which, no doubt, will have an influence on role-changing. It also includes the setting up of Positive Action Plans in companies with over 250 workers and of specific measures in those with less than that figure. These plans will include all the priority axes. The bill also includes transversal measures with regards to education.

The agreement with the Public Administration includes the elimination of temporary employment, which affects women mostly.

Also within the social dialogue process, which is still unfinished, the Government and the social actors have signed a labour reform which will allow for the temporary employment rate, which is currently 33.3%, to decrease below 30% by the beginning of 2007. This measure will benefit women indirectly in our country.

2. PROMOTING WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

CCOO, UGT and CEOE's Contributions

The ANC includes positive action clauses in order to promote the access of women in equal conditions to sectors and jobs in which they are underrepresented.

UGT-CCOO's Contributions

The Law on Equality includes measures to increase the participation of women in decision-making positions at all levels, companies, administration, organisations, elections, etc.

3. SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

UGT-CCOO's Contributions

It is in this aspect that most progress is being made and will be made in the near future when the Law on Equality is approved. A Dependency bill has recently been approved which we hope will have a favourable influence upon women, who will be freed from part of their family duties.

The General State Administration has already adopted measures to allow for a flexibility of two hours with regards to work hours which will make the conciliation of professional, family and personal life easier.

CCOO, UGT and CEOE's Contributions

The ANC refers to work hours, holidays, planning of training etc in a manner that allows for the conciliation of productive needs with personal and family needs.

4. TACKLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

CCOO, UGT and CEOE's Contributions

The ANC refers to the correction of pay differences which may exist due to an inadequate application of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

UGT-CCOO's Contributions

The bill for the Law on Equality includes the obligation to negotiate Plans and positive actions, pointing out equal pay as a reference topic.

The four priority axes are tackled by both the bill for the Law on Equality in the Public Administration agreement and in the Interconfederal Agreement for Collective bargaining. According to a priority ranking (which refers to greater difficulty for the parts to reach an agreement), pay differences between women and men are in the last position in terms of defining specific measures, while the conciliation of professional, personal and family life is where more significant progress is being made.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

UGT-CCOO and CEOE's Contributions

Company agreements have been signed with regards to the conciliation of professional, personal and family life which may serve as an example of good practices, most of them in the banking sector: Banco Sabadell, Banco Santander Central Hispano, Banco Popular, Banesto.

- Agreement between Grupo Banco Sabadell (signed jointly by UGT and CCOO and other trade union organisations.)

Objectives:

- Providing a better fit between persons and the company, helping employees to achieve an adequate balance between professional and family duties and their personal life.
- Adapting the company to changes that take place in society and which affect family, habits and customs.
- Protecting maternity and the care of dependant persons.
- Implementing positive action and non-discriminatory practice strategies in managing human resources.

The agreement refers to an Equal Opportunities Commission which will monitor the compliance with and development of the measures included in this Agreement.

This agreement was signed in December 2005 and we can not carry out a comprehensive evaluation of its results.

ELA contributions

One of the most relevant actions carried out by women has been the conflict in Irun (a town in Gipuzkoa). Approximately 58 employees subcontracted by the Town Hall of Irun have led a strike during more than three months in demand of their salary comparison with the workers who are not subcontracted because their salary was 35 % more than the strikers.

It is not a chance that in this conflict 90 % were women. It is not a chance that our politicians take belligerent positions in women conflicts. Nevertheless, the struggle has been worth it since the workers have obtained what was asked from the beginning, that is to say, the increase of their salaries.

Sweden

Sources of information

- Trade Unions: LO (Swedish Trade Union Confederation), TCO (Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees) and SACO (Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations), members of ETUC
- Employers: Swedish Enterprise (Confederation of Swedish Enterprise), member of BUSINESSEUROPE; The Swedish section of CEEP

1. ADDRESSING GENDER ROLES; 2. PROMOTING WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING; 3. SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE & 4. TACKLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

The Swedish members of BUSINESSEUROPE/UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC have made a joint translation into Swedish of the Framework of Actions on Gender Equality. We have also jointly transmitted this translation and the Framework to different relevant players at European and National levels such as BUSINESSEUROPE, CEEP and ETUC, the EU-commission and DG Employment, the EU-commissioner for equal opportunities, Swedish members of the European Parliament, European Women's Lobby, the Prime Minister's cabinet, different Swedish Ministries and the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman. The Swedish social partners have also informed their members of the Framework through both written and oral procedures.

Statistics Sweden as well as the social partners monitors statistics disaggregated by sex concerning different aspects of equal opportunities such as salaries, women in leading positions, education and public childcare.

Two Swedish CEEP-members, SALAR and Pacta, and their Swedish trade union counterparts have signed a collective agreement in 2005; FAS – Agreement on Renewal – Work environment – Co-operation in Local Authorities, County Councils and Regions, where the parties also agree to implement the Framework of actions on gender equality. It covers 1, 1 million employees.

1. ADDRESSING GENDER ROLES

Gender equality objectives are included in all levels of the school and pre-school system. There have been surveys in schools revealing that the staff treated boys and girls differently and gender stereotyped in an unacceptable way. Some teachers who work in schools in the municipalities have been educated in gender perspectives to become gender pedagogues. Their work is to improve knowledge about gender inequalities and gender roles and to change work methods.

SALAR has developed a working material, including an exhibition, called Health Work & Gender. The purpose of the material is to raise awareness on gender equality and inequalities in general and in healthcare. The exhibition has been shown in Swedish hospitals and in many national and international conferences. SALAR runs a pilot project with the

county council of Stockholm with the objective to educate all 40 000 employees in health and gender matters.

2. PROMOTING WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

Promoting women in decision-making and to have a strategy for this is a significant measure in the ambition to achieve gender equality.

Statistics Sweden as well as the Swedish social partners monitor statistics disaggregated by sex on leading positions on a yearly basis to see the development of the number of women in decision-making. They follow the results of leadership programs, networks and mentorship by measuring statistics and spread the results which give them the possibility to benchmark the development.

The Development Council for the Government Sector- who is chaired by representatives from the social partners- conducts a programme concerning equal possibilities for men and women. The purpose of this programme is, among other things, to promote women in decision-making.

A survey has been conducted, which studies the number of women in decision-making positions in the private sector. The study covers 80 percent of all those who are employed in the private sector.

As already known, the Swedish EQUAL program has Gender Equality as one of its objectives. The signing organizations are represented in EQUAL's Monitoring Committee and have thereby supported between 10-15 development projects, working to promote women's leadership.

Swedish Union for Theatre, Artists and Media together with their employers organization have developed a qualified leadership program for women in the sector. That program has been noticed by other Nordic countries.

Every third year Union of Civil Servants conducts a survey to the Civil Servants in decision-making positions, to investigate their working conditions and to compare the conditions for women and for men, in decision-making positions.

3. SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The possibility to combine work life and family life is stipulated in the gender equality legislation and should be a part of all gender equality plans. 83 % of the children between 1-6 years have some kind of publicly financed child care.

After negotiations with their trade union counterparts, employers frequently practice flexible working hour models in order to facilitate the combination of working life and parenthood.

The salaried employees' union, HTF, each year gives an award called ~"The Golden comforter", to a company that has distinguished itself by practicing especially family friendly policies.

During the election year of 2002, the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees, TCO, campaigned for putting the issue of work-life balance on the agenda, to make it

become a question the different political parties had to take into consideration during their election campaigns. The project was called "The life puzzle" and still exists as an ongoing project at the TCO. The aims are to find various solutions for supporting the work-life balance, and to communicate them to the public, the media and to the politicians.

4. TACKLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

The Swedish social partners have developed different means to support employers and unions to conduct the annual survey of pay differentials between women and men; e.g. education and computer programs. The surveys are stipulated in the Swedish Equal Opportunities Act.

In the work towards tackling the gender pay-gap, the social partners in the Government sector has stated in their central frame-work agreement concerning salaries that the salary for an employee is to be determined from objective reasons. This prohibits sex from- in any way- affecting the individual wage for an employee.

A major agreement has been reached between the Swedish social partners in the field of engineering industries, in order to make comparisons and adjustments of wages between men and women. This field covers a large part of Swedish industry.

A comparison of wages between men and women has been made by the employers in the private sector. The study covers 80 percent of all those who are employed in the private sector.

Many collective agreements have adopted parts of the wordings in the law on gender equality in the working life, that is "The equal opportunities act". The wordings that have been adopted often concerns the compulsory annual comparisons of women's and men's salaries to discover unjust differences. Also other wordings are used, for example agreements on that the employee can have other work tasks to perform during pregnancy, if needed.

The United Kingdom

Sources of information

- Trade unions: TUC (Trade Union Congress), member of ETUC
- Employers: CBI (Confederation of British Industry) member of BUSINESSEUROPE; FPB (Forum of Private Business), member of UEAPME; the UK section of CEEP

The UK social partners have worked together at a national level in the past 12 months to look at the following key priorities under the Framework of Actions on Gender Equality:

1. ADDRESSING GENDER ROLES

In the past 12 months, the CBI, TUC and member of CEEP UK worked together on the Equal Opportunities Commission's General Formal Investigation (GFI) into occupational segregation and apprenticeships. This investigation focussed on five sectors which in the UK were experiencing skills shortages (construction, engineering, ICT, plumbing and childcare). The investigation discovered a clear correlation between the sectors where there was a skills shortage and those where women were under represented. In response to the findings of the GFI, the CBI and TUC have agreed to work alongside Government, the Sector Skills Councils and the EOC to promote the reduction of occupational segregation, as both an equality and a key productivity and business issue for employers.

Within the local government, transport and health sector there are ongoing projects aimed at attracting more women into male dominated occupations and vice versa. In the transport sector, this relates to the recruitment of more women to become bus drivers. In the health sector and in local government, projects aim to attract more men into nursing, childcare and other caring professions.

3. SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

In September 2005 the Department for Trade and Industry, in association with the TUC and CBI published a report 'Managing Change' on practical ways to reduce long hours and reform working practices. The case studies in this guide show how tackling long hours and reforming working patterns can be good for businesses, individuals and families, improving work-life balance as well as having a positive impact on company performance.

Local government employers and trade unions have jointly issued guidance of good practice in planning work-life balance initiatives. This guidance is currently being updated in light of the recommendations contained in the framework of actions. Many local government employers operate pro-active work-life balance policies aiming to combine improvements in the provision of services with more flexible working arrangements for their staff (e.g. by extending opening times and the availability of services to the public or making arrangements for tele and home based working). In the NHS, the Improving Working Lives Agenda, which was jointly agreed between employers and trade unions, focuses on the development of flexible working and leave arrangements as well as offering childcare provision. All NHS Trusts are visited for accreditation under this scheme and are working towards continuous improvement.

4. TACKLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

In September 2004 the UK Government established the Women and Work Commission with a remit to investigate the ongoing causes of the gender pay gap and provide practical solutions for closing it. The CBI and TUC had Commissioners on this body along with people from trade unions, public and private sector organisations. In February 2006 the Commission published 40 final recommendations which concentrate on improving good practice from education into employment in an effort to close the gender pay gap. While the Commission was unable to reach consensus around mandatory pay reviews, it did reach agreement on the need for changes in how education is delivered, how work is structured, how training is delivered and to whom and how discrimination in the workplace is removed. The Commission's recommendations were aimed at Government, employers and trade unions and all of these are committed to implementing the Women and Work Commission's recommendations.

A number of government commissioned reports on this issue have recommended that the public sector take the lead in addressing the gender pay gap. In the local government sector employers and trade unions have issued joint guidance for equal pay reviews which are currently being carried out at the regional and local level. In the National Health Service, Agenda for Change set the framework for equal pay reviews. This was agreed by the sectoral social partners and has been rolled out for the NHS's 1.4 million employment in autumn 2005.

2. PROMOTING WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

The Women and Work Commission, in which both UK social partners were engaged, identified vertical segregation as one of wide ranging causes of the remaining gender pay and opportunity gap. The Commission agreed on practical recommendations for all stakeholders to close this gap. The CBI also provided evidence to the House of Commons Trade and Industry Select Committee inquiry into the implementation of the Commission's recommendations. The TUC are also currently working with Ruskin College, Oxford on establishing a course from September 2006 that will promote women in leadership and decision making in the trade union movement. This will use evidence from other European countries and will look at ways of ensuring that more women secure positions in senior ranks of UK trade unions.

Many public service employers are actively implementing networking and mentoring schemes for senior managers; as well as running leadership courses to attract and develop more women into leadership roles. In the civil service and in the national health service targets have been set for the proportion of women in senior management functions. Civil service are on course towards achieving their target of 30% female representation in senior grades. In the NHS the percentage of female chairs and non-executive Directors has increased from 33% in 2000 to 45% in 2006.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

- TUC and CBI partnership project Supporting Worklife Balance "Managing Change: Practical ways to reduce long hours and reform working practices"

As the Framework of Actions acknowledges, employers, workers and Government all have a crucial role to play in supporting work-life balance policies that benefit employers and employees and that such partnership working can help in devising innovative solutions to work-life balance issues.

One of the strengths of the UK's labour market is the high level of flexible working patterns which enable employers to give employees the flexibility they need for a better work-life balance. Despite this, long hours working continues to be a characteristic of some workplaces in the UK and there is evidence that regularly working long hours is associated with adverse effects on both women and men's ability to reconcile work and family responsibilities. In response to this, employers and trade unions have worked together at organisational level to introduce a range of flexible working practices which aim to give the workforce a better work-life balance while meeting the needs of the business. Schemes that have been introduced include part time working, flexitime, job sharing and annualised hours.

In September 2005, the UK Government's Department for Trade and Industry in partnership with the CBI and TUC, published 'Managing Change', a guide which aims to provide practical ways to reduce long hours and reform working practices by providing case studies of good practice already undertaken in a range of workplaces. The companies and trade unions that took part in the showcased projects cover a variety of business sectors and regions in the UK and show how change can be successfully introduced in companies with a variety of economic and operational issues. In drawing together the guide it was clear that there were some areas of consensus between all of those companies involved in setting up these flexible working policies. These were then incorporated in a 'Top Tips' section in the guide.

The case studies demonstrate the valuable lessons learned from involving employees and unions in developing new patterns of work – and the considerable benefits to be gained. Each has rolled out an innovative programme of flexible working patterns to help improve productivity and allow employees to achieve better work-life balance. For example, BT's 'anytime, anywhere' approach to working allows many employees to control the hours and the location of their work day. The scheme is a real success story – BT retained 99% of its women employees who went on maternity leave.

The guide has been disseminated mainly by the Department of Trade and Industry, but also through the CBI and the TUC to their members and affiliated organisations.

The European level

Actions taken at European cross-industry level

The European social partners disseminated actively the framework of actions in 2005 and 2006, and notably:

- by making the framework of actions known to the public through different means including Internet. The framework of actions was for example sent to European level policy makers and stakeholders involved in gender equality issues. It was posted on the websites of all signatory organisations;
- by organising meetings with national and European sectoral social partners to disseminate the framework of actions and explain its rationale. The framework of actions was for example studied in details during capacity building seminars organised by ETUC, BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, and CEEP with their members in the 10 new Member States. The European social partners also presented jointly the framework of actions at the Liaison Committees gathering European sectoral social partners;
- by promoting the approach taken in the framework of actions vis-à-vis public authorities through participation in a range of conferences and seminars on European policy in the field of equal opportunities between women and men. The European social partners notably jointly presented the framework of actions to the European Parliament, to the members of the European Advisory Committee for equal opportunities between women and men and during EU presidency's conferences;
- by supporting projects organised by their members to promote the framework, notably projects financed through EU Structural Funds and EU Commission budget lines.
- by participating individually or jointly at international, EU, national and/or regional conferences and promoting the framework of actions. Examples include:
 - The Conference on the "Gender Pay Gap" organised by the Austrian Presidency
 - The Conference on "Men and Gender Equality" organised by the Finnish Presidency
 - The Conference on "Diversity in SMEs" organised by the European Commission
 - The EU-US "Roundtable on Gender Issues from the Employment perspective"

Actions taken by Eurocadres and CEC

The framework of actions foresees that the members of EUROCADRES/CEC would have a particular role to play with regard to the priority "promoting women in decision-making". They have therefore submitted a special report, which can be found below.

- EUROCADRES

EUROCADRES published a folder in English, French, German, Italian and Finnish, which contains, among other information, chapter 2 of the framework agreement. This folder is widely distributed among member organisations. There have been national events in Sweden, Finland and France, where the chapter was also introduced and discussed. (There will also be events in Italy and Austria in June).

CFDT Cadres in France refers to the working hours of management staff that are considered to be the main factor of exclusion of women from decision-making positions. The bundling of action in the area of working hours might allow women and men to get access to positions with responsibility and to be able to choose their working time and hours along the professional career. In order to assess and to analyse this situation, a colloquium has taken place with the aim of defining an action plan that will be put into place.

Recently EDF fixed in an agreement the possibility to set back the age of access of women to the pool of high potentials to 40/45 years of age, as women are often affected by maternity leave around the age of 30/35.

Trade Union Confederation of Professionals (ÉSZT) of Hungary has taken steps to promote the participation of women in trade union education and manager training.

In the Netherlands, the following activities were undertaken at national level to promote women in decision-making:

- VNO-NCW is actively participating in the 'Ambassador's Network Glass Ceiling'; a yearly changing group of top business leaders devote themselves to give an extra impetus to the career development and promotion of women to higher occupational and decision making positions.
- VNO-NCW yearly grants an award to a company that performed exceptionally with respect to diversity management, in particular for top positions.
- MHP initiated research on career development of women and the possibility to work part-time in these jobs.

FNV initiated a 4-year project to improve the position of women, ethnic minorities and youth in their organisation.

- CEC

The CEC (European Confederation of Executives and Managerial Staff) has promoted the framework of actions on gender equality through the distribution to its member organization of a booklet containing the English and French version of the agreement. The CEC also presented and explained the agreement during meetings with our members.

Two of CEC's sectoral federations, FECCIA (European Federation of Managers in the Chemical and Allied Industries) and FECER (European Federation of Executives in the Sectors of Energy & Research), have signed together with EMCEF and Total's senior management a European-wide agreement on equal opportunities in the group TOTAL, on 21st November 2005. This European wide agreement clearly refers to the Framework of actions on gender equality in its preamble.

In Spain, the Confederación de Cuadros y Profesionales (CCP), in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, is elaborating a study to identify the obstacles for the access of women to managerial and professional positions. The study has been named "Report on the inequalities between men and women in their access to managerial posts"

("Estudio de las desigualdades entre hombres y mujeres en el acceso a posiciones de "cuadro").

CCP has also launched a document called "Irregular working time distribution proposal for Managerial Staff and Professionals" ("Propuesta básica de distribución irregular de la jornada para Cuadros y Profesionales"). The proposal aims at conciliating working and family life as CCP considers that the prolonged working time of Managerial Staff & Professionals is the main obstacle for access of women to those positions.

In Germany, the Confederation of salaried academic staff in the chemistry (VAA) as the biggest member association of the ULA is carrying out a survey exploring the career perspectives of female executive staff. This survey aims at closing the gender gap. The results will be published in the year.

In Belgium, the Belgian Confederation of Executives and Managerial Staff (CNC-NCK) organized a conference on the topic "Women in management" to raise awareness on this matter. In this occasion, Alexe von Wurmb, CEC representative in the core drafting group, presented the Framework of actions on gender equality to the audience

In Greece, EASE gives emphasis on gender equality and has made efforts to promote the issue, through its magazine and events.

Actions taken at European sectoral level

- EMCEF / TOTAL contribution

One year after the conclusion of the European Social Platform Agreement of 22 November 2004, a first concrete result is the 21 November 2005 Agreement between the Total Group management, and the European Trade Union Federations EMCEF, FECCIA and FECER. In the preamble of this agreement, they subscribe to the action framework on equality between men and women, dated 1 March 2005 and validated by the ETUC, BUSINESSEUROPE and CEEP. The agreement focus goes to women and disabled persons.

Four important issues on gender equality out of this agreement deserve to be included in the report to the Framework of actions of BUSINESSEUROPE/UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC.

- Measures on recruitment;
- An invitation for social partners to negotiate on issues of career orientation and balance between professional and personal life;
- Measures concerning salary parity between men and women;
- The need to collect information on the access to professional training;

For all these issues a social scoreboard will be prepared, on which the European Works Council of Total will be reported yearly. Especially the issues on recruitment, salary parity and professional training deserve to be highlighted.

On recruitment the agreement underlines that under no circumstances will sex, age or any other characteristic serve as an eliminating criterion. Data on the percentage of women recruited as compared with men will be collected, by country, by category (executives and non-executives), and by age bracket. Furthermore, actions will be undertaken in the education world, by, for example, dispatching women active in technical or scientific trades as ambassadors to educational institutions,

Regarding salary parity between men and women, the Group undertakes, insofar as possible, to identify the salary differences between men and women by branch and by country. Based on this finding, the Group undertakes to make every effort to absorb the identified differences, in the presence of equal skills, qualifications and performances. Furthermore, the Total Group general management undertakes to ensure that maternity leave can have no consequence on the salary or advancement of female employees and, as a consequence thereof, to ensure that periods of absence due to maternity (maternity leave) are neutralized.

Concerning access to professional training it is agreed that detailed information is necessary each time for men and women and again per branch and per country; on the number of personnel and training days and on the topics of training including technical training and safety training.

The agreement was filed with the European Commission in Brussels (Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunity DG).

- European Electricity Industry Contribution

Contribution of the electricity social dialogue partners Eurelectric and EPSU/EMCEF for the employers and trade unions respectively. The social dialogue committee has been in existence since 1996 (informal) and recognised in 2000. Equal Opportunities has been one of the major issues on the agenda. A first study on the impact of restructuring on women in the electricity industry was done in 1998.

In their 2003 Joint Declaration on Equal Opportunities and Diversity the social partners of the Electricity Industry - EURELECTRIC, EMCEF and EPSU - stated their commitment to the construction of a "democratic, pluralist and open Europe that respects the dignity and integrity of all human beings".

The social partners recognised the principle that "no discrimination shall be exercised against employees on the basis of age, health, national or ethnic origin, sex, sexual preference, language, religion, opinion, family ties, trade union activity, political activity or any other comparable circumstance". The innovative character of the statement is in highlighting the conditions necessary for realising equal opportunities and in detailing the actions to be taken. This includes positive action, training and development, combatting sexual harassment, work-life balance, equal pay for work of equal value, reorganisation. It also addressed how older workers can be accommodated in the workplace and the implications this has for the work organisation.

EURELECTRIC, EMCEF, and EPSU have since continued to work on Equal Opportunities and Diversity issues.

In 2004, a first project was realised that produced the report "Equal Opportunities and Diversity – Changing Employment Patterns in the European Electricity Industry", done by the University of Cardiff.. The focus of the research was on "groups of workers who are potentially marginalised within the European Electricity Industry". The report comprises a mapping of the European Electricity Industry workforce, an account of equal opportunities policies at supra-national, national and company levels and provides the basis for policy making and learning strategies.

Based on this report a new project was launched in 2006 to produce the "Equal Opportunities and Diversity Toolkit / Best Practices Guide". It is the first handbook on these

issues in the Electricity Industry translating the results from an academic study to the level of practical implementation. It is based on a large series of interviews with employers and management representatives. It gives concrete examples for unions and employers what can be done on a wide range of issues to ensure that policies lead to gender equality. It addresses equal pay, recruitment, management commitment, equality audits, structures for jointly addressing equal opportunities like equality committees, training and so on.

EURELECTRIC, EMCEF, and EPSU are committed to equality and diversity. The European social partners recommend representatives of companies and trade unions to use the toolkit at the appropriate level when addressing equality and diversity issues. It provides useful suggestions on how to improve existing situations based on the experience of a wide range of Europe's electricity companies.

The webbased report can be found at: www.eurelectric.org/EqualityDiversity/index.htm

Eurelectric: www.eurelectric.org

EPSU: www.epsu.org

EMCEF: www.emcef.org

Annex I – List of contact persons

You will find below the list of the members of the ad hoc group on gender equality of the European Social Dialogue.

Country	Organisation	Contact persons
Austria	IV (Federation of Austrian Industry)	Mr Wolfgang Tritremmel Schwarzenbergplatz 4 1031 Wien Tel: 43.17.1135.25.07 Email: w.tritremmel@iv-net.at
	WKÖ Austrian economic chamber	Ms Birgit Bürger Email: Birgit.Buerger@wko.at Tel: +43 5 90 900-4284 Fax: 0043 590 900 3588
	ÖGB (Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund)	Mr Oliver Roepke E-mail : oliver.roepke@bxl.oegb.or.at Tel: 32.2.230.74.63
Belgium	VBO-FEB (Federation of Belgian enterprises)	Ms Sonja Kohnenmergen Premier conseiller, Affaires sociales 4, rue Ravenstein 1000 Bruxelles Tel : 32.2.515.08.40 Fax : 32.2.515.09.13 Email : SK@vbo-feb.be
	FGTB (Fédération Générale du Travail en Belgique)	Ms Gitta Vanpeborgh E-mail : gitta.vanpeborgh@abvv.be Tel : 32.2.230.74.63
Cyprus	SEK (Cyprus Workers Confederation)	Ms Isaia Kosma E-mail: sek@sek.org.cy Tel: 357.22.849.601
	OEB (Cyprus Employers & Industrialists Federation)	Mr Michael Pilikos 30, Grivas Dhigenis Av. P.O. Box 1657- 1511 Nicosia Tel: 35722665102 Fax: 35722669459 E-mail: info@oeb.org.cy

Czech Republic	CMKOS (Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions)	Ms Dana Machatova e-mail: machatova@danuse@gzcd.cz cmkos@cmkos.cz Tel : 420.23.446.22.74
	SPCR (Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic)	Ms Vladimira Drbalova Director of International organisations Mikulandska7 Cz- 11361 Praha 1 Tel: 42.02.24.93.40.88 Fax: 42.02.24.93.45.97 Email: vdrbalova@sPCR.cz
Denmark	DA (Confederation of Danish Employers)	Ms Lise E. Bardenfleth Tel:45.33.38.94.12 E-mail: lib@da.dk
	LO (Danish Confederation of Trade Unions)	Ms Jetty Lykke Adviser Islandsbrygge 32 D DK- 2300 Kobenhavn S Tel: 45.352.46.157 E-mail: jly@lo.dk
	Local Government Denmark	Ms Nanna Kolze E-mail: nsk@kl.dk
Estonia	ETTK (Estonian Employers' Confederation)	Ms Aija Maasikas e-mail : aija.maasikas@eakl.ee Tel : 372.641.28.10
	TALO (Estonian Trade Unions)	Mr Toivo Roosimaa General Secretary Tel: 372.6.41.98.00 E-mail: talo@talo.ee
Finland	EK (Confederation of Finnish Industry)	Ms Anu Sajavaara Tel: 358.9.42.02.22.80 Fax: 358.9.42.02.22.72 E-mail: anu.sajavaara@ek.fi
	SAK (Suomen Ammattiliitojen Keskusjärjestö)	Ms Marja Erkkilä E-mail : marja.erkkila@sak.fi Tel : 358.20.77.40.170

France	MEDEF (Federation of enterprises of France)	Ms Chantal Foulon Directeur Adjoint, Relations sociales Tel : 33.1.53.59.17.97 E-mail : cfoulon@medef.fr
	CAPEB	Ms Roselyne Lecoultre Email: r.lecoultre@capeb.fr
	CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail)	Mme Michèle Biaggi CGT – Force ouvrière Tel : 33.1.405.28.415 E-mail : michele.biaggi@force-ouvriere.fr
	EDF-GDF	Mr Christian Puppinck E-mail: Christian.puppinck@edfgdf.fr
Germany	BDA (Confederation of german employers' federations)	Ms Angela Schneider-Bodien M.A. Tel: 30.20.33.19.04 Fax: 30.20.33.19.05 E-mail: a.schneider-bodien@bda-online.de
	DGB (Confederation of German Trade Unions) Division of Gender Equality And Women Policy Henriette Herz-Platz 2 D – 10178 Berlin	Ms Claudia Menne E-mail : Claudia.menne@dgb.de Ms Ines Grabner-Drews ines.grabner-drews@dgb.de Tel: 49.30.24.060 766
	Kommunaler Arbeitgeberverband	Mr Armin Augat E-mail: augat@kav-bayern.de
Greece	FGI (Federation of Greek Industries)	Ms Irini Pari 168 avenue de Cortenbergh 1000 Bruxelles Tel : 02.231.00.53 Fax : 02.280.08.91 E-mail : fig.bxl@skynet.be
	GSEE (Geniki Synomospondia Ergaton Ellados)	Ms Zoa Lanara/elfetheria Gouveri E-mail: g-gynaikion@gsee.gr
Ireland	IBEC (Irish Business and Employers Confederation)	Mr Peter Flood Assistant Director Tel: 353.1.60.51.612 Fax: 353.1.63.81.612

		Email: peter.flood@ibec.ie
	ICTU (Irish Congress of Trade Unions)	Mr David Joyce Policy Officer, Equity 32 Parnell Square Irl- Dublin 1 E-mail: david.joyce@ictu.ie Tel. (353) 1 889.77.77
Italy	CONFINDUSTRIA (Confederation of Italian Industries)	Ms Lucia Scorza Confindustria Viale Astronomia 30 Italy – 00144 Roma Tel : 39.06.590.32.28 Fax : 39.06.590.34.37 Email : l.scorza@confindustria.it
	CNA	Ms Daniela Piccione Email: europa@cna.it E-mail: impr.donna@cna.it Tel.: 0039 06 441 88 270 Fax: 0039 06 442 49 515
	CGIL(Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro)	Ms Aitanga Giraldi E-mail: a.giraldi@sede.cgil.it
Latvia	LBAS (Union of Independent Trade Unions of Latvia)	Ms Iveta Ozola E-mail: iveta.ozola@lbas.lv
	LDDK (Latvijas Darba Deveju Konfederacija)	Ms Daiga Ermsome Vilandes Iela 12-1 Riga 1010, Latvia Tel: 371.72.25.162 Fax: 371.72.24.469 Email: daiga@lddk.lv
Lithuania	LPK (Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists)	Ms Karolina Petraityte E-mail: karolina.petraityte@lpsk.it
Luxemburg	FEDIL (Federation of Luxemburg's Industrialists)	Mr Marc Kieffer 7, rue Alcide de Gasperi, 1013 Luxembourg-Kirchberg Tel : 352.43.23.28 Fax :352.43.53.661 E-mail : marc.kieffer@fedil.lu

	LCGB (Union of the Christian trade unions of Luxembourg)	Secrétariat européen commun CGTL et LCGB 40 boulevard Napoléon 1 ^{er} L- 2210 Luxembourg Tel : 352.29.68.94.24 Gsm : 352 621 31 00 09 Fax : 352.40.63.61 http://www.secec.lu
Malta	Confederation of Maltese trade unions	Mr Anthony Micallef Debono General Secretary e-mail: gensec@cmtu.org.mt Tel : 356.21.23.73.13
	MFOI (Malta Federation of Industry)	Ms Janine Borg Avenue d'Auderghem 289 Tel: 02.736.08.55 E-mail: jborg@mbb.org.mt
The Netherlands	VNO-NCW (Confederation of employers and industries)	Ms Loes van Embden Andres Director VNO-NCW 12 Bezuidenhoutseweg Postbus 93002 NL- 2509 AA The Hague Tel: 31.70.34.90.349 Fax: 31.70.34.90.300 E-mail: emdbenandres@vno-ncw.nl
	FNV (Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging)	Ms Muriel Dalgliesh E-mail : muriel.dalgliesh@vc.fnv.nl Tel : 31.20.581.63.00
Norway	NHO (Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise)	Ms Nina Solli e-mail: nina.solli@nho.no tel : +47 23 08 84 37
	LO (Landsorganisasjonen I Norge)	Ms Karin Enodd E-mail : karin.enodd@lo.no Tel : 47.23.061.746 (work) + 47.41.58.32.68
	YS (Confederation of Vocational Trade Unions)	Ms Hege Hero E-mail: Hege.hero@ys.no Tel: 47.21.01.37.15
Poland	PKPP (Polish Confederation	Ms Katarzyna Sochacka

	of Private Employers)	Rue de Trèves 49 – Bte 7 1040 Bruxelles Tel : 02.28506.16 Fax : 02.230.70.35 E-mail : ksochacka@prywatni.pl
	NSZZ Solidarnosc	Ms Danuta Wojdat E-mail: wojdat@solidarnosc.org.pl Tel: 48.58.308.43.14
Portugal	CIP (Confederation of Portuguese Industry)	Mr Luis Henrique Legal Adviser Avenida 5 de Outubro 35 1º P – 1069 193 Lisboa Tel: 351.21.316 47 00 Fax: 351.357.99.86 e-mail: dajsl@cip.org.pt
	CGTP-IN (Confederação Geral dos Trabalhadores Portugueses – Intersindical Nacional)	Ms Graciete Cruz Executive committee and Secretariat E-mail: graciete.cruz@cgtp.pt Tel: 351.21.32.366.59
	UGT	Ms Paula Estevez E-mail : Paula.esteves@ugt.pt
Slovakia	KOZ SR (Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic)	Ms Naile Prokesova KOZ SR, Slovakia E-mail: Prokesova@kozsr.sk
Slovenia	ZDS (Employers' Association of Slovenia)	Ms Nina Globocnik Dimiceva 9 Ljubljana 1000 Tel: 386.15.630.880 Fax: 386.14 32 72 14 Email: nina.globocnik@zds.si
	ZSSS (Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia)	Ms Kucka Böhm Executive Secretary Dalmatinova 4 SI – 1000 Ljubljana Tel: 386.1.43.41.245 Fax: 386.1.23.17.298 E-mail: lucka.bohm@sindikato-zsss.si
Spain	CEOE (Confederation of	Ms Pilar Iglesias Valcárcel

	Spanish employers)	Labour Relations Department Confederation of Spanish Employers (CEOE) Diego de León, 50 28006 - Madrid Spain Tel: 00 34 91 566 34 01 Fax: 00 34 91 411 19 82 E-mail: laboral@ceoe.es
	UGT (Unión General de Trabajadores) Hortaleza 88 Spain- 28004 Madrid	Ms Elisa Garcia Rodríguez E-mail: egarcia@cec.ugt.org Ms Carmen Garcia Cruz E-mail: cgarcia@cec.ugt.org Gopazo@cec.ugt.org Tel: 34.91.589.78.15 Fax: 34.91.589.77.21
	CC.OO.(Confederación sindical de comisiones obreras)	Ms Carmen Bravo E-mail: carmen.bravo@ccoo.es Ms Belen Morales: bmorales@ccoo.es Tel: 34.91.70.28.096
	Ela (Basque Workers' Union)	Mr Itziar Gabikagogeaskoa ELA Sindikatua E-mail: Igabikagogeaskoa@elasind.org emakume@elasind.org Tel: 34.94.403.77.73
Sweden	Swedish Enterprise (Confederation of Swedish Enterprise)	Mr Lars Gellner Tel: 46.8.55.34.30.57 Fax: 46.8.55.34.30.82 E-mail: lars.gellner@svensktnaringsliv.se
	LO (Swedish Trade Union Confederation)	Mr Berith Götherg E-mail: berith.gothberg@lo.se
	TCO (Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees)	Ms Ulrika Hagström E-mail: ulrika.hagstrom@tco.se Tel : 46.8.78.29.131
	SACO (Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations)	Ms Charlotta Krafft E-mail: charlotte krafft@saco.se
United Kingdom	CBI (Confederation of British Industry)	Ms Hanna Haas Policy Adviser

		Tel: 44.207.395.81.38 E-mail: hanna.haas@cbi.org.uk
	TUC (Trades Union Congress)	Ms Rebecca Gill Policy Officer (Women's Equality) Congress House Great Russell street London WC1B 3LS E-mail: rgill@tuc.org.uk Tel: 020.74.67.13.03 Fax: 020 74 67 13 33
	NHS-Dept Health, Human Resources	Mr Godfrey Perera E-mail: godfrey.perera@nhsemployers.org
	CEEP UK	Ms Tina Weber CEEP UK Policy Officer Tel +44 1254 246 413 Email tina.weber@lge.gov.uk
European level	BUSINESSEUROPE (The Confederation of European Business)	Ms Thérèse de Liedekerke Ms Jeanne Schmitt Av de Cortenbergh, 168 B – 1000 Brussels Tel : +32 2 237 65 37 Fax : +32 2 237 66 37 Email : j.schmitt@businessseurope.eu
	UEAPME (European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises)	Ms Liliane Volozinskis Mr Ralf Drachenberg E-mail: r.drachenberg@ueapme.com Tel: +32-(0)2 285 07 21 Fax:+32 (0)22307861
	CEEP (European Centre of Enterprises with Public Participation and of Enterprises of General Economic Interest)	Ms Inge Reichert Ms Valeria Ronzitti Rue de la Charité, 15 b.12 BE - 1210 Bruxelles Tel.: + 32 (0) 2 219 27 98 Fax: + 32 (0) 2 218 12 13 E-mail : valeria.ronzitti@ceep.eu
	ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation)	Ms Catelene Passchier Ms Sinead Tiernan Bd du Roi Albert II, 5 B – 1210 Brussels Tel.: +32 2 224 05 95

		Fax: +32 2 224 04 54 Email: stiernan@etuc.org
	CEC (confédération européenne des Cadres)	Ms Aude Guillemin Email: guillemin@cec-managers.org
	EUROCADRES	Ms Gina Ebner Email: gina.ebner@eurocadres.org
	EMCEF (European Mine, chemical and Energy Workers' Federation)	Mr Peter Kerckhofs Political Secretary Av. Emile de Béco 109 1050 Bruxelles E-mail: pkerckhofs@emcef.org Tel : 32.2.626.21.88

Annex II



22/03/2005

FRAMEWORK OF ACTIONS ON GENDER EQUALITY

I. SOCIAL PARTNERS' APPROACH

1. The European social partners, BUSINESSEUROPE/UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC⁴ are committed to enhancing gender equality on the labour market and in the workplace. In this context, they have a key role to play. They have adopted the present framework of actions to contribute to the implementation of the Lisbon strategy for economic growth, more and better jobs and social cohesion as well as of the EU legislative framework on equal treatment between women and men.
2. Bearing in mind that the causes of remaining inequalities on labour markets are complex and interlinked, European social partners are convinced that success in tackling them requires integrated strategies to promote gender equality including, in particular, actions to desegregate labour markets and to address gender roles in society. The social partners take as a basic analysis for their joint actions that gender roles and stereotypes have a strong influence on the existing division of labour between men and women, both in the family, the workplace and society at large, producing and reproducing gender gaps. Addressing gender segregation (both horizontal and vertical) in occupations and the labour market on the one hand, and existing barriers for a better compatibility of work and family life for both men and women on the other hand, in an integrated approach, is therefore key.
3. Explicitly addressing gender equality through social partners' actions, at the appropriate levels, in accordance with national industrial relations practice, such as social dialogue, collective bargaining, joint statements, recommendations, etc. helps to create a supportive framework.
4. Embedding gender equality initiatives in broader diversity management policies presents the advantage of responding to increasingly diverse needs of individual women and men in a way which also suits the production requirements of the employer. Such an approach also helps to increase support or involvement of both male and female workers.

⁴ The ETUC delegation includes representatives of the EUROCADRES/CEC Liaison Committee

5. ETUC, CEEP and BUSINESSEUROPE/UEAPME have studied a rich variety of good practice cases, showing that on all relevant levels and in many different ways social partners are contributing to achieving gender equality on the labour market. They have identified four priorities on which they ask national social partners to take action during the next five years. Under each of these priorities, they have highlighted elements on which social partners, acting and intensifying their dialogue at different levels, can add value. Inspired by current practices in various Member States and companies of different sectors and sizes, they identified examples of tools, which can inspire social partners' actions across Europe. A more detailed description of the case studies from which these examples of tools were extracted is provided in the annex.

II. CHALLENGES

6. Living up to the economic, demographic and social challenges facing Europe requires a new perspective on the role of women and men as economic actors in relation to their roles in society. Demographic changes are putting increasing pressure on economies and societies at large. They may also lead to increased and sometimes contradictory pressures on women in particular. The challenge is to encourage women to become or remain active on the labour market. This can only be achieved by an integrated approach, combining measures to promote labour market participation with measures to ensure equal treatment in employment, and actions to allow men and women, to combine professional and family responsibilities.
7. The need to take measures to improve women's participation on the labour market is an integral part of the Lisbon strategy to turn Europe into the most competitive knowledge based society in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth, with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, as illustrated by the following objectives, to be reached by 2010:
 - the objective to reach an employment rate as close as possible to 70 % and to increase the number of women in employment from 51% to more than 60% by 2010 (Lisbon conclusions, 2000);
 - the objective to remove disincentives to women's labour force participation and strive, taking into account the demand for child care facilities and in line with national patterns of provisions, to provide child care by 2010 to at least 90% of children between 3 years old and the mandatory school age and at least 33% of children under three years of age (Council conclusions, Barcelona 2002);
 - the objective to achieve by 2010 a substantial reduction in the gender pay gap in each Member State, through a multi-faceted approach addressing the underlying factors of the gender pay gap, including sectoral and occupational segregation, education and training, job classifications and pay systems, awareness raising and transparency (Council decision of 22 July 2003 on the employment guidelines).

8. Equality between women and men has been one of the fundamental principles of the European Union since the very beginning. Since the 1970's, equal treatment legislation has grown to form a coherent legal framework which has played and will continue to play a crucial role in promoting a more equal participation of women and men in Europe's economies and societies. This has resulted in significant progress towards gender equality across the EU. The EC report on equality between women and men 2004 clearly points to positive evidence that:
- societal patterns have changed over the last twenty years, away from the male breadwinner model to dual-earner families;
 - young women now remain in education and initial vocational training for longer, in the same way as young men do, outnumber men in upper secondary or tertiary education in most Member States and represent the majority of graduates in the EU;
 - employment rates have increased more for women than for men and now stand at 55.6% compared with 50% in the first half of the 1990's;
 - there is a general trend of narrowing gaps between women and men in employment, education and research;
 - participation of women in managerial positions has increased due to the fact that more women entered high level professional and managerial positions in the 1990s.
9. Economic growth and general progress in society have made these developments possible. However, significant gender gaps remain and the economic slowdown experienced since 2001 reveals that women continue to be more vulnerable than men to unemployment and economic inactivity, especially when they have a low level of education. Among the evidence of remaining obstacles to gender equality, the EC report on equality between women and men 2004 highlights the following elements⁵:
- persistent difficulties to reconcile family responsibilities with full time employment illustrated by
 - i. the fact that women with young children have, on average, a lower employment rate by 12.7 percentage points than women without children whereas men with children show 9.5 percentage points higher employment rates than men without children;
 - ii. evidence that women continue to do the majority of work in the home or family, tend to have interrupted patterns of employment, with all potential negative effects for career, wages and pensions, and are over-represented in part-time jobs;
 - statistics on education, which show that despite the fact that women no longer lag behind in level of education
 - i. traditional patterns remain in high education with only 39% of all PhDs awarded to women (compared with 61% to men), and

⁵ This is confirmed in the EC equality report 2005 published in February 2005

- ii. women's and men's educational choices tend to reproduce gender stereotypes with an EU average figure of 36% of women among graduates in science, mathematics and information technology and only 21% in the field of engineering, building and construction;
 - the fact that a high level of occupational and sectoral gender segregation remains in the labour market, with women dominating in low paid and low skilled jobs or in sectors such as health care and social services, education, public administration and retailing while a disproportionate number of men work as technicians, engineers, finance professional and managers;
 - the fact that the EU gender gap in average pay levels is still 16% but that only some countries have taken effective steps towards a significant reduction.
10. The female workforce is a key resource that tends to be under-utilized or under-valued despite the progress made. Further improving the situation of women on labour markets is in the interest of individual women and men, and the economy and society as a whole. Anti-discrimination legislation exists and is necessary but legislation in itself does not bring about gender equality. It requires interaction and cooperation between all relevant actors, in order to address, in an integrated approach, the contradictions and tensions generated at the interface between the household, the community, and employment structures. Social partners are determined to live up to their own responsibilities but public authorities, education institutions and individuals also have a key role to play.
11. Wishing to enhance the overall performance of Europe's labour markets and to contribute to reaching the above mentioned Lisbon objectives through appropriate actions in their own field of responsibility, BUSINESSEUROPE/UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC undertake to encourage social partners at all levels and in all EU countries to step up their involvement in devising and implementing integrated strategies in favour of occupational gender equality.

III. PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

12. The four priorities on which CEEP, BUSINESSEUROPE/UEAPME and ETUC want national social partners to take action during the next five years are set out below:
- addressing gender roles,
 - promoting women in decision-making,
 - supporting work-life balance,
 - tackling the gender pay gap.
13. These priorities are interconnected and of equal importance. Actions at national, sectoral and/or company levels are most effective if the various aspects of these priorities are tackled in an integrated approach.

1. ADDRESSING GENDER ROLES

14. Traditional gender roles and stereotypes continue to have a strong influence on the division of labour between men and women at home, in the workplace and in society at large, and tend to continue a vicious circle of obstacles for achieving gender equality. Although the role of the social partners is not to interfere with private life, social partners do have a role to play in addressing gender roles and stereotypes in employment and in the workplace.
15. In the past three decades, women's employment rates have increased significantly and faster than men's, but not equally in all sectors and occupations. Women tend to be overrepresented in specific areas of activity related to traditional gender roles such as care, education, cleaning, retail etc., and to be underrepresented at higher levels of occupation.
16. Breaking down cultural barriers to ensure that women and men follow a more diverse range of careers and to encourage their participation across the labour market is a complex task given the numerous socio-economic factors to be taken into consideration. It is nevertheless crucial to desegregate labour markets in order to achieve occupational gender equality.
17. A number of EU enterprises reflect on the influence cultural attitudes and gender roles have at the workplace. They check their internal practices and policies in order to actively encourage particular groups of people to enter and remain in employment. Initiatives have also been taken by social partners at company, sectoral and/or national levels, jointly, separately or in cooperation with public authorities.
18. European social partners believe that the following elements are key to fight stereotyped gender roles on the labour market.
 - Promoting non-gender biased education in schools, universities as well as efficient and non-stereotyped careers advice services, for students and those already at work, to enable individuals to make better informed education and career choices. Encouraging pupils, students and parents to consider all the available career options for girls and boys at an early stage. Examples of practical tools to do so include:
 - Organising open days in companies for girls in order to show that pre-conceived ideas about women's compared with men's jobs are not justified in practice and inform them about career options they may not have considered otherwise;
 - Encouraging parents to promote companies as a place for their daughters to pursue careers;
 - Cooperation programmes with public and/or education authorities to raise awareness on labour markets needs;
 - Participation in career fairs.

- Making a special effort to attract girls and young women into technical and scientific professions which can also help address skills and labour shortages hampering economic growth. Examples of practical tools to do so include:
 - Setting targets to increase the number of girls taking up apprenticeships in technical and scientific professions as a way to step up female recruitment in the future;
 - Sending women engaged in technical or scientific occupations as “ambassadors” into schools to inform and raise awareness of girls about opportunities of technical or scientific professions.

- Promoting the recruitment and retention of women and men with adequate skills at the enterprise level in sectors and occupations where they are underrepresented. Acknowledge, and where possible, enrich the skills content of female occupations so as to offer better career paths and opportunities for women in female dominated sectors. Examples of practical tools to do so include:
 - Reviewing the way in which job titles, job descriptions and advertisements are formulated to enhance their attractiveness for women and making managers who recruit aware of the issue;
 - Adapting the workplace to enable a greater gender mix at work (ergonomics, local services);
 - Informing about internal job offers and career prospects on intranet;

- Raising awareness of middle managers in companies on ways to promote equal opportunities for all employees throughout the employment relationship. Examples of practical tools to do so include:
 - Using all available communication tools to highlight top managers’ commitment to a diverse workforce and its benefits both for the workers and the company;
 - Training managers on the benefits of diversity management and making them accountable for the implementation of the company’s diversity policy;
 - Ensuring good information flow between the designated contact persons for staff grievances on equal opportunities issues, and managers, who have the responsibility to take action;
 - Highlighting cases of women breaking new ground;

- Promoting entrepreneurship as a career option for both women and men at sector and/or national level. Examples of practical tools to do so include:
 - Identifying potential female business starters and/or top managers, and train them.
- Encouraging competence development for adults to allow men and women to evolve in their careers throughout life and to address deficits created by the structure of the education system in the past, with particular attention to supporting SMEs in their efforts. Examples of practical tools to do so include:
 - Ensuring transparency and transferability of competences and qualifications;
 - Promoting the participation of low-skilled workers and/or workers in non-standard employment in further education and training and lifelong learning;
 - Setting gender balance objectives at sectoral level for access to vocational training.

2. PROMOTING WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

19. The number of women in decision-making positions in all spheres of society is growing, notably as a result of increased participation of women in the labour market and their success in higher education. However, only 30 % of managers are women, only 10 % of members of boards of directors are women, and only 3 % of CEO's or equivalent positions are taken by women⁶. Social partners have a clear responsibility to ensure that the overall working environment supports a more balanced participation of women and men in decision-making.
20. Companies who have successfully encouraged women's participation at managerial level report that they did so as part of their efforts to achieve a high performance workplace by taking initiatives to release women's untapped potential. Promoting women in decision-making positions is an investment for a more productive, innovative and stimulating working environment and better economic performance. It also contributes to bringing about improvements for women in workplaces and on the labour market in general.
21. European social partners believe that the following elements are key to improve women participation at all levels within enterprises.
- Promoting competence-based gender neutral recruitment in enterprises. Examples of practical tools to do so include:
 - Putting in place transparent and gender neutral recruitment, selection and promotion criteria;

⁶ EC database on women in decision making: http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/women_men_stats

- Checking that the recruitment of women is proportionate to the number of female applications for the job and review results on a regular basis.
- Retaining women in enterprises, to avoid loss of competence. Examples of practical tools to do so include:
 - Discussing at an early stage with employees their career expectations as well as work-life balance needs of both women and men and how to combine them with company's needs;
 - Conducting interviews with women leaving the company to understand the reasons for doing so in order to further refine the company's human resources policy;
 - Conducting regular staff surveys to check employees satisfaction.
- Encouraging career development of both women and men. Top-management's commitment for initiatives promoting women in decision-making positions is key in this respect. Examples of practical tools to do so include:
 - Developing networks, mentoring or self confidence building schemes across enterprises to address the issue of self-deselection;
 - Setting targets for the promotion of women in proportion to the number of women in the relevant occupational level and review results on a regular basis;
 - Identifying possibilities for non linear career development paths alternating periods of higher professional involvement and periods of greater family responsibility as an alternative to a culture of unnecessarily long working hours;
 - Facilitating geographical mobility of managers by helping the worker's partner to find a job in the new region of occupation.
- Promoting female entrepreneurship as a complementary way of increasing women in decision-making and raising women's participation in the labour market. Examples of practical tools to do so include:
 - Putting in place regional programmes for women willing to start their own business;
 - Supporting projects to ease generational handover to women in SMEs.

- Promoting women's role in the social dialogue at all levels, both on the employers' side and the trade union side, is important, notably in collective bargaining committees and units. Special attention should be paid to the possibility for women to take up responsibilities in worker representation, both in terms of scheduling of meetings and availability of facilities.

3. SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

22. Work life balance arrangements can enhance employee satisfaction, promote workplace equality, contribute to an organisation's reputation as an employer of choice, and benefit employers as well as workers. Successful policies to support work-life balance need to be tailored to the needs of individual women and men, bearing in mind that these can vary throughout the life course and taking into account that long and/or irregular working hours can be an obstacle to reconcile work and family life for both men and women. However, it is equally important that account is taken of different companies needs, bearing in mind that these can vary too depending on the production cycle or customers needs. Although workers' and company's needs do not necessarily coincide, the best results are achieved through dialogue in the framework of a win-win approach.
23. While the responsibility of dealing with work-life balance issues arising at the workplace undoubtedly lies with employers and workers, public authorities have a crucial role to play in addressing the wider societal aspects. This applies in particular to ensuring the availability and affordability of quality care facilities, for children, elderly and/or other dependents, to allow men and women to join the labour market. Where appropriate, partnerships between public authorities and social partners can help in devising innovative solutions.
24. Social partners and enterprises across the EU have found numerous ways of supporting workers' efforts to find a good work-life balance. The tools used have varied greatly from enterprise to enterprise and from individual to individual. These policies are often reviewed and adapted to respond effectively to changing workers and companies needs.
25. European social partners believe that the following elements are key to support a good work-life balance.
 - Considering flexible working arrangements that can be taken up on a voluntary basis by both women and men, including leave arrangements, designed in a way that does not undermine their long term participation and position on the labour market. Examples of practical tools to do so include:
 - Making available a mix of various working arrangements that allow for flexibility in working time or the organisation of work, such as part-time work, job-sharing, reduced hours, compressed working week, school term-time working, staggered or gliding hours, time-off and ad hoc home working etc.;

- career breaks and parental leave arrangements.
- Promoting a more balanced take-up of possibilities to ease work-life balance. Examples of practical tools to do so include:
 - Company internal awareness raising schemes to promote take-up of flexible work options, especially by men, including in male dominated professions;
 - Information campaigns about leave possibilities available to both women and men and encouraging parents to share leave periods more equally.
- Jointly approaching public authorities to develop instruments that help increase the availability of accessible and affordable child care facilities of good quality and seeking innovative ways of providing essential private household or caring services. Examples of practical tools to do so include
 - Attracting on site services such as travel office, shops, bank and insurance offices etc;
 - Sponsoring child care centers or providing an allowance covering part of the nursery costs to parents;
 - Creating funds by collective agreements or other means to “mutualise” the costs of maternity or parental leave allowances helps to ensure that women no longer represent a more costly source of labour than men. Similar measures can be useful to support childcare projects addressing specific needs of working parents such as care for sick children, care outside regular opening hours, etc. This can help in particular SMEs.

4. TACKLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

26. Within the EU there is a strong legal framework, based on article 141 of the EU-Treaty, providing women and men with the right to equal pay for equal work and work of equal value. The wages of individual employees are influenced by many different factors. Social partners of all Member States have a clear obligation to ensure that the pay systems they put in place do not lead to pay discrimination between women and men.
27. Social partners are struck by the persistence of a gender pay gap across Europe. It may, among other things signal labour market dysfunction. They are also concerned by the fact that the reasons lying behind this gap are not always well understood. They therefore believe that it is very important to seek to better understand the numerous and complex factors explaining wage differences between women and men and take action accordingly.
28. Recognising the link between labour market segregation and the gender pay gap, social partners at different levels have used or developed a variety of instruments to act on the underlying causes of gender pay differences, such

as equal pay reviews, equality plans, benchmarking, etc. Practice also shows that using modernisation of pay systems as an opportunity for gender mainstreaming can be extremely effective. In the case of a significant overhaul of pay systems, it is essential to plan and spread the implementation of the pay system modification over a sufficiently long period to ensure the financial sustainability of the approach and to avoid jeopardising the competitiveness of companies.

29. European social partners believe that the joint commitment of social partners at all relevant levels and the following elements are key to tackle the gender pay gap.

- Informing about existing legislation on equal pay and giving guidance on how to help closing the gender pay gap at different levels. Examples of practical tools used to do so include:
 - Practical guide, especially for SMEs, on how to live up to their legal obligations;
 - National or sectoral collective agreements or framework agreements.
- Developing clear up to date statistics at sector and/or national level to enable social partners to analyse and understand the complex causes of pay differentials. Promoting the availability of gender specific information at the appropriate levels (national, sectoral and/or company level). Examples of practical tools used to do so include:
 - Develop a joint method, taking into account as wide a range of variables as possible, in order to have a detailed and analytical picture of the underlying causes of wage differences between women and men.
- Ensuring that pay systems, including job evaluation schemes, are transparent and gender neutral and paying attention to the possible discriminatory effects of secondary elements of pay. Using or developing methods and instruments to address the gender pay gap in a systematic way, that allows for monitoring and evaluation as part of a wider strategy. Examples of practical tools used to do so include:
 - Screening job descriptions to check that they don't contain discriminatory elements;
 - Reviewing pay criteria to check that they are not discriminatory;
 - Developing tool kits comprising different elements in order to give background information to negotiators dealing with gender equality issues and to offer practical advice on what employers and workers can do in enterprises;
 - Use existing on-line tools providing information on wage formation and enabling individuals to compare their salaries with that of other employees.

IV. ACTIONS AND FOLLOW-UP

30. The member organisations of BUSINESSEUROPE/UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC (and the liaison committee EUROCADRES/CEC) will promote this framework of actions in Member States at all appropriate levels taking account of national practices, through joint and separate actions, as appropriate. Given the interest of the matter under consideration, the social partners have also decided to transmit this document to all relevant players at European and national levels, including EU sectoral social partners, EU and national public authorities etc.
31. The national social partners will draw up an annual report on the actions carried out in Member States on the four priorities identified. The members of EUROCADRES/CEC have a particular role to play with regard to the priority “promoting women in decision-making”.
32. The European Social Dialogue Committee will be entrusted with the preparation of the overall European report.
33. After four annual reports, the European social partners will evaluate the impact on both companies and workers. This evaluation can lead to an update of the priorities identified and/or an assessment on whether or not additional action is required in one or more of the priority areas.
34. When preparing the next EU social dialogue work programme, the social partners will take account of this framework of actions.
