



74, CHEMIN DE LA FERME DES BOIS
BP 13 - 78950 GAMBAIS

**STUDY ON
INTEGRATING GENDER MAINSTREAMING
INTO EMPLOYMENT POLICIES**

**COVERING PUBLIC-AUTHORITY OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR
EMPLOYMENT POLICIES AND SOCIAL PARTNERS
IN THE 15 MEMBER STATES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

FINAL REPORT

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

July 2002

**INTRODUCTION
OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY**

- **This report sets out the results of a study** carried out at the request of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs **on incorporating gender mainstreaming into employment policies** in the 15 Member States of the European Union.

This study is part of the broad assessment of employment policies and of how they handle problems relating to equal opportunities at work for women and men. Its purpose is not, of course, to duplicate the very comprehensive procedures of the reports on the National Action Plans for Employment (NAPs), but to **throw additional qualitative light on how officials responsible for formulating and implementing public employment policies, and also the social partners, perceive these problems**, notably the approach to gender mainstreaming.

- The report considers:
 - ❖ the opinions of the persons interviewed on the reasons for inequalities between women and men — both as regards the employment market participation rate and inequalities of treatment at work;
 - ❖ their personal attitudes to the approach to gender mainstreaming, the importance they attach to it and their assessments of the tools used for it;
 - ❖ their perspective on the specific aims pursued through that approach in their respective countries, the true importance attached to it in national employment policies, the current state of progress, and barriers to progress;
 - ❖ their opinions on Community action on gender mainstreaming, its legitimacy and usefulness.

The interview guide used is attached to this report. The above topics are outlined therein, but in a different order, for technical interviewing reasons. They were open, in-depth interviews, two hours long on average, carried out by experienced researchers.

- **327 persons were interviewed in the different Member States in the course of the study:** 245 in public organisations concerned with employment policy and equal opportunities for women and men in employment policy and 75 in social-partner organisations; (seven persons from associations dealing with equal opportunities were also included).

These public organisations included the ministries most involved in formulating and implementing such policy at national level, government agencies or relays for public-authority action on employment, plus local groupings and decentralised levels of national public authorities — in varying proportions depending on the Member State and the extent of its decentralisation in this area.

The social partners interviewed included both employers' and employees' organisations.

Details of the sample of persons interviewed is attached.

- **This study was carried out by OPTEM with its permanent partners in the various Member States under the framework contract for qualitative studies managed by the Directorate-General for Press and Communication** (Unit B 1: Opinion Polls, Press Reviews, Europe Direct).

OPTEM was responsible for the design, coordination and summary of the study.

The interviews in the field and the national analyses were carried out respectively by: IFM in Austria, Yellow Window in Belgium, Vilstrup Research in Denmark, Marketing Radar in Finland, OPTEM in France, Echanges Marktforschung in Germany, Focus in Greece, MRBI in Ireland, Market Dynamics International in Italy, OPTEM in Luxembourg, PQR in the Netherlands, Euroteste in Portugal, Escario y Asociados in Spain, Valuescope in Sweden, and Andrew Irving Associates in the United Kingdom.

**SUMMARY OF RESULTS
AND CONCLUSIONS¹**

¹ Detailed results of the study only exist in French.

➤ Causes of inequality between women and men at work

- ❖ **The study aimed to find out how the persons interviewed felt about the root causes of the inequalities between women and men** both in relation to the differences in employment market participation (activity and employment rates) and inequalities at work.

There was broad consensus among the interviewees that the most important root causes were sociological and sociocultural. The traditional roles of women and men in European societies are all based on a common Christian culture. The world of work (in the sense of gainful work outside the home) was historically exclusively or almost exclusively male and the rules and regulations governing its operation were laid down by men. This has pervaded the collective mentality (among men, and also among a good number of women); nevertheless, it has evolved over the past ten years.

Changes have been introduced everywhere, some time ago (in northern Europe) **or more recently** (in southern Europe); **however, they are described in all Member States as slow and gradual**, requiring at least several more generations for a clean break with a situation that goes back so far.

- ❖ **On the whole, the fundamental causes are the same both as regards female and male employment market participation and unequal treatment at work** despite the apparent continuing major differences between Member States where labour market participation is concerned. **In many cases, the official interviewed do not separate the two factors and** even in countries where the female activity rate has (almost) caught up with the male activity rate, **they highlight the importance of the concept of employment quality:** explicitly or implicitly, women's work tends to be regarded merely as an additional source of household income (even where economically necessary), with the repercussions that has on the frequency of part-time work for women, on women's greater propensity to accept work beneath their qualifications and underpaid compared to equally-skilled men's jobs, on the priority given to men's career progress, and on segregation by branch or occupation.

There are naturally many other causes to which the interviewees attach importance and they vary from one country to another — including the impassiveness of political, administrative, economic and social structures; however, the basic problem is a common, collective obliviousness which acts as the main brake on change and permeates all the other causes.

➤ Understanding the approach to gender mainstreaming

⇒ **The concept of gender mainstreaming is not always understood in the same fashion.**

- **Depending on the nature of the responsibilities held: although the concept as a whole is properly understood by persons in charge of equal opportunities, by persons whose duties include the formulation of employment policies** at national central level (or regional level in certain countries with highly decentralised political structures) and particularly by persons who have been directly exposed to Community-level problems in this area, **other persons still often have only vague ideas** and do not really distinguish the concept from the more general issue of progress towards equality at work. Sometimes the concept is misunderstood and regarded as being the same as positive discrimination.
- **Depending on the country: in this respect the "ranking" of understanding does not correspond to the usual assessment of "advanced" and "less advanced" countries** (north and south respectively) **on the question of gender equality.**

The concept of gender mainstreaming, which, for example, appears to have been taken on board extensively in Sweden (Swedish interviewees often considered that they did not wait for Community action to formulate and implement gender mainstreaming), is far less well assimilated in other northern European countries, in particular Denmark and the Netherlands. That does not mean that gender mainstreaming measures have not been undertaken, but understanding of the concept is often unclear, not distinguished from more general problems of gender equality.

Other countries where gender mainstreaming appears particularly well understood by a large proportion of the interviewees include Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Luxembourg.

The main impression received in other Member States is that although the concept has got through to the officials most directly responsible for public employment policies and equal opportunities, it remains vague elsewhere and its comprehension varies considerably.

⇒ **Generally speaking, an obvious barrier to full, widespread understanding of the concept is the unintelligibility of the term**, reflected in the difficulty of its translation. Unable to penetrate an English term which is too concise to be explicit, many people do not translate it and use the English term in the same way as they would use an abbreviation, without really trying to understand everything it can mean and imply; sometimes they use translations into their own language or expressions which only partly cover the concept.

We believe that efforts must be pursued to explain what gender mainstreaming is; otherwise, the main risk is having to deal with counterparts who believe they understand, and we believe that they understand, yet this is not necessarily exactly so.

➤ **Attitudes to the approach to gender mainstreaming**

⇒ **When understood, this approach is very frequently highly regarded:**

- above all, because it tackles the causes of problems, not just their effects and it encourages examination of the numerous causes and the ways they interact;
- because, on this account, it is an awareness-raising tool — given the collective indifference which is the main reason for reluctance to change (more so than deep-seated opposition to changes in the position of women);
- because of the across-the-board measures it implies subsequent to deliberations;
- because it appears to be suitable for imparting momentum to the deliberations on equal opportunities at work, bringing them out of the "ghetto" into which the radical feminist demands of the seventies had pushed them (whatever their legitimacy and usefulness at the time for "bringing the issue into the public domain") and the relative oblivion into which the issue had subsequently fallen;
- because this a long-term approach which makes the conceptual framework sustainable.

⇒ **This approach also has its limits and risks:**

- risks inherent in the very comprehensiveness and fruitfulness of the approach when put into practice. The avenues it opens up are *a priori* so numerous that they may discourage action or result paradoxically in futile dispersion. Policy decision-makers must accept both the need to press on with the analysis and the need to make — even partially arbitrary — choices on points of departure for the action which are necessarily limited. And it must focus on these consistently, at least in a first stage;
- risks of watering down in an over-general framework practical problems of inequality in the treatment of women in employment — mentioned by the trade unions in certain countries and by female officials who took a constructive part in the feminist struggle over the past twenty years and are still activists. However, this fear is not general;
- reservations expressed by employers' organisations, fearing that the measures which might result from implementation of the approach would increase the burden of charges and costs on their firms. This is not so much specific opposition to the gender mainstreaming approach as broad doubts about any public measure which might have such an effect. Although it is clearly and strongly expressed by some of these organisations, others view the question of women's advancement at work more positively in their considerations on the growing need for skilled labour, at least in certain sectors, in the fairly short term.

⇒ Accordingly, **the vast majority of persons interviewed do not distinguish the gender mainstreaming approach from positive action for women** (without, more often than not, going so far as positive discrimination which is strongly resisted in most countries on principle).

The two are in fact seen as complementary: gender mainstreaming provides the necessary framework for fundamental action on which positive measures can be grafted, both to address discrimination in practice which needs to be eliminated and to mark symbolically the political will to push forward — or, borrowing an image from medicine, the preventive and curative approaches are equally necessary.

⇒ **Analysis of the attitudes found in the different Member States reveals substantial differences.**

- Very positive attitudes in Sweden (considered almost as the inventor), Luxembourg (where attention is drawn to the very traditional social structure and collective mentality of the country as regards the respective roles of women and men), Belgium (despite differences between locations and organisations), Germany (where the expression "revolutionary approach" has even been used), France, Ireland, Spain (despite persisting strong reservations in certain male circles), Portugal (which takes great pride in being "the most advanced southern country", despite outstanding problems) and Greece.
- Positive attitudes in Finland too (but with some confusion between gender mainstreaming and action to promote equality in general), Austria and Italy (where the concept's limited transparency does not encourage certain less-well formed interviewees to voice clear-cut opinions).
- More reserved attitudes (although not completely negative) in Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. On the one hand, many of the persons interviewed tend to wonder what priority should be given to equality between women and men, given the other urgent needs of other population groups (immigrants, the socially excluded, the disabled, and so on). On the other, because of their limited understanding of the concept, some people could not express clear opinions.

➤ Tools of gender mainstreaming

⇒ **The notion of gender mainstreaming tools is not always clearly understood.**

Some people believe that the approach itself constitutes a tool (at least a tool for analysis), while for others, gender mainstreaming is a conceptual framework.

⇒ **The interviewees were asked for their views on four types of tools.**

- **Setting up a statistical tool with data systematically broken down by sex**

The interviewees unanimously agreed that it was useful and even necessary: in a field dominated by social stereotypes, pointing up the facts is a first essential stage for determining what should be given priority and also, and this is fundamental, to bring home awareness of inequalities that the public at large would tend to deny or minimise; in more familiar terms, "putting under the spotlight" circumstances which the body social in its entirety, and its decision-makers in particular, are not necessarily aware of (or sometimes, do not want to be aware of).

Two types of doubts are raised by some interviewees: the risk of wrongly interpreting statistical data requiring more than "first degree" analysis; and, seldom however, the costs involved in collecting and processing the data concerned.

Despite big differences between Member States, most interviewees acknowledge the very real progress in this area in recent years.

- **Interdepartmental cooperation and decision mechanisms between government departments**

This is recognised as indispensable and as inherent to the across-the-board approach of gender mainstreaming.

As for the extent to which such mechanisms have been set in place, opinions vary. In most Member States moves were started or strongly encouraged by the procedures used to prepare the NAPs, involving different ministries and officials or contact persons responsible for equal opportunities appointed for that purpose. The extent to which they were given authority, weight, and sufficient means to really get things moving varies substantially from country to country and, within one and the same country, from one government body to another. In addition, the spread of such mechanisms to regional and local levels seems to vary even more and is, more often than not, limited.

- **Training and awareness-building for decision-makers on gender sensitive questions**

Most of the interviewees regard this tool as particularly essential since the fundamental issue is to change mentalities and raise collective awareness.

Moreover, even among persons who are aware of and open to these questions, a great need is felt for explanations on and clarification of the concept (see above concerning ambiguity) and also for training on the methods and means for moving on from deliberations to action.

Many persons recognise the significant shortcomings in the development of training methods and tools at the current stage and the limited availability of tried and tested training in this field.

- **Evaluation methodologies and procedures**

Almost all the interviewees agreed that they are needed; in some countries, the public authority officials even referred to the national authorities' "lack of an evaluation culture".

However, some of them have a limited view of the concept of evaluation procedures, believing that setting in place statistical tools, which should provide information on progress made, is sufficient in itself.

In most countries, it is acknowledged that no assessments are available as action taken under the heading of gender mainstreaming is in the early stages. Attitudes denying or minimising the importance of setting in place such tools at this stage were sometimes noted and resulted from the idea that the fruits of the work would be visible only in the long term; these attitudes were more worrying.

⇒ It was also noted that:

- the NAP exercise in itself is sometimes regarded as a tool: hence, important;
- making human and budget resources available is also a tool as such — with highly differing outcomes between Member States and organisations.

⇒ **Once again, differences between countries can be highlighted:** the dividing lines are not always identical to those found in the general attitudes to the gender mainstreaming approach.

It appears to be in Sweden, Finland, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Portugal that the idea of the tool is clearest; (on occasion, some clarification is needed from the researchers). In contrast, in Luxembourg, Austria, Italy, Spain and Greece, the notion of analysis tools is usually understood, but tools for implementation are less well understood.

➤ **Perception of aims and progress of gender mainstreaming**

⇒ **In most Member States it is generally agreed that gender mainstreaming is not an aim in itself, but a means, an approach or a strategy which serves the goal of equality between women and men.**

There are exceptions, both among "specialists" "dedicated" to the cause and officials less directly concerned who reason in the more limited terms of the task assigned to their own department to introduce this approach, rather than thinking of the general aims of employment policy.

⇒ **In a few Member States**, equality between the sexes at work is indeed a government aim, **but it appears as less of a priority**, less specific, coming within the aim of reducing inequalities in general and encompassing problems relating to the various "disadvantaged" groups (in particular in Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom).

⇒ **The gender mainstreaming approach can also serve economic objectives in the broad sense**: meeting the growing need for skilled labour in certain sectors and optimising the use of skills and human resources, while the improved balance resulting from the "diversity" in the working population is beneficial to the economy.

⇒ **According to the interviewees, the importance attached to gender mainstreaming in their country's employment policies is linked to the importance attached to matters concerned with equality at work for women and men in general.**

These general considerations are reflected in the main in the opinions given on the structure and operation of mechanisms for formulating and bringing into effect employment policies.

One Member State distinguishes itself among all the others: Sweden. The interviewees there regarded their country as a forerunner, with tried and tested gender mainstreaming machinery, having moved on to practical implementation a fair number of years ago.

In the other countries, the views expressed ranged from the idea that the institutional machinery is more or less in place and starting to "produce" in practice, to the idea that it is only just being introduced.

⇒ **In all Member States, the interviewees considered that obstacles remain, although their significance varies**: sociocultural, related to the more or less consistent fear of weaker political will, with repercussions on full-scale introduction of the organisational structures; planning and technical (preparation of tools incomplete); material and financial; or still connected with employers' reluctance on account of the risk of extra wage costs.

Despite the real progress achieved in recent years on the whole and the cautious optimism about the future, many interviewees see the edifice as still relatively fragile.

➤ **Opinions on Community action on gender mainstreaming**

⇒ **The legitimacy of Community action on equality at work for women and men is hardly ever questioned.**

It is symptomatic that this is recognised, with very rare exceptions, even in traditionally Eurosceptic countries, among groups which traditionally have reservations about the Commission and among people who are harshly critical of Community action in other fields.

The Commission is even often credited with innovation (or even, in extreme cases, described as "revolutionary") in regard to equality between women and men on account of the new approaches it has put forward.

Among officials most directly concerned and most directly responsible for equal opportunities in the Member States, Community action is often credited first for having, in a certain fashion, laid down the rules and legitimised the subject. Or, when attention is drawn at the same time to the decisiveness of a national government's political will, it is pointed out that the Community interest in the matter provides a guarantee of sustainability and continuity not necessarily provided by national policies. (Governments may change; the motivation of the key officials may change; the government may have other more important priorities; and so on.)

Many countries have practically no doubts. Doubts are voiced more frequently in other countries more concerned about restricting Community action to major goals and to the overall framework, without interference at national level in bringing practical measures into effect.

⇒ **We attempted to garner opinions on the usefulness of Community action on four aspects.**

- **To contribute to changing mentalities among decision-makers and changing public policy practice**

The indispensable, even decisive, nature of Community action on this matter is very widely recognised.

- **To help develop concepts, approaches and tools**

Views on this aspect are not so uniform. Although many interviewees acknowledged a genuine need, high expectations of the Commission contrast with much more reserved approaches, notably in regard to the applicability of general tools which have to be devised in the light of, or substantially adapted to, social, political and economic circumstances which are perceived as very different from one Member State to another.

- **To foster real exchanges of experiences and best practices**

No-one challenges the legitimacy of the Commission's role here (it is hard to see who else could play it) **and most interviewees have real, high expectations.**

The reservations expressed sometimes (about the transferability of experiences) are far less significant than those expressed about the tools referred to earlier.

Many persons insist that communication by means of written documents is not sufficient; (it is not always easy to understand how to interpret them, given an unfamiliar foreign situation, and they are often fairly formal). Many interviewees would welcome the organisation of "technical" workshops focusing on practical experiences where they could more often meet counterparts from other Member States; the situations in neighbouring countries would "rub off" on them and they could draw useful inspiration from them. They would also like to see more bilateral and multilateral exchanges in the context of actual projects.

Asked about successful examples abroad or unsuccessful examples which might also be a source of inspiration, the same interviewees admitted that they knew very little about this or referred in stereotype fashion to "the northern countries" which were reputed to be "ahead" in this field; they did not have any more practical information.

- **To exert pressure through recommendations to the Member States**

This aspect of the Community action is accepted and recognised as useful or necessary by a large proportion of the interviewees, although in the more Eurosceptic countries more doubts or "precautions for use" were expressed; however, the incentive role was not challenged, provided that national sovereignty was not jeopardised.

In contrast, some of the most dynamic officials, most committed to equality between women and men, said that they would like an even more active role for the Community level so that it could impose and not merely encourage.

⇒ **In addition — at least among those well informed about Community provisions, financial assistance from the ESF** (and sometimes from other Structural Funds): useful support as such and a "carrot"; it could draw out national funds which do not always appear spontaneously.

⇒ Out of all the interviewees, **those most favourably disposed to Community action** were found in Belgium, Finland and Germany (where mention was even made of a "historic opportunity" to breathe fresh life into the issue of equality at work for women and men), France (where it is often considered to have given "decisive" impetus, giving powerful support to the genuine political will of the last government), Ireland (where it is often said that "nothing would have happened without Europe"), and also Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece.

Without going into detail (and, of course, despite the reservations about the effectiveness of Community action on specific aspects), there was very broad consensus in all the Member States on the idea that it is perfectly legitimate for the Commission to do what it does in this field and even more so on recognition that it is also legitimate, even necessary and indispensable, for it to exert pressure on the Member States.

Although there is genuine support, it is less strongly expressed in Luxembourg and Austria (where concern is also expressed about taking local circumstances into consideration).

This is also true of Sweden, but as we have seen, this country considers itself to be ahead, and the usefulness of Community action is perceived as more applicable to other European countries.

Lastly, **in three traditionally Eurosceptic countries**, Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, **although the usefulness of Community action is not denied, it is viewed at a distance**, with fears being raised about the risk of "red tape"; serious doubts were raised about the ability to go beyond the general approach and move onto practical application. **Much stiffer resistance was encountered than elsewhere to the pressure that the Community level might exert, and similar resistance was met with also in Sweden.**

SUMMARY: GENERAL SURVEY OF ATTITUDES

CAUSES OF INEQUALITIES
AT WORK
WOMEN – MEN

CONSENSUS

Basic causes sociocultural
 ► Change slow and gradual everywhere
 (despite different points of departure)

UNDERSTANDING
GENDER
MAINSTREAMING

**CLEAR
ON THE
WHOLE**

- Officials in charge of equality
- Central officials responsible for employment policies

▲ CLEAR

S
L, B, D, F, IRL, P, GR
SF, A
GB, E
DK, NL, I

**UNEVEN/
VAGUE**

- Non-specialist senior staff

**UNEVEN/
▼ VAGUE**

BARRIER TO
UNDERSTANDING

**BASIC
BARRIER**

English term unintelligible, unexplicit
and difficult to translate

SUMMARY: GENERAL SURVEY OF ATTITUDES

POSITIONS
ON
GENDER
MAINSTREAMING

<p>POSITIONS MOSTLY POSITIVE (WHERE CONCEPTS UNDERSTOOD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackles the causes • Raises awareness • Across-the-board approach • Innovative approach • Long term <p>LIMITS/RISKS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of dispersal • Risk of watering down • Opposition (from some) employers' organisations <p>COMPLEMENTARITY/ POSITIVE ACTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic framework/Specific measures • Preventive aspect/Curative aspect 	<p>▲ POSITIVE</p> <p>S L, B, D, F, IRL, P, GR SF, A, , E I</p> <p>DK, NL, GB</p>
--	---

TOOLS FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING

<p>CONSENSUS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistics broken down by gender • Mechanisms for consultation and interministerial decision • Awareness-raising and training • Assessment methodologies and procedures <p>OUTLOOK SOMETIMES LIMITED</p>	<p>▲ FAMILIAR/ CONCEPT OF TOOLS</p> <p>S SF, B, GB, IRL, P</p> <p>DK, NL D, F L, A, I, E, GR</p> <p>▼ LESS FAMILIAR</p>
--	---

SUMMARY: GENERAL SURVEY OF ATTITUDES

OPINIONS
ON AIMS OF
AND PROGRESS MADE
IN
GENDER
MAINSTREAMING

- MAIN VIEWS**
- Means or strategy serving the aim of equality between women and men
- MINORITY VIEWS**
- Aim in itself
 - DK, NL, GB
- ▲ PROCESS ALREADY VERY ADVANCED**
- SF, B, D, A, IRL, F, E, P
- ▼ PROCESS NOW BEING INTRODUCED**
- DK, L, GB, GR, NL, I

PERCEPTION
OF BARRIERS
TO DEVELOPMENT
OF GENDER
MAINSTREAMING

- SOCIOCULTURAL**
- Slow changes in mentalities and social roles
- UNCERTAINTIES/
POLITICAL WILL**
- Process still unstable
 - Low political priority(DK, NL, GB, I)
- ORGANISATIONAL**
- Institutional mechanisms recently introduced
 - Unequal take-up at regional and local level
- MATERIAL/
FINANCIAL**
- Human and financial resources
- LINKED TO
EMPLOYERS'
OPPOSITION**
- Opposition to any risk of extra wage costs (rather than the approach itself)
 - However: opportunities arising from shortage of skilled labour

SUMMARY: GENERAL SURVEY OF ATTITUDES

GENERAL
VIEWS
ON
COMMUNITY
ACTION

**MOSTLY
POSITIVE
VIEWS**

- Motor of progress
- Legitimises interviewees' own action
- Guarantee of sustainability

**▲ VERY POSITIVE
ATTITUDES**

B, D, F, IRL, E, P, GR
SF, L, A, I
DK, NL, GB,
S

▼ RESERVATIONS

VIEWS
ON
DIFFERENT
ASPECTS
OF
COMMUNITY
ACTION

**TO BRING ABOUT CHANGES
IN MENTALITY AND
ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE**

- Positive consensus
- Reservations, particularly in NL, GB

**TO HELP
DEVELOP**

- Need for tools felt to varying degrees (pressing in F, I, E, P, GR in particular)
- Reservations as regards over-general tools and concern about local fine-tuning

CONCEPTS, APPROACHES AND TOOLS

**TO BRING ABOUT CHANGES
IN EXPERIENCES/BEST PRACTICE**

- Usefulness admitted everywhere (particularly strong demand in B, D, A, F, IRL, E, P, GR)
- Great need for more comprehensive and more practical exchanges

**TO EXERT PRESSURE
ON THE MEMBER STATES**

- Usefulness/need broadly recognised
- Greater reluctance/mistrust in S, DK, NL, GB

SOCIAL PARTNERS: EXTENT OF INVOLVEMENT IN GENDER MAINSTREAMING

EMPLOYERS		EMPLOYEES	
Strong involvement	Limited involvement	Limited involvement	Strong involvement
<p>A</p> <p>GR</p> <p>DK</p>	<p>NL</p> <p>I</p>	<p>E</p> <p>B</p> <p>L</p> <p>GB</p>	<p>SF</p> <p>IRL</p> <p>P</p> <p>F</p> <p>D</p>
<p>S</p>			

NB: This table is based on the findings of the survey; however, the social partners were not covered comprehensively. In particular, it was in some cases materially impossible to consult the main employers' organisations and in other cases they refused to be interviewed on gender mainstreaming. The positions indicated are averages. In most countries, the bodies representing SMEs or affiliated to CEEP appeared to be more involved in gender mainstreaming.

Annex:

GENDER MAINSTREAMING STUDY **INTERVIEW GUIDE (FINAL VERSION)**

INTRODUCTION

We have been asked by the European Commission's Directorate General « Employment and Social Affairs » to carry out a study on “gender mainstreaming” in employment policies.

This study aims at understanding how, and to what extent, gender mainstreaming is taken into account in the national policies and action plans in the different European Union countries, in the different areas having direct or indirect impact on employment.

Taking the terms of EU documents, we are not only interested in positive “corrective” measures taken in favour of women but also, in a broader perspective, in how the possible effects of general policies and actions on the respective employment situations of women and men are taken into account, from the early stages of policy design.

Our work plan includes interviews both with officials who are involved in preparing, implementing and evaluating public policies in this respect, and with people in charge of these questions in social partner organisations.

THEME I. RESPONDENT'S PROFILE AND FUNCTIONS

I.1. May I ask you first of all what your functions are, and which tasks they involve ?

- Probe :

Job title

Situation in the interviewed organisation's structure and hierarchy

Exact nature of tasks and responsibilities

I.2. In what, more precisely, does your work deal with questions related to gender mainstreaming in the preparation, implementation or evaluation of employment policies and programmes ?

I.3. Can you please tell me how long have been in this position and how you arrived to this job, and how possibly your functions have changed since the beginning ?

- Probe :

Number of years in present job position

Previous functions

How respondent arrived to present job position

Changes in present functions

I.4. [Respondent profile]

- Sex
- Age (approximate)
- General profile

THEME II. PERSONAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE CONCEPT OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Regardless of the official EU wording, I would like to know how you perceive this question of gender mainstreaming yourself, how you would define it, and in what way it is, or not, an important concept in your own view.

- Probe :

Respondent's personal definition of the concept

Respondent's own perception of the importance of gender mainstreaming

THEME III. GOALS PURSUED AND IMPORTANCE GIVEN TO GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN NATIONAL ACTION PLANS

III.1. Could we please talk about the importance given to these questions in the action plans of the different bodies and organisations concerned. What would you say, generally speaking ?

• Probe :

How objectives are defined and adjusted at national level

Is professional equality between women and men regarded as a goal in itself, or as a means serving other goals, (or both).

What does that imply as regards the preparation, the implementation, and the evaluation of actions plans.

How important (or not) is gender mainstreaming really considered by the different bodies/organisations concerned, and by the different people in charge (Probe into differences of attitudes between different organisations and between different people)

III.2. As regards, more precisely, your own body/organisation and your own responsibilities : what are the specific objectives of gender mainstreaming here and how great is the importance given to these questions in your own action plans ?

• Probe :

How objectives are defined and adjusted in the interviewed body/organisation

Is professional equality between women and men regarded as a goal in itself, or as a means serving other goals (or both)

What does that imply as regards the preparation, the implementation, and the evaluation of action plans ?

How important (or not) is gender mainstreaming really considered by the interviewed body/organisation, and by the different people in charge (Probe into differences of attitudes between different people)

THEME IV. CAUSES OF INEQUALITIES BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN IN THE FIELD OF EMPLOYMENT

I would like to discuss the deep causes of inequalities between women and men in our country, in the different areas that can have an impact on employment.

IV.1. Firstly, regarding inequalities between female and male participation in the employment market (in other words, employment rates), which are these causes, and how do they play ?

• Probe :

Nature of the different causes

Collective mentality

Causes inherent to the country's own social model and social organisation

Attitudes of decision makers in the different types of organisations concerned (public authorities and organisations, enterprises, trade unions, associations...) ; do they really want to act ?

Slowliness and rigidities to change

Any other causes

How does each cause play ?

Are there any perceivable changes ? Which ones ?

IV.2. Secondly, regarding the issue of equal treatment of women and men at work, which are the causes of the existing inequalities, and how do they play ?

• Probe :

Nature of the different causes

Collective mentality

Causes inherent to the country's own social model and social organisation

Attitudes of decision makers in the different types of organisations concerned (public authorities and organisation, enterprises, trade unions, associations...) ; do they really want to act ?

Showliness and rigidities to change

Any other causes

How does each cause play ?

Are there any perceivable changes ? Which ones ?

THEME V. APPROACHES FOR EFFECTIVELY PROMOTING EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN

V.1. There are roughly speaking two kinds of approaches to move towards the achievement of equality between women and men in the field of employment.

Gender mainstreaming approaches, trying to act “upstream” on the causes of inequalities

Approaches based on positive actions to fight against the inequalities and to correct them.

What do you think of the usefulness and effectiveness of each kind of approach :

- a. On the one hand, to improve female participation in the labour market
- b. On the other hand, to reduce inequalities between women et men at work

- Probe :

Judgements on each kind of approaches respectively for a and for b

V.2. However relevant an approach may be in theory, its effectiveness depends on the way and the conditions in which it is designed and implemented.

As regards gender mainstreaming, could you think of two concrete examples of approaches which you regard as (potentially) effective in our country ?

For each one, I would then like to examine how it is designed and implemented in practice, who are the “actors” involved, how they act, and what makes the approach effective.

- Probe, for each example in turn :

Make respondent describe and explain the organisation and the mechanisms set up to deal with the gender mainstreaming issue in national and regional public bodies/organisations/in social partner organisations (including general orientations, but also practical rules and procedures)

How does that work in practice (how do the different actors actually behave with the established organisation, orientations, rules and procedures)

What about the interaction between the different actors (notably the different government departments/agencies involved)

Key factors of effectiveness.

V.3. Conversely, could we discuss in the same way two concrete examples of gender mainstreaming approaches in our country which you regard as (potentially) not or little effective.

- Probe for each example in turn :

Make respondent describe and explain the organisation and the mechanisms set up to deal with the gender mainstreaming issue in national and regional public bodies/organisations/in social partner organisations (including general orientations, but also practical rules and procedures)

How does that work in practice (how do the different actors actually behave with the established organisation, orientations, rules and procedures)

What about the interaction between the different actors (notably the different government departments/agencies involved)

Key factors of ineffectiveness

V.4. Are you aware of examples of effective gender mainstreaming approaches in other European countries which might be a source of inspiration ? Which ones, and what makes them effective ?

- Probe :

Degree of knowledge of, and of interest for examples from abroad

Summary description of a few concrete examples, and identification of effectiveness factors.

THEME VI. TOOLS OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING

VI.1. Let us talk about the « tools » of gender mainstreaming. Which tools are you familiar with, and what do you think about them ?

- Probe :

« Tools » useful, respectively, for policy design, implementation, and evaluation

VI.2. I would like to know your views specifically on different gender mainstreaming “tools” : what you think of each one, and to what extent it is developed and implemented in our country

- a. The setting up of a statistical tool with data systematically broken down by sex
- b. Interdepartmental cooperation and decision mechanisms between government departments
- c. Training and awareness building of decision makers to gender sensitive questions
- d. Evaluation methodologies and procedures, such as proposed in the “Guide to gender impact assessment”

- Probe, successively for each of the tools a, b, c, d :

Degree of knowledge

Judgments on tool’s importance

Judgments on the extent to which the tool is developed and implemented

THEME VII. OBSTACLES TO GENDER MAINSTREAMING

VII.1. Now, regarding the obstacles for designing and implementing policies or action plans in favour of equality between men and women – in a gender mainstreaming perspective.

You mentioned some of them in our discussion : but what are overall the main obstacles in your opinion, and in what way precisely do they impede progress ?

- Probe :

Nature of major obstacles (legislative, sociological, linked to the under-representation of women in higher job positions, organisational, lack of financial means, lack of concepts and “tools”, etc.)

Importance of each one

VII.2. What could or should be done concretely to reduce these obstacles ?

- Probe :

Measures needed to reduce each of the identified obstacles

Possible trigger factors

THEME VIII. OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE SITUATION

VIII.1. Overall, how do you evaluate the way in which gender mainstreaming is taken into account in our country ‘s employment policy ?

- Probe :

What would you change if you had full powers ?

VIII.2. How do you consider the situation in our country compared with some other European countries that you may know about in this respect ?

- Probe :

Own country ahead or backward compared with other European countries (which ones)

Any qualitative differences

THEME IX. JUDGEMENTS ON E.U. ACTION

IX.1. Finally , how do you view the process initiated at European Union Level, and coordinated by the Directorate General “Employment and Social “Affairs” of the Commission, on gender equality in the field of employment and gender mainstreaming ? How useful is it, or not, in your opinion ? Which elements of this process are, or not, useful ?

- Probe :

Legitimacy and usefulness of having an EU level of initiative and decision in this area

Knowledge of EU actions (Directives, Communications, Strategy for Employment, Guide for Employment, Recommendations, etc.)

Overall judgments on the practical usefulness and effectiveness of these actions

IX.2. Could I have your views more specifically on the usefulness and effectiveness of 4 different aspects of E.U. action :

- a. To contribute to change mentalities among decision makers and to change public policy practice
- b. To help develop concepts, approaches or tools
- c. To foster real exchanges of experiences and best practices
- d. To exert pressure through the Recommendations to the member States.

- Probe for each of the aspects a, b, c, d :

Legitimacy of EU action on this aspect

Usefulness, in principle, of EU action in this area

Degree of action's effectiveness to foster changes (Has the action already resulted in changes ? Are results expected at some point in the future.

IDENTITY OF RESPONDENT

- Name of respondent
- Name of organisation
- Department and job title
- Full address
- Telephone
- Fax
- E.mail