



# Equal pay

## Exchange of good practices



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European Commission



# **Equal pay**

## Exchange of good practices

**European Commission**

Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities  
Unit G.1

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Equal pay for equal work is one of the European Union's founding principles. Enshrined in the Treaty of Rome in 1957, it was the subject of the Community's very first legal provision in the field of equal treatment for women and men. A 1975 directive broadened the legal framework, prohibiting all discrimination on the grounds of gender for the same work or for work of equal value in respect of all aspects of pay.

Despite this, the figures reveal a continuing pay gap of 15% on average between male and female workers. Irrespective of any legal framework, this disparity in pay structures is primarily a reflection of the major differences in the types of work performed by women and men. These include differences between the fields of activities and the occupations, but also between the type of education received and between work patterns, such as the inclination to opt for part-time work.

The pay gap generally reflects the inequalities that tradition and social norms bring to bear on women in choosing their education and occupation and in participating in the labour market, as well as on the prestige of female employment. The sectors and occupations that are still clearly acknowledged as being dominated by women are generally less well rewarded than those where men are in the majority. Women still lag behind when it comes to holding managerial positions and they encounter more obstacles and resistance as they proceed along their career paths. Reconciliation between work and private life is still affecting women disproportionately, with the result that they tend to opt for the less prestigious and less financially rewarding professions.

Closing the gender gap is one of the key concerns highlighted in the Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010, which comes in the wake of the Framework strategy on gender equality 2001-2005. An equal pay victory can be won only by acting at all levels, involving all stakeholders and focusing on all the factors that combine to create the gender pay gap.

To support this effort, the European Commission has encouraged exchanges of information and good practices in the field of equal pay for men and women under the fifth Community action programme on equal opportunities (2001-2006). This takes the form of co-funding transnational projects launched by the Member States, local public authorities, NGOs, social partners, and other relevant stakeholders.

These projects have focused on various equal pay issues: some dealt with the role of employers' and employees' representatives or collective bargaining, others concentrated on a specific field of activity or level of governance, and others again sought to tackle stereotypes and raise the awareness of the stakeholders. The variety of approaches adopted reflects the intricate nature of the issue, as highlighted by all the project promoters.

The projects all produced various outcomes: publications, surveys, good practice guides, training modules, guidelines or awareness-raising and information campaigns (websites, conferences). This publication features the profiles of 26 projects co-funded in the context of calls for proposals on the equal pay theme. Each profile provides a brief explanation of the project aims and a review of the methodology and results achieved. Details of the coordinating organisation and its transnational partners are also included, along with the address of the project website where applicable.

This publication is designed to help ensure these tools are distributed, as widely as possible, among all the key players involved in trying to close the gender pay gap, while acting as a source of inspiration and providing food for thought for future action.







**Equal pay**  
Exchange of good practices

# Women at work

**Project name**

Advancing women in the workplace

**Project duration**

19/12/2001 – 19/08/2002

**Country**

United Kingdom

**International partners**

- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Ireland
- National Research and Documentation Centre on Gender Equality, Denmark

**EU subsidy**

EUR 141 297

**Total costs**

EUR 317 633

**Name of the coordinating organisation**

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<http://www.eoc.org.uk>

*The project 'Advancing women in the workplace' wanted to understand women's position in the labour market and the key barriers they face before suggesting practical solutions that employers could use to promote women at work. The UK Government's Women and Equality Unit led the project. It cooperated with Ireland's Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and Denmark's National Research and Documentation Centre on Gender Equality.*

Despite the increasing participation of women in the labour market, few women are in top jobs even in sectors where they make up the majority of the workforce and are the main consumers. Women continue to dominate lower-skilled jobs and certain sectors of the economy.

The partners wanted to look at the business case for promoting women and a more diverse workforce. There was already clear evidence that recruiting and retaining women helped meet skill shortages. A workforce that reflects the diversity of the customer base could improve quality by increasing the company's ability to meet their customer's needs.

**Research points the way**

The partners researched the situation of women in the three countries and looked at 22 case studies to investigate the measures employers have taken to promote women at work. Twelve case studies were from the UK, five from Ireland and five from Denmark.

The case studies surveyed employers' motivations to take action. They also looked at issues such as recruitment and selection, training, the gender pay gap and work/life balance.

### **Good practice handbook produced**

Based on the research, the partners produced a good practice guide for employers and trade unions.

It gives concrete steps on how the two sides of industry can introduce strategies to dismantle the barriers that prevent women from advancing at work. As with the research, the handbook covers areas such as recruitment policies, access to training, combating stereotyping in the workplace and balancing home and work life. It also has a section explaining why it is important to take action.

The handbook draws on the case studies to explain how employers have successfully implemented equality policies in their workplace, while highlighting the benefits they have gained from doing so.

The partners printed and disseminated 13 000 copies of the handbook.

### **Some of the steps for improvement**

The handbook shows that gender stereotyping wastes staff resources. It explains how companies can introduce equality plans and monitor progress.

It gives a checklist to review their selection procedures and recommends gender training for those sitting on selection boards. For promotion, it suggests that both women and men sit on these panels and are trained to improve their impartiality.

Work-related training needs to take account of part-time workers (mostly women). Childcare for those attending training outside normal working hours could ensure more women participate.

On pay, it asks companies if they are confident that they pay equal wages. It suggests they carry out pay audits to be sure.

In male dominated organisations, women could have access to support networks. To introduce women to more senior posts, it suggests job shadowing with senior partners.

Flexible working could enable parents to balance work and family responsibilities, although the handbook said this practice largely benefited women at lower levels in the organisational hierarchy.

### **Conference close**

A three-day conference of over 200 policy-makers and leading company and trade union representatives from across the EU brought the project to a close. It focused on two themes: tackling the long hours culture and advancing women in the workplace.

# Media students put on guard

## Project name

ARESTE – Cornering stereotypes

## Project duration

01/01/2002 – 30/04/2003

## Country

Spain

## International partners

- Centro de Estudos Tributários e Administrativos, Universidade Fernando Pessoa, Portugal
- Comissão para a Igualdade e para os Direitos das Mulheres, Portugal
- Département d'études hispaniques et hispano-américaines, Université Paris 8, France
- Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Educazione, Università degli Studi di Firenze, Italy
- Dipartimento di Scienze dell' Educazione, Università degli Studi di Roma Tre, Italy
- Dipartimento per le pari opportunità, Italy
- Women's Rights and Equality Service, France

## EU subsidy

EUR 300 850

## Total costs

EUR 379 589

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*The media and advertising continue to portray women and men in rigid gender stereotypes. This perpetuates gender discrimination and stops many women and men from stepping out of their roles. ARESTE decided to focus on media students and their teachers to raise their awareness about the impact of stereotyping in their line of work and to help them avoid it. The Directorate General for Women's Affairs of the Ministry of Labour from the Community of Madrid headed the project. Its international partners included universities in Italy, Portugal and France.*

Traditional sexist stereotypes exist in all areas of communication. The picture of women in the role of the housewife, responsible for the domestic environment, and men serving as the income provider of the household, are still prominent in media and advertising. The project believed that ignorance was the main cause for continued gender stereotyping in these sectors. As a result, they set out to produce teaching materials for students pursuing courses related to communication, information and advertising and began a close cooperation with universities to raise awareness on these issues.

## Teaching material produced

Experts from the partner universities put together the initial material and a writing committee then edited and refined the text. The final manual was produced in Spanish, French, Italian and Portuguese. It comprising seven modules covering stereotyping in the written press, and on radio, television, and the Internet.

They also made a CD to accompany the manual. Researchers from the University of Seville and the European University of Madrid worked with technical experts to put this together.

To complete the set of teaching materials, the partners also published a collection of cards reproducing advertisements and publicity pieces. The cards presented examples of good and bad practice to be studied from a gender perspective in order to stimulate discussions with teachers and students.

In total, their material amounted to a 60-hour teacher-led course which could also be used for individual study.

### **Spreading the word**

Throughout the project, partners kept in close contact with university departments teaching media and communication. These departments received the material when it was ready and were encouraged to use it in their courses and also to organise lectures and discussion groups on how the media depicts the image of women and men.

The university partners also played an important role in disseminating the material within their own departments. They exchanged views on the material with other faculty members and used it with students in lectures, training courses and research projects.

The ARESTE project helped to increase the understanding of how images and oral and written messages can maintain stereotypes. They contributed

towards changing this mentality, which is necessary to achieve real gender equality.

The project closed with a European seminar to present the material. They discussed it with other universities and practitioners interested in introducing such courses.

# Learning to speak with employers

## Project name

BETSY – Benchmarking as a tool for realising equal pay

## Project duration

01/01/2002 –31/03/2003

## Country

Sweden

## International partners

- Arcidonna - La Luna, Italy
- Fundacion Mujeres, Spain
- Gender Institute Sachsen – Anhalt, GISA, Germany
- Government of Åland Islands, Finland
- Programa Dona, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Spain

## EU subsidy

EUR 292 334

## Total costs

EUR 387 224

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*Employers need to be convinced that equal pay makes business sense. BETSY set out to inform them about their legal obligations but also to use their language to gain their support and help them to introduce equal pay changes. Coordinated by the County Administrative Board of Stockholm, it involved partners from Italy, Spain, Germany and Finland (Åland).*

## Training the negotiators

BETSY set up networks in each partner country to create a dialogue between wage negotiators, social partners, experts and others working for equal pay. It then trained some 800 wage-negotiators and consultants on how to tackle the equal pay gap.

A group of 14 employers were also involved in developing and testing a web-based job evaluation system while at least 27 private and public employers, two of them European companies, started activities for equal pay.

## Learning the equal wage game

The project designed and tested tools including questionnaires and interactive tests to help companies analyse their equal pay status. They were made available on the five-language project website [www.equalpay.nu](http://www.equalpay.nu) (Swedish, English, German, Italian and Spanish). The tools cover all aspects of the wage-setting process from signing collective agreements and carrying out job evaluations to the design, analysis and monitoring of equal pay action plans. To help employers and employees understand the intricacies of equal pay, the partners collected examples of good practices from other companies and organisations and identified books, research papers and useful website links.

To publicise the website, they published a brochure entitled 'How well does your organisation work with equal pay?' which was sent to more than 10 000 companies in Sweden. Over 3 200 people visited the website each month during the project period.

### **Reasons for equal pay**

Betsy gave employers business reasons to introduce equal pay. These include the following:

- Women make most buying decisions. A staff mix that reflects the buyer market at all levels of a company will result in better products and services.
- Women represent an under-utilised skills reserve. More women than men are university trained and this is not reflected in their pay and position in the labour market. A better use of their skills can lead to greater profitability.
- Sound staff and wage policies reduce undesirable turnover avoiding the costs of seeking and training new staff, allowing human resources to be used more productively.
- Equal pay ensures job skills and responsibilities are rewarded increasing staff satisfaction.
- Companies that gain a reputation for discriminating against women are more likely to lose the confidence of investors, shareholders, staff and customers, and also risk being taken to court or brought before an equal opportunities complaints board.

### **Support to introduce equal pay**

Equal pay must be integrated into the overall company strategy as recruitment, skills development, working conditions, training, promotion, etc. all have an impact on the wage structure. BETSY used and further developed a method entitled 'Gender equality in management systems – GEMS' (available on their website) to help companies make such an analysis.

The method is the brainchild of the project coordinator, the Stockholm County Administrative Board. Project partners taught the 40 companies and organisations in their networks how to use it. By introducing the gender perspective into management, it helps employers to explore where their companies stand on equal pay and provides a basis for further action to change pay discrepancies. The method can also grade an organisation's gender effort so that its progress can be compared with other employers.

### **Employees given helping hand**

Partners also developed and made available on their website three quick tests for employers and their employees.

The first has nine questions to help management gain a profile of their equal pay performance.

Employees can complete the second questionnaire to help them evaluate their jobs. With eight questions, they have a profile of how difficult their work is, rather than what those around them think. They can then use this profile to negotiate with their employers.

A third questionnaire helps them to see how to negotiate a pay rise.

### **Spreading the word**

Together with the European project on equal pay (PEP), Betsy organised a major seminar to share and exchange experiences on how to reduce the pay gap. Experts and professionals from different European countries participated. Speakers presented proof to show that equal pay is a good business practice and gave examples of how companies have gone about to make equal pay a reality for their employees.



# Promoting equality in rural areas

## Project name

CESEC+ – Rural Information  
carrefours in support of gender  
equality

## Project duration

31/12/2001 – 30/03/2003

## Country

France

## International partners

- CRE de Guadajoz (ADEGUA) et de Rioja ( CEIP), Spain
- CRE de Ligurie ( ISEFT), Italy
- CRE de Macedonia ( American Farm School), Greece
- CRE de Mecklenburg-Vorpommern ( New-wege Peene-Nord e.v), Germany

## EU subsidy

EUR 318 311

## Total costs

EUR 401 103

## Name of the coordinating organisation

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*Women in rural area suffer greater pay discrimination than women in the cities. A network of rural information centres, the rural carrefours, worked together on this project to raise awareness and train decision-makers and others in power to understand gender discrimination. The Rural Information carrefour for Women of the Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur (PACA) region led the project. It worked in partnership with two Spanish carrefours (from Andalusia and La Rioja), a Greek carrefour (from Central Macedonia), an Italian carrefour (from Liguria) and a German carrefour (from Mecklenburg-Vorpommern). A second French carrefour (from Pyrénées Languedoc Roussillon) was also involved. They identified the inequalities affecting women in rural communities, highlighted best practices and made policy recommendations.*

This group of information centres has been working together since 1999, in previous projects, to improve equality between women and men in Europe's rural areas. In CESEC+ they built on their past achievements.

## Database improved

One of the first tasks was to reinforce their database of equality-aware organisations based in their areas that are willing to work in partnership with others to improve the situation of women. These organisations work in all kinds of sectors including culture, education, youth, information and local development.

## Common reflection on inequalities

Each partner then organised study groups of women



and men to discuss their life in rural areas and what policies and measures they would like to see to make gender equality a reality.

Armed with information from the groups, the partners drew up policy reports identifying the difficulties faced by women trying to enter the labour market and suggesting possible solutions.

They presented these reports to specially created committees comprising local decision-makers, officials and pressure groups working on development. The partners set up these committees to create a line of communication between the study groups, representing local demands, and those in power who can make a difference.

All the study groups echoed one finding. It was motherhood rather than being a woman that gave rise to most inequalities. Young qualified women were less likely to get the top jobs compared to their male colleagues because one day ‘they will have children’. And when they do, ‘they will be dependent on school hours and childcare facilities and will not be able to come to work as often as men’. There were also fears about ‘absence, late arrival and their state of mind if the child is sick’.

### **Training gender equality**

The project designed training for local decision-makers to explain gender mainstreaming and positive actions. All the partners then organised local training sessions and seminars working with local officials and other decision-makers to raise their awareness and teach them how to implement gender mainstreaming in policy and practice. The

partners strongly recommend that equality training is adapted to suit the special needs and economic situation of each region.

### **Road to equality continues**

In their previous project, the partners had identified equality aware organisations in their regions along a virtual road running from the PACA region to Andalusia via Germany and Greece. This road, available on their website, allows visitors to cross the continent of Europe visiting organisations that are incorporating equality in their work practice and services.

In this project, the partners strengthened the road of equality by holding meetings and debates along the route in the different partner regions highlighting good practice.

# Developing local equality plans

**Project name**

City-Dona

**Project duration**

01/09/2003 – 28/03/2003

**Country**

Spain

**International partners**

- City of Carpi, Italy
- City of Guimarães, Portugal
- City of Thurrock, United Kingdom

**EU subsidy**

EUR 253 997

**Total costs**

EUR 326 000

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*The City-Dona project wanted to explore how cities can involve their local communities in promoting equal opportunities for women and men. They wanted to do this by using a participative decision-making methodology for strategic local planning. The Spanish Ajutament de Terrassa led the project. The other cities involved were Carpi in Italy, Guimarães in Portugal and Thurrock in the UK.*

Each partner experimented with different aspects of developing a local action plan. Thurrock concentrated on equal pay, Terrassa worked on developing equality plans, Guimarães focused on education and culture and Carpi on awareness raising.

**Equal pay study brings results**

Thurrock Council asked Sheffield Hallam University to look at equal pay and employment in the area. The report confirmed that women in Thurrock earned 29% less than men. It also showed that women graduates had lower starting salaries and poorer pay prospects than their male counterparts. The gender pay gap was largest in the private sector, among part-time workers, and in sectors where men earned high pay, such as financial services.

The study made a number of recommendations including awareness raising about the gender pay gap, providing information on how to tackle it, introducing positive action programmes, establishing partnerships with employers and trade unions and providing adequate services for parents and carers.

Thurrock Council was convinced that more had to be done and created an Executive Councillor for Women to develop its strategy.

### **Guide on local plan produced**

Terrassa organised two-hour interviews with some 50 local key people and surveyed 19 women's organisations to find out their thoughts on gender equality in different sectors (for example, culture, education, sport, health, media, universities).

They then organised what they called an 'exploration' meeting inviting some 400 participants. The key people that they had interviewed were given five minutes to present three factors that they felt prevented equality between women and men in their sector and what they thought should be done about it.

Education, pay discrimination and unequal working conditions, and the lack of women in political life came top of the participant's list.

After this conference, Terrassa set up working groups to come up with a local action plan. They worked on three themes: citizenship, quality of life and work, and the working environment. They identified the weak and strong points and the challenges facing the city.

Terrassa wrote their strategic local planning methodology in a practical guide for other cities to use.

### **Equality training developed**

Carpi developed training for what it called the dynamic agents for equality – gender equality practitioners, trainers, employers, trade unions, NGOs, and those responsible for vocational training, guidance and labour market integration. The main focus of these workshops and seminars was to explore how policy and practice can promote work/life balance.

Guimarães concentrated on education and culture. They offered awareness raising training to a number of schools that agreed to incorporate the lessons learned in their teaching practice.

They also worked with a local theatre company to design a play on the history of the city exploring the theme 'democracy and parity'. The play targeted school students with difficulties and highlighted women's role in building the city. The writer and actors worked with teachers and their students to write the play. They were also involved in the rehearsals and performance.

### **Cities committed to equality**

The partners closed the project with a European conference to present their experiences. The main focus was how local authorities get public and private organisations more involved, as well as individuals in a common effort to promote equality.

They argued that councils must act as equality pioneers in their cities working in cooperation with public and private sector organisations and schools on a platform for change.

# Men rule music and media arts

**Project name**

Cultural gates

**Project duration**

31/12/2001 – 31/03/2003

**Country**

Germany

**International partners**

- Finn-Ekvit, Finland
- Mediacult, Austria
- Observatorio das Actividades Culturais, Portugal

**EU subsidy**

EUR 310 115

**Total costs**

EUR 394 103

**Name of the coordinating organisation**

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*The cultural industry is a fast growing one with many women entering the sector. But the top jobs do not reflect this. The European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research (ERICarts), the project coordinator, wanted to explore the obstacles that prevent women from rising to the top in these professions. It cooperated with media organisations in Austria, Finland and Portugal.*

The project decided to focus on the long established music business and the newer media arts. It wanted to see if women faced similar barriers irrespective of the structure of the two branches.

Each partner selected a research team to carry out the analysis in their country. They looked in particular at the role of what they described as ‘gatekeepers’. These are persons within an organisation that hold key decision-making positions and have the power to control the people to be promoted.

**Collecting the results**

The research teams collected statistics on women in decision-making posts and interviewed artists and gatekeepers from the two research fields. They analysed a selected number of music and media arts institutions and looked at all aspects of the industry from education, to creation, production, distribution and management.

They used the data to determine where the gatekeepers were located, who recruited them, their duties and the role they played in staff selection.

The project published the national results in separate reports. It also published a comparative report

bringing together all the findings. These reports are available on the project website.

### **Barriers found**

The researchers found that stereotypes in the music industry impaired women's chances both in training and in gaining teaching posts in music academies.

Men occupied the highest artistic decision-making positions in key institutions such as orchestras and companies responsible for organising music festivals. They were usually recruited through informal networks and political decision-making and not through impartial selection processes.

The partners also found few women running the media arts or in high positions such as artistic director even though there were many women students in this branch. They were surprised to find that women did not do better in the media arts where there is less of a hierarchical structure.

### **Call for action to open the door for women**

Partners highlighted that many women artists oppose quotas or specific actions to promote them but at the same time accept that targeted measures have helped.

They said music and media bodies had to be more transparent in how they hire staff and recruit for their top jobs.

They also recommend more women role models in schools, universities and conservatories with gender awareness training for teachers. Information campaigns that promote the role of women artists

and challenge their portrayal – especially in the music business where they are often presented as sex objects – can also help. Campaigns could also illustrate the contribution that women make to the arts.

Governments could play an important role by making public funds for music and art universities conditional on the availability of support programmes for women and more clarity in staffing procedures.

The project also suggested a reform of the childcare system to provide affordable and flexible day and night care services necessary for artists and musicians who perform at night or have to go on tour. This, they felt, was a key area that needed to be tackled if women were to move into higher positions.

# Combating the gender pay gap

**Project name**

DEUCE

**Project duration**

01/01/2002 – 30/06/2003

**Country**

Belgium

**International partners**

- Crasform Onlus, Italy
- E.K.A.T.O. Greece
- International Training Centre for Women, The Netherlands
- Språngbrådan Utvecklingskonsulter, Sweden
- University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam Institute of Advanced Labour Studies, The Netherlands

**EU subsidy**

EUR 238 161

**Total costs**

EUR 298 725

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*Women remain trapped in the poorly paid jobs, rarely make it to the top and, when they do, earn less than their male colleagues. Unskilled or low-skilled women also find it more difficult than their male colleagues to access training. The Ministry of the Flemish Community led this project with European partners from Italy, Greece, Sweden and the Netherlands to highlight the problem faced by female workers and suggested policies and measures to speed up change.*

As a first step, the partners made an inventory of measures that the different partner countries have taken to tackle pay discrimination. They wrote up their findings in a report entitled *Labour market statistics from a gender perspective*, as well as in national reports on each country. These include information on: the legislation in place to promote women in the workplace and how it has been implemented; the female/male ratio in different branches; employment/activity rates according to gender and sector; unemployment rates according to gender; female employee characteristics such as age, family situation, educational level, working hours and conditions as well as wages and fees; organisations employing women; data about women and men at the top; and characteristics of unskilled and semi-skilled female employees.

**Identifying good practice**

Partners identified an example from their country to help bridge the gender pay gap. They presented it to the other partners and to specially created focus groups in each country. These groups comprised employer and trade union organisations, enterprises,

training bodies, women's organisations, journalists, equality bodies and policy-makers. Their role was to examine the selected good practices and suggest solutions to tackle the equal pay gap.

The good practices included:

- a 'Family and business audit' from Flanders,
- a 'wage indicator website' from the Netherlands,
- a Greek award to encourage enterprises to avoid stereotypes in advertising,
- the Swedish Equality Act and the country's equal opportunities ombudsman,
- an Italian 'gender-neutral evaluation system' that took account of skills identified with women such as problem solving and conflict control.

### **Recommendations made**

The focus groups came up with a number of recommendations. They put a lot of emphasis on the role of trade unions especially when negotiating collective agreements. In addition, trade unions were in a strong position to argue for measures to promote women's career developments such as individual coaching, better career guidance and suitable training. They could also push for the introduction of flexible working arrangements to facilitate the work/life balance.

Employers could initiate the same measures: take care when fixing their wage structures; allow flexible work arrangements; and provide women with appropriate training. They could also introduce mentorship schemes for women. The focus groups also liked the idea of job rotation so as to help women move up

within the company. This works by offering low-skilled female training. For this period, they are replaced with a job seeker and both gain in work experience and skills. They urged campaigns targeting schools but also teachers and parents to encourage girls and boys to make wider job choices. Companies could get involved by sending their personnel managers as ambassadors to schools to inform girls about the opportunities their company or sector can offer them.

Government campaigns could encourage companies to introduce positive actions and motivate them to draw up equality plans that include training for low-skilled women.

The partners created a special web page with information on the project, the best practices and suggestions to tackle the pay gap.



# Call for sectoral attack on the pay gap

## Project name

Developing sectoral strategies to address gender pay gaps

## Project duration

31/2/2001 – 28/02/2003

## Country

Ireland

## International partners

- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, United Kingdom
- Equality Unit of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Finland
- Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communication, Sweden

## EU subsidy

EUR 330 034

## Total costs

EUR 417 244

## Name of the coordinating organisation

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform of the Irish Government

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- Finland: [www.stm.fi/english/publicat/publications\\_fset.htm](http://www.stm.fi/english/publicat/publications_fset.htm)
- Sweden: [www.equalpay.nu](http://www.equalpay.nu)

*The gender pay gap differs across sectors but there have been few studies done on why this is the case. This partnership wanted to find out more. It picked the IT (information technology), retail and food sectors for its study. Ireland's Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform – the Ministry responsible for gender equality – led the project. It cooperated with the Equality Commission in Northern Ireland, Finland's Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Sweden's Ministry for Industry, Employment & Communication.*

The partners selected the retail and food sectors because they are characterised as low-paid sectors and have a high proportion of female employees. The IT sector offered a contrast as it employs a greater proportion of men and is better paid.

## National and comparative reports published

Each partner analysed the selected sectors in their country. They built on existing research mapping women's profiles in each sector and codifying work procedures, practices and pay. They published the results for each country separately in national reports and also made recommendations to tackle pay differences.

Using the national data, the project leader produced a comparative report bringing together the findings and recommendations.

They presented their results at an international conference in Dublin where employers, trade unions, policy-makers and gender equality practitioners attended.



### **Occupational segregation a culprit**

The partner's comparative analysis confirmed that the gender pay gap is widespread and persistent. They also found that the size of the pay gap varied depending on the sector. It was smaller in sectors such as IT, where women represented a smaller proportion of the overall workforce, and significantly bigger in the retail sector, where women represented a larger proportion of employees.

They said occupational segregation was possibly the most critical factor to explain the pay gap with women underrepresented in higher paid occupations and in promoted posts. They warned that in all sectors, career progression and promotion widened the gender pay gap. This is particularly the case in sectors such as food and retail, where formal qualifications are less important. Here, the partners found strong occupational segregation, with men dominating senior posts. Skill differences between women and men could not readily explain this. In sectors such as IT, however, where qualifications are more important, women's lower qualifications were an important contributor to the pay gap.

### **Sectoral solutions preferred**

The partners said that as the gender pay gap varies by sector, 'economy-wide' policies might be less effective than sectoral strategies. For example, employers in food and retail must be made aware that unequal pay and unequal opportunity exists within their industries and organisations. The partners found that retail firms did not recognise that a problem existed, yet, in these sectors, women have poorer promotion prospects for reasons that are not apparent.

They urged more measures to encourage women's career developments and to remove obstacles in their paths. For example, companies could 'gender proof' their systems of promotion and higher level recruitment and take remedial action if needed.

In sectors where technical qualifications are essential, women face an immediate problem as they often lack the necessary qualifications. The partners said action here must focus on schools and the educational and career choices of girls and boys. But they also said that this does not mean that the only problem in such sectors relates to qualifications. There remains an unexplained gender pay gap and no certainty that unequal treatment is not a factor.

Women's labour force attachment may also be a problem. Women can lose out on promotion because of breaks in their employment history. Women with children, for example, may be less mobile and less able to pursue the 'best' employment choices for them.

### **All pay gap causes call for action**

The partners emphasised that if 'objective' structural factors explain wage differences, this does not imply that the situation is acceptable or that there is no case for policy action. If differences in skills and qualifications explain the pay gap, this begs the question why women are less likely to secure qualifications. If women are concentrated in low-paid jobs then the question arises why so many women move into low-paid employment. If the explanation lies in employer practices then it is necessary to consider why employers follow such practices and how these practices may be changed.

# Dow Jones in the feminine

**Project name**

Dow Jane

**Project duration**

01/01/2002 – 31/03/2003

**Country**

France

**International partners**

- CORA, Italy
- CORAli, Italy
- FLORA, Belgium
- Idea Lavoro, Italy
- Retravailler Liège, Belgium

**EU subsidy**

EUR 322 763

**Total costs**

EUR 408 981

**Name of the coordinating organisation**

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*Dow Jane is a wordplay feminising the Dow Jones stock exchange index. It's a reminder that money is not just for men. The project wanted to challenge the stereotypical attitudes towards the value of work and money in our societies that contribute to maintaining the equal pay gap. The national union of the French Retravailler network of organisations led this project with partners from Italy and Belgium.*

The partners believed that these different gender-based stereotypes partly explained the equal pay gap of between 25% and 27% in the three project countries. They wanted to raise awareness among both general public and socio-economic actors and to achieve this, the project developed information material to foster change.

Their first target group were those in power to influence salary levels – economic and social decision-makers, trainers and managers. Women and men looking for work was their second target group.

**Competence has nothing to do with gender**

The partners highlighted the importance of money in professional choice. Despite the large numbers of women on the labour market, the male breadwinner model still dominates and impacts on the value and pay of different jobs.

Jobs dominated by women are not valued in the same way as those dominated by men. They are considered as complementary and secondary to men's wages and as a result women are paid less. Women and men seem to accept this overall ideology or, at least, do not challenge it.

To address stereotypical attitudes the project developed many different tools. One of these was an educational toolkit. The objective of the kit was to mobilise individuals and socio-economic actors in reducing inequalities and to provide tools to combat stereotypes. It includes material to raise awareness of the equal pay gap. The training material consists of a booklet and CD-Rom with data, information and even games to help change attitudes to work and money. The partners developed and tested it in a number of national and thematic workshops organised during the project.

The booklet gives guidelines on how to organise awareness-raising actions and training sessions.

The CD-Rom provides statistics on wage inequalities in the three participating countries; a comparison of equal pay laws and jurisprudence; an analysis of social and family policies that can have an impact on the pay gap; and a number of interviews.

It also has an instructive section that explains how to run awareness-raising sessions, gives concrete examples and includes interactive games and exercises. A special emphasis was put on making these dynamic and personalised to achieve greater impact.

The educative package is available in French and Italian and was disseminated in the partner countries during seminars and conferences.

### **Conference concludes project**

The project closed with a conference in Brussels. It

focused on two themes: reassessing the differing value placed on work and money; and finding strategies to achieve equality between women and men.

# Putting equality in collective bargaining

**Project name**

Equal pay in collective bargaining

**Project duration**

1/02/2002 – 31/03/2003

**Country**

Spain

**International partners**

- DGB, Germany
- FNV, The Netherlands
- KETHI, Greece
- UIL, Italy

**EU subsidy**

EUR 260 191

**Total costs**

EUR 325 917

**Name of the coordinating organisation**

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*Collective agreements cover the wages of the majority of the EU's employees. This should ensure that there are no wage discrepancies between men and women. But equal pay laws and collective agreements have not managed to shift the equal pay gap that now stands between 18% and 33% and, in some countries, continues to grow. The Spanish General Union of Workers (UGT), the project coordinator, teamed up with trade unions from the Netherlands, Italy and Germany and a Greek research centre for gender equality, KETHI, for this project that focuses on collective agreements and their role in ensuring equal pay.*

Employers often point to structural factors to explain the difference in pay between women and men. For example, women are concentrated in lower paid sectors, more women than men are in precarious jobs, and many women enter the labour market later than men and take career breaks to bring up their families reducing their opportunities as a result.

But the partners argued that structural differences offer a partial explanation. A key reason is the lower value that society attributes to the jobs that women dominate.

**Looking for the pay gap**

The project partners analysed a number of collective agreements to identify if there was any gender discrimination. They published the results in a report entitled *Equal pay in collective bargaining – the Spanish, Italian, German, Greek and Dutch situation*.

The national studies confirmed that collective agreements indirectly discriminated against women even if there was no intention to disadvantage them. As the partners suspected at the start of the project, the main problem was that work dominated by women, as well as qualities identified with women, were systematically undervalued.

They also found that the dynamics of collective bargaining often reproduced the contents of previous conventions importing, at the same time, discriminatory mechanisms.

The partners confirmed that equal pay was rarely an important point in collective bargaining. Negotiators were usually unaware that there was a gender pay gap and employees ignored their legal rights in this field.

The lack of women in collective bargaining and the absence of negotiators who were motivated and sufficiently trained on equal opportunities accentuated the problem.

### **Good practice guide published**

Based on the research, the partners put together a good practice guide entitled *Wage equality in the collective bargaining*. Containing recommendations and examples of good practice, the partners hoped that collective bargaining negotiators would use it.

The guide urged negotiators to incorporate equality clauses in collective agreements and provide employees with clear procedures to challenge

pay and benefit decisions if they consider them discriminatory.

### **Minimum standards recommended**

The guide's recommendations include:

- collective agreements must expressly incorporate the concept of equal pay for work of equal value;
- employers and trade unions must monitor equal pay compliance and have the power to take remedial measures;
- an official body should evaluate externally each collective agreement before it can come into force in order to ensure it respects equal pay;
- the number of female negotiators must be increased;
- all negotiators of collective agreements need equality training to understand the complexities of indirect discrimination;
- measures are necessary to combat occupational segregation;
- negotiators need to understand more fully the implications of the practical impact of equal pay for work of equal value with job evaluation schemes ensuring that female dominated jobs and those skills that are identified with women are not underpaid.

# Learning about equal pay

**Project name**

Equal pay – Mind the gap

**Project duration**

01/01/2002–31/03/2003

**Country**

Greece

**International partners**

- EFFAT (European Federation of Trade Unions in the Food, Agriculture and Tourism)
- ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation) Women's Committee
- EWLA (European Women Lawyers Association)
- UGT (Union General de Trabajadores), Departamento Confederal de la Mujer (Spain)

**EU subsidy**

EUR 256 055

**Total costs**

EUR 392 127

**Name of the coordinating organisation**

Research Centre for Gender Equality  
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*Women in Greece earn on average 32% less than their male colleagues, one of the highest pay gaps in Europe (SES study, 1998). The Athens-based Research Centre for Gender Equality, KETHI, designed this project to raise awareness and put equal pay on the political agenda. It teamed up with the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and its Women's Committee, the European Federation of Trade Unions in the Food, Agriculture and Tourism sector (EFFAT), the European Women Lawyers Association (EWLA) and the Spanish Union General de Trabajadores (UGT). The project organised a nationwide campaign on equal pay. It backed it up with a helpline and legal support to women with equal pay claims and a network of lawyers that it trained to take such cases to court.*

**Preparing the ground**

To deal with equal pay cases, the project organised information seminars for lawyers. They looked at European and national equal pay law, the concept of gender equality, sexual harassment and how lawyers can help women take their cases to court. In total 227 lawyers attended these seminars, which became the backbone of the project's referral programme and legal aid scheme.

**Pay gap campaign success**

Over the two months of November and December 2002, KETHI organised a television and radio campaign on equal pay. Its spots were broadcast free of charge on the 14 national television channels and 8 local ones as well as 26 radio stations. In addition, it advertised in newspapers and disseminated 70 000 postcards and 500 information folders through cinemas, restaurants and shopping centres.

To accompany the campaign it set up a toll free telephone line providing callers with equal pay information. Many of the calls received during the two months involved inequalities at work; the equal pay cases were forwarded to KETHI centres across Greece.

### **Legal aid scheme piloted**

Often women do not challenge their employers in the courts because of the prohibitive legal costs. The project provided a solution: it set up a pilot legal aid scheme to support equality claims in collaboration with the Athens, Thessaloniki, Patras, Herakleion and Volos Bar Associations.

The project enlisted the help of the lawyers that had participated in the training seminars. Women with equal pay cases were first referred to one of KETHI's counselling centres. If the centre felt that it was worth testing the case in the courts, they contacted the local bar to appoint one of the lawyers ready to take on such cases. In this way, KETHI supported more than 180 cases, for most of which a decision is pending.

### **Defining the pay gap**

The project also researched the causes of the equal pay gap in Greece. Project partners said a key reason for pay inequalities is due to the professional and sectoral job segregation. Also crucial were job classification schemes and employer perceptions that undervalued skills that are more closely identified with women and female dominated jobs.

There was clear evidence that women's different career paths have an impact on their wages. Career breaks to bring up their children often meant at best a slower climb up the career ladder and, at worst,

getting stuck in jobs below their qualifications and experience.

In addition, the project found evidence of direct discrimination. Many employers continued to believe that pay inequality is 'normal'. They also feared the cost of introducing equal pay despite long-term production benefits. This was particularly the case in small businesses where pay structures were unclear and trade unions absent. The project also revealed that often women did not think their employer discriminated against them even if there were grounds to suggest this.

In addition, the partners analysed a number of sectors more closely. They carried out a qualitative research of equal pay in tourism which included interviews with employees and employers. They looked at the pay gap in tourism, banking, health, retail commerce and analysed gender pay in collective work agreements. Finally, they looked at the social and economic factors that contribute to gender pay inequality.

### **End conference calls for more action**

The project closed with a European Conference held in Athens in February 2003. Politicians, trade unionists, academics, researchers, and representatives of women's organisations participated.

It maintained that increasing the minimum wage contributed to reducing pay differentials as well as combating poverty. They strongly argued for more targeted training courses for women to increase their skills and supported pay audits to analyse how employers calculate pay structures.



# Equal pay revisited

## Project name

European project on equal pay (PEP)

## Project duration

01/01/2002 - 31/03/2003

## Country

Sweden

## International partners

- Bundesministerium für Soziale Sicherheit und Generation, Austria
- The Danish National Research and Documentation Centre on Gender Equality, Denmark
- The Norwegian Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, Norway

## EU subsidy

EUR 517 905

## Total costs

EUR 674 532

## Name of the coordinating organisation

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*The EU banned pay discrimination between women and men in 1976, but the wage gap remains. A report on pay differentials between women and men published during the 2001 Swedish Presidency showed that women in the EU were paid around 75% of men's wages. The wage difference in Sweden and Denmark was around 18% and in Austria some 26%. Segregation of the labour market with female-dominated occupations being paid less than occupations dominated by men is a key cause of pay disparity. Sweden's Equal Opportunities Ombudsman led this project to raise equal pay awareness, train those responsible for negotiating pay and develop tools to help them combat the stubborn pay gap. It teamed up with organisations in Austria, Denmark and Norway. From the start, it closely cooperated with the European BETSY project, developing a common website and co-organising the final project conference with them.*

## Influencing pay negotiations

One of the first project tasks was to present the case for equal pay, pointing out the advantages to companies. They collected the evidence to prove to employers that equal pay was more than a legal obligation and could actually boost company profitability and work efficiency.

They argued that as women make the majority of consumer decisions, they could better mirror the concerns and demands of consumers. Paying women and men equally prevented staff wastage and contributed to staff performance and growth. Women were often more skilled and over qualified for their jobs constituting a skills reserve for their employers.



They also highlighted that today's pay systems needed to reflect employees' actual responsibilities, abilities and performance and not only their position in an organisation or the time spent at work.

If these arguments are insufficient to convince companies, the partners stated that they had to be made aware of the bottom line: a failure to pay equal wages for work of equal value could lead to costly litigation, damaging court cases resulting in a loss of investor confidence and an erosion of their consumer base.

### **Tools for change**

The partners developed simple checklists and other resource material to help employers take a fresh look at their pay structures. These were posted on the project website.

Their checklist for collective agreements told employers to always ask themselves a number of questions in their search for discriminatory schemes. These include:

- How many men/women are affected by a measure and how many men/women are involved in a measure?
- How are the resources of space, money and time distributed between the different sexes?
- Which gender rules and values (affecting both men and women) are identified in the planning and design of a measure?

Other tools guide wage negotiators on how to assess a job to avoid discriminatory pay decisions. This quick method helps them establish skills, responsibility

and work content to determine the demands and degree of difficulty of a job or groups of jobs. They can then compare it with others to establish equal value.

### **Women are paid less**

Individual women were also given support to make their pay claims. The partners argue that women, in general, are not as comfortable as men when it comes to discussing money and especially their salary. They do not keep track of their current value on the open market with the same assiduity as men and often they are not as assertive in negotiating for increases as their male colleagues. They are also less willing than men to change jobs just to gain a modest salary increase. The partners believe that this attitude contributes to the pay gap and needs changing.

### **Training bears fruit**

The project trained some 1 100 persons through lectures, workshops, dialogue with individuals or smaller groups, discussions and practical training.

At least 27 private and public employers started equal pay activities as a result of this training using the project tools as support. Some organisations even started their own training programmes for their wage-setting managers and human resource departments.

# Motivating girls into professions

**Project name**

GAP Europe – Participation and sustainable development

**Project duration**

01/01/2002 – 31/03/2003

**Country**

Germany

**International partners**

- BBJ (Bruxelles sede italiana), Italy
- Sunwork, Austria
- TIFS, Germany

**EU subsidy**

EUR 235 859

**Total costs**

EUR 297 287

**Name of the coordinating organisation**

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*The partners from Germany, Italy and Austria wanted to see more girls following political, technical and scientific careers. They decided to study what kept girls out of these professions and how they could be motivated to get involved. The German-based organisation 'LIFE – Women develop eco-technology' led the project with partners in Italy and Austria.*

Researchers in each of the partner countries studied three sectors: politics, environmental protection and sciences. They looked at girl's participation levels, at the educational system, and even parents' and teachers' expectations, to see how these impact on girls. The aim of this analysis was to produce guidelines and recommendations as to how girls and young women could become involved on an equal basis.

**Study compares results**

The national results were compared and published in a report that is available in German, English and Italian.

The comparative report highlights that although gender equality has been explicitly stated as a government goal in all three countries, the political and educational structures do not follow suit. Hidden and stubborn discrimination continues.

In addition, although women's income share has risen considerably over the past years, there has been little change in the private division of labour. Women continue to do most of the household work, look after the children, and care for elderly and needy relatives.

This division of labour in the home and gender-stereotypical behaviour has an impact on young people's perceptions of themselves and the role they are expected to play in society.

But the partners also found that girls assumed that they had a right to an equal life and were not aware of gender discrimination.

They said girls did not like to be treated differently from boys as they felt this relegated them to second-class citizens and gave the impression they had to catch up with boys.

To encourage and motivate girls, governments and project promoters need to reconsider their tactics. They need to embrace the varied needs of girls and ensure that they operate schemes in a way that encourages girls and boys to participate without risking the girls feeling that they need special support.

The project said that girls are interested in many subjects and no longer 'belong to a uniform interest group'.

They identified 17 best practice examples (10 in Germany, 2 in Italy and 5 in Austria) that awakened girls' interest in the three sectors.

### **A Girls action plan proposed**

Finally, the partners drew up a Girls action plan (GAP). It emphasised that parents and teachers played a key role in shaping girls' interests and expectations of themselves.

It said girls' interests in all fields should be encouraged. They need support to develop their self-confidence and permission to be different.

Teachers need to be made aware of their impact on girls' career choices and be helped to understand how schools can reinforce gender stereotyping. Teacher

training can cover how teaching practice can better address the learning needs of girls and of boys.

It is also important that boys are given a chance to examine gender roles in society and to understand that such discussions help shape their life choices too and are not only for girls.

Also important was peer-socialisation. Young people often like doing the same as their peer group and do not like to stand out. This is the same for girls. Schools could organise meetings on specific topics for girls across age groups or classes.

Youth organisations can look at their work practices. They could set up quotas, job rotation or even mentoring schemes.

Advertisements for competitions in the scientific field could consciously address girls. Scientific bodies could involve more women in their management and assessment boards for scientific competitions.

Science and technology education should start in primary school to avoid gender specific channelling of interests at an early age.

The project's publications are available in English, German and Italian on their website [www.gap-europe.de](http://www.gap-europe.de)

# Sharpening equal pay rights

## Project name

Guaranteeing equal pay rights - Legislation and mechanisms for ensuring greater protection

## Project duration

01/2002 – 04/2002

## Country

Portugal

## International partners

- Department of Equal Opportunities, Italy
- Department of Equality, Justice and Law Reform, Ireland
- Ministère de la Promotion féminine, Luxembourg
- Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, Norway

## EU subsidy

EUR 133 330

## Total costs

EUR 207 302

## Name of the coordinating organisation

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*Since 1975, EU law guarantees equal pay for women and men doing the same work or work of equal value. Member States also introduced such legislation keeping in line with EU law. But despite this, employers continue to pay women less than men throughout the EU. The Portuguese Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment (CITE), the country's national equality body, led this project to strengthen equal pay compliance. It teamed up with equivalent bodies in Ireland (Department of Equality, Justice and Law Reform), Norway (Ministry of Children and Family Affairs), Italy (Department of Equal Opportunities) and Luxembourg (Ministère de la Promotion féminine).*

The partners looked at their own country's equal pay provisions and how they are enforced. They then compared the results, looking for examples of good practice by using a common questionnaire to make comparison easier. It asked each partner to identify how difficult it was to enforce equal pay in their countries, the level of discrimination that exists there, what they think are the causes of the pay gap, and their suggestions on how to improve implementation.

## Equal pay gap explained

They came up with numerous reasons to explain the difficulties of challenging the equal pay gap. These include:

- lack of information among the social partners on existing rights;
- breaches of employment contracts;
- difficulties in defining and classifying job categories in collective bargaining;

- problems in finding a balance between the right to equal pay and the right to balance work and family life;
- employers and trade unions using different interpretations of the concepts of direct and indirect discrimination; and
- difficulty in implementing the principle at judicial level.

The partners analysed the good practice cases they had identified to propose legislative guidelines and make recommendations to improve the equal pay legal framework.

### **Training the law enforcers**

The project team went on to design an awareness-raising training course, which was aimed at professionals responsible for applying equal pay legislation.

It invited judges and public prosecutors, teachers, lawyers, labour inspectors and collective bargaining negotiators to participate. Some 50 people from this target group were selected to follow the course over three days. They looked at EU equal pay law and the jurisprudence that has resulted.

### **Equal pay manual for pay professionals**

The partners also developed and produced an equal pay reference manual and educational module targeted at labour inspectors, magistrates and other professionals in the labour and employment field.

The manual covers a range of themes connected with the right to equal pay. It includes EU equal pay

law; European Court of Justice jurisprudence; an explanation of the right to equal pay as enshrined in national laws; an economic and statistical analysis of pay imbalances; and the different mechanisms to enforce the law.

### **Conference examines obstacles to equal pay**

In March 2003, partners organised a conference at Lisbon University to close the project and discuss their results. Participants from the legal, academic and employment worlds came together to identify measures that would increase the effectiveness of equal pay. Their suggestions included:

- raising awareness and offering training campaigns on gender equality for social partners and negotiators;
- implementing good practice in collective bargaining;
- raising awareness about equal pay among legal practitioners and supervisory bodies; and
- introducing new regulatory instruments.

Participants also highlighted the importance of collective bargaining and alternative ways of settling disputes.

# Major conference looks at equal pay

## Project name

International conference: Equal pay  
– Models and initiatives on equal pay

## Project duration

31/12/2001 – 30/06/2002

## Country

Germany

## International partners

- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Ireland
- Ministerium für Soziales und Arbeit, The Netherlands
- University of Linz, Austria

## EU subsidy

EUR 253 147

## Total costs

EUR 429 765

## Name of the coordinating organisation

Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend

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*The German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth organised a major equal pay conference in Berlin in June 2002 in cooperation with its partners, the Dutch and Irish Governments. Some 300 experts from 19 different Member States contributed to the discussion. They came from the worlds of science, politics and civil society. The organisers wanted to raise awareness on equal pay and on the important role of job evaluation schemes in accentuating and preventing pay gaps between women and men.*

Opening the conference, Renate Schmidt, Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth said evidence showed that collective agreements and internal company procedures, criteria and rules for job evaluation are not gender neutral.

## Putting a value on women's skills

Participants from employers and trade unions as well as academics looked at all aspects of pay – the value of jobs, wage negotiations, the perks that go with, etc. Speakers presented concrete examples of how equal pay can be advanced, notably from the Netherlands, Sweden and Finland.

They explained how non-discriminatory job evaluation models could be introduced. This included putting an equal value on activities that are important for many women-dominated occupations such as the ability to communicate, empathy, and responsibility for human life or for the success of social processes.

They warned that non-discriminatory job evaluation procedures are a prerequisite for more wage

equality even though they cannot, on their own, end all indirect pay discrimination.

Other speakers discussed the impact of wage policies on the pay gap including what employers and trade unions can do when negotiating wages.

### **Equal pay checklist presented**

The conference looked at a checklist developed by Dutch employer and employee organisations to promote equal pay. It addresses the many elements of pay systems that could disguise unjustified indirect discrimination. A key factor is the value employers put on experience gained in unpaid work, which is particularly important in the case of women.

The checklist comprises 10 questions. They include the following:

- Does the pay system discriminate between employees on the basis of working hours or type of contract?
- Are the criteria that are used to rank employees in the wage scale non-sexist?
- In practice, does the pay system guarantee equal pay for men and women?
- Are salary increases for comparable jobs equal?
- Are men and women equally eligible for fringe benefits?
- Are men and women equally eligible for retirement benefits? And do they also apply to part-time employees?
- Are men and women equally eligible for incidental supplements, allowances or bonuses?

### **Code of practice published**

On the occasion of the conference, the Ministry also

published a ‘Code of Practice on the implementation of equal pay for work of equal value for men and women’, available in English and German. This consolidates the European Commission’s Code of Practice published in July 1996. It guides employers and trade unions on how to introduce and maintain equal pay in their companies and provides steps, tools and instruments to verify and implement pay equity.

The code highlights the importance of fairer job assessment. The problem is that jobs predominately held by women are commonly undervalued and, as a result, are lower paid. It also suggests that companies regularly deliver remuneration equivalence reports on their pay.

The code reminds employers and trade unions that equal pay is not a voluntary gesture but a legal obligation.

The Code of Practice and the conference reports are available on the Ministry’s website ( [www.bmfsfj.de](http://www.bmfsfj.de)) in English and German.



# Assessing jobs for wage differences

## Project name

ISOS – Wage differences between women and men and job evaluation

## Project duration

31/12/2001 – 31/03/2003

## Country

Spain

## International partners

- University of Helsinki, Finland
- University of Leeds, United Kingdom

## EU subsidy

EUR 243 689

## Total costs

EUR 304 611

## Name of the coordinating organisation

Instituto de la Mujer, Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales

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*To understand more fully the continuing pay gap between women and men, this team set out to examine if there was a link between gender-based wage discrimination and the characteristics of a job. The Institute of Women of the Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs led the project, working in partnership with a number of universities in Spain as well as the UK's University of Leeds and Finland's University of Helsinki.*

The project started with two surveys to discover the views of employers and employees. Focusing on Spain's three biggest communities – Andalusia, Catalonia and Madrid – the partners designed and sent a questionnaire to the human resources directors of a number of companies to learn about their workforce composition and wage structures.

At the same time, they carried out a second survey targeting the workers of these companies. They asked them about their background, their professional experience and training, and the jobs they held.

The information from the two surveys was analysed to discover if companies paid their male and female employees differently and how far these differences had their origin in their job characteristics.

## A focus on sectors

The project partners also carried out other studies. They compared gender wage differences in Catalonia and the rest of Spain looking at several branches of activity. The results revealed a higher pay gap between women and men in Catalonia than in the



rest of Spain. They explained this by the fact that men earned a higher hourly wage in Catalonia and that women were concentrated in branches of activity that had the lowest wages.

Another study compared several European countries looking at the relationship between job characteristics and the wages employers paid to identify if a different pattern emerged for women and men. The authors concluded that job characteristics explained an important proportion of wage differences between women and men. In all the countries analysed, they said employers paid men between 5% and 30% more than women.

The partners published the results of their studies in an article entitled *An Investigation of the Relationship between job characteristics and the gender wage gap* providing evidence of such a link.

### **Job-assessment tool designed**

Based on the research results, the partners created two computer programmes: a tool for the evaluation of job positions and one to help employers spot job discrimination in their companies.

The job-assessment tool, called ISOS, allows the user to evaluate the jobs of any type of organisation ensuring they pay equal wages for work of equal value. First, the user has to complete a questionnaire describing a job. ISOS uses these answers to evaluate the job giving it a number of points. The user could be a work inspector, a judge, a trade union or worker representative, or even a worker. In short, anyone who wants to compare if two jobs are of equal value.

### **Wage discrimination detection developed**

The project's second programme is called ADSSE (Analysis of gender wage differential in companies). It helps the user to detect if a company has a discriminatory wage structure. To analyse a job, the user feeds in the data on worker's pay sheets as well as some additional information. ADSSE then compares the salary structure by category, type of occupation and job evaluation point scores to see if there are differences between women and men exposing discriminatory practices.

The partners presented their research and the two computer evaluation tools at a European conference they organised in Madrid.

# Entering local politics

## Project name

MAGAP – Gender mainstreaming in the public administration

## Project duration

01/01/2002 – 28/02/2003

## Country

Spain

## International partners

- BGC Consultant, Italy
- Poliedra Progetti SPA, Italy
- Western Greece Development Centre, Greece

## EU Subsidy

EUR 336 222

## Total costs

EUR 424 657

## Name of the coordinating organisation

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*Led by the Women's department of the Provincial Council of Granada, this partnership wanted to increase the number of women in local political and administrative decision-making bodies. It focused on the people (usually men) who were responsible for selecting and appointing others to sit on these bodies. With its European partners, it developed and tested its methodology in the following provinces: Granada in Spain, Turin and Salerno in Italy and Patras in Greece.*

## Rural areas in focus

Most of the research on women's participation in public life concerns national and regional politics and there has been little study of local politics where women are almost absent from public life.

The project tried to remedy this. It looked at jobs of responsibility and decision-making within local political bodies to assess women's participation and the reasons that may keep them out of holding such posts. They also analysed how the stakeholders themselves perceived their positions.

They published their results in a report entitled *Research on Gender-Based Participation in Local Public Administrations in Rural Environments*.

## Tools for change

The project then designed a training programme for those in decision-making posts to make them aware of gender discrimination and what they could do to encourage more women to enter local public life.

In total, it trained 337 people – 209 women and 128 men – in the three partner countries.

The training helped women and men working in public authorities, social actors and those who are responsible for policy implementation to change attitudes on the role of women in public life and consider introducing an equal opportunities slant when drafting and implementing policies.

The first part of the training was informative looking at inequality between women and men and explaining some of the causes.

Participants then looked at equality law and institutional mechanisms that they can introduce to promote equality.

The third session was practical, providing participants with tools to help them analyse their policies and practise incorporating gender equality throughout.

The project packaged this information in a training manual that also comprised a glossary of terms and a list of bibliographical references and online resources on equal opportunity.

### **Good practice guide produced**

At the end of the project, the partners published a good practice guide entitled *Strategies for gender mainstreaming implementation in local public administration*. Based on the project's work, it includes the strategies, methods and tools developed and tested by the partners.

# Looking out for inequalities

## Project name

Observatoria: Gender mainstreaming  
– A strategy to reduce pay differences

## Project duration

31/12/2001 – 31/03/2003

## Country

Austria

## International partners

- ARCIDONNA, Italy
- Centre de Documentation et d'Information des Femmes et des Familles, France
- Centre d'Information féminin de la Loire, France
- Fundación Mujeres, Spain
- Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen Faculteit der Managementwetenschappen, The Netherlands

## EU subsidy

EUR 220 621

## Total costs

EUR 284 298

## Name of the coordinating organisation

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*Observatoria tested gender mainstreaming policies to see how successful they have been in reducing gender pay differences and made recommendations. It also wanted to see how far NGOs are involved in gender mainstreaming strategies. The Network of Austrian Counselling Centres for Women and Girls, which is an umbrella organisation of 39 counselling organisations in eight Austrian provinces, led the project. It had partners in Italy, Spain, the Netherlands and France.*

In some EU Member States tools have been developed for monitoring the effectiveness and the benefit of social policy and employment measures for women. The project wanted to examine this gender mainstreaming implementation and come up with suggestions for tools that take account of regional and national differences.

The Austrian network introduced the principle of gender mainstreaming and set up special committees at various levels in charge of its implementation.

## Regional groups set up

It set up 11 regional observatories in six Austrian provinces and in the partner countries. They comprised equality and labour market policy experts from public institutions and NGOs.

Their job was to examine the impact of employment and social policy measures on women's income and make suggestions for developing and applying effective tools of gender mainstreaming to reduce income differentials.

The partners introduced the observatories to various gender mainstreaming tools (the 3R method, Gender impact assessment etc.). The observatories used these tools to test the impact of selected measures on pay. At the same time, they tested the effectiveness of the tools and came up with improvements.

An online observatory was also set up to monitor job market developments and survey, examine and document the implementation of gender mainstreaming to reduce the equal pay gap.

### **Involving NGOs**

The partners strongly believed that NGOs had to be involved in this gender mainstreaming work.

The project partners found that NGOs, and especially women's organisations, had a lot of expertise to offer to public bodies and businesses implementing and monitoring gender mainstreaming. Yet public authorities and businesses did not automatically include them.

Up until now NGOs have not been very involved in gender mainstreaming because of financial and ideological restraints. They said little effort has been made to spread information about this key strategy and because of this they lack information about the area. As a first step, the project suggested that more NGOs need to be involved in gender mainstreaming. Additionally the project suggested measures to prepare NGOs for gender mainstreaming.

If policy-makers are to attract more NGOs then they have to be aware of the pressures they work under. Their tight budget lines leave them with little time to be involved in unpaid policy development.

In addition, many women's organisations are sceptical about gender mainstreaming, and the public and private sector needs to show them that there is a sincere wish for change.

The partners also said that NGOs must look at themselves and change their self-image if they are to increase their involvement in policy development and monitoring.

# Learning to mainstream equality

**Project name**

Olympia de Gouges

**Project duration**

31/12/2001 – 31/03/2003

**Country**

Spain

**International partners**

- Equal Opportunities Office for the Women of the City of Munich, Germany
- Province of La Spezia, Italy

**EU subsidy**

EUR 233 508

**Total costs**

EUR 336 728

**Name of the coordinating organisation**

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*The EU promoted the gender mainstreaming strategy in the 1990s in recognition that equality laws alone were inadequate to remove deep-rooted and persistent discrimination. The Technical Office for Barcelona's provincial council's equality plan led a project, which examined how local authorities can implement mainstreaming strategies to promote equality between women in their administrations, policies and practice. It had already developed and tested a gender analysis methodology in a previous pilot action that involved 30 town councils. In this project, it aimed to compare its methodology with others and identify good practice. It worked in cooperation with Munich's Equal Opportunities Office and the Italian Province of La Spezia.*

The partners identified best practices in their countries and applied the Barcelona methodology. They published their findings in a book entitled *Good practices and gender audit. Tools for local Policy*, which is available on the website.

The book has two sections. The first outlines the best practices they had identified in the partner countries. It gives local authorities examples of what they can do to promote equality. The second section presents the methodology.

**Three steps to mainstreaming**

The book takes the reader through different steps of introducing gender mainstreaming.

One of the tools is aimed at gathering information about an organisation. Called the 'Analysis and diagnosis (AD) methodology', it guides readers through three types of analysis.

The first focuses on statistical data such as the activity of each department and their budget, the number of women and men working there, their age, marital status, the number of children they have, their education and training, and the possibilities for staff mobility.

They also recommend an analysis of company documents to draw up an institutional profile. This covers the organisational chart and policy papers on, for example, staff recruitment, selection, promotion and salaries.

A final questionnaire looks at the staff's socio-demographic and professional characteristics including type of employment contract and working hours, their career history, voluntary work and political and social participation outside the organisation.

The fact-finding is concluded with a series of semi-structured interviews and discussion groups involving staff from all professional levels and spheres of the organisation. This gives a space for staff to evaluate policies and give their impression of management and work practices, promotion and informal networks.

### **Measuring gender sensitivity**

The second tool helps authorities to assess the level of gender sensibility in their organisations. They define gender-sensitivity as the capacity of a person, institution or organisation to recognise and accept the presence of a gender dimension in all spheres of society. It involves looking at management's sensitivity as well as the organisation's values and perceptions on equal opportunities.

The project recommends that a company examines the following organisational factors to determine gender sensitivity: openness to gender issues; the institutional context including the organisation's equality objectives, both explicit and implicit; its personnel policy; organisational culture; staff opinion, values and perceptions concerning equal opportunities; and the views of direct/indirect policy beneficiaries and outside bodies working in the area of gender.

### **Networking for equality**

The third tool gives local authorities the basis for introducing a participative methodology to develop gender policy.

It outlines strategies on how to involve the local community in identifying needs and requirements to promote gender equality as well as prepare them with equality action plans.

### **Travelling exhibition**

Barcelona also designed and produced a travelling exhibition called '21st century woman' which it made available to the municipalities of the province of Barcelona.

It consisted of six panels covering decision-making, work, education, family, health and violence. Each panel described an action taken by a local authority linked to the discussed topic. For example, the panel covering family issues presented ways to promote a work/life balance by sharing domestic work.



# Working for equal pay in retail

## Project name

Pre-requisites for the successful implementation of equal pay in the retail sector

## Project duration

01/12/2001 – 31/05/2003

## Country

Germany

## International partners

- Johannes Kepler Universität Linz – Netzwerk für Forschung, Lehre und Praxis, Austria
- Research & Consultancy in Work and Employment, United Kingdom

## EU subsidy

EUR 225 222

## Total costs

EUR 281 528

## Name of the coordinating organisation

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*The retail sector, dominated by women workers especially in the lower ranks, was the focus of this equal pay project led by one of Germany's largest labour research institutes, the Sozialforschungsstelle Dortmund (SFS) working in cooperation with researchers from Austria and the UK. The project's team of researchers set out to analyse wage regulations affecting this sector in Germany, the UK and Austria, talk with employers and trade unions to understand how they see the problem and the steps, if any, that they have taken to close equal pay gaps in their sector.*

## Equal pay not recognised as a problem

The research team quickly found that equal pay was not one of the retail sector's priorities. Employers and unions seemed confident that there were no pay discrepancies between women and men in their sector and that they were complying with equal pay legislation. There was little awareness of the existence of vertical segregation that prevents many women from moving up the career ladder from the lower paid jobs – which they dominate – into the better-paid ones dominated by men.

When employers accepted there was a problem, they feared the high cost of reversing gender segregation in top jobs and opening up bottlenecks in women's career developments. They were also reluctant to invest in staff training because of the sector's high employee turnover.

## Barriers revealed

Research teams in each partner country analysed the retail sector using the same criteria. They looked at equal pay laws and relevant national pay agreements. They then examined a number of companies more closely looking at their pay practices, assessing their compliance to equal pay legislation, analysing their

wage structures and examining the reasons for non-compliance.

Researchers then compared the country data looking in particular at the sector's collective agreements.

They identified what they described as technical obstacles and political barriers that prevented retail sector employers and trade unions from ensuring equal pay compliance.

The key technical obstacle was that both sides of industry in the sector did not think they had an equal pay problem. Retail companies argued that they paid fairly and equally. There was a fixed rate of pay for each grade of work and this applied whether the employee was a woman or a man. As such there was no direct discrimination.

They did not find a problem with the structure of their labour force either even though women are concentrated at the lower end of the retail labour market in the lesser-paid jobs. They argued that women find it difficult to move into better-paid, more senior jobs in the sector, mainly because of the working time demands on retail management that fit uneasily with domestic responsibilities.

But the researchers said this structural problem resulted in pay inequalities which were confounded by the often discriminatory job evaluation schemes and companies' reluctance to explain the weighting criteria they use to assess their pay structures.

The researchers also found that the sector was poorly covered by collective agreements and said this was a major political barrier to equal pay. They unearthed cases where agreements between employers and the unions expressly excluded pay negotiations and

companies refusing to give pay information, even when unions were conducting an internal pay audit making it impossible for them to compare groups of staff.

### **Improvements urged**

The project produced a practical guide to reduce pay inequalities and a handbook with equal pay checklists to help detect pay discrimination in the sector.

They recommended regular pay audits to address the sector's gender segregation allowing employers to assess their equality status. They also urged a review of job evaluation schemes to replace current schemes that favour management work and decision-making over softer skills and front-line customer service work.

To tackle job segregation in workplaces, they suggested improved training regardless of an employee's position or type of work contract, more staff development and work/life balance arrangements for all grades of employees including management. They warned that employers had to take particular care to ensure that 'a-typical' workers, such as part-time staff or evening shift workers (who are predominantly female) are not excluded from training because of their working hours.

Researchers also challenged what they described as the 'masculine' culture of managerial work in retail that they said is a major factor inhibiting women's progression into such positions.

In short, they argued that the main prerequisites for equal pay in the retail sector were better information, more sensitivity for the topic, more women in management and in collective bargaining and greater discussions on pay.

# Internet portal on equal pay

**Project name**

Site Portail 'Outils en matière de rémunération'

**Project duration**

19/12/2001 – 30/03/2003

**Country**

Belgium

**International partners**

- Athena, Denmark
- Ministère de la Promotion féminine, Luxembourg

**EU subsidy**

EUR 111 341

**Total costs**

EUR 147 652

**Name of the coordinating organisation**

Ministère de l'Emploi et du Travail

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**Other links:**

[www.equalpayday.be](http://www.equalpayday.be)  
[www.monsalaire.be](http://www.monsalaire.be)

*A wealth of material now exists on the equal pay gap, as well as tools on how governments and organisations can work towards eliminating it. However, this mass of knowledge is often difficult to find. The partners wanted to create a one-stop shop that can offer immediate, online access to this information.*

The idea was to develop a website gathering various tools on the matter of equal pay, in order to synergise principal actors, in particular social partners.

The Equality Department of the Belgian Employment and Labour Ministry in collaboration with the Luxembourg Ministry for the Advancement of Women and a Danish consultancy group, Athena, created an internet portal giving public access to a range of tools and good practices to reduce the equal pay gap between women and men.

**Finding the best**

The partners spent a lot of time looking at what information was available and selecting what they wanted to include in their database. Four meetings of the steering committee were organised to validate the data collected, the tools proposed, etc.

The research covered studies, laws, court rulings, good practice examples, training tools and so on.

The site was launch at a European press conference on 31 March 2003, a day that, by the socialist trade union, now symbolically is referred to as the 'equal pay day'. For the launch diverse advertising material was designed and disseminated in order to raise

awareness and draw attention to the new Internet address.

Since then the new Internet portal has been further developed to offer immediate online access to tools designed to achieve equal pay. Each entry included a description, the name of the organisation, its contact details, and how to access the information. Moreover, the tools were designed so that organisations, who wished to add a tool in the database, could do so by themselves.

#### **Forum on equal pay**

The site also hosted a forum where participants could post news and discuss examples of good practice. They could subscribe to an electronic newsletter and receive updated information about the latest developments on wage equality.

#### **Access to the database**

The database was available in 11 languages on the website of the project at the following address: <http://www.equalpaytools.org>. Unfortunately the website is not online anymore, as of 2006, but will soon be taken up again by the Belgian Institute for Equality between Women and Men ([www.iefh.fgov.be](http://www.iefh.fgov.be)), as well as on the website of the EVA project (within the framework of the FSE – [www.iefh.be](http://www.iefh.be)).

Furthermore trade unions have developed two web sites linked to the project: [www.equalpayday.be](http://www.equalpayday.be) and [www.monsalaire.be](http://www.monsalaire.be). The theme will also be addressed on the website of the Service Public Fédéral Emploi, Travail et Concertation sociale at [www.meta.fgov.be](http://www.meta.fgov.be).

Finally, a report requested by the Belgian Government on equal pay is envisaged spring 2007 by the Service Public Fédéral Emploi, Travail et Concertation sociale and the Belgian Institute for Equality.

# Women journalists unfairly treated

## Project name

So now you know

## Project duration

01/10/2001 – 01/10/2002

## Country

Greece

## International partners

- Fundacion Eurojoven (Spain)
- Giovanni Europei (Italy)

## EU subsidy

EUR 339 867

## Total costs

EUR 427 741

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*The European Network of Greek Women Journalists wanted to take a closer look at their profession to see if it discriminates against women working in it and how the media covers women's concerns. In partnership with Italy and Spain, it led this project that included a major survey of journalists.*

## Survey finds widespread discrimination

From 29 January to 21 February 2002, it asked some 400 journalists how they viewed their profession and the quality of information provided in Greece. It investigated in particular possible professional, economic or other discrimination against women journalists – women make up 41.3% of Greek journalists.

The survey revealed that women journalists in Greece found it hard to get a job, were often low paid for their work, felt insecure about their future, faced obstacles to their professional development, feared dismissal for gender-related reasons and expected to deal with incidents of sexual harassment.

Just over 13% of those surveyed worked mainly for one employer but were not on the company payroll. From the 86.1% who were employed, 23.2% said they were paid less than what is set out in their sector's collective agreement – 21% of men and 26.4% of women. Another 9.9% stated that their pay was much lower than that set in the agreement – 7.3% of men and 13.5% of women.

Nearly 35% of employed respondents (46.6% of women and 26.3% of men) were categorised as low paid, having a personal monthly income of EUR 440

to EUR 880. A surprising 3.5% of respondents had a monthly income below EUR 440, this applied to 7.4% of women and only 0.9% of men. The pay situation of women journalists was even worse in rural areas. Of the employed respondents, 22.6% had no form of social insurance, with the proportion considerably higher (at 28.6%) among women than among men (18.8%).

Nearly one in three women journalists (32.7%) believed their gender had been and continued to be a disadvantage for their professional development. Just over 36% stated that they had been the victims of economic/job discrimination because they were women. Just over 42% of men and women interviewed said equal professional advancement did not exist in their company.

A surprising 14.1% of women journalists stated that dismissals due to pregnancy were frequent. Another 16% said that this happens, but only rarely. Some 32.5% said that they have been victims of sexual harassment on the job. The figure is 29.1% for Athens and 36.4% for the rest of Greece.

Finally, 80.3% of all journalists surveyed said they were a little or not at all satisfied by the way the media covered violence within the family. Similarly, 81.5% say that they were not satisfied with the presentation of sexual harassment cases.

### **Women's views on show**

The project partners researched how far the media recognises, records, presents and highlights gender discrimination and stereotypes. They also looked at

how women feel about education, work, science, new technologies, legislative bodies, institutions and the media.

They put together an exhibition of articles on women's issues, art and photographs giving it the title 'Woman in the shadow and the light'. It featured 450 newspaper cuttings, tracking women's fight for better rights and their daily struggle for equality. It covered trade in women, domestic violence and their effort to gain access to decision-making bodies.

In addition, they wrote up diaries on the exhibits that were circulated in the participating countries.

### **Five companies awarded**

The project team selected and awarded five Greek companies with a certificate of achievement. They gained the award because of their company policy promoting women to managerial and executive positions, their non-sexist communication strategies and for avoiding stereotypes when promoting their services and products.

The team also organised a cycle of information days called 'awareness days' and produced television spots promoting gender equality. It accompanied them with interviews on national and local radio as well as press releases and articles targeting, in particular, the daily regional media to raise awareness and promote the project's work.

# European Trade Union plan strengthened

**Project name**

The second sex of European trade unionism

**Project duration**

11/2001 – 01/2003

**Country**

Belgium

**EU subsidy**

EUR 185 934

**Total costs**

EUR 232 766

**Name of the coordinating organisation**

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*The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) approved a major equality plan in 1999 to increase women's representation in the national and European confederations. In this project, the ETUC Women's Committee wanted to review the progress made. It sent a detailed questionnaire to all the national confederations. Based on the results, it prepared a report and suggested a revamped action plan to speed up progress.*

The survey showed that most national confederations had introduced strategies to promote women's representation but few were evaluating progress or setting timetables to achieve results.

Many had introduced positive actions that included training and quotas for women in decision-making structures. The partners found that at least half of all steering committees were representative of female membership. In addition, in 40% of all confederations, women ran departments.

But the partners also found that, on a closer look, women tended to head what they described as the 'soft departments' such as equality, youth, health and training. They said few women made it to the top of the collective bargaining, economic and employment departments. In addition, women remain largely under-represented in executive committees, at most congresses, and, in general, men still run national confederations.

The European Industry Federations (EIF) made the least progress with partners finding that many did not know or had to estimate their female membership.



### **Revised Equality Plan**

As a result of the review, the ETUC Women's Committee came up with a new Equality Plan. The ETUC adopted it in May 2003.

Like its predecessor, the new plan takes a dual approach to equality. It supports specific equality actions and calls for gender mainstreaming strategies to ensure all policies take account of women and men to the same extent.

The plan has three objectives:

- **To reduce by half the female representation gap in all trade union decision-making bodies.** The representation gap is the difference between the proportions of women in the organisation's decision-making bodies compared to the proportion of women in the overall membership. The plan asks all confederations to set quantified objectives based on their female affiliation rates, a timetable to achieve this, and clear follow-up and evaluation measures. It also asks them to keep statistics on women's representation and change the way they hold meetings to make it easier for women to participate. For example, they would have to ensure the timing of meetings fits in with the family responsibilities of women and men, revise the way of communicating so everyone's views are heard, and make childcare facilities available during meetings held outside working hours.
- **To extend gender mainstreaming in all policy areas.** This was especially important for collective

bargaining. The plan asks confederations to train negotiators in equality issues and involve equality officers when preparing negotiations.

- **To strengthen the role of the bodies responsible for drafting gender equality policies.** The plan asks national confederations and European Industry Federations that have no such bodies to set them up. In addition, they must give them adequate human and financial resources to be able to evaluate progress.

### **Sanctions introduced**

The new Equality Plan includes follow-up and evaluation coupled with sanctions for non-compliance. National confederations or European Industry Federations that had not taken sufficient measures to increase the numbers of women in their decision-making bodies are put on a list that is published and circulated. In addition, national confederations that fail to reduce the representation gap for women in their decision-making bodies could face a reduction in their number of delegates with voting rights at the next ETUC Congress.

# Closing the gender pay gap

## Project name

Towards the closing of the gender pay gap

## Project duration

21/11/2001 – 21/02/2003

## Country

Norway

## International partners

- Centre for Women's and Gender Study, University of Iceland
- Danish National Research and Documentation Centre on Gender Equality, Denmark
- PERIPHERIE, Austria
- Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI), Greece
- The Women and Equality Unit, United Kingdom

## EU subsidy

EUR 227 432

## Total costs

EUR 297 294

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*Across the EU, statistics show women earn 25% less than men and 14% less in the public sector. In Norway, women full timers earn 14.5% less than men. The pattern is the same in the other partner countries: 18% less in Denmark, 33% less in Austria, and 19.4% less in the UK. This pay gap continues despite equality legislation banning it in all European countries. The Norwegian Centre for Gender Equality, a government body, set out with partners in Austria, Denmark, Greece, Iceland and the UK to investigate the causes of the continuing pay gap and suggest improvements.*

One of the first tasks of the project was to bring on board employers and trade unions. In each country, it created working groups to open a dialogue that also included government officials, equality organisations and researchers.

It then set out to analyse the pay structures of three different occupations: teachers, engineers and fish or food processing industry workers.

## Occupations in focus

A number of reasons guided the choice of occupations covered by the project. Most teachers work in the public sector where the pay gap is smaller. Many are women. Most engineers are men and, in the private sector, wage differences are big. Fish or food processing industry workers are unskilled, often low-paid, manual workers. Partners worked with a common interview guide and data collection indicators to compare their results easily. Each country produced a national report on its findings and the Norwegian Institute for Social Sciences used them as a basis to produce a comparative report.

### **Results unveiled at European conference**

The partners organised a European Conference in Oslo in November 2002 to present their findings and invited other speakers to explain their work in this field, illustrating it by good practice examples. A key conference demand addressed the national statistics agencies responsible for collecting data. It urged them to produce new and better comparable statistics to measure the pay gap.

The conference proceedings, national reports and the comparative European study are available on the project website: [www.likestilling.no/genderpaygap](http://www.likestilling.no/genderpaygap).

The project also published a summary of its findings for each profession as well as its recommendations to close the gender pay gap.

### **Gender pay gap the norm**

The research found two main reasons for the gender pay gap: segregation of men and women across occupations, firms and positions; and higher wage differences in male dominated jobs.

But there are many other factors that intervene making the gender gap difficult to combat. For example, some positions may pay less because women dominate them. Skills seen as female tend to be less well rewarded than skills typically seen as male. Men consistently seek better paid jobs, while women tend to end up in the lower paid jobs.

### **No shift despite more women at work**

The project discovered some surprising trends. They found that high labour market participation could increase the gender pay gap. Their explanation is that

job segregation is higher among countries with a high female labour market participation.

They warned that encouraging women to enter the jobs market must be supported by work/life balance policies. Such policies, they argued, increase the proportion of women who are willing to invest in labour market skills and activities. But they can also backfire. For example, family friendly policies allowed employees of a UK engineering firm to tailor the working hours to their needs enabling them to remain in work. Yet, this had a negative impact on the pay gap as most of the employees using this flexibility were women and fewer hours often meant slower career progression.

### **Public sector a winner**

In all six countries, the gender pay gap is lower in the public sector than the private one. Centralised bargaining regimes, often standardised pay schemes, and strong unions could explain this.

The movement towards decentralisation of bargaining and individualisation of pay accompanied by a decline in unions, may mean more wage differentiation between industries, establishments and perhaps also occupations. Combined with gender segregation, the project predicted that this development could contribute to a widening of the gender wage gap. However, this may affect less highly skilled labour where job segregation is not as common.

# Injecting pay equality in collective agreements

## Project name

Wage equality, a challenge of the democratic and economic development

## Project duration

21/11/2001 – 21/02/2003

## Country

Luxembourg

## International partners

- Commissao para a Igualdade no Trabalho e no Emprego – CITE, Portugal
- Confédération Européenne des Syndicats (CES)
- Ministère Fédéral de l'Emploi et du Travail, Belgium

## EU subsidy

EUR 319 607

## Total costs

EUR 399 509

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*In 1999, the Luxembourg Government made it compulsory to incorporate an equality plan when negotiating collective agreements. Two years later, employers, trade unions and the Government agreed a National Action Plan for Employment that included combating pay inequalities. This project was set up to look more closely at the country's pay gap. Luxembourg's Ministry for Equal Opportunities coordinated it in partnership with the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the Portuguese and Belgium Equality bodies.*

The project conducted two studies on equal pay in Luxembourg. These provided statistical evidence of an equal pay gap in industry and services with women being paid 28% less than their male counterparts.

The project set up a strong national network of 29 partners including employers, trade unions, Chambers of Commerce and Ministries to explore why this pay gap existed and the measures that can be taken to end it.

## Equal pay talk

To go further in its discussions with the two sides of industry, it organised workshops targeting employers and trade unions. It wanted to explore with them how they saw the equal pay problem and the range of measures they could take to tackle it.

Its first workshop was with employers only. It gave them the space to explain their view of the problem. They reserved the second workshop for trade union representatives to give their vision. The partners then brought them together in a joint third workshop for an exchange.

The joint workshop came up with common positions and recommendations for an action plan that the partners presented to the Ministry of Employment and the Ministry for the Promotion of Women.

The action plan suggested changes on a structural level, such as evaluation of the law of parental leave. Further actions were awareness raising and training. For the workplace, it was suggested that working groups should introduce gender neutral evaluation systems. Additional measures would be to further explore tele-working, job sharing and day-care facilities.

### **Conferences provide fresh look**

In cooperation with employers and trade unions, the project organised a cycle of European conferences on equal pay.

The first was in February 2002. It looked at the pay gap and asked if it was a myth or a reality. Speakers showed data on the levels of pay between women and men and some of the reasons the project had unearthed to explain why women continued to be paid less than their male colleagues.

In May 2002, the project organised the second conference to look more closely at what the two sides of industry and government can do to reduce pay inequalities. It addressed employers and employees as well as the general public.

The project ended with an international conference where it presented the workshop results and the research findings. Speakers described best practices and concrete actions to combat the wage gap between women and men.

### **Using adverts to inform**

The project also produced a television spot called *Réflexions de Bistrot*, which targeted companies but also the public at large. Luxembourg's television and cinemas showed it.

It published a report based on the conferences and a best practice guide entitled: Do inequalities in pay between women and men still exist?

The TV spot, brochure, action plan and the best practice guide are available in French and German on the Ministry's website: [www.mega.public.lu](http://www.mega.public.lu).

# Female single parents worst off in pay

**Project name**

Women (Single Parent Families) SPF

**Project duration**

01/01/2002 – 31/12/2002

**Country**

Greece

**International partners**

- ABL Stor Stockholm AB, Sweden
- Centro Internacional de Prensa de Barcelona, Spain
- Noorderpoortcollege, The Netherlands
- Radio televisiao Portuguesa (RTP), Portugal
- University of Wales Swansea, United Kingdom

**EU subsidy**

EUR 230 516

**Total costs**

EUR 298 965

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*In Greece, as in other European countries, increasing divorce rates and births outside marriage are boosting the number of single parent families. In the EU, an estimated 10% of families with children are now single parent families. The figure for Greece stands at 5%, and here, as in the rest of the EU, women head the majority of single parent families. According to a European Ombudsman Survey, such households are the poorest in Europe and single mothers are the least integrated in social, cultural and political life and face grave difficulties in claiming their social and labour rights. The Women's Union of Greece, the project leader, coordinated with partners in Spain, Portugal, Sweden, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom to highlight the plight of single parents.*

Until recently single parent mothers was considered as a minority group in the wider proportion of the EU, which has resulted in little research on this topic in order to generate a better understanding of the group's specific problems. It has also led to insufficient developments of measures and policies supporting these families.

The project set out to improve public understanding of the labour market difficulties faced by women in single parent families. It began with the premise that this target group has new welfare and family support needs that should be highlighted. It also wanted to inform single parents about their rights.

### **Study on law and welfare**

The project started with a comparative study of the labour laws and welfare systems of the partner countries. They also looked at employer compliance with these laws. They put together a professional profile of women in single parent families and then looked at their difficulties in entering and staying in the labour market, as well as their career progression. Additionally the project made a comparison of labour legislation and social organisation in different EU countries.

Multiple problems face women who are single parents. Many lacked the educational and professional qualifications necessary to enter the labour market. They faced social prejudice because of their family status and isolation as a result of insufficient childcare provisions. Their lack of social relationships and networking affected their self-confidence and even their willingness to claim their social rights or call on available support.

### **Single parent guide published**

Project partners pooled their information to publish a guide for women in single parent families, that includes European-wide statistics and reports about the economic and professional status of these families. It describes the social policy and support services that they can expect and includes as well as useful addresses covering the six partner countries.

### **Pilot counselling office opened**

During the project, the coordinator set up advisory agency in Athens for single parent families. It provided

advice, support and help to handle economic and social problems that may arise.

An important objective of the project was to disseminate information about the negative social stereotypes of single parent mothers to employers, politicians and others involved in the welfare system, as well as the public in general. To achieve this the partners organised information campaigns to highlight the difficulties that single parents face: they held press conferences, produced a CD ROM and a TV spot and set up a website.



European Commission

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