

HOW TO CLOSE THE GENDER PAY GAP?

*Strategies and good practices of States
and social partners in Europe*

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Across the European Union women earn, on average, 18% less than men for each hour worked. The gender pay gap reflects a number of inequalities between women and men on the labour market such as: horizontal and vertical segregation; a higher proportion of women in atypical and precarious jobs than men; a double burden of paid work and unpaid work within the family, which is mostly assumed by women; gender stereotypes and so on.

Closing the gender pay gap remains a major issue if we are to achieve gender equality. Therefore it is, and must remain, a political priority at both the European and national levels. The gender pay gap costs Europe more than it can afford. The Belgian Presidency to the EU aims to give new impetus to this field and strongly supports the commitments of the EU institutions and social partners in this respect. The European Commission has pledged to keep this issue, which continues to be a matter of great concern, high on its agenda. The Women's Charter 2010 and the European Commission's Strategy for Equality between Women and Men (2010-2015) set out to close the gender pay gap significantly by using both legislative and non-legislative means. Gender equality is at the heart of the new Europe 2020 Strategy. New and reinforced policies that promote gender equality are needed in order to boost employment and to reach the target of 75% of women and men aged 20-64 employed by 2020. Growth in the economy, which is particularly crucial given the current economic crisis, cannot be achieved unless more women are on board.

The conference in October 2010, organised by the Belgian Presidency with the support of the European Commission, will provide Member States and social partners with the opportunity to present their action strategies and successful national practices used to close the gender pay gap. The conference also aims to stimulate further action in the new European context. In order to show the continued commitment to this issue, the Council of Employment and Social Affairs Ministers (EPSCO) will then negotiate the conclusions of the conference, in December 2010, and put forward proposals for adoption.

Now, more than ever, it is crucial that all key actors, Member States and social partners combine forces in a coordinated way and within a framework of comprehensive action strategies that are targeted at closing the gender pay gap.

This booklet provides an overview of some of the strategies and successful measures that governments and social partners have adopted to close the gender pay gap. It includes a variety of actions such as:

- legislation with specific control mechanisms on provisions and practices regarding pay;
- specific action plans;
- governance structures to secure concerted action;
- monitoring tools;
- development of partnerships,
- online wage calculators or interactive websites that improve the transparency of pay systems;
- analytical job evaluation methods; and
- monitoring reports.

The practices target a range of key players, such as private and public employers, social partners and organisations promoting equality. They also raise awareness among women helping them to understand better the consequences of working in different sectors or reducing their working hours. Some actions are national, others are local or by sector. Some focus directly on pay systems in whole or part (e.g. extra payments), others focus on indirect causes of the gender pay gap such as vertical or horizontal segregation, part-time work, and so on.

All of these strategies and practices highlight the creative solutions used throughout Europe to reduce, and hopefully close the gender pay gap.

We are privileged to be able to present a description of these strategies in the following chapters. We are very grateful to the European States and social partners for sharing with us their expertise and knowledge in this field.

We hope that you will be inspired and encouraged to develop comprehensive action strategies to close the gender pay gap!

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THE EU MEMBER STATES



AUSTRIA

Reducing the gender pay gap through the National Action Plan for Gender Equality in the Labour Market

1. SETTING / BACKGROUND

In accordance with the government's programme for the legislative period 2008-2013 the Austrian Government committed itself to developing and implementing a National Action Plan for Gender Equality in the Labour Market (NAP). Despite the progress that has been made in recent decades, women are still confronted with serious gender-related inequalities in the labour market. The Federal Minister for Women and Civil Service is responsible for the overall coordination of the NAP.

The government intends to step up the action in order to achieve gender equality. Through the NAP the activities should be concentrated, while at the same time ensuring coordinated action and be consistent with the policies concerned.

Consequently, it was important to concentrate the already existing know-how and to link the multiple stakeholders from politics, administration, science, non-governmental organisations (NGO's), business and social partners.

A group of experts has drawn up a strategy paper (Leitpapier) in which the current situation of women in the labour market was analysed and the key areas for action were identified. The paper provided a basis on which four specific working groups including all stakeholders prepared a catalogue of measures. Furthermore, the Federal Minister for Women and Civil Service frequently discussed issues with the social partners and the ministries.

An inter-ministerial working group, chaired by the Minister, guarantees the cooperation and coordination among the Austrian ministries.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

The ambitious aim of the NAP is to improve the position of women in the working world; to reduce qualitative and quantitative gender gaps in employment; and achieve real equality of women and men in the labour market.

The NAP has prioritised the following four strategic targets, which include a number of concrete measures (a total of 55):

- Reduce the gender pay gap.
- Diversify education as well as training and career choices.
- Increase opportunities in the labour market and remove barriers to accessing employment.
- Increase the number of women in executive positions.

Implementing the policies in all the fields mentioned above is crucial in being able to eliminate the gender pay gap completely. Each field of action addresses different causes, actors and levels that are all relevant.

Reducing the gender pay gap

The following measures are planned or currently being implemented that target the gender pay gap:

- Employers will be required by law to compile reports on the average earnings of women and men. It will start in 2011 with companies of more than 1,000 employees (reporting earnings for 2010), and be rolled out to companies with a smaller number of employees year by year. By 2014 all companies with 150 employees or more will have to compile reports. The Civil Service will also be required to compile the reports.
- Job advertisements should contain the minimum wage according to collective agreement and, if applicable, any the disposition to pay more.

Both measures are part of the planned amendments of the Equal Treatment Act and were sent out for consultation in July 2010. This law shall enter into force on the 1 January 2011.

The draft law further contains the possibility for the Ombudsman for Equal Treatment and the Equal Treatment Commission to obtain information from social insurance on a case by case basis in order to compare incomes if discrimination is presumed. Experience has shown that it is often difficult to obtain information on the remuneration of comparable employees, which is necessary if the Ombudsman is to substantiate any claims of discrimination.

- An online wage calculator providing information on wages in the different sectors of industry, occupations, and so on is foreseen.

Measures in the other fields of action are also indispensable for reducing the gender pay gap. The following approaches are high priorities:

- Address gender stereotypes; promote a broad system of job guidance; offer young women a wide range of training and education choices; and further women's access to atypical fields of occupation. Increase the knowledge and skills on gender issues among those working in education and school management.
- Remove barriers hampering women's access to employment; support and provide incentives to increase female employment, including the scale of working hours; promote educational career paths and continuing education especially for women who are educationally disadvantaged. Boost the availability of care facilities and other measures that make it possible to balance work with private and family life. A campaign will be launched to promote parental leave for fathers and provide information on their possibilities and opportunities. It will address individuals as well as their employers.

- Increase the number of women on the company boards of directors, as well as in the executive management of universities. Suitable training should be provided to prepare women for leadership positions. According to a proposal by the Minister for Women's Affairs, the percentage of women on the boards of directors for businesses quoted on the stock exchange should increase gradually (25% by 2013, 40% by 2018).

3. RESULTS

The Federal Minister for Women and Civil Service officially presented the NAP on 30 June 2010. It was considered crucial that all parties, ministries, social partners, the Federation of Austrian Industries, NGO's and numerous other experts, were actively involved in its development. Now it has to be implemented. There are no results available as yet.

Some of the measures recommended in the NAP have not received the full agreement of the government. For example, the proposal that commits companies quoted on the stock exchange to increase the percentage of women on their board of directors to 40% remains a moot point. At the time of writing, the coalition partners had not reached an agreement on this matter. Therefore the companies concerned are encouraged to adopt the measure on a voluntary basis.

Some of the social partners, who were involved throughout the whole process, also had certain reservations. However, they finally agreed with the NAP as it was presented in June. Therefore all measures included in the final version, and particularly the measures regarding income transparency as described above, have received the full support of employers and organisations representing employees. This is crucial if it is to be taken seriously in the political arena in Austria.

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BELGIUM

The Gender Pay Gap, annual report

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

In 2001, within the framework of the Belgian Presidency of the European Union, the European Council approved a set of indicators designed to provide an accurate picture of the pay gap between women and men. In March 2006, the Belgian government decided to publish an official, annual report on the gender pay gap. The Institute for the Equality of Women and Men and the Federal Public Administration in charge of Employment were entrusted with this task. The first report was published in 2007. Since then, it has provided a useful measure every year of the changes in the gender pay gap in Belgium. Each new report builds on the six quantitative indicators and the Structure of Earnings Survey that were included in the original version in 2001. The report is now produced with the cooperation of the Federal Administration in charge of Statistics and the Federal Planning Bureau, both are compile and disseminate economic data in Belgium.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

The Gender Pay Gap report aims to clarify the gender pay gap issue by providing targeted, comparable data that is updated annually. The analysis comprises factual conclusions and strategic recommendations that are useful for political decision-makers and social partners.

The report, published annually, presents seven quantitative indicators relating to the gender pay gap. The indicators cover the following:

- gender pay ratios for all employees;
- part-time work;
- age;
- level of education;
- segregation in the labour market;
- personal features such as civil status, household composition or nationality; and finally
- the factors contributing to inequality as defined by the Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition technique.

The report highlights the wage differences between women and men and identifies the parameters that further increase or reduce these differences. It also distinguishes between the differences resulting from discrimination (the unexplained part of the gender pay gap) and the way the labour market works. For example, data concerning different extra-legal advantages or nationality will be included for the first time in the 2010 edition of the report. In general, part-time work, age and horizontal professional segregation remain the main factors contributing to the gender pay gap.

The report includes recommendations for policy makers, decision makers and social partners. By adopting these measures in a global action plan we can hopefully put an end to the gender pay gap.

3. RESULTS

Thanks to the close cooperation of the different administrations, the report provides a reliable, global measurement tool across cross different data sets. The report, which is widely distributed and reported in the media, can also gauge public opinion about what is unacceptable in reality. Over the years, The Gender Pay Gap report has become a reliable reference tool for anyone working on this issue. The data is widely used in trade unions campaigns, for instance. However, accessing, gathering and processing the data is challenging and year on year involves increased cooperation with companies.

The Collective Agreement on Wage Equality Between Male and Female Workers (1975) has been amended since the publication of the Gender Pay Gap Report so that job functions are revised to exclude any gender bias.

In Autumn 2010, the social partners will draw up a new inter-professional agreement. The Minister of Employment and Equal Opportunities hopes that this new agreement, which will revise the classifications of job functions in which wages are based, will be the start of a long-term plan aimed at tackling the gender pay gap. By 2016, partners must be able to guarantee the gender neutrality of classifications in all sectors in order to reduce the pay gap.

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BULGARIA

Joint awareness-raising activities to close the gender pay gap

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

Although the gender pay gap in public institutions was brought under control during the transition period from a planned to a market economy, the same cannot be said for the private sector, which has not been analysed before now. The gender pay gap issues can always benefit from further discussion. There is a persistent problem in Bulgaria regarding the segmentation and segregation in certain sectors of the labour market, that are typically dominated by women.

The gender pay gap in private business was not thoroughly analysed before EU accession.

In 2009 the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) published a statistical survey entitled, Women and Men in Bulgaria – analysis of the demographic, social and economic situation for the period 2002-2008, as part of its joint awareness-raising activities with the Commission for Protection Against Discrimination (CPAD) to reduce the gender pay gap. As the title suggests, the survey analysed the situation in the country between 2002 and 2008. The results for 2007 showed that the gender pay gap varied from 4.8% to 30.3% depending on the profession. The pay gap also seemed to be slightly reduced.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

In 2008 the MLSP and the CPAD signed an agreement to cooperate on a joint awareness-raising campaign to eliminate the gender pay gap. Activities were carried out in 2008 and 2009 and focused mainly at the local level but with the goal of covering the whole country. A series of press conferences, workshops and round tables were organised for the main stakeholders including decision makers, social partners, high-ranking civil servants, expert civil servants, media and civil society. The events aimed to bring the gender pay gap into the main stream and raise awareness of the negative impact of continued gender discrimination. It also highlighted the effects of the gender pay gap on the individual; on social development; and on the economy particularly on the country's GDP.

3. RESULTS

The campaign reached an estimated 100,000 people.

Data from the National Statistical Institute for 2009 pointed to a gender pay gap of 10%. Official data on gender pay gap in Bulgaria for 2010 varies between 12% and 12.7% (Eurostat). Although the country is in the lower part of the negative scale, compared to the EU average, the situation in general is not optimistic. This is largely due to the negative impact that the social and economic crisis is having on employment coupled with the severe budgetary constraints that risk to undo the achievements of the previous years.

An expert working group was set up by gender equality experts whose members are representatives of the social partners, researchers and experts in the field. A pool of ToTs was also set up and the MLSP together with the CPAD issued tools for raising awareness and providing training.

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CZECH REPUBLIC

*The Czech government's priorities and procedures
for promoting equal opportunities*

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

At present, there is no specific action plan to close the gender pay gap in the Czech Republic. However, measures were included in a general government action plan for gender equality. Since 1998, the action plan has been updated periodically each year. In action plans, the Czech government instructs ministries and other central administrative bodies to carry out specific measures in order to promote gender equality. Some tasks are for general adoption by all ministries.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

The action plan for 2010 contains 37 items referring to various areas, including the balanced participation of men and women in the labour market and the gender pay gap. In particular, task No.12 requires all ministers to put forward concrete measures to promote the balanced participation of women and men in government and leadership positions in all ministries, as well as in administrative bodies and institutions established by the ministries. No.17, requires the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to monitor the compliance with employment law. This also includes compliance with: the provisions prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of gender; the principles of equal pay for work of equal value; professional training; and opportunities for promotion at work. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs must then draw up a statistical analysis of the inspections on compliance.

3. RESULTS

On the basis of the national action plan, all ministries must fulfil their tasks. Therefore, all ministries (in relation to task No.12) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (in relation task No.17) must carry out their task and inform the government of their activities. Information regarding the action plan for 2010 will be provided in 2011. Unfortunately, closing the gender pay gap in the Czech Republic is progressing very slowly. Clearly, the current situation in the Czech Republic where the gender pay gap is 26% indicates that a more focused effort is needed in the future.

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ESTONIA

'Equality between men and women – principles and goals for effective and sustainable enterprises'

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

The Estonian-French twinning project “Equality between men and women – principles and goals for effective and sustainable enterprises” was financed with help from the European Union’s Transition Facility 2006 programme and carried out during 2007 and 2008. The project aimed at raising awareness of the legal provisions, policies, measures and good practices on gender equality in private companies. The project targeted private sector employers, organisations representing employees and gender equality experts. One of the key aspects in each phase of the project was the principle of ‘equal pay for the same work and/or work of equal value’.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

The project included the following activities:

- A survey measuring the knowledge, attitudes and practices of private sector employers towards gender equality. It involved 300 private companies operating in Estonia. It showed rather low awareness among the employers about gender equality and the relevant legislation.
- A compilation of good practices in implementing the principle of equal treatment of men and women and promoting gender equality in the private sector. The report contains 50 best practices from 15 countries, as well as two international organisations. Some of the examples included in the collection specifically concern the pay gap between women and men.
- A guideline entitled ‘Gender Equality in Your Company. Recipes for Success’ for employers to promote gender equality in recruitment, training, career development, pay and work-life balance.
- One-day practical seminars for representatives of large companies, SMEs and organisations representing employees in order that they increase their awareness and improve their knowledge and skills on promoting gender equality in an organisation. A two-day seminar was also organised for gender experts to introduce to them specific aspects of gender equality in organisations. Both seminars focused on the principle of ‘equal pay for equal work’.
- Creating a network of employers, representatives of employees, gender experts and other relevant actors to exchange information, experience and good practice in promoting gender equality.
- Study trips to French companies that actively promote gender equality and that are showcased as good practice.
- A photo exhibition on the theme of ‘Women and men at work’ for the participants of a network launch meeting. Pictures from eight private companies depicting women and men performing tasks that have traditionally been carried out by the opposite sex in Estonia to raise awareness about segregation in the workforce.

3. RESULTS

According to the survey, job descriptions were used in 60% of companies (in 88% of large and 56% of medium to small-sized enterprises). Workplace assessment had been used by 31% of companies (more common in larger companies). In 51% of companies wages were determined as a result of individual negotiations. Pay scales had been established in 29% of companies. Employers were not particularly interested in the average hourly rates of pay for men and women. Only 8% of companies had analysed or discussed the issue, 73% considered it unnecessary.

About 50 organisations representing employers or employees participated in the seminars. However, as the study reveals, employers have a low awareness and are not particularly willing to take measures or even learn about measures to improve the situation. On the other hand, those who did participate actively engaged in the discussions and were also very interested in the guidelines that were introduced during seminars. A further 25 organisations and individuals became members of the network that was created at the end of the project to continue the work in this area. However, very few of these were employers.

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FINLAND

Equal Pay Programme: the targeted comprehensive action strategy

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

Women in Finland who work regular hours receive on average a wage that is 81.8% that paid to men, comprising bonuses and one-off payments, according to preliminary data included in Statistics Finland – Index of Wage and Salary Earnings 2009 (taxes and employee social security contributions have not been deducted from the average earnings). Approximately half of all gender-based pay differences are due to the fact that women and men work in different sectors and do different jobs. When examining women and men in the same age group who have the same level of education and who work in the same sectors doing similar jobs, we find that women earn approximately 10% less than men.

The gender pay gap has remained fairly unchanged for a considerably long time. Since 1995 the gap, calculated on the basis of the earnings for regular hours, has been around 18-20%. On average, Finnish women have a higher level of education than Finnish men. Nevertheless, women's work is, in terms of pay, underrated and women mostly work in the public sector. In Finland, the labour market is very segregated. For example, Finnish women and men work in different sectors doing different occupations and even within the same sector they may have different jobs or tasks. Only approximately 15% of wage earners work in fields where men and women are represented in roughly equal numbers. The high level of segregation is also visible in education where changes have been minimal. In business there are also considerably fewer women than men in management positions, although there have been some positive changes in this respect, particularly in the public sector.

Furthermore, women have atypical jobs (fixed-term employment contracts etc.) more often than men, which also affects their pay and career development. Although women's careers tend to be nearly as long as of those of men, women take more career breaks that often last longer. Studies indicate that parental leave has a negative affect on women's earnings.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

The government, central labour market organisations and employers' confederations agreed to the joint action plan – 'The Equal Pay Programme'. It seeks to reduce the gender pay gap to 15% by 2015 and to implement the principle of 'equal pay for work of equal value'.

The government is currently implementing about thirty actions of the programme. Some are carried out in cooperation with the government and central labour market organisations, while others are being implemented by the central labour organisations. The Equal Pay Programme is coordinated by the Gender Equality Unit of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, which has appointed two civil servants for this purpose. A tripartite Coordination Group is also providing additional support for the programme. The high level Steering Committee appointed for the programme is chaired by Dr Pentti Arajärvi. The programme is also supported by research, development and training projects initiated within its framework.

The period of implementation is: 2006 to March 2011 (the end of the current term of office).

The nine goals of the Equal Pay Programme include:

- Developing pay statistics so that they are sector- and gender-specific by 2010.
- Increasing the use of paternity leave.
- Reducing the gender pay gap to 15% by 2015.
- Improving the quantity and quality of gender equality plans and pay surveys.
- Developing pay schemes.
- Alleviating gender-based segregation in the labour market.
- Enhancing the prospects for women's career advancement.
- Reducing unjustified fixed-term employment contracts.
- Incorporating equality and equal pay in the corporate social responsibility programmes of companies and organisations.

3. RESULTS

The results for the Equal Pay Programme's first year in operation (2006-2007) were analysed and were very encouraging. Therefore, it was considered important that the programme continued.

The Equal Pay Programme is built on a 'tripartite' cooperation. The Tripartite Coordination Group and the high-level Steering Committee of the programme provide excellent forums for distributing information, debate, continuous evaluation as well as decision making on further actions.

In early 2010 the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health submitted a comprehensive study that focused on equality planning and pay surveys at workplaces. It suggests that equality planning has increased and is more diverse than before. However, the quality of the plans and pay surveys are still not sufficient.

Equal pay tranches were incorporated in collective agreements. Local and central government collective agreements have included specific tranches that contributed to gender equal pay during the years 2007-2010.

Central government supported a local government collective agreement that improved the pay of highly educated women working in the public sector who were employed by local government. The support came in the form of a state subsidy under the Government's Action Plan for Gender Equality 2008-2011.

Developing data collection, pay statistics and disseminating information were also important issues. The Equal Pay Programme has funded some large research and development initiatives looking at new pay schemes and their contribution to gender equal pay; analysing segregation within the Finnish context;

and evaluating the proficiency and quality of equality planning and pay surveys. In addition, the Equal Pay Programme regularly monitors the gender pay gap and also influences collective bargaining on pay inequalities.

On the request of the Equal Pay Programme, the Information Committee on Cost and Income Developments (Ministry of Finance) assessed the impact of collective agreements on equal pay in 2008 and 2010. At the end of the 2006, the average wage for women working regular hours was 81% that of men, whereas in 2009 it was 82%. This decrease in the pay gap can be attributed to measures included in the collective agreements as well as structural factors.

Key targets of the programme are monitored with the help of set indicators. Some progress has been made in reducing unjustified fixed-term contractual work, although the economic recession may have a negative impact on this. Some progress has also been made in the number of fathers taking the parental leave to which they are entitled. The number of equality plans drawn up in the workplace has also increased.

Reducing the gender pay gap and other key targets are monitored using a set of indicators that focus specifically on reducing the gender pay gap; developing pay systems; reducing segregation and unjustified fixed-term contracts; advancing women in management positions; and encouraging fathers to use their paternity leave.

In 2010 the Equal Pay Programme will commission an evaluation of the period 2007-2010. Further information on the other indicators will be available at the end of 2010.

The period of implementation: 2006-March 2011 (until the end of the current term of office)

- Reducing the gender pay gap to 15 per cent by 2015.
- Developing pay schemes.
- Alleviating gender-based segregation in the labour market.
- Enhancing the prospects for women's career advancement.

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*Law of 23 March 2006 on
'Equal Pay between Women and Men'*

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

'Equal pay for work of equal value' has been high on the political agenda for more than thirty years. The laws of 22 December 1972, 13 July 1983 and 9 May 2001, have however, not been enough to eradicate the professional disparities facing women. Although women now represent about half of the working population (including those currently working or looking for work - 47.6% in 2008), the global average salary for women in 2006 in companies of 10 or more employees was still 27% lower than that of men.

This gender pay gap can be attributed to the following factors:

- Structure take precedence over education: men and women do not do the same jobs. Women tend to concentrate on jobs that require essentially 'female' skills, or they occupy jobs where little or no qualifications are needed such as in the tertiary sector. More than 31% of the women were in part-time work in 2007 compared to 6% of men. While more than 41% of women are in administrative and commercial positions (executives) in companies and 18.2% are either engineers or in technical positions (executives), they are still over represented in jobs requiring little or no qualifications (60% and 30%.
- The level of diploma, work experience and age are insufficient factors in reducing the gender pay gap. While at the same time, the average level of education among working women is often superior to that of the men.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

The law requires that the professions as well as companies come up with measures to eradicate the wage differences between women and men by the end of 2010, using precise indicators that they have drawn up after a common analysis. The reports comparing the general employment conditions and training for women and men, which also describe in detail the gaps between the genders, should be used as a basis for the wage negotiations.

This new theme of compulsory collective bargaining must be carried out together with the salary negotiations, every year until the end of 2010. The only exception would be if there is already a clearly defined agreement and programme of measures in place to abolish the gender pay gap. The aimed differences in compensation are differences in compensation in the broad sense whatever is their cause and not only the unjustified differences in compensation. The objective is to take into account all the parameters contributing to professional inequality and take action in areas such as recruitment, training and promotion so that a particular company can move towards professional equality. If the negotiations fail, then the wage gap must be taken into account later that year. The parties concerned do not have to reach a collective agreement. However, the negotiations must be conducted seriously and fairly. The employer must provide a reasoned response to the unions.

Based on a mid-term review, to be conducted by the Higher Council for Professional Equality, the government can impose sanctions that may include the threat of a contribution based on wages.

The legislation has a second objective: to balance work and family life by creating a compensation system that would measure the 'effects of motherhood on wages'.

3. RESULTS

Since the law of 23 March 2006 relating to equal pay between women and men came into force, there has been an increase in the number of signed collective agreements in both companies and the professions. However, from quantitative and qualitative points of view, these negotiations are modest.

The number of collective agreements dealing also with professional equality between women and men has increased slightly since 2006, but it remains modest.

In 2002, we listed:

- 86 or 0.4% of company agreements dealing with gender equality.
- 39 or 4% of the agreements of branch, dealing with this question.

In 2009, we listed:

- 1,290 or 5.8% of company agreements.
- 108 or 9.6% of the agreements of branch, dealing with professional equality.

The change is even less significant when we consider the qualitative contents of these agreements.

Professional equality between genders is a priority for companies and the professions as well as trade unions who want to see more training on the subject.

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GERMANY

Cause-orientated governance strategy for overcoming the gender pay gap

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

In the 16th legislative period, the ministry responsible for gender equality, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (BMFSFJ) researched the underlying causes of the gender pay gap in order to address the issue in a targeted way. The outcome was published under the title *Entgeltungleichheit zwischen Frauen und Männern in Deutschland – Pay Inequality between Women and Men in Germany*.

The research suggests that the gender pay gap can be attributed to three main causes. Investigating the reasons underlying the pay differentials revealed that the causes are interlinked in a complex nexus that can only be overcome with concrete policies backed up by the appropriate efforts of strategic partners. Therefore, the federal government's strategy is to establish new governance structures that encourage and secure concerted action to close the pay gap as well as bring together the various actors who will implement these changes.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

The federal government is pursuing cause-specific measures to close the gender pay gap. Examples include: Girls' Day; a pact for women in MINT careers (Mathematics, IT, Natural Sciences and Technology); parental leave including partner months; expansion of childcare facilities, programme on vocational reintegration as a perspective; a phased plan to promote women in executive positions; a tool such as the Logib-D programme, with which companies can voluntarily analyse their wage systems and detect a gender pay gap.

In order to reduce the gender pay gap and thereby move further towards achieving an economically sustainable Germany, the federal government is cooperating more closely with relevant actors in a strategic alliance. After all, closing the gender pay gap is feasible only if civil society (social partners, women's and business associations) cooperate with all levels of government such as länder (federal states) and local government.

Simultaneously, networking and mutual support, in other words, a seamless and perfectly coordinated policy, can enhance the understanding of the positive effects of, and the need for, political measures. It is important for structures to emerge that optimise the efforts undertaken not only by the federal government, but also by the social partners, individual companies and staff. Cooperation and support schemes with companies, employers' associations, trade unions, social partners, alliances, the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency and the federal länder are already in place. Since 2008, the women's network – Business and Professional Women Germany (BPW) – has held an annual Equal Pay Day. For the first time in 2009, the event was organised in association with other partners, including employers' associations and national women's associations, as part of a National Action Alliance. The alliance primarily aims to raise awareness among all actors.

3. RESULTS

The consistent, regular and transparent measurement of outcomes is a decisive element of a sustainable and efficient policy. The BMFSFJ regularly evaluates the implementation of policies.

Parental leave. The number of fathers who share the childcare responsibilities has been rising steadily since the introduction of parental leave. In 2009, 18.6% of all recipients of parental leave were men. Under the previous childcare allowance system, the number of fathers participating was only 3.5%. In addition, employer approval and acceptance of fathers taking their parental leave entitlement is also on the increase.

Success Factor Family. In the past few years the number of family-friendly companies in Germany has markedly increased. At present, almost 3,000 companies are members of the company network 'Success Factor Family'. Family-friendliness remains a priority for companies as part of a sustainable recruitment and retention policy and to address the expected shortage of skilled workers.

Girls' Day, New Paths for Boys, MINT. 122,588 girls have so far participated in the programme. Overall participation since 2001 has now passed the one million threshold and includes 4,000 boys involved in support and promotion services as well as 550 women and men from various institutions.

Equal Pay Day. In 2010 there were more than 250 events in 150 towns and cities across the country. All major media covered the events. All parliamentary groups pledged to improve the situation of women in employment.

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IRELAND

Social partnership approach to the gender pay gap

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

The economic boom in Ireland saw a large increase in female labour market participation. From 1998 to 2007 female employment grew by 55%. An Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) Report identified the following contributory factors: the huge increase in demand for labour caused by economic growth and the consequent increase in wages; policy initiatives such as increased maternity and parental leave; increased investment in childcare; and individualisation of the tax system. An additional factor is the changing profile of women, most importantly the rising levels of educational attainment and demographic factors. Nevertheless, in the late 1990's, and despite legislation, Irish women experienced a wide Gender Pay Gap (GPG).

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

Since 1987, Ireland has devised social policy based on social partnerships between the state and major economic and social interests, involving government and trade unions, employers, the community and the voluntary sector. The National Women's Strategy (NWS) 2007-2016 is the government's statement of priorities for women in Irish society, including reducing the GPG. The issue of the GPG has been addressed in successive partnership agreements and by the NWS.

Partnership agreements helped establish a consultative group on male/female wage differentials. This group, which included social partners and the Equality Authority, was tasked with developing proposals for actions to address the issues raised on equality in the Irish labour market. Key recommendations on the GPG included greater investment in childcare and enhanced flexible working arrangements. The group recommended that public and private sector employers review occupational segregation.

Subsequent progress has been significant. In relation to childcare, the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme 2000-2006 was implemented with support from the European Social Fund to create over 36,000 centre-based quality childcare places. This is an increase of over 60% in the national stock. A subsequent initiative, will create a further 25,000 new places.

The duration of maternity leave has been extended on several occasions in recent years and now stands at 26 weeks paid leave plus the option of up to 16 weeks of unpaid leave. The uptake of unpaid parental leave among women has also increased. A number of reforms were introduced to parental leave in 2006.

3. RESULTS

The most recent data available from the Central Statistics Office reflects a consistent narrowing of the GPG in recent years. The data is taken from the National Employment Surveys of 2003, 2006 and 2007.

The 2003 survey shows the GPG at 15.80%. By 2006 this had decreased to 11.5%. The 2007 survey, which includes the latest available figures at the time of writing, shows that the GPG has further decreased to 10.68%.

An ESRI Report in 2000 attributes three quarters of the GPG to explained factors such as age, labour market experience and education. It also noted a trend towards increased labour market participation for women during the childbearing and child rearing years and concluded that further progress would have to be made in this area in order to close the pay gap. A subsequent report based on 2003 data found that explained factors accounted for two thirds of the GPG.

There is evidence that policies to reduce the GPG could be most effective if they serve to increase continuity in women's employment. Ten years on from the original ESRI report the improvements in such areas as childcare provision, parental and maternity leave as well as employment practices designed to balance family and work life can be seen as important factors in helping to increase continuity in women's employment and narrow the GPG. Policies to reduce the GPG have been effective. However, more initiatives may well be required to reduce it further and these remain a priority in the NWS.

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Directive on 'Measures to Achieve Equality and Equal Opportunity Between Men and Women in Public Administration'

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

The Directive on 'Measures to Achieve Equality and Equal Opportunity Between Men and Women in Public Administration' is an important initiative aimed at guaranteeing fair access for women to public office. It was signed on 23 May 2007 by the Minister for Equal Opportunities and the Minister for Reform and Innovation in Public Administration.

This Directive is aimed at central authorities and non-economic public bodies, but also at regional and local bodies. The Office for the Intervention for Equality and Equal Opportunities within the Department for Equal Opportunities coordinates the planning, management and monitoring of all initiatives relating to equal opportunities that are financed by national resources. It is also responsible for implementing this Directive.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

The Directive indicates areas where authorities should intervene and determine critical points or where there is possible direct and indirect discrimination, using surveys, studies and monitoring activities.

There are six areas:

- eliminating and preventing discrimination;
- adopting positive action plans every three years;
- organising workloads;
- providing policies for personnel recruitment and management;
- establishing an Equal Opportunities Committee (EOC); and
- encouraging a culture of training and awareness within organisations.

The Directive also foresees the adoption of initiatives aimed at encouraging women into decision-making roles, where a gender pay gap still persists and is more than 2/3 that of men. (para 4, letter f).

For each of these areas, the Directive supplies precise instructions for the administrations. For example, it appeals to them to draw up legal and contractual provisions regarding flexible work and to ensure that new appointments take into account the principle of equal opportunity.

In order to monitor the implementation of the Directive, the Department of Equal Opportunities prepares an annual summary report that analyses data provided by the individual administrations. The first report, an experiment using a contained survey sample, comprised 113,452 long-term contract employees and 7,346 employees with flexible short-term contracts from 29 central administrations, which made it possible to define the trends, described below (see part 5). Some consideration should be given to professional management positions.

Out of a total of 326 first level managers under examination, only 23.9% or 78 were women. This statistic is significant even when considered alongside the number of long-term employees in these administrations. For example, out of a total of 78,238 employees in 2007, 52.8% were women and of 1,905 directors and managers of the first and second levels, only 31.7% or 605 were women.

3. RESULTS

The first observation regards the nature of the most occasional and unprogrammed equal opportunity measures. In the face of a legislation that instructs administrations to draft positive action plans, 42% of administrations declared that they had drafted at least one plan of action. Of these only four stated that they had drafted more than one plan. In that context, the social insurance bodies appear to be the most active administrations: The National Social Security Institute, which was established in 2001, drafted four; The National Workers' Compensation Institute drafted three. The National Institute for Public Employees' Social Security drafted two. Most of the administrations (8 out of 10) that had drafted a three-year plan had also allocated funds for it. So it would seem that despite the requirement by law to implement certain provisions, the culture for doing this has not fully taken root with the public sector.

The actions for equal rights are still marginal on the agendas of many administrations. Despite the fact that all administrations have carried out a certain number of projects (134 initiatives) that deal directly or indirectly with gender issues, projects tend to be restricted to those personnel who deal with equality issues. Of the projects analysed, apart from those for day care centres and teleworking, there are no initiatives with broader themes or dedicated resources.

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LUXEMBOURG

Programme for positive actions in private sector companies

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

The National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2009-2014 accompanies the governmental programme entitled 'Positive Actions in Private Sector Companies', which covers the legislative period of the next five years.

Despite the slow but positive progress, the inequalities between women and men still persist in working life. Unemployment among women is double that of men. One third of all employed women work part-time, compared to hardly any men. Women earn 87.6% of the salaries that men earn. In the banking industry for instance, already half of the employees are women with the same qualifications as their male colleagues but the genders are not equally balanced at the higher levels. This essentially means that companies and organisations are not tapping into all the qualified potential labour. Therefore more effort has to be made to ensure that both genders have equal conditions in their working lives.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

Any company looking to participate in the programme for positive actions has to provide an action plan that addresses the following issues:

- equal treatment of women and men including recruitment procedures, equal pay, corporate culture, vocational training and actions against sexual and moral harassment in the workplace;
- gender equality in decision making including work organisation, equal career development support for female and male employees; and
- gender equality in work-life balance including flexible working hours, variety of work models, work re-integration support and career planning in the context of career breaks.

The programme is open to private sector companies of all sizes and the Ministry for Equal Opportunities offers advice and financial support in implementing the initiative. Any company willing to participate in the programme must first sign an agreement with the government. During the preparatory phase a working group (including company representatives, the Ministry for Equal Opportunities and an external expert) is set up. Before receiving the Ministerial Agreement for Positive Actions, the company must first agree to be audited, which is free of charge for them.

Then they embark on the four different stages of the programme:

- An analysis of the current situation within the company is conducted using free software made available by the Ministry, which has been specifically designed to address the existing gap by using a salary scale. This analysis reveals any possible gender pay gap within the company.
- A presentation of the results of the analysis, which is written by an external expert who is not in any way related to the company. The working group then draws up a plan of actions including a series

of measures that set out to improve gender equality in the workplace. The implementation phase then follows after the auditing process has been finalised. It is only at this point that the company receives the Ministerial Agreement for Positive Actions.

- The evaluation and follow-up phase is the last stage in the process. This usually takes place two years after the company first embarks on the programme and it is at this point that changes can be carried out.

3. RESULTS

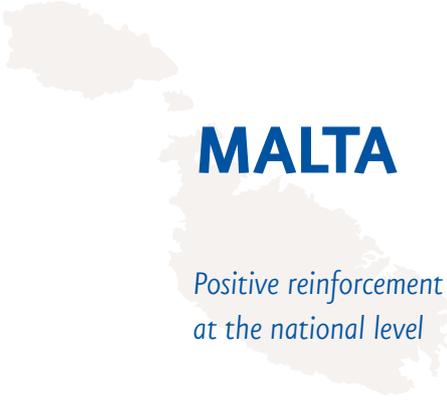
Approximately 48 companies have already participated in implementing positive actions and the increasing numbers looking to join the programme voluntarily, would suggest that the initiative is a success. Companies have started incorporating programmes that better combine work and family life as well as help to reduce the gender pay gap. Positive actions are supporting this change in attitudes. The networking activities and the exchange of experiences that have emerged within the organisations thanks to their involvement in positive actions are also important success factors of the initiative.

The fact that a large bank has participated for a second time stresses the importance that this issue has for the positive image of the company. The programme provides valuable input and management information that give direction for further work in the area of gender equality. For internal human resource management, it is motivating for the employees to see that the company takes the issue seriously and that an external authority (the Ministry) backs equal pay for men and women.

As regards the challenges or obstacles that may occur during the involvement in this programme, the most important factor is that the management and the working group are committed to this issue. Another crucial factor is that the people involved in the working group really devote the necessary time. Changing the people involved can make it more difficult.

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MALTA

Positive reinforcement of gender mainstreaming at the national level

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

This project is aimed at positively reinforcing gender mainstreaming in the public and private sectors and to improve equal opportunities for all. It also strives to make a significant step in achieving gender equality. The project aimed to provide directors, policy makers, human resource managers and equality committees within ministries with the impetus to update policies and practices that would stimulate and raise awareness of gender mainstreaming through training.

As part of this project, two gender equality packs were published to raise awareness of the issues. One addressed employers and human resource managers, while the other targeted households. Advertisements were also included in the print and broadcast media to further raise awareness.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

In order to raise awareness and reach a wide and diverse audience, public service announcements on issues related to gender equality, including sexual harassment in the workplace, gender discrimination in promotion and the gender pay gap were aired on local television and radio stations. The announcements aimed to provide the time, space and possibility for the audience to think about the different types of gender discrimination that they may have encountered in work environment, as well as empower them to do something about it.

One radio station included an example of two workers who were doing the same job but who were not paid an equal salary due to their gender. This spot explained that the gender pay gap is a form of gender discrimination, which is illegal. The announcements also raised awareness on the work of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) and the services it offers including investigating complaints of discrimination on the grounds of gender in the workplace.

Training sessions were also organised to promote the principle of gender mainstreaming among directors, managers and policy makers in both the public and private sectors. Those participating in the sessions became more aware of the issues surrounding gender equality in the workplace particularly the gender pay gap.

3. RESULTS

The public service announcements that were developed as part of this project, reenacted the instances and situations of gender discrimination and sexual harassment in short stories to which people could easily relate. The campaign continued to disseminate information on different forms of gender discrimination in the workplace with the media spots stressing each time that such actions are illegal. They also highlighted how the NCPE could assist people who had been subjected to some form of discrimination.

The training sessions raised awareness among senior officials about gender equality. It also provided them with information and practical methods to prevent gender discrimination and help remove the stumbling blocks that hinder female employment.

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THE NETHERLANDS

The task force 'Part-Time Plus'

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

The objective of the task force, which kicked off its two-year lifespan in April 2008, was to encourage women in the Netherlands who have part-time jobs of less than 24 hours a week to work more hours. The task force was an initiative of the Dutch government and social partners.

Research commissioned by the task force shows that around 70% of Dutch women are currently gainfully employed, although three quarters of them are in part-time jobs that involve working no more than 24 hours a week.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

Interactive software, discussion meetings in towns away from the main conurbations, scientific research and high-profile conferences were some of the tools that the task force used to reach its objectives and achieve its vision.

- Pilot projects
- Regional meetings
- Practical website
- Publicity
- Research
- International conference

Pilot projects

To ensure that its work would be put to practical use, the task force commissioned pilot projects in five different fields: the public sector; healthcare; education; retail; and the service industry. These are the sectors in which women mainly work in the Netherlands. Round-table meetings were organised for each of these sectors in order to assess the opportunities and challenges facing organisations and the wish of women to work more hours. The pilot projects were designed to provide new insights, put women's employment issues on the agenda and facilitate their personal development. The results were published.

Regional meetings

The task force also organised a series of regional discussion meetings aimed at further highlighting the need for Dutch women to work more hours. Local newspapers gave extensive coverage to the regional meetings.

Practical website

The Work+Money website (www.werk-en-geld.nl), an interactive website developed by the task force, has been modified to include not only software for calculating the financial consequences of working more hours, but also the options available to those who would like to take leave, get childcare or work flexible

hours. The site has checklists for women with and without children. It includes essential information for the entire target group as well as useful tips for specific groups. Much of the content is immediately applicable.

Publicity

To ensure maximum exposure for the objectives of the task force and its activities, a wide-spread publicity campaign was devised. The message about working more hours was published in newspapers and magazines and also communicated through free postcards and posters in shopping centres.

A magazine featuring thought-provoking articles was published by the task force and electronic newsletters were periodically distributed. The magazine includes specially commissioned diagrams explaining the arguments for and against women employees working more hours.

The task force also published various newspaper articles in order to stimulate greater public debate about part-time jobs and the need for women to work more hours.

Research

Research played an important role in the work of the task force. The main research looked at demand among employers for people willing to work more hours and among employees seeking to work more hours. It also examined the conditions under which this could be achieved. In addition, the research examined men's and women's ambitions in relation to the number of hours that they work, and in relation to gender-related issues and attitudes in organisations.

International conference

The scientific aspect of the task force's activities was the outcome of the conferences it organised. On 5 and 6 November 2009, an international conference was held in Amsterdam that placed the task force and its activities in a global perspective.

The conference's central theme was women's participation in the Dutch labour market and how to increase it. The delegates presented the results of recent research as well as practical tools that can help women fit more working hours into their schedules, thus increasing their contribution to the economy. Dutch and international academics, CEOs and representatives from a wide range of public and private bodies attended.

3. RESULTS

After two years the task force ended its mission in March 2010 with results and recommendations for the relevant stakeholders. It is the responsibility of the next government to act on the recommendations concerned¹.

¹ <http://www.taskforce-deeltijdplus.nl/summary/23>

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POLAND

*Gender mainstreaming as a tool for a change –
Progress project 2008-2009*

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

The project was addressed at government officials working in the central government administration with the aim of broadening their knowledge of the need to integrate gender equality into the policies of specific ministries.

Results were included in a report entitled, “The equal treatment of women and men in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy: results of the research on the adoption of a gender equality approach”. It was presented to the media and other government officials. A testimony to the success of the project is that the Ministry of Regional Development is now checking other ministries against the Gender Index tool that was used.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

The aims of the project were pursued under the following measures:

- Twenty one-day workshops on gender mainstreaming for government officials. The training included a theoretical part providing participants with information on gender mainstreaming as well as a practical part in which they could learn how gender equality could be applied in practice. Officials found out how to use gender mainstreaming as a tool for building a competitive economy, increasing employment and strengthening social cohesion. The project was designed to convince government officials that gender mainstreaming could mean better leadership.
- Assessing the level of gender equality within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The assessments were carried out using a Gender Index instrument. The project also included two conferences, one at the beginning and one at the end. The Gender Index instrument was created within the Gender Index project, which was co-financed by the European Social Fund. It was carried out within the framework of the EQUAL Community Initiative in a partnership managed by the United Nations Development Programme in Poland.

The project focused most notably on promoting the gender-equal treatment of employees in companies. The Gender Index project provided the possibility to develop a method for monitoring equality in the workplace as well as a Gender Equality Index. The latter compared companies on the grounds of the equal treatment of the genders and was also used to rank those companies selected for the competition entitled: ‘Company of Equal Opportunities’.

3. RESULTS

Women employed in the ministry are far more negative about the reality of gender-equal treatment than men.

There are a lack of solutions encouraging work-life balance particularly regarding working hours and childcare. This justifies the lowest scores given to this area under the policy implementation, especially considering that there were number of people aged 39 or below who were particularly interested in such solutions. This is also confirmed by women age-based evaluations of the policy. One third of employees with children complained about the difficulties in balancing their family life with their professional life.

Despite the indices for gender promotions being quite positive, the evaluation on opportunities for promotion was quite negative. This could be partly due to a lack of information on relevant programmes as well as the feeling of being passed over for promotion, Data obtained from the human resources department shows that women are often disadvantaged when it comes to managerial positions.

The highest scores were given to the protection of women against dismissal and the access to training. Data from the human resources department reveals that intensive training course are offered to all employees.

The recruitment process is evaluated slightly less favourably. It seems that during the recruitment process women are more likely to be asked questions concerning flexibility, overtime and business trips than men.

However, there is no gender pay gap in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

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PORTUGAL

The project 'Re-evaluate work to promote gender equality'

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

The project entitled 'Re-evaluate work to promote gender equality' was financed by the EQUAL Initiative. It was a tripartite project coordinated by the General Confederation of Portuguese Workers – National Inter Trade-Unions (CGTP-IN), which includes trade unions, employers associations and public administration, and involving the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and a number of researchers.

The project developed a job evaluation method free from gender bias that could be used in Portugal's hotels, restaurants and catering services. In 2005, when the project started, the Portuguese Federation of Agriculture, Food, Beverage, Hotels and Tourism Trade Unions (FESAHT) was particularly concerned about the working conditions in the hotels and restaurants. The sector was characterised by a predominance of female workers in typical female-dominated occupations such as cooks and catering assistants. Such jobs often require less qualifications and therefore do not pay as well as other typically male-dominated occupations. In 2004, female workers in restaurants and catering services earned about 91% of the wage of their male counterparts.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

From 2005-2008, the project 'Re-evaluate work to promote gender equality' developed and tested a job evaluation method that was free from gender bias and centred on the value of work. It could be applied to various activity sectors, albeit with some modifications.

In 2006, a questionnaire was sent to about 600 workers and employers as part of a study on the situation of women in the restaurant and catering services sector. Two workshops also took place. One on a 'Gender neutral methodology for the analysis of functions, centred on the value of work' and another on 'The working conditions, equality and the value of work in collective bargaining'.

During 2007, the methodology for assessing the value of work, without gender bias was developed. Given the diversity in types of job evaluation methods, the project organisers decided to develop an analytical method that means every job in an organisation can be systematically examined, evaluated and compared using common, precise and detailed criteria.

This criteria, or 'point method', is recognised as one of the most appropriate ways of evaluating gender equality. More precisely, it is the best method for identifying and eliminating the influence of gender-based prejudice and stereotypes when determining the pay of men and women.

A 25-hour training module was created to implement the methodology. In order to test and validate the curriculum, the training session 'Equal Pay for Women and Men' was held in 2008.

3. RESULTS

An analytical method that means every job in an organisation can be systematically examined, evaluated and compared using common, precise and detailed criteria. This method identifies and eliminates the influence of gender-based prejudice and stereotypes when determining the pay of men and women.

Some of the main functions of this method include the following:

- comparing predominantly female occupations with predominantly male occupations;
- comparing work of equal value and unequal value;
- focusing on the job content and not on a person's characteristics, particularly if the job is held by a man or a woman;
- revealing the usually 'hidden' job requirements – these demands are not taken into account in the tasks description;
- creating a measure – based on points attributed to factors and sub-factors – to assess the fair value of an occupation.

Through the in-depth analysis of job characteristics and demands, this method also contributes to improving human resource management in terms of recruitment, vocational training, performance evaluation and pay, as well as health and safety at work.

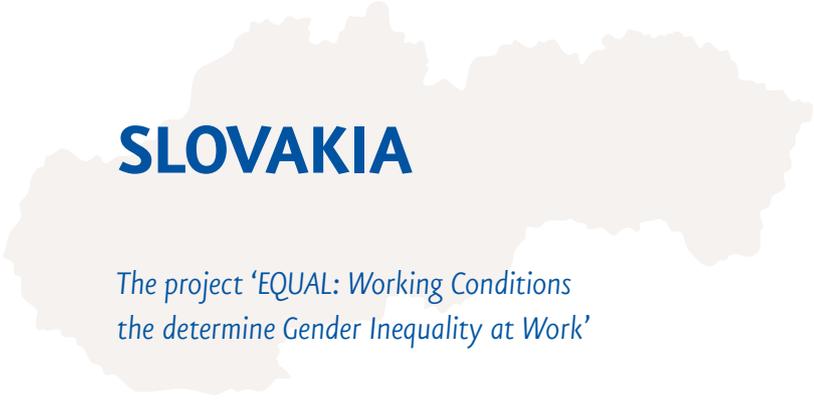
The method has been recognised at the national level by the National Association of Qualifications.

A 25-hour training module for implementing the methodology.

ILO has been providing training based on the results of this project.

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SLOVAKIA

*The project 'EQUAL: Working Conditions
the determine Gender Inequality at Work'*

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

This project was carried out between 2005 and 2008 with the aim of monitoring the situation of women and men in the labour market using research on health and safety at work. It intended to update the database on working conditions, identify and verify the possibilities for optimising and improving the working conditions for women and men in certain occupations and sectors. The project was co-financed by the European Social Fund.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

The main objective of the project was to create a functional transnational partnership to identify the working conditions that determine gender inequality in practices of employing subjects as contribution to the targeted monitoring of the situation in equal opportunities for women and men in a labour market.

The project also included a presentation of recommendations to raise awareness on gender equality and to take into account the specific working conditions and encourage companies to implement/act on the recommendations.

The specific objectives of the project were to:

- identify the working conditions that hamper gender equality in the labour market;
- compile and amend gender data on working conditions;
- compare information and research results in this area across the EU;
- draw up proposals for measures leading to the gender neutral working conditions and test their implementation in practice,
- raise awareness on gender issues among employers and employees;
- increase the legal conscience of employees and employers on gender issues.
- create different possibilities for cooperation between participating partners and representatives of the target groups to monitor working conditions as a determining factor of gender inequality in the labour market. Through this cooperation they will draw up recommendations for implementing systems for better employee management.

3. RESULTS

A survey on equal pay for women and men was also carried out as part of the project. In addition, the National Labour Inspectorate was tasked with monitoring gender pay equality through a number of complaints concerning the violation of labour law relating to gender. There were only a small number of complaints, which could be due to the fact that employees did not know how much their colleagues were

paid. This is largely other employees' wage, because employers often do not disclose the wage policy. When wage differences were discovered the difference had been included as a 'bonus' so the National Labour Inspectorate could not assess whether there had been a violation of the law. Employees were also aware of difficulties in proving discrimination, so they were reticent to talk about it.

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SPAIN

A specific campaign for labour and social security inspectors

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

High female unemployment rates, more involuntary part-time jobs, horizontal and vertical segregation for women despite their higher academic qualifications provides the backdrop for this campaign.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

On 22 September 2009 the Ministry of Equality together with the Ministry of Labour and Immigration signed an agreement to coordinate an action plan to address pay discrimination between men and women. It aimed to develop mechanisms for monitoring situations where pay discrimination between men and women could occur and looked at specific economic sectors as well as companies of all sizes. The results of the inspections provide the basis of a study on the gender pay gap in the selected sectors published by the Ministry of Equality in both Spanish and English.

3. RESULTS

Trade unions have to work on this issue in the collective bargaining agreements, supported by the Social Security Inspections. The Ministry for Equality is also working on raising awareness about gender pay equality among employers. The media is also expected to cover the issue in an attempt to raise more awareness among the public.

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SWEDEN

'The one million inspection project': monitoring company compliance with the provisions on gender pay gap (Discrimination Act - 2008:567)

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

According to the Discrimination Act SFS2008:567, employers and employees should work together to equalise and prevent any differences in pay or working conditions that may exist between women and men who do the same work or work of equal value. They should also promote equal pay growth opportunities for both genders. In order to identify, resolve and prevent unfair gender differences in pay or other areas, the employer must conduct a survey every three years to analyse provisions and practices. In addition, they are also expected to draw up an action plan for equal pay in which they report the results of the survey and analysis and decide what pay adjustments are required. This should also be carried out every three years and should include estimated costs including a schedule for implementation as well as a person responsible for following it up. The requirement for an action plan on equal pay does not apply to employers with fewer than 25 employees.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

In 2006 the former Equal Opportunities Ombudsman initiated a massive inspection campaign on pay surveys, the so called 'One Million Inspection Project', which aimed to question a million people. It actually involved about 600 employers with a total of 750,000 employees. The project aimed to monitor compliance with the provisions that regulate pay surveys. About 15% of employers were governmental agencies or state-owned companies and 85% were private companies.

Employers were asked to provide the ombudsman with their pay surveys, analysis and action plans. Employers whose work did not meet the requirements of the provisions were encouraged to make the necessary amendments. The quality of the pay surveys and analysis were largely insufficient at the initial stage of the campaign. However, a parallel information campaign, training and counseling on the provisions for pay surveys, as well as bench-marking provided by the ombudsman resulted in a considerable improvements.

The main conclusion of the project is that the provisions of pay survey may be efficient provided that they are implemented correctly. According to the ombudsman, correct implementation requires that the employers fully understand the concept of pay surveys. Training and bench-marking can help employers in this respect. 'The One Million Inspection Project' finished at the end of 2008.

3. RESULTS

- About 60% of employers had introduced pay adjustments or other measures in order to achieve equal pay for women and men doing work regarded as equal or of equal value.
- About 44% had identified unjustified pay differentials that had to be amended. Pay adjustments totalled at least SEK 72 million (approximately 7 million euros).

- The pay adjustments concerned at least 5,800 employees, of which about 90% were women. This means an average monthly pay rise of SEK 1000 (100 euros) per person.
- A third of the employers had taken steps other than pay adjustments to achieve equal pay. These included professional development for staff members; training for pay-setting managers; measures to recruit more women in senior positions; a brake on wage growth for men who compared to female colleagues had received a higher wage than their current position justified, e.g. because they had previously held managerial posts.
- The pay survey has helped draw attention to other gender equality measures that are needed to resolve pay differentials – the so called ‘objective pay differentials’ – between women and men that are the result of different conditions in their working lives, for example, that there are more male managers and that women take a greater responsibility for unpaid work.

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UNITED KINGDOM

Policy actions and research on the factors behind the gender pay gap

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

There are many barriers to social mobility and equal opportunities in the UK, and we need concerted government action to tear down these barriers and help to build a fairer and more family-friendly society.

A new coalition government took office in May 2010, and has set out a programme of work to address inequality between men and women (see point 2). It is too early to determine the effect of measures within this programme on the gender pay gap.

Additionally, research has shown that the drivers of the gender pay gap are complex and multi-faceted (see point 3). Therefore it will always be difficult to demonstrate that any one action has directly influenced the gender pay gap. Action is therefore needed on several fronts if we are to progress.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

The UK government has pledged to promote equal pay. We are working to enhance pay transparency, ensuring that through the Equality Act 2010 employees can discuss their pay with one another and expose any inequality that exists. This would also apply where employment contracts are used to try to impose pay secrecy. We are also conducting a review of fair pay in the public sector, where the majority of the workforce are women. In addition, the UK government is considering what further measures may be required to end discrimination, including in respect of pay, in the workplace.

Alongside this, we want to improve flexibility at work for both men and women, removing the barriers to balance work and family life. As part of this, we will extend the right to request flexible working to all employees, consulting with business on how best to do so, and encourage shared parenting from the earliest stages of pregnancy – including the promotion of a system of flexible parental leave. We will also support the provision of free nursery care for pre-school children, with a diverse range of providers and a greater gender balance in the early years workforce.

The UK government is also working with business to improve gender equality on corporate boards. For example, the UK corporate governance code now advocates appointments on merit, against objective criteria and with due regard for the benefits of diversity, including gender diversity.

3. RESULTS

Our research into the drivers of the gender pay gap showed the complexity of the issue:

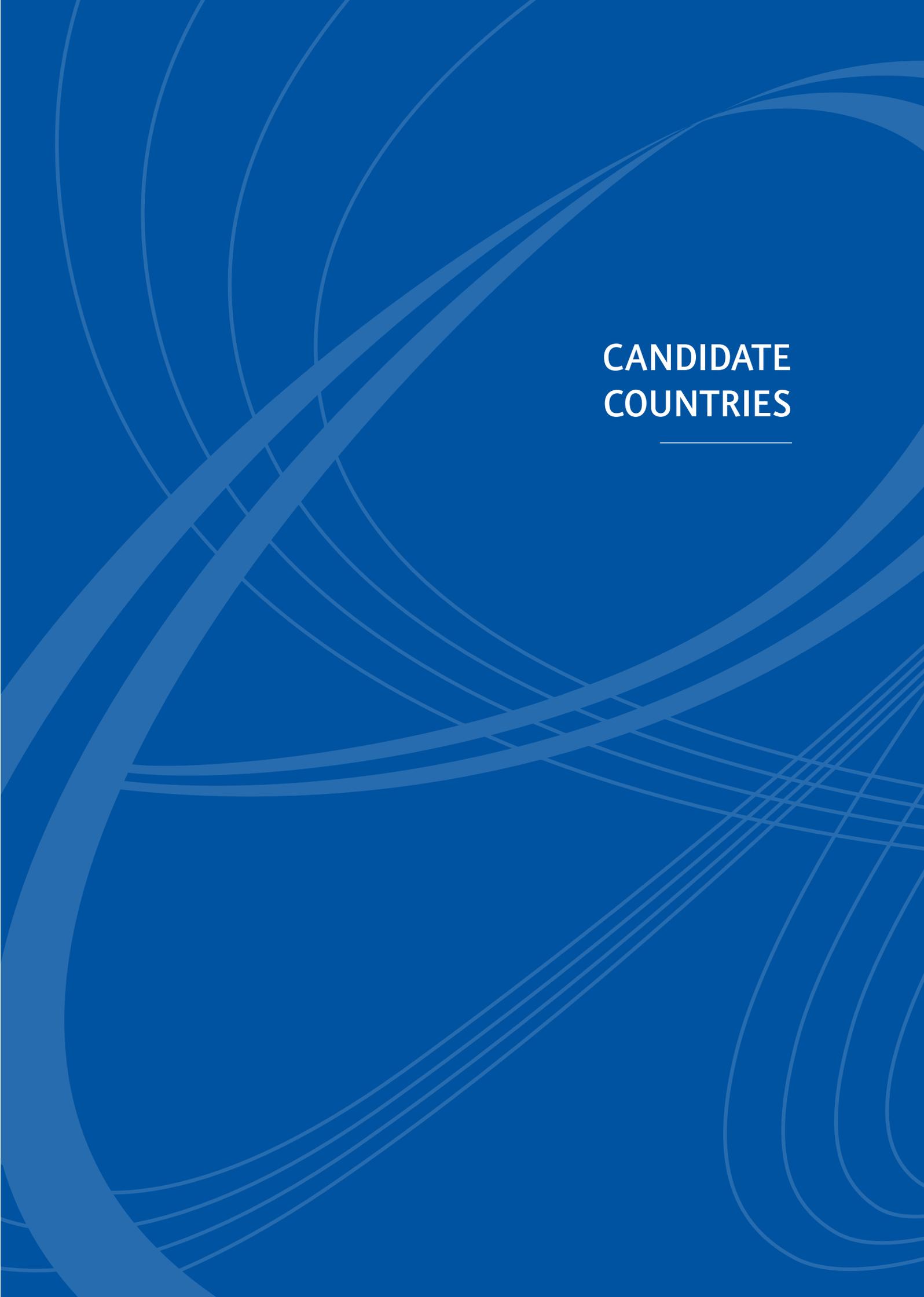
- 10% of the overall pay gap can be attributed to occupational gender segregation;
- 12% of the gap is associated with the industries in which women work;

- 21% of the gap is associated with differences in years of full-time work;
- 16% of the gap is associated with the negative effect on wages of having previously worked part-time or of having taken time out of the labour market to look after family;
- 5% of the gap is associated with formal education levels;
- 36% of the pay gap could not be explained by any observable factors, suggesting discrimination may be an important barrier.

As above, it is too early to determine what impact this programme of work will have on the gender pay gap in the UK, and there will always be a challenge in revealing the causes. However, the UK government will continue to evaluate the impact of new measures (e.g. measures introduced through the Equality Act 2010) and to monitor key indicators, for example the representation of women on boards of leading companies and the availability and take-up of flexible working arrangements.

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CANDIDATE COUNTRIES



CROATIA

National policy promoting gender equality – The Gender Equality Act

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

The Gender Equality Act, Anti-discrimination Act and the Labour Act prohibit any form of gender-based discrimination in employment and guarantee the right to equal pay for work of equal value for women and men.

The Maternity and Parental Rights and Benefits Act sets out the basic rights of employed, self-employed and unemployed parents to parental leave and benefits. The Act introduces 'parental leave' instead of 'supplementary maternity leave' and it opens the possibility of taking this leave in portions until the child's eighth birthday. Parents can also transfer their rights to parental leave to the other parent. Reducing unemployment among women, empowering them economically, eliminating all forms of discrimination in the workforce, balancing family and professional responsibilities are all part of the National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality 2006-2010.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

Raising public awareness about the gender pay gap and the glass ceiling phenomenon was the aim of a number of conferences, round tables and panel discussions, including parliamentary committee discussions. The Croatian Employment Service systematically collects statistical data and indicators on the gender pay gap in the social security system and on the labour market in general. The Central Bureau of Statistics regularly publishes and disseminates gender-disaggregated data.

A number of research activities aimed at collecting specific information on gender differences in the labour market have indicated that a relatively low gender pay gap (11%) seems to widen when education is taken into account. This is particularly significant as women generally tend to have a higher level of education than men. A relatively generous parental leave policy acts as a strong incentive for women not to participate in the labour market during their prime child-bearing age.

At the same time, a strong career commitment is not easy to follow if the family policy is restricted to lengthy maternity leave without providing other family-friendly measures. For instance, measures could include an affordable and flexible child day-care system. In addition, a more equitable share of family responsibilities between parents, including parental leave, would significantly reduce the part of the gap that is due to child-related absence from work.

3. RESULTS

Raising public awareness of the need to share household duties between men and women and balance family and professional responsibilities are continuously encouraged. New pre-school facilities and the

introduction of single-shift classes in many primary schools also support the balance. The percentage of children covered by the state pre-school education system has risen in the past two years to 55.12%. The publication of statistical data and articles in the media featuring the increased number of fathers taking parental leave have helped to raise awareness of the advantages of sharing parental responsibilities.

The Office for Gender Equality has also translated the European Commission publications such as 'A Code of Practice on the Implementation of Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value for Women and Men' and 'Manual for Gender Mainstreaming of Employment Policies'. They are published on the website.

Within the project 'Promoting Equality on the Croatian Labour Market', the Croatian Employment Service created a 'Collection of Best Practices and Guidelines for Employers – Promotion of Differences and Elimination of Discrimination on the Labour Market'. There has been some progress in eliminating sexist language. All occupations in the new National Classification of Occupations are listed in both the masculine and feminine forms, creating the linguistic preconditions for promoting a more balanced representation of men and women on the labour market.

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ICELAND

*The Action Plan of Akureyri district –
an area of 17,000 inhabitants*

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

In 2004, the district of Akureyri decided to bridge the gender pay gap among its employees. According to research from 1998, the gender pay gap was 8% (the average gender pay gap in Iceland has been around 15%-17% for the last 10 years).

A special committee was established to map the wage system in the district and to recommend how to deal with the gender pay gap. The committee finished its work in 2005 and then the real work began.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

The action plan contained three stages:

- The first step was to go through the payments made to each employee, to examine whether the person was being paid according to the agreements made with the labour unions and map any extra payments (for overtime) or special payments (for cars, telephones etc.). The details of who received extra payments and for what were all mapped. Then the extra overtime, which was paid almost exclusively to men, was reduced as well as any other extra payments. One reason for doing this was the fact that some men were working so much overtime that it was not in accordance with the district's family policy. This part of the work took a long time and some employees, especially those who lost extra payments, were not particularly happy but very few resigned.
- The next step was to measure the gender pay gap after the changes had been made. The outcome was that a gender pay gap no longer existed.
- Step three was to ensure that decisions on employee pay was to be centralised and therefore made by the same staff. It also set out the need to measure the gender pay gap on a regular basis.

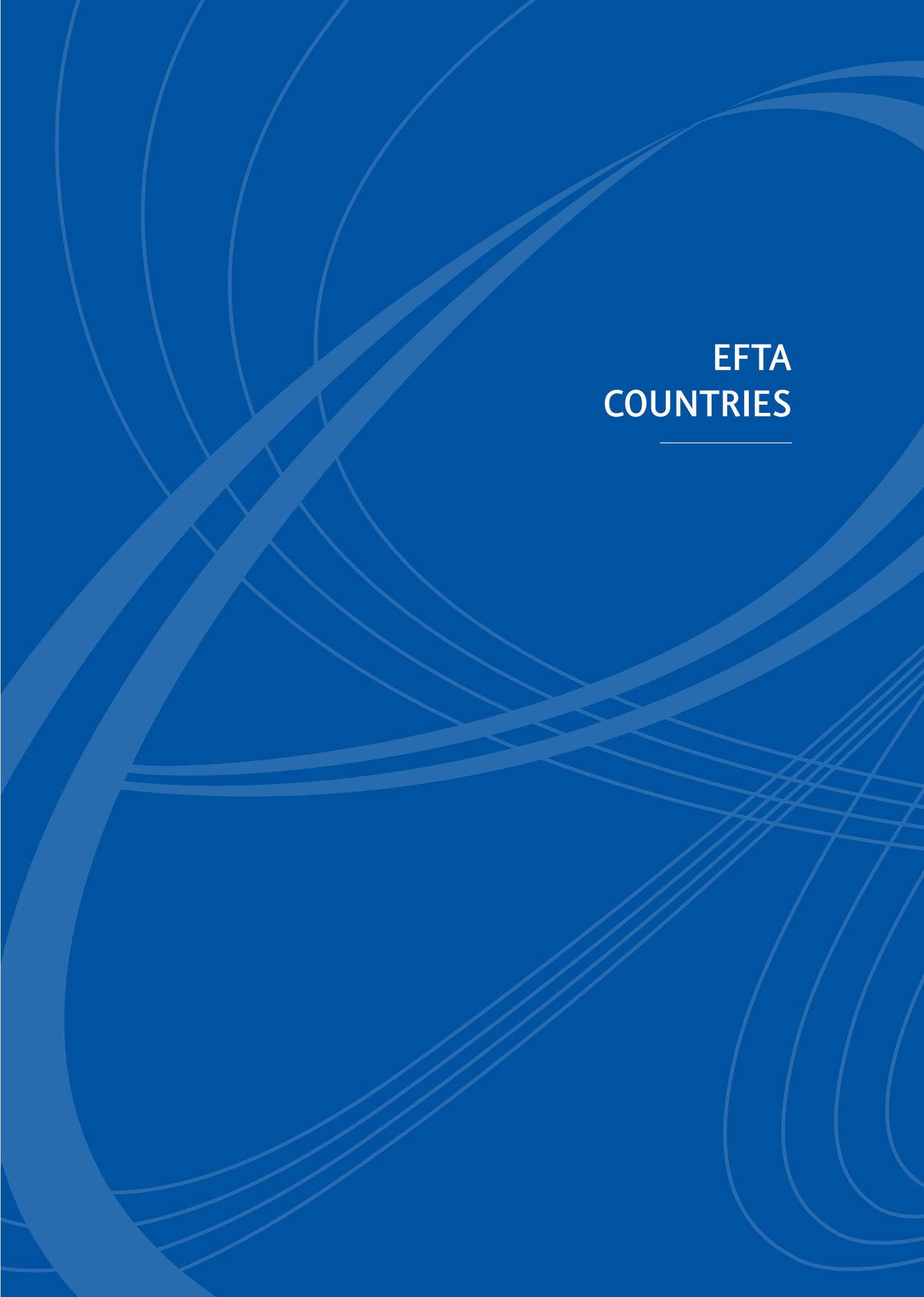
3. RESULTS

The result is that a gender pay gap no longer exists in the Akureyri district. The work was difficult and there was resistance and dissatisfaction among some of the employees, while at the same time the action was supported by the labour unions.

Others were very pleased and the district of Akureyri is now leading the districts in Iceland concerning gender equality in local government.

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EFTA COUNTRIES



NORWAY

Official Norwegian Report NOU 2008:6 Gender and Pay

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

In June 2006 the Norwegian government appointed a commission to provide an overview of the differences between women's and men's pay and consider measures to reduce these differences. The Equal Pay Commission was established as a committee of experts and comprised researchers from several different disciplines. A reference group for the commission was also established, consisting ten main employers' and employees' organisations in Norway. The Equal Pay Commission submitted its report and opinion in February 2008: NOU 2008:6 Facts, analyses and measures to promote equal pay.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

The report gives a thorough documentation of facts, showing a steady pay gap on 15% between women and men in Norway. An analysis of the reasons for the pay gap in a labour market where women and men are almost equally qualified and educated was provided, as well as the consequences of the collective wage agreements from a gender equality perspective.

The analyses prove that differences in the length of education and age explain a minor part of the pay gap. Individual discrimination is relatively rare as women and men are paid approximately the same for the same position at the same company.

The report highlighted three conclusions in understanding the pay gap:

- the pay gap follows the gender-segregated labour market;
- the Norwegian model of collective bargaining and wage agreements has not reduced the pay gap;
- the pay gap increases during child-bearing age as having children has a negative affect on a woman's wage.

The report estimates the economic impact of equal wage training for women and men in the public sector as well as for the labour market and employment in the economy at large.

In its recommendations, the Equal Pay Commission provides concrete proposals for future strategies and measures, covering:

- proactive actions in the workplace;
- pay statistics available to all employees in the workplace;
- increased wages in female-dominated occupations in the public sector, allocated from the national budget;
- a strong focus on equal pay in the collective bargaining negotiations and agreements in the private sector, with the aim of allocating funds for low-paid and female-dominated groups;

- parental leave that is more equally divided between fathers and mothers;
- a right for employees who are absent from work due to parental leave to at least an average pay increase;
- support for increased recruitment of women to management positions.

3. RESULTS

The Equal Pay Commission played a proactive role in disseminating knowledge and influence public opinion. The government submitted the report on an extensive public hearing. In 2009, equal pay was singled out as a priority in the government's new Policy Platform. These activities placed the issue of equal pay high on the political and public agendas.

The system of collective bargaining and wage settlements in Norway is regulated and centralised involving powerful social partners. The freedom of association, the right to negotiate and to make collective agreements are vital. In this system the government is not in the position to govern or to give priority to any groups.

New collective agreements were settled in spring 2010. In the pipeline of the negotiations claims for equal pay were intense. The report from the Equal Pay Commission and the government's concern contributed to a public debate and the female-dominated unions pitched their demands high. Equal pay became an issue in the negotiations. After disputes, mediations in the private sector and the state as well as a strike among employees in the districts, the partners agreed a wage settlement giving better pay rises to female-dominated groups. In the private sector a declaration on gender equality was also agreed.

The government will submit a white paper on equal pay to parliament in 2010 presenting its proposals for new legislation and the authorities' measures targeting equal pay.

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SWITZERLAND

Equal pay for men and women in public procurement

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

According to the Federal Act on Public Procurement (FAPP, Art. 8), companies issued with a federal government mandate must guarantee equal pay for both men and women. The Federal Office for the Equality of Women and Men (FOGE) may be commissioned to perform the necessary checks (Ordinance on Public Procurement (OPP, Art.6).

The objective of these provisions is to ensure the equal treatment of all goods and service providers, thus creating an important precondition for fair competition. Companies that do not comply with the requirement of equal pay for men and women usually save on costs and thus achieve an unfair market advantage. Depending on the degree of pay discrimination towards women within a company, huge cost savings can be made, which in turn lead to competitive distortion on the free market.

Through these rules of procedure, Swiss procurement law also focuses on helping to secure achievements in the social sphere and preserve industrial peace as well as preventing adverse socio-political effects.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

To ensure that the companies receiving mandates under federal procurement law comply with the requirement of equal pay for men and women, the FOGE and the Federal Procurement Commission have developed a monitoring tool. This tool is based on a statistical economic procedure (regression analysis). Differences in pay between men and women working for the same company can be identified using internal data on pay, together with details of the employee's personal qualifications (education/training, employment experience, seniority) and work-related criteria (workplace requirements, professional position). If a percentage of this pay remains unaccounted for, this is considered – by definition – discriminatory. The company can also introduce further assessment criteria as part of a test method. However, these criteria must not be discriminatory in nature (e.g. marital status and part-time employment). For the purposes of enforcement and practicality, the time spent must be kept within the appropriate limits. As a result, it is possible that not all assessment criteria relating to a specific company will be incorporated into the analysis. There is therefore a tolerance threshold of 5%. This should ensure that the time spent on performing the checks remains within a reasonable bandwidth, while at the same time protecting companies from being penalised without just cause.

If the FOGE identifies a case of pay discrimination, the following legally valid measures are to be considered: a contractual penalty; exclusion from the procurement procedure; revocation; and/or termination of the contract.

In the event of non-compliance, a company can be set a date by which compliance with the equal pay requirement must be proven – under the threat of further action. The company is not permitted to

participate in any other federal procurement procedure until it has submitted qualified proof that the issue of pay discrimination has been resolved.

Since 2006, the FOGE has conducted three to five inspections a year on a random selection of companies.

3. RESULTS

This company monitoring process has led to greater awareness regarding equal pay for men and women working within the same company. However, the limited funds available to the FOGE mean that only a few such checks can be performed.

That said, the monitoring tool can also be used by companies to perform their own independent checks. The FOGE offers an Excel-compatible self-test tool called Logib. This is freely available to download at www.logib.ch and no special statistics knowledge is required. Logib has aroused considerable interest in other countries and Germany and Luxembourg have already developed their own version. Logib is now an internationally registered trademark.

The monitoring tool is not intended for small companies. For reliable results, the tool is best suited to companies with a minimum of 50 employees.

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SOCIAL PARTNERS



BUSINESSEUROPE

IRELAND

The National Women's Strategy 2007-2016

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

As part of Ireland's National Women's Strategy 2007-2016, one of the three themes concerned 'Equalising socio-economic opportunity for women', which included the objective to decrease the gender pay gap. There are a number of initiatives identified under this objective that have been implemented or are at various stages of implementation. They include:

- undertaking research on international good practice concerning equality monitoring within companies;
- continuing the work of the National Framework Committee on Equal Opportunities within companies to address gender pay gap;
- introducing statutory employment records that may facilitate research;
- ensuring effective monitoring of the National Minimum Wage;
- continuing to review the national minimum wage as appropriate in conjunction with the social partners.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

From these wide ranging objectives one of the most interesting pieces of work was research that was carried out last year. In 2009, the Equality Authority and the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) published a report on the Gender Wage Gap in Ireland: Evidence from the National Employment Survey 2003. This report identified the size of the pay gap; the gap in full-time and part-time employment; the implications of various policies such as collective bargaining or family-friendly initiatives on the pay gap; and the occupational and industry factors that contribute to the pay gap. Other objectives, which are ongoing, include the work of the National Employment Rights Authority, which monitors the implementation of the national minimum wage.

Unrelated to this particular National Women's Strategy, the Equality Authority has also carried out in the past an Equality Review and Action Plan (ERAP) scheme (funded by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform through the Equality for Women Measure of the National Development Plan, 2000-2006). The scheme was a voluntary initiative designed to promote equality and diversity in the workplace. The scheme provided support for a comprehensive examination of the policies, procedures, practices and perceptions that operate within the workplace with regard to their contribution to equality outcomes. It focused on gender alongside the other eight equality grounds included in the Employment Equality Act 1998. There was a particular focus on a gender pay gap assessment as part of the review. The ERAP scheme also provided a follow-up assessment to be made within 12 to 18 months of the initial review and action plan to ensure

the scheme's longer term impact within the company. Reviews were conducted by an equality auditor chosen from a panel of consultants selected by the Equality Authority.

3. RESULTS

One of the key research findings of the ESRI research was that career breaks for full-time female employees would improve their relative pay (unlike other flexible arrangements such as part-time work which served to widen the gap). This research also shows that social partnership arrangements that yielded national wage agreements have, in the past, helped to standardise wage increases within and across organisations and sectors, thus improving the position of women within both the full-time and part-time labour markets.

With regards the Equality Authority's ERAP scheme, a number of large employers participated in the scheme and received intensive support from a consultant over a period of time. The final audits were concluded in 2008.

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BUSINESSEUROPE

FINLAND

CONFEDERATION OF FINNISH INDUSTRIES

The National Equal Pay Programme

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

Since 2006 the Finnish social partners and the government have been involved in a comprehensive Equal Pay Programme aimed at bridging the gender pay gap and including various actions across many fields. The programme has clear targets and monitoring mechanisms.

A concrete objective for the programme is to reduce the gender pay gap, calculated on the basis of regular monthly working hours, by at least 5% by 2015 down from the current 18-20%. Another target is to one in five people working in jobs that employ a 40-59% proportion of both men and women by 2012. One of the main aims is to discourage segregation and give both women and men equal opportunities for career advancement (e.g. having half of all managerial posts filled by women by 2020). In relation to wage systems, the goal is to have three quarters of workers working within fair and incentive-based pay systems by 2015.

The programme has included numerous measures and projects aimed at dismantling horizontal and vertical segregation; developing wage policy and pay systems; and improving gender equality planning in the workplace.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

There are two on-going projects that can be cited as particular examples of the wage policy and pay systems that have been developed under the programme. They include:

- The 'SATU' research project. This project provides information on the impact of new pay systems on women's and men's pay in the private and public sectors. The Labour Institute for Economic Research is responsible for carrying out the project in cooperation with the Research Institute of the Finnish Economy (ETLA) and Statistics Finland. It will run until the end of 2010.
- The 'TAPAS' project. This is a three-year research and development project that develops pay systems on the basis of job evaluation and employee performance in a way that promotes equal and fair pay as well as providing incentives. Some 16-20 organisations from different industrial and collective agreement sectors are participating in the project. The Helsinki University of Technology BIT Research Centre is responsible for carrying out this project, which is financed by the European Social Fund.

3. RESULTS

The programme has been extensive and has involved all the main national players for many years. It has received a lot of publicity and attention in the media. The various measures already implemented as well

as the projects and research have shed more light onto the complex issue of gender pay, by enhancing the complexity and extent of the issue. Current discussions now centre more on the issues of segregation as well as the different choices that women and men make at the early stages of their education and later in their working lives. Education and career choices are crucial points that lead to significant differences in later life.

One of the main obstacles in implementing the programme and tackling segregation has been the difficulty in establishing dialogue with the educational institutions and authorities. The social partners dealing with working life issues and industrial relations, on the one hand, and gender equality authorities, on the other, do not have natural links with the educational institutions and the dialogue relating to educational choices has been strained and limited.

Despite the many efforts, the results of the programme have been meagre. The economic crisis hitting the male-dominated export fields, however, has had a significant effect on reducing the gap. The crisis has put the male workforce in a much more vulnerable position increasing the need for determined action to dismantle occupational segregation.

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BUSINESSEUROPE

PORTUGAL

CONFEDERATION OF PORTUGUESE INDUSTRY

Tripartite Agreement for a New System to Regulate Labour Relations, Employment Policies and Social Protection in Portugal, 25 June 2008.

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

The need to balance work and family life spurred some employees and companies to look for flexible working arrangements, sometimes in an informal way. With this in mind, the 'Tripartite Agreement for a New System to Regulate Labour Relations, Employment Policies and Social Protection in Portugal' was signed by the Portuguese government and the social partners on 25 June 2008. It set out draft revision of the Portuguese Labour Code (PLC), now already in force, as a tool to regulate, among others, the fields to which the title refers.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

In the framework of the negotiations of the agreement, issues such as social dialogue, competitiveness and equal opportunities were discussed. This resulted in measures being adopted that were interconnected and, which had an impact on the gender pay gap – the duration and organisation of working hours and the work-life balance. In this context, the issue of promoting birthrates, providing more family protection and encouraging a balance between work and family life were also discussed with the result that the parental leave was increased by 30 days (before it was 120 or 150 days).

In addition, several other changes were also foreseen for the same area such as:

- an increase in the compulsory parental leave for fathers from five to ten days;
- adoptive parents would have the same rights as biological parents;
- grandparents who replaced parents in raising children in case of illness or accident would have the same rights as parents;
- the introduction of the excuse for the assessment for adoption, under which workers are entitled to three excuses to attend social security services or to receive social security technicians at home; and
- the introduction of the right of three excuses for the worker to attend pre-natal medical appointments.

3. RESULTS

Considering that the PLC entered into force in February 2009, there is, as yet, little or no available data on the results of implementing the measures outlined above. However, with regards the gender pay gap, it is important to note that the employment rate for women in the first quarter of 2010, stood at 50.1% compared to 61.5% for men, according to the Portuguese National Institute of Statistics – Instituto Nacional de Estatística.

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THE EUROPEAN CENTRE OF EMPLOYERS AND ENTERPRISES PROVIDING PUBLIC SERVICES (CEEP)

UNITED KINGDOM

The EQPay project – social partner approaches for reducing the gender pay gap in public services

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

The EQPay project started in January 2009 and was run by CEEP and its UK Section, CEEP UK². It was initiated to support CEEP in implementing the framework of actions on gender equality and also provide the organisation with important background information for a review of equal pay legislation in the EU.

The project was born out of a concern expressed by a number of CEEP UK's members that current measures and methods were ineffective in tackling the gender pay gap in the UK's public services, despite the significant cost and disruption to those services. They also felt that such measures were barriers to more effective ways of tackling the pay differences between women and men.

CEEP UK was therefore keen to learn from the experiences of other public sector employers who had assessed and defined the causes relating to the gender pay gap and had sought to address them.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

The main goals of the project were as follows:

- Assessment of public sector employers in EU Member States
- A survey of CEEP members

Assessment of public sector employers in EU Member States

CEEP carried out an assessment of public sector employers in other EU Member States in order to determine the extent to which they faced similar challenges in tackling the gender pay gap and to evaluate the measures they had adopted to address the issues more effectively.

A survey of CEEP members

All members of the CEEP Social Affairs Committee (a total 120 people) were asked to complete a survey covering issues and questions such as:

- The size of the gender pay gap in public services.
- Their understanding of the causes of the gender pay gap.
- How the principle of equal pay for equal work was being implemented at national, sectoral and local level.

² In June 2009, CEEP UK changed its name to PPE (Partnership for Public Employers). The structure and membership of the organisation remains the same. PPE is the UK section of CEEP. As the project funding was granted when PPE was known as CEEP UK, we will continue to refer to CEEP UK in this report.

- Examples of other measures taken to reduce the gender pay gap.
- Any barriers that they felt were hampering the implementation of equal pay of equal work and/or reduction of the gender pay gap.
- Any legislative or policy changes at national or European level that they felt could enable social partners to address the gender pay gap more effectively.

A closing seminar was held on 27 November 2009 in Brussels to discuss the results of the survey; present and discuss best practices; and define the input that CEEP should make to any forthcoming consultation on changes to EU legislation or policy.

3. RESULTS

Despite 40 years of Equal Pay legislation, the gender pay gap persists at an average of around 17% in the European Union. There are numerous and complex reasons for the continued gap in gender pay. The most significant reasons generally given are:

- Labour market segregation (also resulting from stereotypes owing to education and/or career choices).
- Differences in the distribution of paid and unpaid work and difficulties in balancing work and family life.
- Difficulties in implementing the principle of equal pay for equal work.

On the whole, the project found that the UK appears to be the only country in the EU that currently has significant litigation procedures for those violating equal pay laws. However, this does not mean that equal pay measures have been badly implemented nor that the gender pay gap is significantly higher than elsewhere. Instead, it seems to related largely to the activities of 'no-win, no-fee' lawyers and a more litigious environment.

Many countries appeared not to have fully addressed or implemented the principle of equal pay for equal work. For example, only Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Slovenia and the UK seem to have taken significant steps in this direction. It also seems that the impact of equal pay for equal work on the gender pay gap has not been sufficiently explored to draw any meaningful conclusions. Where there is experience of litigation in other countries, issues of backdating or pay protection appear to pose less of a problem. In Sweden, for example, the maximum length for backdating any claims is two years. In Germany, claims are backdated only to the original date of a successful claim. The UK's choice to use a statute of limitation to determine the length of time for backdating claims appears to be unique. No issues were

reported in other countries in relation to pay protection. Much more needs to be done to address the underlying causes of the gender pay gap (labour market segregation, differences in paid and unpaid work). Even more work is required to assess the impact of such actions on the overall size of the gender pay gap in order to draw up recommendations for tackling the gender pay gap more effectively.

Participants at the closing seminar of the project agreed the following:

- There is no need to amend the EU's equal pay law but there should be more emphasis on implementing existing regulations.
- The European Commission should not promote a uniform job evaluation system as this would fail to take account of sectoral or local differences.
- The most significant causes of the gender pay gap are a segregated labour market and the work-life balance.
- The reports following the 'Framework of Actions on Gender Equality' highlight the many efforts that have already been taken in this area. However, a detailed evaluation of the impact of such measures is still needed.
- The EC should therefore support evaluation and mutual learning on successful measures to tackle the causes of the gender pay gap and ensure that comparable statistics are available to support such an assessment.
- Public sector employers tend to face lower pay gaps than private sector employers and others often look to them to set an example in this field.

CEEP therefore agreed to establish an equalities working group to continue to gather best practice and contribute to policy discussions at EU level.

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EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC)

BELGIUM

THE GENERAL FEDERATION OF BELGIAN LABOUR (ABVV/FGTB)

Equal Pay Day Campaign

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

In 2005, Zij-kant (a movement of progressive women) and the ABVV/FGTB (the Belgian socialist trade union), launched the 'Equal Pay Day' for the first time in Europe and in Belgium. Based on an American concept, the 'Equal Pay Day' is aimed at explaining and criticising the pay gap between women and men. Those who believe the gender pay gap in Belgium has decreased over the past few years are mistaken. Although Belgium is considered as a 'good European disciple' because the gender pay gap is smaller than in other Member States, still more work needs to be done in this area. Despite a well-developed legislative framework and the efforts of social partners over the past few years, there has been no major progress since the middle of the 1990s.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

The most recent statistics point to a pay gap of 23% on a monthly wage (using a male salary as the basis). This inequality is not widely known and what is even worse - people have avoided talking about it. This is largely why the Belgian trade union, FGFB/ABVV together with Zij-kant decided to organise the Equal Pay Day in 2005. The day raises awareness of the pay gap that currently exists between men and women and highlights the fact that because women earn less on average than men they have to work longer hours for the same money. Equal Pay Day is held at the point in a year that a woman must work to earn the same amount of money as their male colleague for the previous year. For example, a woman typically has to work 15 months to earn the salary that a man earned in a year (an extra three months of work). In this case the Equal Pay Day is held in March but if the pay gap narrows, it takes place earlier. The main aim of the campaign is to make people realise that this issue needs to be openly discussed.

Every year the organisers focus on a different key message. Every year the campaign includes:

- a press file;
- a press conference;
- one or more posters;
- leaflets providing background information;
- different communication tools including a web spot, gadgets, a television spot;
- trade union tools such as brochures and so on; and
- actions in companies and public places throughout Belgium.

This campaign is also used to raise awareness among trade unionists and to focus on the fact that tackling the gender pay gap is one of the trade unions' priorities. More information can be obtained from our website: www.equalpayday.be

3. RESULTS

With their yearly Equal Pay Day campaign, Zij-kant and the ABVV want to raise the public's awareness on this issue. They also want to make 'wages' a more acceptable item for discussion and encourage policy reform. So far the main results of the campaign have been as follows:

- an increased awareness of the gender pay gap (media, university, researchers, ...);
- publication of the first Belgian official report on the gender pay gap in 2007 and annual updates of the report (with statistics).
- an understanding that social partners will update the collective agreement on equal pay for men and women; increase the minimum wage; analyse their job classification systems and correct them if they are not gender neutral; and improve the working conditions for part-time workers; and an increase in the number of studies on the gender pay gap at the sectoral level;
- more commitment among trade unions to reduce the gender pay gap, including improvements in training, more actions in companies, more campaigns to raise awareness about the effects of the gap.

There have been a number of obstacles along the way such as:

- Workers, including both men and women, are not aware that a gender pay gap exists.
- The general mentality towards the issue remains a key obstacle.
- Stereotypes regarding the role of women and men.

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EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC)

CYPRUS

DEMOCRATIC LABOUR FEDERATION OF CYPRUS – DEOK

Cyprus Gender Equality Observatory (CGEO)

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

The Cyprus Gender Equality Observatory (CGEO) was created to respond to a need for an organisation to promote equality and equal opportunities in social, scientific and research activities, in Cyprus.

The CGEO was the result of the far-reaching national and international activities that the Democratic Labour Federation of Cyprus had carried out for so long. Activities that included workshops, seminars, conferences, newspaper columns and trade union actions all relating to equal opportunities for women and the promotion of their rights in the workplace and in society in general.

Equal pay; combatting sexual harassment in the workplace; gender equality in the family, in the workplace and in management; better work-life balance; equal opportunities in employment; the impact of globalisation on working women; the importance of lifelong learning; the positive actions for women; and so on are just some of the issues that have preoccupied the CGEO so far.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

Through the results of the 15th Pan-Cyprian conference that is held every year, the DEOK has placed gender equality among its top priorities and continues to work on practical and systematic ways to tackle the issue. The CGEO, which is an independent organisation set up especially to deal with equality issues, is just one of the many solutions that the DEOK has initiated. It is hoped that the CGEO and the Department of Equal Treatment will raise awareness of the various problems that working women face in the labour market in Cyprus and will work to find measures to counteract these issues, especially in tackling the gender pay gap for example.

3. RESULTS

The CGEO has already organised a number of seminars, campaigns, awareness-raising activities. It has provided the general public, especially women, with more information about Cypriot legislation on gender equality including employment rights and so on.

Employment consultants questioned over 300 women (working and unemployed) about their thoughts on how the government could make it easier for them and other women to enter or re-enter the workforce as well as what additional information was needed to overcome discrimination in the workplace.

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EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC)

ETUCE-CSEE

EUROPEAN TRADE UNION COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION

Promoting gender equality within teacher trade unions and the teaching profession

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

The European Council's Gender Equality Pact (2006), the Lisbon Strategy and the Gender Equality Roadmap 2006-2010 show the ongoing commitment that Member States have made to gender equality and the political will to achieve equality throughout Europe. In 2005, the European social partners signed the 'Framework of Actions on Gender Equality', which included strategies for joint actions to tackle the gender pay gap; gender stereotypes; work-life balance; and increase the number of women in decision-making roles. In 2009, the ETUC adopted its 'Charter on Gender Mainstreaming in Trade Unions'.

In the education sector, the large presence of women is one of the best examples of a segregated labour market, which in turn reproduces gender stereotypes. This increasing number of women in the teaching profession goes hand in hand with low sector wages and low recognition of teachers in society. A specific policy to promote more male teachers does not seem to have been fully developed and, in some European countries, it is totally absent. Teacher trade unions also needed to assess the presence of women in decision-making roles.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

The overall objective of the project was to improve the understanding of national teacher trade unions of gender equality issues and to promote their actions to ensure gender equality within their own structures as well as in the teaching profession as a whole. More specifically, this includes the following actions:

- Raising awareness among ETUCE members about gender equality issues and the teaching profession, as well as about major EU priorities, policies and instruments in the field.
- Analysing the actual gender equality situation in the education sector and within national teacher trade unions' structures in the EU, EFTA and candidate countries.
- Assessing the ETUC-UNICE/UEAPME-CEEP 'Framework of Actions on Gender Equality' and the ETUC 'Charter of Gender Mainstreaming in Trade Unions' from teachers' perspective and help teacher trade unions in implementing and monitoring these two instruments at national, regional and local levels.

The main activities foreseen within the project were the following:

- ETUCE survey on gender equality in the teaching profession and teacher trade unions. The information gathered within the survey concerned:
 - Part 1 – Questions on the national policy context combating gender stereotypes in schools (promoting non-gender biased education in schools, promoting non-stereotyped career advice for pupils, raising awareness on labour market needs).

- Part 2 – Gender balance in the teaching profession: recruitment, career development and working conditions (including salaries).
- Part 3 – Women representation in the teacher trade union movement at local, national and leadership levels.
- Awareness-raising seminar
- Development of an ETUCE Action Plan on enhancing gender equality in the teaching profession and teacher trade unions
- Final project Conference

3. RESULTS

In 2009 the ETUCE held an awareness-raising seminar and a conference to promote gender equality in teacher unions and the education sector. The conference also provided an opportunity to present and evaluate the results of the ETUCE survey; exchange good practice and launch a debate among ETUCE's members on the future actions that should be taken to improve gender equality. The survey highlighted that the number of women in school leadership and teaching staff tends to decrease as the level of education rises. The basis for a salary increase, promotion or other career development for teachers does not solely explain this trend as promotions seem to be based on relevant and appropriate features. Women are also significantly under-represented in high-level bodies within their own teaching union structures. There was an average discrepancy of 15% between the total number of women affiliates in the trade union membership and the total number of women present at the unions' highest level decision-making bodies. Women are again severely outnumbered in decision-making roles, never representing more than 30%.

The ETUCE Gender Action Plan is a direct result of this project. It provides practical advice for national member organisations on how to engage proactively in gender equality and commits ETUCE to take accompanying action at the European level. For the reports and the ETUCE Gender Action Plan go to: www.csee-etuice.org.

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EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC)

GERMANY

VER.DI

Campaign to secure a re-evaluation of wages mainly for women working in the social and childcare sectors

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

The ver.di trade union started from the basis that early years education is an important and valuable service and that the skills and experience of the, mainly female, workforce was not being recognised. The sector was characterised by poor pay and working conditions and there had been insufficient recognition of the change in the nature of the work and the increased stress suffered by many workers. The union assessed work in the sector in relation to the “Decent Work Index’ disseminated by the German Confederation of Trade Unions (DGB). Ver.di not only wanted a re-evaluation of pay and improved working conditions but, more specifically, it wanted an agreement on health to tackle the issues of stress and more onerous working conditions.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

The two elements of ver.di’s action included negotiations with the VKA local government employers’ organisation along with public campaigning and industrial action. The public campaigning was very important from the outset as the union wanted to ensure that the general public, and in particular the parents who used the childcare services, understood why the workers were taking the action.

They wanted the public to understand the need to improve pay and working conditions. Central to this was the focus on the importance of early years education as a foundation for later education and the fact that childcare workers are paid less and work longer hours than school teachers. Press coverage was also important for the campaign and again this was achieved through actions involving both childcare workers and parents.

3. RESULTS

After a lengthy campaign and a threat of strike action in May 2009, ver.di finally managed to negotiate new agreements in July 2009. The agreements introduced revised rates of pay as well as provisions to improve workers’ health. They cover around 220,000 social and childcare workers.

The agreement on health acknowledges the increased responsibility and workload of social workers and childcare workers and introduces health committees, health working groups and risk assessments to address these problems. The revised pay structure means that a newly recruited childcare worker will receive a starting salary of €2,240 a month instead of €2,130 and after four years this will rise to €2,400 up from €2,240.

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EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC)

SPAIN

TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION OF WORKERS' COMMISSIONS

Designating 22 February as an International Day for the Equal Pay between Men and Women

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

Wage Structure Survey: amendment to the poll workers, including public and private sectors so that the results are adjusted to social reality.

Designating 22 February as an International Day for Equal Pay Between Men and Women: proposal made by the socialist parliamentary group with support from CCOO.

3. RESULTS

Cannot measure actions taken as yet.

4. CONTACT(S)

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EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC)

SPAIN

GENERAL WORKERS' UNION OF SPAIN

Highlighting the underestimated work that women do and the indirect discrimination they face

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

In Spain, the latest data from 2008 on pay points to a gap between women and men of around 21.8%. This is despite the fact that Spain's employment law insists that companies pay men and women equal pay for equal work. Part-time work; occupational segregation; bonuses; segregated professional status; and family responsibilities that compel women to reduce their working hours are mostly to blame for the pay difference in Spain.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

For this reason the Spanish trade unions – the General Union of Workers (UGT) and the Trade Union Confederation of Workers' Commissions (CCOO) – pushed for Spain's Equal Pay Day on 22 February 2010. They carried out various actions including a parliamentary meeting in congress where they were able to gather support from the government as well as a promise that ministers would urge international institutions to designate 22 February as an 'International Equal Pay Day.'

At the same time, the UGT embarked on campaign to raise awareness. It included distributing posters as well as drafting a report highlighting the causes and presenting possible solutions to abolish the gender pay gap in Spain.

3. RESULTS

The main difficulties in abolishing or even reducing the gender pay gap in Spain are largely linked to the fact that childcare responsibilities are not equally shared nor is there enough state support for women of childbearing age. As a result many women reduce their working hours, at the risk of losing their wage, to care for the family, whereas very few men do the same. Furthermore, although more Spanish women have recently joined the labour market they still often occupy jobs that require little or no qualifications, are poorly paid and have very little or no social recognition.

Spain's welfare system needs to be further improved and some structural and demographic changes are still needed in order to redress this imbalance. In addition a lot still needs to be done to change the mentality in companies, as well as encourage the involvement of institutions and also men. More social protection and childcare support is needed for women of childbearing age so that they do not feel pressurised to reduce their working hours or dedicate a large part of their professional life to childcare.

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EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC)

UNITED KINGDOM

TRADES UNION CONGRESS (TUC)

Measures to encourage greater pay transparency in the private sector

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

In the Equality Act 2010 there is a provision that enables the government to introduce regulations requiring private sector employers with more than 250 employees to report on gender pay differentials in their organisation. The Trades Union Congress (TUC), the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) among others were asked to help develop a set of measures to encourage voluntary reporting of gender pay information. The final report is available here: www.equalityhumanrights.com/fairer-britain/gender-pay-reporting/

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

The EHRC recommended the following measures:

The EHRC expects employers with over 500 employees to use the narrative approach and report on at least two of the quantitative measures. The EHRC intends to encourage voluntary reporting and will report on progress regularly, beginning in November 2010.

3. RESULTS

The TUC has long argued, and still supports, the need for mandatory comprehensive equal pay audits to address the gender pay gap. But business in the UK has resisted such legislation. When gender pay gap reporting was first proposed the TUC, CBI and the EHRC were all starting from very different standpoints. However, the TUC and CBI agreed on a set of measures together with the EHRC. In terms of quantitative measures, all parties preferred the second one in the list – the difference in average pay by grade and job type. There is still some disquiet about reporting on a single gender pay gap figure for the whole workforce.

It is not clear yet as to what extent voluntary reporting will be adopted in the private sector, although we urge the CBI to promote it among their members. The previous government had said that if the voluntary approach did not work they would use the provision in the Equality Act to require mandatory reporting. However, the Conservative party stated at the time that it did not support this section of the Act. Therefore it is not clear whether the Coalition government will instigate any statutory measures on gender pay reporting at any time in the future and this may undermine the urgency for taking action on a voluntary basis. There is still significant resistance to greater transparency on gender pay differences in the private sector in the UK. This is largely because many fear the extra costs of providing equal pay, the reputational damage it would cause and mass litigation that could ensue if a problem is exposed.

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EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC)

UNITED KINGDOM

THE PUBLIC SERVICE TRADE UNION – UNISON

Public sector Gender Equality Duties and Equality Impact Assessments

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

With 1.3 million members, UNISON is the largest public sector union in the UK. It has a diverse membership and over one million female members. Over 91% of UNISON's members work in the public sector. The Gender Equality Duty (GED) and Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are important statutory instruments for which trade unions successfully campaigned in order to redress inequalities; close the gender pay gap; reduce the disproportionate adverse impact; and promote equality.

Tackling the gender pay gap is a key priority and UNISON uses collective bargaining and legislation to support numerous equal pay cases in the employment tribunals. UNISON currently has over 40,000 cases registered in employment tribunals and appeal courts.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

The GED requires that 'due regard' must be given to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting equal opportunities. It also requires public authorities to take action on the three causes of the gender pay gap – discrimination, occupational segregation and unequal caring responsibilities. Public sector employers, and organisations in the private and voluntary sectors that exercise public functions, are subject to the gender equality duty in respect of those functions. They must also 'have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality' and certain listed authorities have a particular duty to reduce gender pay inequality. A listed authority should, when formulating its objectives for the purposes of the legislation, consider the need to incorporate objectives that address the causes of any differences between the pay of men and women that are related to their gender. They must publish an action plan (referred to in the duties as an 'equality scheme') showing how they intend to fulfil general and specific duties.

The equality scheme should also set out the overall objectives; involve and consult employees, trade unions and service users and others in preparing the scheme; and should include people facing inequalities; and include the actions that the public authority has taken, or intends to take, to conduct Equality Impact Assessments on its current and future policies and practices.

Public authorities must also ensure that their procurement policies and practices comply with GED. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are a legal requirement to implement the specific duties as they ensure that no groups are disadvantaged on equality grounds. They also ensure that where EIAs show an adverse or negative impact, due regard must be paid to modify the policy or practice. Their application is guided by Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and approved by parliament.

3. RESULTS

The public sector GEDs and EIAs have been important steps in changing how employers deliver public services, address inequalities in the workplace and assess the impact of their policies and practice by gender, as well as race and disability. Public authorities have also had to assess how their policies and decisions impact on services and service users. All public authorities have policies but there are huge variations on their implementation. Some equality schemes are more comprehensive than others. Some public authorities see the process as a 'tick box' exercise. Others have published detailed equality schemes and action plans and have monitored and published their results. There is a reluctance to carry out pay audits and job evaluation schemes, which require funding.

Transparency in pay systems remains a problem particularly among discretionary pay systems, for example, performance related pay. The lack of data on the pay gaps between men and women also acts as a barrier. The lack of using a hypothetical comparator remains an obstacle. 'Agenda for Change' in the NHS, which is a single pay system, is a good example of a comprehensive, collective bargaining and social partner scheme.

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UEAPME

AUSTRIA

FEDERAL MINISTRY FOR ECONOMY, FAMILY AND YOUTH (BMWFI)/
AUSTRIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (WKÖ)

Female.Future – The leadership Programme

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

From a socio-political, demographic and economic perspective equality between women and men is very important for businesses in Austria. It would be short-sighted and a waste of talent not to use the economic potential of qualified women.

However, compared to men, women are still under-represented in top leadership and decision-making positions. This vertical segregation of the labour market is one cause of the gender pay gap. We need to take steps to increase the number of women in decision-making positions. Firstly, improving the work-life balance and including access to more affordable high-quality childcare services is crucial in helping women entering, returning to and remaining in leadership positions in the workforce.

In addition to this, we need measures that focus directly on women, especially to encourage them to apply for leadership positions. 'Zukunft.Frauen' (Female.Future) is a leadership programme for women that assists them on their way to the top.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

The Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth (BMWFI), Austria's Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Austrian Industries have developed an executive programme for women. They drew their inspiration from the Female-Future-Programme in Norway, initiated by the Norwegian Enterprise Organisation (NHO). The target group are women who aspire to positions in top management, the board or the supervisory board. The companies, in which the women work, nominate a candidate for the programme Female.Future and, if their nominees are selected they pay a fee to cover costs. Self-employed women can apply themselves. For the pilot project, the number of participants is limited to 25 women, who are carefully selected by an advisory board.

The programme, which has eight modules alternating between 'Successful Management' and training 'soft skills', will take place between September 2010 and February 2011. The modules are organised as half-day events, followed by dinner and fireside talks with business experts and board members. The evening event also provides an opportunity to network and share experiences.

The final event in March 2011 will enable participants to present themselves to the business community increasing their visibility.

Detailed information about the programme is available on the website www.zukunft-frauen.at.

3. RESULTS

Zukunft.Frauen is designed to encourage women to apply for higher positions with confidence. The first round will start in September 2010. After the closing event in March 2011 the programme will be evaluated. The number of nominations is already overwhelming. The start of the programme has brought wide media coverage with the positive side effect that the subject 'more women in leadership positions' is being discussed more broadly in public. Looking toward the future, we hope that this project will promote a network of graduates and established board members. As in Norway we intend to develop a database for female board candidates. Highly qualified and successful women are role models for others and this database makes them visible.

In Norway the programme has been a great success. The adapted programme for Austria shows how best practise examples can be adapted to national needs.

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JOINT ACTION FROM SOCIAL PARTNERS

ETUC/BUSINESSEUROPE/UEAPME/CEEP

European social partners 'Framework of Actions on Gender Equality'

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

In March 2005, the European social partners adopted a 'Framework of Actions on Gender Equality'³.

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

- to address gender roles;
- to promote women into decision-making roles;
- to support a better work-life balance; and
- to close the gender pay gap.

The member organisations of BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC⁴ agreed to promote the framework of actions in Member States at all appropriate levels taking account of national practices.

They also decided to draw up three annual reports on the national actions carried out on the four priorities identified. Three annual reports were made public in 2006, 2007 and 2008.

National social partners were invited in 2009 to submit national evaluation reports covering the period spanned in the annual reports (2006, 2007, 2008) and to include additional actions that have been undertaken since the final annual report of 2008. In 2005, the social partners also decided to evaluate the impact of their actions on both companies and workers after three annual reports – this is the purpose of the current report.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURE

The evaluation report comprises national evaluation reports jointly prepared by social partners in the different Member States. It highlights the key features of their work in promoting the four priorities between 2005 and 2009. European social partners also report on actions taken at the European level separately. This evaluation may lead to an update of the priorities identified and/or an assessment on whether or not additional action is required in one or more of the priority areas.

The evaluation report was adopted by the European Social Dialogue Committee on 27 October 2009.⁵

³ http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/dsw/public/actRetrieveText.do?id=10551

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

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/dsw/public/actRetrieveText.do?id=8817

3. RESULTS

Fifty years on from the first European Treaty that established the principle of equal pay for men and women, a considerable pay gap still exists.

The pay gap is a complex issue with multiple causes, addressed at different levels by all the relevant stakeholders. Despite the persistent inequalities across countries, sectors and professions, the reports show that Member States and the social partners have been active in this field.

The 2008 annual report emphasised the need to collect information on the issue of equal pay in Member States.

Following on from their commitment expressed in 2005, social partners have taken actions to promote all four priorities, focusing on the areas in which their needs are greater. In accordance with national needs and practices, national employers' and employees' organisations have used different tools and means to address the gender pay gap at national, sectoral, regional and company levels. They reported on actions taken in three jointly agreed national reports published in 2006, 2007 and 2008. In 2009 they adopted a final evaluation report.

National reports mentioned 'their participation in round table debates to exchange practices aimed at better understanding the contributory factors for, and the elimination of, pay differentials between women and men. National social partners also referred to their active involvement in consultative national commissions dealing with equal pay (Norway), as well as their direct engagement in projects promoted in the framework of the work of these bodies.

Several social partners (at national, sectoral or company level) have, either jointly or on a unilateral basis, developed toolkits aimed at tackling the gender pay gap in negotiations and collective bargaining. A number of national reports refer to joint efforts to tackle the pay gap via collective bargaining (Norway, Hungary) and there are some examples outlining how the issue has been taken on board in collective agreements (France, Lithuania, Spain).

In addition, gender-specific pay statistics or sectoral surveys on the pay gap have been reported as effective comparison of men and women's wage levels. Many trade unions organise equal pay training for their negotiators and national equal pay days (Germany). Several reports refer to specific studies that have been carried out by national trade unions, which consider the impact of parenthood on equal pay and many joint contributions quoted the level of the existing average pay gap level in their respective country.

Specific examples of activities at the macro level include:

- Social partners' involvement in implementing legislation on equal pay (Cyprus);
- Tripartite cooperation structures (e.g. equal pay programmes, Equal Pay Day) and involvement of social partners in setting targets at national level (Finland, Germany);
- Publications (leaflets, brochures, guides, compendia), campaigns and conferences aimed at both individuals and companies to raise awareness of pay differentials (Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Germany, Netherlands);
- Studies and surveys on better understanding the factors behind pay differentials (Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Portugal, UK); and
- Projects developing and improving the statistical monitoring of pay differentials (Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Slovenia, UK).

Specific examples of activities at the micro level:

- Networks for equal pay – toolbox on income fairness and access to information (e.g. equal pay course) to increase knowledge of different pay structures (Austria);
- Review of job classification systems to ensure they are not discriminatory, upholding the principle of 'equal pay for work of equal value' (Belgium, Finland, Sweden);
- Corporate remuneration policies in companies based on performance-related and gender-neutral criteria (Germany);
- Checklists to assess pay systems on gender equality at work-place level (Belgium, the Netherlands, Finland).

Impact of the framework of actions

The Framework of Actions on Gender Equality is the second such type of initiative undertaken by European social partners, following the 'Framework of Actions for the Lifelong Development of Competences and Qualifications 2002.

European social partner negotiations defined priorities for actions common to all national social partners and drew up a work plan for future follow-up. The framework of actions has delivered a clear message and enabled national social partners in most countries to focus on their work on gender equality. It has been an instrument for change, and/or has supported pre-existing social partner actions on gender equality, and certainly helped to bring about a range of concrete actions in this field at European and national level.

In addition to raising awareness and visibility, European social partners believe that the process of policy coordination undertaken at European level could be clearer, more effective and more attractive

to stakeholders if it focused more on a few key priorities – as articulated in the framework of actions. European social partners also call on the European Institutions to fully take into account their discussions, proposals and priorities for work.

Undoubtedly, the framework of actions has played an important role in influencing the EU policy developments in the field of equal opportunities of men and women. For example, its objectives were recalled by the 2006-2010 Road Map on Gender Equality, by the 2008 Communication on ‘Tackling the pay gap between women and men’ as well as in the two-stage consultation on ‘Reconciliation of work, family and private life’ launched by the Commission in 2007.

Concerning the follow-up, the annual national reports are not exhaustive but they highlight the most significant actions taken by social partners at national, sectoral, regional and company levels. Social partners agreed on a selection of examples to illustrate progress made, which gives an indication of the priorities set in their work. There have been clear developments over the time span of reports.

The number and diversity of actions and initiatives has increased, as well as the degree of examples relating to concrete implementation on the ground, increasingly targeting employers and individuals, as well as specific groups, sectors and industries.

In most countries, there has been a distinct improvement in cooperation, which has clearly led to increased understanding and better partnerships between social partners and other actors. This in turn has instilled a sense of shared responsibility in meeting objectives. Through coordinated strategies that can shape the opinions of pupils, parents, teachers, employers and politicians, negative attitudes and stereotypes can be more easily dismantled over time.

An important contextual factor, already highlighted in the introductory remarks, concerns the crisis and the crucial contribution of social partners in developing conditions that will lead to swift economic recovery. This is now top of the agenda for virtually all social partner organisations and has had an inevitable impact on ongoing and planned activities in other fields, including gender equality issues. Nevertheless, a strong focus on tackling gender equality challenges remains. The crisis has highlighted the longer-term social and economic benefits of a more balanced participation of men and women both occupationally and vertically across labour markets.

The majority of reports, taking into account very diverse national characteristics, illustrate similar concerns regarding longer-term demographic challenges and improving work-life balance in a way that encourages women to keep working, while not having a negative impact on birth rates.

With regard to the impact of the framework of actions at sectoral level, it should be noted that in some cases the priorities identified were used as a source of inspiration and/or as direct reference to discuss or promote initiatives in the area of equal opportunities for women and men. However, the dissemination of this instrument varies among the different European sectors, with some appearing to have used it in a more systematic manner (i.e. metal, food, agriculture and tourism sectors).

Finally, the influence of the framework of actions on social partners' activities will continue in the future. It also depends on the ability of social partners at all levels to disseminate and raise awareness on the results of this evaluation exercise.

Future perspectives

Four years after the framework of actions was adopted, there is encouraging progress in terms of gender equality on European labour markets. However a number of challenges persist, such as in achieving the employment rate of 60% for female workers and in applying the Barcelona childcare objectives. Further improving the quantity and the quality of women's jobs and enabling them to make the most of their skills and competences will help to face future societal and labour market challenges. In particular it will help in stimulating economic growth and coping with demographic ageing. Social partners, institutions, men and women need to continue to work together to challenge existing gender roles and stereotypes in education work, homes and throughout society.

Policies promoting gender equality are key in addressing gender-based labour market segmentation and enabling us to fully exploit Europe's labour force potential. Actions in this regard should be targeted at both men and women. In the framework of actions, social partners have identified concrete and often innovative initiatives and tools that can inspire future actions across Europe.

European social partners believe that the four priorities identified in 2005 remain valid and essential policy priorities where further action is needed to fight remaining inequalities on labour markets. Embedding gender equality initiatives in broader labour market policies requires interaction and cooperation between all relevant actors, including social partners. For these reasons they will continue to work on the framework of actions' priorities, and will assess progress made in a future work programme. They will also integrate the gender dimension in the context of future discussions within the European Social Dialogue.

Social partners need to continue to improve the provision of childcare and other care services implement more flexible working arrangements that can make a genuine difference enabling women and men to combine work and family life. As also stated in their 'Progress Report on Reconciliation of Professional, Private and Family Life' adopted in February 2008, the European social partners have a common interest to explore and promote forms of working time arrangements that benefit both employers and workers. On

this basis, they will assess if and in what form, innovative and adaptable working arrangements for women and men can be promoted.

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JOINT ACTION FROM SOCIAL PARTNERS

SWEDEN

Evaluation of the 'Framework of Actions on Gender Equality'

1. SETTING/BACKGROUND

In 2006, the Swedish members of BUSINESSEUROPE together with the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (UEAPME), the European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public Services (CEEP) and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) translated the 'Framework of Actions on Gender Equality' into Swedish. The joint translation, which is available in print and can be readily downloaded from the websites of many Swedish organisations, has been very useful in improving the knowledge and understanding of the framework.

Sweden has a long tradition of working with gender equality issues. The European Union has contributed to this work in Europe with the different EC Directives and the European Commission's 'Roadmap for Equality between women and men'. The social partners' 'Framework of Actions for Gender Equality' has boosted awareness at the European and national levels, and the cooperation has been positive.

The Swedish social partners have also welcomed the successful revision that the European social partners carried out in 2009 on their agreement on parental leave.

The current situation and the future challenges in a time of economic crisis and the repercussions on gender equality are important to take into consideration. Social partners are eager to participate actively in the work with the new roadmap and are particularly interested to see how the gender perspective will be integrated into the post-Lisbon Strategy.

The Swedish Equal Opportunities Ombudsman, JämO, has ceased to exist and in January 2009 a new authority was formed – The Equality Ombudsman. The work of authorities such as JämO and the Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination (DO), the Disability Ombudsman (HO) and Ombudsman against Discrimination on grounds of Sexual Orientation (HomO) were merged into the Equality Ombudsman. At the same time old discrimination acts were replaced by the Discrimination Act 2008.

Many of the successful projects and activities that were reported in the first, second and third Swedish follow-up reports were included in the latest report. As this and previous reports show, Swedish social partners are working continuously on gender equality issues. However given the current economic uncertainty and changes, more time is needed before the impact and effects can be fully assessed.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE MEASURES

The measures reviewed in point 3 are an evaluation of the actions taken by the social partners on the four

priorities of the 'Framework of Actions for Gender Equality' and include the following:

- Addressing gender roles
- Promoting women to decision making roles.
- Supporting the work-life balance
- Closing the gender pay gap

3. RESULTS

Addressing gender roles

Changing gender roles and stereotypes takes considerable time. In past reports social partners have reported on their activities in three main areas, which include:

- Gender equality and gender stereotypes in the school and pre-school system.
- Inequities between women and men in health and healthcare.
- Men's violence towards women.

In all three areas work has been carried out at the national, regional and local level and included conferences; books, projects funded by the European Social Fund; presentations of good practice and training at different levels. They have also continued their practical work with girls and boys; female and male patients; and with women and children who have been victims of abuse. Their actions have increased awareness of these problems in society and brought them to public debate.

The Swedish labour market is segregated by gender with 80% of the public sector workforce being female. Women work as much in the public sector as in the private sector, while men work primarily in the private sector. The percentage of women in gainful employment is 77% compared to 88% for men. There is both a horizontal and vertical segregation of the labour market.

Changing stereotypical gender patterns in people's preferences and choice of education and work is extremely difficult. Some projects have tried to attract men to work in healthcare through networks, preferential treatment and development groups in an attempt to address the labour market segregation. There has been an increase of girls and young women entering traditional male-dominated professions but not the other way round.

In 2010 a governmental committee was set up to promote gender equality in higher education. It will focus particularly on gender stereotypical choices in education as well as identify the reasons for the recent

decrease in the number of male applicants for higher education. The committee's tasks will be completed before 2011.

Although the Framework of Actions on Gender Equality focuses on women, it is important to emphasise that both women and men play an important part in addressing or promoting gender equality.

Example:

Fastigo has provided assistance to several member firms in their work on the mapping and analysing salary differences between men and women. The actual practical work at local level is carried out jointly by the social partners. In addition to this, Fastigo has held several courses for member firms where the issues of gender discrimination and concrete measures on dealing with equality have been handled. Fastigo also created the prize 'The best employer of the Real Estate business', awarded to the business that has shown fair treatment for all. Trade union representatives are among the prize jury.

Promoting women to decision making roles

Developing a strategy to promote women to decision-making roles is crucial for gender equality in a democratic society. The role of women in top management positions is often a topic of debate in Sweden. A debate to which social partners have actively contributed, especially in relation to using quotas to appoint more female board members.

Statistics Sweden, together with the social partners, monitor changes in the numbers of women and men in decision-making roles on an annual basis. They follow the results of leadership programmes, networks and mentorship by measuring statistics and then spread the results, which enables them to benchmark the developments. In 2006, there were 77% male managers in the private sector, 65% in the government, 39% in the town councils and 50% in county councils. (Source: Wage and Salary Structures, National Mediation Office)

Example:

The AID (arbetsidentifikation – work identification) system is a collective agreement between the employer organizations, SALAR and Pacta and the trade unions for all employees in municipalities and county councils in Sweden with 1, 1 million employees.

The objectives of the AID system are to analyse pay formation on local and central level, give basic data for pay statistics, and identify job content and responsibility. The AID system contributes to facilitate surveys on pay differentials and surveys on sex disaggregated data but is not a system for job evaluation. Job contents are much more evident than previous systems. The AID system has eliminated titles like manager – leader – foreman. Responsibility is defined and described which makes that more exact and correct. To

identify job content and responsibility gives a better and more gender neutral description of jobs. This gives especially female dominated professions more visibility and clarity.

Example:

At present Saco is analysing if causal connections between work organisations and gender roles could be found in order to understand why it still is difficult for women to get promoted to decision-making positions at high level in companies. A report is planned to be presented during the autumn 2009. The preliminary title is "Possibilities and power, thoughts about female and male graduates' careers". The work can be seen as a follow-up on the report, showing that female graduates wish to become managers in the same extent as the men. (The report "More in common than commonly thought" could be found on www.saco.se).

Example:

The 'Framework Agreement for the Central Government Sector' (Arbetsgivarverket) 2002-2004 created a joint programme for social partners to promote women into decision-making roles. In the 2007-2010 framework agreement this work was continued and the social partners decided to create a project to increase their combined efforts to reduce the gender pay gap in the central government. The project focused on two key areas: increasing the number of women in leading positions in the central government and developing methods to support local partners in identifying and reducing the gender pay gap.

Within the first area, led by the Swedish Council for Strategic Human Resources Development, the main task was to monitor the government programme closely and where necessary help improve women's career prospects. The programme aimed to increase the number of women in management and expert positions within central government and also reduce the gender pay gap.

Other initiatives to reduce the gender pay gap have included support for local pay negotiations.

Supporting worklife balance

In Sweden the public sector and its services are vital in helping women and men balance their work and family lives. Childcare, elderly care services and so on support people in creating a healthy balance. The public sector is also largely dominated by women.

The parental leave benefit is paid in full for 480 calendar days as a total for both parents. About 80% of earnings are paid for a total of 390 calendar days for both parents if they have joint custody of the child and 180 SEK per day for the remaining period of 90 calendar days. If the parents have joint custody, each parent is entitled to benefits for half of the leave. A parent may give up his or her right to parental benefits to the other parent, except for a period of 60 calendar days. Parents are entitled to use their parental benefit days to reduce their working hours by three-quarters, half, one-quarter or one-eighth of their

normal working hours. Many companies offer a range of flexible working-hour models that make it easier for people to combine work and private life.

In 2006, a new paragraph, 'Prohibition of unfavourable treatment', was introduced in the Swedish Parental Leave Act 1995, which provides more protection for employees on parental leave.

Men are often encouraged to take more parental leave. During the period of the framework of actions the parental leave that they used increased from 20% to 21%. It remains a moot point as to whether parental leave should be shared equally or if it should be divided into three parts: one for the mother, one for the father and the third part for the parents to share as they like. Parental leave is still mostly used by women and therefore it is they that risk the most on the labour market.

Example:

In order to support work-life balance, Swedish social partners have provided, in a number of collective agreements, extra cash benefits for a number of parental leave days. Employees often receive compensation for 10% of the wage loss due to the parental leave. In addition, the collective agreements give employees the right to take time off for visits to the maternity centre without their salaries being reduced. Both parents can use this right.

The Barcelona objectives on childcare state that in 2010 33% of children under three years old and 90% of children between three and six years old should have access to childcare. In Sweden these objectives have already been achieved.⁶

In July 2008, the government introduced a 'gender equality bonus' into the parental leave benefit. Parents who share parental leave evenly – by each taking the same number of parental days with benefit – will now receive the maximum bonus. The bonus is paid to the parent who has taken the largest number of days with parental benefit in total, based on the number of days the other parent has been on parental leave. The aim of the bonus is to encourage parents to share the parental leave. The maximum bonus is 3,000 SEK/month. The concept of a gender equality bonus was originally put forward by the Swedish Confederation for Professional Employees (TCO). Although TCO's proposal was to be regulated differently, the idea is the same. So far, not many parents have used this possibility.

At the same time, the Swedish government also opened up a possibility for the local authorities to finance a reform supporting parents through a new care benefit – a 'childraising allowance', which provided an

⁶ Children registered in pre-school care in Sweden 2007: Percentage of all children in the population by age: 0 years: 0%, 1 year: 49.3%, 2 years: 90.8%, 3 years: 94.5%, 4 years: 97.4%, 5 years: 97.7%, 6 years: 85.9%. Source: National Agency for Education

alternative to state childcare system. The social partners were consulted in the process but there is no consensus on the impact that this would have on family life. In 2007, the government proposed tax reductions for certain household services such as cleaning. The social partners played an essential role in the public debate for and against the tax reductions.

Examples:

The Swedish social partners have supported work-life balance through their collective bargaining with many agreements stating the following:

- “More emphasis should be given to the possibilities for combining work and parenthood. Workloads and working hours as well as the possibility to work from home should be considered if necessary.”
- “The needs of the company/business as well as the needs and wishes of the employees should be considered when setting work schedules. Working hours shall be in harmony with artistic goals and demands. The aim shall be, as far as possible, to take into account the employees’ possibilities to combine work with parenthood and a social life, thus should for example a continuous time off be aimed at.”(from actors agreement)
- “Continuing training/education/information shall normally be carried out during standard working hours.”
- “Working life shall be attractive to staff members in all phases of life and accessible to all.”
- “Employees absent due to illness or parental leave shall have a normal wage scale in accordance with other employees.”
- “The salary structures shall stimulate further training so that individuals can contribute to the company’s development throughout their working lives. In this respect it is of utmost importance to take account of employees who are absent due to illness or parental leave.”

Tackling the gender pay gap

The new Discrimination Act 2008 incorporates much of the previous Equal Opportunities Act 1991 as well as additional amendments. Companies with 25 or more employees (previously 10 or more) must continue to write a gender equality plan but can submit it every three years instead of every year as previously. The same applies for the survey of pay differentials between women and men, which must also be submitted every three years. As yet, it is not clear what impact this will have.

The social partners are now members of a governmental committee that is investigating the cost and effect of the positive actions of the previous Equal Opportunities Act 1991 and of the Act Against Ethnic Discrimination in Working Life 1999. The aim is to assess the areas where positive actions should be applied and whether these should be applied on all seven grounds of discrimination (gender, transgender identity or expression, ethnic origin, religion or other belief, disability, age and sexual orientation) or not.

In Sweden in 2007, women's weighted⁷ full-time wages/salaries by sector, represented as a percentage of men's were:

- District councils: 99%
- County councils: 95%
- Central government: 94%
- Private: white-collar workers 91%, blue-collar workers 95%

Developments during 2005-2007 shows a slight reduction in difference between women's and men's salaries. In average weighted values it was 0.2%, (from 94.6% to 94.8%) for the whole Swedish labour market.⁸

The actual gender pay gap is wider due to the fact that women and men work, to a large extent, in different sectors that are also valued differently. If you look at the official statistics for the whole labour market the average differences between women and men are about 16%. However, this does not take into consideration, for example, how women and men are divided in different occupations. Furthermore, women work part-time more often than men.

Neither do these differences point to pay discrimination in the legal sense. In order to identify, resolve and prevent unfair gender differences in pay and other conditions of employment, employers must conduct a survey every three years to analyse:

- the provisions and practices regarding pay and other conditions of employment that are in operation within the company; and
- the pay differences between women and men performing work that is to be regarded as equal or of equal value.

Many collective agreements have adopted some of the wording from the previous Equal Opportunities Act 1991. These words often refer to the annual comparisons of women's and men's salaries used to identify unjust differences. As of 2010, there are now new collective agreements for large sectors of the labour market. How the collective agreements will be affected by the new Act remains to be seen.

The Swedish social partners have developed different ways of supporting employers and unions in conducting the survey and analysing the pay differentials between women and men. Some methods include, for example, training and computer programs.

⁷ Weighted values take into account the differences between women and men in age, educational background, full-time or part-time work, sector and occupational group.

⁸ Source: National Mediation Office 2008.

Example:

In 2007, new collective agreements concerning wages for blue-collar workers were concluded. There were deliberate demands from the trade unions representing blue-collar workers for higher wage increases in contractual sectors where wages were low and where there was a high concentration of female workers. The Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) describes this as a special means for promoting gender equality and sees the outcome as a move towards more equal wages.

See also examples Fastigo under 'Addressing gender roles' and SALAR, SACO, Arbetsgivarverket under 'Promoting women to decision-making roles'.

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