



THESSISMUN 2007

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Topic Area B

2007 will be the "European year of Equal Opportunities" for all European citizens, and therefore the need for renewal of the Union's social policies will call for specific actions in the fields of:

- Education
- Training Systems
- Employment



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1. Introduction

2007: Year of equal opportunity for all

“The 2007 European Year of Equal opportunities for all” seeks to make people in the European Union more aware of their rights to equal treatment and to a life free of discrimination. These are the two basic principles.

The 2007 European Year of Equal opportunities for all is an indicative leading the way to a bolder strategy seeking to give momentum to the fight against discrimination in the EU. During this year, all discrimination grounds have to be treated in a balanced way and the different ways in which women and men experience discrimination on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation have to be considered as well.

The year aims to:

Make people more aware of their rights to enjoy treatment and a life free of discrimination – irrespective of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation

- promote equal opportunities for all
- launch a major debate on the benefits of diversity both for European Societies and individuals

Activities during the Year will be organized around four key objectives: rights, representation, recognition and respect.

1. Rights: raising awareness on the right to equality and non-discrimination and on the problem of multiple discrimination



2. Representation: stimulating debate on ways to increase the participation of groups in society which are victims of discrimination and a balanced participation of men and women
3. Recognition: facilitating and celebrating diversity and equality
4. Respect: Promoting a more cohesive society

The EU's tools for equality

The European Union has every reason to be proud of its anti-discrimination legislation, one of the most extensive in the world. In 2000, the European Union adopted two very wide-ranging laws to prohibit discrimination based on national or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation in the workplace and, as far as racial and ethnic origin is concerned, in other aspects of daily life.

| Treaty provisions on gender equality | |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| •Art 2: | Promotion of equality between women and men is a task of the community |
| •Art3: | Promotion of equality and elimination of inequalities should take place in an community activities |
| •Art 13: | The community may take action to combat discrimination based on sex |
| •Art 137: | The community should support and complement Member States' equality measures in labour market opportunities and treatment at work |
| •Art 141: | Member States should ensure equal pay for female and male workers for equal work of equal value |
| •Art 141: | The community should ensure the application of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of women and men in matters of employment and occupation |



However, calling for equal rights and adopting laws to try and guarantee them is not enough to ensure that equal opportunities are enjoyed by everyone in practice. Incentives have to be given in order to bring about a change in behavior and mentality. Steps also have to be taken to tackle the intricate patterns of inequality suffered by certain groups and communities in Europe, such as Roma, while examining the roots of these problems. Finally, we have to acknowledge that our societies are changing. Examples of this are the ageing population of the EU and its increasingly multiethnic making. The ever-growing diversity sets new challenges that we have to meet more effectively, while offering myriad opportunities that we have to seize.

2. Policy Areas

2.1. Employment

The law

2.1.1. Anti-discrimination directives

The Racial Equality Directive 2000/43/EC

- Implements the principle of equal treatment between people irrespective of racial or ethnic origin.
- Gives protection against discrimination in employment and training, education, social protection (including social security and healthcare), social advantages, membership and involvement in organisations of workers and employers and access to goods and services, including housing.
- Contains definitions of direct and indirect discrimination and harassment and prohibits the instruction to discriminate and victimization.
- Allows for positive action measures to be taken, in order to ensure full equality in practice.
- Gives victims of discrimination a right to make a complaint through a judicial or administrative procedure, associated with appropriate penalties for those who discriminate.



- Allows for limited exceptions to the principle of equal treatment, for example in cases where a difference in treatment on the ground of race or ethnic origin constitutes a genuine occupational requirement.
- Shares the burden of proof between the complainant and the respondent in civil and administrative cases, so that once an alleged victim establishes facts from which it may be presumed that there has been discrimination, it is for the respondent to prove that there has been no breach of the equal treatment principle.
- Provides for the establishment in each Member State of an organisation to promote equal treatment and provide independent assistance to victims of racial discrimination.

The employment Equality Directive 2000/78/EC

- Implements the principle of equal treatment in employment and training irrespective of religion or belief, age or sexual orientation in employment, training and membership and involvement in organizations of workers and employers.
- Includes identical provision to the Racial Equality Directive on definition of discrimination and harassment, the prohibition of instruction to discriminate and victimization. On positive action, rights of legal redress and the sharing of the burden of proof.
- Requires employers to make reasonable accommodation to enable a person with disability who is qualified to do the job in question to participate in training or paid labour.
- Allows for limited exceptions to the principle of equal treatment, for example, where the ethos of a religious organization needs to be preserved, or where an employer legitimately requires an employee to be from a certain age group to be required.



2.1.2. Presenting the problem: The gap between women and men at work

Both women and men are central to Europe's economy and ability to compete on a global level. Yet, the rate of employment for women of working age continues to lag behind that of men. From an economic perspective, this represents a dynamic but unused resource with the potential to provide a major boost to the European economy. At the same time, women's weaker participation in the labour market exposes them to a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion, in particular in older age. Bridging the so-called employment gap is thus both an economic and a social challenge for the European Union.

Gaps between groups

Women have been the major beneficiaries of job creation since the launch of the European Employment Strategy (EES): Of the 14 million new jobs created between 1997 and 2004, 9 million were occupied by women. But while women's unemployment has grown in many age groups, the gap between older women and older men remains the highest at 19,3%. Immigrant women also have a significantly lower employment rate compared to the working age population as a whole (both EU and non-EU citizens). Particular attention must be paid to mobilizing the full potential of female employment and to boosting labour market participation at older women and immigrant women.

1. The challenge of ageing

As the population of the European Union continues to grow older, Europe's social protection systems are coming under threat. Closing the employment gap by promoting women's participation in the labour market can help to ensure the sustainability of these systems. This would provide financial reinforcement for state pension systems while promoting women to become more economically independent and earn better pensions of their own.



The European Union is therefore working to boost female employment rates, as a part of its wider economic and social objectives set out in Lisbon in 2000. Specifically, the EU leaders fixed a target for raising women's labour market participation to 60% by 2010. A target rate of 50% was also set to mobilize the potential of older workers. Strong efforts will be required by all member States and the EU as a whole in order to meet these targets, in particular to increase the employment rate of older women.

2. The gender gap in employment

While the ongoing gap in economic activity rates between women and men risks impeding Europe's growth, a similar gap exists among those who are unemployed, showing that women are still disadvantaged when it comes to looking for a job. The average unemployment rate for women across the EU was 10% in 2004, compared to 8.3% for men, leaving a gap of 1.7 percentage points. Action to tackle the higher rate of unemployment among women goes hand in hand with increasing the female employment rate.

3. Gender pay gap

Equal pay for work of equal value is a basic principle in the European Union. Despite this, women continue to earn less than men. The gender pay gap across the 25 EU countries has remained very high over the last few years and heightened inequality more in the private sector than in the public sector. Closing this gap therefore remains at the top of the EU policy agenda.

3.1 Underlying causes of gender pay gap

As a result of the legislation, many women have won legal battles to gain the right to equal payment with men. But in practice there is still a serious gap between men and women's payment (Eurostat). This continuing disparity has a number of underlying causes, including segregation of occupations and sectors of work for women and men, differences in education and training, interruption of careers, the way in which jobs are classified and valued and wage formation systems used and more generally, traditions and social norms regarding women's educational and occupational choices and labour market participation behaviour.



In addition, the part-time job is far more prevalent among women than among men: 30,4% of women work part time, compare to only 6.6% of men.

4. Gender imbalance at work

One of the key factors behind wage differentials between, women and men is the ongoing division of jobs and areas of work by gender. In principle cell, women and men have equal access to different occupations in Europe. But the labour market is characterized by continuing gender “segregation”, despite some progress in breaking down traditional barriers.

Today, many sectors and occupations remain firmly identified in general as either “male” or “female”. Around half of all women employees work in health and social services, education, public administration or retailing – while a disproportional number of men work as technicians, engineers, finance professionals and manager.

Tackling skill gaps

These labour market imbalances have many causes, some based on culture and tradition. But with the pressure of an ageing population, there is the risk of exacerbating skill gaps in certain sectors and occupations where few women work. For example, on number of key economic sectors traditionally dominated by men are experiencing shortages of skilled labour. On the other hand, the care sector – dominated by female employees- is also suffering shortfalls. These gaps could be partly filled by encouraging more women (or men) to enter the sectors. In this way, tackling the gender gap also serves to tackle skill gaps.

Monitoring trends in gender segregation is important in order to measure progress in tackling imbalance and identifying sectors with potential for increasing the female employment rate.



Action undertaken by the EU for gender equality in employment

The work of the European Union to improve gender equality over the past three decades has helped to transform the position of women in the European Society. EU legislation has provided a solid framework for equal treatment and has been supplemented by funding and other targeted measures. Today, gender concerns are mainstreamed across European policy-making. But persistent gap still exists; women's payment and employment levels remain major challenges for the EU Member States.

1. Common priorities for job policies

Coordinating the employment policies of the EU Member States is important to achieve common priorities for jobs at EU level, like increasing the number of women in work.

The European Employment Strategy (EES) is a framework for agreeing on shared objectives in employment policy so that the EU can pursue common policy goals. It aims to deliver a rolling programme of planning, monitoring, examination and readjustment. The elimination of gender gaps is an explicit component of the EES.

On the other hand, the European Commission aims to bridge the gender gaps through the European Union by putting common employment guidelines into practice and assessing the National Reform Programmes in each Member State. The Commission has made several format recommendations to the Member States in this respect. These have included reviewing tax and benefit systems acting as a barrier to female employment and developing comprehensive strategies to tackle the gender gaps in employment and unemployment.

The guidelines developed under the European Employment Strategy (EES) have also been aimed at involving social partners in tackling these gaps.



2. The role of social partners

In 1996, the European Commission issued concrete advice for employers and collective bargaining partners to take account of the gender payment gap. This code of conduct (com/96/0336) seeks to make wage formation systems gender – neutral and to detect cases of gender discrimination in the structures of payment. In March 2005, social partners at European level adopted a framework of actions on gender equality. The payment gap is also included in this framework.

3. Developing ways to reduce imbalance

A number of EU-funded projects are taking on segregation in the labour worked as part of the EQUAL programme. These projects are testing and developing innovative ways to address gender imbalances at work – and sharing the good practices, which come out of their results. They range from challenging gender stereotypes in education, improving the reconciliation of working and private life for women and men to providing mentoring schemes for women starting work.

4. EQUAL – promoting equal opportunities in the job market

With a budget of over 3 billion euros between 2000 and 2006 – matched by national funding – EQUAL is one of the EU's main instruments for promoting a more inclusive job market. The promotion of equality between women and men is integrated in the different themes and the specific actions of the programme.

This helps to create an innovative environment in order to tackle discrimination and inequality in the labour market. In addition, it introduces the issue of gender equality in the employment and social policy.

5. The new Social Agenda (2005-2010)

The Commission has launched its new Social Agenda for modernising Europe's social model under the renewed Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs. As part of its new Social Agenda, the European Union will continue its work to achieve equality between women and men. Extending



equal opportunities to everyone in society is one of the prior areas of action. This will include further action to tackle issues such as the gender pay gap, getting more women in the labour market, training and employment. By modernising labour markets and social protection systems, it will help people seize the opportunities created by international competition, technological advances and changing population patterns while protecting the most vulnerable in society.

Social partners will continue to play an important role in enhancing gender equality in the workplace.

Future policy framework

In 2006, as the framework strategy came to an end, the Commission presented a communication on the future development for equality between women and men to tackle the remaining challenges for gender equality.

A new funding programme

PROGRESS is a programme proposed by the Commission in order to simplify and rationalise the financial instruments in the area of employment and social policy. The aim of this programme is to provide financial support for the implementation of the European Union's objectives in the field of employment and social affairs. It will thus contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy objectives. The programme is divided into the following five sections: employment, social protection and inclusion; working conditions, diversity and combating discrimination and equality between women and men. The PROGRESS programme is one of the actions which fully support the European Social Policy. The programme sponsors the analysis and mutual learning activities, awareness-raising and dissemination campaigns and the exchange of information. The section devoted to gender equality is expected to have a budget of EUR 50.3 for the period 2007-2013.



What else must to be done for achieving equal economic independence for women and men

- Member States and social partners should pursue action to reduce the rate of the employment gap between women and men, in particular among older workers.
- Scaling down the pay gap and attacking its underlying causes should remain a priority. Action must combine all available instruments, including the effective implementation of existing legislation, and should actively involve social partners. Areas to address include notably sectoral and occupational segregation, access to education and training for all, transparent evaluation and pay systems, raising awareness and combating stereotypes among stakeholders and reviewing classifications of professions
- The quality of jobs and a good environment of work are key elements in attracting, integrating and retaining people on the labour market. Member States and Social Partners need to take concrete steps to support these actions, notably by promoting and disseminating work patterns that fully value the qualifications of the workers while reinsuring the employment security, social rights and benefits.
- Member States should proceed with reform of tax and benefits systems to create incentives for young people to enter the labour market and eliminate disincentives for women, to enter and remain in the labour market. Rendering work financially attractive and ensuring their economic independence, also with regard to the insurance of pension rights, are two major priorities for the Member States.
- The European strategy for growth and employment needs the full support of the structural funds in the field of gender equality. Its aim should be the effective integration of a “gender –equality” perspective in the national strategic reference frameworks and programming documents, and the sufficient funding of specific gender equality action.



- The European Union should set up a European Institute for Gender Equality. Its role will be to support the European Commission and the Member States at their work of promoting gender equality.
- The European Union shall combat multiple discrimination, in particular against immigrant women and women of ethnic minorities. This requires the promotion of gender equality in migration and integration policies in order to ensure women's rights and civil participation, to use their employment potential and to improve their access to education and lifelong learning.
- **Gender equality in social protection and the fight against poverty**

Social protection systems should remove disincentives for women and men to enter and remain in the labour market, allowing them to accumulate individual pension entitlements. However, there is an increased risk of poverty for single parents, older women or women working in family-based businesses, such as agriculture and fisheries. The European Fisheries Fund (EFF) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) can help in these sectors. It is essential that social protection systems ensure that these women have access to adequate benefits, in particular when they desire. 3 main actions should be taken in the field of gender equality:

- Reaching the Lisbon employment targets for a 60% employment rate for women by 2020. The gender dimension of the Lisbon strategy for jobs and growth must be strengthened. Compliance with legislation of equal treatment and an effective use of the new Structural Funds (e.g. training) can help increase women's employment.
- The Commission should monitor and strengthen issues of gender equality in national and European activities in 2007, which is the European Year of Equal Opportunities and in 2010, which is the European Year of Combating Exclusion and Poverty.



- The European Union should promote female entrepreneurship and a business environment that facilitates the creation and development of women-led companies. In addition, it shall encourage the promotion of social responsibility initiatives on gender equality.

Education and training

Introduction remarks

Recent decades have witnessed major changes in education enrolment in Europe. Women now outnumber men in upper secondary and university education in most EU countries and represent 58% of graduate in the Union as a whole. Women are also closing the gender gap at the highest academic level, as the 41% of PhD graduates are women. Nevertheless, the different areas of study still show traditional gender patterns, with men continuing to dominate the sciences, mathematics, informatics and engineering.

While the increased qualification of women has had a positive effect on their employment rate, levels of payment and their promotion to managerial positions. However the imbalances in subject choices in education still feed the gender segregation in the labour market.

Policies in the field of education and training are important tools for gender equality. The actions of the EU, concerning the Socrates educational programme, can also offer to the promotion of equal opportunities:

COMENIUS - *School education*

ERASMUS - *Higher education*

GRUNDTVIG - *Adult education and other educational pathways*

LINGUA - *Language teaching and learning*

MINERVA - *Information and communication technologies in education*



Observation & Innovation - *Educational systems and policies (Arion, Eurydice, Naric)*

Joint Actions *with other Community programmes*

Accompanying Measures

In addition, the Leonardo da Vinci programmes aim to contribute towards the creation of a European education area through the promotion of lifelong learning and continue Community-level cooperation between actors in the field of vocational training. In accordance to this effort, the European Commission fully supports the actions of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) and will establish co-ordination with the European Training Foundation.

A. Pre-primary education

The only data relating to inter-grow inequalities, which could be found in the pre-primary education, was the gender differences of the net enrolment rats. According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, a higher proportion of females access the pre-primary education than the proportion of males.

B. Adult education

The inequalities in access to adult education are:

1. **geographical location:**

The geographical location of adults can affect their chances to take part in adult education and training. People in rural areas could be expected to have fewer opportunities for both formal and non-formal training to than people living in semi-urban or urban areas.

2. **previous level of educational attainment**



Previous level of educational attainment is a key source of inequality in access to adult education. Although, addressing basic skill needs and providing training for the unemployed are common objects of adult education for the majority of the EU member states.

It is crystal clear that people of low educational level participate in training much less than those of tertiary educational level. On average, one third of the European citizens, who have high educational level, take part in non-formal education every year.

3. **gender**

Gender equality is one of the priorities of the European Union across a wide number of policy areas. Equality to access adult education is reached in many different levels among the EU countries.

4. **age group**

The participation in learning declines, as the people get older. Data shows that 42% of people aged 25-34 participate in some form of education or training, compared to 40% of those aged 35-44 and 28% of those aged 45-64. The sharp decline in training received by the older age group is presented in all countries.

- **Women and men in tertiary education**

More women than men are being educated to tertiary level in most EU Member States. According to the statistics, women represent the majority of those enrolled in university and account for an even larger proportion of those graduating. Moreover, the number of women with tertiary level education seems to be increasing faster than that of men throughout the Union.

Nevertheless, there are still fewer women than men enrolled in science and technology. In these subject areas, women are significantly less likely to go on to postgraduate study.



Equally, a larger proportion of women in comparison to men tend to participate in more practical/technical/occupationally-specific programmes as opposed to more theoretically-based /research preparatory programmes, which give access to professions with high skill requirements.

- **Women in public research and higher Education in Europe**

Teaching and research should be better coordinated at European level. This can be achieved by creating networks of national and joint research programmes. In addition, if Europe wants to become the world's most competitive economic area, it is important to improve research conditions and create more favorable climate for entrepreneurship.

- In the sector of senior teaching grades in Higher Education, women are seriously under-represented across Europe.
- The majority of public researchers in Europe are men. In 1999 more than 2/3 of the researchers in the Government Institutions and just under 3/4 in the Higher Education Sector were males.
- The proportion of female researchers appears to vary according to scientific discipline as well as according to country. For example no EU Member State has more than 1/3 female researchers in the fields of engineering and technology, while the sexes are closer to numerical parity in medical and social sciences and humanities.
- The more senior the academic post is, the lower the representation of women it has. The proportion of women is relatively low (11%) at the top level of professorship.
- Women and men appear to enjoy similar success rates for research funding applications despite the fact women are less likely to apply for research funding than men.



Actions must be taken

- improving equity in education and training: in order to ensure that European education and training systems are both efficient and equitable;
- promoting efficiency in education and training. We shall stress the importance of the private and public sector in higher education, in which investments are needed for research and development;
- making lifelong learning a reality. Lifelong learning is crucial for competitiveness, employability, economic growth but also for social inclusion, active citizenship and the personal fulfillment of people living and working in a knowledge-based economy;
- modernizing school education and ameliorating the quality of education by school self-evaluation. For example, we shall take the necessary measures to improve the quality of initial Teacher Education and to ensure that all trainee- teachers take part in continuous professional development. The lifelong learning and the continuous development of the skills have been identified as key factors in securing the quality of school education;
- modernizing vocational education and training. Reform and investment should be focused on: the improvement of the image and attractiveness of the vocational route for employers, the incline of participation in Vocational Education and Training (VET) and the improvement of quality and flexibility of initial vocational education and training;
- modernizing higher education: This is crucial to the EU's objective of becoming a competitive knowledge-based economy. The Bologna process plays an important role in making higher European education systems to converge;
- Employability: The augmentation of employment rates is one of the most important aims that EU strives to reach. The importance of employment was strengthened in the re-launch of the



Lisbon strategy in 2006. Educational level and key competences, which include entrepreneurship, are the main determinants of an individual's employability.

Useful Links:

2007 – European Year of Equal Opportunities for All:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/eyeq/index.cfm?language=EN

The European Employment Observatory:

<http://www.eu-employment-observatory.net/>

CEDEFOP – The European Center for the Development of Vocational Training

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/>

European Social Fund:

<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l60016.htm>

The European Social Fund in A new Start for the Lisbon Strategy:

<http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/>

Bologna Process: <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11088.htm>

Vocational Educational and Training (Copenhagen Process):

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/vocational_en.html

Equality and Non-Discrimination in an enlarged European Union:

<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l14157.htm>