The voice of 60 million workers in Europe

UNICE
THE VOICE OF BUSINESS IN EUROPE

UEAPME

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FRAMEWORK OF ACTIONS ON GENDER EQUALITY

I. SOCIAL PARTNERS' APPROACH

1. The European social partners, UNICE/UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC[1] are committed to enhancing gender equality on the labour market and in the workplace. In this context, they have a key role to play. They have adopted the present framework of actions to contribute to the implementation of the Lisbon strategy for economic growth, more and better jobs and social cohesion as well as of the EU legislative framework on equal treatment between women and men.

2. Bearing in mind that the causes of remaining inequalities on labour markets are complex and interlinked, European social partners are convinced that success in tackling them requires integrated strategies to promote gender equality including, in particular, actions to desegregate labour markets and to address gender roles in society. The social partners take as a basic analysis for their joint actions that gender roles and stereotypes have a strong influence on the existing division of labour between men and women, both in the family, the workplace and society at large, producing and reproducing gender gaps. Addressing gender segregation (both horizontal and vertical) in occupations and the labour market on the one hand, and existing barriers for a better compatibility of work and family life for both men and women on the other hand, in an integrated approach, is therefore key.

3. Explicitly addressing gender equality through social partners' actions, at the appropriate levels, in accordance with national industrial relations practice, such as social dialogue, collective bargaining, joint statements, recommendations, etc. helps to create a supportive framework.

4. Embedding gender equality initiatives in broader diversity management policies presents the advantage of responding to increasingly diverse needs of individual women and men in a way which also suits the production requirements of the employer. Such an approach also helps to increase support or involvement of both male and female workers.

[1] The ETUC delegation includes representatives of the EUROCADRES/CEC Liaison Committee

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

II. CHALLENGES

6. Living up to the economic, demographic and social challenges facing Europe requires a new perspective on the role of women and men as economic actors in relation to their roles in society. Demographic changes are putting increasing pressure on economies and societies at large. They may also lead to increased and sometimes contradictory pressures on women in particular. The challenge is to encourage women to become or remain active on the labour market. This can only be achieved by an integrated approach, combining measures to promote labour market participation with measures to ensure equal treatment in employment, and actions to allow men and women, to combine professional and family responsibilities.

7. The need to take measures to improve women's participation on the labour market is an integral part of the Lisbon strategy to turn Europe into the most competitive knowledge based society in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth, with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, as illustrated by the following objectives, to be reached by 2010:

   - the objective to reach an employment rate as close as possible to 70 % and to increase the number of women in employment from 51% to more than 60% by 2010 (Lisbon conclusions, 2000);

   - the objective to remove disincentives to women's labour force participation and strive, taking into account the demand for child care facilities and in line with national patterns of provisions, to provide child care by 2010 to at least 90% of children between 3 years old and the mandatory school age and at least 33% of children under three years of age (Council conclusions, Barcelona 2002);

   - the objective to achieve by 2010 a substantial reduction in the gender pay gap in each Member State, through a multi-faceted approach addressing the underlying factors of the gender pay gap, including sectoral and occupational segregation, education and training, job classifications and pay systems, awareness raising and transparency (Council decision of 22 July 2003 on the employment guidelines).

8. Equality between women and men has been one of the fundamental principles of the European Union since the very beginning. Since the 1970's, equal treatment legislation has grown to form a coherent legal framework which has played and will continue to play a crucial role in promoting a more equal participation of women and men in Europe's economies and societies. This has resulted in significant progress

towards gender equality across the EU. The EC report on equality between women and men 2004 clearly points to positive evidence that:

- societal patterns have changed over the last twenty years, away from the male breadwinner model to dual-earner families;

- young women now remain in education and initial vocational training for longer, in the same way as young men do, outnumber men in upper secondary or tertiary education in most Member States and represent the majority of graduates in the EU;

- employment rates have increased more for women than for men and now stand at 55.6% compared with 50% in the first half of the 1990's;

- there is a general trend of narrowing gaps between women and men in employment, education and research;

- participation of women in managerial positions has increased due to the fact that more women entered high level professional and managerial positions in the 1990s.

9. Economic growth and general progress in society have made these developments possible. However, significant gender gaps remain and the economic slowdown experienced since 2001 reveals that women continue to be more vulnerable than men to unemployment and economic inactivity, especially when they have a low level of education. Among the evidence of remaining obstacles to gender equality, the EC report on equality between women and men 2004 highlights the following elements[2]:

- persistent difficulties to reconcile family responsibilities with full time employment illustrated by
    i. the fact that women with young children have, on average, a lower employment rate by 12.7 percentage points than women without children whereas men with children show 9.5 percentage points higher employment rates than men without children;
    ii. evidence that women continue to do the majority of work in the home or family, tend to have in interrupted patterns of employment, with all potential negative effects for career, wages and pensions, and are over-represented in part-time jobs;

- statistics on education, which show that despite the fact that women no longer lag behind in level of education
    i. traditional patterns remain in high education with only 39% of all PhDs awarded to women (compared with 61% to men), and
    ii. women's and men's educational choices tend to reproduce gender stereotypes with an EU average figure of 36% of women among graduates in science, mathematics and information technology and only 21% in the field of engineering, building and construction;

- the fact that a high level of occupational and sectoral gender segregation remains in the labour market, with women dominating in low paid and low skilled jobs or in sectors such as health care and social services, education, public administration and retailing while a disproportionate number of men work as technicians, engineers, finance professional and managers;

[2] This is confirmed in the EC equality report 2005 published in February 2005

- the fact that the EU gender gap in average pay levels is still 16% but that only some countries have taken effective steps towards a significant reduction.

10. The female workforce is a key resource that tends to be under-utilized or under-valued despite the progress made. Further improving the situation of women on labour markets is in the interest of individual women and men, and the economy and society as a whole. Anti-discrimination legislation exists and is necessary but legislation in itself does not bring about gender equality. It requires interaction and cooperation between all relevant actors, in order to address, in an integrated approach, the contradictions and tensions generated at the interface between the household, the community, and employment structures. Social partners are determined to live up to their own responsibilities but public authorities, education institutions and individuals also have a key role to play.

11. Wishing to enhance the overall performance of Europe's labour markets and to contribute to reaching the above mentioned Lisbon objectives through appropriate actions in their own field of responsibility, UNICE/UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC undertake to encourage social partners at all levels and in all EU countries to step up their involvement in devising and implementing integrated strategies in favour of occupational gender equality.

III. PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

12. The four priorities on which CEEP, UNICE/UEAPME and ETUC want national social partners to take action during the next five years are set out below:

    - addressing gender roles,
    - promoting women in decision-making,
    - supporting work-life balance,
    - tackling the gender pay gap.

13. These priorities are interconnected and of equal importance. Actions at national, sectoral and/or company levels are most effective if the various aspects of these priorities are tackled in an integrated approach.

1. ADDRESSING GENDER ROLES

14. Traditional gender roles and stereotypes continue to have a strong influence on the division of labour between men and women at home, in the workplace and in society at large, and tend to continue a vicious circle of obstacles for achieving gender equality. Although the role of the social partners is not to interfere with private life, social partners do have a role to play in addressing gender roles and stereotypes in employment and in the workplace.

15. In the past three decades, women's employment rates have increased significantly and faster than men's, but not equally in all sectors and occupations. Women tend to be overrepresented in specific areas of activity related to traditional gender roles such as care, education, cleaning, retail etc., and to be underrepresented at higher levels of occupation.

16. Breaking down cultural barriers to ensure that women and men follow a more diverse range of careers and to encourage their participation across the labour market is a complex task given the numerous socio-economic factors to be taken into

consideration. It is nevertheless crucial to desegregate labour markets in order to achieve occupational gender equality.

17. A number of EU enterprises reflect on the influence cultural attitudes and gender roles have at the workplace. They check their internal practices and policies in order to actively encourage particular groups of people to enter and remain in employment. Initiatives have also been taken by social partners at company, sectoral and/or national levels, jointly, separately or in cooperation with public authorities.

18. European social partners believe that the following <u>elements</u> are key to fight stereotyped gender roles on the labour market.

- Promoting non-gender biased education in schools, universities as well as efficient and non-stereotyped careers advice services, for students and those already at work, to enable individuals to make better informed education and career choices. Encouraging pupils, students and parents to consider all the available career options for girls and boys at an early stage. Examples of <u>practical tools</u> to do so include:

    - ➢ Organising open days in companies for girls in order to show that pre-conceived ideas about women's compared with men's jobs are not justified in practice and inform them about career options they may not have considered otherwise;

    - ➢ Encouraging parents to promote companies as a place for their daughters to pursue careers;

    - ➢ Cooperation programmes with public and/or education authorities to raise awareness on labour markets needs;

    - ➢ Participation in career fairs.

- Making a special effort to attract girls and young women into technical and scientific professions which can also help address skills and labour shortages hampering economic growth. Examples of <u>practical tools</u> to do so include:

    - ➢ Setting targets to increase the number of girls taking up apprenticeships in technical and scientific professions as a way to step up female recruitment in the future;

    - ➢ Sending women engaged in technical or scientific occupations as "ambassadors" into schools to inform and raise awareness of girls about opportunities of technical or scientific professions.

- Promoting the recruitment and retention of women and men with adequate skills at the enterprise level in sectors and occupations where they are underrepresented. Acknowledge, and where possible, enrich the skills content of female occupations so as to offer better career paths and opportunities for women in female dominated sectors. Examples of <u>practical tools</u> to do so include:

    - ➢ Reviewing the way in which job titles, job descriptions and advertisements are formulated to enhance their attractiveness for women and making managers who recruit aware of the issue;

    - ➢ Adapting the workplace to enable a greater gender mix at work (ergonomics, local services);

- Informing about internal job offers and career prospects on intranet;

- Raising awareness of middle managers in companies on ways to promote equal opportunities for all employees throughout the employment relationship. Examples of practical tools to do so include:

  - Using all available communication tools to highlight top managers' commitment to a diverse workforce and its benefits both for the workers and the company;

  - Training managers on the benefits of diversity management and making them accountable for the implementation of the company's diversity policy;

  - Ensuring good information flow between the designated contact persons for staff grievances on equal opportunities issues, and managers, who have the responsibility to take action;

  - Highlighting cases of women breaking new ground;

- Promoting entrepreneurship as a career option for both women and men at sector and/or national level. Examples of practical tools to do so include:

  - Identifying potential female business starters and/or top managers, and train them.

- Encouraging competence development for adults to allow men and women to evolve in their careers throughout life and to address deficits created by the structure of the education system in the past, with particular attention to supporting SMEs in their efforts. Examples of practical tools to do so include:

  - Ensuring transparency and transferability of competences and qualifications;

  - Promoting the participation of low-skilled workers and/or workers in non-standard employment in further education and training and lifelong learning;

  - Setting gender balance objectives at sectoral level for access to vocational training.

2. PROMOTING WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

19. The number of women in decision-making positions in all spheres of society is growing, notably as a result of increased participation of women in the labour market and their success in higher education. However, only 30 % of managers are women, only 10 % of members of boards of directors are women, and only 3 % of CEO's or equivalent positions are taken by women[3]. Social partners have a clear responsibility to ensure that the overall working environment supports a more balanced participation of women and men in decision-making.

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

20. Companies who have successfully encouraged women's participation at managerial level report that they did so as part of their efforts to achieve a high performance workplace by taking initiatives to release women's untapped potential. Promoting women in decision-making positions is an investment for a more productive, innovative and stimulating working environment and better economic performance. It also contributes to bringing about improvements for women in workplaces and on the labour market in general.

21. European social partners believe that the following <u>elements</u> are key to improve women participation at all levels within enterprises.

    - Promoting competence-based gender neutral recruitment in enterprises. Examples of <u>practical tools</u> to do so include:

        - Putting in place transparent and gender neutral recruitment, selection and promotion criteria;

        - Checking that the recruitment of women is proportionate to the number of female applications for the job and review results on a regular basis.

    - Retaining women in enterprises, to avoid loss of competence. Examples of <u>practical tools</u> to do so include:

        - Discussing at an early stage with employees their career expectations as well as work-life balance needs of both women and men and how to combine them with company's needs;

        - Conducting interviews with women leaving the company to understand the reasons for doing so in order to further refine the company's human resources policy;

        - Conducting regular staff surveys to check employees satisfaction.

    - Encouraging career development of both women and men. Top-management's commitment for initiatives promoting women in decision-making positions is key in this respect. Examples of <u>practical tools</u> to do so include:

        - Developing networks, mentoring or self confidence building schemes across enterprises to address the issue of self-deselection;

        - Setting targets for the promotion of women in proportion to the number of women in the relevant occupational level and review results on a regular basis;

        - Identifying possibilities for non linear career development paths alternating periods of higher professional involvement and periods of greater family responsibility as an alternative to a culture of unnecessarily long working hours;

        - Facilitating geographical mobility of managers by helping the worker's partner to find a job in the new region of occupation.

- Promoting female entrepreneurship as a complementary way of increasing women in decision-making and raising women's participation in the labour market. Examples of practical tools to do so include:

    - Putting in place regional programmes for women willing to start their own business;

    - Supporting projects to ease generational handover to women in SMEs.

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

3. SUPPORTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

22. Work life balance arrangements can enhance employee satisfaction, promote workplace equality, contribute to an organisation's reputation as an employer of choice, and benefit employers as well as workers. Successful policies to support work-life balance need to be tailored to the needs of individual women and men, bearing in mind that these can vary throughout the life course and taking into account that long and/or irregular working hours can be an obstacle to reconcile work and family life for both men and women. However, it is equally important that account is taken of different companies needs, bearing in mind that these can vary too depending on the production cycle or customers needs. Although workers' and company's needs do not necessarily coincide, the best results are achieved through dialogue in the framework of a win-win approach.

23. While the responsibility of dealing with work-life balance issues arising at the workplace undoubtedly lies with employers and workers, public authorities have a crucial role to play in addressing the wider societal aspects. This applies in particular to ensuring the availability and affordability of quality care facilities, for children, elderly and/or other dependents, to allow men and women to join the labour market. Where appropriate, partnerships between public authorities and social partners can help in devising innovative solutions.

24. Social partners and enterprises across the EU have found numerous ways of supporting workers' efforts to find a good work-life balance. The tools used have varied greatly from enterprise to enterprise and from individual to individual. These policies are often reviewed and adapted to respond effectively to changing workers and companies needs.

25. European social partners believe that the following elements are key to support a good work-life balance.

    - Considering flexible working arrangements that can be taken up on a voluntary basis by both women and men, including leave arrangements, designed in a way that does not undermine their long term participation and position on the labour market. Examples of practical tools to do so include:

        - Making available a mix of various working arrangements that allow for flexibility in working time or the organisation of work, such as part-time work, job-sharing, reduced hours, compressed working week, school term-time working, staggered or gliding hours, time-off and ad hoc home working etc.;

  - career breaks and parental leave arrangements.

- Promoting a more balanced take-up of possibilities to ease work-life balance. Examples of practical <u>tools</u> to do so include:

  - Company internal awareness raising schemes to promote take-up of flexible work options, especially by men, including in male dominated professions;

  - Information campaigns about leave possibilities available to both women and men and encouraging parents to share leave periods more equally.

- Jointly approaching public authorities to develop instruments that help increase the availability of accessible and affordable child care facilities of good quality and seeking innovative ways of providing essential private household or caring services. Examples of practical <u>tools</u> to do so include

  - Attracting on site services such as travel office, shops, bank and insurance offices etc;

  - Sponsoring child care centers or providing an allowance covering part of the nursery costs to parents;

  - Creating funds by collective agreements or other means to “mutualise” the costs of maternity or parental leave allowances helps to ensure that women no longer represent a more costly source of labour than men. Similar measures can be useful to support childcare projects addressing specific needs of working parents such as care for sick children, care outside regular opening hours, etc. This can help in particular SMEs.

4. TACKLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

26. Within the EU there is a strong legal framework, based on article 141 of the EU-Treaty, providing women and men with the right to equal pay for equal work and work of equal value. The wages of individual employees are influenced by many different factors. Social partners of all Member States have a clear obligation to ensure that the pay systems they put in place do not lead to pay discrimination between women and men.

27. Social partners are struck by the persistence of a gender pay gap across Europe. It may, among other things signal labour market dysfunction. They are also concerned by the fact that the reasons lying behind this gap are not always well understood. They therefore believe that it is very important to seek to better understand the numerous and complex factors explaining wage differences between women and men and take action accordingly.

28. Recognising the link between labour market segregation and the gender pay gap, social partners at different levels have used or developed a variety of instruments to act on the underlying causes of gender pay differences, such as equal pay reviews, equality plans, benchmarking, etc. Practice also shows that using modernisation of

pay systems as an opportunity for gender mainstreaming can be extremely effective. In the case of a significant overhaul of pay systems, it is essential to plan and spread the implementation of the pay system modification over a sufficiently long period to ensure the financial sustainability of the approach and to avoid jeopardising the competitiveness of companies.

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

- Informing about existing legislation on equal pay and giving guidance on how to help closing the gender pay gap at different levels. Examples of <u>practical tools</u> used to do so include:

    - ➢ Practical guide, especially for SMEs, on how to live up to their legal obligations;

    - ➢ National or sectoral collective agreements or framework agreements.

- Developing clear up to date statistics at sector and/or national level to enable social partners to analyse and understand the complex causes of pay differentials. Promoting the availability of gender specific information at the appropriate levels (national, sectoral and/or company level). Examples of <u>practical tools</u> used to do so include:

    - ➢ Develop a joint method, taking into account as wide a range of variables as possible, in order to have a detailed and analytical picture of the underlying causes of wage differences between women and men.

- Ensuring that pay systems, including job evaluation schemes, are transparent and gender neutral and paying attention to the possible discriminatory effects of secondary elements of pay. Using or developing methods and instruments to address the gender pay gap in a systematic way, that allows for monitoring and evaluation as part of a wider strategy. Examples of <u>practical tools</u> used to do so include:

    - ➢ Screening job descriptions to check that they don't contain discriminatory elements;

    - ➢ Reviewing pay criteria to check that they are not discriminatory;

    - ➢ Developing tool kits comprising different elements in order to give background information to negotiators dealing with gender equality issues and to offer practical advice on what employers and workers can do in enterprises;

    - ➢ Use existing on-line tools providing information on wage formation and enabling individuals to compare their salaries with that of other employees.

IV. ACTIONS AND FOLLOW-UP

30. The member organisations of UNICE/UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC (and the liaison committee EUROCADRES/CEC) will promote this framework of actions in Member States at all appropriate levels taking account of national practices, through joint and separate actions, as appropriate. Given the interest of the matter under consideration, the social partners have also decided to transmit this document to all relevant players at European and national levels, including EU sectoral social partners, EU and national public authorities etc.

31. The national social partners will draw up an annual report on the actions carried out in Member States on the four priorities identified. The members of EUROCADRES/CEC have a particular role to play with regard to the priority “promoting women in decision-making”.

32. The European Social Dialogue Committee will be entrusted with the preparation of the overall European report.

33. After four annual reports, the European social partners will evaluate the impact on both companies and workers. This evaluation can lead to an update of the priorities identified and/or an assessment on whether or not additional action is required in one or more of the priority areas.

34. When preparing the next EU social dialogue work programme, the social partners will take account of this framework of actions.

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Framework of actions on gender equality

Annex

UNICE/UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC[1] organised seminars between January and September 2004 during which case studies on social partner agreements and practices at national, sectoral and/or company levels were presented. Inspired by these practices in various Member States and companies of different sectors and sizes, they identified examples of instruments and tools, which are described in the framework of actions.

A detailed description of the case studies is provided in this annex.

[1] The ETUC delegation includes representatives of the EUROCADRES/CEC Liaison Committee

National tripartite “girl’s day” initiative in Germany

This initiative was presented by Ms Schneider-Bodien (BDA – Confederation of German employers’ associations) and Ms Kaufmann (DGB - German trade unions federation).

On the girl’s day, visits are organised in companies all over Germany to give girls (16-25 years old) a view of the careers open to them, especially in technical professions. This project aims to dismantle prejudice and to inform girls about possible career choices in technical professions. The objective is to have 40% of girls in technical professions by 2006.

The assessment of social partners is broadly positive. The progression in number of girls reached has been impressive over the five years since the start of the project. Some concerns were highlighted on the insufficient impact of the initiative in leading girls to opt for technical dual education (rather than technical colleges as today).
In DGB’s view, the Girl’s day initiative is focussing on changing attitudes of girls themselves, but this will only be effective when also the attitude of enterprises towards women will change.

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BMW – Technical girls' project

The case study was presented by Manfred Theunert and Werner Löchel (management).

BMW has 20 factories worldwide, mainly in Europe (Germany and the UK). Its aim is to be the world leader in the upper side of the market in cars and motorbikes (premium strategy). Being the best employer in the world is an integral part of this strategy to reach this objective.

The BMW Technical girls' project must also be seen against the background of the German apprenticeship system where apprentices recruited in 2004 finish their apprenticeship in 2008, requiring companies to be able to plan training over this four years cycle.

The technical girls' project was developed in cooperation with the works council of different plants but started as a pilote scheme in the Munich plant. BMW first conducted a survey to map the initial situation and understand the reasons why so few girls were attracted by technical jobs.

On the basis of the diagnosis made, several actions were defined to bridge the gap (the full set of measures was carried out in the Münich plant only as pilot scheme)

- identifying and recognising girls' skills and boosting them
- going to schools in order to inform girls about technical jobs and to tackle their fears (to be more credible, the project leader/trainer is a technical girl/woman)
- developing measures for target groups
- setting a target of 15% of female technical apprentices. Targets in BMW are not quotas; targets are monitored and lead to action in cases where they are not reached because they are linked to the remuneration of management.
- other measures included the participation of the company in the girl's day initiative (see above), the launch of a "girls' practical day" and of "girls technical camps" aiming at letting girls carry out the technical jobs in live.

In parallel to this project, a special programme called "Drive" also exists for managerial and graduate levels in which 20.8% of participants at graduate levels are women (mainly engineers) and 31% of women at doctorate level.

The assessment of results achieved through the BMW Technical girls' project showed that, compared to other German BMW plants where the proportion of female apprentices was 7% in 2003, the figure for the Münich plant was 15% and the proportion is expected to rise to 28% in 2004.

In the future, BMW wishes to improve its current initiatives and step up recruitment of girls apprentices and prepare their full recruitment in 2008 to ensure their smooth integration in technical departments at the end of their apprenticeship.

BMW is also active to retain women in the company after their recruitment. Examples of initiatives include:

- BMW's internal internet web-site on career prospects. The average duration of women career in BMW is 7-10 years,

- measures to promote conciliation of work and family life including sponsoring child care centers, promotion of part-time work for production workers and flexi-time for non-production workers. As a result, BMW has the highest proportion of part-time workers of the car industry and men are increasingly using sabbatical leave.

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BT – equal opportunities policy

The case study was presented by Ms Pam Farmer (management).

BT has a global vision of equal opportunities, throughout the life cycle. It is part of an overall diversity approach but includes specific programmes for women.

BT is involved in a number of external initiatives such as the

- "Take our Daughters to Work" initiative,
- "women ambassadors" in science and engineering,
- production of videos for ethnic minority groups to influence family career choices,
- presence in career fairs,
- web-sites and on line discussions as part of the EU project "PORTIA",
- participation in "women in board rooms" project in the UK, etc.

BT internal initiatives include

- systematically looking at job description and specifications to make them more gender neutral (for example, changing the name of software engineer to software designer increased applications by women by 37%),
- highlighting in the in-house and external press news stories about women breaking new grounds,
- addressing the issue of self-deselection through buddying / mentoring / coaching, confidence building programmes, opening up access for high profile appointments,
- ensuring equal pay through pay audits (compared with the UK average where the gender pay gap is 19%, the average gap in BT is now less than 4%),
- reviewing grades to identify unjustified differences for work of equal value,
- ensuring that there is equal representation in the talent pool,
- developing flexible work possibilities (in the UK 92% of women returning from maternity leave the company after a year but in BT there is a 94% retention rate after a year), etc.

In terms of gender, a future challenge for BT is to move to an approach which is "gender inclusive" - away from an approach only focussing on women, to include men in the thinking, especially focussing on the role of men with regard to family responsibilities. BT supports an organisation called Fathers' Direct in developing this more holistic approach to gender issues. Concerning work life balance, BT has a variety of tools (flexi work, part-time work, telework (home working), leaves and career break opportunities etc.). The message to both men and women in the company is: you can work part time or flexibly, and at the same time do not loose your place in the company hierarchy, or career opportunities. Allowing for 'flexible working' brings huge benefits to the enterprise, because workers are more committed to give a bit extra to their job-performance.

The situation of women employees in BT is characterised by:

- some women at lowest level positions are very well qualified and move up rapidly through promotion. For example, call-center operators in BT have equal access to apply to management positions.
- 42% of graduates in BT are women. 43% of promotees are women,

- looking at the targets that BT has set itself, they focus on senior level representation, the lowest levels, and new entrants.
- During 2003/4 a number of women left BT on attractive release terms. However, BT believes that this trend has started to slow.

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EFFAT-FERCO - European sector collective agreement in the contract catering sector

The case study was presented by Ms Kerstin Howald, Tourism Sector Secretary, (EFFAT – European Federation of Trade Unions in the Food, Agriculture and Tourism sectors and allied branches) and Ms Marie-Christine Lefebvre, secretary general (FERCO - European Federation of Contract Catering Organisations).

The European contract catering sector counts approximately 500 000 workers in Europe. 70% of employees are women. Women of disadvantaged groups are highly represented. A great deal of the employees work part-time.

The European sectoral social partners EFFAT and FERCO concluded an agreement on vocational training in 1999. The background for this initiative was, that they had found that most training in the sector was going to the managers (mostly men), so they wanted to focus on the majority of disadvantaged workers in the sector (mostly women).

Since then, the follow-up of the agreement in the Member States is monitored. For example, a joint initiative of the social partners was developed in the Netherlands to train and coach women in view of offering them a fixed term contract in the contract catering sector.

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Shell - Diversity and Inclusiveness policy

The case study was presented by Mr Alex Krijger (Human Resources Management)**.**

Conducting a diversity policy is a way for Shell to accompany societal changes and to change a traditional and male dominated (image of the) company. Shell wants to be an attractive employer for all people.

To do so, Shell has a broad and diversified approach to diversity, which tackled the gender dimension as well as others such as age differences, religion, nationality, handicap etc. The objective is to create an inclusive organisation where individual differences are recognised and where diversity is valued.

Shell conducted a scientific study to measure the impact of diversity policies on productivity and creativity in the company and hence on its performance. The policy is supported at the highest level of management. To achieve change, the policy was introduced by the top of the organisation, however, the real work has to be done on the local / plant level. The most important thing to achieve results is cultural change, and this takes time.

Examples of actions undertaken:

- Diversity contact persons are identified in each location of the group entrusted with the responsibility of the implementation of the policy on the ground;
- A strategy was defined with the aim to make sure that everyone understands the importance of the issue. Annual plans, goals and targets are defined to ease the implementation of the policy;
- Managers are accountable for the implementation (part of the individual evaluation process of managers) of the policy and are trained to raise their awareness for diversity management;
- Employees are involved individually through regular surveys, which results are carefully monitored, and through the works council / trade unions where they exist.

To help women breaking the glass ceiling and have more women in the top, you need to speak with women as soon as possible on their career expectations, and work life balance, and show the commitment of the management to solve problems that may arise especially during a specific period of 4 to 8 years in their life (when they have small children). Examples of tools introduced by Shell included:

- give the opportunity to go in jobs where there is less mobility,
- create horizontal career steps,
- allow for flexibility in the scheduling of working hours, while at the same time providing for regularity (for instance not 4 days of 9 hours, but 5 days with shorter hours);
- discuss with young parents (men and women) on work life balance issues;
- have exit-interviews with all women leaving the company, and find out why they leave (important to improve retention rates)

It is important to not only have good general policies in place, but also pay sufficient attention to so called ‘micro-inequalities’ that may be very annoying in every day practice.

Within Shell, there are also anti-harassment measures: in every location there are 2 ‘trust-persons’ (a man and a woman).

Is the policy working? Ask your employees! Shell conducts every 2 years a people’s survey. The results are open, and communicated on the website. It is also very important to show that you do something with the results of such questionnaires.

Concerning the Shell Diversity and Inclusiveness policy, the workers and their representatives have been involved through the normal processes of consultation of the works council(s), and collective bargaining. Trade unions were present in 3 locations, where annual or biannual agreements are negotiated, which include diversity policy issues. These locations employ 3000 people. The remaining 8000 are consulted through the works councils.

Tackling the gender issue, as a part of a broader diversity agenda is a way to overcome possible negative reactions from men. Men can benefit from the same benefits as women such as childcare, parental leave, etc, but they tend to be more interested in other parts of this agenda such as for example active ageing measures.

In the future, the company is willing to further work on retaining women, as the turnover remains high.

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French national cross-industry collective agreement on gender mix and equal opportunities between men and women (March 2004)

The collective agreement was presented by Ms Chantal Foulon (MEDEF - French employers) and Ms Le Bihan (CFTC - Confederation of Christian trade unions).

A consensus emerged between French social partners on the main obstacles to reaching equal opportunities for men and women in practice, i.e.

- cultural attitudes towards gender mix;
- insufficient awareness of employers, managers, employees' representatives and employees themselves on this issue.

The cross-industry national collective agreement was signed on 1 March 2004 by all social partners organisations on the employers and workers side. It describes useful instruments which can be put in place or used more actively, referring the decision on which instruments are the most suitable according to their specific needs to collective agreements at sector and/or company levels.

Instruments include:

- Setting gender balance objectives at sector level for access to vocational training;
- Promoting tailored and accurate information on labour markets evolutions in order to help desegregate labour markets;
- More attention given to the fact that flexible working time arrangement can have adverse effects on women career promotion;
- Providing training sessions to workers before the end of the leave in order to facilitate the return to work
- Maintain the link between the enterprise and women on maternity or parental leave;
- Catching up measures on equal pay for work of equal value and possibility of positive discrimination
- Measures to be taken if there is evidence of an "outstanding imbalance" in the career of women and men such as analysis of the causes, definition of clear objectives and deadlines to take action such as three-year-plans
- A review of the effects of the agreement in three years time.

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PSA PEUGEOT CITROËN - company level collective agreement on the development of female employment and on professional equality between women and men

The case study was presented by Ms Valleron (CFE-CGC - trade union) and Mr Brunet (management).

The share of women working in the group PSA PEUGEOT CITROËN compared to the total number of employees is as follows:

- All activities worldwide: 18.17%
- In France for the automobile sector: 15% (Blue collar workers: 14%; Technicians, employees and first line managers: 21%; Management: 17%)
- The main increase in female employment over the last years is in the category of blue collar workers

Many equal opportunities initiatives taken by the group are implemented in partnership with education and training institutions, vocational training schools, local authorities and the State etc. Employees' representatives are involved in these activities. One of the main objectives of these activities is to attract more women to the automobile industry.

A collective agreement was signed on 4 November 2003. The agreement deals with various aspects on equal opportunities between women and men such as training, recruitment, career of women etc. It leaves the issue of equal pay aside as, following an in depth study made in the company, both employers and trade unions observed that there is no difference in equal pay for work of equal value in the company. Average pay differentials between women and men are explained by the fact that fewer women are present in the highest categories of jobs in the company. In addition, pay issues are dealt with in the collective agreement on pay concluded in 2004.

The following initiatives are foreseen and have already been partly implemented:

- Adaptation of work to enable a greater gender mix at work (ergonomics; assessment before leaves ; adaptation of local services such as child care etc.);
- Setting targets for the recruitment of women: the proportion of women recruited should be equivalent to the proportion of women applying to the job. ICT tools have been put in place to ensure a follow-up of the targets. A review will be done after three years.
- Vocational training and promotion of female apprenticeship;
- Helping women to be mobile (mobility is a condition to career promotion in the group) and helping spouses when forced to move;
- Setting targets for the promotion of women: the proportion of women promoted should be equivalent to the proportion of women in the position to be promoted;
- Dissemination of the whole agreement to all the employees in the enterprise by means of a brochure;
- Putting in place a network of 35 persons in charge of gender mainstreaming, spread in each directorate of the company, with the aim to exchange experience on the actions taken and conditions for success ;

- Training of the members of gender equality committees of the establishments' worker councils;
- Awareness-raising and training of managers, HR managers and people in charge of the recruitment.

Concerning the follow-up:

- A bipartite follow-up of the agreement is foreseen on the basis of agreed indicators.
- The three years targets will be monitored.
- Each location devises an annual equality plan in order to turn the agreed objectives into concrete actions.
- Each industrial plant has established a gender equality committee
- Exchange of best practices is foreseen.
- Contact persons are identified in each location.

PSA PEUGEOT CITROËN is currently reflecting on its broader diversity policy.

The law on equality adopted in 2001 has influenced the agreement, but the main reason for PSA PEUGEOT CITROËN to have this policy is to adapt the group to its environment, especially with regard to developments on the labour market (labour market shortages) and to be in phase with the mentalities and expectations of people.

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CNA - Il talento delle donne – research actions to support female entrepreneurship and generational handover

The case study was presented by Ms Elisa Muratori (CNA – National confederation of craft and SMEs).

The objectives of the project are:

- to develop activities to ease the generational handover of SMEs with a gender approach;
- to raise awareness on the problem of the generational handover;
- to identify useful services that can be used by SMEs to solve the problem;
- to train and value the management skills of women entrepreneurs playing a strategic role within SMEs.

The issue of generational handover of SMEs is an important one as in practice a lot of SMEs of the Emilia Romagna region close because no one is found to take over the business. This has important consequences on the economic activity and the employment situation of the region. A solution is to release women's untapped potential.

The two main activities of the project are:

- Training activities targeted to women to strengthen their management skills and capacity to run a business. The activities undertaken take closely into account the situation of women in SMEs and the fact that traditionally they are not perceived as able to take over the business;
- Research activity in order to create a "matrix of activities" to support SMEs faced with a problem of generational handover. The matrix include:
    - analysis activities,
    - exchange of good practices (for example through life stories of senior women entrepreneurs who have already faced the generational handover)
    - discussions groups (for example groups focussing on senior women entrepreneurs or junior women entrepreneurs)
    - tools to assess the business activities of the SMEs and to design a business development plan (reviewing business practices and performance, human resources and roles played, positive actions for equal opportunities within the company)
    - tools to identify the best way in which the business can be taken over (structured transfer plan).

  This matrix is transferable to other regions of Italy – this is foreseen.

A lot of different tools were developed to during the project, including:

- Design and implementation of a data base
- Identification of the sample of enterprises
- Creation and experimentation of a permanent laboratory
- Survey of training needs
- Implementation of a catalogue of Open Learning products

An interesting result of this project concerns the gender of the successor:

- Men entrepreneurs see as their only possible successor for their company, the son and heir. For the daughter there is always a “job” in the company, but they do not see and perceive her as a possible heiress.
- Women entrepreneurs do not make a gender distinction for their successors, they have a more rational and economic view of the business, the important thing is for the heirs to be motivated and aware.

More information on the project is available on the following Web Site: www.comitatoimpresadonna.net/Talento_Donne , together with the following material

- Life stories
- Model of preventive survey of intervention, Model of business check-up
- Documents, Bibliography, Collection of best practices, Materials of in-depth study for women entrepreneurs: “the journey within the company”

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Leeds City Council – work-life balance project

The case was presented by Ms Helena Philips (management) and Mr Martin Walker (UNISON, trade union).

The overall context in which the project was developed is characterised by:

- the demographic challenge and the need to attract and retain talent;
- existing skills shortages in some areas such as accountancy;
- the UK Employment Act 2002, which introduced the right to request to work flexibly for parents of children under the age of 6 (or of disabled children under 18)
- improve services to the public
- improve diversity of representation in management positions (in particular women, who are under-represented at senior level)
- The need to tackle high rates of absence (approximately 13 days a year per employee).

The policy started as a pilot project set up in Leeds City Council to improve work-life balance. The pilot phase lasted 6 months and initially involved 60 employees in two units of the Finance Department. The scheme was extended to other teams within the Department and is now being developed across the whole of the City Council.

In the Department, 56,4% of workers are not unionised. 40,3% are unionised, of which 45% are UNISON members.

The work-life balance pilot scheme looked at the potential for a more flexible service. Staff across the council were already operating on flexi-time but the existing flexitime system was available to staff but not managers (hence problem of glass ceiling). The new scheme involved all employees, including the managers. Moreover, it offered a broader range of "options", giving staff greater influence on long term planning of working hours and leave.

The UK Employment Act 2002 provides for a 'right to request' but not for a 'right to actually get' a change in work patterns and only covers those with parental responsibility for specified children. The new scheme however was introduced for all employees and all employees could benefit from it, if they chose to.

The scheme was linked from the outset to the broader "diversity agenda" of Leeds City Council (women; ethnic minorities, disabled people, etc.) so that the scheme was not seen as a "women only" issue but that everyone could feel involved ("there is something for everyone").

The trade union UNISON supported the scheme from the outset as it was an opportunity to improve working conditions and to prevent stress. Retaining staff was an issue for trade unions as people on leave were not replaced and this increased workload for all employees. Trade unions also wanted to be involved positively in a scheme that could eventually be extended to the City Council as a whole.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Challenge Fund gave financial support. This allowed the City Council to recruit consultants to develop the pilot. The City Council could also rely on the expertise of the DTI in this area.

Careful consideration was given to the process of involvement of the staff and trade unions. For example the Trade Union Committee was briefed regularly by management about the scheme and trade unions participated directly as members of the Work-Life Balance Steering Group.

Work-Life Balance co-ordinators were appointed within each team to provide advice to staff about the practical application of the new system.

Each member of staff participating in the scheme had to prepare an individual "business case" stating why they were taking part, and what the benefits would be both for them individually and for the service (discussed collectively by the service staff). It was stressed from the outset that flexible working was not an entitlement and that employees had to demonstrate how their changed pattern of working would benefit the service.

Communication was extremely important in the success of the project. It was particularly important that every employee understood the service the Council expected them to provide.

There was a possibility for employees not to participate in the scheme or to come back to the old pattern of work if it did not work out. The flexibility-options were only optional, i.e. they were never imposed by management. They were determined by employees and their teams, after considering how their work could best be delivered and following discussions with management. Also, it was always possible to return to the previous working time pattern if the change did not work out well. Annualised hours, for example, were only agreed when the employee could show an acceptable pattern of working hours, staying within the boundaries of the Working Time Directive.

Not all workers' requests could be met. There were examples of requests for term time only working (which means: having the school-holidays off), but there would often be no business case for it, so it would not be granted.

The objectives of the pilot were to address issues of:

- the extension of service provision and service quality;
- staff job satisfaction, morale and commitment;
- staff recruitment and retention;
- sickness and other absence
- improving women's ability to access higher management positions

A mix of options was made available and included:

- annualised hours, term-time working (i.e. working except during school holidays)
- part-time and reduced hours,
- compressed week,
- staggered hours,
- job-sharing,
- career breaks
- time-off and ad hoc home working instead of part-time.

For managers, two issues were particularly difficult:

- Control of attendance had to be changed into control of outcome. Managers had to learn how to manage individual's performance outputs, not their time at work Employees had to think about the whole team Not just about themselves. Success depended on team solutions.

The real challenge was moving away from a culture that was "rule driven" to one of empowerment. Involving the trade unions was important given the specific changes impacting on staff and perceived risks of the scheme. It was also imperative to discuss collectively (in teams) how to reach the business objectives.

For the trade unions closer involvement with the initiative made sense because work life balance was a key trade union objective, but also as an answer to concerns expressed by staff members, which believed that the scheme seemed "too good to be true". These concerns were the following:

- fear that staff would be forced into working longer hours when they may not wish to,
- possible resistance at managerial level,
- concerns that indirect discrimination could result from the fact that payment of over-time would be replaced by making a global deal on flexible working. For UNISON it is important that flexible working is not used as an excuse to not pay over-time. When the pilot scheme is rolled out across the organisation it could then adversely impact on less skilled and lower paid workers who rely upon overtime or out of hours pay enhancements to supplement there basic pay. UNISON is looking into that issue as pay arrangements are decided at the national level.

Clear parameters were set about what constituted success, including "no detriment to the service during the pilot scheme". Management were very clear that this was the primary objective, even though the scheme clearly brought about a more positive climate of employee relations, benefits to staff and raised the visibility of the trade unions.

Evaluation of the scheme was carried out through

- perception surveys,
- staff diaries to see if employees had benefited in terms of work-life balance,
- discussions between staff and management, and
- hard data in particular on sickness absences.

The options most used were

- flexi-time,
- compressed hours,
- annualised hours (same work pattern over a one year reference period).

There have been a number of positive benefits for management, staff and for the service as a whole, in particular:

- surveys showed that personal life and work life balance improved;
- even though management can reject requests for fexitime, in practice there was no case where a mutually satisfactory solution could not be found
- a significant reduction in sickness absence was achieved (and maintained over time);
- due to the hours that staff wished to work, the telephone service was extended by 2 hours (from 9-5 to 8-6), generating an improvement in

recover times for non-payments as staff were able to reach people when they were at home;
- reduced levels in special leave.

In UNISON's view, the scheme is a success and employees supported it as they felt more in control of their working time. It helped women and men, notably single parents who had the opportunity to come back to full time working hours. It was an alternative to reduced working time and improved the quality of the service.

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West Hungary Consulting – work-life balance policy

A preliminary introduction on the evolution of work-life balance policies in Hungary was presented by Ms Terézia Borosme Bartha (MGYOSZ - Confederation of Hungarian Employers and Industrialists) and Ms Marianne Rózsáné dr. Lupkovics (MSZOSZ - National Confederation of Hungarian Trade Unions).

The recent evolution in Hungary with regard to conciliation of work and family life was recalled, distinguishing between two main phases:

- the 1970s and 1980s, characterised by a stagnation of the economy and a reduction of birth rates, during which maternity leave was introduced and full time work was no longer an obligation (as was the case in the context of the planned economy);
- 1999 which saw the introduction of a three year parental leave and an award for work-life balance is created.

Since 1999, an annual “award for family-friendly workplaces” also exists. The criteria for getting the award are set in consultation with the social partners. The company West Hungarian Consulting (see below) won this award in 2003.

The case study on the work-life balance policy of the company West Hungary Consulting was presented by Ms Ildikó Kósa (management) and Ms Kardos Endréné (representative of the worker council).

The company is a consultancy SME (specialised in accountancy, taxation, human resources and financial issues) created in 1990. It started with 4 employees and rapidly grew (to 42 employees today). It is characterised by a family friendly atmosphere.

The family friendly policy measures introduced include flexible working time, parental leave, including training to facilitate return from parental leave, leave for urgent family reasons. Implementation is facilitated by the fact that, in its field of activity, work can easily be planned.

The company is keen to keep contact with women on parental leave and to ease their return to work by offering them training measures and flexible working time possibilities, part-time work, possibility to agree with the manager the start and end time of work.

The company also offers other various benefits to its employees beyond legal requirements such as holiday cheques, a gift when founding a family, sport activities, company newsletter etc.

All these activities are financed exclusively by the company.

These tools are included in the work agreement, agreed with the works council, which is revised every two years. If problems occur, they are dealt with in the works council.

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The Spanish national interprofessional agreement on collective bargaining, 2002

The agreement was presented by Ms Gabriela Uriarte (CEOE – Confederation of employers) and Ms María José Casero Garfía (UGT - trade unions)

The interprofessionnal agreement on collective bargaining was signed in 2002 in a context of low economy growth and high unemployment. The main purpose of the Spanish inter professional agreements on collective bargaining is to give guidelines to negotiators at the other levels.

In 2002, the inter professional agreement on collective bargaining entailed a commitment to promote equal opportunities through collective bargaining, a commitment to tackle discrimination and guidelines on issue such as professional promotion, work-life balance, sexual harrassment, etc.

An ad hoc group on equal opportunities worked on a study to analyse obstacles to equal opportunities between women and men, both in and outside the labour relation systems. They also worked to identify good practice examples, extract good elements of case studies etc.

The work of this ad hoc group was approved and annexed to the 2003 inter professional agreement which is not a binding document but guidelines. The Spanish social partners have committed themselves in circulating the guidelines. The guidelines given to negotiators in 2003 are therefore more specific than in 2002. The 2003 inter professional agreement entails principles to be taken over in other collective agreements, clarifies the content of anti discrimination clauses, foresees the possibility of positive actions and highlights the necessity to use gender neutral criteria in recruitment, classification, vocational training and promotion systems.

One of the objectives of the 2003 inter professional agreement is also to avoid sexist job titles in collective agreements.

The impact of the 2003 inter professional agreement can be seen in the number of other collective agreements, which take over its clauses. It already seems that the work-life balance clause is taken over very frequently. Examples were given of the cleaning and consultancy sectors.

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Nestlé - Work life balance policy and “optima” programme

The case study was presented by Ms Isabel Aubert (Human Resources) and Mr Antonio Murillo (UGT, trade union).

Nestlé is present in Spain since 1905. It has 13 factories in Spain, specialised by products but with ice cream produced in several sites.

The work-life balance policy of the company is explained in brochures and on the intranet. It is available to all employees, with some variations from plant to plant. Available tools include flexible working time for administrative and technical employees (start and end time can vary for 07.30-09.15 and 17.00-19.00), compressed hours (shorter lunch break), short time week (ending at 15.00 hours on Fridays), etc.

All employees can ask to work part-time. Different flexi-time schemes apply to office workers and production workers, in accordance with the type of work performed.

Nestlé also offers other possibilities such as

- training during working time including training which have application to the family context such as how to manage stress, time management, emotional intelligence, etc.
- on site services in order to ease work and family lives such as a travel office, food shop, bank and insurance offices, etc.
- allocations to work council to organise family activities,
- expatriate help to family,
- allowance for nursery for women until the child is 4 years old,
- baby food supplied in the first year etc.

The Nestlé Optima Program started in 1998 and is supported by the Spanish Women’s institute. It goes beyond the provisions of the 1999 law on work-life balance. The program entails equal opportunities measures, such as

- ensuring neutral language in job advertisement or job descriptions, and
- positive discrimination measures in favour of women, such as the possibility for women to work closer to their home, the possibility for them to be excluded from night shift until the child is one year old, the possibility to combine the last months of maternity leave with part time work.

Information on the programme is published in brochures and on the intranet and is available to all employees. Optima coordinators have been identified in all Nestlé locations.

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Danish social partners (DA & LO) - Study “Women’s and Men’s wages”

The case study was presented by Ms Karina Ransby (DA - Danish employers) and Ms Maria Hirslund (LO - Danish trade unions).

In 2000, DA and LO decided in a collective agreement to take action on equal opportunities between women and men. In 2002, it was decided to launch the study on wage differences. The study was published in 2003.

With this analysis on women’s and men’s wages, a joint understanding has been achieved between the social partners about the essential causes for gender wage differences. It was the first time in Europe that Social Partners have succeeded in such a wide-ranging analysis. The analysis explains in details the underlying causes of wage differences and contains more explanatory factors than previous analyses on the subject.

The following elements are important to understand the Danish labour market situation:

- Women participation on the labour market has risen in the 20 last years. Despite the fact that the labour force participation rate for women continues to be somewhat lower than for men, the age profile is far more uniform than was the case 20 years ago. There are several explanations for the continuing differences. Among these, the differences in women and men's respective choices of education and sector are significant for the date of entry into the labour market. Choice of education and sector can especially help explain differences among the younger age groups.
- Over the past 20 years, the population's level of education has risen, and the educational level of men and women is far more equal today than 20 years ago, and on average younger women have higher education than men. This does not help lowering significantly the average wage differences because of the occupational and sector segregation. There is no evident trend that men and women choices in education become more similar than before. On the contrary in some areas, the gap deepens. Different education choices are a major factor of labour market segregation.
- A characteristic of Danish labour market is that women mostly work in the public sector in the health care, education and childcare sectors.
- Education choices influence career choices (sectors and occupations). When working in the same sectors, one can see that some occupations are typically women occupations. This is for example the case of service to clients, sales and office work.
- Figures show very clearly that women have less experience on the labour market (in years), take up in most cases the child-care leave and use more the other types of leave.

For the study, DA and LO have tried to find as much as possible homogeneous groups, that would be comparable (and for that reason have excluded managers, apprentices and part timers). The study is focussing on full-time workers covered by DA-LO collective agreements (approx. 40% of the private sector workforce).

Very detailed variables were taken into account in the study. This is important in order to have a detailed picture of wages differences.

- Occupation: 368 different groups
- Sector: 110 different groups
- Experience: Measured as the number of years in employment
- Education: 56 different groups
- Mobility: Numbers of job changes in the period 1981-1999
- Region: Firm location divided into 3 categories: large cities; towns; or in the country
- Children: Between age 0-17 divided into 3 age groups
- Leave: Number of years on childcare leave or other leave

Two wage concepts were taken into account. One corresponding to direct remuneration (corresponding approximately to gross salary) and one other called “total earnings excluding nuisance bonus” which includes for example payments made by the employer in case of leaves (sickness leaves, maternity leaves, child care leaves etc.). Differences in average wage between women and men were presented taking into account both wage concepts (see Presentation at annex for exact figures).

The study concludes that the occupational segregation is the main explanatory factor in wage differences followed by education choices and sectoral segregation. Additional explanatory factors such as years of experience, take up of leaves, job mobility etc. play also an important role especially for white-collar workers. But one should not forget that everything cannot be captured in statistics.

The wage differences are higher for white collar workers than for blue collar workers, and also a higher percentage of the pay-gap for white collar workers was unexplained.

Unexplained differences amount on average to 3.4% for blue-collar workers and to 6.6% for white-collar workers. These unexplained differences do not necessarily mean that the wage-difference is a result of discrimination. They may be related to factors which cannot be easily quantified such as negotiating skills, individual performance, company-specific training which helps performing better in the job,.

The average wage gap is smaller for young women than for older ones. The fact of having a child in itself has no negative impact on wage. On the contrary, it seems that it has a positive effect linked to increased stability and efficiency. However, the fact of taking long leaves has a clearly negative impact on the long term wage (related to women having less years of work experience).

In the period during which the study was done, the new government suspended a bill from the former government aiming to introduce an obligation to have gender-specific wage statistics at company level. In order to take concrete actions in this field, the current government created two working groups in which social partners are participating. The objective of the first working group is to analyse the causes of segregation on the labour market in public and private sectors. The objective of the second is to produce a guidance note for employers on how to check that there is equal wages for women and men. The groups started their work recently.

In their collective agreement in 2004, LO and DA have agreed to create a fund to share the costs of maternity leaves between employers of different sectors. This is considered as a direct follow-up to the analysis on wages differences. The objective of the fund is to ensure equalisation of the costs incurred by companies in connection with employees taking parental leave. During that same round of negotiations, pregnancy leave and maternity/paternity leave with full pay was extended from 18 to 26 weeks, which represents a considerable improvement of conditions for parents. Similarly, receiving full pay during parental leave allows the parent to maintain the right to pension contributions during the leave. Denmark's new government platform published on 18 February 2005 includes the proposal that companies of a certain maximum size are to be placed under an obligation to prepare equal remuneration statistics - or in some way - report on equal pay developments at company level on a regular basis.

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Finnish social partners - Unification of pay systems and collective agreements in the chemical industry

The case study was presented by Ms Minna Etu-Seppälä (EK - Confederation of Finnish Industries) and Mr Markku Palokangas (Union of Salaried Employees).

In Finland, sectoral agreements concerning white-collar workers were traditionally negotiated by persons coming from the central organizations. This explains why the Confederation of Finnish Industries and the Union of Salaried Employees were involved in the case presented. In Finland different collective agreements apply to white-collar workers and blue-collar workers, Managers are only seldom covered by collective agreements at sectoral level.

The case study concerns the process that resulted in a unification of two pay systems and two collective agreements for white-collar workers in the Chemical industry.

In the mid 90´s there were two sectoral level agreements in the chemical industry concerning white-collar workers (due to historical reasons). One covering clerical employees and the other one covering technical employees. Those two collective agreements also included two different pay systems. Clerical employees had somewhat lower wage level. Clerical employees were a female dominated group and technical employees a male dominated group.

A need for a change became evident in the 90’s as the job content of clerical employees and technical employees became much closer to each other due to rapid development in information technology. There was no more need for two separate pay systems. The old pay systems were obsolete. It was no longer practical to work with two collective agreements and two pay systems, at the company level. This period also coincided with a merger of the trade union for clerical employees´ and the trade union for technical employees into one single trade union organisation.

The unification of pay-systems was done in a gradual way and took time. Discussions with workers on the need for unification started in 1992. The two old pay systems were replaced by a single new one at the end of January 1997. The new pay system included analytical job evaluation and competency-based pay both for clerical and technical employees. However, wage scales and collective agreements were still separate. The two collective agreements were unified at the beginning of 1998. The same pay system and wage scales were applied to both clerical and technical employees in the beginning of 1999.

This time-frame was agreed upon by the social partners and also got the approval of the Finnish Ombudsman for equality. This was important because during a transitional period, there would be one pay system, but 2 wage scales for technical and clerical employees and due to the fact that some of the jobs these groups performed could have been considered as work of equal value, there was a risk that two different wage scales could have been considered to cause pay discrimination. Time is an important factor to make the unification financially possible.

Before the unification, in 1996, there was a difference in wage scale (expressing minimum wage levels) of 9% between the two systems. In 1999, this difference was reduced to 0%. The difference in minimum wage scale had an immediate and longer term impact on wage differences. Even after the unification, pay differences between women and men continue to decline (see Presentation at annex for exact figures).

The main explanatory factor for the remaining gender pay gap is that women and men perform different jobs and have different skills. The occupations in the chemical industry are still very segregated.

The unifications of pay systems and collective agreements led to an evaluation of all jobs performed by the white-collar workers. In the new pay system, wages are based on job value and personal competences and skills (and less on seniority). Job evaluation at company level is done and is regularly checked by a joint team (employers /employees representatives). Employers and trade unions are satisfied with this new pay system. Even if that is in theory possible, no company of the chemical sector has deviated from the sectoral pay arrangements since the unification.

Introducing a new job evaluation system is not an easy task. Very important are discussions and training sessions for everybody involved. In the first year of the introduction of the new pay system 200 seminars were organised, jointly by trade unions and employers, to explain what was going to happen to people's salaries, and job-status, etc. The time-frame was also crucial. The new pay system was jointly tested in a sample of companies before its introduction in the chemical sector as a whole.

The first aim of the project was to merge the collective agreements, and modernise the pay systems. When doing this, it was found that some clerical jobs were lower valued compared to technical jobs and according to the new pay system to be introduced. For example, in the old system formal education, formal job titles and seniority were highly valued. In the new system this was much less the case, and more emphasis was put on activating aspects, and individual capacities. The gender perspective was mainstreamed in these discussions. The review of the job-evaluation system, and the introduction of more gender-neutral criteria played therefore a central role.

The unification was moderate costly for employers (on average1 to 2% on annual total pay at the company level), however the amount of costs for an individual employer varied a lot and some employers were affected less than the others.). This could be done, because the social partners agreed in a national wage agreement in 1996 that the negotiation of the use of a certain part of future wage increases was left to the sectoral parties. (eg. to change their pay system.) However, one should realise that changing the pay-scales did not mean that everybody got a pay-raise: the scales were raised on a minimum-level, so whoever was paid in practice already more did not receive a pay-raise.

Similar pay arrangements have been introduced in the energy, metal, construction, food & drinks sectors.

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Irish trade unions (ICTU) - Tool kit “Negotiating for equality – gender and pay”

The case study was presented by Mr David Joyce (ICTU - Irish congress of trade unions).

The Irish legislation outlawing wage discrimination on the grounds of sex exists since 1975. There have been major changes in the role of women in society and a marked increase in the number of women in the workplace since Ireland’s entry in the EU. The concept of equal pay for equal work has become more widely accepted than it was in the early fifties. However a 15% gender pay gap still remains in Ireland (5% in the public sector in which women mostly work and which is highly unionised).

As reasons for the pay gap ICTU referred to discrimination in pay-systems, to grading structures, and performance related pay. His opinion was that in general in Ireland there is an undervaluing of female skills and female education.

Labour market segregation is a major problem in Ireland (sectoral, occupational and vertical segregation). Most women work in healthcare, eduction etc. A recent IBEC (employers) study showed that only 3 % of chief executive officers is female.

An other major concern is the weakness of women’s link with the labour market (i.e. women take often career breaks, make extensive use of part-time work etc). By the time women arrive to their late 40’s, their work experience is, on average, 9 years shorter than men. 73% of women work part-time, mostly for family reasons. This has major impacts on wage differences between women and men. Women also experience a reduced ability to work overtime, profit less from “long service awards”, experience fewer promotion and have in the end reduced pensions compared to men.

A multi-faceted approach is needed to attract and retain the workforce.

The toolkit developed by ICTU is part of a broader gender equality programme. It offers a one stop shop facility (information, advice, background etc.) for negotiators dealing with gender equality in the workplace, and offers practical advice on what employers and workers can do. Employers, through IBEC, were invited to make comments on the tool kit before its publication.

While it is one complete publication, individual sections can stand alone and are cross-referenced. The tool kit contains 11 chapters:

1. Gender Pay Gap - Current Findings
2. The Law and Equality
3. Equality Audit
4. Job Evaluation
5. Gender Proofing/Gender Impact Assessment
6. Recruitment & Selection
7. Gender Pay Questionnaire
8. Promote Yourself
9. Equality Briefing for Employers
10. Resources
11. Bibliography

It is a very practical tool. The tool-kit is meant to be used by trade union officials or shop stewards before joint actions can be taken by employers and trade unions. It is a basis for improving women negotiating skills, which is part of ICTU's agenda.

Possible actions are described in the kit such as training of interviewers or middle-managers, mentoring etc. The business case for equal pay is also described and can be used by employers or to help trade unionists in their discussions with employers.

The toolkit is a fairly recent initiative. There has not yet been an experience of its use in companies.

The training courses presented can be adapted depending on the context.

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Timeout for the Family - A Finnish Social Partners Information Campaign to promote Equal Use of Family Leaves

The aim of the family leave campaign was to encourage parents, especially men, to use the family leaves more equally. In the background was the uneven use of family leaves between mothers and fathers and the social partners common view, that good reconciliation of work and family life benefits all: the child, the family, the employer and the workplace community.

So far, fathers have not taken much advantage of their rights to parental leave. In 2002 about 3 per cent of fathers took parental leave. Paternity leave instead is increasingly popular: in 2002 nearly 67 per cent of fathers exercised their right to paternity leave. It is seen important that the sharing of parenthood increases the equality in the working life.

The objective of the campaign was to bring about a change in the attitudes of key representatives of employers and employees by presenting examples from workplaces.

The starting point for the campaign, initiated by the central labour market organisations, was this item in the incomes policy agreement for 2001–2003: "The parties shall jointly arrange regional events aimed to reconcile work and family life by promoting equal use of family leaves."

The target groups for the events included key representatives of employees and employers (HR managers, shop stewards, employer-employee negotiators, occupational health and safety officers), co-operation partners (such as family health centres, local offices of the Social Insurance Institution), researchers of family policy and experts from labour market organisations.

The Timeout for the Family - campaign arranged six afternoon seminars in different parts of the country in spring 2002. Each seminar had 50 to 110 participants, depending on the location. The seminar arrangements at each location were the responsibility of regional working groups assembled of representatives of the regional centres, regional committees or corresponding organs of both the employer and employee organisations.

In accordance with the roadmap approved by the Social Partners Round Table on Equality, the seminars

- provided information on the use of family leaves by means of introductions by experts in the fields of law, economy, working hours and children's affairs, as well as associated information materials
- by means of example cases requested from workplaces, presented both the employers' views of the effects of using family leaves and the experiences of fathers who had taken such leave
- the theatre group Geist performed small plays and comic sketches of different family situations, adding more effect to the message of the attitude-forming campaign

The information officers of the central organisations arranged press conferences before the seminars. The press conferences, as well as the seminars, were manned by leaders of both the employee and employer organisations in accordance with a mutually agreed schedule of turns.

Most of the funding came from the Finnish Occupational Health and Safety Fund.

The events received good coverage in the press, radio and television. The visibility of organisation leaders contributed significantly to the publicity. Increased media interest in the Timeout for the Family campaign might also have been the result of the Government's report on child policy, issued to Parliament around the time of starting the campaign.

The attitude campaign to promote equal use of family leave distributed plenty of information and encouraged workplaces to continue discussions on different opportunities to make work and family life more compatible. Development ideas were also brought up at the press conferences and the seminar discussions.

The Timeout for the Family events were successful in making the theme publicly visible as a joint effort of the labour market organisations. The campaign further promoted a process that can cause more equal models of such reconciliation to become common practice through changed attitudes and work cultures.

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FPB-TUC guide on employment for small and medium enterprises

The FPB-TUC guide on employment is designed to facilitate everyday compliance with UK employment legislation and assist small businesses in maintaining positive relations with the company. The Guide is written in plain English, is simple to use and up dated annually.

The Employment Guide is a comprehensive guide covering all aspects of employment law. The practical Guide offers guidance and templates to implement the law within the workplace.

The guide covers such issues as:

1. Minimum wage
2. Flexible working
3. Maternity leave and pay
4. Paternity leave
5. Working time - young persons
6. Dismissal
7. Sexual orientation discrimination
8. Protection regarding belief
9. Statutory employee consultation
10. Dispute resolution
11. Mobile telephones and much more…

Each section is supported by templates and letters, which are also supplied on CD-Rom.

The Employment Guide is published by FPB, supported by the TUC and endorsed by SFEDI, the Small Firms Enterprise Development Initiative.

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Wage indicator website

The wage indicator website essentially consists of 3 elements:

- a questionnaire on line,
- a calculating tool for checking your salary, wage or pay,
- a website with labour market related content.

The first wage indicator was created in the Netherlands in 2000. The objectives of the website were

- to give employees an insight in their salaries and that of colleagues in any other profession,
- to improve the effectiveness of labour condition policies by researching the impact of collective agreements, using a questionnaire filled in by visitors of the website – and thus their data – as benchmark,
- to highlight links to more scientific research in this area,
- and to investigate alleged wage gaps related to gender or ethnic group.

The gender dimension of wages is a key element of the website. The comparison made between the visitor's salary and that of other employees is based on data communicated by earlier visitors of the same professional group.

After its launch the Dutch wage indicator has attracted an increasing amount of visitors (up to 370.000 per month in March 2004), and now disposes of a large dataset, accumulated from almost 70.000 questionnaires (i.e. over 1 percent of the total working population in the Netherlands).

From April 2004 the Dutch prototype is being adapted to the national labour markets of 8 additional countries in Europe, i.e. Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and the UK, and other countries within and outside the EU are under way

More information and links to the different wage indicator websites is available at: http://www.wageindicator.org/

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Central fund for maternity/paternity leave in Denmark

Collective bargaining in the Danish private labour market resulted in the adoption of a fund for parental leave to ensure equalisation of the costs incurred by companies in connection with employees taking parental leave. The agreement was signed by the two main private sector Danish social partners: DA (employers) and LO (trade unions). During that same round of negotiations, pregnancy leave and maternity/paternity leave with full pay was extended from 18 to 26 weeks, which represents a considerable improvement of conditions for parents. Similarly, receiving full pay during parental leave allows the parent to maintain the right to pension contributions during the leave.

According to the mediation proposal adopted in April 2004:
”LO and DA agree to establish a scheme which will, in accordance with specified provisions, equalise the companies' expenses for parental leave, in accordance with collective agreements, so that these costs do not rest with the individual employer alone.
The aim is to support a labour market with equal opportunities for men and women. All companies in employer organisations affiliated to the Danish Employers' Confederation will contribute to these equalisation funds. The schemes mainly consist of sector-specific equalisation funds that are connected by means of a joint equalisation scheme. Schemes that have been established beforehand thereby enter because of the joint equalisation scheme.
Schemes based on the condition that full unemployment benefit reimbursement is maintained will be established as soon as possible, and no later than 1 July 2005.”

The introduction of the fund for parental leave means that women no longer represent a more costly source of labour than men due to pregnancy and maternity leave. Furthermore, the segregation of the labour market according to gender is being reduced. It also means that the income loss suffered by men and women alike due to leave taken in connection with pregnancy and maternity or paternity leave has been reduced. Approximately half of this leave is paid through unemployment benefit schemes if the employee should choose to take the entire leave.

The agreement covers approximately 650.000 LO-members and approximately 28.000 companies on the private labour market – i.e. unskilled and skilled workers as well as white collar workers.

On 27 March 2002, the Danish maternity leave was extended from ½ to 1 year by providing economic compensation at unemployment benefit rate. With this extension, paternity leave was reduced from 4 to 2 weeks and the so-called childcare leave was phased out. This represents an actual shortening of the opportunities for taking leave, even though it has not been fully exploited, but generally also provides better economic compensation all in all.

The first statistics made after the introduction of the extended parental leave scheme show that, on average, women now take 25.1 weeks (a 3-week increase) and men take 2.6 weeks (a 1-day increase). The maternity/parental leave in Denmark consists of:

- 4 weeks before birth for the mother (with unemployment benefit rate and wage subsidies from the central fund)
- 14 weeks after birth for the mother (with unemployment benefit rate and wage subsidies from the central fund)
- 2 weeks for the father (at unemployment benefit rate and wage subsidies from the central fund)
- another 32 weeks for both parents. A total of 64 weeks (at unemployment benefit rate for 32 of these weeks and wage subsidies for 6 of these weeks from the central fund)

The 26 weeks pay covered by the fund for parental leave includes 4 weeks pregnancy leave for the mother, 14 weeks maternity leave for the mother, 2 weeks paternity leave for the father, and 6 weeks leave to divide among them.

Workers thus have the right to a total of 80 weeks maternity/paternity leave after childbirth, including 52 weeks on unemployment benefit and 26 weeks wage subsidies from the central fund, including the 4 weeks' pregnancy leave. The scheme allows for some flexibility in terms of when the leave can be taken.

According to the equalisation scheme, reimbursement means full pay – however with a maximum amount in view of the various collective agreement provisions on pay during maternity/paternity leave. Reimbursement has been fixed at a maximum amount of DKK 115 per hour once the scheme is launched. In addition to this, there are other costs stipulated in collective agreements, such as pension schemes. Reimbursement has been fixed at 26 weeks, during which most collective agreements provide for full pay up until a fixed maximum amount. In addition to this, there is further equalisation within the sector-specific schemes.

The contribution to the fund for parental leave is approximately DKK 785 per employee as per 1 July 2004 – and the contribution is made per employee regardless of gender and age. The equalisation schemes are compulsory for all employees with collective agreement coverage and, furthermore, companies may choose to let the equalisation include other employees also.

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FESC - a social partner's initiative and national agreement for more flexible child care facilities in Belgium

A social partner's initiative to fund more and more flexible childcare facilities

The Belgium national "Fund for collective equipments and services" (in French: Fond des Equipements et Services Collectives or short FESC) was installed in 1971 by the National Office for Family Benefits for Paid Workers. The initial goal of this fund was financing new infrastructures for traditional childcare facilities, in other words care facilities for children between 0 and 3 years old from 9 till 5 o'clock.

Since then the labour market clearly changed: more women entered it and wished to stay on the labour market, the traditional household-model with only one earner became less frequent, new family models appeared; distance between work and home and daily travelling time became longer, new and very flexible forms of employment were demanded on employer's side. Combining a professional career and family life became therefore more difficult. The need for more and more flexible childcare became a collective problem which demanded a collective answer.

Both being conscious of this problem, trade unions and employer's organisations formulated in 1993 an unanimous advice in the National Labour Council to solve it. The advice ended up in a national agreement with a concrete result: since 1994 every employer of the private sector contributes 0,05 % of the salary mass to the fund (FESC) with the objective to subsidy specific child care projects.

How does it work? Which kind of childcare projects gets funding? Which conditions need to be satisfied?

The social contribution of 0, 05 % of the salary mass, paid by all employers, goes to the fund (FESC). This fund gives subsidies to recognised child care projects, most of them organised at local / community level.

The subsidy is calculated / paid per child of salaried / employed people or unemployed people looking for a job and per day of presence.
The following types of child care forms, determined by the social partners, can obtain a subsidy:

- "out-of-school-time care for children" (from 2,5 to 12 years old), before and after the school time, during the school holidays as well as on Wednesday afternoon;
- "flexible care for children" (from 0 to 12 years old), before 7 a.m. or after 18 p.m. since the parents are working in flexible working arrangements (night shifts for example);
- "sick care for children" (from 0 to 12 years old) at home or at a special place since the children are too sick to be accommodated at their usual place of staying while their parents are working;
- "emergency care for children"(from 0 to 3 years), in case the parents receive an employment offer, follow a vocational training in a recognized organization or follow a procedure of reintegration in the professional life (for a 6 months period to the maximum).

The financial mediations of the FESC can cover only salary and functioning costs. The ‘users’ of the childcare projects must also pay a contribution.

Furthermore, following conditions must be fulfilled:

- The approval of the project from the social partners, in partnership with the regional employment committees.
- A synergy of the project with the local social network and the use the existing local infrastructure.
- Minimum quality standards as well as for the infrastructure as for the professional qualifications / capacities of the employees
- Regular quality control done by the competent institutions.

<u>An answer to the changing labour market and workers demands but also an important source of employment!</u>

The projects funded by the FESC have a big success (in 2003: about 400 projects; 22824 children in out-of-school-time-care; 848 children in flexible-care; 301 in emergency-care and 32636 days to take care of sick children) and the success keeps growing.

They also form an important source of (social) employment. Nowadays about 2.100 full time equivalents are employed in the subsidized projects. So called “risk groups” which do not have an easy access to the labour market, cannot be excluded of employment.

<u>The extra dimension of the social partner’s initiative</u>

The re-orientation and funding of the FESC by the social partners was an answer to the growing employers demand for more flexibility and the workers problems concerning combination of professional and family life. The projects funded by the FESC help(ed) workers and especially women and single parents to get on the labour market, to stay on the labour market, to participate in flexible working arrangements and therefore help(ed) to achieve equal opportunities.

Since all employers from the private sector contribute and the funding goes to local community projects, a lot of working people, also people working in small and medium enterprises can benefit from it.

Furthermore it has to be stressed that, although organising child care facilities is in the first place – but not totally - a public authority responsibility, the new needs were in the first place detected and solved by the social partners. This initiative proves that social partners can, by good collaboration, detect and find collective solutions for collective problems or needs and also proves that social partners can organise and administer projects and objectives by themselves.

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