

A Toolkit for Gender Equality in Practice - Initiative

Finnish Social Partners

Initiatives on gender equality

Summary of the initiative

Finnish social partners involved:

- Employers: Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK), Commission for Local Authority Employers, Office for the Government as Employer, Commission of Church Employers;
- Trade Unions: Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK), Finnish Confederation of Professionals (STTK), Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff (Akava).

Summary of initiative

Addressing gender roles: In 2009 the Ministry of Education appointed a working group to look at measures to dismantle occupational segregation. Social partners instigated its establishment and were represented in the working group. In 2010 the group came out with 25 proposals for action.

Women in economic decision-making: Increasing the number of women in economic decision-making positions has been a priority area in gender equality policy and several projects have been launched to promote women's career progression, female leadership and diversity. Self-regulation has played a significant role in promoting women in corporate decision-making.

The Finnish Corporate Governance Code for Listed Companies (CG) currently states that both genders shall be represented on the board. This recommendation entered into force on 1 January 2010. The CG code has contributed noticeably to the increased number of women on boards of listed companies: in 2013 only 11% of all listed companies had an all-male board and these were all small-cap companies) and in large-cap listed companies 31% of board members were women.

The Central Chamber of Commerce launched a mentoring programme for women, with both male and female mentors, in the spring of 2012. A second such programme began in 2014 and continues until the end of 2015.

Reconciliation and Family Leave

Family leave Committee: A tripartite Committee in 2009-2011 looked at possibilities to reform the parental leave system. Instead of concrete reform proposals the committee presented different scenarios for simplifying and developing the current leave regime.

Prolongation of paternity leave: Based on the central framework agreement on wages, concluded between main labour market confederations in 2011, paternity leave was extended to 54 working days (excludes Sundays). Modifications to increase flexibility in the use of day care were also introduced. The aim of the reform was to encourage fathers to take up more and longer leaves, and a more equal division of family responsibilities. The reform entered into force on 1 January 2013.



Committee on flexible working: A tripartite committee in 2012-2013 explored the possibilities to increase voluntary part-time work and flexible working time with a view to improving reconciliation possibilities. The committee proposed that part-time childcare benefit intended for taking care of young children be replaced by a flexible care benefit, which would adjust to the parent's average weekly working hours. The committee also proposed that childcare fees be determined more flexibly on the basis of actual use. The aim of these reforms was to create incentives for part-time work for parents of young children as an alternative to long periods outside the workforce or not taking any leave at all.

Tackling the gender pay gap: A tripartite gender pay gap programme has since 2006 addressed all priority areas of the European Social Partners Framework of Actions on gender equality. The programme has aimed to narrow the gender-based pay gap to 15% by 2015. The means to achieve this goal have included: wage negotiations, decreasing gender-based segregation of occupations, development of pay systems and support for women's career development. Newest activities under the programme relate to studying gender structures of the labour market and promoting women's career advancement. Cooperation in the programme has been intense but the results are rather modest, which indicates the complexity of this issue. It is unlikely that the target of the programme will be achieved by 2015.

Revision of gender equality legislation: Social partners have been involved in tripartite consultation on the revision of the 1986 Act on Equality between Women and Men. The current revision concerns gender equality plans and pay surveys at workplace level and extending the discrimination provisions to cover gender minorities. The proposed amendments have been presented to the parliament for expected approval in April 2014.

Other: Social partners have drafted joint guidance (a checklist for gender equality planning at workplace level) and provided training for their members on obligations laid down in gender equality legislation. They have also agreed on a joint recommendation on promoting good reconciliation practices at the workplace level.

Priorities

Addressing gender roles, Promoting women in decision-making, Supporting work-life balance, Tackling the gender pay gap

Sector(s)

Accounting, Accountants and tax consultants, Advertising/communication, Architectural and engineering activities; technical testing and analysis, Automotive, Building installation, Clothing manufacturing, Computer programming, Construction, Consultancy and related activities, Driving school activities, Distribution of pharmaceutical and fast moving consumer goods, Education, Higher Education, Electric power generation, transmission and distribution, Employment activities, Energy, Electricity and gas, Financial and insurance activities, Government agency, Hospital / Health Care, Hospital activities, Installation of industrial machinery and equipment, Manufacture of basic metals, Manufacture of batteries and accumulators, Manufacture of chemicals and chemical products, Manufacture of electronic components, Manufacture of glass fibres, Manufacture of jewellery and related article, Manufacture of machinery and equipment, Manufacture of office machinery and computers, Manufacture of starches and starch products, Manufacturers and wholesale, Manufacturing, Operation of dairies and cheese-making, Other food services, Processing of wood and manufacture of wood products, Public administration, Public sector, Public services, Public transport, Retail trade, Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles, Steel, distributorship, logistics and energy industries, Telecommunication, Textile industry, Clothing, Utilities / Gas, Utilities / Water supply, Wholesale of computers, computer peripheral equipment and software



Type

Social Partners

Country

Finland

Model of social partnership

Tripartite

Launch date

2006 onwards

References

http://naisjohtajat.fi/files/2012/05/THE-GLASS-CEILING-IS-CRACKING_Self-regulation-Beats-Quotas_finncham.pdf

http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Julkaisut/2010/Segregation_lieventamistyo_ryhman_loppuraportti.html?lang=fi&extra_locale=en

This initiative was submitted by:

EK (BUSINESSEUROPE), The Administration of local public employment (CEEP) and SAK, AKAVA and STTK (ETUC)