



## A Toolkit for Gender Equality in Practice - Initiative

# GDF Suez, Europe

## European agreement on gender equality

### Summary of the initiative

GDF Suez is a global energy company which operates in the production of electricity, natural gas and renewable energy, and provides energy distribution services.

In 2012, the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU), industrial European Trade Union and CEC European Managers signed an agreement with GDF Suez Europe on gender equality.

This agreement comes from the management's proposal to negotiate a text on gender equality to replace and update an older one, while taking into account past experience.

Following a consultation with the trade union representatives in the 16 countries covered by GDF Suez, EPSU, Industrial and CEC eventually agreed to negotiate a European agreement.

A negotiated text between employers and employee representatives offers the advantage of clear and shared objectives. It also ensures that all employees of the company can rely on a basis of common principles and rights. For the company itself, a negotiated text creates a level of cohesion and can ensure the basis for a correct and efficient implementation.

The objective was to conclude concrete measures with a broad, including working conditions. The monitoring of those measures, including an assessment of progress made of their implementation, was also recognised as an important element to take into account.

To help the negotiation process, a study based on interviews with employees and managers of six companies of the Group based in six different countries was carried out. It provided some useful recommendations, such as the need for better training of human resource managers, as well as trade unions representatives - including gender equality legislation - the need to better communicate and develop a Group identity in terms of gender equality goals based on policies and good practices from the subsidiaries.

The final agreement recognises that there are persistent gaps between both gender and states that the Group is committed to address these gaps through action plans at local levels, in consultation with trade unions and works council members on the basis of a comprehensive approach covering all working conditions, from recruitment issues to equal opportunities in the context of the greening of the economy, from career development to wages, work-life balance, restructuring and harassment. The agreement includes terms of monitoring and dissemination (with the establishment of a follow-up committee).

Concerning the pay gap, in general, the higher you are on the scale of the job, the greater the wage gap between men and women still is, certainly when taking the variable remuneration into account. This shows that women are under represented in highly paid jobs and in higher decision-making positions.

Concerning the gender pay gap, it stood at 17% in 2010 within GDF Suez SA, but when variable compensation was included it reached 22%, therefore showing a higher gap at higher level of the job scale. This shows that women are under represented in highly paid jobs.





The agreement makes the company committed to increase the number of women in decision-making positions and equally to increase the number of men in female – dominant occupations.

Finally it is important that within GDF Suez gender equality is not perceived to be a women's issue.

### **Priorities**

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

### **Sector(s)**

Utilities

### **Type**

Social Partners

### **Country**

EU Level

### **Model of social partnership**

Bipartite

### **Launch date**

2012

### **Number of employees**

>250

### **References**

[http://www.epsu.org/IMG/pdf/Accord\\_EgaliteHF\\_Europe\\_clean-AN.pdf](http://www.epsu.org/IMG/pdf/Accord_EgaliteHF_Europe_clean-AN.pdf) (agreement)

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2012/06/articles/eu1206011i.htm>

### **This initiative was submitted by:**

CGT (ETUC)

### **Website**

<http://www.gdfsuez.com>