



# Gender mainstreaming of employment policies

## A comparative review of thirty European countries



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Country abbreviations:	
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CZ	Czech Republic
DK	Denmark
DE	Germany
EE	Estonia
IE	Ireland
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FR	France
IT	Italy
CY	Cyprus
LV	Latvia
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
HU	Hungary
MT	Malta
NL	The Netherlands
AT	Austria
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
FI	Finland
SE	Sweden
UK	United Kingdom
IS	Iceland
LI	Liechtenstein
NO	Norway

Although the European Employment Strategy recognises that gender equality and gender mainstreaming are essential for progress, the analysis of the National Reform Programmes 2005 and 2006 indicated that the visibility of gender and the attention paid both to gender equality policies and gender mainstreaming in the national reports has declined. This decline appears to be strongly linked to the disappearance of the specific gender guidelines following on from the earlier removal of the equal opportunities pillar from the European Employment Strategy guidelines. A reversal of this development can only be attained if all stakeholders have a better knowledge of concrete examples of gender mainstreaming and share the commitment to integrate gender issues in the European Employment Strategy in the future. This report, therefore, provides a checklist for effective gender mainstreaming and analyses the most relevant employment policy domains from a gender perspective. As such the report contains information for the 27 Member States in addition to three EEA-EFTA countries: Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

### The process of gender mainstreaming

According to the European Commission (EC 1996), gender mainstreaming 'involves not restricting efforts to promote equality to the implementation of specific measures to help women, but mobilising all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality by actively and openly taking into account at the planning stage their possible effects on the respective situation of men and women (gender perspective). This means systematically examining measures and policies and taking into account such possible effects when defining and implementing them'. Gender mainstreaming should thus be seen as a gender equality strategy, which focuses on transforming by questioning the status quo (mainstream) and assuming that a transformation of institutions and/or organisations may be necessary to establish gender equality. As such, gender mainstreaming should not be regarded as a replacement for direct equal opportunities policy but as an addition to it.

An effective gender mainstreaming strategy consists of four steps. The central focus of the first step '*getting organised*' is on implementation and organisation, and building awareness and ownership. Implementation and organisation of gender mainstreaming refers to the process of providing a structural and cultural basis for equal opportunities. This includes formulation of objectives and targets, making a plan, drawing up a budget and defining responsibilities and accountability of the different actors involved. In addition, stakeholders should consider gender mainstreaming as part of their tasks and responsibilities. It is therefore important '*to build ownership*'. A next step in the process of gender mainstreaming is '*learning about gender differences*'.

A description of the actual situation is essential in order to assess actual gender (in)equality and to prioritise areas for attention. In addition, monitoring the situation over time provides information on the trends in gender (in)equality. The European Commission has identified four dimensions to the assessment of gender inequality: participation (referring to the gender composition of the target group/population of the policy); resources (referring to the access to/distribution of resources such as time, money, and power), norms and values (referring to the value attached to men and women or to masculine and feminine characteristics) and rights (referring to direct or indirect sex discrimination, human rights and access to justice in the legal, political or socio-economic environment).

The third step, '*assessing the policy impact*', is to analyse the potential gender impact of the policy with reference to participation, resources, norms and values and rights. An important issue regarding participation is that both quantitative as well as qualitative aspects should be taken into account. With respect to access to resources, it is critical to take into account not only the impact on household resources but also the impact on individual resources. On the level of social norms and values, it is important that reconciliation policies address men's involvement in domestic labour, and with regard to rights, it is relevant to include the right to care as well as to undertake employment. Finally, the fourth step '*redesigning policy*' is to identify ways in which the policy could be redesigned to promote gender equality. The need for redesign is particularly strong where initial gender differences are high and have major impacts on women's life chances. When redesigning policy it should be taken into account that gender mainstreaming calls for a more joined-up approach which may involve more than one policy area or department.

### Gender mainstreaming and gender equality in 30 European countries: current state of affairs

An important precondition for an effective gender mainstreaming strategy is the establishment of a clear and transparent organisational infrastructure with a clear focus on gender equality. In some countries like Denmark, Germany and the United Kingdom this is backed up by legislation. To give an example: in the United Kingdom the most important recent legislative change in relation to gender mainstreaming is the Equality Act 2006. This places a statutory 'general duty' on all public authorities when carrying out their functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, and (b) to promote equality of opportunity between men and women. Other countries like Sweden, France, the

Netherlands and Iceland have formulated the principle of gender mainstreaming as a general policy principle. In France, for example, gender mainstreaming is part of the 'Equality Charter', which was adopted on 8 March 2004. The aim is to introduce a gender mainstreaming approach in all actions: 'Concern for equality between men and women should be incorporated not only in all public policies, nationally, regionally and locally, but also be diffused through all political, economic and social sectors'. In addition, some governments have a specific ministry for gender equality issues that is responsible for gender mainstreaming or co-ordinates the policy. In Luxembourg, for example, the government created the Ministry for Female Advancement in 1995. In 2004 the name was changed into the Ministry of Equal Opportunities to better underline the fact that this ministry is not only dedicated to female advancement but to equal opportunities between both sexes. Other countries have installed inter or intra-ministerial committees to enhance the process of gender mainstreaming, or rely on external committees or gender equality institutes.

In addition to a transparent structure aimed at gender equality, an essential precondition for successful gender mainstreaming is the availability of gender-disaggregated statistics. Such statistics enable the description of the actual situation in order to assess actual gender (in) equality and to prioritise areas for attention. The possibility of monitoring the situation over time might also provide information on the trends in gender (in)equality. Gender impact assessment (GIA) and gender budget analysis (GBA) are important instruments for implementing gender mainstreaming. A systematically conducted GIA identifies whether the policy under scrutiny has positive or negative outcomes in terms of promoting gender equality and can be used to improve the quality and efficacy of policy design. With the instrument of GBA expenditure can be analysed from a gender perspective. Several countries report developments regarding the use of these instruments. In Italy, for example, gender auditing and/or budgeting have received increasing attention in recent years, especially by local governments, where most administrations have set up a department for equal opportunities. The Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality has been promoting gender budgeting since 2002. In cooperation with the Department of Planning and Administration the ministry coordinates the efforts to integrate gender and equality perspectives in work on the budget. Training and awareness raising have been core elements of the gender budget process and a guide to gender analysis in ministry budget bills has been developed.

This assessment of the current state of affairs in 30 European countries indicates that there are large differences in the organisation and implementation of gender mainstreaming and gender equality. Though most countries

have developed initiatives regarding gender mainstreaming, the focus seems rather narrow and patchy. Perhaps with the exception of the Nordic countries, a systematic and comprehensive approach is generally lacking and actual implementation is often problematic. Moreover, the attention paid to gender mainstreaming may be sensitive to political changes, resulting in a lack of consistency.

## Gender mainstreaming of active labour market policies

Active labour market policies (ALMPs) aim to increase the likelihood of employment or improve income prospects for unemployed people/groups who find it difficult to enter the labour market. Public employment services (PES) play an important role in this respect by facilitating the integration of the unemployed and other job seekers into the labour market. In addition, active measures include training, job rotation and job sharing, employment incentives, integration of specific groups, direct job creation and start-up incentives. In order to promote gender equality, equal opportunities, principles should be embedded within the operation of the public employment service. An effective method in this respect is the appointment of a specific equal opportunities officer, who has the necessary expertise. Denmark, Germany and Italy provide good examples in that respect. It also seems to be essential that PES employees are informed on the issue of gender mainstreaming and receive training in how to incorporate this in their work. To give an example: in Poland a project 'Gender mainstreaming in labour market institutions' was set up, funded by ESF resources, to raise the level of qualifications and professional skills of public and non-public labour market institutions in the area of gender equality, and to prepare the participants for implementing the gender mainstreaming strategy in the activities of their institutions. Another important aspect of gender mainstreaming of public employment services is that active labour market programmes are open to all inactive people and not restricted only to benefit claimants, and that men and women have equitable access to ALMPs. In several countries, such as Denmark, Finland and Sweden, this is common practice. However, other countries follow a more restrictive policy.

Regarding training, a gender mainstreaming approach would imply that both quantitative as well as qualitative aspects are taken into account. This means that training should not only improve the employability of the unemployed, but also promote the entry of women into high quality and/or non-traditional jobs. The same concern holds for measures focusing on direct job creation. As the national experts of Cyprus, Luxembourg and France indicate, however, this is not always the case. In France, for example, the 'plan for services to individuals' intends to create 500,000 neighbourhood jobs between 2006 and 2009. Though

it is expected that the jobs created will concern women in particular, the gender implications have never been an issue. Moreover, the jobs are part-time and there are concerns regarding the job quality (in terms of working hours and pay). Active labour market measures may also focus on the integration of specific groups into the labour market. In this respect a gender mainstreaming approach would imply that the needs of specific groups are addressed. Lone parents, for example, may be helped by providing child care services, the disabled by providing social services and technical aid, and women returners after long-term caring by providing training facilities. When it comes to start-up measures it is important that men and women benefit in equal terms from initiatives that promote entrepreneurship, by encouraging the unemployed and target groups to start their own business or to become self-employed.

The assessment of active labour market policies in 30 European countries indicates that gender mainstreaming remains uneven and rather narrow in focus. In quite a number of countries, policies in this area have not been developed with any explicit gender perspective or reference to gender equality and mainstreaming. This conclusion may not be problematic if gender inequality is rather modest. For example, in Finland, labour force participation has been almost equal between men and women for a long time and gender gaps in employment and unemployment have been among the narrowest in the European Union. This is, however, a rather exceptional case as most national experts draw attention to existing gender inequalities.

### Gender mainstreaming of pay and career policies

Reducing the gender pay gap is an important topic on the European political agenda. Since 1999 it has been part of the European Employment Strategy and policy efforts have intensified over the years. The gender pay gap refers to the differences between the wages earned by women and by men.

Given the complexity of the causes of the gender pay gap, gender mainstreaming pay policies would imply the need for a variety of measures. Firstly, countries may implement an equal pay policy aimed at tackling direct or indirect gender wage discrimination. Examples include (additional) legislation, availability and dissemination of information and initiatives with respect to job evaluation. To give a few examples: in Luxembourg, since June 2004, a law has been in force that obligates social partners to bargain on equal pay. Similar legislation exists in France, where gender pay bargaining in companies and sectors is obligatory. The establishment of gender specific institutions might support the implementation of equal pay legislation;

the Netherlands, Finland and Norway mention examples in this respect. Innovative examples with regard to the dissemination of information are provided by Denmark, Italy and Portugal, as they have introduced legislation that obliges employers to provide data on wages. Finally, job evaluation systems are often used to determine the value of a job. Job evaluation systems may, however, be (in)directly discriminating against women. It is, therefore, important that a critical assessment of system-specific characteristics and criteria is made. Examples in this respect are provided by Belgium, Luxembourg, Austria and Iceland.

A second policy line may be targeted at reducing horizontal as well as vertical segregation. Policies to reduce horizontal segregation generally focus on young girls in order to encourage them to consider a wider range of occupational options, and to opt for science and technology instead of caring, cleaning and catering. Greece, for example, has a programme that aims at promoting gender equality in secondary education and post-secondary initial training. Among others, actions include using vocational guidance and counselling services of schools to combat gender stereotypes in occupational choices and encouraging girls to participate in initial training courses in specialties where women are under-represented. Policies to reduce vertical segregation generally aim to increase the number of women in high-level and/or management jobs. In Greece and Spain a number of policy measures have been introduced aimed at equality in career opportunities. In Norway 'women and management' has been a major issue in the public debate in recent years, and there have been several policy measures to reduce the gender imbalance. The most prominent public policy measure is the Public Limited Companies Act, enforced on 1 January 2006. It imposes a gender balance (approximately 40/60%) in the boards of all privately owned public limited companies (ASA), amounting to about 500 companies. Establishments that have not obtained a gender balance by 2008 will be sanctioned. Similar laws were already in force for state-owned companies.

A third policy line refers to gender mainstreaming of 'general' wage policies aimed at reducing wage inequality and improving the remuneration of low-paid and/or female-dominated jobs. Wage policies in this respect may vary from the introduction of a mandatory minimum wage, thereby setting a floor to the wage structure, the centralisation of the system of wage bargaining, thereby decreasing inter-industry and inter-firm wage differentials, and the revaluing of low-paid and/or female-dominated jobs, for example as part of an anti-poverty or equality strategy. Most European countries have minimum wage legislation. Ireland and the United Kingdom, however, have introduced such legislation quite recently. An example where there has been an increase in the level of pay in low-paid jobs is provided by Lithuania. Though gender mainstreaming may not have been a major consideration in this policy, given that women are over-represented among

the low-paid, it may play a role in closing the pay gap by improving their relative wage position.

The assessment of pay and career policies in 30 European countries indicates that in most countries the gender pay gap has a rather low profile, both in the public debate and in the policy agenda. The emphasis on deregulation and voluntary action by employers seems in some countries to restrict national policy options. One of the main problems appears to be that there is no real owner of the problem, as nobody feels responsible for the gender pay gap. Organising political support for closing the gap seems to be an important challenge for the near future.

### Gender mainstreaming of reconciliation policies

Reconciliation policies can be defined as policies that directly support the combination of professional, family and private life. As such, they may refer to a wide variety of policies ranging from childcare services, leave facilities, flexible working arrangements to other reconciliation policies such as financial allowances for working partners. A gender mainstreaming perspective in the domain of reconciliation is to a certain extent established, in so far as most European governments recognise the impact of care responsibilities on women's employment. Yet countries differ in their policy responses and in their implicit or explicit focus on gender equality. Some countries encourage the supply of public and private services, others improve the opportunities to work part-time hours. Some still consider reconciliation a woman's affair, whereas others recognise the role of men in care and family responsibilities.

Since 1996, national policy in the field of leave arrangements has been underpinned by a European directive which obliges Member States to introduce legislation on parental leave to enable parents to care full-time for their child over a period of three months. In principle this refers to an individual, non-transferable entitlement. This directive ensures that a certain minimum standard is guaranteed within the Member States. Over and above this, however, there is a broad range of national regulations, with countries differing in the length of leave facilities, the level of payment, the flexibility and the entitlement. The wide variety in leave regulations makes the actual policy choices rather diverse. Some countries (Ireland, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands) report a lengthening of the – relatively short – leave provisions and an improvement of the level of payment. Other countries report a shortening of the – relatively long – leave period (Germany), an increase in the flexibility or a change in entitlements (Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Austria). Presumably, the actual policy choices depend to a large extent on the different starting points, the current situation of the labour market and the gender equality challenge. Practically all countries, though,

report an uneven involvement of men. Some countries react with specific regulations with regard to a father's take-up of leave, others remain rather passive, considering reconciliation to be mainly a woman's issue.

In 2002, at the Barcelona Summit, targets were set with regard to childcare. Confirming the goal of full employment, the European Council agreed that Member States should remove disincentives to female labour force participation and strive, taking into account the demand for childcare facilities and in line with national patterns of provision, to provide childcare by 2010 to at least 90% of children between three years old and the mandatory school age, and at least 33% of children under three years of age. Although assessing the availability of childcare services is not an easy task, it seems obvious that in most countries the Barcelona childcare targets are far from being reached. There are, however, large differences between countries. In Finland, Denmark, Sweden and Iceland, for example, childcare is framed as a social right. In Norway, unlike the other Scandinavian countries, childcare services are not a social right. Yet, since the late 1980's full coverage has been the common political goal for care services. Also Slovenia, France and Belgium report an almost full coverage. At the other end of the spectrum, quite a number of countries report a persistent low level of childcare facilities. This concerns, for example, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Malta, Cyprus, Greece, Spain and Latvia. Only three countries (Greece, The United Kingdom and the Netherlands) report a real expansion of childcare services over the last few years.

The assessment of reconciliation policies in 30 European countries indicates that although reconciliation is high on the policy agenda in quite a number of countries, actual policies remain rather limited. The majority of countries are a long way from reaching the Barcelona target for children aged below three. In addition, there seems to be no uniform trend with regard to childcare facilities. Some countries like the United Kingdom and the Netherlands are clearly moving towards a higher coverage. Others are more or less at a standstill, whereas in some of the former Eastern European countries there is clear downward trend. Also policies with regard to parental leave seem rather diverse. Depending on the different starting points, some countries report a lengthening of the leave facilities, others a shortening, an increase in the flexibility or a change in entitlements. Practically all countries report an uneven involvement of men.

### Gender mainstreaming of 'flexicurity' policies

Flexicurity policy can be described as 'a policy strategy that attempts, synchronically and in a deliberate way, to enhance the flexibility of labour markets, the work organi-

sation and labour relations on the one hand, and to enhance security – employment security and social security – notably for weaker groups in and outside the labour market on the other hand' (Wilthagen and Tros 2004: 169). This definition makes clear that a fully integrated approach to flexicurity goes beyond narrowly defined policies on labour market flexibility and employees' security. Also included are active labour market policies, with active job search, job availability, and life long learning as important ingredients. The central focus is on finding a balance of policies with the aim of increasing the adaptability of workers and the work place. As such the flexicurity approach implies a shift from a job security paradigm (having the same job all your life) to an employment security paradigm (having employment possibilities and abilities all your life).

The relationship between flexicurity and gender equality is not self-evident. On the one hand proponents may claim that flexicurity offers an answer to gender inequality because it helps to reduce the segmentation risks of a more mobile and flexible labour market. On the other hand, critics may claim that the actual flexicurity measures carry the risk of deepening gender inequalities because of the active encouragement of flexible jobs. A gender mainstreaming approach to policies in the area of flexicurity would recognise the role of gender in reinforcing inequalities associated with flexible working and in shaping flexible working patterns, and would address the reconciliation needs of employees with care commitments while recognising the risks of extending working hours or un-social work schedules. In addition a mainstreaming approach would support pathways out of non-standard work and working times to avoid the risks of long-term traps and segmentation of women in disadvantaged employment forms.

The actual state of affairs with regard to flexicurity differs widely among the EU Member States. In most studies, Denmark and The Netherlands are seen as paradigmatic cases with countries in South, Central and Eastern Europe lagging behind. The Danish model of flexicurity is often described as a golden triangle, where a relatively low level of employment protection, a comprehensive unemployment benefit for a short period of time and an active labour market policy form the three corners. The Dutch approach relies more on a careful balancing of rights and obligations for different contractual forms. In a number of other Member States flexicurity is high on the policy agenda. The German government, for example, is trying to find a new balance between flexibility and security by introducing measures which vary from new part-time regulations, the creation of mini-jobs, new dismissal regulations and cuts in unemployment benefits. Although women are affected by all these policy areas, the level of gender mainstreaming is limited. The concept of flexicurity is also widely discussed in France. Yet, as in Germany, the measures seem to be based on a rather traditional model in which men work longer, while women will be given – or will even ask for – part-time work. In most other countries the concept of

flexicurity is still to be developed, as a result of which policy developments within this framework have been limited. Some national experts hope that measures under this heading may improve the accessibility of the labour market to women as it would provide more flexible options especially in the private sector. Other national experts express their concern that flexibility measures may be more readily taken than security measures, with the result that labour market inequalities may increase.

The assessment of flexicurity policies in 30 European countries indicates that a gender mainstreaming approach is still largely missing. Given the centrality of gender to the issue of flexibility and security in European labour markets, the limited evidence of gender mainstreaming is rather striking. Increasing the responsiveness of European labour markets, by increasing the adaptability of workers and the work place, will only lead to a more inclusive labour market if increased flexibility does not imply increased insecurity for certain vulnerable groups in the labour market. In each country, the paradigmatic shift from job security to employment security calls for a specific mixture of policies, in accordance with the national labour market situation, and adapted to the specific trends and circumstances. A gender mainstreaming approach would imply that these measures are designed by taking into account the gender equality issues which emerge in relation to flexible contracts, flexible working hours, career breaks and labour market mobility.

### Conclusion: gender mainstreaming of employment policies

Important preconditions for an effective gender mainstreaming strategy are a clear and transparent organisational structure, clear enforcement mechanisms and a strong focus on achieving substantial equality. In addition, an analysis of the actual situation is essential in order to assess gender (in)equality, to prioritise areas for attention and to analyse the potential gender impact of policy measures. The present study indicates that most countries are still far from adopting a full gender mainstreaming approach to employment policies. The awareness of gender equality, especially in the field of pay and flexicurity policies, is usually rather limited. In addition, gender equality is often not taken into account in the actual design of policy measures. In order to improve the knowledge of gender mainstreaming of employment policies, this report has provided not only an analysis of current trends but also a checklist and a number of examples of effective gender mainstreaming. As such the report may be used as a manual for all actors involved in gender mainstreaming at the national as well as at the European level.



L'égalité des sexes et l'approche intégrée du genre sont des éléments essentiels dans la stratégie européenne pour l'emploi. Néanmoins, l'analyse des Programmes nationaux de réforme de 2005 et 2006 montre que la dimension du « genre » est moins visible qu'auparavant et que l'intérêt porté aux politiques d'égalité des sexes et à l'approche intégrée a diminué. Cette baisse semble être étroitement liée à la disparition de lignes directrices spécifiques suite à la suppression du pilier de l'égalité des chances dans les lignes directrices de la stratégie européenne pour l'emploi. Pour inverser cette tendance, il est nécessaire que tous les acteurs aient connaissance d'exemples concrets d'approche intégrée de l'égalité des sexes et s'engagent à intégrer les questions de « genre » dans cette stratégie. Le présent rapport fournit une liste contenant les points à vérifier ("checklist") pour une intégration effective de l'égalité entre les sexes et examine, dans une perspective de genre, les domaines les plus pertinents des politiques de l'emploi. Ce rapport couvre les 27 Etats membres et trois pays de l'EEE (Islande, Liechtenstein et Norvège).

### Le processus d'intégration de la dimension de genre

Pour la Commission européenne (CE 1996) « il s'agit [...] de ne pas limiter les efforts de promotion de l'égalité à la mise en œuvre de mesures spécifiques en faveur des femmes, mais de mobiliser explicitement en vue de l'égalité l'ensemble des actions et politiques générales, en introduisant dans leur conception de façon active et visible l'attention à leurs effets possibles sur les situations respectives des femmes et des hommes ("gender perspective"). Cela suppose d'interroger systématiquement ces actions et politiques et de prendre en considération ces effets possibles dans leur définition et leur mise en œuvre ». L'intégration du « genre » doit donc être conçue comme une stratégie de changement en faveur de l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes, qui interroge le statu quo et part du principe qu'une transformation des institutions et des organisations peut être nécessaire pour mettre en œuvre l'égalité. Ainsi, l'intégration de la dimension de genre s'ajoute aux mesures directes en faveur de l'égalité des chances et n'y substitue pas.

Pour être effective une approche intégrée de l'égalité s'effectue en quatre étapes. La première, « comment s'organiser », porte sur la mise en œuvre et l'organisation, la sensibilisation et l'appropriation ("ownership"). La mise en œuvre et l'organisation correspondent à la mise en place de bases culturelles et structurelles pour l'égalité des chances. Il s'agit ici de fixer des objectifs, d'établir des plans et un budget et de définir les responsabilités et l'obligation de rendre compte ("accountability") de tous les participants. Par ailleurs, les acteurs doivent inclure l'intégration de l'égalité

dans leurs tâches et responsabilités. Il est donc important d'instaurer un sens d'appropriation ("ownership").

L'étape suivante consiste à « analyser les disparités hommes-femmes ». Une description de la situation s'impose pour évaluer concrètement l'(in)égalité des sexes et identifier les domaines prioritaires. De plus, un suivi de la situation à travers le temps permet d'identifier les tendances de l'(in)égalité entre les sexes. La Commission européenne a mis en évidence quatre dimensions pour l'évaluation de l'inégalité entre les hommes et les femmes: participation (composition d'hommes et de femmes dans le groupe cible à la population concernée par une certaine mesure), ressources (accès et distribution des ressources - temps, budget, pouvoir), normes et valeurs (à savoir la valeur attribuée aux hommes et aux femmes ou aux caractéristiques masculines et féminines) et droits (discrimination sexuelle directe ou indirecte, droits de l'Homme, et accès à la justice dans la sphère juridique, politique ou socio-économique).

La troisième étape consiste à « évaluer l'impact des politiques » d'un point de vue du genre, en termes de participation, de ressources, de normes et de valeurs et de droits. Il convient de noter qu'en matière de participation, les aspects qualitatifs comme quantitatifs doivent être pris en compte. En ce qui concerne l'accès aux ressources, il est essentiel de tenir compte non seulement de l'impact sur les ressources du ménage mais aussi de l'impact sur les ressources individuelles. En termes de valeurs et de normes sociales, il est important que les politiques de conciliation (entre vie professionnelle, vie familiale et vie privée) traitent de la question de la participation masculine au travail domestique et en termes de droit, il est important de considérer le droit de garder un enfant mais aussi celui d'occuper un emploi.

La quatrième et dernière étape « reconcevoir les politiques » consiste à déterminer comment les politiques analysées peuvent être reformulées pour promouvoir l'égalité. Ce besoin est d'autant plus pressant lorsque les disparités hommes-femmes sont marquées et ont un impact significatif sur les chances des femmes au cours de leur vie. La reformulation des politiques doit tenir compte du fait que l'intégration de la dimension de genre peut impliquer plusieurs domaines politiques et donc une collaboration entre services.

### L'intégration de la dimension de genre et l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes dans les 30 pays européens

La mise en place d'une infrastructure organisationnelle claire et transparente centrée sur l'égalité entre les sexes

est une condition préalable à toute stratégie d'intégration effective de l'égalité. Dans des pays comme le Danemark, l'Allemagne et le Royaume-Uni, cela est assuré par la législation. Au Royaume-Uni, le changement législatif récent le plus important en matière d'approche intégrée de l'égalité a été la loi sur l'Égalité de 2006 ("Equality Act 2006"). Cette loi impose une « obligation générale » statutaire à tous les pouvoirs publics de tenir compte du besoin a) d'éliminer toute discrimination illégale et tout harcèlement, et b) de promouvoir l'égalité des chances entre les hommes et les femmes. D'autres pays – la Suède, la France, les Pays-Bas et l'Islande – ont introduit le principe de l'intégration de l'égalité des sexes comme fondement de leurs politiques. En France, par exemple, l'intégration de l'égalité fait partie intégrante de la *Charte de l'Égalité* introduite le 8 mars 2004. L'objectif de cette Charte est d'inclure une approche intégrée dans toutes les actions : « l'engagement en faveur de l'égalité doit s'inscrire non seulement dans les actions menées par les pouvoirs publics, aux niveaux national, régional et local, mais toucher tous les secteurs politiques et socio-économiques ». En outre, certains pays ont institué un ministère spécifique pour les questions d'égalité entre les sexes, responsable de l'intégration du genre ou de la coordination des politiques. En 1995 le Luxembourg s'est doté d'un Ministère de la Promotion féminine, devenu le Ministère de l'Égalité des chances en 2004 afin de mieux souligner que l'engagement ne porte pas seulement sur la promotion des femmes mais aussi sur l'égalité des chances hommes-femmes. D'autres pays ont mis en place des comités interministériels ou intra-ministériels afin de consolider le processus d'intégration, ou font appel à des comités externes ou des instituts pour l'égalité entre les sexes.

Outre une structure transparente, il est essentiel également de disposer de données désagrégées par sexe. Ces données permettent de décrire la situation en cours afin d'évaluer concrètement l'(in)égalité réelle entre les hommes et les femmes et de déterminer les domaines prioritaires. De plus, un suivi à travers le temps doit indiquer les tendances en matière d'(in)égalité. L'analyse d'impact selon le genre et l'analyse budgétaire selon le genre constituent des instruments importants pour la mise en place d'une approche intégrée de l'égalité. Mener systématiquement des analyses d'impact selon le genre permet de déterminer si les mesures examinées ont des effets positifs ou négatifs par rapport à la promotion de l'égalité entre les sexes et elle peut aider à améliorer la qualité et l'efficacité des politiques. L'analyse budgétaire selon le genre permet, elle, d'examiner les dépenses officielles dans une perspective de genre. De nombreux pays ont progressé dans ces domaines. En Italie, par exemple, les processus d'audit et de budget selon le genre ont fait l'objet d'une attention plus marquée au cours des dernières années, particulièrement de la part des autorités locales qui ont mis en place des services d'égalité des

chances. Le Ministère norvégien des Enfants et de l'Égalité encourage depuis 2002 la prise en compte du genre dans les processus budgétaires et collabore avec les services de Planification et d'Administration pour coordonner les efforts d'intégration de l'égalité dans le processus budgétaire. La formation et la sensibilisation sont au cœur du processus budgétaire selon le genre et un guide d'analyse selon le genre des projets de budget ministériels a été élaboré.

L'analyse de la situation en cours dans les 30 pays européens révèle des écarts importants dans l'organisation et la mise en œuvre de l'intégration du genre et de l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes. Si la majorité des Etats membres ont pris des initiatives en matière d'intégration de la perspective de genre, celles-ci restent limitées. Exception faite peut-être des pays nordiques, l'approche suivie n'est ni exhaustive ni systématique et la mise en œuvre s'avère souvent problématique. Par ailleurs, l'attention portée à l'intégration du genre dépend parfois des changements de politiques, ce qui entraîne un manque de cohérence.

### L'intégration de la dimension de genre dans les politiques actives du marché de l'emploi

Les politiques actives du marché de l'emploi visent à accroître la probabilité de participation (au marché du travail) ou à améliorer les perspectives d'emploi pour les personnes ou les groupes qui ont du mal à entrer sur le marché du travail. Les services publics de l'emploi jouent ici un rôle majeur en facilitant l'intégration des chômeurs et autres demandeurs d'emploi sur le marché du travail. A cela viennent s'ajouter des mesures actives qui incluent la formation, la rotation et le partage des emplois, les aides à l'emploi, l'intégration de groupes donnés, la création directe d'emplois et le soutien à la création d'entreprises.

Afin de promouvoir l'égalité entre les sexes, le principe d'égalité des chances doit être ancré dans les actions des services publics de l'emploi et le recrutement d'un agent responsable des questions d'égalité des chances doté de l'expertise nécessaire est utile, comme le montrent les exemples de l'Allemagne, du Danemark et de l'Italie. Il semble également crucial que les employés des services publics de l'emploi soient informés sur les questions d'intégration du genre et formés quant à la prise en compte des questions d'égalité dans leurs responsabilités.

A titre d'exemple, un projet d' « intégration du genre dans les institutions du marché de l'emploi » a été mis en place en Pologne, grâce au Fonds Social Européen. Ce projet avait pour but de relever le niveau de formation et de compétences techniques, en matière d'égalité des

sexes, dans les institutions (publiques ou autre) chargées du marché de l'emploi, et pour préparer les participants à mettre en œuvre l'approche intégrée dans les activités de leurs institutions. Une autre façon d'intégrer l'égalité pour les services publics de l'emploi est l'ouverture des programmes actifs du marché du travail à l'ensemble des inactifs et non pas seulement aux chômeurs bénéficiaires d'allocations, et donc que tous les hommes et les femmes aient un accès égal à ces programmes. Cette pratique est courante dans plusieurs pays (Danemark, Finlande, Suède) mais des approches plus restrictives sont appliquées dans les autres Etats membres.

Une approche intégrée de l'égalité dans le domaine de la formation ferait de sorte que les aspects qualitatifs tout comme les aspects quantitatifs soient pris en compte. La formation ne doit pas seulement renforcer l'employabilité des chômeurs mais devrait promouvoir l'accès des femmes à des emplois de haut niveau ou non traditionnels. Le même principe devrait s'appliquer aux mesures de création directe d'emplois. Cependant, comme le montrent les cas de Chypre, du Luxembourg et de la France, ce n'est pas toujours le cas. En France, le Plan des services à la personne a pour objectif de créer 500.000 emplois de proximité entre 2006 et 2009. Bien que l'on s'attende à ce que les emplois ainsi créés concernent les femmes en particulier, les implications en regard du genre n'ont pas été débattues. Par ailleurs il s'agit d'emplois à temps partiel dont la qualité (en termes d'horaires et de rémunérations) n'est pas assurée.

Les mesures actives en faveur de l'emploi peuvent aussi porter sur l'intégration de groupes spécifiques dans le marché du travail. L'approche intégrée de l'égalité implique de prendre en compte les besoins de ces groupes spécifiques : les parents isolés peuvent être aidés par une offre de services de garde d'enfants, les handicapés par l'offre de services sociaux et d'aide technique, et les femmes de retour sur le marché du travail suite à une longue période d'inactivité par des formations spécifiques. En ce qui concerne le soutien à l'entrepreneuriat, il est important que les hommes et les femmes bénéficient de manière égale des initiatives qui visent à encourager les chômeurs et certains groupes-cibles à démarrer leur propre entreprise ou à se mettre à leur compte.

L'analyse des politiques actives du marché de l'emploi dans les 30 pays européens montre que l'intégration de la dimension de genre reste irrégulière et restreinte. Dans un nombre non négligeable de pays, les politiques actives du marché de l'emploi sont formulées sans prise en compte explicite du genre et sans référence à l'égalité des sexes ou l'approche intégrée de l'égalité. Cela n'a pas une importance majeure si le niveau d'inégalité est réduit et si les écarts entre hommes et femmes sont faibles. En Finlande par exemple, les taux d'emploi et de chômage des

hommes et des femmes sont quasiment identiques depuis longtemps et les disparités entre les sexes sont les plus faibles d'Europe. Néanmoins, il s'agit d'un cas exceptionnel et la plupart des pays examinés sont caractérisés par de fortes disparités de genre sur le marché du travail.

### L'intégration de la dimension de genre dans les politiques relatives aux salaires et aux carrières

La réduction des écarts salariaux entre les hommes et les femmes est un thème important de l'agenda politique européen. Depuis 1999, il fait partie de la stratégie européenne pour l'emploi et les efforts en termes d'adoption de politiques se sont intensifiés depuis lors. Etant donné la complexité des causes qui sous-tendent l'écart de salaire entre les sexes, l'intégration de l'égalité dans les politiques salariales se traduit par une variété de mesures.

En premier lieu, les Etats peuvent mettre en œuvre des actions directes contre la discrimination salariale directe et indirecte entre les hommes et les femmes. L'on peut citer, à titre d'exemples, la législation (ou des renforcements de la législation existante), la disponibilité et la diffusion d'informations et les initiatives relatives à une meilleure évaluation des emplois. Au Luxembourg, une loi introduite en juin 2004 oblige les partenaires sociaux à négocier l'égalité des salaires. Une législation semblable existe en France où la prise en compte de la dimension du genre dans les accords collectifs est obligatoire aux niveaux des entreprises et des branches. L'instauration d'institutions pour l'égalité spécifiques peut aider la mise en application de la législation sur l'égalité des salaires, comme le montrent les exemples des Pays-Bas, de la Finlande et de la Norvège. Des exemples novateurs en matière de diffusion des informations sont fournis par le Danemark, l'Italie et le Portugal où la législation oblige les employeurs à fournir des statistiques sur les salaires. Enfin, les systèmes d'évaluation des emplois en place peuvent discriminer (in)directement contre les femmes. Il est donc important qu'une évaluation critique des caractéristiques du système d'évaluation et des critères utilisés soit effectuée, comme le montrent les exemples de la Belgique, du Luxembourg, de l'Autriche et de l'Islande.

Un autre ensemble de mesures peut viser à réduire la ségrégation horizontale et verticale. Pour la première, les mesures ciblent généralement les jeunes filles pour les encourager à envisager une gamme élargie de choix professionnels et à se tourner vers la science et les technologies plutôt que vers les emplois de garde, de nettoyage et de restauration. La Grèce a mis en place un programme de promotion de l'égalité des sexes dans l'enseignement secondaire et dans la formation post-secondaire. D'autres mesures consistent à re-

courir aux services d'orientation professionnelle dans les établissements scolaires pour lutter contre les stéréotypes de genre dans les choix de carrière et pour encourager les filles à suivre des formations dans des domaines à faible représentation féminine. Les politiques visant à lutter contre la ségrégation verticale visent à accroître la part de femmes dans les emplois de haut niveau ou de cadres. La Grèce et l'Espagne ont introduit des mesures visant à garantir l'égalité des chances aux hommes et aux femmes dans les possibilités de faire carrière. En Norvège la question des femmes aux postes de direction figure dans le débat public et plusieurs mesures ont été prises pour réduire le déséquilibre hommes-femmes. L'initiative la plus connue est la loi sur les sociétés anonymes, entrée en vigueur le 1er janvier 2006. Cette loi impose un équilibre de genre (représentation minimale de 40% pour le sexe sous-représenté) dans les conseils d'administration de toutes les sociétés anonymes, à savoir 500 sociétés. Les entreprises n'ayant pas atteint un équilibre hommes-femmes en 2008 seront pénalisées. Une législation similaire existe déjà dans les entreprises publiques.

Le troisième ensemble de mesures concerne l'intégration de l'égalité dans les politiques salariales « générales » pour réduire les disparités salariales et améliorer les taux de rémunération des emplois à bas salaires et à prédominance féminine. Les politiques salariales peuvent inclure l'introduction d'un salaire minimum imposé, et donc d'un plancher pour la structure salariale, la centralisation des accords salariaux, ce qui réduit les différentiels intersectoriels et entre les entreprises, et la revalorisation des emplois peu rémunérés ou féminisés, dans le cadre par exemple d'une politique de lutte contre la pauvreté et en faveur de l'égalité. La plupart des pays européens ont mis en place une législation de salaire minimum bien que cela se soit fait plus récemment en Irlande et au Royaume-Uni. La Lituanie fournit un exemple récent de valorisation des emplois à bas salaires. Bien que l'intégration de la dimension de genre n'ait pas nécessairement été un objectif majeur de cette politique, elle peut néanmoins aider à combler l'écart des salaires en améliorant la position salariale relative des femmes étant donné que les femmes sont surreprésentées dans les emplois peu rémunérés.

L'analyse des politiques salariales et professionnelles dans les 30 pays européens montre que l'écart des salaires entre les hommes et les femmes ne figure pas au centre du débat public ou de l'agenda politique dans la majorité des pays. Dans certains pays, l'accent mis sur la dérégulation et l'autonomie des employeurs dans la politique des salaires semble réduire les possibilités d'action au niveau national. Un des problèmes principaux semble résider dans le fait que personne ne se sent responsable de l'écart salarial entre les hommes et les femmes. Un des enjeux est donc de renforcer le soutien politique à la lutte contre les disparités de salaires entre hommes et femmes.

## L'intégration de la dimension de genre dans les politiques de conciliation

Les politiques de conciliation visent à soutenir la recherche d'un meilleur équilibre entre vie professionnelle, vie familiale et vie privée. Elles peuvent se traduire par un éventail de mesures telles que les infrastructures de garde d'enfants, les modalités des congés, l'aménagement du temps de travail et d'autres mesures de conciliation comme les allocations versées aux parents qui travaillent. Dans le domaine de la conciliation, la dimension du genre est, dans une certaine mesure, déjà intégrée du fait que la plupart des Etats membres reconnaissent l'impact des responsabilités familiales sur l'emploi des femmes. Mais les politiques varient fortement selon les pays et selon que l'accent est mis explicitement ou implicitement sur l'égalité hommes-femmes. Certains pays promeuvent l'offre de services publics et privés, d'autres visent à accroître les possibilités de travail à temps partiel. Certains considèrent que les problèmes de conciliation ne concernent que les femmes tandis que d'autres reconnaissent la part des hommes dans les responsabilités familiales et de garde d'enfants.

Depuis 1996, les politiques nationales relatives aux modalités de congés sont encadrées par une directive européenne qui a obligé les Etats membres à introduire une législation sur les congés parentaux qui permettent aux parents d'assurer à temps plein la garde de leur enfant sur une période de trois mois. Il s'agit en principe d'un droit individuel et non transférable. Cette directive assure le maintien d'un niveau minimum de congé parental dans les Etats membres. Il existe cependant une grande variété de dispositions législatives en termes de congé parental entre les Etats membres, notamment en matière de durée des congés, niveau de rémunération, flexibilité et droits. Dans certains pays (Irlande, Royaume-Uni et Pays-Bas) on observe un rallongement des périodes, relativement courtes, de congés et une hausse des taux de rémunération. D'autres pays font état d'une réduction des périodes (relativement longues) de congés (Allemagne), une plus grande souplesse ou un changement en matière de droits (République Tchèque, Hongrie, Slovaquie et Autriche). Les stratégies nationales diffèrent donc et dépendent du point de départ, de la situation du marché de l'emploi et du niveau d'(in)égalité entre les sexes. Mais presque tous les pays font état d'une faible implication de la part des hommes. Certains Etats membres réagissent en introduisant des mesures spécifiques pour favoriser le recours des pères au congé parental; d'autres ne prennent aucune mesure en partant du principe que la conciliation concerne principalement les femmes.

Le Sommet européen de Barcelone en 2002 avait fixé des objectifs en matière de services de garde d'enfants. Confirmant l'objectif du plein emploi, le Conseil européen avait conclu que les Etats membres devaient supprimer les élé-

ments dissuasifs à la participation des femmes au marché du travail et s'efforcer – tout en tenant compte de la demande de dispositifs de garde et conformément aux tendances nationales – d'offrir d'ici 2010 des dispositifs de garde pour 90% des enfants entre trois ans et l'âge de scolarité obligatoire, d'une part et pour 33% au moins des enfants de moins de trois ans, d'autre part. Évaluer la disponibilité des services de garde n'est pas sans difficultés mais il semble que dans la majorité des pays les objectifs dits de Barcelone sont loin d'être atteints. Des disparités nationales significatives existent cependant. La Finlande, le Danemark, la Suède et l'Islande font valoir les services de garde comme un droit social. En Norvège, contrairement aux autres pays scandinaves, les services de garde ne constituent pas un droit social. Il n'en demeure pas moins que depuis la fin des années 1980 l'objectif commun a été d'offrir une couverture généralisée. La Slovénie, la France et la Belgique assurent une couverture quasi-totale. En revanche bon nombre de pays enregistrent encore de faibles niveaux de couverture. C'est le cas de l'Irlande, de l'Italie, de la Lituanie, de la Pologne, de Malte, de Chypre, de la Grèce, de l'Espagne et de la Lettonie. Seulement trois pays (Royaume-Uni, Pays-Bas et Grèce) font état d'une expansion réelle des dispositifs de garde au cours des dernières années.

L'analyse des politiques de conciliation dans les 30 pays européens indique que si la conciliation est bien placée dans le débat politique d'un certain nombre de pays, l'introduction de mesures concrètes reste limitée. La majorité des Etats membres sont en deçà de l'objectif de Barcelone pour les enfants de moins de 3 ans et il est difficile de dégager une tendance uniforme en termes d'évolution. Le Royaume-Uni et les Pays-Bas voient clairement augmenter leur taux de couverture tandis que d'autres pays maintiennent un niveau stable et que la tendance est à la baisse dans certains des pays de l'ex-Europe de l'Est. Les dispositions relatives aux congés parentaux sont également très différentes en fonction des pays. En partant de situations différentes, certains pays enregistrent un rallongement des congés parentaux, d'autres une réduction, et l'on observe également des changements dans les droits de congé parental, notamment une plus grande flexibilité. Presque tous les pays font état d'une faible implication de la part des hommes.

### L'intégration de la dimension de genre dans les politiques de « flexicurité »

La flexicurité peut se définir comme « une stratégie visant, de manière synchronisée et délibérée, à rendre plus flexibles les marchés de l'emploi, l'organisation du travail et les relations industrielles d'une part, et, d'autre part, à renforcer la sécurité – sécurité de l'emploi et sécurité

sociale – en particulier pour les groupes les plus faibles à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur du marché du travail » (Wilthagen & Tros 2004). Cette définition établit clairement qu'une approche intégrée de la flexicurité va au-delà des politiques visant uniquement la flexibilité du marché de l'emploi et la sécurité des salariés. Cela inclut également les politiques actives du marché du travail où la recherche active d'un emploi, la disponibilité des emplois et la formation continue sont des éléments importants. L'accent est mis sur un équilibrage des mesures afin de renforcer l'adaptabilité des travailleurs et du marché de l'emploi. C'est ainsi que l'approche de flexicurité implique un changement de paradigme, du principe de sécurité du poste de travail (occuper le même emploi toute sa vie) vers le principe de sécurité des emplois (avoir des possibilités d'emploi et des compétences toute sa vie).

Le rapport entre flexicurité et égalité entre les sexes n'est pas nécessairement évident. Les partisans de la flexicurité arguent que cette dernière permet de répondre à l'inégalité parce qu'elle réduit les risques de segmentation du marché du travail et facilite mobilité et flexibilité. De l'autre côté, des approches plus critiques soulignent que concrètement les politiques de flexicurité risquent de renforcer les inégalités en renforçant la flexibilité des emplois. Dans ce domaine, une approche intégrée de l'égalité reconnaîtrait le rôle du genre dans le renforcement des inégalités liées aux emplois flexibles et à leurs modalités et prendrait en considération les besoins de conciliation des salariés ayant des responsabilités familiales, tout en tenant compte des risques de l'allongement du temps de travail et des horaires atypiques. Par ailleurs, une approche intégrée soutiendrait les initiatives pour sortir des emplois précaires et des horaires atypiques, afin d'éviter que les femmes soient cantonnées à long terme dans des formes d'emploi défavorables.

Le niveau de flexicurité varie considérablement d'un Etat membre à l'autre. La plupart des études présentent le Danemark et les Pays-Bas comme des cas modèles, tandis que les pays du Sud et d'Europe centrale et orientale sont considérés comme en retard. Le modèle danois de flexicurité est souvent décrit comme un triangle doré délimité par les trois composantes suivantes : un niveau de protection de l'emploi relativement faible, une couverture exhaustive en cas de chômage (mais pour une courte durée de temps) et une politique active du marché de l'emploi. Aux Pays-Bas, l'approche retenue vise surtout à soigneusement équilibrer les droits et obligations résultant de diverses formes contractuelles. Dans un certain nombre d'Etats membres, la flexicurité occupe une place centrale dans les politiques. A titre d'exemple, le gouvernement allemand s'efforce d'atteindre un nouvel équilibre entre flexibilité et sécurité en instaurant des mesures telles qu'une nouvelle régulation du temps partiel, la création de mini-emplois, de nouvelles dispositions de

licenciement et des réductions des allocations-chômage. Bien que ces domaines concernent particulièrement les femmes, l'intégration de la dimension du genre reste limitée. En France le concept de flexicurité fait également l'objet de nombreuses discussions. Pourtant, comme en Allemagne, les mesures prises semblent se fonder sur un modèle relativement traditionnel qui veut que les hommes travaillent plus tandis que les femmes auront (ou même demanderont) la possibilité de travailler à temps partiel. Dans la plupart des autres pays le concept de flexicurité reste à élaborer, ce qui fait que peu de mesures ont été prises dans ce domaine. Certains experts espèrent que les mesures prises dans le cadre de la flexicurité rendront le marché du travail plus accessible aux femmes en offrant des choix plus souples, en particulier dans le secteur privé. D'autres craignent que des politiques de flexicurité renforcent la flexibilité mais pas la sécurité d'emploi, et que les inégalités de genre ne s'accroissent encore.

L'analyse des politiques de flexicurité dans les 30 pays européens montre que l'intégration du genre est encore largement absente dans ce domaine. Ceci peut paraître surprenant étant donné l'importance de la dimension du genre dans les questions de flexibilité et de sécurité sur les marchés de l'emploi européen. Renforcer l'adaptabilité des salariés et du marché du travail aboutira à une plus grande inclusion seulement si une flexibilité accrue ne se traduit pas simplement par une plus grande insécurité pour les groupes les plus vulnérables du marché de l'emploi. Dans chacun des pays, le passage de la sécurité du poste de travail à la sécurité des emplois requiert un ensemble spécifique de mesures, en conformité avec la situation du marché national de l'emploi et adapté aux tendances et

caractéristiques particulières. Une approche intégrée de l'égalité impliquerait que ces mesures prennent en compte les questions d'égalité entre les sexes posées par les contrats flexibles, les horaires souples, les interruptions de carrière et la mobilité sur le marché de l'emploi.

### **Conclusion : l'intégration du genre dans les politiques de l'emploi**

Pour être effective une stratégie d'intégration du genre doit reposer sur une structure organisationnelle transparente et des mécanismes de mise en application clairement définis et avoir comme objectif la réduction des inégalités. Par ailleurs, une analyse concrète de la situation s'impose pour évaluer l'(in)égalité entre les hommes et les femmes afin d'accorder une attention particulière aux domaines prioritaires et d'analyser l'impact possible des mesures prises. Le présent rapport montre que la majorité des pays sont encore loin d'avoir introduit une approche véritablement intégrée du genre dans leurs politiques de l'emploi. La prise en compte de l'égalité entre les sexes reste limitée dans le domaine des politiques salariales et de flexicurité. De plus cette dimension est souvent absente de l'élaboration des politiques. Dans le but de faire mieux connaître l'intégration du genre dans les politiques de l'emploi, ce rapport inclut une liste contenant les points à vérifier ("checklist") pour une intégration effective de l'égalité entre les sexes et des exemples concrets d'approche intégrée de l'égalité. Le rapport peut donc servir d'outil à tous les acteurs impliqués dans l'intégration de la dimension de genre au niveau national et européen.

Obwohl in der europäischen Beschäftigungsstrategie deutlich gemacht wird, dass die Gleichstellung der Geschlechter (Gender-Mainstreaming) für den Fortschritt entscheidend ist, zeigte die Analyse der nationalen Reformprogramme für 2005 und 2006, dass das Bewusstsein für geschlechterspezifische Fragen nachgelassen hat und die Aufmerksamkeit für politische Maßnahmen zur Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern sowie für Gender-Mainstreaming in den nationalen Berichten zurückgegangen ist. Dieser Rückgang scheint in deutlichem Zusammenhang mit dem Wegfall der spezifischen Geschlechterleitlinien infolge der vorherigen Entfernung der Säule der Chancengleichheit aus den Leitlinien der europäischen Beschäftigungsstrategie zu stehen. Eine Umkehrung dieser Entwicklung kann nur erreicht werden, wenn alle Interessengruppen besser über konkrete Beispiele für Gender-Mainstreaming Bescheid wissen und sich gemeinsam verpflichten, geschlechterspezifische Fragen künftig in die europäische Beschäftigungsstrategie aufzunehmen. Dieser Bericht enthält daher eine Checkliste für ein effektives Gender-Mainstreaming und analysiert die wichtigsten Bereiche der Beschäftigungspolitik aus einer geschlechtsspezifischen Perspektive. Dazu liefert er Informationen über die 27 Mitgliedstaaten sowie die drei EWR-EFTA-Länder Island, Liechtenstein und Norwegen.

### Der Gender-Mainstreaming-Prozess

Gemäß der Europäischen Kommission (EG 1996) gebietet Gender-Mainstreaming „die Förderung der Gleichstellung der Geschlechter nicht auf die Einführung spezifischer Maßnahmen zur Unterstützung von Frauen zu beschränken, sondern alle allgemeinen Strategien und Maßnahmen zur Gleichstellung der Geschlechter zu mobilisieren, indem ihre möglichen Auswirkungen auf die jeweilige Situation von Frauen und Männern (geschlechtsspezifische Perspektive) bereits in der Planungsphase aktiv und offen berücksichtigt werden. Das bedeutet eine systematische Prüfung der Maßnahmen und Strategien und die Berücksichtigung der möglichen Auswirkungen bereits bei ihrer Festlegung und Umsetzung.“ Gender-Mainstreaming sollte daher als Strategie der Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern betrachtet werden, die sich auf Veränderungen durch Infragestellen des Status quo (Mainstream) konzentriert und davon ausgeht, dass eine Veränderung von Institutionen und/oder Organisationen erforderlich sein kann, um die Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern zu erreichen. Daher sollte Gender-Mainstreaming nicht als Ersatz für eine direkte Politik der Chancengleichheit, sondern als Ergänzung betrachtet werden.

Eine effektive Gender-Mainstreaming-Strategie besteht aus vier Stufen. Im Mittelpunkt der ersten Stufe „Vorbereitung“ stehen die Umsetzung und Organisation sowie die Sensibilisierung und Einbindung der Interessengruppen. Die Umsetzung und Organisation des Gender-Mainstreaming

bezieht sich auf den Prozess der Schaffung einer strukturellen und kulturellen Basis für die Chancengleichheit. Dazu gehören die Formulierung von Zielen, die Erstellung eines Plans, die Aufstellung eines Budgets und die Festlegung von Zuständigkeiten und Verantwortung der verschiedenen beteiligten Akteure. Darüber hinaus sollten die Interessengruppen Gender-Mainstreaming als Teil ihrer Aufgaben und Zuständigkeiten betrachten. Es ist daher wichtig, die Interessengruppen einzubinden. Die nächste Stufe im Prozess des Gender-Mainstreaming ist das „Erkennen geschlechtsspezifischer Unterschiede“. Eine Beschreibung der gegenwärtigen Situation ist erforderlich, um die tatsächliche Gleichheit (Ungleichheit) zwischen Frauen und Männern zu beurteilen und diejenigen Bereiche zu erkennen, die besonderer Aufmerksamkeit bedürfen. Des Weiteren liefert die Beobachtung der Situation im Laufe der Zeit Informationen über Trends in Bezug auf Gleichheit (Ungleichheit) zwischen den Geschlechtern. Die Europäische Kommission hat vier Dimensionen für die Bewertung der Ungleichheit zwischen Frauen und Männern identifiziert: Beteiligung (bezieht sich auf die Geschlechterzusammensetzung der Zielgruppe/Bevölkerung in einem Politikfeld), Ressourcen (bezieht sich auf den Zugang zu/die Verteilung von Ressourcen wie Zeit, Geld und Macht), Normen und Werte (bezieht sich auf den Männern und Frauen bzw. männlichen und weiblichen Eigenschaften beigemessenen Wert) und Rechte (bezieht sich auf direkte oder indirekte sexuelle Diskriminierung, Menschenrechte und Zugang zu Gerechtigkeit im rechtlichen, politischen oder sozioökonomischen Bereich).

Die dritte Stufe „Bewertung der Auswirkungen der Politik“ besteht in der Analyse der potenziellen geschlechtsspezifischen Auswirkungen von Politik mit Bezugnahme auf die Beteiligung, Ressourcen, Normen und Werte sowie Rechte. Bei der Beteiligung ist wichtig, dass sowohl quantitative als auch qualitative Aspekte berücksichtigt werden sollten. Was den Zugang zu Ressourcen anbelangt, ist es entscheidend, nicht nur die Auswirkungen auf die Haushaltsressourcen, sondern auch die Auswirkungen auf die individuellen Ressourcen zu berücksichtigen. In Bezug auf die Vereinbarkeit sozialer Normen und Werte ist es wichtig, dass die politischen Maßnahmen auf die Beteiligung der Männer an der Hausarbeit eingehen, und in Bezug auf die Rechte ist es entscheidend, dass jeder sich zwischen Kindererziehung und der Aufnahme einer Beschäftigung entscheiden kann. Die vierte Stufe ist schließlich „Neugestaltung der Politik“. Das bedeutet, Wege zu finden, wie die Politik neu gestaltet werden kann, um die Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern zu fördern. Eine Neugestaltung ist insbesondere dort notwendig, wo es zunächst große geschlechtsspezifische Unterschiede gibt und diese sich beträchtlich auf die Chancen von Frauen auswirken. Bei der Neugestaltung der Politik sollte berücksichtigt werden, dass Gender-Mainstreaming einen Ansatz erfordert, bei dem alle an einem Strang ziehen und der mehrere politische Bereiche oder Ressorts betreffen kann.

## Gender-Mainstreaming und die Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern in 30 europäischen Ländern: aktuelle Lage

Eine wichtige Voraussetzung für eine effektive Gender-Mainstreaming-Strategie ist der Aufbau einer übersichtlichen und transparenten organisatorischen Infrastruktur mit einem klaren Fokus auf die Chancengleichheit von Frauen und Männern. In einigen Ländern wie Dänemark, Deutschland und Großbritannien ist dies sogar im Gesetz verankert. Ein Beispiel: In Großbritannien ist die wichtigste Gesetzesänderung, die in letzter Zeit in Bezug auf die Gleichstellung von Mann und Frau stattgefunden hat, der Equality Act 2006. Dadurch wird allen Behörden bei der Ausführung ihrer Aufgaben eine gesetzliche „grundsätzliche Pflicht“ auferlegt, gebührend darauf zu achten, (a) dass keine unrechtmäßigen Diskriminierungen und Belästigungen mehr vorkommen und (b) dass die Chancengleichheit zwischen Frauen und Männern gefördert wird. Andere Länder wie Schweden, Frankreich, die Niederlande und Island haben den Grundsatz des Gender-Mainstreaming als allgemeinen Grundsatz für die Politik festgelegt. In Frankreich ist Gender-Mainstreaming beispielsweise Teil der „Equality Charter“, die am 8. März 2004 verabschiedet wurde. Das Ziel ist, bei allen Maßnahmen einen Gender-Mainstreaming-Ansatz einzuführen. „Das Ziel der Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern sollte nicht nur in sämtlichen nationalen, regionalen und lokalen politischen Maßnahmen verankert werden, sondern auch in allen politischen, wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Bereichen eine zentrale Rolle spielen.“ Darüber hinaus haben einige Regierungen ein eigenes Ministerium für Gleichstellungsfragen, das für Gender-Mainstreaming verantwortlich ist oder die politischen Maßnahmen koordiniert. In Luxemburg wurde 1995 beispielsweise das „Ministerium für die Förderung der Frau“ gegründet. Im Jahr 2004 wurde der Name in „Ministerium für Chancengleichheit“ geändert, um die Tatsache stärker hervorzuheben, dass das Ministerium sich nicht nur um die Förderung der Frau bemüht, sondern um Chancengleichheit zwischen beiden Geschlechtern. Andere Länder haben innerministerielle oder ministerienübergreifende Ausschüsse eingerichtet, um den Prozess des Gender-Mainstreaming zu fördern, oder stützen sich auf externe Ausschüsse oder Institute für die Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern.

Zusätzlich zu einer transparenten Struktur, deren Ziel die Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern ist, ist die Verfügbarkeit von geschlechterspezifischen Statistiken eine wesentliche Voraussetzung für ein erfolgreiches Gender-Mainstreaming. Solche Statistiken ermöglichen die Beschreibung der gegenwärtigen Situation, um die tatsächliche Gleichheit (Ungleichheit) zwischen Frauen und Männern zu beurteilen und diejenigen Bereiche ausfindig zu machen, die besonderer Aufmerksamkeit bedürfen. Die

Möglichkeit der Beobachtung der Situation im Laufe der Zeit könnte ebenfalls Informationen über die Trends bei der Gleichheit (Ungleichheit) zwischen den Geschlechtern liefern. Die Bewertung der geschlechtsspezifischen Auswirkungen (Gender Impact Assessment – GIA) und die geschlechtsspezifische Haushaltsanalyse (Gender Budget Analysis – GBA) sind wichtige Instrumente für die Umsetzung des Gender-Mainstreaming. Eine systematisch durchgeführte GIA stellt fest, ob die auf dem Prüfstand stehende Politik positive oder negative Auswirkungen in Bezug auf die Förderung der Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern hat, und kann zur Verbesserung der Qualität und Effizienz der Politikgestaltung verwendet werden. Mit dem Instrument der GBA können Haushaltsausgaben aus einer geschlechtsspezifischen Perspektive analysiert werden. Mehrere Länder melden in Bezug auf die Nutzung dieser Instrumente Entwicklungen. In Italien beispielsweise erhielten Gender Auditing und/oder Gender Budgeting in den letzten Jahren erhöhte Aufmerksamkeit, insbesondere von den Gemeinden, in denen die meisten Verwaltungen eine Abteilung für Chancengleichheit eingerichtet haben. Das norwegische Ministerium für Kinder und Gleichstellung setzt sich seit 2002 für Gender Budgeting ein. In Zusammenarbeit mit der Abteilung für Planung und Verwaltung koordiniert das Ministerium die Bemühungen um die Einbeziehung von Gender-Mainstreaming- und Gleichstellungsperspektiven bei der Verteilung der Haushaltsmittel. Schulungen und Sensibilisierungskampagnen waren Hauptbestandteile des Gender-Budgeting-Prozesses, und es wurde ein Leitfaden für die geschlechtsspezifische Analyse der Haushaltsentwürfe der Ministerien entwickelt.

Die Bewertung der aktuellen Lage in 30 europäischen Ländern hat ergeben, dass es bei der Organisation und Umsetzung des Gender-Mainstreaming und der Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern große Unterschiede gibt. Obwohl die meisten Länder Gender-Mainstreaming-Initiativen entwickelt haben, scheint der Fokus solcher Initiativen ziemlich eng und lückenhaft zu sein. Grundsätzlich fehlt ein systematischer und umfassender Ansatz, und die Umsetzung in die Praxis stellt sich oft als problematisch dar, wobei die nordischen Länder möglicherweise eine Ausnahme bilden. Darüber hinaus kann die Aufmerksamkeit für Gender-Mainstreaming durch politische Veränderungen beeinflusst werden und zu einem Mangel an Kohärenz führen.

## Gender-Mainstreaming bei aktiven arbeitsmarktpolitischen Maßnahmen

Aktive arbeitsmarktpolitische Maßnahmen zielen darauf ab, die Wahrscheinlichkeit der Beschäftigung zu erhöhen oder die Einkommensperspektiven für arbeitslose Personen/Personengruppen, die Schwierigkeiten haben, in das Erwerbsleben einzutreten, zu verbessern. Die öffentlichen

Arbeitsvermittlungsstellen spielen dabei eine wichtige Rolle, indem sie bei der Integration der Arbeitslosen und sonstiger Arbeitssuchender in den Arbeitsmarkt behilflich sind. Zu den aktiven Maßnahmen gehören außerdem Schulungen, Arbeitsplatztausch und Arbeitsplatzteilung, Beschäftigungsanreize, die Integration bestimmter Gruppen, die direkte Schaffung von Arbeitsplätzen und Anreize für Existenzgründer. Um die Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern zu fördern, sollten die Arbeitsvermittlungsstellen bei ihrer Tätigkeit an Chancengleichheitsgrundsätze gebunden sein. Eine effektive Methode dafür ist die Ernennung eines speziellen Chancengleichheitsbeauftragten, der über das notwendige Fachwissen verfügt. Dänemark, Deutschland und Italien gehen in dieser Hinsicht mit gutem Beispiel voran. Ein wesentlicher Faktor scheint auch zu sein, dass die Mitarbeiter der Arbeitsvermittlungsstellen über das Thema Gender-Mainstreaming informiert sind und über dessen Umsetzung in ihrer Arbeit geschult werden. Ein Beispiel: In Polen wurde ein aus ESF-Mitteln finanziertes Projekt „Gender-Mainstreaming in Arbeitsmarktinstitutionen“, ins Leben gerufen, um die Qualifikationen und beruflichen Kompetenzen der öffentlichen und nicht öffentlichen Arbeitsmarktinstitutionen im Bereich Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern zu verbessern und die Teilnehmer auf die Umsetzung der Gender-Mainstreaming-Strategie bei den Tätigkeiten ihrer Institutionen vorzubereiten. Ein weiterer wichtiger Aspekt des Gender-Mainstreaming der Arbeitsvermittlungsstellen ist, dass die aktiven Arbeitsmarktprogramme allen nicht erwerbstätigen Personen offen stehen und nicht nur auf Leistungsberechtigte beschränkt sind und dass Männer und Frauen gleichen Zugang zu den aktiven arbeitsmarktpolitischen Maßnahmen haben. In mehreren Ländern wie Dänemark, Finnland und Schweden ist das allgemein übliche Praxis. Andere Länder hingegen wenden eine restriktivere Politik an.

Was die Schulungen anbelangt, würde ein Gender-Mainstreaming-Ansatz bedeuten, dass sowohl quantitative als auch qualitative Aspekte berücksichtigt werden. Das heißt, dass Schulungen nicht nur die Beschäftigungsfähigkeit der Arbeitslosen verbessern, sondern auch den Zugang von Frauen zu höher qualifizierten Stellen und/oder nicht typischen Frauenberufen fördern sollten. Dasselbe gilt für Maßnahmen, die sich auf die direkte Schaffung von Arbeitsplätzen konzentrieren. Gemäß den nationalen Experten von Zypern, Luxemburg und Frankreich ist dies jedoch nicht immer der Fall. In Frankreich beispielsweise sollen zwischen 2006 und 2009 mit dem „Plan für Dienstleistungen für Privatpersonen“ 500.000 Nachbarschaftsjobs geschaffen werden. Obwohl davon ausgegangen wird, dass die geschaffenen Stellen insbesondere Frauen betreffen, sind die geschlechtsspezifischen Auswirkungen nie ein Thema gewesen. Außerdem handelt es sich um Teilzeitstellen und es gibt Bedenken hinsichtlich der Qualität der Jobs (in Bezug auf Arbeitszeit und Bezahlung). Aktive arbeitsmarktpolitische Maßnahmen können sich auch auf die Integration bestimmter Gruppen in den Arbeitsmarkt konzentrieren. In diesem Fall müsste bei einem Gen-

der-Mainstreaming-Ansatz auf die Bedürfnisse bestimmter Gruppen eingegangen werden. Alleinerziehenden kann zum Beispiel durch die Bereitstellung von Kinderbetreuungsleistungen geholfen werden, Behinderten durch die Bereitstellung von Sozialfürsorgediensten und technischen Hilfsmitteln und Frauen, die nach einer langen Kindererziehungspause wieder in das Erwerbsleben einsteigen, durch das Angebot von Schulungen. Was die Maßnahmen für Existenzgründer betrifft, ist es wichtig, dass Männer und Frauen in gleicher Weise von Initiativen profitieren, die den Unternehmergeist fördern, indem sie die Arbeitslosen und Zielgruppen bei der Gründung ihres eigenen Unternehmens oder der Aufnahme einer selbständigen Tätigkeit unterstützen.

Die Bewertung der aktiven arbeitsmarktpolitischen Maßnahmen in 30 europäischen Ländern hat gezeigt, dass Gender-Mainstreaming immer noch unausgeglichen und auf einen ziemlich engen Bereich beschränkt ist. In vielen Ländern wurden die politischen Maßnahmen in diesem Bereich nicht mit einer expliziten geschlechtsspezifischen Perspektive oder einer Bezugnahme auf die Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern und Gender-Mainstreaming ausgearbeitet. Dieses Ergebnis mag unproblematisch sein, wenn die Ungleichheit zwischen Frauen und Männern eher gering ist. In Finnland beispielsweise ist die Beteiligung am Arbeitsmarkt zwischen Männern und Frauen seit langem fast gleich verteilt, und geschlechtsspezifische Diskrepanzen bei Beschäftigung und Arbeitslosigkeit sind unter den geringsten der Europäischen Union. Dies ist jedoch eher eine Ausnahme, da die meisten nationalen Experten auf bestehende geschlechtsspezifische Ungleichheiten aufmerksam machen.

## Gender-Mainstreaming im Bereich der Lohn- und Berufspolitik

Die Reduzierung des Einkommensunterschieds zwischen den Geschlechtern (Gender Pay Gap) ist ein wichtiges Thema in der europäischen Politik. Seit 1999 ist dieses Thema Teil der europäischen Beschäftigungsstrategie, und die politischen Maßnahmen wurden im Laufe der Jahre intensiviert. Der Gender Pay Gap bezieht sich auf die Einkommensunterschiede zwischen Frauen und Männern.

Angesichts der Komplexität der Ursachen des Gender Pay Gap würde die Gleichstellung der Geschlechter bei der Lohnpolitik eine Vielzahl von Maßnahmen erfordern. Zunächst können die Länder eine Politik zur Anwendung des Grundsatzes des gleichen Entgelts für Männer und Frauen mit dem Ziel, direkte oder indirekte geschlechtsspezifische Lohndiskriminierungen zu bekämpfen, einführen. Dazu zählen zum Beispiel (zusätzliche) Rechtsvorschriften, die Verfügbarkeit und Verbreitung von Informationen und Initiativen in Bezug auf die Arbeitsplatzbewertung. Hier ein paar Beispiele: In Luxemburg ist seit Juni 2004 ein Gesetz in

Kraft, das die Sozialpartner verpflichtet, über Entgeltgleichheit von Frauen und Männern zu verhandeln. Ähnliche Gesetze gibt es in Frankreich, wo das Verhandeln über Entgeltgleichheit von Frauen und Männern in Unternehmen und Branchen Vorschrift ist. Die Errichtung geschlechterspezifischer Institutionen könnte die Anwendung des Grundsatzes des gleichen Entgelts für Männer und Frauen fördern; die Niederlande, Finnland und Norwegen geben hierfür Beispiele. Innovative Beispiele in Bezug auf die Verbreitung von Informationen stammen aus Dänemark, Italien und Portugal. Diese Länder haben Rechtsvorschriften eingeführt, die die Arbeitgeber verpflichten, die Löhne offen zu legen. Schließlich werden Arbeitsplatzbewertungssysteme oft benutzt, um den Wert eines Arbeitsplatzes zu ermitteln. Arbeitsplatzbewertungssysteme können jedoch (in)direkt Frauen diskriminieren. Daher ist es wichtig, die systemspezifischen Merkmale und Kriterien kritisch zu beurteilen. Beispiele hierfür geben Belgien, Luxemburg, Österreich und Island.

Eine zweite Strategie kann darauf abzielen, die horizontale sowie die vertikale geschlechterspezifische Segregation zu reduzieren. Politische Maßnahmen zur Reduzierung der horizontalen Segregation konzentrieren sich in der Regel auf junge Mädchen, um sie zu ermutigen, eine größere Bandbreite beruflicher Optionen in Betracht zu ziehen und sich für wissenschaftliche und technische Berufe anstelle von Tätigkeiten in den Bereichen Pflege, Reinigung und Gastronomie zu entscheiden. Griechenland hat zum Beispiel ein Programm, dessen Ziel die Förderung der Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern in höheren Schulen und in der postsekundären Erstausbildung ist. Die Maßnahmen umfassen u.a. den Einsatz von Berufsberatungsdiensten und Orientierungshilfen von Schulen, um geschlechtsspezifische Stereotypen bei der Berufswahl zu bekämpfen, und die Förderung der Teilnahme von Mädchen an Erstausbildungskursen in Fachgebieten, in denen Frauen unterrepräsentiert sind. Politische Maßnahmen zur Reduzierung der vertikalen Segregation zielen im Allgemeinen darauf ab, die Anzahl der Frauen in höheren und/oder Führungspositionen zu erhöhen. In Griechenland und Spanien wurde eine Reihe von politischen Maßnahmen eingeführt, deren Ziel die Gleichstellung der Geschlechter bei den Berufsmöglichkeiten ist. In Norwegen war das Thema „Frauen und Management“ ein zentrales Thema in den öffentlichen Diskussionen der vergangenen Jahre und es gab mehrere politische Maßnahmen zur Reduzierung des Ungleichgewichts zwischen den Geschlechtern. Die bedeutendste politische Maßnahme ist der Public Limited Companies Act (Aktiengesellschaftsgesetz), der am 1. Januar 2006 in Kraft getreten ist. Er schreibt ein Gleichgewicht zwischen den Geschlechtern (etwa 40/60 Prozent) in den Verwaltungsräten aller Aktiengesellschaften (ASA) in Privatbesitz vor, von denen es rund 500 Gesellschaften gibt. Unternehmen, die bis 2008 kein Gleichgewicht zwischen Frauen und Männern erreicht haben, werden sanktioniert. Ähnliche Gesetze waren bereits für staatseigene Betriebe in Kraft.

Eine dritte Strategie besteht in der Gleichstellung der Geschlechter aus einer „allgemeinen“ Lohnpolitik, deren Ziel es ist, die Ungleichheit bei den Löhnen zu reduzieren und die Bezahlung für Niedriglohnarbeit oder von Frauen dominierten Arbeitsplätzen zu verbessern. Diesbezügliche lohnpolitische Maßnahmen können von der Einführung eines gesetzlichen Mindestlohns und damit der Festsetzung einer Untergrenze für die Lohnstruktur, der Zentralisierung des Systems der Lohnverhandlungen und damit der Reduzierung von Lohnunterschieden zwischen Branchen und Unternehmen, bis zur Aufwertung von niedrig bezahlten und/oder von Frauen dominierten Stellen, zum Beispiel als Teil einer Strategie zur Armutsbekämpfung oder zur Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern, reichen. Die meisten europäischen Länder haben gesetzliche Mindestlöhne. Irland und Großbritannien haben die gesetzlichen Mindestlöhne allerdings erst kürzlich eingeführt. Ein Beispiel für die Aufwertung von Niedriglohnarbeitsplätzen liefert Litauen. Obwohl bei dieser Politik Gender-Mainstreaming keine entscheidende Rolle gespielt haben mag, kann sie eine Rolle spielen bei der Schließung der Gender Pay Gap durch die Verbesserung der relativen Lohnposition von Frauen angesichts der Tatsache, dass Frauen im Niedriglohnsektor überrepräsentiert sind.

Aus der Bewertung der Lohn- und Berufspolitiken in 30 europäischen Ländern geht hervor, dass der Gender Pay Gap in den meisten Ländern bei den öffentlichen Diskussionen und auf der politischen Agenda einen eher geringen Stellenwert hat. Die Betonung von Deregulierung und freiwilligen Maßnahmen seitens der Arbeitgeber scheint die Möglichkeiten der nationalen Politik in einigen Ländern einzuschränken. Eines der Hauptprobleme scheint die Tatsache zu sein, dass es keinen wirklichen „Eigentümer des Problems“ gibt, da sich niemand für den Gender Pay Gap verantwortlich fühlt. Politische Unterstützung zu organisieren erscheint eine wichtige Herausforderung für die nahe Zukunft zu sein, um den Gender Pay Gap zu schließen.

### Gender Mainstreaming bei politischen Maßnahmen zur Vereinbarung von Beruf, Familie und Privatleben

Politische Maßnahmen zur Vereinbarung von Beruf, Familie und Privatleben können als Maßnahmen definiert werden, deren Ziel es ist, die Vereinbarkeit dieser drei Bereiche direkt zu unterstützen. Es kann sich dabei um eine Vielzahl verschiedener Maßnahmen handeln, darunter Kinderbetreuungsleistungen, Elternurlaub, flexible Arbeitszeitregelungen und andere Maßnahmen wie finanzielle Zulagen für den berufstätigen Partner. Gender-Mainstreaming im Bereich der Vereinbarung von Beruf, Familie und Privatleben ist bis zu einem gewissen Grad ein anerkanntes Ziel, da sich die meisten europäischen Regierungen der Auswirkungen

bewusst sind, die die Verantwortung für die Kinderbetreuung auf die Beschäftigung der Frauen hat.. Dennoch reagieren die Länder mit unterschiedlichen politischen Maßnahmen und unterscheiden sich durch ihre implizite oder explizite Schwerpunktsetzung bezüglich der Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern. Einige Länder fördern das Angebot von öffentlichen und privaten Dienstleistungen, andere verbessern die Möglichkeiten der Teilzeitarbeit. Einige betrachten die Vereinbarung von Beruf und Familie immer noch als Frauensache, während andere die Rolle der Männer bei der Kindererziehung und in der Familie anerkennen.

Seit 1996 basiert die nationale Politik im Bereich Elternurlaubsregelungen auf einer europäischen Richtlinie, die die Mitgliedstaaten verpflichtet, Gesetze in Bezug auf den Elternurlaub einzuführen, die es den Eltern ermöglichen, sich drei Monate lang Vollzeit um ihr Kind zu kümmern. Grundsätzlich handelt es sich hierbei um einen persönlichen, nicht übertragbaren Anspruch. Diese Richtlinie stellt sicher, dass in den Mitgliedstaaten ein bestimmter Mindeststandard garantiert wird. Darüber hinaus gibt es jedoch eine Vielzahl von nationalen Rechtsvorschriften, die sich je nach Land in der Länge des Elternurlaubs, der Höhe der Bezahlung, der Flexibilität und den Ansprüchen unterscheiden. Dadurch dass die Bestimmungen in Bezug auf den Elternurlaub so unterschiedlich sind, weichen die tatsächlichen politischen Entscheidungen ebenfalls entscheidend voneinander ab. Einige Länder (Irland, Großbritannien und die Niederlande) melden eine Verlängerung des – relativ kurzen – möglichen Elternurlaubs und eine bessere Bezahlung. Andere Länder melden eine Verkürzung des – relativ langen – möglichen Elternurlaubs (Deutschland), eine Erhöhung der Flexibilität oder eine Änderung der Ansprüche (Tschechische Republik, Ungarn, Slowakei und Österreich). Vermutlich hängen die tatsächlichen politischen Entscheidungen in hohem Maße von den verschiedenen Ausgangspunkten, der aktuellen Situation am Arbeitsmarkt und von der Herausforderung der Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern ab. Praktisch alle Länder geben jedoch an, dass die Männer bei der Inanspruchnahme von Elternurlaub unterrepräsentiert sind. Einige Länder reagieren mit besonderen Bestimmungen für die Inanspruchnahme des Elternurlaubs durch den Vater, andere bleiben eher passiv, da sie die Vereinbarung von Beruf und Familie eher als Frauensache ansehen.

Beim Gipfel von Barcelona von 2002 wurden in Bezug auf die Kinderbetreuung Ziele gesetzt. Der Europäische Rat bestätigte das Ziel der Vollbeschäftigung und setzte sich dafür ein, dass die Mitgliedstaaten abschreckende Faktoren für die Teilnahme weiblicher Arbeitskräfte am Arbeitsmarkt beseitigen und unter Berücksichtigung der Nachfrage nach Kinderbetreuungseinrichtungen und im Einklang mit den nationalen Modellen danach streben sollten, bis 2010 für mindestens 90% der Kinder zwischen 3 Jahren und dem Schulpflichtalter und für mindestens 33% der Kinder unter 3 Jahren einen Betreuungsplatz bereitzustellen. Obwohl die

Bewertung der Verfügbarkeit von Kinderbetreuungsangeboten keine leichte Aufgabe ist, scheint es offensichtlich, dass die Kinderbetreuungsziele des Barcelona-Gipfels in den meisten Ländern bei weitem nicht erreicht sind. Es gibt jedoch große Unterschiede zwischen den einzelnen Ländern. In Finnland, Dänemark, Schweden und Island ist die Kinderbetreuung zum Beispiel als soziales Recht gesetzlich verankert. In Norwegen sind Kinderbetreuungsleistungen dagegen anders als in den anderen skandinavischen Ländern kein soziales Recht. Dennoch ist das flächendeckende Angebot seit dem Ende der 80er Jahre das gemeinsame politische Ziel für Betreuungsleistungen. Auch Slowenien, Frankreich und Belgien verfügen über ein fast flächendeckendes Angebot. Am anderen Ende des Spektrums gibt es in einigen Ländern ein dauerhaft geringes Angebot an Kinderbetreuungseinrichtungen. Dies betrifft zum Beispiel Irland, Italien, Litauen, Polen, Malta, Zypern, Griechenland, Spanien und Lettland. Nur in drei Ländern (Griechenland, Großbritannien und die Niederlande) wurden die Kinderbetreuungsangebote in den letzten Jahren tatsächlich erweitert.

Die Bewertung der politischen Maßnahmen zur Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf in 30 europäischen Ländern zeigt, dass obwohl das Thema in zahlreichen Ländern auf der politischen Agenda ganz weit oben steht, die tatsächlichen Maßnahmen eher begrenzt sind. Die meisten Länder sind weit davon entfernt, das in Barcelona gesetzte Ziel für die Betreuung von Kindern unter 3 Jahren zu erreichen. Außerdem scheint es keinen einheitlichen Trend im Hinblick auf Kinderbetreuungseinrichtungen zu geben. Einige Länder wie Großbritannien und die Niederlande steuern deutlich auf eine höhere Flächendeckung zu. In anderen Ländern herrscht mehr oder weniger Stillstand, während in einigen der ehemaligen osteuropäischen Länder ein deutlicher Abwärtstrend zu verzeichnen ist. Auch Maßnahmen in Bezug auf den Elternurlaub scheinen in verschiedene Richtungen zu gehen. Abhängig von den verschiedenen Ausgangspunkten melden einige Länder eine Verlängerung des möglichen Elternurlaubs, andere eine Verkürzung, eine Erhöhung der Flexibilität oder eine Änderung der Ansprüche. Praktisch alle Länder geben an, dass die Männer bei der Inanspruchnahme von Elternurlaub unterrepräsentiert sind.

### **Gender-Mainstreaming bei politischen Maßnahmen zur Vereinbarung von Flexibilität und Sicherheit („Flexicurity“-Maßnahmen)**

Flexicurity-Maßnahmen können als politische Strategie beschrieben werden, mit der versucht wird, die Flexibilität der Arbeitsmärkte, die Arbeitsorganisation und die Beziehungen zwischen den Sozialpartnern auf der einen Seite und die Sicherheit – Beschäftigungssicherheit und soziale Sicherheit –

insbesondere für schwächere Gruppen innerhalb und außerhalb des Arbeitsmarktes auf der anderen Seite – synchron und bewusst zu verbessern (Wilthagen und Tros 2004: 169). Diese Definition macht deutlich, dass ein voll integrierter Flexicurity-Ansatz über eng definierte politische Maßnahmen in den Bereichen Arbeitsmarktflexibilität und Sicherheit der Beschäftigten hinausgeht. Wichtige Bestandteile sind darüber hinaus aktive arbeitsmarktpolitische Maßnahmen mit einer aktiven Stellensuche, Stellenangeboten und lebenslangem Lernen. Die zentrale Aufgabe ist es, ein Gleichgewicht von politischen Maßnahmen zu finden mit dem Ziel, die Anpassungsfähigkeit der Arbeitnehmer und der Arbeitsplätze zu steigern. Daher beinhaltet der Flexicurity-Ansatz den Übergang von einem Modell der Arbeitsplatzsicherheit (das ganze Leben lang denselben Arbeitsplatz) zu einem Modell der Beschäftigungssicherheit (das ganze Leben lang Beschäftigungsmöglichkeiten und -fähigkeiten).

Das Verhältnis zwischen Flexicurity und Chancengleichheit von Frauen und Männern liegt nicht auf der Hand. Einerseits können die Befürworter behaupten, dass Flexicurity eine Antwort auf die Ungleichheit zwischen Frauen und Männern darstellt, weil sie dazu beiträgt, die Segmentierungsgefahren durch einen mobileren und flexibleren Arbeitsmarkt zu reduzieren. Andererseits können Kritiker behaupten, dass bei den tatsächlichen Flexicurity-Maßnahmen die Gefahr besteht, dass sich der Graben zwischen Frauen und Männern wegen der aufgrund Förderung flexibler Stellen noch vertieft. Ein Gender-Mainstreaming-Ansatz zu politischen Maßnahmen im Bereich Flexicurity würde die geschlechtsspezifische Rolle bei der Verstärkung der Ungleichheiten, die mit einem flexiblen Arbeitsmarkt und der Entwicklung flexibler Arbeitsmuster verbunden sind, anerkennen und die Bedürfnisse der Beschäftigten nach der Vereinbarkeit mit der Kinderbetreuung berücksichtigen und gleichzeitig die Risiken im Auge haben, die mit der Ausdehnung der Arbeitszeiten oder einer unsozialen Arbeitszeitgestaltung verbunden sind. Darüber hinaus würde ein Mainstreaming-Ansatz Wege aus Arbeitsmodellen und Arbeitszeiten unterstützen, die vom Standard abweichen, um die Risiken langfristiger Fallen und die Segmentierung von Frauen in benachteiligten Beschäftigungsformen zu vermeiden.

Die tatsächliche Situation in Bezug auf Flexicurity stellt sich in den einzelnen EU-Mitgliedstaaten sehr unterschiedlich dar. In den meisten Studien gelten Dänemark und die Niederlande als Musterbeispiele, während Länder in Süd-, Mittel- und Osteuropa hinterherhinken. Das dänische Flexicurity-Modell wird oft als goldenes Dreieck beschrieben, bei dem ein relativ geringer Beschäftigungsschutz, eine umfassende Arbeitslosenunterstützung für einen kurzen Zeitraum und eine aktive Arbeitsmarktpolitik die drei

Ecken bilden. Der niederländische Ansatz stützt sich mehr auf das sorgfältige Ausräumen der Rechte und Pflichten für verschiedene Vertragsformen. In zahlreichen anderen Mitgliedstaaten steht Flexicurity oben auf der politischen Agenda. Die deutsche Regierung versucht zum Beispiel, ein neues Gleichgewicht zwischen Flexibilität und Sicherheit zu finden, indem sie Maßnahmen einführt, die von neuen Teilzeitregelungen, der Schaffung von Minijobs, neuen Kündigungsbestimmungen bis zu Kürzungen der Arbeitslosenunterstützung reichen. Obwohl Frauen in all diesen Bereichen politischer Maßnahmen betroffen sind, sind die Gender-Mainstreaming-Bemühungen begrenzt. Auch in Frankreich wird das Flexicurity-Konzept viel diskutiert. Allerdings scheinen die Maßnahmen wie in Deutschland auf einem eher traditionellen Modell zu basieren, bei dem die Männer länger arbeiten, während die Frauen Teilzeitstellen bekommen oder sogar anstreben.

In den meisten anderen Ländern muss das Flexicurity-Konzept erst noch entwickelt werden, weshalb es bisher kaum zu politischen Maßnahmen basierend auf diesem Konzept gekommen ist. Einige nationale Experten hoffen, dass die Maßnahmen in diesem Bereich den Zugang zum Arbeitsmarkt für Frauen verbessern könnten, da sie zu flexibleren Optionen insbesondere im privaten Sektor führen würden. Andere nationale Experten zeigen sich besorgt, dass Flexibilität bereitwilliger eingeführt werden könnte als Sicherheitsmaßnahmen, sodass die Ungleichheiten am Arbeitsmarkt steigen würden.

Die Bewertung der Flexicurity-Politiken in 30 europäischen Ländern zeigt, dass ein Gender-Mainstreaming-Ansatz in weiten Bereichen noch fehlt. Angesichts der zentralen Rolle, die die Geschlechterfrage für das Thema Flexibilität und Sicherheit auf den europäischen Arbeitsmärkten spielt, sind die geringen Gender-Mainstreaming-Bemühungen ziemlich erstaunlich. Die Steigerung der Reaktionsfähigkeit der europäischen Arbeitsmärkte durch die Erhöhung der Anpassungsfähigkeit der Arbeitnehmer und der Arbeitsplätze wird nur zu einem inklusiveren Arbeitsmarkt führen, wenn mit der erhöhten Flexibilität nicht eine erhöhte Unsicherheit für bestimmte besonders schutzbedürftige Gruppen auf dem Arbeitsmarkt einhergeht. In jedem Land erfordert der Übergang vom Modell der Arbeitsplatzsicherheit zu Beschäftigungssicherheit eine besondere politische Zielsetzung entsprechend der nationalen Arbeitsmarktsituation und angepasst an die jeweiligen Entwicklungen und Umstände. Ein Gender-Mainstreaming-Ansatz würde implizieren, dass diese Maßnahmen unter Berücksichtigung der Gleichstellungsfragen, die sich im Zusammenhang mit flexiblen Verträgen, flexiblen Arbeitszeiten, Unterbrechungen der Berufstätigkeit und Arbeitsmarktmobilität stellen, entwickelt werden.

## Schlussfolgerung: Gender-Mainstreaming bei beschäftigungspolitischen Maßnahmen

Wichtige Voraussetzungen für eine effektive Gender-Mainstreaming-Strategie sind eine klare und transparente Organisationsstruktur, klare Durchführungsmechanismen und ein klarer Fokus auf das Erreichen einer umfassenden Gleichstellung. Darüber hinaus ist eine Analyse der tatsächlichen Situation wesentlich, um die Gleichheit (Ungleichheit) zwischen den Geschlechtern zu beurteilen, um diejenigen Bereiche zu erkennen, die besonderer Aufmerksamkeit bedürfen und um die potenziellen geschlechtsspezifischen Auswirkungen politischer Maßnahmen zu analysieren. Die vorliegende Studie zeigt, dass

die meisten Länder immer noch weit von der Anwendung eines umfassenden Gender-Mainstreaming-Ansatzes in der Beschäftigungspolitik entfernt sind. Insbesondere im Bereich Lohnpolitik und Flexicurity-Politik ist das Bewusstsein für die Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern in der Regel noch relativ gering. Außerdem wird die Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern bei der Ausarbeitung politischer Maßnahmen oft nicht berücksichtigt. Um die Kenntnisse im Bereich Gender-Mainstreaming von beschäftigungspolitischen Maßnahmen zu verbessern, enthält dieser Bericht eine Analyse derzeitiger Trends sowie eine Checkliste und eine Reihe von Beispielen für eine effektive Gleichstellung der Geschlechter. Daher kann dieser Bericht als Handbuch für alle beteiligten Akteure des Gender-Mainstreaming auf nationaler sowie auf europäischer Ebene verwendet werden.



Although the European strategy for growth and employment recognises that gender equality and gender mainstreaming are essential for progress, the analysis of the National Reform Programmes (NRP) 2005 and 2006 illustrated that the gender mainstreaming of the employment part of the NRP is limited and that the visibility of commitment to women's employment and gender equality is declining (see Rubery et al. 2005; 2006). This decline appears to be strongly linked to the disappearance of the specific gender guidelines, following on from the earlier removal of the equal opportunities pillar from the European Employment Strategy guidelines. A reversal of this development can only be attained if all stakeholders have a better knowledge of concrete examples of gender mainstreaming and share the commitment to integrate gender issues in the European Employment Strategy in the future. This report therefore provides a checklist for effective gender mainstreaming and analyses the most relevant employment policy domains from a gender perspective. The report will contain information for the 27 Member States in addition to three EEA-EFTA countries: Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, based on the work of the EU expert group on Gender, Social Inclusion and Employment (EGGSIE). As such, the aim of the report is to provide a checklist for effective gender mainstreaming and to analyse the most relevant employment policies from a gender perspective.

The structure of the report is as follows. Firstly, Chapter 1 deals with the issue of gender mainstreaming. After a short history of the development of the concept of gender mainstreaming within the European Employment Strategy, the Chapter provides a checklist concerning the gender mainstreaming of employment policy. Chapter 2 gives an overview of policy developments with regard to gender equality and gender mainstreaming at the level of the EU Member States and EEA-EFTA countries. As such, this chapter provides information on the general climate with regard to gender equality and gender mainstreaming as translated for example into national gender action plans and the equality infrastructure. Chapters 3 to 6 provide an analysis of the most relevant employment policy domains from a gender perspective and examine examples of concrete gender mainstreaming in each area. In particular the report provides an assessment of the following policy areas: active labour market policies, pay and career policies, reconciliation policies, and 'flexicurity' policies. Under each heading the report provides information on the actual policy developments and the results of the policies in terms of gender equality. Together these four policy domains cover all the core employment policy areas. Moreover, the scope of the policy areas corresponds to the general focus of the employment guidelines. Finally, Chapter 7 provides the conclusions.



# 1. Gender mainstreaming employment policy: a checklist

The main part of the report provides an overview of the current state of affairs regarding gender mainstreaming in the field of active labour market policies, pay and career policies, reconciliation policies and flexicurity policies. These chapters illustrate that European countries have undertaken a variety of initiatives, which are extremely valuable from a gender equality point of view. At the same time it may be concluded that gender mainstreaming is still in its infancy. Given this state of affairs and the importance that current and future policies are more clearly informed by a gender specific analysis, this chapter starts with a short history of the development of the concept of gender mainstreaming within the European Employment Strategy. Subsequently, a checklist on gender mainstreaming employment policies is provided, with the ultimate aim of raising the visibility of gender within the policy-making process and supporting the inclusion of the gender dimension in the formulation of employment policies.

## A short history of gender mainstreaming and the European Employment Strategy

The European Employment Strategy was first defined by the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam. Later that year, at the 'extraordinary' 1997 Luxembourg Summit, it was agreed that: 'the ultimate objective of a coordination of Member States' employment policies is to arrive at a significant increase in the employment rate in Europe on a sustainable basis' (OJEC 12.03.1999). With this agreement, the so-

called 'Luxembourg process' was launched, involving the following stages (on an annual cycle): Council approval of Employment Guidelines; Member State response to these guidelines in the form of a National Action Plan (NAP); examination of NAPs in the Joint Employment Report (Commission and Council); Commission recommendation to revise Employment Guidelines; and Council country-specific recommendations. In 1998, the first year of this process, 19 guidelines were agreed based on the four pillars of employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equal opportunities. Regarding equal opportunities four guidelines were formulated, referring to tackling gender gaps, reconciling work and family life, facilitating the return to work and promoting the integration of people with disabilities into working life (Rubery et al 2001).

At the end of this first cycle, at the Vienna Summit in 1998, the number of guidelines for 1999 was increased to 22, significantly including the addition of a mainstreaming approach to equal opportunities. This provided a further major impetus to the integration of equal opportunities issues into the employment framework. Moreover, mainstreaming has not been used within the guidelines as a substitute for direct gender equality measures. Indeed in the 1999 guidelines the second major change to the fourth pillar involved the introduction of the gender pay gap as a policy issue to be integrated into the Employment Strategy. The overall approach, therefore, follows the twin track recommended by the Council of Europe (Rubery et al 2000). See Box 1 for two definitions of gender mainstreaming.

### Box 1: Defining gender mainstreaming

'Gender mainstreaming involves not restricting efforts to promote equality to the implementation of specific measures to help women, but mobilising all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality by actively and openly taking into account at the planning stage their possible effects on the respective situation of men and women (gender perspective). This means systematically examining measures and policies and taking into account such possible effects when defining and implementing them' (European Commission 1996).

'Gender mainstreaming may be described as 'the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies, at all levels and at all stages by the actors normally involved in policy-making' (Council of Europe 1998: 12).

After the Vienna Summit, the Employment Guidelines under the fourth pillar of equal opportunities were collected around four principles. The first referred to the need to adopt a gender mainstreaming approach. Guidelines included promotion of equitable access to active labour market policies among women and men in unemployment, assessment of the gender impact of tax and benefit systems, and application of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. The second principle required Member States to tackle gender gaps. Guidelines included the reduction of the unemployment gap through supporting female employment growth (possibly in line with a national target), action to reduce sex segregation, initiatives to diminish the gender differential in income and measures to further women's advancement in employment. The third principle required Member States to encourage the reconciliation of work and family life. The fourth principle referred to facilitating reintegration into the labour market. From 2001 this last principle was no longer included under the pillar of equal opportunities.

At Lisbon (March 2000), the Council re-emphasised the gender dimension to employment: 'Member States should strengthen their efforts to include and make visible a gender perspective across all the pillars' (OJEC 24.01.01: L22/19). And, for the first time, the Council stated that Member States should each set quantitative targets for higher employment rates in line with EU targets. These were set at 70% for all in employment and 60% for women, to be reached by the year 2010. At the subsequent Stockholm meeting in 2001, intermediate targets of 67% (total) and 57% (for women) were set to be reached by 2005, as well as an additional employment target of 50% for older men and women (55-65 years old) by 2010. The Lisbon Presidency conclusions have been incorporated into the 2001 Employment Guidelines. Underpinning the guidelines are a number of 'horizontal objectives' which aim to build the conditions for full employment in a knowledge-based society. Here the role of women's employment and the quality of jobs created are clearly specified: 'To this end [moving towards full employment], Member States should consider setting national targets for raising the rate of employment, in order to contribute to the overall European objectives of reaching by 2010 an overall employment rate of 70% and employment rate of more than 60% for women. In pursuing these targets the aim of increasing the quality of jobs should also be taken into consideration' (OJEC 24.01.01: L22/20).

Autumn 2003 marked the beginning of a new phase of the European Employment Strategy following on from an intensive review of the first five-year phase. The most significant changes introduced in the second phase include:

- A streamlining of the European Employment Strategy with other key policy coordination processes including the broader economic policy guidelines and the internal market strategy;
- The adoption of three overarching and interrelated objectives – of full employment, quality and productivity at work, and social cohesion and inclusion – and the disappearance of the four pillars (employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equal opportunities) that provided the building blocks for the first phase;
- The adoption of simplified and more limited guidelines– 10 in comparison to the 18 of the previous phase– referred to as the 10 commandments in the proposal for guidelines put forward by the Commission to the European Council (Rubery et al, 2004: 47).

Guideline 6 referred to gender equality and emphasised, again, the integrated approach of combining gender mainstreaming and specific policy actions. This approach should focus on the reduction of gender gaps, in particular the gender pay gap, and reconciling work and family life. Moreover, it included the goals that 'by 2010 Member States should provide childcare to at least 90% of children between three years old and the mandatory school age and at least 33% of children under three years of age' (OJEC 05.08.2003: L197/15).

In response to developments such as the weak growth performance of the EU and insufficient job creation, in 2005 the Spring European Council decided to combine the Employment Strategy with the broad economic policy guidelines into the National Reform Programme (NRP). The integrated guidelines for the period 2005-2008 should 'provide flexibility for Member States to choose local responses that best address their reform challenges, thereby fostering national ownership' (CEC 2005: 4). Regarding the objectives of full employment, job quality, labour productivity and social cohesion, three priorities were set:

- attracting and retaining more people in employment, increasing labour supply and modernising social protection systems;
- improving adaptability of workers and enterprises;
- increasing investment in human capital through better education and skills.

Eight new employment guidelines were drawn up (corresponding to integrated guidelines 16-23). Gender

equality is no longer included as a specific guideline. Gender mainstreaming and the promotion of gender equality is included as a general principle, though. Moreover, gender equality is covered indirectly; for example guideline 17 refers to the employment target of 60% for women and guideline 18 addresses the reduction of gender gaps and the introduction of reconciliation policies as a means to promote a lifecycle approach to work. However, due to the disappearance of a specific gender equality guideline, the visibility of gender and the attention paid both to gender equality policies and gender mainstreaming in the national reports has declined (Rubery 2005; 2006).

The loss of focus, and the increasing invisibility of gender is also mentioned by the Joint Employment Report 2006/2007: 'Through the European pact for gender equality Member States were asked to include a perspective of gender equality when reporting on implementation. In spite of this, the promotion of female employment and systematic gender mainstreaming of policies are rarely emphasised' (JER 2007: 4). At the same time, and despite this development, the EU Roadmap for equality is quite explicit about the importance of gender equality and gender mainstreaming. 'The EU remains an important partner in the global effort to promote gender equality. Turning globalisation into a positive force for all women and men and fighting poverty are major challenges. (...) If the EU is to meet these challenges, progress towards gender equality must accelerate and gender mainstreaming be strengthened in all policies, and in particular in those areas identified in this Roadmap' (CEC 2006: 2).

Given the importance of gender mainstreaming, and the apparent low profile of gender mainstreaming in current employment policies, the rest of the chapter will provide a short checklist in order to support the relevant stakeholders. Gender mainstreaming may be seen as a complex and long-term process. It involves a clear organisation structure, aiming at gender equality, clear enforcement mechanisms, and investment and resourcing. The checklist can be interpreted as an instrument facilitating this process, aimed at establishing a stronger gender mainstreaming perspective across the policy system, and raising the profile of gender equality.

### **Gender mainstreaming of employment policies: a checklist**

Gender mainstreaming is often seen as an innovative concept, encompassing much more than 'traditional' equal opportunities policy. The work of Rees (1998) is useful in this respect (see also Stevens and Van Lamoen

2001). She distinguishes three types of gender equality strategies: tinkering, tailoring and transforming. Tinkering refers to measures aimed at establishing formal equality between men and women, such as equal treatment legislation and mechanisms to ensure law enforcement. Examples at the EU level are the directives regarding equal pay and equal treatment in access to employment, training, promotion and working conditions (see also EC 2004). Tinkering is in fact one of the oldest strategies for promoting equal opportunities. The second strategy is tailoring. As equal treatment does not automatically lead to equal outcomes, specific measures and facilities for women may be necessary. Examples are positive action programmes for women and the provision of childcare. Under this tailoring approach women are supposed to assimilate into the status quo, which is in itself not under discussion. The third strategy 'transforming' goes a step further by questioning the status quo (the mainstream) and assuming that a transformation of institutions and/or organisations may be necessary to establish gender equality. Rees regards gender mainstreaming as adding this potential for transformation to the established gender equality policies of formal equality and positive action.

Over recent years a variety of manuals on 'how to gender mainstream' have been developed, often focusing on specific areas and/or directed at certain target groups. An example at the European level is the EQUAL guide on gender mainstreaming that was written for those involved in national EQUAL programmes (EC 2004). Another more recent example is the gender mainstreaming manual, developed by the Swedish Gender Mainstreaming Support Committee (Jämstöd 2007). Most manuals provide a framework or distinguish certain stages. For example, a useful framework for applying gender mainstreaming is provided by Stevens and Van Lamoen (2001), who developed a manual for gender mainstreaming at universities. They distinguish four toolkits or sets of instruments: 1) measurement and monitoring, 2) implementation and organisation, 3) building awareness and ownership and 4) gender proofing and evaluation. In addition, useful information may be found in guides to gender impact assessment. Rubery & Fagan (2000) describe, for example, a seven-stage gender impact assessment process. Based on the literature and taking the specific area and stakeholders into account, a checklist for gender mainstreaming of employment policies is developed, consisting of four steps, see Box 2.

## Box 2: The four steps of gender mainstreaming

**Getting organised:** The central focus in this first step is on implementation and organisation, and building awareness and ownership.

**Learning about gender differences:** The aim of the second step is to describe gender inequality with regard to participation, resources, norms and values, and rights, and to evaluate trends without policy intervention.

**Assessing the policy impact:** The third step is to analyse the potential gender impact of the policy with reference to participation, resources, norms and values and rights.

**Redesigning policy:** The fourth step is to identify ways in which the policy could be redesigned to promote gender equality.

### STEP 1: GETTING ORGANISED

Implementation and organisation, and building awareness and ownership may be regarded as important preconditions of successful gender mainstreaming. Implementation and organisation of gender mainstreaming refers to the process of providing a structural and cultural basis for equal opportunities (Stevens and Van Lamoen 2001: 52). This includes formulation of objectives and targets, making a plan, drawing up a budget and defining responsibilities and accountability of the different actors involved. With regard to the budget, sufficient resources for implementation need to be made available. Moreover, the use of special (external) expertise might be considered. In addition, gender mainstreaming implies that all stakeholders involved in employment policy should take equal opportunities of men and women into account. In order to create a certain degree of gender awareness and expertise, training is essential. In addition, stakeholders should consider gender mainstreaming as part of their tasks and responsibilities. It is therefore important 'to build ownership' but different strategies may be adopted. In some cases all the team may be expected to take 'ownership' but where awareness levels are low it may be necessary initially to have a nominated person with specific knowledge and awareness within the policy-making team or unit.

### STEP 2: LEARNING ABOUT GENDER DIFFERENCES

A next step in the process of gender mainstreaming is the collection of relevant data on the position of women and men. A description of the actual situation is essential in order to assess actual gender (in)equality and to prioritise areas for attention. In addition, monitoring of the situation over time provides information on the trends in gender (in) equality. The European Commission (1998) has identified four dimensions to the assessment of gender inequality: participation, resources, norms and values, and rights (see also Rubery and Fagan 2000). It is important to

consider the initial situation from a dynamic and not solely a static perspective.

### Participation

Participation refers to the gender composition of the target group/population of the policy and implies the need to gather basic information such as the share of men and women in unemployment, among the disabled or among those with flexible contracts. Where policy measures specify particular groups of vulnerable people, the possible differential impact on men and women should also be taken into account. Over recent years considerable progress has been made in improving the availability of gender segregated statistics, a development which facilitates this first step. Though statistics seem straightforward, it is important to take measurement issues into account. For example, unemployment may be measured in several ways. Depending on the method, gender differences might vary from rather low to quite high.

### Resources

Gender differences may also occur regarding the access to/distribution of resources such as time, space, information and money, political and economic power, qualifications, transport, use of public services etc. In particular the unequal division of care responsibilities has a major impact on the distribution of resources. For example, with respect to active labour market policies, the fact that women bear the main responsibility for raising children should be taken into account. Availability of childcare is, therefore, very important to enable, in particular, women to be participants in the programmes. In the field of reconciliation policies, a relevant issue is whether leave arrangements are paid or unpaid. Women are also more likely to be concentrated in the area of

the labour market most influenced by national minimum wages and are therefore disproportionately affected by decisions to raise the national minimum by more or by less than the average rate of growth in earnings.

### Norms and values

Norms and values influence gender roles and the gender division of labour, and the attitudes and behaviour of women and men. They also account in part for the inequalities in the value attached to men and women or to masculine and feminine characteristics. It is essential to identify the role of policy measures in reinforcing social norms and values that maintain gender inequality. Tax and benefit policies are, for example, often based on the principle of a male breadwinner household model. The move towards more individualised models may, regardless of the impact on participation rates, have an important symbolic value. Along the same line, policy focusing on a more equal sharing of paid and unpaid work – with men explicitly in a role of carer – might also contribute to a more equal set of norms and values.

### Rights

Rights pertain to direct or indirect sex discrimination, human rights, and access to justice in the legal, political or socio-economic environment. For example, are active labour market schemes open to the inactive (returners, not just benefit claimants) as well as to the unemployed who are entitled to benefits? If not, then women may be less able than men to claim support for re-entering employment. In this respect it should also be taken into account that even where women have formal rights on the same basis as men, lack of facilities may restrict women's ability to exercise their rights to take up these opportunities. Similarly formal rights for men to participate in reconciliation measures will not necessarily be sufficient to promote gender equality in care work.

#### STEP 3: ASSESSING THE POLICY IMPACT

The third step requires an assessment of the potential gender impact of the policy with reference to participation, resources, norms and values and rights. An important issue regarding participation is that both quantitative as well as qualitative aspects should be taken into account. For example, programmes to create jobs may in particular concern women. This may be assessed as positive from a gender equality point of view. When, however, the job quality is problematic (e.g. in terms of working hours and pay), such programmes might reinforce gender inequality. With respect

to access to resources, it is critical to take into account not only the impact on household resources but also the impact on individual resources. On the level of social norms and values, reconciliation policies should address men's involvement in domestic labour. If only women make use of reconciliation policies the traditional unequal division of unpaid work between men and women will be reinforced, thereby potentially reinforcing social norms in this respect. With regard to rights it is relevant to include the right to care as well as to undertake employment.

When assessing the impact of policy, it may be important to differentiate between particular groups of men and women such as ethnic minority groups, parents versus the childless, age groups, educational groups, regional groups, etc. While measures to increase the participation rate might, for example, be effective for women from the dominant group, women from ethnic minority groups may require specific measures. In addition, a sound policy assessment should include indirect effects. Changes to gender relations outside as well as inside work may be one of the indirect effects to be looked for. A strong focus on part-time work could, for example, have the long term effect of reinforcing gender divisions of labour both in and outside work as women become more concentrated in sectors offering flexible employment. This example also illustrates the importance of distinguishing between short-term and long-term effects.

#### STEP 4: REDESIGNING POLICY

Where the policy is assessed to have a negative impact on gender equality or to be broadly gender neutral, it is essential to identify ways in which the policy could be redesigned to promote gender equality. The need for redesign is particularly strong where initial gender differences are high and have major impacts on women's life chances. Redesign does not necessarily imply fundamental changes. For example, regarding active labour market policies, a rather simple but effective measure is to extend eligibility to all inactives. Providing facilities to support working parents also seems not too complicated. Other areas may be more complex. For example, reducing vertical and horizontal segregation calls for more extensive policies. Redesign may also require a multi-pronged approach involving more than one policy area or department. For example, the public employment service may need to cooperate actively with the department responsible for the provision of childcare if women seeking employment are to have access to childcare to facilitate job search. Gender mainstreaming calls for a more joined-up approach to policy design, where employment policy is not developed in isolation from welfare provision and childcare services on the one hand or tax and benefit policies on the other hand.

## Conclusions

As a result of the disappearance of the equality guideline in the European Employment Strategy, gender mainstreaming has slipped down the policy agenda. The declining visibility of gender contrasts sharply with the importance attached to gender equality at the broader EU policy agenda. The following chapters serve to underline the importance of a gender mainstreaming approach as an integral part of policy making. Under each heading the

report will provide information on the actual policy development and the results of the policies in terms of gender equality. In addition, following the checklist provided above, the report should provide information on the current state of affairs with regard to gender mainstreaming and provide some concrete examples of gender mainstreaming implemented at the national level. As such, an important objective of the thematic report is to improve the knowledge and understanding of gender mainstreaming in employment policies.

## 2. Gender mainstreaming and gender equality in 30 European countries

EU policy and legislation concerning gender equality and gender mainstreaming have been an important impetus for national policy. In Greece, for example, the impact of the European Union on gender equality and gender mainstreaming has been quite significant. Also in Denmark, with a long history regarding gender equality, legislation and policy at EU level has had a strong impact on national equality legislation. In addition, several of the new Member States emphasise that accession to the European Union provided a direct impulse. According to the national expert from Cyprus, for example, the recent accession to the European Union has accelerated the pace of legislative, legal and policy reform on issues of equality and women's rights. Moreover, the National Action Plans, published within the framework of the European Employment Strategy, have also 'forced' the issue of equality into the foreground and have prompted the Cyprian government to note (if not take) specific steps towards equality and gender mainstreaming. Hungary has had an Act on Equal Treatment and the Promotion of Equal Opportunities since December 2003. It took some years until the act was finally passed by the Parliament and the EU accession played an important role in this respect. Similarly, in Slovenia important changes in legislation regarding gender equality were stimulated by accession to the EU.

Given these positive developments, the decreasing visibility of gender equality within the European Employment Strategy, related to the loss of a specific gender guideline, should be regarded rather negatively. Apparently, the strong focus within EU policies on gender equality and gender mainstreaming serves as a kind of catalyst, which increases the pace of national policy developments. At the same time there is evidence that at the national level positive developments regarding gender equality are taking place, which may not be mentioned by the Member States in their NRP (Rubery 2005; 2006). Therefore, the analysis of gender mainstreaming of employment policies will start with an overview of the current state of affairs with respect to gender mainstreaming. As such, the chapter provides information on the general climate with regard to gender equality and gender mainstreaming as translated, for example, into national gender action plans and the equality infrastructure.

### Equality infrastructure

An important precondition of an effective gender mainstreaming approach is a transparent organisational structure. In Denmark, gender mainstreaming was formally introduced in all public planning by the Equality Act of May 2000. Since then all new relevant legislation has been subject to equality screening. In Germany, all departments of the Federal Ministries have to implement gender mainstreaming as guiding principle in all political, legal and administrative measures of the federal government. In November 2001

the federal equality law became effective, providing the implementation of the principle of gender mainstreaming in its article 2. The federal states have also implemented gender-mainstreaming regulations. In the United Kingdom the most important recent legislative change in relation to gender mainstreaming is the Equality Act 2006, which amends the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act. This places a statutory 'general duty' on all public authorities when carrying out their functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and (b) to promote equality of opportunity between men and women. The 'general duty' took effect in April 2007.

Other countries have formulated the principle of gender mainstreaming as a general policy principle. For example, Sweden adopted gender mainstreaming in 1994 as an official strategy for achieving the policy goals of gender equality. To help the ministries, the government adopted a special six-year plan (2004-2009) that should provide a common framework for all mainstreaming work in the government offices. In France, gender mainstreaming is part of the 'Equality Charter', which was adopted on 8 March 2004. The aim is to introduce a gender mainstreaming approach in all actions: 'Concern for equality between men and women should be incorporated not only in all public policies, nationally, regionally and locally, but also be diffused through all political, economic and social sectors'. The Dutch government published a policy document on gender mainstreaming in 2001. Its point of departure was that gender mainstreaming provides an important impetus to the quality of the policy. It was assumed that, for optimal results, departments should be responsible for gender mainstreaming themselves, which was put into practice in 2004. In Iceland, gender mainstreaming of all public policy-making and actions has been included in (four-year) equality action plans since 1998. In that year, Icelandic authorities adopted a two-track gender equality strategy involving, on the one hand, special measures to improve the position of women and, on the other, integration of the gender perspective into all public policies.

In addition, governments may have a specific ministry for gender equality issues that is responsible for gender mainstreaming or coordinating the policy. In Sweden, since autumn 2006, the Minister for Integration and Gender Equality has been responsible for the coordination of gender equality policies. In Italy, the Ministry of Equal Opportunities (*Diritti e Pari Opportunità*) was established in 1996, at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. It is a ministry without an autonomous budget and is supported in its work by the Commission on Equal Opportunities between men and women. The government of Luxembourg created the Ministry for Female Advancement in 1995. In 2004 the name was changed to the Ministry of Equal Opportunities to better underline the fact that this ministry is not only dedicated to female advancement but to equal

opportunities between both sexes. The current minister is also Minister of Family and Integration. In Norway, responsibility for developing, coordinating and promoting the advancement of equality between women and men rests with the Minister of Children and Equality.

In order to support the process of gender mainstreaming, equality units or the appointment of equal opportunity officers may be helpful. In Ireland, two units to provide advice and support on gender mainstreaming were set up in 2000. The Gender Equality Unit established in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform has had responsibility for monitoring commitments to gender mainstreaming and providing advice to policy-makers, including in relation to data collection and analysis. Within the Department of Education and Science, the Education Equality Unit was set up with responsibility for gender mainstreaming within the educational system. In Belgium, a 'gender mainstreaming' group was set up within the federal government at the beginning of 2001. The main objective was to organise the practical application of a gender mainstreaming process at the federal level and to make visible any action undertaken and results obtained. Recently this group has been replaced by the Institute for Equality between Women and Men.

In addition to intra-ministerial support, inter-ministerial committees may be used to promote the process of gender mainstreaming. To give a few examples, Germany has installed the high-level Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Gender Mainstreaming (*Interministerielle Arbeitsgruppe, IMAGM*) with a preparatory working group at the working level and sub-groups on particular issues. In France, the inter-ministerial committee responsible for women's rights was reactivated in 2000, in order to ensure the consistency of the actions carried out by the different ministries, and also in order to propose initiatives and ensure the regular monitoring of decisions. In Luxembourg a regulation of 10 November 2005 has expanded and reinforced the mission of the 'Inter-Ministerial Committee for Equality of Women and Men'. This regulation has also established gender units within each ministry according to the 2004 policy declaration of the government. Austria has both an inter-ministerial working group (IMAG) for gender equality issues and an IMAG for gender mainstreaming. The IMAG for gender equality issues in the Federal Ministry of Women's Issues is basically responsible for: a) advising the federal government on all fundamental questions of gender equality as well as the promotion of women in the public sector, b) drawing up suggestions for the promotion of women in the public sector and c) appointing a representative to the Federal Equal Treatment Commission. The IMAG for gender mainstreaming aims at supporting and accompanying gender mainstreaming processes in all ministries and on all political levels. All ministries, as well as the Constitutional Court, Administrative Court,

the Ombudsman's Office, the Court of Audit and the Parliament's administration are represented in the IMAG for gender mainstreaming.

In addition to an "internal" infrastructure, policies may also be supported by external committees or gender equality institutes. In the Netherlands, E-Quality is a centre that focuses explicitly on equal opportunities issues. E-Quality is an independent knowledge and expertise centre for female emancipation in a multicultural society, subsidised by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, and is supposed to support the process of gender mainstreaming. The activities focus on providing information and expertise about emancipation and mainstreaming to policy-makers at various levels. In Germany, the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth founded the *Gender Kompetenz Zentrum*, an institute of applied research at Humboldt University in Berlin with the task of assisting the implementation of gender mainstreaming and consulting the federal government.

Though gender equality institutes may be very useful in supporting the process of gender mainstreaming, they also bear the risk that the responsibility for gender mainstreaming is passed exclusively on to them. A clear example is provided by Belgium. In 2003, a law was passed that provided for the creation of an Institute for Equality between Women and Men. The aim of the Institute is to watch over gender equality, fight against all forms of gender discrimination or inequality and elaborate tools and strategies based on an integrated gender approach. However, with the creation of this institute it seems as though an opportunity was created to shift the entire responsibility for gender affairs to this new structure and efforts by other actors appear to have stalled. The Irish national expert also refers to the risk of a narrow scope. In Ireland, an inter-departmental group chaired by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and supported by a social partnership consultative group was set up to produce the National Women's Strategy (NWS). The NWS was stated as intending to 'provide a framework within which the outstanding gaps in the position of women in Irish society are addressed over a 10-year period'. While the content of this promised NWS is as yet unknown, it may prove very significant (and potentially negative) if gender mainstreaming is seen as part of the NWS rather than also part of wider economic and social policy, e.g. the National Development Plan and National Agreements.

### Focus on gender equality

In addition to a transparent and effective structure, the tasks of a supportive unit also have to be defined quite strictly. Though it might make sense to combine equal

opportunities of women with equal opportunities of other disadvantaged groups, this may come at the expense of the attention paid to gender. In Hungary, after the last election in 2006, the Directorate General for Equal Opportunities was placed inside the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour. As a consequence of this process the status of issues connected to gender equality dropped, and the unit responsible for gender equality became only a department with just a few employees, whereas the Roma and disability issues were placed on a relatively higher level. In Poland, the attention of the re-formed Department for Women, Family and Counteracting Discrimination (DKR) within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MPiPS) shifted from gender equality towards wider concerns and an emphasis on family issues. In the view of women's NGOs, the pro-family policies are 'openly against equality policies because they view them [equality policies] as anti-family' and there is 'a justified apprehension among women's NGOs that gender issues will be marginalised and women's advancement jeopardised'.

Other examples in this respect are provided by Slovakia and the Czech Republic. In Slovakia, the government transformed the Department for Equal Opportunities and Antidiscrimination (which is part of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family) in 2005 into the Department of Family and Gender Policy. According to the Slovakian national expert, on the one hand this change is positive since for the first time gender policy became institutionalised. On the other hand, the linking of gender policy and family policy carries the risk that the concept of gender equality will be inspired by a traditional perception of the woman's role. The national expert from the Czech Republic gives the example of the introduction of the so-called 'gender focal point'. As of 1 January 2002, all ministries were charged with establishing at least a half-time position for equal opportunities for women and men. However, the actual responsibilities were not clearly defined. Moreover, the post was often attached to the post of human relations, which resulted in ambiguity about the function and work activities.

Finally, it has to be taken into account that commitment to gender mainstreaming also implies that stakeholders have a certain level of gender awareness. A positive example is provided by Sweden. As part of their gender mainstreaming effort, the government offices incorporate a gender perspective into their internal training programmes, for example those focusing on budget work and on the formulation of government bills. In addition, the regular course programmes are supplemented with special gender-related training. Around 150 of the 4 600 employees in the government offices are directly involved in work on gender mainstreaming and about 400 employees in the government offices have received training in gender issues. In Ireland the Gender Equality Unit in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform has

produced manuals on gender mainstreaming and supports training, research and other policy initiatives in relation to gender mainstreaming. The national expert from Iceland reports that the Prime Minister's Office has been working on a manual for the evaluation of law proposals from a gender equality point of view to be used by parliament, ministries, municipalities, public institutions, boards and committees. Other countries that report the development of a manual for gender mainstreaming are Belgium, Germany, Spain and the Netherlands.

### Instruments for gender mainstreaming

As well as a transparent structure aimed at gender equality, an essential precondition for successful gender mainstreaming is the availability of gender-disaggregated statistics. Such statistics enable the description of the actual situation in order to assess actual gender (in) equality and to prioritise areas for attention. In addition, monitoring the situation over time provides information on the trends in gender (in)equality. Innovative developments are reported by Italy and Denmark. Both countries have developed legislation to oblige employers to provide data on wages (for more details see Chapter 4). Several countries report important developments regarding the availability of statistics. In Italy, for example, ISTAT (the National Institute of Statistics) has increasingly invested in improving the availability of statistical information by gender since the '90s. This has involved not only the goal of overcoming the invisibility of women in many areas (division of labour in the household, violence on women, networks of informal help, etc.) but also overcoming the invisibility of men in certain areas (such as reproductive behaviour) typically considered as female domains. In Cyprus, the number of gender-disaggregated statistics provided by the government has increased lately. According to the national expert this is most likely related to the accession to the European Union. In Norway, since 2004, the Ministry of Children and Equality has provided part of the funding for a half-time position at Statistics Norway for the purpose of strengthening the development of gender-responsive and equality-related statistics. Among other things, Statistics Norway presents facts for a 'gender equality barometer' on an annual basis, reporting the status of gender equality in the main areas of society, and produces a gender equality index for Norwegian municipalities. Several countries (still) note, however, a lack of gender statistics. For example, according to the Irish national expert the development, presentation and analysis of gender disaggregated data continues to be extremely limited.

Gender impact assessment (GIA) is another important instrument for implementing gender mainstreaming. A systematically conducted GIA identifies whether

the policy under scrutiny has positive or negative outcomes in terms of promoting gender equality, and can be used to improve the quality and efficacy of policy design (see also Rubery and Fagan 2000). Only a few countries report the use of GIA. In Ireland, gender mainstreaming was adopted at national policy level under the National Development Plan 2000-06 (NDP) and gender impact assessment guidelines were adopted in March 2000 as a key administrative system for the implementation of gender mainstreaming. Recent evaluation showed that gender impact assessment forms were completed for 75% of specified measures and sub-measures under the NDP. According to the Dutch national expert, since 1998, only seven full GIAs have been conducted on a variety of policies, including a survey on the tax system for the 21st century (Ministry of Finance) and the life-course savings scheme of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. In the United Kingdom, the Women and Equality Unit (WEU), a crosscutting departmental unit, has produced a gender impact assessment toolkit, which is available from its website. Government departments are, however, not required to undertake GIA.

Gender budget analysis is yet another instrument for gender mainstreaming. With this instrument expenditure can be analysed from a gender perspective. Several countries report developments regarding the use of this instrument. In France, for example, a budgetary report (*jaune budgétaire*) will be drawn up each year in order to render visible 'the nation's efforts in favour of gender equality'. This document provides all the information concerning progress in equality and data by the ministries on efforts devoted to equality. According to the Italian national expert, gender auditing and/or budgeting have received increasing attention in recent years, especially by local governments (local councils at the commune, district and regional level), where most administrations have set up a department for equal opportunities. The general knowledge on gender auditing has certainly increased, but there is not yet any systematic analysis of local budgets on the basis of the gender impact analysis. An increasing number of local administrations have promoted some gender budgeting. However, this has been brought about mostly by means of 'external expertise' (academic researchers), and not by developing internally the skills required to do it on a regular basis. In the Czech Republic, gender budgeting is one of the methodologies that has been adopted by the government to monitor the gender dimension of policies. It is problematic, however, that no one actually applies them systematically in their work. The Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality has been promoting gender budgeting since 2002. In cooperation with the Department of Planning and Administration, the ministry coordinates the efforts to integrate gender and equality perspectives on work into the budget. Training and awareness raising have been core elements of the gender budget process and a guide to gender analysis in ministry budget bills has been developed.

## Monitoring

Finally, in order to assess the trends in gender (in)equality, an effective gender mainstreaming approach includes monitoring and evaluating actual performance. An interesting example in this respect is provided by the Netherlands. In 2004 the (independent) Auditing Committee for Emancipation (Commission Lodders) was installed with the task of evaluating to what extent the ministries contribute to the realisation of equal opportunities of men and women and to what extent departments contribute to the realisation of the targets set by the cabinet in the field of emancipation. The final report concluded that the equal opportunities policy and gender mainstreaming were not the focus of attention of the departments (VCE 2007). In general, the top of the departments showed no interest: emancipation was not seen as an urgent topic and there was hardly any internal infrastructure. Departments lacked specific knowledge in the field of equal opportunities and gender mainstreaming, emancipation impact assessments were hardly made and external experts were hardly used. An important issue of concern of the committee was the lack of support and coordination of the policy. Though these conclusions are not very positive from a gender equality point of view, the analysis is extremely useful in signalling the strong and weak aspects of the national situation.

## Involvement of social partners

Given the wide scope of gender mainstreaming, the involvement of the social partners is very important. Several countries provide positive examples. The government of the Flemish region co-signed the so-called pact of Vilvoorde with the social partners and a number of environmental organisations in 2001. This pact formulates 21 goals for the 21st century that are to be realised by 2010. It explicitly aims at eliminating all gender gaps, such as in education, in employment and unemployment, in poverty and social cohesion, in healthcare and in reconciliation. In France the Equality Charter (see also 'Equality infrastructure' on p. 33) was drawn up in partnership with the social partners. Portugal provides the example of the Observatory for Equality in Collective Bargaining (*Observatório para a Igualdade na Contratação Colectiva*). This observatory was composed of members of trade unions and of employers' associations, as well as representatives of the public Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment, representatives of the Labour Ministry and several independent experts. The goal was to scrutinise collective agreements in order to identify discriminatory practices against men and women (with regard to wages, job definitions, career ladders, flexibility schemes, measures of reconciliation of work and family life, etc.). Since 2001, however, this observatory has not been very active due to a shortage of human and material resources. In Slovenia, the Social Agreement

for 2003-2005, which involved the government, employers' organisations and trade unions, supported gender mainstreaming/gender equality in work and employment. Negotiations on the new agreement for 2006-2008 are still in progress. In the draft, however, gender equality and equal opportunities are given considerable attention.

## Conclusions

Box 3 summarises the state of affairs regarding gender mainstreaming in European countries. The countries show

a diverse picture of the organisation and implementation of gender mainstreaming. In some countries gender mainstreaming and gender equality is hardly developed, whereas others – the Nordic countries par excellence – have a long tradition in this field. Though most countries have developed initiatives regarding gender mainstreaming, the focus seems rather narrow and patchy. A systematic and comprehensive approach is generally lacking and actual implementation is often problematic. Moreover, attention paid to gender mainstreaming may be sensitive to political changes, resulting in a lack of consistency.

### Box 3: State of affairs regarding gender mainstreaming in 30 European countries

BE	In 2001, an initiative aimed at the definition of 'Strategic objectives of the federal government in terms of equality' was approved. As a result, heads of department within the federal government had to formulate objectives to be pursued within their respective portfolios.
BG	In Bulgaria, the visibility of gender in the policy process is improving slowly. Yet implementation remains difficult due to underdeveloped infrastructure and substantial regional imbalances.
CZ	Targets with regard to equal opportunities are set by the document 'Priorities and procedures of the government for promoting equal opportunities for women and men in the Czech Republic'. The document also defines measures that should serve to attain this goal, defines who is responsible for implementing the adopted measures, and deadlines. The text of the priorities is modified annually to fit the latest needs.
DK	Gender mainstreaming was formally introduced in all public planning by the Equality Act of May 2000. From then 'all new relevant legislation is subject to equality screening'.
DE	In 2000, all departments of the federal ministries were committed to implementing gender mainstreaming as a guiding principle in all political, legal and administrative measures of the federal government. In November 2001, the federal equality law became effective, providing the implementation of the principle of gender mainstreaming in its article 2. The federal states have also implemented gender-mainstreaming regulations.
EE	Gender mainstreaming in Estonia is weak. Gender expertise and knowledge is available, but an effective organisational structure and clear enforcement mechanisms are lacking.
IE	Gender mainstreaming has been adopted at national policy level under the National Development Plan 2000-06. Gender mainstreaming within the plan was to be implemented through three key processes: completion of gender impact assessment forms in relation to each relevant measure; inclusion of gender equality in project selection criteria; commitments to monitor and evaluate progress on gender mainstreaming.
EL	The gender equality policy in Greece has changed much, due mainly to the obligations and opportunities associated with EU membership. Since 1997 three medium-term action plans for gender equality have been adopted by Greek governments, together with several working documents. In addition, the equality infrastructure has been enriched to serve policy coordination and to cope with the implementation of the gender mainstreaming principle.
ES	The Law 30/2003 of gender mainstreaming has been the basis for subsequent developments such as the manual for their application elaborated by Fundación Mujeres (2005). Moreover, except for three regions (Cataluña, Extremadura and Andalucía) which had already legislated on gender mainstreaming, the remainder of the regions included this mandate in their equality laws or equivalent developments.
FR	The most important text with regard to gender mainstreaming is the Equality Charter. This charter, which was presented on 8 March 2004, is a document that was drawn up in partnership with many players (ministries, local authorities, social partners, associations and so forth). The aim is to introduce a gender mainstreaming approach in all actions.
IT	Gender auditing and/or budgeting have received increasing attention in recent years, especially by local governments. The general knowledge on gender auditing has certainly increased, but there is not yet any systematic analysis of (local) budgets on the basis of the gender impact analysis.
CY	Gender issues and gender equality have gained some prominence, mostly the result of mandatory requests to do so by the EC. However, the implementation and monitoring of policies remains rather weak.

### Box 3 (Cont.): State of affairs regarding gender mainstreaming in 30 European countries

LV	Starting in 2002, when the Latvian government was accepted as a participant in the Framework Programme of the European Community on strategy of gender equality, several projects on development and implementation of gender mainstreaming have been introduced in Latvia. As a result there is an increasing public awareness on gender-equality principles.
LT	In 2003 the parliament passed the Law on Equal Treatment. A mechanism for the enforcement of equal rights and opportunities of women and men has been put in place at government level and the Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson has been established. A set of concrete policy measures for the advancement of women were foreseen in the National Programmes on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women for the period of 2003-2004 and for the period of 2005-2009.
LU	In Luxembourg, the visibility of gender in the policy process is improving slowly. The principal tools for gender mainstreaming of public policies are the Ministry for Equal Opportunities created in 1995, the development of a legal framework on equality and of gender-disaggregated statistics.
HU	The issue of gender equality plays only a marginal role both in the ministry responsible for gender equality and in the whole national machinery.
MT	The main body dealing with gender equality is the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality between men and women. Several initiatives have been taken to promote gender equality.
NL	For several decades gender equality has been part of Dutch government policy. Since 2004 the departments have been responsible for gender mainstreaming. However, gender mainstreaming is not the focus of their attention and the gender equality infrastructure is rather weak.
AT	In 2000 the Austrian Council of Ministers set up an IMAG (inter-ministerial working group) for gender mainstreaming. This IMAG aims at supporting and accompanying gender mainstreaming processes in all ministries and at all political levels. As of 9 March 2004, a further gender mainstreaming resolution was adopted, focusing on the implementation of gender budgeting.
PL	The Plenipotentiary for Equal Status of Women and Men (PRRS) 2001-05 was a dynamic advocate for gender equality and equal status in general. The PRRS was dissolved, however, in November 2005 and part of its competencies taken over by a new Department of Women, Family, and Counteracting Discrimination (DKR) within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MPiPS). As a result of this restructuring, the potential for gender mainstreaming has become more limited.
PT	Equality bodies have shown some initiative in the creation of tools for gender mainstreaming, such as producing manuals and guides about how to accomplish gender mainstreaming in different organisational contexts. The main problem is however, the low level of implementation.
RO	Gender inequality has become more visible in public documents of social protection and social inclusion. However, implementation is difficult due to an underdeveloped juridical infrastructure.
SI	The Office for Equal Opportunities (OEO) is the main actor in activities oriented toward raising gender-equality and implementation of the principle of gender mainstreaming. The OEO is assisted by coordinators for equal opportunities at all ministries and local communities' authorities.
SK	Although some progress has been achieved, the sensitivity towards gender issues is still low. Problematic elements are: the unsatisfactory status of gender agenda, a lack of institutional environment, and a lack of clear vision. In addition, there is generally alleged weakness in cooperation of various stakeholders: government, parliament, trade unions, NGOs and experts.
FI	Achievement of equality between men and women has been a conscious political goal since the 1960's. However, gender equality still deserves attention. During 2004, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health produced a guidebook enabling government civil servants to assess the gender impacts of legislation. To support mainstreaming, the method of compiling statistics in different ministries will be revised so that the information can be produced by gender as extensively as possible.
SE	Gender mainstreaming has been an official strategy since 1994. A platform was created for gender mainstreaming activities. In time, however, it became evident that this was not enough and the efforts were intensified ten years later and a six-year plan (2004-2009) was adopted to provide a common framework for all gender mainstreaming work in the government offices.
UK	Since April 2007 the 'general duty' has come into force. This means that public authorities, and non-public sector organisations that provide public services, will have to take proactive steps to positively promote equality rather than solely taking steps to prevent discrimination. In addition, the establishment of the Women's Equality Unit and the associated 'Minister for Women' role has contributed to the development of gender mainstreaming processes.

IS	Limited progress has been made regarding the integration of gender mainstreaming into public policy-making. The gender-mainstreaming strategy is still at the experimental stage or restricted to a few experimental projects implemented in order to get 'good examples' of how the strategy can and should be carried out.
LI	Since 2002 gender mainstreaming has been gradually being introduced in public administration. A gender-mainstreaming steering committee has been formed with the government mandate to develop an implementation plan. However, concrete implementation measures and legally binding initiatives remain problematic.
NO	Gender mainstreaming is applied in the planning of the state budget. Gender action plans are found in all ministries as well as for specific sectors. The introduction of an activity obligation in the Gender Equality Act obliges both public and private establishments to report annually on the status of gender equality regarding personnel.

Source: National reports



## 3. Active labour market policies

As a result of the European Employment Strategy, Member States have intensified their efforts to improve the position of groups and individuals at the margins of the labour market (JER 2007: 4). Active labour market policies are an important instrument in this respect. As defined in *Employment in Europe 2006* (EC 2006: 120), labour market policies are 'public interventions in the labour market targeted towards particular groups in the labour market' and, as such, may be distinguished from general employment policies such as measures that lower labour costs. Active labour market policies (ALMPs) 'aim to increase the likelihood of employment or improve income prospects for the unemployed persons/groups who find it difficult to enter the labour market' (ibid: 120). Public employment services (PES) play an important role in this respect by facilitating the integration of the unemployed and other job seekers into the labour market (e.g. placement, counselling and advice). In addition, active measures include training, job rotation and job sharing, employment

incentives, integration of specific groups, direct job creation and start-up incentives (see also EC 2006: 121).

In order to promote gender equality, equal opportunities principles should be embedded within the operation of the public employment service. An effective method in this respect is the appointment of a specific equal opportunities officer, who has the necessary expertise. It also seems to be essential that PES employees are informed on the issue of gender mainstreaming and receive training in how to incorporate this in their work. Another important aspect of gender mainstreaming of public employment services is that active labour market programmes are open to all inactive people and not restricted only to benefit claimants, and that men and women have equitable access to ALMPs. This also implies that the specific needs of disadvantaged groups need to be addressed. See Box 4 for a checklist on gender mainstreaming of active labour market policies.

### Box 4: Gender mainstreaming of active labour market policies

#### STEP 1. GETTING ORGANISED

- Are there any guidelines or targets set with regard to equal opportunities?
- Are all relevant stakeholders aware of the gender equality issues?
- Is there a clear structure of responsibilities?
- Are training facilities available and/or is it possible to make use of external expertise?

#### STEP 2. LEARNING ABOUT GENDER DIFFERENCES

- Are all relevant statistics differentiated by gender?
- What is the gender division of the target groups?
- What is the gender division of specific disadvantaged groups like school drop outs, lone parents, people on long-term leave, the long-term unemployed and ethnic minorities?
- What are the relevant trends in this respect?

#### STEP 3. ASSESSING THE POLICY IMPACT

- Do men and women have equitable access to active labour market policies, including training?
- Are measures available to the inactive as well as the unemployed?
- Are there measures addressing the needs of specific groups, like lone parents (by providing childcare services), the disabled (by providing social services and technical aid), or women returners after long-term caring (by offering training facilities)?
- Do active labour market policies promote the entry of women into high quality, non-traditional jobs?
- Do men and women benefit in equal terms from initiatives to start-up businesses or any other services provided by public employment services?

#### STEP 4. REDESIGNING POLICY

Given the results of steps 1, 2 and 3, identify ways in which the policy could be redesigned to promote gender equality. Take into account that gender mainstreaming calls for a more joined-up approach, which may involve more than one policy area or department.

## Public employment system

Denmark has a long tradition of gender mainstreaming of the public employment service, for example by employing equality advisers in all offices. In the recent 'structural reform' of the employment service, a new framework for a more efficient and transparent labour market has been created, where employment services and municipalities are joined together in new job centres. The 91 new local job centres will all have an anchor person for equality and a connection to the new centre of equality consultants. In Germany in 1998 it was decided to promote equal opportunities between women and men as a permanent guideline of labour policy. Implementing gender mainstreaming began accordingly. In the course of the reform of the labour office, a strategic decision was taken to integrate gender mainstreaming and diversity into the day-to-day operation of the labour office. However, the idea of gender mainstreaming has to be implemented by the regional offices, and there are differences with regard to that process. In all regional offices equal opportunities commissioners for the labour market have been appointed. In November 2005, an overall plan for realising equal opportunities on the labour market was finally introduced. One of its main focuses was to provide information for people receiving no financial support, especially people wishing to return to paid work after a period of family care. Another important task is to consult with employers. In Italy local committees on equal opportunities in all public institutions have been set up. Though these committees do not have enforcement power, their work has had a positive impact as some local policies have been developed which specifically focus on women.

Apart from the appointment of an equal opportunities adviser, an essential condition for effective gender mainstreaming within the public employment services seems to be training PES employees. In Poland, a project 'Gender mainstreaming in labour market institutions' was set up, funded by ESF resources, and implemented between October 2006 and September 2007 throughout Poland. The participants in the programme are employees of regional and local employment offices and non-governmental organisations, including women's organisations. The activities encompass an opening and closing conference, 16 two-day training sessions and publishing of the projects' brochure. The training promises that participants will become familiar with the concept of gender mainstreaming, gain knowledge of practical ways for implementing gender equality in the activities of labour market institutions and learn how to apply the gender equality rules. The Latvian national expert considers training civil servants in order to raise awareness of gender equality to be the main part of the gender mainstreaming of active labour market policy

in her country. Courses have been developed such as 'Rights and opportunities of men and women: what has to be taken into account in the development of industrial policy?'. In addition, booklets, postcards and TV advertisements on gender equality in the labour market were produced.

A gender mainstreaming approach to public employment services would imply that active labour market programmes are open to all inactive people and not restricted to benefit claimants. In several countries, such as Denmark, Finland and Sweden, this is common practice. However, other countries, for example Germany, follow a more restrictive policy. This is often at the expense of women as they are generally over-represented among inactive people not on benefits, e.g. non-working spouses. A few countries report positive developments in this respect. In Ireland eligibility for active labour market programmes has been broadened to include lone parents and spouses of the long-term unemployed. This has provided an important access route for many women. According to the Irish national expert, the situation would be further improved by establishing eligibility on the basis of long-term absence from the labour market rather than the current emphasis on those registered as unemployed (among whom women are under-represented). In Iceland, since 2006, everyone between 16 and 70 years and searching for a job has the right to participate in active labour market measures. Lithuania has extended the list of groups that are eligible for support, in ways that are favourable for women. The new list now also includes pregnant women and – under certain conditions – inactive people. In this last group, the share of women is about 57%.

A clear example of gender mainstreaming in employment policy is provided by Greece. All employability schemes are open to both the unemployed (on benefits or not) and the inactive, provided they register with the public employment service. In line with the female share of the unemployed, a 60% quota for women in all employability schemes was announced in the NAP on employment for 1999. Since 2000, the quota has been continuously implemented on the announced numbers of all training, job creation and work-experience schemes. Since 2004 it also applies to the unemployed hired for part-time jobs in the public sector. In Spain, reduction of the female unemployment rate has been set as an employment target in the NRP of 2005. Though this target is not quantified, it is stated that women have to account for 60% of the beneficiaries of all action measures. In the implementation report to the government (2006) it was stated that this target was complied with. However, according to the Spanish national expert there is no data to support this claim.

## Training

One of the most important measures of active labour market policy is providing training in order to improve the employability of the unemployed and other target groups. Training seems common policy in European countries. However, despite the recurrence of training, examples of gender mainstreaming are rare. In Cyprus, the Human Resource Development Authority helps women to re-enter the labour market by offering training. However, the national expert does not consider this to be an example of gender mainstreaming, since the training encourages women to enter pink collar jobs that further segregate them into low paying positions. A similar point is made in the report of the Luxembourg national expert. Most of the training offered by the Employment Administration concerns low-skilled women and female-dominated occupations and industries, except for IT training. This might reinforce occupational and industry segregation among women. The Austrian national expert is more positive and provides a best practice example of gender mainstreaming. In Austria one of the targets of the Public Employment Service for 2006 was to promote the acquisition of vocational qualifications among low-skilled employees of the prime age group. In the interest of gender equality the criteria for participation in such measures differ for men and women. Men are only eligible to participate if they have completed no training exceeding compulsory education; women are also eligible if they have attained lower secondary education (apprenticeship or vocational school). The reason is the concentration of girls in a very limited number of trades, which implies that they – as opposed to male apprentices – have great difficulty finding skilled work after completing their apprenticeship.

## Job rotation and job sharing

Job rotation and job sharing 'include measures, which facilitate placement of an unemployed person or a person from another target group in work by substituting hours worked by an existing employee' (EC 2006: 121). In Portugal the Employment-Family Measure (EM-FAMÍLIA) supports the recruitment and training of the registered unemployed to replace workers on maternity, paternity or parental leave or special leave to assist children. This can help to reduce employers' resistance to providing work for women as the most likely leave takers. A similar measure in Lithuania is work rotation. This provides employers with the opportunity to replace permanent employees by unemployed/job-seekers in cases that are foreseen in collective agreements or for the period of 'special-purpose' leave. The duration of the period of rotation may be not longer than 12 months. The employers will receive monthly compensation equivalent to 0.5 of the minimum monthly

salary for every person employed under these conditions for the entire period of rotation. This measure should extend the possibilities of (re)integration of unemployed women and should help to eliminate hidden discrimination of women in the labour market.

## Employment incentives

Employment incentives may 'facilitate the recruitment of unemployed persons and other target groups or help to ensure the continued employment of persons at risk of involuntary job loss' (EC 2006: 121). Examples are subsidies or reduced social security contributions; the employer normally covers the majority of labour costs. Several countries, such as Germany, Slovakia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and Poland report such measures. For example, a new policy programme in Sweden is 'new start jobs'. This programme involves a subsidy corresponding to the employer's social security contribution for those employers who take on people who have been out of work for more than a year. The unemployed, people who have participated in a labour market policy programme or who have received full-time sickness benefits or sickness and activity compensation for more than a year are eligible for these jobs. The subsidy is available for the same length of time that the individual has been without a job, up to a maximum of five years. Slovakia provides contributions to employers for employing a disadvantaged jobseeker. Most of these jobseekers have been long-term unemployed. The share of women increased in 2005 up to almost 60%. Despite the fact that employment incentives seem to be quite common, the reported level of gender mainstreaming is disappointing (or is absent). A positive exception is Greece, where Act 3227/2004 provided for subsidies to employers equal to their social security contributions if they hire women with at least two children. Subsidies are granted for one year for each child. In Austria, within the Employment Support Act, an amount of €284 million is made available for active labour market policies in the years 2006 and 2007. About 60,000 people are to be supported and 90% of the funds are to be used for young people and women. Elements of the programme include short-term wage subsidies for (female) re-entrants to the labour market. The 2006 implementation report showed, however, that a relatively large share of the subsidy was spent on (a rather small group of) men.

## Target groups: disabled

Active labour market measures may also focus on the integration of specific groups into the labour market. One important group is the disabled. A gender mainstreaming

approach to policies for the disabled would be sensitive to the layers of disadvantage that can result from the combination of gender and disability, and recognise the specific difficulties that disabled women may face. A few national reports, such as those of Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and the United Kingdom, contain information on active labour market policies for the disabled. For example, to include the disabled and people from other social exclusion risk groups in the labour market in Latvia, there are proposals to create subsidised workplaces and to improve the infrastructure of social care and social rehabilitation institutions. In Poland amendments to the Act on Professional and Social Rehabilitation and the Employment of Disabled Persons are aimed at making the existing system more efficient. The act lifted the partial exemption of non-payment of certain contributions – thus lowering the previous subsidy to employers. But the act also created the possibility of a refund of costs associated with adapting the workplace to the needs of a disabled worker (up to 15 times average pay); introduced 60% refund of salary costs for a period of one year for those employed disabled who were registered in public employment services; replaced a one-time loan to a disabled person with a grant for taking up self-employment. The act aimed to move away from the emphasis on financial incentives associated with hiring disabled people towards the view that they are desirable, loyal and productive employees. Though in several countries, such as the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, women run a higher risk of becoming disabled, there are no examples of gender mainstreaming in this field.

### **Target groups: lone-parents**

Another specific target group of active labour market policies is lone parents. Among the countries that have developed policies for this group are Belgium, Germany, Greece, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom. In the United Kingdom, where over 90% of lone parents are mothers and lone parent households account for around one quarter of all working-age families, the New deal for lone parents (NDLP) has been developed. The NDLP was introduced in 1998 and has a 70% employment rate target for lone-parents by 2010, signalling an explicit shift in policy approach towards one where lone parents are actively encouraged to support their families via employment. The target group of the NDLP has been extended since 1998, and the element of compulsory participation has increased. The role of personal advisers, who provide guidance in interviews, is described as the 'key feature' of the NDLP. From April 2007 all lone parents who have been on benefit for at least a year and whose youngest child is under 14 are required to attend six-monthly work-focused interviews. Previously this requirement to attend such interviews had only applied to lone parents where

the youngest child is over 14. The government provides some additional support, such as tax facilities and reconciliation measures. This approach to activation measures is considered as a positive step in that it has meant that a programme has been tailored to the particular needs of lone parents, and the evaluation studies show that it has contributed to raising the employment rate of lone parents. However, from a broader gender mainstreaming perspective it should be noted that alternative policy options – such as increased support to lone mothers who want to stay at home while their children are young or measures to make part-time employment more financially feasible for lone mothers – have been disregarded. Furthermore, issues still remain with regard to the job quality and sustainability of employment for lone mothers.

In Ireland, the Community Employment Scheme (CE) is by far the most important active labour market programme. The CE scheme is designed to help people who are long-term unemployed and other disadvantaged people to get back to work by offering part-time and temporary placements in jobs based within local communities. CE schemes have played a critical role in the provision of community and care services (e.g. care, for the elderly home helps, meals on wheels, childcare) without which there would be an increased unsupported care burden on households and communities, primarily carried by women. This scheme has the important gender-positive approach of allowing eligibility for lone parents and the spouses of the long-term unemployed. As a result the majority of participants on the scheme have been women. Currently, there are over 20,000 participants on the scheme, about 57% of whom are women and nearly half of these are lone parents. Because it is locally based, provides childcare, allows for retention of secondary benefits and is part-time, it has proved to be an attractive option for lone parents.

### **Target groups: people returning to work after a long term of care leave**

A third target group of active labour market policies might be people returning to work after a long term of care leave. This seems especially relevant in countries that provide an extensive period of parental leave. The attention paid to this group is, however, rather limited. In Latvia, women, in particular those who left the labour market to care for their children, are a target group in the employment measures of the National Lisbon Programme of Latvia for 2010. The most important measure is (re)training. In Estonia there are some projects on renewal of skills/employment opportunities for women distanced from the labour market. Since 2004, Hungarian employment policy has prioritised the (re)integration of women in the labour market. One of the target groups in this 'Human Resource Development

Operational Programme' (HRD OP), which was financed by the European Social Fund, is women who want to return to work after childcare leave. In Germany, one of the main focuses of the gender mainstreaming strategy in active labour market policy is to provide information for people receiving no financial support, especially the groups which wish to return to work after a period of family care. However, according to the German national expert, the situation of female returners after longer periods of full-time care is problematic as their right to participate in labour market programmes is weaker than ever.

### Direct job creation

Another category of active labour market measures is direct job creation. This refers to the creation of additional jobs, usually of benefit to the community or of a socially useful nature, in order to find employment for the long-term unemployed or people otherwise difficult to place. The majority of the labour cost is normally covered by public finance (EC 2006: 121). A few countries report policy measures aimed at the creation of jobs. However, these policies are not gender mainstreamed. In France, for example, the 'plan for services to individuals' intends to create 500,000 neighbourhood jobs between 2006 and 2009. Though it is expected that the jobs created will concern women in particular, the gender implications have never been an issue. Moreover, the jobs are part-time and there are concerns regarding the likely job quality (e.g. in terms of working hours and pay). Belgium has developed a system of service vouchers, introduced in January 2004, as an incentive towards more active job search. The aims of the scheme are to fight undeclared work, finance the social security system, and respond to the demand for reasonably priced household services. In 2006, within the new system of service vouchers, 23,755 employees, mostly women and the low-skilled, provided services for a total number of 11,66 million hours to 88,400 users. It thus seems that the initial goal to create 25,000 new jobs by 2007 will be achieved (although workers who are allowed to operate under this new system need not necessarily be unemployed). The service voucher system touches the core of all time-allocation problems. Its main merit is that it extends the possibility of externalising time-consuming household tasks to less well-off families because of the affordability of the vouchers. As a result, it alleviates the multiple burden of women not only in higher income categories but also in low-income households.

### Start-up incentives

Start-up incentives include measures that promote entrepreneurship by encouraging the unemployed and target groups to start their own business or to become self-employed (EC

2006: 121). Several countries provide positive examples. In Hungary, women's labour market reintegration has been a priority since the beginning of 2004. Several projects focus on female self-employment (training, networking, and other related services for female business starters). There are three target groups for the programmes: women who are unemployed, inactive and those employed who run the risk of dismissal. Particular attention and priority is given to women who want to return from childcare leave or from long-care leave of other family members, and also to women over 40 years old. France is developing an action plan for promoting start-up firms by women and access to micro-credit, especially for women, will be made easier. In Greece, in the most recent schemes for the promotion of micro-entrepreneurship among the unemployed, mothers with young children or women caring for people with disabilities can declare their home as the site of their firm and include the costs of crèches or nursery among the expenses of the latter. Spain offers social security contributions reductions for enterprises created by women and a programme of micro credits for female entrepreneurs. The Latvian report mentions a study on women in business activities. Based on this study, problems in development of female business activity were detected and defined, possible solutions to these problems were indicated, and the introduction of the 'mentoring programme to encourage female entrepreneurship' was supported. Other national experts that report support for female entrepreneurs are Slovenia and Iceland.

### Conclusions

The examples provided above may be regarded as best practices. Box 5 summarises the general state of affairs regarding gender mainstreaming/gender policies with respect to active labour market policies in the EU countries. The box makes clear that gender mainstreaming of active labour market policies remains uneven and rather narrow in focus. This is in line with earlier conclusions of Rubery et al. (2006) regarding gender mainstreaming in active labour market policies. This conclusion may not be problematic if gender inequality is rather modest. For example, in Finland, labour force participation has been almost equal between men and women for a long time and gender gaps in employment and unemployment have been among the narrowest in the European Union. This is, however, a rather exceptional case as most national experts draw attention to existing gender inequalities.

### Box 5: Gender mainstreaming of active labour market policies in 30 European countries

BE	There are no gender mainstreaming processes or gender target settings. The most important exercise of gender mainstreaming as regards active labour market policy was probably the Job+ project in which grids were developed for the <i>ex ante</i> and <i>ex post</i> evaluation of employment policies from a gender equality point of view. A detailed analysis of available data to carry out such evaluations was realised.
BG	The employment policy seems well targeted in view of gender inequality. However, it is desirable that the active policy of the labour market should be more effectively oriented towards the labour reintegration of specific female groups and especially towards those in the rural regions.
CZ	The Czech Republic's employment strategy completely neglects the gender mainstreaming/gender equality perspective. Policies, documents and institutions in support of gender equality are not integrated into employment policy.
DK	Active labour market policies apply to all unemployed people, irrespective of whether they are receiving unemployment benefits, social assistance, start help or sickness benefits, and focus on individualised measures. As such, women should benefit from the policies on a more or less equal footing as men. The 'structural reform' has created a new framework for a more efficient and transparent labour market, where employment services and municipalities are joined together in new job centres. As the 91 new local job centres will all have an anchor person for equality and a connection to the new centre of equality consultants, this may mean a more efficient gender mainstreaming.
DE	Major labour market reforms have been implemented over the last three years, such as the 'Hartz' reforms. The new basic income scheme (ALG II) again establishes the household and not the individual as the benefit receiver, resulting in married and cohabiting women not having access to independent benefits. On the other hand, the inclusion of lone mothers in labour market programmes is a step forward. The situation of female returners after longer periods of full-time caring remain problematic as their right to participate in labour market programmes is weaker than ever. The government was forced to evaluate the gender impact of the labour market reforms. The report is expected in 2008, and meanwhile research suggests that the reforms did not improve women's position in the labour market and in labour market policy programmes.
EE	There is limited evidence of gender mainstreaming in active labour market policies.
IE	Policy in this area has not been developed with any explicit gender perspective or reference to gender equality and mainstreaming. However, it can be seen to incorporate a sensitivity to specific situations of low income and labour market disadvantage which brings important benefits to a significant number of women. Recent developments have broadened eligibility to active labour market programmes to lone parents and spouses of the long-term unemployed. This has provided an important access route for many women.
EL	There are several examples of gender mainstreaming in active labour market policies. These include female quotas for the beneficiaries of all employability measures that are open to both the unemployed and the inactive, higher subsidies for women than for men belonging to socially vulnerable groups, special job creation schemes for mothers with children, higher subsidies to employers hiring lone parents and returners, inclusion of all women or special female groups among the target groups of integrated programmes for regional development and wide-ranging national programmes for the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups.
ES	General employment targets are not accompanied by concrete measures other than the objective for women to be 60% of the beneficiaries in all action measures. With regard to mobilisation of the inactive, several measures are taken, such as social security contributions reductions for contracting women on indefinite contracts, various training programmes, action plans in enterprises and a specific programme for employment of victims of gender violence.
FR	Gender mainstreaming of active labour market policies has not been achieved. At no point before measures were adopted was the issue of their gender implications raised, even when it was quite clear that measures target women. There are only a few measures for lone parent families (mainly lone mothers) and unemployed women regarding childcare places and priority for employment. As for other economically inactive people, there have not been specific measures for women, for example concerning the problem of mothers of young children who have had a career break.
IT	Gender analysis in the area of employment has received increasing attention, both within local administrations and public institutions. This has been favoured by the setting up of local committees on equal opportunities in all public institutions. Though these committees do not have enforcement power, their work has produced some positive drawbacks in the government of local labour markets (at the regional, provincial and communal levels), with the development of some local policies specifically focused on women.
CY	There is minimal evidence of gender mainstreaming in policies; in fact, there are only specific and sporadic references to women as a separate category.

LV	Gender mainstreaming in active labour market policy measures is basically formulated as the training and retraining of women after childcare leave and awareness raising of civil servants about gender equality.
LT	In general, the state of affairs with regard to gender mainstreaming can be valued positively, especially considering future prospects. In the 'Programme of actions for the development of human resources for the period 2008-2013' a significant budget is foreseen for the implementation of active labour market policy measures.
LU	Men are relatively more represented in work placement measures than women. As far as training courses offered, the 'Employment Administration' (ADEM) respects the gender balance. However, most of the training proposed concerns low-skilled women and female-dominated occupations and industries. This might reinforce occupational and industrial segregation among women.
HU	There are a few projects for gender equality. An example is the 'Human Resource Development Operative Programme' (HRD OP) financed by the European Social Fund which prioritised women's labour market (re) integration. Apart from these projects there is no evidence that initiatives are gender mainstreamed.
MT	Gender mainstreaming is ongoing. However, additional analysis is necessary in order to point out where further gender mainstreaming is necessary.
NL	There is very limited evidence of gender mainstreaming in the field of active labour market policies. Several measures may have a gender impact. There are, however, no gender impact assessments available. In addition, though there is a strong emphasis in the labour market policies on participation, there is very little attention to the number of working hours.
AT	Despite successfully implementing gender mainstreaming in the Public Employment Service and the fact that, for many years, the share of subsidised women has been higher than that of men in the area of active labour market policy, a gender mainstreaming and/or gender equality approach is largely missing.
PL	Regarding gender there seems to be a degree of learning evident in successive policy documents. A recent policy document prepared by the Ministry of Regional Development is the first to explicitly refer to gender mainstreaming, which is to be implemented horizontally across all tasks and actions and at each stage of the programme.
PT	In the present state of affairs, gender mainstreaming is done exclusively at the level of the monitoring of the evolution of some indicators for the purpose of diagnosis. Gender gaps are measured and their eradication is fixed as an aim of employment policies, but it is not clear how this is supposed to be done. And, as Portugal has already reached women's employment rates established by the Lisbon Strategy, there is no pressure to enact policies especially directed towards increasing female employment.
RO	There is little evidence of gender mainstreaming of active labour market policies.
SI	The explicit mentioning of gender equality has been increasingly present in employment policy documents since the 1990s. However, while important gender-related problems and inequalities at the labour market were discussed and policies and measures were envisaged in order to deal with them (especially in the Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities of Men and Women until 2013), there is no systematic gender mainstreaming.
SK	The active labour market policy measures are formulated in gender-neutral terms. Many findings show the need to pay more attention to women and to give them more support. However, the concept of gender mainstreaming is not developed in active labour market policy.
FI	Active labour market policies are usually understood to be gender neutral in Finland. This is mainly because labour force participation has for such a long time been almost equal between men and women. Indeed, the last ten years have witnessed women becoming more active in participating in employment measures like re-training or going to jobs with employment subsidies. That is why the long-term unemployment is lower among women than among men.
SE	In the latest labour market policy bill, there are direct references to gender mainstreaming and gender mainstreaming has its own subheadings, indicating that a gender mainstreaming infrastructure is in place in the government offices. It is, however, difficult to assess the effectiveness of this infrastructure in the National Labour Market Board, the Labour Market Administration and the public employment service.
UK	A suite of targeted 'new deal' activation policies and in-work tax credits have been introduced with the objective of moving people off benefits and into employment. Gender issues have been addressed explicitly by the government in relation to some aspects of active labour market policy for some target groups (e.g. lone parents); in other areas the gender mainstreaming has been limited or absent (e.g. non-employed women with an employed partner).

### Box 5 (Cont.): Gender mainstreaming of active labour market policies in 30 European countries

<b>IS</b>	The Directorate of Labour integrates the gender perspective into its activities by publishing information on unemployment and participation in different education and training schemes according to sex. Moreover, it administrates special measures to enhance women's entrepreneurship and job creation on the one hand and a gender mainstreaming project on the other. Active employment measures are now open to everyone in search of work, which means that women outside the labour market may also participate.
<b>LI</b>	An active labour market policy is almost non-existent due to very low unemployment rates. In addition, though the female labour market participation is rather low, raising it has never been one of the government's political objectives. In previous years some political attention was given to the situation of women wanting to re-enter the labour market after a career break. However measures focus primarily on isolated cases.
<b>NO</b>	In general, the focus on gender in the active labour market programmes is moderate. Women's participation in labour market measures is at the same level as men's, and women profit from such measures to the same extent as men. While women in many contexts are not defined as a target group with specific needs, there are, however, groups of women that need more specific attention.

Source: National reports.

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## 4. Pay and career policies

Gender equality cannot be achieved without both equality in pay and in opportunities but, in practice, prospects for closing the gender pay gap are also closely intertwined with issues of segregation and continuity of careers. Since 1999 reducing the gender pay gap has been part of the European Employment Strategy and policy efforts have intensified over the years. In 2003, Member States were called on to formulate targets in this respect in order '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' (OJEC 2003 L197/20). Eliminating the gender pay gap is also an important objective of the Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men, 2006-2010 (EC 2006). The persistence of the gender pay gap, according to the Roadmap, 'results from direct discrimination against women and structural inequalities, such as segregation in sectors, occupations, and work patterns, access to education and training, biased evaluation and pay systems and stereotypes' (EC 2006: 3). Indeed, an uninterrupted career is still an important factor in improving the position of women in the labour market in general and in closing the gender pay gap in particular. This underlines the importance of a broad range of policies, varying from equal pay legislation to career policies.

The gender pay gap refers to the differences between the wages earned by women and by men. In order to take into account differences in working hours and the impact of the income tax system most estimates are based on differences in gross hourly wages. The gender pay gap is then calculated as the ratio of women's average gross hourly wage to men's average gross hourly wage, or as the difference between men's and women's gross hourly wage as a percentage of men's average gross hourly wage. Yet estimates of the gender pay gap differ widely, depending on the data available, the specific sample and the method used. As a consequence, there is wide variation in results over time, between countries and even among studies for a particular country. On the basis of data of the Structure of Earnings Survey 2002 (SES), which is considered as the

most reliable source with respect to harmonised pay data, it appears that at the level of the EU 25, the gender pay gap is almost 25% (private sector only; data for Malta missing). The largest gap is found in the United Kingdom (30%), the smallest in Slovenia (11%). Comparing the development of the gender pay gap over time is a complicated affair, primarily because of data problems. Yet, the gender pay gap at the level of the EU 25 seems to be fairly stable over the last decade. The variation is, however, large, with some countries showing a decrease and others an increase (see also Plantenga & Remery 2006).

Given the complexity of the causes of the gender pay gap and in line with the suggested multi-faceted approach, the gender mainstreaming of pay policies would imply the need for a variety of measures. Firstly, countries may implement an equal pay policy aiming at tackling direct or indirect gender wage discrimination. Examples include (additional) legislation, availability and dissemination of information and initiatives with respect to job evaluation. Relevant in this respect is also the development of an appropriate infrastructure. Secondly, equal opportunities policy may contribute to a reduction in the gender pay gap. Given that an uninterrupted career is still a significant factor in explaining the overall gender pay gap, it is extremely important to enable women to have more continuous employment patterns. Relevant measures in this respect are childcare and leave facilities, and measures aiming at desegregation of the labour market, horizontally as well as vertically. As policy with regard to reconciliation is covered by Chapter 5, this chapter will concentrate on policies focusing on desegregating employment patterns. A third line refers to gender mainstreaming of 'general' wage policies aimed at reducing wage inequality and improving the remuneration of low-paid and/or female-dominated jobs. A complicating factor regarding equal pay issues is that in most countries wage setting is seen as the primary responsibility of social partners. Governments may therefore be rather reluctant to interfere. This chapter will therefore also address good practices at the level of social partners. See Box 6 for a checklist on gender mainstreaming of pay and career policies.

## Box 6: Gender mainstreaming of pay and career policies

### STEP 1. GETTING ORGANISED

- Are there any guidelines or targets set with regard to equal pay and career policies?
- Are all relevant stakeholders aware of the gender equality issues?
- Is there a clear structure of responsibilities?
- Are training facilities available and/or is it possible to make use of external expertise?

### STEP 2. LEARNING ABOUT GENDER DIFFERENCES

- Are all relevant statistics differentiated by gender?
- What is the distribution of male and female employees over the wage structure?
- Are women overrepresented among the low paid?
- What are the relevant trends in this respect?

### STEP 3. ASSESSING THE POLICY IMPACT

- Is the equal pay legislation effective at lowering the gender pay gap?
- Is there (additional) legislation that obliges social partners to bargain over equal pay?
- Are companies required to survey and analyse pay practices on a regular basis?
- Are job evaluation measures used on a regular basis?
- Do women returners have access to training?
- Do policies promote (horizontal and vertical) desegregation of occupations and workplaces?
- Are wage policies aimed at reducing wage inequality and improving the remuneration of low-paid and/or female-dominated jobs?

### STEP 4. REDESIGNING POLICY

Given the results of steps 1, 2 and 3, identify ways in which the policy could be redesigned to promote gender equality. Take into account that gender mainstreaming calls for a more joined-up approach, which may involve more than one policy area or department.

## Equal pay legislation

The legal framework of the EU with regard to equal pay is quite extensive. The legal basis and implementation of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value is laid down in article 141 of the Treaty establishing the European Community and in the Equal Pay Directive (Directive 75/117/EEC). National legislation and regulations must comply with these provisions. To be more effective, however, equal pay policy may demand additional legislation. A few countries provide examples in this respect. In Luxembourg, since June 2004, a law was in force that obligates social partners to bargain on equal pay. Under this law collective bargaining has to include a provision concerning the implementation of the principle of equal pay between men and women. The results of the collective negotiations have to be written down. Similar legislation exists in France, where gender pay bargaining in companies and sectors is obligatory. Moreover, this legislation will be revised in 2010 and in case of lack of evidence of bargaining, the introduction of penalties will be considered (financial contribution based on the total wage bill).

Additional examples are provided by Sweden and Finland. In Sweden, the Equal Opportunities Act (EOA) states that employers who employ ten people or more are required annually to survey and analyse pay practices and differentials and prepare a plan of action for equal pay. The 'Equal Opportunities Ombudsman' (EOO) should ensure the proper functioning of the EOA and has the power to impose an administrative fine on employers who fail to submit the information requested. The EOO may also submit requests to the 'Equal Opportunities Board' for the imposition of a penalty on employers who do not observe the rules on 'active measures'. A similar example comes from Finland where the Equality Act between Women and Men requires employers with more than 30 employees to implement an Equality Plan. The law also includes a provision in which the employer is obliged to report on his or her procedures when discrimination is suspected. In addition, this act gives the employee representative at the workplace an independent right of access to information on employees' wages and contractual conditions. An inquiry can be carried out if there is reason to suspect wage discrimination on the basis of sex.

A quite innovative policy in this respect is provided by the United Kingdom. Here, the incoming public sector duty on gender equality will, from April 2007, oblige public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and harassment, and promote equality of opportunity between men and women. It represents a significant move towards mainstreaming gender equality issues into employment practice and service delivery in the public sector, and will require public authorities to produce a gender equality scheme. In drawing up their gender equality schemes, public authorities will be under an obligation to consider the need to have objectives that address the causes of the gender pay gap and how to address them. Public authorities will be obliged to carry out this consideration in consultation with employees and trade unions, and on the basis of evidence and data.

### Infrastructure

The establishment of gender specific institutions may support the implementation of equal pay legislation. A few countries mention equal pay working groups. In the Netherlands, for example, the 'Equal Pay Working Group' has been active between January 2006 and March 2007. This working group was responsible for informing all relevant parties about equal pay legislation. Moreover, it attempted to stimulate compliance with this legislation. In addition to this, the working group examined the causes of unequal payment and tried to find solutions to reduce the gender pay gap. In its final document the working group has made recommendations with respect to compliance with legislation, the collective agreement as an instrument to stimulate equal pay, training with respect to wage negotiations and the role of works councils. In Finland, several task force groups and forums have been established to reduce the gender pay gap. For example, the Minister of Social Affairs and Health appointed a high-level monitoring group for the period from 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007. This tripartite monitoring group was assigned to monitor the implementation of the Equal Pay Programme and the related action programme. When it is obvious that the achievement of the objectives of the programme is not proceeding as planned, the monitoring group undertakes measures, as necessary, to achieve the agreed objectives. In Norway in 2006 the government appointed a 'Commission on Equal Pay'. In the mandate for the Commission's work it is emphasised that the government's platform is based on an active labour market policy, in which gender equality and equality in pay, career and skills development are crucial elements. The gender pay gap is identified as a main gender equality problem. The mandate states among other things that the Commission shall consider measures that can contribute to reducing gender wage differences. The consequences for public budgets, the operation of the labour market and the labour supply are to be considered.

The Norwegian national expert considers the appointment of the Commission to be an important political signal, placing the gender pay gap on the political agenda and revitalising the debate on equal pay.

### Availability and dissemination of information

The availability of information is an important starting point when tackling the gender pay gap. Moreover, dissemination of information is an important tool to raise awareness of the extent and seriousness of the problem. The national reports provide a variety of measures in this respect. Innovative examples include legislation to oblige employers to provide data on wages. In Denmark, after a long period of discussion, the 'Law of Equal Pay for Men and Women' was altered in the summer of 2006 and now includes the obligation to provide enterprise statistics, broken down by gender. This is restricted to enterprises with a minimum of 35 employees, and groups where a minimum of 10 women and 10 men hold the same job. In Italy, public and private firms employing more than 100 employees have an obligation to provide statistical information on the employment conditions of their employees broken down by gender every two years (1991 Law on Positive Actions; art. 9, Act 125/1991). The companies have to give the report to the local equality advisers and to the trade unions at the company level. These reports could be used by equality advisers and/or trade unions to tackle horizontal and vertical segregation, as well as the gender pay gap at the company level. In Spring 2006, the Ministry of Labour announced that new software for the submission of these reports was made available (at an experimental level). According to the Italian national expert this can be considered a significant development for the implementation of the obligation. In Portugal since 2004, all employers, with the exception of central, regional and local administrations, public institutes and other collective public entities, as well as employers of domestic service workers, are obliged during the month of November to display in a visible place (or for online consultation) for a period of at least 30 days, the list of their staff indicating each employee's earnings (Law no. 35/2004, of 29 July, Articles 452 to 457 and 490). This information must be made available to the public authorities, as well as, on demand, to trade unions and employers associations.

### Job evaluation

According to EU legislation, men and women should be paid equally for equal work or work of equal value. In order to determine the value of a job, job evaluation systems are often used, which, however, may be (in)directly discriminating against women. It is therefore important that a critical assessment of system-specific characteristics and criteria is made. In several countries policy initiatives are taken

aimed at the development and application of gender-neutral systems of job evaluation (comparable worth strategy). In Belgium, for example, the EVA project has been launched. 'EVA' stands for analytical EVALuation and its goal is to bring the social partners and the industries a step closer to a gender-neutral system. Within this project three objectives are pursued. A first objective is revision of the existing training programme, organisation of new training courses and sensitisation of the social partners. Secondly, the gender effect of the development and the introduction of analytical methods on wages is analysed. The third objective is the design of a universal analytical gender-neutral job classification method to analyse all job types. In Luxembourg, the government and the social partners have committed themselves to analysing systems of job classification with respect to discrimination. The Ministry for Equal Opportunities with the Chamber of Commerce and private employees provide training courses on gender-neutral evaluations of job classifications for firm managers.

Yet another example is provided by Austria. In 2000, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour commissioned a research project on non-discriminatory work evaluation and work organisation. The research project was completed in 2002 and published by the Ministry for Health and Women in 2003. Building on the experience and results of this research project, in 2004 a guideline for the application of non-discriminatory analytical work evaluation scheme was drawn up. The guideline offers a summary of information on the most important terms and legal bases, conditions, instruments and examples for the application of non-discriminatory analytical work evaluation. According to the preface by the Minister for Health and Women, the guideline is intended to provide information both for employees and employers, and to encourage them to implement the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. In Iceland, job evaluation schemes have a long history in the municipality sector. In recent years, the municipalities have made an effort to implement job evaluation schemes that should enable them to implement equal pay for work of comparable worth. The City of Reykjavik together with the Association of Icelandic Municipalities has been at the forefront in implementing a job evaluation system as a means to achieve equal pay.

## Segregation

Horizontal as well as vertical segregation is an important explanation of the gender pay gap. Several countries have formulated equal opportunities policies aiming at reducing this segregation. Policies to reduce horizontal segregation generally focus on young girls in order to encourage them to consider a wider range of occupational options, and to opt for science and technology instead of caring, cleaning and catering. The Greek national expert mentions a pro-

gramme that aims at promoting gender equality in secondary education and post-secondary initial training. Among others, actions include training teachers in detecting gender inequalities in school curricula and classes, using vocational guidance and counselling services of schools to combat gender stereotypes in occupational choices, encouragement of girls to participate in initial training courses in specialties where women are under-represented, and support for girls in their transition from school to work. The Norwegian national expert mentions the project 'girls and technology in the southern part of Norway' as an example of a policy initiative to reduce horizontal segregation. This is a co-operation between NHO, the main Norwegian employer federation, and two counties. The objective is to increase girls' interest in technology in order to broaden the supply of skilled labour in a longer-term perspective. This project is considered a success as the number of girls that choose technological fields of education increased by 30% in one year.

For women over the age of 25, the Austrian government has developed a 'skilling offensive' with the emphasis on craft-technical occupations and new technologies, consciousness-building and support in the choice of occupation and extension of the occupational spectrum for women. In Slovenia, one of the four qualitative aims for equal opportunities of men and women is a decrease of vertical and horizontal segregation and gender pay gap. In Lithuania, policy measures are foreseen to promote lifelong learning and to decrease gender segregation in school curriculum. A positive example is also provided in the report on the United Kingdom. In 2003 the government announced new initiatives to encourage women into science. The total budget allocated is £1.5 billion, of which more than half will go on a science resource centre to work with employers to improve recruitment and retention. It will do this by coordinating existing activity, promoting good practice, identifying and rewarding good employers, raising the profile of women in science and building a database of expert women.

Policies to reduce vertical segregation generally aim to increase the number of women in high-level and/or management jobs. A number of policy measures have been implemented in Greece since the beginning of the 2000s aimed at equality in career opportunities. Most of them are still in operation and funded by the European Structural Funds. One example is the 30% quota for women's representation on promotion panels in the public sector. Another example is the scheme of 'positive actions in favour of women in large firms and SMEs', that aims at supporting the career advancement of women in firms and the upgrading of their skills. Eligible actions include information and sensitisation of female workers regarding the goals of the programme, counselling and training, improvement of educational attainment, teleworking and

the creation of a care infrastructure. The Slovenian national expert refers to a project, started in 2005 and funded within the EU initiative Equal, which is directed at improvement of career building and vertical mobility of women. In Spain, the Optima Programme favours women's access to decision-making positions. In 2003 a total of 61 enterprises participated in this programme and obtained the Optima certificate.

In Norway 'women and management' has been a major issue in the public debate in recent years, and there have been several policy measures to reduce the gender imbalance. The most prominent public policy measure is the Public Limited Companies Act, enforced on 1 January 2006. This act imposes a gender balance (approximately 40/60%) in the boards of all privately owned public limited companies (ASA), amounting to about 500 companies. Establishments that have not obtained a gender balance by 2008 will be sanctioned. Similar laws were already in force for wholly state-owned companies. Other initiatives aiming at recruiting more women managers include the development of a database with qualified women, which now includes about 6,000 women and the project 'Female Future', a project started by NHO, the main Norwegian employer federation, in cooperation with public sector actors, Innovation Norway and some counties. Companies are members of the project and they select talented women from their staff who get particular training. Five hundred women will be involved between 2006 and 2008. Moreover, NHO has established its own database of potential female board members.

### Wage policies

Finally wage policies should be mentioned as an important policy lever to address the issue of equal pay. Wage policies in this respect may vary from the introduction of a mandatory minimum wage, thereby setting a floor to the wage structure, the centralisation of the system of wage bargaining, thereby decreasing inter-industry and inter-firm wage differentials, and the revaluing of low paid and/or female-dominated jobs, for example as part of an anti-poverty or equality strategy. The prospect for a successful implementation of such a wage strategy does not seem to be very promising, however, given the current emphasis on decentralised or even individualised systems of wage setting. Yet some examples of beneficial wage policies are available. In Ireland, the National Minimum Wage (NMW) was introduced on 1 April 2000 at a level of £4.40 (equivalent to €5.58), rising to €8.30 per hour in February 2007. The NMW has a role to play in narrowing wage differentials because women tend to occupy a greater proportion of low-paid jobs. In Lithuania, the minimum hourly payments and minimum monthly wages have been increased by 11%. According to the national expert this is an important

development with regard to closing the gender pay gap. In the United Kingdom, the statutory National Minimum Wage was introduced in 1999 and subsequently up-rated. Though gender mainstreaming was not a major consideration in this policy, given that women are over-represented among the low-paid it has played a role in closing the pay gap by improving their relative wage position.

Lithuania provides an example of improving the remuneration of female-dominated jobs. In 2006, the government increased the wages in some female-dominated public sectors of economy. The average earnings of employees in all categories in health care institutions were raised by nearly one third (31.6%) in 2006 and will be raised by an additional 20% in 2007. In education the wages were raised by 5-25%, depending on different categories; an increase of average wages for lecturers/professors in higher education of 20% is planned for July 2007. Since October 2006 the wages for social workers and employees in the institutions of Culture and Arts have been raised by 20%.

### Involvement of social partners

In most countries social partners are important actors regarding wage setting. As such, their involvement with respect to the gender pay gap may be essential. Several national reports provide best practices. In France on 1 March 2004, the national inter-sector agreement was signed. One part of the agreement is on equal pay and contains three articles. One article refers to the desire of the parties for the principle of equal pay between men and women for work of the same value to be effectively implemented. A second article estimates the residual gender pay gap as being 5%, which cannot be explained and therefore appears to be discriminatory. The signatories of the agreement expect the implementation of measures to lead to a significant reduction of this gap in the medium term. The third article states that when a gender pay gap in average wages is objectively observed, occupational sectors and companies should make its reduction a priority. In Slovenia, the president of the biggest trade-union confederation, the Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia, has called upon member trade unions to introduce the gender pay gap problem into the collective bargaining agenda. A positive example is also provided by Slovakia. The Slovak Republic Confederation of Trade Unions prepared and implemented the project Equal opportunities policies for men and women in Trade Unions years 2002-2004. The main aim of the project was to promote the agenda for equality and opportunity in the labour market. One part of the project was focused on strengthening the principle of equal pay at all levels of collective bargaining. According to the national expert, however, the impact of the project was rather limited.

## Conclusions

Despite long standing legislation on equal pay, women in Europe still earn less than men. The persistence of the gender pay gap emphasises the need for multi-faceted policies targeted both on increasing the female participation rate as well as on institutional factors such as the overall level of inequality. The ultimate policy mix may depend on national particularities

and the prevailing analysis of the origins of the gender pay gap. Although some best practices are mentioned, most experts indicate that the gender pay gap has a rather low profile both in the public debate and in the policy agenda (see Box 7). One of the main problems seems to be that there is no real owner of the problem, as nobody feels responsible for the gender pay gap. Organising political support for closing the gap seems to be an important challenge for the near future.

### Box 7: Gender mainstreaming of pay and career policies in 30 European countries

BE	The gender wage gap/gender career gap is an issue that has recently been placed high on the agenda by policy-makers responsible for equal opportunities. However, since the basic legal framework to guarantee equal pay to women and men was put in place, only haphazard legislative attention has been given to gender equality in pay. There is no mainstreaming approach of potentially adverse effects of new legislation.
BG	The problem for the country is the low level of pay and that is why the focus of policy is directed towards improving the quality of employment.
CZ	Wage policy and tackling the gender pay gap are not on the policy agenda and never have been during the transition or in the past couple of years.
DK	The most important policy document of recent years, the Welfare Agreement, does not discuss pay or equal pay as part of the future welfare policy, and the Ministry of Equality does not mention equal pay as one of the three main goals in 2007.
DE	The government plays a limited role in wage setting policy and in career policy outside the public sector. As such, the government does not seem to implement its own legal obligation with respect to equal pay and closing the gender wage gap.
EE	In the action plan of the Ministry of Social Affairs a target is set to reduce the gender pay gap, yet concrete programmes are not pursued.
IE	No new policies have been introduced to tackle gender pay gaps. However, policies towards increasing the minimum wage and indexing welfare payments are likely to benefit women, particularly those on low pay and in low-income households.
EL	There has never been any attempt to gender mainstream wage policy. However, a number of measures deployed in the field of career policy are expected to have an indirect positive impact on tackling the gap through their direct effect on desegregation of employment by gender.
ES	The relatively low participation of women in negotiations for collective agreements, the complexity of new concepts like the equal pay principle for work of equal value, and the lack of training in equal opportunities prevents further development of the gender mainstreaming strategy to close the wage gap.
FR	French law incorporates unequal pay in a gender mainstreaming approach. It provides for gender mainstreaming in pay bargaining and no pay agreement should escape this principle. The law offers the possibility of penalties, but so far these have not been used.
IT	The gender pay gap is not on the agenda of policy-makers, nor it is considered as a critical issue in collective bargaining. The crucial problem is not so much the gender pay gap, but the gender employment gap.
CY	There is no specific policy targeted at closing the gender wage gap. Raising the minimum wage to half of the median national wage seems a positive step, since most minimum wage jobs are held by women. However, this effect is not yet seen.
LV	The Ministry of Welfare has recognised the gender pay gap. Nevertheless, neither action plans nor studies are available specifically on the gender pay gap.
LT	The gender pay gap and segregation of labour market are recognised as urgent problems. Recently some positive actions were taken in order to improve the situation; for example in 2006 the government increased wages in some mostly feminised public sectors of economy such as health care and education.

LU	The gender pay/employment gap is an issue that has recently been placed high on the national policy agenda. Initiatives to tackle the gender pay gap concern the positive action programme and training targeted at female returners. In addition, since the law of 30 June 2004, collective bargaining has to include a provision concerning the implementation of the principle of equal pay between men and women.
HU	Pay and career policy plays only a limited role in employment policy.
MT	Reducing the gender pay gap is not a priority.
NL	The new government seems to be applying a slightly more 'offensive' strategy with regard to the gender pay gap. However, it is unclear whether new policy efforts will be developed. There are no indications of gender mainstreaming in pay-related policy areas such as social security and the labour market..
AT	Little has been done over recent years to substantially reduce the gender pay gap. The few initiatives the government has taken mainly dealt with funding research projects, awareness raising and/or the provision of information/tools for narrowing the gender pay gap. There are several gender-mainstreaming initiatives at the level of collective agreements.
PL	The gender pay gap is not high on the political, social or economic agenda. Concrete programmes are not pursued.
PT	Since 2002 the gender pay gap has almost disappeared from the political agenda. The orientation of the present government seems to be to leave the search for gender pay gap solutions to the social dialogue field.
RO	Gender issues are not on the political agenda.
SI	Recently the gender pay gap entered the public debate. The topic appears in public policy documents (such as NAP/NRPs on employment) and social partners (mainly trade unions) started to put it on their agendas.
SK	The gender pay gap is not sufficiently reflected in the relevant policy documents. Also the social partners still pay little attention to equal pay.
FI	The gender pay gap has been in public discussion quite often. Several task force groups and forums have been established in order to reduce the gap. The gap got much publicity in connection with the revision of the Law on Gender Equality during 2003-2005.
SE	The issue of equal pay is regulated in the Equal Opportunities Act and the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman will ensure the proper functioning of this act. Compliance with the law has improved as regards identification and analysis of gender-based pay differentials by individual employers and the adoption of appropriate measures.
UK	The government has introduced many recent measures to promote gender equality in pay and career opportunities, such as the 'gender duty' in the 2006 Equality Act. However, the overall policy approach focuses upon supply-side issues, and particularly that of mobilising the low skilled and inactive into employment. Efforts to change employers' practices are smaller scale and mostly voluntary
IS	The current government has had a clear commitment to pay equality among men and women. However, measures aimed at tackling the gender pay gap have, so far, been limited in scope and constrained to the municipality level.
LI	The gender pay gap is not an issue for political debate. There is no empirical information on income available. Under the aegis of gender mainstreaming it has become a little easier to argue for the necessity of data collection and – at least for the public sector – the first steps in collecting such data and finally assessing the gender pay gap are now being taken.
NO	Equality in women and men's wages is one of the longest standing issues on the gender equality agenda. In 2006 the government appointed a 'Commission on Equal Pay'. The appointment of the commission is an important political signal, placing the gender pay gap on the political agenda and revitalising the debate on equal pay. The commission's proposals for future strategies will include measures outside the wage settlement processes.

Source: National reports.



## 5. Reconciliation policies

In the Roadmap for equality between women and men, the reconciliation of work, private and family life is presented as one of the six priority areas of action for gender equality. According to the Roadmap 'services and structures are adapting too slowly to a situation where both women and men work. Few men take parental leave or work part-time (7.4% compared to 32.6% for women); women remain the main carers of children and other dependants. Men should be encouraged to take up family responsibilities, in particular through incentives to take parental and paternity leaves and to share leave entitlements with women' (CEC 2006: 5). In the Roadmap it is emphasised that reconciliation policy not only serves to improve gender equality; it is also a necessary condition for the achievement of the EU objectives of growth, employment and social cohesion. In fact, the need to create a flexible economy, using the full potential of the workforce, the changing family forms and the demographic pressure from an ageing population have made the reconciliation of work and family one of the major topics on the European social agenda.

Reconciliation policies can be defined as policies that directly support the combination of professional family and private life. As such they may refer to a wide variety of policies ranging from childcare services, leave facilities, flexible working arrangements to other reconciliation policies such as financial allowances for working partners (Plantenga & Remery 2005, 25). A gender mainstreaming perspective in the domain of reconciliation is to a certain extent established in so far as most European governments recognise the impact of care responsibilities on women's employment. Yet countries differ in their policy responses and in their implicit or explicit focus on gender equality. Some countries encourage the supply of public and private services, others improve the opportunities to work part-time hours. Some still consider reconciliation a woman's affair, whereas others recognise the role of men in care and family responsibilities (mainly encouraging taking up or improving paternity leave schemes). See Box 8 for a checklist of gender mainstreaming of reconciliation policies.

### Box 8: Gender mainstreaming of reconciliation policies

#### STEP 1. GETTING ORGANISED

- Are there any guidelines or targets set with regard to reconciliation policies?
- Are all relevant stakeholders aware of the gender equality issues?
- Is there a clear structure of responsibilities?
- Are training facilities available and/or is it possible to make use of external expertise?

#### STEP 2. LEARNING ABOUT GENDER DIFFERENCES

- Are all relevant statistics differentiated by gender?
- Are there leave provisions to cope with care of elderly adults?
- What is the take-up of leave facilities by gender?
- What is the coverage rate of childcare facilities by age group?
- What are the trends in this respect?

#### STEP 3. ASSESSING THE POLICY IMPACT

- What is the impact of leave in terms of labour market behaviour?
- Do leave arrangements for parents promote or discourage attachment to the labour market?
- Do policies promote equal sharing of care responsibilities?
- Is there evidence of commitment to meet childcare coverage targets and to provide affordable, high quality childcare?
- Are opening hours for childcare compatible with full-time employment?
- Are there childcare facilities for those engaged in lifelong learning?

#### STEP 4. REDESIGNING POLICY

Given the results of steps 1, 2 and 3, identify ways in which the policy could be redesigned to promote gender equality. Take into account that gender mainstreaming calls for a more joined-up approach, which may involve more than one policy area or department.

## Leave facilities

Leave facilities are an important element of reconciliation policy. Especially when children are young, time-related provisions such as leave arrangements and career breaks are extremely important for combining work and private life. Since 1996, national policy in the field of leave arrangements has been underpinned by a European directive which obliges Member States to introduce legislation on parental leave to enable parents to care full-time for their child over a period of three months. In principle this refers to an individual, non-transferable entitlement. This directive ensures that a certain minimum standard is guaranteed within the Member States. Over and above this, however, there is a broad range of national regulations. The duration of parental leave, for example, differs substantially, ranging from the period until the child's third birthday in some countries to only three months in others. Also level of payment varies widely, with some countries providing unpaid leave, while other countries compensate leave takers more or less for their loss of earnings. In addition to differences in length and level of payment, parental leave can be organised along family or individual lines. If the former is used as the basis, parents are in a position to decide who will make use of the parental leave allocated to the family. If both parents have an individual, non-transferable entitlement to parental leave then both can claim a period of leave. If one parent does not take advantage of this entitlement the right expires. Especially in the ten new Member States, parental leave is often framed as a family right (see for a detailed overview of leave entitlements Plantenga & Remery 2005; Fagan & Hebson 2005).

The wide variety in leave regulations makes the actual policy choices rather diverse. Some countries report a lengthening of the leave facilities and an improvement of the level of payment. Other countries report a shortening of the leave period, an increase in the flexibility or a change in entitlements. The actual policy choices are likely to depend to a large extent on the different starting points, the current situation of the labour market and the gender equality challenge. Practically all countries, though, report an uneven involvement of men. Some countries react with specific regulations with regard to the father's take-up of leave, others remain rather passive, considering reconciliation to be mainly a female issue.

## Extending leave entitlements

In Ireland, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands both maternity and parental leave facilities used to be relatively short. In addition, parental leave was unpaid. In recent years, however, these countries have lengthened the leave entitlements and increased the level of financial support. In

Ireland, maternity leave was extended by four weeks in 2006 and further weeks are promised for 2007 bringing paid leave to 26 weeks. In addition, maternity leave payments have been increased from 70% to 80% of reckonable earnings. Parental leave entitlement has also been increased which, while it continues to be unpaid, can potentially be combined with maternity leave to establish a new leave entitlement of 56 weeks in 2007, 26 of which are paid at 80% of pay (for those with a sufficient employment record payment). In addition, the maximum age for an eligible child under parental leave entitlements has been raised from five to eight years. In the United Kingdom, statutory maternity rights were extended in 2002 and improved further under the Employment Act 2003, which also introduced new rights for paid paternity leave. Further improvements were made in 2007 with the implementation of the Work and Families Act (2006). This implies that from 1 April 2007 all employed mothers are entitled to a 12-month leave period regardless of the length of services or number of hours worked. At the same time the statutory maternity payment has risen from six months to nine months, with goals to extend this period to 12 months by the end of the Parliament. Finally, in the Netherlands, the new government agreed to extend the length of parental leave from 13 to 26 weeks.

A less straightforward example is provided by Portugal. Portuguese mothers can now choose between having a 120-day maternity leave at full pay (which was the previous regulation) or a 150-day maternity leave paid at an 80% rate. At the workplaces, some of the reactions to these new regulations have been somewhat ambivalent, because poor working mothers cannot afford to lose a month's salary (which is what the 150-day leave represents), and feel they are victims of social injustice and at the same time guilty of being 'bad mothers' for choosing to return to work one month sooner. In turn, employers tend to see those choosing to stay the fifth month as less devoted workers and apply pressure for an earlier return to work (especially if mothers belong to the higher categories of personnel).

The Portuguese example already makes clear that although leave facilities are an important means of reconciling work and family, the outcomes in terms of gender equality may be rather ambivalent or even negative, especially if the leave is long and/or the take-up of leave is highly gender biased. The fact that leave regulations imply by definition distance from the labour market and instead facilitate (care) time, makes these regulations sensitive to the risk of reinforcing traditional options relating to care and work. The result may be problems for reintegration of women back into the labour market as well as a reinforcing of the gender division of labour. In Finland, for example, the well-developed system of leave facilities seems to cause new forms of discrimination against young women entering the labour market. According to the Finnish national expert, many share the opinion that

the increased proportion of fixed-term employment among young, well educated women is to a certain extent a consequence of employers' fear of the costs they might incur from motherhood.

### Shortening leave entitlements

The negative and gender-biased impact of long leave periods may of course be overcome by shortening the statutory right. An important example in this respect is provided by Germany. In January 2007, a new income replacement scheme (*Elterngeld*) was set up, covering a period of one year and paying two thirds of the former salary. This supersedes the former income replacement scheme (*Erziehungsgeld*), which provided flat rate benefits for up to two years after childbirth subject to an earning's ceiling. According to the German national expert, the new *Elterngeld* represents a change in the paradigm of German family policy as it recognizes that mothers are 'employed' people who need income replacement during the period of childcare. In comparison with the former *Erziehungsgeld*, the period of entitlement has been reduced from two years to one year as a reaction to the critique that the withdrawal from the labour market had been rather long. *Elterngeld* is paid for two additional months in cases where the father also takes the leave, prolonging the entitlement period to a maximum of 14 months. The logic of the new scheme has been criticised, though, because after one year it is hardly possible to return to employment because of a lack of childcare facilities for young children.

### Facilitating the combination of leave entitlements and paid employment

Another remedy for the negative effects of long leaves is to create more opportunities for leave takers to participate in the labour market. Examples of this strategy are provided by the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia. In the Czech Republic, since 2004, parents on parental leave (which covers a period of three years) have been allowed to engage in paid employment without any limitations on the amount of earnings, while at the same time receiving parental allowances. From February 2006 it is also possible for a parent who is collecting a parental allowance to use public childcare services for up to four hours a day for a child older than three years. This may be helpful for mothers trying to return to the labour market, as in the fourth year of parental leave they lose the right to return to their original employment. Also in Hungary (with a parental leave system of two years, mainly taken up by women) the conditions for paid employment for parents on leave have been relaxed. As of January 2007, parents receiving child homecare allowance are allowed to take up or return to fulltime employment after the child is one year old. This means that

young parents receiving childcare allowance (*gyes*) can keep both their jobs and their entitlement to the childcare allowance. The final example is provided by Slovakia (with a parental leave of three years). Whereas previous legislation strongly reduced the parental benefit of working parents, since July 2005 new legislation has enabled the parents with a child under three years old (i.e. the parent on parental leave) to work without any consequences for the parental benefit. The only existing condition is that the child is not visiting the state childcare facility.

Although the combination of parental leave and paid work offers a solution for long periods of absence, the status of 'leave' as a transitional stage between being 'active' and 'non-active' in the labour market becomes rather blurred. In fact, if parents may combine leave benefits with gainful employment, the actual facility resembles a childcare allowance rather than a facility granting time off the labour market. In this respect, the policy development in Austria resembles those in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, although the starting points are different. In Austria, in 2002, the parental leave benefit for working parents was replaced by the childcare benefit (*Kinderbetreuungsgeld*) for all mothers (or fathers) independent of their employment status, although limited by an income ceiling of €14,600 per annum. As a result, unlike the previous parental leave payment, the entitlement to childcare benefit is no longer related to current or previous work status nor to whether a parent actually takes care of the child, but only to whether the claimant's income is below €14,600 per annum. According to the Austrian national expert, the effects of the replacement of the parental leave benefit by the childcare benefit are significant in two respects. First, the decoupling of parental leave and the claim to benefit has led to the fact that more fathers draw childcare benefit (2005: approx. 3.3%) because unemployed, studying or self-employed fathers may now claim the benefit. Second, the lengthening of the period over which the benefit may be claimed has led to, on average, longer labour market absences among women, resulting in massive re-entry problems.

Another possible effect of the introduction of a childcare benefit, independent of the actual labour market position, is that it increases the differences between women. Depending on the specifics of the actual policies, each parent may choose its own optimal combination of money, time and services, creating different trajectories for young parents. While such a policy may be defended with a reference towards individual choice, there is a real risk that the introduction of such individualised schemes creates a disincentive for labour market participation, especially for women with a low earning capacity. Several national experts already report developments in that direction. In Sweden, for example, there is to be an investigation into whether municipalities should be allowed to pay a child-raising allowance until the child is three years old, so long

as the child does not use publicly financed childcare. It is expected that women with limited possibilities in the labour market and with bigger problems combining employment and care will use the child-raising allowance. This might imply lower employment rates or lower work hours, particularly for immigrant and single mothers. The French national expert is even more explicit in this respect, stating that current French practices concerning work-life balance reinforce social inequality amongst women. On the one hand, for highly qualified women, access to employment and even a career is increased thanks to childcare provisions. On the other hand, for less qualified women, leave facilities enable them to withdraw from the labour market for a longer period of time.

### The involvement of fathers

In practically all countries there are major differences in the take-up between women and men. Even in countries in which the take-up of leave among fathers is relatively favourable, the duration of the leave taken by men is most of the time shorter, as a result of which the labour market (and care) impact of the take-up is less pronounced. One of the most positive examples comes from Sweden. Here the proportion of all parental allowance days used by fathers increased from 7% in 1990 to 20% in 2005. In Finland, the proportion of fathers using at least some form of family leave has increased to almost 70% in 2003. Although this is a quite impressive percentage, only 4.3% of all parental leave days are taken by men because of the relative short duration of men's parental leave. There has been much discussion in the recent years about fathers' participation in the care of children and use of family leaves. The target of getting fathers to take more responsibility has even been written into the Action Plan of the government in 2003. A survey carried out in 2004 showed that Finnish employees quite unanimously (89%) think that fathers should participate more in the care of children. At the same time, the majority's (57%) experience is that men are not encouraged sufficiently by work organisations to use different family leaves. According to opinions the atmosphere at workplaces is much more in favour of mothers' family leaves.

The involvement of men in the care of small children may be promoted by specific arrangements, such as paternity leave or specific regulations with regard to a father's take-up of parental leave. In Portugal, for example, male employees have a fully paid parental leave of 15 days. In Spain, the new Gender Equality Law grants a non-transferable additional paternity leave of eight days (compared to the previous two days leave). Paternity rights have also been extended in Lithuania. Since July 2006, fathers are entitled to one month paternity leave starting from the birth of a child. During this period the fathers receive a benefit amounting to 100% of

previously earned wages. A necessary precondition of the benefit is, however, that the parents are married; cohabiting couples are not included. Finally in the United Kingdom, the government plans to give fathers a right to take up to 26 weeks 'additional paternity leave' (APL) before the child's first birthday, some of which may be paid if the mother returns to work after six months but before the end of her maternity leave period. The government plans to introduce this alongside the extension of maternity pay to 12 months 'before the end of this Parliament'. The objective is to enable fathers to take a greater role in bringing up their children, and allowing mothers who wish to return to work earlier to do so; thus providing scope for a more equitable division of paid leave between mothers and fathers.

Other countries have introduced specific regulations with regard to the father's take-up of parental leave. Most well known in this respect are the Norwegian 'daddy days'; the 'daddy' quota was expanded from four to five weeks in 2005 and to six weeks in 2006. Italy also has a father's friendly specific provision. In this country, both working parents have the right to a total of ten months leave, to be divided with maximum flexibility. Of these ten months, the mother has the right to a maximum of six months starting from the end of her obligatory maternity leave. The father also has six months of optional leave. However, in order to favour the sharing of family responsibilities and the prompt return of the mother (who has already had obligatory maternity leave) to the workplace, if the father decides to take more than three months optional leave, the couple is entitled to an extra month, thus having a total of 11 months at their disposal. Furthermore, both parents can use sickness leave for their children (unlimited for the first three years, limited to five days a year for children aged three to eight). A negative example is provided by Denmark. Here leave entitlements have been extended since 2002. At the same time, parental leave was organised as a family right without weeks being reserved for the father. As expected, the extension furthered inequality. Women extended their maternity/parental leave by around 50%, using the greater part of the shared parental leave. Currently, mothers take on average 39 weeks, fathers less than 3 weeks leave.

A new fiscal policy to stimulate the equal sharing of leave facilities is proposed by Sweden. The details are not completely worked out yet, but the 'gender equality bonus' implies that the parent who has the lowest earnings – usually the mother – will receive a tax reduction when she starts working after the parental leave and the father starts taking parental leave. To receive the whole tax reduction the mother has to go back to a full-time position. If she goes back and works half days, the tax reduction will be half the amount. The gender equality bonus might strengthen the fathers' caring of their children, but this policy might also tend to maintain women's part-time work, since the gender equality bonus allows for part-time work but then

with a smaller tax deduction. If the gender equality bonus is combined with the voluntary municipal child-raising allowance, these policies might halt or even reverse the trend of the mother's declining part-time work.

Other countries like Iceland and the Netherlands rely on the fact that parental leave rights are individualised and non-transferable and/or on the fact that parental leave is paid. Although strict comparisons are not possible, it seems likely that the father's use of parental leave is particularly low if the parental leave is organised along family lines and not well-paid. The Greek national expert, for example, comments on the fact that in Greece the paid leave is a transferable right of the mother to which the father is entitled only if the mother does not make use of it: 'This means that gender mainstreaming is not applied in the case of childcare leave, since the underlying logic of leave is to enable mothers (and not parents) to cope with care duties'. In Belgium, the socialist party has proposed to increase the duration of parental leave from three to six months. In addition, parental leave would no longer be granted as an individual right. Instead, it would be possible for parents to freely choose how to divide the total period of 12 months. According to the Belgian national expert, the results of such a policy change would be clearly negative as the take-up of parental leave would almost surely get even more feminised. In short, if governments are serious about getting fathers to use care-related leave, then the key requirements are that the leave is paid and non-transferable.

### Innovative developments

Some countries have developed or are developing new, innovative working-time arrangements that (may) support the reconciliation of work and private life. A well-known example in this respect is the career-break scheme in Belgium, which was introduced in 1985. After some alterations, the current career break system in the private sector gives employees the following possibilities:

- a complete suspension or a half-time reduction with a duration of one year over the whole career. An extension is possible by a collective labour agreement (at sector- or company-level) but with a maximum of five years. This is valid for all employees irrespective of their age;
- a 1/5th working-time career reduction with a duration of five years over the whole career. This is valid for all full-time employees irrespective of their age;
- a half-time or 1/5th reduction without maximum duration (available up to retirement age) for employees aged 50 and over who have been employed for 20 years or more.

In the public sector there are similar rights in most services, with the same provisions but with a longer duration than the private sector: six years of complete suspension and six years of work-time reduction. Contrary to the private sector there is no threshold with respect to the amount of people taking a career break at the same time. The statutes can however provide certain limitations to avoid organisational problems. In the Netherlands the life-course scheme came into effect in January 2006. According to this scheme, individual employees should get more opportunities to combine work with other activities. Employees may save up to 12% of their gross annual income tax-free for a 'life-course product'. The maximum amount to be saved corresponds with 2.1 years of leave with 70% of the last gross salary. Employees may use it to finance a period of (unpaid) leave during their career. However, employees have no legal right to a period of leave; employers have to approve the request for leave, with the exception of leave regulated by the Work and Care Act. As the scheme has only recently been introduced, a full assessment is still difficult. Nevertheless a gender impact assessment indicated that the scheme may increase gender differences as it seems likely that women will use their savings in order to finance a period of parental leave, while men will use their savings for re-training and/or early retirement (Keuzekamp 2004).

### Services

In addition to leave facilities, personal services are extremely important in the life of working parents. This applies in particular to childcare services, as care responsibilities constitute a major obstacle to full employment. The importance of measures in this area has long been recognised by the European Council and Union. In March 1992 the European Council passed a recommendation on childcare to the effect that Member States 'should take and/or progressively encourage initiatives to enable women and men to reconcile their occupational family and upbringing responsibilities arising from the care of children' (92/241/EEC). Ten years later, at the 2002 Barcelona Summit, the aims were formulated more explicitly and targets were set with regard to childcare. Confirming the goal of full employment, the European Council agreed that Member States should remove disincentives to female labour force participation and, taking into account the demand for childcare facilities and in line with national patterns of provision, strive to provide childcare by 2010 to at least 90% of children between three years old and the mandatory school age and at least 33% of children under three years of age. Although comparability is severely hampered by a lack of harmonised statistics, national evidence suggests that in most countries the Barcelona childcare targets are far from being reached. At the same time we have to acknowledge that there are large differences between countries.

## The availability of childcare services

In a few countries childcare is framed as a social right. This applies for Finland, Denmark, Sweden and Iceland. In December 2004 the Danish Parliament passed an amendment to the act on guarantees of childcare (*Familieministeriet 2004*). From July 2005, all municipalities have to offer a guarantee of childcare from the age of six months until the school age of six years. If the municipality fails to supply day care facilities for a child the parents are entitled to economic compensation corresponding to private care, with a maximum of the costs of day care facilities for children in the age group. In Iceland, it is the child who has the right to a place in public childcare and not the parents. Since the first law on childcare services came into force in 1974, an emphasis has been put on developing the educational and pedagogical role of the childcare services. During these years, both the names of the childcare facilities and the professional title of the trained staff has been changed to underline even further that childcare is a part of the school system. The facilities are now called pre-primary schools (*leikskólar*) and the title of trained staff is pre-primary schoolteacher (*leikskólakennari*). Today, children can enter pre-primary schools from the age of zero to five years or until they start primary school at the age of six.

In Norway, unlike the other Scandinavian countries, childcare services are not a social right. Yet, since the late 1980's, full coverage has been the common political goal for care services. Declining prices have increased the demand for childcare, thus further escalating the pressure on providing full coverage. The price reform has also increased the demand for full-time places. One reason for this is the high quality of childcare institutions, which are strictly regulated with regard to pedagogical competence, staff/child ratios and physical space. Also in Slovenia, a full coverage of childcare services has been supported by a suitable legislative and institutional framework. Unlike many other countries in Eastern and Central Europe that underwent economic and political transition at the end of the last century, in Slovenia the importance and availability of public care services did not diminish after the transition. Most women choose to stay at home for one year (taking up the whole length of their maternity/parental leave) and then to return to full-time work. Yet another example is France. For a long time the childcare system has offered almost total coverage of children from the age of two to three for working parents, as well as quite long opening hours, which are almost compatible with full-time employment.

At the other end of the spectrum, quite a number of countries report a persistent low level of childcare facilities. In Ireland, the lack of comprehensive public policies towards childcare has been identified at both national and at EU level as a major barrier towards further increases in women's employment. In Italy, the national government

acknowledges that childcare is a critical issue, and that services should expand in order to support the increase in female employment. Between 2000 and 2004 there was an improvement in the coverage rate for small children from 7.4% to 10%, but this is not enough. In Lithuania, one of the most urgent problems with regard to gender equality has been the insufficient provision of childcare services – the demand for the places in nurseries and kindergartens is not satisfied, especially in rural areas. Austria also faces a persistent lack of measures promoting a 'simultaneous' reconciliation, such as childcare facilities. In Poland, the development of affordable and good quality pre-school facilities is seen as one of many ways of improving the situation of mothers of young children; however neither quantitative targets nor current levels are provided. In Portugal, full-time, year-round pre-school childcare is still in limited supply and expensive. Other examples of countries with low provisions or childcare services are Malta, Cyprus, Greece, Spain and Latvia.

Regional disparities are also an important issue when it comes to the availability and accessibility of childcare facilities. In West Germany for example, the number of childcare facilities for the one to three year olds is very low, and a large share of mothers will not be able to return to employment after one year of parental leave and therefore stay home without any financial benefits. However, in 2003, the federal government's Agenda 2010 has scheduled an increase in the number of childcare places for children under three years. The target was to provide facilities for 20% of small children in every federal state. Yet, as local authorities are responsible for the actual supply, there are large regional differences between the *Länder* and the municipalities in terms of available places. A recent report of the federal government concludes that the actual availability is increasing: 7.7% of children under three years had found a place in 2005 against 3.9% in 2003. In East Germany the situation is much better. The GDR followed a policy of the 'working mother' which aimed to integrate women into employment. It developed childcare services, including all children over the age of one and on a full-time base. The East German facilities are still covering a great part of the demand with places for 37% of the children in 2005.

## Declines in the level of services

Slovakia is a typical example of a country in which the provision of childcare services has declined after the transition. The process of decentralisation of the state administration, which started at the beginning of the 1990s, shifted the responsibility for childcare facilities to the level of the municipalities. According to the new state administration, the municipal authorities are obliged to set up and manage the kindergartens, but do not have responsibility for managing crèches for the youngest children. The interest in this type

of service has been declining over recent years because of the high personal and institutional costs, and the relatively high financial costs to the parents. It has led to a reduction in the number of childcare facilities. Also in Hungary a lot of nurseries were closed after 1990, because the state and/or the local authorities no longer supported them. Currently there is a shortage of childcare places, particularly in the villages and rural areas, but also in the suburbs, where many young parents have moved recently.

### Increases in the level of services

A few countries report a real expansion of childcare services. In the United Kingdom, since the launch of the National Childcare Strategy in 1998, there has been an expansion of a variety of forms of government-funded pre-school and out-of-school childcare provision, accompanied by more developed auditing mechanisms to monitor and raise the quality of provision, and new forms of financial support for parents to assist with childcare costs. The National Childcare Strategy also established some targeted government-funded 'Sure Start' programmes to expand childcare provision in low-income and economically deprived areas. The strategy was accompanied by the 2000 launch of a high profile government work-life balance campaign directed at persuading employers to develop reconciliation policies based on 'business case' arguments. In December 2004, the government published a new ten year plan for childcare with an associated budget line which extends the 1997 Strategy on provision, including substantial changes in the financial support directed at parents to assist with childcare costs (HM Treasury 2004) and a new 'Childcare Bill' placed before Parliament. Another example is provided by the Netherlands. After years of stimulatory measures, the new Childcare Act came into force on 1 January 2005. In the new system, the financing of childcare is demand-driven with the aim to increase parental choice. After some changes in the financial support for parents, the act should guarantee affordable childcare for all parents. Finally, Greece reports a significant expansion of childcare services, though starting from a very low level.

### Quality and flexibility

The overall availability of childcare provides little information on the quality of the services, both with regard to opening hours as well as child/staff ratio and the formal qualifications of the employees. In Belgium, for example, working parents encounter problems with the opening hours of facilities. For infants, most day care arrangements are open for nine hours a day but for pre-schools aged children, the nursery schools are open for just seven hours a day, too short for full-time working.

In the United Kingdom, the situation is even worse as state-provided nursery schools are normally mornings only. The German national expert points to the fact that the skill-level of employees in crèches and kindergartens is relatively low. Most employees (96% are females) have only a three-year vocational school-based training as a governess (*Erzieherin*). The low skill level is accompanied with a low salary both in publicly run institutions and in institutions run by charity organisations, churches and other non-profit organisations or firms. In Estonia, the childcare system is currently under review. Proposed new measures include the development of professional child-minding standards, vocational courses and training in child-minding, as well as the creation of databases listing childcare facilities, registered child minders and available training modules. The importance of high quality services is also referred to in the Roadmap for equality between men and women (EC 2006).

### Employer involvement

The reconciliation of work and private life may be furthered by an active involvement of employers. In Finland, companies with more than 30 employees have to provide equality plans, which contain measures on the discouragement of overtime work and fixed term contracts, the encouragement of men to take family leaves and the support of employee-oriented flexibility in working hours. In Italy, over the last few years, increasing efforts have been undertaken to encourage companies to apply for funds supporting reconciliation projects at the workplace. But these resources are largely under-utilised. According to the Italian national expert, the unwillingness to put work-family issues high on the political agenda is related to the prevailing organisational culture that is unable to conceive of working mothers as a resource, instead of a cost. This implies the inability to innovate work organisation to retain female workers *after* motherhood.

Quite a number of countries report initiatives in the field of 'labelling'. In Portugal, the prize 'Equality is Quality' was created in 2000. It is awarded to companies presenting good practices, particularly with regard to the integration of equality into management and the culture of the organisation, and to the reconciliation of work and family life. In Hungary, the competition for the 'Award of Family-Friendly Workplace' was launched in 2001, while Liechtenstein created a biennial Equal Opportunity Prize for woman-friendly and family-friendly businesses. France introduced the Equality Label at the end of 2004. It is a reward for exemplary practices in companies, administrations and associations; assessment is based on 18 criteria, including sensitivity to gender balance and the equality of all employees, access to vocational training, general employment conditions and work-life balance measures. In Latvia, the Ministry of Family

Affairs has started an initiative of 'Family friendly enterprise' in 2005, while Malta plans to launch an award for employers offering work-life reconciliation policies at the workplace in 2008.

## Conclusions

Box 9 summarises the actual state of affairs with regard to reconciliation policies and the level of gender mainstreaming. Although reconciliation is high on the policy agenda in quite a number of European countries, actual policies remain rather limited. The majority of countries are far from reaching the Barcelona target for children aged below three. In addition, there seems

to be no uniform trend with regard to childcare facilities. Some countries, like the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, are clearly moving towards a higher coverage. Others are more or less at a standstill whereas in some of the former eastern European countries there is a clear downward trend. Also policies with regard to parental leave seem rather diverse. Depending on the different starting points, some countries report a lengthening of the leave facilities, other a shortening, an increase in the flexibility or a change in entitlements. Practically all countries, though, report an uneven involvement of men. Some countries react with specific regulations with regard to a father's take-up of leave, others remain rather passive, considering the reconciliation mainly a woman's issue.

Box 9: Gender mainstreaming of reconciliation policies in 30 European countries	
BE	Belgium has a rather well developed system of reconciliation policies, both with regard to childcare services and leave entitlements. The level of gender mainstreaming is rather limited though, as a result of which actual policies may not always further gender equality.
BG	The conditions for combining work and private life changed considerably during transition. Partly as a result of the changes, the debate about reconciliation has in recent years entered the Bulgarian policy discourse.
CZ	Reconciliation policies are mainly discussed within the context of the female employment rate; there is a considerable lack of institutional support for fathers.
DK	The reconciliation policy in Denmark gives equal rights – but apparently not equal possibilities: women take the major part of parental leave, women work part-time to care for children or other dependants and in family-friendly workplaces are able to reconcile work and family.
DE	Reconciliation of work and family is high on the policy agenda; there are targets set to increase the number of childcare places and the parental leave scheme has been reorganised. However, the resistance to a more modern concept of working mothers has been rather strong and is not yet accompanied by a convincing concept of equal opportunities for women and men in society.
EE	Childcare facilities remain in short supply. In addition, reconciliation is mainly seen as a women's problem.
IE	A number of significant new policies have recently been introduced, including extended leave entitlements and additional financial support to parents of young children. Yet Ireland lacks a developed system of reconciliation policies, which has been identified at both national and EU level as a major barrier towards further increases in women's employment.
EL	Reconciliation policies focus on the creation of a publicly funded infrastructure for the care of children, the elderly and the disabled, and the extension of the schedules of public nurseries, kindergartens and schools.
ES	Reconciliation policy is high on the policy agenda. Led by the public administration ( <i>Plan Concilia</i> ), their example is also followed by big enterprises. There is also a shift from reconciliation measures just for women (in practice) to a greater co-responsibility of men in caring tasks.
FR	French policy has a strong focus on gender equality and promoting work-life balance. Yet current practices seem to increase differences between women, with high-qualified women making use of childcare facilities and less qualified women making use of leave facilities.
IT	In Italy, the reconciliation of work and family life is primarily seen as a woman's issue. The most important policy tool is maternity and parental leave. Take-up rates by fathers are very low, notwithstanding the fact that the law on parental leave has been designed to achieve a fairer distribution of family responsibilities between fathers and mothers.
CY	Additional measures in the field of reconciliation are mentioned but remain rather vague and general.
LV	The reconciliation of work and family life has entered the policy debate in Latvia. Reconciliation is, however, mainly presented as a woman's problem.

LT	Reconciliation is identified as an issue for both women and men and newly implemented policy measures (increased payment of parental leave, introduction of paternity leave) have a positive effect on gender equality. Sufficient childcare facilities are, however, still lacking.
LU	Although the number of childcare institutions has increased, childcare facilities remain in short supply. Leave and financial provisions are quite generous in Luxembourg, helping parents (mainly women) to remain in employment.
HU	Reconciliation policy is high on the policy agenda. Official documents focus particularly on the young mothers returning from parental leave. Men (young fathers) have almost been completely excluded from the reconciliation policy, which seems to reinforce the gendered division of labour.
MT	Additional measures in the field of reconciliation are mentioned but remain rather vague and general.
NL	Reconciliation is high on the policy agenda. Childcare facilities have become more affordable and new leave facilities have been created. Yet gender mainstreaming remains underdeveloped; the possible negative effects of the life course scheme on gender equality are not taken into account.
AT	Despite some small improvements regarding childcare facilities, the reconciliation problem remains a woman's problem: while mothers try to reconcile paid and unpaid work on an individual basis by means of working time reductions and career breaks, fathers' career biographies or earnings are hardly affected by care responsibilities.
PL	The reconciliation of work and family life has entered the policy debate in Poland. Reconciliation is, however, presented as a woman's problem, emphasising their responsibility for domestic work and not recognising or encouraging men's roles in the sharing of care and housework.
PT	The reconciliation of work and family life has entered the policy debate in Portugal. Yet childcare services are still in short supply. In addition, there is a clear lack of policies to increase the fathers' sharing of domestic and care chores.
RO	The conditions for combining work and private life changed considerably during transition. The most important measures with regard to reconciliation refer to direct subsidies and leave schemes.
SI	Reconciliation of work and family/private life has been supported for decades by generous statutory regulations concerning paid parental leaves and provision of publicly subsidised childcare services. However, parenthood is still often seen as the mother's responsibility, which causes gender specific consequences of parenthood on employment.
SK	The reconciliation of work and family life has entered the policy debate in Slovakia. Proposed measures focus on less traditional and flexible forms of work organisation, like teleworking.
FI	Reconciliation of work and private life entered Finnish public discourse especially in the 1990s. The focal point has been time budgeting, especially parents' increasing difficulties in apportioning their time between paid work and the family.
SE	Reconciliation of work and private life is important, especially with regard to gender equality. Publicly financed childcare is more or less universal and leave facilities are well developed. The new government is going to introduce a gender equality bonus in order to encourage fathers to take up parental leave.
UK	Reconciliation of work and private life is high on the policy agenda. However, most of the developments are still premised on a normative model of part-time employment by partnered mothers and full-time employment for lone mothers. Measures targeted at changing the behaviour of men or tackling the long-hour culture of many full-time jobs are much more limited.
IS	Iceland has an extensive public childcare system and a well-developed system of leave. Yet the male breadwinner model still dominates when couples make a decision concerning the division of paid and unpaid work.
LI	In Liechtenstein, the debate about reconciling work and private life has just started, mainly because of falling fertility rates. Reconciliation is, however, seen as a woman's problem.
NO	The reconciliation of employment and family life has been an important issue in Norwegian family policy, involving a range of different policy measures. However, reconciliation issues are becoming increasingly relevant for other stages of life, in particular for older workers.

Source: National reports



## 6. 'Flexicurity' policies

Since the start of the Lisbon Strategy, there is a growing concern about the impact of globalisation, technological change and demographic ageing on the European economy. Critics claim that the current institutional design offers insufficient answers to new trends and circumstances, and that the information revolution and the ensuing need for mobility and flexibility calls for a new organisation of work and employment. At the same time there is a certain consensus on the importance of the European social model, and that core elements of this model should be maintained and used as a productive factor. The issue therefore is how to achieve sustainable growth with more and better jobs. In this debate about modernising the European labour markets, the concept of flexicurity has become an important frame of reference.

The debate on flexicurity gained momentum after the publication in 2003 of the report by the European Employment Task Force, chaired by Wim Kok, on creating more employment in Europe (CEC 2003). The report states that in order to boost employment and productivity, Europe needs to increase the adaptability of workers and enterprises. A more responsive organisation of work is especially necessary in order to prevent the emergence of a two-tier labour market where 'insiders' benefit from a high level of employment protection, while an increasing number of 'outsiders' are recruited under alternative forms of contracts with lower protection. Accordingly the task force urges Member States to 'assess and where necessary alter the level of flexibility in standard contracts in areas such as periods of notice, costs and procedures for individual or collective dismissal or the definition of unfair dismissal' (CEC 2003: 28). Yet, in pursuing such reforms, Member States should provide workers with the appropriate levels of security. Since flexicurity affects both employers and employees, involvement of social partners is desirable.

It is important to note that flexicurity does not involve entirely new policy measures; rather its novelty lies in the combination of simultaneously introduced measures in the field of both flexibility and security. An often used definition describes flexicurity as follows: 'A policy strategy that attempts, synchronically and in a deliberate way, to enhance the flexibility of labour markets, the work organisation and labour relations on the one hand, and to enhance security – employment security and social security – notably for weaker groups in and outside the labour market on the other hand' (Wilthagen and Tros 2004: 169). This definition makes clear that a fully integrated approach to flexicurity goes beyond narrowly defined policies on labour market flexibility and employees' security. Also included are active labour market policies, with active job search, job availability, and life-long learning as important ingredients.

The central focus is on finding a balance of policies with the aim of increasing the adaptability of workers and the workplace. As such, the flexicurity approach implies a shift from a job security paradigm (having the same job all your life) to an employment security paradigm (having employment possibilities and abilities all your life) (EMCO 2006).

The relationship between flexicurity and gender equality is not self-evident. On the one hand, proponents may claim that flexicurity offers an answer to gender inequality because it helps to reduce the segmentation risks of a more mobile and flexible labour market. The very challenge of the concept of flexicurity, they would argue, is that it provides an answer to the threat of inequality, by creating a regulatory framework in which flexibility is embedded in a more inclusive labour market. On the other hand, critics may claim that the actual flexicurity measures carry the risk of deepening gender inequalities because of the active encouragement of flexible jobs. In their view flexicurity measures must imply a decrease in workers, rights and an increase in precarious employment. In particular, the position taken with regard to part-time work seems critical in this respect. For some, more flexible, non full-time working hours seem to open opportunities for women and to further gender equality. For others, the increase of part-time work signifies the marginal position of women and undermines their economic security across the life course.

Given the obvious relations between flexicurity and gender and the different positions taken within the current debate, a gender mainstreaming of flexicurity policies is of utmost importance. In this respect, gender mainstreaming implies the need to recognise the tension between the goal of promoting flexibility and the goal of employment security, and the pivotal role of gender in determining the outcomes on the labour market. Moreover, a gender mainstreaming approach to policies in the area of flexicurity (Rubery et al. 2006, 214):

- would recognise the role of gender in reinforcing inequalities associated with flexible working and in shaping flexible working patterns;
- address the reconciliation needs of employees with care commitments while recognising the risks of extending working hours or unsocial hours scheduling;
- support pathways out of non-standard work and working times to avoid the risks of long-term traps and segmentation of women into disadvantaged employment forms.

See Box 10 for a checklist on gender mainstreaming of flexicurity policies.

## Box 10: Gender mainstreaming of flexicurity policies

### STEP 1. GETTING ORGANISED

- Are there any guidelines or targets set with regard to flexicurity policies?
- Are all relevant stakeholders aware of the gender equality issues?
- Is there a clear structure of responsibilities?
- Are training facilities available and/or is it possible to make use of external expertise?

### STEP 2. LEARNING ABOUT GENDER DIFFERENCES

- Are all relevant statistics differentiated by gender?
- What is the gender division of typical and atypical contracts?
- What is the gender division of full-time and part-time working hours?
- What are the trends in this respect?

### STEP 3. ASSESSING THE POLICY IMPACT

- Are flexible time arrangements compatible with women's needs?
- Is the development of flexible working time compatible or incompatible with domestic care responsibilities?
- Are the programmes/policies aimed at men as well as women?
- Do those on flexible contracts have access to training?
- Are there measures to reduce the risk of segregation associated with flexible and part-time working (for example, rights to return to full-time work)?
- Are adaptability policies compatible with the closure of gender gaps including gender pay gaps?

### STEP 4. REDESIGNING POLICY

Given the results of steps 1, 2 and 3, identify ways in which the policy could be redesigned to promote gender equality. Take into account that gender mainstreaming calls for a more joined-up approach, which may involve more than one policy area or department

## Developments at the level of the European Union

Flexicurity is part of the European Employment Strategy where the current guideline 21 calls for Member States 'to promote flexibility combined with employment security'. The areas covered by the guideline vary over a wide range of issues, such as adaptation of employment legislation, better anticipation and positive management of change, and the promotion of innovative and adaptable forms of work organisation. The gender dimension is not explicitly referred to; rather the emphasis is on support for transitions in occupational status, including job-job mobility, geographical mobility and mobility between wage-employment and self-employment.

In addition, a 'Green Paper on modernising labour law has been published in November 2006 (Green Paper 2006). The purpose of the Green Paper is to launch a public debate in the EU on how labour law can evolve to support the Lisbon Strategy objective of achieving sustainable growth with more and better jobs. Moreover, the Green Paper looks at 'the role labour law might play in advancing

a flexicurity agenda in support of a labour market which is fairer, more responsive and more inclusive and which contributes to making Europe more competitive' (p. 4). The issues raised vary from regulations affecting small and medium enterprises and the optimal balance between employment protection and social security legislation, to the need for a 'floor of rights' dealing with the working conditions of all workers regardless of the form of their work contract and the organisation of working time. The open consultation conducted for the Green Paper has been followed by a Commission Communication on flexicurity, adopted in June 2007, which may help reform efforts at the level of the Member States (EC 2007).

## Developments at the level of the European Member States

The actual state of affairs with regard to flexicurity differs widely among the EU Member States. In most studies, Denmark and the Netherlands are seen as paradigmatic cases, with countries in South, Central and Eastern Europe lagging behind. The Danish model of flexicurity is

often described as a golden triangle, where a relative low level of employment protection, a comprehensive unemployment benefit for a short period of time and an active labour market policy form the three corners (OECD 2006). Together, these ingredients create a high level of adaptability of Danish employees and enterprises. According to the NRP, a total of approximately 800,000 Danish employees (corresponding to approximately 30% of the labour force) changes jobs each year. This is significantly above the general EU level. The Danish national expert notes, however, that it is misleading to calculate the job changes as a percentage of the labour force, as a much smaller proportion may bear the burden of constant job mobility. There are not yet comprehensive studies of the distribution of 'job-flexible persons' by gender, age and education. However, the Minister of Employment has commissioned a study of this distribution, and preliminary results show that at least educational attainment seems to have significant impact on numerical flexibility (Bredgaard, Larsen & Madsen 2007).

The Dutch approach relies on a careful balancing of rights and obligations for different contractual forms (CEC 2003). An important piece of legislation in this respect is the Act on Flexibility and Security, which came into effect on 1 January 1999. The point of departure is that the labour market must become more flexible, while at the same time an adequate level of protection of employees must be maintained. The act regulates the position of flex-workers, like workers on call, stand-by employees, temporary workers, etc. Important stipulations refer to minimum wages for on-call workers; an employee is entitled to the wages of three hours per 'call', even though (s)he has worked less than three hours; this applies to employees who work less than 15 hours per week and whose working times and/or working hours are not fixed. The idea is that this will impose an incentive for employers to organise the work in an acceptable manner. Another stipulation considers the sequence of consecutive fixed-term contracts. On the one hand, the act makes it easier to renew temporary contracts, but at the same time it limits the possibilities of renewal. A temporary contract may, for example, not be renewed more than twice and the total length of the temporary contract may not exceed a period of 36 months. An important element in the Dutch approach to flexicurity is also the reliance on social partners. In that respect the Dutch governance model has been defined as 'coordinated decentralisation'. There is control, direction and facilitation at a central level, but at the same time increasing room for a tailor-made solution at the level of the individual company (Wilthagen and Tros 2004).

Sweden is often quoted for its high level of employee-friendly level of flexibility. Like in the Netherlands there is a heavy reliance on the role of social partners and collec-

tive agreements because this makes it possible to adapt the regulations to the varying conditions of different parts of the business sector. In addition the NRP states: 'it also enables the social partners to take responsibilities through their own initiatives for the development of a modern and well functioning working life with agreements that promote flexibility and security' (NRP Sweden 2006: 67). An interesting debate, right at the heart of the flexicurity approach, refers to a new bill, which aims at increasing the possibilities to make agreements concerning fixed-term employment. Since women to a much higher extent than men are fixed-term employed, this can be seen as an obstacle to women's economic independence and career possibilities. The government, however, argues that since many women are outside the labour market today, the chances for them to enter the labour market increases if the threshold is lowered; women's employment positions will therefore be strengthened. Yet, as the Swedish national expert states, if the new policies increase employment equally for women and men, it means that women enter temporary jobs and men permanent jobs, which means that, relatively, gender equality decreases.

In a number of other Member States flexicurity is high on the policy agenda. In Germany, for example, the NRP 2005-2008 points out that the federal government aims to reconcile the need for flexibility of employees and employers with a sufficient level of security. It continues: 'A fair balance between these two dimensions is the most reliable way to ensure that both employers and employees respond adequately to the need for adjustment and that these changes are accepted in return for an assurance that livelihoods and jobs will be maintained' (NRP Germany 2006: 37). The actual policy measures vary from new part-time regulations, the creation of mini-jobs, new dismissal regulations and cuts in unemployment benefits. Although women are affected by all these policy areas, the level of gender mainstreaming is limited. Rather, the notion of women being the second earners in the household is part of the flexibility strategy, as mini-jobs and other forms of precarious employment, which do not allow a living wage, rely on the existence of a main income source, which is either the husband or – in case of lone parents and single people – the state via basic income. The focus of the flexicurity policy is thus mainly on increasing flexible forms of employment; security, the second part of the concept, is offered only partially.

The concept of flexicurity is also widely discussed in France. Yet the definition of flexicurity and the relevant policies are a source of much controversy. Measures that have been taken relate to the nature of the employment contracts. The CNE employment contract enables small employers with less than 20 employees to dismiss employees with no justification during a period of two years. The CPE (first job contract), which was organised along the lines of CNE, was suspended after strong protests by student organisations

and trade unions. In addition, working-time regulation has become more flexible, especially with regard to overtime. Again the level of gender mainstreaming is limited. In fact, the French national expert assesses the consequences of these measures as rather negative in terms of gender equality. The measures seem to be based on a rather traditional model in which men work longer, while women will be given – or will even ask for – part-time work. This is even more worrying as the principle of increasing or reducing working hours is not an individual's right, but depends on the company.

Another example is provided by Slovenia. The Slovenian labour market is still relatively rigid. The transition period did not bring about a dramatic increase in insecure and poor quality jobs and men and women work mainly full-time. There is a growing emphasis, however, on organising the labour market in a more flexible way and the number of people in fixed-term employment is above the EU average. The Slovenian national expert, while emphasising the need for more employee-friendly forms of flexibility, points to the fact that there is no clear plan about how to achieve a desirable level of flexibility nor is there any discussion or consideration of potentially negative and gender-specific consequences of an intensified flexibility of work and working hours. There is a real risk, therefore, that the promotion of flexibility could result in the feminisation of certain flexible forms of work (e.g. part-time employment) and thus in a deterioration of the position of women in the labour market.

A more positive example of the shifting policy mix between flexibility and security comes from Norway. In principle, the Norwegian labour market has been sufficiently flexible to support a growing and competitive economy with unemployment falling to low levels, despite strict regulations of working hours, temporary work and dismissals. Yet involuntary part-time work is considered a serious problem with a clear gender dimension: about 10% of employed women work shorter hours than they prefer, while the corresponding figure among men is only 2%. Moreover, involuntary part-time work is to a large extent a public sector problem. A significant number of women who want to work more hours than they do are employed in public sector care occupations. Given this situation, a recent revision of the Working Environment Act (2006) states that part-time workers shall have a preferential right to an extended post rather than the employer making a new appointment. This right is subject to the employee being qualified for the post and the exercise of the preferential right not involving significant inconvenience for the undertaking. More contested has been the regulation of temporary contracts. The government (in office until 2005) introduced some liberalisations of the regulation of temporary work, but this

was reversed by the succeeding government. Accordingly the current regulation is rather strict and fixed-term employment is only permitted under certain circumstances. As for part-time workers, the revised Working Environment Act (2006) states that workers on fixed-term contracts are to be given priority when positions within the firm become vacant.

In most other countries the concept of flexicurity is still to be developed, as a result of which policy developments within this framework have been limited. Some national experts hope that measures under this heading may improve the accessibility of the labour market to women as it would provide more flexible options, especially in the private sector. Other national experts express their concern that flexibility measures may be more readily taken than security measures, as a result of which labour market inequalities may increase. Their concern seems to be confirmed by Joint Employment Report 2006/2007: 'Governments have tended to focus on easing labour market regulation for new entrants to facilitate more contractual diversity, without reforming legislation for existing contracts and ensuring transitions between types of contracts and opportunities to progress' (JER 2007: 5). As a result the overall assessment of the flexicurity policies is rather negative: 'policies recently implemented or designed will not suffice to meet the flexicurity challenge' (JER 2007:13).

## Conclusions

Box 11 presents an overview of the current state of affairs with regard to the gender mainstreaming of flexicurity policies. All national experts express the importance of a gender mainstreaming approach of flexicurity policies while at the same time acknowledging the fact that such an approach is still largely missing in their particular country. Given the centrality of gender to the issue of flexibility and security in European labour markets, the limited evidence of gender mainstreaming is rather striking. Increasing the responsiveness of European labour markets by increasing the adaptability of workers and the workplace will only lead to a more inclusive labour market if increased flexibility does not imply increased insecurity for certain vulnerable groups in the labour market. In each country, the paradigmatic shift from job security to employment security calls for a specific mixture of policies, in accordance with the national labour market situation and adapted to the specific trends and circumstances. A gender mainstreaming approach would imply that these measures are designed by taking into account the gender equality issues which emerge in relation to flexible contracts, flexible working hours, career breaks and labour market mobility.

### Box 11: Gender mainstreaming of flexicurity policies in 30 European countries

BE	Gender mainstreaming with regard to flexicurity is limited. The position of part-timers with regard to pension rights has been approved. Yet the career break system seems to have a negative effect on the labour market position of women. Recent proposals seem to deepen gender differences in this respect.
BG	The concept of flexicurity is not yet very familiar in Bulgaria, as a result of which policy developments within this framework are still under consideration. Yet rights of part-time workers have been improved.
CZ	In the Czech Republic flexicurity is an unfamiliar concept. Although there is a common understanding that policies should take into account the need for both flexibility and protection, actual policy focuses most on increasing labour market flexibility. Gender aspects in relation to flexible forms of employment are not taken into account.
DK	Denmark is renowned for its flexicurity approach, which is based on relatively high unemployment benefits and labour market mobility. There is, however, no gender mainstreaming in the Danish flexicurity model and no discussion or awareness of the cost of flexicurity and the possible hidden redistribution between the female-dominated public sector and the male-dominated private sector.
DE	Flexicurity policy has focused mainly on supporting the expansion of non-standard forms of employment. Women are seen as a major group providing the labour market with a skilled and flexible labour force, without questioning the inequalities involved. Given the gender bias, there is limited reference towards security aspects.
EE	Estonia has a rather rigid labour market and little policy developments in relation to flexicurity.
IE	Ireland has very little policy development in relation to flexicurity. The lack of a more developed flexicurity policy system provides women with few options in relation to forms of employment.
EL	Legislative regulations have improved the security aspects of several flexible labour arrangements. But even if security has been ensured for part-time workers through protective legislation and recourse to short part-time work has been discouraged among employers, gender mainstreaming has been weak. This is because policy-makers still view part-time work as a women-only affair and a means of promoting female employment.
ES	Recent developments include measures to reduce the high number of temporary contracts by reducing social security contributions of permanent contracts. This may have a positive impact on women though this measure has proven to be not too efficient in the past in significantly reducing the temporary rate for women.
FR	Flexicurity and occupational social security are both concepts that are developing quickly in France in relation to the search for a new French social model. Yet the issue of gender is often missing from these discussions, even though the consequences in equality terms are often rather unfavourable.
IT	Recent reforms ( <i>Legge Biagi</i> ) have made the labour market more flexible without developing some minimum form of income security for the lower segment of the labour market. In short, flexicurity policies are still lacking in Italy. In addition, gender differences in the pattern and extent of flexible working are ignored, simply assuming that atypical employment is good for women, as it favours female employment.
CY	New legislation covering part-time employment and flexible work arrangements is believed to help women, as they are over-represented in part-time jobs. In addition, a new ESF-funded programme to encourage employers to hire inactive women with flexible work contracts has just been enacted. It remains unclear, however, as to how these laws and policies will affect the gender wage gap and job segregation.
LV	The concept of flexicurity has only recently entered the vocabulary of Latvian employment policy, as a result of which policy developments within this framework have been limited.
LT	The Lithuanian labour market is characterised neither by a high flexibility level, nor by high security rates. Although the promotion of flexible organisation of work was identified as one of key policy priorities, Lithuania still lags behind in this respect.
LU	The Luxembourg labour market is not very flexible with regard to working hours: working hours are long and the possibility of part-time limited. Luxembourg has very little policy development in relation to flexicurity.
HU	Hungary has a rather rigid labour market and very little policy development in relation to flexicurity. The lack of a more developed flexicurity policy system seems to provide women with few options in relation to forms of employment.
MT	The concept of flexicurity is not yet very familiar in Malta, as a result of which policy developments within this framework have been limited.
NL	Increasing labour market flexibility, while at the same time providing reasonable levels of security for employees is high on the policy agenda. Yet, even though women have flexible contracts more often than men, the extent of gender mainstreaming in recent policy measures has been limited.

AT	In general it can be said that in Austria the debate regarding better social-security protection for flexible workers has only begun since more men have come to be employed in atypical forms of work. The extent of gender mainstreaming is limited though.
PL	The notion of flexicurity is slowly emerging in the policy discourse in Poland, from the focus on flexibility to the now increasingly understood security. Yet, policy developments within this particular framework are still limited.
PT	Flexicurity has become a frequent topic in official discourse, but there have not been many actions undertaken yet. In addition, the gendered nature of flexible employment forms are not brought into the employment policy debate.
RO	Romania has little policy development in relation to flexicurity. The lack of a more developed flexicurity policy system provides women with few options in relation to forms of employment.
SI	Slovenia has a relatively rigid and inflexible labour market. Promotion of flexible work is high on the policy agenda, but a gender sensitive approach is not yet included.
SK	The concept of flexicurity is not yet very familiar in Slovakia, as a result of which policy developments within this framework have been limited.
FI	The flexicurity debate focuses on limiting the relatively high level of fixed-term employment, and the increase in low-paid jobs. Tighter regulations with regard to fixed-term jobs have led to an increase in temporary agency work, which has become more typical in the private sector.
SE	The Swedish labour market is in many ways characterised by flexicurity. It is possible to have a flexible start and end to the working day, possibilities of leave with pay over the life-cycle are well developed as is leave for care of different sorts. From a gender equality perspective, though, flexibility is complicated. It may help women combine employment and care work, but it does not change the gender division of labour.
UK	There is no developed flexicurity policy approach to labour law and social protection in the United Kingdom. Flexibility is already high and although there have been some pertinent reforms in relation to training, fixed-term contracts and part-time working these are not integrated or informed by a flexicurity framework. In addition, the gender mainstreaming of these different policy areas is rather narrow.
IS	The Icelandic labour market is rather flexible in terms of employment termination in the private sector, real wages, hours of work and labour force participation of those aged 16-24 years. As young men are much more likely than young women to become unemployed, they seem to pay the price for their responsiveness to the needs of the economy.
LI	The concept of flexicurity is not yet very familiar in Liechtenstein, as a result of which policy developments within this framework have been limited. Yet a revision of the occupational pension scheme improved the position of part-time workers since the entry threshold for insurance has been reduced.
NO	The Norwegian labour market has been sufficiently flexible to support a competitive economy, despite strict regulations of working hours, temporary work and dismissals. Flexibilisation of working conditions has been a matter of political controversy, reflected in the revisions of the Working Environment Act. The rights of part-time workers and temporary workers have been improved.

Source: National reports

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## 7. Concluding remarks

The European strategy for growth and employment recognises that gender equality and gender mainstreaming is essential for progress. The assessment of the current state of affairs in 30 European countries indicates that there are large differences in the organisation and implementation of gender mainstreaming and gender equality. Most countries have developed initiatives regarding gender mainstreaming. They have, for example, formulated the principle of gender mainstreaming as a general policy principle and/or have installed inter or intra ministerial committees to enhance the process of gender mainstreaming. Several countries also report positive developments regarding the use of instruments for gender mainstreaming, such as gender impact assessment (GIA) and gender budget analysis (GBA). However, in most countries the focus of gender mainstreaming seems rather narrow and patchy. A systematic and comprehensive approach is generally lacking and actual implementation is often problematic. Moreover, attention paid to gender mainstreaming may be sensitive to political changes, resulting in a lack of consistency.

An important employment policy domain is active labour market policies. Gender mainstreaming of active labour market policies has several dimensions. In order to promote gender equality, equal opportunities principles should be embedded within the operation of the public employment service. An effective method in this respect is the appointment of a specific equal opportunities officer, who has the necessary expertise. It also seems to be essential that PES employees are informed on the issue of gender mainstreaming and receive training in how to incorporate this into their work. Another important aspect of gender mainstreaming is that active labour market programmes are open to all inactive people and not restricted to benefit claimants, and that men and women have equitable access to ALMPs. Regarding active measures, a gender mainstreaming approach would imply that both quantitative as well as qualitative aspects are taken into account. This means, for example, that training should not only improve the employability of the unemployed, but also promote the entry of female into high quality and/or non-traditional jobs. In addition, gender mainstreaming would imply that the needs of specific groups, such as lone parents and women returners after long term care, are addressed. In quite a number of countries, however, policies in this area have not been developed with any explicit reference towards gender equality or gender mainstreaming. As almost all national experts draw attention to existing gender inequalities, this is reason for concern.

Another relevant employment issue is the gender pay gap. Reducing the gender pay gap has been part of the European Employment Strategy since 1999 and policy efforts have intensified over the years. Given the complexity of the causes of the gender pay gap, gender mainstreaming pay policies would imply a variety of measures. Firstly,

countries may implement an equal pay policy aiming at tackling direct or indirect gender wage discrimination. Examples include (additional) legislation, availability and dissemination of information, and initiatives with respect to job evaluation. A second policy line may be targeted at reducing horizontal as well as vertical segregation. Policies to reduce horizontal segregation generally focus on young girls in order to encourage them to consider a wider range of occupational options, and to opt for science and technology instead of caring, cleaning and catering. Policies to reduce vertical segregation generally aim to increase the number of women in high-level and/or management jobs. A third policy line refers to gender mainstreaming of 'general' wage policies, aimed at reducing wage inequality and improving the remuneration of low-paid and/or female-dominated jobs. Wage policies in this respect may vary from the introduction of a mandatory minimum wage, thereby setting a floor to the wage structure, the centralisation of the system of wage bargaining, thereby decreasing inter-industry and inter-firm wage differentials, to the revaluing of low paid and/or female-dominated jobs, for example as part of an anti-poverty or equality strategy. The assessment of pay and career policies in 30 European countries indicates that in most countries the gender pay gap has a rather low profile, both in the public debate and in the policy agenda. The emphasis on deregulation and voluntary action by employers seems in some countries to restrict national policy options. One of the main problems appears to be that there is no real owner of the problem, as nobody feels responsible for the gender pay gap. Organising political support for closing the gap seems to be an important challenge for the near future.

The reconciliation of work and private life is also an extremely important part of employment policy. Reconciliation policies can be defined as policies that directly support the combination of professional, family and private life. As such they may involve a wide variety of policies ranging from childcare services, leave facilities, flexible working arrangements to other reconciliation policies, such as financial allowances for working partners. A gender mainstreaming perspective in the domain of reconciliation is, to a certain extent, established in so far as most European governments recognise the impact of care responsibilities on women's employment. Yet countries differ in their policy responses and in their implicit or explicit focus on gender equality. Some countries encourage the supply of public and private services, others improve the opportunities to work part-time hours. Some still consider reconciliation a woman's affair, whereas others recognise the role of men in care and family responsibilities (mainly encouraging taking up or improving paternity leave schemes). Although reconciliation is high on the policy agenda in quite a number of countries, actual policies remain rather limited. The majority of countries are far from reaching the Barcelona target for children aged below three. In addition,

there seems to be no uniform trend with regard to childcare facilities. Some countries like the United Kingdom and the Netherlands are clearly moving towards a higher coverage. Others are more or less at a standstill, whereas in some of the former eastern European countries there is clear downward trend. Also policies with regard to parental leave seem rather diverse. Depending on the different starting points, some countries report a lengthening of the leave facilities, others a shortening, an increase in the flexibility or a change in entitlements. Practically all countries report an uneven involvement of men.

The concept of flexicurity is rather new on the policy agenda. However, in the debate about modernising the European labour markets, flexicurity has become an important frame of reference. Flexicurity policy can be described as 'a policy strategy that attempts, synchronically and in a deliberate way, to enhance the flexibility of labour markets, the work organisation and labour relations on the one hand, and to enhance security – employment security and social security – notably for weaker groups in and outside the labour market on the other hand' (Wilthagen and Tros 2004: 169). The central focus is on finding a balance of policies with the aim of increasing the adaptability of workers and the workplace. As such the flexicurity approach implies a shift from a job security paradigm (having the same job all your life) to an employment security paradigm (having employment possibilities and abilities all your life). The relationship between flexicurity and gender equality is not self-evident. On the one hand proponents may claim that flexicurity offers an answer to gender inequality because it helps to reduce the segmentation risks of a more mobile and flexible

labour market. On the other hand, critics may claim that the actual flexicurity measures carry the risk of deepening gender inequalities because of the active encouragement of flexible jobs. A gender mainstreaming approach to policies in the area of flexicurity would recognise the role of gender in reinforcing inequalities associated with flexible working and in shaping flexible working patterns and would address the reconciliation needs of employees with care commitments while recognising the risks of extending working hours or scheduling unsocial hours. In addition a mainstreaming approach would support pathways out of non-standard work and working times to avoid the risks of long-term traps and segmentation of women in disadvantaged employment forms. The assessment of flexicurity policies in 30 European countries indicates that a gender mainstreaming approach is still largely missing. Given the centrality of gender to the issue of flexibility and security in European labour markets, the limited evidence of gender mainstreaming is rather disappointing.

The present study indicates that most countries are still far from adopting a full gender mainstreaming approach to employment policies. The awareness of gender equality is usually rather limited, especially in the field of pay and flexicurity policies. In addition, gender equality is often not taken into account in the actual design of policy measures. In order to improve the knowledge of gender mainstreaming of employment policies, this report has provided not only an analysis of current trends but also a checklist and a number of examples of effective gender mainstreaming. As such, the report may be used as a manual for all actors involved in gender mainstreaming at the national as well as at the European level.

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