

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN EUROPEAN EMPLOYMENT POLICY

A REPORT BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GENDER AND
EMPLOYMENT
IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE FOURTH ACTION PROGRAMME FOR EQUAL
OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND MEN

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MARCH 1998

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GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN EMPLOYMENT POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Gender mainstreaming has been launched as a new strategy to achieve gender equality in employment. The incorporation of a new guideline in the 1999 European employment guidelines requires all member states to mainstream a gender perspective into the whole of their National Action Plans on employment. This decision provides a major new opportunity to promote equal opportunities as an integral dimension of European employment policy. Greater gender equality will not be achieved without further improvements in women's position within the labour market. At the same time the objective of European employment policy, that of raising the overall employment rate within Europe, is also dependent upon further mobilisation of women into the employment sphere. These two objectives therefore need to be pursued as interrelated and integrated policy goals.

If this opportunity to promote gender equality is to be seized, there is a need not only to publicise and disseminate information to policy-makers but also to make further progress in developing the concept of gender mainstreaming and in clarifying its policy implications. The notion of gender mainstreaming has not yet been fully integrated into the political decision-making and implementation process. To achieve this integration there needs to be greater understanding of what gender mainstreaming is aiming to achieve and of the political and institutional preconditions for its successful implementation.

This report is designed to aid this process. The objective is to give some guidance on what gender mainstreaming of employment policy actually involves to the European governments and social partners, charged with the task of drawing up and implementing the European employment policy at a national level. This task involves first the distillation of the existing knowledge and understanding of gender mainstreaming. However, the implementation of gender mainstreaming can be considered still to be in an embryonic state, and as such, the focus also needs to be on extending this knowledge and understanding, on thinking imaginatively and creatively and on identifying the possibilities for gender mainstreaming to move the European employment agenda forward.

To achieve this objective we have organised the report into three main sections. The first addresses conceptual and methodological issues associated with gender mainstreaming. The second focuses directly on the mainstreaming of the employment guidelines and the third provides examples of gender mainstreaming drawn from all the member states.

The first conceptual and methodological section has three chapters. Chapter one explores the definition of gender mainstreaming, identifies the potential complementarities between gender mainstreaming and traditional equality policy, debates the appropriate definitions of gender equality and considers the political preconditions for successful mainstreaming. Chapter two focuses on the need for gender mainstreaming in European employment policy. Three main

rationales are offered: first, to promote gender equality, second to increase the likelihood of European employment policy achieving its stated goals and third, to draw attention to the need for employment policy to be situated in a wider policy agenda, focused on the interlinkages between the employment and the social and welfare systems. These rationales are backed up by two detailed analyses, first of the gendered nature of European labour markets and second of the links between employment policy and the changes in the household, family and welfare systems. Chapter three addresses methodological issues, in particular the need for gender mainstreaming in the development of statistics and monitoring techniques and for further development and application of methodologies for gender audits and gender impact assessments.

The second main section provides an analysis of how to mainstream the employment guidelines. Chapter four draws attention to the implications of gender mainstreaming for the overall approach to European employment policy and identifies some general principles for evaluating mainstreaming in the National Action Plans. Most of the chapter is devoted to a detailed analysis of what gender mainstreaming implies within each of the four pillars. The relevance of gender mainstreaming to the overall objectives of the pillar is identified as a starting point and a commentary is provided on the gender mainstreaming implications associated with each of the guidelines. At the end of the discussion of each pillar a checklist is provided, to enable policy-makers to identify both the types of policies which could be expected to promote gender equality and those which may exacerbate or fail to act on the gender gaps.

The third section turns to the practical experience of mainstreaming. Chapter five presents current examples of mainstreaming applied at different levels of the policy process, including examples from pan-national organisations, from central government, from local government and local initiatives, from social partners and from specific employment policy programmes. The range of current examples to choose from is still limited and even those included here have not necessarily implemented gender mainstreaming according to the principles developed in this report; that is they cannot be considered necessarily to represent 'best practice'. However, the examples do share a common feature, that is they have all introduced a gender dimension into policy-making which was not previously present.

Gender mainstreaming must be considered both as a long term objective and a process, a permanent part of policy formation and its implementation. It is a process in two senses; a process of changing policy agendas and implementation procedures to promote gender equality and a process of continual auditing and analysis of the impacts of policies to identify ways in which gender inequalities may still be being generated and reproduced within the society. We are at the beginning, in most countries at least, of the introduction of this permanent concept, so that understanding of this concept must develop with its implementation. Certainly knowledge of what the barriers are to achieving a gender equal society and what opportunities gender mainstreaming offers to overcoming those obstacles will expand with the process of policy development and implementation. The collection and analysis of examples of gender mainstreaming can thus be considered an exercise in this learning process.

Gender mainstreaming is about learning to do things differently and adopting new approaches. This report should also be considered to be part of this process of learning; it represents the first thoughts of the group of experts on gender and employment on the potential contribution of gender mainstreaming to the dual objectives of maximising the employment potential of Europe and making progress towards the objective of gender equality.

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SECTION I. GENDER MAINSTREAMING: SOME CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

1. DEFINING MAINSTREAMING

1.1. The development of the concept of mainstreaming

Originally the mainstreaming concept was used to promote the role of women in developing economies. The Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi 1985 (Council of Europe 1998) called for the integration of 'women's values' into development policy and practice. It was adopted as a general commitment by all governments at the fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, in which the EU played an active part. This UN agreement to '*promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes, so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively*' led to the subsequent European Commission's communication on mainstreaming which committed it to mobilise '*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 situations of men and women (the gender perspective)*' (COM(96) 67 21.2.1996). The introduction of gender mainstreaming in European employment policy is perhaps the most important specific policy development to emerge from this general commitment. Both the Beijing and the European Union definitions of mainstreaming emphasise gender impact analysis as the main characteristics of the approach. Subsequently the group of specialists set up by the Council of Europe to define mainstreaming adopted the following definition:

Gender mainstreaming is 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 1998:13).

This is a wider definition, focusing on the transformative potential of gender mainstreaming which, if implemented, would involve a comprehensive re-evaluation of policy, its implementation and objectives. This introduces a 'proactive' form of gender mainstreaming, to complement the more defensive strategy recommended by the Beijing agreement. This more transformative perspective has been adopted by a recent study of mainstreaming in Europe. Rees (1998) explicitly states that mainstreaming is not simply a 'gender impact' approach, which, although providing a useful beginning for awareness-raising and sensitising to gender issues, can be criticised for being a reactive strategy. Rather, gender mainstreaming should contribute to a paradigmatic shift in thinking, a complete rethinking of how inequality is underpinned in systems and structures.

The implementation of gender mainstreaming requires an awareness of how gender is embedded in societal institutions, processes and outcomes(see

Ellingsæter 1999 for further details). It is these institutionalised arrangements which need to change if there is to be a move towards gender equality. This emphasis mirrors in part the changing character of gender equality issues, from the more evident and visible to the more invisible. The oppression of women has moved from being direct, personal and physical, to becoming more indirect, impersonal and structural (Holter 1982). There is also an increasing awareness that prevailing gender orders and processes may have detrimental effects also for men. Thus, the systematic integration of a gender perspective in policies needs to apply a two-gender perspective. Men's concerns have to be included, for example by facilitating men's rights (and duties) to care. The potential contribution of gender mainstreaming to changing gender relations in practice is bolstered by its focus on the political-institutional framework and on the process of policy-making in all areas, which is vital to changing gender relations in practice.

These wider definitions of mainstreaming, while clearly more ambitious in scope than a gender audit approach have raised the issue whether mainstreaming should be considered an alternative to direct equal opportunities or gender equality policy. Introducing a gender equality perspective into any area of policy necessarily means challenging assumptions about the functioning of the world, the objectives of the policy and the bases for evaluation; mainstreaming cannot therefore be limited to simply a quantitative evaluation by gender without any reassessment of the policy process and objectives. Is mainstreaming thus a potential replacement for gender equality policies? These issues were recognised by the Council of Europe's working group on mainstreaming and its report argues for the continuation of gender equality policies alongside mainstreaming- the twin track strategy. The reason for the need for the twin track, according to the Council of Europe report, lies in the starting point for policy.

Gender mainstreaming means introducing a gender perspective in a given policy field in order to make sure that the effects of policies are more gender neutral, but it does not take the actual gender imbalances as the starting point for developing policies. Specific gender equality policy is a strategy that directly addresses gender imbalances: it takes into account the specific needs of women and men and elaborates policies on issues that are not covered by other areas' (Council of Europe 1998: 15)

According to this approach gender mainstreaming starts with the policy and introduces a gender perspective; specific gender equality policies start with the gender gap and introduce specific measures to close it. However, as we develop further below, gender mainstreaming may also require that policy makers, before developing policy in a particular field, start with an analysis of the gender gap. Nevertheless a distinction still remains between integrating gender into all policy areas, and developing policies specifically to address the main areas of gender inequality. Mainstreaming may be regarded as a new form or another or new kind of equality policy complementary to traditional equality policy.

A project on gender mainstreaming in the framework of the fourth action programme for equal opportunities of women and men in the European Union has located gender mainstreaming as a different form of equality policy, complementary to both legislative and positive action strategies (Bennett et al. 1998). The different approaches, according to the authors, can be considered 'three legs of the equality stool': the equal treatment perspective which guarantees equal rights through legislation; the women's perspective which supports positive action to overcome women's past disadvantage and which may also be associated with valuing women's difference; and the gender perspective which sees the process of adaptation to a more gender equal society to involve change in men's as well as women's lives.

Mainstreaming equality has drawn support from the proponents of both the equal treatment perspective and the women's perspective, although it is not only a combination of their views but instead represents a different conceptualisation of gender equality. A focus on gender rather than on women fully acknowledges, for the first time, the relevance of men's lives to the equality debate. The gender perspective recognises that adapting the organisation of society to a fairer distribution of human responsibilities must aim to transform men's roles as well as those of women. It also moves away from the model of women as a homogeneous group by recognising that there are differences between women caused by vectors such as class, age and race. ' (Bennett et al. 1998:8)

To clarify the different policy approaches to gender equality and their essential complementarity, it may be helpful to expand the definition of the twin-track approach proposed by the Council of Europe to recognise the existence of both defensive and proactive approaches within both tracks (see table 1); Specific equality measures include both the legislative equal treatment approach which can be considered primarily defensive, and the more proactive positive action measures, explicitly designed to overcome women's disadvantage or to value difference. These two dimensions are complementary; positive action measures often derive support from legal rights and legal rights, in some cases, involve not identical treatment but different treatment as a means of overcoming disadvantage. Within the gender mainstreaming approach there is the need for defensive actions, for gender audits of policy to ensure that policy is not hindering progress towards gender equality. However, this approach needs to be combined with proactive measures to transform and change gender relations. Again the auditing and the proactive approaches are complementary and should be supported by a commitment to assess overall performance on equal opportunities, for example through benchmarking for equal opportunities (Plantenga and Hansen 1999). Benchmarking, by comparing performance over time, among countries and according to an absolute standard should motivate member states to ensure that policies not only pass the defensive test of not evidently harming equal opportunities but also meet the gender mainstreaming challenge of contributing to an overall better performance on the equal opportunities dimension.

Table 1: A twin track, two dimension approach to gender equality

	Specific equality policies	Gender mainstreaming
<i>Defensive</i>	Legislation focused on equal treatment	Gender auditing to identify gender specific effects and to ensure, at a minimum, no adverse gender equality effects in policy measures
<i>Proactive</i>	Positive action measures designed to compensate for unequal starting points and/or to value gender difference	Inclusion of specific measures within general policy programmes to promote gender equality:

Gender mainstreaming should be perceived as primarily process orientated, rather than narrowly result-orientated (Buland and Skaar 1998). It is unlikely that we will ever to come to the point where more effort is not needed to achieve gender equality; on the contrary, what is required is continuous effort, involving continuously changing goals, new challenges and action against potential backlashes. Gender mainstreaming is a long term strategy, designed to raise gender awareness in all policy areas, a process which can be expected to take decades if the outcome is to be a fundamental change in the embedded cultural values and in particular in the tradition of seeing all public policy, and labour market policy in particular, through a male lens. The development of the proactive dimension to mainstreaming may in many contexts only realistically be achievable in the longer term, so that any discussion of mainstreaming as a possible replacement for gender equality policies should be considered extremely premature.

1.2. Defining gender equality

Mainstreaming should be considered a methodology, not an aim in itself. The aim is gender equality but this in turn can be considered a contested concept. While many would agree on the definition of gender equality as "an equal visibility, empowerment and participation of both sexes in all spheres of public and private life....and...the full participation of women and men in society", it is more contested that "gender equality is the opposite of gender inequality, not of gender difference" (Council of Europe 1998:5). The debate on sameness and/or difference between women and men has a long history in gender theory and politics, a continuing debate with conflicting positions (see Cockburn 1991). For example, the Council of Europe (1998) expert group takes a stand for a *difference* perspective by arguing that '*Gender equality means accepting and valuing equally the difference between women and men and the diverse roles they play in society*' (p.6) However, this perspective takes biological difference

as an important starting point, and creates an image of women and men as qualitatively different categories, which is disputed.

The question of sameness and difference has serious implications for equality policy (see Karamessini 1999 for further details) as gender equality can be conceptualised and achieved in three ways, according to the perspective adopted. These approaches involve;

- promoting equality based on sameness, with the dominant male norm remaining unchanged;
- promoting equality based on sameness, within a new norm for both men and women;
- promoting equality based on difference, through attaching equal value to female as well as male norms within a gender segregated society.

Major problems arise with both the first and the third approaches. Equality of outcomes without any change in the male norm appears to be an impossible goal, even if it were considered socially desirable. However, the pursuit of equal value for gender differences runs the risk that this approach may keep women in an inferior social position if it does not lead to processes which equalise wealth and power between the sexes. To achieve gender equality, defined as equality in, for example, rank or power, may be difficult without first achieving equality in the participation of men and women in paid and unpaid work. Status and power tend to be associated with labour market roles in modern society. A broad feminist agenda may wish to challenge that characteristic of modern societies but the strategies by which value may come to be attached to non labour market activities may require a prior move towards greater gender equality in the distribution of paid and unpaid work, and indeed wealth. In some senses this corresponds to Cockburn's (1991) distinction between the short and the long agenda for equal opportunities, with the short agenda focused on equal treatment and equality within the male norm, but the long agenda on changing the male norm. This approach still involves paying more attention to valuing women's current contribution through re-evaluation of women's work, qualities and social experience. Such tactics can be considered an important element in the necessary institutional and cultural change required to change the dominant male norm, that is the second strategy for equality, promoting equality through the establishment of a common norm for men and women, different from the male norm.

This strategy involves change in both men's and women's lives, through promoting greater involvement in paid work for women and greater involvement in unpaid work for men. Even this aim does not necessarily imply that men and women should be equally involved in paid work at all stages over the lifecycle; the equality in distribution could be considered a lifecycle objective, following the argument of Schmid (1998) that while we could aim for an average of 30 hours of paid work over the lifecycle in order to provide employment opportunities for all, these hours could still be distributed according to lifecycle needs and preferences. However, for this to be consistent with gender equality, these lifecycle differences would need to be related to individual lifestyles and not the continuation of a gendered division of care responsibilities.

Gender equality, for the purposes of an employment policy perspective, needs to be identified with a goal that can be both quantified and simply understood. The focus must be on greater equality in participation in paid employment: for example, policies likely to reduce women's participation in paid work through providing incentives for women to provide care at home in a context where women are already well integrated into the labour market should not be considered to be enhancing gender equality according to this definition (see box 1 for a recent controversial example of such a policy in Norway). However, enhanced leave arrangements in a context where the impact is likely to be a strengthening of women's connection to the labour market, through reducing the number of women who feel obliged to quit the labour market when they have children, could be considered to have a positive gender equality effect. Context is thus critical; for example even some policies which have the aim of increasing women's participation in paid work may not be considered to enhance gender equality. For example, requirements for lone mothers to enter employment or lose entitlement to benefits restrict women's right to choose to provide care. Assessment of the achievement of quantitative targets, or the benchmarking of progress towards equal opportunities, must involve an assessment of the full context in which these changes took place, by national experts who are fully aware of the background and context to a particular policy programme.

Gender equality is thus a term 'with diverse dimensions and many layers of meaning' (Planntenga and Hansen 1999:5). ***While the focus in gender mainstreaming of employment policy must be on the position of women in the labour market, this objective is unlikely to be achieved without progress towards a broader objective, that is gender equality in the distribution of paid or unpaid work. Equality in the distribution of work is only one dimension to equality; there must also be equality in access to income and resources. The assessment of equality within the labour market must thus include a quality dimension, while greater gender equality in access to income and resources is integral to the broader objective of a more equal distribution of paid and unpaid work.***

This approach to gender equality is consistent with the first two suggested dimensions for gender impact assessment by the European Commission (see discussion 3.2 below), those of participation and resources; more equal access to paid employment and improvements in job quality should contribute to both objectives. Two further dimensions are proposed by the guide to gender impact assessment (see chapter 3 below), gender equality in rights and gender equality in norms and values. These dimensions also need to be considered within a gender mainstreaming perspective. Rights are important to back up and protect equality in participation. Gendered norms and values need to be challenged if women are to be able to participate on an equal basis (see Gonzalez 1999), without being constrained by views of women's appropriate societal and economic roles.

Box 1. The Norwegian Cash Benefit Reform

One recent case from Norway illustrates the conflicting opinions on what gender equality means. A Cash Benefit reform was launched in 1998 after a heated public debate. Parents with small children who do not use public child care will now receive in cash an amount equivalent to the state subsidy for a childcare place. The assumed gender equality effects of this reform are contested. According to the majority of gender researchers engaging in the public debate, the reform will have a negative impact on gender equality in the labour market. The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs argue that this reform represents a modernisation of the gender equality work, allowing for more choice and diversity. Preliminary surveys asking parents (mothers) what they intend to do, indicate that there will be no dramatic change in mothers' employment. This probably means that few parents will spend more time together with their children, which was one of the main aims of the reform, while there will be an expansion in the informal private child care market, which might weaken public child care, which was not one of the stated aims. Some will see the latter as unproblematic, as only a reflection of parents' preferences when child care subsidies are equally distributed, and private child care does not necessarily hamper women's employment. What is best for children is another question. This case also illustrates the difficulty of assessing consequences simply because we do not know how people actually will react to reforms.

(see Ellingsæter 1999 for further details)

There still remain some difficult problems in operationalising a definition of gender equality. Analysis based on gender gaps alone is not appropriate; we may wish to interpret differently a situation in which the gender gap in unemployment was reduced through a rise in the unemployment rate for men compared to a situation when it occurred through a rise in the employment rate of women. ***Gender equality should be focused on levelling up, not levelling down. Although men may have to let go some of their privileges in the labour market in order for gender equality to be achieved, it is important that this does not occur mainly through a levelling down of the situation of men at the bottom of the male labour market.***

Similar problems arise when we focus solely on the trends in the average position of women, in pay or employment terms. Have improvements in the average come about through general upward trends for all women or are the improvements focused on only part of the female population? Or indeed have the improvements in the average disguised deterioration in the position of disadvantaged groups of women? Attitudes to the experiences of different groups of women and men must to some extent be considered a political issue to be determined within member states. For example, it would not always be appropriate to focus employment policy measures on the least well educated in a context where this group was concentrated among older women who had left the labour market many years before and showed no interest in returning. The precise priorities within the various groups of women and men may have to be determined according to the specific labour market context. ***But the***

monitoring of the impact of policies on gender equality will need to identify the effects for different groups of women and men and not solely focus on the average or the change in the gender gap.

Differences among women and men relate not only to education and other indicators of advantage but also to their care responsibilities. Because women tend to be disadvantaged as mothers in the labour market, it is important for gender equality policy to take into account the specific problems women as mothers or potential mothers face, and to make provision to offset these disadvantages by providing care facilities and employment rights related to motherhood and parenthood. This approach fits with the gender equality approach which recognises that equitable treatment does not always mean the same treatment but may also involve different treatment, to reflect the different starting points and conditions of men and women. However, while the need for policies for care is fully recognised, ***there remains the problem of how to move eventually towards a situation where care policies are seen as much the concern of fathers as of mothers.***

Further problems emerge when defining gender equality and equality across different countries and societal regimes. There are significant differences between European societies in the problems facing women and men and therefore in the appropriate agendas for employment policy. For example if we were to contrast the position of women in Denmark and Greece, the main problems for Danish women could be said to relate to the status and rewards for jobs in the public sector and in negotiating time out of the labour market at a time of high overall labour market demand (see Sjørup 1999 for further details), while in Greece the problems relate more to integrating women into work and providing them with better opportunities within the large family firm sector. ***The initial starting point has to be a relevant criterion for assessing the gender equality impact of policy initiatives. Policy also has to be sensitive to differences in the logic of societal systems; policies cannot necessarily be easily transferred from one society to another because of the differences in the societal institutional arrangements, norms and preferences.***

Particular problems emerge in deciding how to respond to differences in expressed preferences of women in relation to both involvement in wage work and opportunities to provide care for children for these preferences are clearly influenced, on the one hand, by differences in infrastructure arrangements and by different societal norms and values on the other. It is also necessary to be sensitive to the differences in practical possibilities within the various member states of the European Union. For example, while women's involvement in family firms as unpaid family workers plays a major role in women's economic subordination in some countries, it may still not necessarily be appropriate to advocate full mobilisation of women from these firms into the more formal sector, without a consideration of the implications for the local community, their and their families' future job security etc. or indeed of the attitudes of the women themselves.

What constitutes a gender equality policy has to be determined both according to general principles- such as, for example, that women should

not be considered to have sole or prime responsibility for care, and that the gender pay gap should be closed- but also according to nationally-specific systems of labour market and family organisation, which shape the realm of both the possible and the desirable, at least in the short term. This requires the involvement of women in monitoring and shaping gender mainstreaming at the nation state and indeed local level, combined with a European wide approach requiring nation states to implement policies which foster gender equality according to transversal or general principles.

1.3. Some political preconditions for the implementation of mainstreaming

There are three interrelated preconditions for the development of mainstreaming at a political level. First, there needs to be the political will to implement mainstreaming, which goes beyond mechanistic implementation of gender impact analysis to a will to accord a high priority to developing policies with positive implications for gender equality. Second there needs to be a development of gender awareness at all levels of policy-making and implementation, that is among all actors. Third, there needs to be active involvement of women in all areas of public policy-making; indeed it is arguable that the first two preconditions cannot begin to be met without the latter. These preconditions can be seen to be essential when we consider the three elements which influence actors' abilities and will to implement a policy (see Ellingsæter 1999 for further details). These involve first the actors' understanding of the policy, i.e. their gender; awareness; second their acceptance or rejection of its use and value, which may be related to their gender, and finally the strength of the actor's acceptance or rejection, which may reflect the importance accorded to gender mainstreaming relative to other policy objectives and priorities (van der Roos 1996).

The need for a wide involvement of actors is both the attraction of mainstreaming, as it offers a real possibility for sustained and widespread cultural change, and also the challenge. How can actors be encouraged not only to appreciate the presence of gendered processes but also to prioritise their change? Tactics to encourage commitment by guaranteeing a mutually advantageous outcome may backfire. In some cases measures improving gender equality will increase overall efficiency or productivity (a "win-win" situation) but in other situations the profit/efficiency argument may be in conflict with the justice argument. The increasing tendency to promote gender equality as a productivity measure might only lead to a conditional political commitment which may disappear in circumstances where promoting gender equality does not necessarily represent a win-win situation.

The more mainstreaming is interpreted in member states as a concept with no direct relevance to their own political agenda, the greater the problems which will be encountered in developing a mainstreaming approach. Some of the problems with the concept relate to the fact that the term itself is not translatable into all European languages, which creates a presumption that it is a term with no internal resonances (see Silvera 1999 and Sjørup 1999). It may have been

more appropriate to adopt a longer phrase, such as integrating a gender perspective, in order to facilitate the translation process. Action needs to be taken at all levels in member states, from the local to the national and from women's groups to central government administration to raise awareness of the concept and its possibilities; if the concept remains confined to the EU employment guidelines it will remain marginal within the political agenda of member states.

The political will, and thus the state's role in promoting gender equality has varied significantly between the European countries. This has been of importance for the relationship between the state and the feminist movement, and the relationship between research and policies (Mósesdóttir 1998). In the Scandinavian countries the state has been perceived as a partner, generating the notion of the 'female friendly welfare state'. In other countries the state's role in promoting gender equality is much less developed or even non-existent. In these contexts the development of both gender awareness among policy-makers within the state and the development of a political will to mainstream must be considered long term rather than short term objectives. The achievement of a strong role for the state in promoting gender equality depends both on the strength and form of the feminist movement and its ability to exert influence on policy-makers and on the representation of those sympathetic to equal opportunities within the decision-making bodies. These will be mainly, though not exclusively women, both female politicians and the so-called femocrats, that is women in powerful administrative positions.

One of the ways in which countries may seek to move more rapidly to the preconditions for effective gender mainstreaming is through measures to improve women's political representation. Quotas have been used with good effect to expand female political representation in Norway, Germany and indeed the UK (although the adoption of female only shortlists was eventually ruled illegal). France has also been considering measures to increase female representation in parliament.

It is not sufficient to develop a political will among politicians and within the state bureaucracy. In most countries central employment issues are regulated by collective agreements, which make the social partners important political decision-makers. Women's interests have not been effectively mainstreamed in the agendas of trade unions. For example in Italy, no women were involved in the recent employment pact even among the unions (see box 2). In France gender equality issues are still dealt with by a separate department at the central level and are almost entirely absent at the local level (see Silvera 1999). Similar problems have been experienced in Norway but there are signs of change. Norway's largest employee federation (LO) has been male-dominated but women provide the fastest growing group of new members and have also recently made their way into positions as elected representatives in the top of the organisation. The LO's new programme for 1997 to 2001 focuses on the need for new flexible working time reforms, advocating a flexibility which accommodates individual needs over the life course (see Ellingsæter 1999).

Box 2: Women's exclusion from employment policy-making in Italy

A very recent example of the lack of gender mainstreaming in the Italian context is the bargaining and signing of the "Patto Sociale" in December 1998. This is a wide ranging political agreement - subscribed to by government representatives, employers' associations and trade unions - defining the agenda for the immediate future in terms of employment policy, wage policy, welfare reforms and local development policies.

- ◆ Forty-five people were engaged in the definition of this agreement; notwithstanding the high numbers involved, there was only one woman sitting around the bargaining table, and even she was a late substitute for a man who was too ill to attend.
- ◆ The government was represented by six ministers but not a single woman-minister was invited to participate either directly or indirectly in the negotiations, notwithstanding the fact that the current Italian Government has six women ministers, the highest number in Italian history.
- ◆ Women organisations were neither invited nor consulted.
- ◆ Some of the issues under discussion were dealing directly with female employment and the position of women in the labour market.

The fact that women were excluded from such an important political event, planning the "modernisation of Italian society", has been denounced in the national press. Some echo of the sharp criticisms raised by this shaming exclusion has reached the high spheres of political life, and there are now some signs of the need to acknowledge women's competence in shaping the future of employment policies. In particular, both the Minister of Equal Opportunities and the Commission for Equal Opportunities are to be directly involved in the planning of the 1999 NAP for Italy.

(see Villa 1999)

Furthermore, while the role of politics in the mainstreaming strategy need to be emphasised, it is also necessary to be aware of the limitations of political influence. Political decisions create formal frameworks for social life, which are important and necessary, but seldom sufficient for creating change. There is also a need for a predisposition towards change in the everyday interactions, in work places and in families etc. through which gender relations are reproduced. Resistance at this level may, however, still diminish over time as a consequence of change in the political and institutional frameworks for gender equality as adaptation to changing gender roles occurs at different speeds not only between but also within European societies and education and age cohorts.

A further political precondition for the implementation of effective mainstreaming is that opportunities should not be provided for the policy to be used to sideline or eliminate gender specific policies and actions. The result of the disappearance of gender specific actions could be increasing invisibility of equal opportunities issues and the absence of pressure to monitor, interpret and develop the mainstreaming approach. For some the development of a separate

policy and separate research on women's issues hamper the process of integration (Gulbrandsen 1998); for others integration runs the risk of invisibility. At the other end of the spectrum there is the danger of promoting gender stereotypes through gender mainstreaming, of emphasising gender difference instead of focusing on the absence of difference. Gender awareness should not lead to the reification of gender difference. But gender mainstreaming must also mean something more than the inclusion of gender in a routine process of policy evaluation. There is a danger as gender mainstreaming becomes more established that it becomes less rather than more transformative, as policy-makers learn to use the technique to minimise external pressures and to inform equal opportunities lobbyists that their concerns have already been taken care of in the initial policy evaluation.

Although the Commission has committed itself to a twin track approach, the risk that mainstreaming could dilute gender equality policies must still be recognised and some may argue is already evident in the plans for the EU's Structural Funds after 2000, where all gender specific measures will end, to be replaced by a general integration of the principle of mainstreaming. What will matter in this case is how the concept of gender mainstreaming is used within member states and how effectively the policy is monitored at the EU level. Will it be used as a justification for soft peddling on specific equality measures or will it provide the opportunity to make a renewed effort to improve gender equality through extending the range of policy programmes and the associated budgets through which gender equality issues can be promoted?

The prevailing knowledge and information concerning gender equality may also provide constraints on the gender mainstreaming process. The approach relies heavily both on statistical information and on research based knowledge concerning gender processes and outcomes. This is more than a question about disaggregated statistics by gender and concerns the general status and competence of knowledge and research on gender relations in national research. Social science does not produce exact knowledge, definitions and interpretations are often disputed. Moreover, there will be limitations in both available knowledge, and what knowledge it is possible to produce, both generally, but also particularly within the limitations of the time and resource frames for political processes. The determination of whether a policy can or should be considered to be acting in the interests of gender equality may well be hampered both by a lack of statistics disaggregated by gender (see section 3.1 below) and by ambiguities and problems in interpreting both the impact of policies and the effects on gender equity (see Ellingsæter 1999 for further details).

These problems are related to the more general difficulty of developing political measures for complex social phenomena, where both causal mechanisms and policy outcomes are ambiguous. Gender inequalities clearly often are of such a character, as gendered practices are complex and multidimensional. Both the formation of policies and the actual outcomes are conditioned by national configurations of economy, institutions and culture. Apparently similar political solutions do not necessarily involve identical causes or motivation or lead to similar outcomes, in part because of variations in the types of policies

implemented and because of differences in the context in which they are applied. The adoption of gender mainstreaming may lead to a glossing over these ambiguities in the interests of the clear and simple policy prescriptions which politicians prefer. Yet it is in fact one of the tasks of gender mainstreaming to look for hidden problems and unintended outcomes. Rees addresses (1998:189) this problem in her definition of the aim of mainstreaming as being "to identify these hidden, unrecognised and unremarked ways in which systems and structures are biased in favour of men, and to redress the balance". The need to identify the indirect as well as the direct impacts on gender equality means that there will be a need for continuing support through research and evaluation for a gender mainstreaming policy. The fact that gender mainstreaming throws up questions as well as providing solutions should be seen as a strength of the policy, as it is through questioning current arrangements and developments that we can develop new and more imaginative policy approaches.

The political preconditions for the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming thus involve first a favourable political and institutional environment, including a political will to prioritise gender equality and a political structure in which women are effectively integrated as well as men. Also required is a predisposition to use gender mainstreaming not as a mechanistic tool but as a creative and new approach to policy-making through which the twin goals of promoting employment and gender equality can be achieved. These goals cannot be pursued effectively on an independent basis and it is only through an effective integration of the two objectives that a coherent and complementary policy approach can be developed. The reasons for this complementarity are outlined in the next chapter.

2. WHY GENDER MAINSTREAMING OF EMPLOYMENT POLICY?

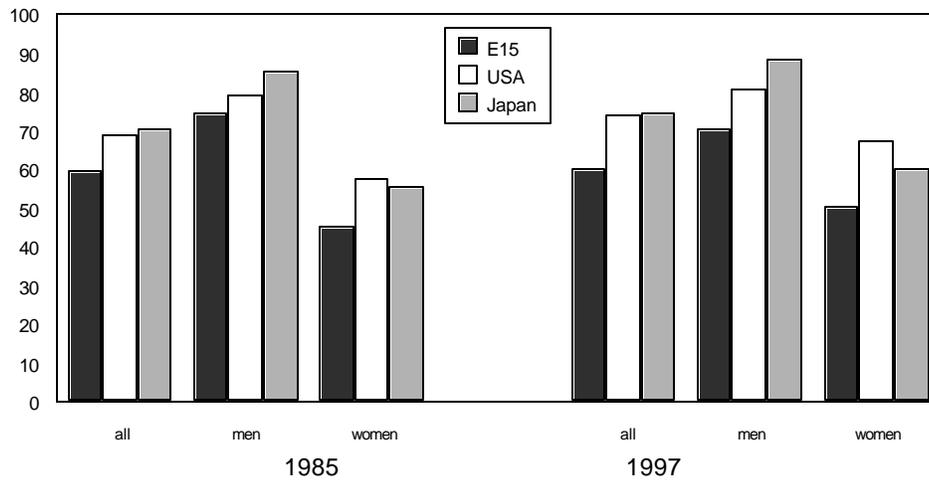
So far we have been discussing gender mainstreaming as a means of promoting gender equality. In this section we need to provide a more detailed rationale for the specific and explicit commitments to gender mainstreaming in European employment policy.

Three main arguments can be provided. First, employment policy is critical to gender equality; there is little evidence that women will achieve greater power and authority in society without first improving their position in the labour market.

Second, the goals of a high employment European society will not be achieved without a further and major expansion of women's involvement in the labour market (Rubery and Smith 1999). This second rationale for gender mainstreaming has been explicitly accepted by the Commission and has led to the publication of its European employment rate report disaggregated by gender (CEC 1999). This report notes that although increasing women's employment is one of the major ways in which the gap in employment rates between the EU and the US can be reduced this *'can only be achieved over the long term by raising employment of women in younger age groups and ensuring the conditions for them to stay in employment for a longer period of their working lives.'* (CEC 1999:12). In Figure 1 we see both the changes in women's and men's employment rates in the EU as a whole between 1985 and 1997 and the continuing gap with the US and Japan, related in part to the lower employment rate of women. Figure 2 indicates the importance of rising female employment rates in prime and older age ranges in preventing further falls in the EU employment rate.

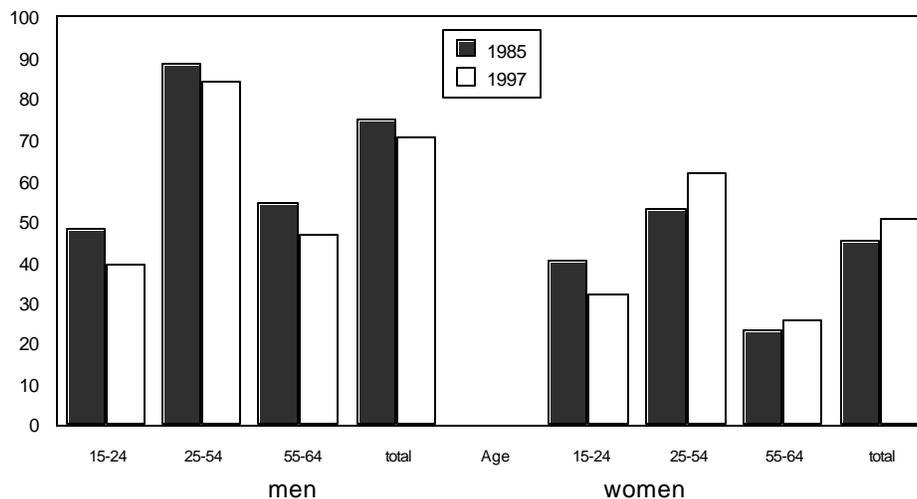
The employment rate report also identifies the demand for services as *'related to the level of female participation in the workplace....higher employment of women also creates jobs to cater for activities such as child care or care for other dependants which were previously unpaid. ... In this way demand and supply reinforce each other.'* (CEC 1999: 17). Moreover, among the policies considered to raise the employment rate are the gender-related policies of provision of childcare and the reform of tax and benefits to facilitate women's integration. There is clear evidence of the recognition of the quantitative importance of women's employment to the overall employment agenda, but the work has still to be done to raise awareness of the gendered nature of labour markets and its consequences for gender equality. For example, part-time work is identified as fulfilling only the positive roles of boosting employment and reconciling work and family life, without reference to its negative impacts on the quality of employment. Therefore, to build upon this second rationale for gender mainstreaming in European employment policy the analysis of the gendered nature of labour markets needs to be further explored and developed, as we illustrate in the following sub-section. Policy-makers need to take into account gender processes when planning employment policies designed to achieve the twin objective of higher employment and improved gender equality for,

Figure 1: Employment rates of the working age population in the EU, Japan and USA, 1997



Note: Data for Japan refer to 1996
Source: European Labour Force Survey 1997 (CEC 1999)

Figure 2: Employment rates of women and men in the EU by age, 1985 and 1997



Source: European Labour Force Survey 1997 (CEC 1999)

without a more developed understanding of these gendered processes, there is a danger that these two objectives may be conflictual rather than complementary.

The third rationale for gender mainstreaming in employment policy arises from the wider agenda which employment policy needs to address. Employment does not only have a productive but also a social reproductive role; it is the main means by which citizens derive their standard of living. Employment policy has to be articulated to the system of social reproduction, including here both family and household organisation and social welfare provisions. Most employment policy is conducted on the false premise that the underlying social structures remain constant or indeed unaffected by employment policy; even when welfare reform issues are brought into employment policy it is often with the narrow objective of identifying, for example, how to make work pay. Gender mainstreaming inevitably leads to the recognition that social structures are in flux, or even in crisis and that employment policy needs to be integrated into a broader agenda, involving a more articulated development of employment, family and welfare policy (Rubery et al. 1999a; Berghman and Fouarge 1998). These issues are explored further in the final sub-section of this chapter.

2.1 Employment policy and the gendered character of labour markets

The complexity of gender relations in labour markets and the role of policy

European labour markets are structured by gender (Rubery et al. 1998, 1999b). Gender inequality is reflected in participation rates, unemployment rates, the distribution of resources and financial rewards, and in societal norms and values. Gender segregation is found in industries, occupations and working time. Segregation not only involves concentration in different types of work but also restricted opportunities for women to move into higher level work.

Gender mainstreaming involves the recognition that labour market problems go beyond issues of employment and unemployment or indeed skill deficiencies to include problems of underemployment and underutilisation of skills. This gendering of labour markets is not diminishing in the face of women's increased integration into employment and in many respects is being reinforced and intensified by recent trends. Moreover, gender differentiation is found in all labour markets and in all labour force groups; it is a transversal or cross cutting dimension to labour markets, even if the form and intensity of gender differentiation varies by country, sector and over time.

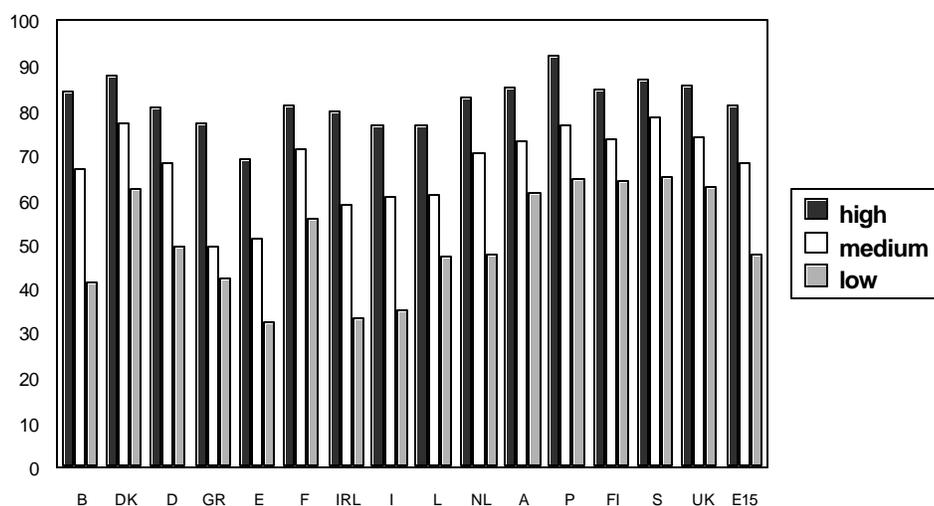
If we review the evidence of progress or change over recent years, we find that women have largely moved from outsiders to insiders within the labour market as European societies are clearly moving from the single male breadwinner towards a dual breadwinner system of organisation (Dingledey 1998; Folbre 1994; Ward et al. 1996). Labour markets are becoming more diverse, less based on the full-time continuous male participation; jobs are becoming less associated with mechanical skills and physical strength and more with social and communications skills in which women may even be argued to have a

comparative advantage; and many areas of work previously confined to the domestic home have been moved into either public or market services. Against this evidence of apparent success we find continuing or even reinforced differentiation (Rubery et al. 1999b) in segregation, pay and working time dimensions, rising problems of female unemployment and a continuation of the belief that care work is the responsibility of women, wherever it is performed.

The consequence of women's and men's different locations in the labour market structure, both horizontally and vertically, and different time allocation in paid versus unpaid work, is that policies often have gendered impacts. Gender mainstreaming in employment policy concerns gender equality in labour market access and participation, as well in as financial and social rewards from work, and the distribution of paid and unpaid work. Understanding the functioning of labour markets requires recognition of the role of norms, social values, customs and cultures which shape the ways in which both men and women operate in the labour market (see Gonzalez 1999). Policy-makers are unlikely to be able to deliver effective policy or to predict its impact unless they are aware of the gendered nature of labour markets, labour market institutions and labour market norms. Moreover, policy-makers, by not taking a gender mainstreaming approach, run the risk of developing or perpetuating inefficient policies and practices. For example, there has been a major rise in investment in higher level education in member states (OECD 1998a) and a simultaneous rise in the female share of higher level students, yet relatively little has been done to develop policies to improve the likelihood that these newly educated women will be able to effectively combine work and family life. Education has a major impact on women's propensity to stay in employment but gender gaps even among the higher educated remain (see figure 3 and table 2). Gender mainstreaming thus has the potential to improve the coherence of employment policy by recognising the interrelationships, for example, between educational policy and provision of care services or leave arrangements.

Gender relations in the labour market are shaped by complex processes, by the way gender is interlocked in the interplay of changing economic structures, state policies, cultural ideas and historical traditions. Gender difference within the labour market arises from conditions both inside and outside the labour market, and most importantly from their interrelations (Bruegel and Perrons 1995). The regulatory frameworks of labour markets are crucial determinants of the forms of employment and work conditions that develop (Rubery et al. 1998; 1999a). General economic and political-institutional structures, which critically shape women's position, may be more important to women's employment than specific gender equality policies. For example, the smaller wage gaps in the Scandinavian countries, particularly in Sweden, appear to be generated by the general bargaining structure rather than equal pay legislation (Asplund et al. 1996). Thus, labour market policies, industrial relations and collective bargaining systems are essential in shaping gender relations in the

Figure 3: Employment rates of women aged 25-54 by educational attainment, 1997.



Source: European Labour Force Survey 1997 (CEC 1999)

Table 2. Gender differences in employment intensity for higher educated labour
(population aged 25-59 with tertiary education)

	Male full-time equivalent employment rate 1995	Female full-time equivalent employment rate	Gender gap in full-time equivalent employment rate
Austria	88.6	75.2	13.4
Belgium	90.8	70.5	20.3
Germany West	89.6	67.3	22.3
Germany East	85.4	75.8	9.6
Denmark	90.5	74.1	16.4
Spain	83.2	63.7	19.5
Finland	84.1	79.9	4.2
France	88.5	71.2	17.3
Greece	88.5	73.5	15.0
Ireland	90.8	70.7	20.1
Italy	88.1	73.3	14.8
Luxembourg	93.5	72.1	21.4
Netherlands	84.7	55.1	29.6
Portugal	91.6	86.4	5.2
Sweden	85.9	75.5	10.4
UK	89.6	70.1	19.5
E15	88.2	69.8	18.4

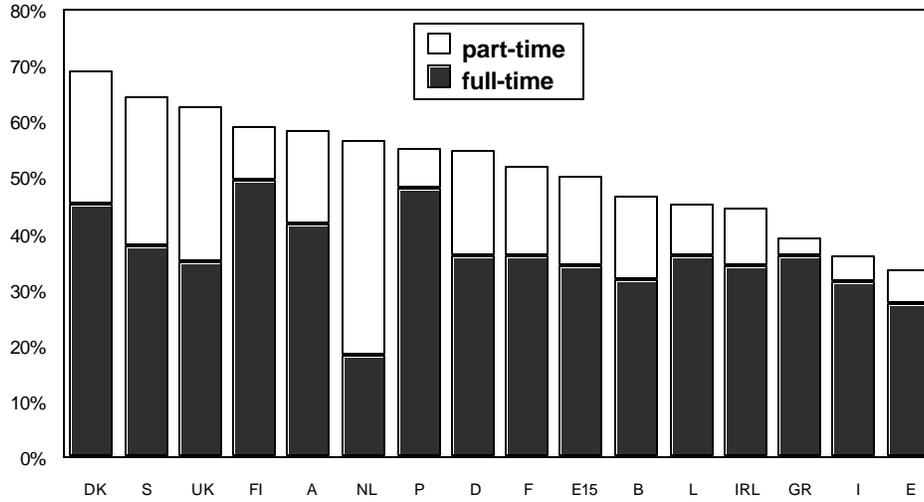
Source: European Labour Force Survey 1995. Full-time equivalent rates calculated by treating a part-time job as equivalent to 0.5 of a full-time job.

labour market. Moreover, the labour market is in turn shaped by the organisation of the family and welfare system which will determine the extent to which care work is performed in the household or through public or private services in the wage economy.

Gender differences vary significantly between European labour markets (CEC 1998b, Rubery et al. 1998, 1999a), reflecting both differences in welfare state and labour market policies and institutions (see figures 3 and 4 for differences in employment rates by education and differences in the shares of women employed part-time). Gender relations embedded in different labour market structures and institutions imply that changes in policy will have different impacts. Motherhood has a very different impact on employment patterns in EU member states (see figure 5). Thus, for example, the problem of women returners has to large degree disappeared in Scandinavia. Comparing the situation of job seekers immediately before starting to seek work, only 3 percent of women came from a status of "domestic work" in Denmark, compared to 38 percent in the UK (Rubery et al. 1998). Another example is part-time work (O'Reilly and Fagan 1998). While part-time work is promoted in order to increase the labour supply in some countries, more full-time work is the strategy in others, for example in Denmark (see Sjørup 1999). This also demonstrates the different stages in the development in women's employment rates in different countries. The need for nationally developed strategies for gender equality is also reflected in labour market restructuring in the 1990s, which has had different impacts on gender relations in various national labour markets.

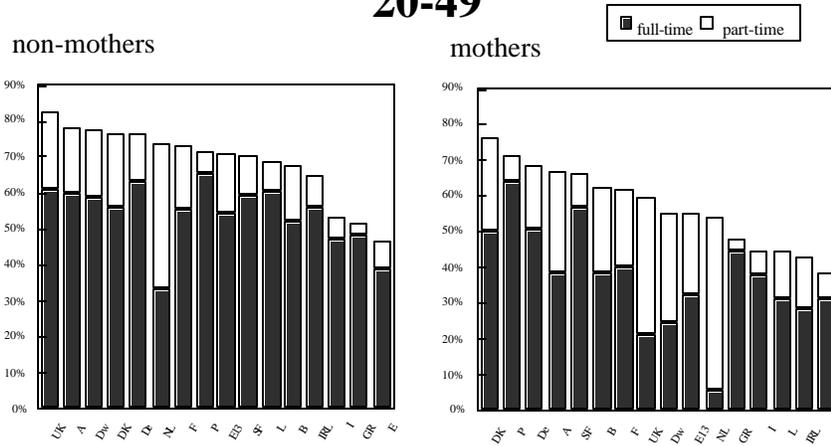
The critical role that general labour market policies play in shaping women's employment provides the key rationale for mainstreaming from a gender equality perspective. Without introducing a gender perspective into employment policy, actions to pursue gender equality in employment may be facing an ever increasing uphill struggle as labour market policies, for example towards more flexible employment contracts or flexible wages, leave women struggling even to maintain their existing standards of pay and employment protection. However, there is also a need for the twin track approach to gender equality, that is the continuation and renewal of gender-specific policies. The experience of past decades tells us that developments in women's employment position depend upon a variety of factors including the particular form of industrial restructuring and labour market policies, as much as on specific equality policies. However, what has become clear from recent trends is that where women have made gains from particular policies and practices, these gains remain fragile if they are not based on an explicit commitment to gender equality. For example, women in Italy have faced particularly strong declines in relative wages in the 1990s, following a period where they benefited, almost coincidentally from a policy of narrowing pay differentials (Bettio and Villa 1996a). In contrast the gains made by women in the Scandinavian countries from policies of wage solidarity appear to somewhat more robust due to greater commitment to gender equality in policymaking bodies. There is, therefore, a need both for explicit mainstreaming of gender equality objectives in

Figure 4: Full and part-time employment rates of women in the EU, 1997.



Source: European Labour Force Survey 1997

Figure 5: Full and part-time employment rates of mothers and non-mothers aged 20-49



Note: no data available for Sweden; data for Denmark refer to 1993
 Note: Data refer to mothers with at least one child aged under 15.

Source: European Labour Force Survey 1996

employment policy and for the introduction and more effective implementation of specific equality measures, involving both legislative and voluntary initiatives. The continuation of gender specific measures becomes even more imperative if the trends in the labour market and the supportive policy measures are likely to create or reinforce gender difference.

To identify how the gendered nature of labour markets impacts on employment policy objectives we consider the key dimensions of labour market differentiation by gender: economic activity status; flexibility and time; segregation; and pay (Rubery et al. 1999b).

Key dimensions of gendered labour markets

i) Economic activity status

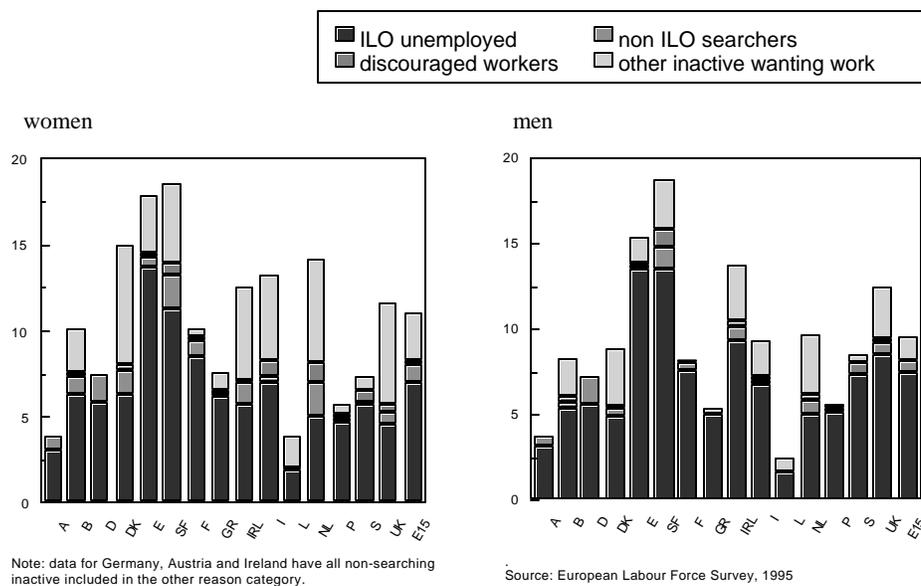
Raising women's employment rates is an essential part of the European employment policy strategy. Raising educational levels of women appears to have a strong upward impact on their employment rates (see figure 3), but there are still major differences between countries in the extent to which even the higher educated women manage to maintain their employment or to work more than for a few hours over the period of responsibility for young children. Thus policies to raise employment rates and to utilise the productive potential of the European economy need to pay attention to policies to facilitate the participation of women when they have children (figure 5). The alternative is likely to be either lower than desired employment rates or, even more likely, lower fertility rates (Bettio and Villa 1998). The slow fertility rates will not produce the demographic profile needed to support the older generation. Particular attention also needs to be paid to the employment needs of less educated women as they tend to have the lowest rates of employment in many European countries (figure 3). The ambition of employment policy should be to facilitate the integration of all social groups.

However, the objective of moving towards a dual earner society, implied by the policy of high employment rates, requires the development of a much broader approach to employment policy than has yet been adopted in either member states or at the EU level. It requires a rethinking of the interrelationships between employment and social and household patterns and welfare arrangements. This approach needs to take into account the reorganisation of all forms of work, from care work to wage work, and to consider all the ways in which individuals and households are supported; through wage work, state and private benefits and intra-family transfers. Without this broad perspective the attempt to develop a new employment framework for Europe could lead to ever increasing inconsistencies and incoherence between the system of employment and the system of welfare organisation.

The changing patterns of participation and labour market organisation are leading to an increased blurring of the boundaries between employment and

unemployment which in turn requires a rethinking of the concepts of work, employment and unemployment. The traditionally dichotomous distinction between employment and unemployment is insufficient to capture the large spectrum of employment relationships which lie between what is called permanent employment on the one hand and traditional unemployment on the other. New concepts which involve different forms of employment, including those which deviate from the standard permanent full-time contract, help to focus attention on the processes of marginalisation in the labour market. Growth in non-standard work contracts among European women is often seen as connected with the feminisation of the labour force and the increasing level of unemployment. As such the development of new concepts can be argued to be particularly relevant for an understanding of women's labour market relations; for example figure 6 illustrates the greater impact on women's unemployment rates of taking into account the hidden unemployed.

Figure 6: Unemployment and hidden unemployment by gender in the EU, 1995.



Gender mainstreaming thus calls into question the use of the traditional rigid differentiation between economic activity statuses and requires a consideration of all forms of work and how they are organised and remunerated, both inside and outside the labour market.

ii) Labour market flexibility and working time policies

Because of the gendered nature of labour markets, apparently gender neutral terms such as flexibility have particular gender connotations. Flexibility can and has been defined in various ways involving, for example: external and internal labour market flexibility, numerical and functional or quantitative and qualitative flexibility, employer-led or employee-friendly and imposed or negotiated flexibility

(see Karamessini 1999 for further details). Flexibility can also be linked either to the deregulation or to the re-regulation of the labour market (Deakin and Mückenberger 1992). These different forms of flexibility have distinct implications for wage earners and different groups of workers, including differences by gender (Bettio et al. 1998a). Indeed there are strong a priori reasons for expecting labour market flexibility policies not to be gender neutral. Policies which favour downward wage flexibility, widening wage differentials, intensification of numerical flexibility or more employer-led working-time flexibility tend to have negative impacts on working conditions and on the position of the many women who are concentrated in low paid and atypical jobs (Rubery et al. 1995). Flexibility may boost female employment rates but at the same time reinforce sex segregation and women's identification as second-class workers.

Gender mainstreaming is therefore crucial not only to assess the gender implications of new efforts to flexibilise labour markets, but also to identify new policies to redress the current burden of flexibility policies borne by women in the labour market. An alternative approach is to pursue a more positive form of flexibility, focused on the modernisation of work organisation and more effective performance, rather than on the reduction in labour costs. Work reorganisation in principle presents an opportunity for the reshaping of gender relations in the workplace. However, even in collectively-negotiated agreements focused on internal flexibility, women can be in a relatively weak position if they are not unionised and if they are not aware of the gender implications of the issues at stake. Thus, whatever approach to labour market flexibility is adopted, issues of gender and the impact on gender equality need to be addressed.

This is particularly the case with respect to the distinction between employer-led and employee-friendly flexibility. For employers flexibility means economies in labour costs and adaptability of the workforce to the fluctuations of production and the skill requirements of jobs. For the employees flexibility means the adjustment of their employment conditions to their family obligations and personal needs. Because of the strong needs that women have for a better interrelation between work and family and home life, they are very vulnerable to being drawn into employer-based flexibility schemes which may appear to offer them more flexibility but which also reinforced their disadvantage in the labour market (Junter and Malpas 1998; see also Silvera 1999; Plasman and Soudan 1999). Thus the solution is not to find gender-specific solutions to these conflicts but to develop an integrated approach to negotiating flexibility, aimed at both matching employer and employee needs and at moving away from a position where only women are seen to have an interest in the interrelations between work and family and home life (Junter and Malpas 1998).

The prevalence and consequences of various types of working time flexibility vary between countries, and across national labour market sectors. For example, the single most important form of flexible working time, part-time work, dominated by women is shaped by national conditions generating and regulating this type of work (O'Reilly and Fagan 1998). The balance between demand and supply factors varies, as well as the regulatory framework in which they are situated. The growth of part-time work in Europe is seen as an indication of

greater labour market flexibility in work arrangements. Growth in part-time work in some countries accounted for almost all of the whole employment growth in the 1980s, e.g. in Germany and the United Kingdom. In the Scandinavian countries, where the highest shares of part-time work have been found, part-time work has declined slightly from the 1980s (Ellingsæter 1998). The growth in women's part-time work is often seen as marginalising women in the labour market although both the extent of part-time work and the degree and form of marginalisation will vary between countries (Ellingsæter 1992, Rubery et al. 1999b).

Variations in the extent and form of part-time work are not systematically related either to the extent of integration of mothers into employment (see above figure 5) nor to the overall problem of employment shortage. Thus policies to promote part-time work cannot be universally justified either as a means of reducing unemployment or as a means of integrating women into the labour market. Part-time work is a source of underemployment for women. Even where women do not express a desire to work full-time those in part-time jobs often wish to work more hours (Fagan 1996, Plantenga 1996). Moreover, the involvement of women in part-time jobs often involves high costs in terms of both opportunities to use skills and in terms of lifetime income and career opportunities.

At the other end of the spectrum there is evidence of increased pressure on individuals in higher level jobs to work longer hours, often involving unpaid overtime. A critical point is organisational cultures (Bailyn 1993). Time is a cultural category and different types of 'absence' and 'presence' at work have different, often gendered meanings. Rewards and opportunities are tied in particular ways to working time patterns. Ideas which equate long work hours with company commitment (Bailyn 1993) permeate some areas of employment. Boundaries between work time and personal time are being blurred particularly in jobs where competence and knowledge is personalised (Sørhaug 1996, Simpson 1997). There is an increasing recognition of the importance of time politics for gender equality (Hochschild 1997). Policies are interacting with different cultures in the labour market but while policies are necessary they are clearly not sufficient: attitudes also need to change. Transforming work cultures is becoming essential for promoting gender equality in working life (see Ellingsæter 1999).

Gender mainstreaming brings the gendered nature of flexible employment forms and working time organisation explicitly into the employment policy debate. It also shows that there is no simple or universal relationship between the integration of women into the economy and flexible working. At the organisation level, time politics is becoming a critical factor in gender equality. Employment policy needs to pay attention to transforming the workplace culture if equal opportunities are not to be further jeopardised.

iii) Segregation

Studies of gender segregation show that women and men do different types of

work in different types of jobs with different wage structures. This reflects an hierarchical order based on the male norm (Jenson 1989). Skills are historically rather than biologically or technically constructed, and social construction is part of the process whereby unequal social relations are reproduced (Jenson 1989). Very frequently the work which women perform is classified as non-skilled: *'It reflects the supposed talents of women rather than any acquired skill for which recognition in the form of wages or social value is appropriate'* (p. 151). Accordingly, gender bias results not only from women and men choosing different types of jobs but also from the social construction of skill.

The segregation of the labour market by gender seems to be very difficult to change (Cockburn 1991; Rubery and Fagan 1993). Paradoxically, perhaps, the Scandinavian labour markets, despite a long history of women with continuous work pattern are the most gender segregated. There is in fact no simple relationship between segregation and labour market disadvantage; for example some countries have low gender pay gaps associated with high segregation while others have both high gender pay gaps and high segregation. Moreover women in countries with relatively low segregation levels may have to adjust more to the male norm, for example in working-time arrangements, than women in countries with high rates of segregation.

Nevertheless, segregation remains an important dimension to the gendered labour market, providing a basis for gender differences in experience and treatment at work. The reasons for the continuing patterns of segregation are complex, involving both exclusionary mechanisms in education and work organisation as well as gender differences in preferences. Gender equality in access and participation in the formal educational system has more or less been achieved in many European countries. In some countries women even constitute the majority in higher education. Women's increasing educational attainment has not, however, been paralleled by a desegregation in the type of education women and men choose, although there have been some changes in women's choices, for example in areas such as medicine and economics. There is an interaction between the dominant gender in an occupation and the observed returns to education. Thus low returns to women's education in, for example, education or health, is not necessarily indicative of low productivity in work but of public policy choices to keep down pay in the public sector. This takes an extreme form in Norway where estimated returns for college education for nurses are negative (Pedersen 1995; Ellingsæter 1999).

Vertical segregation is being reinforced by excessive demands for time input as already discussed. Moreover, although there is some evidence of younger cohorts of highly educated women making entry into non traditional job areas, this process of desegregation is not the end of the story. Some higher level job areas are becoming reseggregated as female-dominated occupations or occupational segments, with implications for pay and status in these areas (Reskin and Roos 1990; Crompton and Sanderson 1990).

Skills and career opportunities also need to be developed in traditional female

occupations. Recent studies by the OECD (1998b) of occupations where women are concentrated, including care and clerical work, found that both the women employed and society more generally lose out as a result of structural problems which minimise opportunities to build upon accumulated skills and experience to develop more productive ways of working, involving higher standards of care and higher standards of efficiency. New ways of professionalising work and career opportunities in female-dominated occupations need to be found, a requirement which may be at odds with the trend towards more flexible and fragmented systems of work in the services sector, associated with the decrease in the dominance of public service provision.

Traditional patterns of segregation may be challenged by new organisational and work forms, in which recruitment, promotion and career opportunities may follow less standardised and predictable patterns (Solheim 1998). A tendency towards the so-called boundaryless career involving more movements between organisations may have both positive and negative implications for gender segregation. On the one hand it may open up opportunities in the labour market thereby increasing the range of jobs available to individual women. On the other hand, a decline in job security and an increasing requirement for individuals to develop their own careers based on their knowledge and competencies, may expose women ever more frequently to the dangers of discrimination in the labour market, particularly over periods when they have responsibilities for young children when they are most vulnerable. One critical issue will be the access that women will have to lifelong learning opportunities, but these may still be more likely to flow to those in permanent full-time jobs and women who spend time outside the labour market or employed in flexible jobs may find an ever widening gap in their access to training and learning opportunities over their work histories (Schömann and Becker 1995; Tuijnman and Schömann 1996; Arulampalam and Booth 1997).

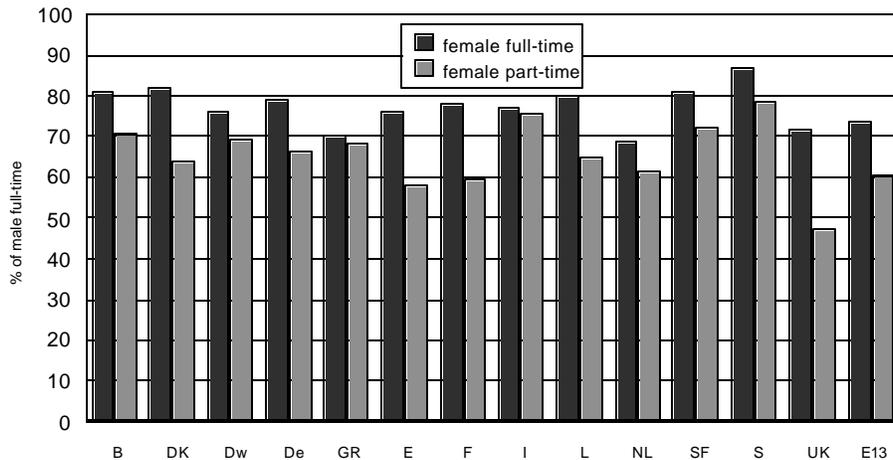
Gender mainstreaming brings to light the problem of underemployment and undervaluation associated with the current organisation of the labour market. Opening up opportunities requires action at the education and the organisation level; moreover action needs to be taken to prevent processes of resegregation in jobs where women do make entry. The consequences of policies to decentralise, subcontract or fragment organisations for skill development and career opportunities also need to be considered.

iv) Pay and income inequality

The gender gap in wages is a systematic feature of labour markets, interrelated with patterns of gender segregation. However, the size of the gender gap varies and with it the associated penalty for gender segregation (see figure 7). Thus despite the high level of segregation, the Scandinavian countries have smaller gender differences in wages than most others. The relatively smaller gender wage gap found in Norway and the other Scandinavian countries can first of all be explained with the centralised wage bargaining system, resulting in overall

small wage differences (Asplund et al. 1996; Blau and Kahn 1992, 1994; Rubery and Fagan 1994).

Figure 7. Gender Wage Gap in the European Union, 1995.



Note: Hourly data excluding overtime payments
Source: Structure of Earnings Survey (Applica 1998)

However, wage systems which help the mass of lower paid women may involve other costs. For example, in Norway, centralisation has helped women on the average by raising pay for the lower skilled, while holding back wages for the higher skilled or more educated, particularly in the public sector (Høgsnes 1995). Similarly, systems which provide good protection at the minimum wage level, which has positive implications for overall gender pay equity, have not necessarily been at the forefront of developing gender sensitive pay and grading structures. Countries in this category include for example France where a recent development of a guide to gender sensitive pay grading has had no impact because of a failure to implement follow-up measures (see box 3). In contrast the UK has probably the widest gender pay gap, particularly if part-time workers are taken into account. However, the UK has one of the strongest records in Europe of trade unions taking action to try to implement the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and a code of practice on equal pay has been published by the Equal Opportunities Commission. In the UK the main problem is the lack of national and sectoral systems of pay determination so that most actions on equal pay have only limited impacts on the overall patterns of pay differentials.

Box 3: Gender-friendly pay guidelines in France: mainstreaming project which was not followed through

In order to limit the discriminatory consequences of the wage negotiation system (see Silvera 1996, 1998), a "handbook" for negotiators was developed in 1997, based on the initiative of the Ministry of Labour and the Department for the Rights of Women based on the studies of a bipartite working group, as well as experts and researchers. The aim of the guide was to offer accessible statistical, economic and legal information, and thus to permit employee and employer representatives at the firm and sectoral level to integrate equality issues into negotiations. Both the procedure and objective of this experiment thus fit within the philosophy of mainstreaming. Its success, however, depends on the extent to which negotiators can take advantage of it. To this end, it was suggested that the social partners should be given awareness-raising training, under the aegis of the Labour Inspectorate. Unfortunately, this project was never put into place, and for reasons that are unknown the Ministry of Labour failed to implement any follow-up to the publication of the handbook. This blockage indicates the lack of serious consideration given by the government to issues of equality in general, and mainstreaming in particular.

(see Silvera 1999)

Employment policy which has a potential impact on the gender pay gap must be evaluated with reference to the initial starting point, that is the size of the gender pay gap yet to be closed (see figure 7). Close attention thus needs to be paid to the gender implications of changes in wage policy, for example policies related to the minimum wage or to decentralised wage bargaining are unlikely to be gender neutral. One of the reasons for promoting decentralisation of bargaining is often to give employers the opportunity to match wages to bargaining power, but this approach, almost by definition, will tend to limit progress towards gender pay equity. The policy agenda also needs to be expanded, if progress on closing the gender pay gap is to be made, to include the development of more proactive and innovative approaches to wage policy at both the labour market and the organisation level (see section 3 for suggestions for policies to close the gender pay gap under pillar IV).

Not all policies to reduce the gender pay gap should be focused directly on wages. Policies to support employment continuity can have a very significant impact on women's life time income (Joshi and Davies 1992, 1993, Waldfogel 1993, Ward et al. 1996). The absence of childcare facilities may force women to take actions, in particular to quit the labour market, which have major long term repercussions. It is not feasible for most women and families to take into account these effects, especially under conditions where it is considered the norm for women to provide the childcare costs out of their own earnings.

Regulations related to access to benefits can have significant impacts on women's share of resources in the economy. The structure of various types of social benefits may affect women and men differently. For example, the effect of a recent increase in the income threshold for sickness benefit in Norway will

affect most women, as they constitute the majority in low paid, part-time work. The costs of employment discontinuity are felt by women not only in their wage packet but also in their income in old age. Policies apparently designed to move from passive to active labour market policies, by tightening up eligibility requirements for benefits or moving to means testing, may have the impact of reducing women's income more than that of men's; women tend to have work histories which are less likely to comply with strict eligibility requirements and the female unemployed are more likely to be in households with someone in work, so that a switch to means testing may remove women's' right to an independent source of income if they are made redundant and exhaust their non means-tested benefits (Grimshaw and Rubery 1997).

Gender mainstreaming draws attention to the importance of general wage determination and benefit policies in shaping the pattern of gender inequality in earnings and income. The need for a more holistic approach to policy to improve women's lifetime earnings can also be identified. Finally there is a need for more imaginative and proactive approaches to close the gender pay gap.

2.2 Employment policies and social and economic change in household, family life and welfare systems

Change in households, family formation and economic activity

European employment policy has to take account of and be shaped by the major and dramatic changes that are taking place in social and household organisation in Europe. The increased educational attainment of women in Europe has not just led to higher female activity rates in general but, in particular, to higher activity rates of mothers. In fact, one of the most striking trend of the last few decades (found in all EU countries) is the growing labour force participation of women with family responsibilities, particularly mothers of young children. For many families the search for a second income may be motivated more by the family economy and less by ideology, that is by the need to achieve a decent standard of living (see Villa 1999). Nevertheless this is a significant change with respect to the immediate post-war period, when mothers with young children were the largest group of women outside the labour force. This important change in the behaviour of women calls for a better co-ordination of employment policy, social policy and welfare provisions.

This challenge has been met in different ways across countries (see table 3). The solutions put forward to reconcile paid work and care work range from temporary interruption from active life, to the extension of part-time work or the provision of childcare services. Family policy is in fact an area of expansion in Europe, despite the external pressures on the welfare states (Scott 1998). Over the last ten years maternity and parental benefits have been more deeply institutionalised and in many cases improved in generosity and conditions, but the family and employment models implied vary significantly. No countries have yet successfully mobilised fathers into taking anything approximating an equal

share of childcare responsibilities. Herein lies one of the main problems still facing women even in countries which have made serious efforts to facilitate continuity in women's employment. Increasingly continuous employment patterns among mothers demonstrate the success of the work-family policies instituted over recent years but the 'time off work' reforms, paid leave of absence and flexible and reduced work-hours serve to construct a two tier model of parenthood in work life - one model for mothers and one for fathers (Ellingsæter 1999b). The shared worker-carer role remains largely a "women-only" practice. 'Political fatherhood' still has to be incorporated onto the agenda of equal opportunities. While rights for employed women was the main area for innovation in the 1980s in countries such as Norway and Sweden, the caring father is the new issue of the 1990s in these countries there fathers have already been allotted their own quotas in the parental leave schemes, which has increased their take up of leave radically. However, most countries still remain at the point where they have yet to develop adequate policies to facilitate continuity of female employment. In some cases, therefore, the aspiration of mothers to be in employment are frustrated. In other cases it may be the opposite: the aspiration of working women to have children is hindered. The numbers involved in each category differ from country to country, but the phenomena are the same. Failure to address these dilemmas can thus result either in not achieving employment targets or in low fertility rates.

Employment policy thus needs to be situated within a broader framework of social and economic change in household, family and welfare systems. This need for coherence between employment and social policy is not a new requirement: post-war social policy could rely both on a labour market able to offer stable, well-paid jobs for standard production workers (i.e. male workers employed by large enterprises in the industrial sector) and on the stability of the family. Both these conditions have now been lost (see Villa 1999). It was against a background of stable families and well functioning labour markets that welfare provisions were originally planned; the current crisis in the welfare state springs from the simultaneous failure of the labour market, on the one hand, and the family, on the other hand, to provide a basic level of security (Folbre 1994).

Contemporary labour markets are increasingly characterised by high unemployment, employment instability, and a growing share of atypical employment. Therefore, the risk of poverty related to the failure of the labour market (simply measured by the unemployment rate) is now higher than in the past. The failure of the labour market is matched by the failure of the family as a stable institution. Demographic data show similar trends in family instability across industrialised countries, though differences in levels remain wide (see table 4). Together with growing marital instability, one finds declining fertility (or stabilisation of fertility at under-replacement rates), rising proportion of births out-of-wedlock, as well as greater fragility of the father-child relationship. The growing instability of marriage, due to desertion, separation and divorce, has direct implications on the economic situation of women (and their children). The economic risk is higher, the more difficult it is for the woman to find employment

Table 3. Provision of support for childcare ⁽¹⁾

	Equivalent of leave weeks paid in full	Index of financial provisions	Publicly financed services for children 0-3 years old	Publicly financed services for children 3-6 years old
Greece	Low/medium	Low	Low	High
Ireland	Low	Low	Low	Medium
Portugal	Low	Low	Low	Medium
Spain	Low/medium	Low	Low	High
Italy	Medium	Low	Low	High
United Kingdom	Low	Medium	Low	Medium
Netherlands	Low	Medium	Low	High
Austria	High	(High) ³	Low	High
Luxembourg ²	Medium	High	Low	High
Germany	Medium	High	Low	High
France	Low	High	Medium	High
Finland	Medium	(High) ³	Medium	Medium
Iceland	Low/Medium		High	Medium
Belgium	Low/Medium	High	High	High
Denmark	Medium	Medium	High	High
Norway	High		High	High
Sweden	High		High	High

⁽¹⁾ The four indications have been standardised on a scale ranging from 0 to 100: for each indicator standardisation entails setting the highest country value to 100 and expressing the remaining values as percentages of the top value. As a rule low values are below 30, high above 70 and medium 30 to 70. Only the first indicator is sensitive to the choice of thresholds and those countries which fall in the 30 to 35 range are classified as low/medium.

⁽²⁾ Luxembourg was not included among the countries for which we have standardised values because comparable information was not available for 3 indicators out of 4. The scoring reported in the main text was indicated by the national expert and reflects his judgement.

⁽³⁾ Values in brackets are obtained by using an alternative indicator to replace missing values. The indicator is the share of expenditure on family and maternity on GDP, weighted by the share of children 0=16 over the total population (Eurostat data for 1995). Finland and Austria ranked, respectively, first and third out of 14 member countries on the basis of this indicator. Information in the national reports is consistent with this ranking

Source: Bettio et al. 1998. This report was drawn up on the basis of joint work on care in Europe by the group of experts on gender and employment and gender and law.

in reasonably well paid jobs (Bergman, 1981). This fact partly explains the decline – throughout the industrialised nations – in the occupation of housewife as for women the best way to reduce the economic risk associated with family dissolution is to retain contact with the labour market. Without this continuity the costs of marital break-up can be both very high and mainly borne by the woman. This search for economic independence among women is quite widespread, even though it tends to be stronger among highly educated women. Different indicators show this general behaviour: the increase in the number of women choosing an uninterrupted working life pattern, as well as the expansion in the share of mothers in full-time employment.

The result of family change (from marital instability to out-of-wedlock fertility) leads to a growing population of children living with only one parent (in most of the cases, the mother), and to a growing number of women acting as the only (or the main) responsible parent both for care and maintenance. National levels of lone parenthood vary quite considerably between countries, although trends are similar everywhere (Cantillon 1997). Most lone mothers are in the labour market, except in countries where benefit systems discourage participation, but they tend to become trapped in low paid dead-end jobs which are not sufficient to provide an adequate standard of life for themselves and the children (Saraceno 1997, p. 85 and table 5). Moreover recent research has shown the tendency for absent fathers not to acknowledge their financial obligations towards their children after the relationship with the mother has ended (Seltzer 1994; Sorensen 1994). Lone parent families thus stand a much greater risk of poverty. As pointed out by Saraceno: *'In all countries lone mother families tend to be poorer than two-parent families, notwithstanding that in most countries the proportion of lone mothers holding a job is higher than that of married women in two-parent households'* (Saraceno, 1997, p. 84). Welfare state reform is currently driven primarily by perceived needs to cut costs and to make work pay. However, these reforms to the welfare system, aiming at a lean welfare state, are taking place in a period in which the other two pillars of the post-war social construction – the labour market and the family – are no longer able to reduce the risk of economic uncertainty for the members of the household. Welfare reform needs to focus on how it contributes to gender equality in employment and income. The pursuit of this objective would provide the best way of reducing the need for public intervention towards the 'weakest' sections of the population, for example lone mothers, or elderly women living alone. Such a policy perspective could thus provide a new coherence to economic and social policy (see Villa 1999).

Table 4 Trends in Marriage and Fertility

4a

Country	Marriage rate		Divorce rate	
	1980	1995	1980	1995
Belgium	6.7	5.1	0.21	0.55
Denmark	5.2	6.6	0.40	0.41
Germany	6.3	5.3	0.25	0.33
Greece	6.5	6.1	0.10	0.17
Spain	5.9	5.0*	N/A	0.12
France	6.2	4.4*	0.22	0.38
Ireland	6.4	4.3*	N/A	N/A
Italy	5.7	4.9*	0.03	0.08
Luxembourg	5.9	5.1	0.26	0.33
Netherlands	6.4	5.3	0.25	0.37
Austria	6.2	5.3	0.26	0.38
Portugal	7.4	6.6	0.08	0.16
Finland	6.1	4.6	0.28	0.49
Sweden	4.5	3.8	0.42	0.52
United Kingdom	7.4	5.5*	0.16#	0.45*#

4b

Country	Mean age at childbearing		Births outside marriage		Fertility rate	
	1980	1995	1980	1995	1980	1995
Belgium	26.6	28.5*	4.1	15.0	1.68	1.55*
Denmark	26.8	29.2	33.2	46.5	1.55	1.80
Germany	26.4	28.3	11.9	16.1	1.56	1.25
Greece	26.1	28.2	1.5	3.0	2.21	1.32
Spain	28.2	29.7 (1994)	3.9	10.8*	2.20	1.18
France	26.8	29.0*	11.4	37.2*	1.95	1.70*
Ireland	29.9	30.2*	5.0	22.7	3.25	1.86*
Italy	27.4	29.7 (1994)	4.3	8.1*	1.64	1.17
Luxembourg	27.5	28.9	6.0	13.1	1.49	1.69
Netherlands	27.7	30.0	4.1	15.5	1.60	1.53
Austria	26.3	27.7	17.8	27.4	1.62	1.40
Portugal	27.1	28.1	9.2	18.7	2.18	1.40
Finland	27.7	29.3	13.1	33.1	1.63	1.81
Sweden	27.6	29.2	39.7	53.0	1.68	1.73
United Kingdom	26.9	28.2*	11.5	33.6	1.90	1.70*

Source: Eurostat (1997a: tables E-4,E-6, E-9, F-3, F-19) in Ditch et al (1998)

*Provisional data

Scotland and Northern Ireland are not included

Table 5. Percentage of children living in poor households by type of household circa 1990

	<i>Type of household</i>			Lone parent all
	Couple 1 child	2 children	3 children	
Belgium	4.4	5.1	4.9	10.9
Denmark	2.7	3.1	9.2	8.0
Germany	11.1	7.0	13.3	25.5
Spain	10.1	11.9	27.9	28.0
Italy	12.1	10.9	29.2	18.3
Netherlands	6.4	4.8	12.9	34.4
Finland	2.5	2.7	5.1	6.3
Sweden	2.9	3.2	4.7	5.2
UK	11.2	15.9	32.7	47.1
Norway	2.3	1.5	5.7	8.6
Canada	8.5	8.6	17.7	43.3
US	12.9	16.3	27.3	55.7

Source: Ditch et al. 1998 Table 2.4 based on original research by Jun-Rong Chen, University of York, UK based on the Luxembourg Income Study

Care policy

Post-war welfare states took on divergent forms and gave rise to a variety of models, differing – among other things – in terms of the amount of services directly produced by the state. There are three central policy elements in the organisation of care and employment: time to care; money for care; and care services (Bettio et al. 1998b). The various policy elements appear in different mixes in national welfare state policy models, they change over time, and they have different implications for gender relations. In some countries (such as the Nordic countries) the state was conceived, from the very beginning, as the main provider for some categories of care services, with the family complementing it; in other countries (such as continental Europe and the Mediterranean countries) the family was conceived as the main care provider, with the state intervening only in case of ‘family failure’; in other countries (such as the UK), the market was supposed to produce these services, with the family substituting for the market when the price charged in the market for these services was too high. Thus, within different models of welfare state, the family continues to play an important role in the provision of care services.

However, all European societies, including those without significant levels of public provision are moving towards dual earner households and higher shares of lone parent households. This move is strengthened by the growth of family instability and by the fact that single earner households increasingly face a lower standard of living than dual earner households (Cantillon, 1997, p. 124-5). This implies that employment policies should promote the employment of women in

order to favour dual earner households and hence income security at the household level. Increasing dual earner households has positive economic effects not only for the household's members but also for the society at large, as it reduces the need for social transfers (see Villa 1999). But there are also some costs associated with dual earnership, particularly for care activities, as the time spent in the market reduces the resources available (in terms of time) for family activities. Employment policies need to be integrated with arrangements designed to help carers (men and women) to cope with the dual demand of work and family. In particular, carers need help with: accessible and affordable childcare facilities; parental leave programmes; flexible working time arrangements (including shorter working time, paid leave, unpaid leave); programmes facilitating the distribution of care activities between partners; pension credits for periods of absence. These care policies need to be specifically available for both men and women, thereby reinforcing the gender perspective in gender mainstreaming (see Gonzalez 1999). Lone parents need specific assistance to escape from the cycle of poverty and welfare dependency (Cantillon, 1997), involving both labour market assistance such as training programmes (specifically targeted) and affordable and flexible childcare facilities.

Employment policy also needs to take into account the changing needs for care of elderly people. The reduction in fertility and the rise in life expectancy is leading to a shortage, even in traditional Mediterranean family systems, of adult children to care for elderly parents. Moreover, more women are in the labour market and unable and unwilling to be the primary source of care work. At the same time as providing more public care services for elderly people there also needs to be opportunities for both sons and daughters to have time off from work to assist in periods of emergency.

The overall objective of broadening employment policy to include the care and family economy must be two fold; first to establish a new level of coherence in the organisation of both economic and social life; and second to move beyond the situation in which care work is linked to labour market policy solely as a women's issue. Instead the long term objective must be to move to a broad approach to employment policy in which the arrangements for care are seen as of fundamental concern to all labour market participants.

3. Methodological implications of mainstreaming

3.1. Gender and statistics

Before the objectives of mainstreaming can be achieved it is essential that the differences in the position, behaviour and aspirations and attitudes of men and women are made visible. Without this information on gender difference employment policy design, implementation and evaluation will, almost by definition, be geared towards the visible and the codified, namely the predominately male-dominated employment sphere. The mainstreaming of gender into statistics requires a great deal more than simply disaggregating existing data by gender; it also requires rethinking what data are collected and how the data are used to interpret trends, design policies and evaluate outcomes.

Availability of data

The first and perhaps most fundamental issue of concern relates to the problem of availability of data. Mainstreaming gender into statistics involves disaggregating existing datasets by gender, identifying gaps in data which result in a gender-biased representation of the world and ensuring that choices and decisions made over the collection and analysis of data do not result in gender bias.

The first objective, that of disaggregating all existing data by gender was the basis for the mainstreaming programme undertaken by *Statistics Sweden* and which has resulted in the regular publication of a booklet on women and men in Sweden. There is also now a draft law before the Italian parliament on statistics and gender which would require the disaggregation of all existing data by gender and the collection of new data that would assist in the understanding of women's position in the economy. A major problem with employment datasets is that while there may be tables presented by gender, gender is treated as only one variable for analysis and is not included as a transversal variable to be included in all analyses. Gender is most frequently made reference to with respect to labour supply analyses, but analyses of, for example, trends in labour demand often fail to disaggregate the analysis by patterns of gender segregation within industries, occupations or working time contracts. Labour demand is therefore often portrayed as gender neutral. When information is collected with respect to business development, for example business start-ups, the gender of the entrepreneur is not considered a relevant category (see Ilmakunnas 1999).

Progress has been made within European Commission/Eurostat and OECD publications over recent years towards ensuring a systematic breakdown by gender with respect to employment data although labour demand projections tend still to be based on skill and do take into account gender segregation. While this approach avoids reinforcing notions of gender segregation, more insight could be obtained into recent employment trends if analyses explored changes in gender shares of occupations, industries or employment forms.

The second requirement, that of identifying gaps and initiating new surveys and data collection, takes on significance because the presence or absence of data affects our perceptions of the world. For example, labour economists tend to focus more on the supply side of the economy because it is easier to collect data on individuals than organisations; this in turn may lead to policies which focus on supply-side issues (see Ilmakunnas 1999). However, this process of identifying and filling gaps has not yet been widely acted upon, although it is possible to identify some progress in some countries. In Finland meetings arranged between statistics experts and equality experts since 1994 have been helpful in identifying where data should be collected.

Some of the current gaps in availability of statistics have been highlighted in the associated report on benchmarking for equal opportunities (Plantenga and Hansen 1999:56-57). Some of the major gaps relate to information on both income and on time allocation. Moreover, there is a lack of attention paid to the issue of how to categorise employees on various forms of paid or unpaid leave, despite the expansion of leave schemes over recent years. These leave schemes challenge the simplistic assumption that there is a clear divide between the active and the inactive, as discussed further in box 6 below.

However, while more efforts need to be made to improve collection some of the problems arise because of the difficulties in recording data. This occurs where gaps in information relate to the private as well as the public sphere, for example in information relating to time use or where women are involved in sectors which can be regarded as either part of the informal economy or falling between the formal and informal economy. Involvement in homeworking may be less effectively documented than involvement in paid work outside the home, but even when efforts to collect the information are made, there are major methodological problems in collecting the information on a comparable basis. To make women's work more visible in these areas also probably requires regulations which make the work more visible within company accounts, tax returns and the like. As atypical and flexible work is becoming increasingly important in the economy, more efforts need to be made to ensure that all forms of employment are made visible. Wage statistics may be particularly poor in their coverage of all forms of employment. Interpretation of gender issues may also require institutional information which reveals the interrelationships between employment form and gender pay inequalities; for example information on the share of women, say in atypical jobs who are covered by collective agreements, or the impact of atypical contracts on the share of women covered by maternity leave arrangements. Training statistics may give inaccurate impressions of the amount of training provided by gender because of differences in the context and content of training (see box 4).

Box 4: Problems of measuring training provision by gender

A distinction needs to be made between *‘training which is potentially transformative, that is, likely to improve occupational life chances, and that which merely facilitates people to do their current job. In other words, while some training will lead to the development of the skills that enable the trainee to enhance their human capital, other forms of training merely serve the purpose of induction of a new employee, or provide instruction in health and safety at work or familiarity with new equipment, all geared to allow employees to perform their existing jobs more adequately or safely (Rees 1998:82)*. If, for example, women are more likely to benefit from *induction training* because there are more female returners than male, global figures of participation in training will not be sufficient, even if broken down by gender and a further separation will be necessary indicating the kind of training offered and taken up by men and women. (see Plasman and Soudan 1999)

Some efforts have been made to estimate the contribution of both informal paid work and indeed unpaid work to national income accounts (OECD1995). The usually invisible contribution of care work to the economy needs to be taken into account when assessing, for example, the benefits of creating more paid work in the area of care. Some advances can be identified in making women’s work more visible; for example the UK Labour Force Survey now collects information on earnings for all people in paid work, thereby overcoming the shortfalls of the standard earnings survey which only includes those registered for tax purposes. This has confirmed, what analysts predicted before, that those on short hours of work and outside the tax registration were more likely to receive low hourly as well as weekly earnings.

Gender mainstreaming also requires that gender issues are kept in mind even at the point where detailed decisions are made on how to collect the data and the definitions to be used. Box 5 provides a prime example of a European survey where the gender dimension was lost sight of at the final decision-making stage.

Box 5: The Structure of Earnings Survey

One example can be given of a recent decision relating to data collection which demonstrates the importance of continuing the process of mainstreaming right up to the point of commissioning the survey. This example relates to the structure of earnings survey conducted by Eurostat for the first time in 1997. The consultation work for the development of this survey involved requests to the Equal Opportunities Unit of DGV for their views on the proposed survey. At this planning stage the proposal was to include all sectors of employment as well as all types of employees, including those working part-time. These features would provide for the first time the opportunity to compare men's and women's earnings across the labour market as a whole, instead of the previous data which only provided data for manufacturing and for manual and for non manual workers separately, thereby effectively preventing the establishment of labour market wide estimates of the gender pay gap. The importance of maintaining the labour market wide survey and of maintaining the data on hours as well as by gender was stressed at every stage of the consultation, yet during the final decision-making process some of the main sectors of women's employment, including most public services, were removed from the scope of the survey. The result is that the survey now covers only 54% of women's employment compared to 78% of men's employment and also excludes some 69% of women with university degrees from the scope of the survey compared to 34% of women with basic education (Brooke et al. 1998). The biases introduced in the types of women's employment covered as well as the overall low ratio of female employment covered significantly reduces the usefulness of the survey as a barometer of progress on the gender pay gap, an area where the European Commission has a legal duty to monitor progress. This problem is exacerbated by the exclusion of establishments with less than 10 employees where again women are concentrated, but such restrictions may be more understandable on grounds of cost and indeed reliability of data than the exclusion of whole areas of activity. On a more positive note, it must be recognised that the consultation process may still have been influential in maintaining the inclusion of part-time work and hourly earnings data as key variables.

Making women visible may also involve paying more attention to their attitudes and opinions. In Finland a new statistical survey, known as an equality barometer has been established. Its aim is to provide information on the experiences of men and women regarding gender equality in personal relationships, family life, organisations, working life and society at least every other year. By comparing results from successive years it should be possible to trace how attitudes towards gender equity are evolving.

Appropriateness of definitions

Mainstreaming requires an appraisal of statistical categories and definitions, before, for example, systems can be set in place to monitor progress towards gender equality.

Perhaps the most important categories which need to be reconsidered in the context of employment policy are those which relate to economic activity status

itself. Problems can be identified with all three categories of economic activity, as explored further in box 6.

Box 6: Gender and economic activity status

Inactivity

Defining those not in paid work or looking for paid work as inactive serves to make invisible all unpaid work activities, as well as disguising the processes and institutions through which those who are economically inactive have access to income to support themselves outside the labour market.

Action: *More information on the activities and roles of the inactive is required.*

Unemployment

Defining as unemployed only those people who comply to all the following criteria- namely being without work, being available for work and having been looking for work- involves the implicit assumption that it is not possible to be unemployed, in the sense of wanting work, without abandoning all other activities in the interest of seeking work. Many women may wish to work but would require some time to sort out childcare arrangements, for example, should work become available, and may not have the time or energy to be constantly looking for work. If they have no wage work they may be expected to undertake a full range of unpaid work activities by their partners and not to spend their time searching for jobs, particularly when the probability of obtaining a job is low.

Action: *statistics on the hidden unemployed should be published, to include those who wish to work but who are either not immediately available for work or who have not been seeking work in the past four weeks*

Employment

If a low hours threshold is taken to define wage employment - in principle as low as one hour in the European Labour Force Survey - there is a danger of distorting the picture of women's involvement in paid activity relative to men and also creating false dichotomies between so-called inactive women and employed women, even when the latter may only be working say 5 hours a week so that their main activities relate still to non wage work. A higher threshold raises the problem of making women's wage work invisible.

Action: *statistics should be collected on the underemployed, defined by few hours of wage work, and information provided on the other activities of the underemployed (e.g. education, childcare, retirement etc.). Information on desires to work more or fewer hours would also be useful, as would information on those counted as in employment who are actually on leave schemes.*

The problems of definition are such that there may be no one ideal solution and what is perhaps needed is a wide range of indicators relating to economic activity status which would allow dual categorisation by major and minor forms of activity- unpaid work as well as paid work- and which would allow those out of employment to be actively engaged in either unpaid work or preparation for work through education or training without them being defined as inactive and thereby disconnected from active pursuits or endeavours. Increased visibility of unpaid work activities is an essential goal of mainstreaming gender into statistics but

must move away from the dichotomisation of people into those engaged in paid and those engaged in unpaid work.

Use of gender as basis for statistical discrimination

There may be hidden dangers in disaggregating all data and categories by gender and that is the promotion of statistical discrimination by gender, where access to employment is based on the assumption that an individual takes on the characteristics applying on average to the particular sex. Sex discrimination legislation focuses on the right of the individual to be judged according to their own personal attributes and not those ascribed to them by virtue of their gender, thereby providing some protection against this affect. Nevertheless, two problems remain. The first is that statistical discrimination on grounds of gender is only illegal in certain fields (see box 7).

Box 7: Statistical discrimination by gender is still legal in some areas

It is still legal in the UK for insurance companies to offer different annuities associated with personal pensions or company 'money purchase' schemes to men and women on grounds of statistical differences in life expectancy, a practice which the UK Equal Opportunities Commission is seeking to end. In contrast, company 'final salary' and state pensions schemes in the UK treat men and women equally.

The second problem is that despite the existence of laws protecting against the use of statistical discrimination by gender, the reality is that employers take into account these expected differences. There is therefore a danger that further disaggregation by gender may increasingly call attention to gender differences, perhaps reinforcing rather than reducing gender stereotyping. For example, the higher elasticity of women's labour supply found in many econometric studies tends to reinforce a view that women's labour force attachment is fragile and contingent. More detailed investigation reveals wide differences between women. Moreover, without this information the impact of tax and benefit systems on particular groups of women would not be recognised and made visible.

The way forward must be for the dangers to be taken explicitly into account when deciding how to collect and disaggregate data. For example, data on labour turnover by gender, if collected only at an aggregate level, could reinforce stereotyping of women as more unstable workers than men. More disaggregated analysis may reveal that at least part of the differences in behaviour may be related to differences in both employment history and employment location, with women disproportionately represented among new entrants to jobs who are the least stable and overconcentrated in sectors and occupations where turnover rate are high both for men and for women.

Disaggregation by gender therefore requires interpretation and analysis by those who are sensitive to gender specific differences in labour market position and behaviour.

Use of the household rather than the individual as the unit of analysis.

While individual data are now increasingly provided by gender, the gender dimension to social and economic policy disappears once the unit of analysis is taken to be the household and not the individual. The household is often argued to be the relevant unit of analysis for issues such as poverty and standards of living, and therefore often for analyses such as the targeting of benefits or the effectiveness of reintegration into work policies. There are, however, a number of problems with this approach from a gender perspective which can be summarised as follows.

- A household approach implicitly assumes some degree of equality in the distribution of income within households. Policies which redistribute between households are treated as increasing equity. Possible intra-household redistribution, for example away from women, is not considered.
- Households are often unstable but changes over the lifecycle are not identified using a household approach. For example, the impact on welfare of a tax and benefit policy which discourages the partner to participate in work cannot be assessed solely with regard to its impact on current household income. The long term impact for the partner depends also on whether the partnership ends in divorce or on which partner dies first and at what age.
- A household approach is sometimes used to argue against the case for individual rights. For example, studies have suggested that the introduction of a minimum wage has a limited impact on welfare as it does not tackle the problem of household poverty (see for example the EC Labour Market Studies Report for Ireland). Using a household poverty measure to assess the policy benefits ignores the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, which is an individual and not a household right in international law. The right to independent income from the state for women in compensation for unemployment or incapacity to work may be at risk when household income is used as the basis for evaluation.
- Policies which are evaluated on the basis of their impact on households and families often use the notion of a typical household for the policy assessment. This approach reinforces an increasingly wrong perception that most people live in standard nuclear families, or indeed that many households have only one breadwinner.

Even when analysis is undertaken on an individual basis, it is critical that gender differences are taken into account. For example, the impact of benefit changes may be incorrectly assessed without some consideration of the differences in the operation of the labour market for men and women (see box 8).

Box 8: Differences in labour market opportunities by gender change the impact of benefit reform

A few years ago in Belgium a decision was taken to terminate a partial unemployment benefit that was given to unemployed persons, previously in full-time work who accepted a part-time job. This allowance covered part of the difference of income between full-time and part-time, so that a large number of women (about 10 % of the women's workforce) took on a part-time job but immediately fell into an 'employment trap' as the difference between a full-time job and their enhanced income in the part-time job was often too narrow for it to be worth taking a full-time job. The ending of this benefit was expected to have the effect of encouraging women to take on full-time job but this did not occur because of the difficulty women experience in securing a full time position. The result was thus a reduction in women's income.
(see Plasman and Soudan 1999)

Use of market values in policy evaluations

The final problem which has to be addressed in developing mainstreaming into statistics policy is the tendency to rely on market values as the basis for policy evaluation. The practice is applied even when the policy is concerned with redressing discrimination which is itself present in the market values on which an assessment is based. These problems are evident in any evaluation which uses the current structure of wages to assess the costs and benefits of policies. For example, policies to assess the benefits of training to women may be evaluated by reference to their impact on lifetime earnings opportunities, yet one of the features of female-dominated sectors may be a tendency not to provide rewards for extra skills or experience. Similarly, countries which choose to offer relatively low earnings in the public sector may be benefiting from access to a skilled labour supply at low cost but this might show up in an analysis of educational investment as a low return to the society on the investment in women's education. These potential contradictions need to be recognised in any policy of mainstreaming gender into the statistical methods of policy evaluation.

3.2. Gender audits or gender impact assessments

The definition of a gender impact assessment, according to the EC's guide to gender impact assessment (CEC 1998b) is 'to compare and assess, according to gender relevant criteria, the current situation and trend with the expected development resulting from the introduction of the proposed policy'.

Four criteria are also suggested for assessing gender inequalities; participation by gender; access to resources by gender; gendered norms and values; gender differences in rights. These four criteria can be used to provide a gender impact assessment of employment policy.

Box 9: Gender impact assessment and employment policy

- *Participation*: this issue is already identified in the employment guidelines as there is a specific commitment to reduce the gender gaps in employment and unemployment rates.
- *Resources*: greater equality in access to resources needs to be addressed more directly as an objective in the employment guidelines, for although the 1999 commitment to progress on equal pay is a step in this direction, more may need to be done to assess all policies according to their impact, for example on the gender pay gap or on gender differences in access to benefits.
- *Norms and values*: the influence of gendered norms and values is implicit in the focus on policies for care and the reconciliation of work and family life under the equal opportunities pillar. Policies to assist with care responsibilities are needed because of the widespread assumption that care is a responsibility of women but the guidelines could also do more to challenge gendered norms and values. The restriction of, for example, quantified targets to measures for the unemployed in the employment guidelines may be interpreted as evidence of greater priority being placed on reducing unemployment than in raising the employment rate, even though the latter policy objective is more compatible with equal opportunities.
- *Rights*: there is no explicit discussion of rights in the guidelines, but the implications of combining flexibility with appropriate levels of security suggest the need to ensure that those workers who accept flexible jobs, the majority of whom are women are not disadvantaged in terms of employment rights. Similarly, access to lifelong learning may need to be backed up by rights and these rights need to be available to those inside and outside the labour market and in full and part-time work if this is to be a right which promotes gender equality.

This checklist of considerations (see box 9) provides a useful multi-layered way of thinking about the conduct of gender impact assessments and a positive focus on what the policy is doing to reduce existing inequalities. While remaining within the framework of the four thematic principles, a more detailed specification of the stages of gender impact assessment and a wider definition of the impact, to include indirect as well as direct impacts may be desirable in order to provide more guidance on how to operationalise a gender impact assessment.

Steps in a gender impact assessment.

1. Identify the position of men and women prior to policy development with respect to participation, resources, norms and values and rights.
2. Assess the trends in men's and women's position, independently without regard to the effects of the policies proposed.
3. Determine the priority to be attached to adopting policies which actively promote equality (as opposed to policies which are simply gender neutral), according to an assessment of the current degree of inequality and the impact of the inequality on men and women's lives.

4. Assess the potential impact of policy with respect to participation, resources, norms and values and rights. Attention should be paid not only to easily quantified impacts, for example on numbers employed, but also to less easily measurable impacts, for example on quality of jobs or job security or promotion prospects. The impacts on access to employment and resources from employment, as well as on other resources such as time and the quality of both home and work life, need to be evaluated. Rights include not only the right to work but also the right to care. Long term and lifecycle costs and benefits need to be taken into account as well as the immediate and short term costs and benefits.
5. Assess the impact of the policy on particular groups of women and men. For example, the impact on ethnic minority groups, parents or non parents, age groups, educational groups, those in work , those out of work, regional groups or urban/rural groups etc. needs to be identified. Interpretation of these differential impacts requires a determination of the priority to be attached to the different groups. This priority should reflect, at least in part, the contribution of these dimensions of difference (by ethnic group, educational group, region etc.) to the current overall level of gender inequality.
6. Assess the indirect impacts of both the current state of gender inequalities and the proposed policies, paying particular attention to the indirect impact on children.
7. For policies which, in the initial gender impact assessment, are identified as likely to have a negative impact on gender equality or to be broadly gender neutral, consider ways in which the policy could be redesigned or respecified to promote gender inequality.

A further dimension to gender impact assessment is that of benchmarking performance for equal opportunities. Benchmarking provides the opportunity to take into account the various dimensions related to equal opportunity as well as to examine the effectiveness of policy performance. These opportunities provided by the benchmarking concept also require choices to be made concerning both the appropriate dimensions and the appropriate benchmarks. As is discussed more fully in the accompanying report on benchmarking (Plantenga and Hansen 1999), choices of dimension or indicators are hampered by the availability of harmonised and even national data. Thus for effective benchmarking, progress needs to be made on developing more information disaggregated by gender and developing statistics which provide appropriate indicators for gender equality. The choice of benchmarks is also important; should it be the ideal of equality vis a vis men or should it be the best performing countries with respect to equal opportunities? Both approaches provide potentially useful indicators of performance and both may need to be used in any benchmarking exercise (Plantenga and Hansen 1999:20).

A more holistic approach?

Introducing gender mainstreaming into the evaluation of employment policy implies acceptance of the need to broaden the conception of what constitutes employment policy. This follows from the fact that recent trends in employment policy have been related to major changes not only in labour markets but also in the whole system of social and economic organisation of European societies.

All countries in the European Union are moving, albeit at different rates and with different degrees of enthusiasm, towards a dual earner society but there has been little systematic consideration in most European countries of the implications of these trends for the organisation of care in the society, the principles on which welfare systems are based, or indeed on how the labour market should be organised. Gender mainstreaming has consequences for all citizens, not only because gender refers to men as well as women, but also because changes in gender relations affect men as much as women. Gender mainstreaming involves reconsidering the linkage between areas of social and economic policy that are often treated as separate and independent. It involves taking into account the impact on women and men over the long term, and in particular at different stages of the lifecycle and it involves thinking about new social and economic arrangements that reduce the risks for both individuals and societies of poverty and social exclusion. In short there is a need for a more holistic analysis of employment policy which takes into account the changing nature of societies as well as the changing nature of labour markets. This more holistic approach to employment policy would involve the following principles.

Employment policy needs to be broadly conceived to include the impact of changes in participation on the organisation of the care and welfare system

Policies to reconcile work and family life need to be placed at the centre of European employment policy. These policies require co-ordination with working time policies of organisations and to be appropriate for children at different ages and school/education stages (Rubery and Smith 1999). Welfare systems need to take into account changing household formation patterns as well as changes in the labour market towards more unstable and atypical employment. The broad based approach is necessary if employment policy is to take into account demographic changes which in practice are fuelling the debate over higher employment rates for the working age population. Policies which reconcile work and family life could facilitate a return to a higher birth rate, thereby providing another dimension to human resource policy in Europe.

The interlinkages between different policies and institutional arrangements need to be recognised

The interlinkages between different elements of policy can reinforce gender equality policies in both positive and negative ways. For example, policies on both the demand and the supply side can reinforce women's position in marginal jobs (see Bettio, Del Bono and Smith 1998). Alternatively policies to subsidise childcare can offset a tendency for women to reduce fertility with increased opportunities in the labour market (Ermisch 1989). The Nordic countries have demonstrated the possibility of combining high employment rates with high fertility rates over recent decades.

Long term as well as short term costs and benefits need to be assessed

Cost benefit analyses and other policy evaluations need to take into account long term benefits of, for example, provision of paid leave related to the opportunity for women to maintain continuity of employment with their employer and avoid occupational downgrading on re-entry to the labour market (Humphries and Rubery 1995; Joshi and Davies 1992; Dex et al. 1993). These benefits extend to improved income in old age.

Non monetised as well as monetised costs and benefits should be included

The impact of changes on the quality of life at home and in work, on levels of stress and time pressure, on the security and care of children etc. should be taken into account.

The impact of policies over the lifecycle need to be considered

The appropriateness of both employment and care and welfare policies to meet changes over the lifecycle in income, time and service provision should be taken into account.

Costs and benefits to be considered at the level of the society and not at the level of the individual organisation or sector.

Assessment of the costs and benefits of policies should not be confined to the employing organisation which may not be in a position to capture the long term benefits of an equal opportunities policy and/or may incur additional costs because of the lack, for example, of a nation-wide infrastructure for care etc. (Breugel and Perrons 1995; Holterman 1995; Rubery et al. 1999a).

The impacts on families and children should be assessed

The costs of policies, for example towards more diverse working-time arrangements or towards more flexible employment systems for families and households should be considered; these interests include the need for security in order to plan household formation, childrearing and family life; the need for opportunities for shared leisure time, for predictable and known working hours etc.

The impacts on individuals as well as households should also be considered

The impact of policies on individuals and on individual rights to equality need to be considered as well as the impact on households. Analysis based solely on households leads to an assumption of equality of distribution within households, a denial of individual rights and implicit assumptions over the long term stability and durability of household formation.

Opportunities to use equal opportunity policy to foster productivity and growth should be explored.

Particular attention should be paid to any opportunities equal opportunities policies provide for enhancing productivity and growth (Rubery et al. 1999a); for example by expanding professional service delivery in the care area, or through the more appropriate utilisation of the skills of women workers through policies of upgrading and job enhancement (OECD 1998) or through the opening up of the collective bargaining agenda (Bercusson and Dickens 1996; Dickens 1998).

Policies need to be designed to reduce risks and assist in long term planning and security for individuals, households and communities.

Opportunities should be built upon to use equal opportunities policies as a means of reducing risks: for example to reduce risks of poverty for women and children as a consequence, for example, of divorce (Ditch et al. 1998 and table 5), to reduce the risks of social exclusion of households and the concentration of non earner households in specific communities through the promotion of multi-earner households (Rubery et al. 1999a).

SECTION II. MAINSTREAMING THE EMPLOYMENT GUIDELINES

4. IMPLEMENTING MAINSTREAMING IN THE NATIONAL ACTION PLANS

4.1 Introduction

Introducing the concept of gender mainstreaming throughout the National Action Plan, taken together with a fourth pillar dedicated to strengthening equal opportunities policies for women and men, has significant general implications for European employment policy. These implications are both conceptual and practical.

At the conceptual level mainstreaming gender equality requires attention to be paid to ***the quality as well as the quantity*** of jobs. The notion of quality is only indirectly referred to at various points in the document largely with reference to job security. However, closing the gender gap requires progress to be made in narrowing gender gaps in quality as well as volume of employment. The second conceptual change is that the notion of employment policy has to be ***broadened to take into account those outside of the labour market***, namely in care work. This broadening is essential as the changes in social and family organisation are interacting with changes in the labour market and it is inappropriate, even if still common, to consider employment policy separately from social and welfare policy. Moreover if women are to be integrated even more into the wage work sphere it is essential that all types of work undertaken by women and men are considered within the framework of employment policy. This broad approach to the notion of an active society calls into question conventional employment concepts such as the definitions of economic activity status.

The third conceptual change is that gender mainstreaming requires a ***recognition of the institutional and social nature of labour markets***. The actual pattern of labour market organisation and the position of women within the labour market is shaped by wider social institutions which take on different forms between European member states. Thus the impact of policy depends in part upon the current state of both gender relations and labour market institutions and arrangements. ***The assessment of National Action Plans must take into account differences between member states in the level of gender equality already achieved.***

At a practical level gender mainstreaming has also a potential major impact. To implement it requires a rethinking of the implementation and evaluation of employment policy, requiring ***co-operation across a wider range of policy-making departments and a reorientation of the strategies and objective of the social partners.*** It also requires the ***collection, analysis and interpretation of statistical data by gender.***

Above all gender mainstreaming should be considered a ***transformative and modernising*** programme, and not simply an additional constraint which can be readily introduced into existing ways of working. The programme of gender mainstreaming is necessarily ***long term and ambitious***; these are the principles which have guided this analysis of implementing gender

mainstreaming into employment policy. It undoubtedly goes further than has so far been achieved in most member states and may perhaps be best considered a long term programme for action. These more ambitious objectives are included in a checklist of policies at the end of each employment policy pillar which may be able to promote genuine equal opportunities over the longer term. This is complemented by a list of those policies which may be included under the particular pillar but which without modification may reduce or fail to improve gender equality. These two checklists could be considered to provide an example of the range of possible National Action Plans, arrayed according to the extent of gender mainstreaming. The first checklist provides an example of a fully mainstreamed National Action Plan, while the second provides an example of either non-existent or half-hearted mainstreaming.

There is one sense, however, in which the programme set out here can be considered far from ambitious, and that is that the mainstreaming approach has been developed largely within the confines of the current European employment policy and European employment guidelines. As has been widely discussed elsewhere (Meulders 1996; Bettio et al. 1998c), this policy favours a supply-side approach to the resolution of European employment policy, focusing on maintaining employability, removing supply-side obstacles to job creation and fostering adaptability of enterprises to new conditions. Little is said about the macro or demand side conditions for achieving high employment rates, nor about the feasibility of establishing higher employment rates for women across European member states without specific policies to allow countries with underdeveloped welfare systems to take action to transfer, for example, domestic work to the sphere of the wage economy or public services. Members of the group of expert on women's employment are concerned that ***this approach focuses too much on adjusting the skills and labour supply characteristics of women and pays too little attention both to policies to change the structure and number of jobs in the economy and to policies to change employer as well as employee behaviour.*** A fully developed gender mainstreaming approach may, therefore, lead in the longer term to some reassessment of the European employment guidelines themselves.

4.2. Some general principles for evaluating mainstreaming in the National Action Plans.

Some general criteria can be proposed for assessing the extent which mainstreaming has been integrated into the National Action Plans (see also Bettio et al. 1998c). These include the following questions.

- Is there a clear definition and articulation of the concept of ***gender equality*** which the NAP is seeking to achieve? Is the focus only on specific measures to help women as a disadvantaged group or does it adopt a broader gender focus? For example, are family friendly policies aimed at men as well as women?
- Is there a clear analysis of the gender equality deficit which the National Action Plan and the guidelines is attempting to reduce? Are there any proposals to introduce benchmarking for equal opportunities (see accompanying report on benchmarking (Plantenga and Hansen 1999))?

- Is there evidence of statistical analysis by gender, target setting by gender and plans to monitor the impact of the NAPs by gender?
- Are steps being taken to raise gender awareness among policy makers and the social partners? Are there any measures to improve the preconditions for gender mainstreaming, including raising the proportion of women involved in decision-making?
- Can the overall direction of employment policy be considered to be i) negative for gender equity ii) consistent with the defensive form of gender mainstreaming (no specific negative consequences for gender equality, but no evidence of proactive mainstreaming) or iii) likely to promote gender equality?
- What proportion of the measures included in the NAP have an explicit gender mainstreaming dimension?
- Is there recognition of any potential conflicts in interpretation over whether a policy is positive or negative for gender mainstreaming, or indeed whether the policy is likely to be effective in its stated objectives? And in particular how are different impacts on different groups of men and women to be assessed?
- Is there evidence that the twin track approach to gender equality, through both gender mainstreaming and specific equality measures, is being pursued, or is there evidence of gender mainstreaming leading to a reduction in activity relate to specific equality measures?
- What proportion of the total NAP budget and/or of GDP is to be devoted to gender mainstreaming measures?
- How many of the gender mainstreaming measures are new measures (paying particular attention to countries with the largest gender equality gaps)?

4.3. The Four Pillars

I. Improving employability

The Objective

The *employability pillar* is concerned with access to the labour market, for the unemployed, for the young and for all social groups. The focus is on the supply side of the labour market and in particular on maintaining and developing individual employability through skills, training and lifelong learning.

Gender inequality and employability: the diagnosis of the problem

Women in most European countries still face particular problems in gaining and maintaining access to the labour market, as demonstrated by their higher rates of inactivity, their often higher than proportional rates of unemployment and long duration unemployment, their concentration in temporary, casual and poor quality jobs and their underrepresentation in access to high level training and/or lifelong learning opportunities.

These problems arise, on the one hand, from the traditional assignment of most care work to women which may both constrain their choices of work and lead to them having more intermittent employment histories. Women often face the problem of integration into the labour market not just once but several times in their working lives; women have thus even more reasons than men to be concerned about maintaining 'employability'. The tax and benefit system, where these are based on the household and involve means-testing, may further constrain women's access by creating disincentives for spouses to enter the labour market. Moreover, fewer women who wish to work have access to unemployment benefits due to eligibility requirements, including past work histories and means-testing provisions.

Problems of employability are also related to the gender segregation of the labour market whereby access is controlled by traditional gender patterns of recruitment and training. Women's concentration at the bottom of the labour market hierarchy also makes them vulnerable to displacement by participants in active labour market policies. Such policies, including direct job creation schemes or employment subsidies, may encourage hiring those on the unemployment register in preference, for example, to women returners. Women are more likely than men to be underemployed when in the labour market, due not only to shorter hours of work but also to confinement in lower level jobs with fewer chances of advancement. Employment in, for example, part-time jobs, may also reduce opportunities for participation in lifelong learning, leading to widening gender skill gaps over time.

Gender segregation in recruitment and training may now be having negative impacts on access to the labour market for unemployed men, particularly younger less qualified males, where new jobs are concentrated in low paid and low status female-dominated job areas and organised on a part-time basis.

Implementing the guidelines

Tackling youth unemployment and preventing long-term unemployment

Member States will ensure that:

- (1) every unemployed young person is offered a new start before reaching six months of unemployment, in the form of training, retraining, work practice, a job or other employability measure;
- (2) unemployed adults are also offered a fresh start before reaching twelve months of unemployment by one of the aforementioned means or, more generally, by accompanying individual vocational guidance.

Transition from passive measures to active measures

Each Member State:

- (3) will endeavour to increase significantly the number of persons benefiting from active measures to improve their employability. In order to increase the numbers of unemployed who are offered training or any similar measure, it will in particular fix a target, in the light of its starting situation, of gradually achieving the average of the three most successful Member States, and at least 20%;
- (4) will review and, where appropriate, refocus its benefit and tax system and provide incentives for unemployed or inactive people to seek and take up work or measures to enhance their employability and for employers to create new jobs. In addition, it is important to develop, in the context of a policy for active ageing, measures such as maintaining working capacity, lifelong learning and other flexible working arrangements, so that older workers are also able to participate actively in working life.

Defining the unemployed population

The guidelines fail to specify how the unemployed population should be defined. Definitions based on benefit claimants would in many countries underrepresent the population of women wishing to work as many women are not eligible for unemployment benefits. Even use of the ILO criteria would underrepresent the share of women who would like to work (see figure 6 above). Moreover, if the objective is not only to reduce unemployment but also to raise the employment rate, it is essential to provide assistance for the inactive to enter the labour market. This suggests that in setting targets that the definition of the unemployed should be widened to include those wishing to return to work as well as those who are eligible for benefits.

Monitoring participation by gender

Guideline 19 on mainstreaming under the fourth pillar recommends that participation in active labour market programmes by women should be at least proportional to the share of women in the unemployed population.

As women account for more than 50% of EU unemployment according to ILO definitions (overall and for youth and long term unemployed), even under this definition at least half the efforts in many countries should already be directed towards the female unemployed. For some countries, such as Italy, fulfilling even this objective would represent a major change in the importance attached to female unemployment (see Villa 1999). However, in a few countries, such as the UK and Sweden, a policy guided entirely by women's share of measured unemployment might lead to less than 50% participation. Such an approach would ignore the persistent higher share of inactive women, many of whom demonstrate their interest in employment by moving straight from inactivity to employment.

Member states will need to set both targets for women's participation and also establish appropriate monitoring systems disaggregated by gender. Part of the monitoring and target setting should include differentiated targets by types of active labour market programme. Research suggests that there are strong differences in effectiveness by type of scheme. For example, in Ireland it has been found that these effects differ in strength and form by gender (O'Connell and McGinnity 1997). Similar evaluations by gender need to be undertaken in other member states and targets for participation set according to the effectiveness of the schemes.

Evaluating displacement and indirect effects by gender

Active labour market policies can have 'dead weight' and displacement effects: indeed they could be considered as increasing competition at the bottom of the labour market where women are concentrated. Monitoring and evaluation of displacement effects should therefore be disaggregated by gender.

Integrating gender into the design of active labour market programmes

Labour market programmes need to be designed to help overcome obstacles to equality. Training and placement schemes must be aimed at reducing not reinforcing gender segregation; without this agenda active labour market schemes may promote even higher levels of segregation than in the wider labour market (Felstead 1995; Rees 1998). As Rees has argued: *the equal access approach, even when tempered with some positive action initiatives, does not lead to equal outcome: on the contrary, it reinforces divisions and cements gendered trajectories*' (op.cit. 1998:93) These problems also apply to European Structural Funds despite the introduction of an equal opportunities dimension (Rees 1998).

Taking into account care work in the definition of an active society

The development of an active approach to labour market policy needs to pay proper attention to the care work carried out in the domestic sphere. For example, offering opportunities for lone parents to enter the labour market should not lead to a disregard of the domestic work and the domestic constraints under which some recipients of passive benefits have to operate.

From household to individualised approaches to tax systems and benefit entitlements

Revision of tax structures to provide incentives for an active society have implications for whether tax and benefit systems are organised on an individual or a household basis. Tax regimes based on household income tend to provide disincentives to second income earners, although with a few exceptions such as Germany (Dingledey 1998), their impact on actual employment rates of women tend to be relatively low, partly because of a reduction in marginal rates of income tax over recent years (Gustafsson 1996). More severe disincentive effects come from benefit systems which are means tested at a household level. Schemes designed to encourage the main breadwinner to enter the labour market - for example inwork benefits - can create another trap for the second earner in the household as the inwork benefit is lost if either partner increases earnings (OECD 1997). Benefit schemes need to be evaluated with respect to individual not just household effects and by gender.

Encouraging a partnership approach

- (5) The social partners are urged, at their various levels of responsibility and action, to conclude as soon as possible agreements with a view to increasing the possibilities for training; work experience, traineeships or other measures likely to promote employability.
- (6) In order to reinforce the development of a skilled and adaptable workforce, both Member States and the social partners will endeavour to develop possibilities for lifelong learning, particularly in the fields of information and communication technologies, and, in consultation with the Employment and Labour Market Committee, define lifelong learning in order to set a target according to national circumstances for participants benefiting from such measures. Easy access for older workers will be particularly important.

Integrating gender into social partnership negotiations and agreements

The social partners do not have a track record in all countries of integrating gender interests in their drawing up of employment plans and agreements (see box 2 above in relation to Italy). National Action Plans should include some measures to improve the responsiveness of social partners to the interests of gender.

Ensuring access and monitoring participation in lifelong learning by gender

Lifelong learning can either compensate for differences in initial training and education and in accumulated work experience, or it can add to disparities in skill development by being reserved for those already with high levels of education and training and extensive work experience. For lifelong learning to assist in the reduction of gender inequality, it is vital that it fulfils the first function; that is opportunities must be provided for participation for those outside as well as inside the labour market and for those in flexible or part-time jobs and in small

firms as well as for those in permanent full-time jobs in large organisations. For example, until recently, in Belgium, part-time workers could not take paid leave to undertake post-compulsory education (see Plasman and Soudan 1999). Special attention should also be paid to the possibility of training during maternity leaves, a policy promoted for example in the 1998 Austrian NAP. Monitoring of access to training by gender is required but care needs to be taken not to give a misleading impression of equality in access: for example, women may receive more training related to induction and to upgrading of skills for returners while men's training may be more significant and helpful for further career development (Rees 1998).

Easing the transition from school to work

Member States will:

- (7) improve the quality of their school systems in order to reduce substantially the number of young people who drop out of the school system early. Particular attention should also be given to young people with learning difficulties.
- (8) make sure they equip young people with greater ability to adapt to technological and economic changes and with skills relevant to the labour market, where appropriate by implementing or developing apprenticeship training.

Widening educational choices by gender to improve school quality

Women's participation in employment tends to rise strongly with higher levels of education. Quality is related not only to length but also to the type of education and subject choices. Measures to break down gender differentiation within the school system should assist in reducing gender segregation in the labour market.

Developing broad-based training programmes such as apprenticeships in a wider range of occupations

Women have tended to be underrepresented in broad workplace-based training programmes such as apprenticeships. Employers appear to have been less willing to pay for broad based training for women and there has been perhaps less pressure from social partners to establish apprenticeships in female-dominated areas. The extension of this type of training should involve a wider range of occupations than in the past, including service sector jobs and should also include new types of occupations where gender stereotyping is less firmly established (see example of mainstreaming in Norway in section III below).

Promoting a labour market open to all

Each Member State will:

- (9) give special attention to the needs of the disabled, ethnic minorities and other groups and individuals who may be disadvantaged, and develop appropriate forms of preventive and active policies to promote their integration into the labour market.

Addressing multi-layered discrimination , by gender and race or disability

The separation of the guideline promoting a labour market open to all from the equal opportunities pillar in the 1999 guidelines correctly identifies gender inequalities as being of a different nature than those experienced by disadvantaged and minority groups. Gender, as a consequence of gender segregation, shapes the organisation of employment, resulting in differences, for example, in working hours, in pay and grading structures and in the nature of work organisation. Many disadvantaged labour market groups find themselves concentrated in job areas which have been structured with reference to gender relations; for example in jobs designed for second income earners, organised on a part-time and contingent basis. National Action Plans need to be sensitive to the multi-layered nature of disadvantage in the labour market and seek to identify groups of women who may face double or multi-layered levels of disadvantage and discrimination: these could include not just ethnic minority groups or immigrant women but also, for example, women with low education or women in rural areas. Policies to target particular groups of women according to their multiple and interacting problems of disadvantage should be developed if the policy of ensuring a labour market open to all is to be achieved.

Checklist: Employability policies consistent with proactive gender mainstreaming

- The adoption of an employment as well as an unemployment target in quantitative labour market objectives and the disaggregation and monitoring of targets by gender
- The use of active labour market policies, training programmes in new skill areas and lifelong learning programmes to challenge gender segregation
- The modernisation of social welfare programmes to facilitate not only a move from a passive to an active society, but also to make the benefit system more compatible with dual earner and single parent households.
- The development of a multi-layered approach to discrimination and disadvantage where the specific problems of gender are recognised and acted upon separately, but the interactions with other types of disadvantage, for example by ethnic groups are also identified.

Checklist: Employability policies which are not consistent with gender mainstreaming

- The adoption of target groups, identified solely or mainly around 'benefit claimant' definitions of unemployment
- The development of active labour market policies likely to have major displacement effects on those women employed at the bottom of the labour market
- The promotion of active labour market programmes which lead to the concentration of women in programmes which are more distant from the labour market than those in which men are mainly involved
- The development of a more active labour market policy approach which fails to take adequate account of the care responsibilities of benefit recipients
- The use, for example, of inwork benefits to encourage household heads to move from benefit claimant to labour market participant which at the same time create major new disincentives to work for spouses.
- The concentration of training and lifelong learning opportunities on those already in the labour market and/or on those employed in male-dominated segments.

II. Developing Entrepreneurship

The Objective

This pillar is concerned with reducing supply-side barriers to job creation. The specific guidelines suggest the promotion of self employment and new small businesses; the promotion of job creation at the local level associated with exploiting opportunities arising out of the social economy, environmental technologies and new activities to satisfy unmet needs; the exploitation of the full potential of the information society and the environmental sector; and the revision of the tax system to make it more employment friendly.

Gender inequality and entrepreneurship: the diagnosis of the problem

There is a clear gender dimension to all the types of measures proposed.

Women are underrepresented among the self employed and small business entrepreneurs (Domingo and Molto 1997). Women entrepreneurs are also more likely not to have employees and less likely to expand their firms. Among the self-employed women are only overrepresented among unpaid family helpers and among the so-called pseudo self-employed such as homeworkers or freelance workers. These jobs offer very limited opportunities for autonomy and often provide low pay, long hours and income insecurity. Other forms of self-employment such as entrepreneurship provide potential access to relatively high monetary rewards and to autonomy and self fulfilment. Thus women's underrepresentation within these categories contributes to gender inequality in employment.

Many policies to support entrepreneurs are likely to be beneficial to women as well as men but specific policy measures for women are still needed (OECD 1998; ESF 1998). Women face disadvantages due to their lower personal capital and income; their more limited access to credit (caused both by discrimination by banks and by their more limited access to family property as security); their more limited involvement in networking; and their more limited experience of management. These problems are exacerbated by the concentration of women's firms in overcrowded and unstable sectors and by the greater time constraints under which women are working due to family responsibilities. Although the opportunity to work at home is often cited as an attraction for women entrepreneurs, in practice they often work very long hours. The promotion of self-employment as a means of reducing unemployment also involves the danger that there will be an expansion of a low-paid and unprotected female self-employment segment. Homeworkers and other 'pseudo' independent workers are often denied the status and rights associated with dependent workers, including rights to social protection.

The second set of guidelines promotes the social and the local economy where women are overrepresented owing to their more restricted mobility and to their traditional involvement in care work. Unmet needs are defined to include everyday services, cultural services and environmental activities but in practice it has been the everyday life services where there has been most evidence of activity associated with the social economy at the local level (Meulders 1996). These everyday life services are already largely provided by women, either through the domestic or informal economies or through public services provisions. No mention is made in the guideline of differences in current levels of public provision. The impact of these local economy schemes on the level and quality of care and on the potential displacement of women already providing these services will vary between member states.

The focus on the employment capacities of the information society also raises gender issues. Women currently face discrimination in the 'hard' sciences, but without increased access to education and training in these areas, women are likely to remain confined to lower level jobs associated with the information society, such as call centre operators. Moreover they face potential job loss as new technologies undermine the demand for routine clerical and administrative jobs where women are concentrated.

Even the objective of making the tax system more employment friendly has a gender dimension, as the net effect of tax reform depends not only on the immediate impact on employment creation but on the overall impact on tax revenues and public expenditure. Women are likely to be disproportionately affected by any measures to stimulate job creation at the bottom end of the labour market, but they will also be affected by any overall change in tax and public expenditure policy, particularly where it affects public services.

Implementing the guidelines

Making it easier to start up and run businesses

Member States will:

10. give particular attention to reducing significantly the overhead costs and administrative burdens for businesses, and especially small and medium-sized enterprises, in particular when an enterprise is being set up and when hiring additional workers;
11. encourage the development of self-employment by examining, with the aim of reducing, any obstacles which may exist, especially those within tax and social security regimes, to moving to self-employment and the setting up of small businesses as well as by promoting training for entrepreneurship and targeted support services for entrepreneurs.

Improving access to financial capital

Possible policy measures to counter women's more limited access to credit and capital include: raising awareness among bankers and other funders of how they may in practice be discriminating against women; provision of special loan guarantee funds for women entrepreneurs or loans without the normal collateral requirement to serve as seed capital and open doors to regular bank loans; the development of intermediary organisations and structures between large pools of capital and small borrowers, which can deliver small amounts of money to entrepreneurs at reasonable cost.

Targeted financial support for women's entrepreneurship

Specifically targeted measures or programmes, such as those supported by the NOW and the Employment-Now programmes of the European Commission can help overcome other dimensions of gender disadvantage (OECD 1998c, ESF 1998). These could include special funding programmes which take into account women's typical forms of business, sectors and niches; subsidies for unemployed women to create a small business; grants for technological modernisation and product development in women's firms; opportunities for increased participation of women's firms in public procurement. Existing industrial subsidies should also be scrutinised to ensure they are gender neutral. For example, in Finland some subsidies are available only for manufacturing industries, a sector where women are underrepresented (see Ilmakunnas 1999).

Training and support services for women entrepreneurs

As women may lack some of the basic skills and experience required to set up or maintain businesses, access to training is a priority. Women's access should be at least equal to, or even greater than men's in recognition of the gender gap. Training programmes need to meet the specific need of women: this involves the time scheduling of training programmes, the adoption of more female-friendly teaching methods (including for example mentoring, use of female trainers and evaluators and opportunities for practical experience) and a focus on the

development of personal skills as well as on business skills and knowledge. This applies particularly to women returning to the labour market who are interested in setting up in business. Attention needs to be paid particularly to that category of women starting up businesses who lack 'commitment to a vision, self-esteem, independence, ability to take risks, flexibility, educational qualifications and broad-based professional experience' (ESF 1998: 3). Women may also benefit from, for example, one-stop-shops and business incubators or special support structures for women entrepreneurs providing a range of integrated services such as information and networking, financing, training, counselling and support for the preparation of business plans, guidance and follow-up etc.. Care also needs to be taken to ensure that women have access to advanced technical training where appropriate for the business.

A first priority for support services is good quality childcare, both during training and after starting the business; public or community based childcare facilities need to be open to women entrepreneurs as well as to employees.

Improving pay and conditions for female 'independent' workers

Mainstreaming requires that attention is paid to inequalities within the category of the self employed and entrepreneurs, particularly where this relates to gender. Women's self-employment is often synonymous with low pay and low status and in many Southern European countries associated with disguised wage employment. Policies need to be developed to improve the status and conditions of unpaid family helpers, homeworkers and other 'pseudo' independent workers. Such measures may require changes to both social protection systems to create a more inclusive framework and to employment regulation to ensure that all those in effective dependent employment receive appropriate protection. Such policies would help to close the gender gap in quality of employment.

Exploiting new opportunities for job creation

Member States will:

12. promote measures to exploit fully the possibilities offered by job creation at local level, in the social economy, in the area of environmental technologies and in new activities linked to needs not yet satisfied by the market, and examine, with the aim of reducing, any obstacles in the way of such measures. In this respect, the special role of local authorities and the social partners should be taken into account.
13. develop framework conditions to fully exploit the employment potential of the services sector and industry-related services, inter alia by tapping the employment potential of the information society and the environmental sector, to create more and better jobs.

Monitoring for displacement and substitution effects

The promotion of the social economy through employment subsidies and service vouchers can be expected to generate substitution of formal for informal

care work, either through the regularisation of previously informal workers or the substitution of formal for informal workers - involving in some countries the displacement of legal or illegal immigrants. Subsidies may also benefit the registered unemployed at the expense of the unregistered unemployed and the inactive. Attention must therefore be paid not only to the risk of substitution of male unemployed for female informal workers but also to the risk of substitution of female formal sector workers for the most vulnerable female groups in the informal sector. In member states where care services are primarily provided through the public sector, these policies should not lead to the displacement of good quality jobs in the public sector, often occupied by women.

Maintaining standards in employment and care provision.

The positive impact of such measures on gender equality is conditional not only on their job creation potential but also on the quality of social protection, the level of wages, the recognition accorded to women's traditional skills and the quality of care services. The 1998 Greek National Action Plan refers to the Local Employment Pacts concluded among public agencies, local government and social partners which allowed the setting of wages below the sectoral and occupational minima for the jobs created in the new activities (see Karamessini 1999). In this case, meeting the unmet needs at the local level is providing an opportunity to induce downward wage flexibility and stimulate employment by the reduction of labour costs. The differential gender impact of this kind of measure depends on the relative share of women and men wage earners in the new activities.

Gender mainstreaming requires that attention should be paid to the impact on the quality of care. Consideration is required of whether or not these services are best provided through the public sector as an alternative to local or social economy schemes (see Ilmakunnas 1999).

Measures to reduce gender segregation in new job opportunities.

Exploitation of job creation potential to generate new jobs also provides an opportunity to move beyond traditional patterns of gender segregation. Such positive results are unlikely if job creation in the social and local economy focuses around low paid and low status jobs. Where these new job creation activities allow for higher quality jobs there may be an opportunity to break down gender stereotyping and provide opportunities for young men as well as women in the care economy, and for women as well as men in the environmental jobs sectors. Gendered culture inside and outside the classroom has tended to restrict women's access to technical jobs within the information society even though they now dominate the more operational jobs associated with information technology. Specific measures need to be taken to open up higher level and technical training to women. Action also needs to be taken to provide opportunities to upgrade and develop the skills of those in the more operational sectors and to avoid the use of information technology to create highly controlled and narrowly skilled jobs.

Making the taxation system more employment friendly

Each Member State will:

14. set a target, if necessary and taking account of its present level, for gradually reducing the overall tax burden and, where appropriate, a target for gradually reducing the fiscal pressure on labour and non-wage labour costs, in particular on relatively unskilled and low-paid labour, without jeopardising the recovery of public finances or the financial equilibrium of social security schemes. It will examine, if appropriate, the desirability of introducing a tax on energy or on pollutant emissions or any other tax measure.
15. examine, without obligation, the advisability of reducing the rate of VAT on labour-intensive services not exposed to cross-border competition.

Building safeguards into tax restructuring policies.

Tax restructuring may appear to benefit women, both because more are low income earners and job creation in labour intensive services tends to increase female employment. The net impact on gender equality will depend both on the size of the job creation effect and on the safeguards built in to such a policy. The overall effects of tax restructuring on job creation is contested (Maier 1995; Meulders 1996). Even more important is whether member states choose to compensate for the loss in tax revenues by increasing taxes or introducing new ones or reducing social expenditure. Cuts in social expenditure provide possibly the easier option which may be detrimental for women's employment and for their access to social protection or social services. These potential costs are greater if reducing the so-called tax wedge involves excluding some workers from social security contributions, for without contributions their rights to social benefits may be called into question (Maier 1995). Consideration needs to be given to alternative policies, such as reducing the underemployment of women already in the labour force which should release low skilled jobs for the unemployed. Thus policies to restructure tax to be more employment friendly need to be evaluated taking into account the whole effects on revenue and expenditure and on the long term development of social protection and the employment structure.

Checklist: Entrepreneurship policies consistent with proactive gender mainstreaming

- The development of targeted programmes designed to overcome the barriers to entrepreneurship faced by women in financial markets, product markets and in reconciling entrepreneurship and family life.
- The taking of steps to regularise the status of disguised dependent employment such as homeworking in the self employed sector
- The promotion of the social economy on the basis of providing high quality and high levels of care services and high quality job opportunities
- The development of new job opportunities based around the principle of promoting gender desegregation in the workplace
- The restructuring of tax to boost demand for social and personal services without jeopardising existing levels of social expenditure and social protection
- The development of policies to reduce underutilisation of skills and potential in the labour force in contrast to policies aimed at maximising the share of low skilled and low income jobs in the economy.

Check list: Entrepreneurship policies not consistent with gender mainstreaming

- The provision of assistance to entrepreneurship which is targeted solely or mainly at the current segment of the population engaged in entrepreneurial activities or provided solely or mainly to sectors dominated by male entrepreneurs.
- The promotion of 'pseudo' self employment or disguised dependent employment within the small firm sector and informal economy
- The development of the social and local economy at the expense either of higher paid and regularised work in the public or formal private sector or at the expense of vulnerable women in the informal economy
- The development of the social economy such that it leads to lower standards of care provision
- The promotion of the information society through training and other programmes which do not address the problem of gender segregation
- The restructuring of tax such that the net result is a reduction in social expenditure and/or in access to social protection and public services

III. Encouraging adaptability of businesses and their employees

Objective

The objective of the third pillar is to encourage adaptability of businesses and their employees, that is to enhance the competitiveness of existing organisations. The emphasis is on modernisation, flexibilisation and skill development, with objectives such as worksharing through reduction in working time only identified as a possible accompaniment to agreements to secure enhanced competitiveness. A second theme is flexibility with security: more diversity in employment contracts is called for, subject to appropriate safeguards for security and occupational status.

Gender inequality and adaptability: the diagnosis of the problem

The four employment areas of concern in this pillar- work organisation, flexibility and working time, employment contracts and skill development- are all structured by gender.

Work organisation is influenced by the pattern of gender segregation, both horizontal and vertical, which reduces the scope for more flexible forms of work organisation, particularly where the segregation is reinforced by wage differentials between female and male work and between masculine and feminine working cultures. The current exclusion of women from higher level jobs leads to underutilisation of current potential and a narrowing of the range of talents and attributes allowed to contribute to effective systems of work organisation.

Flexibility strategies have a strong gender dimension; women tend to be overrepresented in forms of atypical or non standard employment, particularly part-time work. Women are involved in flexible employment at all stages of their working lives, while men's involvement tends to be limited to the beginning and end of their work careers. Differences can be found in employer strategies with respect to flexibility by gender (see Silvera 1999 and Plasman and Soudan 1999): those relating to female employment areas are more likely to be based on reducing costs and creating narrow skilled, low paid and insecure jobs, while those in male employment areas are more likely to be based on positive forms of flexibility involving functional flexibility, empowerment and job security.

Working time reduction has also taken a gendered form, involving primarily individualised working time reduction for women in the form of part-time work, usually without any form of wage compensation. For men working time reductions have more often been based on collective reductions, usually with at least partial wage compensation. Both sexes are facing increasing demands for both variable and unsocial hours working which will cause even greater

problems for combining work and family life. One response is to offer 'family friendly' working time arrangements (Hogg and Harker 1992; Holtermann 1995), but these options are primarily aimed at women and involve costs in terms of both current salaries and promotion prospects. Similar problems apply to the increasing diversity of employment contracts.

The possibility of contradictions between the promotion of flexibility on the one hand and lifelong learning and skill development on the other needs to be recognised. Initial and lifelong training opportunities tend to be concentrated on those in full-time permanent work, leading to a cumulative polarisation of skills. Particular problems for those in flexible jobs- i.e. mainly women- arise when training they do receive is orientated solely to firm-specific needs and does not lead to a recognised credential which would help them maintain employability.

The underrepresentation of women within the voluntary regulated sectors needs to be taken into account when considering whether action to assist in structural change should involve regulations or voluntary action. The next stage of structural change is likely to be concentrated on both public and private services where women are concentrated but the social partners may be less able or willing to take action in these sectors, compared to manufacturing and heavy industry, to ensure effective retraining and redeployment of the workforce. Women, and part-timers in particular, run the risk that they may face unequal access to, for example, in-house training and retraining, compensation for new flexible working arrangements or indeed compensation for higher skill levels required in more flexible, delayed organisations.

Implementing the guidelines

Modernising work organisation

16. The social partners are invited to negotiate at all appropriate levels agreements to modernise the organisation of work, including flexible working arrangements, with the aim of making undertakings productive and competitive and achieving the required balance between flexibility and security. Such agreements may, for example, cover the expression of working time as an annual figure, the reduction of working hours, the reduction of overtime, the development of part-time working, lifelong training and career breaks.

17. For its part, each Member State will examine the possibility of incorporating in its law more adaptable types of contract, taking into account the fact that forms of employment are increasingly diverse. Those working under contracts of this kind should at the same time enjoy adequate security and higher occupational status, compatible with the needs of business.

Policies to promote more flexible forms of work organisation need to be linked to progress in the desegregation of the labour market. Segregation is a form of labour market rigidity which tends not to attract the attention of policymakers.

Companies should be encouraged to take steps to analyse their current pay and job grading structures with a view to implementing equal pay for work of equal value. The elimination of gender pay differences should provide the preconditions for greater flexibility across traditional gender and other work organisation divides. New forms of work organisation based on a more integrated workforce could create opportunities for the development of more positive flexibility, focused on new opportunities for productive activities in contrast to defensive or negative flexibility focused on cost reduction and increased insecurity (Bosch 1995). Policies to reduce vertical segregation would promote gender equality and could also enhance productivity and competitiveness. For example, women may bring to management different skills; according to some women are more likely to have facilitative skills and to pay more attention to issues such as teamworking. Organisations which currently select managers according to how well they fit with the attributes of the current management team may be missing out on opportunities for development and change.

Social partners need also to ensure that in circumstances of downsizing and delayering, the workforce which remains is compensated for additional responsibilities and skills.

Introducing equal opportunities into the reorganisation and reduction of working time

Introducing equal opportunities into the reorganisation of working time requires that the reconciliation of work and family life is regarded as an issue for both men and women. Unless working time and family life issues are general concerns, reconciliation policies will tend to reinforce gender segregation and gender disadvantage at work, as a consequence of the development of female-specific working time policies such as part-time work or unpaid career breaks (see Silvera 1999). If viewed as a general issue, more innovative approaches are possible, including various forms of time banking, annualised hours schemes or reductions in standard working hours. The introduction of a gender perspective into negotiations over working time reorganisation can lead to positive and innovative solutions although the extent to which this occurs currently varies considerably between member states (Bettio et al. 1998a; Junter and Malpas 1998; Lewis and Lewis 1996). Integration of women into the negotiations over new working time arrangements is a minimum prerequisite for the development of a gender perspective.

In contrast to this integrated approach, many of the 1998 NAPs primarily concentrated on policies to promote part-time work, even including short part-time jobs, with little consideration of the implications for gender equality (Bettio et al. 1998c). However, the policies to promote part-time also involved policies which are at face value more difficult to interpret. These included not only policies

to remove 'barriers' to part-time working or the promotion of part-time in the form of fiscal incentives but also policies to promote part-time work through greater equality in employment rights and benefits. The latter approach obviously goes some way to mitigate the problems of part-time work, but legislative intervention cannot resolve all the problems of lower wages and fewer career opportunities associated with the part-time option. Consideration may need to be given to the starting point in the particular country; where part-time work is already established as a major form of employment, it is may be desirable on pragmatic grounds to concentrate on improving conditions for part-timers, including opening up opportunities in higher level jobs, offering opportunities for reduced hours working and providing greater equality of treatment in terms and conditions between full and part-timers. All these policies could be identified as steps towards a more gender integrated and equal labour market. Where part-time work is not established and women are already participating in full-time work as a normal mode of employment, even these types of policies to promote part-time work could be interpreted a move towards recreating a gender divide, based around a more contingent employment status for women and a reinforcement of women's responsibility for care work.

Even where the policies involve more general working time reorganisation, involving collective reductions in standard working time or annualised hours, attention still needs to be paid to the full implications for the time-work relationship: for example employees need to have some control over their working time schedule and to be able to insist that responsibilities such as childcare are taken into account in the rescheduling of hours. Consideration should be given to new or developed employment rights such as rights to notice with respect to variations in days or hours of work, and rights to minimum numbers of weekends to spend with families. Rights to scheduling holidays in line with the holidays of children and partners should be considered. Whether these rights are best introduced through legislation or collective negotiation depends upon the situation in the different member states but consideration needs to be given to the underrepresentation of women employees in collective agreements.

Developing 'family friendly' working time arrangements for men and for women at the society level

Modernising work and working time organisation requires not only adaptation to new competitive conditions but also to new conditions in the society and labour market, and in particular to the trend towards dual earner and single parent households. This modernisation may not be fully achievable through the actions of individual organisations or even agreements between social partners but may need the development of new policies at a national or regional level to support the modernisation, through for example the development of both paid career breaks and a childcare infrastructure. Without societal level support, employers will at best offer low cost alternatives such as unpaid breaks which reinforce the gender division of labour and women's economic dependency within the family or focus policies on their more advantaged workers (Dickens 1994). However, enterprises and trade unions both need to adapt and adjust their policies and outlooks to take into account the change in the nature of society and the labour

force, and to engage in joint initiatives with, for example, the national or local government to consider how better to reconcile the time constraints of work, family and city life (see section III below for examples from Italy and Denmark).

Developing an inclusive regulatory framework, which supports labour standards and job security

Proposals to provide a more inclusive framework of regulation of employment contracts and forms are likely to reduce gender inequality in employment, provided they do not at the same time promote the development of employment forms which act against the long term interests of integration based on equality. An inclusive framework also needs to promote notions of labour standards and labour norms and not simply provide legitimation for all forms of employment contracts offered by employers.

Support adaptability in enterprises

Member States will:

18. re-examine the obstacles, in particular tax obstacles, to investment in human resources and possibly provide for tax or other incentives for the development of in-house training; they will also examine new regulations and review the existing regulatory framework to make sure they will contribute to reducing barriers to employment and helping the labour market adapt to structural change in the economy.

Providing incentives for investment in training and education for all types of employees

The dual goals of flexibility and enhanced investment in training and lifelong learning are likely to be incompatible objectives unless policies are specifically designed to overcome the disincentive effects at the enterprise level of investing in training and human capital formation associated with more flexible employment forms. Specific tax or other incentives and regulations are necessary to ensure that all employees benefit from training and lifelong learning. Equal opportunities would require policy to go further and provide some mechanisms whereby lifelong learning opportunities would compensate for earlier disadvantage in education and training access. Those in flexible jobs are more in need of training and education which results in the acquisition of recognised credentials, to assist in maintaining employability within a flexible labour market.

Introducing equal opportunities into policies to support adaptation to structural change

Member states are expected to review existing regulatory frameworks with a view to reducing barriers to employment and assisting the labour market adjust to structural change in the economy. Such restructuring programmes are in practice in many member states carried out in conjunction with social partners, particularly in conditions of major restructuring of industries. For women to be adequately protected by restructuring programmes, social partners need to be encouraged to enhance the representation of women within the existing collective negotiating structures, and to take steps to extend collective bargaining into the service sector and small firm areas. Redundancies among large segments of the white collar clerical and mainly female banking staffs in countries such as the UK have not attracted the attention, for example, reserved for threats to closures of car plants (see Rubery 1999).

In the absence of social partner regulation and activity it may be more necessary to consider state regulation in a situation where reliance on the voluntary actions of social partners might result in widening gender equality as a consequence of women's underrepresentation within the social partners.

Checklist: Adaptability policies consistent with proactive gender mainstreaming

- The reorganisation of work and working time linked to reductions in gender segregation and to positive flexible working, involving higher skill levels and greater autonomy
- The use of changes to working time change to promote a rethinking of the interface between work and employment for men and women, and involving greater attention being paid to employees' need for social and private life and to the need to co-ordinate work life and city life
- The development of policies which provide an equal or greater emphasis on individual rights to move from part-time to full-time work to rights to move from full-time to part-time
- The creation of positive incentives for employers to invest in the training and certification of skills in flexible, part-time and/or low skilled job areas
- The development of social plans or redeployment policies for those employed in service as well as in manufacturing and heavy industry sectors.

Check list: Adaptability policies not consistent with gender mainstreaming

- The promotion of part-time work without attention being paid to the full range of negative employment effects, including employment rights and benefits, career paths and opportunities to return to full-time work
- The establishment of incentives to create marginal part-time or temporary jobs
- The promotion of greater managerial discretion at the workplace
- The concentration of negotiated changes in working time in male-dominated sectors
- The promotion of subcontracting and fragmentation likely to lead to a deterioration in terms and conditions and/or to reduced opportunities for applying the principle of equal pay for work of equal value
- The offering of incentives for in-house training that are effectively restricted to those in permanent full-time jobs or in organisations or occupations dominated by men
- The adoption or expansion of unpaid family friendly working time arrangements such as unpaid career breaks or uncompensated reductions in working time, as cheaper alternatives to childcare provision.

IV. Strengthening equal opportunities policies for women and men

Objective

The objective of strengthening equal opportunities policies for women and men has been fully integrated into the other three pillars of the employment policy through the first guideline in this pillar which requires member states to mainstream gender into all four pillars. In addition the pillar is concerned with identifying and reducing the key gender differences in the labour market, in employment rates, in horizontal and vertical segregation, in pay levels, in care responsibilities and in participation patterns.

Gender inequality and employment policy: the diagnosis of the problem

The employment problem to be addressed through this pillar is the linkages between European employment policy and gender equality; this link is two way. A high European employment rate is unlikely to be achieved without much greater integration of women into wage work, and the current labour market and employment trends are to some extent dominated by the changes taking place in women's relationship to the labour market. At the same time, there is no guarantee that integration will proceed at the same rate irrespective of policy nor that integration will result in reduced inequality. The EU has a prior commitment to equal treatment in employment, thus requiring the development of policies which both yield employment and gender equality objectives. These gender equality objectives must include not only specific actions to promote the employment of women but also actions to change the pervasive systems of gender segregation and gender pay inequality.

Some of the problems women face in the labour market are clearly associated with their actual or assumed future domestic responsibilities. Whether these problems can be resolved through policies to assist in the reconciliation of work and family may depend crucially on the extent to which in the longer term these promote a more equal sharing of family responsibilities between men and women or reinforce gender difference. Care policies remain critical to ensure that women do not face a choice between work and family, leading to women either quitting the labour market or reducing their fertility, due to lack of care provision. Women returning to the labour market face particular problems of being confined to lower status jobs or to temporary contracts. Assistance for women and male returners is needed but a more proactive approach involves policies which both facilitate employment continuity (Dex et al. 1993) and challenge the assumption that it is only women who will take responsibility for children and make use of leave or flexible working time arrangements (see Gonzalez (1999)).

Implementing the guidelines

Gender mainstreaming approach

The Member State will:

19. adopt a gender-mainstreaming approach in implementing the Guidelines of all four pillars. In order meaningfully to evaluate progress on this approach, Member States will need to provide for adequate data collection systems and procedures.

Establishing the preconditions for effective mainstreaming.

Member states need to take action to establish the conditions under which such a policy will be both feasible and effective. These preconditions include: a high level commitment to mainstreaming within employment policy-making at both the government and the social partner level; the development of awareness of gender issues among policy-makers both through the integration of women into decision-making posts and through specialist advice and awareness training; the development of statistical databases by gender and the use of gender disaggregated statistics for setting and monitoring of targets; the development of appropriate gender impact analysis tools which focus both on the initial gender gaps as well as on the potential impact of policies in order to determine the appropriateness of proceeding with the given policy.

Tackling gender gaps

Member States will:

20. attempt to reduce the gap in unemployment rates between women and men by actively supporting the increased employment of women and will take action to bring about a balanced representation of women and men in all sectors and occupations. They will initiate positive steps to promote equal pay for equal work of equal value and to diminish differentials in incomes between women and men. In order to reduce gender gaps, Member States will also consider an increased use of measures for the advancement of women.

Promoting women's employment

Translating the desire to promote equality of opportunity into increased employment rates for women requires member states to consider not only how to reduce discrimination against women but also how to increase the total volume of wage work in the economy. Economies which have transferred significant parts of domestic activity to the wage economy tend to have higher employment rates among women. Consideration needs to be given to the promotion of wage employment in, for example, the care and service economy. In some cases this may involve an expansion rather than a contraction of public services (the implications for public expenditure dependent upon the impact on public subsidies and transfers in the long as well as the short term). Policies to promote women's employment must also be consistent with closing the gender gap in employment quality.

Reducing the gender gap in unemployment

Policies to reduce the gender gap in unemployment rates should, according to the guidelines, be promoted through higher overall employment rates for women. Such policies would not necessarily immediately reduce measured unemployment as many more women may be interested in joining the labour market once jobs are created than those who are openly unemployed. This should not create a contradiction as inactive women who wish to work should be considered as part of the hidden unemployed. Specific measures may need to

be enacted for the long term female unemployed, however, particularly if it is younger and better educated women who successfully compete for any new jobs or if female unemployment is concentrated by region.

Desegregating the labour market

Particular attention needs to be paid to policies to desegregate the labour market in new and expanding job areas as these offer the most scope for change. Policies need to operate within the education system, the training system and within the workplace. Change is needed in workplace culture, working hours and in employer attitudes and not just in the skills and attributes of potential employees. Specific incentives could be introduced to break down segregation in entry level jobs: for example, where employers receive subsidies or rewards according to new hires, some performance assessments according to recruitment by gender could be introduced.

Improving career opportunities

Improving career opportunities for women requires action not only to open up traditional male jobs to women, particularly higher level jobs, but also policies to create career ladders and opportunities within typically female job areas. Such policies may involve the professionalisation of female job areas, such as the care sector through the development of recognised credentials for skills and experience, which could facilitate career development even within flexible labour markets (OECD 1998b). Member states are also asked to consider making more use of measures for the advancement of women, now that the Amsterdam Treaty has reduced previous legal constraints on various forms of positive action. Gender mainstreaming requires the mobilisation of social partners as well as governments in the development of new initiatives to promote the careers of women at all levels of the labour market.

Tackling the gender pay gap

Policies to tackle the gender pay gap in the first instance need to take a defensive stance and assess current developments in pay structures for their potential negative as well as positive effects on the gender pay gap. The types of developments which potentially threaten a further widening of the gender pay gap include policies to restrict the level of minimum wages, to control public sector expenditure through below average wage increases in the public sector, to decentralise pay determination, to fragment private and public sector organisations through subcontracting, to individualise pay and increase employer discretion (through for example performance-related pay (Rubery 1995)), the provision of wage subsidies or dispensation to pay below minimum rates as part of the active labour market programme. Part of gender mainstreaming of employment policy must be a monitoring of wage policy and wage developments to ascertain their compatibility with the objective of reducing the gender pay gap. Such monitoring requires much better earnings statistics than are currently available in most member states. The new Structure of Earnings Survey only goes part way to reducing this problem because of the exclusion of much of the public sector and part of private services from the data

base and because of the relative infrequency of the survey (see Section I, Chapter 3 above).

More positive actions to close the gender pay gap could include policies developed at both the labour market and the organisational level: examples of the former could include expanding the range of potential comparators for equal value claims beyond the same employing organisation (Jones 1993), encouraging social partners to negotiate collective agreements with more gender sensitive pay, grading and working time arrangements (Dickens 1998) or with clauses which extended promotion and productivity bonuses to part time and flexible workers, as in the Netherlands (Plantenga et al. 1996). Examples of organisation-level initiatives could involve requiring organisations to monitor the implementation of flexible pay policies for gender pay discrimination and/or to account for the size of their gender pay gaps and to establish a plan to narrow the gap over time, following the idea of gender equality plans in Sweden and action on the gender pay gap in Ontario, Canada (Armstrong and Cornish 1997). Inequalities in the provision of fringe benefits and especially pension entitlements need to be included in the general definition of the gender pay gap.

Reconciling work and family life

Member States and the social partners will:

21 design, implement and promote family-friendly policies, including affordable, accessible and high quality care services for children and other dependants, as well as parental and other leave schemes

Promoting employment continuity

Women face particular labour market disadvantage if they quit the labour market to have children (Joshi and Davies 1992, 1993). Policies need to be developed to promote continuity of employment (Fagan and Rubery 1996) and where flexible working arrangements are appropriate or necessary, these may be best provided within the job that the women held before having children. This is preferable to women having to seek alternative employment in jobs specifically designed around short or flexible hours. Rights to leave arrangements may also need to include the right to reduced hours on a temporary or permanent basis within the same job. Continuity is not facilitated by policies which solely focus on leave arrangements; childcare facilities are necessary to enable a smooth return to work and to limit the length of absence from work which has a negative impact on career prospects (Dex et al. 1993).

Promoting a more equal sharing of family responsibilities

Family friendly policies must be developed for both men and women. For there to be any realistic prospect of men participating in leave or flexible working time

there needs to be earnings compensation arrangements and certain periods of leave reserved explicitly for the partner. Even so it may still be necessary to back up such policies with more general policies such as reduced working hours and time banking for all staff, so as to reduce the association of flexible and short working with motherhood. Employers should be required to give all parents rights to emergency leave for family responsibilities related to health and education of children or the emergency care of adults.

Providing high quality care

Unless the care provided through childcare services and care for the elderly meets a high quality standard, women who enter the labour market when they have responsibilities for dependants will be stigmatised. Quality standards form an essential part of equal opportunities policy and must not be sacrificed for employment objectives; for example, care jobs should not necessarily be assumed to be low skilled jobs to be filled by the unemployed without previous experience or training provision.

Facilitating reintegration into the labour market

The Member States will:

22 give specific attention to women, and men, considering a return to the paid workforce after an absence and, to that end, they will examine the means of gradually eliminating the obstacles in the way of such return.

Eliminating obstacles and providing returners with access to active labour market policies.

The obstacles facing returners to the labour market include tax and benefit systems which discriminate against second income earners; employers which discriminate against returners on grounds of age, working time preferences or assumed lack of skills and experience; lack of childcare facilities which fit with employer determined work schedules. Policies to overcome these obstacles require restructuring of tax and benefit systems, action on age discrimination, opportunities for returners to upgrade their skills in high quality training programmes and access to good quality childcare facilities. Access to active labour market policies is essential but these programmes also need to take into account that many returners may face problems because of discrimination not because of lack of appropriate skills and education. If active labour market policies assume all people in need of help reintegrating into the labour market are from the lower end of the ability range, the programmes may be inappropriate to meet the needs of women returners, many of whom are highly educated and skilled.

Checklist: Equal opportunities policies consistent with proactive gender mainstreaming

- The implementation of gender mainstreaming, conceived as a long term objective likely to lead to changes in the structure and organisation of society
- The adoption of a twin track approach to gender equality, involving both mainstreaming and specific equality policies
- The promotion of improvements in both the quantity and quality of women's employment and involving policies to reduce the underemployment of women as well as the removal of barriers to access to employment
- The development of measures to reduce the gender pay gap, involving evaluation and action on general trends in pay policy as well as active monitoring and development of statistical indicators at the workplace and the labour market level
- The design of family friendly policies to promote continuity of employment, more equal participation by men in family responsibilities and high quality standards in care services.
- The development of opportunities for the inactive as well as the unemployed to reintegrate into the labour market.

Checklist: Equal opportunities policies not consistent with gender mainstreaming

- The adoption of gender mainstreaming without the establishment of proper procedures for developing, implementing and monitoring equal opportunities
- The implementation of gender mainstreaming such that it leads to a reduced emphasis on or reduced budget for specific equality policies
- The development and promotion of quantitative targets for gender equality in employment without reference to the quality of employment
- The separation of policies to tackle the equal pay gap from general policies towards pay structures and payment systems.
- The design of family friendly policies such that they are only likely to apply to women and unlikely to promote a more equal sharing of care work

SECTION III: EXAMPLES OF MAINSTREAMING

5. CURRENT EXPERIENCES OF MAINSTREAMING

Mainstreaming is a relatively new policy tool. Examples of mainstreaming are thus relatively few in number and have by and large not yet been in place long enough for full evaluation of the impact to have been possible. Nevertheless examples of mainstreaming can inform member states of the various ways in which mainstreaming is being experimented with at the member state level, even though it is too early to label policies or processes examples of best practice. Mainstreaming can take place at various levels of decision-making and may also be applied within specific policy areas. We start with examples at various levels of government- pan-national, national and local- followed by examples from social partners. We conclude with examples of mainstreaming in employment policy programmes including not only national and local programmes but also EU structural programmes.

5.1. Mainstreaming at the pan-national level.

The pressure for mainstreaming has to a large extent come from the international or pan-national level, from UN World conferences, EU commitments to mainstreaming and at a more local level from policy programmes adopted by the Nordic Council of Ministers. Here we explore how the mainstreaming approach has so far been developed first within EU policy-making and secondly within the Nordic Council of Ministers.

(I)

Mainstreaming in the EU

According to the progress report to the Commission on the follow up to the Communication on mainstreaming (COM (1998) 122), the tangible results of the mainstreaming process are most evident in four Directorate-Generals, namely external relations (dealing inter alia with women's issues and rights in development); employment and social and industrial relations; education, training and youth policies and in Commission staff and information policies. There is also action at the inter-departmental level in mainstreaming the structural funds. The mainstreaming initiative is being promoted through an inter-departmental group of 'gender mainstreaming officials' who have prepared a tool for gender impact assessment (CEC 1998c). The Employment, Social and Industrial Relations DG has required Directors to integrate equality into their respective policies and particular attention has been paid to integrating gender issues into the social dialogue. However, major barriers remain including problems relating to lack of awareness of gender issues at the decision-making levels, lack of both budgets and staff devoted to the tasks and a lack of gender expertise (COM (98) 122:3)

Source: COM(1998)122

(II)

The Nordic Council of Ministers mainstreaming project

In 1997 the Nordic Council of Ministers initiated a 3 year mainstreaming project to integrate equal opportunities into youth policy and labour market policy in the Nordic countries. The project has been developed through a number of national subprojects covering a wide range of areas. For example:

- In Denmark the Equal Opportunities Council is testing methods of ensuring the equal pay question is integrated into the introduction of a new decentralised wage bargaining system.
- In Finland there is a project testing methods of integrating equal opportunities into the government's normal work in different areas. In total six ministries are involved.
- In Iceland methods to mainstream equal opportunities are being tested at a municipal level, particularly in the work of recreation committees.
- In Norway some developmental work is being undertaken to mainstream equal opportunities into daily work in the fields of labour market administration and counselling and children and youth policy.
- In Sweden new processes are being tested, under the direction of a group of local experts on equal opportunities, to mainstream gender into local authorities' labour market and youth policy.
- In the Faeroe Islands a project to mainstream equal opportunities at kindergartens and youth institutions has been launched.

The projects will be co-ordinated and supported through conferences, education, guidelines, handbooks, tools of analysing, check lists etc. Each project must be of importance in a Nordic relationship and led by a Nordic co-ordinator and a Nordic steering group.

Source: Sjørup (1999)

5.2 Mainstreaming at central government level.

It is national governments which have signed up to the commitment to mainstreaming at both the UN and the EU level and it is therefore at this level that action needs to be taken if, for example, the commitment to mainstream gender in employment policy is likely to be implemented. There are a number of governments which have made explicit commitments to mainstream, and have taken a variety of policy initiatives to implement mainstreaming as a process. There are different assessments as to the current impact of these developments, but while it may be the case that Portugal, for example, yet lacks the processes to back up its commitment to mainstreaming, the very establishment of a political commitment to mainstreaming is still significant in a country with relatively underdeveloped equal opportunities policies. In contrast Norway has been committed to mainstreaming for over twenty years and has implemented the policy gradually. There is now a wealth of experience of mainstreaming in Norway and the detailed evaluation of these policies (Buland and Skaar 1998) provides insights into both the scope for radical change in policy making and implementation and into the continuing barriers and difficulties faced by a mainstreaming project.

(III) A new ministry in Luxembourg to promote mainstreaming

In 1995, the Luxembourg government set up a new ministry, the Ministry for the Promotion of Women. The aims of the ministry are to promote the status of woman in society in order to achieve a real partnership between men and women and to develop cultural models which integrate masculinity and femininity as necessary components of social progress. The Ministry is expected to adopt a general policy framework, in line with the concept of mainstreaming, aimed at promoting women's status in the whole of the society, in all the sectors and in all aspects of governmental action, including education, training, employment, and social security. The Ministry has also responsibility for developing childcare and promoting sufficient flexibility in working hours to allow adaptation between the social environment and the evolution in family and work patterns.

The creation of this ministry indicates a political will to take action to support an equal sharing of responsibilities in all relevant areas. After 4 years of functioning of this Ministry, on balance the outcome is largely positive. The question of equality and equity between both sexes is being discussed at different levels in the ministries and administrations of Luxembourg, a consequence of the setting up of an Inter-ministry Committee for Equality. The National Action Plan for Luxembourg (1988) has been prepared and adopted with the direct involvement of the Ministry of Woman's Promotion. Mainstreaming was introduced in the NAP in pillars 1 and 2 in 1998, before this was a requirement of the guidelines, and the law that enforces the NAP makes an explicit reference to the mainstreaming. The introduction of a paid parental leave of 6 months, which amounts to 1500 EURO per month is an important outcome of the actions of the Ministry and the inter-ministerial committee.

Source: Plasman and Soudan (1999)

(IV) Mainstreaming in Iceland

In the Equal Opportunity Action Programme for the period 1998-2001, the Icelandic government stated that its aim was to mainstream a gender perspective into all policies, decision-making and programmes of the state. Moreover, the government emphasised the need for those who participated in planning and decision-making at the state level to have a good knowledge of equal opportunities. In 1998, a committee was established with the task of examining whether and how a gender perspective was being mainstreamed into public policy-making.

However, there is little evidence of the government's commitment to mainstream in a new regional policy that is now being discussed by the Icelandic parliament. Even though women are much more likely than men to move between municipalities and fewer women live in many of the rural areas, there is no mention of women in the measures aimed at stimulating population growth in regions outside the capital region.

Source: Mósesdóttir (1999)

(V)

Proposal for a new family policy in Denmark for dual earner families with small children

The need to address the time constraints faced by young working parents has recently been recognised by the Danish government, in part as a result of a general strike and labour market conflict in spring 1998 over the issue of care days. The need to provide more time for parents conflicts with the problems of mobilising more labour to meet the high labour demand in Denmark.

The proposal for a new reform of family politics made by a committee of the social partners set up at the initiative by the Danish government focuses on more flexible access to parental leave, including shorter or even part-time leaves and reduced penalties for taking leave. This approach provides a means of meeting the twin demands for leave and high integration into work but no concrete measures have yet been announced, perhaps suggesting continuing concerns that these more flexible leave arrangements may conflict with the need to mobilise more labour hours in total.

Source: Sjørup (1999)

(VI)

An Inter-Ministerial pilot mainstreaming project in Finland

A three-year mainstreaming project, part of the larger Nordic Council of Ministers' project was launched in 1997 by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, together with four other ministries, aimed at developing tools for promoting equality in public administration. The project involves both mainstreaming training for Finnish civil servants and the development of mainstreaming methodologies through pilot projects in each ministry where the mainstreaming principle is intensively used. The experiences over this three year period will be evaluated and the information used widely in the public administration.

In some ministries only a narrow pilot project has been chosen, somewhat against the spirit of mainstreaming. However, the Ministry of Labour is aiming to use the mainstreaming principle in the reshaping its whole administrative structure while the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has taken the preparation for the Finnish Presidency of the European Union as their mainstreaming pilot.

Source: Ilmakunnas (1999)

(VII)

Mainstreaming through cross-departmental initiatives in Ireland

Important cross-departmental initiatives have become a feature of new policies towards mainstreaming equal opportunities in Ireland. The Irish National Anti-Poverty Strategy 'Sharing in Progress', launched in 1997 as a strategic cross-departmental initiative based on specific targeted reductions in poverty and social exclusion to be achieved over a ten-year period, included an explicit commitment to equality principles. This commitment to equality was elaborated during 1998 by the Inter-Departmental Policy Committee charged with implementing the Anti-Poverty strategy into three specific objectives : ensuring equal access and encouraging participation for all; guaranteeing the rights of minorities especially through anti-discrimination measures; and the reduction in inequalities and in particular, addressing the gender dimension of poverty. All areas of government policy are to be subject to 'poverty proofing' with a particular emphasis on the impact of policies on the 9 to 15% of the population (identified in the Living in Ireland European Household Panel data) as living in persistent poverty "while having regard to the equality principles which underpin the National Anti Poverty Strategy". (Inter-Departmental Policy Committee, July 1998)

Source: Barry (1999)

(VIII)

Implementing mainstreaming in British central government

The Labour government has begun to implement a policy of mainstreaming gender across all government departments. This process started immediately after the election but progress was slow until the transfer of the Women's Unit to the Cabinet Office in summer 1998. The Cabinet Office is at the centre of government and provides a more appropriate location for integrating gender into all policy agendas as part of the general agenda of 'joined-up government' which is being pursued from the Cabinet office. The main cross-government developments so far have included the issue of high level guidelines to all government departments to undertake gender impact assessments of all policies and to make it clear that government departments will be held accountable for undertaking this. The guidelines may be considered to fall short of what could be called a proactive approach to mainstreaming, focusing as they do quite explicitly first and foremost on requiring policy-makers to ascertain whether or not what they are doing is legal. Moreover the British government has chosen to widen the concept of mainstreaming to include race, disability and other groups such as the unemployed. This focuses attention on women as one of a number of disadvantaged groups, perhaps therefore hindering the development of awareness of gender as a factor embedded in labour market institutions and processes.

A number of initiatives are being implemented to reinforce the guidelines, including the establishment of a network of civil servants responsible for mainstreaming in each ministry which meets every two months and receives a mailing every two weeks. To streamline mainstreaming and to reduce resistance to yet another evaluation hurdle for each policy, there are plans to move towards a common reporting framework for policy evaluation according to a range of policy objectives from the environment to gender equality.

Progress on mainstreaming has not been and is not likely to be even. As early as 1996 the Department for Education and Employment committed itself to mainstreaming and as a consequence this department has progressed further than most others in government. It has its own more detailed and more proactive guidelines and mainstreaming is embedded in the business planning process with the department, with divisional directors responsible for mainstreaming in their plans and a 'champion' for equal opportunities appointed at the divisional level. Equal opportunities has also been identified as a core managerial competence. Within the planning process there is increasing emphasis on targets and monitoring for equal opportunities. One positive result of mainstreaming has been action taken to improve the gender balance within the modern apprenticeship scheme.

Source: Rubery (1999)

(IX)

A Global Plan for Equal Opportunities in Portugal

In 1997 a Global Plan for Equal Opportunities was approved in Portugal designed to implement equal opportunities into all areas of government action. The plan underlined the importance of this issue for both economic and democratic development as well for full citizenship. The objectives included: the integration of the principle of promoting Equal Opportunities from a gender perspective in all economic, social and cultural policies; the prevention of violence and the guarantee of adequate protection to women as victims of violence; the promotion of Equal Opportunities in the labour market; improvements in the reconciliation of work and family life; the promotion of social protection for the family and motherhood; and the promotion of Equal Opportunities issues in and through the areas of health, education, science and culture. The overall responsibility for the plan is that of the High Commissioner for Matters regarding the Promotion of Equality and the Family, who is in turn responsible directly to the Prime-Minister, although the Ministers from the different areas have the responsibility of implementing the different measures. Almost two years after the adoption of this plan there has been no real evaluation of it. An external evaluation is now in course which will product results in March 2000.

However, the plan remains in fact almost unknown to the public. Perhaps the most noticeable action resulting from the plan has been a media campaign promoting the need to reconcile work and family life through pointing to the double burden on women who have to work and handle the organisation of domestic tasks. The evaluation of the results of this campaign, when available, could prove to be interesting. Those with responsibility for equal opportunities in Portugal appear to share a common opinion that although the plan is a declaration of intent that probably commands political support there is a lack of operative procedures. These inadequacies relate to the lack of planned evaluation procedures, a low budget and the lack of clearly defined responsibilities. The results of the evaluation currently underway will be crucial for the development of the plan.

Source: Gonzalez (1999)

(X)

Norway's experience of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policy fields

The 1978 Act on Gender Equality (1978) stated that public authorities should promote gender equality in all sectors of Norwegian society. The first Equality Action Programme in 1980-81 emphasised women's position in the educational system and the labour market; the second plan, 1986-1990 focused on awareness raising and new research and development projects. The third plan from 1991 to 1994 increased the level of ambition: more formalised tools were introduced and the aim was to integrate a gender perspective in activity plans, in budgets etc. Awareness raising and training courses for all ministries were important in this work.

An evaluation in 1997 of the status of gender mainstreaming three years after the end of the last action programme period, concluded that the programme had generated significant activity in several ministries, and at least in part was a success. There were considerable differences between the ministries and in no ministry had the gender perspective become entirely integrated into the everyday general procedures (Buland and Skaar 1998). Some ministries focused on moving more women into management positions and had difficulties in understanding what integration of the gender perspective meant more concretely. No single factor explained the difference between ministries but the degree to which gender was perceived as *relevant* for the ministry's core activities was important for the implementation of the gender perspective. Awareness of the action plans was found to be low and while it was possible for enthusiastic individuals to influence the work on mainstreaming, this appeared to involve a danger of burn-out, and thus of discontinuity if the work was not tied to the formal power structures. Often the person last recruited, particularly if it was a woman, was given the responsibility for gender equality, a practice which had a marginalising effect. Few routines for the integration of gender perspectives into policy programmes had been developed. Moreover gender equality is argued not to be currently "in fashion" (in contrast to environment issues).

Four Ministries were selected for in depth case studies; Agriculture, Health and Social Affairs, Justice and Church, Education and Research. In the Ministry of Agriculture a gender perspective was found to be perceived as both relevant and important, a result partly explained by individual efforts, particularly those of a former minister. The positive shift in attitudes was also related to a paradigmatic shift in the orientation of the Ministry, from the administration of agricultural subsidies to an organisation responsible for regional and rural social development. Creating alternative employment for the women moving out of rural areas became a core activity for the Ministry but problems were still experienced as the Ministry was working in a part of society which is conservative and male dominated. Judging from the state budget, gender issues are also clearly visible in the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. Interviews with officers revealed, however, that many did not see a gender perspective as relevant or as a priority and that the gender perspective had been omitted in several policy cases where it was relevant because of a wish to act on a general principle of equality and gender neutrality: health services should be available to the whole population, and not directed at group interests. Gender issues remained implicitly relevant because of the significant differences in women's and men's health but a lack of relevant gender knowledge in the field of health and social affairs was defined as a problem in this Ministry. Mainstreaming becomes difficult when a gender dimension to the knowledge base is lacking

In the Ministry of Justice a gender perspective was not seen as particularly relevant or important. There were very few examples where the gender dimension was made visible, including the budget. Gender equality was perceived as "silent knowledge", that is, integrated in the "heads" of the officers. Moreover, policy priorities were perceived as unstable, as "shifting winds". Knowledge about gender equality within the Ministry's field was scant, with few statistics broken down by gender. Some saw problems in an emphasis on a gender perspective in a field where the main principle is equal treatment. However, little had been done to change the traditionally male-dominated sectors of society (police, prisons) for which the Ministry was responsible. In contrast gender equality in the recruitment of personnel in the Ministry was seen as important, as the justice sector should reflect "society".

The situation in the Ministry of Church, Education and Research was found to be quite the opposite. Here a gender equality perspective was seen as clearly relevant to the Ministry's activity. Gender issues were visible in the Ministry's budget, in pedagogic plans, in available gender statistics etc. Some were concerned about the need for new measures for boys losing out in the post-industrial labour market. This Ministry had established organisational structures for its work on gender equality: responsibility was placed with the divisional heads and in addition there was a separate gender equality unit. The officers were interested and enthusiastic about the work, and also perceived signals coming from the top that this was an area of priority. There was also a gender equality network, with representation from all the seven divisions, having regular meetings. One of the results of mainstreaming can be seen in the educational reform "Reform '94", which has offered new opportunities for gender equality in typically female educational streams concerning formal competence and possibilities of further education. The aim is to achieve a better gender balance in educational choices, particularly in science and technology. Three main projects have been launched: 1) a development project, in cooperation with the social partners, to motivate girls and boys as well as employers to think in new ways. 2) a project to stimulate girls' interest in information technology. 3) a project based on giving additional credits to the underrepresented gender for some types of higher education, including positive action in favour of men in education directed at care occupations (social work, kindergarten and primary school teachers). The main concern in this context was to provide male role models for young children

Source: Ellingsæter (1999)

(XI)

Application of gender impact assessment in central government policy in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, gender impact assessment (Emancipatie-effectrapportage) has been applied in several policy areas. Important examples are income taxation and pensions.

The Dutch tax system is a rather traditional one, in the sense that up until now the system has favoured male breadwinners, and created barriers to the participation of women, especially in the low educational and income classes. Recently, the Dutch government has presented plans for a thorough reconstruction of the tax system, with more emphasis on indirect and less emphasis on direct taxes. A gender impact assessment is to analyse the effects of this reconstruction from a gender and emancipation perspective. Even though there are some major improvements for women (separate taxation, such that male net wages are not affected if his wife takes a job), the new tax system is still not very consistent with respect to the issue of individualisation. Moreover, the way the system deals with the costs of children is rather traditional, although only slight changes with respect to the combination of paid labour and care might improve the gender-friendliness of the system.

The Dutch supplementary pension system is complementary to the state pension. Most plans try to guarantee the employee a total income equal to 70% of his or her final wage before retirement, conditional on having worked 40 years. The specific structuring of pension schemes disadvantages families with two salaries, flexiworkers who can be excluded from company pensions plan, and persons with an interrupted career. Given the rise of dual earners, the growing emphasis on reconciliation of labour and care and the increasing flexibilisation of working time, the Ministry of Social Affairs, together with the Department for Equal Opportunities financed a research project focusing on the effects of more flexible working time patterns on individual pensions rights. In order to gain more insights into the effect of a more gender equal distribution of paid and unpaid work, a gender impact assessment was also included. By this instrument, the effects of the most likely developments in combination with policy proposals are assessed and reported upon.

Source: Plantenga (1999)

5.3 Mainstreaming at the local level

There are a range of reasons why mainstreaming at the local level takes on major importance for women. First, it is at the local level where many of the services important to women are provided. Second, it is at the local level where women may be most able to be active in decision-making. Third, it is at the local level where it is possible to bring together directly the time constraints faced by women in their family lives, their work lives and in their civic lives.

(XII)

The development of the 3R method for mainstreaming at the local level in Sweden

In 1996 the so-called JÄMKOM project was started under the auspices of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities (Åseskog 1998). A diverse group of six local authorities was chosen from volunteers. Each committee elected a local project leader who was to test, in close collaboration with the national project leaders, the 3R method- that is a method by which gender equality is not to be regarded as a separate issue but observed and given concrete expression in the everyday activities of the authority. The 3Rs refer to Representation, Resources and Realia. The first two are quantitative concepts and the final one a qualitative concept. Thus representation and resources requires a systematic review of men's and women's representation and use of resources in order to trigger discussion about the responses underlining these patterns and to raise the question of whether the municipalities actually work for the people who live in the municipalities. The projects reported that this had been the result in practice. To provide information on representation the members of the participating committees kept notebooks for two weeks, noting down the gender of all the people they came into contact with. The resources analysed under the project were time, money and space. This was measured in a number of innovative ways, including recording how much time men and women talked in meetings. The Realia dimension focused on norms and values expressed in the local authority activity and differences in gender attitudes to those norms. One result of the projects was an attempt by a town planning committee to develop a mental map to help build an understanding of how different categories of citizens felt about a particular urban renewal area.

Source: Åseskog (1998)

(XIII)

The 'City Clock' approach in Italy

The debate on 'City Times' has been evolving in Italy since the mid-1980s in various settings and with the participation of a variety of social actors. Women's groups and associations, women in trade unions and several Commissions for Equal Opportunities have proposed a gender perspective on reconciliation between working hours and everyday life, that considers both paid and unpaid work, the demand for more time for personal relationships and the increasing importance of one's own time. The Consumer Association together with those entrepreneurs' associations that are in closer contact with the public administration, such as artisans, builders and traders, have formed pressure groups to change the setting of the city clock. Belloni (in Belloni, Bimbi 1997) found in her survey that the three main aims of this public action were: to rationalise the complexity of the city clock (e.g. Sunday openings for shops, varying the hours for secondary schools to reduce traffic, and protect pedestrian routes for children); to introduce innovations in the opening hours of public services and implement flexible hours, especially in child services (e.g. afternoon opening for front offices, and partial access to crèches for children who are not enrolled); to get a fairer deal for working women through facilities for arranging their personal time (e.g. special arrangements in the organisation of office hours have taken explicitly into account the needs of mothers and their children)... A number of cities have opened special offices for "rationalising" the city clock; several have adopted special projects aimed at achieving equal opportunities and increasing women's participation in public and political life. Most of these schemes were put forward by women holding positions and responsibility in city administration; some of these offices are even headed by women. (Bettio et al. 1997: 73)

Source: Villa (1999)

(XIV)

Experiments with new kinds of services for busy parents in Denmark.

In the municipality of Frederiksberg (Frederiksbergbladet 1999) an experiment is taking place testing a new concept of a 'service-kindergarten' offering new kinds of services for busy parents with pre-school kids. The kindergarten is offering the parents the service of an inter-net video access to the kindergarten all day long, allowing them to have a video view of how their children are doing whenever they wish. A female film director and mother of a two year old recounted in a feature in the local newspaper recently how she had the video of the kindergarten as a window on her computer screen all day long. This aspect of the experiment has been very controversial because of the "big brother" perspectives of kindergarten teachers being kept under surveillance during their whole working day. However, other services offered to the parents include a ready-cooked warm dinner to take home, laundry services, shopping etcetera. This is therefore an innovative experiment at trying to reconcile time pressures with care responsibilities at the local municipal level.

Source: Sjørup (1999)

(XV)

Trans-faire: the Rhone-Alpes regional project in France

Trans-faire is a French regional project, financed by the 4th European Community Action Plan (1996-2000). Its objective is: "to stimulate a permanent commitment on the part of public authorities to foster equal opportunities between women and men in their working lives...in three main areas: youth employment, equality at work, and the reconciliation of working, family, social and citizenship roles". This project provides an example of mainstreaming as it involves the mobilisation of local decision-makers, including department prefects, the public employment service, and local branches of state authorities. This work is under the direction of the Regional Prefect whose active involvement is due in part to continued interventions by the Regional Women's Rights Representative.

The large number of actors involved has permitted the launch of a programme of co-ordinated policies to achieve the three objectives stated above. The concrete measures developed have been considered to represent a "laboratory of mainstreaming". These include the following:

- an awareness raising campaign, launched by the Regional Office for Women's Rights, to ensure that equal opportunities are integrated within the next Contract of Economic Planning between the state and the region;
- the setting up of working parties on three experimental zones within the framework of the 'development of service sector employment' component of the National Action Plan for employment;
- the creation of a statistics gathering group in order to create a long-term framework which will make the comparative situations of women and men more visible;
- awareness raising among directors of the Family Allowance Offices on harmonising and improving childcare arrangements, thereby helping to establish a better balance between family and working life for women and men;
- an evaluation of programmes in three localities aimed at long-term unemployed women to raise awareness and to ensure the transfer of good practice among those responsible for the long-term unemployed;
- the dissemination of research from a gender perspective related to employability and competencies to those actors involved in the accreditation of skills and competencies;
- the creation of a "market place" for the exchange of ideas and knowledge in the area of Equal Opportunities. Meetings have been organised for around 40 participants (including trade unionists, politicians, researchers, and men and women from the community), to exchange information on practices and experiences in the area of equality.

The project forms part of a "transnational partnership", comparing the French experiment with those in different regions (Madrid, Catalonia, Denmark). The international evaluations have centred around two factors: cultural differences and the strategy and tools used in mainstreaming.

Source: Silvera (1999)

(XVI) The introduction of gender issues into regional administration in Greece

Mainstreaming is at only an embryonic stage in Greece. However, the General Secretariat for Equality has been actively promoting the creation of regional centres for equality in the thirteen regions of the country (two are already in existence as advisory committees to the regional administrators on equality policy issues). This initiative can be considered as a first attempt to build the appropriate machinery for mainstreaming regional policy together with the publication of a handbook (Veniopoulou 1998) containing guidelines and practical advice for implementing equality policy at the level of local government (policy areas, processes, project management etc.). Moreover, the General Secretariat for Equality sponsors training courses for public administration executives destined to staff the regional centres for equality and the equality agencies within all ministries that are to be created in the near future.

Source: Karamessini (1999)

5.4 Mainstreaming by social partners and at the organisation level

The involvement of social partners in the mainstreaming process is central for the overall objectives of reducing gender equality. Whatever the policy programmes of government, gender equality in employment cannot be achieved unless these affect conditions and behaviour at the sector and organisation level.

(XVII) Incentives introduced by the local government of Andalusia to establish a working week of 35 hours

The debate on the reduction of working hours, already active in other EU countries (Comas and González, 1996), started in Spain in 1996 (El País, 1996a). This debate was initiated by one of the largest trade unions who saw the need to analyse the scope for the redistribution of working-time as part of positive action programmes for equal opportunities between women and men (El País, 1996b). On the last week of January 1999, the newspapers (El País, 1996a, 1996b) gave details of the circumstances under which private sector enterprises will receive a subsidy for new job generation resulting from a progressive reduction of the working time to 35 hours in three years time. This is not a legal requirement but a proposed development agreed upon within the collective bargaining framework or pacts. The enterprises which create vacancies through working time reduction and through part-time indefinite contracts will receive a social security rebate up to 100% of the employer's social security contribution between a maximum of 700 000 pesetas and a minimum of 500 000 pesetas for each new post created. A total budget of 5000 million pesetas has been established but additional funding of this programme is already forecasted. Women are among the target groups of this programme, which is directed at the unemployed under 30, unemployed women, long-term unemployed over 40, people with disabilities and persons on risk of social exclusion. The Andalusian local government expects between 15 and 50 thousand new jobs will be generated.

Source: Moltó (1999)

(XVIII) Handbook for gender equality in companies in Norway

Early in 1999, a handbook on gender equality in companies was launched in Norway. This is a guide for companies how to make gender equality action plans and agreements, and to implement them in the normal business goal setting processes of the company (Botnedal 1999a). The handbook was developed through a cooperative pilot project of ten large private companies, financed by the Norwegian Federal Employer Organisation and the Norwegian Agricultural Employer Organisation. Thus it has been generated through practical work by the actors who are to use it (Botnedal 1999b). The handbook contains examples of techniques and tools, and it includes one concrete agreement on a gender equality action plan in one of the participating companies, signed by the local social partners. In Norway (in contrast to Sweden) there is no legislated obligations for companies to formulate such plans. The emphasis is on the need for cultural change, in both practices and attitudes, and change is directed at both genders and all levels in the organisation. Companies have diverging interests and approaches to gender equality, and the handbook strategy is to place the focus on identifying each company's strategic interests, and what to do with such issues. Gender equality is defined as a strategic interest on a par with other economic interests. The methodology in the pilot study was to make the participants "change agents" in their own work lives. It proved crucial for the participating companies that the project developed a gender, and not a women only, approach, and that it focused on the company as a whole, and not on the managerial level exclusively.

The handbook will be available on Internet, in Norwegian.

Source: Ellingsæter (1999)

(XIX) The welfare project in the Danish Trade Union Congress (LO)

The LO, the Danish general trade union organising workers of all sectors of Industry and service is preparing a welfare project for its 1999 congress Dealing with welfare in work and family life. Thus this is an example of mainstreaming gender equity into a general policy of working life, initiated by a social partner representing approximately half of the Danish labour force, even though the mainstreaming concept is not used explicitly in the project. The project covers 6 themes: time, working life and family life; democracy; economy including pensions; working life; competencies; health.

The project theme concerning time is, in particular, dealing with the reconciliation of work and family life, addressed from a life phase strategy approach. Three research projects are being carried. One involves interviewing a large number of members of the trade unions about their views on work and family life and the conflicts between those two areas of daily life. This uses the notion of 'the developmental family', concerned with the principles for developing family life, relations between family members, with demands for spending time with small children and elderly family members, in a new context of a full time dual earner family.

Source: Sjørup (1999)

(XX)

Staff recruitment in Ringsted, Denmark

One of the subprojects within the Nordic Council of Ministers mainstreaming project relates to staff recruitment in the municipality of Ringsted in Denmark. The motto of the project is 'Put on the 'gender glasses' and make changes happen': that is the objective is to mobilise the human resources of both women and men and to make use of the positive co-operation resulting from taking into account the different perspectives of women and men, and to break down prejudices which prevent women and men developing their resources freely. The project is dealing with changing the gender specific work cultures into a mixed culture by making it possible to talk about differences when they are observed. Mainstreaming in the context of this project is defined as discussing the gender impact of decisions made in the work place concerning working hours, working routines, purchase of new tools and equipment, wage bargaining and recruitment of new staff members.

The project is primarily related to the recruitment of new staff members.

In this municipality, as in most Danish municipalities, 73% of the staff at all levels are women. This relates to the dominance of care and education in the activities of the municipalities - but even within these areas women are still mainly to be found in jobs involving direct contacts with clients and patients and not in technical and managerial functions. The mainstreaming project is therefore working to change the pattern of gender segregation or at least to put on 'gender glasses' in order to consider whether changing the gender balance would have a positive effect on the quality of work and results obtained.

A handbook has been distributed to all the parties engaged in the process and a folder has been prepared for short-listed applicants. A consultant following the project is carrying out a survey interviewing all such applicants and a number of these are also being interviewed intensively in a qualitative survey. The project has not yet been concluded, but it potentially provides an interesting initiative to reduce the gender division of labour both horizontally and vertically.

Source: Sjørup (1999)

(XXI) The MIXPRO project for promoting equality at work in France

This experiment consists of a training project, financed under the Leonardo da Vinci programme aimed at employee representatives, led by a consulting organisation "Emergences". The aim is to combat the degradation of working conditions, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises. With regard to the position of women, it is particularly concerned with issues of remuneration, working time, access to positions of responsibility and to training. The objective is "to create training modules, applicable across Europe, to promote awareness of forms of discrimination between men and women, using an approach that emphasises positive actions that can be taken in firms, thereby enabling employee representatives to become both actors in a new social dialogue and promoters of a new type of self-training" This project is thus concerned with raising awareness of actors involved in negotiation, to limit and indeed remove the risk of discrimination within the negotiating process. The mobilisation of employee representatives in the area of equality is a necessary step in the progress towards mainstreaming. Given the weakness of French trade unions, it is particularly necessary to mobilise these actors, as employee representatives have a crucial role to play within current negotiations at the firm level, particularly on the subject of working time.

Source: Silvera (1999)

5.5 Mainstreaming employment policy

Although full mainstreaming of employment policy may be conditional upon mainstreaming in general government policy, at national and local level and in the social partners, there are already some examples of mainstreaming explicitly within employment policy programmes.

(XXII) Strengthening gender equality in labour market policy in Germany

Despite a legal regulation enacted in 1987 that labour market policy should help reduce gender segregation in training and employment as well as support women's integration into the labour market, women have been underrepresented in nearly all labour market programmes and activities, particularly in East Germany. In 1993 an additional commitment was made that women should participate in labour market programmes in the same proportion as their share of the registered unemployed. In the 1998 legal framework this commitment is reaffirmed and strengthened to include a requirement that labour market programmes be designed in a family-friendly way, i.e. part-time training, special programmes for returners, and child care for participants. Moreover, local labour market offices have to monitor and assess the effectiveness of their policies for participation by target group, including women, and to develop a strategy for a better or more efficient labour market policy in consultation with the local labour market board (including trade unions, employers and public administration). This should greatly increase the visibility of women's position. Additionally, all labour offices are now obliged to have a women's officer, responsible for the control of women's representation in programmes and who has the right to be heard and to make proposals concerning the programmes and their budget.

Source: Maier (1999)

(XXIII)

The first steps towards, and the remaining obstacles to gender mainstreaming in Greek employment policy

Gender mainstreaming was an unknown word in Greece before it was *imported* together with the respective debate at the Community level and the Beijing Conference. Today, still very few policy-makers understand what it means and even the General Secretariat for Equality has only recently started exploring its implications for equality policy. The latter still consists mainly of equality legislation and specific measures for women in several policy areas. These include some innovative measures such as: *the extension of the period of subsidy by two months within all employment schemes for job creation, if employers hire unemployed women*; special grants for women entrepreneurs for the creation of new firms, modernisation of existing firms or the development of new products; extension of opening hours from 3.5 to 8 hours a day in public kindergartens; and home assistance programmes for the elderly. While some of these measures have great potential for improving gender equality, they are not the outcome of a mainstreaming strategy as they start from the specific problems of women and not employment policy or a policy area as a whole. This prevents the development of an holistic approach to women's problems and needs. For example, the policy measures targeted on women's entrepreneurship operate in isolation one from the other, while specialised support structures such as the Women's Information and Entrepreneurship Centres fail to resolve a major problem for women i.e. access to capital.

A first unsuccessful attempt was made to apply the mainstreaming strategy by the General Secretariat for Equality during the preparation of the 1998 National Action Plan for Employment. However, the General Secretariat for Equality is now fully involved in the elaboration of the 1999 National Action Plan for Employment. It heads the inter-Ministerial working group preparing the policies and measures under the fourth pillar and has undertaken the responsibility for integrating gender equality in the other three pillars as a member of the respective inter-Ministerial working groups. Gender mainstreaming can still expect to encounter obstacles arising out of ignorance of what the policy means and a lack of political commitment; the weakness of the national equality machinery and the "traditional" equality policy; and a lack of sufficient knowledge and expertise about gender relations.

Source: Karamessini (1999)

(XXIV) Evaluating schemes financed by the Structural Funds in Finland

In Finland a relatively large amount of effort has been devoted to the analysis of the structural fund programmes from a gender perspective. Two researchers have published three different studies in this field (Horelli and Roininen (1997a,b; 1998). In their latest publication they have developed a practical toolkit aimed at assessing the relevant programmes and projects from gender perspective. It offers a choice of different methods for the varying stages of assessment. This toolkit is targeted at authorities, experts, evaluators, politicians, project leaders and NGOs. The toolkit offers a choice of different methods for the varying stages of assessment, starting from the ex-ante evaluation of the programming phase, continuing through the interim evaluation of the implementation phase, and ending with the ex-post evaluation. It consists of 60 methods applicable to gender analysis. Some of the methods are suitable to any phase of the evaluation process, and some tools are phase specific.

Source: Ilmakunnas (1999)

(XXV) Monitoring gender equality in the Structural funds in Ireland

An initiative to monitor Structural Fund expenditure from a gender perspective was launched in November 1998 following the mid-term evaluation of the funds and in preparation for the new round of Structural Funds (2000-2006). A budget of 300,000 Euros has been allocated by the Irish Structural Fund Monitoring Committee to support 'preparatory actions' for mainstreaming equal opportunities. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform suggested a programme of actions to be implemented in the lead up to 2000 including: the setting up of an Equality Coordinating Committee; the appointment of officials with responsibility for monitoring mainstreaming of gender equality in different Departments and services; a programme of training sessions on gender mainstreaming; and the preparation of specific Impact Assessment Guides and Manuals. In response to these proposals, the Department of Finance (which carries central responsibility for evaluating Structural Fund expenditure) has asked the consultants responsible for evaluating Ireland's National Development Plan to address specifically the issues of equal opportunities between women and men as part of their assessment, and specifically to take into account the 4th pillar of the Employment Action Guidelines. A two-day Workshop on Mainstreaming Equal Opportunities was organised in March 1999 to bring together the different government departments, statutory agencies, social partners and services (as well as the European Commission) to focus on a comprehensive strategy for mainstreaming gender equality within the next round of Structural Funds.

Source: Barry (1999)

(XXVI) The Austrian NAP: an example of “mainstreaming”?

Austria can be considered the country which made most obvious efforts to mainstream gender into its 1998 NAP. There are three main ways in which the NAP demonstrated commitment to mainstreaming.

First, it recognised the need for a broad perspective: "... employment policy must be flanked by a social policy, which supports employers and employees as they adapt to new prospects in the occupational and business environment and safeguards them against potentially catastrophic consequences of structural change. Employment policy is not only a matter of labour-market policy but must also be buttressed by other policy areas and must operate on a very broad front. This particularly applies to equal opportunities in the labour market, which cannot be achieved by piecemeal action but only if the "mainstreaming" approach is applied in all relevant areas." (Austrian NAP 1998, p. 4).

Second, it introduced gender specific measures under the main pillars including some gender quotas. The specific commitments included: improving the skills of the unemployed coming back in the labour market, specially for women who benefit from a career break : better targeting of qualification and training measures and the possibility of childcare during the period of training; increases in the number of apprenticeship opportunities and increases in the employment probability of young people by extending the available occupations, with a special accent placed on favouring young women seeking training in a high skilled sector; creation of new jobs in the expanding sectors, like welfare, health and social assistance, with a special focus on the long term unemployed, the persons returning in the labour market and the low skilled (with gender quotas introduced); gender quotas introduced for the placement of redundant workers in the case of large industrial restructuring; a gender dimension to be central in the design of measures for low skilled unemployed.

Third, it was one of the few countries to explicitly address the issue of gender segregation, at least in its active labour market policies.

However there are still some problems, including a general scarcity of quantifiable - and hence verifiable - indicators, made worse by a tendency to make a declaration of intent without any concrete plan of action and a failure to distinguish clearly between planned measures and those already accepted. Moreover, there is still a lack of detailed information on the concrete measures, making it extremely difficult to evaluate their real effects on female employment.

Nevertheless the considerable integration of women's issues into the NAP can be seen a major advance, as this concept has not been a typical feature of Austrian politics in the past.

Source: Pastner (1999)

(XXVII) Gender mainstreaming in the agency for training and placing the unemployed in the Walloon region of Belgium

FOREM, the organisation for vocational training and job placements in the Walloon region first set up an 'equal opportunity' network in 1976, designed to increase the awareness of equal opportunity policy among all the staff involved with the placement and training of unemployed persons. In 1990 an employment network was established and in 1994, the two networks were merged. More recently, the network has focused its attention on the mainstreaming approach. Training has been organised around that topic to include systemic analysis of employment systems, strategic analysis of the power relationships and mainstreaming strategies (including analysis and awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the network within the FOREM). This has led to the constitution of a mid-term action plan with the objectives of: putting the gender perspective in all the documents produced either by or for the institution; obtaining the support of the entire staff and of the social partners for the principle of equal opportunity; incorporating equal opportunity in all the activities of the FOREM; establishing the FOREM as a best practice example at the European level. The organisation is applying for support for its mainstreaming activities under the auspices of the 4th action programme for equal opportunities for women and men in the European Union. If successful, this should enable it to build upon its linkages with similar organisations in European countries, for example Sweden, to facilitate the transfer of knowledge on the methodology of implementing mainstreaming in the public administration.

Source: Plasman and Soudan(1999)

(XXVIII)

Introducing an ethical dimension to part-time work in the 35 hour working-time law in France.

The introduction of an ethical dimension into part-time employment within the 35 hour law can be considered an example of mainstreaming; namely actions to offset potential negative impacts of the law included as part of the law. Thus the law forbids breaks for part-timers in the working day of more than 2 hours (breaks of 4 hours are still commonplace in the retail sector). Additionally, the fiscal advantages to employing part-timers (30% reduction in social costs) have been limited to those working at least 18 hours per week (previously 16). Yet the measures are far from sufficient. To reduce the level of "involuntary" part-time employment, which in France is among the highest in Europe, it might be considered more appropriate to remove altogether the fiscal incentives available for increased use of part-time employment, particularly in circumstances where these fiscal incentives may allow employers to make unreasonable demands for flexibility in working hours.

Source: Silvera (1999)

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