

## ETG 4: A SINGLE LABOUR MARKET FOR ALL EQUAL PROMOTES HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL DESEGREGATION

### ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

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This document presents the main results of the activities of the European Thematic Group on Equal Opportunities (ETG 4) that relate to the gender desegregation of the labour market. These activities were undertaken in 2003 and 2004 and led to the identification of the key components of policies and practices that can promote more gender diversity at work. The full report covering all of the outcomes of ETG4 is contained in two chapters of its "Living Document" - one focusing on horizontal desegregation and the other on vertical desegregation and equal pay.

### 1. GENDER SEGREGATION ON THE EUROPEAN LABOUR MARKET

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The European Commission's Gender Equality Report 2005<sup>1</sup> confirms the trend of recent years<sup>2</sup> which show that educational gender gaps are closing in the EU and in most Member States women are now acquiring better educational qualifications than men.

Girls are less likely than boys to leave compulsory (lower secondary) school without gaining a certificate. In upper secondary education, more than half of the students are female but there are considerable variations ranging from 80% in Finland and Sweden to under 60% in other countries. There are other very systematic tendencies across Europe. Young women are more often enrolled in general educational programmes, whilst boys tend to opt for vocational ones. Fewer women than men drop out of upper secondary education without successfully completing their studies. Consequently, more women than men go on to university and female students form the majority in both occupationally-oriented and academic programmes. The majority of graduates (56%) at first-level in the EU are female but at advanced research level, men represent 61% of graduates.

However, the study choices show a traditional gender stereotyped pattern. With proportions of between 70% and 80%, men outnumber women in engineering, manufacturing and construction, as well as in science, maths and computing. On the other hand, more than two thirds of the students in educational sciences and humanities, in arts and in health and social work studies are women.

However, all the inroads mentioned above are not yet mirrored by women's position in the labour market. Whilst there has been a gradual increase over the last decade in women's participation on the labour market from under 50% to 55.6%, there are still disparities between women and men in employment. The employment gender gap stands at 15.8% in the EU, while the unemployment gender gap is 1.7 %. Both sector specific and occupational segregation continue to be the major obstacle to the equal treatment of women and men in employment and pay. Almost half of the women (48%) gainfully employed in the EU during the year 2000 worked in only four sectors: health care and social services; education; public administration and retailing. By contrast, in the same year, only one third of men worked in four sectors: construction; public administration, retailing and business services.

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<sup>1</sup> [Report](#) from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on equality between women and men, 2005; COMM (2005) 44 final;

<sup>2</sup> Eurostat: The life of women and men in Europe, A statistical portrait, 2002;

Finally, even if EU-level figures show a larger female than male participation in continuing education and training, the access to these avenues of life-long learning is often difficult for women due to work-life-balance problems and a lack of suitable training provision in the sectors in which they work.

## 2. HORIZONTAL DESEGREGATION

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EQUAL good practices that tackle sectoral and occupational gender gaps are making a valuable contribution to diversifying and improving the skills of the European workforce. Those EQUAL approaches that have integrated different elements of successful de-segregation policies show the greatest potential for generating positive and sustainable change.

### 2.1. WIDENING VOCATIONAL CHOICES

In many Member States, EQUAL Development Partnerships (DPs) emphasise the need to address gender stereotypes at an early age. During compulsory education and even in pre-school, different types of activities, behaviour and attitudes are fostered in boys, as compared to girls. Although much has changed in the past decades, many girls are still not encouraged to study 'male' subjects such as science, engineering or technologies. Actors in young people's social environments, including teachers, guidance counsellors, parents and also their peers, are often not equipped to take account of girls' and young women's specific needs and interests.

#### 2.1.1. Starting in primary schools and even before

The most formative impressions of gender roles are created in early childhood. In addition to parents and the immediate social environment, childcare facilities can play a key role when it comes to avoiding gender stereotypes. Two Finnish DPs started the de-stereotyping process even before primary education.

- "WomenIT" operated in **kindergartens**, using role play, games and toys to encourage and to inspire girls to work with technology. The children have the chance to play with construction toys, create animations and use technical devices such as computers and digital cameras. They have also explored domestic work and presented the results in surveys of mothers' and fathers' tasks and they then discussed why these are divided in a gender specific way.
- "Mirror" launched a campaign to stimulate the creativity and inventiveness of **girls and boys aged 6 to 12**, whilst at the same time enhancing their team building skills and persistence. Regional and national competitions were organised, in cooperation with Finnish Technology Industries, to design and construct a mobile toy of the future.

#### 2.1.2. In secondary education

Several DPs have recognised the need to organise **girl-specific activities** such as clubs, extra-classes or groups. All these have been based on **female ways of learning**. These are seen as acquiring knowledge and skills in a coherent context and for a specifically defined purpose that meets the learners' needs, rather than trying to assimilate technical or isolated information for which they must detect a suitable use.

- In Germany, the "Gender Mainstreaming in the Information Society" DP (GM InfSo) produced a series of **e-Learning materials** for girls and their teachers to help them develop media competences in an interdisciplinary way. Another German DP, "Frauen in t.i.m.e" set up **computers clubs** specifically targeting girls, aged 14-15, who had few opportunities to access ICT. The main objectives of these clubs was to increase the girls' technological and media skills and enhance their self-confidence and social skills.
- "WomenIT" has also developed science, mathematics and technology clubs, as well numerous **curricular activities** to influence current and future teaching practice related to ICT. In rare cases, these initiatives are also open to boys.
- "JIVE's" partners have developed a model of best practice promoting **hands on events** for girls in engineering, construction and technology. The DP is now promoting and transferring these events more widely within the engineering and construction industries and also to learning providers.

Most of these EQUAL activities have been complemented by measures that also **involve parents**. DPs usually concentrate on providing information about, and raising the awareness of, career opportunities in science and technology where women continue to be under-represented. Information and communication technologies have also been presented as a promising career path and the DPs have stressed that competences in this area are indispensable transversal skills for many aspects of working and everyday life.

### 2.1.3. Teacher training

Supporting teachers in secondary education by providing them with materials, advice and expertise is one of the strategies used by DPs to reach out to girls and to help them develop technology-related skills and competences both in and outside school. Female teachers, who act as role models, often play a crucial part in the girls' choices of, and success in, science and technology.

- In Finland, the “Mirror” course on Network Technologies for Women prepared **female teachers and other educational staff** to use ICT and information networks in everyday teaching activities. The objective of the course was to learn how to apply various tools in developing e-learning materials. Another sub-project was based on research into the relationship between gender and science teaching and learning in schools, in particular, on the types of approaches and tools that are required to motivate girls to consider science and technology, as a subject or career option.
- An English DP, “JIVE”, has developed new **teacher training** modules, materials and methods, which are geared specifically to teaching ICT to women. The modules were based on the results of preliminary research which had demonstrated the need for training in technical trouble-shooting and problem-solving skills for ICT tutors and learning methods, tools and approaches for ICT teaching, including e-learning.

### 2.1.4. Focusing on guidance and transition

Most of the efforts of DPs to broaden girls' vocational choices were centred on career paths in science, technology, ICT and other male-dominated growth areas or in economic sectors facing skill shortages. Many projects were focusing on the transition from school to vocational training or tertiary education and have developed a huge variety of methods and activities such as information days, school-industry links, taster courses, summer camps, work-experience placements, group discussions and mentoring. Other important aspects were specific training and awareness raising activities for guidance counsellors and teachers. It is important to note that these DPs treated the transition process as starting during the final years of compulsory education and not just during the last year or term.

There is a cluster of DPs that concentrates on the **individual support of young women**. These DPs have orchestrated a number of activities for young women themselves but also, on occasions, involving their parents, potential employers, social partners and mainstream training institutions.

- “GM InfSo” encouraged networking between key actors in the field of careers guidance and training in technical jobs, manual trades and the ICT sector. These included secondary school teachers, careers advisers from employment offices and trainers and human resources managers in SMEs and big companies. “Frauen in t.i.m.e.” also cooperated with Chambers of Commerce to identify female role models from the ICT sector, who could be presented at various information events.
- The “Mirror” model called ‘7-8-9’ was a programme that targeted Finnish children aged 13 to 15 and placed a specific emphasis on girls. The programme was delivered in three different stages according to the pupils’ school years or grades and these were:
  - Hands-on taster courses in vocational schools and mathematics exercises based on real life cases in industry (grade 7);
  - Practical activities in physics, chemistry and mathematics at the Museum of Technology (grade 8);
  - Female tutors, who were working in the industry, presenting and explaining jobs in engineering and electronics (grade 9).

### 2.1.5. Working with guidance staff

A few DPs focused explicitly on the **role of career advisors and counsellors** and combined several lines of action. These included pushing for regulations that would require all guidance staff to follow modules on gender issues as a normal part of their training, developing material for continuing training such as the application of gender mainstreaming or gender sensitive counselling and tests and finally, developing practical tools to help break down stereotypical patterns. Some of these tools were designed as interactive electronic games that could be used in different settings and by different groups, over a period of time. The idea was that **horizontal segregation resulting from vocational choice should no longer be dealt with as a typically women's or girls' issue**.

- In Denmark, the “Get A Life, Engineer” DP has been running seminars for career advisors in universities and high schools, based on several research projects. These seminars have considered the influence of gender and learning and power relationships on the learning experiences of women engineering students and also the feasibility of reconciling working life and family life for highly educated engineers. Another line of action has helped young people to work on their perceptions of future working and family life. These “future scenario” workshops brought together pupils, engineering students and adults working as engineers, both women and men, to create a vision of how life should be and to try to develop pupils’ choices for the future.
- The “WomenIT” DP has organised a series of 8-day courses on Gender Sensitive Career Guidance, Recruitment and Counselling for counsellors and employment office staff. In addition to their formative dimension, these courses are perceived as an empowerment tool for participants who are in charge of running “WomenIT” sub-projects on the ground.
- “JIVE” has trained trainers to deliver Continued Professional Development training to careers teachers and guidance professionals across the country. This training focuses on how to overcome gender stereotyping in careers education and guidance. Using case studies, role plays and interactive exercises, it aims to equip guidance professionals with the awareness they require to overcome their own stereotyping and with arguments to challenge it in the behaviour of others.
- After studying the perception of gender in the daily practice of school-based career counsellors and also young people’s experiences of vocational guidance, the Danish DP “Youth, Gender and Career” has developed and organised further education courses for guidance staff and teachers and awareness raising seminars for parents.

### 2.1.6. Improving information and guidance for adult women

As in the strategies targeting girls and younger women, many DPs aiming to improve vocational information and guidance for mature women focused explicitly on the role of career advisors and counsellors and combined the same lines of action. In addition, they have often established Information or **Resource Centres** for women. **Networking with other key actors in their territories** has been a central feature of all those DPs that have been providing guidance for mature women as the first step in a longer process.

- In Italy, “SVI.P.O” aims to improve the level of participation of women in all spheres of local life in rural mountainous areas. It has set up a network of 12 **Women’s Information Centres** based in the offices of the Regional Equal Opportunity Commission and in the nine participating municipalities. The centres function as “one-stop shops” offering not only vocational guidance but also a platform where women, institutions, enterprises and trade unions can meet to talk and contrast their views and strategies on local development from a gender equality perspective.
- In Spain, “Red Adalba” formed a **research, analysis and action group** to help guidance counsellors become more aware of gender issues and to train them to provide advice that is completely unbiased. Equal opportunities experts were involved in these training sessions for employment agencies, guidance services and human resources staff and they shared the strategies and tools that they have used to facilitate gender desegregation in the labour market. The sessions also included role playing, project work for guidance counsellors,

performance analysis and a practical guide has also been produced and disseminated widely.

## 2.2. VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Two approaches can be detected amongst those DPs that are focusing on women's training in non-traditional occupations. The first aims to **train women in mixed groups** whilst ensuring that:

- Gender sensitive methodologies are being developed, tested and used;
- Trainers are being sensitised to women's needs and also trained in equal opportunities;
- Flanking measures such as childcare and family friendly schedules have been agreed.

Most DPs that are concentrating on horizontal desegregation seem to be convinced that positive action is required to open up jobs in economic sectors and occupations that have huge gender imbalances. This second approach involves **"women only measures"**, which contain all the elements mentioned above but, in addition, ensure that:

- Female trainers predominate and act as role models for beneficiaries;
- The training builds on the previously acquired skills and know-how (both formal and informal) of the participants;
- The most effective methods of women's learning are used;
- The training includes working on small projects, in a step-by-step approach;
- Science and technological subjects are demystified;
- Work placements are included in the programme so that trainees experience the reality of a male work culture and have the opportunity to prove that "women can do it";
- Networks and support groups are designed and fostered so that they will continue after the end of the DPs' lifespan.

### 2.2.1. Initial vocational training

Only a small number of DPs concentrated on initial vocational training in male domains such as construction, transport and certain segments of ICT and they worked mainly **to improve the training environment in vocational schools**.

- In Sweden, the "Libra" partnership has developed a multiple approach to de-stereotyping vocational training in the construction sector. The approach combines all girl classes (because the presence of boys can hold girls back in their learning progress) with the use of drama and interactive theatre to demonstrate the realities of life on construction sites and also to stimulate discussions on attitudes towards race, gender and desegregation.

### 2.2.2. Integrated pathways for mature women

The largest number of horizontal desegregation DPs have catered for the needs of **adult women**. Whilst aiming to exploit job opportunities in future growth sectors and male dominated occupations, they have tended to develop highly individualised training and support measures. Individual pathways have been created covering the route from the first information and counselling contact to, and often beyond, the labour market integration of the beneficiaries. Lessons learned from EMPLOYMENT-NOW have often been taken into account in their design.

- In Spain, "TECNICA" used research data to design training modules in new technologies and **technology-related fields** that have been tailored to both the needs of the local firms and the profiles of different target groups. After an orientation phase, participants were trained in computer literacy, renewable energies, e-content management, logistics software and website programming. Then, they were able to choose between a period of work experience in the firms, or producing a feasibility study for establishing their own businesses. Finally, they had the possibility of either finding a job, with counselling and support from "TECNICA" or undertaking a placement in a 'mother' or 'mentor' company before starting their own businesses.
- In the Netherlands, the "Equal-in-Tech" DP catered for women who wished to work either by taking on **"odd jobs in and around the house"** such as painting, construction and carpentry, electrical engineering and domestic engineering or by starting up their own "odd-jobs" company. Training in four different technical branches – painting, construction/carpentry, electrical engineering and domestic engineering – was offered to unemployed women aged between 18 and 50. They were selected as a result of a rigorous four day assessment

procedure that was designed to measure their motivation and suitability. Occupational health and safety played an important role in the training and the module 'Think safe and act safe' added an important message about the prevention of accidents. Any woman who wished to start her own business after the training then received direct support from one of the partner organisations in the DP.

### 2.2.3. New occupational profiles

A number of DPs have been following recent developments on the labour market, such as **emerging skills gaps and staff shortages** and also trends indicating the formation of new vocational profiles before these are officially recognised and integrated into mainstream training systems.

- “GM InfSo” has developed training courses to prepare unemployed female university graduates for careers as Knowledge-Management experts. Knowledge management is an example of a new occupational profile which is based on the growing awareness in businesses and organisations that successful performance depends on their capacity to mobilise and use the knowledge of their staff more effectively. A demand for these skills and services was identified in large companies and SMEs and also in the consulting sector, education, training and research institutions and large NGOs, such as organisations for development cooperation.
- “TECNICA” has identified environmental protection and the development of renewable energies as a growth area in its region. The need for qualified technicians led the DP to train women to become specialists in the practical applications of solar energy. The group of trainees had no experience of this industrial sector that employs almost no females. Thus, “TECNICA” set up an individualised follow-up system through which the trainees were coached during the training process and also during their work experience placements in companies.

### 2.2.4. Training of trainers

Before working directly with beneficiaries, many DPs started by **training the trainers**. The knowledge and skills of the teams that were to inform, advise or train the target groups have been up-dated in different ways.

- Working with a network of universities, “Red Adalba” has set up a **virtual campus** to teach a social mediation master course through a programme designed from a gender perspective. In Spain, social mediation is a new professional profile based on an inter-disciplinary approach to social problems, as they are experienced by individuals in firms, municipalities, and organisations. These problems are often handled in bureaucratic or technocratic way while social mediation attempts to address them from the perspectives of the individuals who are involved. Training includes ICT, gender mainstreaming and research methods, all taught by external experts and certain tactics had to be deployed to convince university staff to broaden and revise their usual ways of teaching! For instance, to overcome their reluctance of being trained by non-university staff and of showing their ignorance in public, participants were provided with materials which they could study on their own or they could consult on-line.
- “JIVE” has trained a ‘pool’ of ten tutors to deliver specialised training material to learning providers and careers professionals. The training process is staged so that after participating in an initial training session, a potential tutor observes another training event and then co-delivers with an experienced tutor before becoming fully qualified to train. The DP has been providing one day integrated training programmes on how to create conducive learning environments for women, to lecturers and tutors across the country. The main focus of the training is on **inclusive learning** and this covers both attracting women to courses and maintaining their interest in learning. The training is based on good practice from various educational and training initiatives within the engineering, construction and technology sectors. It is designed in packages so that it can be adapted to meet the needs of individual institutions or provided in a more general staff development course, geared to raising awareness. The training materials are available in a complete modular training pack but they are only to be delivered by approved tutors.

- “Frauen in t.i.m.e.” has supported experienced female trainers in acquiring new skills as **Online-Trainers**. This 9-week training course focused on skills related to autonomous planning and the implementation of e-Learning courses. It concentrated on the acquisition of those methodological, didactic and media skills that are necessary for future teaching assistants. The topics included the operation of e-Learning platforms, time and project management, establishing and leading virtual groups and gender mainstreaming in the new media. The training was completed by the design of an online course and a practical exam.

### 3. VERTICAL DESEGREGATION

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Vertical segregation is not only related to top management, as in many cases women are already confronted with invisible barriers or the “**glass ceiling**” during the early stages of their careers. It may even begin with their initial recruitment as management trainees, as companies do not necessarily recruit a mixed pool of candidates and this may be due to a variety of reasons, such as the recruitment channels used or the availability of candidates. Another problem women face is the fact that the posts below top management (pipeline) are often related to the central (production) areas of the company. The lack of women in these posts means that only a few gain the access, networking and credibility that are so vital in attaining the decision-making level. This is particularly true for those sectors that are traditionally male dominated but the 'glass ceiling' seems to be less impenetrable in the public sector. This is probably because the public sector largely comprises health care and education and both of these services have substantial numbers of female employees.

In 2000<sup>3</sup>, 10% of men employed in the European Union were classified as managers, compared to only 5.5% of women. The gender gaps appear to be largest for the highest-level category of managers, as 1.4% of men held the title of “directors and chief executives”, but only 0.4% of women. In other words, over three and a half times as many men as women were in this highest category. At a level down, 3% of men worked as “production and operating managers” as against 1.5% of women - a difference of two and a half times. The gender gap was smaller for “other specialist managers” (men: 2%; women: 1.5%) and for “managers of small enterprises” (men: 3.5%; women: 2.5%).

#### 3.1. EQUAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO VERTICAL DESEGREGATION

The number of Development Partnerships (DPs) and Transnational Partnerships (TPs) that concentrated exclusively on vertical desegregation and sought **to break the glass ceiling** was much smaller than those that focused on horizontal desegregation. However, several projects combined activities that aimed to combat both horizontal and vertical desegregation.

EQUAL approaches to vertical desegregation included:

- Helping women to enter management and middle management;
- Developing strategies to open up the access of female managers to more senior positions;
- Increasing women’s participation in decision-making within social partner organisations, local and regional developmental activities and even the world of politics.

**Building the business case** for equal opportunities by **convincing stakeholders** of the benefits of using un-tapped female potential is at the core of these projects and a variety of other concepts were tested and implemented, namely:

- Introducing diversity management as a strategy to break the glass ceiling and, at the same time, to strengthen the positions of companies in rapidly changing markets;
- Establishing positive action plans;
- Providing continuing training to equip women with new management skills that are in demand such as quality management, international marketing and product development;
- Offering training in counselling, coaching, mentoring and networking skills to women managers at different levels of the job hierarchy;
- Integrating gender and diversity concepts into quality control systems;
- Introducing experts with “bridging” functions such as equality counsellors, work-life-balance agents and intercultural mediators.

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<sup>3</sup> Eurostat: The Lives of women and men in Europe, A statistical portrait, 2002

Some DPs assisted the self-employment of “gender consultants”, as they expected employers to need, and therefore to pay for, this type of external expertise in the introduction of change processes. They also helped SMEs that can rarely afford this expertise, to use the services of these external consultants.

### 3.2. ENHANCING CAREER AMBITIONS FROM EARLY ON

EQUAL DPs that were tackling vertical segregation emphasised that female career ambitions should be encouraged from as early an age, or stage, as possible. These projects believe that combating gender stereotypes in vocational guidance should go beyond enabling women to choose non-traditional occupations and should involve raising girls’ and young women’s expectations of becoming senior managers. This is why DPs working to widen career choices also attempt to **develop the leadership potential** of girls while they are still at school.

In Portugal, "Agir para a Igualdade" used a three pronged approach to bring equal opportunities into schools. The pilot project took place in a private technical institution that had ten separate schools throughout the country. The model catered for young people, trainers and trade unions, and was implemented in several stages that included:

- Raising the awareness and improving the skills of the teachers through a specific training programme;
- Helping teachers to develop an Equal Opportunities (EO) curriculum;
- Providing teachers with on-going support to deliver this curriculum to their students (aged 15 to 18).

In the UK, the “Fuirich Transport” Development Partnership established a forward looking strategy to improve female career opportunities in the **transport sector**, by integrating a gender approach into a major national scheme of initial vocational training - the Modern Apprenticeship programme. All beneficiaries were in the 16 to 24 age range and the gender module was structured into 6 sessions of 1.5 hours duration. These covered stereotyping, discrimination, prejudice and awareness-raising of the issues, including demographics to ensure that the participants understood the reasons for tackling skill shortages. The delivery methodologies varied from presentations, business games and project work during which participants analysed equality and diversity issues within their own working environments. The module was accredited formally to enable it to be mainstreamed into the Modern Apprenticeship programme both nationally and across sectors. The pilot was evaluated on an on-going basis and this process identified the fact that its success was very much related to the following teaching or learning methods:

- Business games to illustrate key stereotyping messages;
- Television and video to illustrate stereotypical role models and images of equality such as bullying at work; and
- Interactive topic groups to discuss issues such as “are women taking men’s jobs?”

### 3.3. SUPPORTING WOMEN’S ACCESS TO MANAGEMENT POSITIONS

Other DPs have been concerned with the situation of women who have acquired high-level qualifications in certain economic sectors but despite of all of their credentials and skills, become stuck at the very threshold of more senior positions of responsibility whilst their male counterparts climb above them on the career ladder.

#### 3.3.1. Training women as managers in growth sectors

Research that highlighted the absence of women in the upper levels of the job hierarchy in **science, engineering and technology**, led a Spanish DP to focus on training existing female employees to become managers in these growth sectors. In the Basque country, the “EMATEK” project drew up three occupational profiles and then designed training that would provide women with the necessary competences to drive innovation and technological development and to disseminate technological knowledge to the industries and organisations in the region. Depending on the nature of the agreement with the firms that employed the participants, training took place during, or outside, working hours. The 300 women, who were already extremely competent in their respective technical areas, were divided into three groups depending on their level of seniority. The programme included three main areas of skills training:



- Management competences such as project management and innovation management;
- Human relations oriented competences such as communication, leadership and teamwork;
- Personal competencies such as creativity, business spirit and tenacity.

The most innovative aspects of this profile definition process were the focus on competences instead of functions, the integration of the gender perspective in the profile definition and a holistic approach (technical, personal, relational and managerial) to relevant competences.

Similar research that revealed the absence of women at the top of the **tourism industry**, led a Greek partnership to open up management positions for women in the fastest growing sector in this country. According to male managers, there were two main obstacles to the progression of women in the sector which were their perceived lack of mobility and the fact that they are clustered in hotel functions, such as housekeeping, that do not naturally lead to management positions. With the support of Trade Unions and Employers' Organisations, the DP designed tailor-made equality plans, as an integral part of the human resource strategies of the tourist companies and hotels, and then followed up this work with an evaluation of the plans' effectiveness and efficiency.

### 3.3.2. Boosting female careers in Academia

Like their counterparts in other EU Member States, Dutch universities still have a major problem with vertical gender segregation. Only 6 to 8 percent of the professors are female, while more than half of the students are women. The first step of the "Bridging the Gender Gap at Universities" DP was to assemble relevant facts and figures and make them available in a very visible graphic form to show the under-representation of women professors in three Dutch Universities. In addition, the project **supported selection committees** by defining each job profile very clearly and also producing a checklist of what that job required. In addition, training was provided on recruitment procedures and how these should be followed. Action taken by the DP ensured that:

- Each department appointed a recruitment and selection "director" accountable for support and monitoring (ownership, monitoring);
- These directors were familiar with instruments and methods to improve the recruitment and selection of staff;
- Procedures and competences for recruitment and selection were recorded (implementation/organisation).

Building awareness and ownership was achieved through coaching of personnel officers and/or chairs of recruitment and selection committees, establishing of an exchange platform for personnel officers and holding an annual working conference for university staff. Support tools were also developed in the form of Fact Sheets on:

- Drafting competence profiles;
- Composition of teams;
- Active recruitment of female applicants;
- Preparing selection interviews;
- Competence-oriented job-interviews.

### 3.3.3. Coaching and mentoring

One of the difficulties that individuals experience when moving into a new environment is that they are not likely to have 'natural' access to relevant networks and nor will they be familiar with its specific culture and its unwritten rules. Coaching and mentoring are methods that can help overcome these difficulties.

EMATEK set up a coaching programme for 100 women who were intending to break into non-traditional careers. This programme aimed to improve their negotiation skills, boost their self-esteem and increase their self-control through a competence based approach. The 40 male and female coaches who were all working in technology centres also received training to prepare them for their new roles. Naturally, this focused on gender issues but it also provided the would-be coaches with support material and monitoring tools. These included:

- A practical guide on helping the participant to define an action plan based on her needs and then to commit herself to that plan;
- An outline of an action plan summarising the competences to be developed in the process, and the tasks to be carried out between each session;

- A monitoring tool for the coach to record every aspect of the process including sessions, contacts, tasks and commitments made.

Coaches also received individual on-line and face-to-face support from the University team which designed the programme.

### 3.4. INCREASING FEMALE INFLUENCE IN POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING

**Careers in politics** are another area where the glass ceiling really blocks women's access to higher positions. In addition, the low levels of women's participation in political decision-making can be seen as a threat to true democracy, as over half of the population is not adequately represented. Just 25.4% of all of the parliamentary seats throughout the EU are occupied by women. But supporting women's access to elected office is only one small part of an overall strategy to increase their influence at the centres of power of political development and decision-making.

The Italian DP "Esserci" (Being there) addressed this crucial issue through a number of interlinked activities.

- An Observatory was established on the presence of women in decision-making that investigated all the areas of political, social and economical power: parties, unions, trade associations, banks, financial and credit institutions. The ultimate aim was to identify the dynamics underlying the poor representation of women in decision-making arenas. To back up this analysis, a sample survey entitled "The hidden woman. A survey on the condition of women in society and in the government of the country", was carried out amongst slightly more than 1000 adults over the age of 18, 650 people aged between 16 and 17 and 3.000 women in managerial positions. The results were then used to apply pressure in a number of directions. Attempts were made to influence public opinion, the institutional players, such as the government and parliament which were pushed to make changes in the law that regulates electoral procedures, and also the political parties. All of these are, in some way, responsible for the appallingly low participation of women at the different decision-making levels.
- Around 8.200 students in 163 general, technical or vocational schools all over Italy took part in the "Political laboratory of male and female citizens". This was a short course of six hours for a group of up to 50 students aged 16 to 18 that was divided in two sessions. The topics covered were citizenship and gender, rights, duties and opportunities, rules and targets for an equal democracy and Italian and EU law. Students also took part in a competition to create an advertising slogan of no more than 160 characters, aimed at promoting equal democracy.
- The last strand of Esserci was an awareness raising campaign in two stages. The message "Democracy - in the masculine form, it is a mistake" was displayed in Rome and Milan airports for 90 days at the end of 2003. Then, a second stage targeted the 2004 elections to the European Parliament with the message "Democracy needs women" and the slogan "More Italian women into the European Parliament" printed on a fan that showed the distribution of seats in the Parliament by gender. This campaign included press conferences, articles in daily and weekly newspapers, programmes on national and regional radio and television and advertising posters in Rome. Promotional material ranged from leaflets, stickers, postcards, and bills to fans, t-shirts and flags.

In June 2004, Italian voters sent 16 women to the European Parliament (out of a total of 78), compared to 10 out of 80 five years ago, i.e. raising the percentage of women from 11.5% to an encouraging 20.5%.

## 4. LINKING VERTICAL SEGREGATION TO TACKLING OTHER GENDER GAPS

### 4.1. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING TO REDUCE GENDER GAPS IN THE WORKPLACE

It is often stated that **Trade Unions** have a key role to play in gender equality issues, but their contributions do not always live up to these expectations. However in Portugal, the Trade Union Congress (CGTP) is the leading member of the "Agir para a Igualdade" DP which has opted for a

comprehensive approach. Whilst incorporating vertical desegregation strategies, this approach also aims to include a gender dimension in all personnel policies and **collective agreements**.

To develop positive action in companies and organisations and to introduce gender mainstreaming in human resources management, the DP recruited 19 organisations and proceeded with:

- A gender analysis of each company's social record (employment, hygiene and security, training, additional social protection) and its staff situation (types of contract, qualifications, pay systems and working hours);
- A series of interviews with workers' representatives and HR managers, on policies and procedures concerning recruitment, promotion, pay, career planning, reconciliation, training, and staff turnover.

In almost every organisation, cases of gender discrimination were detected. The first reactions of the organisations were either to reject the conclusions of the study or to link women's absenteeism to maternity and family responsibilities. The argument used by the DP was that women do not hold the specific rights for being parents and that the rights actually belong to children and, in that sense, both fathers and mothers should be concerned. This argument not only defeated the objections, it also helped to broaden perspectives on the issue. The attitudes of all parties involved, proved to be more open and flexible than in normal bargaining between management and unions. As a result, the organisations and the DP drafted specific company agreements that containing remedial measures to be implemented in the short and medium term and to be monitored on an on-going basis.

## 4.2. TACKLING THE GENDER PAY GAP

The **gender pay gap** is another persistent obstacle to equal treatment of women and men on the labour market<sup>4</sup>. On average, women in the EU earn only 84% of men's wages – 89% in the public sector and 76% in the private sector. Women make up 77% of the EU's lowest paid workers. The risk of poverty is 3% higher for women compared to men. The disparity in earnings is reflected in the much larger proportion of women at the bottom end of the wage distribution than at the top<sup>5</sup>. Over the EU15, women on average make up only 20% of the 10% of full-time employees with the highest hourly incomes, as opposed to almost 40% of all full time employees. By contrast, they make up some 54% of the bottom 10% of employees with lowest hourly earnings.

In EQUAL, there was only one DP working specifically on the gender pay gap. This was the Scottish "Close the Gap" DP which built a broad partnership uniting Trade Unions, the Scottish Executive (Scotland's devolved government), local development agencies, the Equal Opportunities Commission and a grouping of government-funded projects that presented the business case for equality. The project aims were to:

- Engage employers to carry out pay audits;
- Encourage effective action plans to be developed;
- Engage unions to make equal pay a priority;
- Empower women to challenge pay discrimination.

To these ends, the DP worked with all parties to address the pay gap by:

- Holding employers' and employees' workshops and events to raise awareness of the issues;
- Raising awareness and developing a common understanding of what the pay gap means;
- Building the capacities of employers, trade unions and employees to address the pay gap.

"Close the Gap's" lead partner, the Equal Opportunities Commission, has developed a five step Equal Pay Review, which is a model that can be applied to any size of organisation. This model concentrates on comparing the pay of men and women doing equal work, explaining any equal pay gaps and closing those pay gaps that cannot satisfactorily be explained on grounds other than sex.

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<sup>4</sup> Source: Report on equality between women and men, 2004. European Commission. [http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/equ\\_opp/com\\_04\\_115\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equ_opp/com_04_115_en.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Eurostat: The lives of women and men in Europe, A statistical portrait, 2002

The DP designed the following **5-Step process** for organisations:

- Deciding on the scope of the review and the data that was required;
- Identifying where women and men are doing equal work: like work, work rated as equivalent, or work of equal value (using a job evaluation);
- Collecting data on levels of pay to identify the existing gaps;
- Reviewing and monitoring the pay gaps, if they are free of discrimination;
- Developing an Equal Pay Action Plan, if the pay gaps are discriminatory.

An **Equal Pay Action Plan** should include arrangements to:

- Provide equal pay if there are gaps between men's and women's pay for which there is no genuine reason and this should apply to both current and future employees;
- Change the pay policies and practices that contribute to unequal pay, within a given timescale;
- Introduce an Equal Pay Policy that commits the organisation to providing equal pay with clear accountability and regular monitoring and to devoting adequate resources for such reviews.

## **5. PAVING THE WAY FOR THE FUTURE**

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Segregation has been a constant feature of the European labour market for many centuries. Over the last decades, a long track record of attempts to tackle the problems at both European and national level has been established. This includes legislation, model programmes and a large number of good practices related particularly to horizontal desegregation.

The EQUAL good practices presented in this document have generated significant changes, the full impact of which will only become visible over the next few years. However, through its Development Partnerships, EQUAL has successfully launched a process which incorporates key elements of desegregation into education, training and employment policies and practices in public and private organisations. EQUAL DPs have demonstrated that it is possible to win over top level decision-makers and to get their lasting commitment to social and cultural change. This has become possible because EQUAL has established convincing business cases that have demonstrated the substantial advantages of gender equality at work.

The EQUAL achievements include a wealth of curricula, methodologies and tools that can support administrations at national, regional and local level and also public and private organisations in improving gender equality in the labour market. These products also provide important background information for those DPs that will focus on desegregation in the second round of EQUAL and in most cases the products can be accessed via the DPs' websites listed in the annex to this document.