

ROADMAP

Title of the initiative: **Strategy for equality between women and men (2010-2015)**

Lead DG: **EMPL/G1**

Expected date of adoption of the initiative (month/year): **09/2010**

Initial IA screening & planning of further work

Introduction:

The future strategy for equality between women and men will be set out in a Communication establishing a cross-cutting framework including all relevant policies and actions to be implemented by the Commission between 2010 and 2015. It will also provide a policy framework for the EU stakeholders in this field.

A. Context and problem definition

What is the political context of the initiative? How does this initiative relate to past and possible future initiatives, and to other EU policies?

Equality between women and men is a fundamental principle of the EU. The Roadmap for equality between women and men¹, adopted in March 2006, set out the Commission's priorities for gender equality for the period 2006-2010.

The Commission has announced² that it will present a follow-up strategy to the Roadmap. The "Women's Charter"³ sets out the priorities to be addressed in the new strategy.

The new strategy needs to be coherent with the other relevant policy processes and policy cycles at EU and international levels. It will be aligned in particular with Europe 2020.

What are the main problems identified?

Fifty years of Community policy to promote gender equality have improved the position of women in many areas: employment, education, scientific research and external policies. However, persistent and considerable gender inequalities continue to exist.

The main challenges relate in particular to economic independence, reconciliation between work and private life, gender pay gap, the position of women in decision-making and also to violence against women. These need to be addressed in the light of a changing context arising from globalisation and demographic changes.

Is EU action justified on grounds of subsidiarity?

Equality between women and men is a fundamental right enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union. The Treaty provides too that the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities and to promote equality, between men and women, in all its activities⁴. The new strategy

¹ COM(2006) 92 final

² 2010 Annual Policy Strategy COM(2009)73 final

³ COM(2010)78 final

⁴ Article 8 of TFEU (Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union)

provides a framework for doing so in all EU policies and activities, as did the current Roadmap (2006-2010), while fully respecting Member States' prerogatives in this area.

B. Objectives of EU initiative

What are the main policy objectives?

The new strategy would present the Commission's commitments for the next five years. It will address the priority areas for equality between women and men as defined in the Women's Charter:

- Equal economic independence,
- Equal pay for Equal work and work of equal value,
- Equality in decision-making,
- Dignity, integrity and an end to gender-based violence,
- Gender Equality beyond the Union.

In addition, the governance for gender equality should be strengthened, notably by laying the ground for future cooperation on gender equality with Member States as well as with the European Parliament and other institutions and bodies, including the European Institute for Gender Equality. Regular monitoring and reporting on the progress achieved would be foreseen.

Does the objective imply developing EU policy in new areas or of strategic importance?

As presented above, the content of the follow-up strategy for gender equality will consider all existing priority domains as well as new areas.

C. Options

What are the policy options? What legislative or 'soft law' instruments could be considered? Would any legislative initiatives go beyond routine up-date of existing legislation?

The strategy would propose a strengthened framework which would build on the experience gained with the Roadmap for equality between women and men, i.e. a general framework within which the Commission would outline its main programmes and actions to implement gender equality. The framework would aim to improve governance and policy dialogue and would be implemented in close cooperation with the other main partners at European level.

Does the action proposed in the options cut across several policy areas or impact on action taken/planned by other Commission departments?

The new strategy for equality between women and men will provide a framework for coordination across all relevant Commission departments.

Do the options respect the proportionality principle?

The option is proportionate with the objectives identified.

D. Initial assessment of impacts

What are the significant impacts likely to result from each policy option (cf. list of impacts in the impact assessment guidelines), even if these impacts would materialise only after subsequent Commission initiatives?

Implementing gender equality has brought added value to the definition and implementation of other policies. Applying a gender perspective to EU policies would improve their effectiveness. Addressing gender equality in social policies would increase employment, growth and social inclusion and so would have a positive social impact and support the implementation of the rights in the Charter of Fundamental Rights. A new strategy could have a positive impact on environmental policies through a more balanced involvement of women and men in all areas where decisions on climate issues are taken and could also impact positively on the ways in which the EU will cope with the challenges brought about by climate change. It would have a more positive impact on growth and competitiveness. Addressing gender equality would create a better climate for sustainable growth and well-being in the EU. As a greater participation of women in the labour market generates higher employment in general, gender equality contributes to economic growth.

Could the options have impacts on the EU-budget (above 5 Mio €) and/or should the IA also serve as the ex-ante evaluation, required by the Financial Regulation?

The strategy for equality between women and men in itself does not imply any additional expenditure.

Could the options have significant impacts on simplification/administrative burden or on relations with third countries?

- Gender Equality would also be promoted outside the Union in accordance with the international commitments (Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women).

Who is affected?

While the target of the strategy is women and men in the EU, the groups directly affected by the new strategy would be the Commission services themselves since they will have to come forward with proposals and programmes implementing the strategy.

Member States and other partners will be affected indirectly as well, as the role of the Commission is to steer policy and to encourage gender equality in the EU.

E. Planning of further impact assessment work

What information and data is already available? What further information needs to be gathered? How will this be done (e.g. internally or by an external contractor) and by when? What type and level of analysis will be carried out (cf. principle of proportionate analysis)?

There is no impact assessment foreseen as the Women's Charter already identifies the areas of action for the new strategy. The Commission will prepare instead a staff working paper, providing analytical background information used for the preparation of the new Strategy.

Separate impact assessments will be developed, as appropriate, for specific initiatives to be implemented as part of the framework.

Following information are available:

- A mid-term report on the implementation of the Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010 was adopted in November 2008 COM(2008)760 final.

- A contract to support the final evaluation of the Roadmap was launched in January 2009 and should be finalised in the summer 2010. It has provided interim results.
- Expert reports on gender mainstreaming in different policy areas.

Which stakeholders & experts will be consulted, how and at what stage?

Broad consultations were conducted between June and November 2009 in order to prepare the new strategy:

- The conference on 'Equality between Women and Men in a Time of Change', organised by the Commission in June 2009, launched the public debate on the priorities to be addressed by the new strategy for gender equality.
- At its meeting in September 2009 the High-Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming discussed the main gender equality challenges to be addressed.
- In January 2010 the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities adopted an opinion on the future of gender equality policy after 2010⁵.
- The FEMM Committee of the European Parliament organised a public hearing on evaluation of the Roadmap for 2006-2010 and on the new strategy in January 2010. A report on the new strategy is expected to be adopted in the plenary session in June 2010.
- The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) is preparing an explanatory opinion on the new strategy for equality between women and men, which was adopted on 17 March 2010⁶.
- Broad consultations of the main stakeholders (social partners, civil society, equality bodies, Eurofound, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and the European Institute for Gender Equality) on the strategy to follow up the Roadmap were concluded in November 2009.

⁵ Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities, 'Opinion on the future of gender equality policy after 2010 and on the priorities for a possible future framework for equality between women and men', January 2010.
http://eescopinions.eesc.europa.eu/EESCOpinionDocument.aspx?identifier=ces\soc\soc350\ces448-2010_ac.doc&language=EN