



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG

Equality between Men/Women, Action against discrimination, Civil Society
Equality between Men/Women

Consultation paper Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010 and follow-up strategy

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the EC Treaty¹, equality between women and men is a fundamental principle of the EU to be promoted through all Community activities. Fifty years of Community policies, legislation and programmes 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 remain.

The Member States have the main responsibility for the achievement of equality between women and men. Nevertheless, the European Commission has always been very active regarding gender equality and adopted in 2006 a **Roadmap for equality between women and men**². The Roadmap represents its commitment to gender equality for the period 2006-2010. As the Roadmap expires in 2010, the Commission will present a follow-up strategy in 2010³ and launches a consultation on this future strategy. The outcome of the consultation will feed into the impact assessment which will accompany the proposal for the follow-up strategy.

2. ROADMAP FOR EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN 2006-2010

2.1. Policy commitments

The Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010 provides an ambitious policy framework for promoting gender equality in all the Union's policies and activities. It defines six priority areas:

- 1) Equal economic independence for women and men,
- 2) Reconciliation of private and professional life,
- 3) Equal representation in decision-making,
- 4) Eradication of all forms of gender-related violence,
- 5) Elimination of gender stereotypes,
- 6) Promotion of gender equality in external and development policies.

¹ Articles 2 and 3 EC Treaty

² COM(2006) 92 final

³ COM(2009) 73 final

The Roadmap identifies key actions in these priority areas to be implemented through the dual approach of gender mainstreaming and specific actions.

It also sets out ways to improve governance regarding gender equality policies.

Significant progress has been achieved in policy areas, in particular where concrete equality objectives were included.

The information on the progress achieved is available in two types of annual reporting undertaken by the Commission services:

- the annual report on gender equality on progress towards gender equality at EU level including a statistical annex⁴,
- the monitoring of the Roadmap (mid-term progress report adopted in 2008⁵ and annual work programmes 2007, 2008 and 2009⁶).

Despite the results achieved so far, progress is uneven and it is therefore necessary to further develop gender equality policies.

2.2. Complementarity and synergies

The Roadmap 2006-2010 is a framework for the policies the Commission is designing and implementing. However, the Roadmap has not only been the basis for the Commission's actions for gender equality but has also been a policy framework taken as a reference point for the partners in the EU.

In line with the Commission's Roadmap for Gender Equality, the **European Pact for Gender Equality**⁷, approved by the Member States at the European Council of 23 and 24 March 2006, reflects the Member States' determination to implement policies aimed at promoting gender equality. The EU Member States have also committed themselves at international level to improving the status of women in the world and are involved in the implementation of the **Beijing declaration** (BPfA).

Other partners also have a role to play in implementing gender equality policies. In 2005, the **European social partners** agreed on a Framework of Actions on Gender Equality. The **NGOs** have also been very active in this field and are playing an important role. Moreover, new actors such as the Equality Bodies have responsibilities in implementing gender equality⁸.

It should be noted that the regulation of the **European Institute for Gender Equality** was adopted on 20 December 2006⁹. The main objective of the Institute shall be to contribute to the promotion of gender equality, including gender mainstreaming in all Community policies and the resulting national policies, by providing technical assistance to the Community institutions, in particular the Commission and the authorities of the Member States.

⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=418&langId=en&furtherPubs=yes>

⁵ COM(2008) 760 final

⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=422&langId=en>

⁷ European Council 23/24 March 2006

⁸ Directive 2002/73/EC

⁹ OJ EU of 30 December 2006, L 403

3. POLICY CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES FOR THE NEW STRATEGY ON GENDER EQUALITY

Whereas Member States have the main competences in the achievement of gender equality, many of them still face difficulties and should continue to develop gender equality policies. The EU can add value by providing a policy framework and the impetus to put gender equality on the top of the political agenda.

The new strategy will probably cover the period 2011 to 2015 and should:

- identify the challenges regarding gender equality at EU level,
- define the objectives for gender equality across all Community's policy areas,
- foresee the key actions to be implemented as well as define the processes for doing so and for reporting on progress,
- foresee the complementarities and the synergies to be created with Member States, Social Partners, civil society and more specifically with the new European Institute for Gender equality.

To strengthen the mainstreaming of gender equality in all Community's policy areas the new strategy will need to be aligned with the reflections and cycles of the major policy processes (the Strategy for growth and jobs post 2010, the budget review and the new financial perspectives post 2013, the new Social Agenda 2011-2015, etc.).

3.1. Policy challenges

The challenges regarding the main inequalities faced by women and men have not radically changed since the adoption of the Roadmap in 2006. Significant gender gaps continue to exist in the priority areas identified in the Roadmap. However, new trends affecting gender equality in the European Union should also be taken into account when defining the priorities for the new strategy:

- the economic and financial crisis triggering a rise in unemployment, pressure on wages, increasing uncertainty among economic actors and strong pressure on public finances,
- the demographic trends of low fertility rates and an ageing society,
- the globalisation of the economy and increased migration,
- environmental aspects linked to climate change and restructuring towards a low carbon economy.

3.2. Policy priorities

The six priority areas of the Roadmap 2006-2010 still seem relevant. Therefore, the new strategy could build on these core priorities and also address new areas of potential gender inequality.

When defining the new strategy, closer attention could be given to the demographic trends, the globalisation of the economy, migration and climate change. Furthermore attention

should be paid to the fact that the economic and financial crisis does not create additional gender disadvantages.

3.3. Priorities related to governance

The Roadmap 2006-2010 has followed a dual approach of gender mainstreaming and specific actions. Gender mainstreaming should, in particular, be integrated in all European policies and funds. However, the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming in all policies is still uneven. The preparation of the new strategy is the opportunity to reflect on the best methods to improve the dual approach and on how to apply it in practice to the different policy areas and instruments.

Consideration should be given on how to strengthen or make better use of the various institutional mechanisms which can support gender mainstreaming. For instance, the utility and feasibility to identify new gender targets in certain policy areas should be considered in that context.

Synergies and complementarities could be strengthened notably with Member States, European social partners and with the civil society.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSULTATION

The following questions are provided as guidance. The Commission would like to receive contributions on these questions as well as on any other issue regarded as relevant.

1. Overall assessment of the performance of the Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010

- Do you think the Roadmap 2006-2010 has made a difference and contributed to more equality between women?

2. Future challenges for gender equality

- What are in your view the main medium and long term challenges that a new strategy for gender equality should address?

3. Main policy priorities for gender equality

- Are the six priority areas defined in the Roadmap still relevant (see point 2.1)? Which new priorities should be considered?
- How can gender mainstreaming and specific actions be made more effective?
- In what policy areas could new gender targets be defined? Which targets should be quantified?
- How can complementarities and synergies between the Commission's initiatives, the actions by the Member States, the actions by Social Partners and organisations representing civil society, both at European and national level, be achieved?
- What types of improvements should be aimed at concerning the monitoring and the reporting on progress made?