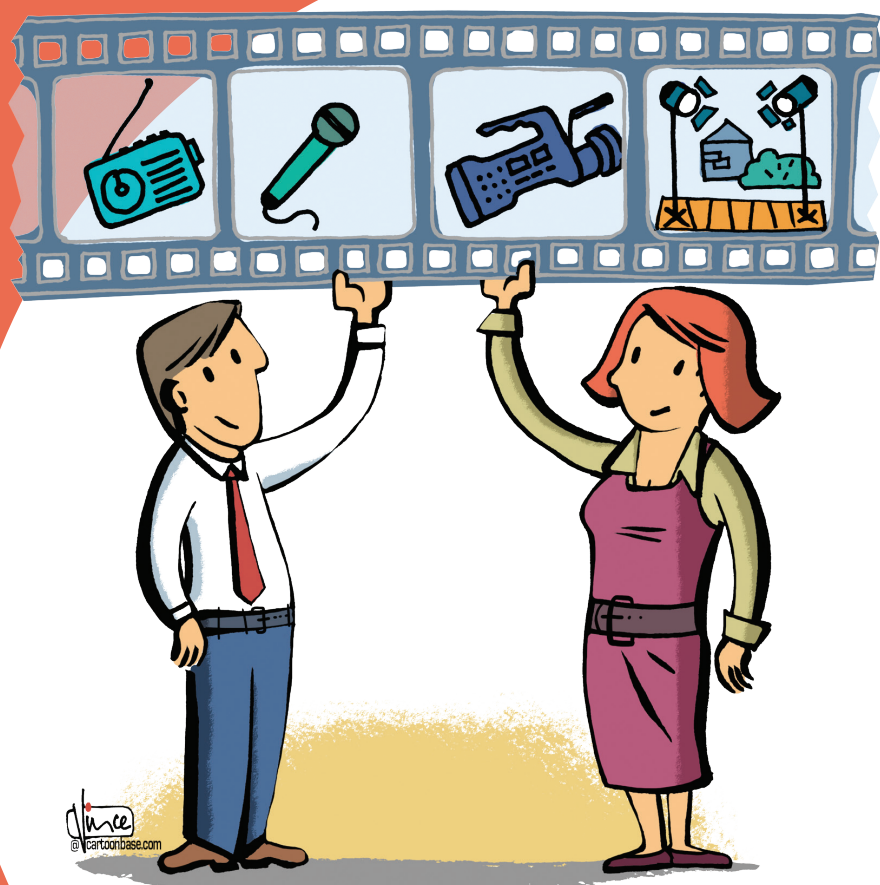


FRAMEWORK OF ACTIONS ON GENDER EQUALITY IN THE AUDIOVISUAL SECTOR IN EUROPE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Introduction

In October 2011, the European social partners in the audiovisual sector adopted a Framework of Actions (FoA) on Gender Equality in the sector. This summary has been written to introduce the FoA and show how it can help social partner organisations in the audiovisual sector across the EU to develop their practices with a view to enhancing gender equality. The FoA can be seen in its entirety on the EC.Europa.EU sector social dialogue documents database and is the authoritative document.

Background

The FoA recognises that the causes of gender inequalities within the workplace and wider society are complex. The audiovisual sector is a place of work for many people; it is also a primary source of information and entertainment across the EU with the ability to influence and change family life and culture. It also has a special role in the protection and promotion of fundamental freedoms and democracy across the EU.

The FoA identifies the priorities which it believes can enhance gender equality focusing on the following key areas: gender portrayal, equality of pay, equality in decision making, gender roles in the work-place, the reconciliation of work and private life. These are interconnected and of equal importance and action to address the issues identified are best tackled in an integrated approach.

The case for equality

In addition to equality being a fundamental right, there is a clear business case for equality at work. It is simply expressed - in order to thrive in a competitive environment, all organisations need to be able to attract and retain the most talented people to work for them. It makes perfect sense to be an 'employer of choice' in terms of gender equality.

The FoA notes that gender equality leads to an improvement in employment opportunities for all those who have the talent to work in the audiovisual sector, thus enhancing the ability of the sector to deliver content of quality and diversity.

Equality for all

Over 1.20 million people work in the audiovisual sector in the EU. Of this figure, just under half are women; around 82% are employees, and 25% work part-time. In addition there are also many who work on atypical contracts including self-employment within the sector across a wide range of occupations. The nature of these may be incidental but in some cases may involve establishing a working relationship over a period of time. The FoA is therefore also relevant to this group.

The AVSDC has an agreed Equal Opportunities Statement which lists the personal protected characteristics which it covers. The FoA specifically addresses gender equality but notes that equality of opportunities should be afforded to all persons. The actions suggested by the FoA to address gender equality can have positive benefits for the diversity of the audiovisual sector as a whole.

The FoA embraces the principle that it is only in an inclusive culture that gender equality can be achieved. The FoA also recognises that the prevention of bullying and harassment in the workplace sits hand in hand with promoting gender equality and creating an inclusive working environment through which both women and men can achieve their full potential.

Actions and follow up

A Framework of Actions is one of the formal outcomes of the work of the social dialogue committees. It must be followed up, and progress in implementing it must be regularly assessed.

Accordingly the social partners have agreed to promote this Framework of Actions on gender equality among their member organisations, and to assess and evaluate developments and progress in the sector. This will enable the social partners to update the priorities within the framework of actions, and assess whether additional action is required in any of the priority areas.

The key challenges for gender equality

In each of the priority areas briefly introduced below, the FoA offers joint definitions, as well as an overview of the relevant European policy and legislative frameworks.. The FoA also offers a series of joint recommendations and suggestions for action. The final section of this summary offers an overview of the general direction of these recommendations. It should be noted that all the priority areas are interlinked and have a consequential effect, which means they need to be considered and addressed as a whole.

Gender Portrayal

Women's participation in the media and in television has been the subject of debate throughout much of Europe for at least 25 years. The early focus was on equal opportunities but more recently the discussion has also moved on to consider stereotypes and how to avoid them and how to show diversity. There is an on-going perception that, despite progress made in recent years, the broadcast media do not always provide a fair and balanced representation of men and women. The use of gender stereotypes influences the public's perception of gender roles. The absence of gender balance reduces the role and experience of both genders and can be a real barrier to equal opportunities.

The output of the audiovisual sector should therefore serve to both reflect society and to foster and support the fundamental principle of gender equality. European social partners support fair and balanced gender portrayal while defending the fundamental principle of freedom of creative expression for film and broadcast creative content. Achieving the balance of these principles is one challenge of the sector.

The version of reality created by the audiovisual sector comes into being during a production process which involves many choices – those of subjects, guests, script, plot, location, lighting, sound, camera angles and movements, editing, music, commentary, and so forth. Decisions on these and other issues influence the image of reality that reaches the audience. In this way broadcasters, producers, programme makers, casting-directors and all those involved in the production chain contribute to how the world is seen by the audience.

Gender roles

Traditional gender roles continue to have a strong influence on the division of labour between men and women in the workplace and in society at large. At work, women still tend to be over-represented in roles traditionally occupied primarily by female employees and be under-represented in roles traditionally occupied by male employees, including senior positions.

Breaking down cultural barriers to ensure that women and men follow a more diverse range of occupations is crucial to achieve occupational gender equality. There is also a good business case for taking action - EU countries will face a skills shortage in future and it will therefore become even more crucial to attract women, in particular, into a more diverse range of occupations at all levels.

Equal Pay

The Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) lays down the principles of the right to equal pay for equal work or work of equal value for female and male workers. Statistics show however that there is still a significant gender pay gap across the EU. The European Commission emphasises that one of the main causes is the way women's competences are valued compared to men's and that jobs requiring similar skills, qualifications or experience tend to be less well paid and undervalued when they are dominated by women rather than by men.

The social partners across the EU have an obligation to ensure that the pay systems they put in place do not lead to pay discrimination between women and men. The FoA notes that in the sector, social partners have the means to tackle the issue of gender pay gap through collective bargaining.

Equality in decision making

More women than ever are working in the audiovisual sector. However, the percentage of women holding decision making positions remains low. The FoA recognises that gender equality in decision making in the sector is a key ingredient to delivering equity in pay, addressing portrayal and gender stereotyping, delivering equality of opportunity in the workplace and establishing work-life balance. It also enables relevant and quality decisions.

The FoA notes that equality in decision-making extends beyond gender equality at Executive Board or Senior Manager level and touches all roles that have key decision-making responsibilities. Promoting equal participation for women and men in decision-making is also a key priority of the European Commission's Strategy for equality between women and men 2

Reconciliation of work and personal life: Work-Life Balance

The European Social Model has a vision for the future of the employment relationship that seeks to balance the interests of individuals, employers and society in order to deliver performance, engagement and fairness. The introduction of policies which promote and support work-life balance enable both men and women to gain benefits in both their work and personal life.

Work-life balance is an important element of the EU social model, the interconnection of quality of working life and productive workplace. This topic has also been high on the EU agenda, in particular since the publication of the 2008 EC consultation document on "A better work-life balance: stronger support for reconciling professional, private and family life", and applies across the range of caring responsibilities and life beyond the workplace.



Actions and recommendations

The FoA offers suggestions for actions in all the priority areas identified, tailored to the challenges in each and supported by examples and good practice. There are common themes which arise from each of the topics, however, in terms of the questions to be asked, the actions to be taken, and examples of best practices. The main elements of the general approach may therefore be summarised as follows:

1. Awareness, training and information provision

- Raising awareness among employers and workers; plus education and training providers;
- Training managers on the benefits of diversity management and make them accountable for the implementation of the organisation's diversity policy;
- Developing gender training for recruiters, those responsible for making promotion decisions and line managers who authorise career development opportunities;
- Providing non-stereotyped careers information;
- Advertise job opportunities and use gender neutral selection criteria.

2. Positive Action

This involves setting out quantitative and qualitative positive action plans including:

- Development of gender equality plans; gender sensitive indicators; joint toolkits (such as gender "check-lists");
- Review of human resources policies and procedures, including pay;
 - Review of job titles and job descriptions plus recruitment and selection processes to ensure they are gender neutral;
 - Making a positive effort to attract women into those technical roles and professions where they are under-represented;
 - Ensuring there is an organisational culture which is inclusive to all.

3. The importance of Monitoring

Without regular monitoring by gender and the follow-up of actions and initiatives, it cannot be properly seen whether actions have been beneficial or may require variation in the future.

4. Mainstreaming gender equality

Mainstreaming is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation and monitoring of social and HR policies and programmes so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. It is a process designed to help achieve gender equality and one which requires top management commitment and the support of the employees and their representatives.



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