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Cover: An incubator for woman-managed businesses located at the "HAFEN" centre in Berlin-Marzahn.

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Make gender mainstreaming a success

The European Union has a comprehensive approach in place to support equality between women and men. As laid down in the EC Treaty, the key objective is to eliminate inequalities and promote gender equality through legal and policy actions including EU funding. Importantly, mainstreaming gender equality is in line with the objectives Europe has set for its growth and jobs agenda. These objectives have been laid down in the European Commission's "Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men 2006-2010." They include achieving an average employment rate of at least 60% for women, promoting a life-cycle approach to work, reducing gender gaps in employment, pay and social protection, a better reconciliation of work and private life and provision of accessible and affordable care for children. This approach was reinforced in 2006, when Member States agreed upon a "European Pact for Gender Equality" with the main objective of making full use of the productive potential of the European labour force and of meeting demographic challenges by promoting better work-life balance for women and men. We have already made some progress towards achieving these targets. But there is still more to be done.



European cohesion policy and its instruments contribute to the achievement of a "gender mainstreaming" approach. Already since the mid-1990s, cohesion policy regulations lay down the requirement that the Member States and the Commission shall ensure that equality between men and women and the integration of the gender perspective is promoted during the various stages of policy implementation.

Let me invite you to have a look at some examples from European regions showing how the principle of gender mainstreaming works in practice. The projects presented in this issue of Inforegio Panorama illustrate part of a bigger picture which has developed over time. They also highlight the fact that ideas and methods have been changing and today, rather than individual approaches linked to concrete projects, we need a common regional or local approach driven by the actors involved. Cohesion policy can also connect local actors across borders and help them exchange experiences and new ideas, as the selection of trans-national and interregional projects supported by INTERREG and EQUAL demonstrates.

For the new period of cohesion programmes 2007-2013 which is just starting in all EU regions, I look forward to successful local, regional and European projects supporting equality between women and men. I hope that the actors will be able to fully use the opportunities offered by these programmes and make the gender mainstreaming principle a success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DHübner'.

Danuta Hübner
Commissioner responsible for Regional Policy

Fourth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion

From progress to challenges: questions for the regions

Tangible and encouraging results, but also new and formidable challenges. These are the two messages sounded by the European Commission on 30 May 2007 with the presentation of the Fourth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion⁽¹⁾. Running to over 200 pages, this document provides a detailed analysis of economic, social and territorial situations and trends in the EU-27 and its 268 regions, takes stock of the difficulties to be faced in the years ahead, and provides an initial assessment of cohesion policy for the 2000-2006 period and preparations for the 2007-2013 programmes. Finally, it presents the various regional development actors with a set of key questions with which to kick off the debate on the future of this major policy area.



“Cohesion policy has demonstrated its capacity to adjust to changing circumstances,” declared Regional Policy Commissioner Danuta Hübner on presenting the Fourth Report. *“It has supported much needed investment in infrastructure, human resources, and the modernisation and diversification of regional economies. It has also helped to shift the policy mix of public investment in Member States towards the priorities of the Union.”* The Commissioner stressed

how the action of the Structural and Cohesion Funds consists essentially of improving the opportunities available to EU citizens, wherever they may live, by reducing regional disparities, mobilising unused potential and concentrating resources on investments that generate growth. However, she also stressed that: *“The Union faces many challenges in the period ahead: a population which will start to decline (...) and is already declining in many regions, increased economic pressure from global competitors, increased energy prices, climate change and social polarisation”* and urged all regions and people to cooperate in generating wealth and jobs.

Vladimír Špidla, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, pointed out that cohesion policy *“has helped to reduce social exclusion and poverty and to improve administration and public governance, particularly at sub-national level.”* He went on to stress that, *“The challenges of technological progress and globalisation make it particularly important to ensure that people have the skills to cope with change (...)”* Cohesion policy plays a major role in helping to promote active and flexible employment policies, lifelong learning and *“policies to promote the reconciliation of work and private life, which are especially important for the EU’s efforts to raise the number of women and men in work.”*

(1) Fourth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/cohesion4/pdf/4cr_en.pdf

Presentation of the Fourth Report on Cohesion by Danuta Hübner (slides): http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/cohesion4/doc/4cr_fr.pps

(2) Commission Communication COM/200/273 of 30 May 2007: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/cohesion4/pdf/com_fr.pdf



■ *The Hemeius-Bacau technology park (Romania).*

Added value

In its Communication⁽²⁾ on the conclusions to be drawn from the Fourth Report, the Commission highlights a set of elements which confirm the “added value” of cohesion policy. These are briefly:

- A significant impact on the economic convergence of Member States and regions with a low per capita gross domestic product (GDP) – a trend which must continue –, but also a sustained effect on growth and jobs outside these “convergence regions”;
- A major contribution to the research and development (R&D) and innovation effort, as well as a highly profitable investment in human resources;
- A crucial leverage effect on public and private capital to support productive investment as well as a major role in improving the quality of public investments through long-term programming on the basis of coherent priorities;
- The emergence of coherent approaches combining various sectorial policies and generating synergies, as well as the development of partnership as a key factor for good governance

The Fourth Report on Cohesion (illustrated with numerous maps, tables and graphs) is set out in four major chapters. Here are some of its main findings.

1. Economic, social and territorial situation and trends in Member States and regions of the EU-27

Disparities in income and employment have narrowed over the past decade. Nevertheless, major differences remain between the least well-off regions and the others, and it will take a sustained effort to eliminate them. Thus, in 2004, for two groups of regions each representing 10% of the EU population, the per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of the most advanced regions was almost five times that of the poorest regions. In 2000, it was six times higher. Also in 2004, approximately 75 million people (16% of the EU population) were threatened with poverty. For the rest, between 1995 and 2004 productivity experienced a sharp rise in the regions of the new Member States while falling in 29 other regions, principally in France, Italy and Spain.

2. The impact of cohesion policy

European cohesion programmes have had a direct impact on promoting regional convergence and jobs. For example,



■ *The Bilbao metro (Spain).*

between 2000 and 2006 they helped boost GDP by 2.8% in Greece and by 2% in Portugal. Preliminary estimates indicate increases between 2000 and 2013 (2004-2013 for the new Member States) of about 9% in the Czech Republic and Latvia, 8.5% in Lithuania and Estonia, 7.5% in Romania, 6% in Bulgaria and Slovakia, 5.5% in Poland, 3.5% in Greece and 3.1% in Portugal.

Cohesion policy is also helping to combat social exclusion and poverty by co-financing training for 9 million people annually – more than half of them women –, thus leading to better employment conditions and higher wages. Over 450,000 gross jobs were generated in six countries between 2000 and 2005, absorbing two-thirds of the Structural Funds’ Objective 2 funding (regions undergoing economic and social reconversion) for this period. It is estimated that approximately 1.4 million additional jobs will be generated in the Convergence objective regions during the 2007-2013 period. It should be stressed, however, that to achieve the goals of the Lisbon strategy a total of almost 24 million jobs will have to be generated in the EU as a whole, more than a third of them in 30 regions located principally in Poland, Spain, Romania and southern Italy.

The report indicates that many of the investments needed in the less well-off regions will be made with the help of the Structural and Cohesion Funds. In the four countries benefiting from the Cohesion Fund at the time, public investments were about 25% higher between 2000 and 2005 than if there had been no cohesion policy.

3. National policies and cohesion

Public investment over the past years has followed a downward trend as budgets felt the effects of an ageing population (pension reform, more costly health and education) and economic reforms to consolidate public finances. In 1993, public investments represented 2.9% of GDP, whereas 12 years later they had fallen to 2.4%. At the same time, we are seeing a slow but steady decentralisation of decision-making and management in the direction of local and regional authorities. Between 2000 and 2005 public expenditure at the latter levels increased at the rate of 3.6% per year.



A drinking water conveyance tunnel in Valencia (Spain).

Fourth Cohesion Forum: Questions for the debate

The Fourth Forum on economic and social cohesion, to be held in Brussels on 27 and 28 September 2007, will mark the official launch of a wide public consultation on the future of cohesion policy. Around 800 representatives from the European institutions and national, regional and local authorities from the 27 Member States and candidate countries will kick off the debate which will revolve around three sets of questions presented in the Fourth Report.

1. What lessons can be drawn from the experience of preparing the 2007-2013 programmes? In this context and in the light of the analysis provided by this report, to what extent is cohesion policy adapting to the new challenges facing European regions?

1.1. How can the regions respond to pressure from dynamic competitors in low- and medium-tech sectors?

1.2. Given wide differences in birth rates, death rates and migratory flows at regional level, what is the role of cohesion policy in responding to demographic change?

1.3. To what extent is climate change a challenge for cohesion policy?

2. In this new context, how can cohesion policy develop a more integrated and flexible approach to development/growth and jobs?

2.1. How can cohesion policy promote a more harmonious, balanced and sustainable development taking into account the diversity of EU territories, such as regions, islands and coastal areas but also the deprived cities, declining industrial regions and other areas with particular geographic characteristics?

4. Community policies and cohesion

The different Community policies (R&D and innovation, agriculture, competition and state aid) have the potential to increase the effectiveness of cohesion policy, by taking explicit account of economic, social and territorial circumstances. The Fourth Report shows that although this is increasingly frequent there are still synergies to exploit. Cohesion policy is helping to redirect investments towards R&D, innovation and the information technologies; the share of expenditure allocated to these sectors in cohesion programmes has more than doubled between the 2000-2006 and 2007-2013 periods.

2.2. What is the impact of the challenges identified in this report on the key elements of social cohesion such as inclusion, integration and opportunity for all? Are further efforts needed to anticipate and counteract these effects?

2.3. What future skills are essential for our citizens to face new challenges?

2.4. What are the critical skills that should be developed at regional level to make regions more globally competitive?

3. On the basis of the answers given to the previous questions, how can the management of the policy for the 2007-2013 period be evaluated?

3.1. Given the need for efficient management of cohesion policy programmes, what is the optimum allocation of responsibility between the Community, national and regional levels within a multi-level governance system?

3.2. How can cohesion policy become more effective in supporting public policies in the Member States and regions? What delivery mechanisms could make the policy simpler and more effective?

3.3. How can we further strengthen the relationship between cohesion policy and other national and Community policies to achieve more and better synergies and complementarities?

3.4. What are the new opportunities for cooperation between regions, both inside and outside the EU?

If you wish to participate in this consultation, you can give your opinion on the website: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy. The consultation is open until the end of January 2008.

Gender equality and the EU Structural Funds

Equality between men and women, a «plus» for cohesion

By Muriel Mackenzie ⁽¹⁾

By encouraging gender to be taken into account in the different projects (mainstreaming) while at the same time financing specific actions in this field, the Structural Funds help to generalise equality between women and men.



A Hungarian National Development Agency work meeting.

There is often a belief that gender equality has become less of an issue in regional development - women are highly visible in public life and in the labour market. However, gender inequality persists: gender stereotyping, the gender pay gap and occupational segregation continue to be real issues, particularly in key areas identified by the Lisbon Strategy such as employment, education, research and innovation, and business growth.

Gender mainstreaming requires a paradigm shift. It is about understanding that gender is a key variable in public policy design, delivery and outcomes. Misunderstandings abound as to what mainstreaming means and consequently a risk that mainstreaming can become tokenistic, and that gender equality becomes everybody's – and nobody's – responsibility,

and that there is strong public commitment to gender equality, but little real activity. The challenge is to translate concepts of mainstreaming into practice. The Structural Funds' 'twin-track' approach which combines funding for specific actions, while encouraging mainstreaming of equality in all funded projects, can help to avoid marginalisation of gender equality.

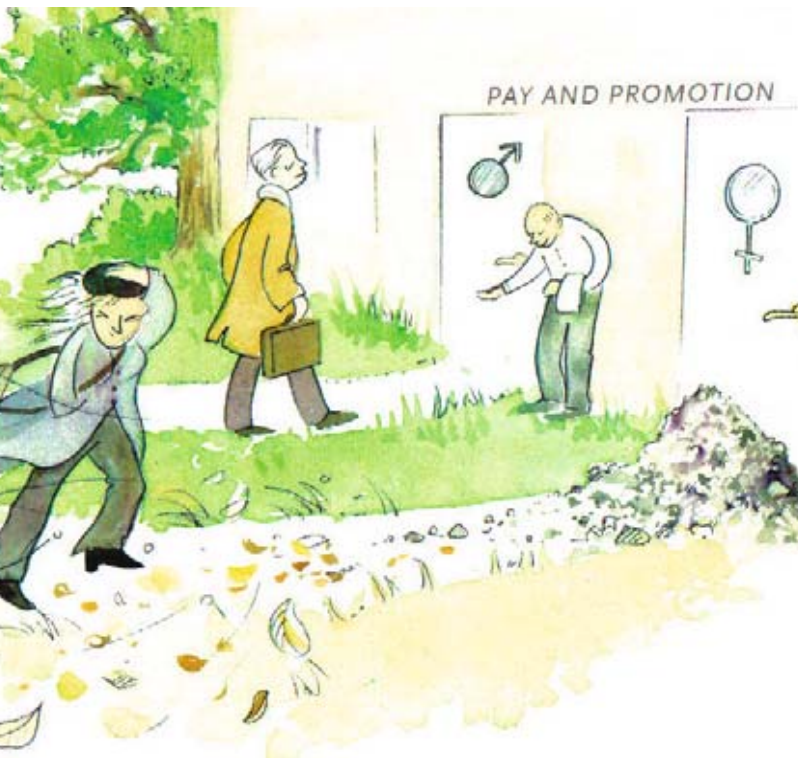
Gender Mainstreaming is a key element of the European Employment Strategy and the EU Structural Funds Programmes. Structural Funds play a key role in addressing many of the priority areas identified by the European Commission in their 'Roadmap for equality between men and women' published in 2006.

The Roadmap aims to 'reach Lisbon employment targets and to eliminate the gender pay gap'. Structural Funds projects

(1) Research & Policy Officer, ESEP Ltd (Programmes Lowlands & Uplands Scotland, Programmes).

provide training to combat occupational segregation; help with childcare and dependent care; and encourage business start-ups in under-represented occupational sectors.

ESF has funded projects which directly tackled the gender pay gap, for example the Close the Gap Development Partnership funded through EQUAL. This works with employers, employees and trade unions to address the gender pay gap in Scotland. Significantly, this project has now been mainstreamed.



ESF and ERDF projects aim to address gender imbalance in areas such as ICT and science and technology through careers support and advice, working with information providers/careers staff in schools and communities as well as providing training in under-represented occupations and sectors.

A European Roadmap for equality between the genders, 2006-2010

Adopted by the Commission on 1 March 2006, the "Roadmap for equality between men and women"⁽¹⁾ sets six priorities for the 2006-2010 period:

- 1) Equal economic independence for women and men. This includes achieving the Lisbon objectives for employment, eliminating the pay gap and supporting women entrepreneurs.
- 2) Reconciliation of work and private life.
- 3) Equal representation in decision-making.
- 4) Eradicating gender-based violence and trafficking.
- 5) Eliminating gender stereotypes.
- 6) Promoting gender equality in external and development policies

Pursuing these priorities necessarily involves better governance. Drawing inspiration from the experience of the 2001-2005 framework strategy for gender equality⁽²⁾, the Roadmap maintains the 'twin-track' approach consisting of gender mainstreaming in all EU policies on one hand and implementing specific measures on the other.

The Structural Funds can contribute to implementation of the Roadmap – in particular for priorities 1), 2), 3) and 5) – in terms of both these aspects. It can also contribute in terms of method, by taking account of gender equality when drawing up and implementing programmes, project selection criteria, and follow-up and evaluation indicators, etc. The Commission and Member States will seek to encourage gender equality in Structural Funds' intervention in the 2007-2013 period, including by allocating the appropriate resources.

(1) COM(2006) 92 final
http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0092fr01.pdf

(2) COM(2000) 335
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2000/com2000_0335fr02.pdf

A European pact for equality between the genders

Following the Commission's adoption of the Roadmap for equality between women and men, the European Council adopted on 24 March 2006 the "European Pact for Gender Equality"⁽¹⁾ which encourages Member States and the Union to implement, in the framework of a strategy for growth and jobs, a series of measures linked to the need to:

- Contribute to the full realisation of the EU's ambitions as laid down in the Treaty in the field of gender equality;
- Eliminate the gap between women and men in terms of employment and social protection, by helping to draw full benefit from the European workforce's productive potential, and
- Helping to meet demographic challenges by promoting a better balance between working and private life.

(1) Annexe II of the Presidency Conclusions, European Brussels Council, 23-24 March 2006:

http://www.eu2006.at/fr/News/Council_Conclusions/2403EuropeanCouncil.pdf

Meeting different needs

The Roadmap also highlights the low rate of women entrepreneurs. Projects which support business start-ups and encourage business growth need to be aware that women entrepreneurs often have differing needs from their male counterparts: they may require start-up costs, so 'micro-credit' grant or loan schemes may be more appropriate; women may prefer enterprise support and training in the evenings, at weekends, to fit with care responsibilities and part-time work.



An haute couture house in Frederikshavn Denmark).

The Roadmap recognises the gender dimension in health and combating poverty. Structural Funds Programmes have a key role in encouraging regional development activity which takes account of women and men's needs, building awareness of gender equality into regeneration, local economic development and sustainable development strategies. For example women make up the majority of people on benefits, and lone parents and lone pensioners are particularly vulnerable to poverty. Many projects are now more aware of the need to reconcile work, private and family life through flexible hours for training and support, through direct provision or information on childcare and dependent care.



Language instruction for immigrants in Vienna (Austria).

Ethnic minority groups and disabled people have lower rates of employment generally, in particular women. Women and men also suffer discrimination as a result of their age and sexual orientation. Structural Funds give us the potential to support specific actions to challenge issues of multiple disadvantage, and how and in what ways this interacts with gender.

"Gender mainstreaming": the origins of a concept with a global vocation

In 1985 in Nairobi, at the 3rd World Conference of women, organized by the UN, the term "gender mainstreaming" was mentioned for the first time during a debate on the status of women and their role in development. This concept was taken up 10 years later by the action Platform established at the 4th United Nations World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995).

In 1998, the Council of Europe put forward the following definition: "Gender mainstreaming is the (re)organisation, 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."⁽¹⁾

The European Commission, which initiated work on gender mainstreaming at the beginning of the 90s, has continued to make its approach to this concept⁽²⁾ more coherent after the Beijing Conference on women.

(1) Council of Europe report (EG-S-MS(98)2).

(2) More information: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/gender_equality/gender_mainstreaming/general_overview_en.html

Structural Fund Programmes as key drivers

Our work in the 2000-2006 Programmes has shown that Structural Funds can be a key driver in mainstreaming gender equality. In Scotland we work to develop a systematic approach to mainstreaming; through gender balance on Programme Committees and groups, through awareness raising and provision of guidance and 'toolkits'; an emphasis on identifying and sharing good practice examples; and encouraging project-to-project transfer of experience and expertise.

Partnership plays a key part in mainstreaming, bringing together organisations and individuals with expertise and experience of collecting meaningful data, of engaging individuals and groups in communities, and of understanding the needs of women and men and the barriers they face in accessing opportunities. Mainstreaming needs to 'make sense' to regional development actors. Project sponsors need robust data to show the need for and relevance of gender mainstreaming, and it has to be seen to bring tangible benefits for organisations and projects.



At a child care centre in Leipzig (Germany).



The approach taken in Structural Funds Programmes has shown that gender mainstreaming is about the differing needs of women and men. There have been a range of projects that tackle occupational segregation, and therefore challenge the gender pay gap. While the majority of positive action projects focus on training women for higher level, higher paid jobs, in growth areas such as ICT and science, engineering and technology, ESF projects have also trained men in occupations where they are under-represented, and this assists in challenging gender stereotyping for both women and men. In Scotland, only 4% of childcare workers are male, yet a study showed that 27% of men would consider working in childcare. Projects training men in child and social care occupations have reported large numbers of men interested in their recruitment drives and radio and newspaper advertising.

Plans to open a European Gender Institute in Vilnius

Following the expression of support by the European Council on 17-18 June 2004, the Commission announced on 8 March 2005 that it would be setting up a European Gender Institute. The proposal for a regulation⁽¹⁾, presented by the Commission, is currently the subject of an interinstitutional debate. Following a decision of the Employment and Social Affairs Council of 1 December 2006, it is now known that the new institute will be based in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania.

What will be its role? According to the Commission's feasibility study⁽²⁾, such an institute will have a clear role to play in fulfilling certain tasks not covered by existing bodies or institutional mechanisms, particularly in terms of coordinating, centralising and disseminating information, increasing awareness and providing tools, without any risk of duplication. The European Women's Lobby (EWL) insists that the institute should have sufficient means to exercise this role and assist the European institutions and Member States in the context of a European framework strategy for equal opportunities

(1) COM(2005) 81 final:
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/news/2005/mar/genderinstitute_en.pdf

(2) Available for downloading from: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equ_opp/documents_en.html
Annexe E gives the list of bodies and organisations concerned. See also the study drawn up for the European Parliament:
<http://www.yellowwindow.be/assets/free/r-finalreport-EN.doc>

Direct and indirect discriminations

Gender equality is not just an issue for ESF funded projects. Our experience of sharing good practice has shown a deepening understanding in ERDF projects of how to address inequality in patterns of self-employment. We encourage projects to look at project life cycle to identify opportunities for mainstreaming at all stages, from design and consultation through to evaluation, addressing issues of direct and indirect discrimination. Projects consider whether women and men use their services in the same way, and have addressed areas of indirect discrimination, such as availability of child-care, accessibility by public transport (women have less access to private cars), safety and lighting, timing and provision of support services for businesses and business start-up. Positive images of women and men and more inclusive language are being used in project publicity and marketing.



Research on fish feed in Swedish Lapland.

It is critical to build an awareness of gender equality issues into all strategic planning on employment and business growth, and raise awareness of the effects (and solutions to) indirect and direct discrimination. There is no one single cause of gender inequality, however Structural Funds Programmes can challenge the multi-faceted nature of inequality. Mainstreaming gender equality requires commitment of time, resources and leadership. This commitment is vital if we want to avoid the adoption of policies and practices that reproduce discrimination and exacerbate existing inequalities.

Action to reduce the gender pay gap

On 18 July 2007, the European Commission adopted a Communication⁽¹⁾ on possible actions to combat the pay gap between women and men. The document states that, on average, women in the EU earn 15% less than men and that there are no signs of any significant narrowing of this pay gap. The gap measures the relative difference in average gross hourly earnings between women and men across all economic sectors. It also reflects many other discriminations and inequalities which mainly affect women on the labour market

(1) http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/gender_equality/gender_mainstreaming/equalpay/equal_pay_en.html
Experts report «The Gender Pay Gap – Origins and Policy Responses»
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/publications/2006/ke7606200_en.pdf
Experts report «Legal aspects of the gender pay gap»
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/gender_equality/legislation/report_equal_pay.pdf

Saxony-Anhalt (Germany)

“Concrete action on gender equality: the Saxony-Anhalt Gender Institute”

Thomas Claus, Director of the Research and Information Department, Gender Institut Sachsen-Anhalt



With the inclusion of gender equality in the 2000-2006 European Structural Fund regulations, we have, for the first time, a coherent policy for equal opportunity between women and men which is binding on all Member States. However, implementing such a strategy requires effective structures. This is why the Saxony-Anhalt Gender Institute (GISA) was set up, at the beginning of 2001, as Germany's very first gender mainstreaming centre.

The GISA's mission is to encourage harmonious relations between men and women in all fields and at all levels of life in society. To this end, the institute finances applied research in the gender field, training, and advisory and support actions to facilitate gender mainstreaming. Its activities include: signalling, examining and assessing cases of sexual discrimination; the acquisition of gender equality skills in everyday life; the implementation of actions adapted to different contexts, whether regional, national or European. Close cooperation between the institute's twin pillars – that is, the Department of “Research and Information” (headed by a man) and the Department of “Advice and Training” (headed by a woman), ensures that the results of scientific studies are implemented rapidly.

The GISA attaches great importance to ensuring that its activities have a concrete impact. On behalf of the Saxony-Anhalt regional government, it regularly publishes a “Gender Report” containing a variety of information and figures on men-women relations as well as the latest research results from which policy-makers, economists and administrators can draw inspiration. The institute has also developed a number of practical methods and tools which are in growing demand to promote gender integration. These include a gender information system, the first of its kind in Germany. The website www.g-i-s-a.de contains several databases on the living conditions of men and women, provides access to completed studies and reference literature (numerous guides, technical dossiers, reports, etc.), and includes a list of experts on gender issues.

It was on the basis of all these elements that, in 2005, European Regional Policy Commissioner Danuta Hübner recognised the GISA as a “European model of good practice”.

In carrying out its activities, the GISA also has the support of a European network of male and female experts. The range of transnational cooperation activities in which the institute is involved extends from pan-European research on subjects such as “Promoting women entrepreneurs” or “Reconciling work and family life” to the provision of consultancy services to the Estonian Government in implementing its gender approach.

Although we are seeing many measures and much progress in promoting equality between women and men in Europe, the situation remains far from satisfactory. The obstinacy of resistance to change should not be underestimated as it still has the potential to complicate or even block the long march towards equality. This is why it is so essential to mobilise all of Europe's “egalitarian” forces. In this respect, the GISA hopes to continue its work within European networks and to place its experience and its know-how at the service of other countries – particularly the new Member States – in their efforts to implement a gender approach.

To find out more: <http://www.g-i-s-a.de>



A delegation from Pakistan is welcomed at the Institute.

1994-1999, 2000-2006, 2007-2013... Step by step towards gender equality

From one period of Structural Funds programming to another, a long road to real equality between men and women.

Gender mainstreaming is not a new idea in Cohesion Policy. Equality between men and women in the workplace was already an objective of the Structural Funds for the period 1994-1999. During this period, however, the Funds mainly supported actions in favour of women, which, despite their importance did not succeed in overcoming the problem of structural inequality. In addition, gender mainstreaming was mainly seen as being relevant to the ESF. Experience and evaluation led to the consideration of this issue in a more general way in the methodological documents covering the Structural Funds programming for the period 2000-2006.

A Communication from the Commission

In December 2002, in advance of the mid-term evaluation of the programming period in 2003, the Commission published a Communication⁽¹⁾ which included a progress report, a selection of good practices and also identified the obstacles to the implementation of the 'twin-track' approach (the combination of specific measures in support of women and the integration of gender mainstreaming in policy areas). In its conclusions, the Commission presented a number of recommendations, which are summarised below:

- Specific actions are an essential first step and it is important that the financing to support these actions is designated in a transparent manner and that the Member States establish incentives in this regard, in particular in relation to the criteria for project selection.
- In countries that have put a greater emphasis on the integration of gender mainstreaming, the actual level of financial support might be difficult to recognise. Therefore, these countries are invited to present accounts which distinguish the financing of specific actions from the programme's more general contribution to gender equality.
- The Member States are invited to turn to expertise in gender equality, to ensure representation of competent bodies on the steering committees of the programmes and to put in place measures for awareness raising and training.
- The importance of the ex-ante evaluation (via statistics broken down by sex) and the impact evaluation (with the help of quantitative and qualitative indicators) must be recognised.



- Each Member State is invited to designate a high level representative to coordinate the national strategy on equality between women and men and to participate in a high level group at EU level.

Looking to the longterm, the Communication proposes three elements: the pursuit of the 'twin-track' approach, which has proven its effectiveness; the importance of the knowledge society and increased efforts to include women in the ICT and R&D sectors; the role of the Structural Funds in supporting women in the new Member States, where they are exposed to the negative effects of economic restructuring.

A study by the European Parliament

For their part, the European Parliament recently published the results of a study⁽²⁾ on the 2000-2006 programming period, with a particular focus on the ERDF and the Cohesion Funds, in order to identify the lessons for the period 2007-2013. In general, it concludes that gender balance is better in the initial stage of the policy process (analysis of the context, definition of the strategy) than later on, i.e. during the implementation stages. While much has been achieved in terms of the recognition of gender mainstreaming, much remains to be done to bring about practical and tangible results.

2007-2013: gender equality in the new regulations...

The following extracts bring together the provisions concerning gender equality as featured in the new Structural and Cohesion Fund regulations⁽³⁾ for 2007-2013.

(1) Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Implementation of gender mainstreaming in the Structural Funds programming documents 2000-2006, COM(2002) 748 final: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/smartapi/cgi/sga_doc?smartapi!celexapi!prod!CELEXnumdoc&lg=EN&numdoc=52002DC0748&model=guichett

(2) "Gender mainstreaming in the Use of Structural Funds" IP/B/REGI/IC/2006-200, PE 379.206, 22 July 2007. Available soon at: www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/expert/eStudies.do?language=FR

(3) The new regulations are available at: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/newregl0713_en.htm

From the general regulations on the Structural and Cohesion Funds:

Article 11: Partnership

Art. 11(1): (...) Each Member State shall organise, where appropriate and in accordance with current national rules and practices, a partnership with authorities and bodies such as: (...) c) any other appropriate body representing civil society, (...) non-governmental organisations, and bodies responsible for promoting equality between men and women. Each Member State shall designate the most representative partners at national, regional and local level and in the economic, social, environmental or other spheres (...), in accordance with national rules and practices, taking account of the need to promote equality between men and women (...)

Art. 11(2): (...) The partnership shall cover the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of operational programmes. Member States shall involve, where appropriate, each of the relevant partners, and particularly the regions, in the different stages of programming within the time limit set for each stage.

Article 16: Equality between men and women and non-discrimination

The Member States and the Commission shall ensure that equality between men and women and the integration of the gender perspective is promoted during the various stages of implementation of the Funds. The Member States and the Commission shall take appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination based on sex (...) during the various stages of implementation of the Funds and, in particular, in the access to them.

Article 66: Arrangements for monitoring

Art. 66(2): (...) Where the nature of the assistance permits, statistics shall be broken down by sex and by the size of the recipient undertakings. From the European Development Fund regulation:

Article 6: European territorial cooperation

Art. 6(1): (...) In addition the ERDF may contribute to promoting (...) gender equality and equal opportunities(...).

From the European Social Fund regulation:

Article 3: Scope of assistance

Art. 3(1): Within the framework of the Convergence and Regional competitiveness and employment objectives, the ESF shall support (...):

Art. 3(1)(b)(iii): mainstreaming and specific action to improve access to employment, increase the sustainable participation and progress of women in employment and reduce gender-based segregation in the labour market, including by addressing the root causes, direct and indirect, of gender pay gaps.

Art. 3(2): Within the framework of the Convergence objective, the ESF shall support (...):

Art. 3(2)(a)(ii): increased participation in education and training throughout the life-cycle, including through actions aiming to achieve a reduction (...) in gender-based segregation of subjects (...).

Article 4: Consistency and concentration of support

Art. 4(5): Evaluations undertaken in relation to ESF action shall also assess the contribution of action supported by the ESF to the implementation of (...) Community objectives in the fields of social inclusion, non-discrimination and equality between women and men (...).

Article 5: Good governance and partnership

Art. 5(4): The managing authority of each operational programme shall encourage adequate participation and access by non-governmental organisations to the funded activities, notably in the domain of social inclusion, gender equality and equal opportunities.

Article 6: Gender equality and equal opportunities

The Member States shall ensure that operational programmes include a description of how gender equality and equal opportunities are promoted in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of operational programmes. Member States shall promote a balanced participation of women and men in the management and implementation of operational programmes at local, regional and national level, as appropriate.

Article 10: Reports

The annual and final implementation reports (...) shall contain, where appropriate, a synthesis of the implementation of: a) gender mainstreaming as well as any gender-specific action (...).

...and from the Community strategic guidelines on cohesion

Adopted in October 2006 by the Council, the Community strategic guidelines on cohesion⁽⁴⁾ set out the EU's principles and policy priorities for 2007-2013 and suggest the means of implementing them. The Member States took these guidelines as a basis when drawing up their National Strategic Frameworks (NSFs) and when developing the some 450 Operational Programmes which must be adopted by the Commission during 2007. In terms of gender equality, the guidelines set the specific objective for the Member states of **increasing by 60% by 2010** the participation of women in the labour market. The principle of gender equality is incorporated in the strategic guidelines at two levels:

- In the cross-cutting principles by the terms of which the programmes must be in keeping with the Lisbon agenda: «(...) Member States and regions should pursue the objective of equality between men and women at all stages of the preparation and implementation of programmes and projects,» whether through specific actions or «by taking careful account» of the effects that other projects can have in this field. They must also «prevent all discrimination on the basis of gender, (...) during the different stages of Fund implementation.»
- In a series of detailed measures designed to support women entrepreneurship, strengthen the participation of women in employment without any kind of discrimination, reconcile professional and private life, facilitate access to childcare services, etc., thereby helping to implement the European Pact for Gender Equality.

(4) http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/2007/osc/index_en.htm

ESTONIA

Childcare for working mums



Total cost: EUR 216 640
EU contribution: EUR 154 356

"Estonia is well known for the high proportion of women in full-time employment. But while 80% of women want to combine work and family life, fewer than half of the children aged between one and four are able to find a place in nursery school. 48% of municipalities have therefore had to draw up a waiting list for access to childcare facilities. Launched by 30 enthusiastic nursery nurses, the pilot project 'Children taken care of, mothers at work' sought to resolve this problem by creating daytime childcare facilities throughout the country. Now well established, this system has been recognised for the past year by the Estonian Social Security and more than 200 child carers, in addition to the project initiators, are now qualified and available to assist parents of young children return to the employment market."

Erika Vahtmäe, Project Manager, Ministry for Population and Ethnic Affairs of Estonia
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HUNGARY

Network of women entrepreneurs



Total cost: EUR 61 200
EU contribution: EUR 61 200

"The professional integration of women from an underprivileged background is a difficult problem to solve. The Hungarian Association for Women in Computing Nonprofit Companies received a European grant to organise, in five Hungarian towns, training in computing, management and accounting for 120 women entrepreneurs, many of them beginners. The project "e-NIVÓ – real and virtual cooperative of female entrepreneurs" sought to support women by helping them to overcome the handicaps and prejudices of which they are the victims as well as the obstacles they encounter along the road to integration. More concretely, the project involved providing them with personalised support and all the assistance needed in finding a job."

Ida Csapó, Project Manager, Hungarian Association for Women in Computing Nonprofit Companies
<http://www.minok.hu/taxonomy/term/108>

BELGIUM

Crèches adapted to the needs of workers in the tourism sector



Total cost: EUR 10 000
EU contribution: EUR 2 500

"The hotel, restaurants and cafés sector (horeca) on the Belgian coast faces a shortage of labour due in particular to the lack of care facilities for young children. It is often very difficult for workers in this sector – especially women – to find childcare services suitable for their atypical working hours (evening, weekend, at peak holiday seasons). 'De Trampoline' is a pilot project providing a network of nursery facilities adapted to the needs of the horeca sector. A number of nurseries were opened at various locations in Blankenberge, providing care facilities for 40 children on a flexible basis. This experience will serve as a basis for launching similar schemes elsewhere on the Belgian coast for the benefit of workers and employers in the tourism sector."

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GERMANY

"HAFEN", the business incubator for women



Total cost: EUR 466 624
EU contribution: EUR 340 912

"The project 'Women can do it' supported women entrepreneurs through the 'HAFEN' centre, a business incubator for women located in Berlin-Marzahn. The project's main aims were to: create the HAFEN centre; convince candidate entrepreneurs to set up their business at the centre; provide them with cheap office space, equipment, advice and support; restore businesses in difficulty to working order; find exit strategies or professional outlets for those who abandoned their business project following a negative assessment; organise eight professional forums on management, the search for public financing, a balance between work and private life, etc. Berlin's FHTW University of Applied Sciences provided the necessary scientific support and follow-up."

Carmen Giese, Director of European projects, Gemeinnützige Gesellschaft TÜV Rheinland Bildungswerk mbH (Berlin)
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Finland

“Finnvera, a financial instrument in the service of women entrepreneurs”



Anneli Soppi, Head of the Microfinance Unit, Finnvera Plc

Finland is well known for its equal opportunity policies. For Finnish women, equality also means financial independence. This is perhaps why the proportion of women entrepreneurs in Finland is relatively high compared with other European countries.

A third of Finnish entrepreneurs are women, with many of them self-employed. The Finnish Government's entrepreneurship programme aims to increase this proportion to 40%. The Finnvera «Loans for Women», which are specifically targeted at women entrepreneurs, seeks to act as a genuine catalyst in achieving this.

Jobs and profitable businesses

Owned by the Finnish state, Finnvera Plc is a financing company which specialises in providing complementary financing solutions adapted to the different stages in a company's development. Finnvera also acts as an intermediary between the European Union's financing programmes and Finnish SMEs. It awards between 3 800 and 5 500 microloans a year with a total microcredit portfolio of over 12 500 loans for a total amount of 160.7 million euros. Women make up 40% of the customers applying for microcredit. Finnvera currently works with over 26 000 companies, 80% of which are micro-enterprises.

The aim of the “Loans for Women”, launched in 1997, is to encourage entrepreneurship among women and in particular to encourage women, with a good business idea but without sufficient guarantees, to obtain the financing they need to set up their business.

For women who already have their own business, in particular in sectors which are less attractive to financial institutions, this special credit enables them to expand their business. The scheme has also helped unemployed women or women threatened with unemployment to create their own job. Today this financial instrument is also helping young and immigrant women to set up their own businesses.

The loans are targeted at micro-enterprises employing fewer than five persons. However, in practice most of the clients are self-employed workers. The typical profile is a woman aged between 39 and 45 who has been trained for a particular occupation and now wants to create her own job.

The award criteria are the same as everywhere: the

actual or projected profitability of the business venture.

Services to people first

Women have a clear preference for the services sector. Most of those who take out the loans are engaged in “proximity” services such as social assistance, health, diet, other services to persons and retail. Local competition is often fierce in these fields and existing businesses can already offer a comprehensive range of services. To succeed, a new business must stand out from its competitors. But creating a niche market requires both ability and financial resources, the demand for consumer services being very sensitive to economic fluctuations.

The contracting out of social assistance and health-care services has created a new demand, and small businesses run by women are responding to this.

Good payers

Women entrepreneurs are often accused of being too cautious. In fact, they are simply realistic. Women take calculated risks, ensuring that should the very worst happen they will be able to meet their obligations. Finnvera has also noted very few defaults on payments among its female clientele.

The survival rate of start-up companies is 76-80%. The advisory services, training and sponsorship facilities offered by local non-financial service providers help increase this survival rate.

Will it be possible to increase the share of women entrepreneurs to 40%? That will depend on the desire of women to start their own businesses and their ability to reconcile business and family. Because it is women who still bear most of the burden of looking after children and elderly relatives. There is also a need to bear in mind all the women “concealed” in the statistics who work as partners assisting many family businesses.

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Land of Salzburg (Austria)

“Managing gender equality”

Christian Salletmaier, Head of the Regional Development and European Regional Policy Unit, Land of Salzburg



Regional development is a field that is both multi-disciplinary and highly complex.

The Salzburg Objective 2 programme aimed to increase the competitiveness and innovative capacity of businesses, capitalise on regional resources, and reduce unemployment, out-migration and long distance commuting in the Land's most southern areas.

To do so, a set of measures were implemented in three priority sectors (tourism, businesses and local development) in line with a strategy based on innovation, participation and sustainability, while not forgetting gender mainstreaming, one of the cross-cutting principles of Structural Fund intervention for the 2000-2006 period. Two measures financed by the ERDF were developed with a specific gender objective.

The first sought to provide support for the female population in the Objective 2 areas. This involved encouraging and facilitating women to become involved in the programme as well as providing the assistance needed in drawing up gender equality projects. The idea was to put into place a facility that would be very open to the local actors and able to encourage and support bottom-up initiatives. The result is that since 2001/2002 two “project managers



A company day care centre.

for equal opportunities” have been working in the Land of Salzburg. These are responsible for a variety of activities, ranging from the coordination of gender equality projects in a European context to the creation of local networks to help women put their ideas into practice. Among other things, these managers have set up local partnerships involving employment services, businesses, the municipalities and vocational training bodies.

The second measure was designed to increase the level of employment among women in remote rural area. In this respect, a number of actions were launched. One of the principle obstacles facing women in their search for skilled jobs in the most rural and alpine areas of the Land of Salzburg is the lack of childcare facilities. New childcare schemes were therefore developed in cooperation with local SMEs. At present three company nurseries are serving as a model for a better reconciliation of work and family responsibilities for women.

Another series of actions focused on continuous training and those who provide it. The aim here was to encourage the training providers to cooperate, pool their resources and orient their training programmes towards the qualifications and professional needs of women. Finally, a third area of activity consisted of actively supporting companies that implement a career development plan for women employees.

Implementing these projects was not always easy and required considerable patience and commitment. The project managers played a driving role and they will remain in place beyond the life of the Objective 2 programming. As to the projects themselves, they helped maintain and improve the status of skilled jobs, while at the same time helping women return to work. The end result of all these actions was to make it possible to retain vital forces in the region, stabilise the local employment force, and improve the competitiveness of SMEs and of the regional economy as a whole.

To find out more: www.salzburg.gv.at/themen/wt/regional/programmperiode2000-2006.htm

Equality between men and women, an issue of strategic importance for Jämtland (Sweden)

Looking through the gender spectacles

Faced with demographic challenges, if it is to ensure its development North Middle Sweden must retain its female population. Hence the need to promote equal opportunities. The Objective 1 programme has financed a number of projects in this field, both out of principle and in the light of clearly understood socio-economic interests.



“Jämtland” starts with “Jäm”, as does “Jämställdhet” which means “equal opportunities”. A coincidence perhaps, but the latter is nevertheless a major concern in this region which lies in the centre-west of Sweden and has a population of just 130,000 for an area larger than Slovakia, more than half of them concentrated around the regional capital Östersund.

“The exodus of women is seriously damaging the sustainability of regional development and here it is even more of a problem due to the low population density and distances. There is a shortage of women and already a labour shortage in the health services,” regrets Ingegärd Pettersson, coordinator of the “Gensyn” project implemented by the County’s authorities with financial support from Objective 1. “Through Gensyn we are seeking to open the eyes of the politicians and key local actors to the situation. They tend

to be gender blind and insufficiently aware of the unsatisfactory situation of women and the problems that result. In a remote rural environment the differences are very marked: men, who concentrate more on their professional activity, cope with this type of environment better, whereas women prefer to live – and have children – in places where it is possible to achieve a harmonious reconciliation of work, family life, housing and leisure activities without this costing too much money or involving too much travel. To keep them here we need adapted social and planning measures and a committed policy. We are trying to convince the decision-makers by every possible means, including ‘emotional’ arguments, with questions such as ‘how would you react if your daughter told you she wanted to leave for a more attractive region?’.”

(1) In force since 1980 and amended on several occasions, the Equal Opportunities Law (“Jämställdhetslagen”) aims in particular to promote equal rights for men and women at work. The “JämtO”, Equality Ombudsman’s Office, is responsible for ensuring that the procedures laid down in the legislation are respected.

A study carried out by the Swedish statistics office showed that more women than men leave the region, due to the difficulties of obtaining permanent employment and also in order to make better use of their level of education, one that tends to be higher among the women than the men. Ingegård pointed to a population map that showed clearly the unequal distribution of men and women in Sweden, with women dominating in the south and in coastal regions and more men than women in the centre-west of the country and in the north.

“There is more to keeping women in the region than providing childcare. It means a better organisation of all facets of life, starting with gender equality. We are an advanced country in this field, but the battle is far from won,” insists Annica Westerlund, head of information with the Objective 1 Södra Skogslän and INTERREG IIIA Sweden/Norway programmes, for which the County of Jämtland is the managing authority.

Among the some 3 000 projects which the Structural Funds supported in the Objective 1 region between 2000 and 2006, many involved women directly, whether as entrepreneurs, self-employed workers, mothers following training to return to the labour market or as beneficiaries of the various services. But, in Jämtland in particular, the European Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) have also teamed up to co-finance four programmes to increase awareness of equality between men and women launched by the County Administration and addressing a number of key issues such as: the female demographic challenge; gender equality at work; combating harassment and discrimination. *“Sweden has an equal opportunities law”⁽¹⁾*, explains Annica, *“but it is not easy to implement it in the field. Here, in Jämtland, we told ourselves that in addition to the ‘stick’, we also need a ‘carrot’ or incentive measures to enable the equal opportunity goal to become a real priority for the local actors.”*

Equality, health, efficiency

With a budget of 1.2 million euros, half of it provided by the European Union, the “Know How – Equal Opportunities, Profitability and Health” project was implemented in two stages between 2000 and 2006. *“We chose ‘Know How’ as the name because the aim of the project was to provide, at the workplace, the know-how, motivation and methods for a better management of the gender issue,”* explains Syvonne Nordström, project coordinator. *“We also adopted as sub-title ‘Equality, Profitability and Health’ as these three aspects are closely linked: equality between men and women is not only a matter of democracy and justice as it also has an influence on a company’s competitiveness. A 1999 survey carried out among 14 000 Swedish companies showed that companies that make an active effort to promote gender equality were more productive than the others. Also, as equality improves working conditions, it contributes to better health. Another study showed that a balanced proportion of men and women at the workplace creates a better social environment, better internal and external communication, and a better company image. A better allocation of tasks between men and women provides greater efficiency.”*



Mastering several workstations is less boring and more rewarding.

Established on these grounds, the Know How project involved implementing a range of parallel activities: information campaigns on the gender dimension (advertising in the local press, publication of good practices, actions in schools, etc.), the organisation of seminars and thematic days (how to draw up an equality plan, how to prevent sexual harassment, etc.), plus a consultation and support service for companies, public institutions and other bodies seeking to acquire a gender equality procedure.

Enterprise(s) culture

The Husqvarna factory in Tandsbyn, 20 km from Östersund, makes electric tools. *“The Know How project could not have come at a better time for us”,* remembers director Markku Pärssinen. *“Both the management and the unions wanted to conform more to the principles of the Equal Opportunities Law, to be pioneers and serve as an example. So when we heard of the project we were onto it right away”.* Once the project team had agreed on the procedures, the *“Know How method”* took effect. A working team of three women and two men was set up, meeting for an hour a week during 20 weeks to draw up an “equality plan” covering the wages, working conditions, men-women relations and work-family balance of the company’s 160 employees.

A wages study resulted in equal pay for equal work for men and women. To avoid excessive task repetition, workers were also given the option of rotating between different posts. *“This has affected women workers primarily”,* points out Agneta Wessen, member of the working party, *“because it is women who are in the most boring jobs. Those who wanted to, men and women, were given the opportunity of following training and as a result are now able to operate four or five different kinds of machine. The ergonomics was also improved and the personnel now has access to fitness equipment, massage and relaxation sessions. We are now seeing fewer back problems and fewer cases of phlebitis. All of which has benefited men as well as women!”*

As far as achieving a better balance between work and family life is concerned, one aspect in particular was taken into account at Husqvarna in light of the Know How approach: the incentive to share parental leave following childbirth. Maternity leave as such does not exist in Sweden, the emphasis being placed rather on parental leave. This lasts 15 months, two of which must obligatory be taken by one or other of the parents. For one year the employee is paid 80% of his or her wages by the state. In Tandsbyn, Husqvarna added 10% to this amount for four months, bringing it up to 90% of the normal wage but on condition that the mother and father share the parental leave equally.



Father and child benefit from paternity leave.

“Shared parental leave is now part of our enterprise culture. The number of fathers who take extended leave has doubled in three years”, notes Kerstin Jonsson, administrative manager at Jonsson & Paulsson, an engineering company with 136 workers which subcontracts for several major automobile constructors. Kerstin, who had herself drawn up an equality charter but *“put it away in the drawer”* before participating in the Know How project, continues: *“Our equality plan is attached to the copy of the work regulations which every new employee receives on the day of his or her arrival. Then, a few weeks later, we have a meeting with the newcomers at which I place great emphasis on the importance of parental leave as an opportunity to improve social skills and learn to take on new responsibilities. I realize that we have the means to do this. It is more difficult for a small business which has much less margin for manoeuvre when managing human resources.”* And as if to stop in his tracks the journalist who may perhaps be wondering what can lie behind such virtuous action, Kerstin explained: *“By favouring job rotation, extended parental leave or flexible working hours more attuned to children’s schooling, we are also serving the interests of the company: Happy employees are more productive employees. Good health means less absenteeism. Parenting also teaches people much that can be useful at work. We also want to be known as a modern employer, one that is attractive to a skilled personnel, young people and women, indeed we want to see more of them at our company.”*



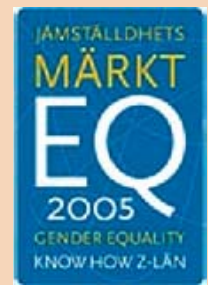
Opinion leaders

The Know How project was also able to count on a formidable ally in the form of the regional daily Östersunds Posten, communicator as well as participant in the project. The newspaper, with a staff of 90, also launched a drive for equality in 2002. There were two aspects to this: *“Internally, we organised a two-day seminar for managers, subsequently extended to include the rest of the staff”*, explains Viktoria Winberg, marketing manager. *“This led to the drawing up of a similar plan to the one at Husqvarna or Jonsson & Paulsson, with perhaps in addition a policy of balanced recruitment and a more clearly stated promotion of women. Externally, every year we organised an anti-sexist competition in companies and then at 15 primary schools.”* Elina Olofsson, head of the news department, adds: *“We also publish a lot of articles and special reports on gender issues and seek to ensure a good gender balance in our editorial policy. In this respect, we carried out a quantitative and qualitative survey of the place awarded to men and women in our texts, photos and in the sports columns.”* The next stage? *“To relaunch an internal procedure – we need a booster this autumn! – and extend this to the other regional newspaper, the Länstidningen, which has been bought by the Posten.”*

But is it easier to implement a “gender plan” in an “intellectual” enterprise such as a newspaper than in an industrial company which is more “manual”? *“Absolutely not”*, answer Syvonne and Annica without a moment’s hesitation. *“Know How has been implemented in about 60 companies and administrations and we have not noticed any difference”*. To which Viktoria adds, with a smile: *“It is true that the commercial department was rather reluctant. But then again it does include a lot of former footballers!”*

Viktoria Winberg and Elina Olofsson ensure gender equality at the Östersunds Posten.

“EQ”: equality between men and women at the workplace – making it work



To encourage the approach, increase its visibility and reward the best gender action at the workplace, the Know How project organisers created the “EQ” certificate. About 15 private companies and public administrations have been awarded this certificate since 2002.

To merit this genuine quality label, the participating company or administration must:

- set up an internal working group on equality,
- analyse its gender situation (working atmosphere, wages, work and parenting, any sexual harassment or discrimination, recruitment policy, etc.),
- set quantifiable targets,
- adopt the measures and methods needed to achieve equality (How?),
- draw up a timetable (When?),
- allocate responsibilities (Who?),
- assess availability and skills (of employees, of other participants),
- foresee external actions (How to influence others? Disseminating know-how, etc.).

The Know How project, which ended in 2006, is being extended until December 2007 through the “Jämsyn” project with EU funding of 228 000 euros. *“The difference compared with Know How is that Jämsyn places more emphasis on training for key persons within organisations, such as managers, directors and trade union representatives,”* explains Syvonne Nordström. *“We use the system of thematic days to communicate practical methods in relation to specific issues (sexual harassment, wages studies, task sharing, etc.), the idea being to consider participants as ‘opinion leaders’ who will later ‘preach the good news’ of gender equality during their duties at the workplace.”*

“There is a lot to learn about the methodology of gender mainstreaming,” believes Mattias Eliasson. *“You can quote many examples: the equality plan is an opportunity for the company to call into question hitherto unsuspected aspects of its functioning; the prevention of sexual harassment often makes it possible to assess the atmosphere at work; at schools, making pupils more aware of non-traditional occupations for women can help meet the needs of employers who find it difficult to recruit through traditional channels.”* But Mattias is a little disappointed also: as manager of the “Vidsyn” (“Broad vision”) project, which helps prevent all forms of discrimination at work, he wanted to organize one- or two-day seminars on a subject, instead of which he had to make do with sessions of just 2 or 3 hours with large groups of participants. *“I was very ambitious and perhaps not flexible enough: companies here are too small to be able to set aside time for these questions.”*

So the battle has not yet been won, to use Annica’s expression? *“Certainly not”*, Dan Humble, equality consultant and organiser of many Know How / Jämsyn seminars with his colleague Camilla Simonsson. *“The gender mainstreaming approach is a very long-term job... It is hard to convince people at first. And then there is resistance to applying the precepts discussed during training sessions. In companies, the approach adopted at a subsidiary is not always validated by senior management. You need both equality incentives and individual responsibility: everybody must do their bit but it is only when you don the ‘gender spectacles’ that you really see the difficulties women face every day. So the path to equality is wide open.”*

To find out more: www.z.lst.se/z/en/

The Know How and Jämsyn projects resulted in two publications available in Swedish and English: **“Quality Work in Gender Equality - a Handbook for the Workplace”** and **“Facing Resistance - Managing Gender Mainstreaming in Organisations”**.

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■ A gender equality seminar in Strömsund.

Glasgow (Scotland, United Kingdom)

“For better business creation”

Kathleen Jones, business adviser, Women into Enterprise Project Team



Glasgow City Council developed the Women into Enterprise (WiE) programme; the project was funded by ERDF grants (EUR 775 000) and Glasgow City Council (EUR 855 838). The initial programme ran from February 2002 to February 2005 and proved so successful that follow on funding was obtained to extend the programme.

The programme was set up to address some of the barriers experienced by women in starting or expanding their business. It is recognised that women often set up business in areas with low entry costs. They often believe they have limited skills in key areas such as finance and IT, and they frequently undervalue their skills. They are also more likely to limit the growth of the business.

Over the life of the project, WiE has given advice, support and training to 3 000 businesses of which 2 246 were new businesses and 746 existing companies. Many women have taken the opportunity to participate in training workshops covering a range of business skills. Topics covered included Public Relations, Marketing, Negotiation Skills and Finance as well as many IT training workshops. In addition to the one-off workshops, more complex topics were covered. WiE offered a ten week programme for those thinking about starting a business, taking participants through a process that resulted in a business plan for their venture. The programme also offered a group based strategic review process for more established women owned businesses. This helped identify the challenges facing the companies and enabled them to formulate a strategic plan to deal with the issues and grow the business.

Many business contacts have been made during workshops, as well as friendships formed. Peer support systems evolved naturally through group working – idea and information sharing were often the norm – and many of the groups formed during these sessions still meet regularly today.

WiE also worked hard to meet the needs of women at local levels in the community. Through joint programmes with Community groups and Social Inclusion Partnerships, the programme successfully reached women who might not be otherwise aware of business support services available. Women into Enterprise worked with Glasgow based groups such as the Chinese Community Development Partnership and the Talleem Trust for ethnic minorities to organise

events tailored at each specific group. These were often delivered in conjunction with other services such as translation support and childminding, as appropriate, to meet the needs of the specific target group.

The grant support element of the programme has also been well used. 251 companies received grant



support over the life of the programme: 168 new and 83 existing businesses. When applying for grant funding, businesses submitted a brief application form with a supporting business plan and financial forecasts for the business. Grants could cover up to 50% of the cost of project expenditure in the business. Typically projects covered one off expenditure items: examples include equipment purchases, refurbishment costs, IT projects and marketing materials. Grant funding ranged from a few hundred to ten thousand euros (5 000 pounds) per company.

Elements of the project are undoubtedly transferable to other countries. Many of the barriers to women engaging in entrepreneurial activity are shared across nationalities. The programme has a number of innovative elements. It offered support and training to women prior to starting their business – through workshops and networking events. The programme also supported women operating businesses from home, as this is often the only option open to women due to various issues related to childcare and access to capital (most mainstream business support programmes target businesses in commercial premises). The programme has been a mainstay in developing and supporting women owned businesses in the area over its lifetime.

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Interreg IIIB Alpine Space

“GenderAlp!, an administrations network for the administrations or when gender goes public”

Romana Rotschopf, Project Manager, GenderAlp!

The Alpine countries share a number of conditions and difficulties: complex spatial planning, limited transport infrastructure in certain areas, a relatively low rate of female employment, male-dominated decision-making structures at regional and local level. Hence the benefits of creating an international network on gender issues.

With financing of 2.3 million euros, half of it from the ERDF, the “GenderAlp! Spatial Development for Women and Men” project networks 12 towns and regions in the Alpine Space (Austria, Germany, Italy, France, Slovenia). These towns and regions are working together (between 2005 and 2007) on issues linked to spatial development and public financing from the viewpoint of equal opportunities between men and women.

Convinced that equality between men and women means a better quality of life, a more attractive environment for businesses and people, increased competitiveness of the regions and thus more jobs, we want to share with all our European partners the experience and good practices of 32 regional projects implemented within the GenderAlp! Network. The themes of the projects have included: gender mainstreaming in local authority budgets (City of Munich, City of Cuneo), public transport (City of Fribourg), regional development (Land of Salzburg), town planning (Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia), developing training for policy-makers and administrative decision-makers (Rhône-Alpes Region) and developing activity parks (Lower Austria, etc)...

A network of administrations to improve competences

Although much gender equality is laid down in Community, national and regional legislation, it is proving slow to be implemented. GenderAlp! aims, on the one hand, to make the public aware of the issues at stake and, on the other, to create the tools and the know-how for administrations and policy-makers. The “toolbox” developed by GenderAlp! thus offers: quality criteria and methods for including gender in spatial planning and drawing up public budgets; “gender-oriented” objectives for the tourism, employment

and enterprise creation, sports, health and education sectors; gender indicators for evaluating regional development programmes; a series of recommendations for including gender when planning industrial or commercial zones; examples of good practice observed all over Europe, etc.

Through GenderAlp! we hope to put into place lasting networks of administrations who are concerned about including gender equality when implementing and financing their development policies.

Contact: genderalp@salzburg.gv.at
To find out more: www.genderalp.com,
www.gendercompetence.net (English),
www.genderalp.at (Germany),
www.genderbudget.it (Italian),
www.genderalp.si (Slovenia)



A network partner meeting.

INTERREG IIIA Spain/Morocco

NISAE-MUJER: promoting exchanges between women entrepreneurs in Spain and Morocco



Total cost: EUR 405 275
EU contribution: EUR 303 956

“The ‘NISAE-MUJER’ project seeks to promote an improved participation of women in economic cooperation across the Mediterranean in sectors with a high proportion of women entrepreneurs, namely textiles, craft and commerce, hotel and restaurants. For this we have organised the following activities: meetings and forums for cross-border businesses in Malaga and Morocco, one-day training courses, presence of Moroccan companies at the Malaga Fair for Women Entrepreneurs and Businesses (FEMMA), programme of visits and exchanges, creation of a business database and communication plan.”

*Bernadette Sebrechts, European Resources Unit,
Diputacion de Malaga
bsebrechts@malaga.es*

INTERREG IIIC North

Women Resource Centres



Total cost: EUR 1 351 950
EU contribution: EUR 776 663

“The vocation of the Women Resource Centres (WRCs) is to promote the participation of women in economic, social and political life. The aim of the ‘W.IN.NET’ project (2003-2005), which was supported by Interreg IIIC, was to create a European network of WRCs working in local and regional development. To this end, 17 partners from nine countries participated in five thematic sub-networks that reported back to Brussels with their findings in November 2005. The result was the creation of ‘WINNET Europe’ which now brings together the Resource Centres in 18 Member States.”

*Britt-Marie Torstensson, President of WINNET Europe
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INTERREG IIIB CADSES

WEFneT: women’s credit



Total cost: EUR 2 854 473
EU contribution: EUR 1 275 366

“The ‘WEFneT’ network (Women Engendering the Finance network) is seeking to extend to the CADSES area of cooperation (Adriatic, Danube and Central Europe) this local development unit which consists of resource centres for women. The primary aim is to facilitate access to credit for projects launched by women through cooperation between regional governments, financial institutions, associations and other public and private organisations. To date, some 200 administrations have received training in the gender approach, about 20 resource centre managers have perfected their management skills and 10 businesses have been set up.”

*Elda Schena, Employment and Training Consultant,
Puglia Region (Italy)
e.schena@regione.puglia.it*

INTERREG IIIA France/Italy

Joint cross-border strategies for equal opportunities



Total cost: EUR 100 000
ERDF contribution: EUR 45 000

“The project aimed to launch initiatives to promote increased mobility for women through improved knowledge of the regulatory framework and opportunities offered in the cross-border area. The biggest challenge was to include heterogeneous content within a single shared and coherent document. The Italian project leader focused on the world of women at work while the French partner adopted a more social approach to the working themes, stressing for example aspects linked to violence, immigration and illiteracy among women. The research results gave rise to a guide to good practices, available at www.lavorodonna.it/interreg/index.htm. Other studies will be made on the subject of seasonal work in the agricultural and hotel sectors.”

*Gianluca Tripodi, STC Interreg IIIA Alcotra
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Informal meeting in Leipzig, 24-25 May 2007: two policy documents

Strengthening regional solidarity

An informal meeting of ministers responsible for urban and territorial issues was held in Leipzig on 24-25 May 2007, at which two policy documents were accepted: the Territorial Agenda of the EU ⁽¹⁾ and the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities ⁽²⁾.

Regional Policy Commissioner Danuta Hübner stressed the strong links between territorial development and the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs: "The new cohesion policy programmes (...) and the priorities set out in the Territorial Agenda and Leipzig Charter strengthen my belief that we are on the right track, one leading to a more competitive and cohesive Union."

The result of previous informal meetings, the Territorial Agenda constitutes a policy paper for cooperation with a view to strengthening "**territorial cohesion**". The aim is to improve the conditions for sustainable economic, social, cultural and ecological development throughout the EU on the basis of a polycentric and balanced territorial and urban development. This would draw on the characteristics and potential of the regions and cities to provide citizens with equal opportunities and businesses with new opportunities.

This requires an integrated approach that cuts across all sectors and in which local, regional and national concerns connect both with each other and with Community policies. In other words, "**territorial governance**" understood as a continuous process of dialogue and cooperation at all levels between public, private and non-governmental participants. For this, the regional and local actors must be closely involved in implementing policies and their needs taken into account when drawing them up.

The Territorial Agenda identifies the **new challenges of strengthening regional identities and achieving a better use of territorial diversity** while defining six priorities aimed at promoting:

- *Polycentrism and innovation* through cooperation between metropolitan regions and small and medium-sized towns, in the interests of rural, mountainous and remote areas;
- *New forms of partnership and territorial coordination between urban and rural areas*, through regional and sub-regional strategies involving public-private partnerships and voluntary associations of local authorities;
- *Regional "clusters" for competition and innovation*, by virtue of cooperation between entrepreneurs, researchers and the public authorities;
- *The strengthening of trans-European networks*, whether transport (especially multimodal), infor-



mation and communication technologies (ITCs) or energy (renewable energies in particular);

- *The trans-European management of environmental risks, including the effects of climate change;*
- *The strengthening of ecological structures and cultural resources as an opportunity for development.*

Cities at the cohesion crossroads

The Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities is complementary to the Territorial Agenda in that it promotes an integrated urban development programme as a task that is European in scale. The charter formulates two major recommendations:

- *Making greater use of integrated urban development policy approaches.* This permits a pro-active and multisectoral coordination of development as it relates to housing, transport and energy systems, urban infrastructures and the ITCs as well as economic, social and cultural life. To this end, the charter identifies three lines of action: the creation and preservation of quality public spaces; the modernisation of infrastructure networks and more efficient energy production; active innovation policy in the field of education and training.
- *Paying special attention to deprived neighbourhoods within the context of the city as a whole* through four priorities: pursuing strategies for upgrading the physical landscape; strengthening the local economy and local labour market policy; proactive education and training policies for children and young people; and finally, promoting efficient and affordable urban transport for all.

(1) http://www.bmvbs.de/Anlage/original_998233/Territorial-Agenda-of-the-European-Union-Agreed-on-25-Mai-2007.pdf

(2) http://www.bmvbs.de/Anlage/original_998680/Leipzig-Charter-on-Sustainable-European-Cities-agreed-on-24-May-2007.pdf

REGIO & networks

OPEN DAYS 2007: record partnership of 212 regions and cities

For the fifth consecutive year, a record number of regions and cities will be official partners of the "OPEN DAYS – European Week of Regions and Cities" organised by the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and DG REGIO. In all, 212 representations from the regions and cities – compared with 135 in 2006 – will be participating in the biggest event on the regional development calendar, from 8 to 11 October 2007 in Brussels. These regions and cities are grouped into 24 "conglomerates" for the purposes of organising seminars and workshops on issues such as renewable energies, science and innovation, cooperation between regions and maritime policy. This year, for the first time, the Open Days will be proposing a series of seminars on the international dimension of regional policy, which will be attended by experts from third countries and international organisations. http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/od2007/index.cfm

Assessing the impact of cohesion policy on employment

A practical guide to "Measuring Structural Funds Employment Effects" is now available on the Inforegio website. This is the sixth working document in the series produced jointly by DG REGIO and DG EMPL for the 2007-2013 programming period. It provides a stage by stage, concrete bottom-up approach for measuring the impact on jobs. Three key steps are recommended: setting targets and estimating gross employment effects; converting this gross estimate into net effects; and finally, making an overall assessment. http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/working/sf2000_en.htm

Integrated urban development

The German Institute of Urban Affairs (Difu) was assigned, by the Federal Minister for Transport, Construction and Urban Development, to carry out a comparison of the national programmes and regional and local approaches to integrated development in deprived urban neighbourhoods of the 27 EU Member States. Published in English, French and German, the document "Integrated urban development, an essential condition for the sustainability of European cities" is the result of this work, taking a broad view of urban development in the light of the new programming period. http://www.bmvbs.de/Anlage/original_991530/Le-d-veloppement-urbain-int-gr_-condition-indispensable-la-durabi-lit-des-villes-europ-ennes.pdf

Cross-border cooperation: Council of Europe report

La coopération transfrontalière soulève plusieurs questions juridiques étroitement liées: nature et étendue des compétences, droit de conclure des accords et de créer des organismes transfrontaliers, taille du territoire concerné... The "Report on the current state of the administrative and legal framework of transfrontier cooperation in Europe", published by the Council of Europe, looks at the present institutional context, the operational mechanisms of cross-border cooperation and measures to facilitate it. The document then presents an analysis of cooperation in 28 countries. http://www.coe.int/t/E/Affaires_juridiques/D%E9mocratie_locale_et_r%E9gionale/Documentation_et_ressources/Bibliotheque/Cooperation_transfrontaliere/default.asp#TopOfPage

REGIO agenda

Dates	Event	Place
21-22 September 2007	EU Interregional Cooperation Forum: Celebrating INTERREG IIIC – Launching INTERREG IVC http://www.interreg3c.net/interreg4c/mailling/invitation.htm	Lisbon (P)
27-28 September 2007	4th Cohesion Forum http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/4thcohesionforum/index_en.cfm?nmenu=1	Brussels (B)
8-11 October 2007	"OPEN DAYS 2007 – European Week of Regions and Cities" http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/od2007/index.cfm	Brussels (B)
08-09 November 2007	"Cross-border territories: Day-to-day Europe" colloque-mot@la4emedimension.com	Lille (F)
26-27 November 2007	"Telling the story – Communicating Cohesion Policy Together" http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/country/commu/conferences/november07/index_en.cfm	Brussels (B)

Growing regions, Growing Europe.



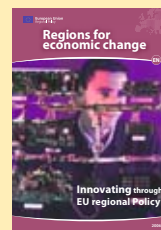
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/cohesion4/index_en.htm
Fourth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion
Available in 22 languages.

Regions for economic change – strengthening competitiveness through innovative products and technologies and prosperous communities.



http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/documents_en.cfm?nmenu=2
Available in 19 languages.

Regions for economic change – innovating through European Regional Policy.



The challenge of research and innovation for 2007-2013, illustrated through 15 ongoing projects.
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/documents_en.cfm?nmenu=2
Available in 19 languages.

The Urban Dimension in Community policies.



Community policies for cities in the 2007-2013 programming.
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/guides/urban/pdf/urbanguide1_en.pdf
Available in DE, EN and FR.

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/eyeq/index.cfm

The European Commission has designated 2007 "European Year of Equal Opportunities for All!", in support of the fight against all forms of discrimination, whether linked to the origin, beliefs, gender, age, handicap or sexual orientation of those who experience it. This site explains the objectives of the Year and how it works.



<http://www.managenergy.net/>

Launched in 2002 at the First European Conference for Local and Regional Energy Management Agencies, ManagEnergy is an initiative of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Energy and Transport. It aims to improve the communication and dissemination of information on renewable energies and the management of energy demand at local and regional level. The multilingual website is a central communication tool of the initiative.



<http://www.european-microfinance.org/>

The European Microfinance Network (EMN) was set up in April 2003 with financial support from the European Union and the French Caisse des dépôts et consignation. It was founded by the Association pour le Droit à l'Initiative Economique (ADIE, France), the New Economics Foundation (United Kingdom) and the firm Evers & Jung (Germany) and today has 53 members in 21 European countries. The network's vision is of "a society in which micro-entrepreneurs and all those who are socially and financially excluded have access to the full range of financial services that empower them to improve their lives." The EMN's website is accessible in French, English and Spanish.



<http://www.europe-innova.org/index.jsp>

Supported by the 6th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development and with more than 300 partners in 23 EU Member States, the Europe INNOVA network seeks to network, inform, assist and mobilise the key stakeholders in the field of entrepreneurial innovation, including business managers, policy-makers, investors and associations active in this field. The network's publications, in particular its studies on clusters and regional business networks in the new Member States, can be consulted online.



Inforegio website: the key pages available in 22 languages

"The Policy" and "The Means" are the first two sections of our new website (with their respective sub-sections) to be made available in 22 languages. Visitors can read in the languages of 27 Member States detailed information on the history, main aims and key elements of regional policy for 2007-2013.

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.htm

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