

Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

Opinion on how to overcome occupational segregation

The Opinion of the Advisory Committee does not necessarily reflect the positions of the Member States and does not bind the Member States

1. Introduction

While the number of women in the labour-market has increased over the past 20 years, women's access to certain occupational sectors is limited, remaining overrepresented in others. The entrenched **gender segregated labour-market remains a reality for both women and men in Europe today.**

In fact, women are overrepresented in sectors such as health (77% women), education (67% women), and the service sector (80%), while others are still male dominated, for example construction (91%), transport (80%), industry (69%) and agriculture (65%)¹. More women than men work in small and medium sized enterprises consisting of up to 50 employees, whereas the opposite is the case for men (over 100 employees). Women also outnumber men in the so-called "5Cs" occupations: catering, cleaning, caring, clerical and cashiering.

The labour-market is marked by **both horizontal and vertical segregation**. Horizontal segregation means that specific industries or sectors of the labour market are mostly made up of one gender. Vertical segregation on the other hand takes place where opportunities for career progression for a particular gender are narrowed. Vertical segregation is still widespread in all sectors. On average, just 4% of CEOs of listed companies are women and only some 22% of supervisory boards' members are women².

Both of these forms of gender segregation have to be addressed to overcome occupational segregation and to promote gender equality. The fact that women account for 60% of third level graduates in the EU and are on average better qualified, is in no way reflected in the labour-market – neither as to their positions (vertical segregation), nor their presence in employment (lower female employment rates) nor across the occupational spectrum. This means that there is a vast pool of untapped potential, an underutilisation of female and male talent, and a waste of resources and investment. Therefore, in order to promote and accelerate more competitive, sustainable and inclusive development and growth, as aimed the EU 2020 Strategy, as well as promoting gender equality, Europe needs to tackle occupational segregation, taking into account all the talent available in society (women and men), also engaging social partners and companies as major actors.

2. Context

The root causes of gender segregation....

Gender segregation is a consequence of gender patterns of socialisation, roles and expectations of what traditionally is seen as 'women's work' or 'men's work'. These attitudes can be reinforced, both consciously and unconsciously, by parents, family, peers, teachers, textbooks, children's books, the media, the working culture, employers, etc. Therefore, the path

¹ European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 5th Working Conditions Survey, 2012

² Latest data from the EU Commission Women and men in decision-making http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/business-finance/executives-non-executives/index_en.htm

towards gender segregated occupations starts **early in life, even before educational choices are being made and continues later**, steering women and men into subject choices at school, college and university that subsequently impact on their future career options. This raises the need not only for both men and women, but also for society as a whole, to better understand the consequences of education and career choices.

Insufficient or inefficient work-life balance policies or a family-friendly working environment, the lack of equal sharing of care responsibilities and **limited access to affordable child-care and care of other dependants** is often seen as the reason why women compromise on their careers and choose specific sectors, occupations, or part-time working arrangements. It also contributes to both vertical and horizontal gender segregation in the labour market. Addressing work-life balance for both women and men on an equal footing therefore remains a challenge to be faced if true gender equality in the labour market is the goal. Moreover, there is a possible misunderstanding / misrepresentation of the concept in the public, linking the ideas of work-life balance merely to women and their ability to juggle the many duties at home and at work, often combined with the care for children and /or the elderly. Men / fathers are often absent in the discussion, making it seem as though the issue of work-life balance does not concern them. As a result, work-life balance as a key policy and strategy becomes yet another woman's issue, and therefore typically marginalised and labelled non-essential, especially in male dominated sectors. Making work-life balance an issue for both women and men is therefore crucial in order not to reinforce gender stereotypes.

Moreover, the economic crisis has limited the capacity of the public and private sectors to revise wages and occupational structures, work arrangements and recruitment and retention practices, and limited the advancement and improvement of public care services. Such revision would be needed to tackle gender segregation, notably vertical segregation.

...and its consequences

The consequences of gender segregation in the labour market are manifold, but are notably translated into undervaluing the sectors where women work which in turn **impacts on pay, pensions, lifelong earnings and poverty**.

In addition, vertical segregation, which exist in every sector, further widens the gender pay gap – currently 16.3% in the EU – and hence gender gap in earnings over the life cycle.

As for pensions, the on-going shift from statutory state pensions towards second and third pillar schemes may widen the gender pension gap. Women's access to occupational pension schemes is limited, due, inter alia, to horizontal and vertical gender segregation in the labour market. In the predominantly female sectors, scheme conditions tend to be less favourable and the overall availability of pension schemes – and of second pillar schemes in particular – limited and contribution based schemes rarely take into account care-related breaks and involuntary part-time work. Second and third pillar schemes are often particularly tailored to uninterrupted full-time work³.

It has also been observed that occupational segregation has a **negative impact on the effectiveness and functioning of the labour market** as such. The low representation of many women and men in a wide variety of professions and occupations is a waste of human capital and a lack of return of investment. This means that many capable and educated women and men are prevented from working in certain occupations where they could be beneficial and grow as professionals.

³ [“The Gender Gap in Pensions in the EU”](#), Bettio, F., Betti G., and Tinios P. report for the European Commission 2013.

Segregation can exacerbate bottlenecks on the labour market. Evidence shows that labour shortages appear in segregated occupations⁴. For instance, the low proportion of women in STEM fields of study and occupations makes a significant impact because graduates of these fields are in high demand in the labour market.

Tackling gender segregation: common objectives, diverse stakeholders

Some positive initiatives have been taken to address occupational segregation (see annexe for examples). However, despite all the efforts made in recent decades to achieve gender equality and overcome occupational segregation (both at EU and national level), available data and current trends show that occupational segregation is a persistent challenge in all Member States.

As is well known, occupational segregation is related to a mixture of economic and socio-cultural factors and policies. Hence, this complex issue needs to be addressed comprehensively and in partnerships with the following stakeholders, which are crucial to overcome segregation:

- education and training institutions and professionals at all levels (early childhood education and care, school, vocational training, higher education, continuous training),
- children, youths, parents and families, friends and peers, sport and other celebrities;
- career guidance professionals, private and public employment services;
- social partners;
- companies as well as the public service as a major employer;
- women's organisations;
- the media, social media and advertisement / music / film industries;
- policy makers.

Moreover, it is crucial to combat gender stereotypes in all age groups, ranging from very young children to the older population. In general, **everyone** should be involved, i.e. men and women of all ages. **Special focus should lie on young people** (children, pupils, students), as they have to be well-informed about career choices. Hence, schools and universities, but also families should be targeted. At the same time, it is of great importance that employers are involved as well, since they play a key role in promoting gender equality and combating segregation, e.g. by changing recruitment, retaining and promotion policies. Evidence suggests that diverse teams are more effective and more creative. They are also more conducive to happiness: women and men's well-being is higher in gender-mixed occupations.

3. Recommendations and possible actions

In a globalised economy, policies tackling occupational segregation would benefit from EU impulsion and coordination, which can build on the many existing good practices (see annexe for examples) but need a **more systematic approach to address the issue in all its complexity**.

Women should be given educational choices to expand their education and career options into areas where men are predominant and into new and growing work opportunities (like the digital and green economy). **Men, too, should be given educational and career choices in "female" dominated fields** (especially the care economy, but also prima-

⁴ Mapping and analysing bottleneck vacancies in EU labour markets , report for the European Commission, 2014

ry and secondary education). For too long, the focus was merely on encouraging women to enter men-dominated arenas, but men have so far had very little encouragement to enter female-dominated areas. The following sectors should therefore be targeted: ICT, sciences, green and digital sectors, engineering, but also social work, the healthcare care sector and education, etc.

Since initiatives have so far been scattered, mostly based on voluntariness, and principally found in big companies, a more comprehensive strategy would **focus both on the supply and the demand side**. The latter would include, among others, addressing working arrangements, health and safety and the gender pay gap. Another issue is to focus more on policies or initiatives to narrow the differences in life course patterns between genders – e.g. promoting continuity of women’s labour market participation, through accessible and affordable care services, leave provision for both parents, involving men in more care activities, etc. –, as discontinuity of career is what pushes women into certain segments of the labour market and contributes to the “glass ceiling”.

It must also be noted that while research and policy-making should continue to focus on work-life balance, and equal sharing of care and household responsibilities, more attention should also be given to other potential reasons that shape women's and men's choices.

a) Promoting non-stereotypical education, training and career choices

The EU should:

- Stimulate and support Member States to **ensure that educational curricula at all levels eliminate gender stereotypes**, assuring that professional paths are gender neutral and not conditioned by cultural stereotypes.
- Support Member States to introduce **gender equality and gender mainstreaming as a part of teacher training at all levels and as part of the training for career guidance professionals**. It is crucial to ensure that career guidance professionals have gender awareness and effectively carry out their role in providing non-stereotypical advice and counselling that subsequently impact on gender occupational segregation.
- Support Member States to increase **gender awareness among parents and teachers, education boards and authorities** at all levels of the educational system.
- Stimulate and support Member States to ensure that the **educational system is flexible**. Too often educational systems are not flexible enough and set pupils too early (at the age of 15 or even earlier) on a trajectory for a specific job, and pupils can no longer change their core subjects and hence are less flexible in their career choices. Graduation from school should not prejudice career choices.
- Promote adult education to ensure the possibility for both men and women to change career ways throughout the life course
- Support Member States in performing **extensive reviews of current educational material with a view to gender equality**, so that positive messages on the benefits of a gender equal society are conveyed and appropriate role models provided.
- Contribute to the elaboration of non-stereotypical **educational tools** in different languages, user-friendly and easily accessible to the teaching community. Creating and disseminating powerful nonstereotyped boy and girl characters in an attractive format for

children (comics, game applications, etc.). Highlight women's contribution in the arts, science, politics, religion and other domains in teaching material.

- Promote regular **twinning programmes between schools** of Member States on gender equality and transnational projects to enhance less stereotyped career or occupational choices, thus strengthening programmes such as Erasmus+.
- Ensure that vocational education and training, including **apprenticeship systems** and programmes, mitigate occupational segregation and that funds and initiatives, such as the **Youth Guarantee**, are used to support young women and men taking on jobs in occupations still dominated by the opposite gender.
- Dedicate more funding to proactive educational campaigns tackling gender stereotypes.
- Promote education and training programmes to support girls and women's entry into STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).
- Fund shadowing, mentoring and training programmes for women's entry into research, ICT and bio-medical sciences to close the gender gaps.
- Support free-of-charge, gender-fair career advice services for pupils and students.

b) Tackling segregation in employment

- Encourage at least **big and medium-sized companies as well as public administrations to adopt gender equality plans**, which is quite effective in some EU Member States⁵.

Representing more than 99% of all European businesses and providing two out of three private sector jobs and contributing more than half of the total value-added created by businesses in the EU, **SMEs** should be encouraged and supported to tackle gender segregation. It is also important to foster female entrepreneurship.

Moreover, the **public sector**, which has traditionally been a key employer of women, should make stronger efforts to promote equal opportunities and to address gender imbalances in decision making positions, the gender pay gap, as well as horizontal occupational segregation. The glass ceiling remains a barrier to women's progression in female dominated sectors, for example, in teaching and nursing where leadership roles continue to be dominated by men. Action need to be taken to ensure that work-life balance responsibilities do not disadvantage women in particular.

- The EU should support Member States and companies as regards the implementation and monitoring of **business equality plans** through **financial and technical support**, including **free tools and services** to facilitate companies' gender based assessment and guidance to foster true gender equality.

⁵ Spanish Gender Equality Act has been quite effective compelling big companies in this regard. However, with more than 99% of all European businesses being SMEs and providing two out of three private sector jobs and contributing more than half of the total value-added created by businesses in the EU, regulations focused on SMEs should be taken into consideration, as is the case in France, where companies employing more than 50 people are required to adopt specific measures on gender equality.

- The EU should promote innovative working-time arrangement measures attractive to both companies and workers without gender prejudices, in particular to men.
- Promote and encourage full time jobs and “breadwinner wages” in both male and female dominated sectors.
- Support Member States to **enhance the employability of women and to open up** traditionally male dominated sectors for them, as well as to enhance the employability of men to move into traditionally female dominated sectors.
- **Promote transparency and gender neutrality regarding access to employment, recruitment, wages, promotion and retention policies**, access to training and vocational training, etc. Examples of practical tools to retain workers include: discussing at an early stage with employees their career expectations as well as the work-life balance needs of both women and men and how to combine them with company’s needs; protecting women and men from discrimination because of work-life balance commitments and ensuring equal access to opportunities and promotion; conducting interviews with women and men leaving the company to understand the reasons for doing so in order to further refine the company’s human resources policy; conducting regular staff surveys to check employees’ satisfaction.
- Monitor at a European level, the gender impact of the socio-economic crisis on occupational segregation, pay, pensions and working conditions and update existing studies on the impact of the first years of the crisis.
- Put greater emphasis on addressing gender segregation in relevant projects supported by the **European Social Fund (ESF)**, including those targeting inclusion of disadvantaged groups in the labour market. Ensure that the 20% of the ESF allocated to combat poverty and social exclusion are used to support the training and job creation of young women and men taking up still segregated occupations. The issue of occupational segregation is too often marginalised in the implementation phase. Better control mechanism on the side of the EU targeting the beneficiaries might help reach better results. Management authorities of the ESF should be specifically trained in gender equality to enable an effective gender mainstreaming approach. As a result, more actions and activities will truly address occupational segregation.
- Value the sectors where women work: **review the Directive on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast)**⁶ to ensure that the principle of equal opportunities, equal treatment and equal pay for work of equal value between women and men is fully respected. Enhancing greater wage transparency is key to prevent and discourage discriminatory practices aiming at undervaluing women’s work.
- Promote **job evaluation of predominantly female and male occupations** in order to secure equal pay for work of equal value and eliminate the influence of prejudices and stereotypes when determining the remuneration of men and women, thereby promoting non-discrimination and non-segregation in hiring.
- Promote training in conducting equality-proofed job evaluation.
- Ensure that gender is mainstreamed in the **EU Strategic Framework on Health and**

⁶ *Directive 2006/54/EC*

Safety at Work 2014-2020 and that psycho-social risks are included in occupational risks and preventative measures.

- Ensure that **occupational health and safety covers both mental and physical health** as gender segregated occupations represent different risks for women (more people-orientated) and men (more physical risks).
- Carry out a Europe-wide study on well-being at work and exposure to stress and risks by occupation and by sector, taking into account the impact of gender.
- In order to tackle segregation, the EU institutions should systematically impose strong requirements on **gender equality in public procurement**, as well as motivate and assist member States in doing so.

As regards vertical segregation in particular

- **Support women in gaining access to positions of responsibility**, including steering committees and boards of directors, through more **transparent** promotion and selection procedures, female leadership training and personal development initiatives, including facilitating cross-mentoring, coaching and networking opportunities. Provide training for women and men in leadership on diversity and gender equal power sharing. Measures should be implemented both for the private and public sector, and address both full-time and part-time workers.
- Promote **gender-based targets for all levels of management**, including boards within public and private companies.

c) Ensuring the involvement of social partners and companies

In order to better involve social partners and companies, a number of actions can be taken:

- Strengthen the role of **social dialogue** and collective bargaining at EU, national, sectoral and company level with a gender focus. Ensure that women are represented at every level of social dialogue and collective bargaining, including in decision-making.
- **Raising awareness among companies** on the latest international studies considering gender equality as a productive and necessary investment in order to attain better company performance, an increase of labour productivity, enhanced governance, an increase of workplace innovation, and a reduction in employee turnover. Moreover, companies and social partners should be involved in awareness-raising campaigns for young people.
- **Putting companies with gender imbalance in their workforce** and interested in attracting new and diverse talent in **close contact with secondary schools** so that children and young people can visit, participate in workshops highlighting the contribution and role model of the underrepresented sex and know more about the type of career they offer.
- Promoting and supporting networks of companies with outstanding policies and practices on gender equality to **share their experiences of the benefits of gender equality for growth and productivity, etc. with other companies** (at national and EU-level).
- **Disseminate information** on existing gender mainstreaming initiatives.

- **Providing free tools and services** that may be used by companies in order to assess gender equality in their organisations and providing them with technical and economic support, if possible, in the implementation and monitoring of their business equality plans.
- Promote **workplace nurseries and subsidised childcare services** and point out their value for fathers.
- **Promote tolerance and acceptance** at the workplace of flexible forms of employment and reconciliation patterns.

d) Promoting the sharing of household and family responsibilities, and reconciliation policies, especially for men

- Encourage Member States to endorse longer full paid paternity leaves and individual and not transferable parental leaves and to bring about a cultural change whereby women are not perceived as a risk due to (perceived and potential) caring responsibilities.
- Go beyond the Barcelona targets to **support provisions and incentives for accessible, affordable and quality care services** for dependent people (children under 6, elderly and people with disabilities), as well as strengthening social policies in general.
- Change the current male-dominated corporate culture so that **reconciliation is no longer a women's issue but becomes a whole-company issue**, particularly regarding time-tables, presence in the workplace, etc.
- Identify **possibilities for non-linear career development paths** for both women and men (alternating periods of higher professional involvement and periods of greater family responsibility) as an alternative to a culture of unnecessarily long working hours.
- Analyse and, if necessary, revise taxation systems and family policies to assure that they support gender-equal economic independence and the individualisation of rights.

e) Awareness raising and challenging gender stereotypes in and through the media

EU Institutions should collectively undertake awareness raising programmes and campaigns to **break gender stereotypes**, by undertaking and/or promoting:

- Publicity campaigns to raise awareness among the population **concerning family co-responsibility in the household, and questioning values and behaviour of traditional male / female role division** in order to motivate a real change in gender-roles, with a special focus on new masculinities.
- Awareness-raising on gender stereotypes addressing the **attitudes and behaviour of boys and men**, particularly in areas such as family roles, domestic responsibilities, violence against women and the sexualisation of women in society and in the workplace. Fatherhood and manhood should be displayed in their variety, showing that there are a lot of different ways of being a man / father and that caring, e.g., is also a male feature.
- Awareness-raising campaigns and disseminating good equality practices addressing

prevailing stereotypes about presumed capabilities and aspiration of women and men.

- Campaigns highlighting the **assets women can bring into male-dominated sectors, and men into female dominated ones**. Campaigns should also highlight the possibilities for both girls / boys, women / men to pursue careers in all sectors.
- Public campaigns to acknowledge and give **visibility of women's achievements and contributions** throughout history, highlighting their support to the growth of economy and the development of a better society.
- **Cultural changes in the working culture** in relation to work-life balance and the use of time, especially in decision-making positions, including the dissemination of best practices from organisations, companies and other stakeholders promoting social co-responsibility and reconciliation of private, family and working life and a rational use of time by women and men.
- Promote a **non-sexist language and image of women** in the media, including social media, and deconstructing sexist language.
- Promote **Media Gender Codes of Ethics**, so that issues relating to women, such as pregnancy, rape or any other gender-based violence, are dealt with in a non-sexist manner. The media plays a critical role in ensuring gender equality as well as changing attitudes and mindsets.
- A special day, the "**Gender Equal Occupation Day**", should be celebrated annually all over the EU and should raise awareness of the occupational segregation. It could be based on already existing initiatives such as "Girls' Days" and "Boys' Days"⁷. An EU-wide campaign similar to "White Ribbon" focused on labour segregation could also be created.

f) Strengthening the gender perspective in all the EU governance mechanisms and EU initiatives

- In the context of the **Europe 2020 Strategy**, address occupational segregation. In documenting the employment target ensure that not only heads are counted, but also the sectors in which employment is increasing / decreasing and the quality of employment (working hours, pay, etc.).
- Additionally, **gender equality should be fully mainstreamed into all relevant EU strategies, policies and funding programmes**. In particular it should be included in social protection, education and lifelong learning, health and safety at work, economic and monetary union, etc., when designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies. Gender mainstreaming should systematically include **gender impact assessment, gender budgeting, monitoring and evaluation**, including specific gender qualitative and quantitative indicators. The EU Institutions should also induce Member States in this endeavour.
- Ensure that **new areas**, such as the Digital Agenda or the Energy Union, are fully gender mainstreamed.

⁷ See annex and <http://resourcecentre.etuc.org/gendertoolkit/#/priorities/addressing-gender-roles>

g) Compilation and dissemination of best practices

- The EU should **elaborate and regularly update** a compendium of best practices tackling occupational segregation, with useful recommendations, links and tools. These best practices should be easily accessible for Member States and the relevant Stakeholders.
- A European follow-up mechanism on the use of the above referred information and tools and on the implementation of the related recommendations would also be desirable.

h) Conduct research, particularly in relation to occupational pension schemes

- Carry out a comparative EU-wide study on the number of women participating in occupational pension schemes and their respective entitlements as compared to men's and on the treatment of involuntary career interruptions in these schemes.
- Develop further research to evaluate 2nd and 3rd pillar pension schemes from a gender perspective; collect and disseminate best practices and monitor the rules of the pension schemes and their implementation.
- Monitor that all funded pension schemes comply with the principle of gender equality as requested by the European Court of Justice ruling C-236/09 (Test-Achats) and introduce unisex tariffs.

Annex: good practices

In September 2015, the European Commission organised a mutual learning seminar on how to overcome segregation in education and in the labour market, with a focus on three practices⁸:

- The Dutch policy on encouraging girls to choose STEM
- A Charter promoting women in STEM industries in Northern Ireland
- Practices at promoting male pedagogues in Denmark.

This annex provides additional examples.

Promoting non-stereotypical education, training and career choices

Girls Day, Boys Day is organised in different countries under different formats⁹. It allows young people to experience working life for the first time and to discover atypical jobs, traditionally held either by women or by men.

In **Belgium** (French-speaking Community)¹⁰, *Girls day, Boys day* is to break down gender stereotyping in the choice of school and career paths. It enables young people to have a first hands-on experience and to discover unusual jobs, which are traditionally associated with either men or women. *Girls day, Boys day* is aimed at pupils in primary and/or secondary school, at a time when they are faced with choosing a career. There are two phases to *Girls day, Boys day*: first, workshops on job stereotyping issues are held at schools, and then pupils get to meet people with jobs not traditionally associated with their gender who can share their insights.

In **Germany**, *Boys' Day* and *New Paths for Boys* (Neue Wege für Jungs) address male youths in order to open up new perspectives for their future, to widen the range of both their role options and their career choices as well as to strengthen their social skills. *Girls' Day* is an annual event (usually in April) when enterprises, universities, and other institutions take on girls for a one-day work experience or work placement offering first-hand insights into possibilities and opportunities of jobs and professions usually perceived as atypical for women.

The **German project** („my test ground“) is a website¹¹ on all subjects concerning “gender” for boys (and girls) by boys (and girls), according to a proposal made by the advisory council on boys’ policies – a body made up of scientists, researchers, practitioners and boys (!). The focus of the website is on the activity of boys and girls themselves. A first evaluation shows:

- It creates options for participation, takes all participants seriously, brings them together, takes up initiatives and triggers action.
- The project makes participants discuss gender related issues (e.g. stereotypes!).
- Existing competences of participants in the fields of the media and gender are connected and widened by the cooperation within and between the editorial groups (made up of youths) as well as with the permanent editorial staff.

⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/other-institutions/good-practices/index_en.htm

⁹ Grand-Duché de Luxembourg: www.girlsday.lu ; France: www.girls-day.org; Allemagne: www.girls-day.de; Autriche: www.girlsday.at; Pays-Bas: www.girlsday.nl; Suisse: www.nationalerzukunftstag.ch/)

¹⁰ www.gdbd.be

¹¹ www.meintestgelaende.de

- Good relations between participants and staff are crucial. A protected space creates trust and openness for debate.
- Experts exchange information on the different challenges the project offers in the fields of both the media and gender.
- Boys and girls are interested in gender issues, and ready to get involved.
- The possibility of getting into contact with youths from all over Germany is quite attractive.
- The issues discussed, and the feedback are strong motivators for participation.
- The wide range of different boys and girls participating stimulates exchange, while at the same time difference and diversity become normal.

The **Spanish** Secretariat of State for Social Services and Equality, through the Women's Institute and for Equal Opportunities in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport and the Regional bodies for Education in the Autonomous Communities, are currently developing a Project called "**Equal Education (Plurales)**"¹². Plurales aims to designing guidelines to incorporate equal education into quality management systems currently used in the educational field; designing an intervention model to produce, implement, monitor and evaluate Equality Plans in school centres; and provide instruments, tools and capabilities for a successful equal education model.

In **Portugal**, the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG) published **4 Guides for education on "Gender and Citizenship"**, one guide for teachers of pre-school (ages 3 to 6) and 3 Guides for teachers of basic education (1st grade to 9th grade). These Guides were drafted by experts on gender and education and validated by the Ministry of Education and Science (MEC). The main purpose of these guides is to mainstream gender in formal educational practices within schools thus gradually eliminating gender stereotyping. The guides were designed to contribute to an effective education for citizenship for girls and boys with strong gender dimension, ensuring that it became a cross-cutting initiative in the nation curriculum.

The Guides include some key subjects such as Body, Health, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Leadership and Vocational Choices and propose activities to mainstream gender issues in several school projects such as health, sexual and reproductive health education, security (including internet security), and non-violent relationships.

Results and reports showed that these Guides helped teachers, highlighting the usefulness of training and follow-up actions for the implementation. The implementation of the Guides project, which was a pilot experience, received a positive evaluation.

Focus on specific sectors

In **Germany**, the federal initiative "*More Men in Early Childhood Education and Care*" (ECEC) (*Männer in Kitas*) aims at opening up ECEC for men, and at raising the number of men active in this field. Boys and girls profit from having both male and female role models. The initiative also supports boys and men in making career choices according to their personal interests and abilities rather than to traditional gender stereotypes.

Komm mach MINT (Go STEM), the National Pact for Women in STEM Careers brings together politics, business, science and the media and is designed to change the image of

¹² More information about Plurales Project can be found in English at:
<http://www.inmujer.gob.es/areasTematicas/educacion/programas/docs/MemoriaMaquetadaEN.pdf>

MINT professions in society, with the aim of increasing young women's interest in scientific and technical degree courses and attracting female university graduates into STEM-careers.

In **Austria**, the female-specific ALMP-programme “ *Women in Crafts and Technology*” (*Frauen in Handwerk und Technik, FiT*) offers certified qualifications in handicraft and technology (apprenticeships, technical vocational schools and colleges, universities of applied science), i.e. “non-traditional” professions, to improve women’s income and career opportunities. The programme also includes preparatory and supporting measures, basic technical know-how, counselling and supervision. According to a recent evaluation study (2014) FiT has been very successful: 70 % of participants are employed six months after the programme, 63 % work in the profession for which they were trained; 85 % of participants rate their new employment situation better than their previous one and 82 % are comfortable with the type and contents of their occupation.

A new online platform “My Technology” (www.meine-technik.at) was presented on 10 April 2015 facilitating access to projects and funding opportunities in order to create interest of women and girls for technology. The online information tool for girls and women, for committed teachers, companies and parents aims at inspiring more women and girls to opt for careers in technical professions. While numerous outstanding projects and affirmative action programs are already in place to reduce barriers girls and women face in accessing technical and science-oriented jobs in Austria, the new platform presents a central and focused tool that refines and provides information on existing measures in a comprehensive and attractive way.

In **Slovakia**, the project "You too in IT"¹³ aims to provide all relevant and available information to girls and young women regarding information technologies. The initiative has a track of successful events, education activities and courses reaching out to many girls and young women. Recently, the Slovak Ministry of Education launched a comprehensive campaign promoting science to both girls and boys¹⁴. The campaign is inclusive and as of its launch it has been providing positive examples and images of girls in science and technologies.

The **Flemish government** tries to promote a balanced gender distribution in mathematics, sciences and technology via its STEM action plan 2012-2020¹⁵. The basic principle of the action plan is to increase the human capital for STEM by creating more attractive educational and career perspectives within scientific institutions, companies, sectors and education. It sets the following targets for 2020:

		2011	2020
1	Ratio of girls in secondary education (3rd grade)	27,40 %	33,33%
2	Market share of STEM in professional bachelors	23,82%	27,82%
3	Ratio of girls in professional STEM bachelors	21,13%	25,20%
4	Ratio of girls in academic bachelors	29,02%	33,02%
5	Ration of girls in academic STEM bachelors	33,50%	33,50% (*)

(*) This number shouldn’t increase as such but there should be a shift towards disciplines like computing and ICT, engineering...

¹³ www.ajtyvit.sk

¹⁴ www.veda-technika.sk

¹⁵ <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/STEM>

In the meanwhile concrete actions were set up relating to girls specifically:

- Development of a STEM tool for boys and girls in primary schools via which children gain insight in their talents and passions in an interactive manner. The tool will indicate clearly whether the youngster has a predilection for STEM.
- Using role models to increase the efficiency of the communication about branches of studies, especially women if the goal is to increase recruiting female students (men if the goal is the recruit more men, etc.).
- Questionnaire for youngsters in secondary education relating to the available study materials. A specific component of the inquiry is the role of educational materials in the choice of study subjects. It inquires for example if the information meets young people's, and girls' in particular, wishes and needs when trying to make an informed choice.
- The organisers of 'Olympiades' (yearly competitions in Flanders for students in the 5th and 6th year of secondary education about technology, chemistry, physics, etc.) must undertake action to involve more girls and increase the visibility of participating girls. This is from now on inscribed as a criterion for governmental subsidization.

At the European level, the European Research Area (ERA) was mentioned as a good initiative, which could be improved by taking more into account research fields in which men are underrepresented.

The **Council of Europe** has published a compilation of good practices from member states on "Gender Equality and the Media at National Level"¹⁶, including national and targeted media campaigns, specific legislation, prizes/awards for non-stereotyped portrayal of women, electronic databases with experts that traditionally appear less in media coverage, inventorying of best practices in the field of gender imaging, training courses directed at mass media professionals, relevant data collection and competitions. In addition, the Council of Europe has published a Handbook¹⁷ which includes numerous examples of good practices from member states in the field of gender equality and media.

Overcoming gender occupational segregation on the labour market

European social partners' toolkit on gender equality

A 'toolkit' of initiatives to promote gender equality has been launched by European employers and trade union organisations. About 100 initiatives from 25 European countries are contained in the online toolkit accessible via:

WW.RESOURCECENTRE.ETUC.ORG/GENDERTOOLKIT

or

WWW.ERC-ONLINE.EU/GENDERTOOLKIT

The initiatives include specific actions on addressing gender roles:

- A work environment based on social dialogue that offers work-life balance as a prerequisite for successfully attracting and retaining talented employees at BOLIDEN Sweden, a mining company

¹⁶ See at:

http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/03themes/women_media/Gender%20Equality%20and%20the%20media%20at%20national%20level%20-%20compilation%20of%20good%20practices%20from%20member%20states.pdf

¹⁷ [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/03themes/women_media/Handbook%20on%20the%20implementation%20of%20Recommendation%20\(2013\)1%20of%20the%20Committee%20of%20Ministers%20on%20gender%20equality%20and%20media.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/03themes/women_media/Handbook%20on%20the%20implementation%20of%20Recommendation%20(2013)1%20of%20the%20Committee%20of%20Ministers%20on%20gender%20equality%20and%20media.pdf)

- A collective agreement concluded by Saint-Gobain Italy for the promotion of “Positive Actions” in favour of gender equality at work, such as targeted training for women, facilitation of access to employment and career progression.
- Actions to encourage girls to choose STEM - science, technology, engineering and mathematics - skills in education: MintRelation and Girls’Day, in Germany.

The initiatives show the added value of the social dialogue between employers and trade unions, and highlight their commitment and key role in enhancing gender equality throughout Europe. Through such dialogue, reaching equality between women and men can be speeded up.

Background: the European social partners – ETUC, BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME and CEEP – signed a ‘Framework of Actions on Gender Equality’ in 2005 to promote gender equality on the labour market and in the workplace. In 2009 they adopted a final evaluation report of this instrument. In 2014 they launched an online tool to promote a selection of successful initiatives showing how the organisations’ members aim to achieve their common goals.

The **Slovak Ministry** of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family implements a project called “**Family and Work**” which uses affirmative action to support employment of mothers of small children. The aim is to help women sustain their work skills and competitiveness while helping them back into the labour market. The project only started in 2015, hence it is too early to assess the effectiveness and impact of the project. However, the response from the employers has been very positive so far and many applications by the employers have been submitted.

In **Spain**, according to the *3/2007 Gender Equality Act*¹⁸, companies with over 250 employees are obliged to formulate and implement **Gender Equality Plans**, which aim to eliminate discrimination on grounds of sex and cover a range of issues, such as a access to employment, occupational classification, promotion and training, remuneration, organisation of working hours to favour reconciliation of working, personal and family life on equal terms for women and men, etc. The Gender Equality Plans are said to have an indirect impact on horizontal and vertical segregation within the company, and thus in employment. Small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) are provided with free technical assistance and advice service, both of which provide useful information and tools for companies, organisations and individuals regarding gender equality in employment and working conditions. A regular bulletin on gender equality, which is also automatically distributed to approximately 2.700 people, has revealed to be very useful. Financial support for the voluntary design and implementation of gender equality plans is also provided for companies from 31 to 249 employees that are not obliged to have them by law. Trade unions have published various publications to improve the negotiations of equality plans.

Since 2010, a **Business Equality Label** is granted annually by the Secretariat of State for Social Services and Equality to distinguish employers for outstanding achievements in the implementation of equal treatment and equal opportunities policies between women and men. Promoting gender-balance representation in decision-making, establishing neutral remuneration criteria and job classification systems free from gender bias and promoting co-responsibility policies for both, women and especially for men, are some of the subjects reviewed and evaluated by the Evaluation Committee. This business equality label may be

¹⁸ ₁ An English version of the Spanish Gender Equality Act can be found at: http://www.igualdadenaempresa.es/recursos/normativa/docs/LO_3-2007_EN.pdf

used in the company's commercial dealings and for advertising purposes. Furthermore, a network of companies which have been awarded this equality label has been created for the share and exchange of information and good practices on gender equality in the workplace. The companies use an e-room tool to share their experiences and good practices, problems solving, etc., additionally, seminars are also organised with the support of the State Secretariat for Social Services and Equality.

Additionally, the Spanish **Promociona Programme**¹⁹ is enabling companies to develop and retain female talent within their organisations, by providing an excellent leadership and personal development training programme, including a 360-degree assessment, cross mentoring, coaching and counselling opportunities, as well as by supporting female candidates in creating and strengthening their professional network through which companies detect candidate's potential in their organizations and commit to promoting them in their company. The programme also intends to promote cultural change within the participant's organisations. However, the key element of the programme is that participating companies nominate their own female participant to the programme and commit themselves, before starting the programme, to promote their candidates when possible in a near future.

The programme initiated in 2013 is being extremely successful, with a large impact in the media and a significant positive feedback from the companies involved and the business community. Due to the huge demand, in the second edition, the programme extended the number of vacancies up to 30 extra participants. Those extra places were fully paid by the companies involved. Up to now, 15% of the participants from the first edition and the 11% from the second edition, who are still under training, have been promoted to top leadership positions. Moreover the 110 participants have created a "Women Managers and Board Directors Association" in order to strengthen their network and improve their shared experiences and knowledge.

Promociona has also been linked to another project, called "Mas mujeres, mejores empresas" (More women, better companies) through which companies sign a voluntary agreement with the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality, in which they commit themselves to reaching specific targets regarding gender balance in decision-making positions and boards of directors. Companies also commit themselves to develop and implement targeted measures to achieve those voluntary targets in a four year period. Annual monitoring and an interim evaluation between the State Secretariat and the company involved are also foreseen.

In **Belgium**, for several years now, the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men has run a programme to encourage companies to provide equal opportunities for male and female staff. It has set up a **database of good practices in companies** which is intended to raise awareness of initiatives in (private, public or charitable) organisations that have made gender equality their primary concern and have drawn up and implemented an effective gender-equality policy. The 60 or so entries in the database present positive and original practices in different types of organisations across an array of sectors in Belgium (banking, agri-food, public transport, catering and hospitality, consultancy, IT, pharmaceutical, humanitarian, etc.). The objective of the database is to constitute a source of inspiration for other organisations by presenting as many different types of gender-equality initiatives, solutions and programmes as possible, thereby enabling those organisations to draw on others' experiences.

In 2014 this database of good practices in companies fostering gender equality was updated. In terms of the working method, the Institute called on an external consultant who contacted the companies, then selected several good practices and drew up a ranking on the basis of the effectiveness of the measure, the efficiency of its implementation, the added value, etc.

¹⁹ <http://www.proyectopromociona.com/index.php/en/>

The measures selected for the database guarantee a win-win situation for employers and their staff: greater work satisfaction and well-being through gender equality are reflected in better results within organisations.

A thematic selection of good practices can be made via a search engine. Some of these good practices deal with gender stereotyping and segregation. The database of good practices in companies is available at <http://www.iefhaction.be/>.

In **Malta**, the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) is working on a set of initiatives to combat vertical segregation and empower more women to participate in decision-making positions. A mentoring programme is giving the opportunity to women aspiring to hold decision-making positions to be mentored by successful professionals thus acquiring skills and knowledge to advance in their careers. In addition, a Directory of Professional Women has been launched to strengthen the visibility of these women and enhance their opportunities to be appointed to boards, committees and other decision-making positions. This Directory highlights information on the qualifications and skills of professional women in their respective areas, including areas that are traditionally associated with men (such as engineering, the built environment and sciences).

The good practice network

In order to further encourage initiatives by private and public companies and to have them shared by as many companies as possible, the Institute has decided to set up regular exchanges between those companies already in the database. Three such meetings have taken place since the end of 2014. The theme of the first one was the influence of sexist stereotypes on women's and men's careers. Three companies explained how they dealt with this issue: first, a bank that organises training on unconscious gender stereotyping. The training was followed by members of the management board, then by the rest of the staff. A technology company with mostly male staff organised an awareness day to make female engineering students more aware of jobs in technology. The day was a success since around 50 young women took part. Finally, a company which includes female representation at management level and on the management board in its annual and strategic objectives and which, therefore, undertakes to make gender diversity one of the key principles underpinning its management.

The next - ongoing - step is to update the database regularly and to open it up to other companies.

In order to further expand the 'good practices' this type of network could be developed at the European level, on a purely voluntary basis of course, and for the information to be circulated either through a newsletter or via an 'award'-type event.

In **the United Kingdom**, legislation has been introduced to make Gender Pay Reporting mandatory. From 2016, companies with 250 or more employees will be required to carry out equal pay reviews and publish their gender pay gaps. This is the successful outcome of trade Union campaigns to implement Section 78 of the Equality Act 2010 introduced in the UK.

In **Portugal**, between 2006 and 2009 the project "Revalue work to promote gender equality", promoted by a Trade Union Confederation in a partnership with several organisations, including the ILO office in Lisbon, was developed. This was an experimental project aimed to develop and test a **job evaluation method** free from gender bias, centred on the value of work,

allowing the application of the principle "equal pay for equal work or work of equal value" without a gender bias, and may be applied to various activity sectors.

This methodology for assessing the value of work without gender bias allows comparing the value of the professions mainly occupied by men or by women. It is an analytical method that allows a systematic analysis, evaluating and comparing the characteristics of each job in a company, organisation or sector, using common criteria precise and detailed, in order to establish its relative value. Within a framework of equal pay, this method measures how jobs which are predominantly female and predominantly male jobs but of equal value are paid equally. It is therefore an effective method to identify and eliminate the influence of prejudices and stereotypes when determining the remuneration of men and women, thereby improving low-wage earners, where mostly women are.

That is, the methodology is an appropriate tool to measure and compare the value of the professions in a non-discriminatory manner, and is designed to support organisations that want to implement a process for evaluating jobs with no gender bias, in order to revalue the work in enterprises and contribute to the objectivity of the HR management process and work organisation in order to promote equal pay between men and women.

During the project this methodology was tested in several companies (mainly SME) of the food and beverage sector. As a result of this process some companies realised that some of the occupational categories were gender segregated and that the occupations mainly performed by women were less valued than the ones performed by men; they also realised that there were a number of female occupations where the working conditions were much worse than the working conditions of male dominated occupations. These findings allowed the companies to improve the working conditions, to review some occupational categories and in one company some women moved to occupations that were typically seen as men's occupation.

These results show some impacts in overcome gender occupational segregation on some specific small companies.

After the project finished the job evaluation method developed within the frame of such project was applied in 3 economic sectors (textile industry, footwear industry and woollen industry). The result of this work of job evaluation in these sectors was the identification of the occupational categories in each sector which are gender segregated and where also the pay gap is gendered. This diagnosis allowed the trade union of these sectors and the employers' associations of the each sector to start a collective bargaining process in order to review some of the most gender segregated occupations and include this into the collective labour regulation instruments.

The **Programa Formação-Algarve** (Algarve Training Programme), adopted in 2012 to actively promote employment, foresees an extra bonus in the financial support provided to companies which celebrate or renew contracts to people who meet certain criteria, namely people responsible for single-parent families or people from the sex which is underrepresented in the sector for which they are being hired. The programme supported 13 contract employments with the extra bonus.

The extra bonus support was enlarged to all country under the programme **Portaria Estímulo 2013**, adopted in 14 March 2013. This programme supported 66 contract employments with the extra bonus.

In 2015 a new programme was adopted, called **Promotion of Gender Equality in the Labour Market**, aiming to achieve a better gender balance and combat gender segregation in the labour market. This measure grants an extra financial support to employers to hire unemployed people from the sex underrepresented in a given profession. Till June 2015, 1107 companies/organisations have benefited from this extra financial support, hiring 1238 unemployed people, most of them male (874 men and 364 women). Men were contracted mainly to occupations related with sales, administrative staff and personal service activities, while women were mainly contracted to occupations related with engineering and ICT.

Since 2000, CITE – Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment promotes the **Award “Equality is Quality”**. This award distinguishes companies and other employers with policies in the area of gender equality and the reconciliation of work, family and personal life, as well as gender based violence. Since 2009 the award is a CITE and CIG - Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality joint initiative. Since its launch 11 editions of the Award have been launched.

The Award “Equality is Quality” is a prestige award and the awarded can use this distinction to promote themselves as employers that are non-discriminating and gender equality friendly.

Gender equality plans, hiring of people from the underrepresented sex, gender balance representation in decision-making, work-life balance measures and policies for both women and men, measures to reduce of gender pay gap are some of the areas reviewed and evaluated.

In 2013 a **Forum of Companies for Gender Equality** was fostered by CITE aiming to further progress companies’ commitment to gender equality and to address obstacles they face. 31 companies have joined this Forum and pledged to undertake actions to promote gender equality in their organisations (including parental rights, maternity, paternity, work-family reconciliation, decision-making and pay gap) and established quantified targets for improvement.

The Forum meets quarterly, with an agenda pre-established in order to make decisions, discuss proposals presented by any member, approve documents and activities and share good practices. In such meetings practices from two or three companies are presented and discussed.

Throughout this process, companies share their experiences, difficulties, strategies to overcome the obstacles found and the main achievements. They work as a community of knowledge and practice and an on-line platform was created to share information.