



The EU Mutual Learning Programme in Gender Equality

Gender segregation in the labour market and education

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Gender segregation in the labour market and education in Slovenia

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1. Introduction and relevant country context

The labour market in Slovenia, on which high share of women has been present for decades¹, is gender segregated – both horizontally and vertically. The indicator for gender segregation in occupations points to 25 % in 2014, which is somewhat higher than the EU-28 average of 24.4 %. Gender segregation in economic sectors is at 18.7 % in 2014 slightly lower than the EU-28 average of 18.9 %. In spite of the legislation that prohibits the unequal treatment of men and women, horizontal segregation places women and men in different groups of traditionally gendered activities and vertical segregation holds women below the glass ceiling that is still preventing equal distribution of economic resources and positions of economic power. Both horizontal and vertical gender segregation in Slovenia are connected with the culturally determined and differently valued male and female social roles and activities and gender segregation in education. Data for 2014 shows that two thirds of female graduates in Slovenia achieved degree in Social sciences; Business and law; Education or Humanities and Arts. Science and Technology, on the other hand, remained mainly masculinised – in 2014 less than a third of all graduates in these fields were female (see data in the Appendix),

Decrease in gender segregation at the labour market has been one of the public policy aims. Since 2001 it was envisaged in national programmes of development of the labour market and employment. Government's documents envisaged a dual strategy: equal opportunities principle as a horizontal measure in all programmes and policies and treating women as a special target group in order to decrease both gender segregation and gender pay gap. **The Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities 2005-2013** and **Periodical plans for implementation of the national programme** declared tasks and activities aimed to accomplish goals set by the national policy (as well as funding, responsible actors, time table and expected results of activities) to overturn trends of reproduction of gender segregation. A decrease in vertical and horizontal segregation and the gender pay gap was stated as one of the four aims for equal opportunities of men and women in employment and work mentioned in the Resolution. Among other measures under this objective was envisaged encouragement of women and men to get involved in education and training and to seek employment in those fields where either women or men are underrepresented.

The resolution also addressed gender segregation in education and stated the aim of reducing gender based segregation in educational programmes at the secondary education and higher education levels and in different school and out-of-school activities. Three ministries were defined as responsible for these measures and

¹ Slovenia ranked 9th in 2005 among EU-27 and 16th (and 10th FTE employment rate) in 2014 among EU-28.

activities (Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs; Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology and Ministry of Education and Sport).

In 2001 the **Commission for the Promotion of Women in Science** was established as an expert body of the Ministry of Science. The Commission has been active in the field of information and public awareness rising regarding the position of women in science. It has contributed to data collection (e.g. data collection and analysis of gender pay gap in the public research institutions in the period 2001 to 2005), elimination of discriminatory provisions or practices in research funding and in the evaluation of the female applicants, adoption of policies that determine gender equality in membership in professional bodies. In the future the Commission will support and monitor: indicators of equal participation of women in science; legal basis and strategic documents and their implementation; balanced composition of decision-making bodies in science; risks in the academic and research community for women. A special attention will be paid to the use of gender sensitive language; (Komisija za ženske v znanosti, 2014).

For several years within the "**For Women in Science**" programme, three partners – L'Oréal Slovenia, Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO and the Slovenian Science Foundation – are awarding scholarships to young and successful Slovenian female researchers. This year a scholarship of 5,000 euros each was awarded to a physicist, a pharmacist and a mathematician for their doctoral thesis, which were evaluated as important contributions to the development of science in terms of knowledge, excellence and vision. It could be that the attention paid in the last decade to the encouragement of women to take active role in science resulted in the rise of number of women in studying science, maths and computers (from 33.4 % in 2005 to 41 % in 2011).

Within the project "**Girls' day**" workshops, seminars and companies' presentations of "typically male" jobs to the girls are organised annually in collaboration of two Ministries, and an employers' organisation in order to equip young women with adequate information when deciding on a professional career. On that day companies open their doors to girls in the last three grades of elementary school, and offer guided tours and attractive presentations of science and technical occupations and workplaces where they would be employed after a successful completion of an appropriate education.

2. Policy debate

The issue of gender segregation of employment and education entered public discussion in Slovenia based on research in women studies at Slovene universities and activities of the national gender equality machinery (in the last decade mainly the Office for Equal Opportunities and later Sector for Equal Opportunities at the Ministry for Work, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities); such as discussions and workshops related to gender segregation (e.g. Women at the labour market: statistics and facts; Women in Science and Research; Abolition of gender stereotypes: Mission Impossible?). Gender segregation has been covered in media occasionally, when employment of women is mentioned (e.g. on Women' Day).

Sector for Equal opportunities reports that from 2007 to 2013 numerous activities were carried out, which created the basis for the systematic integration of a gender perspective into educational curricula, programmes and materials at all levels of education. Indicators of gender equality in education were developed as well as

recommendations for the integration of education for equal opportunity in the curricula, programmes and learning materials and suggestions study programmes and professional training of teaching and counselling staff. Training on diverse methods to encourage boys and girls to equal participation in school and extracurricular activities, which has traditionally represented one or other sex has also been performed. Several projects analysed career choices and allowed primary school female pupils to get insight into typically male professions and to encourage the enrolment of girls in secondary schools, which are dominated by boys. ESF funded projects in kindergartens and schools aimed to eliminate differences between “female” and “male” jobs and occupations that should in the long run diminish gender segregation in employment.

The elimination of inequalities and gender employment and educational segregation stay among the key aims for equal opportunities of men and women stated in **the Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities 2015-2020**. Planned measures and activities in the next period could be seen as building upon the results already achieved and addressing the issues where there have not yet been (satisfying) results. The document is to be discussed in Parliament in September 2015.

3. Transferability aspects

The latest data on labour market and education segregation in Slovenia shows that in spite of introduced measures and performed activities there has yet not been enough improvement in the last decade concerning elimination of gender segregation at the labour market and in education. That indicates that the efforts should be reinforced and that performed and existing programmes/measures should be complemented by new and additional ones. Concerning that, many of the suggestions/ideas in the three discussion papers could be very helpful. Two of those papers are tackling gender inequalities in STEM (Dutch and Northern Ireland's).

The explanation of reasons for gender segregation in STEM provided in the Dutch paper is valid for Slovenia as well (being individual, societal, labour market and educational system related). The general logic of the Dutch practices is applied in Slovenia as well. There are some features of the policy that could be useful in tailoring similar policies in Slovenia. I would stress the following two:

- Attention paid that girls and young women (as well as their parents and educators) are systematically encouraged by suitable tailored information on all three levels of education;
- Awareness of the importance and success in attracting the attention and involvement of business/employers.

Concerning the mentioned two strong points, in further projects aimed at encouraging girls in STEM in Slovenia involvement of the following institutions should be boosted:

- Career Centre of the University of Ljubljana (that could use the presented Dutch good practice in programmes for tertiary education);
- Association of Slovene managers, Slovene HR association and Employers' associations (as the higher participation of women in STEM ensures the better use of all the existing talent that business need for the best performance).

The business case for gender equality is successfully used in the Northern Irish initiative. Both initiating a STEM CEO Charter and creating a network of STEM employers interested and devoted to gender equality are initiatives that are transferable to Slovene environment in which similar initiatives in other areas were successful (e.g. certificate of family-friendly company that declares companies devotion to support of WLB working conditions).

The third discussion paper tackles Danish initiatives to promote more male kindergarten pedagogues. The general logic and most of the proposed initiatives are transferable to Slovene environment in which until now much more has been done in addressing emancipation of women and their entrance in masculinised professions while encouragement of men's entrance in traditionally feminised professions/areas/activities, recognition of different masculinities and activation of men as actors of fostering gender equality are newer initiatives. Because of that it is not surprising that men are just a tiny minority of preschool teachers (see data in Table 2 in the Appendix),

As in Denmark, preschool teachers in Slovenia have an university degree, but in contrast to Denmark, in Slovenia most of preschool teachers (both men and women) work full time. Both affect their wages and is a feature of preschool teacher's jobs that should make them acceptable to men in Slovenia. A recent research in Slovenia (a survey of 101 parents and 19 interviews with preschool teachers and heads of kindergartens; Revinšek 2015) revealed that parents, female preschool teachers and employers would welcome a higher number of male preschool teachers. The main reason for a small number of male preschool teachers seems to be stereotypes about the female nature of the profession and lack of support for boys to make untraditional career choices. The analysis concluded that the occupation should be better presented in order to overcome its female, motherly connotation and underline its professional dimension – professional work based on specific knowledge and competences. That is very much in line with initiatives presented in the Danish paper, especially in case of Fredensborg Municipality that stresses the professionalism in kindergartens. Very interesting and useful are initiatives that tackle recruitment procedures that should provide more chances for men professionals to get jobs in kindergartens.

Especially interesting and valuable is the initiative from Skanderborg Municipality on questioning procedures and language use, as the language is a formative factor of both social identities and social relations.

The issue that should be tackled with care when promoting men into preschool teaching is not to use arguments that could reinforce essentialist stereotyping about "male" characteristics/skills/activities/values because of which men should be welcomed into feminised working environments (as e.g. somewhat in case of the forest man). In that case of Hjørring Municipality the challenge was at the end resolved by employment of the forest woman, but it might be good to have educators of both genders being involved in same activities or sharing tasks in a non-traditional way (forest people). If men are attracted to work and praised in kindergartens based on their "maleness", that is reinforcing gender stereotyping. It would be better to use arguments that are basis of emancipation of men in care (both in private and public sphere). In Slovenia initiatives of attracting more men in

preschool education could be joining already existing initiatives/projects of promotion of active fatherhood.²

One concern when fostering employment opportunities for men in preschool education is the influence of that in reducing the employment possibilities for women who represent the majority of graduate preschool teachers. Actions positive for the profession, men and society might have immediate negative consequences for women. Because of that parallel activities must be introduced that would open employment possibilities for women in currently masculinised professions.

4. Recommendations for action

4.1. Overcoming of gender segregation on the national and European level

4.1.1. Mixture of reasons for change and partnership of actors

It is hard to fight gender segregation in education and employment as the reasons for it are complex. That is why a multilevel approach is needed – change should be stimulated at societal, organisational and individual level and in both private and public sphere of life simultaneously. Changes of educational and employment individual choices (that are socially constructed) and employment/educational opportunities are also interrelated. Therefore along with systematic and long-term oriented policies, attention should be paid to mobilising important actors that would lead social change. Creators of public policies on national and European level might try to foster further meaningful partnerships with business community/employers (being private or public) who could be motivated by a set of different reasons for wanting to achieve a gender-balanced working force/working environments (use of talents, overcoming the problem of lack of suitably educated workforce, etc.).

4.1.2. Reciprocity of changes in feminised and masculinised professions

In reflection of three initiatives presented – two dealing with overcoming exclusion of women from a masculinised area and one dealing with exclusion of men from a feminised profession – one could think how to address the reciprocity between two aspired changes. As overcoming of gender stereotyping is the basic for achieving gender equality in both STEM and teaching/care professions, it could be interesting to think about projects/initiatives that are addressing the change in masculinised/feminised professions/education at the same time. Scientific research and projects of education and employment promotion/counselling should be initiated at national and European level with the aim to analyse and change gendered concept of skills and competence attached to the professions. Professional skills/competences/achievements of women or those that have been defined as (traditionally) female are not valued as some others that men have or that have been (traditionally) connected with men. It would be reasonable to analyse which

² One of recent ones is the project “Men and employers in action” at the Peace Institute in Ljubljana (financed by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism Programme 2009-2014) that is addressing working fathers and WLB aiming to raise awareness about gender equality, fostering equal fatherhood in family life and cooperation of key actors, employers, trade unions and working fathers in developing, testing new strategies and possibilities of work – life balance (<http://www.mirovni-institut.si/en/projects/fathers-and-employers-in-action-oda/>).

differences in definitions, expectations and recognition of skills and competences are the basis for gender differentiation and inequalities. The analysis could help in perception of professional performance based on the knowledge, professional competencies/skills and not on the gender of a person who performs it.

A project (e.g. “Computers and kids”) could present two jobs: a “male” and a “female” job, e.g. computer programmer and (pr-e)school teacher as being similar in many ways (demanding innovation, playfulness, creativity, discipline), as being socially constructed as female and male today (but the history of two professions shows that the first programmers were women (“ENIAC girls”) while the teaching profession was at the beginning masculinised); as being team jobs – in which gender balance could be an added value. Such a presentation of two professions could stimulate change in gendered educational and occupational choices of young women and men.

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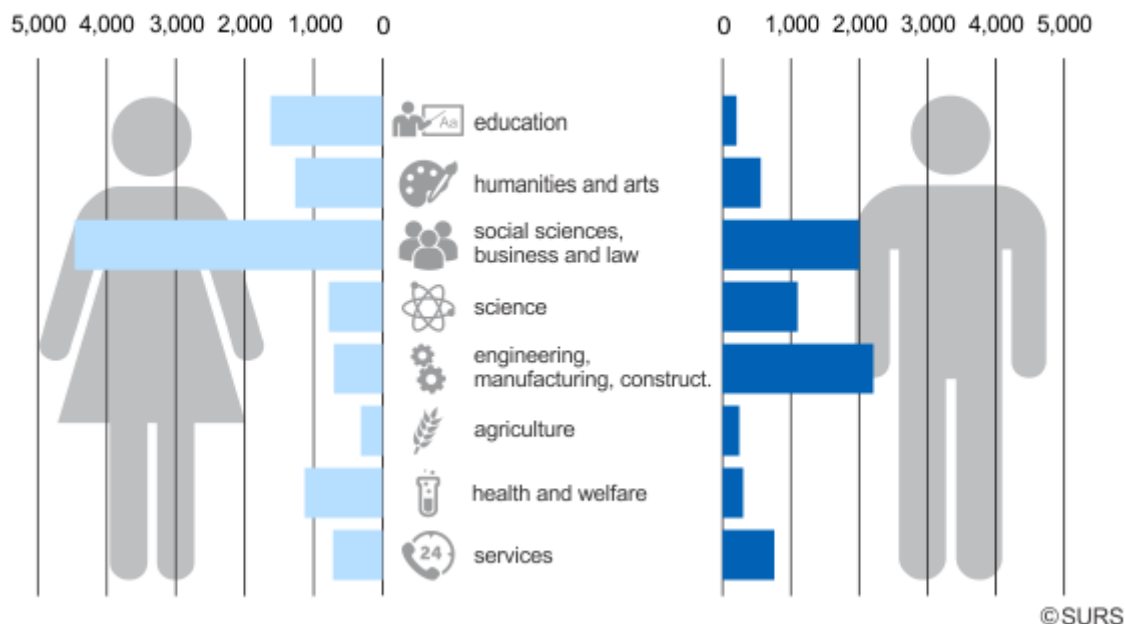
The Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities 2015-2020 (draft).

SORS. 2015. Graduates from tertiary education, Slovenia, 2014.

SORS. 2015. Kindergartens, Slovenia, school year 2014/15.

Appendix

Infographics 1: Graduates from tertiary education by fields of education (KLASIUS-P) and gender, Slovenia, 2014



Source: SORS, 2015

Table1: Percentage of female students by field of study

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total	57.82	58.37	58.29	58.14	57.96	57.84	60.63	57.73
Education	80.39	80.08	80.94	81.09	80.00	81.41	90.85	83.05
Arts and Humanities	73.41	72,52	72.97	72.35	71.32	68.95	73.76	69.41
Social sciences, Business and Law	64.70	65.88	66.50	67.11	67,60	67.50	67.36	66.32
Science, Mathematics and computer sciences	31.93	33.04	33.56	33,47	36,14	39.17	50.07	41.02
Technical, manufacturing and construction	24.15	24.13	24.68	25,13	25,35	25.43	27.76	25.05
Agriculture	54.92	55.48	57.09	59,18	58,92	56.17	59.36	54.63
Health and Social work	79.64	79.74	79.01	78,92	78.24	77.04	80.99	77.48
Services	45.08	47.05	48.54	51.09	51.99	52.19	54.32	53.59

Source: SORS, 2013

Table 2: Professional staff in kindergartens, Slovenia, school year 2014/15

	Total	Men	Women	% of men
Total	11,658	280	11,378	2.4
Educators - total	5,140	53	5,087	1.0
in programmes of the 1 st age period	1,878	13	1,865	0.6
in programmes of the 2 nd age period	3,262	40	3,222	1.2
Assistant educators - total	5,642	195	5,447	3.5
in programmes of the 1 st age period	2,256	55	2,201	2.4
in programmes of the 2 nd age period	3,386	140	3,246	4.1
Management staff	404	12	392	2.9
Advisers	141	1	140	0.7
Other professional personnel	331	19	312	5.7

Source: SORS, 2015