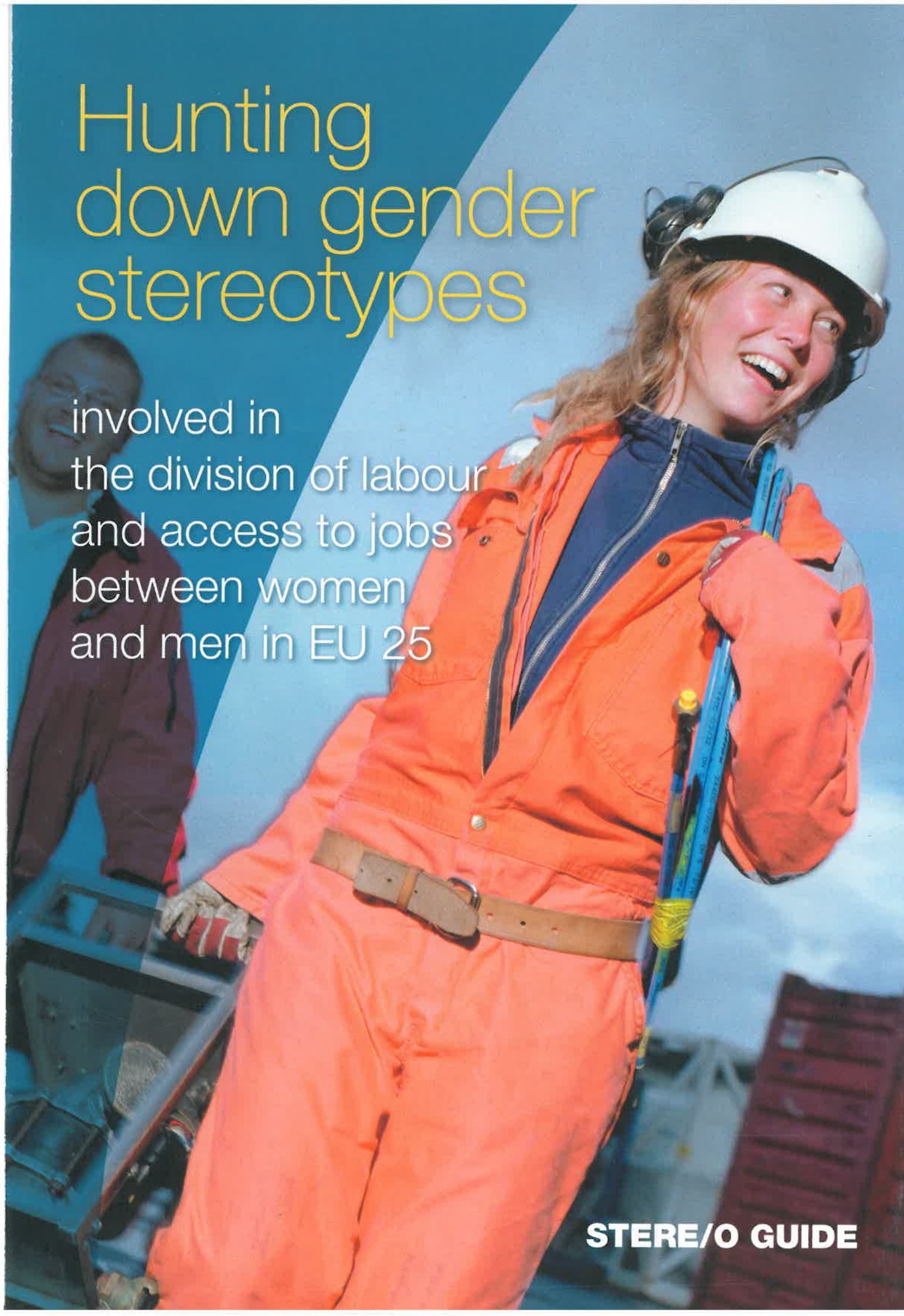


# Hunting down gender stereotypes

involved in  
the division of labour  
and access to jobs  
between women  
and men in EU 25

**STERE/O GUIDE**





# HUNTING DOWN GENDER STEREOTYPES INVOLVED IN THE DIVISION OF LABOUR AND ACCESS TO JOBS BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN IN EU 25

## STERE/O GUIDE

5th community initiative programme EWA

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## INTRODUCTION

**STERE/O** guide was designed in response to the call for proposals of the Fifth Community Initiative programme (VP/2003/31) about gender stereotypes that reinforce and perpetuate inequalities between women and men.

**STERE/O** guide identifies and deconstructs the gender stereotypes involved in the division of labour and access to jobs between women and men in EU 25.

Six countries participated in the project: Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy and Hungary, that is to say six specific and significant backgrounds with different cultures of reference.

### The designers

**EWA** is a non-profit association for research and the promotion of career counselling and professional retraining for adults and young people (particularly women), as well as the organization of social and cultural activities and programs. Its priority is continuous career counselling with an approach that encourages gender equality.

**ANCORPARI** is a politically and economically independent professional non-profit association. ANCORPARI organises and manages studies, research, actions and training in equal opportunities.

**BARDA** is a non-governmental Bulgarian umbrella organisation composed of regional development agencies and independent business centres whose activities focus mainly on the development of regional economies, civil society and the SME sector.

**CORA** leads the Italian network of Retravailler associations. Since 1992, Cora's mission has been the promotion of equal opportunities between women and men in the world of work with career counselling. Its methodology focuses on the gendered individual considered in the global context.

**JOL LET** carries out research and promotes actions to eliminate discrimination against underprivileged social classes (particularly women). The Foundation creates networks to help them integrate into society. The main activity is career counselling and reintegration in the labour market through a continuous individual approach.

**Le Piment** is an organisation of vocational education and professional training for adults. This association develops programs that include teaching

French as a foreign language, teaching literacy, career counselling, basic training, pre-training and training leading to qualifications. Le Piment focuses on the gender dimension and the fight against discrimination.

**Union Nationale Retravailler** leads and coordinates the French network of Retravailler territorial associations. Since 1974, Retravailler's priorities have been career counselling and professional integration with a view to professional equality and job mixing. The Union is also involved in research on professional equality and in gender equality training programs.

**Retravailler Liège**: ASBL Retravailler is a socio-professional integration organisation created in 1993 on the initiative of the continuous education movement of the Femmes Prévoyantes Socialistes. The association's expertise is in the fields of adults' career counselling on the one hand, and of actions promoting equal opportunities and equal rights between women and men on the other hand.

**VIRGILE** is a European network of NGOs that organizes training projects and the development of the rural areas. Its goal is to promote an integrated approach of the rural development at the European level which takes into account various sectors and actors and the active participation of rural communities. The network works for the integration regarding gender. The members of VIRGILE involved in STERE/O project are TAMEN (consultants for small rural enterprises), in charge of the survey in Germany and the GREP (Groupe de Recherche pour l'Éducation et la Prospective) for the rural workshop.



## The method

### → Quantitative assessment

A meta-research collected the comparable statistical data that were available at the European level to assess the compared situation of men and women on the labour market in the expanded European Union.

This meta-research made it possible:

- to outline today's main trends regarding the compared situation of men and women in the workplace in the expanded European Union (synchronic study).
- to compare this assessment with the situation in the 1990s to understand the nature of the observed evolutions (diachronic study).
- to focus on the six partner countries involved in STERE/O project: Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Hungary, and Italy.

Five parameters were taken into account to draw the compared situation between men and women in the sphere of work:

- The activity rates, the unemployment rates and part-time work rates.
- The compared distribution of women and men according to subject combinations in post-graduate studies.
- The compared situation between women and men according to activity segments.
- The compared situation between women and men according to socio-professional groups.
- The compared situation between women and men according to wages and salaries in the six partner countries of STERE/O.

### → A field survey focused on opinions

This survey was carried out for a better understanding of attitudes and of their impact on the quantitative assessment established by the meta-research in the six partner countries of STERE/O.

Two methods were used to carry out this survey.

#### → *The organisation of focus groups*

Small groups of women, whose age groups, standards of education and socio-professional categories were similar, were organized. Each group was requested to react to and to express concerted opinions about three dilemmas. These various scenarios were designed to have the participants express their opinions; they described situations that illustrated the relative importance of gender when people made choices concerning vocational guidance, careers and life or in decisions concerning Human Resources Management.

#### → *A series of interviews, led in each country, based upon a common grid of questions*

These semi-guided interviews were conducted with three groups of people:

- Institutional and political representatives and leaders.
- Employers.
- Career counsellors.

The interviewees were invited to react and to express their opinions about the main conclusions of the quantitative assessment, about the means to mobilize to move forward and about their personal experiences on the subject.

All the partners conducted this double investigation except the Bulgarian partner who employed questionnaires that were composed from the grid used for the interviews. The Italian partners focused their survey on education and training social actors.



The data collected in the field surveys were processed at national and transnational levels. Their analysis made it possible for the STERE/O partners to make a common classification grid.

## The guide

The guide falls into four chapters:

1- The statistical assessment: *what figures have to say.*

2- Opinions at work: *what is said.*

3- The (cross) examination of stereotypes: *the contradictions.*

- Identification: *It is said that...*
- Deconstruction:
  - The refutation.
  - Facts: *Yet!!...*
  - Contradictory opinions: *Besides, people also say that...*
- Levers of change:

4- Focus on specifics.

- Rural areas.
- Belgian, Bulgarian, French, German, Italian and Hungarian national backgrounds.

# WHAT FIGURES HAVE TO SAY

*Quantitative assessment of the compared situation between men and women at work in E.U.25.*

## Today's main trends

### → Gender and activity rates

- The average in E.U.25 is 77% for men in work and 60% for women in work.
- The average unemployment rate is 9.1% for men and 10.3% for women; the average gap is 1.2%.
- The average part-time activity rate is 6.9% for men and 29% for women.

#### Comments:

- In all the countries, the women's activity rates are lower than the men's, without any significant gap between East and West.  
The main disparities can be found in the southern European countries (Italy, Spain); they are less pronounced in northern Europe.
- The unemployment rate is higher for women. The most pronounced gaps to the detriment of women are in Spain (7, 4), and in Italy (4, 6), and they are globally less important in the eastern countries than in the western ones.  
In some countries, Ireland, Sweden and Norway for northern Europe, Estonia and Lithuania for eastern Europe, the women's unemployment rate is lower than men's.
- The part-time activity rate is low for both men and women in eastern Europe while it is significantly higher, especially for women, in northern Europe.

### → Gender and university diplomas

- Between 73 and 80% of holders of a diploma in either Social Work or Healthcare or Education are women.
- Women represent between 60 et 70% of the holders of a diploma in Teacher Training or in Behavioural and Social Sciences.
- Only between 15 to 30% of them hold a diploma in Business and Administration, Manufacturing and processing Mathematics and Statistics or Transportation.

#### Comments:

The high proportion of women holding University degrees in a limited and very characteristic number of fields (Healthcare, social work, education) has to be linked with the activity segments where they are either over- or under-represented.

### → Gender and activity segments

- 77% of the workforce in education and social work are women, between 82 and 84% in Eastern Europe, between 67 and 75% in Western Europe.
- 38% of the workforce in agriculture, hunting, forestry and fisheries are women (42% in Eastern Europe and 34% in Western Europe).
- 34% of the workforce in the manufacturing industry is women, 40% in Eastern Europe, 28% in Western Europe.



#### Comments:

- Women's labour is highly concentrated in the sectors of education and social work.
- On the contrary, the proportion of women is very low in such sectors as the building industry, the production and distribution of electricity, gas and water and the manufacturing industry.
- In the Eastern European countries, the concentration of women in education and social work is higher than in Western Europe, on the other hand, they are more represented in traditionally male-dominated sectors.

### → Gender and socio-professional categories

- Women represent 75% of clerical workers and 65% of services staff and shop and market sales assistants.
- They only represent 21% of machine operators and fitters and 15% of craftsmen and related manual workers.

#### Comments:

- Women are mainly concentrated in services and education and social work.
- Men are much more represented than women in the industrial sector, yet this difference is smaller in the Eastern European countries.
- The proportion of women in managerial staff is definitely lower than the proportion of men (3 times as many men as women on average), and the higher in the hierarchy, the smaller the proportion of women.

## Acknowledged evolutions

The comparison between today's main trends and the statistical situation of the first half of the 1990's brings about the following conclusions:

- The women's activity rate keeps increasing and gets closer to men's in the E.U.15, whereas in the former communist countries it keeps decreasing to stabilize in the years 2000. The sole exception is Hungary where women bene-

fited from the development of banking and insurance services.

- Women's unemployment decreases in E.U.15 whereas it keeps increasing in Eastern Europe, except in Hungary.

Let us note, however, that the employment and unemployment rates are relative indicators, considering the importance of informal work in the transition economies and the recent trend for women to start their own businesses in Southern Europe countries.

The fact remains that the transition of the former communist countries free market economies made women more vulnerable and caused the loss of welfare benefits that they had been granted particularly in terms of childcare. The economic restructuring has first affected women's labour and recruiting practices are discriminatory against young women. It is between the ages of 25 and 34 and after 55 that we observe the greatest differences between men and women.

This opposite evolution, the improvement of women's situations in Western Europe, deterioration in Eastern Europe, results in an assessment that is less contrasted than we might have thought considering the respective histories of the concerned countries.

Because of their massive and outstanding transnational character the following observations cannot not be made:

- Generalized sectorization of women's labour in social work and education.
- The correlation between this sectorization and the higher education courses completed.

The focuses on the six partner countries of STERE/O project, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy and Hungary confirm this horizontal segregation of women's labour to be related to school and university choices of courses.

Another cross observation common to the national contexts is women's lesser representation in top managerial positions. However, the gap varies from



one country to another although it remains consistent in the six partner countries of STERE/O project, with one third of women in top management, except in Italy where 25% of managers are women.

In these six countries the women's salaries are lower than men's, but the differences significantly vary from one country to another. In Germany they reach 23%, while they are 6% in Italy and between 13 and 14% in the other countries.

Finally, the women's activity rate, like everywhere else in Europe, is lower than men's, with variations again from one country to another. With a 65% women's activity rate, Germany has the most balanced situation whereas Italy, with 48%, has the most unequal one, like the other Mediterranean countries.

## What we learn from these figures

The analysis of the quantitative data about the compared situation of women and men at work in the six partner countries of STERE/O, and on a wider scale in the E.U.25, establishes a gender division of labour and access to jobs based on two major phenomena:

➤ ***The concentration of women's labour in the same activity segments, whatever the countries or the cultures of reference.***

The horizontal segmentation of women's labour must be related to their school and university choices of courses, but if there is direct interaction between these two facts, it is hard to tell the cause from the effect. Vocational guidance practices obviously determine professional choices, while the reality of the gender division of labour and access to jobs certainly influences women's school and university choices of courses *by backlash*.

➤ ***Women's concentration in junior or intermediate positions within hierarchies and professions and a significantly lower representation than men's in top management.***

This vertical segregation, often illustrated by the metaphor of the glass ceiling, is the second linchpin of the gender division of labour and access to jobs.

The pay gap between women and men results from the conjunction of these two segregations.

Despite the historical, political and cultural specific features of the member states of the European Community and of six partner countries of STERE/O, the horizontal and vertical segregations are the two cogs of the same machine: the division of labour between women and men.

Therefore, these are the two mechanisms that have to be acted on. Now, it is time opinions were studied.



## WHAT IS SAID...

### Opinions at work

**The survey in the six partner countries brings out the same main trends**

### Transition attitudes

The collected opinions show a paradoxical situation in all the countries: not only do these opinions proceed from identifiable, even expected, stereotypes but they also reveal that the mentioned stereotypes are identified as such, even sometimes by those who express them. Some denounce the gender stereotypes that are at work in the contexts where they are confronted with them, but they think that they have personally transgressed them, or that they can do so.

In the light of the opinions collected within the survey, the attitudes about the division of labour and about the underlying social roles seem to be changing in all the concerned countries.

Gender stereotypes are still vivid in the representations because they are still vivid in a fair number of facts, but they no longer travel with complete impunity.

This is the first lesson that can be drawn from our survey.

### Stereotypes do exist: STERE/O has found them

We call gender stereotypes the rigid mental constructions based upon a set of prejudices that are collectively internalised and assign distinct characteristics and roles to men and women.

They go with and legitimize gender social roles and relationships. Hence the concept of "Gender Social Contract" defined by the European Commission<sup>1</sup>:

"The whole of implicit and explicit rules governing relationships between women and men that assigns them distinct jobs, distinct values, distinct responsibilities and distinct obligations. Those rules apply on three levels: the cultural infrastructure (social standards and values), institutions (family care, education, employment, and so forth) and the processes of socialisation, in particular within the family."

The analysis of the data collected within the survey brings to light two meta-stereotypes:

- **Women are not made for power.**
- **Some jobs are for men and some others are for women.**

We call them "meta-stereotypes" because they result from the arrangement of secondary stereotypes according to a number of combinations.

The stereotype that states that women are not legitimate in the exercise of power is to be linked with the phenomenon of vertical segregation noticed at the statistical level. It proceeds from the combination of two underlying stereotypes: first, women are less available as a result of their being also mothers, second, they are less competent as a result of the psychological features that are attributed to them.

The stereotype that states that there would be male jobs and female jobs is to be linked with the phenomenon of horizontal segregation noticed at the statistical level. This stereotype feeds on three underlying stereotypes: men and women do not have the same physical capacities, they do not have the same skills, they do not have the same relationship with work. As a consequence of which, their respective legitimacy for such or such job is appreciated.

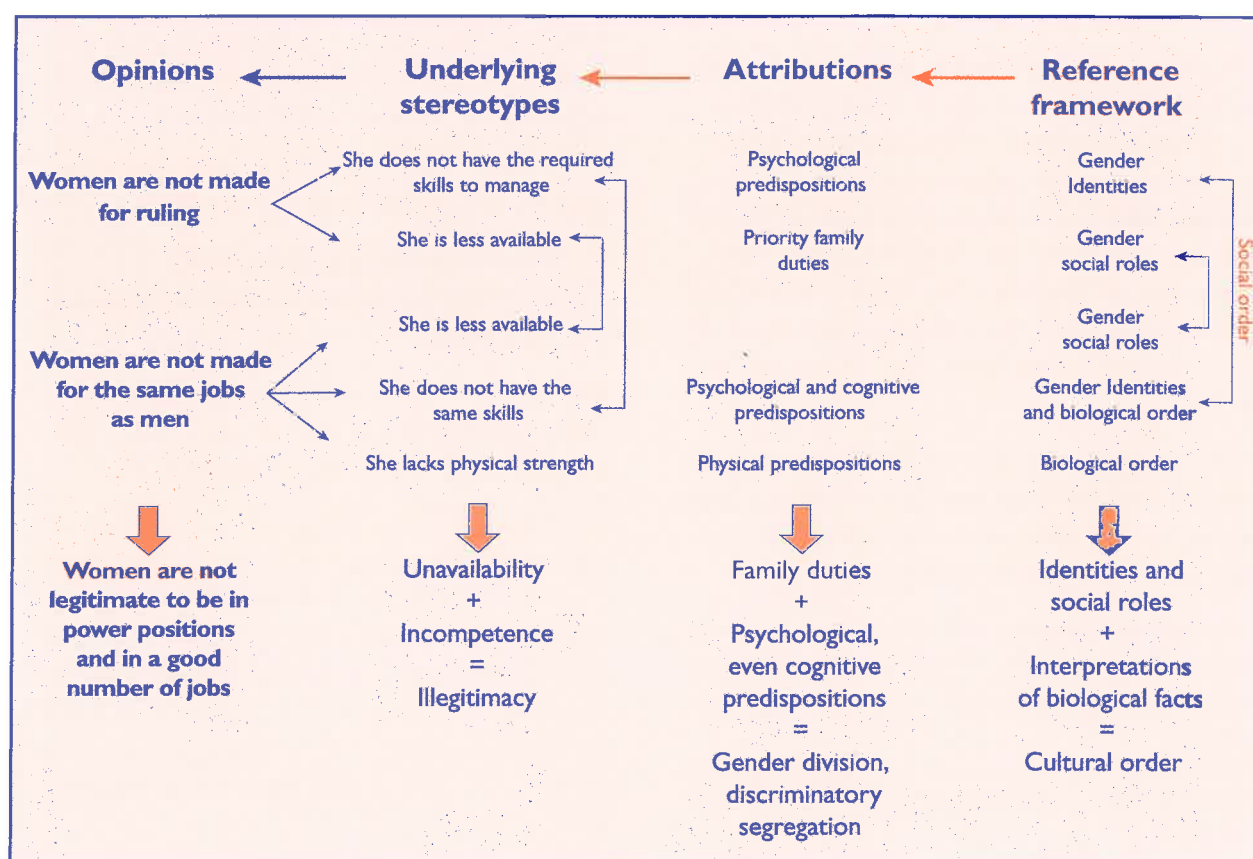
<sup>1</sup>. "100 mots pour l'égalité - Glossaire de termes sur l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes" - Commission européenne - Emploi et affaires sociales - Égalité des chances et politique familiale - 1998.

## The vicious circle of stereotypes

Let us note that the two identified meta-stereotypes have common and shared workings.

The opinion that women are not legitimate in the exercise of power proceeds from the same stereotyped logics as the one that states that they are not legitimate in a good number of jobs: first, they are less available and therefore they are less involved owing to family duties that are allotted to them, second, they are incompetent at some levels or in some spheres in the name of the psychological indeed cognitive predispositions they are allotted with.

Hence the following diagram:



Let us finally note that the opinion that women would be unfit for the exercise of power is the object of rationalizations which obviously proceed from stereotyped logics themselves; but this tendency to justify or to explain this view reveals that it is no longer *self-evident*.

This is not as true for the representations that have to do with the gender division of jobs and of professions, which people are still little aware of, or which are lived through on the mode of inevitable gender determinisms.

The statistical data reveal the radical and transverse sectorization of women's labour and the qualitative data confirm that horizontal segregation is the more resistant to the evolution of attitudes.



## THE CONTRADICTIONS

### The (cross-) examination of stereotypes

#### It is said that... ...women are not made for managing

- [ "... A woman cannot be trusted to manage ..."]
- [ "... It is not done for a woman to manage men ..."]
- [ "... Men dislike being managed by women ..."]
- [ "... Men want to keep the key-roles ..."]
- [ "... Women are less legitimate than men ..."]

#### Why?

#### ⇒ Women are said to lack the required availability

- [ "... A woman must first look after her children ..."]
- [ "... A woman is never totally dedicated to her work, half her attention is devoted to her family ..."]
- [ "... Meetings where decisions are made, inevitably take place in the evenings, and you cannot be free, you miss promotion opportunities ..."]
- [ "... A woman, she is going to be pregnant sooner or later ..."]

#### Comments:

These examples of opinions, and there could be many more of them, highlight women's lack of availability that founds another opinion that women would be out of place in managing positions. This verdict of women's unavailability is mechanically related to the fact that they give birth to children, which cannot be denied.

But this natural fact becomes a stereotype:

- when it is generalized to all women without any distinction,
- when it becomes a generic determiner of their relationship with work. "Women" then becomes "THE WOMAN"

If it is true that women are still statistically in charge of the bulk of family duties, this cultural fact becomes a stereotype when it is not considered as a stereotype but as a fact belonging to the natural order of things.

#### Yet !!!

- Some women do not have children...
- Many women have children and get (deeply) involved in their careers...
- Fathers have been entitled to parental leave in many European countries.
- The sharing of domestic and family chores has become a law in some countries (Germany, Spain...).
- Whatever the country, the lower the women's employment rate, the lower the birth rate and vice versa.

#### Facts that contradict opinions.



## Besides, what can also be heard is that...

*"... Women can do several things at the same time ..."*

*"... Women can adapt to everything"*

*"... A woman top executive knows how to get organized ..."*

*"... A woman who works far away can work on the train ..."*

*"... a child needs his / her father just as much as his / her mother ..."*

So many paradoxes show that opinions are far from being stabilized.

Women's lack of availability might look at first sight as utterly forbidding women's access to responsibilities; therefore it works as a stereotype.

Some facts contradict the opinions that use it. Besides, opinions on this subject are not univocal, as some opinions contradict the stereotype conveyed by others.

## ⇒ Then, it is said that...

*["Women are not competent..."]*

*["Women are not good managers..."]*

*["Women are too involved in relationships..."]*

*["Women are too symbiotic..."]*

*["Men are better-balanced..."]*

*["Women lack authority..."]*

*["Women keep being submissive..."]*

*["Why is she so much in the public eye?... that's suspicious".]*

### Comments :

Through these opinions' words, we can note that the verdict of women's incompetence in positions of responsibility relies exclusively on psychological attributions that are obviously considered as out of keeping with the exercise of power :

- too much emotionalism,
- lack of hindsight,
- lack of authority.

We are confronted here with a combinatory arrangement of stereotyped representations :

- representations that have to do with the very nature of the exercise of power conceived as sheer acts of authority from which personal, relational, affective involvements are banished.

These representations refer to a model of autocratic power that can be qualified as caricatured and archaic.

- representations that have to do with the nature of skills without their technical, methodological or cognitive dimensions. Reducing competence to traits of personality can be qualified as simplistic and fallacious.

- representations that have to do with the so-called "feminine nature" and with the psychological attributions that it brings about. There, we are in the kingdom of gender stereotypes, facing the cleavage between the feminine (the kingdom of affectivity, of relationships, of obedience,...) and the masculine (the kingdom of authority, of assertion, of independence,...).

In the kingdom of gender stereotypes power is in the hands of the stronger sex who rules over the weaker sex in the general interest.

These simplistic, caricatured and archaic representations are perpetuated and are principally expressed when the exercise of power is the topic. That is how women who reach positions of responsibility can still be suspected of trading their charms to achieve their ends.

## Yet ! ! !

→ More and more women reach the highest positions in many European countries, for example in Germany.



- The number of women in middle and top management keeps increasing in all the European countries.
- Mixed boards of examiners in higher education institutes have given women access to prestigious careers.
- Thanks to anonymous competitive entry examinations, the number of women managers has significantly increased, for example in Italian banks.
- More and more big companies look for women managers, for example in France a woman is the representative of French managers and employers.
- The women's standards of general education and of professional training are better and better.

These facts contradict the opinions.

### Besides, what can also be heard is that...

*"Women are more aware of the workers' real living conditions" and that "therefore, they are better managers ..."*

*"Women are more diplomatic ..."*

*"Women are better at settling conflicts ..."*

*"Women control everything ..."*

So many opinions are utterly at odds with those that give a verdict of incompetence.

### → Gender and the exercise of power: conclusions

Figures confirm that vertical segregation is still a very pronounced phenomenon, however it is changing as the number of women in top and middle management tends to increase regularly in the six countries concerned by the survey and more generally in Europe.

Opinions reflect this double reality:

- Stereotypes survive and are still very active on the glass ceiling.
- People are more and more aware of this segregation.
- Attitudes are changing towards the recognition of women's legitimacy to manage.

The stereotypes that can be found in the vertical segregation of labour are different in their nature; therefore, they call for different action strategies.

→ The problem of women's availability proceeds from both:

- unquestionable facts in the present situation of habits and customs: women still bear the brunt of domestic chores, of the children's education and of elders' care;
- and stereotypes that first ignore the fact that some women do not have children and second, that stipulate that once a woman has become a mother she has only got half her brain left available for work.

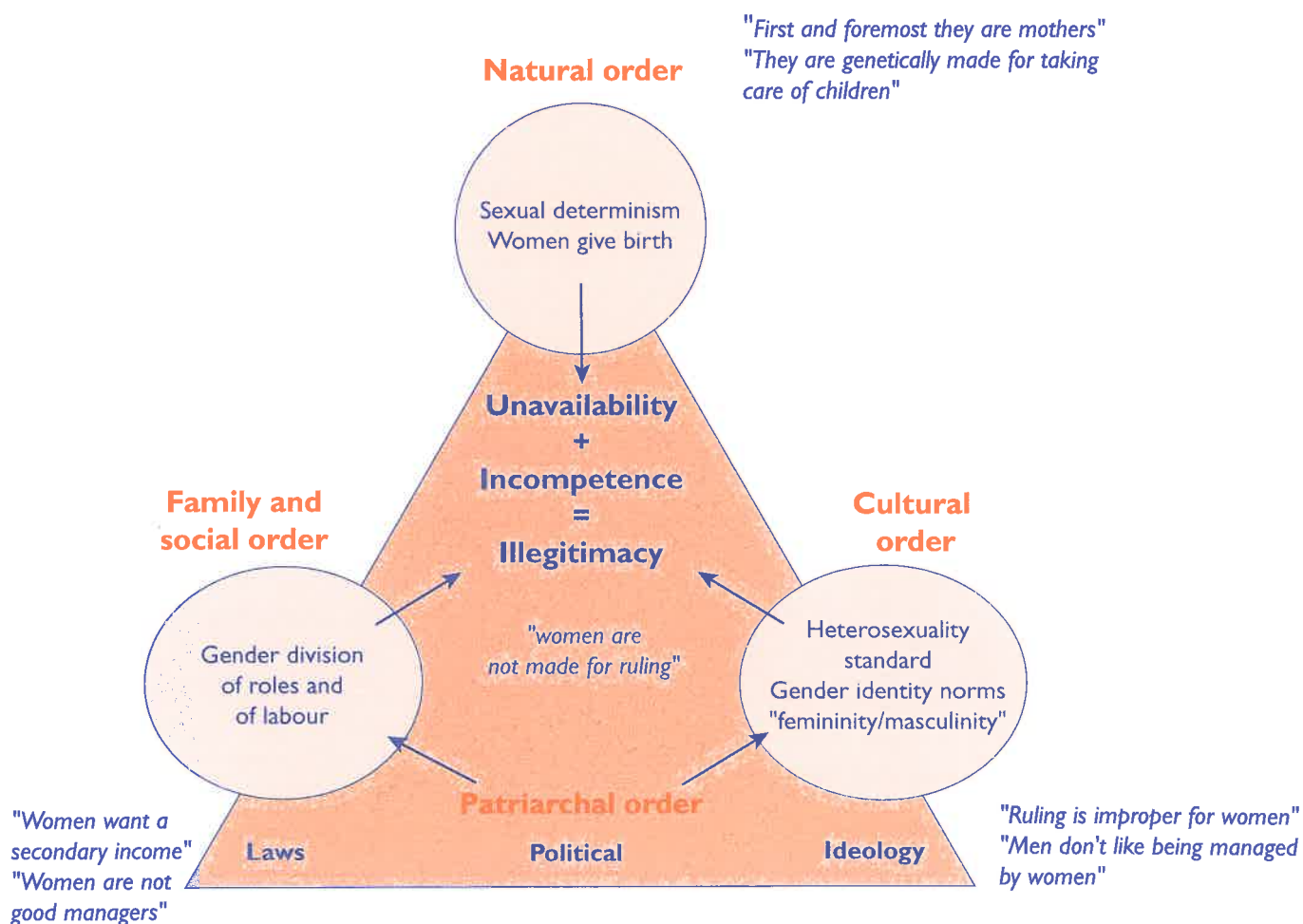
The time has come for action not only on facts (policies and measures to improve work-life balance) but also on attitudes (neutralization of gender stereotypes, promotion of parenthood for new balances within the couples).

→ The opinions that state that women would not have the required skills to rule and manage proceed from particularly redoubtable gender stereotypes: the cleavage of psychological attributions goes together with the overestimation of the masculine. Besides, some opinions show that it is unthinkable that women should manage men whereas women might seem legitimate to manage women.

Therefore we are facing a patriarchal resistance which makes of power and responsibility men's private ground; and makes of "home" women's private ground. Such a distribution, obviously much archaic and unfair, is still effective on men's as well as on women's attitudes. The necessary changes have a

high price at the identity level that men and women have to pay. The change of attitudes requires collective and individual support that involves the whole social group: political, educational and cultural actions.

### From the vicious circle of vertical segregation...

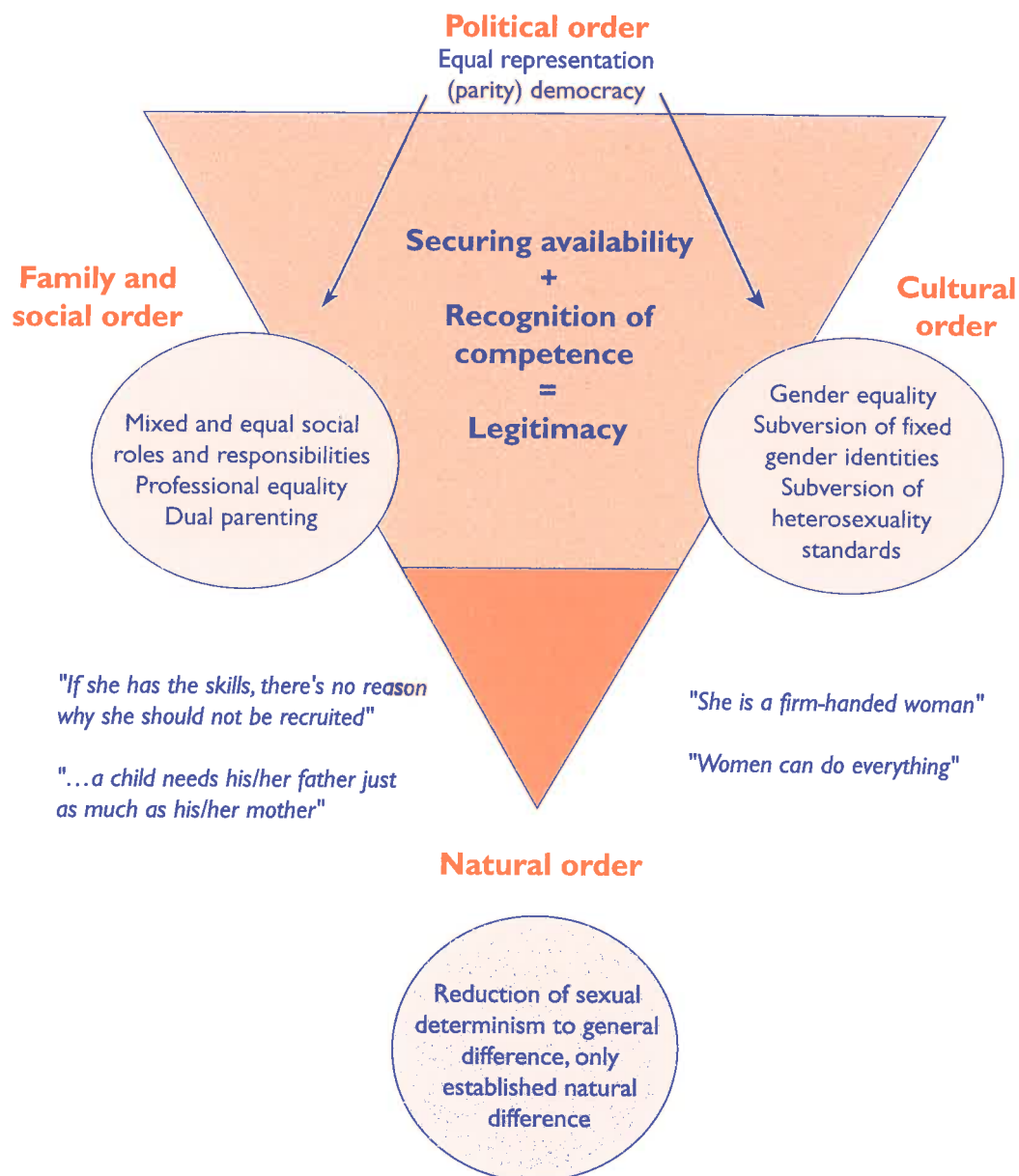




The inversion of the triangle introduces politics and policies as the vector of change for gender equality. It drives back into darkness the naturalization of a

differentiation of responsibilities according to gender, based upon the gender differentiation of interests and competences.

## ...to the virtuous circle of power-sharing





## It is said that... ...there are women's jobs and men's jobs

*["If they have to hire a man, they'd rather hire him to be a gardener than a childminder"] and ["they'd rather hire a man than a woman to do gardening..."]*

*["It is more a question of different types of intelligence that are more developed one way than the other"]*

*["These people have to patrol with a gun; that kind of job suits a man better than a woman"]*

*["The world of young children is not a man's job"]*

*["Women are more used to looking after people..."]*

*["The difference is in the genes..."]*

In the light of these quotations, attitudes reveal a series of prejudices that state that men and women are not made to have the same jobs.

### Why?

#### ➞ What is first said is that women are not as available for work as men

*["For a woman, her family comes first. If her family goes wrong, her work goes wrong too..."]*

*["Women work because they cannot do otherwise for financial reasons."]*

*["A woman is never completely dedicated to her job, half her attention is devoted to her family..."]*

*["With a man, you can be more certain that he will be here, it's a question of availability"]*

*["You cannot deny that so many women teach because of the schedule..."]*

#### Comments:

These excerpts show how much the question of women's availability weighs down on attitudes and on the idea that women's relationship with work comes second after their family involvement.

If the unequal distribution of chores and family duties remains a statistical fact, women's lack of availability becomes a stereotype when it is generalized to all women, in other words when it is attributed to "THE WOMAN".

Women's lack of availability also becomes a stereotype when it determines women's relationship with work, indeed when it is like a handicap for her involvement, even for her competence in the workplace.

Therefore, this stereotype may be much discriminatory for women access to jobs.

### Yet !!!

- ➔ "Some women do not bring up children".
- ➔ "More and more women bring up their children alone".
- ➔ "More and more women play an active part in politics in all the European countries".
- ➔ "In half cases, part-time work is not chosen, it is imposed".
- ➔ "More and more women reach managerial positions".
- ➔ Some jobs, women's traditional strongholds, require much availability: social work, health-care...
- ➔ Teaching requires much personal work outside the classroom.

The principle of women's unavailability or of lesser availability does not stand up to a certain number of facts proving that things are changing in the societies where there are more and more couples at work.



### Besides, one can also hear that...

- “Women accept everything”.
- “Now, women negotiate with their husbands to make a career”.
- “Women know how to get organized”
- “Fathers must get involved in education”
- “Women can manage several things at the same time”

These counterpointing opinions show that renewed representations on the subject are emerging.

### ⇒ Then it is also said that... ...women are not strong enough for some activities

- [“Women are physically weaker”.]
- [“Men find it easier with muscle power jobs”]
- [“Have you ever seen a woman blacksmith?”]
- [“Some positions are definitely not made for women”]
- [“Some jobs are too physically demanding”]
- [“Women are not capable under physical and psychological stress”.]

#### Comments:

These opinions converge to establish a division of labour based upon physical hardness.

The physical differences between women and men cannot be denied, nor can be the extreme hardness of some jobs.

The hardness argument becomes a stereotype whenever it is used out of context and does not take into account the evolution of technology and therefore of work. Stereotyped representations of work combine here with gender stereotypes.

One of the excerpts exemplifies the shift that may take place from physical features to psychological ones. Physically weaker, women would be psychologically weaker too.

This harmful drift belongs to the vicious circle of stereotypes but turns out to be dreadful in such contexts as those where work pressure has shifted from physical to psychological hardness.

### Yet!!!

- The physical and morphological difference between women and men is statistical: it has no absolute value.
- Whatever the cultural background, women have always worked hard physically.
- Such jobs or professions as nurse, nursing auxiliary or care attendant, women's traditional strongholds, are physically demanding.
- In most situations, technological advances applied to job ergonomics reduce or can reduce physical difficulties.
- A judgement rendered by the European Court of Justice forbade any form of discriminatory hiring because of a job's demand for physical strength<sup>2</sup>.

All these facts contradict the opinions and contradict the stereotype that feeds them.

<sup>2</sup> Gisela Rummier vs. dato-Druck GmbH (1st July 1986, 237/85)

### Besides, it can also be heard that...

*"In the days of the socialist economies, women had physically demanding jobs".*

*"Steering wheels can be turned with the little finger";  
"A little woman can drive a big lorry".*

*"A nurse's job demands much physical strength".*

*"The building industry wants women".*

*"Today, women and men can have the same jobs, allowing for exceptions".*

All these opinions are a counterpoint to the idea that requirements for physical strength might determine gender access to jobs.

Referring to a need for physical strength as an argument for the gender division of labour does not stand up to facts.

If the stereotype is still vivid in some people's attitudes, some opinions show that this stereotype is no longer influential.

### ⇒ Finally, it is said that... ...women and men do not have the same skills

*["A woman will be offered jobs where tact and sensitivity will be given more importance".]*

*["Education is for women, they are gentler in looking after children".]*

*["Women aren't comfortable with technology".]*

*["It's hard to talk about technology with a woman; they'd rather talk about social issues, about kids or pets".]*

*["Women can work in car body shops, it's open to them, yet does it correspond to the feminine principle? I really can't tell".]*

*["In one school, I taught a boy who was studying dressmaking; he had to be good".]*

*["A man childminder! You can't be serious".]*

*["I don't know many parents who would have their child looked after by a man".]*

*["When he is 17 or 18, a man is more straightforward, and technical studies correspond well to his way of thinking".]*

*["As men, they are less sensitive and social work doesn't appeal much to them".]*

*["Men are more gifted for technology".]*

*["If I had a daughter, I wouldn't advise her to be a mechanic because she'd find it hard to make a niche for herself".]*

*["It's not normal that a woman should speculate on the Stock Exchange; that means she makes up for the lack of family life".]*

*["Being a care attendant is for women; that's part of the maternal instinct that is deeply rooted in man's evolution, since the times of hunters and gatherers".]*



## Comments:

This set of quotations shows the vicious circle of stereotypes at work: women can have those jobs that have to do with children and relations, therefore teaching and social work is theirs. As for men, technical jobs are theirs; that is to say all the other jobs. The former are considered incompetent in technical jobs, the latter suspicious when dealing with young children. We can find the division of social roles underlying this division of jobs and of professional sectors: women have the realm of childhood and by extension education and care. Men have muscle power jobs and techniques, and by extension all that has to do with industry.

Underlying the division of social roles, we find the cleavage of psychological attributions between women and men: women have the intelligence of feelings; men have the intelligence of action, of production and of decision.

Women in technical jobs are suspected of incompetence even of frustration while men who choose to work with young children are suspected of unhealthy leanings.

Gender identity standards have much bearing on attitudes. It all looks as if professional roles automatically took over from family roles, where women would be reduced to externalizing their so-called family, domestic even natural skills.

All these facts contradict the validity of opinions saying that there would be a division of labour based upon the differentiation of skills between women and men.

## Besides, what can also be heard is that...

*"Women have always worked in textiles and have always repaired their machines themselves."*

*"Men have technical jobs, yet women do repair the domestic appliances when they break down."*

*"The technical nature of women's jobs is not recognized."*

*"In the old days, secretaries and primary school teachers used to be men."*

*"We need more men teachers."*

All these opinions are beyond the cleavage of gender social roles and gender identities.

## Yet!!!

- The textile industry and the clothing trade have always been in the women's hands.
- Technical skills have become more and more important in the textile industry, in office work, in health care, women's traditional strongholds.
- The gender of reference for some jobs may change according to the evolution of contexts: secretarial work, education...
- There are more and more women engineers.
- More and more companies look for women at all technical levels.
- More and more companies are convinced of the benefit of mixed collective work groups.
- Only 7% of existing jobs require technical skills in the traditional sense of the word.

## → Gender and jobs: conclusions

Horizontal segregation is a massive and statistically inescapable fact that feeds on combined stereotypes:

- women's lesser availability is inferred from a different and less involved relationship with work,
- women's lesser psychological resistance to stress is, in some cases, inferred from women's and men's unequal resistance to physical hardness,
- women's differentiated and disparaged skills are organized on the basis of cleft psychological attributions; they reduce the individuals' singularities and isolate women's labour within the field of the externalization of mothering skills.



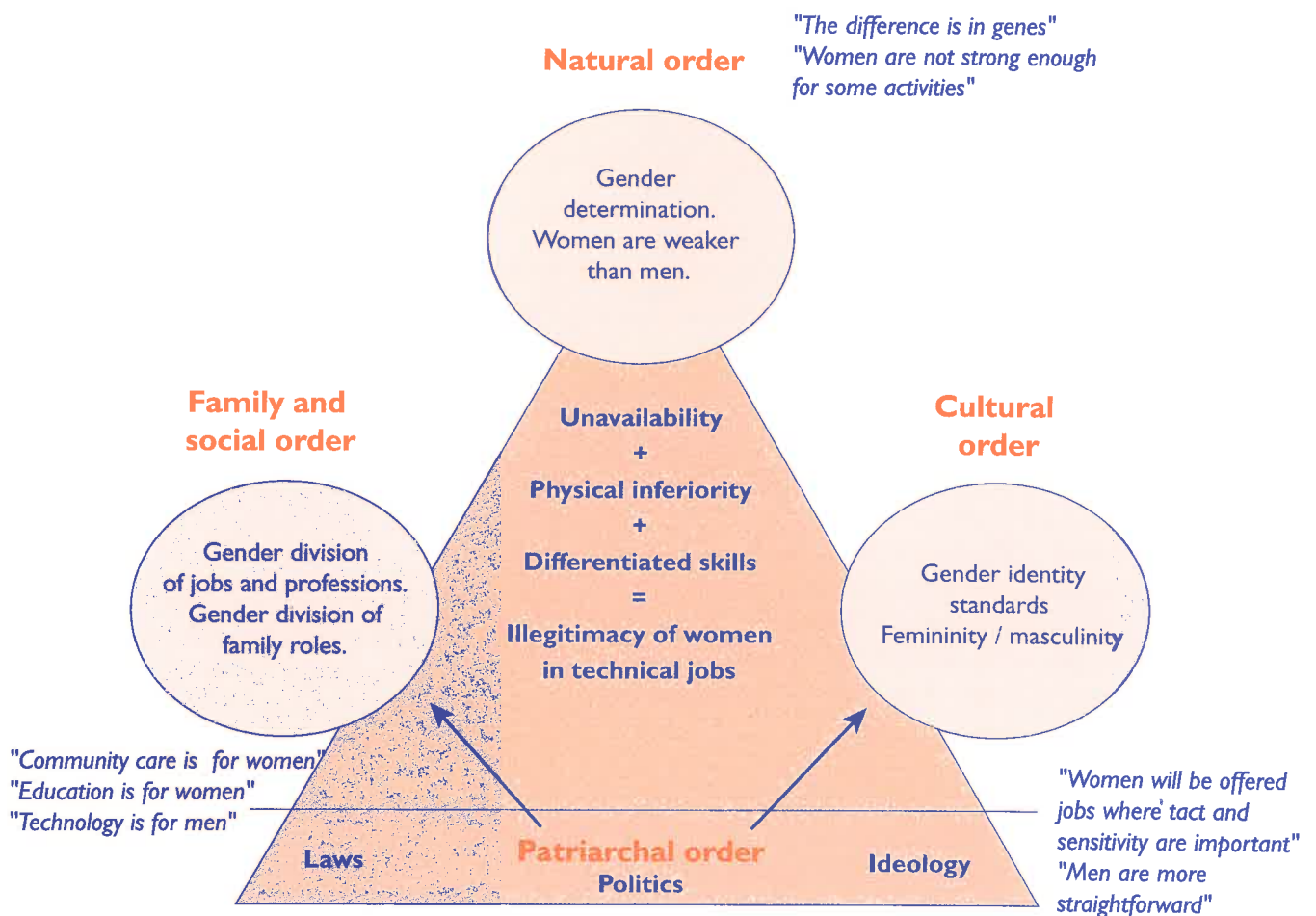
Many attitudes reveal that jobs are still gendered, and that there is little awareness of the pairing between gender and professional activity.

Various levers of change have to be used to act on the horizontal segregation of labour between women and men:

- Ergonomic progress in work posts to reduce physical hardness.
- Evolution of the methods of job analysis to recognize the technicality of service professions.

- Policies and measures to improve work-life balance.
- The development of information, of awareness-raising actions and of training activities aiming towards changing attitudes (individual, schools, families, social actors...).
- Policies and measures aiming at getting rid of elements of gender inequality and discrimination in vocational, training and educational choices.

### From the vicious circle of horizontal segregation...

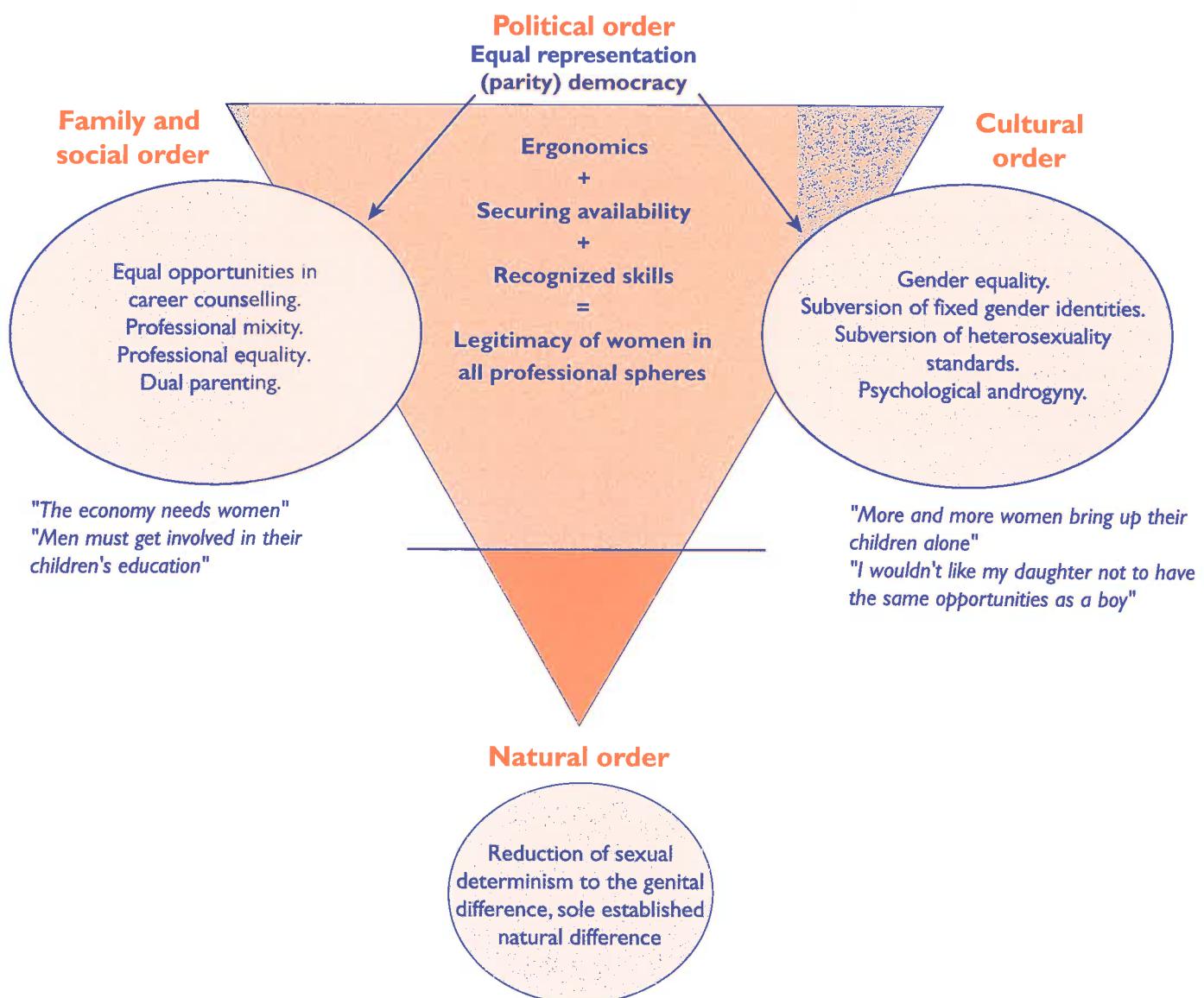




The reversal of the triangle introduces politics and policies as a vector of change for gender equality. It deconstructs the supposedly natural character of the differentiation between jobs according to gender, based upon the gender differentiation between interests and skills.

In the present state of knowledge, no theory can support the gender differentiation of skills.

...to the virtuous circle of jobs' and professions' and collectives' mixity...



## → Which levers of change ?

Much has to be done to break the vicious circle of the gender stereotypes that founds and reproduces the division of labour and access to jobs and to promote gender equality, the mixing of the sexes in employment and professional equality.

Horizontal and vertical segregations partake of the same logic of the division of roles, of skills, of resources and of values between women and men. This binary and unequal distribution of labour feeds on a very small number of stereotypes: women's lesser availability because of their being mothers, of their physical weakness and of the specialization of the main skills they are presumed to have: relational, affective, socializing and educative ones.

These three basic stereotypes snowball and organize two super-stereotypes: women are legitimate neither in positions of power nor in the professions and jobs that are beyond the sphere determined by their presumed physical and psychological dispositions.

Gender stereotypes are all the more dangerous as they work in a systemic way.

Therefore they call for systemic approaches and strategies requiring specific actions on the part of governments and civil society in cooperation.

Hence the following diagram:

GENDER MAINSTREAMING		
States, authorities	Civil society	
Curricula and textbooks	Cultural messages	Education, training, career counselling
Consciousness raising / training of teachers, of guidance counsellors and of heads of school	Political messages	
Career counselling plans and practices	Media messages	
Political messages	Socio-cultural messages	
Media campaigns	Consciousness raising / training of representatives of associations and of social, socio-cultural, socio-educational actors... Citizens' Consciousness raising Organisation of events (forums, debates...)	
Labour laws	Companies' HR management policies and practises (recruitment, mobility, pay...)	Labour and employment
Checks and sanctions	Trade-union reflection and action	
Incentives for business	Political reflection and action	
Territories' policies and practises (geographic, mobility aid, training aid, access to jobs aid...)	Consultants' and experts' practises	
Legislation and incentives (dual parenting, distribution of tasks...)	Distribution within the couple of domestic chores, of children's education, of the responsibility of elders	Work-life balance
Territories' policies and practises (bureaux des temps, childminding, care attendants...)	Corporate policies and practices regarding work-life balance	
Media campaigns	Organisation of events (forums, debates...)	



The whole of these levers of change relies on the existing background. The European incentives and directives in the matter of gender equality initiated the progressive mobilization of most of the European countries. Many have passed legislation; many must have observed that the people's attitudes were resistant to the state of legislation and so they designed strategies and measures promoting

equality. The civil society too, tackled the problem, and participated in making it more visible and in dealing with it. The good practises implemented vary according to the countries and the singularity of national backgrounds yet; they can easily be capitalized and transferred at the European level.





# FOCUS ON SPECIFICITIES

## Rural areas

VIRGILE European network's objective within STERE/O project was the identification of stereotypes specific to rural areas to produce appropriate messages. Four countries (Bulgaria, France, Germany and Italy) participated and came up against two difficulties:

- the identification of the "rural" elements in the global statistical data,
- the definition of the rural world in each country, and the consequent difficulty to make comparisons.

## The rural world: which reality?

There is no positive definition of the rural world in any of these four countries: "what is not urban is rural".

### ⇒ Some figures

There are quite few data about rural areas in the countries under consideration and even fewer gendered ones, however, some statistics could be found:

#### Population living in rural areas, in % of the national population:

Bulgaria	Italy	France	Germany
49%	No statistics	24%	15,4%

#### Area of the rural zones, in % of the country's area:

Bulgaria	Italy	France	Germany
83,7%	87,2%	62%	85,3%

#### Population density in rural areas, in % (inhabitants/Km<sup>2</sup>):

Bulgaria	Italy	France	Germany
70,3	194	62	231

#### Population living on farming in %:

Bulgaria	Italy	France	Germany
No statistics	No statistics	4,9%	2,4%

note: in Italy, 45% of farmers are women and 30% in France.

#### Women working in farming in %:

Bulgaria	Italy	France	Germany
21%	50%*	24%	4%

### ⇒ Some general facts about the rural world

The rural territories in the four countries under consideration fall into three main categories.

- **The peri-urban or quasi-urban areas:** either the residential peri-urban rural areas, or the productive, residential, densely populated rural areas.
- **The fragile and isolated areas:** on the economic and demographic decline, sparsely populated, mainly traditional farming areas.
- **The new spaces:** in search of "multifunctional" balance, with the development of new activities: "tourism in natural spaces" around rural "small towns".



## ⇒ The specificities of gender stereotypes in rural areas

### Strong resistance to change:

The less developed rural areas are quite isolated and very often the ones most resistant to change. Traditional patterns are very persistent: family and professional patterns are stronger than in towns.

### A more difficult transgression:

Indeed, it is more difficult for people to break social conventions: in rural areas everybody knows about everybody, everything is known and seen; the social, cultural and professional environments exert a strong pressure to reproduce gender stereotypes.

- For example women do all the kinds of farm work, yet the reference is still masculine.
- Bulgarian and German women (former GDR) are recognized as as skilled workers as men in rural industries; however, employers give men priority.
- The proportion of 19-to-25-year-old women who leave the rural areas for the cities is much higher than the proportion of boys (50% in Bulgaria). They flee from the rural areas because of unemployment, but also because "the surest way to get rid of the burden of stereotypes is to leave the village". The consequence is the increase of the number of bachelors in difficult rural areas.

## Focus on two specific situations

### ⇒ The very small rural businesses run by couples: an arrangement that combines of all the gender stereotypes

The small rural businesses are often run by couples (farmers, craftsmen, shopkeepers). The gender stereotypes linked with the couple and with the family reinforce the gender stereotypes in the workplace.

The organization of these Very Small Businesses is based on the rights of the family and of property which are little influenced by the logics of labour laws and or by equal opportunities issues: the head of the household is also the head of the business. Wives often work without any status, without wages, without any right to decision-making: the woman is under the authority of the boss who is also her husband, she is "X's spouse".

Her status is "aide familiale" in France, "Coadiuvante" in Italy, and "Mitelfende Familienangehörige" in Germany.

The confusion between professional and private lives emphasizes these facts:

- in space: people often work and live in the very same place,
- in time: difficulty in finding a balance between work and life.

Moreover in such situations women are isolated and cannot organize professional groups nor can they negotiate: they are in a state of dependency.

### ⇒ Seasonal work in rural areas: unrestrained gender stereotypes

This is undeclared work, paid cash in hand, without any professional status, and the bearer of strong gender stereotypes.

This is the epitome of secondary income but also of working on the side.

These activities can be found in farming (gathering, picking...), in tourism (hotels, restaurants...), in the craft industry and in commerce.

## Some levers of change

- **Rural exodus** is the **solution** for some women to escape from these patterns.
- **The settlements of new populations in rural areas** change the locals' attitudes: the new rural populations have less stereotyped representations of jobs and employment. This

trend is gaining momentum in France: new models oppose old ones and get things moving.

- In many instances, the fight against stereotypes first and foremost depends on the **spouses' getting genuine professional statuses**, which grants them rights, the recognition of their qualifications, and the right to participate in the process of decision-making in the businesses run by couples as well as in professional organizations.



## National contexts

Belgium – Bulgaria – France – Germany – Hungary – Italy

# BELGIUM

## Facts and dates

### → Education

1864: First “*précisée*” school for girls.

Isabelle Gatti de Gamond founds in Brussels the first intermediate school for girls with a complete secondary curriculum. Middle class people think of giving girls education with a different view from turning them into housewives.

1865: Creation of the first technical school for girls in Brussels.

1880: First female students registered at the “Université Libre de Bruxelles”.

*Emma Leclercq was the first female student admitted to the Faculty of Science. She was the first Belgian woman to receive a diploma.*

Girls get access to higher education but they cannot practise as doctors of medicine or pharmacists.

Compulsory secular education for boys and girls.

1889: The 10th of April Act explicitly entitles women to all academic degrees and to practising as doctors of medicine and pharmacists.

1948: Co-education is introduced in all official schools. This measure spreads to all educational institutions after about thirty years.

### → Family

1867: Abortion is severely punished by the law.

1933: Women have the right to inherit.

1955: Dual parenting rights Act.

1957: The 30/04 Act introduces juridical equality between women and men, but discriminations

at the level of civil law remain since the husband still manages the common property and his wife's own property whose consent is only requested in case of alienation of her property.

1968: Dismissal and/or resignation because of marriage or pregnancy is prohibited.

1973: Men and women get equal rights over matrimonial property. The law on marriage settlements puts an end to discrimination between husbands and wives. For example, a married woman can open a bank account without her husband's consent.

1980: Juridical qualification of rape.

1990: Decriminalization of abortion.

1992: Royal decree on the protection of workers against sexual harassment.

1993: Joint parental rights, whether the parents are married or not.

1996: 32.044 cohabitants are excluded from unemployment benefits, 89% of whom are women.

1997: 60% of the people living on social security benefits are single mothers.

2002: The equality between women and men is inscribed in the Constitution.  
July: Paternity leave (10 days).

2003: Paid (1000€) 8-week maternity leave for women freelance workers.  
Helping spouses (freelance workers' wives) are entitled to the state health scheme.

### → Labour

1884: A Royal decree grants Isala Van Diest, the first woman doctor in Belgium, permission to practice medicine.



She had to study medicine in Berne (she graduated in 1877) since the Faculty of Medicine of Louvain refused to enrol her in 1873.

1889: Marie Popelin, the first woman doctor in law, is excluded from the bar by decision of the court of appeal and of the court of cassation. The motivation of judgement reads:

*"whereas woman's particular nature, the relative weakness of her constitution, the reserve inherent to her sex, the protection of her that is necessary, her special mission in mankind, the demands and constraints of motherhood, the education she owes her children, the management of the household and home entrusted to her care, place her in conditions that can be scarcely reconciled with the duties of the profession of lawyer and give her neither the leisure, nor the strength, nor the skills necessary to endure the struggles and the strain of the Bar".*

1890: Ban on child labour for children under 12 and limitation of working hours.

Girls between 12 and 21 cannot be employed for more than 12 hours a day and only 6 days a week, they cannot work at night.

It is forbidden to employ women under 21 in mines.

It is forbidden to make women work during the four weeks following childbirth.

1896: Regulations on women and child labour in brickyards and in fish canning factories. Work cannot exceed 12 hours a day.

1897: The law grants a woman the right to be a member of professional associations, unless the husband refuses.

1900: An act grants women permission to sign a work contract, with the husband's consent, and to receive wages.

1933: A decree reduces by 25% women civil servants' salaries if they are married to a public sector employee.

1934: All public sector jobs, except domestic jobs, are reserved to men.

1936: A special Commission studies women's working conditions particularly the disparity in pay.

1957: Belgium ratifies Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome on equal pay between women and men, but delays enforcement. This act is still circumvented today (nowadays, the average wage differential between women and men is still 23%). 1958: Right to work without the husband's permission.

1963: Reform of general unemployment regulations, but women continue to be discriminated against: women heads of household get lower allowances than men heads of household and unmarried men.

1966: 3,000 women working at the National Arms Factory go on strike demanding "Equal work, equal pay".

*The Belgian feminist organizations show solidarity with this action and 7,000 women from six member states of the EEC demonstrate and support the protest.*

*This is the first totally women's strike initiated by women.*

1967: Women workers can go to court to demand equal pay.

1971: A decree promulgates the principle of equal treatment for unemployed men and women, there is no further reference to men and women, but two categories are introduced: heads of household and the others (without any gender distinction).

1980: Introduction of three categories of unemployed people: heads of household, cohabitants (whose allowances are reduced), the isolated.

*Women are principally penalized by the negative consequences of this measure.*

1991: Revision of the 1a legislation excluding long-term unemployed cohabitants (most of the time women) from unemployment benefits.



## → Politics

1830: Women actively participate in the Belgian Revolution.

Belgium becomes an independent constitutional hereditary monarchy. The throne is reserved to male descendants.

1831: The Constitution proclaims that all citizens are equal. But the voting system based on the poll tax or on property qualification gives the right to vote to a minority of men. Women cannot vote, nor can they be elected. They can have no public role nor can they belong to political organizations.

1893: End of the voting system based on the poll tax or on property qualification which is replaced by **universal suffrage**.

This suffrage is a hybrid of the voting system based on the poll tax or on property qualification as it is universal for men who can read and write.

1918: Universal suffrage for all men.

1919: Right to vote at the national level for some women: war widows and women imprisoned for patriotic motives.

1920: The right to vote is extended to women of age for local elections, with the exception of prostitutes and adulteresses. **At the national level, women can be elected to the Chamber.**

1921: The August 27 Act grants women the right to hold public offices: burgomaster, deputy burgomaster, town clerk, local tax officer (with the husband's consent).

1948: Women get the right to vote in legislative elections.

1994: The Smett-Tobback Act provides for the imposition of a number of women on the lists of candidates. This act was enforced for the 1999 legislative elections.

2003: Obligation of parity between women and men on lists of candidates, with representation of both **sexes** in the first three names of the list.

## Key figures and good practices

In the European context that the Treaty of Lisbon expresses in the wish to reach a 60% women's employment rate, Belgium combines various unfavourable realities which, however, show signs of positive evolutions.

### Women and pay

In Belgium today, women are still experiencing disparities in pay of 7% (same posts, same skills).

### Women and responsibilities

They are still globally under-represented in managerial positions.

Indeed, few women reach positions of responsibility. Even in the main largely female sector, kindergarten and primary schools, where they represent 81% of the personnel, women represent but 57% of the heads of schools. The higher in the education system, the lower the figures are, reaching next to naught at university level.

Women represent 7% of managerial positions in the public sector and 5% in the largest private companies.

Some changes can be noticed: for the first time a woman is at the head of the Federation of Walloon Industry.

An interesting point was collected in the surveys within STERE/O project: some women declared they were little attracted to upward-moving careers and yet they wished their daughters could reach such positions.

## Women and working time

Recent studies made on time management in Belgium show that every week, women devote 9h30 more than men to domestic chores and 1h20 more to the children's education. The weekly working load for women (paid work, domestic chores, children and family care) is 2h30 more than for men who can devote 8h20 to their paid job and so to their career and get an extra 2h30 rest. Nevertheless, 63% of working women work full time.

## Women and employment rates

Women's employment rates in Belgium rose from 46.7% in 1997 to 51.5% in 2000 whereas men's employment rate rose by only 2%. Among the young, women's participation in the labour market is equal to men's; whereas, after 55, 82% of women stop working. That partly explains why women are discriminated against as regards retirement pensions; their welfare cover is still much less favourable than men's.

It can also be noticed that 69% of mothers work.

## Women and the private sphere

Today, 85% of single parent families are supported by women, which strongly questions the prejudice about the secondary nature of women's income.

As for married women, one woman in five is still the victim of her husband's violence.

The most successful advance in Belgium has been the creation of a large network of "crèches" and of child-care services; even though it is still insufficient, it maintains a priority status as a support for parenting.

## Advances

Recently, a bill was proposed to the Belgian Cabinet by the person in charge of Equal opportunities at the federal level, for the mainstreaming of a gender perspective at all levels of political decision making. This bill is an improvement, given that it focuses on three fields: the government's measures and actions, the budget, and statistics. For every measure, an evaluation should be made beforehand to assess its probable impact on men's and women's situations. The budget should be monitored to avoid discrimination in allocating funds. Statistics should systematically integrate the gender perspective in order to identify, study and correct any discrepancies between women and men.



## BULGARIA

### Key dates (history)

Rights of women by the end of World War II<sup>3</sup>.

After the Liberation from the Turkish Yoke in 1878, the first Bulgarian Constitution of 1879 did not give civil rights to women but only to men, including those Bulgarian citizens "from different ethnic origins". It was not until 1937 that married, divorced and widowed women received the right to vote, and in 1938 - to be elected.

At the same time the Constitution introduced obligatory primary education for all Bulgarian citizens, including women. Thus, many girls' secondary and vocational schools were established by the end of World War II. Gradually girls were allowed to study at Sofia University and other institutions of higher education schools. In spite of numerous limitations, a great number of women worked outside the home, e.g. in teaching, administration, communications.

At the same time women were not allowed to practise certain professions - for example before 1944 women did not have the right to be lawyers or judges.

#### **Women as part of the work force during the totalitarian period of the socialist command economy.**

After the beginning of communism in 1944, the new *Constitution of the People's Republic of Bulgaria* was adopted in 1947. It not only reaffirmed the full electoral rights of women, but also proclaimed that "Women are equal to men in all spheres of state, private, economic, cultural and political life. This equality shall be achieved by entitling women, equally with men, to the right to work and to equal payment for equal work, the rights to vacation, social security, pension and education. The woman-mother shall enjoy additional protection in labour. The state shall take special care of the mother and the child by establishing maternity hospitals, kindergardens and dispensary clinics, entitling women to paid leaves before and after giving birth with preservation of salary and providing free obstetrician and medical help (Article 72)." At the same time all women's

organizations that existed before 1944 were banned and replaced by the Union of Bulgarian Women, formed by the state, subordinate to the governing Communist Party. This was the only association in which Bulgarian women were organized during the socialist period.

During that period two major parallel processes took place – the legalizing of women's equality and their equal participation in public production. This corresponded to the Soviet model, according to which women had to be involved in work for the society and to participate in common production. Having in mind that gender equality had formally been declared after World War II, the specific features of the social and economic development concerning women's participation in paid labour included, on one hand, economic constraints caused by low wages payment and the insufficient support for the family and, on the other hand, the strong will of women for personal fulfillment and economic independence.

The modernization and industrialization of the country that followed, as well as access to free education and health care, gave opportunities to many women to participate actively in the labour market, which was encouraged by the state. The model of the "emancipated" woman - mother, worker and socially active person - was recognized by the ideology enshrined in the educational system, the media, the social organizations and the structures of the ruling communist party, in order to increase the contribution of Bulgarian women to the rapid change in society. At the same time women were responsible for all child-care and housework. Women were offered three priority areas for fulfillment - socially useful labour, active participation in social and political life, and the family.

In order to reconcile these three activities, in the 70's the state created favourable legal and economic conditions by introducing paid and unpaid maternity leaves much longer than those in many countries in Europe and the rest of the world. The decreasing

<sup>3</sup> Center for Women's Studies and Policies (CWSP), "Gender Analysis Report and Equality Plan" within UMA Project.

birth rate trend imposed the adoption in 1968 of a special *Decree on Encouraging Births*.

According to this document “The woman-mother shall enjoy special protection and care from the state and from economic and social organizations, which shall provide her with leaves before and after giving birth maintaining her same salary, free obstetrical and medical help, maternity hospitals, alleviating her workload, enhancing the network of child care establishments, community and public services and catering” (Article 37).

The employment of women during the period of socialism was characterised by higher rates of employment than other countries worldwide. According to some international statistics, Bulgaria marked rates far above those for the developed countries in North America and Europe.

reconciliation between work and family life, the occupation of women outside the home.

Some researchers have noted the common negative trends that impact women’s lives in Eastern Europe: high women’s unemployment rates, occupation in low-paid and non-prestigious jobs and professions or in the informal economy, increased volume of non-paid household work. The reasons seem obvious: economic decline, lack of protective measures, and regeneration of patriarchal stereotypes.

## Key figures

In response to the structural and macroeconomic pressure the labour market adjustment in Bulgaria has undergone significant changes related to the employment levels and sectors of the economy. Unemployment is a specific problem for all transition economies and especially for Bulgaria. The above-mentioned processes have affected most significantly women’s employment. In the first several years after the changes, the greatest job cuts were in public administration, healthcare services, education, science and others with high employment of women. As a result, gender segregation on the labour market is significant. **The rate of women’s unemployment** (9.1%) is slightly lower than that of men (9.2%) but still higher than in EU member states. Gender inequalities on the labour market are significant as far as economic activity is concerned. The rate of **women’s economic activity** is Decreased during the last quarter of 2005 (45.7% compared to 45.9% in 2004) while men’s economic activity increased in 2005 (57% compared to 50.8% in 2004).

Women’s employment inequality could be illustrated at the management level and with regard to the decision-making process. According to a DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities survey in 2004, 20% of Bulgarian women in Top 50 publicly quoted companies occupy the highest **decision-making** positions (10% average for EU-25, BG and RO), which is quite low in comparison to men.

Table 1 : Share of women in the labour force

	1950	1975	1981
Developed countries	31.18	36.6	36.1 - North America
			38.4 - Eastern Europe
Bulgaria	40	46.1	49.5

Source: *Women in Economic Activity: Global Statistical Survey 1950-2000*

## Status of women during the period of democratization and transition to market economy

Since 1989 the processes of transition to a market economy and democratisation have totally changed Bulgarian society by putting it on entirely different ideological grounds. The restructuring of the political, economic, social and cultural structures of the society had its impact on the status of women and men, as well as on their relationships. This could be clearly seen in the changes in attitudes, behaviour and practices concerning roles in the family, the





**Women-entrepreneurs** and managers in Bulgaria number about 60 000 (33.7% of all entrepreneurs in Bulgaria); 80.5% manage companies with up to 9 employees, 16.1% manage small companies (10-49 employees), 3.4% manage companies with more than 50 employees, 32% in Services, 16% in the Public Sector, 17.43% in Trade, 3.18% in the Healthcare Sector.

22% of Members of **Parliament** are women, which is a lower share of women in policy-making than in EU-25, BG and RO (24%). Women comprise only 20% in **National Governments** (24% for EU-25, BG and RO).

The involvement of both genders in the Supreme Court in Bulgaria is balanced - 50% women as compared to a 24% average for EU-25, BG and RO. The President is a man, and 56% of the members are women.

The **profile** of the women-entrepreneurs in Bulgaria shows that 72 per cent are married with children. About 85 per cent of the business women work more than 50 hours a week and only 8.4 per cent state that they are engaged in their business but 8 hours a day.

With regard to **education**, Bulgarian business women are highly educated, and even take the lead over women-entrepreneurs in EU Member States – 62.97 per cent of Bulgarian women entrepreneurs have higher education and 35.14 per cent have secondary education. A majority of Bulgarians with higher education are women (53.4%). The same holds true for people with higher level secondary education (50.2%)

It could be concluded from the available data that “feminised” **domains** are “Healthcare services and social affairs” (77.4%); “Education” (76.5%); “Financial intermediaries” (66.8%) and “Hotels and restaurants” (63.5%) while relatively “balanced” domains are: “Other services” (54.3%), “Processing industries” (50.8%), “Trade and repair” (49.9%) and “Real estate and business activities” (42.6%).

Women represent 39.0% of the workforce in public administration and defence, 37.4% in agriculture,

27.4% in transport and communication, 21.7% in electricity, gas and water supply, 9.4% in construction.

## Good practices promoting professional equality

However, the gender equality mechanisms in Bulgaria are not established yet. At the end of 2004 and beginning of 2005 the **Commission for Protection against Discrimination** (independent body), **Ombudsman institution**, the **Commission for Countering Trafficking of Human Beings** (to the Government) were set up. However, so far little progress has been achieved in the implementation of the newly adopted legislation on gender equality. Another problem is the still vague system of correlation between the different institutions that have recently been established, as well as their funding.

In the National Assembly, the **Standing Committee on Human Rights and Religious Affairs** passes bills on human rights and religions, religious freedoms, anti-discrimination, gender equality, rights of children, rights of convicts, and rights of refugees, submitted by members of the Parliament or the Council of Ministers. The Committee also organizes hearings on these issues together with international institutions and non-governmental organizations.

**National Council on Equality between Women and Men** was set up in November 2004. The Council is acting as a consultative body to the Council of Ministers and will develop and implement the national policy in gender equality in collaboration and coordination between the government authorities and the non-governmental sector.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy is responsible for gender issues at the level of executive power. Since March 2004, a **Sector on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men** has been functioning within the Directorate of the Policy on the Labour Market. The Sector is responsible for the development of the National Plan for Gender Equality.

The Commission for Protection against Discrimination is an independent body responsible for prevention of discrimination, protection against discrimination and equal opportunities in accordance with the Law for protection against discrimination. The Commission reports every year to the National Assembly about the implementation of the Bulgarian legislation in the field of equal opportunities.

Only few **municipalities** have structures dealing with equal treatment issues and women's problems, assisting consultative bodies are being gradually established with the Municipal Councils, e.g. the Public Council on Social Activities and Protection of the Child, which is also responsible to recognise and resolve problems of the women. In 2004 two among 264 municipalities have appointed a special expert on gender, youth and children issues. These experts should develop an action plan promoting gender equality at local level.

The application of gender mainstreaming approach is mentioned in some documents of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, such as: **National Employment Strategy 2004-2010**, **National Action Plan for Employment for 2004**, **National Action Plan for Employment for 2005**, **National Action Plan for Promotion of Gender Equality for 2005**. As initial practical measures, undertaken by the Ministry, could be mentioned the training sessions for civil servant from central level of government in which basic information on international and national legislation on gender equality, methods of gender-based analysis (gender mainstreaming), gender-sensitive indicators were provided.

This Plan also envisages the following measures:

- increasing the low rate of economic activity among women;

- implementation of a system of indicators for tracing the trends related to equal opportunities;
- encouragement of women's entrepreneurship;
- overcoming of gender stereotypes on the labour market and particularly, employers' attitude to women's labour force;
- flexible forms of employment for better reconciliation between family and professional life.

There are some **specific measures** for overcoming the inequality of the two genders on the labour market. They have temporary character and are targeted at overcoming the lack of equal chances for realisation on the labour market and decreasing the differences between men and women in the remuneration, labour conditions, possibilities for career promotion, etc. there are some measure aimed at better reconciliation between family and professional life, better care for the children, better reintegration of women in the economic life and better access to information and technologies. This type of measures could be classified in the following 3 groups:

- provision of possibilities for better adaptability of unemployed women in accordance with the economic development and the situation of the labour market in Bulgaria thus encouraging their economic activity;
- encouragement of women's entrepreneurship;
- overcoming of social isolation among vulnerable social groups (women over 50, young women re-entering the labour market after maternity, single mothers, women with low educational level, etc.).



## FRANCE

### The march towards equality between women and men:

#### key dates

- **Equality of access to knowledge:** from differentiation (1867, creation of girls' primary schools – 1880, creation of girls' secondary schools – 1919, creation of female “baccalauréat”)... to co-education (1924, unification of curricula, equivalence of “baccalauréats” – 1975, co-education in State schools).
- **Equality in the workplace:** from women's labour protected by the law (1892, ban on women's night work – 1909, Act instituting maternity leave)... to women's labour and the professional equality concept (1972, equal work, equal pay – 1983, Act on professional equality – 2001, the 1983 Act is amended: social modernisation re-establishes the right to night work for women).
- **Political equality:** from passive citizenship, (1791: declaration of women citizens' rights – 1795: women are banned from political activities – 1845: women are excluded from universal suffrage)... to active citizenship (1944: women get the right to vote and to eligibility, – 1946, the principle of equal rights is inscribed in the preamble to the constitution – 2000, election parity act).
- **Equality within the couple:** from the patriarchal family model (1804, the Napoleonic code gives women the status of minors – 1938: married women's juridical incapacity is abolished – 1965, married women can have a job without their husbands' consent)... to the couple composed of two individuals endowed with equal rights (1970, parental authority replaces paternal authority – 1985, husband and wife are equal in the management of the couple's property – 1993, joint parental authority).
- **Equality of own rights:** from pro-birth policies (1920, the law puts contraception in the same category as abortion, both considered as

crimes – 1956, foundation of “maternité heureuse” (happy maternity) which will become “planing familial”(family planning))....to own rights (1967, the law authorizes contraception – 1975, the law authorizes termination of pregnancy – 1980, legal definition of rape – 1993, obstructing termination of pregnancy becomes an offence).

### Situation of inequalities in the workplace

- Women's activity rate is 63.8%, that is to say 11 points lower than men's.
- Women's unemployment rate is 11.1%, that is to say 2.1 points higher than men's.
- Women's part-time activity rate is 30.1%, which is to say 24.8 points higher than men's.
- Women represent 35.5% of top management and top intellectual professions.
- Fewer than two managers out of ten are women.
- 70% of working women are employed in five main sectors (social work, health care, education/training, home care and clerical work).
- Disparity in pay between women and men is globally 20%, and 13% if part-time is taken into account.

#### Comments:

Indicators are in the red, despite much progress as regards activity rates and access to management. Disparities in pay are still very important, hence the government's decision to make legislation about equal pay.

Women are still confined to some professions (which impacts on disparities in pay: the women's professional strongholds are worse-paid...), this situation has been resisting all strategies and tends to deteriorate at the present moment.

## Good practices

### In matters of education, training and career counselling

- Promotion of equal opportunities in the education community (July 2000 interdepartmental decree).
  - Raising awareness and training of teachers and guidance counsellors.
  - Equality correspondents are appointed in some “academies” (regional education authority districts).
  - Creation of teaching tools.
  - Organisation of events.
- Planning projects for equal access to professional training and for equal access to jobs.
  - Raising awareness and training of guidance and professional integration personnel.
  - Territorial plans of actions.
  - Focus career counselling practices on diversifying professional choices.

### In matters of labour and employment

- Actions of the State and of public authorities.
  - Legislation: act on the abolition of disparities in pay between women and men within five years.
  - Creation of a professional-equality-between-women-and-men quality label.
  - Equality Charter with the economic players, Unions, management, and associations.
  - Media campaign on equal opportunities between women and men.
  - Territorial plans of action for equal access to jobs and to employment.

- Positioning of authorities in charge of professional equality in administrations.

- Actions of enterprises and of unions and management.

- Unions and management interprofessional national agreement on professional equality between women and men.

- Self-created company policies in the matter of professional equality (pay, career development, mixed personnel, working posts ergonomics...).

### In the matter of work-life balance

- Actions of the State and of public authorities.
  - Legislation: equal rights as regards parental leave.
  - Territorial authorities policies: childminding, “bureaux des temps”, “guichets uniques”...
- Actions of companies: flex-time, “conciergerie” services (ironing, dry-cleaning, laundry,...), assistance in dealing with family troubles, childcare...

France can boast an increase of women’s activity rate while keeping the birth rate stable.





## GERMANY

### Situation in Germany

Compared to the international situation, the employment of childless women is average in Germany. However employment of women with children is far below average. Especially women with more than one child withdraw from the labour market.

Many women do not see any possibilities for combining work and family life. Highly qualified women in particular opt for careers instead of children; hence the birth-rate in Germany is only 1.4. Not that young people in Germany do not want to have children, only the conditions to make this wish come true are much worse than in many other European countries. In addition, the model of a housewife staying at home all day or half of it to take care of the children is still in place, and there is a lack of child-care facilities and day-schools. Special tax and insurance laws for couples are even indirectly fostering women's withdrawal from the labour market.

Nevertheless, there are significant differences between eastern and western Germany. Since the reunification Germany has been made of two parts with a different 30-year history. The overall numbers display rather the western part's reality, as the difference in population between east and west has a ratio of approximately 3:1. In eastern Germany labour participation was extraordinarily high for both sexes compared to western Germany. Child care facilities were available for all. During the transformation process of planned- to market economy unemployment rose enormously. First more women were affected by unemployment than men. Now the situation is stabilised at a high level. Still women's labour force participation rate is 9% higher in the former socialist part of Germany than in the west. In general east German women work part-time only when full time jobs are not available. In the west family commitments are the main reason for women to work part-time. Also income differences between women and men are smaller in the east than in the west thus leading to a wife's higher dependency on the husband's income in the west than in the east.

### Figures, dates and facts

#### Education

##### → F.R.G.

1960: Co-education in secondary schools was implemented in the "Länder", one after the other.

##### → G.D.R.

1950: Act on the protection of mothers and of children and about women's rights: measures of qualification for women are taken in all professions.

1961: Labour laws: preference for women for the measures of qualification / training.

#### Labour

##### → F.R.G.

1952: Act on the protection of working mothers, ban on Sunday work and night work.

1955: A decision of the federal constitutional court makes "women's salaries" unconstitutional.

1957: Married women can work without their husbands' consent.

##### → G.D.R.

1949: Constitution of the G.D.R.: equal pay between women and men.

1950: Act on the protection of mothers and children and about women's rights:

- women's labour cannot be restricted to the traditional women's jobs but must be extended to all branches of production: power industries, mechanical engineering industries, ... building industries.
- paid maternity leave; beyond that, one-year unpaid leave (at the most), meanwhile the woman is still the company's employee.



- ban on overtime work and on night work for pregnant women and breast-feeding mothers; they can perform light tasks without any wage cut.
- sick child leave.

2001: - reform of the status of enterprises (Betriebsverfassungsgesetz): aims at promoting equal opportunities within enterprises.

- federal law on the equality between women and men in the federal administration and in the federal courts that gives preferential hiring for the same level of qualification.
- women can do their national service in the armed forces.
- in firms with more than 15 employees, mothers and fathers are entitled to parental leave (three years at the most) even simultaneously.

## Family

### → F.R.G.

1957: Act on equal rights: deferred augments community (legal marriage settlement in German law).

### → G.D.R.

1950: Act on the protection of mothers and children and women's rights.

- rights of working single mothers to their children's admission to day-care centres, or kindergartens.
- creation of common facilities (kindergartens, public laundries...) for women farmhands and women farmers.

1961: Labour laws:

- day-care centres, health care centres and schools must be constantly upgraded in keeping with the general development.

- creation and upgrading of varied service facilities for women workers.
- women working full-time are entitled to one day off a month for housework.

## After the reunification

1996: Children over three years of age are entitled to attend kindergarten schools.

## Political rights

### → F.R.G.

1949: Equality between women and men is inscribed in the constitution.

1953: The rights against the equality between women and men are abrogated.

### → G.D.R.

1949: The constitution guarantees women and men's equal rights. The right to vote for all citizens over 18, universal suffrage for all citizens over 21.

1994: Complement to the constitution: "The State promotes the implementation of the equality between women and men and aims at eliminating existing hindrances."

2000: Equality between women and men in administrative and judicial languages.

- Part time work is a "female domain". In 2004 43% of all employed women – compared to 7% of men - had official work time of 31h/week and less.
- In 42% of the German households with children the woman is not employed at all, in 26% the woman works part-time while the man works fulltime. Only in 21% of the households do both parents work fulltime.
- Only 8% of people between 18 and 44 support mothers' full time professional activity, 49% support a part-time transition, 29%



support their ceasing work altogether. A vast majority of women, with or without children, agree that working is incompatible with bringing up children.

- 44% of 35-to-39-year-old women holding a diploma do not have children.
- 17% of women believe that society makes no distinction between housewives and working women. 44% of women are convinced that a professional activity is necessary to get some social prestige.
- Young women have not only caught up to but also have outrun men at school. Women start younger, have better marks and are more likely to attend secondary schools. They also have better diplomas.
- Women benefited from the transition of industry to service society. For the past couple of years there have been fewer women unemployed than men.

- The number of women in top positions in politics is increasing. On average the proportion of women in local and federal governments is slightly higher than 30%. This is above the European average.
- The current government intends to change the laws on maternity leave. The persons on leave (men or women) will receive 67% of their net income (max. € 1.800/month) for one year. The aim is to convince more men to take paternity leave. Currently only 4.9% of men take paternity leave from which 4.7% take turns with their wife and only 0.2% stay at home completely.



# HUNGARY

## FACTS AND DATES

### Before 1945:

The revolutions of 1848 did not bring equality for women:

- Women's right to participate in public issues and hold public offices was introduced in the form of a new act on election rights during the 6 months of the so-called Republic of Councils in 1919. This resulted in an increase in the rate of those having the right to vote from 8% to 40% in the total population. Partial election rights were introduced in 1923, however, gender equality did not become a reality: women's right to vote was limited by several factors: a higher age, a university degree, number of children (in later years).
- Women's *property rights* were restricted before the introduction of state socialism.
- Although the regulation of *inheritance rights* was not so unfair, the "privileging of boys" was long a practice: 58% of those enjoying this right were boys in 1902, and by 1950 their rate among beneficiaries was still above 50%.
- In terms of governing their *family status*, women had restricted rights to initiate divorce.

### After 1945:

It was not until 1945 that the equality of women was progressively introduced in the fields of political, civil, family, and employment rights:

- Gender differences in the *right to vote* were finally abolished by Act VIII of 1945.
- The Constitution of 1949 declared the *equality of men and women* regarding all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights (Section 66, (1) paragraph); general anti-discriminatory clauses of the Constitution refer to the principle of equal remuneration, equal treatment in

the workplace, etc. The Constitution allows for the employment of positive discrimination to safeguard women's rights (note that the constitutional authorization of positive discrimination is based on the "correction principle", i.e. the acknowledgment of the natural, biological and physical differences between men and women. Furthermore, related measures often turned out to be actually restrictive, e.g. constraining employment opportunities by reference to the need to protect mothers' health).

- Gender differences in citizenship rights were abolished by Act V of 1957.
- It is telling that the possibility to give the mother's family name to the child is a very recent accomplishment, and almost never used. Instead, most wives are still bearing their husband's name-not only his family name but also his first name!

### **Women's inclusion in the labour market:**

The dictatorship of the proletariat in the 1950's demolished the traditional bourgeois family model. It was economic need after the war that brought women massively to the labour market. At the same time, communist ideology also determined gender equality in education and the workplace, as well as a non-segregated labour market (which never fully became a reality). The "progressive" childcare measures progressively introduced from the late 1960's reflected a change in the economy as well as ideological continuity: in order to cover unemployment, women were made to stay at home taking care of children.

### After 1989:

#### **Conservative turn**

Nostalgia towards the bourgeois family model has been reflected by the propaganda of conservative parties to reintroduce the single-earner family model that is, however, not viable in Hungary: as a matter of fact, only the economic elite can afford it. Professional equality is, however, enhanced by the attitudes of the new generation: women, too, have



career ambitions. Nevertheless, while the rate of women holding a higher education degree is higher than men's (by 11.4% in 2003); they are represented in top (and also middle) management in significantly lesser numbers (5.2% women vs. 94.8% men).

## Key figures

After the transition, the activity rate has fallen dramatically, especially for women. Due to the development of the insurance and finance service sector, it is up again (see meta-research). Nevertheless it is still low. Once a woman became unemployed, the time needed to find a new job is twice as long as for a man. Typically, women become passive when unemployed, not necessarily registering. It is true also for women after maternity leave.

Substantially more women are economically **inactive** (not registered unemployed or on childcare leave) – in 2004: 46% – compared to 32.8% of men in the same age interval.

In 2004, 12% of the economically inactive women were on childcare leave.

## The child minding benefits meant as compensations:

- "GYES" till 3 years,
- "GYET" till 8 years - Special maternity allowance paid to a parent who has stopped work to bring up 3 children or more from 3-8 years of the smallest child.
- The current government intends to incite the earlier return, allowing from 2006 full time employment from 1 year of the child (only part-time before), and still receive the benefit.

## Benefits in cash:

- "GYED" linked to insurance affiliation and so with the previous employee status of 180 days.

- There is a data confusion showing better activity rate: students (any level) and registered unemployed can benefit from this system, but they figure also within the number of students (active population) and unemployed (figuring as active) too.

Even if the legislation obliges the employer to reemploy the person after maternity leave 32.5% are dismissed, 12.3% of workplaces disappear (2002). Only one third of mothers after maternity leave go back to their previous job.

There is legal possibility to finance publicly:

- re-employment,
- studies during maternity leave, but in practice the Labour Offices conserve the status quo and do not use the funds allocated to them for these purposes.

(JOL-LET now began the work to build bridges between employers and mothers to canalize public funds).

In international comparison labour participation of childless women is higher than the EU average, but lower if one child is born, and mothers with 3 children withdraw from the labour market (12.9%, EU average is 41.2%). The career/child issue became an alternative, 20% of women under 30 do not want children, and the birth rate is 1.28 in 2004.

In higher education (university/college) the number of girls is superior to boys. The most significant difference is in the share of teachers training for handicapped (97.5% are women), in engineering and informatics the balance is on the boys' side (gap of 53.4 and 73.2%). But more girls study economics, law, and even natural science.

But in **PHD and DLA** there are already more boys almost in all fields.

The scientific degrees are held by men.

Regarding the **different sectors** of the economy, the domains where the presence of women is more significant are: health and social work, education and financial intermediation, whilst the masculine

domains are agriculture, construction and transport and storage.

In Hungary, the number of **part-time employees** is low and more widespread among women, as typical in other countries as well. In 2004, 5.9% of employed women worked part-time, almost twice as many as men. The share among under-qualified (primary school of 8 grades or lower) is more than twice as much – 9.7% – as among women with high level of education (university, college) – 4.2%. The same data for men – 5% and 3.7% (here we should mention that employers often declare part-time their employees working full time in fact in order to economize on social security spending. So the data of part-time employment are not realistic, they are only tendencies).

Hungarian women are EU record holders in **household care**: the longest time (434 minutes a day spent in married families raising children of 0-6 years).

In **management** and among the members of the executive, of the legislature, among senior officials of public administrations and senior executives there are still twice as many men as women.

Only one of the 50 biggest companies' CEOs is a woman.

**As for politics**: the share of members of parliament is 14% women, 86% men, and there is no difference between parties. Hungary is 24th in rank in the EU-25 (just before Greece) concerning the share of female/male MPs (8%).

## Good practices

### State measures:

**Legislation**: successful harmonization of Hungarian legislation to meet the requirements contained in the *Acquis Communautaire* of the EU.

- *Amended Labour Code*:

The labour law has undergone several modifications since the early 90's to meet current demands and comply with equality requirements. Importantly, it contains the reversal of the burden of proof in discrimination cases. Flexible work regimes have been made available in recent modifications of the law.

- *New social laws*

Thanks to developments in the late 1990's, current legislation on social security systems is basically free from discrimination (e.g. uniform retirement age for women and men was introduced). Gender differences in the enjoyment of social rights arise today from differences in social status, though the regulation of some areas (notably the status of the self-employed and their assisting spouses) is also under-developed.

Fathers have been long entitled to take child-care leave and allowances (but incentives are lacking). Recently a 5-day father's leave was introduced (symbolic importance).

- *Act on Equal Treatment and the Promotion of Equal Opportunities*:

It is a composite law prohibiting discrimination against all kinds of minorities; it contains a definition of discrimination, the reversal of the burden of proof, the opportunity of class action and ex officio proceedings, and legislation on harassment (though not on sexual harassment specifically). The law also prescribes the design and implementation of Equal Opportunities Plans by public institutions.

**Institutional framework**: important mechanisms to enforce gender equality are lacking, however, there are some promising developments:

- The governmental institution responsible for gender equality is now integrated in the *Ministry of Social Affairs, Healthcare and Equal Opportunities*. However, the present minister (a woman, Kinga Göncz) is more concerned about other minority issues than about women).
- As determined in the Act on Equal Treatment, a public administrative body responsible for the surveillance of compliance with the act called





the *Authority of Equal Treatment* has been set up and started its operations in February 2005. The work of the authority is aided by an expert council. Although *ex officio* proceedings were made available by the same act, due to the lack of resources, the authority has not used this opportunity, and is hardly able to meet demand at all.

**Programs:** some steps towards the implementation of the spirit contained in EU directives have been made but women's issues are still considered marginal:

- Gender equality is a chapter in the *Plans of National Development*.
- The Ministry of Social Issues, Healthcare and Equal Opportunities, jointly with the Ministry of Labour, annually grants the so-called *Family friendly Workplace Award* to workplaces that offer flexible work regimes, the opportunity of part-time work, pleasant work environment, childcare facilities, and help in reintegration after child-care leave to the employees.
- *Telephone counselling service* maintained by the Ministry of Social Issues, Healthcare and Equal Opportunities for victims of discrimination.
- Training programs supported by the Secretariat of Women's Representation (now integrated in Ministry of Social Issues, Healthcare and Equal Opportunities), e.g. *Managing E-Quality and Train the Trainer* to share and adapt best European practices; reintegration Training to help women's reintegration on the labour market by the training of multipliers; model programs for the prevention of violence to treat expert personnel in the fields of domestic violence and human trafficking.

### Economic Enterprises:

A growing number of especially small and middle size enterprises (but also some public institutions) show sensitivity to the issue of equal opportunities (these are awarded the "*Family-Friendly Workplace Award*" by

the Ministry of Social Affairs, Healthcare and Equal Opportunities and the Ministry of Labour):

- the porcelain manufacture in Herend has long been considered an *etalon* regarding "family or mother-friendly" measures (note that in the absence of incentives for fathers to stay at home, family friendly and mother-friendly becomes synonymous and workplaces introducing such measures are likely to become favourite niches of female workers, thus reinforcing professional segregation. In the porcelain manufacture of Herend 75% of workers are women).

### Civil initiatives:

A small minority of women's NGOs and other civil organizations are active in safeguarding and promoting women's rights:

- Legal and psychological advice provided for the victims of discrimination and violence by NANE (Women for Women Against Violence) and Habeas Corpus.
- Projects and programs to help women's reintegration on the labour market by introducing new, family-friendly work models, career orientation consultancy, and mediation between employers and employees by JÓL-LÉT.
- Research projects (MONA: Women's involvement in the public life).
- Training of female politicians/party cadres by the Women's Committee of some political parties.
- Increasing awareness on the part of political parties about the need to include women in decision making (e.g. EP elections in 2004).
- The promotion of the quota issue by the Women's Section of the Hungarian Socialist Party, and regional coalition of the women's committees of left-wing parties for the same purpose.

- Increased media and public representation of women's issues, especially of the issues of domestic violence and prostitution, by NANE and the Movement for a Prostitution-Free Hungary.
- Conferences and critical feedbacks to the government by NGOs and the Women's Section of the National Alliance of Hungarian Trade Unions.
- The germs of coalition-building realized by trade union organizations as well as umbrella organizations of women's NGOs like Alliance of Interest Promotion of Hungarian Women that has also joined the European Women's Lobby.



## ITALY

### Facts and dates

#### Laws, measures, policies in favour of equality in Italy:

- 1945: Right to vote for women.
- 1948: General principle of equality between women and men and consequently equal pay.
- 1956: Proclamation of equal pay between women and men - protocol n°100 OIT is signed: equal work, equal pay.
- 1960: Equal pay between women and men agreement in industry.
- 1963: Protocol n°111 OIT is signed: equal pay between women and men, equal access to jobs, and equal working conditions. Women can get access to any public professional role, except limitations and particular conditions in the Army.
- 1971: Creation of public day-care centres.
- 1975: New family code: equal status for women and men concerning the children's education and the management of the family's property. Abrogation of the concept of "head of family".
- 1977: 903 Act on parity between women and men: ban on discrimination in access to jobs, career developments, levels of qualification, training, pay, right to social contribution.
- 1983: Creation of the national committee for the implementation of the principles of equal pay and equal opportunities between women and men in the workplace.
- 1984: Creation of the national commission for the achievement of parity between women and men. Institution of Parity Counsellors in charge of denouncing discriminations against women.
- 1986: Creation of the Regional Equal Opportunities Commissions.  
Creation of Equal Opportunities Committees in private business and public organisations.
- 1990: City laws on the re-organisation and harmonizing of city working hours and times.
- 1991: 125 Act: "positive initiatives" to eliminate obstacles to women's access to jobs and to their careers' development.
- 1992: 215 Act: measures to encourage and support women's businesses.
- 1997: Creation of the Ministry of Equal Opportunities and of the Women's Enterprises Commission, following the implementation of the Beijing Women's Empowerment Programme.
- 2000: 53 Act: parental and training leaves, for a fairer life-work-training balance.

### Key figures

(source: ISTAT)

#### Labour

##### - Activity rate

in 1993:	women	41.9%
	men	73.8%
in 2003:	women	48.3%
	men	74.4%

##### - Unemployment rate

in 1993:	women	14.6%
	men	7.5%
in 2003:	women	11.6%
	men	6.8%

#### Business creation

➔ Rate of increase in business creation in 2004 compared with 2003:

- rate of increase of women's businesses: +2%.

- average rate of increase (women's businesses + men's businesses): +1.3%.
- variation 2003/2004 of women's businesses in "traditionally" male sectors:
  - building industry: + 7%.
  - transports and telecommunications: + 9.6%.
  - energy: +15.8%.

## Services

- Incidence of places available in childcare centers for children 0-3:  
Italy 6%, (Denmark 64%, Great Britain 34%, Greece 3%).
- Incidence of places available in kindergarden schools for children 3-6:  
Italy 95%, (Denmark 91%, Great Britain 60%, Greece 46%).

## Education

- Secondary schools – 1999/2000:
  - secondary school graduates success rates: women 83.7% men 72.7%.
  - graduates with distinction (100/100): women 6.9% men 4.2%.
- University – 1999/2000:
  - final exam success rates: women 49.3% men 41.8%.
  - University graduation within expected period of time: women 14.0% men 12.9%.

## Good practices

1998 - 2001: POLITE European project (with the financing of the European Union's Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs) in part-

nership with the Department of Equal Opportunities to the Presidency of the Cabinet for the revision of school texts to balance the images of women and men in all fields of activity and of representation (family, work, art, economy).

Introduction in regional vocational training curricula of an equal opportunity educational module (raising awareness, training) in all the courses of all the professional fields.

As of 2002: 900 € scholarships for young women enrolling in Polytechnique Turin to encourage them to study technical and scientific subjects.

1990: First regional legislations on cities' schedules and Time allocations: according to these, genuine organization plans of activities and places are being prepared based notably on the demands of working women and men and public and commercial services must comply with them.

2000: Institution of "bureaux des temps" for town authorities to coordinate local partnership initiatives between public and private institutions to rationalize and coordinate schedules, to improve the work-life balance. Examples in Cremona, Prato, Rimini, Bolzano, Pesaro, Milan, Genoa: actions on the schedules of public services, shops and schools.

2001: Institution of the Milan Polytechnic University Research Department on Town Planning of City Times to study policies to reconcile individual and professional and family time allocation.

2001/2002: Institution of the Studies of the Architecture of Mobility Places and of Town Planning of Times at Milan Polytechnic University, to study the local organization of mobility and of transports.



## CONCLUSIONS

### The division of labour between women and men is a statistical reality in the expanded European Union

Figures confirm a division of labour between women and men that is based upon two facts:

- **Vertical segregation:** women are three times as few as men in management. This situation, often metaphorically referred to as the glass ceiling, is common to all the European countries but its extent depends on national backgrounds.
- **Horizontal segregation:** women's labour is restricted to some activity segments and professions. This sectorization of women's labour is a massive phenomenon that cuts across all the European national backgrounds. It is in strict correlation with the sectorization of girls' choices of higher education courses.

### Gender stereotypes in cause

Opinions explain this statistical assessment, through two main stereotypes:

- **Women are not made for power.**
- **They are not made for the same jobs as men and vice versa.**

These two meta-stereotypes feed on the combination arrangement of three underlying stereotypes.

Unavailability and incompetence support the verdict of women's illegitimacy in the sphere of professional responsibilities; women's supposed physical inferiority comes into the bargain to support the verdict of their illegitimacy in those professional fields that are allotted to them and sometimes reserved for them, child care, for instance.

The interactions of those few stereotypes cleave labour on the same pattern as family and social roles. This pattern proceeds from a binary representation of human beings: home and children are for women, (all) the rest is for men.

These representations may seem caricatures, yet that is how they appear in the six STERE/O partner countries. To support their arguments they rely on the pseudo-concepts of masculinity/femininity which shelter all the gender stereotypes but are taken for granted in the state of people's attitudes.

None of the stereotypes identified in STERE/O could logically resist analysis or the confrontation with facts.

However they do resist facts and progress and they may even re-emerge, as in Eastern European countries.

Their impact on girls' guidance counselling practices is very disturbing. These practices foster and reproduce the vicious circle of the horizontal division of labour.

As a result, girls' and women's professional choices are an essential strategic target of initiatives for professional equality between women and men.

### Facts and attitudes are changing

The sectorization of girls' and women's professional choices and labour is still organized and supported by some very resistant stereotypes; nevertheless opinions are no longer unanimous.

More and more women get to top positions, more and more businesses' and professional sectors' policies show that the economy needs women at all levels and in all sectors, and women's levels of general education and professional training keep improving.

Attitudes too, have taken note of these changes particularly as regards women's access to responsibilities.

The opinions show three main trends:

- The first one stands firm on gender stereotypes and supports the commonplace that there is a difference of nature between women and men, this fact implies that attributions are differentiated and that the "masculine" is over-valued.



- The second reverses the stereotypes; it claims the differentiation but over-values the “feminine”.
- The third one is less common and considers that women and men are equally legitimate in all human activities.

The debate underlying these three trends is ideological indeed, and the transition to equal representation democracy is obviously a political stake. But the same applies to the state of knowledge. Knowledge in every discipline little nurtures opinions, which are often left to themselves on this subject.

This observation shows that the culture of gender equality has to be democratized, for the knowledge that nurtures it has not yet influenced attitudes.

## Europe, the land of opportunities for gender equality

Europe is for all its member states the cornerstone of the construction of equal opportunities between women and men, in the workplace and in all the spheres on which professional equality depends. The national opinions analysed in STERE/O show that its role in this respect is still little known.

The national situations are not homogeneous and they are not totally comparable because of their respective histories and cultures.

Yet STERE/O shows that, as things stand at present, situations East and West are not basically different.

Despite disparities, the nature of the action to be conducted in the expanded European Union is the same: hunting down gender stereotypes that restrict women's access to jobs and girls' professional choices within strict and conventional bounds.

Whatever the national contexts, professional equality is faced with the same cultural hindrances.

Although the member states have used various levers of change adapted to their specific contexts, their logic is the same: education and career counselling practices must be made to change, professional equality must be instituted and work-life balance must be developed.

Therefore, it turns out that the good practices implemented can be capitalized and, in most cases, transferred to other backgrounds with some adaptations.

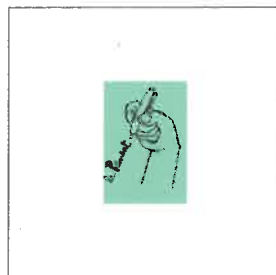
Pooling practices and tools and confronting experiences result in national and transnational added value.

The European capitalization of knowledge and of gender equality practices nurtures and legitimates national and European initiatives, in Europe and in the world.

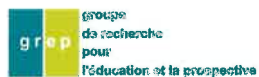
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