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COUNCIL OF EUROPE ACTIVITIES SINCE 1995
IN THE FIELD OF EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN
RELATED TO THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES IN THE
BEIJING AND VIENNA PLATFORMS FOR ACTION */

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THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Founded in 1949, the Council of Europe is an international organisation with a European vocation, which at present has 41 European member States, all of which are pluralist parliamentary democracies¹ (this figure includes the 15 member States of the European Union). It is the European continent's largest intergovernmental and parliamentary forum. Its seat is in Strasbourg (France).

The objectives of the Council of Europe are:

- to work for the closer union of the more than 800 million women and men of Europe;
- to safeguard and develop democracy and human rights;
- to undertake co-operation in the broadest sense between the member States in the fields of human rights (including the media), education, culture, social questions, health, youth, local and regional authorities, environment and legal affairs.

The consideration of equality between women and men, seen as a fundamental human rights, is the responsibility of the Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG). The experts who form the Committee are entrusted with the task of stimulating action at the national level, as well as within the Council of Europe, to achieve effective equality between women and men. To this end, the CDEG carries out analyses, studies and evaluations, defines strategies and political measures, and, where necessary, frames the appropriate legal instruments.

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INTRODUCTION

The Global Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women and endorsed by the fiftieth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations calls for the UN regional commissions and other regional intergovernmental organisations to collaborate on gender issues in order to ensure the implementation and monitoring of both the Global Platform and the regional plans and platforms for action.

The Council of Europe is therefore expected to play a full part in the implementation of the Platform for Action adopted at the Beijing Conference and of the Regional Platform for Action adopted at the High-level Regional preparatory meeting of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (Vienna, 17-21 October 1994).

This document provides brief information on the activities of the Council of Europe since 1995 related to the strategies in the Beijing and Vienna Platforms for Action.

PRINCIPLES

The Council of Europe's action in favour of equality between women and men is an integral part of its central mission which is the safeguard and promotion of pluralist democracy, the rule of law and fundamental human rights and freedoms.

* * *

Declarations of the Committee of Ministers

The Declaration on equality of women and men of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (16 November 1988) establishes the principle of equality between women and men as a principle of human rights, a *sine qua non* of democracy and an imperative of social justice. In a message to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 4-15 September 1995), adopted on 11 July 1995, the Committee of Ministers reiterated its commitment to the principle of equality as a fundamental principle of human rights.

Second Summit of Heads of State and Governments

The Final Declaration adopted by the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 10-11 October 1997), stresses "the importance of a more balanced representation of men and women in all sectors of society, including political life", and calls "for continued progress with a view to achieving effective equality of opportunities between men and women".

Recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly

Recommendation (1269) 1995 states: "The Assembly considers that human rights of both women and men are universal and indivisible, and that it is the duty of all states to ensure their respect and enjoyment, irrespective of socio-cultural and religious traditions or economic and political systems. In this context, the Assembly affirms that the principle of equality between women and men, or parity democracy, is an integral part of the values the Council of Europe stands for".

FRAMEWORK

Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG)

Set up by the Committee of Ministers in 1992, the CDEG² is in charge of defining and implementing the activities of the Council of Europe for the promotion of equality between women and men. Its members (one from each member State plus observers) meet in plenary session twice a year, to implement the inter-governmental co-operation programme of

activities (seminars, fora, conferences, studies, drafting of legal instruments, etc). Several groups of specialists work under the auspices of the CDEG on issues of specific interest to the committee (positive action, violence against women, trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation, gender mainstreaming, equality and democracy).

The CDEG co-operates actively with other steering committees, through joint or multi-disciplinary projects.

² The CDEG had some predecessors. The first Equality Committee was created in 1979.

Committee on equal opportunities for women and men of the Parliamentary Assembly

The Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly has been active for many years in the field of equality between women and men. In 1998, it set up a new committee specifically dealing with the promotion of equal opportunities. Its terms of reference include, *inter alia*, reporting periodically on the implementation of commitments taken by the Council of Europe member States in the Beijing Platform for Action, organising seminars, conferences and parliamentary hearings on equal opportunities issues and promoting co-operation between parliamentary bodies in this field.

Activities for the Development and Consolidation of Democratic Stability (ADACS)

The specific co-operation programmes that the Council of Europe organises for both its new member States and candidate States include

activities regarding equality between women and men. These activities comprise the organisation of information seminars on the various issues linked to equality, as well as study visits and expert advice on draft legislation in equal opportunities. These programmes have contributed to the implementation, at the national level, of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Since 1995, nearly 100 activities have been organised in the following countries: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Turkey, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In view of the events that have recently taken place in South-East Europe, gender issues will be mainstreamed into the Council of Europe's contribution to the Stability Pact for this region.

HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND THE GIRL CHILD

Legal instruments

I. The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR)

The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR, 1950) contains a non-discrimination clause, Article 14. However, its application, even through the right of individual petition, is limited by its subsidiary nature: discrimination, notably on the grounds of sex, can only be sanctioned under the ECHR if it occurs in connection with the enjoyment of one or more of the rights or freedoms guaranteed by the ECHR or one of its additional Protocols.

Moreover, Article 14 places sex alongside other prohibited grounds of discrimination, an approach which has hindered the use of the ECHR as an effective instrument for the protection and promotion of women's rights.

During the last five years, the Council of Europe has reflected on ways to guarantee the right to equality as an autonomous fundamental human right. A group of experts, working under the authority of the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH), has now drawn up a draft protocol to the ECHR based on a general prohibition of discrimination. The adoption of this protocol would afford a scope of protection beyond the enjoyment of rights

and freedoms set forth in the Convention, for example to the enjoyment of any right specifically granted to an individual under national law.

In addition, the obligation to respect the fundamental rights and freedoms set forth in the ECHR and its additional Protocols is not one of merely abstaining from interference with the exercise of those rights, but it may entail certain positive obligations for the member States to ensure the effective enjoyment of this right. This could open the way for action aimed at accelerating *de facto* equality.

II. The European Social Charter

The European Social Charter (1961) is the counterpart to the ECHR in the sphere of economic and social rights. It guarantees the enjoyment, without discrimination, in particular on the grounds of sex, of fundamental rights such as the right to work, the right to just conditions of work, to a fair remuneration, etc. It also ensures the right of employed women to protection, *inter alia* in case of maternity. Going beyond non-discrimination, it also provides the right to equal remuneration. Its additional Protocol from 1988 guarantees the right to equal opportunities and treatment in occupational and employment matters without discrimination on the grounds of sex.

Since 1995, major improvements have been carried out with regard to the Social Charter. A revised version, bringing together in a single instrument all the rights guaranteed by the 1961 Charter and the 1988 Additional Protocol, was opened for signature on 3 May 1996 and entered into force on 1 July 1999. It amends and extends the list of guaranteed rights.

An Additional Protocol to the Social Charter providing for a system of collective complaints

which may be lodged with the Charter's supervisory body entered into force on 1 July 1998. Its purpose is to improve the effective implementation of the rights guaranteed by the Charter and, as a result, the protection of women's rights.

The Council of Europe has published a study on "Equality between women and men in the European Social Charter", based on the case law of the European Committee of Social Rights (formerly Committee of Independent Experts).

III. Conventions of the Council of Europe adopted since the Beijing Conference

1. The European Convention on Nationality

This Convention was opened for signature in November 1997. The text specifically provides that rules on nationality shall not contain distinctions or include any practice which amount to discrimination on grounds of gender. Other provisions ensure that a married woman does not lose automatically her nationality on marrying and enable both parents to transmit their nationality to their children, whether born in or out of wedlock.

2. The Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine

In this Convention, opened for signature in April 1997, a specific article ensures that the use of techniques of medically assisted procreation shall not be allowed for the purpose of choosing a future child's sex, except where serious hereditary sex-related disease is to be avoided.

Activities aiming at promoting the human rights of immigrant and ethnic minority women

In the framework of the promotion of human rights, it has become apparent that inequality affects different groups of women in different ways. This is why the Council of Europe has felt the need to look more closely at the specific needs of these diverse groups.

For example, studies have been carried out by the CDEG on migration, intolerance, racism, cultural diversity and equality between women and men. These include:

- in 1996, a report on the impact on equality between women and men of the cultural diversity in European society resulting from recent immigration, including on conflicts which may arise between respect for

equality between women and men and the cultural identity of immigrant groups;

- in 1997, a report on intolerance, racism and equality between women and men. This report points out the need to acknowledge and consider the gender dimension in all activities aiming at combating racism and intolerance.

The Parliamentary Assembly has adopted recommendations on the situation of immigrant and refugee women in Europe and held a hearing on the situation of women in fundamentalist regimes.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS FOR THE PURPOSE OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

I. Violence against women

The 3rd European Ministerial Conference on equality between women and men (Rome, 21-22 October 1993) strongly condemned all forms of violence against women as violations of human rights. As a follow-up to the Conference, the Council of Europe has made the combat against violence one of its priorities.

A Plan of Action to combat violence against women was drawn up by under the authority of the CDEG. Published in 1997, the plan concerns not only an evaluation of the phenomenon of violence against women, but also legislative, judicial and police aspects, prevention and education as well as assistance to victims and perpetrators of violence. It has been widely disseminated, including among NGOs.

More recently, the CDEG has undertaken the drafting of a Recommendation to member States for the protection of women and young girls against violence. It is hoped that this text can be forwarded to the Committee of Ministers in 2000, with a view to its adoption. Apart from this standard-setting work, the CDEG has organised the following events concerning, totally or partly, the subject of violence against women:

- A Seminar on "Promoting equality: a common issue for men and women" (Strasbourg, June 1997). One of the themes discussed was "Men and violence: the logic of inequality".
- An Information Forum specifically devoted to the theme of how to put an end to domestic violence (Bucharest, November 1998). The Forum put particular emphasis on the legal aspects, as well as on the role

of men in combating violence against women.

- A Seminar on "Men and violence against women", aimed mainly at researchers and practitioners (Strasbourg, October 1999). Among the themes discussed were violence against women in situations of armed conflict and post-conflict situations. The recommendations adopted at the seminar appear in Appendix I.

The Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly (Sub-Committee on Violence against Women) recently organised a Seminar on "Violence towards women: from domestic abuse to slavery" (Bari, Italy, 4-6 November 1999).

A compilation of the main texts of the Council of Europe in the field of violence against women since 1995 has just been published.

II. Trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation

Trafficking in human beings – which mainly affects women and girls – is a distinct manifestation of violence and a modern form of slavery. It entails grave violations of fundamental human rights. Europe, in particular, has recently experienced a considerable growth of activities linked to this phenomenon, which has become a highly lucrative business.

The issue attracted the collective concern of the Heads of State and Government of the 40 member States at the Strasbourg Summit held in

October 1997: the final declaration adopted at this summit clearly classifies all forms of sexual exploitation of women as being a threat for citizens' security and democracy in Europe.

The Council of Europe, conscious of the need to establish a pan-European strategy to combat this phenomenon and protect its victims, has identified the most urgent areas for action in this field which were worked out, by a consultant, in a comprehensive Plan of Action published in 1997. This Plan suggests research guidelines with a view to making recommendations to the member States on legislative, judicial and police aspects, on plans designed to assist, support and rehabilitate the victims and on preventive and educational programmes.

Aware of the need for standard-setting work in the field, the CDEG has prepared a draft recommendation to member States on the issue of trafficking in human beings. This text will be examined by the Committee of Ministers at the beginning of 2000, with a view to its adoption.

A seminar was organised in Strasbourg in June 1998, focusing on the role of NGOs in combating this phenomenon.

During summer 1999, the Council of Europe launched a prevention campaign against trafficking in Albania, including in the refugee camps. The objective of this campaign was to raise public awareness on the issue. Basic information material was provided and information sessions organised.

In 1997, the Parliamentary Assembly adopted a recommendation on traffic in women and forced prostitution in Council of Europe member States.

WOMEN AND HEALTH

After the important work achieved in the field of reproductive rights by the 4th World Conference on Women, the CDEG dealt with this topic in order to develop a European approach, using as a basis the Beijing Platform for Action. It conducted activities focusing on research, awareness-raising and legal analysis.

A background document on reproductive choice was prepared and an Information Forum on "Guaranteeing freedom of choice in matters of reproduction, sexuality and lifestyles in Europe: trends and developments" was organised in Tallinn (Estonia) in November 1997.

Work is still underway on the preparation of a draft recommendation to member States on the right to free choice in matters of sexuality and reproduction. In the immediate future, the CDEG will prepare a report on the basis of this text and its explanatory memorandum to be disseminated at the March 2000 session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and the special session of the United Nations General Assembly in June 2000.

According to a new report drawn up by a Group of specialists on future priorities work-

ing under the auspices of the CDEG (to be published at the beginning of 2000), health and violence appears as an important policy issue of gender equality. The report gives examples of achievements, obstacles and innovative strategies in this field.

The Pompidou Group, whose aim is to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking in drugs, has looked at developments in female drug use and in the provision of treatment services for women. The issues of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation efforts for women have been part of its work programme since 1994. Seminars on "women and drugs: focus on prevention" and "pregnancy and drug misuse" were held in 1995 and 1997 and a consultant study on "special needs of children of drug misusers" has been prepared.

A specific study on the health problems of single parent families (mainly made up of women) was concluded by the European Health Committee in 1996 and the Committee of Ministers adopted a recommendation on this subject in 1997.

WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

Well before the Beijing Conference, the Council of Europe carried out an important reflection on the subject of equality and democracy. In a report on parity democracy published at the beginning of 1995, it puts forward strategic guidelines aiming at enabling women to become full actors in society, both as contributors and beneficiaries, with the same rights and responsibilities as men. These strategic guidelines include the setting of parity thresholds and target figures in the

various organs of the State as well as in political parties.

The Conference "Equality and Democracy: Utopia or Challenge?" (Strasbourg, February 1995) constituted the Council of Europe's specific contribution to the preparatory process of the 4th World Conference on Women. The proceedings, published prior to the Beijing Conference, have been translated into several languages of the new member States of Central

and Eastern Europe and benefited from a wide dissemination.

Since the Beijing Conference, the dissemination and implementation of this work, both at the intergovernmental level and among NGOs, has been one of the Council of Europe's priorities.

The following events have taken place:

- Information Forum on national policies in the field of equality between women and men (Budapest, November 1995).
- Multilateral Seminar for women's NGOs (Strasbourg, June 1996). The action of NGOs is essential in encouraging women to become involved in politics and in community activities, to develop their leadership skills and to exercise fully their rights.
- Seminar on "Equality between women and men in the political decision-making process", organised at the initiative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland in her capacity as President of the Committee of Ministers (Helsinki, March 1997).
- Several national seminars in the framework of the co-operation programmes for new member States and candidate States. Participants included NGOs, representatives of political parties, trade unions, etc. Among the most popular themes of these seminars are those dealing with how to increase the participation of women in political and public life.

The 4th European Ministerial Conference on equality between women and men, held on 13-14 November 1997 in Istanbul, was devoted to

the theme "Democracy and equality between women and men". One of the sub-themes of this conference was: "Equality between women and men as a fundamental criterion of democracy". The Ministers adopted a Declaration on this issue, together with multidisciplinary strategies aiming at the balanced representation of women and men in all walks of life (see Appendix II). This Declaration should be seen as the outcome of many years of work on this essential question of equality and democracy. It constitutes a practical instrument for those who work for increased participation of women in political and public life and in decision-making in general.

Recently, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) have actively taken up this issue. In 1999, the Parliamentary Assembly adopted a recommendation on equal representation in political life and the CLRAE adopted a resolution and a recommendation on women's participation in political life in the regions of Europe. The CLRAE also carried out a survey concerning women's holding of political office at regional level and on policies adopted to promote their involvement in politics.

In the near future, the CDEG will publish a report on positive action in the field of equality between women and men, including in political and public life. This report will present examples of good practice and make recommendations for the future. It will also embark on the drafting of a recommendation on balanced participation of women and men in political and public life.

The Council of Europe's work in the field of equality and democracy has contributed to major discussions on this subject at national level.

INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING

I. National machinery

The Council of Europe has, during recent years, devoted much attention to the strengthening and/or creation of national equality machinery in its member States. It conducted a comparative study on the subject in 1994 and, the same year, an International Workshop on the subject was organised in Ljubljana (Slovenia). The different reports of that workshop and its conclusions provide useful information material for the member States which intend to strengthen and/or set up national equality machineries.

Furthermore, in the framework of its co-operation programmes with the new member States and candidate States, several national seminars have been and will be organised on the subject of national equality machinery. These programmes have also included visits, aimed at giving government and other experts working in the field of equality between women and men the opportunity to study national machinery in another member State. Legislative expertise consisting of expert assistance in the preparation of equal opportunities legislation has also been provided. The seminars for NGOs held in the framework of these programmes have also focused on ways and means for NGOs to act as pressure groups in this respect.

In January 2000, the Council of Europe published a "Report on national machinery, action plans and gender mainstreaming since the Beijing Conference". This report gives an overview of the developments in member States over the past five years.

II. Gender Mainstreaming

Since the Beijing Conference, one of the main priorities of the Council of Europe has been the development of tools and strategies to promote equality. One of these – gender mainstreaming – has been high on the agenda. It must, however, be stressed that gender mainstreaming cannot replace specific equality policy – the two approaches are complementary and go hand in hand to reach the same goal: gender equality.

The main motivation behind the activities in this field is the need to look at equality between women and men in a positive vein, in terms of taking into account the needs and interests of both women and men and what each gender can contribute to the functioning of society.

The major achievement in this field since 1995 has been the publication of the report "Gender mainstreaming: conceptual framework, methodology and presentation of good practice" at the beginning of 1998. This report gives a definition of gender mainstreaming. It identifies tools, strategies and actors for integrating the gender dimension in an effective and visible way, in all projects and programmes, as well as for its evaluation and follow-up.

The report was very well received by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and has been widely disseminated. Following its publication, the Committee of Ministers adopted a Recommendation to member States on gender mainstreaming in October 1998 (see Appendix III).

In order to examine the ways of implementing gender mainstreaming, the Council of Europe organised a Conference on "Gender mainstreaming: a step into the 21st century" in Athens on 16-18 September 1999. The Conference looked at the interrelationship and the interaction between gender mainstreaming and specific equality policies, as well as the methodology and necessary prerequisites to implement gender mainstreaming – in particular how to create political will. It also examined how mainstreaming is implemented in specific areas. Concrete examples of mainstreaming projects/programmes which have been initiated and/or are underway at the local,

regional or national level were presented and discussed in working groups.

The recommendations adopted by the working groups at the Athens Conference are reproduced in Appendix IV and the summary of the report on "Gender mainstreaming: conceptual framework, methodology and presentation of good practices" in Appendix V.

In January 2000, a report drawn up by a consultant expert on "Gender mainstreaming: practice and prospects in the Council of Europe member States" was published.

WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY

Provisions in the revised European Social Charter guarantee the right to equal opportunities and treatment in occupational and employment matters without discrimination on the grounds of sex (see above) as well as the elimination of discrimination in access to employment, career development, including promotion, *inter alia* on the grounds of sex, and the right of men and women workers to equal pay for work of equal value. It must be borne in mind that all the rights related to employment and social protection which the Charter guarantees apply equally to women and men. In addition, the revised Charter provides for the right of workers with family responsibilities to equal opportunities and equal treatment.

The subject of equality in the labour market and labour law is a constant concern of the Steering Committee for equality between women and men. In 1996, the subject of the Committee's annual Information Forum, held in Warsaw,

dealt with trends and perspectives in this field, and many of the seminars organised in the framework of the co-operation programmes with new member States and candidate States concern this issue.

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted, in June 1996, a Recommendation to member States on reconciling work and family life (see Appendix VI).

The report on future priorities (see "women and health") contains a chapter on the reconciliation of professional, family and private life as a policy issue of gender equality. The report gives examples of achievements, obstacles and innovative strategies in this field.

The report on positive action, which is under preparation, will present a number of examples of good practice regarding equality in the labour market and make recommendations for the future.

WOMEN AND POVERTY

A major multidisciplinary project on Human Dignity and Social Exclusion (HDSE) held its final conference in May 1998. Equality issues were a cross-cutting theme throughout the work of the HDSE project and, in addition, several of these issues were explicitly stressed in the proposals for action issued by the conference.

All the rights guaranteed by the European Social Charter and its additional Protocol contribute to the protection of women and men against poverty and social exclusion, and the revised Charter increases these guarantees by introducing a right to protection against poverty and social exclusion and the right to housing.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN

The three year project "Access to Higher Education in Europe", implemented by the Higher Education and Research Committee, attached particular importance to ways of ensuring that under-represented groups, among them women, participate more in university education, especially when it comes to scientific and technological fields.

The Committee of Ministers adopted a recommendation on access to higher education in 1998 and the Parliamentary Assembly adopted a recommendation on the role of women in the field of science and technology in 1999.

The Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region entered into force on 1 February 1999. The Convention explicitly states that no discrimination shall be made on the grounds of, among other things, gender.

The Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG) has recognised the need to take stock of the situation regarding equality of the sexes as far as education is concerned. This subject will be one of its priorities in the future as a policy issue of gender equality.

The report on future priorities, soon to be published, contains a chapter on this subject. Even though it must be acknowledged that, in many countries, girls attain a higher level of education than boys, inequalities still exist when it comes to entering the labour market. The report looks at achievements, obstacles and innovative strategies in this field.

In autumn 2000, the CDEG will be organising a seminar in co-operation with the Education Committee on the theme "A new social contract between women and men: the role of education".

WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

Following a joint seminar held in 1994 on "Human rights and gender: the responsibility of the media", the CDEG organised a workshop on "good" and "bad" practices regarding the image of women in the media in Strasbourg in 1998 in co-operation with the Steering Committee on the Mass Media. The workshop, mainly aimed at journalists, dealt specifically with trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation. It tackled such issues as the portrayal of women

in the media and its impact on trafficking, the often sensational reporting of cases of trafficking, raising awareness among media professionals and the use of new information technologies for trafficking.

A new Group of specialists on the impact of the use of new information technologies on trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation set up by the CDEG will start work in 2000.

EQUALITY: A COMMON ISSUE FOR WOMEN AND MEN

Over the past few years, the Council of Europe has been focusing more and more on the important part men should play in achieving gender equality. In the past, equality was regarded exclusively as a women's problem and men were rarely given the opportunity to voice their thoughts on the subject. This is why the CDEG tries to involve an increasing number of men in all its activities.

A seminar "Promoting equality: a common issue for women and men" was organised in Strasbourg in 1997 to look at how partnership and co-operation between women and men could be developed, and the link between

inequality and men's violence against women. In this respect, the need for men to assume their responsibility was stressed.

The 4th European Ministerial Conference on equality between women and men (Istanbul, November 1997) also paid particular attention to the specific role of men in the realisation of equality (see Declaration in Appendix II).

Throughout its work, the Group of specialists on future priorities bore in mind the need to involve men as active participants in working towards a society that has overcome gender inequality.

PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE

The recognition and respect throughout Europe for the equal dignity and integrity of both women and men is a major objective of the Council of Europe. Combating violence against women and all forms of sexual exploitation of women will continue to be a priority in the coming years. It is hoped that the adoption of recommendations to member States on these issues will provide useful

guidelines for action to be taken to combat these phenomena.

Gender mainstreaming, as well as the strengthening and/or creation of national equality machinery will also form a basis for future work. Special attention will be paid to the specific needs of new member States in order to establish effective policies in the field of equality between women and men.

The CDEG will focus on awareness-raising for the promotion of equality between women and men. Studies will be carried out and examples of good practice collected on tools and techniques used to awaken new enthusiasm for work to attain equality.

As mentioned above, work will also be carried out on the needs of specific groups of women (for example, young, elderly, immigrant, disabled). The Information Forum of the CDEG in 2000 will focus on the fundamental rights of girls and young women (Slovakia, October 2000).

APPENDIX I

SEMINAR “MEN AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN”

STRASBOURG, 7-8 OCTOBER 1999

RECOMMENDATIONS

Violence against women is one of the major obstacles to the achievement of real equality between women and men. The phenomenon has its roots in the very structure of European societies, based on patriarchal values and principles. Although male violence can also be directed against other men and incidents concerning violent women are reported, the vast majority of victims of violence in Council of Europe's member States are women and children.

Most European societies remain tolerant towards violence against women, considering it acceptable according to tradition. They continue, directly or indirectly, to lay the blame on the victims by suggesting that they would not have been assaulted if they had or had not acted in a certain way. Men are often excused by saying that they are subject to stress from overwork or unemployment, under the influence of alcohol or drugs, sick and so on.

Women suffer from violence resulting in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering, both in private and public life. Violence can take different forms, such as sexual assault, violence within the family or in the domestic unit, sexual harassment and intimidation (in education, at work, in institutions or in any other place), denial of reproductive rights, genital mutilation, trafficking in human beings for the purposes of sexual exploitation and sex tourism, rape or assaults in (armed) conflict situations, honour killings and forced marriages.

Being conscious of the above, the participants at the Seminar on “Men and violence against women”, organised by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on 7 and 8 October 1999, agreed on the following recommendations.

Recommendations to Member States of the Council of Europe

Research and in particular surveys are essential because there is still denial of the phenomenon of violence against women : they can be used as tools to convince the decision makers of the *real* extent of violence against women. In order to have a better understanding of the prevalence of violence, standardised instruments are necessary in order to obtain *valid, reliable, comparable data* as well as results which are representative of the reality. This effort should be pursued at the *local, regional, national and international level* and in this perspective Governments should :

- Encourage and support national and transnational research projects and surveys on different forms of violence against women taking into account the following parameters which, if neglected, may alterate the results of the research :
 - the gender perspective including the element of gender conflict which is present in all European societies ;
 - the variability of meanings and of the perception of concepts in different contexts determined by various factors (such as differences in social classes, as well as in regional, cultural and

- linguistic backgrounds) : different groups or persons may have different understanding of the same notion, such as violence ;
- the stigmatisation of concepts (such as rape), encouraged notably by the mass media ;
 - the developments and changes in cultural values ;
 - the changes in society especially where instability has arisen (be it due to socio-economic reasons or to a conflict) : even if the source of instability disappears, the level of violence does not decrease ;
- Encourage the standardisation of research methodologies by using, among others, the following elements :
 - a representative sample of the population (1,000 respondents minimum) ;
 - a scale with very detailed descriptions of acts of violence ;
 - input from battered women and victims of violence (also to design questionnaires) ;
 - training for interviewers and researchers which should include information on how to take into account cultural, ethnic, social and economic differences, as well as on how to have access to isolated or marginalised groups ;
 - precautions in order to prevent the dangers that the respondents of surveys or of case studies could encounter ;
 - for research conducted at European level, recourse to language specialists in order to avoid translation problems ;
 - Encourage and support national and transnational research into the following aspects:
 - what prevents a person from becoming violent;
 - ways to reach violent men and how to bring them into education programmes;
 - the prevailing polarisation in the construction of gender identities, with a view to promoting a more open perception of femininities and masculinities;
 - to what extent and in what way do social instability and social change affect gender relations and violence against women;
 - the consequences violence in the home has on children and adolescents and how it affects their socialisation and their future integration into work, as well as their relations with peers and partners;
 - ways to prevent elder abuse and violence among elderly people;
 - the financial costs of violence;
 - Improve interactions between the scientific community, the NGOs in the field, political decision-makers and legislative bodies in order to design co-ordinated actions against violence;
 - Encourage the diffusion of all relevant information (results of studies and research, statistical data, etc.) on violence against women at all levels and across the life course;
 - Ensure that statutory agencies which respond to men's violence convey clearly to the men that their behaviour is unacceptable and develop further strategies for repeat offenders, including multi-agency approaches at the community level;
 - Making use of the gender mainstreaming strategy, involve all the relevant actors normally involved in policy-making, in order to fight violence against women, even if they are not currently working on the issue;
 - Reinforce national legislations and measures aiming at fighting violence against women, also by introducing innovative approaches based on experiences conducted in other European countries: the pooling of experiences is essential to progress on this issue;

- Adopt or reinforce social protection measures so that injuries caused to women and children by violent acts are provided for under social protection schemes;
- Promote training of those involved with young people, as well as health personnel, to identify children and adolescents growing up in violent homes and to take the necessary measures to help and assist them;
- Ensure training of medical personnel to enable them to identify victims of violence;
- Promote the participation of women in politics and decision-making: a higher number of women in politics is important in order to adopt an increased number of measures to combat violence against women;
- Promote human rights education, and especially education on equality between women and men, in all member States of the Council of Europe, especially where there is social instability;
- Create a more proactive police response to violence against women;
- Promote training for the judiciary regarding violence against women;
- Enhance research on, and take all possible measures to prevent, development of gender dichotomy and inequality as well as male aggressiveness in the army and all military contexts (especially during military service), including armed conflicts;
- Condemn all forms of violence against women and children in situations of conflict;
- Condemn systematic rape, sexual slavery, enforced pregnancy of women and young girls and all forms of violence against women and children, as these, as shown in recent conflicts, tend to be used as a weapon of war;
- In post-conflict regions, promote a public debate and disseminate information concerning abuses of women and children in order to prevent repetition of violence.

Recommendations to the Council of Europe

The participants emphasised that the international community – especially international organisations such as the Council of Europe – have a major ethical role to play in promoting zero tolerance towards violence against women. By condemning this violence, they can give an important political signal to governments and to policy-makers.

The participants noted that the continuous work achieved by the Council of Europe, and in particular by its Steering Committee on Equality between women and men (CDEG), to combat violence against women have substantially assisted in increasing the visibility of the problem. The Action Plan published in 1997 was considered as an effective platform on which to formulate national measures.

The Council of Europe should continue to play a key role in the combat against violence. The need for transnational actions to be undertaken at legislative, policy and research level to enhance international co-operation can be the basis for the future action of the Council of Europe.

The following activities could be conducted in the Council of Europe or with its assistance:

- Continue and complete, as rapidly as possible, the preparation of the draft Recommendation on protecting women and young girls against violence, which is being prepared under the aegis of the

Steering Committee for equality between women and men (CDEG). Once adopted, the Recommendation may serve as a reference for national policies on actions against violence;

- Prepare as soon as possible a study on the position as regards legislation in the field of violence against women in the member States ; ensure the translation and diffusion of this document in member States;
- Organise, possibly in co-operation with other competent bodies and International Organisations, regular meetings involving in particular policy-makers, researchers, practitioners and police, in order to take stock and exchange information on the current stage of research and practice in the area;
- Compile country reports, based on research and information collected at national level, focusing on violence against women and the measures taken to combat it;
- Following the recent conflicts in South-East Europe, contribute to the efforts undertaken at European level to foster peace and stability in countries of the region by organising activities aiming at combating violence against women in all its forms;
- Foster research on the development of violence against women in its different forms during and after the conflicts which have recently affected South-East Europe, including the increase in domestic violence.

APPENDIX II

4th European Ministerial Conference on equality between women and men

(Istanbul, 13-14 November 1997)

DECLARATION ON EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN AS A FUNDAMENTAL CRITERION OF DEMOCRACY

The Ministers of the States participating in the 4th European Ministerial Conference on equality between women and men (Istanbul, 13-14 November 1997)

- considering that the principles of pluralist democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights - which are the guiding principles of the Council of Europe - constitute the basis for their co-operation;
- bearing in mind the major political changes that have taken place in Europe during recent years, leading to the enlargement of the Council of Europe and to the profound transformation of European societies;
- noting that the Heads of State and Government of the member States of the Council of Europe, meeting in Strasbourg on 10 and 11 October 1997 for the Organisation's Second Summit, stressed "the importance of a more balanced representation of men and women in all sectors of society, including political life," and called for "continued progress with a view to achieving effective equality of opportunities between women and men";
- recalling the commitments entered into by the member States of the Council of Europe under the European Convention on Human Rights and in the Declaration on equality of women and men of 16 November 1988, reiterated in the message of the Committee of Ministers (11 July 1995) to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, September 1995);
- reaffirming their commitment to the goals and recommendations set forward in the texts adopted by the international community at the United Nations World Conferences held during the 1990s, in particular those contained in the strategic objectives of the Platform for Action adopted at the Beijing Conference, as well as in the strategic objectives of the Regional Platform for Action adopted at the High-Level Regional Preparatory meeting for the Fourth World Conference on Women (Vienna, October 1994);
- noting, however, with grave concern that, in spite of the significant changes in the status, the role and the contributions of women in society during the second half of this century, the distribution of power, responsibilities and access to resources between women and men is still very unequal;
- taking as their starting point the texts adopted at the 1st, 2nd and 3rd European Ministerial Conferences on equality between women and men (Strasbourg, 1986, Vienna, 1989 and Rome, 1993) as well as the results of the Conference "Equality and democracy: Utopia or challenge?" (Strasbourg, February 1995) and in general the work of the Council of Europe on the subject of equality and democracy;

- recalling the Recommendation No R (96) 5 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on reconciling work and family life;
- stressing that, as society is equally composed of women and men and that one of the most structural diversities of people is gender, the balanced representation of women and men in political decision-making would ensure a better functioning of a democratic society;
- emphasising that the work towards the achievement of equality between women and men should no longer be considered as a women's issue but involve all members of society, women and men, fully and become the concern of society as a whole;
- taking into consideration the need for men's greater contribution to the promotion of equality between women and men;

AGREE ON THE FOLLOWING:

The strengthening of democracy requires that its principles be deepened and clarified in a never-ending dynamic process of search for and commitment to the full promotion and protection of human rights - civil, political, economic, social and cultural - for all people;

The achievement of equality between women and men is an integral part of the process leading to a genuine democracy. As a prerequisite, the participation of all members of society, women and men, in all walks of life, has to be fully secured. Democracy must become gender aware and gender sensitive;

This includes gender-balanced representation as a demand for justice and a necessity for attaining genuine democracy, which can no longer afford to ignore the competence, skills and creativity of women;

Some of the barriers which women face in connection with their participation and gender-balanced representation in political and public life are due to the structure and functioning of electoral systems and political institutions, mainly political parties. Change in this field can only come about through the empowerment of women and a constructive dialogue with men, leading them to understand the urgency of deep reform in the forms of political representation and decision-making which now show under-representation of women;

The marginalisation of women in public life and democracy is a structural factor that is linked to the unequal distribution of economic and political power between women and men and to attitudinal stereotypes regarding the social roles of women and men. These stereotyped social roles limit the scope for both women and men to realise their potential;

Equality requires a positive, dynamic challenge to the established power structures and to stereotyped sex roles so as to achieve structural change at all levels and, ultimately, a new social order;

Men have an important part to play in achieving equality between women and men, especially when they are decision-makers;

Greater participation by men in the sphere of private life, in caring responsibilities, especially the everyday care of children, family and home, as well as a more equal sharing of responsibilities for decision-making in political, public and professional life with women would improve the quality of life for all.

The Ministers,

1. AGREE that the goal must be to achieve a democracy in which women and men are equal, leading to a deeper realisation of justice and universal human rights, as well as to the enrichment of democracy through gender-balanced representation;
2. AGREE that this goal should be pursued through specific, multidisciplinary strategies, concerning political and public life and all other walks of life, through the empowerment of women and through partnerships of women and men working towards the common goal of equality;
3. AFFIRM that the realisation of equality between women and men is the task not just of governments, but also that of society as a whole;
4. EMPHASISE the need to mainstream a gender perspective into all policies and programmes at all levels, in order to identify the impact on women and men and to improve and develop decision-making;
5. UNDERLINE that the allocation of adequate human and financial resources for gender mainstreaming from all funding resources needs to be ensured for a successful translation of this concept into practice;
6. EMPHASISE, as an important prerequisite to mainstreaming, the need to improve knowledge on men and women in all their living conditions by promoting studies and statistics on men and women in a gender perspective;
7. UNDERLINE the role men have to play in the realisation of equality and agree that specific strategies for men are to be developed;
8. AGREE that new activities aiming at promoting the role of men in the realisation of equality should be complementary to current activities in the field of equality between women and men;
9. AGREE on the indicative list of multidisciplinary strategies aimed at equality between women and men as a fundamental criterion of democracy, which is appended to this Declaration;
10. ENCOURAGE governments, and all institutions and groups concerned, in particular the social partners and senior public officials, to implement, strengthen and support initiatives based on the appended strategies;
11. RECOMMEND the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to take all necessary measures for the achievement of the objectives set out in this Declaration, in particular:

in the field of intergovernmental co-operation:

- devise, launch and promote public campaigns to alert public opinion to the usefulness and advantages for society as a whole of gender balanced representation by women and men in decision-making;
- encourage and organise pooling of information and experience between member States of good practice and assessment of impact of measures taken to achieve a gender balanced representation of women and men in decision-making;
- promote and carry out research, including a gender impact assessment of electoral systems to identify measures to counter the under-representation of women in decision-making;
- organise meetings, seminars and conferences, at which men and women discuss together different subjects in an equality perspective, with a view to elaborate a vision for the future, a vision of a post-patriarchal society;

- in the framework of its work for combating violence against women, consider preparing a European legal instrument on this subject;
- invite the Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC) and its Education Committee (CC-ED) to set up a Joint Group of Specialists together with the Steering Committee for equality between women and men (CDEG) aimed at promoting gender equality education and non-stereotyped education at all levels of the education system;

within the Secretariat of the Council of Europe:

- promote a gender-balanced representation of women and men at all levels within the Council of Europe;
- encourage targets for the achievement of a critical mass of women in decision-making positions within the Council of Europe.

Furthermore, the Ministers recommend that the Committee of Ministers:

- promote the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all Council of Europe bodies and activities and encourage all bodies which deal with programme and budgetary matters to ensure, in their work, the visible mainstreaming of a gender perspective;
- ensure that the realisation of equality between women and men is a part of the monitoring of member States' fulfilment of their democratic obligations.

APPENDIX TO THE DECLARATION

MULTIDISCIPLINARY STRATEGIES AIMING AT PROMOTING EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN AS A FUNDAMENTAL CRITERION OF DEMOCRACY

A. EQUALITY IN POLITICAL AND PUBLIC LIFE

Governments are invited to:

in order to inform and sensitise the public opinion:

- table a political statement explaining that the equal sharing of decision-making power between women and men strengthens and enriches democracy and commit themselves to the goal of gender balance;
- monitor and publish, on a regular basis, details of the proportions of women and men in elective and non-elective public positions;
- promote research on the obstacles which prevent women's access to the various decision-making bodies at the different levels and publish the results;
- promote analysis of and studies on the selection criteria used for public nomination procedures, with a view to detecting the elements which have a negative influence on the nomination of women and commit themselves to take measures aimed at removing those elements, e.g. by setting up a governmental body in charge of following the situation;
- promote public campaigns aimed at the general public as well as at specific groups, e.g. at those who decide upon nominations, in order to raise their awareness on the importance of a gender balanced representation in decision-making;
- undertake education and training activities aimed at informing people, and in particular young people, about the importance of political participation and of having a gender-balanced representation;

in order to prevent discrimination and ensure a gender-balance in political and public life:

- review the differential impact of electoral systems on the political representation of women in elected bodies and, where appropriate, adjust or reform those systems to promote gender-balanced representation;
- promote and support special measures to stimulate and empower women to participate in political and public life;
- take measures to encourage a gender-balanced representation in all public appointments made by the government, for example by proposing thresholds and target figures for women's appointments and by promoting open and accountable appointments and procedures;
- encourage governmental advisory committees and councils to have a gender-balanced representation in their decision-making bodies;
- promote a gender balance in all financial institutions funded by the government, for example, by nominating persons of the under-represented sex to Committees at all levels and encourage gender balance in all other financial institutions;

- ensure that there is gender-balanced representation in all appointments made by a minister or the government itself to all public committees, etc., by, for example, the adoption and implementation of appropriate legislative and/or administrative measures, the setting up a database of all women and men with special skills and knowledge (experts), publishing figures for male and female representation and encourage other nominating bodies to follow a similar policy;
- encourage employers to allow those participating in political life to have the right to take time off from their professional activity;
- support, by all appropriate measures, programmes to stimulate a gender-balance in political life, in governments, political parties and/or NGOs;
- aim at a gender balance in the list of national candidates nominated for elections by the Council of Europe, for example, to the European Court of Human Rights or other bodies of the Organisation;

Political parties are invited to:

- consider restrictions on the number of terms of office a person can spend in the same political function;
- consider restrictions on the number of political offices that can be held simultaneously;
- adopt and promote a gender balance policy within the party and the party's structures and identify measures to achieve this aim;
- consider adapting the status and working conditions of elected representatives so as to make politics more attractive to persons with family responsibilities;

Political parties, trade unions, employers organisations and other relevant organisations are invited to:

- remove discriminatory practices, incorporate gender perspectives into their platforms and ensure women's access to executive and decision-making bodies on an equal basis with men;
- put at the disposal of their members, when actively involved in their party/organisation's work, a system of necessary benefits for temporary child care and adjust their meeting hours to take account of the needs of families;
- review and adjust structures and policies, using gender impact assessment;
- set up specific policies aiming at promoting women to posts of responsibility;
- review their selection and nomination procedures in order to remove all barriers that directly or indirectly discriminate against the selection and nomination of women to these posts;
- undertake training initiatives aimed at favouring gender-balanced representation at all levels in the party/organisation;
- strengthening women's branches within their structure, in order to influence the policy of the party/organisation and to promote the nomination of women candidates;

NGOs are invited to:

- develop their activities as pressure groups working for equality in the political system and political institutions;

- initiate and/or develop activities aimed at informing women about their civil and political rights;
- organise all kinds of training for women and men aimed at a gender balanced representation in political and public life;
- set up networks of organisations working in favour of gender balanced representation in political and public life;
- carry out gender impact assessment of systems, structures and policies.

B. EQUALITY IN ECONOMIC AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

Governments are invited to:

in order to prevent discrimination and ensure gender balance:

- promote and strengthen women's full and active participation in the economy and in economic decision-making;
- encourage and promote an increase in the number of women working at management level in the media;
- enact and enforce legislation against discrimination based on the ground of sex and to guarantee equal treatment in the labour market;
- eliminate discriminatory practices against women related to their reproductive possibilities and functions, for example by prohibiting any reference to pregnancy during recruitment;
- serve as a role model to other employers by ensuring non-discriminatory structures and practices and, to this end, take measures to increase the number of women in the senior civil service through, inter alia, the adoption of transparent, non-discriminatory staff policies and practices, the balanced representation of women and men on recruitment and promotion boards and examination of work practices;
- encourage the social partners to adopt policies aimed at the increased presence of women in decision-making posts, for example, by setting up joint promotion plans for women between certain employers and women's institutions and organisations;
- encourage employers to adopt equal opportunities policies in their enterprises as an integral part of their human resources policy and provide the necessary budgetary and staff resources to implement these policies and to ensure their monitoring and assessment;

in order to ensure equal pay for work of equal value and equal treatment:

- enact and enforce legislation to guarantee the rights of women and men to equal pay for equal work and work of equal value;
- enact and enforce legislation to guarantee the right of women and men to equal treatment, opportunities and pay and ensure access to justice by providing legal aid and counselling, financial support and information on the functioning of judicial mechanisms;
- monitor the gender division of the labour market and the participation of women in high level positions, including economic decision-making;

in the field of training

- promote the improvement of women's skills, in particular in the fields of science, information and communication technologies, as well as in areas of potential expansion;
- encourage the social partners to provide education and training schemes, such as self-development and management courses for women; when one sex is under-represented, special training should be provided to enable employees of the under-represented sex to take advantage of particular employment opportunities;
- provide assistance, counselling and training for people wishing to create their own enterprises, taking into account the specific difficulties with which women are confronted, including access to credit facilities;
- encourage women to participate actively in the labour market by counselling and training measures aimed especially at young women, at women re-entering the labour market and at unemployed women;

in the field of awareness raising

- encourage a gender-sensitive judicial system, for example by providing training courses for judges and lawyers;
- provide training courses for members of government, high level civil servants and other administrative officers when an active and visible policy of mainstreaming is implemented;
- raise the awareness of teachers about the roles of women and men in a democratic society and about their contribution to equality;
- include courses on equality between women and men in training programmes for civil servants;
- encourage the media to provide special awareness-raising and training courses on equality between women and men for their staff;

Social partners such as trade unions and employers, political parties and other relevant bodies are invited to:

- take initiatives to remove wage differences between traditionally female and male professions by re-evaluating jobs traditionally held by women; the re-evaluation process should be performed both by women and men;
- ensure a gender perspective in all wage negotiations by the balanced participation of both women and men and by respecting female qualifications;
- ensure training programmes for women and men employees on an equal basis;
- agree policies aimed at strengthening women's competencies, knowledge and skills, inter alia by special training courses;
- agree specific policies aimed at promoting women to decision-making posts where they are under-represented;
- incorporate equality of opportunity into their human resources policy by analysing and modifying, if necessary, documents and practices implemented in the framework of recruitment procedures, job offers, selection of applicants, training programmes and promotions;

- gather and update regularly gender-segregated statistical data concerning all indicators to be used in order to establish a permanent overview of the comparative situation of women and men in the company;
- raise awareness among and train the staff of the company in the field of equal opportunities, especially top management and persons in charge of management, selection and training;
- combat sexual harassment at the workplace by adopting legislative and administrative measures or collective agreements aiming at protecting the dignity of women and men at work (ref: article 26 of the European Social Charter (revised)) and promote actions for the implementation of these measures, such as awareness-raising campaigns for employers, incentives, counselling, support and, if necessary, to appear for plaintiffs;
- encourage the organisation of regular meetings between employers and employees on career expectations and the expectation of enterprises (discussion on career planning);
- ensure the implementation of mainstreaming in all their activities, which involves the (re)organisation, improvement and development of policy processes to incorporate a gender equality perspective by training all their officials in the consequences of the imbalances between women and men.

C. RECONCILIATION OF FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES WITH POLITICAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

Governments are invited to:

- promote harmonisation and partnerships of women and men in family and society, especially equal sharing of family rights and responsibilities and foster national policies that enable people to combine their work with family life;
- recognise that the sharing of work and family responsibilities between women and men constitutes a gain for society as a whole and promote this concept;
- adopt appropriate legislation, incentives and/or measures aimed at encouraging the equal sharing of parental responsibilities between women and men. These could include: flexible working patterns, suitable pension reforms, family friendly infrastructures, appropriate social services;
- support and encourage the provision of child care and facilities for dependent persons for women and men, or other services to help them meet their family responsibilities;
- adopt leave schemes applicable throughout working life for family and educational reasons and, where appropriate, encourage and provide for adequate maternity and paternity leave schemes, shared equally between fathers and mothers and organised with some flexibility, aiming at taking into account the interests of both women and men;
- adapt social security schemes and tax systems to the increasing diversity of working patterns and in particular, adopt policies to ensure the appropriate protection of labour law and social security for part-time, temporary, seasonal and home-based workers, especially as far as unemployment and pension schemes are concerned;

Employers are invited to:

- promote and develop flexible employment practices enabling the employees, both women and men, to meet the demands of their family responsibilities for example by facilitating access to part-

time work for those who so wish, to "distance employment" - (telework, homework) provided that suitable protection is agreed;

- promote career development, including promotion possibilities, based on work conditions which harmonise work and parental responsibilities;
- contribute, financially or otherwise, to the provision of child care and family facilities for their employees;
- encourage organisation of work which facilitates flexibility for families, inter alia by holding meetings and training programmes within ordinary working hours;

Social partners are invited to:

- ensure that collective agreements include provisions to support the reconciliation of work and family life, e.g parental leave, part-time work and flexible employment practices.

D. PROMOTING EQUALITY IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY: THE ROLE OF MEN

Governments are invited to:

In order to favour the mainstreaming of equality and the understanding of the fact that equality is an issue for society as a whole:

- encourage men to promote equality within their areas of responsibility by incorporating a gender perspective in their work;
- encourage men to assess the consequences and the impact of political initiatives on the balance between women and men within the area concerned;
- undertake activities aimed at heads of enterprise or administration, in order that they recognise that men's commitment to their role as fathers is a positive sign, including for their work;
- encourage high standards of conduct for all those engaged in public life and, in particular, promote non-discriminatory behaviour among members of government and high-level public officials;

In the field of awareness-raising among men on the equality issue:

- develop awareness among members of government and high-level public employees on equality between women and men, for example by organising training courses;
- integrate into training of administrative officers training courses on equality between women and men;
- highlight the changing role models for men and women so as to generate public acceptance and support for men who are following non-traditional role models;
- encourage activities, such as conferences and campaigns aimed at making equality between women and men a concern for men. This would include encouraging men to be aware of their role in the family, professional life and society with the goal of giving their own input into more equality and partnership and, for the same purpose, women to be aware of their new role in the family;

In the field of training and education:

- favour mixed-sex composition of education teams at all levels and of staff assisting families;
- support training and educational programmes already in Kindergartens and primary schools in order to develop and support new ways of socialising girls and boys and prevent stereotypes concerning the traditional roles of women and men;
- support training and educational programmes for men aimed at ensuring the sharing of responsibilities in the upbringing of children, and for women to accept the participation of men;
- reduce and aim to eliminate men's violence against women by initiating education ensuring respect of the other person and as concerns violent men, by supporting practical and therapeutic initiatives;

In the research field:

- improve knowledge on men and women in all their living conditions by promoting studies and statistics on men in a gender perspective;
- promote studies which examine the consequences for the identity of men of changes in women's careers, lives and aspirations.
- promote research on relationships between men and on the ways in which they perceive their masculine identity.

**STATEMENT ON
EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN
IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

The Ministers of the States participating in the 4th European Ministerial Conference on equality between women and men, being held in Istanbul on 13 and 14 November 1997;

Noting that the Heads of State and Government of the member States of the Council of Europe, meeting in Strasbourg on 10 and 11 October 1997 for the Organisation's Second Summit, stressed "the importance of a more balanced representation of men and women in all sectors of society, including political life," and called for "continued progress with a view to achieving effective equality of opportunities between women and men",

Recalling the commitments made by the States participating in the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, as well as the Council of Europe's contribution to that Conference,

Noting that 1999 will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Council of Europe,

AFFIRM the necessity to take stock of the progress made in member States and to multiply the efforts for implementing the Platform for Action adopted at the 4th World Conference on Women, and express the firm hope that this issue will be addressed in the context of the 50th anniversary of the Council of Europe in an appropriate form,

UNDERLINE the importance of strengthening the intergovernmental cooperation within the Council of Europe in the field of equality between women and men and in particular the role of men in this process.

APPENDIX III**COUNCIL OF EUROPE
COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS**

RECOMMENDATION No. R (98) 14

**OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES
ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING***(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7 October 1998
at the 643rd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the ideals and principles which are their common heritage;

Considering that achieving effective equality between women and men is an integral part of these ideals and principles;

Having regard, in this context, to its Declaration on equality of women and men, adopted on 16 November 1988;

Bearing in mind the objectives set forward in the declaration and platform for action adopted by the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995);

Recalling the Declaration adopted at the Second Summit of the Council of Europe (October 1997), in which the Heads of State and Government of the member states of the Council of Europe stressed "the importance of a more balanced representation of men and women in all sectors of society, including political life", and called for "continued progress with a view to achieving effective equality of opportunities between women and men";

Having regard to the Declaration on equality between women and men as a fundamental criterion of democracy, adopted by the 4th European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men (Istanbul, November 1997);

Convinced that one of the main strategies to achieve effective equality between women and men is gender mainstreaming;

Welcoming the report on gender mainstreaming, produced by its Steering Committee on Equality between Women and Men (CDEG), setting out the conceptual framework for gender mainstreaming and a methodology for its implementation, accompanied by examples of good practice;

Convinced that the implementation of the strategy of gender mainstreaming will not only promote effective equality between women and men, but also result in a better use of human resources, improve decision-making and enhance the functioning of democracy,

Recommends that the governments of member states:

- disseminate widely the CDEG's report on gender mainstreaming and encourage its use as a tool for implementing this strategy in the public and private sectors;
- encourage decision-makers to take inspiration from the report in order to create an enabling environment and facilitate conditions for the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the public sector.

APPENDIX IV

CONFERENCE

“GENDER MAINSTREAMING: A STEP INTO THE 21ST CENTURY”

ATHENS, 16-18 SEPTEMBER 1999

Recommendations of the Working Groups

In the working groups, the presentation of projects was followed by discussions from which the following points emerged:

Gender mainstreaming is a new area which has yet to be fully explored. In many cases, projects started in the 1990s without a great deal of knowledge and developed on a trial and error basis.

Some projects started off as traditional equality projects and, in the course of their implementation, turned into mainstreaming projects.

Among the projects presented, some could be considered primarily as tools for implementing the mainstreaming strategy.

In carrying out a project, it is essential to take account of the following recommendations:

- I. The first step is to demonstrate the relevance of the approach: what purpose does a mainstreaming project serve? What needs does it meet? What benefits are to be gained?**

The projects presented highlighted the importance of this question: it is essential to demonstrate the relevance of a project to decision-makers. This can be done by providing tangible proof of the existence of inequalities between men and women, using tools which may be both:

objective:

- quantitative and qualitative statistics as well as detailed surveys which may be used to develop a grid for analysis;
- research;
- identification of target groups;
- use of existing tools such as the Council of Europe report;
- definition of focal points or strategies for action;

and subjective:

- launching of campaigns to convince decision-makers of the relevance of mainstreaming by fostering events in which decision-makers are involved (seminars, conferences, local actions, etc);
- choice of topics having a direct impact on the public and therefore regarded as priorities by decision-makers (eg violence against women, school education, local policies);

- identification of arguments which meet the main preoccupations of the decision-makers and strategic actors, using their language and taking their priorities into account.

The following resources must be available:

- at the outset, genuine political will at national, regional, local or institutional level; projects may be launched by high or intermediate level political decision-makers, women's organisations, or at grassroots level;
- material resources (budget, facilities, project managers);
- the possibility of gathering detailed, in-depth information on the sector in which the project is carried out;
- national mechanisms for the promotion of equality which support the project;
- the possibility of calling on experts in equality issues.

Several obstacles have to be overcome:

- political will alone is not always sufficient to start up a mainstreaming project: the stage of putting the project into practice is often difficult; in fact, it is a question of changing not only working methods, but also attitudes, which is a longer and more complicated process;
- an often low level of awareness and knowledge of issues relating to equality between women and men;
- as a result of this difficult process of changing not only working methods, but also attitudes, there is a risk that the actors involved, even if they are highly motivated, may grow weary of the day-to-day practice of mainstreaming;
- the lack of training personnel who have knowledge about the subject matter of the project as well as the administrative structures and gender issues;
- the cost of mainstreaming: this is accounted for mainly by the production of statistics, the training of actors at all levels and the time which the project's partners devote to its implementation;
- the current male-oriented hierarchical structure of organisations as well as horizontal segregation in certain areas (for example, part-time working hours being used mainly by women);
- unduly rapid turnover of actors involved without attention to continuity;
- the slow pace of the process is often underestimated: a lot of time is needed for a mainstreaming project to be firmly established and gain acceptance in the sector concerned.

A number of factors have been identified which facilitate mainstreaming:

- use of existing structures and incorporation of equality into day-to-day work, without setting up additional structures;
- establishment of a formal framework (protocol of agreement between the partners);
- involvement of all actors, with delegation of responsibility to services which are not directly responsible for equality policy in order to motivate them and get them involved in the project;
- awareness-raising and training for all the actors involved;
- setting up of networks of persons in charge of mainstreaming projects;
- presence of women in the setting in which the project is implemented; women represent as many potential partners;
- a trained professional team;
- the preparation of handbooks or publications on gender mainstreaming, their translation into several languages and their dissemination;
- the use of all means of disseminating information, in particular the mass media;
- creation of Internet sites on projects or resource centres devoted to mainstreaming projects;
- the involvement of civil society, serving both to exert pressure and to disseminate information;

- introduction of a "bonus" system: partners who attain the objectives and work to promote equality are granted a salary increase;
- the launch of pilot projects in different domains (eg taxation);
- the setting-up of a mainstreaming policy within the very organisation promoting the project.

It is important to determine the objectives and assess the feasibility of the planned project:

- projects should be designed to promote equality of opportunity and, in due course, to achieve real equality between women and men;
- but also to offer better service provision in the field concerned (eg improvement of sports activities organised to meet women's and men's needs to an equal extent);
- the main aim is to bring about improvements : mainstreaming can improve results for certain policies (for example, reductions in unemployment by increasing employment for women; reduction of violence in schools; improved tax arrangements taking into account the situation of each taxpayer, male or female, and setting up a tax system which is gender neutral; greater consideration given to the needs of the elderly).

VI. The implementation of mainstreaming projects shows the following advantages:

- since projects are mainly implemented by the usual actors, no significant increase in human resources is required (few additional recruitments);
- redeployment of resources where it proves most necessary (based on the findings of research and studies carried out in connection with projects);
- development of interaction and networks between the national and local levels and between politicians, administrators, representatives of civil society and employers' and workers' representatives;
- the preliminary analyses required in order to set up projects often reveal the shortcomings of current governmental policies (eg policies for the elderly);
- the need to institute a process of systematic assessment of public policies;
- improved communications between the different sectors involved, owing to the transsectoral and comprehensive nature of the strategy;
- at an advanced stage of the project, introduction of the legislative changes needed in order to take account of its results (for example, in the area of violence against women, or taxation).

Evaluation of projects

Those projects still in their early stages can still take inspiration from, and benefit from, the experience of initiatives which are already well underway.

Certain projects have reached the evaluation stage, a process which is indispensable to the mainstreaming of the equality perspective. Evaluation methods need to be improved and a more effective evaluation grid developed. This evaluation should serve to prove the relevance of a mainstreaming approach.

Working towards an integrated approach: the role of the Council of Europe

Gender mainstreaming must be introduced not only at national level but also at European and international level: such organisations as the Council of Europe have a key role to play in promoting mainstreaming.

The Council of Europe is at one and the same time:

- a forerunner: the conferences and seminars organised before the Beijing Conference (and in particular the Seminar on the participation of women in decisions relating to regional planning and the environment, held here in Athens in 1990) contributed to the development of the concept of mainstreaming;
- a protagonist: the report on mainstreaming, prepared by the CDEG, served as a point of reference and a source of inspiration;
- a catalyst: through its intergovernmental structures comprising 41 member States and observers, the Council of Europe continues to bring together and disseminate information and analyses on the implementation of gender mainstreaming. It is also important that co-operation should be established between the Council of Europe, other international organisations and NGOs in order to promote mainstreaming and the projects through which it is implemented.

In conclusion

The Conference, which ends today, has been an opportunity to compare mainstreaming practices; that is essential in order to continue developing this new strategy, which is still evolving. It is important to organise such gatherings regularly in order to take stock and make further progress.

APPENDIX V

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

GENDER MAINSTREAMING: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK, METHODOLOGY AND PRESENTATION OF GOOD PRACTICES

Part I: What is gender mainstreaming?

The first part of the report describes the origins of gender mainstreaming and its relation to specific gender equality policy. It discusses the problems which might occur when implementing gender mainstreaming and explains why this strategy is important.

1. What is gender equality?

Gender equality means an equal visibility, empowerment and participation of both sexes in all spheres of public and private life. Gender equality is the opposite of gender inequality, not of gender difference, and aims to promote the full participation of women and men in society.

Gender equality must be constantly fought for, protected and promoted. At present, the most important targets for gender equality include the following aspects:

- the recognition and full implementation of women's rights as human rights;
- the development and improvement of representative democracy through the promotion of the equal participation of women and men in political and public life and all other walks of life;
- the economic independence of the individual and the aim to reconcile family and working life for both women and men;
- the empowerment of girls and boys through the education systems;
- women's and men's common acknowledgement of the need to remove imbalances in society and their shared responsibility in doing so.

2. Are there still problems with gender equality in Europe?

Despite important progress, and even if in Europe women have obtained *de jure* equal rights and equal status with men, they are still discriminated against in many areas of life. Moreover, the progress towards gender equality seems to encounter a number of blockages. The main problems are:

- that the definition of equality used is often the very narrow one of *de jure* equality and that protection against discrimination is not always provided;
- that women have mainly had to work on these questions outside the 'mainstream' of society;
- that the position of women in decision-making is still very weak in most countries;
- that the methods used to promote gender equality have been mostly concerned with the specific needs of women and have not used the 'gender perspective'.

3. What is gender mainstreaming?

Gender mainstreaming is the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making.

Gender mainstreaming means that gender equality becomes a full part of common policies. It implies a broader and more comprehensive definition of gender equality, giving value to differences and diversity. At the same time, it stresses the need to (re)organise, improve, develop and evaluate policy processes and thus make it possible to challenge the male bias that characterises society and the structural character of gender inequality.

4. How does gender mainstreaming relate to specific gender equality policy?

Gender mainstreaming cannot replace “traditional” policies that have been designed to deal with specific problems related to gender inequality. It takes as a starting point policies which already exist or are being developed and then looks at how a gender equality perspective can be incorporated into the policy process, so that the specificity, interests and values of both sexes are taken into account. Gender mainstreaming and specific equality policy are dual and complementary strategies with the same goal: gender equality.

5. What are the difficulties that might accompany gender mainstreaming?

The main difficulties are the following:

- there is a danger that the concept of gender mainstreaming and the way in which it relates to specific gender equality policies is misunderstood, which would mean that some governments might use it as a pretext to cease traditional equality policies;
- that the concept is reduced to the two categories of women and men, and not used to take into account the relations between women and men;
- that there is a lack of adequate tools and techniques for the implementation of gender mainstreaming;
- that there is a lack of training for the actors involved and that the procedural changes needed are not implemented, eg in the administrations.

6. Why is gender mainstreaming so important?

There are five main reasons.

Because it puts people at the heart of policy-making

Policy-makers will have to pay attention to the broad effects of policies on citizens' lives – and that, as a result, may mean a more human and less economic approach to the management of contemporary societies.

Because it leads to better government

If gender mainstreaming is used, policy-making will be better informed and show that policies are never gender neutral.

Because it involves both women and men and makes full use of human resources

As the people involved in implementing mainstreaming are those who usually do the work, a broader range of actors is involved. This is a clear shift from equality work undertaken – often in isolation – by a few women, to making use of all human resources and involving men in gender equality work.

Because it makes gender equality visible in the mainstream of society

Mainstreaming will show that gender equality is an important societal issue with implications for the development of society, and not just a “luxury”. This should launch a new debate on equality issues.

Because it takes into account the diversity among women and men

Equality policies usually target women as a whole – but gender mainstreaming should be able to target the diverse situations of the different groups of both women and men (migrant women, young women, old men, etc).

Part II: A methodology for gender mainstreaming

Part II exposes the facilitating conditions and necessary prerequisites for gender mainstreaming. Furthermore, it gives an overview of the ingredients available for, and the actors concerned by, gender mainstreaming.

1. What are the necessary prerequisites or facilitating conditions for gender mainstreaming?

The most important prerequisite is political will. The government – or the highest authority (in the case of an organisation, etc.) – will have to issue a mission statement, making it clear that the intention is to mainstream the gender equality perspective with the objective of reaching gender equality.

Another prerequisite is that a specific gender equality policy exists. Gender mainstreaming cannot be implemented without the existence of such a policy. Therefore, countries or organisations who wish to begin mainstreaming but do not have such a policy, should build up the latter at the same time.

Other important facilitating conditions are:

- the existence of statistics on the current situation of women and men (sex-segregated statistics). These are essential in order to convince policy-makers;
- the existence of gender studies which generate knowledge of gender relations; financial means (often partly reallocation of funds) and human resources (ie for training for policy-makers) and, last but not least, the full participation of women in political and public life and in decision-making processes. Most advocates of balanced gender relations are women. It is therefore important that they enter the decision-making processes to ensure that the values, interests and life experiences of women from different groups are taken into account when decisions are made.

2. When, what and where to mainstream?

When should gender mainstreaming intervene in the implementation of a policy? In fact, all stages of the policy process are important for mainstreaming – from the planning stage to the moment when decisions are taken, because this is when financial and other means are allocated. The implementing stage includes the elaboration of concrete actions and may therefore be the most important stage. Finally, it is important to evaluate the effects of policies on the current gender relations, as this can serve as a starting point for the development of new policies.

As to the question what to mainstream?, or which are the most important policy areas for mainstreaming, the answer is that most policy fields are relevant, as they all have a direct or indirect impact on the life of women and men. It is, however, difficult to begin mainstreaming in all areas at the same time. It might be easiest to begin with policy areas which are recognised as being important for achieving gender equality (ie. the labour market, education, social and family policy). Another possibility may be to start in areas which are habitually labelled as gender neutral (urban policies, transport policies, research policies).

Mainstreaming will, however, have the greatest impact when major reforms are being undertaken or when new legislation is being introduced. This is the moment to implement mainstreaming.

Should mainstreaming take place at the national level only, or should the regional and local levels be concerned? All policy levels are important, but this will depend, of course, on the structure of a given country (centralised or federal). The local level is important, as this is where decisions affect people most directly.

3. What techniques and tools are available?

The techniques and tools should be separated into three main sets: 1) analytical, 2) educational, 3) consultative and participatory.

Analytical techniques and tools:

These are: statistics split up by sex; surveys and forecasts regarding gender relations; cost-benefit analyses from a gender perspective; research in gender studies, which is one of the most important bases for mainstreaming.

Other tools intended for policy-makers are: checklists (setting out objectives, describing actions to be taken); guidelines and terms of reference – which are not precise but give more freedom to put mainstreaming into practice. Gender impact assessment is another tool which originates from the environmental sector but has been adapted for the use of mainstreaming. It is a screening of a policy proposal to assess the different effects on women and men and whether their needs are equally taken into account. Finally, monitoring, comprising regular reporting and meetings, is also a tool to prepare new policies.

Educational techniques and tools:

These contain two main aspects: awareness-raising and transfer of knowledge. Awareness-raising aims to make people sensitive to gender issues, and training will help the actors normally involved in the policy processes to detect gender issues and develop policies which take gender into account. This can be done through: awareness-raising and training courses – beginning at the highest level of management; special experts joining a unit for some time (“flying experts”); manuals and handbooks (to be used during and after the training); booklets and leaflets for the general public; educational material for use in schools.

Consultative and participatory techniques and tools:

These are very important, because they make gender equality experts and other experts work together. Examples are: think tanks, working or steering groups (interdivisional and interdepartmental collaboration); special measures to ensure the participation of women in decision-making bodies; conferences, seminars, aimed at informing the public and those concerned by the policies; hearings (to help people participate in the policy-making process).

4. Who are the potential actors and what role can they play?

Gender mainstreaming implies all the actors routinely involved in designing, implementing and evaluating policies. Implementing gender mainstreaming means that gender equality has to become the concern of a great number of people. Certain aspects of gender mainstreaming need to involve specific actors, for example: research requires the participation of academic specialists and decision-making involves politicians. There is also a role for external experts, NGOs, pressure and interest groups as well as the media. The role of supranational institutions is also important as a supporting, stimulating and initiating actor.

Part III: Gender mainstreaming in practice

Part III discusses the points to keep in mind while elaborating a policy plan on gender mainstreaming and gives some indications for monitoring the process. Most important, this part contains examples of good practices of gender mainstreaming.

1. Constructing a gender mainstreaming policy plan

When constructing a policy plan, the first step is to identify who will be responsible for the start of gender mainstreaming. The next steps are to take stock of the actual situation – the prerequisites met, the characteristics of the policy-making process – and to design a plan that takes this actual situation into account. Finally, the last step is to monitor the results.

The main aim of a gender mainstreaming policy plan consists in linking up the necessary prerequisites, facilitating conditions and ingredients with the policy context and priorities of a specific setting. This chapter contains a checklist of aspects which should be taken into account when constructing a plan.

2. Good practices of gender mainstreaming

The last chapter contains examples of good practices of gender mainstreaming. These examples cover a broad range of policy plans, regulations, actions and techniques or tools. The aim of this chapter is to illustrate the methods and ways to mainstream a gender perspective into the policy spectrum and thereby to facilitate the setting up of a gender mainstreaming policy plan.

* * *

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APPENDIX VI**COUNCIL OF EUROPE****COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS**

RECOMMENDATION No. R (96) 5**OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES
ON RECONCILING WORK AND FAMILY LIFE***(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 19 June 1996,
at the 569th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and facilitating their economic and social progress, while respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms;

Bearing in mind Article 1 of the Revised European Social Charter, which contains an undertaking to ensure the effective exercise of the right to work, as well as Article 20 concerning the right to equal opportunities and equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation without discrimination on the grounds of sex, and Article 27 concerning the right of workers with family responsibilities to equal opportunities and equal treatment;

Bearing in mind its declaration adopted on the occasion of its 83rd Session in 1988 on equality of women and men;

Recalling that, in the resolution on the employment of women adopted at the close of the 4th Conference of European Ministers of Labour (Copenhagen, 1989), the Ministers of Labour agreed that adaptive and innovative measures were required in order to better reconcile working life and family life, whether it be in social infrastructures, labour and social protection legislation, or flexibility of employment for workers, without prejudice to access by women to professional responsibilities of all kinds;

Bearing in mind Recommendation No. R (94) 14 of the Committee of Ministers on coherent and integrated family policies;

Taking note of the final communiqué of the XXIVth session of the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Family Affairs on the theme of the status and role of fathers _ family policy aspects (Helsinki, 1995);

Bearing in mind the various instruments of the International Labour Organisation, particularly Convention No. 156 and Recommendation No. 165 concerning equal opportunities and equal

treatment for men and women workers: workers with family responsibilities, and Convention No. 175 and Recommendation No. 182 concerning part-time work;

Considering that the initiatives to enable women and men to reconcile their occupational, family and upbringing responsibilities arising from the care of children contained in the Recommendation of the Council of the European Communities of 31 March 1992 on child care (92/241/EEC) are relevant to the circumstances pertaining in all member states;

Bearing in mind the principles set out in Article 18 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which provides that the states parties shall use their best efforts to ensure recognition of the principle that both parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing and development of their children, that they shall render appropriate assistance to parents in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities, and that they shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that children of working parents have the right to benefit from child-care services and facilities for which they are eligible;

Bearing in mind the strategic objectives set out in the Platform for Action adopted by the United Nations 4th World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), and in particular those aiming at the promotion of the harmonisation of work and family responsibilities for women and men;

Considering that employment and family policies should promote equal opportunities in order to overcome discrimination on grounds such as disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, race, colour or ethnic origins;

Welcoming the progress already made in facilitating the labour force participation of workers with family responsibilities;

Recognising that the reconciliation of work and family life is a problem of considerable complexity which still remains insufficiently understood;

Recognising, nonetheless, that the following observations can be made:

- it is women who most often continue to bear the principal burden of family responsibilities;
- discrimination against women in the labour market is encouraged by insufficient sharing of family responsibilities;
- women and men have an increasing desire and willingness to share their family responsibilities more equally;
- numerous obstacles, especially social and cultural, stand in the way of a more equal sharing between women and men of their family responsibilities;
- overall, labour-market actors continue to take insufficient account of the family responsibilities of women and men;

Taking note of the development and importance of family responsibilities for women and men arising from economic, cultural and social changes;

Taking into consideration, on the one hand, the difficult economic and social context, particularly the budgetary restrictions confronting member states, and, on the other hand, the potential benefits to be gained in the promotion of a working society that uses the skills of all its members to the full;

Noting that the full social and economic participation of workers with family responsibilities has positive effects for the efficiency of the economy, the promotion of employment, and the fight against unemployment, and also has a role in strengthening social cohesion;

Considering that success in meeting the objectives and implementing the measures and initiatives described below demands both individual initiative and collective effort;

Considering, furthermore, that the undertaking of such a collective effort concerns, *inter alia*, public authorities, employers, organisations of employers and workers, and non-governmental organisations;

Being aware that greater access for women to positions of responsibility is an important factor in promoting measures designed to improve equal opportunities for women and men;

Affirming that the reconciliation of work and family life, promoting as it does self-fulfilment in public, professional, social and family life, is a precondition for a meaningful quality of life and for the full exercise of fundamental human rights in the economic and social sphere,

Recommends that the governments of member states:

- I. Take action, within the framework of a general policy promoting equal opportunities and equal treatment, to enable women and men, without discrimination, to better reconcile their working and family lives;
- II. Adopt and implement the measures and general principles described in the appendix to this recommendation in the manner they consider the most appropriate to achieve this goal in the light of national circumstances and preferences.

Appendix to Recommendation No. R (96) 5

General principles

1. With a view to creating effective equality of opportunity and treatment for women and men workers, each member state should make it an aim of national policy to enable persons with family responsibilities who are engaged or wish to engage in employment to exercise their right to do so without being subject to discrimination and, to the extent possible, without any conflict between their employment and family responsibilities.
2. The need for women and men to meet their responsibilities for child rearing should be made a priority, not only in respect of their very young children but also in respect of their older children. It is also important that workers be able to meet their increasing responsibilities to other dependent family members, and in particular to their relatives who are elderly or who have a disability.
3. The measures described in this appendix imply a considerable change in attitudes, business structures and working patterns in the public and private sectors, and it is therefore important to ensure that the measures in this appendix are implemented with the full involvement and co-operation of all labour-market actors including employers and organisations of employers and workers.
4. Although the measures described in this appendix relate essentially to the labour market, they will not in themselves ensure a more equal reconciliation of occupational and family responsibilities. A concerted effort, therefore, needs to be taken in all fields of social life in order to promote and take account of changes in the roles of women and men in both the workplace and the home.
5. With a view to promoting the reconciliation of working and family life, action needs to be taken in a number of related priority policy areas, namely:
 - the organisation of working time;
 - the abolition of discrimination between women and men in the labour market;

- the development of adequately financed services in favour of families;
- the adaptation of social security schemes and tax systems to the increasing diversity in working patterns;
- the organisation of school time and curricula.

6. A significant effort should be made to strengthen the regulatory and social infrastructures which support and assist workers who have to reconcile their working and family responsibilities.

7. The various instruments of the international bodies referred to in the preamble to this recommendation should be applied as widely as possible.

Organisation of working time

General

8. Governments should promote effective flexibility, or, where appropriate, encourage employers' and workers' organisations to promote such flexibility, throughout the length of the active life of workers to take account of their family responsibilities. Account should be taken of their needs and in particular on their preparation for, entry to and withdrawal from the labour market.

A flexible employment practice

9. Employers should be encouraged to develop flexible employment practices enabling their workers, both women and men, to meet the demands of their family responsibilities in the most satisfactory manner possible. In so far as is possible, account should be taken of the individual circumstances of each worker in relation to their family responsibilities and the needs of the persons dependent on them (for example the size of their family, whether they are a single parent, or whether their dependent relatives are ill, elderly or have a disability).

10. A flexible and voluntary employment practice widely agreed between employers and workers should comprise as many as possible of the following options:

- easier access to part-time work for those workers who so wish;
- easier access, where possible, to options for "distance employment" such as, for example, telework or homework for those workers who so wish;
- the possibility for workers to vary their working hours and the organisation of their working time, whilst retaining the possibility of reverting to their original hours;
- leave arrangements to care for family members who are ill or who have a disability.

11. Flexible employment practices should provide for conditions of employment which are equivalent or comparable to those of similarly placed full-time workers. In particular, member states are encouraged to extend this principle of equal or comparable treatment to the following areas:

- job security;
- work place representation;
- career development including promotion possibilities;
- pay and other benefits.

Maternity and parental leave

12. Women should be entitled to legal protection in the event of pregnancy, and, in particular, an adequate period of maternity leave, adequate pay or allowance during this period and job protection.

13. The fathers of newly born children should also be allowed a short period of leave to be with their families. In addition, both the father and the mother should have the right to take parental leave

during a period to be determined by the national authorities without losing either their employment or any related rights provided for in social protection or employment regulations. The possibility should exist for such parental leave to be taken part-time and to be shared between parents.

14. The measures described in paragraph 13 should apply equally for the benefit of persons adopting a child.

15. The return to work at the end of a period of parental leave should be facilitated by, for example, vocational guidance and training facilities.

Abolition of discrimination between women and men in the labour market

16. A reduction of wage differentials between women and men should be encouraged in order to achieve a more equal sharing of family responsibilities within each family unit. Accordingly, measures should be taken to promote:

- i. a more balanced distribution of women and men in different sectors and occupations;
- ii. a reduction of wage differentials between female dominated and male dominated occupations;
- iii. a reduction in wage differentials between women and men within the same occupation.

Development of adequately financed services in favour of families

17. A wide and diversified variety of high quality services in the public and private sectors (including the voluntary welfare sector and the personal service sector) should be available to assist women and men in better reconciling their occupational and family responsibilities. They should operate at local level and cover child-minding services, child care, the bringing up of dependent children, reception facilities outside school time and the care of relatives who are elderly or who have a disability.

18. In order to ensure the success of the various services they should be financed collectively and not only by families. They should also be closely co-ordinated by the different parties concerned, that is national, regional and local authorities, employers, organisations of employers and workers, as well as service users themselves.

19. Employers should also be encouraged to participate, financially or otherwise, in the provision of child care and family facilities for their workers, or in other services to help them meet their family responsibilities.

20. Full information should be available to users on the various services open to them, the standard of these services and their charges.

21. Where charges are made for child care and other services, these should be reasonable, and/or means-tested, and reflect the nature and quality of the service provided by the public authorities. Where necessary, and in order to ensure that these services are effectively available for workers with low means, financial assistance should be provided by the public authorities. Governments should ensure that the services are open to all children and that they should not be excluded for reasons related to the situation, and particularly the financial situation, of their parents.

22. Assistance to families may take the form of cash benefits, free entitlement to services, services at reduced charges and public funding to service providers. Consideration should be given to determining the most efficient means of financing these services.

23. The full range of public services, in particular public transport and housing, should be organised to better meet the needs of workers with family responsibilities. Similarly, urban and rural planning should take into account such responsibilities.

Adaptation of social security schemes and tax systems to the increasing diversity of working patterns

24. Where necessary, income tax and social security schemes should be reviewed to ensure that their operation does not work against the goal of enabling women and men to better reconcile their occupational and family responsibilities and to share these responsibilities between them more equally.

25. With a view to financing the assistance referred to in paragraph 22, contribution and tax systems might be designed in such a way as to encourage employers to make provision for their workers.

The organisation of school time and curricula

26. An effort should be made to better harmonise school and working hours.

27. School curricula should support an awareness of the needs related to reconciling work and family life.

DOCUMENTATION

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