

Beijing +15

Evaluation of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) in Hungary, 2009

Part I: Overview of achievements and challenges in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment

In the Republic of Hungary, **the general prohibition of discrimination against either of the sexes is stipulated in Section (1) of Article 66 of the Constitution** of the Republic of Hungary (Act XX of 1949).

It is *Act CXXV of 2003 on the promotion of equal treatment and equal opportunities* (hereinafter referred to as Ebtv.) that defines the concept of various types of discrimination – among others that against either of the sexes –, and sets forth the prohibition of such practices. On the basis of this Act, the Equal Treatment Authority started to operate in 2005. The Equal Treatment Authority acts on the basis of the provisions of Ebtv. and Government Decree 362/2004 (XII. 26.). The **Equal Treatment Authority** is an administrative body of national scope of competence for the promotion of equal treatment.

In addition to the examination of individual cases in its actions against discrimination, the second priority objective of the Authority is to promote social awareness, as well as to disseminate information and knowledge in relation to the enforcement of rights.

If the Authority asserts any violation of the regulations pertaining to equal treatment, the following sanctions may be applied:

- a) act for the cessation of the unlawful state of affairs,
- b) prohibit the further continuation of the conduct constituting a violation of law,
- c) act for the public disclosure of its resolution ascertaining the violation of the legal regulation,
- d) impose a (discrimination) fine.

The Equal Treatment Authority has several other fields of competence, such as: right to institute legal proceedings on the basis of its rights for the enforcement of demands of public interests, right to formulate a position in any draft legal regulation concerning equal treatment, information services, etc.

The Authority carries out its tasks in cooperation with the Advisory Body appointed by the Prime Minister. Independent experts with significant experience in the field of human rights protection and the enforcement of the equal treatment principal can be members of this body. Formed in the summer of 2005, the Advisory Board has accepted positions, such as the one in relation to the issues of evidencing in anti-discrimination proceedings.

It is important to note that besides legally guaranteed equality today we should dedicate a much weighty emphasis to the promotion of the practical enforcement of rules. Towards this end, joint, multilateral efforts, as well as the proper review of the objectives and achievements are needed from time to time.

Accordingly, the Government regularly evaluates the implementation of the Platform for Action accepted in Beijing.

Our membership in the European Union has had well-perceivable, positive effects on the treatment of gender issues in Hungary. The European guidelines offer ways to follow, and at the same time provide support to the accomplishment of joint objectives. They make the integration of the criteria concerning social genders unavoidable in all the segments of public policy and

public thinking. Partly due to the quota voluntarily undertaken by the governing political party in the course of the nomination of the candidates, the ratio of women in the Hungarian representatives to the European Parliament is over 30%.

By 2009, Hungary has adopted the legal environment ensuring and supporting gender equality, as well as the institutional system promoting the implementation of the same. Ebtv. stipulates that the promotion of equal chances is primarily an obligation of the government where the declared objective is to provide efficient legal protection to those having suffered any discrimination. 2003 saw the establishment of the Ministry of Youth, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities acting as the legal successor of the Governmental Office of Equal Opportunities, and then since 2006 it is the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour that has been to ensure proper governmental background for the governmental experts also involved in gender issues.

As the successor of the Women's Representation Council, the **Council for the Social Equality of Women and Men** has been set up to provide for the involvement of non-governmental organizations and experts in the shaping of women's policy in Hungary. (See Chapter 3)

Several, appropriately functioning mechanisms have also evolved in the prevention and management of violence against women and treatment, especially domestic violence. (See Chapter 2)

Today, it can be asserted that a number of **projects for the improvement of the situation women** have been implemented in Hungary with co-funding from the European Union (e.g. EQUAL, HEFOP, etc.).

Conferences, workshops for the formulation of attitudes have been organized. We have continued to publish the **statistical booklet** entitled "Women and Men in Hungary" (both in Hungarian and English) from year to year (since 2000), and **now it is also accessible electronically.**

Similarly, the CEDAW convention and the recommendations of the CEDAW Committee are also accessible in Hungarian both electronically and in hard copy as free of charges. Hungary submitted her sixth country report to the Committee in 2006, and it was evaluated in 2007. The report was compiled from a broad base of sources: it was in fact prepared with the involvement of experts and non-governmental activists in addition to the governmental actors. The publication entitled "Rights of Women" has already disclosed the most recent recommendations. This book has been disseminated continuously, via several channels with the contribution of the non-governmental organizations and activists for women.

Obstacles and difficulties of the implementation of the Platform for Action of Beijing:

The "gender mainstreaming" strategy has still not become properly wide-spread in governmental activities. However, one can see the fact with some optimism that **2008 witnessed the first (outstandingly successful) gender training for employees applying for participation from the ministries**, and that in 2009 it will be followed by a training session of several days for the employees of the National Development Agency who have a key role in the allocation of development funds in Hungary.

In society, the thought of gender equality, the consideration of inequalities between the two sexes have taken their roots, but the legal knowledge of women, as well as the abilities and techniques of the enforcement of their rights tend to be on a rather low level, and therefore in this field governmental policies are still to be strengthened.

The fairly conservative attitudes – in spite of the efforts taken in order to shape proper attitudes – change quite slowly, and the elimination of several gender stereotypes causes difficulties. *Nevertheless, the change among the younger generations has already become apparent: they are more open to the issues of gender equality.*

Part II: Progress in implementation of the 12 critical areas concerning the Beijing Platform for Action

1. Women and poverty

In Hungary, the national *poverty rate* does not reflect gender differences and the poverty of families with female household heads is just slightly larger than that of the families with male household heads. Still, in certain types of households women are to face larger risks of poverty. These types of households include typical single-parent families with mothers living alone with children, as well as one-member households with persons over the age of 65 where the poverty rate of women considerably exceeds that of men, in particular due to shorter employment periods, lower salaries and longer life expectancies. In 2006, the numbers of retired single men and women were 132,438 and 534,619, respectively. In these two types of families, it is not only the risk of poverty due to insufficient incomes that tends to be larger, but the risk of cumulated financial deprivation, as well.

The sub-average positions of women in the employment structure are reflected in the smaller wages and salaries in comparison to the earnings of men, as well as the lower level of social incomes calculated on the basis of wages and salaries. In this context, the *old-age pensions of women* are to be highlighted that was 25% lower in 2007 than those of men. Apart from labour positions, the discrepancy is also due to the fact that women generally work 2-3 years less than men do, and currently the advanced retirement allows them to retire 3 years earlier than men.

It is to be also noted that recently, especially in the settlements where the disadvantaged Roma population tends to be over-represented, *young Roma women tends to have children at younger ages*, and therefore the population of the younger generations is increasing in these settlements. Women having even several children in their adolescent years ultimately leave the institutional system of education, and thus are unable to enter the labour market. To improve the situation, the programme “*Take a Step Forward*” has been elaborated with the objective to heighten the level of education of the Hungarian adult population via launching trainings where these people can step one level up from their existing level of education and knowledge. These trainings are free for the participants, meaning that adults joining this form of education are supported financially including the costs of the training and an amount corresponding to one-monthly minimum wage.

The less advantageous positions of women in comparison to men and their lower earnings are also reflected in their social incomes, and affect the expected amounts of their *old-age pensions*, as well. The positive discrimination of women in the definition of the retirement age-limit will gradually disappear, and by 2009, both genders will retire at the same age, at the age of 62. In other areas, the Hungarian pension system provides equal rights to both genders.

2. Education and training of women

Guidelines followed by Hungary in relation to education emphasize that everyone should be provided with the opportunity for personal development, the accomplishment of the highest level of performance required by the new, international environment and access to resources that are necessary for social integration. For this reason, such strategies of education management are to be framed and applied whose declared principles are that (1) they cannot accept the existence of persons permanently and irreversibly excluded from society; and (2) they wish to promote the development of personality and the education of active citizens.

In Hungary, the educational qualifications of women tend to be slightly higher than those of men on the average. A larger proportion of working-age women hold secondary school and higher education qualifications than men of the similar age, whereas a larger proportion of men have

vocational qualifications. Girls are considerably over-represented in high schools, and significantly under-represented in vocational schools. *It means that girls rather prefer general secondary school qualifications, and just rarely learn any specific vocation on this level of education.* Nowadays, education in Hungary is gender-segregated, which is apparent mostly in vocational education and higher education. Girls are also over-represented in secondary school education.

Act LXXIX of 1993 on public education functions as a compass in the system of public education for several structural and contextual changes. Beside the creation of the conceptual and strategic foundations in line with the relevant European Union guidelines, this Act is to ensure that institutions of education should work out their local educational profiles in the light of the actual needs of their students.

The provisions concerning the quality of educational aids and books state that *in the course of the evaluation of school books the contents of the educational materials should also be examined* for – among other things – stereotypes, statements, pictures, photos, graphical images that are injurious to gender equality or strengthen unequal opportunities.

In the current situation of higher education and teacher's training, the clear association of the existing gender courses with specific persons/teachers seems to be the dominant factor, meaning that these courses are efficient at institutions where there are proper statuses for the teachers of the subject. A factor working against the emergence of a broad-scaling professional and scientific offering is the homogenization of higher education in terms of contents and quality - in spite of the fact that one objective of the Bologna process should be to open to wider layers of society, and the diversification.

Owing to the diversity of target groups and maintainers, discrimination and segregation are less traceable in vocational education and higher education. Nevertheless, in the upcoming years these areas are expected to face the most extensive structural and contextual changes. Therefore, such researches and studies are needed whose results can serve as fixed points of reference for social gender in the course of the methodological development of the pedagogy for adult education.

According to a 2003 study on the labour market position of pedagogues, in the past decade the average age and the proportion of women engaged in public education have increased, while the average level of qualifications has dropped, because in the younger generations the ratio of those with college qualifications has risen. This outcome further strengthens the labour market segregation of the employees of public education in terms of gender. Although most of the teachers are women, the participation of women in the management of institutions tends to decrease in direct proportion with the diminishing prestige and social status of these professions.

In the framework of cooperation by governmental, professional and non-governmental actors, **a training DVD (and an accompanying booklet for the explanation of the underlying concepts) has been prepared to contain a short film focusing on gender roles** alongside with a schoolbook entitled "A History of women and men in the long 20th century"; these materials will be subjected to experimental education in 2009.

3. Women and health

The two key characteristics of the health conditions of the adult population are life expectancy and the closely correlated ratio of pre-mature mortality, as well as life standards that can be achieved in actual life. In these two respects, the Hungarian adult education features opposite

tendencies. In Hungary, men die considerably earlier than one would expect in the light of the economic development of the country. According to the figures of the UNDP Human Development Report (2008), the probability for a woman or man to survive the age of 65 is 84% in Hungary. In view of pre-mature mortality there is a lot to improve, especially with respect to the life expectancy of men.

Social and economic factors have a crucial role in the trends of pre-mature mortality. On the average, in the period of 1986–1990 the difference between the life expectancies of men with the highest and lowest levels of qualifications had been 8.9 years, and by 2004 this indicator increased to 16.5 years. In the case of women, the former gap of 4 years also rose to 10.2 years to the detriment of those with the lowest level of qualifications. The difference is similar when one look at the percentage of people at the age of 30 who will live up to the age of 65. The underlying probability is only 43% in the case of men with the lowest level of qualifications, and 70% of such women, whereas for men and women with the highest level of qualifications the ratio is 85% and 91%, respectively.

Roma people tend to see a negative gap of 8–10 years for both sexes in terms of the domestic average life expectancy. If the indicators of the Roma population are adjusted with school qualifications, no deviation can be detected between the Roma and non-Roma population with school qualifications under the eight grades of primary school. Among other things, Resolution 68/2007 (June 28) of the Parliament on the Decade of the Roma Integration Programme Strategic Plan sets forth several actions in relation to the improvement of the health conditions of Roma people, and they are now under implementation.

Among men under the age of 65, mortality due to digestive problems and external reasons – such as murder, suicide – is much more frequent. In the case of women, mortality due to cardiovascular problems and cancer is mostly characteristic of the older age groups, but the associated mortality rate is much larger than the European average.

While 8.1% of people under the age of 70 suffer from serious complexes of depression symptoms definitely calling for medical treatment as a result of stress leading to the permanent deterioration of health, the corresponding ratio in the case of people with school qualifications under the eight grades of primary school is 15%, and 11% and 5.6% for people with primary school qualifications and qualifications of higher education, respectively.

Screening examinations of public healthcare have key importance. The following screening examinations are handled with priority:

- biannual breast screening examinations for women at the age of 45–65 with ileum x-ray (mammography);
- tri-annual gynaecological screening examination of women at the age of 25–65 after the first negative screening examination, involving cytological tests, as well as
- biannual screening examination of men and women at the age of 50–70 for the laboratory (immuno-chemical) detection of blood hidden in the faeces.

In the past of the National Curriculum related to physical and mental health, there is a strong focus on the support that schools are to provide to children – in particular adolescents – in the field of education for family life, as well as HIV–AIDS prevention. An indispensable task of schools is that they are to contribute to the explanation of issues concerning sexual culture and behaviour, as well as preparation for responsible, joyful partnership. In this context, the lives of pedagogues also have a crucial role, and we offer permanent professional support to the implementation of school programmes, primarily in secondary schools, and also in the institutions of elementary education and training.

At the beginning of 2007, the Ministry of Health commissioned the National Center of Epidemiology to organize the sentinel HIV screening examination of gravidae within the

framework of the project entitled “Monitoring of the spread of HIV”. The objective of this examination include the monitoring of HIV infection for women, the measurement of trend changes over time, as well as the cross-sectional examination of the HIV prevalence of pregnant women. In 2007, the blood samples of 8,000 women attending pregnancy screening examination from 12 regions between 03 September and 15 October were examined. All the blood samples proved to be negative, which indicated that rate of HIV infection among women was very small with no detectable change having occurred in the prevalence since the examination that had been conducted in 2003.

Hungary also supports anonymous HIV/AIDS screening, as well: 17 HIV/AIDS Counseling Centers offer free screening examinations for volunteering individuals.

4. Violence against women

In the field of the prevention of violence against women and children, we have launched a series of initiatives since our last report, while the country has been maintaining the achievements that she made before.

Domestic violence

The tasks of the government in this respect are prescribed and determined by Resolution 45/2003 (Apr. 16) by the Parliament on the establishment of the national strategy for the prevention and efficient management of domestic violence, as well as Resolution 115/2003 (Oct. 28) by the Parliament on the national strategy of the social prevention of crime.

Within the meaning of the above legislation, Hungary has framed a separate institutional system funded from governmental sources.

Its elements:

- *Regional Crisis Management Network – currently with 10 units and a national scope of competence*
- *National Crisis Management and Information Telephone Services – toll-free, 7/24 telephone services that can be called across the country*
- *Secret Shelter, which is also a hosting institution*
- *For the shaping of public awareness, a change in the attitude, role of the media, organization of national road shows, conferences, regular roundtable discussions for professionals.*
- *Start-up of a “half-way” exit system as a result of the cooperation of the Ministry, local governments, non-governmental organizations operating crisis centers for the provision of municipal homes where the insulted persons can live for up to five years with assistance supplied by professionals.*
- *Operation of a methodological center appointed by the Minister (Secret Shelter)*

On 25 October 2004, the Governmental Office of Equal Opportunities announced an invitation procedure for applications in relation to the establishment of a **Regional crisis service network** for the temporary homes of families and children; these homes are to host persons (parents and children, women) who are under the threat or have become victims of domestic violence, and to be provided with complex assistance. An opportunity was offered for putting proper personal and material conditions in place, improving them, and as a consequence capacities for 4 additional persons could be added to the existing services. Applications could be submitted by temporary homes that were willing to develop, establish further cooperation with the settlements having joint the programme.

In 2005 8 applicants (7 non-governmental organizations and an institution maintained by a local government) won the tender and could become a regional crisis centre.

The amounts to be furnished were in fact a non-repayable aid that could be used solely for the development of the temporary homes of families and the provision of services as described in the

conditions of application. The programme was launched in **January 2005** as a pilot project. As a result of the excellent experiences, this programme has been continuously operated since its commencement, and its elements have been gradually developed.

2005. On 25–27 January and 02–03 February 2005, 33-hour **training sessions** were held for the preferred temporary homes for families and the associated service providers involved in basic services, and besides a process for the processing of local cases and discussion for the strengthening of cooperation was organized for each region.

SUMMARY TABLE OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE NETWORK

Objective of operations	Professional activities
Professional, methodological work	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attainment and application of qualifications required for the professional attendance of clients in crisis situations – guaranteed in all the regions 2. Collection and processing of information, preparations of assessments, analyses – appointment of experts with experience in the given issues – continuous since 2006 at the Ministry. Broad-scaling provisions for the professional performance of tasks by maintaining the professional background information – trainings, supervisory case discussions – organized by the Ministry 3. Adequate information technology in human services 4. Professional counseling for local governments and non-governmental organizations, support to direct services to the target groups – implemented as organized by the regional network.
Services to clients	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provision of social, administrative and other services, direct assistance to the victims of violence, persons in crisis situation, victims with special needs and in demand of assistance. 2. Organization and maintenance of employment, training, psychological, legal counseling and information services. 3. Mentor-type services, mediation, family group conference 4. Professional accommodation to victims, their reintegration into safe social circumstances.
Reduction of the number of cases involving domestic violence, crisis situations by communicational and information means	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social publicity, use of media facilities with proper respect to personality and privacy rights 2. Actions for the reduction of cases involving domestic violence, communication of the planning and implementation of programmes, dissemination of information materials, use of regional media, local televisions, printed press by the members of the network
Networking, contacts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planning, organization and implementation of actions, programmes for the development of the crisis management network, continuous expansion 2. Resource development, project management 3. Identification of client and non-governmental initiatives in relation to crisis situations, analysis, publication of the related experience, findings.
Professional support (TA)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. monitoring system 2. Professional programmes, conferences, workshops 3. Planning–execution of communicational activities, publications 4. Administrative consultation 5. Conveyance of experience to professional policy

For the monitoring and quality assurance of the programme, a Monitoring Committee has been set up from the employees of the Ministry working in the field of domestic violence. The aim to develop a monitoring, evaluation and signaling system has been set in order to trace the utilization of the financial resources supplied by the maintainers. Furthermore, it is to ensure the accomplishment of objectives by way of formulating professional positions continuously in

relation to the programme, analyzing the results and impacts achieved, preparing successful elements for dissemination, as well as assisting the elimination of any error, deficiency. The actors in charge of the programme have been provided with continuous feedbacks in relation to the execution of the programme, with a primary focus on problems and deficiencies, and as a result an action plan has been compiled for the upcoming period to reflect the potentials to correct these problems in the future.

The monitoring system has consisted of two fundamental components: the evaluation of **professional and financial** processes.

In 2008, external experts were entrusted to perform the necessary monitoring tasks.

The most important characteristic of the programme is the **provision of immediate protection** to insulted persons. For the above-described target group, an additional objective has been the development of complex assistance (intensive social work, more efficient operation of the signaling system, immediate request for provision of social supports, continuous supply of mental hygienic and legal assistance), crisis management programmes, as well as the implementation of prevention, services, follow-up care.

The network has been gradually expanded; in 2007, it was suitable for hosting 25 persons simultaneously, and then in 2008 an organization that had developed a property for hosting 10 insulted persons joined the programme. The regional programme organizers started the elaboration of **local professional protocols** in December 2005, and since 2006 they have been acting in line with these professional protocols.

In 2008, the number of insulted persons admitted to crisis centers was as follows: 1,347 persons, including 421 women, 9 men – with children, 8 insulted men, 858 children, 51 single women.

Physical assault: 348; physic assault: 462; sexual violence: 111; economic assault: 190; separation: 236.

The crisis centers participating in the pilot project work in close cooperation with both the National Crisis Management and Information Telephone Services and the authorities acting for the clients, as well as social, child protection and other organizations. (members of the signaling system)

Beside the crisis management network, Hungary also operates a system of **Temporary Homes of Families with a capacity for 2,901 persons**; under the relevant legal regulations they host the victims of domestic violence – some of them can accommodate all of them, while others have to operate waiting lists.

The crisis centers rely strongly on cooperation with non-governmental organizations and the media.

The programme has been presented on regional and local television channels; several settlements have helped the persons exiting the programme by searching for “receiving families” for the insulted persons. Non-governmental organizations have assisted the programme by seeking jobs and accommodation facilities.

National Crisis Management and Information Telephone Services (OKIT)

Within the framework of the pilot project, for the modernization of the telephone-based services the government has developed toll-free, 7/24 assistance services that can be accessed from the entire territory of the country: OKIT has been in operation since the beginning of April 2005. The associates of the services are experts of mental hygiene, social policy and social workers.

They perform their work on the basis of the **professional protocols** they prepare.

In the 7/24 telephone services, two persons receive calls throughout the day, initiate immediate actions after contacting the members of the network, or in cases not requiring immediate actions they notify those professional organizations that are the nearest to the clients concerned. The

associates monitor the resolution of problems, request (and receive) feedbacks from the clients, offices, institutions, authorities in order to improve the life situations of the clients in question.

Prior to the commencement of the operation of OKIT, the associates attended comprehensive professional preparatory training and their **continuous professional training** has remained an integral part of the operation of the institution (e.g. human trafficking). Moreover, team meetings, case discussions, supervision and a modern database help their day-to-day work. The crisis telephone services have been established and operated with respect to the relevant professional principles (IFOTES), legal regulations and professional ethical requirements. In 2008, 53,426 calls were received with 68.26% of them being successful, which indicated a 10% increase in comparison with the previous years.

In the light of the experience so far, there were much more women than men calling the services. In 2008, 68.42% and 31.58% of the callers were women and men, respectively.

Women tended to be mothers with several children, and just a few of them were single. Most of the calls were received in relation to domestic violence. Demands for counseling were more frequent than for accommodation.

They have had contacts with all the authorities, institutions and non-governmental organizations that can and actually act against domestic violence. (Police, National Public Health and Military Officer Services, National Headquarters of the Border Guards, etc.)

They have forged firm contacts with the members of the signaling system, both institutions and non-governmental organizations. They are in daily contact with the regional crisis management network to indicate where accommodation facilities can be found. With the support and under the organization of the government, joint professional days have been organized on several occasions.

Secret Shelter

The shelter was opened in February 2006. The function of the Secret Shelter includes the admittance of seriously insulted women with or without children, as well as the provision of complex support to the resolution of their problems.

Methodological Center

In order to keep the uniformity of the crisis management model programme, the government has commissioned a non-governmental organization to **operate as a methodological center**, and perform the professional tasks of the model programme.

Half-way exit programme

In order to prevent insulted persons from becoming forced to return to the insulters, in 2008 the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour launched a model programme in three counties: the **half-way exit programme**. In the framework of the programme, the insulted person can live in the apartment provided by the local government for 5 years (with the assistance of experts in job-seeking) with the additional condition that the insulted person occupying the apartment should economize, have a goal of life, and create such a financial background during the period in the programme that allows the purchasing of an own apartment with the use of loans, or becoming entitled to apply for social housing from the local government in the course of the 5 years. In the model programme, the insulted person can rely on legal advice, psychologist, social pedagogues. The related costs are covered by the government.

Shaping of public attitude – a change in approach

The autumn of 2005 saw the commencement of a public information programme for the broad-scaling dissemination of information on domestic violence and the OKIT telephone number (preparation and dissemination of leaflets). For the shaping of public attitude, the government has been organizing road shows for experts and the media since 2006. In 2007, the Ministry of Social

Affairs and Labour announced a press competition prize for the media with a focus on genuine information services. This prize is announced continuously, from year to year.

Restraint

On 14 February 2006, the Parliament adopted Act LI of 2006 on the amendment of Act XIX of 1998 on criminal procedures; it was enacted on 03 March 2006, and the associated legal provisions entered into force on 01 July 2006. Pursuant to the Act, the investigating judge may order restraint for a **period of ten to thirty days** after the commencement of the criminal proceedings in the event of any well-grounded suspicion of crime punishable with imprisonment, and under the effect of the restraint the *accused party is to leave the place of residence where s/he lives together with the injured party, and is forbidden to frequent the institutions/locations that the injured person often visits*. Restraint includes the prohibition of meeting in person, as well as contacts attempted by such means of communication as the telephone or electronic channels. In the event of any violation of these rules, the accused party may be held in preliminary imprisonment or required to pay procedural fine. The ordering of such restraint may be proposed by the prosecutor, the private prosecutor, the complementary private prosecutor, the injured party, as well as legal representative of the injured party if s/he is incapable to act or has restricted capacities to act, and the legal representative of any minor living in the household of the accused party.

Relying on the experience earned since the effective date of the Act, a review of this legal institution was started in 2008.

Human trafficking

In recent years, no changes have occurred in the legal regulations pertaining to human trafficking and the protection of witnesses. On the other hand, Government Resolution 1018/2008 (March 26) has been adopted on the national strategy against human trafficking for 2008–2012.

Human trafficking has been effectively deemed as a separate legal circumstance of Hungarian criminal law since 1999; it underwent major modification in 2001 with respect to the fact that the convention of UN on the cross-border combat against organized crime, the so-called Palermo Protocol necessitated such a move. In June 2005, for the former Ministry of the Interior, the Police, the former Border Guards, as well as the Immigration and Citizenship Office an Action Plan was prepared concerning their tasks for the prevention of human trafficking. The National Headquarters of the Police and the individual county police headquarters also elaborated their internal regulations. The related order of the National Headquarters of the Police entered into effect, and Order 46/2007 (Oct. 30) ORFK by the National Commander of the Police on the execution of police duties in relation to the offences connected with prostitution and the management of human trafficking was published on 20 December 2007. The Hungarian–American Task Force for the Prevention of Human Trafficking established upon the initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been in operation since the second half of 2004 with the purpose to improve the efficiency of governmental measures against human trafficking. Furthermore, it can be claimed that the former Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour exploited the opportunities offered by the various initiatives, campaigns and retraining courses.

In addition to the foregoing, before the framing of the strategy Hungary had no coordinated, regulated, measurable actions, regular monitoring, evaluation in relation to this criminal circumstance, but the Convention of the European Council against Human Trafficking (signed by Hungary on 10 October 2007) required the signatory states to establish their own bodies of coordination.

Moreover, it is to be noted that the Office of the United States to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (the so-called TIP Office) published its last report in relation to human trafficking on 12 June 2007. In the report examining the period from April 2006 to March 2007, Hungary – for the first time ever – was listed in the first group with respect to her continuous efforts made for the prevention of human trafficking, the conviction of the perpetrators and assistance to the victims. On the other hand, the report saw – among other issues – the preparation of a national strategy to be a condition of the maintenance of this positive evaluation, as well as the framing of a coordination mechanism and the appointment of a president to head the coordination body (i.e. the national coordinator in the international terminology).

The national strategy of combating human trafficking serves as the basis of our actions against human trafficking; it determines the main principles, as well as the scope of persons concerned or participating in prevention, criminal prosecution and the provision of assistance to the victims.

During the implementation of the strategy, respect for human rights should be observed as a **fundamental principle** – especially in view of the rights of children – alongside with the protection of victims in exposed, vulnerable positions, as well as the prevention of discrimination, this in particular the **guaranteeing of gender equality based on the acknowledgement of the different needs of women and men.**

5. Women and war conflicts

Immigration and refugee regulations

Hungary's immigrant and refugee regulations have undergone certain changes as a result of the **country's accession to the European Union and then the Schengen Area.** On 01 July 2007, the formerly effective legal regulations on immigrants were replaced by two legislative acts: Act I of 2007 on the entry and staying of persons entitled to free movement and staying and Act II of 2007 on the entry and staying of persons from third countries, as well as the decrees for their enforcement. Pursuant to these legislations, the right of free movement and staying in the country may be exercised by the citizens of the member states of the European Economic Area and Switzerland (hereinafter referred to as EEA citizens), any family member from a third country who accompanies or joins the citizen of EEA, any family member from a third country who accompanies or joins the citizen of Hungary.

The visa, residence permits, immigration and establishment permits issued prior to the effective date of the new legislations entitle the family members being citizens of third countries to stay in the country until the expiry of the validity of those permits. Similarly to EEA citizens, upon any related request the permits may be exchanged to residence cards.

Upon the request of any EEA citizen or family member from a third country with establishment or immigration permits, the regional directorate shall issue – without examining the fulfillment of conditions – a document certifying the right to stay in the country on a permanent basis (permanent residence permit).

The personal scope of the Act on the entry and staying of citizens of third countries shall cover such foreign citizens who are not in possession of the community right for free movement and staying.

Any entry by a citizen of a third country intending to enter Hungary for a stay not exceeding three months shall be subject to the provisions of Resolution 562/2006/EC of the European Parliament and Council of 15 March 2006 establishing a Community Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Border Control Code).

The system of residence visa and residence permits has in fact survived the changes, but the Act has stipulated special rules for the residence visa and residence permits that can be issued for different purposes of staying in the country.

As legal statuses with regard to establishment are compatible, citizens having temporary establishment permit may apply for a national establishment permit and an EC establishment permit, and citizens from third countries having national establishment permit and having obtained the status of immigrant or established under the legislation in force may apply for an EC establishment permit.

Refugee regulations:

In the first half 2008, 90% of the applicants for refugee status arrived in Hungary illegally, and more than 60% of them originate from countries outside Europe. Since 2005, the number of persons receiving refugee status has been steadily growing, presumably in association with conflict situations.

Women in the army:

In Hungary, before the change of the political system approximately one percent of the military personnel of the army belonged to women and today this proportion is 16–17 percent. While **in 1994**, the Hungarian Army **included 1,628 female soldiers**, **by 2003 this number increased to 2,581**, **and in 2006 the female personnel exceeded 4,000 soldiers**. In the current situation, in certain units of the Army women tend to be under- or over-represented, which are well-reflected in the minutes of periodic assessments and supervisions.

Order 107/2007 (HK 18) by the Ministry of Defense was signed and published in 2007 to set forth the **Equal Opportunity Guidelines** of the Minister of Defense.

The Ministry of Defense operates a system of interest protection and interest promotion that is based on legal regulations and internal agreements. The highest level of consultation and interest promotion is the Defense Interest Reconciliation Forum.

The Ministry (in 2003) also set up the **Women's Committee of the Ministry of Defense**. This Women's Committee of the Ministry of Defense monitors and examines the situation of women soldiers serving in the official or contracted personnel of the Hungarian Army, as well as changes in remuneration and social benefits. It analyzes and evaluates the findings of the examinations, and in this context it makes reports, proposals to the under-secretary of administration for the Ministry of Defense, the chief of staff of the Ministry of Defense, as well as the deputy under-secretary of human resources for the Ministry of Defense, and in addition it supports the decision-making activities of the leaders of the Ministry.

In the light of the foregoing, it can be claimed that from legal grounds the army ensures promotion and career opportunities to the members of the regular personnel as without any discrimination, i.e. solely on the basis of professional abilities, experience and performance, as well as with respect to the time spent in service, the actual rank and duties. It also guarantees the discrimination-free integration and work of women.

On the other hand, it is obvious that the “*de iure*” equality is not identical to the so-called “*de facto*” equality, and therefore there are still problems to be solved; however, the Ministry of Defense has already implemented the majority of the Community guidelines – that are obligatory for all the member states – ensuring equal treatment, and enforced them in the day-to-day life of the army on the basis of the relevant legal regulations. **Some of the characteristics of these regulations in connection with women can be summed up as follows:**

In comparison with other social organizations, the army is much more formalized with strictly

regulated internal life, and therefore those subjective aspects can be excluded from the processes of career and promotion opportunities that may lead to anomalies in other segments of the society, such as the different earnings of men and women working in the same positions where – according to the associated indicators – there exist a 20–30 percent gap to the detriment of female employees. The army establishes compensations in view of the given rank, position and specialties of work, as irrespective of sex and age. There are no differences between female and male soldiers, promotion is bound to qualifications, practical skills, while the rights, obligations and compensations **depend** on the given rank and position.

The option for women to have careers in the military field was first opened by the opportunities to be trained and educated. Therefore, today at the Zrínyi Miklós University of National Defense there are several majors that can as well be selected by girls with GCSEs preferring military careers, and consequently they also have the opportunity to be promoted in these ranks.

The attainment and improvement of high-level knowledge required by the performance of tasks are supported by staff combinations of various levels – with duration from a single day up to several weeks (for instance, deployment of new technical devices, new structures and requirements – considerably differing from the domestic criteria – in relation to NATO assignments, learning of the tasks connected with activities in military missions). Naturally, the training of the civil personnel (civil servants, public officers) is organized with similar circumspection and regularity.

All the existing forms of training serve the attainment of knowledge required for the occupation of the various positions, as well as the exploitation of the career opportunities of the person choosing military service (workplace at the army). Depending on the position and professional qualifications, the option to participate in the trainings needed for promotion is continuously provided both in military professional training and civil education. (Including language courses, computer skills, etc.)

Recent years, the increased number of peace mission assignments and the associated larger incomes have heightened interests in armed service, and as a consequence women can also be found in the crew serving abroad.

In the light of the experience earned in services abroad, in the event of conflicts female soldiers are more accepted. Their presence does not imply violence, and in Muslim countries female soldiers performing law enforcement tasks can find their feet more easily, because in that particular cultural setting different communicational techniques are to be used, and due to their more refined emotional senses women are more successful in applying them.

It is to be noted that due to the restructuring of armed forces and the mandatory service period of 25 years needed for retirement a large number of soldiers have left the duty mostly from among male soldiers, while on the reverse side, in the process of filling up the ranks women have arrived in service in much larger proportions than before.

Up to this day, the tendency that prevails in nearly all the areas of employment, including military service, i.e. that first rather low-prestige positions are offered to women within the given organization, is also apparent here; thereafter – mostly in response to pressure from the political and social fields – they are allowed to occupy some higher (“shop-window”) statuses in order to prove the democracy of leadership and loyalty for the efforts of women towards equal treatment. It means that it is primarily the “conventional” military positions that are primarily open to women; they do not ensure them careers as commanders, which should be inherent in the system, but they are involved in so-called specialized services and support activities. Another “darker” side of the system is that women – as they enter the military system at older ages – cannot climb the hierarchy up to the levels that are open to their male colleagues (with respect to the time

spent and positions occupied), and therefore there are only a few leaders or high ranks among female soldiers.

In addition to the acceptance of the engagement of female soldiers and the changing roles, the creation of appropriate working conditions has also meant a major challenge. The increasing headcount of female soldiers call for the resolution of a number of practical, training, service and supply, work psychology and other problems. Concurrently with the deployment of female soldiers, proper conditions in the infrastructure of employment had to be put in place (changing rooms, washrooms, toilets, separate resting rooms, female accommodation, etc.), and the most appropriate version of military dresses for women had to be introduced.

6. Women and economy (employment of women, income positions)

The European employment guidelines set the requirement for the member states of the European Union that they should follow such employment policies that in the average of the member states ensures 70% employment rate in the population aged 15–64, and 60% for women. *The improvement of the employment rate is in Hungary's fundamental interests as irrespective of the requirements of the European Union.*

Participation in the labour market does not only have the potential of larger incomes, thereby moderating poverty, but also enriches human relations, may make access to information more efficient, strengthen the social involvement of individuals, contributes to the reinforcement of social cohesion, reduces the risks of social segregation.

In the period from 2004 to 2007, the employment rate of the population aged 16–64 increased by only half a percent. Furthermore, this rise was brought about solely by men, while the number of women employed slightly decreased. Thus, the gap between the employment rates started to widen, and in 2007 arrived at 13.1%. In 2007, both sexes had employment rates 7.4–7.5% under the average employment indicator of the EU27.

This deficit in the employment rate is concentrated on *young and elderly people*. In the case of *young people*, it is an especially alarming fact that our negative gap to the EU average has not decreased, but significantly broadened since 2000. In 2000, the proportions of boys and girls, aged 15–24, in employment were 4.1% and 5% under the corresponding indicator of the EU member states. In 2007, our deficit for both sexes exceeded 16%. **On the other hand, in the case of elderly people we are in the middle of a successful process of making up the gap: an increasing number of people enter employment from year to year. In the period of 2000–2007, the employment rate of men increased from 33.2% to 41.6%, while the same ratios for women were 13.3% and 26.3%.**

For the promotion of the employment of career-starters and people over the age of 45, the government has worked out its START programme package. START programme supporting the labour engagement of career-starting young people was launched on 01 October 2005. Designed for the promotion of the attainment of work experience by young people, START programme offers job opportunities to career-starters for 2 years, while employers can rely on preferential public contributions in connection with the employment of young people. The objective of the programme is the promotion of entrance of young people to the labour market towards the attainment of proper work experience that is essential on the labour market.

Career-starters may participate in the programme provided that they have not accomplished the age of 25, or the age of 30 with qualifications of higher education, and completed or suspended their studies, and it is the first time that they establish legal relations for work or employment relations with grants after the completion of their studies.

The participants of the START EXTRA programme are **permanent job-seekers** who have been registered as job-seekers for at least 12 months within the 16 months preceding the date of

application, and **accomplished the age of 50**. Alternatively, participants are those people who have been registered as job-seekers for at least 12 months within the 16 months preceding the date of application, and as irrespective of the age hold **primary school qualifications at the maximum**, or are job-seekers being eligible for availability support, and registered by the national employment body at the time of the applications, and in fact receive availability support. Similarly to the programme for young people, the employer has the option to rely on the payment of preferential public contributions.

The third element of the programme package is START PLUSZ (see details below).

Back in 2000, the *employment rate of women aged 25–54 regarded to be ideal in terms of employment* was identical to the average EU indicator being around 67%. Since then, the negative gap has broadened here, as well: to 1.5% in 2004 and 3.5% in 2007. In 2000, there were 6.8 percent fewer men working in Hungary. **This deficit could be cut back to 5.5% by 2007.**

The low employment rates in Hungary are closely correlated with the *low-level application of part-time employment*, which is not a new phenomenon. In 2007, 2.7% of men and 5.7% of women were working in part-time jobs.

Since 2004, *the formerly decreasing trend of unemployment has reversed*. Another new phenomenon is that in the same period the *unemployment rate of women became larger than that of men*, which had never before occurred since the change of the political system. By today, the number of permanently unemployed women has exceeded the number of similar men.

In terms of economic activeness, the regional differences are quite large: In Budapest, the labour market participation of women is 10% under the corresponding rate of men, while in other towns and villages the negative gaps go up to 12% and 16%, respectively. Young and elderly people can be characterized by low economic activeness, similarly to mothers with small children, especially if they are members of the Roma minority. After Malta, Hungary ranks second in the list of *lowest participations by such women aged 25–49 on the labour market* who have at least one child under the age of 12. The following facilities – among others – have been designed to promote the return of persons being inactive for childcare to the labour market:

- From the time when the child accomplishes the age of 1, there is an opportunity to enter fulltime job in addition to the childcare aid, child-raising or nursing allowance.
- START Programme: The objective of the programme is to provide support to the re-entry to the labour market for the long-term unemployed, for parents raising small children, for family members taking care of close family members to have employment after childcare benefits and to enable them to work while receiving the benefits.

Those persons may participate in the programme who intend to establish legal relations for work within one year (365 days) following the termination of the disbursement of the childcare aid, childcare pay, child-raising support or nursing allowance, **or** wish to enter work after the child has accomplished the age of 1 with the concurrent disbursement of the child-care aid provided that their labour relations have been terminated during the any unpaid leave or absence used in the period of the childcare aid, childcare pay, child-raising support or nursing of a family member, or they have no employers (or had no employers even before the disbursement of the childcare aid).

The support is associated with the persons of those participating in the programme; it is a public contribution allowance to be granted automatically for a term of two years, and paid to employers that engage the eligible participants of the programme within the framework of labour relations.

For the support of the harmonization of workplace and family obligations, in each year since 2000 the **Family Friendly Workplace Award** has been announced as to be granted to the companies and institutions implementing outstanding family friendly measures.

Applications may be submitted in six categories – micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprises, large companies, budgetary organizations and non-profit organizations – by presenting the established practices. The questions in the application datasheet are associated with the following main topics:

Data pertaining to employees, policies and practices (e.g. distribution of employees by the position, family status, method of work, promotion systems, issues in relation to childcare, wages and salaries, trainings, etc.). Issues concerning equal opportunities (e.g. regulations, practices, etc.) in this section, there are several questions inquiring about the documentation of the individual measures. Family friendly policies, practices for the support of the harmonization of work and private life (e.g. work organization, leaves and holidays, other benefits, etc.). Matters concerning the organizational culture (e.g. family friendly organizational culture, involvement of employees, social corporate responsibility, etc.) Miscellaneous questions (e.g. development, monitoring, etc.).

The winners of the competition are entitled to use the logo of “Family Friendly Workplace” for a year.

In 2003, less than one third of Roma men between the ages of 15 and 74 primarily lived on income from some kind of work; less than one third of this group had some form of regular work. One in six Roma women primarily lived on income from some kind of work and similarly, one sixth had some kind of regular work. *The unfavourable employment situation for Roma women is related to low schooling, their starting families early, the lack of appropriate qualifications and gender-based discrimination.* The above-mentioned “Take a Step Forward!” programme has been designed to respond to this problem.

This combination of gender- and ethnic-based discrimination exercises the most complex impacts on *Roma women and women belonging to immigrant ethnic groups* (that are distinguished on the basis of their racial origins). In their cases, unemployment, low schooling, permanent poverty, improper health conditions, in appropriate housing circumstances, their low social and economic status, as well as the joint impacts of prejudices and discriminative procedures lead to multiple (inter-sectional) social segregation jointly and in correlation with each other.

The “Road to Work” programme has been developed to back women on their way from inactiveness to activeness with the underlying purpose to encourage the employment of those permanently unemployed who receive regular social aids, as well as to improve their employability. The accomplishment of this double aim calls for a complex approach and the introduction of a series of intertwined employment and social policy measures. For those without primary school qualifications under the age of 35, learning will become a pre-condition of the disbursement of the aid. On the other hand, unskilled workers can attend trainings that prepare them for vocations demanded on the labour market.

In 2000, the average gross salary of women was 20% under the level paid to men, but in 2006 the gap was only 11%. In view of the average of the European Union, difference between the average incomes of women and men was 16% in 2000 and 15% in 2005, and nowadays it is larger than in Hungary. In reducing the earning gap on the level of national economy, the adjustments of earnings in the budgetary sphere started in 2001 had a key role (adjustment of the salaries of civil servants, public officers, judges, prosecutors, those in varied service relations), because this sphere is dominated by female employees: 68 of the employees are women. Therefore, women were more affected by the adjustment of salaries than men. The negative gap in the earnings of women is not caused by lower salaries for women for the same work in comparison to the earnings of men, but can be attributed to the fact that the two sexes tend to work in different jobs.

Women are concentrated in a relatively small number of professions – this number is much smaller than the variety of professions occupied by men. Nearly three-fourth of male wage-earners are occupied in strongly and fully segregated jobs making up 52% of all the occupations, while a similar proportion of women can be found in the other 30% of occupations that can be described with gender-based segregation. The presence of women and men in the hierarchic order of the world of work is similarly disproportionate. Men are much more likely to be appointed to managerial positions carrying higher salaries than women, even in “female” professions.

Women are also under-represented among entrepreneurs: for long, they have been present in this sphere in only 30%. According to a 2008 survey on the female aspects of enterprises, *only cc. 15% of female entrepreneurs regarded their businesses to be growing*. Most of them realize no considerable profits, two-third of them have never participated in any cooperation, and the majority of them sell their products in their own respective settlements. Only 15% of them have ever taken out any business loan, whereas 30% of them have already relied on some private or household loans for the benefit of the business operations. *In 2008, less than 10% of them planned to expand the enterprise*, more than half of them financed developments by reinvesting their (rather small) profits. Just a fraction of women in enterprises rely on expert services, they hardly have business plans, brand names, logos, they do not care about the protection of their intellectual properties.

The more successful businesses differ from the age in the following traits: they were formed in 2000 or later; they are owned by women at the age of 35–45 with qualifications of higher education who put huge work into the operations; they typically have some large, steady customers and plenty of other small buyers; they operate much more consciously than the average: they are three times more likely to have business plans than micro-enterprises in general. They would be willing to engage more employees if public dues were lower, and less administration were needed.

7. Development of the institutions by the government for the improvement of the situation of women (See Part III)

8. Women in power and decision-making (participation in political and public life)

In the general elections of 2006, 16.7% of the candidates were women, their activeness dropped in comparison with the period of nomination in 2002. In spite of the decreasing proportion among the candidates, the ratio of women among the elected members of the Parliament increased: 10.6% in comparison with 9.1% in 2002. In the combined election system of Hungary (individual candidates, regional and national party lists), it can be seen that women can enter the Parliament rather via the party list-based channels (in terms of proportions, the largest number of women in 2002 and 2006 were admitted to the Parliament via the national and regional party lists, respectively).

In 2007, a draft bill was passed on the introduction of a quota system on the basis of an individual proposal by a member of the Parliament. Pursuant to the proposal, after the following general elections taking place in 2010 at least 30% of the politicians entering the Parliament could have been women. Unfortunately, this initiative was not adopted as the legislative act of the Parliament in spite of the fact that during the discussion of the proposed bill non-governmental organizations performed excellent and unprecedented lobbying activities in order to encourage politicians to vote for the proposal.

The disapproval of the proposal highlighted the problems concerning the role of women in decision-making processes, and thus a number of issues surfaced that should be tackled in the society as a whole and on the political level. The quota issue did raise such a sensitive topic to

which all the political, professional and civil stakeholders wanted to give their opinions. It soon turned out that there are many who failed to interpret the question of the quota and the gender issue appropriately.

To promote the shaping of attitudes to this issue, with the contribution of a work team consisting of governmental experts, non-governmental organizations and specialists the government published a collection of studies in 2008 under the title of “Women’s Quota in Hungary: if yes, why not?” where in addition to the associated information material, expert evaluations were also included. All the writings collected in the volume examine the quota issue. At the present, there is a national road show under way to present the book, as well as manage the problems brought to the surface by the quota proposal, respond to the associated questions.

The results of the local elections reflect a more positive picture: In 2008, 15.9% of the mayors of the settlements were women, which meant improvement in comparison with the ratio emerging after the local elections of 2002. During the 2006 nominations, 19.3% of candidates for mayor offices belonged to women. In view of the hierarchy of settlements, it can be claimed that the ratio of female mayors tends to decrease in the upper segments of the hierarchy.

Before the **European Parliamentary Elections** of June 2004, the political parties committed themselves to choose at least one-third of their nominees from among women. Fifty percent of the list of the candidates of the Hungarian Socialist Party was in fact made up from women. 8 of the 24 representatives of the Republic of Hungary to the European Parliament are women.

From among the political parties, the Hungarian Socialist Party uses a 20% **quota** in its own leading bodies to ensure the proper representation of women and young people under the age of 35.

9. Human rights of women

Article 70/A of the Constitution stipulates the right of women for equal treatment. The Constitution specifically provides for the equality of men and women when **Section (1) of Article 66** states that “The Republic of Hungary shall guarantee equality for men and women in relation to all the civil and political, economic, social and cultural rights.”

Hungary ratified the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW Convention.

As a result of the activities of the Equal Treatment Office, other forums are also available for the enforcement of the rights of women. A total of 729 discrimination complaints and other proposals were submitted to the Authority in 2007. Of these, 159 cases were closed by way of resolutions on the merits, 96 by way of transferring the case to another authority, and 348 by way of providing information. In 29 cases, the Authority passed reprehending resolutions. Some of the complaints had to be turned down due to the lack of protected characteristics, or casual nexus between the protected characteristics and the disadvantaged suffered, or because of the fact that the correlation could not be evidenced.

Until 31 December 2007, the Authority passed altogether 542 resolutions on the merits.

Of all the applicants leading to reprehension, the number of male and female applications were 12 and 17, respectively. Of the 29 reprehending decisions, the Authority imposed fines in 14 cases.

Ebktv. Also rules that the Authority shall act in cooperation with the Equal Treatment Advisory Board (hereinafter referred to as the Board). Pursuant to the provisions of the Act, the six members of the Board (with 50–50% representation of the two sexes) are persons with extensive experience in the protection of human rights and the enforcement of the requirements

of equal treatment. The Board meets regularly, on the basis of the pre-agreed work plan. When defining the tasks specified in the work plan, the related proposals of the Authority were taken into account alongside with the problems that had been raised in connection with the cases submitted to the Authority. In 2007, the Board held **6 meetings**.

The rules of procedures of the Board were reviewed and updated, the proposed amendments to Ebktv. and the Government Decrees issued for enforcement of the same were discussed, the report on the 2006 activities of the Equal Treatment Authority to be submitted to the government was also evaluated, the issue of the school segregation of Roma children was discussed, and the Board was also involved in the legislation process concerning the issues of same-sex marriage and registered partner relations. The Board elaborated a draft position in connection with the principle of equal wages for works of equal values, as well as the draft position on the definition of retaliation. The position on the questions that could be raised by employers at any job interview was finalized alongside with the position on the requirements of equal treatment in public education.

10. Women and the media

Pursuant to the provision of Act I of 1996 on radio and television broadcasting, the activities of broadcasters may not be injurious to human rights, or suitable for raising detestation – among other things – in between the two sexes. If any of the broadcasters infringes the requirement of equal treatment in relation to women, it will be subject to the proceedings of the National Radio and Television Commission.

The annual report of the Commission examines the ratio of the two sexes in the programmes of the national broadcasters (news and background information programmes, other concrete programmes). In 2006, the gender composition of the (non-institutional) participants of news reports showed considerable inequalities. More than 80 percent of the persons acting in these programmes were men. One of the commercial television channels had a somewhat more favourable composition in its news report programme (76% vs. 24%), while the strongest dominance of males was produced by the news and analytic programme of one of the public service radio channel (87%).

In 2006, the Commission registered approx. 38,000 participants with the largest number of actors (37%) appearing in an early morning magazine programme. In terms of the ratio of sexes, sharp differences could be seen among the individual programmes. In the analytic, general information programme of a commercial television, every fourth guest was a woman. On the other hand, the background information programmes of several broadcasters could be regarded to be masculine programmes, because three-fourth of the actors were males. On the aggregate, men appear in these programmes six times more often than women (60.4% vs. 8.3%).

The Commission has asserted the violation of the relevant legal regulations with reference to the abusing presentation of women.

The results of several domestic and international studies show that the Hungarian electronic and printed media, as irrespective of their being public service, profit-oriented or alternative channels, tend to convey a disadvantageous image on the social and cultural status, roles of women – both on the level of the selection of the topic, as well as visual and verbal communication – when presenting women in their private environments and public life. Thus, the media multiply and vitalize the impacts of stereotypical public attitudes arising from traditional approaches.

In addition to the disadvantageous presentation, the “acceptance” of sexist vocabulary and attitudes in the media is clearly discriminative, therefore it is justified to establish and operate media criticism on the social level, as well as the creation of a system of criteria that makes discriminative communication manners against various minority social groups unacceptable.

Organizations founded for the purpose of control and self-regulation – e.g. the Self-Regulating Advertisement Board, Complaint Committee of the National Radio and Television Commission – can be characterized by gender blindness and inefficient modes of operation. The process of the modification of the Media Act to be revised has again lacked the emphasized integration of gender aspects due to the differing interests of power.

The complexity and relatively under-organized conditions in the media hinder the effectuation of pressure from the non-governmental sphere, the promotion of interests or the development of associated strategies.

The lack of the thorough training of journalists and communication experts in social studies and their missing sensitiveness for social criticism also contribute to the general gender blindness of the media.

11. Women and the environment

Environmentally conscious education is not too characteristic of Hungary, there is a relatively small number of studies and researches focusing on this topic. In spite of this fact, the government has made several efforts for the support and development of environmentally conscious and health lifestyles.

The everyday application of health improvement is reinforced by the obligation arising from Act LXXIX of 1993 on public education and its amendatory Act LXI of 2003. Section (3) of Article 48 sets forth that *from the school year of 2004/2005 schools are obliged to specify in their pedagogic programmes their tasks and duties in relation to health-related education, health improvement and environmental education*, prepare the health and environmental education programmes with the involvement of the school healthcare services. The government offers continuous professional support to education and training institutions towards the execution of their tasks in health education and improvement.

To inform the population in relation to issues of food safety, a website has been constructed to disclose credible information (primarily to children) on potentially health-hazardous substances that originate from the environment, and in particular food.

Main topics of the website:

- 1) Description of the origins of various substances being hazardous to health, as well as the way how they enter food for human consumption,
- 2) Description of the incorrect and correct storage of food, as well as the threats arising from the chemical and microbial contamination due to incorrect storage practices, provision of information on the identification of microbial contamination visually,
- 3) GMO as a phenomenon, simplified explanation,
- 4) Popularization of various natural sources of vitamins and other food materials for the preservation of health, as well as the description of their role in our defense against hazardous materials. According to the available information, children often visit this website.

The Environmental Health Action Programme includes the following elements:

- Protection of air cleanliness
- Climate protection,
- Waste management
- Remediation of damage
- Water and soil protection
- Protection of underground waters
- National Programme for the Improvement of Drinking Water Quality
- Ragweed clearing

12. Female children

The **children's rights representative** defined in the child protection Act of 2003 is the legal representative of children receiving child protection care and helps children to know and enforce their rights.

In Hungary, **child-raising is backed by various financial and non-financial forms of supports.** Institutions for children: In Hungary, those children are automatically eligible for nursery school services who accomplish their age of 3 until the end of the calendar year where the beginning of the given school year falls, but do not accomplish their age of 6 until 31 May, as well as those accomplishing the age of 6, but have not started their school studies, but remained in the nursery schools. At nursery schools, free services include participation in nursery school classes, as well as logopaedic classes and care to prevent the emergence of dyslexia, as well as the make-up programmes for children with special educational needs. Regular healthcare supervisions, as well as the use of the facilities and assets of nursery schools during the provision of the said services are also free of charges. From among basic services, reimbursement of costs should be paid only for meals, yet children in need may receive various allowances from these fees up to 100%. Another way to have care for children is reliance on family daytime nurseries.

Financial supports: After the provision of the allowance for the 24-week period of maternity leave, until the child accomplishes the age of 2 the so-called childcare pay (GYED) is furnished in an equivalent of 70% of the average wage or salary for a single calendar day, yet the amount is maximized in each year. This form of benefit is subject to the availability of social insurance coverage.

Automatically, either of the parents (also grandparents under certain conditions) may rely on the childcare aid (GYES) until the age of 3 of the child raised in the same household, or in relation to twins until the children accomplish their compulsory schooling age. Eligibility is independent from the prior duration of social insurance coverage.

Those parents, foster parents and guardians are eligible for child-raising support (GYET) who raise three or more children of minor age in their own households. The support is payable between the third and eighth year of age of the youngest child.

Family allowance is payable after each child.

Part III: Institutional development by the government for the improvement of the situation of women

National mechanism (institutional system)

It was in 1995 when with Government Resolution 2268/1995 (Sept. 08) on the **division of governmental work in relation to women's policy** the "National mechanism to ensure the equal status of women" was created. On the basis of the resolution, within the Ministry of Labour a Secretariat of Women's Policy started to operate as the only government-level organization in charge of the improvement of the situation of women. In the course of institutional developments, 2004 saw the establishment of the Ministry of Youth, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities with the combination of several ministries. Government Decree no. 289/2004 (X. 28.) on the scope of tasks and competences of the Minister has defined the

promotion of the social equality of women and men as one of the Minister's primary duties. Acting for the performance of these tasks, the Minister coordinates and supervises the implementation of the CEDAW Convention, and prepares reports on the enforcement of the provisions of the Convention.

After the changes in the government in 2006, the governmental unit in charge of gender equality was integrated in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour with its tasks remaining unchanged.

Under the coordination of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, there are several work teams operating and organized around the 2006–2010 priorities defined in the publication of the European Commission under the title of Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men – 2006-2010. Accordingly, these work teams are active in the following topics:

- Achievement of equal economic independence for women and men
- Enhancement of reconciliation of work, private and family life
- Promotion equal participation of women and men in decision-making
- Eradication of gender-based violence and human trafficking
- elimination of gender stereotypes in society
- Promotion of gender equality outside the EU.

The members of these work teams are delegates of various ministries and those of non-governmental organizations, experts and business associations. Owing to the activities of these work teams, recent years have witnessed several positive initiatives and implemented projects for the improvement of the situation of women.

Council for Gender Equality

The **Council for Gender Equality** is an important element of the national institutional system, which acts as the successor of the Women's Representation Council.

Women's Representation Council: with Government Resolution 1059/1999 (May 28), the Government set up the Women's Representation Council (hereinafter referred to as the Council) for the acceleration of legislation and action plans to ensure equal opportunities for women and men, as well as the involvement of the social organizations promoting the interests of women. The Council is a consultative, evaluating and proposing body for making proper preparations for the Government's related decisions, executing and controlling the fulfillment of action plans promoting equal opportunities for women. The members of the Council have been delegated by the government, non-governmental organizations working for the improvement of gender situation, national social organizations for the representation of the interests of women, and also include persons who are involved in remarkable scientific and practical activities in connection with the equal opportunities for women.

The establishment of the Council have contributed to the initial broad publicity of issues and debates concerning gender situation. On the basis of the legal regulation pertaining to the Council it had the right to formulate opinions during the drafting of regulations, actions promoting and directly concerning equal opportunities for women and men. During its existence, the operations of the Council were continuously faltering, and then the body became completely inoperable.

For this reason, in 2006 – with the concurrent dissolution of the Women's Representation Council – the Government set up the Council for Gender Equality and then in 2009 (in base of Government Resolution 1008/2009 (I.28.)) it re-regulated the operation of the Council in the light of the experience having been earned throughout the years.

The Council is a consultative, evaluating and proposing body drafting regulations for the government. In this capacity, it

- a) formulates its opinion on regulation proposals and international reports and information materials concerning the social equality of women and men;

b) participates in the preparation of programmes aiming to promote social equality of women and men using national and international financial resources, as well as in the preparation of related reports;

c) proposes amendments to regulations that are to promote the social equality of women and men; initiates governmental decisions and programmes.

d) may make actual proposals towards the achievement of social equality of women and men, in association with the New Hungary Development Plan and the New Hungary Rural Development Strategic Plan.

Members of the Council:

a) **one senior representative** – appointed by the head of the organization – from each **ministry** and the Prime Minister's Office;

b) 11 persons called upon by the minister in charge of the promotion of equal gender opportunities (hereinafter referred to as the minister) who have **performed outstanding scientific, representative or practical activities in the field of the gender equality**;

c) **8 persons delegated by non-governmental organizations** acting for the promotion of the gender equality.

National Action Programme, i.e. "National Strategic Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality 2009–2020"

The National Strategic Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality defines 6 priorities in areas where governmental measures need to be taken for the accomplishment of gender equality. (For further details, see Part IV)

According to the plans, the **government will accept the National Strategic Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality still in 2009 as a long-term development programme**. Provisions associated with the long-term objectives and the actual methods for their implementation are specified in the action plans to be elaborated on a biannual basis. The government prepares biannual action plans in close cooperation with the Council for the Social Equality of Women and Men.

Role of the Parliament in the improvement of the situation of women

As it has been described in the previous chapter, the representation of women in the Parliament is too small to be regarded as a critical mass.

Among the members of the Parliament, the ratio of women participants was the largest (11.1%) in the governmental period of 1994–98. Thereafter, in 1998–2002 it was 9.1%. In 2002, 9.1% of the Parliament was made up by women. In 2006, the proportion of women among the members of the Parliament rose. At the present, 41 of the 385 members of the Parliament are women – it means 10.6% representation.

A somewhat **more favourable situation can be seen among the Vice-Presidents of the Parliament, from 1990 to 2002 their proportion was definitely increasing** (1990–94: 0%, 1994–98: 50%, 1998–2002: 50%), and currently the Hungarian Parliament has a female president for the second time.

In general, just a few women participate in the work of the permanent committees of the Parliament, and mostly in areas that are conventionally associated with the roles of women, such as social and family affairs, healthcare, non-governmental organizations, culture.

Among the members of the governments following each other in political cycles after the change of the political system, only a few women could be found. After the establishment of the new government in 2002, the ratio of women among the ministers was better: 4 of the 23 ministers were women. **At the present, there are 2 female ministers with one of them heading the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.**

Part IV: Main tasks and measures for their implementation

It is still the promotion of actual equality as regards our main task in addition to the maintenance and development of the institutions and mechanisms having been created so far. The existing problems may be resolved by the Strategic Plan which has been briefly mentioned in Chapter III. In its programme, the government has promised the consistent enforcement of the European Union guidelines; these guidelines attribute priority importance to the elimination of the open or hidden discrimination against women in all fields of life, determine the internationally accepted terminology of the **enforcement of gender equality**, and the terms of **gender mainstreaming**. On the one hand it means that in all the measures of professional policy it is to be considered how they would affect gender equality, the lives of women and men, and on the other hand targeted programmes should be used for the active support of those actions that contribute to the elimination of inequalities impacting women or men in all the facets of social life.

The above-described objectives call for the creation and integration of the National Strategic Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality into development plans, strategies and measures, as well as the establishment and operation of a system of institutions that ensures the coordination, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and supervision of tasks to be executed in the various areas.

Elaborated with involvement of experts, the Strategic Plan is a long-term programme for 12 years that defines tasks in 6 priority areas alongside with the associated, long-term measures. The short-term plans tuned for the actual implementation of the objectives are described in the Action Plan elaborated in every second year.

In line with the Platform for Actions of Beijing and on the basis of the document entitled “Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men 2006–2010”, the priority areas of the **long-term strategy** for 2009–2020 are:

1. Achievement of **equal economic independence for women and men**, elimination of gender pay and employment gap with respect to the criteria defined in relation to women and poverty, women and health,
2. **Enhancement of reconciliation of work, private and family life**, equal division of responsibilities in taking family obligations, household and care services,
3. **Promotion of equal participation of women and men in political and economic decision-making, as well as in research,**
4. **Eradication of all forms of gender-based violence**, urgent action against any violation of fundamental rights of women and men, girls and boys for physical and emotional integrity,
5. **Elimination of gender stereotypes** in society,
6. **Gender mainstreaming as professional base of indispensable changes required for the accomplishment of the objectives of the Strategy.**

Nevertheless, the economic crisis impedes the implementation of the action plans in several areas, yet it is extremely important to define the necessary steps on strategic level and frame the basis of strategic thinking.