



Project:
“Empowerment, Affirmative Action and Gender Mainstreaming in Trade Unions”

NETWORK.GENDER

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EUROPEAN PROJECT NETWORK.GENDER

CONCLUSIONS

OF THE REPORTS, SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

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The advance in regulations regarding Equal Opportunities between women and men that has taken place in Europe during the last two decades, has been centred on the principle of gender mainstreaming as the basis of public authority action aimed at eliminating inequalities between women and men as well as attaining female empowerment in all aspects of life.

Two strategies define and form the basis of present-day European policy, intersecting in relation to gender equality: Europa2020: A European Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth, and the Strategy for Equality Between Men and Women (2010-2015). In harmony with both strategies, and taking into account the different specific situations in countries, regions and sectors, it is necessary to take measures that enable us to improve the situation of women when they are in less favourable situations than men in the social environment, and to support those measures that increase women's participation in the job market in a quantitative and qualitative way.

The project NETWORK.GENDER VS/2013/0460 is aimed at contributing to this objective. One of the instruments to that end is the training that union organisations offer their members. Collective Bargaining and Social Dialogue are essential tools for guaranteeing the gender dimension at all bargaining levels. To that end, it is necessary to include gender mainstreaming in union action and reinforce women's presence in union organisations, as well as in decision-making positions.

Reality shows us daily that the rights acquired for Women's Equality are never perpetual, due to the reaction on the part of the patriarch's hard-core aimed at returning women to the private sphere, using any argument as an excuse to that end, such as the present-day crisis.

There are numerous inequality gaps that still remain and that harm women's social, economic and political participation; we can therefore not assert that women have entered the public sphere on an equal footing with men, just as we analysed and highlighted in the Transnational Report, whose main conclusions are detailed below, supplemented with the results of the debates and exchange of experiences regarding the work carried out in the seminars in

Rome, Madrid and Wimbledon (London) and the statistical comparison of the three countries involved provided by the project members¹.

Women's greater employment insecurity means smaller salaries, less social protection in the face of unemployment, differences in employment contributions... all of which results in lower pensions for women and, therefore, greater female poverty in old age.

From the point of view of the job market, the lower salaries and poorer working conditions imposed by structural reforms have had particularly serious consequences for women, since women already started out with large inequality gaps in the job market, so that such reforms have seriously increased these inequality gaps.

¹ See *Transnational report on the effects of the crisis on women's employment and their participation in union organisations*, accessible on the Website of the Project NETWORK.GENDER:
http://www.ccoo.es/cscceo/Areas:Mujeres_e_Igualdad:Proyecto_Europeo_NETWORK.GENDER

1. CONCLUSIONS IN RELATION TO THE IMPACT OF THE CRISIS AND AUSTERITY POLICIES ON WOMEN'S SOCIO-LABOUR SITUATION

CONCLUSION NUMBER 1

- Increasing female activity rate: the most evident proof that women have decided to abandon the private sphere and occupy the public sphere is the fact that they continue joining the job market, even in an adverse situation for employment as the period of crisis has been and still is. A period during which women's activity rate has increased in the three countries analysed (according to Eurostat data, the female activity rate in the period 2008-2012 increased by 4.5 points in Spain, 2 in Italy and 1 in the United Kingdom).
- Greater training levels in women: Women have sought individual strategies for this entry into the public sphere, with training being the main tool, as shown by the statistics. In all European Union countries, the number of female higher education graduates is higher than the number of male graduates, with a proportion of 121% female higher education graduates, according to Eurostat data at 03.10.2014. Stereotypes and gender roles continue to mark women's choice in their studies, closely linked to providing care, which will have a direct influence on the job market.

In relation to field of study, in 2012, the greatest percentage of women graduating from higher education in relation to the total number of graduates belong to the field of Education and Training, both in Spain (78%) and the EU-28 (77%), followed by the field of Health and Welfare with 72% in Spain and in the EU-28.

CONCLUSION NUMBER 2

- More female unemployment. False appearance of improvement in women's situation, in relation to unemployment. The increase in male unemployment is the reason why the unemployment rate has been equalised. The increase in employment has especially affected Spain in relation to the EU as a whole. Thus, while the EU had an unemployment rate of 8% in 2012, in Spain it amounted to 25%, with the unemployment rates of both sexes converging due to the continuous increase. The

opposite is true in Great Britain, where the total and male/female unemployment rates are lower than the European average.

- The dismantling of the Welfare State and the decrease in public expenditure is mainly affecting female employment, as workers and beneficiaries of social services that, due to their scarcity, prevent or hinder women from remaining in the job market.
- Sectorial change in the crisis. The second stage of the crisis, along with government austerity policies, has hit the strongly feminised services sector hard.

CONCLUSION NUMBER 3

- Feminised care, without reconciliation services or co-responsibility: Women's entry into the job market has not been accompanied by a distribution of domestic work, which continues to be their responsibility. This situation moves women to choose part-time employment, so that 44% of European women claim to handle family responsibilities on their own. Data supports the thesis that care never left the family, and within the family circle, there was never real co-responsibility enabling women to participate in the job market and in public spheres in the same conditions as men.
- More part-time for women: Women that work part-time or that simply do not look for employment or have had to give up a job to provide the necessary care for minors or dependents (28.7% of women in the EU-28) point to the excessive cost of care services. In all EU countries and specifically in the countries included in this project, women experience greater job insecurity, which results in increased temporariness and part-time employment. Women's presence in this type of employment in relation to total female employment has been increasing, with a current rate of 32% compared to 9% for men.
- In addition, there are the so-called government austerity measures, which are nothing more than cutbacks in essential social services and a re-privatisation of such, which have a serious impact on women. These

cutbacks lead to greater class and gender inequality, with women taking on the great majority of such care².

CONCLUSION NUMBER 4

- Double and persistent salary gap: We can affirm that women have a double “gap” in relation to men regarding the job market in terms of salary: on the one hand, women have a lower average hourly salary than men, apart from the fact that there are more women working part-time. This results in a lower average annual salary than men. In the European Union, the salary/hour difference between sexes is 16.2%; however, differences are observed among Member States ranging from 6% in Italy to 20% in the United Kingdom. Eliminating the difference in hours worked by women and men, the salary gap remains. Women’s average annual earnings are less than men’s in any EU country; there are marked differences ranging from €12,733 in the United Kingdom to €5,322 in Italy. Expressing the salary gap in terms of men’s salary compared to women’s salary, men’s salary amounts to 125% of women’s salary in Spain or 145% in the United Kingdom, i.e. women’s average annual salary would have to increase by 25% to be equivalent to men’s in Spain and by 45% in the United Kingdom.
- Salary difference generally reflects the different patterns of female employment. In most countries in which the female employment rate is low, the salary difference is lower than average. High salary differences usually occur in highly segregated job markets or in those with an important proportion of women working part-time.

² These observations were repeatedly stressed in the debates and discussion groups held in the Rome, Madrid and Wimbledon seminars.

2. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PROPOSALS: THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF UNION ORGANISATIONS IN LABOUR GENDER EQUALITY

We are now at a crucial moment in terms of gender equality, since despite the existence of formal equality and the prohibition of discrimination due to sex/gender, along with laws requiring gender mainstreaming in order to end such inequalities, it is by no means guaranteed in the results. This is due to the lack of political will to apply public policies that actually remove the obstacles that women currently face in order to attain full citizenship, which lack endangers gender mainstreaming itself and, therefore, democracy itself.

To date, the governments of the countries participating in this study have chosen to consolidate, at any price, fiscal policies and public expenditure restraint by means of budget cutbacks, by applying austerity plans that have affected the public sector and its welfare services, affecting women doubly, as workers (in Europe around about 70% of public-sector employment is occupied by women) and as beneficiaries of such. We can affirm that macro-governance has been and is gender-blind.

These policies have been gender-blind by not evaluating the repercussions that austerity policies have had in women's lives, increasing their workload and hindering their employability.

The inaptly called austerity policy, which is nothing more than cutbacks in services that should be provided by the State, has resulted, by means of the facts, in a transfer of responsibility in providing care from the public sphere to the private sphere, and therein the work has again fallen to women, reinforcing the sexual contract imposed by the patriarchy, demanding a return to the natural order of things: a return of women to the private sphere, to the home³. This relocation of women reinforces the stereotypes of man as the family breadwinner, while the woman again becomes the guarantor of the natural order of the home and family that the patriarchy needs for its survival. The patriarchy imposes its austerity policies in order to control the time of women, who have less value for the patriarchal system. According to this view, the time that women spend doing paid work has a subsidiary nature that is dispensable;

³ Almost a third of employed women work part-time, this compares to a mere 8% of men working part-time. Even though men devote more time to paid work, women work in total 60 hours a week, 10 hours more than men, spending on average 26 hours on caring activities, compared with 9 hours spent by men: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/140303_factsheet_progress_en.pdf

this is reflected in women's working conditions, which are more precarious than men's.

The union organisations participating in this project have expressed their concern about the future consequences for women, should we continue along the path of austerity and internal devaluation at any price, such as less social benefits or smaller pensions for women, increasing even more the existing gap in pensions, which currently amounts to 39%, producing a feminisation of short- and long-term poverty.

The crisis has also produced greater deregulation in labour relations by means of labour reforms, which have granted greater discretionary powers to businesspeople, as is the case of Spain, with successive modifications to part-time contracts, or the introduction of contracts featuring precarious labour conditions for women, as in the United Kingdom with the so-called zero hours contract or the contract with resignation in Italy.

Reducing the inequality gaps that have been increased by gender-blind policies requires a change; the different organisations that have participated in this project demand the following measures and orientations, which involve a favourable gender impact and improve women's socio-labour conditions, in all our fields of action:

- Reintroducing Collective Bargaining and placing Social Dialogue at the centre of the measures to be carried out to combat the crisis and guarantee Equal Opportunities between women and men.
- Demanding the integration of the gender dimension in all policies, particularly those related to: impact of austerity and crisis-recovery measures, economic governance and planned measures or those that will be applied to counteract or limit the effects of the crisis, especially in National Reform Plans, with the purpose of correcting and neutralising the negative impacts on women.
- Recovering resources for programmes and policies aimed at promoting Equal Opportunities between women and men.
- Funding quality public services, such as nurseries for 0 to 3-year-olds, which will help to create quality employment, will promote equality between men and women by reconciling personal and professional life,

and will enable women's entry into the job market.

- Developing social services in general and especially those aimed at persons in situations of dependency, both to satisfy the demand and to generate stable and quality employment.
- Increasing public employment policies on behalf of women, with the objective of eliminating discriminations that still persist in the job market, such as horizontal and vertical segregation and the salary gap.
- Ensuring personalised care and establishing an itinerary for professional insertion, centred on female employability.
- Reducing unjustified temporariness. To that end, we have proposed penalising temporary hiring. This measure would favour women, who have the highest rate of temporariness.
- Considering the active participation of social representatives in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies.
- We require policies that support new activities capable of generating green and decent jobs, favouring women's and youth employability.
- Innovation and improving human-resource training in the service sector.
- Public employment plays an essential role in the correct functioning of a public sector aimed at satisfying citizen demands. The investments in this sector should help to improve the country's production capacity, with the public sector being of central importance to female employability.
- Reinforcing anti-unemployment measures. Revising access criteria and promoting programmes linked to training and relocation.
- Facilitating access to ongoing training (professional or for employment)

for female workers in order to combat labour segregation, or for those women that have left the job market to look after their family.

- Promoting equal opportunities among students with the objective of breaking sexist stereotypes and roles, which are responsible for perpetuating female discrimination.
- Increasing investments in programmes to prevent and deal with sexist violence, including programmes to prevent and deal with sexual harassment and gender-based harassment in the workplace.

These are some measures and orientations that can be adopted, but there are more. The continuity of the State's neglect towards equality policies is only going to perpetuate women's condition as second-class citizens, resulting in a lack of real democracy; democracy must be equal or it will not exist.

3. CONCLUSIONS ON FEMALE EMPOWERMENT IN UNION ORGANISATIONS

One of the cores of the NETWORK GENDER project has been exploring in depth women's presence within the union structure, analysing and exchanging the formulae that the different organisations have been applying to ensure a greater female presence in their decision-making spheres, until they attain a balanced representation according to sex.

We have analysed the different Statutes of the participating union organisations and, along with the study of each union's functioning regime, this subject has been considered as a core debating theme in the pilot seminars. In them, the female union members have dealt with, based on their experience, the advances, obstacles and new challenges that have to be faced by the organisations in order to be a truly democratic space of female participation, guaranteeing women's access in equal condition to responsibility and decision-making posts.

This section summarises the conclusions of the debates held in the pilot seminars and in the reports prepared by the unions participating in the project; these highlight the need for reinforcing equality policies within union organisations, in order to consolidate and increase women's presence in decision-making spheres in a quantitative and qualitative way.

Likewise, the course's participants coincide in recognising the work carried out by equality structures to guarantee the application of gender mainstreaming in the organisations' union and political actions.

Advances and Good Practices. From the beginning, the different confederations CCOO, CGIL, CWU and UNI Europa have recognised the need for dealing specifically with the social and labour problems affecting women and the challenges facing them.

Internal structures aimed specifically at women and the incorporation of gender-equality mainstreaming into union policy, are a constant feature in the organisations analysed. Each union confederation, according to its social, political and economic determinants, has gradually shaped an equality strategy in its union policy and action, debating and solving existing contradictions and gaps.

Below we highlight some of the initiatives, objectives and good practices that, due to their gender impact, have favoured the advancement of equal opportunities and the promotion of more equal participation and representation between women and men.

- Creation, promotion and development of specific structures for gender equality: They are present in all the confederations. Depending on each confederation, with a type of structure developed to a greater or lesser degree: regions/territories and/or according to branch, human and economic resources, etc., making up an important core of union influence, which encompasses inferior structures, even reaching as far as union company sections.

- Reforms, statutory advances and equality plans: Development of internal regulatory changes, development of gender-equality strategies and efficient measures for guaranteeing a balance between women and men in union participation and representation.

- Gender mainstreaming in union policies in the internal union sphere, in Collective Bargaining and in Social Dialogue is the main strategy for dealing with and preventing inequalities due to gender, along with it. Also indispensable is positive action and actions for empowering women.

- Training and awareness strategies for gender equality. We have been developing programmes, training materials (guides, brochures) and awareness campaigns, in relation to aspects regarding the improvement of employment and social and labour conditions, against gender violence, etc., as well as advancing in female empowerment and favouring greater union membership and representation for women.

Gender-equality training and the incorporation of the gender perspective into union training are essential, since they prepare for the systematic application of gender mainstreaming, provide information, concepts, data and methodologies for detecting gender discriminations, as well as knowledge of equality legislation.

Awareness campaigns, which occasionally go beyond the labour and union sphere, deal with socio-political problems and are aimed at promoting educational changes that enable a break from stereotypes and socially assigned

traditional roles, as well as providing specific support for campaigns led by the women's movement.

However, in addition to gender-equality training aimed at the entire union structure, it is necessary to train women in leadership techniques, team management, public communication techniques... with the objective of providing tools favouring their empowerment, revealing self and group inhibitions due to social, cultural aspects, in short, breaking down the barriers impeding their leadership.

CONCLUSION 1

- Positive achievements and advances have been attained, although it is necessary to continue reinforcing women's union participation and representation, so that all organisations apply and guarantee such practices in the different levels and structures.

Obstacles. Women traditionally face different obstacles in order to attain effective equality between them and men. In the union sphere, they especially face resistance from structures to changes in the organisation favouring a greater female presence in decision-making posts, due to social practices and cultural prejudices, which persist in societies as a whole. The main detected obstacles, then, are:

- Certain obstacles in women's participation in the different management and representation organs and levels. Women's union membership and representation levels have evolved very positively, although there still exist imbalances and insufficiencies between women and men in the different fields and levels of participation and representation in the organisations as a whole. There is both a horizontal and vertical union segregation, i.e. women have a greater presence in responsibilities with feminised themes, and a lesser presence in areas or Secretariats with more importance or recognition (general secretariats, union action, organisation, finances, etc.). Likewise, few women hold posts in the maximum executive responsibilities. Their presence in agreement-negotiating committees is likewise unequal.
- Deficits in training, awareness and communication regarding equality between women and men internally and in the field of collective bargaining. There are still deficits in training, awareness and communication in gender

equality, since the specific training is highly feminised and gender mainstreaming has not been sufficiently incorporated into the training content, educational materials, information campaigns, messages and, in general, in the language and images used.

- Insufficient integration of gender mainstreaming in union policies. There remain obstacles and difficulties in developing the application of gender mainstreaming in the different Secretariats' union policies and work plans; action strategies are required to guarantee the application of statutory measures approved by union structures as a whole.

CONCLUSION 2

- It is necessary that union organisations as a whole guarantee the application of the strategies, regulations and measures that have been adopted to combat gender-based discrimination and advance in the balance in the participation and representation of women and men in all of their levels and structures.

After the analysis carried out in the above sections, we now identify some challenges and necessary proposals for obtaining the aforementioned objectives:

1. Advancing in the integration of gender mainstreaming in union policies as a whole:
 - Promoting gender-equality training and awareness in different levels and structures, reaching all of the union's men and women.
 - Promoting Communication, non-sexist language, information and equality culture by means of the media, magazines, posters and other campaigns carried out by union organisations.
 - Strengthening specific structures, valuing and acknowledging women's role in union organisations.
 - Preparing and circulating the union's Gender Map, breakdown and analysis of data regarding women's participation, presence and representation in the union's different spheres, levels and structures.

- Carrying out or promoting gender-impact analysis, evaluation and reports in the application of gender mainstreaming in union policies and decisions.
- Promoting social dialogue and collective bargaining, guaranteeing the fulfilment of equality regulations, measures, strategies and resources required for combating gender-based discrimination and all expressions of violence against women.
- 2. Positive actions for promoting and encouraging women's presence and representations in union structures as a whole.**
 - Carrying out Campaigns, objectives and strategies for ATTRACTING WOMEN TO THE UNION, increasing female membership and presence in electoral candidacies.
 - Promoting WOMEN'S PRESENCE IN NEGOTIATING COMMITTEES.
 - Promoting the Establishing of quotas, positive-action measures and posts reserved for women.
 - Modifying, improving and guaranteeing gender equality in union regulations and strategies, in order to eradicate discrimination and advance in EQUAL REPRESENTATION in union structures as a whole.
 - Promoting Women's Preparation and training in LEADERSHIP to favour their access to decision-making posts.
 - ORGANISING WORKDAYS in the union to favour the reconciliation of personal and family life.