

The National Reform Programmes 2008 and the gender aspects of the European Employment Strategy

Final Report

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The National Reform Programme 2008 and the gender aspects of the European Employment Strategy

The co-ordinators' synthesis report prepared for the Equality Unit, European Commission

Final Report

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*see Bibliography for the list of national experts' reports

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For more information see:

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List of Abbreviations

Country abbreviations

AT	Austria
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CY	Cyprus
CZ	Czech Republic
DK	Denmark
DE	Germany
EE	Estonia
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FI	Finland
FR	France
HU	Hungary
IE	Ireland
IT	Italy
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
LV	Latvia
MT	Malta
NL	The Netherlands
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
SE	Sweden
UK	United Kingdom

List of abbreviations

ALMP	Active Labour Market Policies
BEPG	Broad Economic Policy Guidelines
CEC	Commission of the European Communities
CSR	Country Specific Recommendation
FTE	Full time equivalent
EGGE	Expert Group on Gender and Employment
EO	Equal Opportunity
EU	European Union
GE	Gender Equality
GL	Guideline
GM	Gender Mainstreaming
LLL	Life long learning
NRP	National Reform Programme
p.p.	Percentage points
PES	Public Employment Services
PTW	Point to Watch

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report constitutes an assessment of the gender dimension of the European Employment Strategy and was conducted in the autumn 2008 by the Expert Group on Gender and Employment for the European Commission. It examines the developments in employment and gender equality in the European Union over the last few years and identifies policy needs and challenges with respect to gender and the links with employment policies. Moreover the report analyses, from a gender perspective, the National Reform Programmes adopted by Member States in 2007 and 2008. The analysis has been conducted on the basis of 27 national reports prepared before (pre-assessment or Part A) and after (post-assessment) the adoption of the National Reform Programmes. From this comprehensive assessment lessons can be learned in the context of the revision of the current European Strategy for Growth and Jobs.

Gender mainstreaming is a vital aspect of the European Employment Strategy and can help ensure both the efficacy of employment policies and avoid increases in inequalities along gender lines. The Amsterdam Treaty established gender equality as a central element of the Strategy and many European developments since then have underlined the role of gender equality in achieving European aims.

CHANGES IN EMPLOYMENT AND THE CONTEXT FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Changing Economic Environment.....

The year 2008 marks something of a watershed in economic conditions in the European Union. In the period to 2007 many Member States reported rather positive economic conditions and growth in employment but now the Euro zone has officially entered recession. The drastic economic changes of recent months means that forecasts based on 2007 data need to be revised and gains made against employment rate targets might be at risk.

Progress against Lisbon Targets...

The period 2006-07 was one where the EU27 made progress towards the Lisbon target but 70% is still some way off. These headline figures mask considerable variety at the Member State level, and between women and men. Improvements in the EU female employment rate have tended to outstrip those of men's.

Diversity among men and women and Member States...

Unlike the period before 2004 men have been registering positive increases in their employment rate. While the total Lisbon target still looks some way off, the 60% female target for women has been reigned in by the progress of the EU rate over the last three years. There is a marked distinction between the EU15 and the New Member States.

Threat to Women of New Recession...

Previous recessions have had a devastating effect on predominantly male working-class employment but there is a risk in the current crisis that the impact will be less sector-specific. The well-publicised job losses in male-dominated sectors have been matched by job losses in female-dominated sectors.

Gender Equality Risks...

There are risks for gender equality in an economic downturn where equality is relegated among other policy priorities and tighter public budgets may also bring the threat of cut backs in 'expensive' reconciliation policies as old arguments around the 'costs of employing women' surface.

Persistent Regional Disparities impact upon women...

The recent period of growth shows that regional disparities have fallen somewhat but remain a persistent in some Member States. Regional disparity in employment rates is higher for women than men but we see dispersion falling. However, regional inequalities have also been resilient and women and men in certain regions may be at greater risk during in the current economic downturn.

Gender gaps closing but not everywhere...

The European gender gap in employment rates has fallen but there was once again considerable diversity at the Member State level with falls in less than half of the national labour markets for 2006-07. The rises in gender gaps in employment were concentrated on the new Member States.

Parenthood and Women's Employment....

Much of the gap in employment rates between women and men is explained by the gendered impact of parenthood on participation patterns. The impact of the presence of children on the employment rates of women is overwhelmingly negative, depressing employment rates while fatherhood still tends to boost male employment rates.

Part-time work remains important in female job growth...

A number of the countries reporting above average increases in employment rates in the recent period were those where there has been reliance on part-time work to promote women's employment and in some cases mini-jobs with very short hours. Full-time equivalent employment rates demonstrate the unequal volume of work and gender gaps opening rather than closing.

Persistence of the Gender Pay Gap...

The gender pay gap has been given a high priority by the European Commission and both the data compiled by Eurostat and national data confirm the resistance and even increases in gender pay gaps.

DEVELOPMENTS IN GENDER EQUALITY POLICY INFRASTRUCTURE AT NATIONAL (REGIONAL) LEVEL

European Developments build on the impetus from the Roadmap...

At the European level the period 2007 and 2008 has not been as momentous as 2006 for developments in gender equality policy, when there was the launch of the Road Map for Gender Equality and the Gender Equality Pact. However, recent developments have built on these milestones with action in all priority areas of the Roadmap, including: manuals for gender mainstreaming, female entrepreneurship, promotion of gender balance in decision making, action against stereotypes as well as consultation of the European Social Partners on reconciliation and the October 2008 reconciliation package. Furthermore developments in other areas, for example the Commission's Communication on the demographic future intergenerational solidarity, have continued to emphasise the role for gender equality policies.

Communication on the Gender Pay Gap....

The Commission also placed great emphasis on the importance of the gender pay gap by publishing a Communication in July of 2007. The communication sets out ways to address the gender pay gap and recognised limited movement in recent years and sets out ways to address the gender pay gap.

The challenge of Flexicurity...

There have been considerable developments in the area of flexicurity and the adoption of Flexicurity as an overarching principle of the Employment Strategy is an area where gender mainstreaming can make an important contribution. Gender mainstreaming is required

throughout the full range of flexicurity policies and action is required to address gender gaps on the labour market and avoid further disparities opening up.

Patchy Progress in the Member States ...

At the Member State level developments have been marked by patchy progress in the area of gender mainstreaming, changing institutional arrangements but also some examples of good practice. However, nowhere is there a consistent and integrated example of gender mainstreaming of labour market policy and our review of the 2008 NRPs, based on national expert assessments, illustrates this (see chapter 4, § 4.3).

Moves towards integrated equality bodies...

Moves to integrate gender equality institutions with those bodies dealing with equality based on race, age and disability for example may enhance the scope for dealing with additional layers of inequality but also reduce the representation of gender issues at the top echelons of government. However we also find some positive examples likely to support gender mainstreaming although they are rarely integrated into all aspects of policy making

Many Action plans and Frameworks....

There are numerous examples of policy frameworks and action plans across the 27 Member States relating to gender pay gap, segregation, reconciliation, provision of services, gender budgeting, governance, violence against women and trafficking. Reflecting the priorities at the European level we see Member States picking up the theme of reconciliation and concerns around the persistence of the gender pay gap.

POLICY NEEDS AND CHALLENGES WITH RESPECT TO GENDER

Relevant gender specific policies at the Member State level...

National experts were asked to provide an assessment of recent relevant gender specific policies at the national level. Our assessment makes the important distinctions between the level of *priority* afforded to gender and also the *status* and *adequacy* of the policy initiative.

Over a hundred gender specific policies ...

The total number of gender specific policies considered by national experts was 125, with an average of 4.6 policy initiatives per country. Of all gender-specific policies considered around a quarter were announcements and there was a high concentration of new policies in some of Member States.

Limited evidence of Evaluation but positive assessments...

Out of the 125 policy measures considered by national experts only 11 have an evaluation and the evaluation of policies is under developed in a large number of Member States. Nevertheless where there are gender-specific policies identified by national experts the overall assessment was relatively positive.

Differences across Member States

There is a group of Member States for which the assessment of the gender-specific policies is that they tend to have a low priority. In a relatively large group of Member States the assessment is that these policies have a low impact perhaps reflecting a lack of efficacy or financial resources.

Paradox of gender mainstreaming without gender impact assessment...

There are some Member States where reported gender mainstreaming is very high, but the gender impact assessment of the policies considered is mainly negative. Detailed analysis of the policies at the national level is required to understand these tensions.

OVERVIEW OF NRP PROCESS

An Insufficient level of Gender Mainstreaming

The overall assessment of the expert group is of an insufficient level of Gender Mainstreaming in the NRP process with gender mentioned sporadically in the reports rather than consistently across policy domains. In many cases the discussion of gender issues is isolated to a section on equality policy and/or reconciliation and childcare.

Some Good Examples...

There are some NRPs where there is evidence of a more concerted attempt to integrate a gender perspective consistently throughout more sections of the report although we would stop short of suggesting there is evidence of best practice. By contrast, there are numerous key policy areas where gender is absent or largely absent.

Substantial amount of activity targeted towards Lisbon...

The review finds many measures addressing the Lisbon employment rate targets but the level of gender mainstreaming is at best patchy and often absent in key domains. There are two groups of measures those with an explicit focus on women and those that are not gender mainstreamed and risk a negative impact on gender equality.

A focus on reconciliation...

Reconciliation policies invariably focus on women and reconciliation, rather than parents, and thus do little to address the unequal division of labour in the household. As such the reconciliation of work and family life is linked to expanding the number of women in work and providing a means to address the dual burden of labour market and domestic work.

Rising Employment Rates....

Shortfalls in the availability and affordability of childcare are widespread and arise notably in Member States that have seen strong rises in employment.

Flexicurity and gender, a missing link...

There is widespread promotion of Flexicurity but the gender impact is frequently absent and often a lack of integration of the concepts of flexibility and security. Nevertheless there are exceptions that emphasise the need to even out flexibility and security women and men

Country specific recommendations and Points to watch promote policy activity...

Childcare and reconciliation emerge as the most critical areas for CSRs and PTWs (adopted by the Council in Spring 2008) while female participation in employment is also signalled as important in some member states. Other issues include gender segregation and gender imbalances on the labour market, and the gender pay gap.

A Variety of Responses to Country Specific recommendations and Points to Watch...

Of the 16 Member States for which the Council adopted a PTW/CSR in the field of gender equality, the experts' assessment was that three countries did not react effectively, another five provided a weak reaction, while the other seven responded adequately, developing policy initiatives focused on the issues addressed by the Council.

Gender pay gap and segregation are among the key issues for experts....

Almost all national experts discuss the issue of the gender pay gap and segregation since the gender pay gap is an issue of great concern in a large number of countries. The underlining causes of the persistent pay gap stressed by experts include occupational gender segregation, the under-representation of women in the higher levels of organisational hierarchies, the undervaluation of women's work, the job classification systems in use, the wage bargaining system, the non-observance of legal norms, and the gender division in family life. However, the

issue of gender segregation and gender pay gap is not explicitly considered in the majority of the 2008 NRPs.

Reconciliation and child care underpinned many persistent inequalities...

The importance of providing childcare services has been recognised at the EU level and was again stressed in the recent Commission Communication on childcare. The main problems addressed by some of the experts have been the insufficient nature of child care infrastructure and options. Each country has its own unique constellation of childcare arrangements but there are very few new initiatives to challenge established models. At the same time quite a number of countries are rebalancing the actual policy mixture between the provision of services, time and money, with the aim of increasing parental choice, improving the labour market position of women or promoting family life. Seventeen countries have mentioned childcare targets and childcare continues to be considered as one of the most important priority issues.

Female Entrepreneurship is an area of activity across many Member States...

Women face a number of difficulties in establishing and maintaining businesses due to factors such as poor business environment, the choices of business types and sectors, information gaps, lack of contacts and access to networking, gender stereotypes, weak and inflexible supply of childcare facilities, difficulties in reconciling business and family obligations as well as differences in the way men and women approach entrepreneurship. Experts of fifteen countries highlighted provisions with regard to female entrepreneurship in their respective countries but there is evidence of a focus on the subject of female entrepreneurship only in a handful number of NRPs.

Flexicurity is a Common Theme but not gender mainstreamed...

Flexicurity is considered a means to contribute to fulfilling the overarching objectives of the EES. Many public initiatives have been developed at different levels directly concerned with the flexibility approach. In a large number of countries flexicurity has entered the vocabulary of official documents and NRPs and in some countries some policy measures have been adopted inspired by the principles of flexicurity, however a comprehensive strategy is still missing. Some national experts point out that gender impact assessment and gender mainstreaming are not taken into account in the discussion about flexicurity principles others say that the gender dimension has been taken into account in a limited way, but not ignored.

Gender mainstreaming, where present, only in the Employment Chapters...

In general, gender equality issues are explicitly considered in the employment chapter, dealing directly with female employment, while they are rarely, and only briefly, referred to in the other parts of the NRPs.

Gender statistics also more likely in the employment chapter...

References to gender are much more frequent in the employment chapter than in the other parts of NRPs and the use of gender disaggregated statistics is much more common here than in the other parts of NRPs. This means that the visibility of gender tends to be limited to the employment chapter.

Targets are required for a quantitative assessment ...

Thirteen Member States have set national targets for women's employment in the employment chapter and seven also refer to the female employment target in other parts of the 2008 NRPs. A further eight Member States have set other gender specific targets in the employment chapter and five Member States have referred to them also in other parts of the 2008 NRPs; finally, eleven Member States have set national childcare targets in the employment chapter and seven countries also refer to them in other parts of the 2008 NRPs.

Majority have some national targets to close gender gaps ...

The vast majority of Member States have set some quantitative targets in the 2008 NRPs. Thus, 22 countries (out of 27) have set at least one national target relevant for gender equality; overall there are 35 national targets, with an average of 1.3 per country.

Experts assessment of policy measures is mostly negative...

The overall assessment in terms of *gender mainstreaming* of the 420 policy initiatives analysed is rather unsatisfactory: only 32.1% of all policies have some gender mainstreaming. However, the overall evaluation of employment policies in the 2008 NRPs in terms of *gender impact assessment* shows a better picture than that outlined on the basis of the pre-assessment with two fifths (compared to a third) of all policies considered to have a positive impact.

Still there are some examples of policies favouring gender equality...

Experts are also able to identify policy developments likely to have a positive impact on gender equality. The least widespread are those with the elements of a coordinated approach to gender mainstreaming but there are also policies on childcare, child benefits and leave arrangements, and the gender pay gap and those aimed more generally at integrating women into the labour market or particular areas of the labour market.

A range of policies would improve if GM were used...

While there is rather unsatisfactory evidence of policies that have been adequately gender mainstreamed there are many policy areas that would have benefited from gender mainstreaming or more thorough gender mainstreaming. The importance of gender mainstreaming is illustrated in both policies that are apparently gender neutral as well as those that appear to have a more obvious gendered effect.

Relatively weak overall assessment...

The overall assessment of Gender Mainstreaming in the 2008 NRP process by the experts in the EGGE network is rather bleak and the vast majority of the NRPs are reported as being largely gender blind or gender neutral and limit their discussion of gender to a narrow range of policy domains.

Lack of sufficient policy detail and most importantly gender mainstreaming...

Even where gender is discussed the expert assessment is often that there is a lack of specifics and required detail or proposed measures are assessed as weak. The lack of an adequately gender-mainstreamed approach means that some proposed measures and developments in the NRPs present potential risks for equality and women's employment in the Member States.

Gender Pay Gap the priority area but also future economic conditions ...

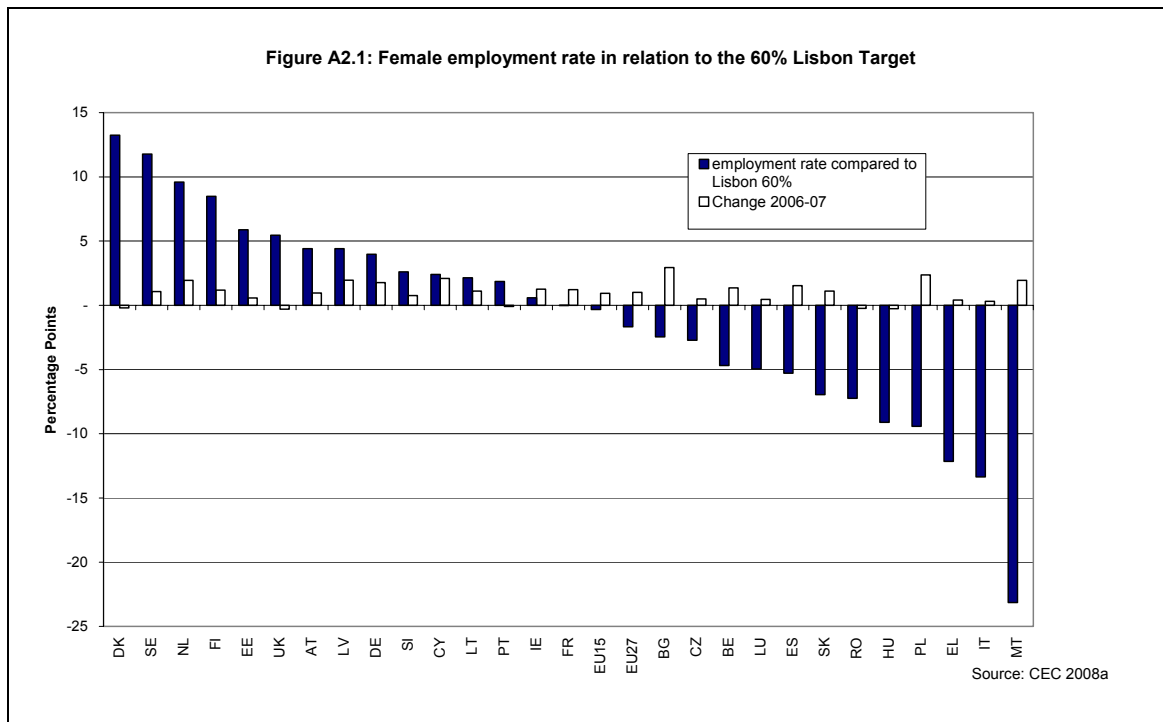
The experts point out a number of priority areas that need urgent consideration of which the gender pay gap is most frequently cited. However, a number of experts raise concerns about the prospect for gender equality as European economies take a downward turn. Indeed the need to monitor the impact of the crisis on women's situation and gender equality is important to ensure that progress against Lisbon targets is not undermined and inequalities not exacerbated.

2. CHANGES IN EMPLOYMENT AND THE CONTEXT FOR GENDER EQUALITY

2.1 Macroeconomic context, employment and unemployment trends

The year 2008 marks something of a watershed in economic conditions in the European Union such that the recent economic turbulence places a slightly different light on the developments reported in the national expert reports on which a large part of this synthesis is based. In the period to 2007 many Member States reported rather positive economic conditions and growth in employment. However, at the time of writing the Euro zone has officially entered recession following the declaration that Germany had officially entered recession in early November with other major economies set to join (Eurostat 2008a). The signs of the changing economic conditions and impending ‘credit crunch’ were evident in late 2007 in the economic performance of some Member States with a slowdown in growth and stagnating employment figures. The drastic economic changes of recent months mean that forecasts based on 2007 data need to be revised and gains made against employment rate targets might be at risk. The marked differences between the two views looking back towards 2007 and forward towards 2009 can be seen in the tone of various European documents. In 2008 the European Foundation and the Lisbon Council both lauded the recent growth and improvement in employment (Hurley and Fernandez 2008; Lisbon Council 2008) while looking forward the European Commission predicts that GDP growth, “is expected to come to a stand-still in 2009 in both the EU and the Euro area” (CEC 2008c: 13).

In this opening section to our review of the NRPs we both assess the macro economic conditions in the period up to 2008 and consider the prospects for women and men’s employment following the economic crisis of the end of 2008.



The period 2006-07 was one where the EU27 made progress towards the Lisbon target of a 70% employment rate with the rate rising by 0.9 of a percentage point to 65.4% - still some way off the target. Nevertheless the increase of nearly a percentage point and similar rises in 2005-06 and 2004-05 marks the end of a three year period where the EU27 rate rose by 2.6 percentage points and the EU15 rate by 2.4 points – a more optimistic picture than the last time the Expert Group on Gender examined the NRP process (Rubery et al. 2006). However, as previously identified by the Expert Group, these headline figures mask considerable variety at the Member State level, and between women and men. Once again the improvements in the EU female employment rate have tended to outstrip those of men's but unlike the in the period before 2004 men have been registering positive increases in their employment rate. While the total Lisbon target still looks some way off, the 60% female target for women has been reigned in by the progress of the EU27 rate over the last three years rising from 56.3% in 2005 to 57.3% in 2006 and 58.3% in 2007 (fig. 2.1). In the words of the Commissions 2008 Gender Equality Report:

Female employment has been the main factor in the steady growth of employment in the EU in recent years. Between 2000 and 2006 employment in EU-27 grew by nearly 12 million, including more than 7.5 million women. (CEC 2008b: 8)

The current economic crisis means that similar growth in 2007-08 is not expected (CEC 2008c).

As previously pointed out by the work of the Expert Group there is a marked distinction between the EU15 and the New Member States. In 13 of the EU15 Member States female employment rates increased by a greater percentage point margin than for men or in compensation for falling male rates. On the other hand, in the New Member States percentage point increases for men were higher than those for women in 10 of the 12, and in two of these, female employment rates fell back while male rates rose. These diverse trends underline the heterogeneity of experiences across Europe both in terms of the impact of the period of growth up until the start of 2007 and importantly any potential impact of the economic situation at the end of 2008. Poor employment performance for women in the New Member States has implications for progress towards the Lisbon targets and gender inequalities in these Member States. World growth is expected to return in 2010 but it is not expected to be anything like the positive period for employment rates witnessed between 2004-07. The European Commission acknowledges that the EU will “fail – by a wide margin – to reach the 70% target set in the Lisbon agenda” (CEC 2008c: 43).

The improved picture for employment rates up to 2007 reflected strong growth in many parts of the EU with GDP growth rates of 2.9% for 2007 and 3.0 for 2006 for the EU27. The projected growth of 2.4% in 2008 has now been reassessed and early signs show that there are very different economic expectations (CEC 2008c). In November 2008 the Euro zone entered recession recording a 0.2% decline in its GDP for two successive quarters and, compared to the situation twelve months earlier, Eurostat reported seasonally adjusted GDP growth of just 0.7% in the euro zone and by 0.8% in the EU27 (Eurostat 2008a). The autumn forecasts of the European Commission revised growth rates downwards, by 1.5 percentage points their spring forecasts (CEC 2008c). In terms of employment this means a half of a percentage point fall in employment in 2009, a percentage point lower than the previous forecast (+0.5 of a percentage point). The forecasts predict a +0.1 percentage point increase in 2010. Given the flux of the economic conditions at the end of 2008 and the caveats in forecasting uncertainties must

remain and these conditions could deteriorate further. By contrast the period prior to 2008 was one of growth and positive performance for most Member States; 12 Member States reported GDP growth in excess of 3% in 2007 including nine New Member States with growth in excess of 5%. However, there were some Member States already showing signs of the worsening conditions (for example ES, IE, and UK) and yet others who had shown little benefit of the period of growth (for example PT).

Trends in unemployment had been mirror image of those of employment rates up until 2007 with total unemployment rate falling by one percentage point between 2006-07 and 2.1 percentage points between 2004-07. However, in 2008 the early signs are of much more negative trends with the widespread redundancies reported across Europe and unemployment rates rising (OECD 2008). Returning to the trends prior to 2008 we see a slightly greater decline for women at the EU27 level (1.1 percentage point compared to 1.0 for men) yet female unemployment rates remain higher than men's in 22 Member States and by more than a percentage point higher in 15 of these. The overall decline in unemployment rates was replicated across the Union with female rates rising in only two Member States (five for men). However, these reported falls in the international ILO measure of unemployment prior to 2008 are not always matched in the changes in registered unemployment which may be exclude women or behave in a different way (see box 2.1). The most recent forecasts from the European Commission suggest unemployment will rise to 7.8% in 2009 (from 7.0% in 2008) and then 8.1% in 2010. These figures are an upward revision of those from the earlier forecast and a whole percent point higher for 2009. The figures for the Euro zone show a similar increase in unemployment.

BOX 2.1: Unemployment Trends Disguise a multitude of non-employment patterns for women

In **Austria** the data show a decline in the number of persons registered with the PES with registered unemployed falling between 2005 and 2007 from 7.2% to 6.2%, with men (6.2%) still being more seriously affected than women (6%). The Eurostat data show a decrease in unemployment, from 5.2% to 4.4% between 2005 and 2007 but here the female rate is higher and shows a decline only from 5.5% to 5% compared to 4.9% to 3.9% for men. So called 'hidden' unemployment, in particular of women, must be taken into account here. Firstly, claimants of parental leave or childcare benefit (predominantly women) are not counted as unemployed, even if they are no longer properly employed. Secondly, women who cannot draw unemployment assistance (Notstandshilfe) owing to 'lack of hardship' (as their partner's income is taken into account) are often no longer registered as unemployed.

In **Belgium** the last two years have witnessed important negative shocks in the activity rates of all age classes under 50. The measures that have been implemented to encourage the unemployed to step up job search efforts have been accompanied by stronger controls, leading to the exclusion of a significant number of people, mainly women, from registered administrative unemployment.

In the **Czech Republic** the average representation of women among the applicants for employment slightly increased (from 53.2% in 2006 to 53.9% in 2007). The unemployment rate for women aged 30 to 34 years was 8.2% in 2007, for men in this age the rate was 3.3%. In this age group women create 60% of registered job seekers. It is in particular due to the impact of childcare and long parental leave which women use in almost the entire or the entire length of three years. In addition, as a result of the option to receive the parental allowance until the age of four of the child, the labour offices often help women to find work only after the end of this period.

In **Germany** the Hartz IV-reform of the labour market has had different effects on women and men. The consolidation of unemployment and social benefit – now unemployment benefits I and II – at the beginning of 2005 has changed also the statistical registration of registered unemployment. This led above all to an abrupt rise of female unemployment as persons receiving social benefits haven't

been registered as unemployed until the beginning of the reform. About 70% of the so called Hartz IV-effect fell upon women and the female share of unemployed persons increased by 2.3% (260,000 women) to 46.4% in 2005. Though the labour market recovery since 2006 also reached unemployed women, relatively and absolutely more unemployed men could take up an employment. The female share of unemployed rose up to nearly 51% – it is the first time within a period of 15 years that more than 50% of all unemployed are female.

In **Hungary** the period of 2004-2007, saw the return of a trend of declining unemployment. In 2005, for the first time since the transition, the unemployment rate of women rose above that of men (7,4% compared to 7,0%). Since then both rates have slightly increased to 7,1 % in the case men and 7,7% for women in 2007. At the same time, the employment rate of the population aged 15-64 increased only by half of a percentage point from 56,8% to 57,3%, one of the lowest in the EU27. Male employment rose by almost a percentage point (from 63,1 to 64%), but the female rate remained at 50,9%. Consequently, during the period under investigation the employment indicator of men got closer to the EU average, but in the case of women the opposite occurred.

In **Ireland** unemployment levels are currently at a ten year high of 6.3% according to Live Register data for October 2008 (Central Statistics Office, October 1st 2008) and forecasters expect the level to reach 7% by the end of 2008 and 8% during 2009. While it is important to note that these job losses have occurred in the context of a historically high level of employment, a substantial proportion of employment growth over the last ten years had occurred in the construction sector as a result of high rates of activity in both publicly-funded infrastructural development and also commercial and residential property development. Job losses in construction have been predominantly among male workers, many of whom have been immigrant workers. As the decline in employment has spread across the economy over more recent months job losses among women workers have become more evident. Unemployment rates among male workers have risen markedly over the period 2006-08 and have also risen among women workers to a level not experienced in the Irish economy for over ten years.

In **Lithuania**, due to the positive labour market changes, unemployment rate decreased during 2000-2006. In the recent years, unemployment rate dropped from 8.3% to 5.9% and in 2006 was below the EU average (8.0%). In 2000 unemployment rate for men was 18.8% and for women 13.9%, in 2006; 5.8% and 5.4% accordingly. In 2007 women constitute 62% of all registered unemployed persons while the common unemployment level is strongly decreasing in Lithuania during last few years.

In **Poland** Although employment is approaching the record high of 15.6 million registered in August 1998 and the unemployment rate is the lowest since LFS began in 1992, inactivity continues to be high and activity low. The situation appears somewhat different in registered unemployment rates. Although the gender gap has diminished from 1.7% in 2004 to 1.3% in 2007, analysis of registered unemployment over the course of the last few years suggests that the number of unemployed men is falling more rapidly than women. This is reflected in the increased proportion of women among the registered unemployed from 51.2% at the end of 2002 to 58.2% at the end of 2007. Age is also an important factor in unemployment trends, as in 2007 the decrease of registered unemployment of young persons was substantial as it fell by 30.2% (but remains high at 20.7%), while for workers over 60 years of age the trend was opposite with a 9.5% increase (but is relatively lower at 7.1%).

In **Spain** women still make up the majority of the unemployed with a higher level of education. The average number of unemployed women until July 2006 was 27,243, as compared to 12,961 men. Two years later, however, these figures turned into 26,538 and 10,992, respectively. The rate of feminisation was 68% and is now about 71%. This is a reality never mentioned in political discourse on this social problem. In July 2008, unemployed women with a higher education degree represented 13% of all female unemployment, whereas men in the same position represented 6%. The gender gap is now 7 percentage points, but in July 2006, it was 3.9 percentage points. This means that policies to combat this form of unemployment have succeeded, but mostly in the case of men. Regrettably, the designed policies are more responsive to men's identities (developing technological and commercial profiles).

In **Romania** The registered unemployment rate came down from 5.7% to 4.3% for males and from 4.6% to 4.0% for females (NIS Monthly Statistical Bulletins 12/2006, 12/2007). A similar trend had the unemployment rate, measured using ILO definition, decreasing from 8.2% to 7.2% for males and

from 6.1% to 5.4% for females. Long-term unemployment (ILO definition) also decreased, from 4.7% to 3.6% for males and from 3.6 to 2.7 for females (CEC 2008a).

Source: National Reports.

Looking at the employment trends in more detail we see rising rates across most Member States but there were some important exceptions. In Romania and Hungary rising rates for men were accompanied by falling rates for women. On the other hand, in three member states (DK, PT, UK) employment rates fell for both women and men between 2006-07 and here we observe a certain level of equality not witnessed in previous slowdowns. In all three countries the percentage point fall in employment rates was very similar for both men and women. Thus we see a number of countries displaying what has been a common picture over the 1980s and 1990s of women's employment rate growth bolstering that of men's or even compensating for falls but there is also a new diversity to these employment rate trends in the enlarged EU with male and female rate fall together (three countries), male rates compensating falling female rates (two countries) and male rates increasing by more than female rates (ten countries).

BOX 2.2: Female Employment Rate Performance 2006-2007 and 2004-2007

2006-2007

	<i>Below average increase</i>	<i>Above average increase</i>
UK(-)	<i>Above 60% Lisbon</i> CY, DE, FI, FR, IE, LV, LT, NL, SE.	AT, DK(-), EE, PT(-), SI,
2007 position	<i>Below 60% Lisbon</i> , BE, BG, ES, MT, PL, SK	CZ, EL, HU(-), IT, LU, RO(-)

2004-2007

	<i>Below average increase</i>	<i>Above average increase</i>
UK(-),	<i>Above 60% Lisbon</i> NL, EE, AT, LV, DE, LT, IE	CY, DK, FI, FR, PT, SE, SI,
2007 position	<i>Below 60% Lisbon</i> , SK, BG, ES, LU, MT, PL	BE, CZ, EL, HU, IT, RO(-)

Note: 1) working age employment rates

2) “-“ indicates falling female employment rate

3) EU27 female employment rate rose by 1.0 percentage point, 2006-07

4) EU27 female employment rate rose by 2.9 percentage points, 2004-07

Source: CEC (2008b)

There are also no clear patterns in the trends with respect to the various starting points of Member States in relation to the Lisbon target (box 2.2). Malta with the lowest female employment rates of 36.9% in 2007 posted an above average increase in the employment rate the previous year while five of the 12 member states with below EU average female rates recorded below the one percentage point increase of the EU27

average and two of these were net falls in the employment rate. Even over the period of strong growth between 2004-07 seven of the below-Lisbon Member States recorded increases of below the average 2.9 percentage point increase. On the other hand, nine of the 15 with above average rates posted above average increases for 2006-07 (seven for 2004-07). These Member State differences show that in relation to the Lisbon target, in spite of the EU27 figure making good progress towards the 60% figure, there are nations making rather limited steps in this direction, even in a period of relatively strong growth. Such performance suggests that, as we enter more difficult times, we may not see the ‘recession proof’ performance of the female employment rates noted in previous recessionary periods (Rubery et al. 1998; 1999).

The recession of the early 1980s had a devastating effect on predominantly male working-class employment, but it was not too bad for women entering work in expanding service sectors and underrepresented in manufacturing. Again in early 1990s women did quite well in employment terms as they increased their share of employment and compensated for falling male employment (Rubery et al. 1999). There is evidence that some parts of the service sector do indeed display a countercyclical or at least resistant employment patterns - for example health and social services – while other service sub-sectors follow a more cyclical pattern losing jobs in recessionary quarters - for example business services and personal services (Goodman 2001). It is services most closely related to business that may initially experience initial declines in employment, female dominated public sector may also suffer from funding cut backs in the future (see box 2.4). However, there is evidence to suggest that this recession may be somewhat different to those of the early 1980s and 1990s. Unlike previous recessions there is a risk in the current crisis that the impact will be less sector-specific. The well-publicised job losses in the banking sector in Europe and the US have caught the headlines just as much as the cut backs in car production. Industries in which women have been protected in the past look set to be affected by the current crisis – finance and retail - while the impact on construction will affect men’s employment (see box 2.3). The nature of the credit crunch may also have an impact on consumer spending and thus disproportionately affect women working in the retail sector.

BOX 2.3: Early Signs of a Gendered Impact of the Recession?

In the **United Kingdom** the impact of the developing recession has been uneven across the economy with output from producing sectors falling and the construction sector being particularly hard hit. The growth in services has slowed, with financial and business services suffering. On the other hand, the higher petrol and food prices, combined with slow growth in wages have contributed to a fall in retail sales for some consumer goods, although overall household expenditure remained buoyant

According to the **Swedish** Public Employment Office (October 2008) the number of entrants to the unemployment register was almost 20,000, compared to 3,000 for the same month in 2007, and the highest number since November 1992. Most entrants were from male-dominated manufacturing, and also transport and construction but entrants from female-dominated municipalities were also increasing. The first three sectors are male dominated and the last female dominated. According to the Swedish Public Employment Office the number of unemployed is still low, but growing and the increase is greatest among men, young people and foreign-born. Compared to October 2007 the number of unemployed increased with by around 1,000 among women and 5,000 among men. The number of unemployed is still higher among men than women - in October fully 73,000 women and 82,000 men.

In **Hungary**, due to the inevitable job destruction of the crisis, unemployment only slightly increased at the end of 2008 (from 7,4% of the Q3 to 7,8% in Q4). Lay-offs particularly affected temporary agency workers, who are mainly men. For 2009, an unemployment rate of 8,5% has been forecast

and short-term labour market analyses indicate that job cuts will concentrate both on the male dominated industries (for example, car production, construction) and on the female dominated administrative staff in the banking sector and municipalities.

Recent labour market data for **Ireland** show falling levels of employment and rises in unemployment; men have been most affected in the first instance due to the contraction of the construction sector. Over the year to August 2008, employment rose by 1% (compared 4% in the previous year) and unemployment has risen to 6.7% compared to 4.5% the previous year. The figures also show that full-time employment for men has decreased but has been partially offset by a rise in female full-time employment. Employment fell in construction, hotels and restaurants, transport storage and communications and other production industries but increased in wholesale and retail trade, health, financial and other business services. One impact of the recession may be on inward migration. Over a number of years Ireland has been a destination for migrants but the recession means that there has been a reduction in migration into the Irish economy and growing evidence of out migration.

Source: National Reports.

There are also risks for gender equality in an economic downturn where equality is relegated among other policy priorities. After a period of growth where women have made some inroads into employment rate gaps and there is evidence of gender equality being considered in some aspects of employment policy there is the risk that gender equality may be regarded as something that can not be afforded during a recessionary period (see box 3.4). Similarly tighter public budgets may also bring the threat of cut backs in ‘expensive’ reconciliation policies as old arguments around the ‘costs of employing women’ surface. The economic downturn is predicted to hit government finances with deficits rising from 0.9% of GDP in 2007 to 1.6% in 2008 (CEC 2008c). The potential impact on public sector finances and employment is something that may have negative consequences for female employment since public sector cutbacks risk both cuts to services that benefit women and cuts to jobs where women predominate (Rubery et al. 1999: 23).

BOX 2.4: Changes to Policy and Public Sector Funding Present Risks for Women

In **Hungary**, downsizing the large budget and current account deficit according to the convergence criteria were the primary aims of the Government in 2006 and 2007. The decline in women’s labour market position compared to that of men was connected with employment cuts in the public sector where women are overrepresented. The deficit is still considerable with little budgetary room for revitalising the economy and, moreover, further cuts in public finances are expected to encourage confidence and stability on the financial market.

In **Ireland** the budget was brought forward from December to October 2008 and introduced cut-backs in expenditure in both health and education, leading to reduced class sizes at primary school, and end to the cover for the uncertified (short-term) sick leave of teachers. A decision to remove medical cards (entitlement to general practitioner, drugs and community-based services) from over 70 years olds was met with huge controversy resulting in the government introducing a much improved means test which they have argued will mean 90% of the over 70s will retain the cards. (National Report: IE)

In **Italy** delays have already been reported in transferring funds already earmarked for the increase in childcare places. A move likely to impact on Italy’s already slow progress towards Lisbon targets in this area. Similarly there have been cuts in education budget so that a single primary school teacher will teach practically all classes compared to the previous situation where there would have been three teachers. There have also been cuts elsewhere in the university budgets, most likely to impact primarily on admin staff, where women predominate. (Bettio 2008)

In the **United Kingdom** the right to request flexible working will be extended to parents with children up to the age of 16 from April 2009, a move likely to benefit up to 4.5 million working parents. However, at the end of 2008 the economic conditions prompted a review of policies likely to impact upon business, including the right the request flexible working (Clark 2008).

2.2 Regional variety and cohesion

The recent period of growth shows that regional disparities have fallen somewhat but remain a persistent part of the economic landscape in many Member States. Poor performing regions, defined as having employment rates below 90% of the national average accounted for 170 of the 1283 in the EU27 (CEC 2008a). A number of Member States stand out as having significant number of poor performing regions affecting around a fifth or more of the population (BE, ES, FR, HU, IT, RO). The dispersion of regional unemployment rates is lower affecting 186 of the EU27 NUTS-III regions with 119 of these NUTS-III regions found in Germany and Italy. These regional variations translate into gendered differences within and across regions (see tab. 2.1).

At the European level regional disparity in employment rates, measured by the standard deviation of employment rates divided by the weighted national average (age group 15 + years), is higher for women than men, 18.9 compared to 10.3 percentage points (tab. 2.1). This pattern is repeated across 13 of the 20 member states for which NUTS-III data are available - replicating the dispersion in national employment rates, which is more marked for women than men. There are in fact just two Member States with above average dispersion of female employment rates (IT, RO) skewing the European average upwards. On the other hand, for men it is only Romania that has this above average dispersion. Over the period for which these regional data are available, up to 2006, we see dispersion falling for both women and men. Between 2005-06 regional dispersion in employment rates fell for women by 0.2 of a percentage point at the EU level and in 14 of the Member States for which we have data (13 for men). For the longer period, 2000-06, we observe falls in 14 Member States for women but only seven for men. Worryingly in Romania, one of the member states with the widest dispersion of employment rates, there is a general upward trend in regional disparity for both women and men's employment rates. The persistence of regional inequalities during this period of European growth means that women and men in certain regions may be at greater risk during in the current economic downturn. Furthermore these regional varieties that manifest themselves in variations in employment rates encapsulate other disadvantage linked to infrastructure, historical development and sectoral characteristics (see box 2.5). The heavy reliance on agriculture in certain regions, a sector on the decline in employment terms in most Member States, places particular strains on regional performance (National Report: PL).

Table 2.1: Variations in Regional Employment Rates by Gender (percentage points)

	Female			Male		
	2006	2005-06	2000-06	2006	2005-06	2000-06
EU27	18.9	-0.2	-3.4	10.3	-1.1	0.8
BE	10.5	-0.3	0.3	6.9	-0.4	-0.2
CZ	7.3	-0.2	-1.8	4.4	-1.0	1.3

DE	8.4	0.0	-0.9	10.2	-0.3	-1.5
EE	7.3	-1.9	0.3	8.2	1.8	-0.6
IE	4.7	-0.4	-3.8	1.6	-0.3	1.6
EL	10.9	0.2	-2.4	4.6	0.5	1.0
ES	14.0	-1.1	-4.7	5.5	-0.3	2.6
IT	27.2	-2.1	-5.7	9.7	-0.2	1.2
LV	6.9	-1.8	-0.4	6.3	-1.3	2.9
LT	5.5	1.7	1.0	4.8	0.7	-1.0
HU	11.0	-0.9	0.1	9.3	-0.5	0.1
NL	4.7	-0.2	-0.7	4.0	0.2	-0.4
AT	5.4	0.4	-1.1	5.0	-0.6	-1.6
PL	9.3	-1.3	-4.3	8.7	-0.4	1.9
PT	8.8	0.1	-1.6	7.4	0.3	0.0
RO	18.7	-1.1	5.7	13.1	0.4	-6.5
SK	12.1	-0.2	1.1	8.2	-1.9	1.0
FI	7.8	-0.2	-2.0	7.5	0.3	0.8
SE	4.4	0.5	-1.4	2.6	-0.8	2.1
UK	7.6	-0.3	-1.6	6.7	-0.1	1.4

Note: regional variation calculated as the standard deviation of NUTS-III regional employment rates divided by the weighted national average

Source: CEC (2008a)

The reliance on the property markets to boost domestic consumption and booms in real estate prices have placed certain regions and Member States at particular risk now the availability of credit has become problematic (IE, UK, ES). For example, in Spain some regions have benefited from the boom in construction sector, a key engine of Spanish economic growth in the recent period, particularly coastal regions and large urban areas, however, these areas are now also the most vulnerable ones in the current economic slowdown.

BOX 2.5: Regional Variations have a variety of Impacts upon Women

In the **Czech Republic** there are regional variations in the structure of unemployment according to qualifications and in some regions the situation for women is alarming, for example in the Moravia-Silesia region. In regions with high unemployment there is also a lack of transport infrastructure, which particularly affects women with children who need to transport children to childcare facilities in addition to transportation to their place of work.

Regional disparity in **Spain** has been a theme of its economic history and this, in turn, is clearly reflected in the labour market. There are important structural differences and sectoral specialisation explaining these differences. The better performing regions tend to be concentrated in the northeast, where industrialisation has been deeply rooted - Navarre, Catalonia, Basque Country, Aragon – and

the worst performers in regions where there is a reliance on the primary sector, both in terms of GDP and employment - Andalusia, Extremadura or Galice.

In **Italy** regional disparities in employment and in unemployment are particularly important in the case of women. In the Centre-North the employment rate has recently recorded positive increases for women, while in the South the female employment rate stopped increasing in 2003, and recorded a contraction in the two following years. Only in 2006, following the national trend, did the female employment rate grow, while remaining stable in 2007.

In **Sweden** the European indicators for regional differences suggest that there are no disadvantaged regions in terms of employment and unemployment. However, regional differences in employment and unemployment exist. In 2007, for women the highest female employment rate was 78.1% (Jönköping) and the lowest was 68.3% (Västmanland) while the unemployment rate varied from 3.3% (Västerbotten) to 5.8% (Östergötland). For men, the best and worst performing regions were different with the highest employment rates in Halland (82.3%) and lowest in Norrbotten (73.6%) which also had the highest unemployment rate (6.9%)

In the **United Kingdom**, a Member State with relatively small regional variations in employment rates compared to many others, there are regional differences in the level of the gender pay gap. The Trades Union Congress has shown that Full and part-time gender pay gaps occur in each region but that they tend to be higher in London and the South East of England and smaller in Northern Ireland and Wales. National data also show that variations in employment rates are greater across local areas within regions than between regions themselves with the greatest contrast local authorities in London. On the other hand there was a narrower spread of working-age employment rates in lower-employment areas such as Wales and the North East.

Source: National Reports.

2.3 Gender equality trends

The period of growth prior to 2008 was not only one of rising employment rates but also falling gender gaps in employment at the European level. For the EU27 and EU15 the gender gap in employment rates fell for the period 2006-07 and 2004-07. However, once again there was considerable diversity at the member State level with falls in only 12 national labour markets between 2006-07 (18 for 2004-07). The rises in gender gaps in employment were concentrated on the new Member States: 10 of the 12 with increases in the gaps between women and men's employment rates between 2006-07 were New Member States (six of the eight with increases for the period 2004-07). However, those countries with increasing employment rate gaps tended to be those with below average gender gaps in employment rates with only two (CZ, SK) reporting and increased gap and already having a gap greater than the EU average. As such the dispersion of gender gaps has fallen to 7 percentage points from 7.5 in 2006 and 8.2 in 2004 as measured by the standard deviation. Nevertheless the distance between the highest and lowest gender gap remains nearly 24 percentage points (tab. 2.2).

Table 2.2: Employment rate gender gaps on headcount and Full-time Equivalent basis

	Headcount			FTE		
	2007	2006-07	2004-07	2007	2006-07	2004-07
EU27	14.2	-0.1	-0.7	20.6	0.1	-0.3
EU15	14.5	-0.4	-1.3	22.4	0.0	-0.8
FI	3.6	-0.5	-0.5	7.4	0.8	0.4

SE	4.7	-0.1	1.6	11.7	0.3	2.3
LT	5.7	0.4	-1.2	7.2	-0.5	-1.4
EE	7.3	1.6	0.9	8.3	1.7	0.9
DK	7.8	0.0	-0.3	13.4	-0.2	-0.3
LV	8.1	0.1	0.2	8.9	2.6	-2.8
BG	8.4	0.2	1.1	8.1	-0.6	0.6
FR	9.3	-0.9	-1.9	14.6	-0.8	-2.1
SI	10.1	0.8	0.6	11.8	2.7	1.6
DE	10.7	0.1	-0.9	22.9	0.7	0.5
UK	11.8	0.3	-0.4	21.8	0.5	-1.0
PT	11.9	0.0	-0.6	15.0	0.1	-0.9
RO	12.0	0.4	0.7	13.1	1.0	1.2
NL	12.6	-0.6	-1.8	29.1	-0.3	-1.4
PL	13.0	0.3	2.0	14.8	0.8	2.6
HU	13.1	0.4	0.7	14.9	0.6	0.8
BE	13.4	-0.5	-1.9	22.1	0.4	-1.1
AT	14.0	0.6	-0.2	24.2	1.5	0.6
SK	15.4	0.3	3.1	16.2	-0.1	2.8
IE	16.8	-1.6	-2.6	26.1	-1.8	-1.8
LU	16.9	-1.1	-4.0	28.8	1.4	-0.8
CZ	17.5	0.6	1.2	18.6	0.4	1.1
CY	17.6	-1.5	-3.5	20.1	-2.9	-3.6
ES	21.5	-1.4	-4.0	26.6	-1.2	-2.9
IT	24.1	-0.1	-0.8	28.3	-0.2	-0.4
EL	27.0	-0.2	-1.5	29.1	-0.2	-1.3
MT	37.3	-2.3	-5.1	40.3	-2.6	-5.5

Note: countries ranked by employment rate gap (headcount).
Source: CEC (2008a).

Much of the gap in employment rates between women and men is explained by the gendered impact of parenthood on participation patterns. The impact of the presence of children on the employment rates of women aged 20-49 is overwhelmingly negative, depressing employment rates by 12.6 percentage points at the EU27 level and by between 2.0 and 43.2 percentage points (except in three Members States, see CEC 2008a: tab. 18.A5). Much of the focus of the Employment Strategy has been around

raising the employment rates of women with caring responsibilities and promoting reconciliation with the aim of reducing the negative impact of parenthood on mothers' participation. Unfortunately the direction of change in these statistics over the period 2006-07 was actually in the opposite direction to that desired with a slight rise in the impact of parenthood on the EU27 female employment rate (0.3 percentage points at the EU27 level). Perhaps more worryingly is the result that there was an increased negative impact of parenthood on the employment rate of women in 15 of the 27 Member States. For the period 2004-07 the European trend was for a reduced impact of parenthood but there was still an increased impact in 12 member states. On the other hand, fatherhood tends to boost the employment rates of men by almost ten percentage points at the EU level and between five and 15 percentages points among the member states. There is evidence of a slightly reduced impact on employment rates from fatherhood with the size of the impact falling in 13 Member States for the 2004-07 period (nine for 2006-07).

A number of the countries reporting above average increases in employment rates in the recent period to 2007 included those where there has been explicit proportion of part-time work, and particularly short part-time jobs, to promote women's jobs (AT, DE) or where part-time work forms an integral part of women's participation patterns (NL). The evidence suggests that part-time rates for women have continued to rise across the EU with minor falls in five Member States (CEC 2008a; tab. 21.M2). Meanwhile rates for European men have been stable and fallen in several States. The high level of part-time work can be hidden in recent employment rate increases and full-time equivalent employment rates demonstrate the unequal volume of work resulting from the growing proportion of part-time employment. Table 2.2 shows how the employment rate gap opens up to 20 percentage points on a full-time equivalent basis compared to 14 points for headcount (the difference is more stark for the EU15). Unlike some of other indicators used here, the lower proportion of part-time work in the New Member States means that they perform rather well in comparative terms. Of the top five Member States with the lowest full-time equivalent gender gap in employment rates four acceded to the EU in the last five years. Although headcount employment rate gaps tend to show evidence of closing over recent years the opposite is the case with FTEs reflecting the expansion of part-time work. Full-time equivalent employment rate gaps widened in 14 Member States for the period 2006-07 (12 for 2004-07). The growth of part-time work, and particularly mini jobs, means that the quality rather than the quantity measured by employment rates has increasingly become a source of inequality in many Member States (see box 2.6 and 2.7). The promotion of flexicurity policies poses an additional threat there since some Member States have interpreted this approach as promoting greater flexibility, including part-time work for women, without concomitant increases in security associated with this type of work (see chapter 4).

BOX 2.6: Heterogeneity of women's experiences is disguised by employment rates

In **Austria** between 2006 and 2007, employment among men rose more sharply than women's employment, the gender employment gap also widened during this period, from 13.4% to 14%. If part-time and marginal employment is taken into account, the situation is even more dramatic: between 2005 and 2007, the ratio of women in full-time employment (FTE) only rose from 50% to 51.1% while during the same period male FTE rose from 72% to 75.3%. Thus, based on FTE ratios, between 2005 and 2007 the gender employment gap rose continuously from 22% to 24.2% (CEC 2008a).

In **Germany** the at first sight positive general developments in the labour market have been

accompanied by structural changes in the labour force: slight drop of employees subject to social insurance contributions since 2000; low growth rate of full-time compared to considerable increase of traditional part-time employment as a dependent employee; ongoing increase of marginal part-time employment (*mini job*); rising share of self-employment, temporary work (*Leiharbeit*) and fixed term contracts. The vast majority of all part time employees are women. In June 2007, 3.9 million (84% of all dependent part-time employees) were female. The increase in the female employment rate in the previous years and above all in 2007 is only based on more part-time occupations. At the same time, also relatively more men start working part time in 2006 and 2007 than in previous years. The part time employment patterns explain in parts the slow increase of the German overall working time volume in the last years. Compared to other EU member states Germany ranks in position 2, only the Netherlands have a higher share of part time employment.

In **Hungary**, the gender employment gap has widened slightly since the male employment rate increased somewhat, while that of women remained unchanged. As the proportion of part-time workers is very low, the Hungarian full-time equivalent gender gap in employment rate is much lower than the EU-average. On the other hand, the labour market position of the Roma population in general is very disadvantageous and among this group only one sixth of women have regular paid jobs. The reasons for the extremely low employment rate of Roma women are related to their low level qualification, their early child-bearing and the discrimination they experience.

In **Luxembourg** the share of frontier workers in new jobs has increased from 66.2% in 2001 to 73.5% in 2007. In 2007, the share of frontier workers in total domestic employment amounts to 42.6%, against 34.9% in 2000. Nationals only represented 30.5%, a sharp decrease, compared to 37.5% in 2000 and 53.9% in 1990. The increase in employment is mainly due to foreigners, frontier workers or residents, but moreover the relative contributions differ significantly following the sectors. This increasing part of frontier workers in domestic employment explains the fact that despite a significant increase in employment (a little bit less than 100% since 1990), the employment rate remains low and inferior to the Lisbon targets. Even in the case of residents, the differences between nationals and foreigners are quite large: 68.6% and 76.5% respectively for men and 52.5% and 60.5% for women. The evolution is quite positive for female employment: since 2000 the employment rate has increased by 6 points, both for foreigners and nationals. But for men it decreases by 6.4 points, mainly due to the sharp decrease of the employment rate of the nationals, from 75% to 68.6%.

The increasing participation of women in the **Netherlands** increasingly highlights the diversity of experiences among different groups of women. National data show that older women, lone mothers with children below the age of six, women with a lower education and, particularly, women from some ethnic minority groups have the lowest participation rates. To illustrate, national data of 2006 show that the net participation rate of autochthonous women is 57.8%, whereas it is 37.8% among women from non-Western origin. Particularly the participation rates of Turkish and Moroccan women are low: 29.7 and 22.8% respectively. Women from Surinam, and the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba have higher participation rates (55.3% compared to 51.2%).

Source: National Reports.

Table 2.3: Trends in the Gender Pay Gap

	2006	2007	Trend 2006-07
EU27	17.7 ^(p)	17.4 ^(p)	-
EU25	18.1 ^(p)	17.6 ^(p)	-
EU15	18.7 ^(p)	18.1 ^(p)	-
Belgium	9.5	9.1 ^(p)	-
Bulgaria	12.4	12.7 ^(p)	+
Czech Republic	23.4	23.6	+
Denmark	17.6	17.7	+
Germany	22.7	23.0	+
Estonia	30.3	30.3 ^(p)	=
Ireland	17.2	17.1	-
Greece	20.7	20.7 ^(p)	=
Spain	17.9	17.6 ^(p)	-
France	15.8	15.8 ^(p)	=
Italy	4.4	4.4 ^(p)	=
Cyprus	21.8	23.1	+
Latvia	15.1	15.4	+
Lithuania	17.1	20.0	+
Luxembourg	10.7	10.0	-
Hungary	14.4	16.3	+
Malta	5.2	5.2 ^(p)	=
Netherlands	23.6	23.6	=
Austria	25.5	25.5	=
Poland	7.5	7.5	=
Portugal	8.4	8.3	-
Romania	7.8	12.7	+
Slovenia	8.0	8.3	+
Slovakia	25.8	23.6	-
Finland	21.3	20.0 ^(p)	-
Sweden	16.5	17.9	+
United Kingdom	24.3 ^(p)	21.1 ^(p)	-

Notes:

1. Gender pay gap in unadjusted form Difference between men's and women's average gross hourly earnings as a percentage of men's average gross hourly earnings See text for details of methodology
2. "p" provisional;

Source: Eurostat (2009)

The gender pay gap has been given a high priority at the European level with the 2007 adoption of the Commission Communication (see chapter 3). However, analyses of comparative trends in the gender pay gap are fraught as a result of the availability and comparability of the available data. A glance at the EU Data Compendium for 2008 shows that data are unavailable or provisional for a number of member states (CEC 2008a: tab. 18.M2). Thankfully following the 2007 Communication, Eurostat, in collaboration with Member States, improved the methodology used to calculate the gender pay gap in the EU. Instead of a mix of various national sources, an EU harmonised source (Structure of Earnings Survey) is used, with the support of comparable national sources for the yearly estimates. The improved methodology will aid the analysis of trends in the pay gap in future. However, it should be noted that the apparent increase in the gender pay gap - from 15% previously quoted for 2004,

2005 and 2006 under the old methodology to 17.4% in 2007 with the new one - does not correspond to an increase in the indicator but is rather the result of the change in methodology (see table 2.3). At the national level data problems also hamper the analysis of the gender pay gap. The expert report from Greece points out that it is impossible to establish long-term trends there due to breaks in the data series. Similarly in Portugal breaks in the data series means that it is only possible to compare longitudinal data for one part of the economy (see box 3.4). Unfortunately difficulties with the data do not disguise the persistence of the gender pay gap and data – both in the two dataset compiled by Eurostat and national data - confirm the resistance and even increase in gender pay gaps.

The Eurostat compiled data, based on all 27 Member States, show that for 2007 the gender pay gap data was 17.4 percentage points down from 17.7 percentage points in 2006. Estonia recorded the largest gap (30.3 percentage points) with ten Member States reporting gaps of 20 percentage points or more. Malta recorded the lowest gap 5.3 percentage points and was joined by three other member states with gaps below 10 percentage points. The comparative data also show rising gender pay gaps in eleven countries for the period 2006-07 and unchanged gaps in eight. However, while the revised levels for the gender pay gap make cross-country comparison easier, determining trends with the improved data set may need the consideration of a series of more than two years. Previously the 15 percentage points gender pay gap figure was based on data for just 24 countries and ranged from 24 percentage points (CY) to three percentage points (MT) (CEC 2008a). The low recorded pay gap for Malta in both data series is somewhat surprising given the expert assessment that there is an “absence of effective equal pay policies in Malta” and suggests that this result may be an underestimate of the extent of the gender pay gap.

The persistence of the gender pay is closely tied up with many aspects of women’s disadvantage on the labour market including the undervaluation of women’s work, gender segregation and penalties associated with the unequal domestic division of labour. All of these processes underline the priority for action on the gender pay gap highlighted in many expert national reports and developments at the Commission level (see chapter 6, § 6.1).

BOX 2.7: National Trends in Gender Pay Gap

In **Austria** studies have identified a variety of levels for the gender pay gap in recent years – depending on the data, method of measurement and model used. All studies confirm that women are clearly at a disadvantage and that the (unadjusted) gender pay gap has widened since the mid-1990s. This widening is mainly the result of the surge in female part-time work. While the EU-SILC data show that, based on gross hourly earnings, the gender pay gap has increased over the last years, national data adjusted for working time shows that pay inequalities between women and men have fallen continuously over the last two decades.

In **Belgium** national data show that the gender pay gap in 2006 was equivalent to 24% of a woman’s average wage (7 p.p. gap). Although the gender pay gap dropped by around 10 percentage points between 1980 and 2005, immigrant women earn a further 10% less than Western European women.

In **Bulgaria** a downward trend in the gender pay gap is beginning to address inequalities established over recent years. However the period under study was not very long. The inequality between women and men result mainly from the specific reallocation of the female labour to low productive industries and activities and low positions in the hierarchy. However, it is due also to the lack of respect for legal norms around equal payment, particularly among employers in private sector, and micro and small firms.

In **Cyprus**, the Member State with the largest gender pay gap, there has been a downward trend from 29 percentage points in 1995 to 24 points in 2006. However, the Cypriot gender pay gap still remains the highest, well over the EU27 average (15 points) and the decline is at an extremely slow rate — in fact, the gap remained at 25 points for 4 years and the 24 point figure is only a projection for 2006. Proposed measures to increase women's participation in Cyprus risk having negative effects on this high gender pay gap. For example the Human Resource Development Agency (HRDA) training women was aimed at low-paying positions with limited promotion opportunities – measures likely to maintain Cyprus' extremely high gender pay gap.

In **France** gender pay gaps are, according to Eurostat, about 11 or 12 percentage points. Although this rate is lower than the European average it relates only to the hourly rate which neutralises the effect of working time differences on the overall gap; this difference can account for up to 25 percentage points according to French sources.

In **Hungary**, gender wage gap had remained at 20 percentage points until the beginning of this decade. In 2004, the Government centrally increased the earnings in the public sector by 50% – where 68% of the employees have been women. This measure reduced men's' earnings advantage to 10 percentage points, a figure lower than the EU-average. Since 2004, the gender wage gap has opened up again with worsening earning conditions of the public sector. National data indicate that in 2007, the average female gross earnings were 14.6 percentage points lower than those of men; a figure closer to the gender wage gap of the EU27.

National Data for **Lithuania** show that since 2000 the pay gap between men and women has narrowed. In 2006 the average wage for women in the public sector was 17.9% lower than for men while in the private sector women earned 19.1% less. The greatest difference was in financial mediation sector (41.8% for 2006). The national data also show that women's wages increased more slowly than those of men in all sectors and the highest wage gap was found among 25-34 year olds – the child rearing years.

In **Poland** the average gross hourly gender pay gap was 12 percentage points in 2006. National data show that the gender pay gap is wider among women and men earning higher incomes, largely driven by women's under-representation in positions of authority – in 2004 women accounted for just 20% of high ranking managers in large companies (above 250 employees) and about a third in medium size firms. However, by taking working time differences into account the gender gap becomes substantially wider rising to 18 percentage points.

Previously data for **Portugal** has shown that there was a reduction in the gender pay gap in 2004: 5 percentage points compared to 9 previously. However, this result highlights the difficulties in evaluating developments in the gender pay gap since there was a break in the data series and in the subsequent year it rose again to nine and then eight percentage points. National data for the private sector may be more reliable in terms of methodology and continuity; according to this source women earned 75.3% of men's gross monthly earnings in 2005 and 74.6% in 2006. This slight widening of the pay gap can be attributed to the higher increase for male wages.

In the **UK** the gender pay gap is large, in fact a third higher than the EU average. National data show that the pay gap has narrowed since 1997 and the full-time pay gap now stands at 17.2% with the part-time gap at 35.6%. National studies show how the pay gap opens up over the working life with the full-time gap more than three times higher for women in their thirties than those in their twenties.

Source: National Reports.

3. DEVELOPMENTS IN GENDER EQUALITY POLICY INFRASTRUCTURE AT NATIONAL (REGIONAL) LEVEL

At the European level the period 2007 and 2008 has not been as momentous as 2006 for development in gender equality policy since 2006 was marked by the launch of the Road Map for Gender Equality and agreement on the Gender Equality Pact by the Council of Ministers (CEC 2006a; 2006b). In the period following the adoption of the Road Map the Commission has undertaken a number of activities, notably in the areas of reconciliation and the gender pay gap building on the impetus created by the 2006 developments. A mid-term report on the Road Map, adopted in November 2008 (CEC 2008d), takes stock of action in the six priority areas and identifies the challenges for the future.

In the area of reconciliation the Commission launched a formal consultation of the social partners at European level on a possible European approach and action regarding “professional, private and family life, including the promotion of flexible working arrangements, the development of crèche and care services and the possible revision of existing provisions regarding maternity leave and parental leave” (CEC 2007a: 4). Building on the theme of reconciliation the Spring Council also proposed the European Alliance for Families as a platform for exchanging Member State best practice and knowledge around pro-family policies in relation to demographic challenges (CEC 2008a). The European Alliance for Families placed considerable emphasis on the demographic changes facing the EU, a theme stressed by the Commission’s Communication on the demographic future of Europe (CEC 2006a) and the Communication on promoting solidarity between the generations (CEC 2007b). This first communication recognised the challenges of ageing populations, declining birth rates and the role that policies on gender equality could play in meeting those challenges in raising the employment rate of women and supporting individual fertility choices of women and men. The second again stressed these themes and recognised the importance of the range of policies required to support sustainable fertility and employment levels, stating that:

the countries which have implemented global policies to promote equality between women and men, have developed integrated systems for the supply of services and individual entitlement to parental leave for both men and women, have invested in the quality of childcare services and have moved towards the more flexible organisation of working time generally have both high birth rates and high levels of female employment (CEC 2007b: 5)

In line with these developments, in October 2008 the Commission adopted a comprehensive reconciliation package consisting of four main components: a Communication on Work Life Balance (CEC 2008e), two legislative proposals and a report on progress made by EU countries towards the childcare provision set out at Barcelona. The legislative proposals relate to maternity leave and equal treatment for the self employment and their assisting spouses. Under the maternity leave proposals the Commission has proposed to raise the minimum maternity leave entitlement from 14 to 18 weeks (CEC 2008f). The proposals also include:

- the principle of full pay during the 18 weeks maternity leave (with possible ceilings at the Member State level not below sickness pay).
- the right to ask for flexible work on return from maternity leave arrangements (no obligation for the employer to accept);

- increased flexibility for women over when to take their maternity leave, before or after giving birth.
- tighter restrictions on the preparation for dismissal *during* maternity leave.

The proposal on the self employed seeks to ensure that self-employed women have the choice to be covered by a social security scheme providing for maternity leave (this is currently available in 19 of the 27 Member States) (CEC 2008f). Furthermore the proposed changes seek to extend social security protection, at the level available for the self employed, to assisting spouses who contribute to the activities of the family business without being an employee or partner.

The Commission has not ignored other forms of leave and has consulted the European Social partners in 2006 and 2007. In July 2008 the Social Partners decided to launch formal negotiations on updating the existing EU rules on parental leave (currently based on a 1996 Directive). Accordingly, the social partners have a period of nine months to carry out their negotiations and, should they reach an agreement to revise the current directive, the Commission will then make a proposal to give their agreement legislative effect

The Commission has also placed great emphasis on the importance of the gender pay gap by publishing a Communication in July of 2007. The advisory committee on Gender Equality for women and men also published an opinion in early 2007 (CEC 2007c; 2007d). Closing the gender gap is one of the key concerns highlighted in the 'Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010' (CEC 2006a). The Commission communication sets out ways that the EU can address the gender pay gap recognising limited movement in recent year. The Communication identified four fields of action:

- ensuring better application of existing legislation,
- fighting the pay gap as an integral part of Member States' employment policies
- promoting equal pay among employers, especially through social responsibility and
- supporting the exchange of good practices between Member States with the involvement of the social partners.

The improved application of the legislation also involves raising awareness and consideration of how current laws could be adapted.

Other developments in the field of Gender Equality policy and infrastructure have included the establishment of the European Institute for Gender Equality with a proposed budget of € 50 million for the five year period from 2007. The members of the Management Board have been appointed and the Institute will provide technical support for gender equality policies. The 2007 Year of Equality for All saw the first ever European Equality Summit (January 2007) with the second one being staged in September 2008.

The last two years have also seen considerable developments in the area of flexicurity with the adoption of common principles (CEC 2007e), promotion under the Portuguese presidency and the output from the Commission's Expert Group established in 2006 (CEC 2007f). The adoption of flexicurity as an overarching principle of the Employment strategy in the Joint Employment Report and of the three priority areas (CEC 2008g) is an area where gender mainstreaming can make an important

contribution. The adoption of the European Commission's Common principles on flexicurity recognises the importance of gender equality in one of the eight principles. However gender mainstreaming is required throughout the full range of flexicurity policies and "concerted action" is required to address gender gaps on the labour market (CEC 2008b: 9) and avoid further gaps opening up.

Member State and Regions

At the Member State level developments have been marked by patchy progress in the area of gender mainstreaming, changing institutional arrangements but also some examples of good practice. However nowhere is there a consistent and integrated example of gender mainstreaming of labour market policy and our review of the 2007 NRPs, based on national expert assessments, illustrates this (see chapter 4, § 4.3).

To some extent consistency in policy has been affected by changes in government and elections over the last twelve months. These changes illustrate the political swings that can occur in all Member States but perhaps also a lack of political consensus on approaches to gender equality that can not withstand changes in government. As such a new government may provide new impetus towards gender equality or weaken advances made under previous political leadership (see boxes 3.1 and 3.3).

3.1 Infrastructure for gender mainstreaming

In a number of member States there have been moves to integrate gender equality institutions with those bodies dealing with equality based on race, age and disability for example (see box 3.1). Although this integration of equality bodies may enhance the scope for dealing with additional layers of inequality - for example that experienced by women from ethnic minorities – it may also dilute the focus on gender equality or reduce the representation of gender issues at the top echelons of government. These fears were reflected in the rejection of the draft of Equality Act in Estonia in May 2008. The Estonian Women's Association Round Table lobbied against the abolition of the position of Gender Equality Commissioner and transfer of tasks to an Equality Commissioner with responsibility for unequal treatment and discrimination on the basis of race, nationality, colour, religion, belief, age, disability or sexual orientation. Similarly the Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment in Poland has responsibility for all types of equality and its establishment has delayed progress on National Action Plans for women and cooperation with the new Department for Women, Family, and Counteracting Discrimination.

BOX 3.1: Changing gender equality infrastructures

In **France** the Ministry of equality was abolished and replaced by a secretariat of state for 'solidarity', covering older people, the disabled and women's rights. This new secretariat falls under the auspices of the Ministry of labour, Industrial Relations and the Family. Previously priority was given to gender equality in the form of a full-scale Ministry and, in the new of the National Expert, this downgrading represents a regression as far as institutional representation is concerned.

In the **Czech Republic** an Antidiscrimination Act has not been implemented even though it was approved by the Parliament in 2008. The subsequent rejection by the President of the Czech Republic means that protection against discrimination has been set back several years and remains weak. As a result the Czech Republic does not meet the European standard and comply with Directives against discrimination on the basis of gender and other characteristics affecting access to the labour market.

In **Finland** the Programme of the new Government (2007-2011) continues to put emphasis on gender equality. Equality has been given a central position, along with the financial policy, in the Government's Programme for the first time. A majority of ministers are women in the Government and there is a commitment to promote equal pay and women's labour market position with far reaching programmes and legislation.

Gender equality has long been one of the priorities of **Lithuanian** social policy. Systematic implementation of programmes, projects and initiatives has been aimed at improving of situation of women and men. The highest recognition of the achievements of Lithuania with respect to gender equality has been the European Union's decision to establish the European Institute for Gender Equality in Vilnius.

In **Hungary** the process for the development of a Regional Network for Equal Opportunities began in 2004 and there are now Coordination Offices for Equal Opportunities in 16 of the 19 county seats. The Network aims to prevent all forms of discrimination and to develop cooperation with organisations and institutions operating within each region in order to reduce prejudice. The main target groups of the Network are women, children, the Roma community, the elderly and people with disabilities.

In **Italy** the new government has extended gender budgeting and new initiatives for gender mainstreaming but at the same time removed of the Commissioner for Equality from her office by decree (of the Ministry of Labour) following her criticism of the government's lack of gender mainstreaming in employment policy proposals.

Source: National Reports.

Our review also finds positive examples of the development of infrastructure likely to support gender mainstreaming and, although they are rarely integrated into all aspects of policy making, they are worth highlighting. Box 3.2 details developments in Belgium and Spain where new legislation signals significant advances in Gender Mainstreaming, albeit from different starting points.

BOX 3.2: Advances in Gender Mainstreaming

In **Belgium** a gender mainstreaming law was adopted in 2007. This law amends that of March 6, 1996 that was adopted to ensure the application of the resolutions of the 1995 World Conference of Women in Beijing. The new law aims at guaranteeing the integration of a gender dimension in all federal policies. It constitutes a huge step forward in terms of gender equality. The 2007 law stipulates that at the beginning of its term the government should present the strategic objectives towards the promotion and/or realisation of gender equality in all policy domains that it will pursue during its term. The financial credits that are reserved within each federal department for gender equality actions should be explained in a "gender note". Each Minister watches over the implementation of the strategic objectives and annually presents all actions, measures and projects that were initiated to realise them. Each Minister also controls the integration of a gender dimension in all strategic planning instruments and approves gender indicators to measure progress at the organisational level and in terms of the policies that were implemented. For each legislative or regulatory project, a "gender test" should be done, i.e. an ex-ante evaluation of the impact of the project on the respective situation of women and men. Each Minister is also held to establish gender indicators and statistics that are broken down by sex in all of his/her competence areas. Mid-term the government submits an intermediary report and at the end of its term a final report to Parliament explaining the policies that were designed and implemented in the framework of the 2007 law and comparing the situation at the beginning and the end of its term.

Spain has shown considerable progress in order to overcome its backwardness regarding gender equality issues. In the institutional domain, there have been recent and remarkable initiatives that attempt to foster women's empowerment, the eradication of discriminatory practices, and the adoption of the gender mainstreaming approach in public policy. As a sign of the political will to

comply with those objectives, the government created at the beginning of its second term of office (in March 2008) the Ministry of Equality (*Ministerio de Igualdad*). This new governmental department is entitled to promote and apply public policies in the area of gender equality, the fight against discrimination and domestic violence. In particular it is in charge of the preparation and development of any actions and measures aiming to guarantee equal treatment and equal opportunities in all ambits, especially between women and men, and the promotion of political and social participation of women.

Source: National Reports.

3.2 Equal opportunities policy frameworks , actions plans etc.

Aside from the good examples of integrated Gender Mainstreaming highlighted in box 3.2 there are numerous examples of policy frameworks and action plans across the 27 Member States. These initiatives relate to gender pay gap, segregation, reconciliation, provision of services, gender budgeting, governance, violence against women and trafficking (see tab. 3.1).

Reflecting the priorities at the European level we see Member States picking up the theme of reconciliation and concerns around the persistence of the gender pay gap. In discussing the equality infrastructure developments at the Member State level a number of experts highlight initiatives around reconciliation with concerns around Barcelona targets and a more equal sharing of the household labour driving initiatives (see box 3.3). In most Member States reconciliation policies around childcare form part of a National Programme or Action plan on equal opportunities. However, there are sometimes contradictory policies within the same Member State where reconciliation policies do not necessarily mesh with policies aimed at promoting the participation of, for example, single parents (illustrated by the case of Czech Republic, see box 3.3). On the other hand there are examples of innovative approaches to reconciliation issues for example in the case of Finland where the inequalities among employers of bearing the cost of reconciliation policies is considered and the levelling out of employer costs of parenthood between female- and male-dominated sector accompanies the encouragement of fathers to share family leave with mothers (National Report: Finland).

Box 3.3: Developments in Reconciliation Policy

In **Ireland** an Office of the Minister of Children (OMC) has been established with a dedicated Minister of State for Children responsible for all children's services, including the childcare programme. The Ministry for Children integrates seven different government departments and agencies which previously had responsibility for early childhood and family policy in Ireland. Related to this an Expert Advisory Group for a new National Childcare Training Strategy was established in 2007. This Group is intended to provide the framework for all future training across the childcare sector.

In **Finland** the level of maternity and parental leave allowances have been raised (the maternity allowance from 70% or 90% for the first 56 days of maternity leave and the parental leave to 75% of salary for the first 30 working days). In an effort to encourage men to take leave both parents receive the higher allowance if they share the parental leave. In addition, amendments were made to the 2003 "father's month" so that it could be used more flexibly. These changes have been accompanied by family leave publicity campaigns focused on fathers, spreading information about leave via direct mail, a telephone campaign, advertising and PR.

In **France** a Charter on parenthood was established in 2006, signed by 30 companies so far. The charter has three objectives 1) changing companies' images of parenthood; 2) creating a favourable

environment for employees who are parents, especially for pregnant women; and 3) respecting the principle of non-discrimination in the careers of employees who are parents.

In the **Czech Republic** recent reform to public finances threatens reconciliation of low-income families with children, single parents (women) and mothers of young children. In particular they will affect families through the increase in indirect taxes (affecting prices of basic goods), the abolition of benefits for single parents which do not take into account the absence of second income in single parent households and the need for an early return to the labour market.

In **Slovakia** the 2006 Government adopted measures for reconciliation of work and family life which the national expert argues could be “one of the most relevant documents related to gender equality and family friendly policy”. The objective of the policy was to promote employment for people with family responsibilities and limit tensions between work and family life and discrimination that they may face on the labour market resulting from their need to take care of their families.

Source: National Reports.

Developments to address the gender pay gap are covered in more detail in chapter 6 of this report but table 3.1 shows where national policymakers have been active in this area and there have been renewed commitments to addressing gender pay gaps. However, the extent to which these policy initiatives are followed through and have real impact at the level of the labour market will depend on the nature of implementation and the extent to which the multitude of factors shaping the gender pay gap are addressed. As ever the implementation of such measures will be key, for example the coverage of the public sector only in the proposed United Kingdom Equalities bill will do little to address the gender pay gap in the private sector (National Report: United Kingdom).

BOX 3.4: Gender Budgeting at the National and Regional Level

In **Austria** a ‘Gender Budgeting Tools’ (*Arbeitshilfe für Gender Budgeting*) was published in November 2007 to aid the actual implementation of gender budgeting in public administration. The ‘Tools’ are to contribute to identifying the different effects certain kinds of public revenue and spending have on women and men, thereby revealing their impact on gender relations with a view to a reassessment of priorities and the redistribution of funds. The aim is to establish a gender sensitive and gender relevant budget.

In **Belgium** the 2009 budget will compulsorily contain a gender note. This is stipulated by the 2007 gender mainstreaming law. The addition of such gender notes in the budget should be checked by government commissioners and financial inspectors.

In **Germany** In 2003 the government’s inter-ministerial working group on gender mainstreaming founded a sub working group on gender budgeting, which initiated a feasibility study on gender budgeting. The study was conducted from 2005 to 2006 and published in 2007. The federal government comments among others on the results, that the proposals in parts are linked with extraordinary bureaucratic expenses and that the ministries are already obliged to the principal of gender mainstreaming including budget decisions. In other words, there are no federal activities to implement gender budgeting planned at the moment.

In **Hungary** the implementation of a *pilot project on gender budgeting* is underway in cooperation between the University of Pécs with the municipalities of Pécs and Komló. Its result will be used to audit the budgets of other municipalities from the point of view of gender, and also to implement this method in the central budgeting process.

In **Italy** Gender budgeting is already widespread at the regional and local level. Since 2000, when the Equal Opportunities Department and the Equal Opportunities Commission promoted a congress on Gender budgeting, many local experiences have been carried out (by provinces, municipalities and regions). In 2002, with the aim of spreading gender budgeting and best practices on equal opportunities, a “*Network of Provinces and Municipalities*” (“*Rete tra Province e Comuni per la diffusione di azioni sulle pari opportunità*”) has been established. Recently, the national Financial Law for the year 2008 (L. 244, December 2007) decided to experiment and to test the gender

budgeting policy at the national level: in particular the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Research and the Ministry of Labour have been involved in this testing.

In **Sweden** gender mainstreaming of the budget process focuses on three different areas: performance and financial management of government agencies, the decision-making material on which economic policy is based, and statistics disaggregated by sex. The objective of this work is to engender the budget process in accordance with the Council of Europe’s definition of “gender budgeting” (Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality 2006).

Source: National Reports.

In addition to the two key themes of reconciliation and the gender pay gap there is evidence of gender being taken into account in wider policy development and delivery. In particular a number of experts point examples of gender budgeting at the Member State level and its expansion to more areas of national government financing (box 3.4) and the consideration of gender in the provision of public services (see box 3.5).

BOX 3.5: Gender Equality in Respect to the Provision of Services

In the **Czech Republic** the recent rejection of the against discrimination act by the President means that The Republic does not meet the European standards and directives in terms of protection against discrimination in the provision of services.

In **Luxembourg** the Parliament adopted a law implementing the European Directive 2004/113/EC on the principle of equal treatment with regards to access to and the supply of goods and services. The Directive applies to services such as housing, banking and insurance. In line with other Member States Luxembourg had to transpose this Directive into national legislation by the end of 2007.

In the **UK** a Gender Duty on Public authorities came into force in April 2007 placing a statutory ‘general duty’ on all public authorities to have due regard to the need to (a) ‘eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment’ and (b) ‘promote equality of opportunity between men and women’. In 2006 a similar duty was introduced across all public bodies in relation to disability.

Source: National Reports.

The full range of national policies with respect to gender equality can be seen in table 3.1. Here we highlight the policies identified by the national experts organised by themes. More details of these policies and their inclusion in the NRPs at the Member State level is explored in chapter 4 of this report (§ 4.3).

Table 3.1: Gender Specific Policies Highlighted by National Experts

General Action Plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action plans for gender equality of the Flemish and the French community (BE) • The 2008-2011 Strategic Plan for Equal Opportunities (ES) Action Plan of Disabled Women (ES) • Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2008 - 2011 (FI) • Set up of the Council for Gender Equality (HU) • Plans for Equal Opportunities (HU) • Elaboration of the National Strategy and Action Plan for Gender Equality (HU) • National Plan against discrimination (IT) • National Women’s Strategy (IE)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality for Women Measure (IE) • Strategy of informing society about gender equality issues was started (LV) • Support to capacity-building for implementation of labour market and gender equality policy (LV) • Programme on gender equality (LV) • Gender equality action plan 2007 - 2008 (MT) • Inclusion of gender equality as one of the 10 priorities defined for the National Strategic Reference Framework (PO) • Observatory of Gender Equality (PO) • Monitoring and evaluating the action plan to implement the strategy (RO)
Key Legal Changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The « gender mainstreaming law » (BE) • Gender Equality Act (EE) • Gender Mainstreaming of the National Strategic Development Plan 2007-2013 (EL) • Law on gender equality (ES) • Draft of a new Law on equal treatment and non-discrimination (ES) • Form of Evaluation of legislative and regulatory measures on the equality of women and men (LU) • Reform of Positive Actions (LU) • Equal Treatment Act (PL) • Equalities Bill (UK)
Gender Pay Gap
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study the pay gap (CY, IE) • Gender disaggregated wage statistics on enterprise level (DK) • Equal Pay Programme (FI) • 23 March 2006 law on equal pay (FR) • November 2007 conference: reduction of pay gaps (FR) • Addressing the gender pay gap (LT) • Measures against unexplained pay differentials between women and men in the government by 2010 (SE) • Closing gender pay gap (SK) • Women and Work Commission Action Plan (UK)
Reconciliation (childcare services)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reform of the childcare benefit (AT)

- Expansion of childcare facilities (**AT**) Creation of an additional 2600 places for under 3s by the region of Brussels Capital and the French-speaking and Flemish communities. (**BE**)
- Flemish Action Plan for flexible and occasional childcare (**BE**)
- Support of part-time work for mothers of small children (**CZ**)
- legal entitlement for subsidized child care for 3 year old children (**DE**)
- Child care facilities (**ES**)
- Introduction of Kindergarten programme for poor families living in disadvantaged regions (**HU**)
- New Childcare Support System (**IE**)
- Nursery plan (**IT**)
- Ensuring good quality and affordable childcare (**LT**)
- Implementation of the “*maisons relais*” (**LU**)
- National Standards of Child Day Care Services (**MT**)
- Funding to support employers who offer child-care services (**MT**)
- Childcare: focus on pre-school (several phases) (**PL**)

Reconciliation (work life balance)

- ‘Fathers’ leave’ (**AT**)
- Changes in parental allowance; equality for fathers taking care of their child from 6 weeks of age (**CZ**)
- Elterngeld Parental allowance to compensates parents for income lost when caring (**DE**)
- Renewals in the family leave system and in the level of allowances (**FI**)
- Reducing employer costs caused by parenthood (**FI**)
- Campaign for fathers to take more family leave (**FI**)
- Charter on parenthood (**FR**)
- Increased Maternity Leave (**IE**)
- National observatory on family (**IT**)
- Full pay maternity leave increased from 13 to 14 weeks (**MT**)
- Vazalo Act for lone parents (**NL**)
- Reconciliation of Work/Family – enhancement of fathers leaves and rights at work (**PO**)
- Universalisation of maternity / paternity rights to all workers, independently of qualifying condition (**PO**)
- Child raising allowance (**SE**)
- Gender equality bonus to share parental leave (**SE**)
- Reconciliation of work and family life (**SK**)

Segregation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures for ‘non-traditional’ training and occupation choice of girls (AT) • More women in decision making (initiative from the ministry of equality) (DK) • Training teachers and interventions to promote gender equality in schools (EL) • Observatory of Equality in Education (EL) • Action Plan of the Labour and Social Security Inspection for the surveillance of effective gender parity in private enterprises (ES) • New guidelines for promotion of gender equal opportunities in the public sector (ES) • Promotion of female entrepreneurship (FI) • Recognition of women in family business (MT) • Overture of armed forces to the employment of women in all military specialities (PO) • Support to female entrepreneurship (IE, PO) • Compulsory equality plans in state-owned enterprises (PO) • Gender role and stereotypes (RO) • Guidance of girls and boys in school and out of school activities, inc. non-traditional choices (SI) • Development of indicators for monitoring equal gender opportunities in education (SI) • Support for starting female enterprises and discount interest rates for female owned enterprises (SI) • Programme for promotion of women in science (SI) • Action plan for geographical and occupational mobility in technical occupations (SI)
Female Participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidies for female returners (AT) • Measures for encouraging employers to hire jobless people – incl. single mothers /and/or mothers with children under 3 years old. (BG) • Program “Supporting Maternity as part of National Programme to increase female employment (BG) • Train inactive women to return to labour force through HRDA programs (CY) • New agreement for the promotion of the access to the labour market of women older than 45 (ES) • New subsidy for enterprises in the case of job reallocation due to pregnancy, lactation or professional disease (ES) • Programme for the labour market reintegration of women on child care leave and inactive (HU) • Increase quality of jobs (LT) • Tax credits for women returners (MT) • Abolishment of the general tax credit (NL)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise of combination tax credit (IE, NL) • Training obligation for lone parents on social assistance (NL) • Women working part-time/Taskforce ‘Part-time Plus’ (NL) • Policies focusing on women from ethnic minority groups (Direction group Women from ethnic minorities and employment and Project A thousand and one strength) (NL)
Governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality label (FR) • Pilot project on gender budgeting (HU) • Gender Duty on Public authorities (UK) • Public Service Agreement’ targets on the ‘Deliver on Gender Equality Initiative (UK)
Miscellaneous
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund FWAs through ESF—pilot programme (CY) • Gender studies and research on gender issues (EL) • A renewal of the statistical system in employment administration (FI) • National Observatory on discrimination and sexual violence (IT) • Individualisation of social rights (LU) • Women and equality in collective agreements (LU) • Tax relief for the purchase of household-related service (SE) • Analysis and research of sexual and other violence at work and mechanisms against it (SI) • Informing and consciousness-raising about sexual and other violence and possible procedures in cases of sexual and other violence (SI) • Support to employers in creating policies against sexual and other violence (SI) • Analysis of cases of gender based discrimination in employment and work (SI) • Public consciousness raising about equal opportunities at work and employment (SI)

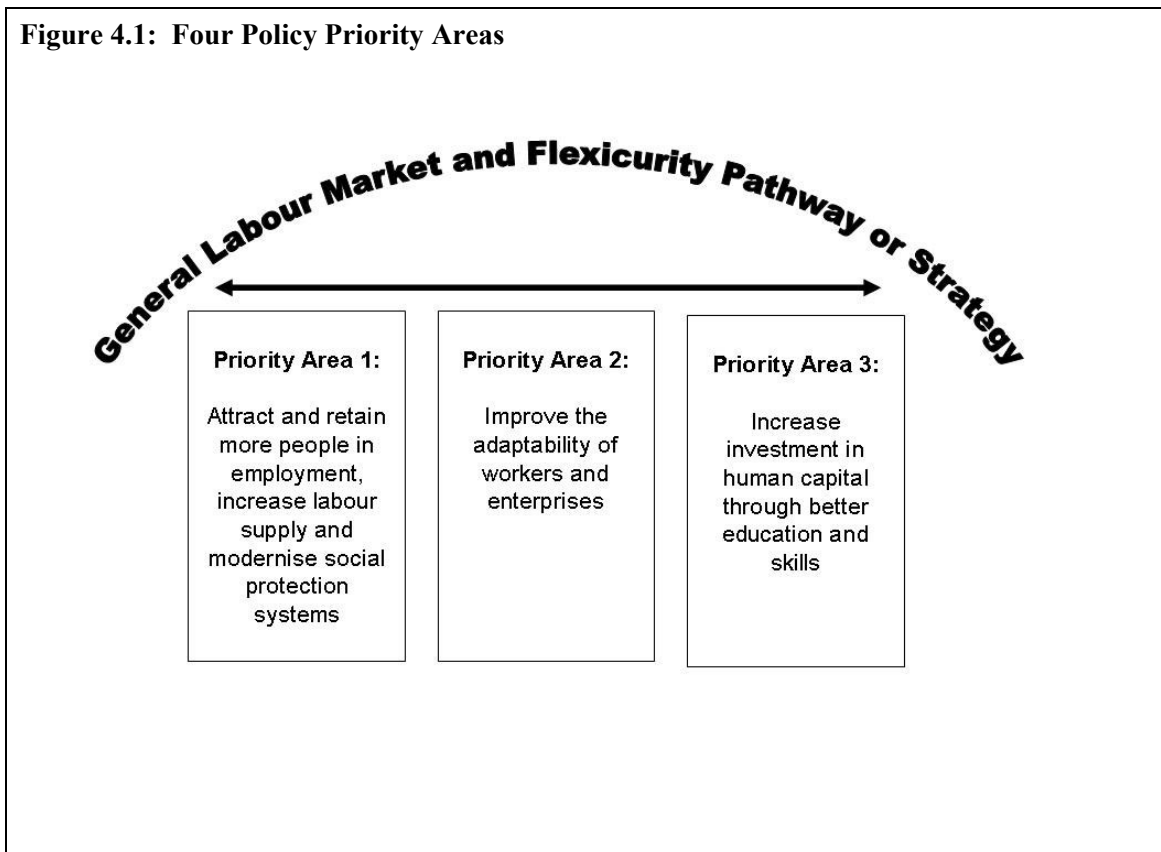
Source: National Reports.

4. POLICY NEEDS AND CHALLENGES WITH RESPECT TO GENDER

4.1 Introduction

This section reviews the position of gender with respect to the policy areas identified in the next phase of the Lisbon process (CEC 2008g). Here we have tried to use the three policy areas of ‘attracting and retaining more people in employment’, ‘improve the adaptability of workers and enterprises’ and ‘increasing investment in human capital through better education and skills’ and the overarching theme of the general labour market situation and flexicurity to both organise our summaries of policies but also provide sound links with the current thinking behind the European Employment Strategy (fig. 4.1). These four priority areas not only have direct links with the integrated guidelines (Employment GLs 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 22, 23 and 24) but also fit with the framework many Member States used to present their NRPs.

Figure 4.1: Four Policy Priority Areas



Methodologically our analysis is based on the work of the 27 national experts of the *Expert Group on Gender and Employment* (EGGE). Each expert prepared their report to the specification of a standard work programme design to elicit relevant comparative data from the NRPs in their Member State. In practice we faced some difficulties presented by the timing of the delivery of the NRPs in relation to the synthesising process and in particular delays in the national delivery of the NRPs. As a result some experts had to base their assessments on draft documents. Other challenges arose from the timing of recent elections across the EU that meant governments of different

political persuasions (and approaches to gender equality) occupied positions of power in the periods before and after the NRP process. A similar, and still uneven impact at the time of writing, can be seen in the rapidly changing economic conditions. The NRPs were presented in October at a time when the full scale of the current economic crisis was still unfolding and some of the expert work was done over the summer of 2008 when many were not aware of the scale of the looming economic changes.

We have been fortunate to be able to rely on the expert assessment of members of the EGGE network on the situation in their own country and in synthesising this work we draw heavily on their views and opinions. However, these assessments are the work of 27 individual national experts and it is important to recognise that differences will remain in the interpretation of ‘adequacy’ and ‘relevance’ for gender that not only reflect the particularities of the national situation but also the variety of ‘starting points’ that exist in relation to gender mainstreaming and gender equality. Our synthesis attempts to contextualise the impact of these institutional and socio-economic differences on each expert’s analysis but not neutralise them.

In this assessment we provide both a quantitative and qualitative assessment based on experts’ subjective analysis and evaluation of the position of gender and Member State’s current policy development and the NRP process. The combination of quantitative grids (in particular, grid 1 and grid 2 below, grid 3 and grid 4 in chapter 7) and qualitative national expert assessments (in the form of boxes) provide the main means of the analysis.

4.2 Gender Specific Policies

National experts were asked to provide an assessment of recent relevant gender specific policies at the national level. They had to consider all important current gender specific policies as well as announcements of new policy initiatives. For each policy initiative, they were asked to assess the *priority* of with respect to areas significant for gender equality at the national level, taking into account the CSR or PTW adopted by the Council in the field of gender equality or reconciliation. They were also asked to specify the *status of the policy initiative*, hence distinguishing between announcement of a new policy, enactment, implementation and evaluation. They were then asked to specify the *adequacy* of the policy initiative with respect to its specific goals (distinguishing between adequate, partly adequate, not adequate). Finally, they had to point out the *expected impact* of the policy initiative for the promotion of gender equality, saying if according to the information available and/or their own judgement the impact is full, significant, and partial or none. Grid 1 reports some quantitative and qualitative information on gender specific policies in Member States, based on the national experts’ assessment.

The total number of gender specific policies considered by national experts is 125, with an average of 4.6 policy initiatives per country. Of the 26 countries considered, roughly one third reported between 1 and 3 policies (BG, CZ, DK, EE, IE, LU, LT, PL, SE, SK); another third reported between 4 and 6 policies (AT, BE, CY, EL, FR, HU, IT, LV, MT, UK); the remaining countries reported over 6 policies (DE, NL, PT, RO with 7 policies; FI with 8 policies; ES with 9 policies and SI with 14 policies).

Of all gender specific policies considered by national experts about one fourth (i.e. 32) are announcements made by policy makers. Not surprisingly, there is a high concentration of announcements of new policies in some of the countries reporting an

overall high number of gender specific policies (SI with 5 announcements, RO with 4 announcements and PT with 3 announcements).

Out of the 125 policy measures considered by national experts only 11 have an evaluation². The very low share of policy measures with an evaluation (9%) is due to the fact that most of the policies considered are relatively recent. But this is only a small part of the story. Unfortunately, the evaluation of policies is little developed in a large number of countries. As a matter of fact, only eight countries (DE, EL, FI, FR, HU, LV, RO, UK) have included at least one policy for which an evaluation is available.

The overall assessment of the 125 gender specific policies identified by national experts is relatively positive: 63% of all policies record high priority; 92% of all policies are considered adequate or partly adequate; finally, for 53% of cases the expected impact of the policy initiative considered by national experts is full or significant.

Data disaggregated by country provide a more diversified picture. In particular, there is a group of countries (DK, EL, ES, LV, RO) for which the national experts assert that the majority of the gender specific policies (existing in their own country) have a low priority. This can be interpreted as a signal of lack of policy intervention in critical areas for gender equality in these countries. The picture by country is also quite diversified in terms of expected impact. More precisely, there is a relatively large group of countries (AT, CY, CZ, DK, FR, IT, MT, RO) for which the national experts affirm that the majority of the gender specific policies (present in their own country) have a low impact (partial or none). This can be interpreted as an incident of lack of efficacy of the policy intervention (for example, due to lack of financial resources).

The major areas of policy intervention can be grouped as follows:

- major legislative provisions (*Gender Mainstreaming Law* in BE; *Gender Equality Act* in EE; *Law on Gender Equality* and *Law on Equal treatment* in ES; *Law on Equality Pay* in FR; individualisation of social rights in LU; *Equal Treatment Act* in PL; “*Vazalo Act*” to support lone parents to combine work and family in the NL; *Gender Duty on Public Authorities* in the UK)
- national action plan for gender equality (such as the *Action Plan for GE* in BE; the *Action Plan for GE* and the *Equal Pay Programme* in FI; the *Action Plan for the surveillance of effective gender parity in private firms* and the *Action Plan for Disabled Women* in ES; Charter on parenthood in FR; *Action Plan for GE* in HU; *National Women’s Strategy* in IE; *National Plan against Discrimination* in IT; *Action Plan for GE* in MT; *Women and Work Commission Action Plan* in the UK)
- gender mainstreaming, positive actions, etc. (gender mainstreaming of National Strategic Development Plan in EL; reform of Positive Action in LU; Equal Opportunities in the Public Sector in ES; *Equality for Women Measure* in IE; compulsory equality plans in state enterprises in PT; inspection on implementation of legislation on EO in SI)
- childcare services, childcare benefits, tax deduction for childcare (AT, BE, DE, IE, IT, MT, LT, LU, PL, SE)
- maternal/ parental/ paternal leave and/or allowance (CZ, DE, FI, IE, MT, PT)
- female returners (AT, DE, HU, MT)
- training (students in non traditional areas, teachers to promote GE in schools, lone parents in social assistance, etc.) (CY, DE, IE, NL, SI)
- flexible working arrangements, including PT for mothers (CY, IT)
- female entrepreneurship (FI, IE, PT, SI)

² Obviously, a policy in order to be evaluated has to be implemented, following its enactment.

- gender studies, research projects, observatories, conferences (CY, EL, FR, IT, PT, SI)
- statistics disaggregated by gender, indicators for GE (DK, DE, SI).

GRID 1: “Gender Specific Policies” in Member States

	Policy measures	PRIORITY		STATUS of the policy initiative				ADEQUACY of the policy initiative			EXPECTED IMPACT				REMARKS (area of policy – see <i>legend</i> for abbreviations)
		High	Low	1	2	3	4	Adequate	Partly adequate	Not adequate	Full	Significant	Partial	None	
AT – Austria n. %	5 100	5 100	- -	1 20	1 20	3 60	- -	5 100	- -	- -	- -	1 20	4 80	- -	Childcare facilities; childcare benefit; female returners; non traditional training; fathers' leave
BE – Belgium n. %	4 100	4 100	- -	- -	1 25	3 75	- -	4 100	- -	- -	- -	2 50	2 50	- -	GM Law; Flemish Action Plan for childcare; additional childcare facilities by Brussels Capital; Action Plan for Gender Equality
BG – Bulgaria n. %	2 100	2 100	- -	- -	- -	2 100	- -	2 100	- -	- -	2 100	- -	- -	- -	Program “Supporting Maternity”; measures for encouraging employers to hire unemployed single mothers / mothers of small children (< 3yrs)
CY – Cyprus n. %	4 100	2 50	2 50	1 25	1 25	2 50	- -	- -	1 25	3 75	- -	- -	3 75	1 25	Training women returners; pilot program on flexible working arrangements; study on gender pay gap
CZ – Czech Rep. n. %	3 100	2 64	1 33	2 64	- -	1 33	- -	1 33	2 64	- -	- -	1 33	2 64	- -	Parental leave; paid paternal leave (69% of salary, as mothers); support to part-time for mothers of small children
DE – Germany n. %	7 100	4 57	3 43	- -	1 14	3 43	3 43	3 43	4 57	- -	- -	4 57	3 43	- -	Childcare services; parental allowance; tax deduction for childcare; Earnings Statistic Act; women returners; Equal Treatment Act; technical training
DK – Denmark n. %	2 100	- -	2 100	1 50	1 50	- -	- -	- -	2 100	- -	- -	- -	2 100	- -	Gender disaggregated statistics on enterprise level; more women in decision making
EE – Estonia n. %	1 100	1 100	- -	- -	- -	1 100	- -	1 100	- -	- -	- -	1 100	- -	- -	Gender Equality Act
EL – Greece n. %	4 100	1 25	3 75	- -	- -	3 75	1 25	4 100	- -	- -	1 25	2 50	- -	1 25	Gender mainstreaming of National Strategic Dev. Plan; training teachers to promote GE in schools; Gender studies; Observatory of Equality in Education

ES – Spain														Law on GE; Strategic Plan for EO; Law on equal treatment; Action Plan for the surveillance of effective gender parity in private firms; childcare services; EO in the Pub. Sector; subsidy for firms in case of job reallocation due to pregnancy; promotion of access to employment. for women > 45; Action Plan for Disabled women
n.	9	2	7	2	6	1	-	8	1	-	-	7	2	-
%	100	22	78	22	67	11	-	89	11	-	-	78	22	-
FI – Finland														Action Plan for GE; Equal Pay Programme; campaign for fathers to take family leave; statistical system in employment. administration; female entrepreneurship; reducing employer cost caused by parenthood; family leave system
n.	8	7	1	-	3	4	1	-	8	-	-	4	4	-
%	100	88	12	-	38	50	12	-	100	-	-	50	50	-
FR – France														Law on Equality Pay; conference on reduction of gender pay gap; equality label; charter on parenthood
n.	4	2	2	2	-	-	2	1	3	-	-	1	2	1
%	100	50	50	50	-	-	50	25	75	-	-	25	50	25
HU – Hungary														Action Plan for GE; set up of Council for GE; pilot project on gender budgeting; plans for EO
n.	4	4	-	1	-	2	1	1	3	-	-	2	2	-
%	100	100	-	25	-	50	25	25	75	-	-	50	50	-
IE – Ireland														Increased maternity leave; new Childcare Support System
n.	2	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	2	-	-
%	100	100	-	-	50	50	-	-	50	50	-	100	-	-
IT – Italy														Childcare services; National Observatory on discrimination/ sexual violence; National Plan against Discrimination.; National Observatory on the Family
n.	4	2	2	2	1	1	-	1	3	-	-	1	3	-
%	100	50	50	50	25	25	-	25	75	-	-	25	75	-
LT - Lithuania														Childcare services; addressing the gender pay gap; increase quality of jobs
n.	3	3	-	3	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	3	-	-
%	100	100	-	100	-	-	-	33	66	-	-	100	-	-
LU – Luxembourg														Evaluation of measures on GE; individualisation of social rights; reform of Positive Action; childcare (implementation of “maison relais”); women and equality in collective agreements
n.	3	3	-	-	1	2	-	3	-	-	-	2	1	-
%	100	100	-	-	33	67	-	100	-	-	-	67	33	-
LV – Latvia														Programme for implementation of GE; Strategy of informing society about GE; Support to capacity-building for implementation of labour market policies and GE policy
n.	4	1	3	-	-	3	1	4	-	-	1	2	-	1
%	100	25	75	-	-	75	25	100	-	-	25	50	-	25
MT – Malta														Women returners; recognition of women in family business; increased maternity leave; funding for employers offering childcare; Action Plan for GE
n.	6	4	2	1	1	4	-	-	2	4	-	-	2	4
%	100	67	33	17	17	67	-	-	33	67	-	-	33	67

NL – Netherlands																Training for lone parents on social assistance; “Vazalo Act” to support lone parents to combine work and care; women from ethnic minorities and employment; abolishment of general tax credit; raise of combination tax credit
n.	7	5	2	1	4	2	-	4	3	-	-	4	3	-		
%	100	71	29	14	57	29	-	57	43	-	-	57	43	-		
PL – Poland																
n.	2	2	-	1	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	2	-	-		Equal Treatment Act; childcare (focus on 3-5 yrs)
%	100	100	-	50	-	50	-	50	50	-	-	100	-	-		
PT – Portugal																
n.	7	4	3	3	2	2	-	4	3	-	3	3	1	-		Enhancement of fathers’ leaves; universalisation of maternity-paternity rights; female entrepreneurship; GE in the Nat. Strategy. Reference Framework; open access for women in armed forces; compulsory equality plans in state enterprises; GE Observatory
%	100	57	43	43	29	29	-	57	43	-	43	43	14	-		
RO – Romania																
n.	7	1	6	4	1	1	1	4	3	-	-	-	4	3		Legal frame; Institutional capacity; Economic life; Social life; Participation to decisions; Gender role and stereotypes; Monitoring and evaluating the action plan to implement the strategy
%	100	14	86	67	14	14	14	67	43	-	-	-	67	43		
SE – Sweden																
n.	3	1	2	-	-	3	-	-	1	2	-	-	3	-		Tax relief for purchase of household services; Gender equality bonus; Child raising allowance
%	100	33	67	-	-	100	-	-	33	67	-	-	100	-		
SI – Slovenia																
n.	14	9	5	5	8	1	-	13	1	-	-	12	2	-		Indicators for GE in education; education-training in non traditional areas; women in science; inspection on implementation of legislation on EO; consciousness raising about EO; research on violence at work; female entrepreneurship
%	100	64	36	36	57	7	-	93	7	-	-	86	14	-		
SK – Slovakia																
n.	2	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	1		Gender pay gap; reconciliation
%	100	100	-	50	50	-	-	-	100	-	-	-	50	50		
UK-United Kingdom																
n.	4	4	-	1	1	1	1	-	4	-	-	3	1	-		Gender Duty (public sector) to speed up progress towards GE; WWC (Women and Work Commission) Action Plan; Public Service Agreement targets; Equalities Bill
%	100	100	-	25	25	25	25	-	100	-	-	75	25	-		
EU27																
n.	125	79	46	32	35	47	11	65	50	10	7	59	47	12		
%	100	63	37	26	28	37	9	52	40	8	6	47	38	9		

Legend: Priority: The priority of a given policy initiative with respect to areas significant for gender equality, country specific recommendations and points to watch. *Status of policy initiative:* 1 announced; 2 enacted; 3 implemented; 4 evaluated. GE: Gender Equality; GM: Gender Mainstreaming; EO: Equal Opportunity

Source: National Reports on 2008 NRPs, Part A (Grid 1).

4.3 Employment policies: gender mainstreaming and gender impact assessment

National experts were asked to provide an assessment of recent employment policies at the national level. They had to consider all important current policies as well as new announcements of policy initiatives in the following four priority areas:

Priority Area 1: “Attract and retain more people in employment” (GLs 18, 19, 20)

Priority Area 2: “Improve the adaptability of workers and enterprises” (GLs 22 and 22)

Priority Area 3: “Increase investment in human capital through better education and skills” (GLs 23 and 24)

Priority Area 4: “The general labour market situation and flexicurity” (GL 17)

For any given policy initiative, they were asked to specify the *status of the policy initiative*, hence distinguishing between announcement of a new policy, enactment, implementation and evaluation. They were then to specify the *adequacy* of the gender mainstreaming of the policy initiative (distinguishing between adequate, partly adequate, none). Finally, they had to provide a *gender impact assessment* of the policy initiative, saying if the impact is negative, neutral or positive according to the information available and/or their own judgement. Grid 2 reports some quantitative information on employment policies in Member States, based on the national experts’ assessment.

The total number of policy measures considered by national experts is rather large: 357 for (EU26), with an average of 14,4 policies per country. However, there are significant differences across countries with respect to developments in employment policies.

To start, let us consider the total number of policy initiatives listed by national experts in their reports (Part A, Grid 2). It is possible to identify three broad groups:

- ♦ *a few new developments* in 12 countries: CY (9), CZ (8), DE (8), DK(9), FI (9), FR (5), IE (7), LU (9), LV (8), MT (11), NL (6), SK (7)
- ♦ *some new developments* in 7 countries: BE (15), EL(14), HU (17), IT (14), PL (14), PT (16), SI (13)
- ♦ *several new developments* in 7 countries: AT (18), BG (23), EE (27), ES (34), RO (41), SE (18), UK (27)

The number of policy initiatives considered for each country does not reflect, necessarily, the high/low degree of attention/innovation in employment policy. In fact, in some cases it might reflect the way in which “policy initiatives” are identified and structured (at the national level, in official documents; and/or by national experts, in their analysis). Moreover, the number of policy measures says nothing about their relevance for the labour market. Hence, the possible cases are rather diversified: on the one hand, a small number of marginal policy initiatives or a small number of important policy initiatives; on the other hand, a large number of rather marginal policy initiatives or a large number of policy initiatives, mostly important. Given the very large number of policies considered overall by national experts, it is not feasible to provide, for each policy, a description and an assessment from a gender perspective. Therefore we propose to proceed in three steps in order to make the best use of the detailed and rich information provided by experts in their national reports.

First, we will present an overall quantitative assessment of employment policies in terms of status of the policy initiatives, gender mainstreaming and gender impact assessment, basing the analysis on the synthetic answers given by national experts in their reports (here summarised in Grid 2).

Second, we will complement this simple (and rough) quantitative assessment with a qualitative analysis of developments in employment policies in Member States on the basis of a synthetic description of new developments in employment policies provided by experts.

Third, we will discuss GM and GIA focusing on four thematic issues: (a) gender pay gap and segregation; (b) reconciliation, childcare and care work; (c) female entrepreneurship; (d) flexicurity and gender mainstreaming. These themes have been identified by almost all experts as issues of major concern in the scope of gender equality.

i) An overall quantitative assessment of employment policies in terms of status of the policy initiatives, gender mainstreaming and gender impact assessment

About 44% of all employment policies considered by national experts falls under Priority Area 1 (*Attract and retain more people in employment*). This is the policy area receiving the greatest attention in a large number of countries (AT, BE, CZ, DE, EE, EL, HU, IT, LV, NL, SE, SI, UK). Priority Area 2 (*Improve the adaptability of workers and enterprises*) and Priority Area 3 (*Increase investment in human capital through better education and skills*) follow, with a 21.3% share each. Priority Area 2 records some attention in terms of number of policy initiatives in AT, BG, DK, FI, IT, PL, RO and UK, while Priority Area 3 in BE, BG, EE, ES, RO. Almost all countries records a small number of policy initiatives in Priority Area 4 (*The general labour market situation and flexicurity*), with the exception of BG, ES, PT and RO.

Out of the 357 policy measures considered by national experts only 37 have been evaluated. The picture in terms of evaluation in the area of employment policies is very similar to that of gender specific policies: in both cases the share is rather low (10% and 9%, respectively). As already pointed out, the very low share of policy measures with an evaluation is due to the fact that most of the policies considered are relatively recent. But it also signals the fact that the evaluation of policies is little developed in a large number of countries. As a matter of fact, only 14 countries (AT, BE, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, LU, NL, PL, PT, RO, UK) have included at least one policy for which an evaluation is available.

The overall assessment of the policy initiatives in terms of gender mainstreaming is rather unsatisfactory: the 57% of policies considered lack any gender mainstreaming, followed by 28% partly adequate. Thus, the gender mainstreaming of the policy initiative is adequate only in the 14% of cases. The assessment provided by national expert (see Grid 2) can be summarised as follows:

- *GM is low* (i.e. > 60% of policies have no GM): BE, BG, CZ, DK, EE, FR, LV, RO
- *GM is moderate* (i.e. 59-40% of policies have no GM): AT, DE, EL, ES, MT, NL, PL, PT, SE
- *GM is high* (i.e. < 40% of policies have no GM): CY, FI, HU, IE, IT, LU, SI, SK, UK

The overall assessment of the 357 employment policies in terms of gender impact assessment is also unsatisfactory: only 32% of all policies considered record a positive impact. Almost half (46%) of policies have a “neutral” impact, that is they leave unchanged existing gender inequalities, while another 14% of policies have a negative impact, that is they tend to reinforce existing inequalities³.

The assessment provided by national expert (see Grid 2) can be summarised as follows:

- a) *GIA is mainly positive* (i.e. > 50% of policies: positive GIA): CY, EL, IT, PT, UK
- b) *GIA is mainly positive or neutral* (i.e. > 50% of policies: positive or neutral GIA): BE, DE, ES, FI, HU, IE, PL
- c) *GIA is mainly neutral* (i.e. > 50% of policies: neutral GIA): BG, EE, LV, MT, NL
- d) *GIA is mainly neutral or negative* (i.e. > 50% of policies: neutral or negative GIA): AT, SI
- e) *GIA is mainly negative* (i.e. > 50% of policies: negative GIA): CZ, DK, FR, LU, RO, SK
- f) finally, *GIA is more evenly* distributed across the possible cases: SE, PL.

The policies assessed by national experts for Sweden and Poland It is interesting to point out that the majority of countries for which the assessment in terms gender mainstreaming is high or moderate are included either in *group a* (GIA mainly positive) or in *group b* (GIA mainly neutral or positive):

	<i>GM</i>	<i>GIA</i>
CY	high	Positive
IT	high	Positive
UK	high	Positive
FI	high	neutral/ positive
HU	high	neutral/ positive
IE	high	neutral/ positive
LT	high	neutral/ positive
EL	moderate	Positive
PT	moderate	Positive
ES	moderate	neutral/ positive
PL	moderate	neutral/ positive
SE	moderate	neutral/ positive

But there are also some paradoxical cases. This is the case of two countries (LU, SK) where gender mainstreaming is very high, but the gender impact assessment of the policies considered is mainly negative. To understand the reasons of this paradox would require an analysis of the policies one by one. But this is out of the scope of this simple quantitative assessment.

³ The difference to 100 is due to the lack of information on GIA for 25 policies (7%).

GRID 2: Employment policy initiatives by area of action in Member States

	Policy Initiatives (n.)	STATUS of the policy initiative				GENDER Mainstreaming of the policy initiative			Gender Impact Assessment				REMARKS
		1	2	3	4	Adequate	Partly adequate	None	Negative	Neutral	Positive	na/doubts	
AT – Austria													
1. attract more p.	9	-	2	6	1	-	3	6	3	6	-	-	A substantial number of policy measures enacted/ implemented (15, plus 2 announced), mainly falling under the first priority area. Evaluation of policies: low (only one). GM: moderate (61% none). GIA: mostly neutral (61%) or negative (22%)
2. adaptability	5	-	1	4	-	-	2	3	1	2	2	-	
3. investment in hc	3	2	-	1	-	1	1	1	-	2	1	-	
4. flexicurity	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	
Total policies (n.)	18	2	3	12	1	1	6	11	4	11	3	-	
% distribution	100	11	16	67	6	6	33	61	22	61	16	-	
BE – Belgium													
1. attract more p.	9	-	-	4	5	-	-	9	-	4	5	-	A large number of policy measures implemented/evaluated (14, plus 1 announced), mainly falling under the first priority area. Evaluation of policies: rather high (40%). GM: very low (87% none). GIA: mostly neutral (47%) or positive (40%).
2. adaptability	2	-	-	2	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	
3. investment in hc	4	1	-	2	1	1	-	3	1	2	1	-	
4. flexicurity	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total policies (n.)	15	1	-	8	6	1	1	13	2	7	6	-	
% distribution	100	7	-	53	40	7	7	87	13	47	40	-	
BG – Bulgaria													
1. attract more p.	4	-	-	4	-	1	-	3	-	3	1	-	Many new policies announced (14), but fewer enacted/implemented (9) and none evaluated. The policies considered are distributed across all four priority areas. No evaluation of policies. GM: almost nil (96% none). GIA: mainly neutral (96%)
2. adaptability	7	6	-	1	-	-	-	7	-	7	-	-	
3. investment in hc	6	2	4	-	-	-	-	6	-	6	-	-	
4. flexicurity	6	6	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	6	-	-	
Total policies (n.)	23	14	4	5	-	1	-	22	-	22	1	-	
% distribution	100	61	17	22	-	4	-	96	-	96	4	-	
CY – Cyprus													
1. attract more p.	2	-	1	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	1	A small number of policy measures implemented (9), though distributed across all four priority areas. No evaluation of policies. GM: high (only 33% none). GIA: mainly positive (56%)
2. adaptability	2	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	1	
3. investment in hc	2	-	-	2	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	
4. flexicurity	3	-	1	2	-	-	1	2	-	-	2	1	
Total policies (n.)	9	-	2	7	-	3	3	3	1	-	5	3	
% distribution	100	-	22	78	-	33	33	33	11	-	56	33	

CZ-															
1. attract more p.	4	1	1	2	-	-	-	4	4	-	-	-			A small number of policy measures implemented (5, plus 3 announced), mainly falling under the first priority area. No evaluation of policies. GM: very low (88% none). GIA: mainly negative (75%)
2. adaptability	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-			
3. investment in hc	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	1	1	-			
4. flexicurity	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-			
Total policies (n.)	8	3	1	4	-	-	1	7	6	1	1	-			
% distribution	100	38	13	50	-	-	13	88	75	13	13	-			
DE															
1. attract more p.	5	1	-	1	3	2	-	3	1	2	2	-			A small number of policy measures implemented (4, plus 1 announced), mainly falling under the first policy priority. Evaluation of policies: high (50%). GM: moderate (63% none). GIA: mostly neutral (50%) or positive (38%)
2. adaptability	2	-	1	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-			
3. investment in hc	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-			
4. flexicurity	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Total policies (n.)	8	1	2	1	4	2	1	5	1	4	3	-			
% distribution	100	13	25	13	50	25	13	63	13	50	38	-			
DK															
1. attract more p.	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-			A small number of policy measures implemented (8, plus 1 announced), though distributed across all four policy priorities. Evaluation of policies: low (only one). GM: very low (78% none). GIA: mainly negative (67%)
2. adaptability	3	1	-	2	-	-	2	1	1	1	-	1			
3. investment in hc	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-			
4. flexicurity	3	-	-	2	1	-	-	3	3	-	-	-			
Total policies (n.)	9	1	2	5	1	-	2	7	6	2	-	1			
% distribution	100	11	22	56	11	-	22	78	67	22	-	11			
EE															
1. attract more p.	14	1	5	8	-	1	1	12	-	11	2	1			A substantial number of policy measures implemented (24, plus 3 announced), mainly falling under the first policy priority. Evaluation of policies: low (only one). GM: very low (89% none) GIA: mainly neutral (70%)
2. adaptability	4	1	1	1	1	-	1	3	-	2	-	2			
3. investment in hc	8	-	2	6	-	-	-	8	-	6	2	-			
4. flexicurity	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1			
Total policies (n.)	27	3	8	15	1	1	2	24	-	19	4	4			
% distribution	100	11	30	56	4	4	7	89	-	70	15	15			
EL															
1. attract more p.	10	1	6	3	-	5	1	4	2	-	7	1			A large number of policy measures implemented/evaluated (9, plus 1 announced), mainly falling under the first priority area. No evaluation of policies. GM: moderate (57% none). GIA: mainly positive (57%)
2. adaptability	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2			
3. investment in hc	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	1			
4. flexicurity	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Total policies (n.)	14	1	7	6	-	5	1	8	2	-	8	4			
% distribution	100	7	50	43	-	36	7	57	14	-	57	29			

ES													A very substantial number of policy measures implemented (34), distributed across all four policy priorities. Evaluation of policies: low (only one). GM: moderate (64% none). GIA: mainly neutral (56%) or positive (39%)
1. attract more p.	9	-	1	7	1	3	3	3	-	4	4	1	
2. adaptability	5	-	1	4	-	2	-	3	-	3	2	-	
3. investment in hc	10	2	1	7	-	3	-	7	-	5	5	-	
4. flexicurity	12	-	-	12	-	1	1	10	1	8	3	-	
Total policies (n.)	36	2	3	30	1	9	4	23	1	20	14	1	
% distribution	100	6	8	83	3	25	11	64	3	56	39	3	
FI													A small number of policy measures enacted/implemented (9), though distributed across all four policy priorities. Evaluation of policies: low (22%). GM: relatively high (only 22% none) GIA: mainly neutral (56%) or positive (33%)
1. attract more p.	3	-	1	1	1	-	1	2	-	3	-	-	
2. adaptability	4	-	1	2	1	2	2	-	-	1	2	1	
3. investment in hc	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	
4. flexicurity	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	
Total policies (n.)	9	-	4	3	2	3	4	2	-	5	3	1	
% distribution	100	-	44	33	22	33	44	22	-	56	33	11	
FR													A very small number of policy measures enacted/implemented (4), though distributed across all four policy priorities. Evaluation of policies: low (only one). GM: low (80% none). GIA: mainly negative (80%).
1. attract more p.	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	
2. adaptability	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	
3. investment in hc	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	
4. flexicurity	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	
Total policies (n.)	5	1	3	-	1	-	1	4	4	1	-	-	
% distribution	100	20	60	-	20	-	20	80	80	20	-	-	
HU													A large number of policy measures implemented/evaluated (9, plus 8 announced), mainly falling under the first priority area. No evaluation of policies. GM: relatively high (41% none) GIA: mainly neutral (35%) or positive (35%)
1. attract more p.	10	3	-	7	-	2	2	6	4	2	3	1	
2. adaptability	4	4	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	3	1	-	
3. investment in hc	3	1	-	2	-	1	2	-	-	1	2	-	
4. flexicurity	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total policies (n.)	17	8	-	9	-	3	7	7	4	6	6	1	
% distribution	100	47	-	53	-	18	41	41	24	35	35	6	
IE													A small number of policy measures implemented (6), though distributed across all four policy priorities. No evaluation of policies. GM: relatively high (43% none) GIA: mainly neutral (43%) or positive (43%)
1. attract more p.	2	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	
2. adaptability	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	
3. investment in hc	2	1	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	2	-	-	
4. flexicurity	2	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	2	-	
Total policies (n.)	7	1	4	2	-	1	3	3	1	3	3	-	
% distribution	100	14	57	29	-	14	43	43	14	43	43	-	

IT																
1. attract more p.	6	1	1	4	-	2	2	2	2	1	3	-		A small number of policy measures implemented (11, plus 3 announced), mainly falling under the first two policy priorities. No evaluation of policies. GM: high (only 23% none) GIA: mainly positive (69%)		
2. adaptability	4	2	1	1	-	3	-	1	-	2	2	-				
3. investment in hc	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-				
4. flexicurity	3	-	3	-	-	-	2	1	1	2	-	-				
Total policies (n.)	14	3	6	5	-	5	5	4	3	4	7	-				
<i>% distribution</i>	100	15	54	31	-	38	38	23	8	23	69	-				
LT																
1. attract more p.	4	-	2	1	1	2	2	-	-	1	2	1		A small number of policy measures enacted/implemented (8, plus 2 announced), most falling under the first two policy priorities. Evaluation of policies: rather high (30%). GM: high (only 10% none). GIA: mainly neutral (50%) or positive (30%).		
2. adaptability	3	1	-	-	2	-	3	-	-	2	1	-				
3. investment in hc	2	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-				
4. flexicurity	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1				
Total policies (n.)	10	2	2	3	3	2	7	1	-	5	3	2				
<i>% distribution</i>	100	20	20	20	30	20	70	10	-	50	30	20				
LU																
1. attract more p.	2	-	-	1	1	2	-	-	-	2	-	-		A small number of policy measures enacted/implemented (9), though distributed across all four policy priorities. Evaluation of policies: low (22%). GM: high (100%). GIA: mainly negative (56%).		
2. adaptability	3	-	-	2	1	3	-	-	2	1	-	-				
3. investment in hc	2	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	-				
4. flexicurity	2	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	1	1	-	-				
Total policies (n.)	9	-	2	5	2	9	-	-	5	4	-	-				
<i>% distribution</i>	100	-	22	56	22	100	-	-	56	44	-	-				
LV																
1. attract more p.	4	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	4	-	-		A small number of policy measures enacted/implemented (8), half falling under the first policy priority. No evaluation of policies. No GM. GIA: neutral (100%)		
2. adaptability	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	-				
3. investment in hc	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	-				
4. flexicurity	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Total policies (n.)	8	-	1	7	-	-	-	8	-	8	-	-				
<i>% distribution</i>	100	-	13	88	-	-	-	100	-	100	-	-				
MT																
1. attract more p.	5	-	-	5	-	-	1	4	-	4	1	-		A small number of policy measures enacted/implemented (11), distributed across the first three policy priorities. No evaluation of policies. GM: moderate (64% none). GIA: mainly neutral (64%).		
2. adaptability	3	-	-	3	-	1	2	-	1	-	2	-				
3. investment in hc	3	-	1	2	-	-	-	3	-	3	-	-				
4. flexicurity	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Total policies (n.)	11	-	1	10	-	1	3	7	1	7	3	-				
<i>% distribution</i>	100	-	9	91	-	9	27	64	9	64	27	-				

NL																				
1. attract more p.	3	1	-	1	1	2	-	1	-	1	1	1								
2. adaptability	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-								
3. investment in hc	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-								
4. flexicurity	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1								
Total policies (n.)	6	1	1	2	2	2	1	3	-	3	1	2								
% distribution	100	17	17	33	33	33	17	50	-	50	17	33								
																A small number of policy measures enacted/implemented (5, plus one announced) mainly falling under the first policy priority. Evaluation of policies: relatively high (33%). GM: moderate (50% none). GIA: mainly neutral (50%).				
PL																				
1. attract more p.	5	2	2	1	-	-	3	2	-	2	2	1								
2. adaptability	4	2	-	1	1	-	1	3	-	3	-	1								
3. investment in hc	2	-	2	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	1	-								
4. flexicurity	4	2	1	1	-	-	3	1	1	-	3	-								
Total policies (n.)	15	6	5	3	1	0	8	7	1	6	6	2								
% distribution	100	40	33	20	7	0	53	47	7	40	40	13								
																	Several new policies announced (6), and many policy measures enacted/ implemented (8), distributed across all priority areas. Evaluation of policies: low (only one). GM: moderate (47% none). GIA: mostly neutral (43%) or positive (43%).			
PT																				
1. attract more p.	5	-	2	2	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	-								
2. adaptability	3	1	1	1	-	2	-	1	-	-	3	-								
3. investment in hc	3	-	3	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	2	-								
4. flexicurity	5	5	-	-	-	1	-	4	1	-	4	-								
Total policies (n.)	16	6	6	3	1	5	2	9	5	1	10	-								
% distribution	100	38	38	19	6	31	13	56	31	6	63	-								
																		Several new policies announced (6), and a large number of policy measures enacted/ implemented (10), distributed across all priority areas. Evaluation of policies: low (only one). GM: moderate (56% none). GIA: mainly positive (63%).		
RO																				
1. attract more p.	4	2	-	-	2	-	-	4	-	4	-	-								
2. adaptability	3	2	1	-	-	-	2	1	-	1	2	-								
3. investment in hc	5	1	2	-	2	-	1	4	-	5	-	-								
4. flexicurity	2	1	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	2	-	-								
Total policies (n.)	14	6	3	-	5	-	4	10	-	12	2	-								
% distribution	100	43	21	-	36	-	29	71	-	86	14	-								
																			Many new policies announced (6) and several policy measures enacted/ implemented (8), distributed across all priority areas. Evaluation of policies: relatively high (36). GM: low (71% none). GIA: mainly negative (86%).	
SE																				
1. attract more p.	14	-	-	14	-	1	6	7	7	3	4	-								
2. adaptability	2	-	-	2	-	1	-	1	-	1	1	-								
3. investment in hc	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	-								
4. flexicurity	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-								
Total policies (n.)	18	-	-	18	-	2	6	10	7	4	7	-								
% distribution	100	-	-	100	-	11	33	56	39	22	39	-								
																				A substantial number of policy measures enacted/ implemented (18), mainly falling under the first policy priority. No evaluation of policies. GM: moderate (56% none). GIA: mostly negative (39%) or positive (39%).

SI																
1. attract more p.	8	-	1	7	-	-	7	1	-	4	4	-	A large number of policy measures enacted/ implemented (12, plus 1 announced), mainly falling under the first priority area. No evaluation of policies. GM: high (only 15% none). GIA: mainly negative (64%).			
2. adaptability	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-				
3. investment in hc	2	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-				
4. flexicurity	2	1	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	2	-	-				
Total policies (n.)	13	1	2	10	-	1	10	2	-	8	5	-				
% distribution	100	8	15	77	-	8	77	15	-	62	38	-				
SK																
1. attract more p.	2	-	-	2	-	1	-	1	-	1	1	-	A small number of policy measures enacted/ implemented (5, plus 2 announced), though distributed on all four priority areas. No evaluation of policies. GM: high (only 29% none). GIA: mainly negative (57%).			
2. adaptability	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-				
3. investment in hc	3	2	-	1	-	-	2	1	1	2	-	-				
4. flexicurity	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-				
Total policies (n.)	7	2	-	5	-	1	4	2	1	4	2	-				
% distribution	100	29	-	71	-	14	57	29	14	57	29	-				
UK																
1. attract more p.	12	1	1	4	6	-	8	4	1	-	7	4	A very substantial number of policy measures enacted/ implemented (23, plus 2 announced), mainly falling under the first two priority areas. Evaluation of policies: relatively high (26%). GM: high (only 22% none). GIA: mainly positive (63%).			
2. adaptability	8	1	-	6	1	1	6	1	-	-	6	2				
3. investment in hc	6	2	1	3	-	3	3	-	-	-	4	2				
4. flexicurity	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1				
Total policies (n.)	27	4	2	14	7	4	17	6	1	-	17	9				
% distribution	100	15	7	52	26	15	63	22	4	-	63	33				

Legend:

Status of policy initiative: 1 announced; 2 enacted; 3 implemented; 4 evaluated.

na / doubts: policies for which it is not possible to identify the GIA (information not available; mixed effects: positive and negative; etc.).

* Final grid not available during compilation.

Source: National Reports on 2008 NRPs, Part A.

Table 4.1: Employment policy initiatives by area of action in EU27

	PRIORITY AREA 1 Attract more people	PRIORITY AREA 2 Adaptability	PRIORITY AREA 3 Investment in human capital	PRIORITY AREA 4 Flexicurity	Total (n.)	% distribution
Status of policy initiatives						
1. announced	15	21	15	18	69	19,3
2. enacted	29	14	20	7	70	19,6
3. implemented	90	34	37	20	181	50,7
4. evaluated	23	7	4	3	37	10,4
GM of the policy initiative						
adequate	26	12	10	4	52	14,6
partly adequate	42	28	19	11	100	28,0
none	89	36	47	33	205	57,4
GIA of the policy initiative						
negative	32	6	3	9	50	14,0
neutral	63	35	47	20	165	46,2
positive	51	26	23	15	115	32,2
na	11	9	3	4	27	7,6
Total policy initiatives						
n.	157	76	76	48	357	100
<i>% distribution</i>	<i>44,0</i>	<i>21,3</i>	<i>21,3</i>	<i>13,4</i>	<i>100</i>	

Source: see Grid 2.

4.4 Employment policies by area of action in Member States

Our review of policy development in this area reveals a substantial amount of activity as Member States develop measures to meet Lisbon employment rate targets and/or maintain existing levels of employment. Unfortunately as we find elsewhere the level of gender mainstreaming is at best patchy and often absent in key domains. Broadly

speaking we can group measures and initiatives into two areas those with an explicit aim at women and those that are not gender mainstreamed. The first groups of policies are often limited scope and scale so that while they may be designed to have a positive impact on women that are affected or on elements of the disadvantage face they are insufficient to address the issues. The second group of measures are those that for the most part are not gender mainstreamed and will at best have a neutral impact on women and at worst negative impact on gender equality.

Reconciliation policies fall into the first category as even for the least gender mainstreamed NRPs it is hard to avoid the gender dimension to the targets to raise female employment rates and coverage of childcare. Invariably the focus on reconciliation for women does little to address the persistent impact of the unequal division of labour in the household but across many Member States the promotion of reconciliation of work and family life is emphasised as the link between expanding the number of women in work and providing means to address their double burden of domestic work is realised. There are however shortfalls in the availability and affordability of childcare particularly in Member States that have seen strong increases in employment. In Member States such as Spain, Ireland, Malta, Lithuania and Romania among others the lack of childcare provision is a problem in the light of the increasing employment rates. When it comes to improving the employment opportunities of certain target groups such as the Roma in Bulgaria or ethnic groups in Germany the gender dimension is often absent. The consideration of gender, ethnicity and barriers for integration in Denmark is a rare example of policy makers recognising the double disadvantage that gender and ethnicity can create; however, there is no evidence of any political intervention.

The promotion of flexicurity is a consistent theme across many countries but that falls into the second, larger, group of policies perhaps where the gender impact is absent. There are few Member States where the policy integrates the concepts of flexibility and security and even fewer where the Flexicurity policy has been gender mainstreamed. One example is the new Employment Contracts Act in Estonia as an attempt to modernise the labour law under the auspices of a flexicurity approach – as often found elsewhere the gender aspect is rarely considered. The Hartz reforms in Germany are a more established form of a so-called ‘modern’ employment contract that has a significant impact on gender equality in the form of the many mini jobs that have been created. On the other hand, the Greek approach combines relatively good protection for part-time and temporary workers with a reduction in rights for newly hired workers in the public sector. Nevertheless there are exception and the *Finnish model of flexicurity* emphasises the need to even out flexibility and security among different employee groups, including women. Spain also stands out, albeit from a different starting point, as a good example where gender aspects have been covered more consistently as a result of the *Frame Law on Gender equality*, for example in applying greater flexibility in accordance to personal circumstances mostly affecting women.

There obviously are other policy areas related to employment and access to the labour market addressed in the NRPs including changes to unemployment benefits, life long training, policies to address segregation, active labour market policy, making working pay, improving the adaptability of the workforces and these are highlighted in more detail in the following table drawing on national expert comments from the EGGE network.

BOX 4.1: Employment policies in Member States

(summary on the four policy priority areas in Member States)

1. AT – Austria

(pp. 1-2) With regard the first policy priority, a substantial number of policy measures have been implemented over the last two years. While measures with a special focus on improving women's employment opportunities can be assumed to have a general positive impact on gender equality, individual measures are not far-reaching enough (e.g. initiatives to expand childcare services are quite limited). The expected impact is therefore partial rather than significant. There is only one initiative (recently announced) to directly address men. The other measures are for the most part not gender mainstreamed and thus will mostly have a neutral or even a negative impact on gender equality. The measures taken with regard to the second policy priority are expected to have quite diverse gender impacts: some are neutral but the most far-reaching measures, providing for a greater flexibility of working-hour arrangements will no doubt impact negatively. The introduction of overtime pay for additional hours worked by part-time staff and the minimum wage initiative, on the other hand, are positive steps into the right direction but not far-reaching enough. In terms of the third policy priority, besides non-gender-mainstreamed measures without an impact on gender equality, some women-specific policies (with regard to promoting 'non-traditional' training and occupations among young women) have been introduced. In addition, the only measure with an explicit gender-mainstreaming approach is included here (GLs for a LLL Strategy). As yet, however, this measure has/these guidelines have been announced but still awaits implementation. Finally, even though the need for increased 'flexicurity' has repeatedly been a topic of debate in recent years, a comprehensive flexicurity strategy is still missing and the rather limited number of individual measures enacted within the so-called 'Flexicurity Package' – taken are not gender mainstreamed.

2. BE – Belgium

(p. 3) The employment policy measures that are analysed throughout this report mainly fall under the first priority "Attract and retain more people in employment". An overall evaluation puts forth that except for one, all of these measures are implemented without having gone through a preliminary process of gender mainstreaming. The exception is the recent policy shift towards a more active guidance of the unemployed. Although it was hoped that this new system would increase the chances of labour market (re)entry for one of the most problematic groups, notably non-EU nationals, and particularly women, it has become an easy way to evict discouraged unemployed persons from the system. Despite the fact that all other measures have not been gender mainstreamed, some (are expected to) have a positive gender impact. This is particularly the case of the service voucher system that has created many new jobs, almost exclusively for women, thus bringing them out of the shadow economy and providing them with a genuine employment contract and associated social and pension rights. Recent changes in tax policies go towards a higher degree of individualisation of the tax system and are consequently expected to have a neutral (refundable income tax credit) or even positive (increase in the level of tax exempt income, refundable childcare tax credit) gender impact.

3. BG – Bulgaria

(p. 7) Bulgarian joined the EU in 2007. The first NRP, covering 2007-2009, addressed five main challenges, including improving quality of human capital through better access to quality education and training (including lifelong learning) and activating labour supply, through the introduction of a flexicurity approach. A large number of policy initiatives have been enacted and implemented in the recent years, aiming to increase employment rates, to promote the effective integration of vulnerable groups on the labour market, and to improve education, training, and skills. The policies are in line with the four broad priority areas, identified in the EU integrated guidelines 2008-2010. Attracting and retaining more people in employment is pointed out as a step for reaching the indicative levels of employment in 2009. There are significant labour resources, estimated at 37.9% of the working age population. About 25% of these people declare that they would like to be in employment, but due to different reasons (family engagements, illness or injury, professional mismatches, lack of relevant education, etc.) they are excluded from it. The NRP envisages several areas for policy intervention.

Priority Area 1. Improving the employment opportunities of target groups is a priority action of the

NRP 2007-2009. The envisaged policies address specific groups (youth, women, people with disabilities, and people from the Roma community). One of the policies is gender oriented since it targets women; the others are gender oriented indirectly. The National Programme “From Unemployment Benefits to Employment” is based on activities which have to stimulate long-term unemployed people to be more active in searching a job. It also targets low educated long-term unemployed people, as well as long-term unemployed people with primary or lower education. This programme has no direct gender dimensions.

Priority Area 2. One of the main areas for approving the adaptability of workers and enterprises related to working conditions. The increase of the attractiveness of the existing working places by improving working conditions is suggested as a priority target. Three operational targets are pointed out regarding further decrease of labour accidents. They relate to protection of workers’ health and increasing safety at work place; linking working conditions with quality labour indicators and further improving the legal framework in the area of safety work conditions, as well as tightening the control over the implementation of the law. All these policies are indirectly gender oriented.

Priority Area 3. Several policies are envisaged in this area in order to reach the following goals: a) reducing the number of drop-outs and integrating the early school leavers into the education system; b) building a modern and efficient system for standardized external evaluation in secondary education; c) development of vocational education and training in compliance with the needs of the labour market; d) developing lifelong learning; e) improving the quality and efficiency of higher education; f) establishment and development of a National System for Regular Monitoring of the Labour Market.

Priority Area 4. The Governmental policy is based on the understanding that increasing flexicurity is a pre-condition for more effective use of labour force and for increasing employment. Six main directions are identified, in which actions should be undertaken to develop and implement a flexicurity approach: a) increasing the territorial and professional mobility of labour; b) linking wage increases to labour productivity; c) implementing new forms of employment, as well as territorial and professional mobility; d) developing the legal frame of temporary employment agencies; e) encouraging employers to hire unemployed and people with disabilities (as part-timers, under temporary, hourly or seasonal contracts); f) revising the mechanism for determination of the minimum wage by strengthening the role of the social partners and linking more closely the minimum wage level to the macro and social indicators.

4. CY - Cyprus

According to an update provided by the Cyprus Government in 2007 (Annual Progress Report) the implementation of measures is proceeding as planned. Implementation is lacking in some areas (pension reform, vocational education and training system). The very high gender pay gap has not been addressed yet. In 2006 and 2007 there were few developments in employment policy, none of the policies implemented has been formally evaluated. There is almost no evidence of gender mainstreaming.

5. CZ – Czech Republic

(p. 8) The Czech National Reform Programme (NRP), which was elaborated according to the conditions of the EES, responds to the problems of the Czech Republic in the labour market and human resources development. The measures proposed in the NRP in the Employment chapter are therefore focused on addressing these areas: labour market flexibility, the labour market inclusion and education.

Even though government documents on the labour market and employment identify women among the groups at risk of exclusion from the labour market (especially women with small children, women, after parental leave and women over 50 years of age), the active employment policy does not identify the group of unemployed, on which it is focused, according to gender. The employment policy of the Czech Republic is missing the use of gender mainstreaming, gender impact assessment of the reforms and gender specific measures.

6. DE – Germany

(pp. 4-5) Attract and retain more people in employment. During the last years the general female employment rate has continued to increase, but the increase has not been accompanied by an overall increase in women’s working time. The increase in the female employment rate in the

previous years is above all and in 2007 only based on more part time occupations. The increase of part time occupations goes hand in hand with an ongoing increase of marginal part time employment – predominately performed by women. Part time and marginal part time are closely connected with low wages and/or low incomes and low or no entitlements for social insurance benefits. The increase of marginal part time is one effect of the labour market reform (Hartz-reform) which brought predominately women into insecure employment. Improving the possibilities to reconcile family and work life for men and women has been a very central issue during the last years and major changes are under way as improving the provision of child care services, income related parental allowances and tax deductibility of child caring expenses were enacted. The impact on the employment of women (and men) is not yet assessed but referring to previous studies we can assume that a sufficient child care infrastructure and incentives for re-defining the distribution of labour within family and workplace will have positive employment effects. In contrast, resolute action to reduce the considerable gender pay gap (24% in 2006) is not on the top of the German policy agenda. As measured by the dimension of the pay gap only little activities were performed during the last years.

Improve the adaptability of workers and enterprises. After a long discussion the General Equal Treatment Act came into force in August 2007 and an anti discrimination office was established. The ongoing expansion of the low wage sector with declining wages simultaneously and of low incomes has been a major socio political issue during the last years. The grand coalition has compromised not to introduce a legal minimum wage but to extend the German Posting Act and to modernise the minimum working conditions in 2007. As large parts of low paying occupations and jobs are female dominated, women's wage would have been covered by minimum wages to a larger extend than men's wages.

Increase investment in human capital. Diverse minor activities which include girls or women to some extend.

General labour market situation and flexicurity: The labour market developments of the last years point altogether into the same direction. Whereas the employment structure gets more heterogeneous and more "flexible", the employment security decreases altogether, and to a larger extend for women than for men. That means that both, employment and flexicurity policy should / must be surveyed carefully from a gender (mainstreaming) perspective.

7. DK - Denmark

(pp. 6-7) As the unemployment rate is low in Denmark, an extra effort has to be made to enlarge the labour force. However, only two groups have low employment rates: non-western immigrants and person in the age group 60-66. A high percentage of non-western immigrants - especially women - are receiving unemployment benefit, cash benefit, are in activation schemes, or in other ways (as on maternity leave) temporarily outside the labour market, and less than one of two men in the age group 60-66 and one of four women are in employment. Married men have a relatively higher employment rate than unmarried men, and this is also the case for men aged 60+, while married women aged 60+ have a relatively lower employment rate than unmarried women in the same age (Emerek 2005).

With the welfare agreement the government expects 14.000 more persons in employment in 2010 – firstly due to the integration of immigrants and later retirement, and secondly - in future years - later retirement will form the main part (85.000 persons) of the expected 110.000 more persons in employment by 2025 (and 96.000 persons of the targeted 126.000 persons by 2040). The initiatives concerning education and more rapid study completion are expected to increase employment by 10,000 persons by 2025 and 15,000 persons by 2040.

The labour market reforms, including strengthened activation and initiatives to enhance employment among immigrants, are expected to reduce unemployment in the medium term by about ½ percentage point. In all, the total number of recipients of income transfers is expected to be reduced by some 145,000 persons by 2025 and 200,000 by 2040, compared to a no-reform scenario.

Despite the fact, that the two groups that are expected to be involved to a much greater extent in employment both have a gender bias (as almost two thirds are women), a possible gender dimension – or gender barriers are not mentioned or discussed in the agreement. The Minister of

equality has commissioned a report on gender, ethnicity and barriers for integration. The report concludes on the basis of existing research, that immigrant men meet the greatest barriers in the educational system – immigrant women the greatest barriers in the labour market and in social activities. This is however not evident from the action plan based on ‘En ny chance til alle’, which according to the Minister of equality’s statement from 2005, should be a follow up on this report.

In optimism the government has launched a new ambitious 2015-plan in August 2008 for Denmark’s future and the enlargement of the labour force with 8000-9000 persons a year. The plan includes increased tax reduction on work to make work more attractive compared to benefit. The plan includes tax reduction for persons aged 64 who have been full-time employed since the age of 60. Students will be allowed to take more employment without loss of student grants. Absence in form of sick leave must be reduced. Furthermore foreign labour must be recruited. The government has also established a Labour Market Commission in late 2007. The commission will present their report in 2009, however, they have already suggested that early retirement should be further postponed, and that the financial problems in the future welfare state can be solved by everybody working one hour extra a week.

8. EE – Estonia

(p. 3) There are many developments and changes in labour and education policies. New Labour Market Services and Benefits Act which developed new active labour market services and case management principles in providing services to the unemployed have been adopted. Equal treatment of elderly employees and the social protection of unemployed have been improved; the sustainability of the national pension insurance and health insurance budgets has been enhanced and a new Employment Contracts Act aiming to modernize Estonian labour law and to develop the flexicurity approach is about to be adopted. However, gender aspect is very rarely considered in new policies and programmes. Most of the measures are general and directed to all employees or concerning some other risk groups as young people, elderly, disabled, unemployed or ethnic minorities. Policies which have more direct impact on women, both implicitly and to certain extent also explicitly (i.e. gender aspect is considered in the policy making process) mainly concern family and work reconciliation policies like parental leave and childcare facilities.

In order to expand and improve investment in human capital, several changes in the education policies have established. Most of all, the popularisation, availability and quality of vocational training has been improved. The educational attainment of men is significantly lower than of women, also the educational choices differ drastically. Thus, it is important to take gender aspect into account in education policies in order to deal with inequality and improve the overall level of education and human capital.

9. EL – Greece

(pp. 1-2) A great number of employment policy initiatives were undertaken in 2007 and 2008. We have picked up the most important of them from a gender equality perspective: 1) the new Civil Servants’ Code that incorporates a series of measures supporting the reconciliation of work and family life; 2) the new law on the reform of the pension system, which makes conditions for early retirement of mothers more stringent while, at the same time, introduces a paid child-care leave in the private sector; 3) the implementation of the law that rendered mandatory one year of pre-school education for all children who have completed their 5th year of age; 4) the creation of an Observatory for Equality in Education.

A recent policy initiative aiming at more flexibility in the labour market through an important change in industrial relations in public enterprises and utilities cannot be assessed from a gender perspective. All the same, it is part of the Greek flexicurity approach which combines the provision of relatively good protection to part-time and temporary workers with the reduction of rights and guarantees for the newly hired workers in public enterprises and utilities.

10. ES - Spain

(p. 13) Spain has registered noticeable advancements to increase the employment level of women, by providing incentives permanent jobs for women, self-employment and investment in child care facilities and other conciliation measures. This last aspect, however should deserve greater efforts, due to the acknowledged lack of available places in kindergartens. The National System of Dependence should also be regarded as an advancement to fight undeclared work and to enhance

living conditions of women receiving and providing long-term care services, but unfortunately its implementation process is suffering from important delays and lack of administrative coordination.

(p. 14) Adaptability of workers and enterprises in Spain has been re-boosted in the face of the latest economic events, although through a temporary policy scheme. Gender aspects have been widely covered thanks to the endorsement of the Frame Law on Gender equality, applying greater flexibility in accordance to personal circumstances mostly affecting women. The most disadvantaged groups (people with disabilities, long-term unemployed, etc) have also received greater attention.

(p. 4) In sum, 14 out the 36 general policies analyzed (in Part A) are expected to cause a perceivable positive gender impact, whereas the proportion of policy developments that contain an adequate gender mainstreaming approach amounts to 25% (keeping in mind that not all policy developments are suitable to include a gender perspective). An additional 11% have rated as partially adequate.

11. FI – Finland

(p. 3) The Finnish labour market can be described as fairly gender equal in the sense that employment as well as unemployment rates are very similar among women and men. The gender employment gap in Finland is the lowest in the EU27. Public day care services guaranteeing a day care place for every child under school age play a major role in making this possible. The main shortcomings in the Finnish labour market, viewed from the gender point of view, are the high prevalence of fixed-term employment relationships especially among young well-educated women, the deep, persistent gender pay gap (of about 20%) and the unequal distribution of family leaves between mothers and fathers. Also, the integration of immigrant population to labour market is not yet really achieved. The employment and unemployment gaps between populations born in and out of the country are wide. The situation is especially difficult among immigrant women.

Several measures have been taken to tackle at least the problems with fixed-term employment and pay gap, but the situation has barely changed. The current policies further emphasise the importance to overcome these problems. The Equal Pay Programme committee has set a target to reduce the gender pay gap to 15% by 2015. The working group aiming at designing Finnish model of flexicurity by 2010 has emphasised the need to level out flexibility and security among different employee groups so that the young women would not have to bear the main burden of labour market's needs for flexibility. The measures include levelling out employer costs caused by family leaves and encouragement of fathers to more actively take up family leaves. Such development would mean that the hiring a young woman to open-ended employment relationship would no longer be a more risky investment for an employer than hiring a young man. In this respect, the policy trend is right and a lot has already improved. However, a lot still remains to be achieved.

(pp. 8-9) In 2003, the Government put a goal of increasing employment by at least 100,000 jobs during the electoral term 2003-07, i.e. to rise the employment rate to 70%. The goal was more or less achieved. In 2007, the target of Prime Minister Vanhanen's second Cabinet was set to reach the employment rate of 72% during the current electoral term, i.e. to increase employment by another 80,000-100,000 jobs by 2011. The medium term aim is to raise the employment rate to 75%. Measures to achieve the goals, as referred to in the Policy programme for employment, entrepreneurship and work life are to shorten the time required for completing degrees, to extend work careers, to increase the incentive aspects of social security and to promote work-based immigration. Also the promotion on reconciliation of work and family life is emphasised, as well as finding ways of improving job satisfaction and well-being at work. Furthermore, measures to encourage (female) entrepreneurship and to remove the impediments to the growth of firms and companies are supported. The goal is also to improve the match between jobs and jobseekers, to foster occupational and regional labour mobility and to reduce structural unemployment.

12. FR – France

(p. 4) The French economy is marked by a growth rate that is still insufficient, a high unemployment rate, even if it is going down, and, above all, low employment rates for young and older people. However, we will show that significant progress has been observed regarding gender equality – as far as unemployment and overall employment are concerned. Women's unemployment rate, which remains approximately one percentage point higher than that of men, has gone down,

especially for those in the 25–54 age group. But the unemployment rate of young women remains very high. In terms of employment rates, the increase is significant even if the overall rate and that of men are lower than the European rates. However, women's employment rate reached the Lisbon target (60%) for the first time and exceeded European levels. Taking into account working time, and especially part-time working, reduces this result: the gap regarding full-time equivalents is 14.6% (but is 20.6% for the whole of the EU); women's full-time equivalent employment rate is not 60%, but 52.4%, because of more than a 30% part-time rate for women in employment.

The situation regarding gender equality is paradoxical: on the one hand, as far as infrastructure is concerned, the new government (elected in May 2007) abolished the Ministry of equality and threatens regional women's rights structures; but, on the other hand, a new conference on equal pay took place and a new draft law on equal pay is said to be in the process of being drawn up.

Although some measures promoting equality in the labour market have been introduced, it is nevertheless true that major changes in employment policy since 2006 are also at work (especially since 2007 with the change of government). But most of these measures are having a big, mainly negative, impact in gender terms, without it being mentioned anywhere. Everything is happening as if gender mainstreaming policies did not exist – on the one hand, the reduction of inequalities, notably regarding pay, is advocated, but, on the other, there is an increase in flexible measures, including more flexible contracts, as well as greater controls of the unemployed which indirectly reinforce inequalities for women in the most insecure situations, and especially those with family constraints

13. HU – Hungary

(p. 2) Downsizing the large budget and current account deficit according to the convergence criteria were the priority aims of the Hungarian government in 2006 and 2007. Due to increasing tax revenues and cuts in government spending the financial indicators of the budgetary balance substantially improved. Nevertheless, the country could not break out from the trap of high tax wedge, low employment, high social expenditures and deteriorating income generation capacity. The growth rate and the competitiveness of the country declined over recent years.

The main priority of the government's employment policy was to reduce the negative position of the most vulnerable groups such as: the Roma minority, disabled persons, the aged, the low skilled and women. Unfortunately, the government was not able to achieve this strategic target in recent years. From perspective of gender the results are rather ambiguous. The employment indicators of women deteriorated: they have a higher unemployment rate and lower employment probabilities than that of men. Gender segregation decreased and the gender wage gap narrowed, but an extremely low employment level and high wage loss of mothers with small children still remained.

14. IE – Ireland

(pp. 3-4) The Irish economy has been unique within the EU in recording particularly high levels of economic growth, well above the EU average, throughout the decade 1997-2007. However over the last eighteen months the economic situation has changed quite dramatically. A consequence of these changing economic conditions is a very different employment situation in 2008 compared to the situation in 2006. There have been significant job losses over the last eighteen months, particularly in construction but job losses have also spread to manufacturing and there is growing evidence of a ripple effect through into the services sector.

In this changing economic context, employment policy has developed a renewed focus on addressing increasing levels of registered unemployment, and particularly preventing further increases. As a consequence less emphasis is evident in policies towards the activation of labour supply which characterised the high growth years of 1997-2006. The emphasis is no longer on increasing the supply of labour through drawing more women into paid employment and increasing the numbers of migrant workers. Employment policy has shifted towards moving registered unemployed and lone parents off social welfare and into paid employment through active labour market policies. This represents a significant shift in policy towards lone parents, predominantly women, with the dual objective of reducing the number of welfare claimants as well as increasing the employment rate of women. However, in practice, policies aimed at phasing out welfare provision for long term lone parenting are likely to come up against the barrier of rising unemployment and job losses.

In the context of a lack of available and affordable childcare, employment trends continue to show a steep decline in women's labour force participation over the life cycle, particularly dependent on factors such as the number and age of their children. Gender differences are very marked in that men's employment rates are largely unaffected by the presence of children in the household. The central issue in relation to women's access to employment remains the lack of a proper care infrastructure, particularly the lack of adequate child and pre-school education services and the perpetuation of financial disincentives within a household-based welfare and taxation system. Ireland does not have a comprehensive childcare policy.

15. IT - Italy

(p. 3) The major issues addressed by the policy makers between 2006 and 2008 in terms of equal opportunities can be grouped in two: i) policies aimed at supporting women's participation in the labour market through the provision of childcare services; ii) policies aimed at increasing the employment rate through financial incentives. Less has been done for gender mainstreaming in the field of workers adaptability, or within the policies aimed at fostering the participation of adult population in training initiatives, in the framework of a lifelong learning approach. The flexicurity approach is still weak: much has been done in order to identify flexible contracts to increase employment rate, but a complementary strategy for counterbalancing negative effects of this flexibility through adequate unemployment insurance schemes has not yet been implemented. The weakness of the system of security (of both income, and employment) falls especially on female workers, who are overrepresented in all types of precarious contracts.

16. LT - Lithuania

(pp. 3-4) Measures, schemes and programmes (in priority area 1) are targeted at the following groups: women, youth, and persons with special needs, elderly. Emphasis is placed on support to employers who create new quality jobs or new jobs adapted to the needs of persons with special needs. Also there is a goal to develop further social services infrastructure whose employment possibilities are restricted by family situation to join the labour market. More attention should be paid to improvement of access to childcare services in Lithuania. Emphasis (in priority area 2) is on prevention of unemployment, diversification of rural population employment, variation of forms of employment, analysis of emigration of skilled workers. Issues of reducing labour market segmentation, gender pay gaps remain ignored. The policy focus (in priority area 3) is on raising the prestige of vocational training and increasing the extent of lifelong learning also on the optimisation of the network of vocational education schools. There is no explicit flexicurity policy in Lithuania. Main purpose of employment policies is to increase level of women employment, introduce flexible working forms and etc. Stated policies are not always directly corresponding to the concrete policies.

17. LU - Luxemburg

(pp. 3-4) Most of the employment policy measures that were implemented in Luxembourg fall under the first priority "Attract and retain more people in employment". The problem for Luxembourg is not to create more jobs, but to succeed in attracting more Luxembourg people, mainly women, to the labour market. In principle, every measure has been evaluated from a gender perspective, through the Inter ministerial Committee. But it is difficult to assess the quality of the gender impact assessment made in the ministries and administration and in the Committee.

With the exception of explicit gender equality measures, most of the measures adopted seem to be gender neutral. In some cases, the evaluation process will allow to measure the gender effect of some of the measures, for example the activation policies and the employment measures for young people. The gender impact remains difficult to assess sometimes because data provided by other ministries or administration than the Ministry of Equal Opportunities, when presenting for example employment measures, still lack of broken data by sex. Nevertheless, consistent effort have been made by the statistical office (STATEC), by Research Institute such as the CEPS-Instead to provide a large set of indicators, data and analysis on gender differences and inequalities in the labour market in Luxembourg.

Public authorities in Luxembourg are more and more concerned with gender equality. The existence of a ministry of Equal Opportunities is an important tool and the visibility of the gender equality debate is increasing.

18. LV – Latvia

(p. 4) Of the four policy areas, attaining full employment and increasing labour supply receives by far the most attention of the government. In line with the European Council recommendation, policy documents and policy measures show that the government is (increasingly) convinced that women are an important target group in this respect. A set of measures that has successfully supported labour market performance has been implemented. Latvia still needs to improve the availability of public child care and preschool education system in order to ensure gender equality in terms of reconciliation of work and family life for families with preschool and primary education children.

19. MT – Malta

(p. 1) Malta has implemented fiscal measures to attract women into the labour market through a revision of income tax bands, tax credits for women returnees, an adjustment in national insurance contribution on income of part time work, and a drop in threshold requirements for entitlement to pro rata benefits. However, even when Malta has recognised the need for the provision of childcare, the State still keeps its distance in financing and organising the service. Malta's response to a long standing demand for the provision of childcare for the under 3 was to publish national standards for childcare services in 2007. However, no attempt has been made to discuss a national childcare policy.

Although state policies may be seen as enabling gender equality, in practice they are trapped in the traditional way. For example, maternity leave on full pay increased to 14 weeks, however, parental leave is unpaid and fathers' take-up rate remains low. Policy initiatives are still dominated by the idea that reconciling work and family means improving conditions for women to do both, where men are expected to earn and women to care. Although Malta appears to be relatively advanced in active labour market policies, more effort is required for gender mainstreaming. Occupational and sectoral segregation linked to the gender pay gap is increasing, and the equal pay law needs a definition of the value of work, job evaluation and ranking processes reinforced with effective sanctions.

20. NL – Netherlands

(p. 3) Of the four policy areas, attaining full employment and increasing labour supply receives by far the most attention of the government. In line with the European Council recommendation, policy documents and policy measures show that the government is (increasingly) convinced that women are an important target group in this respect. Several measures have been implemented to increase their participation rate (both in persons as in number of working hours). For example, the number of childcare facilities has increased considerably and fiscal measures will be implemented to make paid work more attractive. In addition, there is attention for specific groups such as lone parents on social assistance and women from ethnic minority groups. Policy attention does, however, not always translate into effective policy measures. For example, taskforces, advisory commissions and direction groups may be useful in order to raise awareness, they are also rather non-committal. In addition, with respect to the other policy areas, there is hardly evidence of gender mainstreaming.

21. PL – Poland

(p. 3) The political discourse relevant for labour market reforms increasingly reflects the goals and objective of the European Employment and the Lisbon Strategies, and women have become identified as a weaker labour market group and their integration into the labour market is gaining importance in light of the demographic challenge. At the national level significant changes have been taking place with respect to a growing emphasis on ALMPs, extending the working lives of older workers (50+) and active ageing, the promotion of flexible forms of employment, participation of children (3-5 yrs) in preschool education, improving the effectiveness of vocational training and participation of adults in lifelong learning. Many of these reforms are at the early stages of proposals or projects and have not been agreed upon with the social partners or passed by the Parliament. It is thus too soon to categorise them as a specific national pathway of flexicurity. However, the content of policies represents a significant effort on the part of the government to align Polish labour market policy with the Europe-wide trend of activation and the establishment of a work-fare model. Although policy proposal attest to the importance Poland puts on human capital

development, activation, entrepreneurship, and adaptability the degree to which gender is taken into consideration is still limited. At policy level the role of gender in shaping flexible patterns of work and reinforcing inequalities stemming from such arrangements are not recognised. There is no evidence of consideration of the likely negative gender consequences of flexible work; or supporting pathways out of non-standard employment. Since the impact of flexicurity policies on gender are not self-evident, a systematic application of gender mainstreaming at all stages of policies would be beneficial to the attainment of greater gender equality.

(p. 9) Over the last couple of years all four priority areas have gained the attention of policy makers. Significant changes have been taking place with respect to a growing emphasis on ALMPs, extending the working lives of older workers (50+) and active ageing, the promotion of flexible forms of employment, participation of children (3-5 yrs) in preschool education, improving the effectiveness of vocational training and participation of adults in LLL. The labour market situation has been gradually improving and the references to the concept of flexicurity have become more frequent. The major recent developments include the novelisation of the Act of April 2004 on the promotion of employment and labour market institutions (proposal), family policies (in progress) and an Equal Treatment Act (proposal), and education policies (in progress). These policy changes aim to further improve the functioning of the labour market in general (which may thus also have a positive impact on the situation of women) and some (e.g. better provision of childcare, flexible employment) focus on the improvement of the labour market position of women in particular.

22. PT – Portugal

(p. 3) The Portuguese government searches for the “keeping up the pace of change”, trying to follow the GL of the first Lisbon Strategy Cycle. As a consequence, social turbulence has marked these past two years in Portugal. It was during this period that major reforms of different sectors of public administration were launched and that resistance to them made itself heard loudly and uninterruptedly, through the most widespread public protests ever seen in Portugal. Among the policies pursued it has been prioritised: the reduction of budget deficit; the reform of pension and early retirement systems; the advancement of ALMP; the expansion of maternity and paternity protection rights; the reduction of the number of early school leavers; the upgrading and enhancement of long life learning; the advancement of the information society; the support to small and medium enterprises; the reinforcement of the education-research-innovation triangle.

Important milestones for gender equality must be underlined in this period, among which the most noteworthy is probably the inclusion of gender equality as one of the 10 priorities defined for the National Strategic Reference Framework (QREN). The second milestone is constituted by the approval by the Council of Ministers, on 22 June 2007, of three new national Plans: the I National Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings (Resolution 81/2007), the III National Plan for Equality, Citizenship and Gender (Resolution 82/2007) and the III National Plan against Domestic Violence (Resolution 83/2007). These Plans will run until 2010. The third milestone is the tripartite agreement with social partners on the reform of labour relations, of social protection and of active labour market policies, whose outcome will greatly influence the strategy for mainstreaming gender equality into the employment policies in the near future. This agreement tackles the following issues: 1. increase the adaptability of enterprises; 2. promote the collective bargaining; 3. rationalize and reinforce the security of both parts in processes of dismissal; 4. reinforce the effectiveness of labour legislation; 5. combat precariousness and segmentation.

(p. 13) The government has been very active as regarding GLs 18, 19 and 20, not only implementing the new policies launched with the NRPE 2005-2008, but also in the announcement of new policies. Following the important agreement between the government and the social partners, a variety of new policies has been announced to be launched within next year (this legislature will come to its term in mid-2009). In spite of the strong impact on gender equality of some of the measures, this is not often acknowledged.

23. RO – Romania

According to the 2007 NRP, employment policies should address the following goals: a) improving access to the labour market, developing an inclusive labour market; b) flexibility and security in the labour market; c) extension of active life; d) stimulating employment in the rural area; e) improving the quality of human resources; f) development of education and vocational training; g) improving quality in higher education; h) promoting LLL; i) developing and improving the quality of social

protection services. Within this framework special attention was paid to improving the quality of services offered by PES, as well as to strengthening social partnership principles.

A large number of policy measures have been announced, but only a few have been enacted and implemented. The majority of policy proposals are not gender mainstreamed. In particular, no reference is made to the problem of reconciliation between work and private life.

The economic and social situation of women during the transition period was negatively affected more significantly than that of men. Hence, a process of feminisation of poverty appeared during the transition period in Romania. The component of social policy which experienced the most spectacular drop after 1989 has been cash and services support for families with children. The disintegration of the social support system for child care has greatly diminished the chances of women's participation in employment. The low chances of participation in employment of women with young children will probably have a negative effect on their future reintegration into work activities. The jobs accessible to them tend to require low levels of training and, consequently, generate low income. The lack of effective gender specific policies and lack of gender mainstreaming of employment policies make unlikely the possibility of any substantial improvement.

24. SE – Sweden

(p. 3) As far as labour market policy is concerned many changes have taken place. The most important is subsidised jobs (so called new start jobs, step in jobs and special new start jobs). New start jobs were introduced in January 2007. The employer will normally receive economic support for as long a period as the new employee has been unemployed, but twice as long for those 55 years or more. Step in jobs were introduced in July 2007 and are aimed at asylum seekers who have received a residence permit, quota refugees and close relatives of people in these two groups. Beginning in January 2008, special new start jobs were introduced for persons who has been on sick leave for a year or more and new start jobs was widened to include also the public sector and part-time unemployed. One third of these jobs went to women.

In general the work requirements to qualify for unemployment and sickness allowances has been increased, the length of work has been given more importance in determining the benefits level and the levels have been lowered. On the other hand, an in-work tax credit has been introduced, which, according to the Government, will reduce the tax for low and middle income earners, of which a majority is women.

According to the Government, important steps have been taken in order to facilitate women's working life and for families to live in a more gender equal everyday life. One measure is a tax relief for the purchase of household-related services. Another is a gender equality bonus. It is hoped that the bonus will provide an incentive to share parental leave more equally, improve the bond between the child and both parents and lessen the gender pay gap. Another measure will however, most certainly work in the opposite direction. This is a child-raising allowance which can be received until the child is 3 years old. Since mothers use this kind of leave, but not fathers, it might mean that some women will be absent from the labour market longer.

(p. 29) The Government overall goal is to restore the work-first principle and fight labour exclusion. This is to be achieved by measures making it worthwhile to work, making it easier and less costly to take on new employees and making it possible for more enterprises to start up and grow. The most important measure to strengthen the work principle is the in-work tax credit. It is designed in a way that lowers the tax on wages relative to other income. Additionally stricter requirements have been enforced as far as other income is concerned such as unemployment and sickness insurance, which means bigger differences between those who have a job and those who do not.

25. SI – Slovenia

(pp. 9-10) The Programme of Active Employment policy for period 2007–2013 declared the following main aims: 1) Increase of employment and decrease of unemployment; 2) Preventing long-term unemployment; 3) Decrease of structural unemployment: increase of employability by acquiring new knowledge, skills and abilities; 4) Increase of flexibility and competitiveness of employees; 5) Promoting new employment; 6) Increase of social inclusion. These aims are to be achieved by the following measures (implementation of some of them started in 2007).

1. Guidance and assistance in seeking employment (guiding and helping in seeking jobs and familiarising with vocational possibilities, improving employment possibilities and eliminate barriers in seeking jobs). Target groups of this measure are all unemployed persons and those seeking a job or information on occupations and the needs of the labour market.

2. Training and education (increasing employability and competitiveness on the labour market by acquiring new knowledge, skills and abilities and raising the level of education and qualifications of employees and unemployed persons, acquiring national professional qualifications, practical education, education and training of employees). Target groups are unemployed persons without any vocational education or with training in surplus professions, unemployed young persons up to the age of 25, young people without work experience, recipients of financial social assistance and unemployment benefit and other disadvantaged unemployed persons.

3. Promoting employment and self-employment (promoting the self-employment of unemployed persons, subventions for employers, support for introduction of flexible forms of employment and implementation of suitable policies for easier reconciliation of work and family life). Target groups are long-term unemployed persons, recipients of unemployment benefit and financial social assistance, the unemployed above 50 years of age, young people under 25 years of age and first-time job seekers, and primarily those without adequate education relative to the needs of the labour market, workers in the process of losing their jobs, disabled persons and other unemployed persons.

4. Programmes to increase social inclusion (creating an environment that will motivate people towards being active and in which they may more easily and quickly find work, while at the same time enjoying the necessary level of social protection, public works, in-work benefit schemes, support to NGO and non-for profit projects). Target groups are long-term unemployed persons, recipients of financial social assistance, unemployed persons over 50, young persons under 25 and first-time job seekers, especially those without adequate education relative to the needs of the labour market.

The Programme of Active Employment policy for period 2007–2013 declares that principle of equal opportunities will be respected in its implementation, but it does not envisage any programmes or measures designed for women or men only.

26. SK – Slovakia

(p. 2) Slovakia recorded a high GDP growth in 2006 and 2007. The unemployment rate decreased, but the current level (11.1% in 2007) is high and ranks Slovakia at the “top” position within the EU. Another important phenomenon is labour emigration. The employment policy in the last two years paid the primary attention to the problem of long-term unemployment and to the related problems of prevention against exclusion from the labour market and to the assistance for disadvantaged groups. In terms of gender was strongly declared the need to support economic activity of women with small children and the need to close gender wage gap.

The social and economic reforms after 2002 had very strong and positive influence on the economy and on the situation on the labour market. A high level of variability, the cuts in state expenditures, cut-down in direct tax load and compensation through indirect taxes and reductions of public finances into human capital and infrastructure were the main features of the past reforms. After the election in 2006 a notable turnaround took place in policy orientation including strengthening the role of state and giving much stronger preference to the principle of social solidarity.

27. UK – United Kingdom

(p. 1) The main measures since 2006 related to each of the employment guidelines are analysed from a gender perspective. The overriding message is that gender issues have quite a high profile in some parts of employment policy but that gender mainstreaming is uneven.

GL18, GL19, GL20: There is continued progress in relation to reconciliation measures although there are still shortfalls in the availability and affordability of childcare. There is also evidence of GM in the policies for older workers and training for low-skilled adults, although weaknesses still remain in the scope of reform. However there are also developments which are negative, ignore gender differences, or contain contradictions when evaluated from a gender equality perspective. This applies particular to the forthcoming reform of Incapacity Benefit, of Lone Parent policy and the Working Tax Credit system.

GL21, GL22: Again, there are some positive developments for gender equality (reconciliation measures, training) but other pertinent issues remain resolutely ignored (e.g. long full-time hours). There is new activity in relation to the gender pay gap, although much of this is still in the planning stages and will depend on the detail of the Single Equalities Bill as it progresses through Parliament.

GL23, GL24: GM is well-developed overall, but it should be noted that the policy focus is on low-skilled women; with little importance attached to improving the situation of higher skilled women which is also pertinent for gender equality and addressing skill shortages in the economy.

Quality and productivity goals remain subordinate to the focus on full employment. Activation programmes and tax/benefit reform drive the agenda. There has been an increase in attention to investment in skills, but the focus is on low-skilled workers and the non-employed rather than re-skilling as part of a more transformative lifelong learning commitment across the life course. A few developments are compatible with the emergence of a life course perspective on employment (policies for older people, reconciliation measures), but other elements – such as promoting healthy working conditions, the widespread problems of poor quality part-time work, the flexibility and reconciliation needs of older workers – are virtually absent.

Source: National Reports on 2008 NRPs (Part A and B).

5. OVERVIEW OF NRPS

This chapter presents an overview analysis of the National Reform Programmes (NRPs) for 2008 and the consideration given to gender in the national strategies. This overview is structured around four sections. Each section is based on a table and a short commentary that synthesises the key themes from the European Commission’s Expert Group on Gender and Employment (EGGE) initial assessment. After this introduction, section 5.1 examines the overall structure and approach of the NRPs and the integration of gender mainstreaming in the discussion of policy areas. Section 5.2 considers in more detail the adequacy of the approach from a gender perspective using specific policy examples from the Member State NRPs. Section 5.3 discusses the areas highlighted by national experts as key priorities for the promotion of equality within each Member State. Section 5.4 considers the “Country Specific Recommendations” (CSR) or “Points to Watch” (PTW) adopted by the Council in the field of gender equality or reconciliation and the response provided in the 2008 NRPs.

The overall assessment of the expert group is that of a low level of Gender Mainstreaming in the NRP process with gender mentioned sporadically in the reports rather than consistently across policy domains. In many cases the discussion of gender issues is isolated to a section on equality policy and/or other areas such as reconciliation and childcare reflecting the drive to raise female employment rates rather than inequalities on the labour market. Our analyses show that data are not usually disaggregated by gender, even in the case of part-time work and where they are disaggregated it is often not systematic (ES and SE) or are isolated to the annex (DK). This level of coverage is characteristic of previous year’s NRPs (for example entry for Belgium and also Rubery et al. 2006; 2005; 2004). In most countries gender, when discussed, is limited to the Employment chapter of the NRP and although gender issues may be less pertinent in other policy domains (for example, the chapter on Climate Change in the UK or the chapter on Sustainable Development in FR) Gender Mainstreaming requires that gender is considered throughout all policy areas.

However, there are some NRPs where there is evidence of a more concerted attempt to integrate a gender perspective consistently throughout more sections of the report, for example in Spain, although we would stop short of suggesting there is evidence of best practice. On the other hand, there are numerous key policy areas where gender is absent or largely absent and its inclusion would have made an important contribution to either policy development or analysis of the labour market issues; for example, older and younger workers (AT and DK), flexicurity (NL), and education and skills (DK, ES and UK). In chapter 7 (§ 7.5) we discuss in more details policies that would have been improved by the inclusion of gender mainstreaming.

5.1 Visibility of gender

Many of the NRPs follow a standard format in line with the structure of the Integrated Guidelines with sections devoted to macro economic, micro economic and employment policies. Other countries follow their own structure covering similar themes but organised around current policies, future developments and structural fund policy. Although gender mainstreaming would require that gender is considered in all policy domains in practice most NRP reports leave the discussion of gender, if at all, to a rather narrow range of policy areas. In some countries the visibility of gender is assessed to

have been extremely poor by our national expert (DK and FR) with limited or no mention of women, gender or equality in many sections of the NRP.

In the majority of countries gender is visible exclusively in the employment chapter (BG, CY, CZ, EL, HU, IT, LT, LU, LV), but this does not necessarily imply a thorough approach to gender. Within the employment chapter, the NRPs restrict the discussion of gender to specific sub section on women and gender equality policies, or reconciliation. For example, the Austrian NRP deals with gender in isolation: not in line with Gender Mainstreaming principles. As a result many of the other sub sections remain rather gender blind, potentially undermining the efficacy of policy development and risking unintended consequences in relation to gender equality. On the other hand, there are examples of Member States not mentioning important policy developments where gender has been integrated (DE, SI) and the NRPs have missed the opportunity to discuss positive examples in relation to gender equality and policy development.

Nevertheless there are some more positive examples in the NRPs in relation to the adoption of a gender perspective for example in the discussion of future policy proposals with a clearer gender focus (CZ) or the coverage of employment and social protection policies (ES) or ethnicity (NL) or in emphasising gender equality objectives at a broader level (PT). By way of an illustration of the uneven coverage, there are also examples of the focus on the female employment rate (ES and NL) or the maintenance of a higher than average female employment rate (DK and EE) without a thorough integration of the gendered tensions that may exist in relation to quantitative targets and reconciliation or flexibility. The focus on women's role in increasing labour supply means that where reconciliation and childcare are discussed (SE and UK) gender is also present. By contrast, the topic of childcare is absent from the employment chapter in some NRPs (BE). Similarly the impact of flexibility and flexicurity policies on women is largely absent (EE and DE being the exceptions). However, there is evidence of a focus on the subject of female entrepreneurship in a number of NRPs (LU, SI, SE and SK) (see also chapter 6, § 6.3). Table 5.1 presents a Member State by Member State analysis of the visibility of gender in the NRPs.

Table 5.1 NRPs 2008 and visibility of gender

	Structure of NRP	Visibility of gender	Remarks
1. AT	The <i>Austrian Reform Programme 2008-2010</i> consists of three parts. Part 1 (Introduction) gives an overview of the “strategic approach” and the “current economic performance”. Part 2 is divided into three sections: “Macroeconomic policies” (GL1-6), “Microeconomic policies” (GL 7-16) and “Employment policies” (GL 17-24). Part 3 covers “Interrelations with other policy areas”.	The attention given to women and to increasing female labour market participation is limited to the specific subsection “Women and gender equality policy measures” under the section “Successful labour market and employment policies”. The other sub sections remain rather gender-blind.	The subsections ‘Older workers’ and ‘Young people’ make hardly any reference to women. In the subsection “Common flexicurity principles” no reference to women or gender equality issues are made.
2. BE		Gender is not very visible in the policy process. The 2008 NRP shows no improvement compared with the 2005 and 2006 NAPs in terms of the degree of gender mainstreaming of the different employment guidelines or the adequacy of specific gender equality policies. The abolition of the specific guideline for gender equality since 2005 has further reduced the visibility of gender issues throughout the Belgian NRP Employment.	The complete absence of a gender perspective means that some very important gender differences on the labour market are ignored.
3. BG	The document starts with an introductory part, presenting the mechanism for reporting and updating the NRP and a short text on the progress under the NRP 2006-2008. There are two parts in the contents: part 1 deals with the Bulgarian economy in the context of the Lisbon Strategy Objectives, and part 2 presents the short-term and long-term NRP measures within the new Lisbon Strategy Cycle 2008-2010. The NRP is supplemented by the Action plan, presenting in detail the measures under each priority area.	Special attention to gender is not paid in the NRP. There is not a consistent approach to gender in the employment chapter. The Action plan describes in details the policies and the measures, which will be undertaken in 2008-2010. Many of the measures, especially in the employment chapter, target women and men, but this is not mentioned in a visible way.	The proposed policies do not refer to the gender issue, and gender approach has not been applied. There are no estimates of the effects, which the implemented policies could have had on gender gaps. There are also no evidences of gender mainstreaming.
4. CY	The 2008 Renewed NRP is divided into four parts. Part 1 is comprised of a detailed description of measures already adopted or to be implemented by 2010 for addressing the European Commission’s CSR and PTW including relevant timetables. The second part is an update of the NRP with some modifications depending on the sector in question and with an emphasis on reforms that promote the four priority areas agreed during the 2006 and 2007 Spring Councils. Part 3 contains a description of the progress made in the main reforms undertaken in the last twelve months with particular emphasis on the CSRs, PTWs as well as the main actions adopted by the Spring Council in the four priority	Reference to women is made on many areas, for example with reference to young unemployed women, programmes implemented to help women directly, funding available for women entrepreneurs, programmes for balancing of work and family life, funding available to NGOs that promote gender equality, etc.	Although this is not yet a completely gender mainstreamed document, the attention paid to gender equality is a significant improvement on past governmental submissions.

	areas. Part 4 connects the NRP to the Structural Funds and contains data that substantiate the fact that approximately 60% of the Structural Funds are granted for measures that promote the priorities of the Lisbon strategy.		
5. CZ	The NRP for 2008–2010 consists of six parts: Introduction, Development of the Czech economy, Macro, Micro, Employment and measures financed from the Structural funds of the EU. Each part is organised along the integrated guidelines and under each guideline the description of the current and recent situation is followed by new objectives and measures.	Gender mainstreaming is not used as a method for promotion of gender equality in employment policies. Gender is only visible in the Employment chapter. However, there is some positive development in the coverage of gender equality issues in terms of plans and new policies for 2008–2010 compared to the previous cycle.	
6. DE	The German report is divided into two parts: part 1 outlines the political reform priorities of the programme for the years 2008-2010, part 2 provides information (in the form of a table) about projects that have been launched since the adoption of the 2007 <i>Implementation and Progress Report</i> . There is no systematic reference to the impact of the policies which have been implemented since 2005 but most parts of the paper announce new policy for the years to come. The NRP does not follow the structure of the integrated guidelines, but has its own structure and includes references to the guidelines.	Gender aspects are mentioned with respect to education, child care facilities, social security regulations/flexicurity, labour market/employment opportunities.	There is no general gender mainstreaming approach, gender aspects remain limited and even programmes which integrate gender aspects as for higher tertiary education/female professors or Start-ups/SMEs are not mentioned in part 1.
7. DK	The NRP focuses on the third priority area of the Lisbon Strategy: <i>Investing in people and modernising the labour markets</i> in chapter 4, where the Commission’s PTW for Denmark regarding “increasing labour supply and hours worked over the medium term, including further initiatives to work and additional steps to integrate older workers, immigrants and their descendants into the labour market” is dealt with.	The word ‘gender’ is mentioned only three times in the NRP – although the annexes give tables broken down by gender. It only appears in one section in the NRP: 4.6 <i>Equal opportunities and employment of women</i> . This section restates the fact that women’s employment is high in Denmark and reveals that the Danish Government is working to realise goals in the implementation of initiatives stated in the EU Equal Opportunities Pact.	The gender blind reference to a decline in the number of young people expected to complete a youth education programme as well as the initiatives to increase labour market supply, is a picture of the general lack of gender awareness. Danish NRP2008 is the same story about lack of gender awareness – and of the fact that the labour force has gender as well as an ethnicity and age.
8. EE	The Estonian NRP for 2008–2011 consists of four main chapters (brief analysis of the components of economic growth, macroeconomic environment, competitive business environment and education and labour market) which altogether describe nine objectives and means of reaching them. The last two objectives concern education and the labour market.	There is some gender-mainstreaming visible in the action plan, especially regarding <i>Objective Nine</i> on flexibility of the labour market and combining family and work.	Other sub-sections of the action plan remain relatively gender blind. From the gender perspective, <i>Objective Nine</i> is adequate, but not sufficient as some of the issues are not covered. The approach concerning <i>Objective Eight</i> needs further inclusion of the gender-mainstreaming into the policy making process.
9.	The report consists of ten chapters an introduction, eight	Attention to gender is paid only in the chapters on	A number of positive developments can be

EL	<p>chapters on special policy fields, a final section on the financial contribution of the European Structural Funds and the National Strategic Reference Plan 2007-2013 to the funding of the NRP 2008-2010. The following policy fields are dealt with in the eight chapters of the report: macroeconomics, public administration, knowledge society, business environment, employment, education, energy and environment, regional and social cohesion.</p> <p>The chapter on the “Reforms for the enhancement of employment” is made up of five sections. The first analyses the current situation of the labour market while the second reports on the policy interventions during 2005-2008, their stage of implementation and number of beneficiaries. The third section describes the strategy and policy priorities in the field of employment for 2008-2010 while the fourth enumerates the new policies and measures in the field of employment. The reforms of the social security system related to the enhancement of employment are described separately in the fifth section.</p>	<p>employment and public administration while all the other chapters remain gender-blind.</p> <p>In the chapter on the <i>modernisation of public administration</i>, one of the five stated policy priorities for 2008-2010 is the enhancement of gender equality policies through the full range of public action (central and local government/ administration). Section 3.5 of the chapter includes all the relevant measures planned for 2008-2010.</p>	<p>observed in the Greek NRP 2008-2010 from the gender perspective, for example the use of gender disaggregated statistics. Moreover, it includes a clear commitment to the improvement of the conditions for gender mainstreaming of all general policies in the coming years.</p>
10. ES	<p>The 2008 Progress Report on the Spanish NRP is structured around five chapters. After a brief introduction and an overview of the economic situation, the third chapter is devoted to monitoring and updating policies gathered in the seven axes of the NRP, these constitutes the main body of the report. The fourth part of the report details the contribution of European Funds to the implementation of the NRP, while the last chapter is dedicated to the accountability of results and objectives. Two additional annexes provide statistical indicators and information about the implementation of specific measures respectively.</p>	<p>In the first two chapters of the report, the only gender issue that has deserved an explicit mention is the positive recent evolution of the female employment rate, which constitutes one of the main objectives of the NRP.</p> <p>The annex of quantitative indicators shows an adequate disaggregation by sex.</p>	<p>In general, the 2008 Progress Report of the Spanish NRP seems to pay a noteworthy attention to gender issues regarding employment and social protection policies, although some elements should have been more closely covered, for example in the gender impact of the <i>implementation of the National System of Dependency</i>.</p>
11. FI	<p>The Finnish NRP for 2008-2010 consists of five chapters: 1) Introduction 2) Macro policy: economic stability and sustainable public finances 3) Micro policy: structural reforms to promote competitiveness and productivity 4) Employment policy: raising the employment rate and improving market efficiency 5) Regional development and support of structural fund policy for Finland’s national reform programme. In addition, there are two appendices, one of them describing the Finnish flexicurity model under</p>	<p>In the foreword of the report it is emphasised that “in accordance with the Government Programme, the promotion of gender equality is taken into account in all decision-making when implementing the reform programme. The gender perspective is mainstreamed in the drafting of legislation, in budget processes and in early stages of other significant projects”.</p>	<p>Even though the foreword sounds promising, in the following 100 pages or so practically no gender perspective is to be found.</p>

	preparation, and the other presenting a table of the integrated guidelines.		
12. FR	The French NRP is about 70 pages long. It is made up of three main themes: sustainable growth, reforms of the labour market and 'sustainability of public finances'. It presents more than 100 measures that have been adopted or are envisaged.	In the introduction to the chapter on the labour market, the issue of gender equality is posed. Throughout the report, the word 'women' appears 11 times; 'equality' (sometimes attached to equal opportunities or equal treatment in general) appears 22 times.	The terms 'gender mainstreaming' (or 'integrated approach to equality' in French) are never used. The issue of equality is only dealt with in one paragraph (pp. 44-45) devoted to 'promoting activity'.
13. HU	The Hungarian NRP 2008-2010 consists of three main parts. The first one evaluates the economic and labour market trends. The second one contains information on the implementation of policy measures according to macro- and micro-economic and employment guidelines. The third part introduces the partnership approach of elaboration, revision and realisation of the NRP. A list of cohesion instruments to be applied for fulfilling the main targets of the Action Programme are presented in the Appendix of the document.	GM was not taken into consideration at the elaboration of NRP, gender disaggregated statistics were not used in it. Gender specific policies were drafted only in the employment chapter, addressing especially the very low employment rate of mothers with small children. Implementation of measures to improve the reconciliation of paid work and childcare already started in the period of the previous NRP but was extended to the present one. In all other filed, the programme is rather gender-blind.	Gender Equality Body was not involved in the elaboration of the NRP and in its discussion either.
14. IE	The <i>Irish NRP 2008-10</i> entitled <i>Lisbon Agenda – Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs</i> is structured around four chapters : a background chapter outlining recent economic and employment trends and the current policy context; a chapter detailing macroeconomic policy objectives; a chapter detailing microeconomic objectives; a chapter presenting employment guidelines, objectives and policies.	There are important specific references to the economic position of women, to gender differences and to gender equality. A specific section on gender equality is included in the employment chapter.	The underlying gender analysis is weak, but it is a stronger than in the NRP 2006, For the most part Ireland's NRP 2008 presents its analysis and policy priorities in a <i>gender neutral</i> , and at times <i>gender blind</i> fashion.
15. IT	The chapter on employment is 20 pages long. It is made up of 8 themes: i) Education, training and LLL; ii) Labour market policies and flexicurity; iii) transition of youngsters from education to the labour market; iv) Policies against undeclared work; v) Active labour market policies and PES (<i>Servizi per il lavoro</i>); vi) Policies for reconciliation: childcare services; vii) Active ageing and adequacy of pension benefits; and viii) Policies for social inclusion.	The issue of gender equality is limited to section 6 (on reconciliation and childcare), where two short paragraphs describe what the Governments "intends to do", though in a very superficial way. Throughout the rest of chapter the word 'women' appears only two times. The word 'equal opportunities' appears only once; the term 'gender mainstreaming' is never used, and, in fact, there is no gender mainstreaming at all in the Italian NRP.	The statistical information provided is very limited (only three tables), and data are never disaggregated by gender (neither in the tables, nor in the text). The question of the very low female employment rate is neither mentioned nor explicitly considered.
16. LT	The 2008 Implementation Report consists of three parts. Part 1 contains information on process of implementation of the programme and improvement of cooperation. Part 2 presents detailed information on progress in implementing the Programme and measures implemented (macro, micro and employment). Part 3 contains information on EC recommendations and spheres demanding specific attention.	There are gender equality aspect in employment chapters.	Overall the Annual Progress Report on the implementation of the programme pays specific attention to integration of the gender equality aspect in employment, including the influence on gender stereotypes, better reconciliation family and working roles.

17. LU	The 2008 Luxembourg NRP consists of five parts: after an introduction making the link with the Lisbon Strategy, a second chapter is devoted to the good governance and empowerment of economic actors. The third chapter details the BEPGs, the Employment guidelines are detailed in the fourth chapter, the last one, the fifth, describes the relationship between the Structural Funds and NRP.	The gender approach is almost exclusively present in the Employment Guidelines. In the BEPG chapter, reference to the specific situation of women is only explicit in the part devoted to GL 15, about entrepreneurship.	
18. LV	The Progress Report (draft, October 2008) contains a Preface, six chapters and two Annexes. Chapter 1 gives a Political summary of the Report, provides a short description of economic processes in Latvia, introduces five main directions of economic policy to achieve the main Lisbon objectives in Latvia. Chapter 2 describes ensuring the Programme, Chapter 3 discuss economic situation and economic policy, Chapter 4 describes Micro economy policy, Chapter 5 is devoted to Employment Policy, and Chapter 6 describes the coordination of Latvian National Lisbon Programme and ESF funding. Annexes provide information activities of Latvian National Lisbon Programme, the status of activities and financing (Annex 1), and Status of activities of the Operational Document as of 31/07/2008 (Annex 2).	No gender mainstreaming visibility of gender, no gender specific policy, seldom use of gender disaggregated statistics (employment of men/women, gender disaggregated statistics on employment of elderly men/women). The Employment policy Chapter includes a paragraph which mentions that Latvia still has “remarkable reserves” (p.47) for women to enter the labour market.	The Gender dimension was more visible in the previous National Lisbon Programme (2005-2007). There is no gender mainstreaming visibility in the current document. There is also no clear vision of a solution to solve the problem of preschool education in order to increase female employment.
19. MT	The Maltese NRP consists of three parts. Part A provides a closure report of the Malta Reform Programme 2005–2008; Part B addresses specific recommendations for Malta; and, Part C discusses micro and macro economic policies, as well as employment, and education and training.	Women are mentioned in all three parts of the NRP	Emphasis is largely on the country-specific recommendation of stepping up efforts to attract more people, especially women, into the labour market.
20. NL	The 2008 Progress Report on the Dutch NRP 2005-2008 consists of two parts. Part 1 contains information on implementation of policy whereas Part 2 provides a background analysis.	The 2008 Progress Report on the Dutch NRP 2005-2008 pays specific attention to women and the policies to increase their participation rate seem appropriate. The attention is, however, limited to a specific subsection under the section ‘increasing labour supply’. The other (sub)sections remain rather gender-blind.	In the subsections ‘elderly’ and ‘vulnerable groups’ there is hardly a reference to gender. One exception is with respect to ethnic minority groups (with reference to a project that aims for an inflow of 50,000 women from ethnic minority groups in volunteer work). In the sections ‘flexicurity’ and ‘increasing human capital’ no reference is made to gender whatsoever.
21. PL	The NRP 2008-11 contains 6 sections with 3 priorities: 1) Introduction; 2) Implementation of NRP and economic situation in Poland 2005-08; 3) NRP 2008-11 priorities,	The NRP 2008-11 adopts a gender neutral language. The word ‘gender’ or the notion of ‘gender equality’ does not appear even once. Reconciliation of work and family life	Despite the gendered nature of labour market inequalities in Poland, the NRP 2008-2011 does not pay sufficient attention to gender equality

	measures and tasks; 4) Priority 1: Active Society, 5) Priority 2: Innovative Economy; 6) Priority 3: Effective Institutions. The section most relevant to employment is Priority 1: Active Society, divided in six Measures: a) Development of education and knowledge economy; b) Modernisation of the social protection system; c) ALMP; d) Development of institutions supporting civil society and strengthening the role of social partners/ social dialogue; e) Development of information society; e) Increased effectiveness of the health care system. The overarching theme is to increase social activity (i.e. participation in the labour market and in civil society through the development of social economy, social dialogue, non-governmental organisations, voluntary sector).	policies are mentioned briefly in reference to the implementation of the previous policy cycle stating that ‘labour market reforms were supported by instruments facilitating reconciliation’ (p.7) and this is continued in the employment chapter (section 3.2) where reforms will ‘facilitate’ reconciliation (see section B.2 below). But, there is no separate section dedicated to reconciliation, gender equality, or women’s employment. Women are explicitly referred to only 3 times in the text as part of one measure under ALMPs. These do not make use of gender disaggregated statistics and do not provide targets. Within the NRP 2008-11 visibility of gender is thus very limited.	issues or does not provide evidence of gender mainstreaming.
22. PT	The 2008 Progress Report consists of three parts. The first contain the Portuguese government’s response to the EC recommendations and challenges; the second contains the proposals for the next 2 years; the third presents the results achieved with the NRP 2005-2008. The overall document has 349 pages, with the last part composed of tables presenting schematically each measure, the state of the issue and the expected results and future developments.	Overall the 2008 Progress Report on the NRP 2005-2008 and the plan for the New Cycle 2008/2010 emphasises gender equality objectives, at a very broad level. We can find in this report the linkages with other policy instruments, namely, <i>National Action Plan for Inclusion; III National Plan for Equality; III National Plan against Domestic Violence; I National Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings.</i>	There is some progress, in general, but not particularly in employment policies, where there are no new relevant measures to diminish inequalities between men and women at the same time, gender-blindness characterises the more relevant new measures proposed.
23. RO	The Implementation Report on the Romanian National Reform Programme (NRP) cover the period 15 October 2007 – 15 October 2008 and is structured on four areas (public administration, macro-economy, micro-economy and labour market). The report systematically presents the relevant actions of Romanian authorities involved in implementing the reforms stipulated in the revised National Reform Programme 2007 – 2010.	The policy needs for women’s employment are not considered directly or explicitly in the NRP 2008; there are few references and many indirect solutions - it is more of a “declarative ideology”. As such there are limited links between women and policies or the development of the labour market. There are objectives or policy initiatives relating to gender equality in the NRP but they don’t correspond to concrete action plans.	There is an absence of gender mainstreaming, even in the chapters focused explicitly on gender equality. In the chapter referring to the harmonisation of family life with careers and flexicurity on labour market, there is no GM on the proposed solutions. GM in those policy areas dealing with the real support for women’s employment should remain a high priority for the near future in Romania.
24. SE	The 2008 NRP is divided into three main sections – macroeconomic policy, microeconomic policy and employment policy – in accordance with the Integrated Guideline’s structure. Under each heading guideline covering one or more guidelines, the policy’s aims and orientation and the measures the Government has under way or planned for the period 2008 to 2010 are reported. There is also an introductory chapter in the beginning of the	In the introduction and Macroeconomic policy chapter, there is no mention of women, men or gender. Data are not disaggregated by sex, although in most cases they could have been. Under GL 9, it is stated that sustainable growth requires everyone to participate and therefore also includes gender equality. Additionally women (and men) are referred to when discussing entrepreneurship.	

	report and in the end there is information about The EC Structural Funds Programme in Sweden for the programme period 2007-2013. There are also three appendixes: Integrated Guidelines, Structural Indicators; Sweden and EU, 2007 and Indicators to monitor the employment policy.	There are some paragraphs under the heading of “Equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market”, discussing childcare and allowances (see table 2).	
25. SI	The 2008 NRP consists of three parts. The first part reports on implementation of the integrated recommendations and PTW, the second part reports on the realisation of the reform programme for implementation of the Lisbon Strategy for 2008 and third part presents the renewed programme for implementation of the Lisbon strategy 2008-2010.	Overall the document is not systematically gender mainstreamed. Visibility of gender is present only in some subsections of the document, gender related problems are not adequately discussed and policies and measures to tackle these problems are not presented. Available gender desegregated statistics and indicators are not presented.	With exception of mentioning the further development of education and training of women within the programmes of the promotion of entrepreneurship, there is no reference to gender in other sub sections of the third part of the document. Existing and planned programmes, measures and aims defined in the <i>Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men</i> and the <i>Periodic Plan</i> for 2008-2009 are not presented and there is no discussion how those could be helpful in achieving aims defined in the programme.
26. SK	The NRP for 2008-2010 consists of two parts. Part 1 presents the implementation of Lisbon measures in the previous year, macroeconomic framework and financing of NRP. The last section in Part 1 deals with the reform measures for the period 2008-2010. Two annexes are included: the first annex presents the set of indicators for the Lisbon Strategy and the second annex presents the institutional framework of the Lisbon Strategy. Part 2, titled “Annex 3”, presents the action plan for 2008-2010.	In both parts of NRP the attention paid to gender equality and gender mainstreaming is very marginal.	The problem of gender wage gap is not simply a problem of legislation, but much more as a problem of structural imbalances in national economy.
27. UK	The report consists of an introductory chapter followed by four chapters addressing different policy areas. The UK CSRs are presented in Annex A.	Gender barely appears in the macroeconomic and microeconomic chapters where there are a few specific mentions of policies targeted at women. The employment chapter includes some implicit consideration of gender via a strong focus on lone parent policy (4 of the 34 paragraphs in this chapter – only ‘skills’ receives more paragraphs) and reconciliation issues (4 paragraphs address work-life balance and childcare) and one paragraph on gender equality. GM was present to some degree in some policy developments but these are not detailed in this brief report.	Taken as a whole, across the report the attention given to reporting on GE and GM considerations is limited and this perspective is notably absent from the discussion of some of the Government’s key policy objectives where GM is particularly pertinent; namely in relation to improving skill-levels, innovation and productivity. There are very few labour market statistics presented in the report, and no statistical annex. Given this approach there is little, if any discussion of gender differences on key labour market indicators.

Source: National Reports (see Bibliography)

5.2 Adequacy of approach in the field of gender equality in employment

The 2008 NRPs present quite diversified approaches in the field of gender equality in employment. On the basis of the information provided by national experts it is possible to identify three broad groups of NRP reports.

- The first group is made up of reports in which the issue of female employment and gender equality is addressed through a large and diversified combination of policy initiatives. This is the case of AT, ES, CY and NL. Here significant attention to gender issues and key challenges is given, resulting in noticeable advancements. However, gender specific inequalities persist.
- The second group consists of reports in which the attention given to female employment and gender equality is restricted within the area of employment and tackled through few individual policy initiatives. This appears to be the case of CZ, DE, EE, FR, HU, LU, PT, SE, SI, SK and UK. Although there are significant differences across the NRPs of these Member States, they all tend to focus on few areas of intervention, ignoring other important gender differences on the labour market and key challenges for gender equality.
- The third group is made up of reports in which the question of gender equality in employment is not present (as appears to be the case in BG, LV, MT, PL, RO) or it is approached in a transversal way, stating important principles (such as gender mainstreaming) and/or emphasising gender equality objectives at a very broad level, but this is not followed by a genuine gender perspective. This seems to be the case of BE, DK and FI. The absence of a gender perspective implies very limited references to gender and practically no gender mainstreaming. This means that key challenges for gender equality are ignored.

The preliminary analysis of the NRPs (as summarised in table 5.2) allows us to identify some commonalities across Member States in terms of issues considered in the field of gender equality in employment.

The issue of the gender pay gap is explicitly considered in a significant number of countries (AT, BE, DK, EE, FR, LU, SK). Austria mentions the introduction of a permanent monitoring scheme on the gender pay gap; the Belgian NRP mentions the gender pay gap, though the proposed solutions are weak (according to national expert); the French NRP announces the initiative on *Unequal Pay* which will mobilise social partners in order to reduce the gender pay gap; Denmark announces the first “Equal Pay Statistics” in the Cooperation Committees in Autumn 2008; Estonia sets the reduction of the gender pay gap as one of the main goals in the area of employment policies; France announces an initiative on ‘unequal pay’ which will mobilise actors in companies to reduce the gender pay gap with the help of new tools; Luxembourg considers measures aimed at reducing the gender pay gap; Slovakia presents the amendment of the Labour Code, including a more precise definition of the principle of equal pay for equal work, as an important tool for the reduction of the gender pay gap.

Another issue that has received attention in a large number of countries is that of care work and reconciliation (AT, CZ, DE, EE, ES, IE, IT, LT, NL, SL, SE, and UK). The way in which the issue is tackled suggests an improvement in the sense that policy measures are no longer limited to availability of childcare but embrace other forms of care work. In particular, Austria puts forward measures to improve the reconciliation between employment and family; the Czech Republic, as well as Ireland and Italy, are

concerned with improving access to childcare; Germany has made the choice to increase childcare facilities as a major instrument to combine work and family; Estonia has developed a plan for an integrated care system, in order to enable working-age people with care responsibilities to enter the labour market; Spain reports on the implementation of the *National System of Dependency*, which implies the labour market integration of informal carers (mostly women); the Netherlands has announced a restructuring of the *Childcare Act* (in order to restrain high public costs), as well as policies aiming to develop and improve family-friendly policies within companies and public services; Sweden has announced the *Gender equality bonus* (to stimulate an equivalent use of the parental allowance between women and men) and the possibility for municipalities to introduce a *Child-Raising Allowance* (for parents looking after children at home); Slovenia reports some important improvements in the area of reconciliation (including co-funding of kindergarden's payment); the UK documents important progress in relation to policies for work-life balance and the expansion of childcare.

A third issue that has received attention in several countries is related to female entrepreneurship (CY, LU, PT, SE, SI, and UK). Luxembourg reports on the Prize *Woman Business Manager of the Year 2008*; Portugal gives major emphasis on the promotion of female entrepreneurship; Sweden has announced the Government's goal to increase the percentage of new businesses started by women to 40% by 2010; Slovenia mentions programmes of assistance for the self-employment of long-term unemployed women; the UK reports on the government investment in women-led business and initiatives to provide women with skills to start and grow a business.

Table 5.2 NRPs 2008 and adequacy of approach in the field of gender equality in employment

	Approach	Adequacy of the approach
1. AT	<p>According to the “Austrian Reform Programme 2008-2010” the main focus is on the “reduction of the gender pay gap”. In order to reach this goal two fields of intervention are mentioned: 1) “measures to provide equal access to all types of jobs for women and men” and 2) “measures to improve reconciliation between employment and family”.</p> <p>In this respect, several measures, most of them already mentioned in the previous NRP and implemented in recent years, are listed.</p>	<p>Several measures are listed (most of them mentioned in the previous NRP and implemented in recent years). A new instrument and specific target are mentioned: the introduction of a permanent monitoring scheme with respect to the gender pay gap and the national target of increasing the female employment rate by 3 percentage points between 2007 and 2010.</p> <p>The measures presented are important steps but far from sufficient to tackle the persistent gender-specific inequalities on the Austrian labour market or even the gendered division of paid employment and unpaid care work.</p>
2. BE	<p>The choice of the Belgian NRP in the field of gender equality in employment is of a transversal design, implementation and evaluation of policies. It is stated that the formulation of priorities is “to be completed by an approach that keeps a vigilant eye on gender, constitutes the global framework of Belgium’s employment strategy”.</p> <p>The policy attention is focused on: life-long learning; the system that organises guidance, follow-up and control of the unemployed; interregional mobility, employment traps and labour market integration of vulnerable population categories (the young, older workers, non-nationals, handicapped people).</p>	<p>The complete absence of a gender perspective means that important differences on the labour market are ignored and key challenges for gender equality.</p> <p>Amongst the main challenges are: the still not fully individualised taxation system; the persistence of employment traps (measures are taken but they are not sufficient to fully eliminate these traps); the gender wage gap (mentioned but proposed solutions are too weak); the disadvantaged labour market position of non-national women (not identified as a specific problem) and the lack of sufficient child care arrangements (not mentioned at all), especially for the unemployed and outside office hours.</p>
3. BG	<p>The designed policy initiatives in the Programme and the Action Plan aimed at increasing labour supply by attracting and retaining more people in employment, improving the adaptability of workers and enterprises, increasing investment in human capital through better education and improving the functioning of the labour market and its flexicurity but they do not demonstrate gender mainstreaming. The initiatives and suggested policies are adequate in relation to the Lisbon target since they are aimed at reaching the objectives in the four policy areas identified in the integrated guidelines 2008-2010.</p>	<p>However, gender approach is neither present in formulating the priority nor in the analysis of the document. If we compare the two reform programmes – the first one for 2007-2009 and the second one for 2008-2010 – the first programme is more gender-oriented in sense of the statistics used in the analysis as well as in some of the policies initiated, while the NRP 2008-2010 strongly concentrates on reacting to the country-specific recommendations rather than other gender problems and thus it misses gender approach throughout.</p>
4. CY	<p>Reference to women is made on many accounts, for example with reference to young unemployed women, programmes implemented to help women directly, funding available for women entrepreneurs, programmes for balancing work and family life, funding available to NGOs that promote gender equality, etc.</p> <p>Although this is not yet a completely gender mainstreamed document, the attention paid to gender equality is significantly improved from past governmental submissions.</p>	<p>References to women and gender equality in general are significantly improved in this NRP. Several schemes and programmes are mentioned - some repeatedly. References are made to the training of inactive women and the modernisation of the PES with a specific reference to how this would help women “wishing to enter the labour market”. There are also references to the programme aimed at women entrepreneurs which was completed in 2006 but which will continue for the period 2007-2013 with a total budget of 5 million € (co-financed by ESF). In addition, special reference is made to the EQUAL funded programs aimed at the reconciliation of family and professional life. Finally, a new measure is presented the National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAPE) approved in August 2007.</p>

5. CZ	<p>There is some positive development in the coverage of gender equality issues in terms of plans and new policies for this new period of 2008 – 2010 compared to the previous cycle. Generally the national targets for the employment rates are set very low for 2008 (66.4% employment rate, 57,6% employment rate of women and 47,5% employment rate of older workers) and so even though the targets for 2008 have already been met it is not clear in the given economic context that the Lisbon targets for 2010 will be met as well.</p>	<p>There are several new policies that could have a positive impact on gender equality. They concern: a) access to childcare, b) support of education of women and men employees on parental leave and c) flexible workplace policies. It is important to note that concerning the access to childcare, the focus is on services provided by the business sphere or non-governmental organisations. There is significant gender stereotyping that may have a negative impact on gender equality and reproduce the stereotype of women as the exclusive carers.</p>
6. DE	<p>The choice of the German NRP in the field of gender equality in employment is of a punctual policy, heavily concentrating on increasing child care facilities as a major instrument to combine work and family. Initiatives for family-friendly human resource policies are also mentioned (which promote part-time employment and other leave arrangements).</p> <p>The flexicurity approach is described considering gender aspects.</p>	<p>Increasing childcare facilities is important, but it is only one aspect shaping women's position in the labour market. All other aspects are not mentioned: the low employment rate of older women, the low employment rate of migrant women and the special employment paths of young women.</p> <p>There is no overall policy to use women as a major source of skilled labour supply.</p> <p>The flexicurity approach highlights some very problematic developments, like the mini-jobs as instruments to achieve a better balance between working commitments and family life. This is one of the most negative developments of the recent labour market reforms which increase low-paid employment for women without offering the necessary security concerning social security systems.</p>
7. DK	<p>The Danish NRP focuses on the third priority area of the Lisbon Strategy - <i>Investing in people and modernising the labour markets</i> - which was a Point to Watch for Denmark. However, although the annexes provide data disaggregated by gender the chapters are largely gender blind - the word 'gender' is mentioned only three times in the NRP. The NRP states that women's employment is high and reveals that the Danish Government is working to realise on goals on the implementation of initiatives stated in the EU Equal Opportunities Pact.</p>	<p>Initiatives for the EU Equal Opportunities Pact include the promotion of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • women in management (promoting the share by mentors – no discussion of affirmative actions) • Gender-disaggregated information on educational choice (by information to schools) • The first Equal Pay statistics in the Cooperation Committees in Autumn 2008, the result of changes to the equal pay law of 2006.
8. EE	<p>In the first chapter a brief analysis of the components of economic growth points to the employment of women as one of the main components influencing the level of labour utilisation. The second chapter on macroeconomic environment notes that the gradual harmonisation of the retirement age for men and women by 2016 is one of the most significant recent changes which will influence the resilience of the pension insurance system. The third chapter on competitive business environment remains without reference to gender. The fourth chapter on employment starts with setting the main streams of activities, one of which is developing workforce skills that 'help to achieve the necessary flexibility in the labour market and in work relations, as well as reducing the gender pay gap'.</p>	<p>Equal pay is set as one of the main aims of the employment chapter of the action plan. There are two objectives under chapter 4: <i>Objective 8</i>: Improve the skills of the labour force and <i>Objective 9</i>: Increase the flexibility of the labour market and improve the quality of working life. Most of the analysis and measures concerning <i>Objective 8</i> include no reference to gender aspects. <i>Objective 9</i> can be regarded as relatively well gender mainstreamed. There is some gender analysis of the employment rate of men and women, problems for women returning to the labour market and some data on main reason for working part-time (data on part-time work is gender aggregated).</p> <p>Chapter 4 also, for instance, includes a plan to “develop an integrated care system, creating a solid network of nursing homes and formulating social services, including day centres, child day care and nursing care, in order to enable working-age people with a care giving responsibility to enter the labour market”.</p>
9.	<p>The introduction of the NRP mentions the four general policy priorities of the Greek government, of which one is to “increase the employment rate, decrease</p>	<p>The female targets seem to be considered independently from the overall targets since, in the same chapter, women are treated as a vulnerable group when recent employment</p>

EL	unemployment, and make education and training systems more efficient”. However, the employment policy chapter of the NRP fails to explicitly make the link between the advancement of women’s position in employment and the achievement of this general goal. This link remains implicit.	policy developments are reported and assessed and new policy initiatives described. This is also why all gender-relevant employment policy measures are concentrated in two paragraphs on “women” from which men and gender relations are missing (one dealing with the progress of the measures implemented since 2005 and the other describing new policies and measures planned for 2008-2010) and there is no reference to gender in the rest of the chapter.
10. ES	The Spanish NRP pays a significant attention to gender issues: (a) in the area of human capital, the document takes into consideration the gender impact (on employment) of the investment in early schooling; (b) it reports on the monitoring of the new benefits introduced by the <i>Frame Law for the Effective Equality between Women and Men</i> (FLEEW) for a better conciliation of work and family life; (c) it also reports on the monitoring of the implementation of the <i>National System of Dependency</i> , mostly by means of the labour integration of informal carers (mostly women); (d) it mentions the recently signed agreement for the renewal of social dialogue in which equality at work will be taken as a priority; (e) the programme run by the Women’s Institute for the provision of micro credit for women entrepreneurs is briefly mentioned; (f) creation of the Ministry of Equality; (g) adoption of important steps towards the application of a gender mainstreaming approach in every aspects of public policy (thanks to the approval of FLEEW).	The 2008 Progress Report of the Spanish NRP seems to pay a noteworthy attention to gender issues regarding employment and social protection policies, although some elements should have been more closely covered. That is the case of, for instance, the gender impact of the implementation of the <i>National System of Dependency</i> . Despite the noticeable advancements in the evolution of the female employment rate, considerable gender gaps persist. As female employment positively evolves, the emphasis on quality issues should be strengthened and more closely followed up.
11. FI	The targets of the Finnish NRP 2008-2010 are the same as in the previous NRP (for 2005-2008): to raise the employment rate and to improve the well-being of citizens in a sustainable way. The focus is now in the implementation of the already approved national policies. Efforts to boost growth potential include 1) raising the employment rate, 2) accelerating productivity development and 3) promoting work-based immigration.	References to gender are very limited and practically no GM is to be seen in the presentation. This is striking given the new gender mainstreaming principle of the Government Programme and promises given in the foreword of the NRP. Women’s employment rate is mentioned as well as the fact that two thirds of part-time workers are women, and a comment is made on the gender differences in the assessments on the quality of work life. However, when discussing fixed-term employment or the flexicurity model, no reference to gender is made. Still, fixed-term employment is a problem concerning particularly young women. Furthermore, when discussing immigrants’ labour market situation, gender mainstreaming would be appropriate, since immigrant women’s situation is much worse than that of men. Finally, some of the most striking gender equality problems in the labour market are not mentioned: there is no reference to the wide gender pay gap, nor to the need to increase fathers’ take-up of family leave. These items are ‘hidden’ in the Appendix II (presenting the GLs).
12. FR	Throughout the report, the word 'women' appears 11 times; 'equality' (sometimes attached to equal opportunities or equal treatment in general) appears 22 times; but the terms 'gender mainstreaming' (or 'integrated approach to equality' in French) are never used. The issue of equality is only dealt with in one paragraph (pp. 44-45) devoted to 'promoting activity'.	The section on 'ensuring occupational equality between men and women' is the only half page devoted to gender (whereas 3 pages are devoted to older people, who constitute a recurrent problem in France). Besides this formal dimension, the section on equality brings no new measures which have not already been mentioned elsewhere. One of which is an initiative on <i>Unequal Pay</i> which will mobilise actors in companies (company and sector-level social partners) in order to reduce the pay gap, with the help of new tools (a

		new version of the 'comparative situation report'). However, nothing is said about the difficulty women have in accessing employment. In terms of gender mainstreaming, this transversal approach has been abandoned. Mention is made just a few times that women are most affected by unemployment, under-employment and also that occupational equality is one of the bargaining topics.
13. HU	The activity potential of the NRP is limited by the aim of creating durable budgetary stability and the drop of economic growth. Under these conditions, priority was given to: i) the prevention of long-term inactivity; ii) helping employees losing their jobs into the labour market; iii) encourage social groups with disadvantages to take up jobs. Beside the improvement of people's employability, the Government will: - support the economy to maintain its employment capacity and labour demand, - introduce measures encouraging people to become employed, - initiate programmes disseminating non-conventional forms of employment.	Neither the challenges of gender equality were recognized, nor were the answers found in the Hungarian NRP. Moreover, the document failed to mention some important gender issues like gender pay gap, gender segregation, and the special problems of lone parents, providing care for old and ill relatives.
14. IE	In the NRP 2008-10 Overview emphasis is placed on the dramatically changed economic environment. Three critical aspects of the policy context are emphasised: the new National Development Plan 2007-2013, the current renegotiated social partnership agreement "Towards 2016 - Review and Transitional Agreement 2008-09" and the emergency Budget 2009 (brought forward from December to October 2008). People's skills and capabilities are defined as 'the core economic asset' and the social partnership process is defined as having an important contribution to make in 'managing a difficult transition in the economy.'	The strategy aims to increase labour market participation focusing on lone parents, older people, people with disabilities and migrants and developments towards increased provision of childcare. All of these have critical, although mostly not stated, gender dimensions. Policies towards innovation in science and technology, including information technology, energy and transport are all presented in a gender neutral fashion. In a similar manner, there is a lack of a gender perspective in strategies presented towards services and manufacturing development, despite the evidence of strong gender patterns on the Irish labour market.
15. IT	The chapter on employment in the Italian NRP devotes very little attention to the issue of female employment and no attention at all to that of gender equality. Not surprisingly, the issue of female employment appears exclusively (and very briefly) in section 2 (where flexibility is discussed) and in section 6 (on reconciliation).	The approach adopted to address female employment and gender equality is insufficient. The implicit idea is that it will be sufficient to encourage employers to use part-timers (making part-time regulation more flexible) and all other forms of atypical contracts (as they have expanded again) in order to increase female employment; moreover, as women enter employment, more childcare services (0-3 years) will be made available.
16. LT	The main goal of the NRP is to stimulate involvement of Lithuanian citizens to achieve goals specified in the Lisbon Strategy: to familiarize the society with the Lisbon Strategy, to involve the society in discussions concerning sharing ideas on implementation of the Lisbon Strategy and relevant methods of problem resolution	Part 2 of the report is the most gender oriented and highlights a number of measures for improved attention to the availability, accessibility and affordability of child care facilities and creation of better conditions for reconciliation of work and family life. Specific measures are taken for better integration of gender equality in employment (organisation of training for women returners and encouraging elderly women to work and learn). Another important measure is the organisation of seminars intended for changing stereotypes related to roles of women and men in economic activities.
17. LU	The gender approach is almost exclusively present in the Employment Guidelines. In the BEPG chapter, reference to the specific situation of women is only explicit in the part devoted to IGL 15, about entrepreneurship. There is	Reference to gender is only explicit when discussing Entrepreneurship and the Prize "Woman Business Manager of the Year 2008" aimed at promoting women entrepreneurship. In the employment chapter five of the seventeen measures are explicitly

	generally no reference made to the gender dimension in the BEPG and in the large development on the microeconomic reforms there are areas where a gender approach would have been appropriate.	aimed at increasing the employment rate of women: introduction of a services voucher for childcare, Childcare availability and broadening of the concept, Reduction of the Gender Wage Gap, Rethinking of activation policy concerning the beneficiaries of the RMG (<i>Guaranteed Minimum Income</i>) and pursuit of the <i>Positive Action for Equality of Women and Men</i> . However, no reference is made to gender or gender mainstreaming in the discussion of other policies.
18. LV	The gender dimension was more visible in the previous National Lisbon Programme (2005-2007). There is no gender mainstreaming visibility in the current document.	Gender is not mentioned in the objectives or activities of the planned activities, financed by the ESF. Gender dimension is mentioned only in a paragraph about the “remarkable reserves” of female employment and in the title of ESF funded Programme on capacity building during the previous period (the years are not mentioned).
19. MT	Overall, a gender mainstreaming approach in the development of policies is still missing in the NRP. A more strategic approach is needed for mobilising measures specifically for the purpose of achieving gender equality. Of relevance to this short response is Part C of the NRP which focuses specifically on Malta’s programme for 2008 – 2010.	There is no organisational infrastructure with a clear focus on women or gender equality except for the <i>Smart Women</i> initiative (p. 65) to increase women’s employability through ICT certification programmes. There are no specific pathways out of non-standard work and working time, to avoid risks of long-term traps and segmentation of women in disadvantaged employment forms. In practice, gender equality policies in Malta are based on traditional assumptions that leave the basic gendered structure of Maltese society untouched.
20. NL	The participation rate is one of the key issues of the current government (addressed in section 1.3). The Progress Report refers in this context to the CSR “to take further measures to improve the labour supply of women, older workers and disadvantaged groups with a view to raising overall hours worked in the economy”. Indeed, women are mentioned as a particular target group and the section summarises four different policy measures that are being implemented or will be implemented in 2009 to increase their participation rate: the ‘combination’ tax credit is raised and will become income-dependent, the Taskforce ‘Part-time Plus’ has been installed, and the possibility to transfer the general tax credit from a non-working partner to the working partner will be abolished.	Several policy measures are summarised. In addition, a restructuring of the Childcare Act is announced. The current system has resulted in high public costs. It is not clear yet what the impact of the specific measures will be, but it seems likely that the government will decide to cut back the expenses of child care facilities. Other policies aim to develop and improve family-friendly policies in companies and public services. Positive is also the announcement that as of January 2009 the period of parental leave will be extended from 13 to 26 weeks. Moreover, parents on parental leave will receive an extra fiscal facility of 50% of the minimum wage for the statutory period of parental leave. At the moment, this facility is only available for parents who participate in the so-called Life-course scheme. This condition will be abolished. This might be considered as an example of <i>good practice</i> as partly paid parental leave will be available to all (new) parents.
21. PL	The NRP 2008-11 does not take gender differentials sufficiently into account (no national targets, very limited use of gender disaggregated statistics). The lack of specific national targets poses difficulties for the assessment of policies outlined in the NRP 2008-11, especially that their discussion is not extensive. However, there are several policy areas of great relevance to meeting the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy and the goal of gender equality. In the chapter Active Society these policy areas are: education and LLL, modernisation of social security systems, ALMP (e.g. include policies for young people, active ageing, equal opportunities, reconciliation). It is important to note that policies explicitly mentioning women’s employment and the issue of reconciliation are	The labour market situation in Poland has been improving since 2004. Gender gaps are a persistent feature, with women occupying a weaker position in terms of employment, unemployment and inactivity (as well as pay and segregation). Improvements have benefited men more than women. Thus, women’s access to the labour market continues to be one of the main gender equality issues in the Polish context. Despite the gendered nature of labour market inequalities in Poland, the NRP 2008-11 does not pay sufficient attention to gender equality issues and there is no evidence of gender mainstreaming. The main problem is the high level of generality of policy goals and the lack of information on the specifics of reforms. The implementation instruments presented as preparing ‘act on education system’ or ‘act on higher education’ (p.11) do not shed any light onto the

	subsumed under the ALMP heading and dealing with groups at risk of social exclusion. Thus, labour market gender equality does not have an independent status in the NRP (e.g. ALMPs would not resolve the gender pay gap or labour market segregation on their own) and gender is not mainstreamed throughout the document indicating that the EU-level dual approach to gender (specific measures and mainstreaming) is not applied.	reform process or content while expected results, such as the ‘quality of human capital will improve’ (p.10) are too vague to monitor. Indeed, the timetable of elaborating ‘the assumptions’ of reforms for 2008, and further drafts for 2009 (p.11) suggests that many of the proposed reforms are at very early conceptual stages.
22. PT	The 2008 NRP emphasises gender equality objectives at a very broad level. Government’s priorities for 2008-2010 are concerned with “consolidating reforms” (Part II). The pursuit of gender mainstreaming is stated. Measures to promote gender equality are included in two of the six “Domains”: <i>Domain 2 (Making business easier, especially for SME)</i> includes measures to support female entrepreneurship and to award SME with good practices as far as gender equality is concerned; <i>Domain 5 (Plus Positive Mobility through Qualifications, Employment and Social Cohesion)</i> , contains a list of eight measures aimed at building a governance system to promote gender equality and the prevention of discrimination, encompassing a parity citizenship prize, new support for sensitising gender equality and the reinforcement of the gender equality mainstreaming in state policies, through training and monitoring.	It is acknowledged the need to prevent new measures aimed at increasing working time flexibility (contained in the new tripartite agreement) jeopardising the already difficult reconciliation of family and work. However, it is not made explicit how this prevention might be done nor is it acknowledged that this has a major impact on women. In presenting the main results obtained in 2005-2008 (Part III) in terms of employment major emphasis is put on the promotion of female entrepreneurship. But this is not adequate in a country with already high rates of female self-employment and high rates of poverty among the self-employed. Moreover, the entrepreneurship that is envisaged is based on technological innovation, not taking into account the fact that the world of technology is a field where women face more hostilities in the market; hence, there is a high risk of failure of many of the initiatives that will receive support.
23. RO	The NRP 2007-2008 takes into account the main objectives and priorities in the Lisbon Strategy. These objectives are followed by the some proposals for the actions in an implementation process.	Active measures for supporting women on the labour market is not a priority at this moment for the Government. In spite of the fact that women’s employment is one of the Council Recommendation “to take further measures to improve the labour supply of women, older workers and disadvantaged groups with a view to raising overall hours worked in the economy” and an important Lisbon and national target assumed by the Romanian Government through NRP (female employment rate at 55% by 2010), there are no direct references to women’s situation or figures to show the steps made to accomplish this assumed objective. Practically the whole report, including the annexes, can be considered “closed” to gender issues.
24. SE	The 2008 NRP is divided into three main sections (macro, micro and employment policy). The introductory chapter presents the Swedish strategy for growth and jobs and there is no mention of women, men or gender and data are not disaggregated by sex. In the section on macroeconomic policy there is no mention of women, men or gender. In the Microeconomic policy section, under GL 9, it is stated that sustainable growth requires everyone to participate and therefore also includes gender equality. Additionally women (and men) are referred to when discussing entrepreneurship. In the description of the situation in the labour market, data are disaggregated by sex and differences between women and men are quite visible. However, when it comes to the effects of different policy measures, gender mainstreaming is uneven.	It is the Government’s goal to increase the percentage of new businesses started by women to 40% by 2010. The Government has initiated a special programme for women’s entrepreneurship covering 2007-2009. There is a special action plan in order to stimulate women’s entrepreneurship. There are some paragraphs under the heading of “Equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market”, where a <i>gender equality bonus</i> and the possibility for municipalities to introduce a <i>child-raising allowance</i> are discussed. The aim of the gender equality bonus is to stimulate an equivalent use of the parental allowance between women and men. The child-raising allowance is not gender mainstreamed and not discussed in terms of a gendered impact (which most certainly will be in a negative direction, reducing female employment rate).
25.	In the first part of the document gender is mentioned only once in the part on	The subsection on equal gender opportunities gives reference to the <i>Resolution on the</i>

SL	<p>pension reform although there are data on increased retirement age for men and women. There are few gender desegregated statistics in the second part of the document and visibility of gender is limited to the subsection “Equal opportunities for both genders”. The lack of visibility of gender in the third part of the document that presents the supplemented and updated 2005 reform programme is the most problematic because there is no discussion on important gender-related problems and inequalities let alone systematic presentation of policies and measures directed to resolve them..</p>	<p><i>National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men</i> and reports on the adoption of the new <i>Periodic Plan</i> for 2008-2009. The subsection mentions programmes of assistance for the self-employment of long-term unemployed women and project <i>Systemic Possibilities of Vocational Development Orientation in High Schools</i>. This subsection does not report on the existing gender related problems. In the subsection <i>Reconciliation of work and private life</i> the document reports on some important improvements in the relevant legislation (working time, use of annual leave, right to the part-time work, co-funding of kindergardens’ payments), but it fails to pay any attention to the impact of reconciliation policies on the improvement of gender equality at the labour market.</p>
26. SK	<p>The presentation of measures implemented in recent years includes: the amendment of the Labour Code and the Act on Employment Services. In particular, the revised Labour Code gives a more precise definition of the legislation implementing the principle providing equal remuneration for equal work and for work to which equal value is attributed.</p> <p>The following new measures are announced: the introduction of an allowance to support the employment of disadvantaged jobseekers (long-term unemployed); the development of a national system of flexicurity (based on internal and external flexibility); the creation of lifelong career counselling system; increase links between education and the demands of the labour market.</p>	<p>The reduction of the gender pay gap is tackled through a legislative measure (the amendment of the Labour Code); however, the problem of the gender wage gap needs other measures, being a problem of structural imbalances in the labour market.</p> <p>Most of the measures are presented without considering their impact on women.</p>
27. UK	<p>Gender barely appears in the macroeconomic and microeconomic chapters where there are a few specific mentions of policies targeted at women. The employment chapter includes some implicit consideration of gender via a strong focus on lone parent policy (4 of the 34 paragraphs in this chapter – only ‘skills’ receives more paragraphs) and reconciliation issues (4 paragraphs address work-life balance and childcare) and one paragraph on gender equality.</p>	<p>There is no mention of gender, GM or ‘women’ in chapter 1. There is some indirect focus on gender inequality issues via the mention made that long-term policy goals include ‘ensuring fairness and opportunity for all’, and women are a majority target group of the continued effort to tackle child and pensioner poverty, and active labour market measures for lone parents. No reference made to gender in chapter 2 but in chapter 3 gender is mentioned in relation to government investment in women-led businesses and initiatives to provide women with skills to start and grow a business. (data on the rate of self-employment for women are not included in the report) and promoting a larger and well-qualified scientific workforce. However, gender is not discussed in the large section on Skills even though there has been extensive, although ultimately narrow, attention to gender issues in this major area. There is some tacit mention of gender in relation to increased training requirements being introduced for out-of-work lone parents with school-age children. The employment chapter documents important progress in relation to policies for work-life balance and the expansion of childcare. Yet the NRP continues to refuse to address the long full-time hours which many are obliged to work in the UK and the implications which this has for work-life balance and gender inequalities in the household and the labour market.</p>

Source: National Reports (see Bibliography).

5.3 Issues that should be prioritised with respect to gender

The priority areas identified by EGGE experts in the network reflect, to some extent, national priorities but there is also a strong consistency in the expressed need for a thorough gender mainstreaming approach throughout the NRP process and for gender issues to extend beyond the narrow range of policy domains. The priority areas identified reflect the persistent inequalities associated with contractual forms and pay, difficulties faced by working mothers in reconciliation, as well as disadvantages associated with the interaction of gender with age or ethnicity.

Where the growth of women’s employment has been based around the expansion of atypical contracts and part-time jobs, often outside the social security system, experts have identified the quality of women’s work as an important priority area (for example, DE and AT). In France, where the female employment rate has been based around a balance of full and part-time work, the risks of imposed part-time jobs also highlight the continuing gendered risks of part-time work. In Finland, the promotion of flexicurity is identified as an area where the gender perspective is required. Similarly in Portugal, new adaptability rules may pose a risk to women. The persistence of the gender pay gap across the EU causes a number of experts to identify action here as a priority (for example, CY, DK, EE and UK). Reconciliation issues are one of the key barriers inhibiting women’s more equal integration on the labour market. The limited supply of childcare is identified as a key constraint on improving women’s access to the labour market (for example, BE, LV and LT). Disadvantage associated with gender can often act in conjunction with other forms of discrimination and a number of experts stress the need to prioritise the interaction of gender with ethnicity (BG, DK, NL and RO) and with age (BG and SI).

Finally there are a group of Member States where there are rather specific priority areas identified by EGGE experts which both reflect particular national circumstances and also highlight common themes of social protection (individualisation of pension rights in Luxembourg); reconciliation (the gender equality bonus in SE) and exclusion (Roma women in RO, long-term unemployment in SK and specific female employment rate targets in SI).

Table 5.3: NRPs 2008 and issues that should be prioritised with respect to gender

	Priority Areas	Expert’s Remarks
1. AT	The quality of women’s jobs (in terms of increasing instability, insufficient social security protection, jobs offered only with low levels of qualification and low pay)	The quality of women’s jobs is in decline due to the increase in atypical employment
2. BE	1. The lack of gender dimension, be it with respect to major or minor gender equality challenges. 2. The lack of attention to childcare provision in the employment chapter of the Belgian NRP	1. A first step is to disaggregate all statistics by sex, this exercise will put forth those problems and challenges that call for a gendered policy approach and finally, some political goodwill is needed to design gender-specific and adequate solutions to the problems and difficulties identified. 2. There is strong evidence both in the theoretical and empirical economic literature that childcare provision for very young children (0-2 years of age) is a very strong determinant of women’s employment.

<p>3. BG</p>	<p>1. Labour market difficulties for younger and older women. 2. Ethnicity and gender as it affects the Roma</p>	<p>Gender does not get special attention in NRP either in formulating the priority areas or in the analysis of the economic situation. Gender is considered a horizontal priority, which means that all actions set as priority will consider effects on genders. However, this is not underlined in the new NRP. Also, there is no evidence of GM.</p>
<p>4. CY</p>	<p>Gender pay gap.</p>	<p>Attention also needs to be paid to an equally disturbing statistic - women in decision making positions or women managers. Since one of the attributes of the pay gap is the very low number of women in high ranking positions (the share of women managers in Cyprus is around 14-15%)</p>
<p>5. CZ</p>	<p>Gender pay gap.</p>	<p>Though it has not been addressed as an issue in the NRP 2008–2010, in spite of its high persistence, it has been one of the PTW for 2007 and 2008. The NRP says only generally under the GL 22 that “Wage discrimination in the case of one employer is expressly prohibited by law.” (p. 67, NRP-CZ).</p>
<p>6. DE</p>	<p>Women's employment opportunities lack quality of employment (as they are often mini-jobs, part-time jobs, low paid jobs etc.) and that the crude increase of women's employment rate above the Lisbon target is not a success.</p>	<p>The programme addresses child care facilities, a lesson learned now in Germany, but does not address “better jobs” for women.</p>
<p>7. DK</p>	<p>1. The intersections of gender and ethnicity, gender and age, age and ethnicity, and gender, age and ethnicity in real life ought to be taken into consideration according to initiatives to investing in people and modernising the labour markets. 2. Gender pay gap. 3. The problem of bottlenecks in the Danish labour market (and the need for a gender assessment)</p>	<p>Consider the potential action to solve the problem of gender pay gap when studies (in late 2008) reveal that gender pay gap cannot be explained by factors as skills, education and experience. The bottlenecks in the Danish labour market are closely related to the gender segregation.</p>
<p>8. EE</p>	<p>Reducing the gender pay gap is one of the gender related aspects that has been highlighted in the action plan. Prioritising this area is important since the wage gap in Estonia is one of the largest in EU.</p>	<p>Still, the action plan points out no clear cut measures to address the gender pay gap. As the issue is highly connected to very large gender segregation (both on the labour market and education) and the impact of parenthood on the employment, these are some of the issues which need attention in order to decrease the gender pay gap.</p>
<p>9. EL</p>	<p>Childcare services.</p>	<p>There is a need for continuing progress in the provision of child care services.</p>
<p>10. ES</p>	<p>Despite the noticeable advancements in the evolution of the female employment rate, the persistence of considerable gender gaps means that it should remain a main policy priority for the coming years.</p>	<p>As the level of female employment positively evolves, the emphasis on quality issues needs to be strengthened and more closely followed up. In this concern, the implementation of plans for equal opportunities at firm level, as promoted by the FLEEW between Women and Men, could yield perceivable outcomes to cut down the segmentation of the labour market by sex (in terms of different occupations, sectors, etc.) and specially the gender pay gap. Close monitoring of the impact needs to be further developed.</p>
<p>11. FI</p>	<p>Gender perspective needs to be clearly presented especially when discussing fixed-term employment relationships and the new flexicurity model.</p>	<p>The main problem in the Finnish NRP is the lack of gender perspective in spite of the gender mainstreaming principle of the Government Programme and the very promises made in the</p>

		foreword of the NRP. It is also astonishing that the NRP text makes no reference to the wide gender pay gap and to the endeavours taken to tackle it, such as the Equal Pay Programme.
12. FR	The growing risk of insecurity especially via the development of imposed part-time jobs for low skilled women in certain sectors: personal services, cleaning and distribution.	The great majority of low skilled women (in insecure jobs) are foreigners or have immigrant origins. It is necessary to ensure that these women do not remain in such highly insecure situations which often result in poverty (living below the poverty threshold). The RSA* does not have a declared 'gender' but could affect women in particular, who – in order to earn a little more – run the risk of being stuck in 'little bits of jobs', because the RSA could have a “windfall effect” for companies. * RSA: <i>Revenu solidaire d'activité</i> (Active Solidarity Income)
13. HU	1. Certain hard-hit groups are facing difficulties in entering into the labour market or remaining at work. These are school-leavers, older age groups, the Roma population, the disabled and the women. 2. Reconciliation policies must focus on young mothers returning from childcare leave.	1. Target-oriented approach reflects one-dimensional way of thinking in handling the labour market difficulties of the problem-groups, where the gender aspect is fully missing. 2. Women’s labour market disadvantages are narrowed down to the problems of mothers with small children, strengthening the prejudice that the care of children is nothing to do with fathers. 3. Men (young fathers) are largely excluded from reconciliation policies, which seem to reinforce the gendered division of labour.
14. IE	1. The need for enhanced system of leave entitlements, specifically the establishment of <i>paid</i> parental leave and entitlement to paid paternity leave. 2. Childcare provision	Childcare provision continues to be a hugely important issue and a review of the new funding system is needed (NCIP), particularly as it affects community childcare facilities, is urgently required. Absence of paternity leave and the unpaid nature of parental leave reinforce traditional gender inequalities in relation to care responsibilities.
15. IT	1. Announced changes in schooling hours 2. Announced shift from individual taxation to family taxation	The reduction in schooling hours implies that families (i.e. mothers) will have to take care of children (up to the age of 14) in the afternoon, making it impossible for working women to have full-time jobs. The changes in the taxation system have been planned to help families with dependent children and only one earner (the male breadwinner). The negative impact on second earners (women) has not been considered at all. This is very critical for a country with an extremely low female employment rate (only 46,6% in 2007).
16. LT	Childcare	
17. LU	1. Individualisation of pension rights, 2. Equality requirements in collective agreements	These two important areas not covered in the NRP.
18. LV	Childcare	
19. MT	Participation of migrant women in the labour market.	Migrant women are the most marginalised in Maltese society, and tend to suffer multiple discrimination and social exclusion often linked to child poverty. The NRP fails to mention

		migrant women.
20. NL	The position of women from ethnic minority groups.	Women from ethnic minority groups, particularly Turkish and Moroccan women, have the lowest participation rates.
21. PL	1. Budgetary allocation for various measures 2. Involvement of government officials for gender equality in consulting or drafting of the NRP.	There is no mention of budget allocation for the various measures, timetables largely point to the year of introducing new legislative or institutional measures, and ‘responsible authorities’ are identified at the ministerial level. There is no indication whether any government offices/ officers for gender equality took part in the consulting or drafting of the document.
22. PT	The priority ought to be segregation since this results in low salaries for women in sex-typed occupations with low participation of men in domestic and care roles..	As a result of the changes of the labour relations introduced with the most recent tripartite agreement, it will be necessary to take some measures to prevent the negative impact of new adaptability rules on women’s employment and on people’s reconciliation of work and family.
23. RO	The position of Roma women.	Roma women are doubly discriminated against. Firstly because they belong to this minority and secondly within the minority because their adherence to traditions.
24. SE	A main issue that needs to be prioritised with respect to gender in the Swedish NRP is the impact on gender equality of the child raising allowance and the gender equality bonus.	
25. SI	The main priority with respect to gender in the Slovene NRP is the need of declaration of (quantified) targets regarding main gender related problems and reflection of some increasing gender differences (such as in flexible employment, self-employment, employment and activity rates).	
26. SK	1. The inclusion of (very) long-term unemployment women into the labour market 2. The existing open or hidden forms of discrimination of women by age	The position of women above 45 years of age (or even earlier) is extremely difficult and unfavourable
27. UK	The priority issue is to push for further action on the gender pay gap, including a more precise definition and application of the gender pay gap target in the Public Service Agreement on equalities.	

Source: National Reports.

5.4 “Country specific recommendations” or “points to watch” adopted by the Council in the field of gender equality or reconciliation

To complete the overview on 2008 NRPs this section is focused on “Country specific recommendations” (CSR) or “points to watch” (PTW) adopted by the Council in the field of gender equality or reconciliation. In particular, we provide an assessment of the responses provided by Member States in terms of policy initiatives undertaken and of attention devoted to the CSR/PTW in their 2008 NRPs. Table 5.5 specifies the CSR or PTW adopted by the European Council in the field of gender equality or reconciliation in 2007 and 2008, e.g. in the second and third years of the current three year-cycle

(2005-2008)⁴. It also reports comments by experts on the relevance of the specific recommendation adopted by the Council, on policy actions taken at the national level to tackle the issue, as well as on the reference made in the 2008 NRPs to PTW/CSR.

Before considering comments by expert (presented in table 5.5), it is useful to give an overview of the country-specific recommendations adopted by the Council in the field of gender equality in 2007 and 2008. In order to allow a comparison across countries and over time, table 5.4 considers the “content” of PTW/CSR adopted by the Council. The content is identified on the basis of the “key words” used in the specification of recommendations. Overall, 16 countries received a PTW/CSR in the field of gender equality or reconciliation in 2007 and/or in 2008. Austria and Cyprus did not received any PTW/CSR in 2007, but they did in 2008; while the PTW was removed in 2008 for both Germany and the UK, given the progress made.

Table 5.4 CSR or PTW adopted by the Council in the field of gender equality and reconciliation by “key words”

	AT	CY	CZ	DE	EL	ES	HU	IE	IT	LT	LV	MT	NL	PL	SK	UK
2007	PTW	-	PTW	PTW	PTW	PTW	-	PTW	CSR	PTW	PTW	PTW	CSR	-	PTW	PTW
Segregation/ Gender Imbalances	✓	-					-							-	✓	
Pay gap		-	✓				-							-	✓	
Childcare/ reconciliation	✓	-	✓	✓		✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓			-		✓
Female Participation	-	-			✓		-					✓	✓	-		
Raising hours worked	-	-					-						✓	-		
2008	PTW	PTW	PTW	-	PTW	PTW	PTW	PTW	PTW	PTW	PTW	PTW	CSR	PTW	PTW	-
Segregation/ Gender imbalances	✓	✓		-											✓	-
Pay gap		✓	✓	-											✓	-
Childcare/ reconciliation	✓		✓	-		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		-
Female Participation				-	✓				✓			✓	✓			-
Raising hours worked				-									✓			-

Source: Country Recommendations adopted by the Council (see table 5.4).

Childcare and reconciliation emerge as the most critical area in both years. As a matter of fact, 9 countries (out of 13 in 2007, out of 14 in 2008) received a recommendation concerning “increasing the availability of childcare” and/or “ensuring better reconciliation of work and private life”. The UK and Germany had the PTW removed in 2008, for progress made in childcare provisions, while Hungary and Poland had a new PTW in this field.

Female participation in employment is signalled to be critical in 3 countries (EL, MT, NL) in 2007, increased to 4 (with the addition of IT) in 2008. The issue is implicitly

⁴ There were no CSRs in 2006, the first year of the current three year cycle (2005-2008).

related to the relatively low number of women in employment in the three southern countries, but to the very high share of part-timers in the Netherlands.

Gender segregation and gender imbalances on the labour market are identified as areas of concern in only 2 countries in 2007 (AT, SK), with the addition of Cyprus in 2008; the high gender pay gap emerges as a problem in only 2 countries (CZ, SK) in 2007, with the addition of Cyprus in 2008.

Almost all experts acknowledge, implicitly or explicitly, the relevance of the specific recommendation adopted. The response by governments, in terms of policy initiatives undertaken as well as in the acknowledgement of the PTW/CSR in the 2008 NRPs, is diversified. In particular:

- no explicit reference to PTW/CSR and/or no new policies to tackle the issue in 3 countries (IT, LV, MT);
- explicit reference, but little discussion and/or weak policies in 6 countries (CY, CZ, IE, LT, PL, SK). In particular, the 2008 NRP for Cyprus has no new measures; in that of the Czech Republic, there are no targets or policies concerning the pay gap, but some attention to reconciliation; in the Polish NRP attention to reconciliation appears insufficient; in the case of Slovakia there are no measures to reduce the gender pay gap, marginal attention to gender gap in employment;
- some discussion, including areas of intervention and new policy initiatives, in 5 countries (AT, ES, EL, LT, NL). The case of Germany and that of the UK should be included here, as the PTWs for these two countries were removed in 2008 on the basis of the progress made.

In short, out of the 16 countries for which the Council adopted a PTW/CSR in the field of gender equality, 3 countries did not react effectively, another 6 provided a sort of a weak reaction, while the other 7 responded adequately, developing policy initiatives focused on the issues addressed by the Council. Thus, PTW/CSRs have resulted in some positive developments in roughly half of the countries considered; this could be considered a below optimum outcome. However, one should not conclude that PTW/CSRs are ineffective tools. The case of the UK shows the crucial role of country-specific recommendations for shaping policy direction (as this is clearly stated in the introduction of the 2008 NRP). In particular, the specification of PTW/CSR is mirrored in the amount of emphasis given to these topics in the NRP; hence, the modification/removal of PTW/CSR on childcare and on pension reform in 2008 helps to explain the loss of emphasis on these topics in the 2008 NRP (National Report: UK).

Table 5.5 CSR or PTW adopted by the Council in the field of gender equality or reconciliation and the 2008 NRPs

	CSR / PTW	Comment (expert)
1. AT	2008 – PTW: <i>Tackling the gender segregation of the labour market, including by improving the availability of childcare</i> 2008 - PTW: <i>Tackling the gender</i>	The issues of childcare and that of gender segregation have been tackled through several direct measures. In particular, the following measures have been implemented : 1) an expansion of childcare facilities; 2) a reform of childcare benefit provisions; 3) Public Employment Service measures for improving the reconciliation of work and childcare obligations; 4) measures to encourage girls and young women to enter ‘non-traditional’ or ‘male-dominated’ training and occupations as well as programmes encouraging young women in ‘research and technology’. 5) In addition, the introduction of a voluntary ‘fathers’ leave’ has recently been proposed by the Social Minister and the Minister of Women’s Affairs.

	<i>segregation of the labour market, including by further improving the availability of childcare</i>	2008 NRP. The subsection on “Women and gender equality policy measures” directly refers to the PTW adopted for Austria by the European Council in the field of gender equality. According to the Austrian NRP 2008-2010 the main focus, however, is on the “reduction of the gender pay gap”. In order to reach this goal two fields of intervention are mentioned: 1) “measures to provide equal access to all types of jobs for women and men” and 2) “measures to improve the reconciliation between employment and family”. “Thus the segmentation of the labour market should be reduced” (NRP 2008-2010: 34). In this respect several measures, most of them already mentioned in the previous NRP and implemented in recent years, are listed.
4. CY	2008 PTW: <i>particular attention to tackling gender imbalances and reducing the high pay gap</i>	Little has been done to reduce the gender pay gap, except for a study that is still under way. 2008 NRP. The gender pay gap is of crucial importance (and a PTW); however the discussion of this topic is limited to a paragraph (p. 129) that says that a study was completed in November 2007. The Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance is said to have prepared a set of measures for dealing with this PTW (allocating a budget of 4,5 million €), none of these measures are considered in the NRP.
5. CZ	2007 – PTW: <i>reconciling work and family life; tackling the gender pay gap</i> 2008 - PTW: <i>reconciling work and family life; tackling the gender pay gap</i>	There are no policies to tackle the high gender pay gap. The problem is not discussed on the political level in the Czech Republic. Reconciliation of work and family life is discussed and policy initiatives are only partly adequate and could have positive impact only on some groups of families. In some cases these policies can even have negative impact on gender equality. Czech national policies do not take into account the PTW for 2007 and 2008. Each year the Government issues an annual programme document on the “Priorities and Procedures in the Promotion of the Equality of Women and Men.” In the years between 2004 and 2007 this document contained the exact same chapter with the same content and the same wording. Policies or specific programmes that would tackle the situation of high gender pay gap were not established. 2008 NRP. Gender pay gap was described in the NRP 2005–2008 but no targets or policies to close it have been designed. In the NRP 2008–2010 this issue is missing. On the other hand the other PTW that remained unchanged in 2007 and 2008: reconciling work and family life is more developed in the NRP 2008–2010.
6. DE	2007 - PTW: <i>increasing the provision of childcare facilities</i> 2008 – None	Major changes are under way as improving the provision of child care services.
9. EL	2007 - PTW: <i>implementing policies to encourage women's participation in employment</i> 2008 - PTW: <i>encourage further female participation in employment</i>	The female employment rate in Greece is currently the third lowest in the EU27 (47.9% in 2007) and well below the Lisbon target for 2010 (60%). This is why the Council in both 2007 and 2008 addressed to the Greek government the same PTW, asking her to implement policies aiming to “encourage further female participation in employment”. The greatest policy challenge from a gender equality perspective is the boosting of employment opportunities for women. It is thus evident that policy area 1 (“attract and retain more people in employment”) is of great priority and with urgent policy needs that continuously give rise to many policy initiatives. All the policy initiatives mentioned (in Part A) contribute to the boosting of the overall employment rate, but especially those of women, older workers and young people. 2008 NRP. There is a general remark in the introduction of the NRP that CSRs were taken into account in the drafting of the NRP. No specific reference to them in the text.

<p>10. ES</p>	<p>2007 - PTW: <i>increasing access to childcare</i> 2008 - PTW: <i>increasing access to childcare</i></p>	<p>An aspect that could receive some criticism is the deficient pace in the development of child care facilities (one of the Commission's recommendations in employment policy). Although there is a perceivable political will in this concern and certain initiatives have been launched (including an extraordinary 100 million € budget item), the supply of child care services will not be sufficient to cover the demand of kindergarten places (p. 3). <i>2008 NRP.</i> The document establishes the links between the measures implemented and those still to develop with the specific CSR and PTW</p>
<p>13. HU</p>	<p>2008 - PTW: <i>ensuring better reconciliation of work and private life</i></p>	<p>The availability of public childcare is insufficient and the measures addressing the PRW are not enough to satisfy the needs. Although policy decision requires every municipality to find nursery places for all multiply disadvantaged children from the age of 3 by January 2009, and to satisfy every demand for nursery education by August 2010, the main purpose of this obligation is less to provide support for parents to reconcile their work and private life. Its aim is rather to ensure that the care for children in the underdeveloped micro-regions is the highest possible quality, to counterbalance the disadvantages of small children brought from home, as soon as possible.</p>
<p>14. IE</p>	<p>2007 – PTW: <i>including by establishing a comprehensive childcare infrastructure</i> 2008 - PTW: (unchanged)</p>	<p>The 2008 NRP sets a target of 50,000 additional childcare places for 2010. Stated commitment to “substantial progress towards meeting Barcelona targets” of 90% childcare available to children aged 3 to school age and 33% of children aged under 3 by 2010.</p>
<p>15. IT</p>	<p>2007 – CSR: <i>increasing childcare provision</i> 2008 - PTW : <i>increasing childcare provision with a view to reconciling work and family life and fostering labour market participation of women</i></p>	<p>One of the main challenge for the employability of women still remains the access to childcare services. In fact, low activity rates of women in Italy are strictly linked to a low level of care services availability supporting women participation in the labour market, namely in the <i>Mezzogiorno</i>. During the last five year a strong effort has been made by policy makers in this direction, but Italy is still far from the target set by the Lisbon strategy (33% by the end of 2010): this is a serious challenge for our country if we consider that the Italian average coverage rate was around 10% in 2005, and in the Southern Regions this percentage was less than 4%. In 2007, the Minister for the Family (Prodi's government) had developed a three years <i>Nursery Plan</i>, with the objective to reach a coverage rate of 13% by the end of 2009. The Plan has devolved more resources to the Southern Regions in order to tackle regional disparities. <i>2008 NRP.</i> There is no reference to the PTW, but the <i>Nursery Plan</i> is discussed.</p>
<p>16. LT</p>	<p>2007 – PTW : <i>increasing the availability of childcare</i> 2008 - PTW : <i>increasing the availability of childcare</i></p>	<p>Policy measures consider also the goal to develop further social services infrastructure whose employment possibilities are restricted by family situation to join the labour market (p. 3) <i>2008 NRP.</i> Several national targets are set with respect to childcare (coverage rate of 10% for children <3 yrs; 70% for children 3 yrs up to school age; 65% for children aged 4 yrs). The targets set for 2010 are considerably lower than EU27 average (p. 22).</p>
<p>18. LV</p>	<p>2007 – PTW : <i>increasing the availability of childcare</i> 2008 – PTW : <i>increasing the availability of</i></p>	<p>Lack of preschool educational institutions and alternative child care has not decreased in the recent years and the number of children on the waiting lists to child care has increased (to 22 thousands). The availability of public child care is insufficient and the measures to develop child care are too weak. <i>2008 NRP.</i> These is no explicit reference to PTW. Childcare targets have not been established. There is only a general indication on the need to</p>

	<i>childcare</i>	develop childcare services.
19. MT	<p>2007 – CSR: <i>steps up efforts to attract more people into the labour market, particularly women</i></p> <p>2008 – CSR: <i>steps up efforts to attract more people into the labour market, particularly women</i></p>	<p>Although the CSR adopted by Council in 2007 (repeated in 2008 due to no change) encourages Malta to address gender gaps especially through effective family friendly policies that would reduce the high rate of women’s economic inactivity (69%) and to make work pay, claims to increase women’s labour market participation cannot be sustained in the context of more traditional features of the male breadwinner model that underpins much of social, political and economic life in Malta. No new work policies with a gender dimension were announced, there was no evaluation of the adequacy of existing policies that could address women’s lack of labour market participation. Indeed, there is an urgent need for serious commitment to gender equal work-care policies and evidence of such measures remains to be seen in the forthcoming NRP.</p> <p><i>2008 NRP.</i> Reference is made to CSR. It is announced that the <i>Gender Equality Programme</i> and the biennial <i>Gender Equality Action Plan 2009–2010</i> will be launched in 2009 (p.72). However, claims to gender equality cannot be sustained without an aggressive plan for a national childcare policy. Despite claims of good practice, Malta still lacks a coherent policy strategy aimed at encouraging women to participate in market work.</p>
20. NL	<p>2007 – CSR: <i>take further measures to improve labour supply, notably of... women</i></p> <p>2008 - CSR: <i>take further measures to improve labour supply of women, older workers and disadvantaged groups with a view to raising overall hours worked in the economy</i></p>	<p>As a result of the high Dutch part-time rate the female employment rate drops significantly if calculated in full-time equivalents: from 69.6% to 44.4% in 2007. This high part-time rate has been an important reason for the European Council to give the Netherlands the CSR “to take further measures to improve the labour supply of women, ... with a view to raising overall hours worked in the economy”. In line with this recommendation, increasing labour supply receives by far the most attention of the government. Policy documents and policy measures indicate that the government is (increasingly) convinced that women are an important target group in this respect. Several measures have been implemented to increase their participation rate (both in persons as in number of working hours). For example, the number of childcare facilities has increased considerably and fiscal measures will be implemented to make paid work more attractive. In addition, there is attention for specific groups such as lone parents on social assistance and women from ethnic minority groups. Policy attention does, however, not always translate into effective policy measures.</p> <p><i>2008 NRP.</i> Increasing the participation rate is clearly one of the most important topics of the NRP. The first chapter starts with a description of the main policy lines of the (new) government. First in line is the (national) target to increase the participation rate (in persons) to 80% in 2016. The NRP refers in this context to the CSR “to take further measures to improve the labour supply of women, ...”</p>
21. PL	<p>2007 – None</p> <p>2008 - PTW: <i>increasing the provision of childcare facilities</i></p>	<p>The series of documents subsumed under the EES pointed out the insufficient provision of childcare in relation to women’s employment difficulties, but policy or programme proposals have not reflected this concern adequately. Recently, however, the issue has come to the fore, especially in relation to preschool education of children 3-5 years of age and 6-year olds.</p> <p><i>2008 NRP.</i> Explicit reference to PTW is given only in Annex 3 (p. 49), in a table referring to ‘Measure 1: development of education and knowledge based economy’ although the section deals with education reforms and not childcare provision – as a result more attention is needed.</p>
22. SK	<p>2007 – PTW: <i>Addressing the gender pay gap</i></p> <p>2008 - PTW: <i>Addressing the gender gap in pay</i></p>	<p>In recent years Slovakia has implemented the following measures: 1) the <i>National Labour Inspectorate</i> system was transformed, this should help to increase the level of control over employers (and their compliance with existing regulation concerning wages); 2) the revision of the <i>Labour Code</i> provides a more precise definition of the legislation implementing the principle of equal pay. However, these two initiatives are not sufficient to</p>

	<i>and employment</i>	<p>reduce the gender pay gap, being a problem of structural imbalances in the labour market. Other measures (besides legislation) are required.</p> <p><i>2008 NRP.</i> Three PTW dealing with gender equality (to some extent) were addressed to the Slovak Republic: to address the gender gap in pay and education, to reduce the gender gap in pay and employment and to create job opportunities for young people. The NRP considers the first two PTWs (gender gap in pay and in employment), but only partially. Dealing with the gender pay gap is not considered by the measures; the increase of female employment is considered only marginally.</p>
27 UK	<p>2007 – PTW: <i>further improve access to childcare</i></p> <p>2008 – None</p>	<p>The introduction (2008 NRP) expresses a clear government commitment to the Lisbon Strategy, including explaining how the country-specific recommendations are being addressed. From this we can conclude that both PTW and CSR are useful tools for shaping policy direction in the UK. Unfortunately, none of the current three PTW/CSR for the UK mention gender or gender mainstreaming (GM) explicitly so there is no pressure placed on the UK to gender mainstream its response. However, the UK could have applied a GM perspective voluntarily, and GM is particularly important in relation to the PTW/CSR on improving skills levels to boost productivity and tackle socio-economic disadvantage</p>

Source: National Reports on 2008 NRPs (Part A and B).

6. POLICY NEEDS AND CHALLENGES WITH RESPECT TO GENDER BY THEMATIC ISSUES

6.1 Gender pay gap and segregation

Almost all national experts discuss the thematic issue of the gender pay gap and segregation (with the only exception of EL, HU and IT). Some experts focus the attention more on gender segregation (such as AT, BE, DK) while other experts underline more the problem of the large gender pay gap (such as BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, FR, IE, LU, MT, SE, SK).

The gender pay gap is an issue of great concern in a large number of countries (especially in CY, EE, LT, SE, SK and UK). The underlining causes of the persistent pay gap recalled by experts include occupational gender segregation, the under-representation of women in the higher levels of organisational hierarchies, the undervaluation of women's work, the job classification systems in use, the wage bargaining system, the non-observance of legal norms, the gender division in family life.

However, the gender pay gap has not yet found a place in the policy agenda of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania and Malta. Little has been done to reduce the pay gap in Cyprus and Germany. The lack of concrete commitment to tackle the gender pay gap is reported by the Belgium expert.

Experts of 11 countries (BE, CY, DE, ES, FI, FR, LU, SE, SI, SK, UK) have highlighted in their reports some provisions with regard to gender segregation and/or the gender pay gap⁵ in their respective countries. In particular:

- in Belgium, a *report* on the gender pay gap is published every year;
- in Cyprus, a *study* on the gender pay gap has been launched;
- in Germany, a *code of practice on the implementation of equal pay for work of equal value for women and men* (originally introduced in 2002) was updated in 2007;
- in Spain, *plans for equal opportunities at firm level* have been implemented, involving greater transparency in both job allocation and pay determination;
- in Finland, the tripartite *Equal Pay Programme* has the explicit objective to reduce the gender pay gap from 20% to 15% by 2015;
- in France, the *2006 law on equal pay* envisages compulsory bargaining to abolish unequal pay by December 2010;
- in Luxembourg, the Government formalized a structure implementing *positive actions projects* to ensure a lasting effect in the company and portability to other companies;
- in Sweden, the Government has introduced a *programme to support women's career in the state sector*, aiming at the elimination of unjustified gender wage differentials by 2010;
- in Slovenia, the Parliament adopted the *Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities of women and men* in October 2005; decreasing vertical and horizontal segregation and the gender pay gap is one of the aims of the Resolution;

⁵ For detailed policy discussion refer to box 6.1, below.

- in Slovakia, the *National Labour Inspectorate* system was transformed (in 2007) allowing for an increase in inspections, helping to close the gender pay gap, and the *Labour Code* was revised (in 2007) including a more precise definition of the legislation implementing the principle on equal remuneration for equal work;
- in the UK, there are several policy developments which relate directly to improving the valuation of women's work.

The issue of gender segregation and gender pay gap is not explicitly considered in the majority of the 2008 NRPs. In particular, the gender pay gap is missing in the Czech NRP as well as in the Lithuanian NRP; it is mentioned in the Estonian NRP but there are no measures which explicitly would target the pay gap. In other countries (such as BE, DE, FI, FR) some policy initiatives to tackle the gender pay gap have been taken, but these policies are not mentioned in the NRPs. Thus, the gender pay gap is taken up seriously in the 2008 NRPs only in a few countries (ES, FI, LU, SE, UK).

BOX 6.1: Gender Pay Gap and Segregation

1. AT – Austria

(p. 3) While the horizontal **gender segregation** of the labour market shows small signs of relief, vertical labour-market segregation has increased dramatically in recent years.

Despite a rising female activity rate, the Austrian labour market is still very much gender segregated. Women and men do not only work in different sectors but, in particular, in different occupations (horizontal segregation). In addition, women are also underrepresented in the higher levels of all organisational hierarchies and occupations (vertical segregation). All available studies on gender segregation in Austria stress that occupational segregation persists or is showing only minor signs of relief. In terms of managerial positions within enterprises (ISCO 12 and 13), women's situation deteriorated dramatically between 2001 and 2006. The share of female managers dropped from 30.3% to 28.7% and thus has not only fallen below the European average (32.6%) but has also taken a different direction than in most other Member States (European Commission 2008a: 32).

2. BE - Belgium

(p. 8) In 2006, gender segregation in occupations remained stable at its 2005 level (26%). Not only is this figure above the EU average but numerous wage gap studies have underlined the importance of this phenomenon in Belgium. Additional efforts need thus be made to tackle vertical segregation on the Belgian labour market. From the Belgian Spring report on the gender pay gap we know that in 2006, the gender wage gap amounted to 24% of a woman's average wage in Belgium.

(p. 29) Each year a report on the gender pay gap is published to follow up the way this gap evolves over time.

(p. 39) The lack of concrete commitments to tackle the **gender wage gap**. The NRP mentions only the intention of the social partners to continue their efforts to further improve job classification systems and the fact that each year a report is drawn up to monitor the evolution of the gender pay gap. However, it seems that more radical efforts are necessary given that job classification systems have been scrutinised for the last ten years now and that there are still only a handful of firms and sectors with a gender-neutral system in place.

3. BG - Bulgaria

(p.6) Gender pay gap in Bulgaria exists as a problem and is documented by the statistical data and by scientific survey data (Beleva, 'The Gender Pay Gap in Bulgaria', EGGsIE, 2007) However, the trend shows downturn tendencies, which is a positive feature, although the studied period is not very long. Anyway, the inequality in the remuneration of male and female labour is mainly a result of the specific reallocation of the female labour force in low productive industries and activities and low positions in the hierarchy. To a certain extent, it is due also to the non-observance of the legal norms,

which claim for equal payment on behalf of employers in private sector, and micro and small firms in particular. Thus, the institutional mechanisms for monitoring and controlling the payment system are a factor, which should be taken into consideration when the gender pay gap is studied.

4. CY - Cyprus

(p. 4) An issue of great concern for Cyprus is the **gender pay gap** which although down from 29% in 1995 to 24% in 2006, it still remains the highest gap in Europe, well over the EU27 average (15%) and declining at an extremely slow rate. Little has been done in recent years to reduce the gender pay gap, except for a study that is still under way. Moreover, some of the policy initiatives implemented to increase women's participation in the labour market are supposed to have a negative impact on the pay gap. One example noted in the past was a Human Resource Development Agency (HRDA) measure to train women for re-entry into the labour market while focusing on skills such as book-keeping, secretarial skills, etc. Such measures will only promote more women into low-paying, stagnant positions that contribute to Cyprus' extremely high gender pay gap.

(p. 13) The gender pay gap is of crucial importance (and a PTW). The 2008 NRP devotes only one paragraph to the issue to say that a study was completed in November 2007. While the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance is said to have prepared a set of measures for dealing with this PTW (allocating a budget of € 4,5 million), none of these measures are considered in the NRP, which is problematic.

5. CZ - Czech Republic

(p. 4) There are no policies to tackle the high **gender pay gap**. The problem is not even discussed on the political level in the Czech Republic.

(p. 11) Each year the Government of the Czech Republic issues annual programme document on the "Priorities and Procedures in the Promotion of the Equality of Women and Men." In the last couple of years however the document has just constantly reiterated the same measures and thus in reality systematically perpetually defers their fulfilment for another year. In the years between 2004 and 2007 this document contained the exact same chapter with the same content and the same wording for ten measures in area: "*Ensuring equal opportunities for women and men in access to economic activity*". The second measure is to "Monitor conformity with labour code regulations against gender-based discrimination, including adherence to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, and conformity with regulations affecting increasing women's job security. Document and statistical process checks on conformity with the ban on gender-based discrimination". Policies or specific programs that would tackle the situation of high gender pay gap were not established. The NRP 2005-2008 deals with the issue only very generally without any concrete measures.

(p. 16) In the NRP 2008–2010 this issue is missing.

6. DE - Germany

(p. 4) Resolute action to reduce the considerable **gender pay gap** (24% in 2006) is not on the top of the German policy agenda. As measured by the dimension of the pay gap only little activities were performed during the last years as e.g. the release of the new Earnings Statistic Act and an updated code of praxis on the implementation of equal pay for work of equal value, both in 2007.

(p. 12) In August 2008 the Federal Statistical Office published first results on the German gender pay gap in 2006 based on the new Earnings Statistics Act. Thereafter the unadjusted gender wage gap amounted to 24% in 2006. That means that the average hourly earnings of women amounted to 14.05 € compared to 18.38 € per hour on average for men. The data show that the pay gap exists in each industry but varies considerably depending on the industry. Furthermore, the pay gap increases the older women and men are. And finally, there are still considerable differences between the former East and West Germany. In East Germany the pay gap amounted to 6%, in West Germany it added up to 25%. The results indicate among other things that reconciliation policies could contribute to reduce the gender wage gap as the pay gap starts to increase considerably in the age group of 30 years and older women. This is the phase of life when women frequently have a baby and stop pursuing gainful employment. The data also show considerable gender wage gaps within Leistungsgruppen. Leistungsgruppen are categories used in German official statistics to summarize several wage groups of collective agreements. The distribution of men and women according to

Leistungsgruppen are among others the result of classification systems.

As a reaction to the just published data the Federal government underlines again that reaching equal pay is an important entire societal task which needs joint efforts of the Federal government, single employers, social partners and employees. Improvements to reconcile family and work life and to promote women returning to the labour market are seen as steps in the right direction.

The German federal government is not directly able to regulate wages in the private sector – this is the exclusive right of the employers’ associations and trade unions. Although government again and again emphasises that it has adopted the goal of reducing differences in pay and income between men and women and to work actively within the existing framework to ensure the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value (BMFSFJ 2007) only little action could be observed with reference to job evaluation during the last years.

In November 2002 the federal government presented for the first time a code of practice on the implementation of equal pay for work of equal value for women and men. It was updated in 2007. With this code, the employees’ associations, the unions, individual employers, and those responsible for personnel in principle have a tool to ensure that the basic right to equal pay is honoured in collective wage and individual agreements. The code also offers an orientation for work councils, as well as for employees who may be affected by discrimination themselves. Whereas the first code of practice still profoundly informed about the potential for discrimination within German evaluation schemes – e.g. by using examples of wage agreements and demonstrating their discriminatory potential – the recent code of practice is more cursorily and there are no longer “bad practice examples” – although they are still reality as for instant the wage agreement of the private cleaning sector demonstrates (BMFSFJ 2002). Though the code of praxis exists no backup system has been established which could widespread knowledge on evaluation systems and its bias (e.g. via workshops, conferences, best practice awards). Summed up, it remains still unclear if the discriminatory potential of job and performance evaluation is assessed as an above all pure academic discourse or a socio-political belief and a matter of fact.

7. DK - Denmark

(p. 8) **Gender segregation** is still considered a problem by public authorities in Denmark. An analysis based on national data for the last ten years reveals desegregation, which however is merely a result of a decline in ‘male dominated’ jobs and a declining percentage of persons (mostly men) employed in male dominated jobs – a kind of ‘de-masculinisation’ of the labour market. Horizontal segregation is almost persistent while vertical segregation is declining, from 1997 to 2006. This has happened at the same time as a significant structural change in the Danish labour market, where traditional, mostly male dominated jobs in agriculture, fisheries, industry and manufacturing has been markedly reduced, while employment in service areas, caring and computer technology has been growing. In spite of these structural changes the female proportion of the sectors is almost constant in 2006 as in 1997. At the same time there is a change in the vertical gender division of work. Women are gaining promotion in the job hierarchy due to their increasing educational level. Their gained positions do however not yet correspond to their education, which may partly be caused by mechanisms, visible only at workplace level. Mechanisms, which contribute to the containment of women and men in predetermined roles at workplace level, and subscribe to the creation of a so-called sliding gender division of work (Emerek and Holt, 2008).

(pp. 9-10) The gender segregated labour market has many consequences. In all investigations of the **gender pay gap** in Denmark gender segregation (in sectors and occupations) appears as the overall most important explanatory factor. Human capital factors (as education and seniority) seem to have a decreasing influence and more individual factors and personal characteristics have an increasing influence on wage setting at the same time as more women are undertaking education - as well as further education. This has unfortunately had a negative effect on the gender wage gap, a study by Deding and Wong (2004) revealed an almost permanent gender wage gap in the period 1997-2002, and confirmed earlier results (LO/DA 2003, Pedersen and Deding 2000). Furthermore, studies show that maternity and parental leave have negative effects on women’s pay. Some studies even suggest that women actually choose occupations, where they have a greater flexibility and better possibilities for reconciling work and family (Nielsen et al. 2002). This is an interesting aspect in the discussion of the interaction of the gender-segregated labour market and the gender pay gap. The advantages of

flexible and family friendly – however low-paid - employment may contribute to the persistence of gender segregation, and different developments of fringe benefits in female and male dominated labour markets may contribute to increasing gender segregation.

(p. 10) *Gender and sharing of family tasks.* One of the reasons why gender segregation of the labour market is so persistent is that the expectations to the gender division in families, influences the employer's demand for a particular gender, and in fact the actual gender division in families influences the individual supply of labour. In other words, gender division in family life contributes to gender segregation of the labour market and visa versa. A number of investigations have documented that the division of work in the family is changing (see for instance Deding et al, 2006; Olsen, 2007). It is however still women who are responsible for the time structured and inflexible chores that affect the daily stress (Lausten and Sjørup, 2003). The changing pattern affect women's and men's behaviour on the labour market, however, as long as men are regarded by employers and their own colleagues as the breadwinners and women as the main providers of care in the family, both women and men are at a deadlock with regard to their opportunities on the labour market (Emerek and Holt, 2008).

The stereotype expectations to women and men are also maintained by public policies. Maternity and parental leave legislation, and the financing of leave, is of great importance for parent's activity. The most recent data reveals that women's maternity and parental leave is still rising (on average to 275 days) while men on average take 22 days in total of paternity and parental leave, amounting to 7.4% of the leave taken (Statistic Denmark, 2008), for children born in 2006.

8. EE - Estonia

(p. 5) The low level of part-time work among women in Estonia (only 12.1%) might be the result of the low wage level, which makes it economically unprofitable to take up part-time employment. This may especially influence women as the gender wage gap in Estonia is one of the highest in EU (25% in 2005) and it has not shown any remarkable decrease. The wage gap is connected to gender segregation and concentration of women on lower paid occupations. The gender segregation in occupations was 30.8% in 2005 and 31.6% in 2006 which is the highest in EU27. Also, the segregation in sectors is the highest in Europe (24.3% in 2006).

(pp. 6-7) Wage-setting is mostly conducted on enterprise level and dependant on the wage setting mechanisms of the specific company. Wage bargaining is not widely developed and is conducted in only some individual sectors (e.g. health care, transport) or companies. Also it should be noted that the social partners are relatively weak in Estonia with trade union membership on the level of 9% in 2006 and collective agreement coverage on 25% of employment. In addition, reducing gender pay gaps have not been the main target for the social partners.

(p. 24) The gender pay gap is mentioned in the primary objectives of the Governmental activities. However, the 2008 NRP gives no measures which explicitly would target the pay gap, neither is the impact of planned measures on the pay gap discussed. There are, however, some policies (e.g. formulating principles of work and family reconciliation, several measures improving the availability of childcare) which may be expected to have impact on gender equality on the labour market in general and also the pay gap, but all the policies are presented as gender neutral and there is no gender analysis of these measures.

10. ES - Spain

(pp. 8-9) The Ministry of Equality is entitled to apply and develop a new legal and institutional framework gathered in the FLEEW that is currently unleashing a vast number of legal and administrative initiatives. This new legal instrument attempts to enforce the principle of gender equality. One of the consequences of the new legal framework is that labour inspection will include from now on a closer monitoring and sanction of gender discriminatory practices, such as salary differential, sexual harassment at work, unequal treatment in labour relationships, unequal conditions of access to employment, or the effective application of corporate plans of gender equality as stated in the Frame Law. These provisions are gathered in a action Plan of the Labour and Social Security Inspection for the surveillance of effective parity in private companies.

(p. 30) Among the mentioned measures in the 2008 NRP, probably the initiative that deserves a particularly positive assessment is the implementation of **plans for equal opportunities at firm**

level, which will involve not only greater transparency in the access of employment but also in terms of gender pay gap and labour conditions. However, the efficacy of the initiative will depend to a large extent on the reinforcement of the labour inspection for the fulfilment of the plans, which in turn seems to be the will of the Government.

11. FI - Finland

(p. 3) The Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen's second Cabinet (2007-2011) has given gender equality policy, along with the financial policy, a central position in the Government Programme for the first time in history. The Government is committed to promote equal pay and women's labour market position with long-span programmes and legislation. *Action Plan for Gender Equality* is designed to look for the concrete measures to realise the goals announced by the government.

(pp. 6-7) The persistently prevailing **gender pay gap** in Finland (about 20%), is large also in the European comparison. There seems to have been very little change in this respect in the last couple of decade or so. The priorities in the *Action Plan for Gender Equality 2008-2011* are placed on the most important gender equality policy objectives defined in the Government Programme, as follows: gender mainstreaming

narrowing of the gender pay gap

As for the goal of clearly reducing the differences in pay between men and women, the Government committed itself to a tripartite *Equal Pay Programme*, launched in August 2007.

(p. 15) Narrowing of the gender pay gap is currently high on the political agenda. Preparatory work has been done on the issue during the whole 2000's, until finally the tripartite *Equal Pay Programme* has been launched for 2007–2011. The ambitious goal of the programme is to reduce the gender pay gap from about 20% to 15% by 2015. The main measures are to promote the desegregation, to develop pay systems and to support women careers. To achieve the goal, also collective agreements are demanded for. The programme hosts several projects on gender sensitive statistics on pay, gender equality planning and reconciliation of work and family.

Work on the **eradication of pay differentials** has been going on for several years - and still, the gender pay gap persistently remains at about 20%. *The Equality Act* stipulates that the workplaces with more than 30 persons have to design a gender equality plan including a rapport on pay. This rapport should examine the gender distribution of women and men into different tasks and in pay categories, their actual pay and pay differences. It should assess whether tasks of the same requirement level are treated in equal way, and pay should be compared as well between as within different occupational groups. If unjustified differences are to be detected, attention should be paid to amend the faults.

(p. 21) Some of the most striking gender equality problems in the labour market are barely mentioned in the text (2008 NRP): there is only a very short reference to the tripartite *Equal Pay Programme* with the objective to reduce the present gender pay gap from 20 to 15%.

(p. 24) **Gender pay gap** is referred to only very shortly (p. 18). However, the issue has been on the political agenda for years and the Government has committed to a tripartite *Equal Pay Programme*, launched in August 2007, which has as a objective to reduce the currently 20% gender pay gap to 15% by the year 2015. As to the improvement of the incentive effect of the tax and benefit systems, the report refers to wage formation. Particularly in the public sector, major reforms of pay systems are under way, including new assessment methods of work demands and productivity.

12. FR - France

(p. 8) Compulsory bargaining is envisaged in order to **abolish pay gaps** by December 2010. A diagnosis of the gaps should be made. There are penalties for those companies, which do not embark on "loyal and serious" negotiations: a sector-level agreement without measures for abolishing pay gaps cannot be extended; company pay agreements will only be registered if negotiations have been opened on this topic; finally, in three years, if necessary, a financial contribution will be introduced, based on the total wages bill for companies, which have not embarked on negotiations.

An assessment of the number of agreements signed in the context of the 2001 law shows that only 800 company's agreements have been signed in 2007 (4% of the total). Their impact is small, even if there has never been so many agreements before on this topic. At the sector level, out of 970 sectors,

39 had signed an agreement in 2007.

(p. 20) We should first of all observe that the only issue (which is certainly the most important, but not the only one) **concerns unequal pay**: it is a matter – as announced previously - of mobilising actors in companies (company and sector-level social partners) in order to reduce the pay gap, with the help of new tools (a new version of the 'comparative situation report'). Nothing is said about the difficulty women have in accessing employment (the above-average unemployment of women is just mentioned in the report's preamble). There is nothing on women's access to training and careers, nor on their difficulties regarding pensions; nor on under-employment (even though it is recalled elsewhere that women are the first victims of it). Even worse, nothing is said about a point that should be tackled this year, namely imposed part-time work, which affects a great majority of women who are in very insecure situations and on the edge of poverty. Each time that job insecurity and poverty are referred to, it is in neutral terms with no gender distinction being made. Moreover, the responsibility for dealing with the issue of unequal pay is put solely on companies. We know that most of the gaps occur in companies, however gaps also exist upstream (in the educational system and social perceptions), as well as alongside the labour market (effects of maternity leave and family constraints, and thus also the problem of 'reconciling times').

The only concrete measure, which was already announced a long time ago and should be implemented in January 2010, would be 'to reflect on implementing a financial penalty aimed at (...) companies that have not submitted a plan for reducing pay gaps...'. This point does seem to us to go in the right direction, but two criticisms can be made: firstly, many companies are likely to submit the report, and even negotiate an agreement, where it will be stated that 'there is no pay gap, in cases of equal average seniority and grades'. This is already the case in many agreements on equality: how can employees and trade unions be given the resources necessary to check on company figures, which are often not very transparent (basic pay, without counting bonuses; little information on careers, etc.). The second criticism concerns the use of funds that are collected in this way: it is envisaged to give them to companies that want to embark on an equality approach: however, those that want to do so often have the necessary resources (they are usually big companies). Would it not be better to support SMEs and even very small companies that do nothing, because of a lack of resources and actors (absence of social dialogue)?

(p. 23) Only pay gaps are treated (in half a page). This “silence” is fairly contradictory with the real situation, because the government has done various things and made announcements concerning equality, which do not appear in the NRP: since the 2007 conference, the report on the comparative situation of men and women has been modified (this is mentioned in one sentence in the NRP); according to personal information, there will be a conference with social partners on imposed part-time work; penalties for companies regarding pay gaps will effectively be adopted at the beginning of 2010; there will be an effort concerning childcare (postponed until 2010 or perhaps even 2012); an article of the Constitution has been changed regarding the possibility of promoting the under-represented gender in economic and social areas (company management, workplace elections and so forth)

(p. 24) Special attention is paid only to **pay gaps** (although there are not European quantified targets). Firstly, the gaps (18.9% on average and 23.1% for executives) are assessed above European indicators that are usually used, as they are based on average monthly pay (including part-time). Some measures are taken up from the 23 March 2006 law and added to. On this point, concrete measures seem adequate because they strengthen monitoring of the implementation of the law (which is a real problem in France) via reinforcement of the role of the labour inspectorate. Penalties are recalled and envisaged by the end of 2009 for companies that “will not have submitted a plan for eliminating gender pay gaps” (p. 45). This should encourage companies to provide quantitative information regarding this area and tackle unequal pay. But various criticisms have already been made about the target of eliminating (not only reducing) pay gaps: if companies provide such data, there is nothing to guarantee that real gaps will be taken into account (basic pay, without taking into account bonuses and careers...). We have already shown that many agreements that have been signed on this topic made the following observation: besides seniority, there is no (or very small) pay gap by average grade.

13. HU - Hungary

In Hungary, the gender pay gap and gender segregation are not issues for social dialogue. They were also not mentioned in the 2008 NRP as problems to deal with. Public opinion is not interested in gender segregation because in the socialist period women were often pressed to enter in male dominated jobs, which they would try to avoid.

Although the gender pay gap used to be about 20 pp before the year 2000, the causes for that were so many-sided that it was very difficult to decide what to do to address it. In 2004, the Government significantly increased the earnings in the public sector, which has been a female dominated area. This measure cut the gender pay gap to 10 pp – to a level much lower than the EU-average. After that it was thought that on the field of gender pay gap there is nothing to do but since then, the gap has widened again. As such the gender pay gap will be addressed in the long-term EO Strategy which is in preparation.

14. IE - Ireland

(p. 6) The National Women's Strategy details a series of **eight objectives to inform public policy** covering women's participation in paid employment, decreasing the gender pay gap, supporting women entrepreneurs, access by women and girls across the training and educational systems, reducing poverty among women and enhancing the work-life balance.

(p. 8) Trends in the gender pay gap highlighted in recent studies show the significant level of the gap in Ireland (including among recent third level graduates), the impact of horizontal, and particularly vertical segregation and the need for equality and audit action plans at sectoral level together with improved statistical and monitoring systems. The importance of policies to support women's paid employment during childrearing years, such as childcare, family friendly and flexible workplace policies has been emphasised by the Consultative Group established by government to analyse and suggest ways to address the gender pay gap (Consultative Group on Male/Female Wage Differentials 2002, Indecon, 2004).

16. LT - Lithuania

(p. 6) Employment in Lithuania is highly **segregated**. Gender segregation is first of all highly influenced by the choice of study fields. This choice by students impacts on the gender segregation in the labour market both by occupation and economic sector. Lithuania, as other countries (Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, etc.) face high segregation. In consequence of segregated labour markets there is an under-representation of women in sectors crucial for economic development and usually well remunerated. Women face difficulties in reaching decision making positions. In 2006 women dominated in health protection and social work (83% of all employees), hotels and nutrition (80%) education (78%) sectors. The employment dynamics of Lithuanian women indicates that there are no considerable structural changes between 2000 and 2006; a considerable share of Lithuanian women are employed in feminized professions. Women employment rate in Lithuania is continuing to grow, but in relation to men women remain disadvantaged. Women have higher educational attainment than men, but they employed less and their salaries are lower.

(p. 7) Since 2000 the **gender pay gap** is increasing. In 2006, women's wage was 19,1% lower than that of men in the private sector and 22,1% in the public sector. The highest difference in 2006 was in financial mediation sector (41,8%). According to the Lithuanian Department of Statistics, women wages in all spheres of economical activity grow slower than men. Statistical data show that gender wage differences vary by age. The highest gender wage gap is in 25-34 yrs groups. Presumably, this is the age group where the economical vulnerability of women is related to childcare.

17. LU - Luxembourg

(pp. 13-14) Two studies on the **salary gender gap** have been carried out to determine why discrimination exists in the area of salaries, with a view to eradicating it by making players of both genders aware of the phenomenon and to analyzing the impact of joint collective agreements on equality in treatment and salaries between men and women in the hope of improvements.

An analysis of **positive actions** was carried out between October 2006 and July 2007. Persistent impacts were recorded in companies that chose to implement structural changes. These included changes in pay scales designed to reduce the wage gap, introducing roving work schedules or part-time work specially adapted to family requirements, promoting parental leave for women and men

and recruiting women for atypical careers. Male and female employees who took part in one-off measures such as training sessions, were able to take advantage of personnel benefits little likely to be shared within the company.

Following the analysis, the Government formalized a structure implementing positive action projects to better ensure a lasting effect in the company and portability to other companies. All positive actions have to be consistent with the three priority themes of the Government, which are equal treatment of men and women, equality of men and women in decision-taking and equality of men and women in reconciliation between family life and work. Follow-up is done on the basis of qualitative and quantitative indicators, and the positive action project approved by the State is subject to evaluation every two years.

(p. 19) As far as gender equality on the labour market is concerned, the most important challenges (in 2008 NRP) are: a) to increase the employment rate of residents women, mostly nationals; b) to reduce the gender pay gap; c) to reduce job segregation on the labour market. Among the measures discussed and the different objectives (in the 2008 NRP) five are directly aimed at reducing gender inequality in the labour market (including the reduction of the gender pay gap).

19. MT - Malta

(pp. 11-12) In Malta, the principle of **equal pay** for work of equal value is a legal reality. However, the implementation of this principle on the ground, in terms of the deployment or of job-evaluation systems, and how far such systems, if in place, are gender-neutral and designed to ensure equal pay for women, remains unclear. Official indicators signal that the gender pay gap in Malta fell remarkably from 11% in 2000 to 3% in 2006. Moreover, compared to other EU-Member States it is the lowest among EU-Member States. However, these figures do not take into account that the majority of women (15-64 yrs) are not active, hence they have no earnings.

An area where rights and practice do not meet is the **gender gap in earnings**. Despite long standing legislation on equal pay, Maltese women still earn less than men, and the gender pay gap has a rather low profile both in public debate and in the policy agenda. Given the current emphasis that the equal pay policy has tackled gender wage discrimination, reducing the gender pay gap is not a priority in Malta. As a result, the prospect of a successful implementation of job evaluation for the elimination of the earnings wage differential between women and men in Malta does not seem very promising.

The state is encouraged to press for more effective equal pay policies to make women's work more profitable, and to make the costs of women not working more obvious. Moreover, the equal pay law in Malta might have to be modified to reflect a definition of the value of work, and to introduce job evaluation and ranking processes that are reinforced with effective sanctions.

(p. 19) The gender pay gap has no place on Malta's policy agenda, not mentioned in the 2008 NRP.

21. PL - Poland

(p. 8) The average gross hourly gender pay gap in Poland at 12% in 2006 has been narrower than the estimated gap of 15% for EU-27 (CEC 2008a). The gender pay gap is wider among persons earning higher incomes, which to a large degree is driven by women's under-representation in positions of higher authority – in 2004 women comprised about 20% of high ranking managers in large companies (above 250 employees) and about a third in medium size firms (MPiPS 2008d). Taking into account differences in working time of women and men in full time employment, where in 2006 the average weekly working time of men was 42.6 hours and of women 39.3 hours (CEC 2008a), the average income gender gap becomes substantially wider at 18%. A decomposition of the hourly gender pay gap performed on national data (LFS pointing to 13% gap and Structure of Income Study pointing to a 16% gap) suggests that only a small proportion of the gap can be ascribed to individual characteristics of women and men, and over 85% of the gap remains unexplained - the scale of gender discrimination in pay has been difficult to specify (MPiPS 2008d).

(p. 24) The NRP 2008-11 does not take gender differentials sufficiently into account. Labour market gender equality does not have an independent status in the NRP (e.g. ALMPs would not resolve the gender pay gap or labour market segregation on their own) and gender is not mainstreamed throughout the document indicating that the EU-level dual approach to gender (specific measures and mainstreaming) is not applied.

22. PT - Portugal

(p. 16) A recent measure has been enacted to **desegregate the labour market**: all specialities of the armed forces are from now on open to women (GL 20).

(p. 19) *A case study on the gender pay gap*. The historical agreement reached in the employment sector of Cork is an interesting case. After many years of struggle and negotiations, there is a new collective agreement that establishes the gradual convergence between men's and women's wages. Not acknowledged as such by the employers, the **gender pay gap** was disguised under different types of jobs – some just for women and others just for men. Women (around 5,000), representing 40% of the labour force employed by the sector, receive less 100 € than men. In average wages of 600 € this is a significant differential. The odd predicament is that this much needed convergence, made obligatory by the law, is delayed until 2015, with the complicity of the law, of the institutions, of the trade unions that signed the agreement, and in the end of all society.

23. RO - Romania

(pp. 5-6) Data indicate a relatively **small difference in income between man and women** in comparison with the other UE states. Income differences in Romania are among the smallest in Europe (2006)

Romania: 10% UE 27: 15% UE 25: 15% (Source: UE, 2008 compendium)

The small income difference between men and women suggests a lack of significant direct discrimination. It seems to be caused mainly by income differences between economic fields and secondly of the hierarchical position of men, which lead to indirect discrimination. It is obvious that a more accurate analysis of the income differences between men and women is required, as is establishing some recommendations for collective gender policy.

24. SE - Sweden

(pp. 10, 21-22) A long standing topic on the gender equality agenda in Sweden is **gender wage gaps**. The issue of equal pay between women and men is regulated in the *Equal Opportunities Act* and states that employers shall take active measures and to equalise and prevent differences in pay and other conditions of employment. There is also the *National Mediation Institute*, a central government agency, which has as one of its tasks to follow the development of the gender wage gap. In spite of this, the gap seems not to decrease much, which at least partly can be explained by the fact that the general pay gap is increasing. The main responsibility for wage formation in Sweden rests with the social partners, therefore the Government has limited power within this area, however, they are able to act within the state sector which they are now doing with the goal of eliminating unjustified wage differentials between women and men by 2010.

(p. 19) The Government has introduced a specific programme (2008-2010) to support women's careers in the state sector with the aim of having eliminated *unjustified wage differentials between men and women* by 2010. It is doubtful if it will be possible to reach this goal. In 1997 women's standardised wage of men's was 92% and in 2006 it was 93%, an increase of one p.p. in ten years. Seven p.p. remain and have to be eliminated in three years, which probably will be quite hard.

(p. 21) The Government is taking some measures directly aimed at promoting gender equality. An interesting initiative is the introduction of a *gender equality bonus* on 1 July 2008. The gender equality bonus can amount to SEK 3,000 per month and is provided to parents in the form of tax relief, in one's tax account. It is hoped that the bonus will encourage fathers' to use a greater part of parental leave and mothers to return to work earlier. This should lead to a smaller gender pay gap and lower differences in total earnings over the life cycle. The Government intends to evaluate the effects of the bonus.

25. SI - Slovenia

(pp. 7-8) The most important contribution to the equal opportunities policy framework in Slovenia in the last few years was the adoption of the *Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities of women and men (2005–2013)* by the Parliament in October 2005. The Resolution states distinctive aims and measures to achieve these aims as well as responsible actors and indicators for the successful implementation of measures. The four aims towards promoting equal

opportunities of men and women in employment and work are stated in the Resolution: decreasing gender discrimination in employment and work; decreasing differences in employment and unemployment of men and women; increasing self-employment of women and female entrepreneurship; decreasing vertical and horizontal segregation and the gender pay gap.

(p. 4) Analysis so far shows that the application of horizontal gender mainstreaming in policies and measures that considers labour market and other economic changes alone would be insufficient to achieve gender equality at the labour market. Policies and measures directly aimed at further decrease of gender segregation and pay gap are still needed. Gender segregation and pay differences are also connected with gender segregation of unpaid domestic and care work: women are overburdened with domestic and care responsibilities and that should be taken into account when designing policies and measures concerning gender inequalities at the labour market.

26. SK - Slovakia

(p. 6) The gender wage gap is one of the most acute problem in the field of gender equality. It was explicitly identifies as PTW. The gender pay gap in Slovakia is one of the largest among EU countries. According to national official data (Trexima) the average monthly wage of women (4th quarter 2006) was only 73% that of men. The gender wage gap is caused by numerous structural imbalances, such as labour market segregation, gender stereotypes on the labour market but also in the access to education and vocational training, or failure to comply with remuneration regulations.

Two initiatives have been taken in recent years. First, the *National Labour Inspectorate* system was transformed (September 2007); this should help to increase the level of control over employers in the area of remuneration for work and help to close gender pay gap. In 2007 were performed 230 inspections for revealing direct or indirect gender discrimination in employment law relation and in working conditions. In total 583 shortcomings were found of which 204 were serious. Unfortunately there are not available data about the variety of shortcomings and if the were found also in the field of remuneration. Second, the revision of the *Labour Code* (September 2007) provides a more precise definition of the legislation implementing the principle providing equal remuneration for equal work and for work to which equal value is attributed. However, these two initiatives are not sufficient to reduce the gender pay gap. Other measures are required (besides legislation), being a problem of structural imbalances in the labour market.

(p. 14) In the NRP 2008-2010 no gender specific policies are mentioned. The term “gender wage gap” is used 2 times (of which 1 time as a reference to PTW).

27. UK- United Kingdom

(pp. 4-5) Employment is highly *gender segregated*, even if the aggregate level of segregation is lower than that recorded by many other countries in the EU27 (Fagan 2008b: 4). This gender segregation includes a much lower rate of self-employment for women: 7.8% of employed women compared to 17.6% of employed men (TUC 2007: 10). Horizontal gender segregation is evident in the subjects pursued in education, in apprenticeship schemes, sector and occupation; and vertical segregation persists with the under-representation of women at senior levels (Fagan 2008b).

The *gender pay gap* is large – a third higher than the EU average (TUC 2007: 14). The pay gap has narrowed over the period since 1997 (TUC 2008a). The full-time pay gap is now 17.2% and the part-time pay gap is much higher at 35.6%. The pay gap opens up over the working life: the full-time gender pay gap is more than three times higher for women in their thirties than those in their twenties (TUC 2008b). The underlying causes of the pay gap persist; namely the undervaluation of women’s work, employment penalties for mothers, occupational gender segregation and discriminatory treatment in the workplace (TUC 2008a). Full and part-time gender pay gaps occur in each region of the UK but tend to be higher in London and the South East of England. The smallest gaps are in Northern Ireland and Wales (TUC 2007:17). The public sector – which employees nearly 40% of all female employees and 20% of all male employees – has a narrower full-time gender pay gap than that in the private sector (based on median earnings). However, the pay gap between women working part-time and men working full-time is much the same in the public and private sectors (The Women and Work Commission 2006: 87-89).

The gender pay gap means *women face greater risks of falling below the poverty line and being worse off than men in retirement*, with more than one quarter of employed women located in the

lowest earnings bracket compared to just over 10% of men (Women and Work Commission, 2006). Women account for two thirds of the minimum wage workers (Fagan 2008b: 12), and they are 50% more likely to be paid below the Statutory National Minimum Wage than men (TUC 2007:13). The Women and Work Commission (2006: 43) reports that 15% of lone parents working full-time and a third of those employed part-time are not able to earn enough to lift their families out of poverty.

(pp. 14-15) The Women and Work Commission's report has been widely criticised for focusing primarily on gender segregation and women's career choices – not on the undervaluation of women's work – as the main cause of the gender pay gap. The subsequent Government's Action Plan has focussed on mobilising the non-employed and training for low-skilled women. There is much less policy development in relation to revaluing women's work or to protect them against new forms of undervaluation. The main measures which relate directly to improving the valuation of women's work are:

- The public sector gender duty, which includes ensuring compliance with the Equal Pay law, has triggered initiatives in many parts of the public sector, including employment terms in private sector contractors via procurement guidelines.
- The upgrading of the national minimum wage
- A Public Service Agreement target to raise the number of large employers conducting Equal Pay Reviews to 45% by 2008, which is supported by a set of tools, capacity building activities and good practice exchange via the Equal Pay Forum developed by the Equalities Commission (EOC and subsequently EHRC) (Fagan 2008b:29, Women and Work Commission 2006)

A survey for the EHRC in February 2008 documents an increasing proportion of organisations carrying out equal pay reviews (Schafer et al., IFF forthcoming). The proportion of employers who have completed an equal pay review has increased to 13%, while the proportion currently conducting their **first equal pay review** has risen from one in fifty in 2005 to one in twenty in 2008. This progress is welcome, but the EHRC (2008) are recommending streamlined and stronger legal procedures and that consideration be given to making pay audits mandatory in their response to the consultation on the *Single Equalities Bill*. (EHRC 2008) If adopted, the Single Equalities Bill has the potential to provide a renewed focus on equal value and a combination of legal and informational resources to progress this policy objective.

(p. 26) In 2008 NRP there is a statement of commitment to 'closing the gender pay gap' which is one of the indicators for monitoring progress on the new Public Service Agreement on equalities. However, there is no target presented for reducing the gender pay gap or discussion of the policy strategy to achieve this goal. The likelihood of making progress on this target is uncertain and is contingent on the efficacy with which the '*Gender duty*' is implemented, the final content of the Equalities Bill and the resources committed to the Public Service Agreement to 'Deliver on the Gender equality Initiative'

Source: National Reports on 2008 NRPs (Part A and Part B).

6.2 Reconciliation, child care and care work

An important reason for employment differences between men and women, as identified in most reports, is the differential impact of parenthood on either. Whereas men with children tend to work more than men without children, the opposite is true for women: women without children have higher employment rates than women with children. Child care services have become a matter of public concern in the view of improving reconciliation of work and family life in order to foster labour market participation and gender equality. All of the 27 countries have discussed childcare in the areas of attracting more people in the labour market as well as investing in human capital.

The importance of providing childcare services has also been recognised at the EU level. At the Barcelona summit in 2002, some explicit conclusions and targets have been defined with regard to the provision of childcare services. Confirming the goal of full employment, the Council of Europe agreed that Member States should remove

disincentives to female labour force participation and strive to provide childcare by 2010 to at least 90% of children between 3 years old and the mandatory school age and at least 33% of children under 3 years of age (Plantenga and Remery 2008).

The main problems identified by some of the experts have been the insufficient nature of child care infrastructure and options. The daily and annual opening hours of child care facilities impose a restriction on the availability of the services to the parents, especially to families working odd hours (nurses, doctors, policemen). Many child care facilities are open only in the mornings and are closed during school holidays. Therefore there is lack of flexibility. Additionally, affordability and quality of child care services have been signalled by expert needing special attention, to the training of child minders. While programmes for improving child care services maybe announced, lack in fund allocations on delay in release of funds halts programmes (DE, IT).

The policies of almost all countries have focussed on care services for children up to the age of 3 years. However, the attention required for children above the age of 3 have been ignored and this may have a negative impact on reconciliation of women in the labour force in spite of increasing volume of child care services for children up to 3 years. There are scarce provisions for facilities beyond school hours. Similarly, policies for caring parents have also ignored the scope of care for elders or any other dependent. Only three countries (ES, FI, PT) have recognized in the 2008 NRP the care work of parents with ill or disabled children⁶.

One of the overriding problems on the issue of reconciliation is still the stereotyping of care work as a female attribute. While many countries have introduced parental allowances and parental leave, they have mostly been gender neutral; very few are directly aimed at promoting the participation of fathers in child care (EE and FI).

In the scope of a more holistic approach to child care and reconciliation the following initiatives can be considered positive and progressive⁷:

- introduction of ‘Service Vouchers’ in Belgium aimed at lone parents of children below 3 years, to avail ‘occasional and atypical’ childcare at home;
- increase in the number of places reserved in “crèches” for children of first generation immigrants by the Flemish Community Commission in Belgium.
- ‘Pro-Family Package’ of the Czech Republic, comprising of various provisions to provide options and diversify forms of child care provided;
- provision in Greece to transfer to the father the right of the mother to a fully-paid child rearing leave after maternity leave in case the mother chooses not to avail of her leave.
- the *National System of Dependence* in Spain, aimed to establish mechanisms of personal assistance and economic benefits for those who require it for their personal autonomy and development, including facilitating their access to labour market;
- *Employment Contracts Act* in Finland making provisions of reconciliation easier for parents of children in split families;
- *child care services for the unemployed* in the Netherlands whereby, all parents who have become unemployed are still entitled to child care subsidies for a period of six months;

⁶ This is true for other countries (for example, Sweden), but it is not discussed in the 2008 NRP.

⁷ For detailed policy discussion refer to Box 6.2, below.

- the *gender equality bonus* to get fathers to use the parental leave more than they do today and *tax relief for purchase of household related services* in Sweden.

Each country has its own unique constellation of childcare arrangements, consisting of services and facilities such as leave arrangements, day-care centres, kindergartens, family-type care arrangements, childminders at home and (pre)school education systems etc. However, there are very few new initiative set apart from the established models. At the same time quite a number of countries are rebalancing the actual policy mixture between the provision of services, time and money, with the aim to increase parental choice, to improve the labour market position of women or to promote family life. Seventeen countries have mentioned childcare targets and it continues to be considered as one of the most important priority issues.

BOX 6.2: Reconciliation, Childcare and Care work

1. AT - Austria

(p. 7) Although childcare services in Austria have been expanded and enrolment rates have gone up in recent years, in 2006 out-of-family childcare services were still in short supply and relatively expensive. At an enrolment rate of 12.9%, Austria clearly fails to meet the Barcelona childcare target for children under the age of three, with huge variations across the Austrian provinces. And if the opening hours of childcare facilities are taken into account, the picture is far more negative. In terms of 3-6 yr olds, **the enrolment rate of 85% almost meets Barcelona targets (90%)**. Major problems regarding the reconciliation of work and childcare obligations here also arise from restrictive daily and annual opening hours: Many childcare facilities only open in the mornings or close for lunch, with many also closing for several weeks a year during school holidays. According to a survey among parents, however, the most severe lack of childcare services, in terms of quantity, affects children aged 6-14 (for more details see: Mairhuber 2008).

(p. 10) The federal government has pledged to invest direct federal funds to the amount of €45 million over the next three years to expand childcare services. The provinces will contribute another €60 million until 2010. The funds are to be used to support the expansion of public childcare for pre-school-age children as well as the training of childminders, with a major focus on childcare for under-threes, made necessary by the increasing demand expected to arise from the more flexible provisions of the childcare benefit. While this certainly constitutes an improvement compared to previous years as for the first time concrete measures (including financial allocations) have been adopted, the measures taken are too few to offset the pressing shortage of childcare facilities (especially for children over the age of six), particularly as their actual implementation is left to the individual provinces.

(p. 21) Unlike the previous NRP and the implementation reports, the Austrian NRP 2008-2010 for the first time mentions the Barcelona target for children under the age of 3. As described in Part A of this report the federal government has pledged to invest direct federal funds to the amount of €45 million over the next three years to expand childcare services, especially for under-threes. While this certainly constitutes an improvement compared to previous years as for the first time concrete measures (including financial allocations) have been adopted, the measures taken are too few to offset the pressing shortage of childcare facilities and the Barcelona target is far from being met, particularly as the actual implementation of these measures is left to the individual provinces.

2. BE - Belgium

(pp. 17-18) In March 2007, the Flemish government gave the green light to an Action Plan for flexible and occasional childcare. This plan is comprised of four measures. Firstly, existing childcare facilities will be strengthened as their offer will be extended to include flexible and occasional childcare. Secondly, a pool of 200 low-qualified long-term unemployed people will be appealed to strengthen existing provisions. Thirdly, 193 additional childcare slots will be created through local services for proximity childcare so that 35 jobs are opened up for vulnerable categories. Finally, employed lone parents of children under 3 may make use of the “service voucher” system for

childcare at home. For the first two measures, the Flemish government has made roughly 5.5 million € available. The 200 workers of the new pool can provide occasional and atypical childcare within existing collective facilities. Moreover, they can fetch children at home to bring them to these facilities in the morning and they can get them back home in the evening, cook them a meal, put them to sleep and stay present until one of the parents gets home. Through the local services, 193 slots will be created, 91 for 0-2 year-olds and 102 for children aged 3-12. This will create 35 new jobs for vulnerable categories. To achieve this the Flemish government has made roughly €1.7 million available. Finally, working lone parents with small children (under 4) can annually purchase between 5 and 40 service vouchers to meet urgent and occasional childcare needs. The price of these vouchers is income-related (1.67 € per voucher if income is lower than 14824.50 €; 3.35 € if income is between 14824.5 and 31745.12 €; 6.7 € for a higher income level). To finance this the Flemish government has freed 5.3 million €.

The French Community puts into practice the so-called Plan Cigogne II which is supposed to create 8000 additional child care places for 0-2 year olds by 2009. The major policy orientation defined in this plan are the following:

1. The financing by the French Community of collective subsidised child care facilities
2. The reform of the SEMA plan (an initiative that builds on synergies between care structures and employers)
3. The development of a new type of care structure: “co-accueillant(e)s”
4. The promotion of the care profession.

Moreover, in the Walloon Region, recently adopted measures to encourage access to training focus on giving children of individuals following training courses and children of unemployed job-seekers access to ‘Children's Homes’ (Maisons d'enfants), i.e. childcare facilities at Employment and Training Centres (Carrefours Emploi Formation) and Job Centres (Maisons de l'Emploi).

Concerning Brussels, the French Community Commission has announced that 2600 extra places in “crèches” will be created. The Flemish Community Commission will focus on flexible and occasional care in Brussels as it does in the Flemish Community. It will also make efforts to increase the number of places reserved for children of first-generation immigrants. Moreover, training programmes will be developed for the staff of day care centres with special attention for the accessibility of care. Finally, child care solutions for jobseekers will be extended. By 2010, the French community aims at 10000 extra places in order to reach the EU's 33% objective. Finally, the German-speaking community wants to catch up with the others, both in terms of childcare availability for under 3s and in terms of care opportunities outside school hours.

Thanks to the system of nursery schools childcare (3-6 yrs) during school hours is not a problem. On the contrary, policies should focus on expanding childcare opportunities outside school hours.

3. BG - Bulgaria

(p. 7) Developing relevant economic and social policies for prevention and elimination of gender gaps, for equal access to the labour market and economic activities, for appropriate measures for reconciliation of work and family life. Education and healthcare, especially reproductive health, are areas of special concern, together with fighting domestic violence and human trafficking.

4. CY - Cyprus

(p. 6) One of the measures considered in the previous NRP (p. 89) is the expansion of childcare services and services to dependants which is expected to help 250 women for the years 2006-2008.

(p. 13) Although access to affordable childcare is mentioned several times in the 2008 NRP (pp. 24, 41, 45, 157) the specific targets are not adequately analyzed. Although we know that there is a target for providing childcare to 90% of all children 3-mandatory school age by 2010, we do not have an assessment of how well the government is doing in this area. We know that during 2007-2008, grants co-financed by the ESF were provided to 31 care programmes developed through partnerships between NGOs and local authorities. During this period about 60 work positions were created to cover the needs of the programmes and approximately 200 women benefited from the care facilities. A study on the role of local authorities in the promotion of care policies for the reconciliation of work and family life has recently been completed and that the measure will be fully implemented by December 2008 (p. 127); nonetheless, we do not have an indication of whether it will be possible to meet the stated targets. A target for the under-3 age group was not set.

5. CZ – Czech Republic

(p. 4) **Reconciliation** of work and family life is discussed and some policy initiatives have been taken. However, they are only partly adequate as they could have positive impact only on some groups of families. In some cases these policies can even have negative impact on gender equality. Changes in parental allowance terms (shorter schedule set for two years) cannot help reconciliation of work and family life without available and quality childcare facilities for children from two years of age and without flexible and inclusive labour market. Support of part-time work for mothers of small children is only partly adequate policy for reconciliation of work and family life and can have even a negative impact on gender equality.

(pp. 17-18) In the area of reconciliation of work and family life a new policy reform is announced called “Pro-family package”. It contains following proposals:

- Modification of the conditions for the services of care for children as an entrepreneurial activity in the form of a trade. This proposal is focused, first of all, on physical persons (women) over 50 years threatened, to a higher degree, by unemployment, and this modification will help them to start business in this area.
- Introduction of the institute of mutual parental aid, i.e. the possibility to use own parenthood for watching over children of other parents on the basis of clearly defined conditions for the development and function of a legal relationship, the object of which will be care for children placed in trust.
- Introduction of services of the institute of a mini-nursery, i.e. services provided on a non-commercial basis, generally by the parent’s employer at his/her workplace or by non-profitable entities or municipal and regional authorities which are obliged, in the framework of their self-governing function, to care for the needs of their citizens.
- Introduction of tax allowances for employers providing or subcontracting care for children of their employees, e.g. by establishing a mini-nursery, classic company nursery or in the form of subcontracting this service from a third entity (an entrepreneur).
- Strengthening the motivation of employers to employ parents caring for children on the basis of a part time job, e.g. by offering them a reduction of premiums for social security and a reduction of the unemployment contribution paid by the employer.
- Strengthening the father’s role in the care for children by introducing a new sickness benefit for the period after the birth of the child until 6 weeks after birth, for the time of seven calendar days. The amount of this benefit for a calendar day will be 70% of the daily assessment base (p. 67, 2008 NRP/en).

Concerning the access to childcare the focus is on **diversity of forms of childcare services provided by the business sphere** (employers for their employees or new self-employed persons) or nongovernmental organisations. State (e.g. through support of municipalities) does not plan to invest in the promotion and coverage of the growing unmet demand for childcare services. The plan is to modify the conditions of child care services through skilled trade. “It is especially targeted at

individuals (women) over 50 years of age who are at a higher rate of unemployment and this modification will allow them to do business in this area.” (p. 67, 2008 NRP/en). This is a significant gender stereotyping that may have negative impact on gender equality. On one side it will reproduce the stereotype of women as the exclusive carers and on the other side it will exclude men interested in this type of business.

Paternity leave of seven calendar days (that is called father’s weekly leave in the NRP) during the period from the birth till six weeks of the child is planned for the objective strengthening the role of father. This is a positive development but it should be accompanied by measures to support equal use of parental leave (until three years of a child) by fathers and mothers. It has been previously discussed that with the Amendment to the Act on health insurance equality for fathers taking care of their child from 6 weeks of age would be introduced in the amount of the benefit. This measure did not appear in the last version of the Amendment that will be effective from 1.1.2009.

6. DE – Germany

(p. 10) A broad societal consensus exists in Germany that **child care facilities** should be promoted as they support reconciliation of work and family live, counter balance disadvantages due to social backgrounds and take active part in developing human capital. Apart from the legal entitlement for subsidized child care for 3 year old children until compulsory school in 1996 and the decision to extend all-day schools in 2002, there has been an important reform of the *KJHG (Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz; Child and Youth Welfare Service Act)* in 2005, aiming on sufficient provision of child care for children under 3. Originally, it was planned to establish about 230,000 new places at child care facilities for children under 3 until 2010.

To reach the new goals of 2007 strong efforts will be essential: 750,000 places until 2013 mean the creation of yearly 70,000 additional places. This is a big challenge as in 2007 in West Germany as a whole only 167,000 places for children younger than 3 years old existed. Now it is all the more important that the Länder and local authorities support the expansion of child care places all out. This might be problematic as some local authorities wait until they receive a concrete financial commitment of the Bund. This could lead to the paradox effect that in spite of a general consensus the development stagnates as waiting for legal security and cash flow constrain the capacity of local authorities to act.

7. DK – Denmark

(p. 9) The Danish childcare system has a high coverage but does not provide flexible care for children in families working flexible and odd hours (as nurses, doctors, policemen, people employed in shops) as the vast majority of childcare facilities are scheduled after traditional working hours – even with a decline in opening hours, when working hours in general were reduced (Emerek, 2005). The regional facilities for childcare, the number of places available, opening hours and closing days affect the daily life of families with children requiring day care. This structuring may influence the parent’s choice of employment, especially single parents, who are even more dependent on opening hours and closing days of childcare. Hopes and expectations of children and family life may also influence the choice of education – especially for women.

8. EE – Estonia

(pp.7-8) Relatively **more attention has been turned to the reconciliation** of work and private life which has a significant impact on women. The issues have been tackled mainly by improving the lack of childcare facilities. The statistics show that there is a quite severe lack of childcare. Improving the childcare is crucial, especially in a context of very strong impact of parenthood on women’s employment in Estonia and a full-paid childcare leave which also has an impact on labour supply of women.

As family policies and increasing the birth rates have been one of the priorities for the current government, the generous full-paid parental benefit was extended from 14 months to 18 months in 2008. According to research evidence from 2006, it is difficult to estimate the real impact of the parental benefits. Still, data indicates an increase in birth rates in general and also increasing proportion of highly educated, previously employed and higher salaried women having children (Võrk, Karu, 2006). Similar analysis will be conducted in 2008.

Efforts have also been made to increase the role of fathers in reconciliation of work and private life to increase the gender equality. For that purpose since 1 January 2008 fathers are provided a right to receive parental benefit when the child is 70 days old instead of the previous 6 month requirement. Also, the benefit paid to fathers during the child care leave of fourteen calendar days will be increased up to 100% of the average wage instead of the current flat rate of 66 EEK (4.22 €) per day, but no more than 3 times the Estonian average gross wages.

A state investment programme *Kindergarten place for every child* was launched in 2008 to support the local municipalities to build up new and renovate existing childcare facilities (altogether to create about 4000 childcare places), but also to increase the wages of kindergarten teachers. Initially the programme was planned in an amount of 1.4 billion EEK (89 million €) in years 2008-2011, but due to rapidly declining economic growth, the government has been forced to reassess the state budget and the programme was cut to 625 million EEK (39.9 million €).

The Ministry of Education and Research launched a pilot project of long-day-schools allocating 10 million EEK (€ 639,000) to finance long-day-schools in 54 educational institutions in 2007. The schools that participate in the project provide care for longer hours: from after the end of lessons until 6-7 p.m. Also childminders' professional standard was developed in 2005 and starting from 2007, local governments are paying benefits to compensate the cost of qualified childminders to parents whose children do not attend public kindergartens or crèches.

(p. 23) **Childcare is one of the best gender-related issues in the whole 2008 NRP** which is appropriate from the gender perspective as the impact of parenthood on women is very strong in Estonia and scarcity of childcare has a significant role in it. The target is set at 90% of coverage of children aged 3 to school age by 2011 (currently 89%). However, no target for care of younger children or other dependants is set.

(pp. 24-25) There is a whole set of measures in the 2008 NRP which are gender specific as they deal with family and work balancing and employment of persons with care responsibilities. In Estonian, there is a traditional division of work which leaves the care work mainly to women. Thus, acknowledging the problems of work and family reconciliation and a need for an integrated care services is a remarkable improvement in terms of gendering the policies even if the gender aspect of the issues is not explicitly mentioned.

9. EL – Greece

(p. 6) The new Civil Servants' Code (Law 3528/2007) incorporates a series of measures supporting the reconciliation of work and family life. These include the transfer to the father of the right of the mother to a fully-paid child-rearing leave after maternity leave, in case she does not make use of it; a non-transferable right of both parents who have a third child to a paid 3-month career break in addition to the fully-paid child-rearing leave; and the extension of the duration of the latter in the case of parents with more than three children (GL 18). This reform introduced for the first time parental leave in the public sector even though the right is transferable from men to women. In order to fully promote gender equality in employment, through gender equality in care, parental leaves should be non-transferable between partners.

(p. 7) The changes in the system of childcare leaves in the public and private sector brought about by the new policy measures (the new Civil Servant's Code, the reform of the pension system which introduces a paid childcare leave in the private sector) should be considered as very positive for the promotion of gender equality in employment. However, several categories of mothers working in the private sector were excluded from the entitlement to the leave. Moreover, the fact that the paid childcare leave in the private sector is only available to mothers could lead to discrimination against women in hiring, especially in SMEs that incur the highest costs from replacing the employees on leave. Finally, the rise in the age of pre-retirement for mothers with underage children faced strong protest by the unions and workers of both sexes during the big strikes against the last reform of the pension system. Greek women consider these special pre-retirement schemes as 'aquis', since they value more free time and taking care of their children than career advancement or high pensions and financial independence from men in old-age.

(p. 8) Many reforms of the education and training system have taken place in recent years. In particular, Law 3518/2006 rendered mandatory the attendance of a kindergarten by all children who

have completed their 5th year of age.

10. ES – Spain

(pp. 11-12) Of the initiatives aiming to modernise social protection systems, one of the recent development with greater gender implications is the provision of **new childcare facilities**, by means of an Agreement approved by the Government in September 2007 in order to promote school enrolment for children aged 0-3, including a budget item of 100 million € for the creation of 40.000 public kindergarten places. Although the measure points in the right direction (complying with the recommendation of the Commission), 100 million € budget does not seem to be sufficient, as it has been acknowledged that other 250.000 places for children under 3 would be necessary. Child care facilities have a considerable impact on female employment in Spain, as the regions with greater schooling rates for children aged 0-3 show higher female employment rates. Efforts to improve the availability of child care services should continue (the schooling rate for children under 3 amounted to 17% in 2005).

One of the most important and unexpected measures announced during this period is the endorsement of a new social benefit for families consisting of a **2.500 € payment for every child born or adopted** since July the 3rd. Although the measure has been designed on a neutral gender basis, the benefit is expected to cause greater relief for women, as it contributes to subsidize child care costs that in turn may facilitate female employment and family conciliation. Undoubtedly, the measure deserves a positive assessment in the face of the lack of such family support in the previous years. Nevertheless, when taking into account other priorities regarding the access to child care services (mainly the lack of available places), the efficiency of this measure could be questioned in the light of the great budgetary effort that it entails (1.2 billion €), in detriment of greater expenditure on more available places.

However, probably the most remarkable initiative in social protection during the last years is the establishment of the **National System of Dependence (or NSD, *Systema Nacional de Dependencia*)**. The so-called fourth pillar of the welfare state will establish mechanisms of personal assistance and economic benefits for those who require it for their personal autonomy and development, including measures to facilitate their access to the labour market. The project has stipulated a budget of 12.3 billions € for a gradual implementation in the next 8 years and is expected to create directly or indirectly around 300.000 jobs, mostly for women. Hence, the gender impact of this policy development can be found at least in two different aspects: on the one hand, it is likely that the provision of long-term care services and economic benefits of the system will benefit in a large extent to female population, as women show greater degrees of disability and dependence at older ages. On the other hand, since women are much more frequently engaged in the provision of long-term care services (indistinctively as professional, undeclared or family work), women will benefit from the creation of new jobs in the sector, the improvement of working conditions and the relief of family burdens that the system will imply in the long run.

However, one of the aspects that should be borne in mind for prospective impact analysis of the measure, is the fact that the NSD may involve some negative consequences in terms of the segmentation of the labour market (as it may contribute to the occupational specialisation of women in a specific sector), unless proper complementary human resources policies foster the gender equality in the care sector. In this case, we could be facing a trade-off effect regarding the impact of this policy: on the one hand contributing to labour integration of women, but on the other involving certain segmentation of female employment, in terms of occupational specialisation.

11. FI

(p. 5) The activity rate (15-64 years) has increased as well, especially among women: from 72% in 2004 to 73.8% in 2007. During the past couple of years women have increasingly often returned to work from family leaves at early stage, even directly after the parental leave, instead of staying home on home care leave. In the beginning of the 2000's the situation was the opposite, and there were speculations about women increasingly often choosing for long family leaves, which showed in lower activity rates. However, in the last couple of years, with the improving employment situation the trend has turned into the opposite direction.

(pp. 7-8) As for the reconciliation, *amendments* have taken place regarding *family leave system*. The

level of maternity and parental allowances was risen from the beginning of 2007: the maternity allowance from 70% or 90% for the first 56 days of maternity leave and the parental leave to 75% of salary for the first 30 working days. If parents share the parental leave, both of them receive the higher allowance, which is believed to encourage men to increase their use of parental leave. In addition, the use of so called "father's month" (in use since 2003) has been made more flexible. Furthermore, several *family leave campaigns* have been going on during the past few years. The latest one of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (2007- 2008) *focused on fathers*, spreading information about family leave through direct mail, a telephone campaign, advertising and PR.

The provision on family leave in the Employment Contracts Act were amended in 2006 to make the reconciliation easier for the parents of children of split families: also the parent not living with the child is entitled to stay at home to take care of the child aged under 10 due to sudden illness. In addition, the right to partial care leave for parents of chronically sick or disabled children was enlarged in 2006 to cover all the 18 first years of the child.

(pp. 24-25) No real references are made to *family leave schemes* any more, although they were addressed to some extent in the NRP 2005-2008. However, *several minor reforms* have been made in this respect: campaigning has been going on to encourage fathers to use their family leaves, and *a total reform of the family leave system* is under consideration. The current problem is the fact that the take-up of family leaves by fathers still is very low compared to women or even compared to men in other Nordic countries. All this has implications on women's labour market position. Another point connected to family leaves and work life-balance in general is the low use of partial home care leave, in spite of the reforms already made - and some already scheduled - regarding this type of leave. Overlong working hours of parents and the growing ill-being of children has been a topical issue in the Finnish debate already for almost a decade. The theme of reconciliation of work and family was shortly referred to in the NRP 2005-2008, but it is ignored in the NRP 2008-2010.

12. FR – France

(pp. 8-9) *Work-life balance*: the bill consolidates the rights of women on maternity leave, notably concerning pay, holiday and protection against discrimination. It provides for an increase of at least 10% of the training allowance for employees who have extra childcare expenses, in order to be able to go on a course out of working hours and also provides for financial help to enable small companies to temporarily replace employees on maternity or adoption leave.

As far as **reconciling times** is concerned, the debate has been postponed until the implementation of a **legal right to childcare** (which was due to happen in 2010 and was then postponed until 2012). A report has just been made on this legal right. It indicates that about 350,000 additional places are needed in order to meet families' needs. But given the cost (1 to 4 billion €), the choice seems to be in the process of being directed towards reinforcing the role of childminders, rather than crèches, which are acclaimed (but much more expensive). The report recommends measures that are considered dangerous by the CGT, because they involve entrusting 4 children, instead of 3, to childminders, as well as creating new structures (awakening gardens) for 2-3 yrs, with fewer staff.

(p. 24) The levels of **childcare provision**, which are part of the Barcelona targets (33% for children under 3 and 90% for those over 3), are not mentioned in the 2008 NRP.

13. HU – Hungary

(p. 8) Since 1 January 2005 parents receiving child care assistance (GYES) have been allowed to take up work after the child reaches the first year of age, instead of the previous 1.5 years. On the 1st of January 2006, the restrictive rules regarding the part-time employment of GYES-recipients were abolished. Since then, working full-time has been permitted without any limitation regarding the sum of the child care assistance. (According to LFS the proportion of working GYES recipients increased by 15% between 2005-2007, but it was still pretty low in 2007 at only 7.6%.)

(p. 8) In mid-2007, the 'Start Plus' programme was introduced – with the support of the ESF – to promote the employers taking on parents whose child care benefit (GYED), assistance (GYES) or support (GYET) had recently expired. Under the 'Start Plus' programme a significant reduction in social contributions are available to employers for 2 years. (In the period of 2007-2008 more than 12 thousand 'Start Plus' card were given out to parents to promote their return into the labour market.)

(p. 9) There are relatively few public childcare places available for infants. Accessibility of childcare services for children under 3 is lower than 10%, with large regional differences at the expense of small villages. The lack of childcare services is a barrier to mothers wishing to take up work.

Policy measures to focus more on reconciliation between work and family. The Government decided to develop early child-care institutions. Accordingly, a new policy decision requires every municipality to find nursery places for all multiply disadvantaged children from the age of 3 by January 2008, and to satisfy every demand for nursery education by August 2010. In 2007, the Hungarian Parliament adopted a national strategy “Making Things Better for our Children” to run from 2007 to 2032. Policy measures of the strategy are coordinated in the framework of the “Child Opportunity Flagship programme” of the 2nd National Development Plan. The most important elements of the programme are:

- The enlargement the scope of the Sure Start programme
- The introduction of the Sure Start Kindergarten programme for poor families living in disadvantaged regions
- The integrated development of children’s day-care services
- Improvement of flexible operation of childcare services

(pp. 9-10) The New Knowledge Action Program concentrates EU and government budgetary financial resources on the further development of the infrastructure for early child development. It has a great impact on the reconciliation of family and working life obligations of parents, primarily that of mothers. It focuses on:

- Existing network of district nurses will be expanded and the remuneration of district nurses will be increased
- The network of Sure-Start programs will be extended
- The scope of family day care centres will be increased in small settlements under 1000 inhabitants, Professional early education will be provided for all children above 3 years.
- On family demand local authorities should provide childcare services for all children above the age of 3 regardless of the employment status of the parents.
- In small settlements integrated nursery-kindergarten facilities should be made available for children between 2-6 years.

(p.14) The following measures were introduced in recent years:

- Strengthening dismissal protection during the child care benefit period: From 1st. January 2006, the dismissal protection during the child care benefit period up until the child’s third birthday is also valid in the case where the parent takes up (or resumes) work.

(p.15) Taking stock of the relevant policy initiatives from the gender point of view two major fields had gender relevance in 2006 and 2007.

Implementation of a LLL strategy with special interest towards increasing the employability of parents (mostly women) who wants to participate in adult education or wants to return to employment during and after parental leave

14. IE – Ireland

(p. 5) A significant positive development over 2006-07 has been an increase in **maternity leave entitlement** to 26 months paid leave and 16 weeks unpaid leave, a policy likely to result in increased levels of employment among women in the 25-40 age sector. However, parental leave remains unpaid and there is no entitlement to paternity leave a position which reinforces gender inequalities, particularly in relation to care responsibilities.

(pp. 5-6) Budget 2006 saw the introduction of new financial supports for parents of young children, increases in child benefit and additional resources towards childcare facilities. New initiatives included: annual €1000 payment in respect of each child up to 6 years (reduced to 5.5 in 2008) to all households irrespective of their labour market status commencing in 2006; Childminder’s Tax Relief, conditional on the notification of the service, on those earning incomes up to € 10,000 available to those minding up to three children in their own home; extended maternity leave up to 26 months paid leave and 16 weeks unpaid leave. These initiatives represent important increases in childcare supports and leave entitlements, essential to women's participation in labour market programmes and paid employment. They are likely to positively impact on women both in their role

as primary carers and in relation to accessing active labour market programmes and employment opportunities. However Ireland's system of public supports for childcare remains underdeveloped and lacking in a comprehensive childcare policy.

(p. 11) Detailed surveys of Ireland's childcare and early education system by the OECD in 2004 highlighted key failures : few supports for women with children, meagre parental leave, scarce affordable early childhood services, absence of fiscal supports for young children in childcare.

“With the exception of the infant school for children from four to six years, a critical volume of centre-based services has yet to be developed in Ireland. The situation can be even less promising for children born into situations of disadvantage, in which women with low educational levels tend to remain unemployed and live in poverty” (OECD, 2004).

Despite some discussion of a pre-school child place for those aged 3 to 4 years of age, as specified under the Barcelona targets, no specific initiatives have yet been put in place to achieve this objective. In the context of a lack of available and affordable childcare however, employment trends continue to show a steep decline in women's labour force participation over the life cycle, particularly dependent on factors such as the number and age of their children. Gender differences are very marked in that men's employment rates are unaffected by the presence of children in the household. The central issue in relation to women's access to employment is the lack of a proper care infrastructure, particularly the lack of adequate child and education services and the perpetuation of financial disincentives within a household-based welfare and taxation system. Ireland does not have a comprehensive childcare policy. The picture of provision and regulation of childcare is fragmented and financial supports and leave entitlements are very limited.

(p. 11) One key new positive policy development has been the increase in maternity leave entitlement to 26 paid weeks and 16 additional unpaid weeks. In addition, increases in the level of child benefit (a universal payment) and the early childhood payment have improved financial supports to parents. To a large extent the thinking behind these recent policy initiatives is that women are to continue to be the primary carers. The continued lack of paternity leave and the unpaid nature of parental leave are likely to reinforce existing gender care divisions rather than encourage greater gender equality in the carrying of childcare responsibilities.

(pp.16-17) Childcare provision is highlighted as an important policy area and is “seen as playing an important role in increasing female participation in the labour market”. Ireland NRP 2008-10 refers to the commitment under the social partnership agreement *Towards 2016* to significantly increase the supply of affordable and quality childcare over the ten year period of the agreement. However, the replacement of the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme EOCP 2000-2006 by a new funding system, the National Childcare Investment Programme NCIP 2006-2010, has been met by controversy. Although the programme sets a target of 50,000 additional childcare places which has been welcomed, criticism of the new funding system argues that the means-testing of access to community-based facilities will likely result in access being limited to those on social welfare and those in employment, including those on low pay, will have restricted access. An important positive policy towards increasing women's employment rate is the significant increase in maternity leave entitlement - current entitlements have been increased to 26 paid weeks and 16 unpaid weeks. Other leave entitlements continue to be very weak – parental leave is unpaid and there is no statutory entitlement to paternity leave.

(p. 19) The NRP details important improvements in maternity leave entitlements, but unfortunately no change to the lack of *paid* parental leave and the absence of a *statutory* entitlement to paid paternity leave. As it stands, the current structure of leave entitlements may result in further increases in the proportion of women accessing and continuing in paid employment, but it will also likely reinforce gender inequalities in relation to care responsibilities. Under this system men are not encouraged, or supported, to increase their roles and responsibilities towards care.

15. IT – Italy

(p. 9) One of the main challenges for the employability of women still remains the access to childcare services. In fact, low activity rates of women in Italy are strictly linked to a low level of care services availability supporting women participation in the labour market, especially in the *Mezzogiorno*. During the last five year some efforts have been made by policy makers in this

direction, but Italy is still far from the target set by the Lisbon strategy of raising the percentage of childcare services up to 33% by the end of 2010: this is a serious challenge for our country if we consider that the Italian average coverage rate was around 10% in 2005, and in the Southern Regions this percentage was less than 4%.

In 2007, the Minister for the Family (Prodi's government) developed a three years plan (*Nursery Plan*) devolving around 300 million € for childcare services, with the objective to reach a coverage rate of 13% by the end of 2009. The Plan has devolved more resources to the Southern Regions in order to tackle regional disparities, thus accomplishing the recommendations (as a PTW) set by the Council in 2008. In fact Regional imbalances are very strong: for example in Campania Region only 1,7% of children found a place in public nursery, while in Emilia Romagna Region the rate is 27,1%. Unfortunately, these resources have not been fully spent because of bureaucratic and administrative problems. Furthermore, due to the worsening of economic trend, there is the risk that the Ministry of the Economy might cut resources, causing serious problems in attaining the Lisbon target.

(p. 18) The 2008 NRP confirms that reconciliation policies are mainly developed in terms of childcare provision. The *Nursery Plan* is the policy initiative, already implemented by the previous government, which intends to support reconciliation of family care and work duties. It is estimated that it will result in an increase of 41.000 places for small children (0-3 yrs). An additional initiative, the so called *Spring sections*, is announced. This is an experimental project aimed at offering a care service for children aged between 2 and 3. The Government intends to support a complementary offer of care services of private nature with the disbursement of voucher or fiscal benefits. It is stated that a budget of about 730 million € (for 2007 and 2008) has been set jointly by the central government and the Regions. This should increase the coverage rate of childcare services up to 15% by 2013 (hence, well below the Barcelona target of 33%). However, nothing is said about the financial resources for 2009 made available for childcare services.

(p. 11) In the *Welfare agreement*, signed by Social Partners in 2007, a new approach to part-time has been envisaged: more flexible arrangements both at national and enterprise level can contribute to enhance the role off **part time-work for care duties**. Law 247/2007, enacting the above mentioned *Agreement*, gives the Government the task to revise and develop the legislative framework of part time contract for women employability: in particular the law identifies incentives for part-time contract and incentives for the conversion of full-time contract in part time contract for care duties. This provision has not yet been implemented yet.

16. LT – Lithuania

(p. 13) Social services infrastructure was further developed with the view to create better opportunities for members of the community whose employment possibilities are restricted by **family** situation to join the labour market. *Social Services Infrastructure Development Program for 2007* is implemented for that purpose. *Social Services Infrastructure Development Program for 2006* (Minister of Social Security and Labour) sets forth the main development directions of social services: setting up of community establishments; children's day centres and family support centres; family support services and other social care centres.

(p. 17) For national expert "Ensuring good quality and affordable **childcare**" is an area that should be prioritized.

(pp. 22-23) The 2008 NRP considers specific measures aimed at assuring accessible and affordable childcare facilities, as well as the creation of conditions for better reconciliation of work and family life. In particular, additional guarantees for individuals who have family obligations are provided. Following provisions of the Labour Code, employment agreements with employees who raise children (up to 14 yrs) can be terminated only in special cases. It was established that employees who raise children alone have a priority right to select the work shift. Additional guarantees for individuals who have obligations towards the family are provided. Seeking for accessible and affordable child care services, it is planned to ensure participation of at least one of the parents in the labour market, when the other is raising the child, to create a basis for combining of family duties and work obligations and to reduce social exclusion. It is also planned to develop a model for improving the living and educational conditions for children, starting from birth and finishing with the commencement of compulsory education

17. LU – Luxembourg

(pp. 9-10) The policy “*maison relais*” concept for children (MRE) has direct positive impact on women activity and employment rate. The implementation of this policy has quantitative (more structures), geographic (distribution of structures based on requirements throughout Luxembourg) and qualitative (development of services within structures) aspects.

In 2005, the Government forecasted requirements for 2013 of 3.75 times the spaces available in 2005. Geographically, 30% of new requirements are in rural regions and 50% in urban areas, resulting in an average of 40%. These estimates were carried out considering the number of children living in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and experience acquired from functioning centres in the country. In August 2007, Luxembourg had 59% more spaces in centres than in 2005, spread out among the 193 units; of which 82.25% were in MRE for school aged children, around 2% are in *maisons relais*/day care centre and around 12% of the spaces are in day care centres and standard infant care facilities.

In order that MRE structures meet regulatory requirements and are able to adapt to operation schedules as prescribed by regulations, progressive start-up programs have been implemented for a phase not to exceed five years. In June 2007, 4292 spaces were being planned. Of the 116 communes in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, 31 communes do not currently have MRE infrastructures. Of these 31 communes, 24 communes are currently planning the implementation of an MRE in upcoming years. For the moment, 7 communes have no specific plans to set up an MRE. In view of the current growth rate of MRE structures, which is from 2000 to 3000 spaces per year, it is also important to ensure that in the future high quality facilities will be in place.

(p. 18) Among the measures discussed (2008 NRP) and the different objectives 5 on 17 are explicitly aimed at increasing the employment rate of women and reducing gender inequalities. Moreover, 2 are directly aimed at improving childcare facilities: introduction of a services voucher system for childcare access for the household in risk of poverty; childcare availability and broadening of the concept of caring for school-age children outside the school. These measures would contribute to the rise of feminine employment.

18. LV – Latvia

(p. 8) Gender equality in terms of **reconciling** work and family life is still a very topical issue for parents with preschool children. Taking into account that mother take care of preschool and children in primary education in majority of cases. Lack of preschool educational institutions and alternative child care has not decreased during the period, but the number of children on the waiting lists to child care has increased to 22,000. Women after child care leave face several problems with regard to integration into the labour market – the share of unemployed women after childcare leave increases annually (from 11.3% in 2005 to 11.6% in 2006). In many cases women leave their jobs or are not able to start them due to nonflexible organisation of work, lack of child care institutions.

(p. 11) In order to attract more people to employment, and support persons after child care leave for inclusion in the labour market two projects have been implemented.

Project “*Development of child-care services*”. In order to attract more people to employment, and support persons after child care leave for inclusion in the labour market a Project on development of services of kindergartens, play and development centres, and service of babysitters (2005-2008) was initiated. 13 agreements with municipalities have been concluded in various regions about the development of the children play and day centres for the primary school children. In 2007, an agreement was concluded about the formation of a babysitter service in the city of Liepāja and training for potential baby sitters was provided. However, the funding has been too small to solve the availability problem of public childcare. In 2006 a concept paper on child care development was developed at the Ministry of Economics that had a long term vision on public child care. However, so far the project has not resulted in reasonable increase of public child care.

Project “*Motivation enhancement activities for persons after child care leave and long-term unemployed*”, aimed at returners to the labour market after longer breaks. The project included organising measures to enhance motivation of persons after child care leave and long-term unemployed (2005-2008). By mid 2007 motivation enhancement activities for the persons after the

child care leave and unemployed persons had covered about 70 persons, Again, no data available on gender of persons covered by activity.

(p. 16) The 2008 NRP notes that financial support is provided to develop services for supervision (pieskatīdāna) of preschool and early school age children. Municipalities have developed 44 such centres by the end of 2007. The child play and development centres for short-time child supervision are planned for 2009. It is a good initiative from the child perspective. However, development of such centres do not provide employment chances for women taking into account the very low number of women who work at home or part-time work and will not increase opportunities of reconciliation of work and family life. Such centres do not provide educational programmes, and the time period when child can stay there is rather short (it can be time used for shopping). Report devotes a half page paragraph to problem of preschool education institutions. Cabinet of Ministers has adopted a Decree (No 520) about “several activities to facilitate preschool educational institutions, changes in the normative acts concerning the hygiene requirements and tax exempts, a study about preschool institutions and alternative child supervision service provision prognosis in Latvia”. Support from the ESF will be used for two types of activities in order to develop “Infrastructure of preschool education institutions in the national and regional development centres” and “Support to development of alternative care services”.

(p.16) In order to popularize *family friendly enterprise and entrepreneur*, offering family friendly policy and services, a long term project “Family friendly entrepreneur” is announced (2008 NRP). One of the criterions is orientation of the business policy towards reconciliation of work and family life.

19. MT – Malta

(p. 3) Government’s aim to increase women’s active participation in the labour market brings to the fore the importance attached to balancing employment with family life. However, Malta tends to hold back from public provision of childcare, and maintains a strong division between public and private responsibility for care work, thereby strengthening women’s traditional role and family duty. For instance, although women in Malta are encouraged to be employable, supports to enable them to combine reproductive work with labour market participation are too restrictive to provide effective help. No legislation or national childcare is yet in place in Malta, other than a minimum regulatory framework binding child day care centres with a provisional registration certificate, Enforcement of the national quality standards for child day care services drawn up in 2006 is still on paper. Moreover, there has not been an attempt to discuss or design a national policy for early childhood education and care.

Moreover, there is very little commitment by employers in Malta to support childcare centres which are currently financed by children’s fees. In view of the lack of formal childcare, women have to accommodate to family life by shifting their economic activity to shorter and flexible working hours, with negative consequences of career regression and income earning. Alternatively, women are likely to exit the labour market, if they are unable to secure convenient working time arrangement. Clearly, Malta’s childcare deficit has a negative influence on women’s economic activity and their dependency on men. In a move to support childcare centres, the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) secured funding under the ESF scheme *to support employers who offer childcare services to their employees*.

(pp. 6-7) Even when government has recognised the need for the provision of childcare, Malta has little experience of high quality publicly supported care. There are disparate practices of varying quality across state funded and private childcare centres which are free to develop and follow their own programmes. There is a minimum regulatory framework binding child day care centres with a provisional registration certificate. Other than that, Malta’s response to a long-standing demand for childcare provision in the category age 0–3 years was to publish a consultation document on standards in childcare in 2004 followed by “*National Standards of child day care services*” in the public, private and voluntary sectors in 2007. It was the responsibility of the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity, and now following recent general elections, of the Ministry for Social Policy, to draft legislation that gives government the power to publish regulations and implement the standards. More than a year on, the enforcement of the national standards of child day care services is still on paper.

Additionally, no attempt has been made to discuss a national policy for childcare. What appears to be happening is that although the State aims to establish a monitoring system in the provision of childcare, it still keeps its distance from financing and organizing the service. Moreover, school schedules in Malta are not compatible with typical adult employment hours and the situation is not likely to change. As a consequence, Maltese women are often expected to fit into the family's schedule by reducing their hours of paid work or exiting the labour market altogether.

(p. 19) A policy issue within the field of family friendly measures considered in the 2008 NRP is childcare. Childcare courses funded under the ESF are provided by the Employment and Training Corporation. Positive for reaching the 40% target for women's participation in the labour market is the training of child carers to improve the provision of child care services. To this effect, Government has started an initiative whereby parents availing themselves from childcare facilities are now able to deduct €932 from the taxable amount to make good for part of the expenses incurred in licensed child care services. Furthermore, in those cases where employees receive payment from their employer for expenses related to childcare services, such payments are no longer considered as fringe benefits and will therefore no longer be taxable for the employee. At the same time expenditure related to childcare services is considered as business costs for the employer and therefore are deductible from taxable income.

20. NL – Netherlands

(pp. 10-11) *Developments in childcare* (GL 18). Over the last couple of years, there has been a strong 'increase in the availability of childcare services' in the Netherlands. Especially the introduction of the Childcare Act in 2005 and the lowering of the consumer prices in the year 2006 and 2007 have created a strong increase in the demand for childcare services. Due to the introduction of the Childcare Act in 2005, and the introduction of income related prices, parents now have equal access to childcare services. However, parents are not entitled to a place in a day care centre. Though there has been an enormous increase of the supply of childcare, parents still face shortages. Especially the out of school care seems to be in short supply, mainly because of a lack of appropriate accommodation and/or lack of personnel. The growth in childcare services has also led to a strong increase in public expenses. The financial setback is estimated at approximately €500 million on a yearly basis. Recently, the government announced that the contribution of parents will increase as of 2009. The point of departure in this respect is that childcare should be affordable for everybody. Households on a lower income will pay an extra amount of about €5, middle-income households an extra amount of about €15, whereas the increase for the higher income-levels will be higher. In addition, the government will limit the financial contribution for more informal forms of childcare (such as host families) (OCW 2008b). It is unclear yet what the impact of these measures will be. Higher costs for parents may limit the demand – although it is likely that the price elasticity among higher income groups is fairly small. Shifting part of the financial burden on the suppliers of childcare services may also translate into higher consumer prices.

Childcare services for the unemployed. Since January 2008, parents who have become unemployed are still entitled to childcare subsidies for a period of six months. This way all unemployed parents get the opportunity to search actively for a new job, without worrying about the costs and the possibility of ending the childcare services. Up until 2008, unemployed parents received the childcare contribution until the end of the year, regardless of the month in which they become unemployed (SZW 2006b). The new regulation is considered fairer.

Pre-and after school care. The Second Chamber has carried a motion on pre-and after school care, submitted by the socio-democratic party and the liberal party (motion 'Van Aartsen-Bos). According to this motion, as of school year 2007-2008, primary schools are obliged to offer pre-and after school care in case the parents request this. How and where the care is organised is a matter for the school and the parents (SZW 2006c). Modalities may differ from a simple referral service to a full-blown co-operation between school and day care. It seems that approximately 90% of the schools have chosen the 'referral model'. Although this may not be seen as a major achievement, the motion does increase the co-operation between schools and childcare services. In addition, the motion increased the awareness of the complicated schedules of children and their parents.

Other relevant developments regarding childcare. Part of the recommendations of the commission

Labour force participation refer to childcare. According to the commission current childcare facilities do not fit with the organisation of the educational system. Opening hours are generally between 8.30-12.00h. and 13.00-15.15h. As a result working parents need (pre-school) facilities between 7.30 and 8.30h, facilities during lunch between 12.00 and 13.00h and after-school facilities between 15.15h and 18.30h. The commission therefore pleas for an increase of the number of 'extended schools'. Extended schools cooperate with organisations in the field of childcare and welfare, school of music etc and generally have more extended opening hours. In addition, the commission recommends a revision of the financing system of childcare. In the current system the extent of the childcare allowance parents is dependent on household income. The higher the income, the lower the childcare allowance. As a result it is financially disadvantageous for part-time working partners (generally women) to increase the number of working hours. The commission therefore recommends that the childcare allowance will be based on the highest income in the household. The government has responded positively on these proposals and has announced to develop new plans.

Summarising, the child care infrastructure has undergone significant changes over the last couple of years. From a gender perspective the developments may be considered positive, as childcare facilities support the combination of work and private life and have a positive impact on the (female) participation rate. Due to high public costs, parental contributions will, however, increase. It is unclear what the impact of this increase will be.

21. PL – Poland

(p.5) Family policies have gained a prominent place, with the overarching goals of improving family welfare and increasing birth rates. Policies include plans to improve quality and accessibility of childcare infrastructure; enable the use of social funds for company care facilities; gradually increase maternity leave from currently 18 weeks to 20 weeks (and from 20/28 to 31 weeks for a multiple birth) in 2009 and further adjustments until 2014; raise contributions to the social security system on behalf of parents availing of parental leave; and developing flexible forms of employment for parents (KPRM 2008; SPR 2008).

(pp. 11-12) The series of documents subsumed under the EES pointed out the insufficient provision of **childcare** in relation to women's employment difficulties, but policy or programme proposals have not reflected this concern adequately. Recently, however, the issue has come to the fore, especially in relation to preschool education of children 3-5 years of age and 6-year olds. Accordingly, several new developments can be observed. The Ministry of National Education (MEN 2008) has announced the academic year 2008/09 'The year of the pre-schooler' drawing attention to the importance of early education and popularising the idea of preschools among parents and local authorities. Lowering the mandatory school age in grade one (from 7 to 6) and the compulsory year of pre-school education in grade zero (from 6 to 5) has been debated over the last several years. These proposals are gradually being implemented, where in the school year 2008/2009 more 5-year olds should have access to grade zero, so that in 2009/10 some 6-year olds may enter the first grade together with 7-year olds. From the year 2009/10 the government plans to grant the right to all 5-year olds to pre-school education where local councils will be obliged to provide pre-school education free of charge to all parents who wish to avail of this option. The transition to the new system would last until 2010/11 when a one year preparatory pre-school education would become mandatory for all 5-year olds. The ministry has set a target of 70% of pre-school coverage by the year 2011 (MEN 2008) – an ambitious goal given the current coverage of 44.6% among 3-5 year olds (GUS 2007b).

In addition, development of alternative forms of preschool education has been included in two editions of the OP HC. Under the 2004-06 programme between 2005-08 MEN implemented 19 projects and together with local organisations, activists, and self-governments established 802 centres of alternative preschools in rural areas, which catered to 10 500 children. According to the participants, most of these centres declare continued functioning after the financing of the programme ceases (MEN 2008). The new OP HC 2007-13 programme continues the task. The Strategic Objective 4 (popularisation of lifelong learning) includes increasing of the proportion of children 3-5 participating in preschool education from 19% to 30% in rural areas; and Priority IX (development of education and competences in the regions) includes a target of covering 6% of rural children aged 3-5 in various forms of preschool education and increasing the number of

establishments by 2000 facilities (MRR 2007). In January 2008 MEN has introduced the possibility of establishing two new forms of preschool education: ‘preschool group’ functioning several times a week and ‘preschool point’ functioning throughout the school year, ranging in size between 3-25 children. In June 2008 further regulations were passed easing some of the accommodation/location requirements aimed at facilitating the establishment of new facilities (MEN 2008). Thus, policy makers have been implementing changes which, can contribute to lifelong learning goals, but also to the lifecycle approach to employment and activation of women (mothers, grandmothers).

(p. 23) Reconciliation of work and family life policies are mentioned briefly in reference to the implementation of the previous policy cycle stating that ‘labour market reforms were supported by instruments facilitating reconciliation’ (p.7) and this is continued in the employment chapter (section 3.2) where reforms will ‘facilitate’ reconciliation. But, there is no separate section dedicated to reconciliation, gender equality, or women’s employment.

22. PT – Portugal

(pp. 13-14) **Childcare and elderly services.** The government shows a clear political will to upgrade both the quantity and the quality of childcare and elder services. The option for public/private partnerships can be questioned, but it is undeniable that the situation on this matter registers steps forward. It was a much needed policy, and in a context of cutting of public expenditures it is expected that the State ownership strategy would be avoided. (GL 20)

The demand for services of support to family life is far away of being met. As there are no “Barcelona” targets for elder care services, the investment on them is less expressive. The coverage rate of residencies for elder people is only 8.2%, and the government expects to increase it up to 10%, until 2009. Day care centres and home support services are also scarce.

The demand for childcare services is not met in Portugal, especially as far as the 0-2 age group is concerned. The coverage rate for the 0-2 age group is still behind the Barcelona targets – it was around 23%, in 2005/06; there is no national update data, and the major investment has concentrated on the coverage of children of the 3-5 age group.

The coverage rate for 3-5 age group is also still behind the defined goals, being 78.4%, in the year of 2005/06. In the following year, the outcome of these policies was not visible yet. The number of children attending the pre-school in 2006/07 registered a small increase of 2,797 (from 261,050 to 263,887). Any way, we should underline the investment being made in the improvement not only of the quantity of equipments available, but also in the quality of the services delivered as well in its increasing affordability (expenditure with childcare services, as crèches, are deductible in income taxes, whenever the provider of the service is licensed and certificated by the Social Security).

In my opinion, the most important measure having marked impact on the demand for childcare services since 2006 was the introduction of the extended timetable of childcare services and expansion of the provision of meals in these services. These measures helped to facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life, in spite of the negative opinion about the way their implementation is carried out.

(p. 15) Other measures intended to facilitate reconciliation of work and family life, like **flexible working hours**, are provided, in theory, but in practice they are not taken up, because organisations do not offer these possibilities, being very rigid in their way of functioning. Even in public employment, it is very hard to get the agreement of direct supervisors to do a continuous timetable; that is, the reduction of lunch hours to just half an hour to be able to arrive later in the morning or to leave earlier in the afternoon. Moreover, the low salaries the Portuguese earn make part-time work unviable, entailing the corresponding wage cut.

23. RO – Romania

(p. 4) The employment impact of parenthood in 2006 was of -9.1 for men and of 2.1 for women. While the employ employment impact of parenthood was close to the 2006 value, it oscillated by about one percentage point, the figures for women had a very unstable development with the lowest value, of 0.4, in 2001 and its highest, of 6.8, in 2004.

(p.11) From the 1st of January 2007, based on the Government Emergency Ordinance no. 148/2005, the state allowance for a child will be increased to 2 million ROL (200 RON) and given to all

children based on the universality principle, until they reach the age of 2, or 3 for children with disabilities. Family allowances have been provided since 2005 (complementary allowances and single-parental families allowances). Families that have children and an income of up to 168 RON for each member of the family can take advantage of this assistance. The amount differs according to the number of children in each family. The allowance was increased by 5% in 2006 compared to 2005

Care and education of young children is considered a public responsibility. Therefore early childhood care and education (ECCE) services are publicly subsidized and universally provided through mainly public institutions. Families in disadvantaged situations are also the targets of public ECCE provision, while the private services market exists for parents who can afford the costs. The public provision for disadvantaged families are made by delivering mainly through public institutions and supported through direct subsidies and leave schemes.

(p. 13) A measure taken by the government to solve the problem of childcare was to raise the benefit of parental leave to about 120% of average wage, a measure with implications for family life.

24. SE – Sweden

(p. 9) According to the Government, important steps have been taken in order to facilitate women's working life and for families to live a more gender equal everyday life (Prop. 2007/08:100 p. 46). One important factor is access to preschools and childcare for school children. A very big share of all children in Sweden is enrolled in publicly financed childcare. In 2007, 78% of all children between the ages of 1 and 3 were enrolled in preschool or family day care home, 98% of all children 4 and 5 years of age, 80% of all 6-9 years of age and 12% of all 10-12 years.

An interesting measure is the *gender equality bonus*, which aims at getting men to use more of the parental leave, and to further men's reconciliation of work and family. Another measure, introduced on July 2007, is *tax relief for the purchase of household-related services*. The reform means that the cost of buying household-related services under certain conditions has been cut by 50%. The aim is to improve the conditions so that women and men will be able to combine working and family on equal terms (NRP 2007 p. 64). The reform is expected to lead to an increase in gainful employment among women. Whether this will be the case or not is too early to say

25. SI – Slovenia

(pp. 11-12) Both the *Resolution on the national programme for equal opportunities of women and men* and the *First Periodic plan for realisation of the Resolution 2006–2007* paid considerable attention to the **impact of reconciliation policies on the position of women** and men at the labour market. According to the *Report on the realisation of the Resolution*, a number of activities were undertaken with the aim to improve the possibilities of reconciliation of work and families: preparation of directives for companies for integration of concept of reconciliation of work and family in policies on corporate social responsibility; analysis of the position of single-parents families; annual certification for family friendly company; introduction and monitoring of EU indicators on reconciliation of work and private life; development of curriculum for kindergartens; development of domestic help services.

Data on rates of employment of parents and inclusion of children in pre-school system show that individual reconciliation strategies in Slovenia have been supported by institutionalised arrangements (such as public kindergartens) as well as generous parental leaves that made individual coping with different obligations easier. Besides existing parental leaves (maternity, parental and paternity), parents have the right to work part-time until the child is three years old. That right has been upgraded and since 1.1.2007 it covers *part-time of parents who mind and care for more than one child until the youngest is six years old* (Kanjuro Mrčela, 2008a).

According to recent data (CEC, 2008) on the impact of parenthood on employment, in Slovenia the impact for men is constantly high (higher than EU average) and amounted to 12.2% (compared to 10.1% in the EU), the impact for women is also positive: 5.5%. Thus in Slovenia the impact is different in direction compared to all other EU countries, except Portugal.

(p. 13) The new *Law on kindergartens* that was passed in March 2008 is aimed to **improve availability of kindergartens** as it introduces the publicly covered fees for childcare for the second

and every next child if a family has more than one child in the kindergarten (Kanjuo Mrčela, 2008a).

In the *Periodical plan for the implementation of the national programme for equal opportunities of women and men for period 2008-2009*, reconciliation of work and private life is still defined as an issue that has to be further improved and special attention in the next period will be paid to development of programmes of reconciliation especially regarding child care adapted to the needs of employed parents. Planned activities encompass the following: support to employers for providing programmes and measures for easier reconciliation strategies; research on the issues of reconciliation, monitoring of EU indicators on reconciliation; improvement of public and support services for reconciliation.

26. SK – Slovakia

(p. 7) In June 2006 the (former) government approved the document “*The measures for reconciliation of work and family life for the year 2006 with prospects till 2010*”, prepared by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family SR which is probably one of the most relevant document related to gender equality and family friendly policy. The main objective of this policy document was to “promote growth of employment and employability of persons with family responsibilities and to reduce the risk of these persons facing the dilemma “job versus family” or becoming the victims of discrimination in the labour market and employment because of they need to take care of their families.” The document contains measures and instruments and serves as a strategic platform how to promote gender equality in everyday life. The present government accepted this document as a basic strategy. The government also promised to prepare own draft of gender equality strategy.

(p. 15) In the 2008 NRP no policy initiatives are considered related to child care facilities; no target regarding the number of pre-school facilities or the proportion of children visiting these facilities.

27. UK – United Kingdom

(pp. 12-13) The main provisions of the Work and Families Act (2006) came into force in April 2007. This improves employment security/adaptability, flexibility for a large proportion of employed carers and starts to deepen the life course perspective in employment policy. The period of statutory maternity leave was extended and all pregnant employees are now entitled to 52 weeks of maternity length regardless of the length of time they have worked for their employer and the amount of hours they work. Statutory maternity pay increased from 6 to 9 months, the second extension in recent years, and the number of weeks covered with flat-rate maternity pay increased from 20 to 33 weeks for babies due on or after 1st April 2007. Up to 10 ‘keeping in touch’ days can now be taken during maternity/adoption leave, when agreed by the employer and employee, without the employee losing her right to maternity leave or statutory pay (Fagan et al. 2007: 36)

The Women and Equality Unit website (January 2008) states that the “Government has ruled out extending SMP to 12 months in April 2009, but remains committed to doing so by the end of this parliament”. The Work & Families Act (2006) also proposed extending paternity leave, which is still under consideration.

Since April 2003, employed parents with children under the age of 6 or disabled children under 18, have had the right to request flexible working arrangements (reduced hours as well as changes in scheduling and location). This right was extended to carers of disabled adults from April 2007 and should significantly benefit carers, most of whom are women (Fagan et al. 2007: 37). In May 2008 the government announced that this legislation is to be extended to parents of older children up to the age of 16 following the publication of the government’s independent review. The review also emphasised that flexible working should not be considered a ‘woman’s issue’ given that men account for 45% of the 14 million employees currently working flexibly (employees who have requested flexible working under the legislation plus other employees, including part-timers who actually work flexibly). Nearly all (91%) of workplaces who received requests in 2007 approved them all (BERR, May 2008).

The expansion of childcare under the National Childcare Strategy was given additional impetus by the Government Action Plan for Implementing the WWC and the Childcare Act (2006). Further expansion of pre-school childcare places is underway, and the target is that by 2010 all schools will offer extended childcare services from 8am to 6pm. There is a commitment to developing a

nationwide network of 3,500 Sure Start Children's Centres by 2010. Some 700 of these have been established so far (Fagan 2008b). The Childcare Act (2006) places, among other things, a legal responsibility on local authorities to survey local need, including ensuring more flexibility in childcare for working parents (Fagan 2008: 19). This is underwritten from April 2006 by a £250m transformation fund. New capital grants have also been made available to help small and medium-sized employers establish workplace nurseries; £8m has been allocated for this in 2006-08 (Fagan et al 2007: 34). Despite these positive developments there are still childcare shortages in some areas, during school holidays, for those working non-standard hours (part-timers and full-timers), the quality of some services is still insufficient and the cost can be prohibitive for low and middle-income earners (Fagan 2008).

The 2006 National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion mentions the 'New Deal for Carers'. This offers support and respite care and is mainly targeted at non-employed carers in receipt of the 'carers' allowance' (Fagan et al: 2007: 37)

Source: National Reports on 2008 NRPs (Part A and B).

6.3: Female Entrepreneurship

In a socio-cultural context, studies indicate that many women still consider entrepreneurship as a masculine activity and therefore an area exclusively for men. Women face a number of difficulties in establishing and maintaining businesses. Although many of these difficulties are common to both genders, in many cases they tend to be more significant for female entrepreneurs. This is due to factors such as poor business environment, the choices of business types and sectors, information gaps, lack of contacts and access to networking, gender stereotypes, weak and inflexible supply of child care facilities, difficulties in reconciling business and family obligations as well as differences in the way men and women approach entrepreneurship.

According to the ISCO-88 occupational codes (EU25), while 'managers of small enterprises' appears in the top 6 occupations for men, women's occupations are reflexive of the service delivery nature of their jobs. There are several underlying reasons for such differentials of which one prominent line of thought would be social construct of men-jobs and women-jobs. In this light we could aptly refer to the National Strategic Reference Framework of Portugal, which acknowledges the difficulties of women entrepreneurs in its official discourse as: "stereotypes make it difficult for women to start companies, as they face more obstacles than men in terms of credibility, confidence or access to credit."

In the European Union 87.4% of female entrepreneurs run a micro business of 1-9 employees. Women tend to create business in the service industries, including education, distribution and the personal services industry, with a clear tendency towards service industry. Increasing difficulties in accessing finance constitutes a major hurdle. In spite of financial institutions being in place, amounts of money allocated are too low. In terms of access to training the issue also arises in relation to 'positive action' from the authorities who could prioritize certain companies for financing on the provision that women gain greater benefit from training programmes. Women are currently suffering from limited access to vocational training. This situation can be explained by the fact that they are greater in number in small and medium sized entrepreneurships and that part time employment is fairly widespread (de Beaufort, 2007).

Experts of fifteen countries (BE, CY, DE, DK, EL, ES, FI, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, PT, RO, SE, SI) have highlighted in their reports any provisions with regard to female entrepreneurship in their respective countries. However, there is evidence of a focus on

the subject of female entrepreneurship only in a handful number of NRPs (LU, LT, PT, SI, SE and SK).

Only ten countries (DE, ES, EL, IE, IT, LT, SI, PT, RO, SE) have gender specific new or interesting initiatives. They are⁸ :

- establishment of an exclusive agency for female entrepreneurs founded by the Federal government of Germany and its mini-credits programme;
- the *Programme for Promotion of Self Employment* in Spain, which improves the benefits for those unemployed workers who have established themselves as self-employed; in the case of women, benefits are to the tune of 7.000 €;
- 60% quota for the participation of women in the Greek government’s policy initiative to encourage entrepreneurship among young higher education graduates;
- ‘*Going for Growth*’ an Irish initiative, is one of the few gender specific references in its microeconomic policy chapter. It is a pilot initiative aimed at providing a support mechanism for women entrepreneurs.
- a decree of law has established in Italy that the government’s Fund for enterprise financing will support new enterprises by women.
- establishment of the Lithuanian Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts to support entrepreneurship of women.
- inclusion of self employment women in the maternity benefits in Portugal, with specific qualifying period of 6 months contribution to social security;
- several initiatives are undertaken in Romania in order to increase the share of new business started by women to 40% by 2010;
- *Periodic Plan for realisation of Resolution (2008-2009)* in Slovenia envisages a programme for support of entrepreneurship (information, motivation, training) in different groups (student, potential entrepreneurs) and support of starting of 20 female enterprises.
- a number of different initiatives have been undertaken in order to increase the share of new businesses started by women to 40% by 2010 in Sweden.

BOX 6.3: Female Entrepreneurship

2. BE – Belgium

(p. 24) In the micro-economic chapter, the section “New business creation: encouraging entrepreneurship and bolstering industrial competitiveness”, is more elaborate than it was in 2006. However, compared with 2005, both the 2006 and 2008 NRPs drop an important sub-section, notably that on “Encouraging entrepreneurship amongst young people and women”.

4. CY – Cyprus

(p. 11) In the 2008 NRP, specific reference is made to increasing the female participation rate (p. 45) through “the continuation of the scheme for the encouragement, strengthening and reinforcement of women’s entrepreneurship, ...”.

6. DE – Germany

(p. 26) – The section *Enhancing general conditions for entrepreneurial activity* (in 2008 NRP)

⁸ For detailed policy discussion refer to Box 6.3, below.

includes the reduction of the tax burden on domestic companies, the reduction of bureaucracy especially for SMEs, the stabilisation of financial markets, venture capital for technology companies, describes programmes to facilitate start-ups including a programme with mini-credits. Serial no. 32 to 50 reports the detailed regulations, covers GL 14, 15, 16. Gender aspects not mentioned although there exists a special agency for female entrepreneurs founded by the federal government and the mini-credits programme may have a special impact on female entrepreneurs.

7. DK – Denmark

(p. 14) The Danish NRP2008 is in line with the former NRP – gender is not an issue in the discussion of [...] entrepreneurship ...

9. EL – Greece

(p. 6) An important policy initiative is the design and implementation of a new scheme encouraging **entrepreneurship** among young higher education graduates (grants for the creation of their own business within 4 years from graduation) (GL 18). There is a 60% quota for the participation of women in this scheme. Consequently, the latter could be seen as positive for the promotion of both female participation and gender equality in employment.

10. ES – Spain

(p. 11) The **program for promotion of self-employment** was approved on June the 7th of 2007, in order to substitute the former one, which was established in 1986. One of the most important measures gathered in the document is the improvement of the benefit for those unemployed workers who establish themselves as self-employed, from 3.000 to 5.000 €, which in the case of unemployed women reaches 7.000 €. This measure complements the new policy on promotion of self-employment, whose most illustrative instrument is the **Statute of Self-employed Workers**. Indeed, this new legal code offers a comprehensive regulation that affects more than 3 million workers, including a declaration of rights and obligations, a social protection system that aims to converge to the general regime, and certain measures to promote self employment (mainly though benefits in the social security contributions) in which women receive an enhanced support. However, since the program came into force, the share of self-employed women has decreased from 13.4% to 13.0% whereas the male rate has slightly augmented (from 20.4% to 20.6%).

11. FI – Finland

(p. 9) Measures to encourage (female) entrepreneurship and to remove the impediments to the growth of firms and companies are supported.

(pp.14-15) A large part of the suggestions made by the previous working group have been acted upon in 2005-2006, such as increase in counselling and consultancy services as well as development of mentoring models specific for female entrepreneurs. As a pilot project, the target group for start-up grants was enlarged to cover not only unemployed but also those persons, who want to transit from paid employment, studies or inactivity to self-employed during 2005–2008. Improvements in the social security coverage of self-employed have taken place as well as measures to level out employer costs due to family leaves, which has been a major issue for self-employed employing mainly women. The intention is to continue to develop the system further. A number of ESF-funded pilot projects on organising ‘substitute service systems’ for female self-employed in case of holidays, sickness or family leaves have been going on in the past few years (HOIVISKA, SIPA). The results have been encouraging and plans are made to establish this kind of activities at the national level.

However, women still show considerably less interest in entrepreneurship than men do. From 2005 to 2007, the number of male self-employed increased by 8,000 persons (from 198,000 to 206,000) but that of females only by 1,000, from 98,000 to 99,000. Women are especially worried about uncertainties associated with entrepreneurship in female-dominated sectors and about social security of self-employed in general. In this sense it seems a little bit arbitrary to put very much effort in increasing women’s share of self-employed by ‘any cost’. Furthermore, according to the Ministry of Labour, the *promotion of female entrepreneurship* is important because of the fact that over half of the female self-employed work in the care services and with the ageing of the population there will be further need for such services. This kind of comment provokes the question whether the underlying principle also is to increase of the privatisation of public sector services. One of the aims

is to urge the private sector to put more women in top management posts, now that the goal of filling 40% of all seats of administrative boards of fully and partly State-owned businesses with women has been achieved.

(p. 21) The promotion of entrepreneurship is also mentioned in the Micro policy chapter, but not again in the employment chapter. It is mentioned that the special needs of academic entrepreneurship and women's entrepreneurship will be reviewed.

13. HU – Hungary

(p. 8) Programmes for the reintegration of women into the labour market (HRDOP 1.3; PES): tailor made services and training courses for women in preparation for a return to the labour market as an employee or a female entrepreneur.

14. IE – Ireland

(p. 16) One of the few specific references to gender comes in the chapter on microeconomic policy which includes a section on women's entrepreneurial activity, accounting for around one third of new business set-ups, and the launching of a new pilot initiative 'Going for Growth' aimed at providing a support mechanism for women entrepreneurs.

Some synergies are evident between the employment chapter and the economic chapters when considered from a gender perspective, though these are mostly confined to the macroeconomic chapter. Within the macroeconomic chapter these are focused principally to the theme of sustainability of economic growth, which addresses the issue of childcare in the context of supporting women's continued increasing labour market participation. This theme also addresses the issue of pensions but in this case did not bring any specific gender focus to an area recognised as having important gender based concerns. In contrast, a specific gender dimension is recognised in relation to female entrepreneurship, linked to a new (limited) initiative to support networking among women entrepreneurs.

15. IT – Italy

(p. 10) Financial Law for the year 2008 (L. 244, December 2007) supports women entrepreneurship by establishing that the **Fund for enterprise financing** will support new enterprise creation by women. This effort is coherent with the recommendation by the Council (PTW 2008).

16. LT – Lithuania

(p. 13) Public bodies, establishments, municipal and public institutions organised their activity for successful implementation of the *National Programme for Equal Opportunities of Men and Women 2005-2009*. Measures of the program have been harmonised with the provisions of the *European Gender Equality Pact*. Women who wish to start a business as well as **women-entrepreneurs** can use the services of business information centres and business incubators, including business information services, training and consulting on possibilities to start a business, etc.

(p. 21) Particular attention is paid to promote female entrepreneurship in the 2008 NRP. Target projects for encouraging women entrepreneurship were supported: Lithuanian Association of Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts supports entrepreneurship of women and improves partnership. The support of initiatives of businesswomen takes place through education, development of networks and mentorship. Also, there is a constant participation taking place in activity of the European Network to promote Women's Entrepreneurship (WES).

17. LU – Luxembourg

(p. 18) In the 2008 NRP there is almost no reference to gender in the chapter on the BEPG, with the exception of the prize of the "Woman Business Manager of the Year 2008", aiming at promoting women entrepreneurship.

22. PT – Portugal

(p. 18) Within the *National Strategic Reference Framework*, and in official discourse in general, high importance is credited to policies promoting **female entrepreneurship** (see the theme chosen for one of the EU Conferences that took place during the Portuguese Presidency in the second

semester of 2007, in Ferreira 2007). The official discourse acknowledges the difficulties for women: “stereotypes make it difficult for women to start companies, as they face more obstacles than men in terms of credibility, confidence or access to credit... Encourage female entrepreneurship as a factor for innovation and competitiveness through vocational training and re-skilling, financial incentives, micro-credit, creation of organisational networks, meetings and sharing good practice, thus fostering a positive climate for female entrepreneurs.” (excerpt from the final conclusions of the Conference quoted above).

The policies launched last year include supporting the creation of businesses by women. Besides the support to the creation of self-employment by women, some studies will be funded, namely on the context that favours the female entrepreneurship.

(p. 19) Another important measure was the **inclusion of self-employed women in the maternity benefits**. They benefit on an equal footing from maternity leave and benefit, with a specific qualifying period of 6 months’ contributions to social security (just as waged workers). In any event, as regards self-employment, much has still to be done in terms of social protection for women entrepreneurs, independent and co-working partners (financial aid in case of occupational disease; unemployment and benefit; retirement; training; and so on) and the implementation of technical aid plans (just to mention a few, training; coaching; access to TIC; market research, etc.).

(pp. 30-31) As expected the 2008 NRP confer to the promotion of female entrepreneurship great emphasis. A quantified target is provided: the creation of 1,059 enterprises by women (by 2010).

(p. 32) The promotion of female entrepreneurship seems to be the only measure gaining new impulse during last year (namely through a 10% increase in the incentive for projects headed by women). This is very important in a country with one of the highest self-employment rates among EU member-states, particularly if we think on the several measures taken envisaging the improvement of self-employed women (employing others or not). On the other side, however, one should keep in mind that we find higher risks of poverty among this occupational group.

23. RO – Romania

(p.14) The Report on Sectoral Operational Programme, Human Resources 2002-2013, stated some key areas of intervention for achieving its goals (p. 89): Promoting entrepreneurial culture.

24. SE – Sweden

(p. 21) Different initiatives have been taken in order to increase the share of new businesses started by women to 40% by 2010. Against the background that women constitute 25% and men 75% of the existing entrepreneurs (2007), this seems a high proportion, which might not be reached by 2010, especially not against the background of today’s economic situation.

25. SI – Slovenia

(pp. 19-20) There still exist a huge gap in entrepreneurial activity and self-employment between men and women in Slovenia. According to Rebernik, Tominc and Pušnik (2007), key measures for decreasing the existing gender gap in entrepreneurial activity in Slovenia are as follows: i) training and professional counselling of women for entrepreneurship; ii) development of role-models and mentors for female entrepreneurs; iii) development of female entrepreneurship counselling; iv) decrease of burden of other social roles of women (housewives and mothers).

One of the aims declared by the *Resolution on the National programme for equal opportunities of women and men, 2005–2013* is increasing self-employment of women and female entrepreneurship. To achieve that Resolution envisage realisation and support for special programmes that stimulate female self-employment and entrepreneurship; Ministries for economy and for work, family and social affairs are identified as carriers of this measures. The first *Period Plan for realisation of the Resolution* (2006-2007) envisaged the following activities for achieving of the mentioned aim:

1. *Programme for professional promotion of women as a part of programmes for improvement of the supporting environment for small enterprises* (carriers: Ministry for Economy, Public agency for entrepreneurship, Slovene Entrepreneurial Fund)

2. *Direct long-term investment credits for new enterprises, with additional benefits (0,5% lower interest rate) if enterprises are 50% or more owned by women* (carriers: Ministry for Economy, JAPTI, Slovene Entrepreneurial Fund).

Programmes were aimed in stimulating female self-employment and entrepreneurship considering specific needs of women and possibilities for improvement of their economic and social position.

Programmes were financed from different ministries and consisted of: introduction in training for stimulating of self-employment of women; specific training of a network of women promoters of female entrepreneurship; support to promoters of female entrepreneurship in improvement of business quality; support to promoters in services; local meetings; national coordination of network of promoters; promotion; management, monitoring and supervision of the programme.

In 2006, 1,600 women participated in the *Programme for women entrepreneurship*. They got information on enterprise registration procedures, initial problems and social support, fund rising, development of business ideas and plans, breaking of gender stereotypes. 222 business ideas have been developed, women produced 44 business plans, registered 14 enterprises and started 5 business cooperation projects. Slovene participants visited business incubator for women in Austria. Among participants were also unemployed women, who developed business idea and business plan. In 2006 Slovene entrepreneurial fund supported 5 entrepreneurial ideas/enterprises where women held more than 50% of ownership with a total amount of 224.499,93 €. These enterprises plan to create 16 new jobs. However, the data show that the number of self-employed men increased much more than the number of self-employed women and that the gender gap in self-employment is further increasing. Therefore it is needed to pay special attention to this problem in the future.

The new *Periodic Plan for realisation of Resolution (2008-2009)* envisages a programme for support of entrepreneurship (information, motivation, training) in different groups (students, potential entrepreneurs) and support for starting of 20 female enterprises. As in case of encouraging the entrepreneurship in general, in the case of national policy to encourage female entrepreneurship and self-employment, social protection provision are not considered as priority and are not mentioned in documents dealing with increasing self-employment of women and female entrepreneurship.

Source: National Reports on 2008 NRPs (Part A and Part B).

6.4 Flexicurity and Gender Mainstreaming

Flexicurity is considered a means to contribute to fulfilling the overarching objectives of the EES. Experts have been asked to assess the integration of recent flexicurity measures from a gender perspective in their own country.

As the previous work of the Expert Group has highlighted (Plantenga et al. 2007; Smith and Fagan 2008) Gender Mainstreaming of flexicurity would need to:

- i) recognise the role of gender in shaping flexible working patterns and reinforcing the inequalities associated with flexible working
- ii) address the reconciliation needs of employees with care commitments while recognising the risks of extending working hours or unsocial hours scheduling
- iii) support pathways out of non-standard work and working times to avoid the risks of long term traps and segmentation of women into disadvantaged employment forms.

All national experts provide some information on flexicurity measures. The vast majority of experts reports quite extensively on the approach to flexicurity in their own country. On the basis of the discussion (here presented in Box 6.4) it is possible to provide an approximate answer to the following two questions:

- to which extent each country has designed a national pathway/approach to flexicurity (as well as its content);
- to which extent gender mainstreaming of flexicurity has been applied (whether the gender dimension has been taken into account when designing the national flexicurity approach).

Several experts recall that the term flexicurity is relatively new, as the ideas behind it. The flexicurity rhetoric irrupted quite suddenly in public discourse as well as in official documents. Many public initiatives have taken place at different levels directly concerned with the flexibility approach. The debate has been intense, involving governments, employers, trade unions, as well as researchers. Reading the comments provided by national experts one gets the impression that the introduction of flexicurity in the discussion on the European Employment Strategy has raised a lot of attention in terms of debate and public discussion, but some misunderstanding on the ideas behind the concept, and little action.

In a number of countries flexicurity is a very new concept, almost unknown. Therefore, there is no attempt to develop an integrated approach to flexicurity (CY, HU, LT, LV, MT).

In a large number of countries flexicurity has entered the vocabulary of official documents and NRPs. Several experts point out that the theme of flexicurity is explicitly acknowledged in the NRPs (both in 2007 and 2008) and/ or in other official documents (AT, BG, BE, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, IT, LU, MT, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, UK). But this does not necessarily imply the development of a flexicurity approach at the national level.

In some of the countries that directly refer to the flexicurity principles in their official documents, some policy measures have been adopted inspired by the principles of flexicurity, however a comprehensive strategy is still missing (AT, EE). This is the case when the development of the concept has focused on few individual policy tools, rather than on a comprehensive strategy.

In another group of countries the discourse (hence employment policy measures) is by and large centred on flexibility: mini jobs in DE, part-time and flexible contracts in CZ, hiring and firing in EE, atypical contracts in IT, more flexibility regarding individual dismissals, numerical and financial flexibility in the UK. In these countries the security side of flexicurity has not entered the agenda of policy makers. Hence, there are almost no developments. Thus, a national approach to flexicurity does not exist yet, in spite of official declarations asserting the proposal to develop a national approach to flexicurity.

The picture illustrated so far looks rather gloomy with respect to the need for each European country to design and develop a national pathway to flexicurity. The countries considered up to now appear to have done very little, apart from using the flexicurity language (in some cases, simply to make new proposals for more flexibility less undesirable to its opponents). But there are also cases of countries that are effectively trying to move towards the development of a national approach of flexicurity. In this respect, it is worth to signal the case of Austria, Estonia, Finland, Spain, Hungary, Poland and the Netherlands⁹. In these countries, the flexicurity concept has been taken up by policy makers. In some countries this has resulted in the enactment of important provisions or in other relevant policy initiatives:

- the *Act of Flexibility and Security* implemented in the Netherlands, in 1999;
- the *Flexicurity Package* enacted in Austria, in 2007;
- the setting up of a *high level working group* with the aim to design a “national model of flexicurity”, appointed in August 2007, by the Ministry of Labour in charge of the design of a *Finnish model of flexicurity*);

⁹ For detailed policy discussion refer to Box 6.4, below.

- the law introducing a single status for salaried employees in the private sector in Luxemburg, in 2008;
- the announcement (in the 2008 NRP) that a “National model of flexicurity” will be created in Slovakia;
- the new version of the *Employment Contract Act* recently developed in Estonia, which aims at both increasing flexibility in employment relations and raising employment security;

However, in other countries the explicit mention in the 2008 NRPs of a need to implement a proper balance between flexibility and security emerges more as an ex-post classification exercise, rather than an actual effort to develop a national model of flexicurity. This is the case of:

- the recent initiatives concerning the Spanish labour market, somehow combining (ex-post) the four key elements of flexicurity;
- policy developments in all the four key elements of flexicurity in Hungary and Poland, in the recent years.

Some national experts point out that gender impact assessment and gender mainstreaming are not taken into account in the discussion about flexicurity principles (AT, BG, FR, HU), others say that the gender dimension has been taken into account in a limited way, but not ignored (EE, PL). There is no gender mainstreaming also in the well known Danish flexicurity model, based on relatively high unemployment benefits and labour mobility. And the lack of gender mainstreaming in the discussion of the Danish flexicurity model hides negative implications for gender equality.

BOX 6.4: Flexicurity and Gender Mainstreaming

1. AT – Austria

(pp. 16-17) In accordance with the government programme of late 2007, a so-called ‘*Flexicurity Package*’ was enacted. This package only contains the following individual measures: a tightening of ‘job suitability’ criteria, improved provisions for educational and training leave and better social-security coverage of ‘quasi free-lancers’ and the ‘new-self-employed’. More flexible working-time arrangements were adopted by means of an amendment of the *Working Hours Act* in 2008 (based on a social-partner agreement), although working hours are already quite long by EU standards and (male) overtime has seen a substantial rise in recent.

(p. 2) Even though the need for increased ‘flexicurity’ has repeatedly been a topic of debate in recent years, a comprehensive flexicurity strategy is still missing and the rather limited number of individual measures taken are not gender mainstreamed. What is also becoming apparent is that despite partial improvements for “atypical” workers to the call for a greater flexibility of employment contracts, recent reforms have linked social security (above all pension reforms) ever more tightly to the standard (male) career biography has thereby even structurally reinforced the exclusion of the “atypically” employed (women). What the Austrian ‘flexicurity’ debate complete fails to mention is the different labour-market positions of women and men as well as the needs of (female) workers for a better reconciliation of work and private life. Quite on the contrary, the adoption of a more flexible working-hour scheme will contribute to a further deterioration of the opportunities for workers in Austria to reconcile employment and private care obligations.

(p. 23) In the Austrian NRP 2008-1010, the rather central (and large) subsection on “common flexicurity principles” only mentions women once, by referring to the active labour market policy measures listed in the subsection on “Women and gender equality policy measures”. The continually falling quality of women’s jobs (in terms of increasing instability, insufficient social security protection, jobs offered only with low levels of qualification and low pay) due to the increase in

atypical employment (especially marginal part-time) is not even mentioned. In addition, it should be noted here that the amendments to the Working Hours Act are bound to impact quite negatively on gender equality. Given the already long (male) working hours, these additional possibilities to extend daily working hours will make even more difficult – if not impossible – for persons with care duties (mostly women) to accept full-time work and harder for men in full-time jobs to share household and family care duties more equally with women (for more details see: Part A of this report: 3 and 15f.). As already detailed in Part A of this report in the context of the so called “Flexicurity Package”, “job suitability” criteria have been further tightened. Tighter criteria, however, will not help to combine the promotion of “flexibility through security” and gender equality. To do so, a set of different measures would be necessary.

2. BE – Belgium

(Grid 2, p. 23) No policy measures were retrieved in terms of flexicurity.

(pp. 24-25) In 2008 NRP, the theme of flexicurity is used as a transversal approach in which all policies discussed in the NRP are framed. Moreover, the last section of the microeconomic chapter focuses on (internal and external) flexicurity. Note nevertheless that childcare provision is mentioned only in very vague terms but no precise policy objectives are presented.

3.BG – Bulgaria

(p. 9) The NRP 2007-2009 addresses five main challenges to be overcome in order to achieve the overarching, medium-term targets for sustainable GDP growth at annual rate of 6% and employment level of 61%, and to narrow the income gap with EU average. One of these challenges is entitled: “Activating labour supply through introducing a flexicurity approach notable through ALMPs.”

(p. 12) The Governmental policy in the area of employment is based on the understanding that increasing flexicurity is a pre-condition for more effective usage of labour force and for increasing employment. As a result of this understanding, the NRP points out six main directions, in which actions should be undertaken in order to develop and implement flexicurity approach. These directions are as follows:

- Developing activities for popularisation of the envisaged in the Employment Promotion Act measures for increasing the territorial and professional mobility of the labour force.
- Activities for implementation of “Ordinance for the structure and organisation of the wages in Bulgaria”. According to this ordinance, the link between wage increase and labour productivity should be strengthened and should be taken into account during the process of wage bargaining.
- Financial support for activities directed to the implementation of new forms of employment, as well as for territorial and professional mobility of the employed people within the frame of the operational programme “Human resource development” 2007-2013.
- Developing the legal frame of the temporary employment agencies. The agencies should contribute to an increase of the types of flexible forms of employment in the country.
- Further activities for encouraging employers to hire unemployed people as part-time employees, as well as to hire disabled people under temporary, hourly or seasonal contracts.
- Further improvement of the existing mechanism for determination of the minimum wage by strengthening the role of the social partners and linking more closely the minimum wage level to the macro and social indicators.

The above mentioned directions of activities are not described in details by gender, by source of financing, etc. There is no evaluation of any potential or actual impact of these policies on gender equality.

(p. 20) For enhancing the quality of the labour force and raising the employment level, the NRP 2008-2010 envisages several policies targeting activating inactive people and giving “new start” to young people, amendments in the Labour Code regarding the operation of the temporary employment agencies, increasing employment among elderly people. There are also policies concerning the approval of Bulgarian flexicurity “pathway”, expanding employment services and establishing national system for monitoring and forecasting of employers demand of labour with certain quality characteristics. This part also does not contain gender dimensions except fragment statistics on female employment rate.

4. CY - Cyprus

(p. 8) Gender Mainstreaming of flexicurity must recognize the role of gender in shaping flexible working arrangements (FWA); must address reconciliation needs of employees with care commitments while recognizing the risks of extending working hours or unsocial hours scheduling; support pathways out of non-standard work and working times to avoid the risks of long term traps and segmentation of women into disadvantaged forms of employment. It is doubtful that Cypriot policy has indeed addressed the above issues.

5. CZ – Czech Republic

(p. 13) Concerns about the security side of flexicurity policies have not entered the political debates in the Czech Republic. The discussions only centre on flexibility, which consequently could lead to the development of greater job insecurity, especially for women. Gender is reflected in the discussion in more of a negative sense, because the topic of part-time and flexible work is linked to the need of women/mothers to combine work and childcare. This approach reinforces and reproduces gender stereotypes that then operate as the basis for discriminating against women in hiring, in their treatment at work, and in their returning to work after parental leave and also disadvantages men who stay on parental leave. Thus far no real changes have occurred, only an adjustment of existing policies and legislation, and therefore it is not possible to assess their real impact. The emphasis on the need to reconcile job and family responsibilities as a women's issue and the introduction of part-time and flexible work to accommodate the needs of women may have a positive impact on some women in the short term, but in the long term the impact will undoubtedly be negative. There is a very real danger that if the aspect of job security is not included as parts of the debate the changes will have a very negative impact on gender equality

(p. 19) The NRP 2008–2010 says: “In accordance with the concept of flexicurity, the Czech Republic has continued increasing contractual freedom in the law regulated labour relations as well as flexibility in the labour market.” (p. 72, NRP/en). This approach clearly shows that the security part of the flexicurity concept is absent in the Czech employment policy even though the policy approach is labelled as flexicurity. The amendment of the Labour Code in terms of the extension of freedom of contract in labour relations – flexibility – is mentioned under the GL 21. It is important to note that the flexibility policies are not only missing the security aspect but also gender equality is absent. The combination of these two shortcomings means that this policy could have a negative impact on gender equality.

6. DE - Germany

(p. 16) German flexicurity policy has focused mainly on increasing more flexible forms of employment and supporting the expansion of non-standard forms of employment. As women are the major supply of flexible employment forms flexicurity policy should have an explicit gender mainstreaming approach. Summed up, the labour market developments of the last years point into the same direction. Whereas the employment structure gets more heterogeneous and more “flexible” employment security decreases altogether, and to a larger extent for women than for men. That means that both, employment and flexicurity policy should /must be surveyed carefully from a gender (mainstreaming) perspective.

(p. 27) Paragraph 69 (2008 NRP) highlights that Germany has a high degree of flexibility “above all with a view to striking a better balance between working commitments and family life as well as flexible work organisation. Some example for this include mini-jobs, flexi-hours, child rising periods in pension insurance, flexibilisation of working hours using a credit point system”. We think that the development of mini jobs and other flexible forms of employment does contribute to women's marginal position in the labour market, including low wage jobs and a substantial gender wage gap (Weinkopf 2008) and growing poverty among women as was just reported by a newly published study (OECD 2008a). A successful balance between work and family is not given as long as child care facilities are not available in reality but only as announced programme.

(p. 28) The flexicurity approach, described in paragraph 69 (2008 NRP), highlights some very problematic developments like the mini-jobs as instruments to achieve a better balance between working commitments and family life. We think this is one of the most negative developments of the recent labour market reforms which increases low paid employment for women without offering the necessary security concerning social security systems.

7. DK - Denmark

(p. 2) Denmark is renowned for its ‘flexicurity’, which is based on relatively high unemployment benefits and mobility in the Danish labour market. The mobility is higher than in almost all other EU-Member States. There is however no gender mainstreaming in the Danish flexicurity model, apparently no profound knowledge of who meets the request of the various forms of flexibility, and in how many years. There is no discussion and awareness of economic and possible non-economic cost of flexicurity and of a possible hidden economic redistribution between the female dominated public sector and the male dominated private sector.

(pp. 11-13) The Danish model of flexicurity is described as a ‘Golden Triangle’ with the following three elements:

- ♦ flexible rules for hiring and dismissing.
- ♦ security for the wage earners in the form of a guarantee for a legally specified payment (unemployment benefit or social benefit)
- ♦ a labour market system that offers guidance, a job or education to all unemployed

It is estimated that approximately 30% of the labour force change jobs each year, which is significantly above the general EU level. The EU Commission comments on the Danish Golden Triangle as ‘*a successful combination of flexibility and security, offering flexible labour laws and relatively low job protection, extensive efforts on lifelong learning and active labour market policies, and a generous social security system*’ (EU Commission 2007, p. 9). It is however important to discuss flexicurity from a gender mainstreaming point of view.

Firstly, sufficient unemployment benefit is an important precondition for the Danish flexicurity system, and an expensive one, which to a great extent is financed by the state, an active labour market policy is also expensive, although self support and employment – even under qualification level with the risk of diluting out gained qualifications – takes preference to a long term investment in real education of the labour force in the Danish active labour market policy. The safety net under the flexicurity policy – the benefit system and the active labour market policy of training and education - is expensive, and financed by high Danish taxation. The high tax rates and the introduced tax ceiling are on the other hand used as an excuse for not raising wages in the public sector to a adequate and decent level, although wages in the public sector are lagging behind wages for similar jobs in the private sector. As women form more than two thirds of the staff in the public sector, one may suggest that women in the female dominated public sector pay for flexicurity in the male dominated private sector.

Secondly, the degree of coverage of the benefit system is not as high as earlier, due to lower adjustment in relation to development of pay. Only very low paid employees will get an unemployment benefit of 90% of their salary, if they become redundant. Furthermore the benefit system has been tightened up for the weaker groups (including immigrants) on the fringe of the labour market by the agreement *En ny chance til alle* (A new chance for everybody) from 2005 implying that persons on social benefit will have to demonstrate, that they are part of the labour force with a special focus on families, where both spouses receive social benefit. Labour markets researchers argue that this may not immediately harm the flexicurity system but may in the long run create uncertainty and result in demands for increasing job security and stricter firing rules (Madsen 2007). The low compensation is also a problem for single parents – predominately single mothers, who form more than 15% of the families with children (Emerek 2005), and the tightening up of the benefit system may result in a backlash for unemployed immigrant women, who have the highest chance of losing their individual rights to social benefit. These new non-individualised rights are not consistent with equal opportunities, and are also a violation of the foundation of the Danish welfare state model, which is based on universalism in regard to social security and to social services, equality and solidarity.

Thirdly, the newest initiative from the Danish government (supported by Danish Peoples Party) is the efforts of turning part-time employees into full-time employees by altering the rules regarding supplementary unemployment benefit have a gender bias, as mentioned earlier.

Finally, the institutional frames in form of comprehensive childcare and elder care are a necessary precondition for a flexible labour force (Hansen, 2007), where almost half the participants are

women, and the Danish Family and Working Life Commission's work on recommendations as to how a modern society can be organised with more flexibility than today can also be seen in the ongoing process to further conditions for flexicurity.

Flexibility covers numerical flexibility, functional flexibility and working time flexibility, and it is true that care facilities are a precondition especially for parent's possibility of being numerically flexible – that is having time in and out of work. The Danish childcare facilities have a high coverage, the problem is however that they do not provide flexible care, as most of them still are scheduled after traditional working hours. There is thus a problem with child care facilities for families working flexible and odd hours. Furthermore there has been a decline in opening hours in day-care facilities combined with the reduction in working hours in general. At the same time the local authorities, to save money, close day-care institutions in quiet periods or days in connection with holiday weekends and vacation etc. (Emerek 2005). Due to the tax ceiling several (half the municipalities) now in late summer 2008 announce shorter opening hours and/or an extra closing week during the holiday season, which will make working mothers and fathers less flexible.

Already, employees with small children – especially single mothers - have (due to the structuring of childcare) problems in meeting fluctuations in time-demands, as well as older employees, who cannot endure hard manual work in more than a normal working week (Ilsøe 2007). Flexibility has thus become a new qualification, which combined with the employers' expectation to women and men has a strong gender bias, as women are expected to be less flexible when it comes to working long hours (Holt et al. 2006).

8. EE - Estonia

(pp.17-18) Flexicurity is a relatively new concept for Estonia. The government has aimed at implementing the approach with the modernisation of *Employment Contracts Act* which will be discussed in the Parliament in autumn 2008. However, the development of the concept until now has focused on individual policy tools rather than comprehensive reform packages encompassing several approaches simultaneously (Leetmaa 2006). Initially the new draft Employment Contracts Act was criticised for an unbalanced approach to the four pillars of flexicurity: flexibility, social security, lifelong learning and active labour market policies (Leetmaa 2008; Rõõm 2008; Eamets, 2008). The draft focused mostly on increasing the flexibility of hiring and firing while the social security of the employees during unemployment and expenditures on ALMP in Estonia are one of the lowest in EU. However, after long discussions between the government and the social partners, a new version of the Employment Contracts Act was developed which aims at both increasing flexibility in employment relations and raising employment security at the same time. Thus the new draft act aims at providing a more comprehensive approach to the concept of flexicurity.

Although women are affected by the development of the flexicurity approach (i.e. introducing more flexible possibilities to hire and fire, flexible forms of work etc), the level of gender mainstreaming in the process is relatively limited. For example, currently different flexible forms of employment are rather marginal in Estonia, but the possible impact of promoting more flexible employment on women is not discussed (e.g. possible feminisation of flexible forms of work etc.). At the same time, as the current approach addressed flexibility and labour market security simultaneously, it may be expected that the modernised Employment Contracts Act will not lead to increased gender inequalities in the labour market with regard to flexible contracts, working hours etc.

Still one of the main issues with regard to the new draft act has been the social protection of pregnant women and parents of small children. Namely, with the new act the requirement to have labour inspector permission in case of ending employment contracts with pregnant women or parents of small children is lost. According to the draft act, parents of children older than 2 months can be fired without the permission of labour inspector (until now parents were protected until a child reaches 3 years). However, the employer has a burden of proof to prove that the reason of firing was other than pregnancy or care responsibilities. The reasoning behind was that the labour inspector only controls whether the documents and official reasons for firing provided in the documents were in accordance with law i.e. did provide lawful reason for firing the person. The new law would provide these two groups with a possibility to turn to labour dispute committee (or court). Thus, it is said that instead of formal control, more thorough control is established. However, this requires the initiative of an employee and may end with long court cases. Critics of the act find this provision to

reduce the protection of pregnant women and parents (see for example Kalmus, 2008).

9. EL - Greece

(p. 2) The Greek flexicurity approach combines the provision of relatively good protection to part-time and temporary workers with the reduction of rights and guarantees for the newly hired workers in public enterprises and utilities.

(p. 8) In summer 2008 a policy initiative aiming at more flexibility in the labour market introduced the following changes in industrial relations in public enterprises and utilities: i) the exclusion of the newly hired employees in public enterprises and utilities from the coverage of collective agreements and Internal Work Statutes with respect to wages, bonuses, leaves, hiring and firing procedures etc.; ii) the restriction of collective bargaining on wages in public enterprises and public utilities with deficits or subsidised by the central government.

10. ES - Spain

(p. 16) Far from being a consciously adopted model of flexicurity, the Spanish approach to recent labour market reforms has rather addressed key particular issues to overcome some of the most worrying tendencies in the last years. Although there have been explicit mentions about the need to implement a proper balance between flexibility and protection, more precisely by the Experts Commission for the 2006 Reform of the Labour Market, the actual measures have tackled specific aspects (mainly temporality), neglecting the configuration of a target model on flexicurity. The fact that some policies could be embedded within the four key elements of flexicurity is actually an ex-post theoretical classification, but not a conscious ex-ante policy. Nevertheless, some of the recent initiatives concerning the labour market can be embedded in the framework of flexicurity as far as they contribute to some extent to the compliance of its ends. Following the four elements that constitute the concept of flexicurity, the following table summarizes the measures so far analyzed and their correspondence with the four key elements of the flexicurity concept.

The key first element: necessity to implement flexible work arrangements and reduce labour segmentation and undeclared work.	The second key element: ALMPs to help the unemployed to rapidly find a job and to adjust to the changing labour market needs	The third key element: The Life-long learning policies constitute the mainstay of flexicurity	The fourth key element: provision of modern social security systems, combining adequate income support with the need to facilitate labour market mobility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New subsidy for enterprises in the case of job reallocation due to pregnancy, lactation or professional diseases • Collaboration protocol between the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Labour, and the Office of the State's General Attorney and the General Council of the Judiciary Power in order to promote safety at work and to combat undeclared work. • Law for Gender Equality • 2006 labour market reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extraordinary Plan for Orientation, Professional Training and Labour Insertion of the Ministry of Labour and Immigration • Textile Industry Support and Development Plan • New agreement for the promotion of the access to the labour market of women older than 45 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Royal Decree that enters to regulate the National Reference Centres in the area of vocational training • New Royal Decree that enters to regulate the two categories of professional training existing so far 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reform of the Social Security System

11. FI - Finland

(p. 3) The *working group aiming at designing 'Finnish model of flexicurity'* by 2010 has emphasised the need to level out flexibility and security among different employee groups so that the young women would not have to bear the main burden of labour market's needs for flexibility. The measures also include levelling out employer costs caused by family leaves as well as encouragement of fathers to more actively take up family leaves. Such development would mean that the hiring a young woman to open-ended employment relationship would no longer be a more risky investment for an employer than hiring a young man. In this respect, the policy trend is right and a lot has already improved. However, a lot still remains to be achieved.

(p. 13) Fixed-term employment is often seen as a good method for the flexible use of labour. The problem is the fact that most of the *fixed-term workers* themselves are not that happy with their situation of financial insecurity and uncertain future. Quite a few *actions have been taken to improve the situation* in the 2000's, beginning from the reform of the Employment Contract Act from 2001

towards a more rigid legislation regarding the grounds for fixed-term employment. In 2003, the Government gave instructions to reduce the use of fixed-term contracts especially in the public sector. Changes have taken place in the legislation on social security regarding temporary workers' sickness and family allowances, and the reform of the Act on Annual Holiday (2005) includes several improvements for those on fixed-term or part-time contracts.

(p. 17) 'Flexicurity' is a newcomer in the Finnish vocabulary. Although the word as such was not yet included in the current Government Programme, designed in April 2007, the *Policy programme for the employment, entrepreneurship and work life* of the Government Programme states, however, that "a new Finnish *modus operandi* will be work out to create greater harmony between job security and flexibility. promoting these objectives side by side will help respond to the needs of both the employer and employees."

In August 2007, a high level *working group on flexicurity*, appointed by the Ministry of Labour, was set with the aim to design a 'Finnish model of flexicurity' by 2010. The group is aiming at promotion of occupational and regional mobility, life-long learning and efficient employment services so that employees would be able to change jobs as flexibly as possible in the case of restructuring cases. However, the Chairperson Minister Tarja Cronberg emphasises that the Finnish model will not include weakening of the conditions of employees' protection against unlawful dismissal. The working group has already decided to start to further develop the existing Change Security model to a more proactive direction.

'Change Security' model, entered into force on July 2005, is implemented in case of redundancies to speed up the transition from work to work and re-employment. Besides to the common employment service, the employees covered by the Change Security model are additionally entitled to take between up to 20 days of paid job-seeking leave during the notice period, to an individual employment programme and intensified employment services, and an increased unemployment benefit during the implementation of the employment programme. In addition, the model has increased the obligations of employers to inform the employee of his/her rights to the services of Employment Offices, and to negotiate together with the personnel about a plan of action to support the re-employment of dismissed employees.

(p. 25) When very shortly referring to fixed-term employment (p. 74) and presenting the ideas of the *working group 'Finnish model of flexicurity'* (Appendix I), no reference whatsoever to gender is made to. This is very strange, given the fact that women have been bearing the major responsibility for the flexibility needs of the labour market, as acknowledged also by the Ministry of Labour.

12. FR - France

(p. 11) Today, penalties can be legally imposed if one refuses the first job offer. But it never happens - ANPE staff are reluctant to stop allowances for people who are already in a difficult situation. Henceforth (since January 2008), the principle that a 'reasonable' job offer cannot be refused more than twice by an unemployed person - at the risk of penalties - is now in force. According to a document sent by Bercy (Ministry of finance) to the social partners, jobseekers must accept any paid job that is at the same level as their previous pay in the first three months of looking for employment. After 3 months of unemployment, they must accept a drop of a maximum of 5% in their pay, on condition that relevant laws and rule are respected (e.g. full-time employees cannot be paid less than the SMIC). The job must also be '*compatible with the jobseeker's qualifications*' and '*be in the geographical area defined for their search*'. After 6 months, jobseekers can be obliged to accept a drop in pay of 20%, and travelling time of up to two hours per day using public transport. Travelling distances between home and work cannot exceed 30 kilometres.

(pp. 16-18) In France there are many debates at different levels that more or less directly concern flexicurity: university debates (symposiums, publications); institutional and governmental debates (numerous official reports and proposed laws); and also debates at the level of the social partners (union proposals for "guaranteed social protection and employment rights throughout working life" (CGT) and for "making career paths secure" (CFDT), as well as the signing of an agreement on this topic (signed by all representative unions, except for the CGT, which is the union with the greatest support, according to the results of workplace elections). The specifically French feature of these debates is to focus on the employment contract, much more so than on the other dimensions of flexicurity (for example, when the Danish model is advocated in France, reference is not made to the

major differences between the French and Danish versions of the Welfare State). Moreover, the French industrial relations system is far from being similar to that of the Nordic countries or even of the Netherlands - with difficulties regarding the social dialogue, low levels of unionisation and strong unions divisions. And for many years already, certain labour advantages have been challenged, including a major reduction of the unemployment benefit system and controls of the unemployed; reforms of pension schemes; while unemployment remains high. These are all factors that are incomparable with the countries that are quoted as being a “model”. Therefore, for many people in France, flexicurity is synonymous with rendering employment contracts more flexible and termination of contracts without sufficient compensation for employees and the jobless.

This topic has never in fact been tackled from a gender point of view, although in France flexibility is accompanied by increasing part-time work (the great majority of which is done by women) and also by the development of parental allowances (which are only taken up by women!). The issues of returning to employment or changing to full-time work do not seem to be addressed, whereas they are in other debates. *Gender is a blind spot*. No one wonders officially about the impact of these changes on the employment conditions of women. Is there not a risk of consolidating certain forms of discrimination, while elsewhere progress on gender equality is advocated? Most of the debates and undertakings in France concerning employment tend to ignore the gender dimension, but at the same time (within the same Ministry) advocate measures for promoting gender equality – separately from the general measures. Thus gender mainstreaming is not applied concretely.

The main angle of flexibility dealt with here is that of the **employment contract** – how can French constraints regarding termination of contracts be made more flexible, while at the same time maintaining a minimum amount of security for employees? This is the question that is generally posed. Other aspects of flexicurity are also referred to, but they lead to fewer reactions – activating the labour market via incentives for returning to employment, by introducing, for example, the possibility of combining minimum social benefits with pay during a given period of time and the implementation of the RSA; reform of social protection (pension reforms and revision of unemployment benefits, etc.); life-long training. Thus, we can pinpoint two topics, which have marked the period and are contradictory, namely “modernising the employment contract” and “Individual Right to Training” (DIF).

The new law on modernising the labour market (July 2008). This law (based on the agreement reached in January 2008) does, in fact, concern the new concept of French “flexicurity”, even though this term is not used. The aim is to offer flexibility to companies compensated for by new guarantees for employees... Is this really the case? Firstly, the length of the **probationary period** is increased (to 4 months for manual and clerical workers and to 8 months for managerial and professional staffs). This will enable companies to be more flexible after the abolition of the New Recruitment Contracts (CNE) (that do not require giving reasons for terminating the contract). With respect to “rendering termination of employment contracts secure”, the employers' organisation (MEDEF) obtained the creation of two new ways of terminating contracts by mutual agreement: “termination by negotiated agreement” (by simple agreement between the company and the employee concerned) and, for professional and managerial staffs, “termination after carrying out a defined assignment that is set out in the contract”, which is another name for the “mission contract” that the MEDEF has been demanding for years. Once these separations by mutual agreement have been authorised, no appeal to the courts is possible. Thus, “rendering career paths secure” is reduced to rendering unemployment secure... The unions wanted to limit their impact by demanding that “termination by negotiated agreement” should be described as a form of dismissal and only authorised by a member of the employment tribunal. The employers refused and preferred authorisation to occur if there was no reaction from the labour inspectorate within 15 days. (This is why the CGT refused to sign the agreement). As for “mission contracts”, the only “victory” of the unions was to have them defined as fixed-term contracts, rather than permanent ones, the former being paradoxically a little more favourable to employees (providing an insecurity bonus and a guaranteed length of contract). The future will tell whether these new forms of termination will be widely used or not. The more positive terms used in the agreement - such as “permanent contracts are the normal and general kind of employment contract”, “responsible use of fixed-term contracts and temporary agency work” and “forward-looking employment and skills management” (human resources planning) – do not limit the real risks of the agreement. The unions, which signed the agreement, are pleased about the concessions won regarding the “**portability**” of individual rights when changing employer. But

this progress is limited to partly maintaining top-up health insurance cover for six months after the termination of the contract and the possibility of transferring unused rights to **Individual Right to Training**, to a new employer with the latter's agreement. The agreement just states that it is necessary to provide compensation for employees, whose contracts have been terminated by mutual agreement, and “provide better benefits for shorter periods”. However, there is no indication – on the contrary – that the security of income of the jobless will be improved after the next UNEDIC (unemployment insurance system) negotiations. In all, although flexicurity may – in the abstract - seem seductive for some people, it means flexibility for employees and security for companies.

13.HU – Hungary

(p. 3) Flexicurity in Hungary is an unfamiliar concept. Although there is a common understanding that policies should take into account the need for both flexibility and social protection, actual policy focuses most on increasing labour market flexibility. Gender aspects in relation to flexible forms of employment are largely missing.

(pp.13-14) The Hungarian NAP aimed to develop a differentiated legislation – through the *amendment of the Labour Code* - that takes into account the diversity of the different forms of employment. The legal amendments aimed to combine the flexibility of employment with new forms of security. Taking into account the higher share of women in part-time jobs such manner of modification of the legal framework has gender relevance.

(pp. 29-30) Flexicurity was missing from the earlier NRP but it is a new element in the 2008 NRP. It is not an independent programme, it is built on components of the implementation of other employment GLs. The link between the flexicurity pillars and employment measures is here summarised:

Elements of the flexicurity concept in the Hungarian 2008 NRP

Pillars	Measures
Strategy for Life-long Learning	- “One Step Forward!” training programme
- Development of key labour market competencies	
- Development of the Regional Integrated Vocational Training Centre network	
- Development of a career guidance system	
- New Career programme	
- Support of on the job training	
- Quality, methodological and curriculum development of the training system	
Active Labour Market Policies	- Integration of NGOs into the service providers' network of the PES
- Supporting the rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities	
- Improving the labour market situation in the most disadvantaged micro-regions	
- Employment of disadvantaged persons at infrastructure investments funded by the EU	
- Programmes promoting the employment of the Roma population	
Labour law environment; reducing undeclared employment and labour market segmentation	- Reducing social security contribution in the case of employment of people with labour market disadvantages
- Strengthening the Labour Inspection	
- Raising employee's awareness	
- Package of measures aimed at reducing the informal economy	
Developing a modern social protection system	- Transformation of the pension system
- Improving access to child day-care services	
- Transformation of the disability pension system	
- Setting up the integrate employment and social services system	
- Strengthening the promotion of employment in the social protection system	

Flexicurity concept focuses **on the dissemination of atypical forms of employment** to broaden new employment opportunities for persons excluded from the labour market. For that purpose:

- the regulation of casual work will be renewed to transform the present paper administration on electronic data provision;
- reorganisation of casual work into permanent employment will be supported by using ESF funds to expand the scope of declared regular employment.

14. IE – Ireland

(p.15) Social partnership is viewed as critical to achieving greater flexicurity, particularly in the development of new initiatives to regulate low pay, including the establishment of a new regulatory authority, the *National Employment Rights Authority* with a role of ensuring compliance with employment law. As the majority of those on low pay are women, adequate resourcing of this new Authority has the potential to improve the position of disadvantaged women on the labour market.

15. IT – Italy

(p. 2) The *flexicurity* system is still weak: much has been done in order to identify flexible contracts to increase employment rate, but a complementary strategy for counterbalancing negative effects of this flexibility through adequate unemployment insurance schemes has not yet been implemented.

(pp. 12-13) The *Reform of the labour market* (law 30/2003, so called “*Legge Biagi*”) has been the most important policy development in the recent years. Job creation has been the main objective of the law: a lot of “flexible” contractual typologies have been identified in order to support labour market transition. The outcome is an increase in employment insecurity, especially for new entrants into the labour market. For people with atypical contract, the transition towards standard employment is difficult. Unfortunately, little has been made to develop a complementary strong social security protection system, such as unemployment subsidies, unemployment insurance or a *lifelong learning* system to support the adaptability of people. On the one hand, Italy still lacks effective ALMP and efficient PES. On the other hand, the reform of the so called “*ammortizzatori sociali*” (i.e the system of income support in case of redundancy, collective layoffs, unemployment spells, etc.) has not yet been fully implemented.

(pp. 15, 18) As far as labour market policies are concerned, the Berlusconi’s Government has explicitly stated in the 2008 NRP that it intends to give a “discontinuity signal” with respect to the Prodi’s Government, by supporting a strong “deregulation” in the labour market. It is also argued that one of the causes of the bad performance of the Italian economy is the rigidity of the labour market. The approach developed is based on the *Green Paper on the future of Welfare* (July 2008), where the Government has developed a new approach to welfare. The idea is that a “passive welfare” is no more feasible, but it is necessary to give to the individual more responsibilities for an active behaviour in order to live an active life. In order to pursue these objectives, the Government announces the intention to implement the Welfare Agreement on income support to workers made redundant (*ammortizzatori sociali*), PES, apprenticeship and incentives. However, the first two provisions adopted give to the flexicurity principle simply more flexibility (with no provisions on the side of security): the “simplification” and the reintroduction of a very flexible forms of contract go in this direction. The measures listed (2008 NRP, employment chapter) to foster flexibility are few, but they are very important as they point out a radical change in the employment strategy (and the approach to flexicurity). In 2007, the Prodi’s Government started (timidly) to intervene in order to reduce the variety of atypical (i.e. insecure) contracts (abolishing some of them); it also provided atypical workers with some security (for example, in case of childbirth). Among the very first decisions of the Berlusconi’s Government one finds the re-introduction of those atypical contracts (very flexible fixed-term contracts, *job on call*, *accessory work*, *staff leasing*, etc.) that the previous Government had abolished, but without any new measure in the area of security. Moreover, it is announced that the regulation of part-time will be modified making it more flexible (with the possibility to have “flexible and elastic clauses” regarding working time). Of course, it is assumed that this increased flexibility will meet both the needs of employers (facing cyclical fluctuations in production) and that of employees (especially women with family responsibilities).

The employment chapter has a short comment on female employment that highlights the approach adopted. This is well illustrated by the fact that women enter the scene only when the issue of atypical jobs is considered. It is important to say that the present Government strongly believes that a large variety of atypical contracts is crucial to support the expansion of employment, in particular that of women. It is assumed, explicitly, that it should be easier for women employed with these atypical contracts to reconcile work and family. The issues of job quality, career advancement, training, insecurity and low pay associated with these atypical contracts are by and large ignored.

16. LT – Lithuania

(p. 4, 17) Lithuanian labour market in terms of flexicurity is difficult to evaluate. Lithuanian labour market in terms of flexicurity is at very early stage of development. There is no explicit flexicurity policy in Lithuania. Main purpose of employment policies is to increase level of women employment, introduce flexible working forms.

17. LU - Luxemburg

(p. 14) Following several months of negotiations with the social partners, the Parliament has adopted in May 2008 the law concerning the introduction of a single status for salaried employees in the

private sector. The principal modifications appearing in the law include: a) harmonisation of severance compensation for employees; b) harmonisation of additional premiums for overtime; c) the extra quarter pension for all salaried employees with repayment of the pension fund share; d) continuation of salary for all salaried employees for an average of 13 weeks.

Single status will put an end to the distinctions between skilled manual workers and private employees and will give way to a Labour Code that is uniformly applicable to all employees under the private law schemes. It will contain an administrative simplification. The law allows health fund insurance and pension funds in the private sector to merge, and will lead to the creation of a single professional chamber for salaried employees in the private sector as well as a single labour court.

This new regulation is considered in Luxembourg as an element of flexicurity. It simplifies the administrative charge for the employers and suppresses unjustified discrimination between different categories of employees. It is worth noting that the cost of this harmonisation will be supported by the public authorities: neither the employees, neither the employer would be penalized. The employers have nevertheless insisted on the necessity of controlling more efficiently absenteeism. The element of flexibility is brought by the fact that it simplifies the management of the employees since there will be a single contribution rate, a single social security administration. The security counterpart is the fact that it brings a harmonisation of status between blue and white collars.

18. LV- Latvia

(p. 12) So far, flexicurity is not a widely debated issue from the gender perspective. Although the need of flexible working hours is recognised by the research performed on gender and labour market, there are no effective measures to increase flexible working hours for at least for women (men) with small preschool or primary school children. In particular, gender mainstreaming of flexicurity is still missing (the gender dimension has not been taken into account when designing flexicurity policies). So far, there is no national pathway/approach to flexicurity. That should be assessed negatively because there is strong need for measures to encourage employees to develop flexicurity measures in terms of working time and segmentation of women into disadvantaged employment forms.

19. MT - Malta

(p. 13) Flexicurity can be helpful when addressing challenges to women's re-entry to the labour market, however, the concept is not yet very familiar in Malta, as result of which policy development and the gender dimension within the framework of a national approach to flexicurity are limited. Indeed, some initiatives have been taken to improve lifelong learning, and introduce labour market policies, yet Malta still lacks a coherent policy strategy. Flexicurity is a strong and vital social dialogue within the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD), where the social partners actively participate and are able to negotiate, influence and take responsibility for the definition and components of flexicurity and evaluation of its outcomes. However, there is a degree of suspicion surrounding the concept of flexicurity among social partners and there is little debate about the concept in Malta. A speech by the Minister for Social Policy of 18 June 2008 suggests little knowledge of the concept that seems to be mixed up with globalisation, pushing prices up and family values. Nevertheless, the ad hoc committee currently studying a model of flexicurity to address Malta's needs is timely. It is one of the Commission's priority areas in the planning of the forthcoming NRP.

(p. 18) The Malta 2008 NRP lacks an organisational infrastructure with a clear focus on women and gender equality. For example, Malta's flexicurity pathway "to improve the supply of skilled labour across the skills spectrum" (p.70) has 35 policy measures (pp. 91–93: Appendix 02), however, the measures lack a gender mainstreaming approach to promote the entry of women into high quality and non traditional jobs. Instead, the focus is generic, and only one measure, out of the thirty five, aims to "provide training courses targeted at women returners to the workplace, in personal and occupational skills and in areas of labour market shortage" (p. 9).

20. NL – The Netherlands

(pp. 15-16) Regarding flexicurity, the Netherlands is often seen as a paradigmatic case. The most important legislation in this respect is the '*Act on Flexibility and Security*', which came into effect on 1 January 1999. The point of departure is that the labour market must become more flexible,

while at the same time an adequate level of protection of employees must be maintained. The act regulates the position of flex-workers such as workers on call, stand by employees, temporary workers, temps etc. The Act has been evaluated twice. The most recent evaluation (Knecht et al 2007) shows that of all employees about 25% has a flexible contract. In addition, the population of flexible workers is changing. The share of women has increased and is now more than 65%, the average age of the flexible working is decreasing (now about 32 years old) and the average level of education has increased. Almost half of the population of flexible workers gets or has the prospect of a permanent job within a year.

The most important reason for employees to have a flexible job is that no permanent job could be found. Other important reasons are the freedom of a flexible contract and the opportunity to combine work and private life. The evaluation also shows that the act has increased the flexibility of employers and the security of employees. An important stipulation of the Act refers to the sequence of consecutive contracts. On the one hand the act makes it easier to renew temporary contracts, but at the same time it limits the possibilities of renewal. A temporary contract may, for example, not be renewed more than twice and the total length of the contract may not exceed a period of 36 months. Social partners may, however, make different agreements in this respect. A first evaluation of the act showed that in several collective agreements this freedom resulted in an impossibility to get a permanent contract. The second evaluation indicated that the situation has hardly changed. Based on the results of this second evaluation the minister of Employment and Social Affairs announced that he intends to limit the opportunity to make different agreements (SZW 2007f). Despite the fact that the share of women is rising, no comments are made on the gendered aspect of flexicurity.

21. PL - Poland

(pp. 14-15) Faced with substantial challenges, especially in the areas of ‘full employment’, ‘quality and productivity at work’, and ‘strengthening social and territorial cohesion’, the relatively strong macroeconomic growth has been beneficial not only to lowering unemployment and increasing employment rates, but also in allowing policy makers to develop labour market programmes intended to achieve further progress. Domestic policy debates increasingly reflect the goals and the rhetoric of the EES and the Lisbon Strategy. While flexible employment forms have been propagated for a few years already, the term flexicurity is new in the Polish vernacular, as is the idea behind it. The term appears for the first time in the EES documents: Implementation Report 2006 and subsequently in NAP 2007; in 2008 an annual publication of MPiPS (2008d) is titled ‘*Employment in Poland 2007: Security in a Flexible Labour Market*’ and the flexicurity concept is used throughout; and in 2007 a conference on flexicurity was organised with social partners and academics. There is thus an increasingly frequent reference to flexicurity and the need to address its both aspects, that is, flexibility and security.

Although it may be too soon to speak of a integrated flexicurity strategy or a fully developed pathway as well as gender mainstreaming in this area, the contours of a national approach to flexicurity are beginning to form. Indeed, according to European level analyses (e.g. Flexicurity Pathways, Communication on flexicurity), Poland (together with other transition economies) is characterised by a labour market with insufficient opportunities to groups outside of formal employment because of benefit dependency (e.g. incapacity or early retirement) and the prevalence of informal work. Thus, there is a need for policies to ensure that flexible contractual arrangements are associated with adequate protection, to develop LLL strategies in cooperation with enterprises, to upgrade ALMPs in order to make them more effective, to strengthen conditionality and social security provisions, to encourage job search and formal employment, and to develop social dialogue. In other words, all policies contained in the flexicurity model are relevant, but especially modernisation of social security systems, investment in LLL, and improving ALMPs. Moreover, the persisting gender gaps in the labour market require a gender mainstreaming approach to achieve greater gender equality, especially in women’s access to employment and reconciliation of work and care. Over the last couple of years there have been developments in all the four components of flexicurity, but the conditions of low starting points, high costs of investment, early stages of reforms and at the same time significant challenges in reaching consensus on some issues (e.g. early retirement) mean that the process is not yet developed or effective. It requires, therefore, systematic action in a long term perspective as well as continued economic growth which cannot be guaranteed. Because of the early stage of most reforms and past-experience of frequent changes of political

leadership (with often contrasting ideologies) only over the course of the next few years it will be possible to assess whether current policy proposals result in a national pathway of flexicurity.

Moreover, the degree to which gender is considered in policy development and action is limited, but not ignored. So far there is no evidence that flexicurity policies bring positive outcomes upon the situation of women in the labour market. While certain policy proposals are framed in the rhetoric of reconciliation of family and work responsibilities – these are generally aimed at women and the potential consequence of creating further differences between the labour market situation of women and men are not analysed. For example, evidence suggests that the currently most frequent forms of flexible employment (self-employment, fixed term contracts, part-time work) are not relevant to combining work and family life - yet they are presented as a panacea to solving the tension between work and care. Thus, at policy level the role of gender in shaping flexible patterns of work and reinforcing inequalities stemming from such arrangements are not recognised. Without closer policy attention to security in general, and the precariousness of flexible employment of women in particular, policies may lead to greater labour market segmentation. At present, the gender distribution of flexible (non-secure) contracts is relatively even (except for part-time jobs). Nevertheless, presenting flexible employment as a way of reconciling work and personal life for mothers (rather than mothers and fathers,) may further lower the security of women in the labour market. Thus, there is no evidence of consideration of the likely negative gender consequences of flexible work; or supporting pathways out of non-standard employment – that is the security aspect requires further attention. In positive terms, flexibility is associated with greater employment opportunities for women/mothers (as well as other weak labour market groups) and thus may increase (income) security.

22. PT- Portugal

(p. 23) The flexicurity ‘rhetoric’ irrupted suddenly in the 2007 Summer, in a special conjuncture characterized by the Portuguese Presidency of EU, during which the possibility and the conditions of spreading the approach to the EU were under consideration in meetings at the highest level, and by the national social dialogue around the reform of employment policies.

The developments are not significant. More recently, the public pronouncements of the Minister of Labour and Social Solidarity underline the inadequacy of the policy framework to the Portuguese reality, but the need to get some proximity to it by reinforcing the life long learning mechanisms. As most of the market analysts have pointed out, the flexicurity policy was viewed by both the government and the employers as a way to acquire more flexibility as regarding individual dismissals and, so they claim, to increase Portuguese economical competitiveness. The more common view is well expressed in this excerpt: “Priorities for improving flexicurity conditions are concentrated in the first (modern labour laws) and third (lifelong learning) elements of flexicurity. Although there is still considerable potential to improve flexicurity in the second (ALMPs) and fourth (modern social security) elements, it is very clear that Portugal should focus its major efforts and investments in modernising labour legislation in relation to permanent contracts and lifelong learning systems.” (Ramos, 2006). Unions manifest their fears that only the flexibility might be accomplished in a country which is still very far away from the social protection patterns of the majority of EU member-states. In my view, these fears have strong fundamentals, because Portuguese market does not put forward many opportunities to change job positions, having in account that many sectors of activity are dominated by a few enterprises. In a way, we can say that, before we liberalize dismissals, it is necessary to liberalize the market itself. As regarding this matter, it will be very difficult to reach an agreement within the social dialogue.

Flexibility and insecurity get translation, if not in the books, at least, in practice, with more than 40% of persons in employment working in part-time and/or fixed term contracts or in self-employment. Uncommon but not totally absent is the attention towards women in risk of exclusion from the labour market: “These workers [mostly women, over 40 and with single job careers], once unemployed after redundancies, will find it very difficult to reintegrate into the labour market even after acquiring new skills for new jobs. Special job creation programmes with considerably more flexibility in hiring and firing could help these workers find a new opportunity in the labour market” (Ramos, 2006). As we see, the emphasis is still in the easiness to hire and to fire.

(p. 18) The impact of the financial incentives to transform fixed-term contracts into without-term,

introduced in March 2006, contrary to my expectations that they would benefit women, did not manage to counteract the trend to increase employment precariousness. By the end of 2007, more female workers had fixed-term contracts (17.9%) than in 2005 (16.5%). The impact on men's employment security was different, but not relevant either. The rate of waged work with fixed-term contracts rose during 2006 (from 17.7%, in 2005, to 18.2%), but after that year it diminished to 17.2% (INE, 2008). It seems that in this matter, as in others, male employment is quicker to respond to policies. Trade unions claim that this is the effect of financial incentives for enterprises to employ young unemployed people and long-term unemployed, independently of the kind of contract.

23. RO - Romania

(p. 21) The "NRP, Implementation Report, October 2007" stipulates as a main objective for flexibility and security on the labour market that: "an integrated analysis of the corresponding balance between flexibility and security cover a wide range of problems, such as: company adaptability, social protection, internal and external dimensions of flexibility and security, long-term education and vocational training, the role of social dialogue, etc" (p. 77). These very general aims relate to: modernisation and updating of the Labour Code in 2007 in order to assure a greater flexibility of the labour market.

24. SE - Sweden

(pp. 3-16) The Swedish labour market is in many ways characterised by flexicurity. It is possible to start and end working day flexible, possibilities of leaves with pay over the life-cycle is well developed as is leave for care of different sorts. From a gender equality perspective, though, flexibility is complicated. Flexibility (combined with security) helps women in many ways to combine employment and care work. It might be helpful for women to enter the labour market, especially if women's general employment rate is low. It is also useful with flexibility over the life cycle, over the year and over the work day. However, when the number and share of women in employment are about the same as men's as in Sweden, then flexibility might have more negative effects. It helps women combine employment and care work, but it does not change the gender division of labour.

25. SI - Slovenia

(pp. 17-18) Phillips and Eanet (2007) in the cluster analysis of EU countries place Slovenia together with Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Czech Republic in a group of countries for which are characteristically modest mobility, high long-term unemployment rates and low employment rate of older population. IMAD (2008) analysis show that in the last years despite declarative aims of achieving flexicurity, developments at the labour market in Slovenia show mainly increase in flexible employment, while social security system and active employment policies still have to be better adopted to the flexicurity aims. It is crucially important to monitor whether measures and programmes aimed to improve flexicurity are contributing to the gender equality at the labour market. These measures and programmes should not increase gender segregation at labour market in terms of occupational, sectoral segregation and also participation of women and men in different types of employment and work arrangements.

(pp. 27) The main approach to employment related aims in the 2008 NRP is embedded in the realisation of the flexicurity model in Slovenia. The model is presented as a combination of boosted dynamics at the labour market matched with the high sensitivity and social policy answers to the problems that dynamic might cause. The stress on the role of knowledge (education, LLL, research and development), improvement of functioning of the labour market institutions and legislation and coordinated approach to flexibilisation and social security reforms are certainly well oriented. Documents emphasises the need of monitoring and upgrading of the flexicurity policies and measures. It would be certainly needed that this monitoring encompass gender dimension as well, otherwise neither employment nor gender equality challenges will not be adequately met.

26. SK - Slovakia

(p. 11) Flexicurity is a new concept in employment policy. It became the issue of public and policy discourse only recently and most intensively in the recent years. The most significant and concrete step forward in the implementation of flexicurity is represented by the amendment of Labour Code in 2007. The principles of flexicurity, flexible and reliable working conditions and flexible forms of

work are reflected in the revised Labour Code, including the “new form of flexible work organisation and the protection of employees”. The inclusion the flexicurity principle in legislation is a step forward, but very important will be the implementation of this principle in everyday practise.

(p. 15) Taking into account the recommendation of the European social partners (October 2007) as well as the fact that there is no single (nor universal) model of flexicurity, the 2008 NRP announces that a “National model of flexicurity” will be created. The aim will be to develop an environment facilitating greater competitiveness of the Slovak economy and improving the employability of employees. Long term sustainable growth should be provided mainly with a higher number and better quality of jobs, effective labour market policies, development of education and training according to the needs of the labour market via more active participation of employers and employer’s associations in the preparation of educational programmes. The important aim will be also to achieve increased employment and employability and to improve protection of persons with family duties and the effectiveness of the system of social protection of physical persons working in alternative employment-legal relationship.

27. UK – United Kingdom

(p. 1) UK employment policy is not informed by an integrated flexicurity approach beyond an uncritical and general embracing of numerical and financial flexibility. Other key elements of flexicurity – functional flexibility, contractual security, income security – are marginalized.

(p. 18) There is no explicit flexicurity policy statement informing UK employment policy; neither is there an integrated flexicurity approach embedded in the different component parts of employment policy beyond that of an uncritical and general embracing of numerical and financial flexibility. Other key elements of flexicurity – functional flexibility, contractual security, income security – are the poor relatives in the UK. As Plantenga et al (2007:74) concludes:

‘There is no developed flexicurity policy approach to labour law and social protection in the United Kingdom. Flexibility is already high and although there have been some pertinent reforms in relation to training, fixed-term contracts and part-time working these are not integrated or informed by a flexicurity framework. In addition, the gender mainstreaming of these different policy areas is rather narrow’.

Source: National Reports on 2008 NRPs (Part A and Part B).

7. GENDER EQUALITY AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN 2008 NRPs

7.1 A quantitative assessment of the role of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in 2008 NRPs

An overview of the way in which gender equality has been incorporated by Member States in the 2008 NRPs has been presented in Grid 3 and summarised in table 7.1. The reporting experts were asked to answer a list of questions with regard to gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the NRPs (excluding the employment chapter) and in the employment chapter, supplemented by some comments where relevant. The focus of this section is based on the answers provided by national experts, while section 7.2 will expand the analysis in order to take into account some of the remarks made by experts.

The attention given to gender equality infrastructures and the need for gender auditing in designing of policies appears rather insufficient (see table 7.1). First of all, as far as gender auditing and/or gender evaluation of policies is concerned, 18 Member States (of 27) have no evidence in the employment chapter (going up to 21, in the NRP), while 6 Member States have only “very limited evidence”. The remaining 3 Member States (LU, SE, SK) are the exceptions with “limited” or “good” evidence. Second, only 4 Member States (AT, DK, NL, SE) refer to the *European Pact for Gender Equality*, and only one of them (DK) has the reference in the NRP (although with no elaboration of concrete action). Thirdly, 23 Member States have no evidence of involvement of equality bodies or NGOs in the drafting of the 2008 NRPs in the employment chapter (going up to 24 in NRP). The remaining four Member States (ES, IE, LU, SI) are the exceptions.

In general, gender equality issues are explicitly considered in the employment chapter, dealing directly with female employment, while they are rarely, and only briefly, referred to in the other parts of the NRPs. Thus, references to gender are much more frequent in the employment chapter than in the other parts of NRPs. Similarly, the use of gender disaggregated statistics is much more common in the employment chapter than in the other parts of NRPs. However, the visibility of gender tends to be rather limited also in the employment chapter: only 5 NRPs (EL, LT, LU, NL, SE) have “frequent” references to gender, and only 4 NRPs (EL, ES, LU, SK) use gender disaggregated statistics in a proper way (i.e. assessed as “good” by experts). Also gender mainstreaming of policies remains under developed: only 3 NRPs (LU, SE, SK) have “good” evidence of gender mainstreaming in the employment chapter and other 8 NRPs (EE, EL, ES, IE, LT, LV, MT, NL) have “limited” evidence; for the remaining 16 countries the evidence of gender mainstreaming is “very limited” or there is “none”.

The picture becomes brighter when we turn to quantitative targets: 13 (of the 27) Member States have set national targets for women’s employment in the employment chapter and 7 Member States also refer to the female employment target in other parts of the 2008 NRPs; 8 Member States have set other gender specific targets in the employment chapter and 5 Member States have referred to them also in other parts of the 2008 NRPs; finally, 11 Member States have set national childcare targets in the employment chapter and 7 also refer to them in other parts of the 2008 NRPs. Though a true gender perspective is lacking in the 2008 NRPs, the vast majority of Member States (19 in the employment chapter, but only 10 in other parts of NRPs) has set policies to close gender gaps.

Grid 3: Gender equality and gender mainstreaming in 2008 NRPs

	AT	BE	BG	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	HU	IE
<i>References to gender in NRP in employment chapter</i>	Infreq. Some	No Some	No No	Some Some	No Infreq.	Infreq. Infreq.	Infreq. Infreq.	Infreq. Infreq.	Some Frequent	Some Some	Infreq. Infreq.	No Some	Infreq. Some	Infreq. Some
<i>Use of gender disaggregated statistics in NRP in employment chapter</i>	v. limited v. limited	None None	None v. limited	v. limited v. limited	None Limited	None None	None None	v. limited Limited	limited Good	Good Good	Limited Limited	None v. limited	v. limited v. limited	v. limited Limited
<i>Evidence of gender mainstreaming of policies in NRP in employment chapter</i>	v. limited v. limited	None None	None v. limited	v. limited v. limited	None v.limited	None None	None None	None Limited	v. limited Limited	Limited Limited	None None	None v. limited	None None	v. limited Limited
<i>Evidence of gender auditing/evaluation of policies in NRP in employment chapter</i>	None v. limited	None None	None None	v. limited v. limited	None None	None None	None None	None None	None None	Limited Limited	None None	None None	None None	None v.limited
<i>Setting of national targets for women's employment * in NRP in employment chapter</i>	No Yes	No Yes	No No	Yes Yes	No Yes	No No	No No	No No	Yes Yes	Yes Yes	No No	No No	No No	Yes Yes
<i>Any other gender specific targets * in NRP in employment chapter</i>	No No	No No	No No	No No	No No	Yes No	No No	No No	Yes Yes	No No	No No	No No	No No	Yes Yes
<i>Childcare targets * in NRP in employment chapter</i>	No Yes	Yes No	No No	Yes Yes	No No	Yes No	No No	No Yes	No No	Yes Yes	No No	No No	No No	No Yes
<i>Policies to close gender gaps ** in NRP in employment chapter</i>	No Yes	No Yes	No v. limited	Yes Yes	No No	No No	Yes Yes	No Yes	Yes Yes	Yes Yes	Yes No	No Yes	No Yes	No Yes
<i>Evidence of involvement of equality bodies/NGOs dealing with gender issues in NRP in employment chapter</i>	No No	No No	No No	No No	Not spec Not spec	Not spec Not spec	No No	No No	Not spec Not spec	Yes Yes	Not spec Not spec	No No	No No	Yes Yes
<i>Reference to CSR of PTW in NRP in employment chapter</i>	Yes Yes	Yes No	No No	Yes Yes	No No	Yes No	No No	Yes No	Yes Yes	Yes Yes	Not relev Not relev	Not relev Not relev	Yes Yes	Yes Yes
<i>Reference to European Pact for Gender Equality in NRP in employment chapter</i>	No Yes	No No	No No	No No	No No	No No	Yes Yes	No No	No No	No No	No No	No No	No No	No No

	IT	LT	LU	LV	MT	NL	PL	PT	RO	SE	SI	SK	UK
<i>References to gender in NRP in employment chapter</i>	Infreq Infreq	Some Frequent	Infreq. Frequent	Infreq. Some	Some Some	Some Frequent	No No	Infreq. Infreq.	Infreq Some	Infreq. Frequent	Infreq. Some	Infreq Infreq	Infreq some
<i>Use of gender disaggregated statistics in NRP in employment chapter</i>	Limited None	None Limited	Good Good	v. limited Some	v. limited v. limited	None Limited	v. limited v. limited	none v. limited	None v. limited	Limited Limited	v. limited v. limited	None Good	None v. limited
<i>Evidence of gender mainstreaming of policies in NRP in employment chapter</i>	None None	Limited Limited	None Good	v. limited Limited	v. limited Limited	Limited Limited	None None	v. limited v. limited	None None	Limited Good	v. limited v. limited	None Good	None v. limited
<i>Evidence of gender auditing/evaluation of policies in NRP in employment chapter</i>	None None	None None	None Good	v. limited v. limited	None None	None None	None None	v. limited v. limited	None None	v. limited Limited	None None	v. limited None	None v. limited
<i>Setting of national targets for women's employment * in NRP in employment chapter</i>	No No	No Yes	No No	Yes Yes	Yes Yes	No Yes	No No	No No	Yes Yes	No No	No No	No Yes	No No
<i>Any other gender specific targets* in NRP in employment chapter</i>	No No	No No	No No	No No	Yes Yes	No Yes	No No	No Yes	No No	Yes Yes	No Yes	No No	No Yes
<i>Childcare targets* in NRP in employment chapter</i>	Yes Yes	No Yes	No Yes	No No	Yes Yes	No No	No No	Yes No	No Yes	No No	No No	No No	No Yes
<i>Policies to close gender gaps ** in NRP in employment chapter</i>	No No	Yes Yes	No Yes	No No	Yes Yes	Yes Yes	No No	Yes Yes	No No	Yes Yes	No Yes	No No	No Yes
<i>Evidence of involvement of equality bodies/NGOs dealing with gender issues in NRP in employment chapter</i>	No No	No No	Yes Yes	No No	Not spec Not spec	No No	Not spec Not spec	Not spec Not spec	No No	No No	No Yes	Not spec Not spec	Not spec Not spec
<i>Reference to CSR of PTW in NRP in employment chapter</i>	Yes No	Yes Yes	Yes No	No No	Yes Yes	Yes Yes	Yes No	Yes not relev.	Yes Yes	Yes Yes	Yes Yes	Yes No	Yes Yes
<i>Reference to European Pact for Gender Equality in NRP in employment chapter</i>	No No	No No	No No	No No	No No	No Yes	No No	No No	No No	No Yes	No No	No No	No No

* See boxes 7.1 and 7.2 for details on quantitative targets. ** See box 7.3 for details on policies to close gender gaps. Source: National Reports (Grid 3).

Table 7.1 – Gender equality and gender mainstreaming (in 2008 NRPs) for EU27

	in NRP (excluding empl. chapter)	in employment chapter
<i>References to gender</i>		
- frequent	-	5
- some	6	12
- infrequent	16	8
- no reference	5	2
<i>Use of gender disaggregated statistics</i>		
- good	2	4
- limited	3	10
- very limited	11	9
- none	11	4
<i>Evidence of GM of policies</i>		
- good	-	4
- limited	4	7
- very limited	8	8
- none	15	8
<i>Evidence of gender auditing/ evaluation of policies</i>		
- good	-	1
- limited	1	2
- very limited	5	6
- none	21	18
<i>Setting of national targets for women's employment</i>		
- Yes	7	13
- No	20	14
<i>Any other gender specific targets</i>		
- Yes	5	8
- No	22	19
<i>Childcare targets</i>		
- Yes	7	11
- No	20	16
<i>Policies to close gender gaps</i>		
- Yes	10	19
- No	17	8
<i>Evidence of involvement of equality bodies or NGOs</i>		
- Yes	3	4
- No	24	23
<i>Reference to CSR / PTW</i>		
- Yes	21	13
- No	4	11
- not relevant	2	3
<i>Reference to European Pact for Gender Equality</i>		
- Yes	1	4
- No	26	23

Source: see Grid 3.

7.2 A critical assessment of national targets and policies to close gender gaps in 2008 NRPs

This section provides a critical assessment of the quantitative targets set in the 2008 NRPs and of policies identified at the national level to close gender gaps. Experts were asked to specify the quantitative targets set in the 2008 NRPs for women's employment, other gender specific targets and those for childcare (see box 7.1). With the exception of

only five countries (DK, FI, FR, HU, PL), the vast majority of Member States have set some quantitative targets in the 2008 NRPs. In the case of Denmark and Finland, the lack of quantitative targets directly relevant for gender equality is partly justified by the very high female employment rate, the narrow gender employment gap and the large availability of childcare services – as in these two Member States childcare is a subjective right of all children. In the case of France, Hungary and Poland, not having any target set in their 2008 NRPs, cannot be justified in a similar way; as a matter of fact, some targets were set in previous NRPs, but they have been excluded in 2008. Thus, 22 countries have set at least one national target relevant for gender equality in the 2008 NRPs. Overall there are 35 national targets, with an average of 1.3 per country.

BOX 7.1 Setting of national targets in 2008 NRPs

(A) for women's employment; (B) other gender specific targets; (C) childcare

	Description	Comments
1. AT	A. Female employment rate: plus 3 p.p. between 2007 and 2010	Unlike the previous NRP
	C. Barcelona target (33%) for children 0-3 yrs	For the first time Barcelona target mentioned; unlike the previous NRP with financial allocation
2. BE	A. Female employment rate: Lisbon target (60%), to be attained by 2010	
	C. Barcelona target (33%) for children 0-3 yrs	It is stated that in order to better organise the work/life balance, Flanders will make available an extra 50 million € to expand childcare supply, improve the status of childminders and increase the financial accessibility of childcare provisions. In the region of Brussels Capital, the focus is on increasing the number of available slots in crèches. Since 2004, 908 places have been created to which should be added 1046 new places that are already planned and financed and 1055 places that result from new projects. On the legislative side of matters, new initiatives seek to encourage firms to participate in the creation of new places in crèches. The Walloon region focuses on pulling down the cost of childcare for the unemployed. The NRP's introduction is as precise as it gets in terms of childcare, the employment chapter only very vaguely states that previous efforts will be continued in the future.
3. BG	A. Female employment rate: 54% by 2009	An <i>indicative target</i> of the NRP is to reach employment rate of 61% for all (15-64), 54% for women and 37% for older people (55-64) by 2009. The envisaged activities for the achievement of these targets are listed. It has to be underlined that all activities are new policies since this is the first NRP. Also quantitative target for 2007 is to include in employment 545 people with disabilities and to train another 40 people.
4. CY	A. Female employment rate: 63% by 2010	The national target is higher than the Lisbon target and it is very likely to be achieved although it is not clear from the report what exactly will help to increase the rate
	B. –	The NRP considers the goal to reduce the pay gap but no specific target is set. It is important that the pay gap is now acknowledged as a PTW; it was not seen as an issue in the previous NRP. It is however problematic that no specific target has been set.
	C. 90% of children (3 yrs to school age) in childcare by 2010	The target has been set (an improvement from the past NRP) but it is still not clear how this will be implemented or assessed. Several programs are indeed under way (through the Grants in Aid scheme, co-financed by the ESF).
5.	A. Female employment rate:	The national target set for 2008 is very low. In the first quarter of

CZ	57.6% for 2008	2008 the employment rate of women was 57.8%. However, it is not sure in the given economic context that the Lisbon targets for 2010 will be met as well.
6. DE	B. 200 new professorships only for women	Not mentioned in text but in serial number 8 of the list on targets.
	C. The total number of places should cover 35% of all children under 3 by 2013	Provision of child care services: legal entitlement for subsidized child care for 3 year old children until compulsory school in 1996; decision to extend all day schools in 2002; legal entitlement for subsidized child care for 1-2 years old children in 2013 is planned; the total number of places for children 1-2 years old should cover 35% of all children under 3 until 2013 (this are altogether 750,000 places for children under 3 and mean the creation of yearly 70,000 additional places).
7. DK	A. -	No specific targets for women's employment, but mentioning twice that women's employment rate is high in Denmark, and above the Lisbon target.
	B. -	Promotion of women in management: no targets set. Gender divided information on choice of education by information to schools: no targets set.
	C. -	Denmark already has full childcare guarantee from when the child is 6 month of age.
8. EE	A. -	The introductory chapter points out the high female employment rate (65.7% in 2007) which meets the Lisbon targets. The NRP 2005-2007 included target for women's employment (63.3% for 2008 and 65% for 2010).
	C. Share of children (3 yrs to school age) covered with places: 90% by 2011	Share of children (from 3 years old to school age) covered with kindergarten places (current level 89%). However, no target for care of younger children or other dependants is set.
9. EL	A. Female employment rate: 52 by 2015	Up from 47.9% in 2007.
	B. Female unemployment rate; Participation of women in ALMP; Number of women beneficiaries of reconciliation measures	a) Female unemployment rate: 12.4% by 2015 (down from 12.8% in 2007. ATTENTION! Probably mistake in figure); b) Participation of women in ALMP: 25% in 2015 (up from 17% in 2007); c) Number of women beneficiaries of reconciliation measures: 15,700 in 2015 (up from 8,300 in 2007)
10. ES	A. Female employment rate: 57% by 2010	With regard to the target on female employment rate, the 2008 Progress Report highlights positive evolution during the last year. The initial target of a 57% rate by the year 2010 seems now closer to its realisation (54.7% in 2007).
	C. -	The NRP has not defined an specific target in this matter but there are references to policies seeking the general European objective of 33% schooling rate for children aged 0-3 years old.
11. FI	A. -	The gender employment gap is very narrow in Finland. Female employment rate is well above the Lisbon target. Finland is also one the countries were the Lisbon target for old age employment has already been achieved.
	C. -	Not relevant, given every child's subjective right to day care.
12. FR	A. -	There is no information regarding respect for Lisbon quantitative targets. And yet, France has good statistical results on gender: achievement of the target of 60% employment rate for women and reduction of the unemployment gender gap.
	C. -	Just one reference at the end of the report "ensuring that each family has suitable childcare". Although the announcement of the creation of 350,000 necessary places had been made and mentioned in a big way in the previous NRP, there is no reference to it in the new NRP.
13. HU	A. -	Previous NRP set a national target for female employment rate: 53.2% for 2010, and 51.8% for 2008. The 2006 NRP brought down the original employment targets to a lower level. Well,

		actual indicator was 50.9% in 2007 (and it will be lower in 2008, because of the crisis). No new target was set in NRP 2008-10.
14. IE	A. Female employment rate: 60% by 2010.	The Lisbon/Stockholm targets for employment have already been achieved in Ireland for 2007 and are likely to be reached for 2010.
	B. Skill and education targets	Target rate for reduced rate of consistent poverty among both women and men at 2% for 2010. National Skills Strategy targeting up skilling 500,000 men and women by at least one level and increasing participation rate in upper second level education to 90% and increase progression rate to third level to 70% by 2020.
	C. Barcelona targets.	Target of 50,000 additional childcare places for 2010. Increased provision of childcare by 50,000 places over period to 2016. Stated commitment to ‘substantial progress towards meeting Barcelona targets’ of 90% childcare available to children aged 3 to school age and 33% of children aged under 3 by 2010.
15. IT	A. -	Only a generic commitment of the Government towards the raise of women employment rate, but no specific target is given.
	C. Barcelona targets.	The <i>Nursery plan</i> intends to raise up to 33% the coverage rate of services for children under 3 year by the end of 2010. But NRP does not present a strategy to reach the target. The experimental project “ <i>Sezioni primavera</i> ” intends to reach a coverage rate of educational services of 15% by the end of 2013.
16. LT	A. Female employment rate: 63.5% by 2010; employment rate of women aged 55-64: 48% by 2010	The NRP discusses several policies: integration of gender equality aspects into employment, availability of childcare, promotion of female entrepreneurship.
	C. Three targets have been set concerning childcare (to be reached by 2010)	Share of children under provision of childcare (by 2010): a) under 3 yrs of age: 10%; b) 3 yrs to school age: 70%; c) 4 yrs participating in pre-school education programmes: 65%.
17. LU	C. 35.000 places by 2015.	Concerning childcare (0-3) and the caring of school-age children outside classes, the government declared a target of 35.000 places for 2015.
18. LV	A. Female employment rate: 67% by 2010	The target set in previous NRP for 2010 was reached in 2008, therefore a new target was set.
	C. -	There is only indication of development, no information is provided on targets.
19. MT	A. Female employment rate: 40% by 2010	The target is still well below the Lisbon target. It is clear that policies are not gender mainstreamed yet.
	B. Training for women returnees	Training courses for women returnees is already in place, but presented as a target for September – December 2008 (p. 91).
	C. Childcare targets included as part of <i>Malta’s Flexicurity Pathway</i>	Between July and December 2009 measure 3.5: Explore the potential of utilizing school structures for after-school childcare (p. 92); between January and June 2010 measure 3.2: study the feasibility of deducting childcare costs (up to a capped amount equivalent to the amount permitted for tax rebate purposes) from the reckonable income used to calculate entitlement to Children’s Allowance (p. 93).
20. NL	A. Female employment rate: 65% by 2010	This target refers to the net female participation rate based on national labour force statistics (including persons with a job of at least 12 hours per week).
	B. Inflow of 50,000 women from ethnic minority groups in volunteer work.	The aim is an inflow of 50,000 women from ethnic minority groups into volunteer work. The idea is that voluntary work might, in the longer run, increase labour market opportunities.
	C. -	No reference to childcare targets; this is also less likely given the introduction of a demand-driven system. The employment chapter, however, pays attention to developments regarding childcare.
21.	A. -	NAP 2005, NRP 2005-08, and IRs 2006 and 2007 all set

PL		women's employment rate targets. In addition to women's ER, NRP 2005-08 set employment for older women rate. No explicit target for female employment is set in NRP 2008-11.
	C. -	Past documents also did not set coverage targets, but mentioned programmes and the need to increase provision.
22. PT	A. -	In the 2005-2008 NRP, it was set that female employment rate should rise up to 63%, in 2008. By now it is evident that this target will not be accomplished (it was 61.9%, in 2007), but no justification for lack of compliance. The target for rate of employment of older women disappeared.
	B. Female entrepreneurship	To support the creation of 1,059 enterprises by women, until 2010
	C. Barcelona target	References to the Barcelona targets (33% of children under 3 yrs).
23. RO	A. Female employment rate: 55% by 2010	
24. SE	A. -	The employment rate of women in Sweden is 71.8% (2007). There was no target set in 2006-2008. The Government wants to increase the employment rate, but have not set a specific target.
	B. New business started by women: 40% by 2010	Increase the percentage of new businesses started by women to 40% by 2010 (the only quantitative target set). Eliminate unjustified wage differentials between women and men within the state sector. Not as explicit in 2006-2008. The measures under the eight regional Structural Funds programmes are expected to contribute new jobs and new businesses evenly distributed between women and men.
	C. -	In Sweden 97.1% of all children between 4 and 5 years are enrolled in preschool or family day care and 77.9% of the children between 1 and 3 years. The Government proposes an expansion of the universal preschool to include three year olds.
25. SI	B. Establishment of 20 new companies by women	Establishment of 20 companies by women is the only quantitative target set. NRP declares the general aim of ensuring equal opportunities for both sexes and preventing discrimination in the labour market. There are some more specific targets such as: more balanced allotment of live for childcare and family work between both parents; reduction gender differences in unemployment, reduction of gender segregation on the labour market, but without any quantitative defined aims.
	C. -	There are no quantitative targets mentioned, but envisaged new programmes and services as well as recently adopted legislation should contribute to increase of affordability and availability of child care. Promotion of gender equality in parenting (active fatherhood).
26. SK	A. Female employment rate: 55.7% by 2011	-
27. UK	A. -	The same applied to the NRP for 2007; the aim was to reach the Lisbon female employment rate target which has been crossed. By contrast, there is a national target for the overall employment rate, for the lone parent employment rate and to increase the number of older persons in employment
	B. Lone parent employment rate: 70% by 2010	
	C. By 2010 all schools will offer extended childcare services from 8am to 6pm.	Target for expansion of Childcare Centres has been exceeded. There is a commitment to developing a nationwide network of 3,500 Sure Start Children's Centres by 2010. Some 700 of these have been established so far.

Source: National Reports on 2008 NRPs (Part B, Grid 3).

The information presented in box 7.1 is rich, diversified and not easy to disentangle as Member States differ in terms of current socio-economic conditions as well as national targets. It is reasonable to assume that national targets are affected, first of all, by the 60% Lisbon target established by the European Council for the EU27. As previously pointed out (see box 2.2), in 2007 the female employment rate was already above the 60% Lisbon target in 15 countries and below in the remaining 12 countries. Thus, we can look at national targets by distinguishing countries on the basis of their current female employment rate, i.e. above or below the 60% Lisbon target, as summarised in table 7.1.

Let's consider first the 15 countries with a female employment rate *above* 60% (table 7.1, section A). Even though the 60% target has already been reached, seven of these countries (AT, CY, IE, LT, LV, NL) have set in their 2008 NRPs a national female employment rate higher than the Lisbon target. In addition, six countries (DE, IE, NL, PT, SE, SI, UK) have set other gender specific targets; these are defined in terms of new professorships only for women in Germany, female entrepreneurship in Portugal, new business started by women in Sweden and Slovenia, lone parent employment rate in the UK, skill and education target in Ireland, voluntary work involving women from ethnic minorities in the Netherlands. Moreover, seven countries (DE, EE, PT, UK, AT, CY, IE, LT) have set a national target for childcare in their 2008 NRPs. Thus, among these 15 countries, only three (DK, FI, FR) did not set any national target concerning gender equality in 2008.

Now, let's consider the 12 Member States with a female employment rate *below* 60% (table 7.2, section B). As expected, the vast majority of these countries (BE, BG, CZ, EL, ES, MT, RO, SK) have established a national target for women's employment in their 2008 NRPs, with the only exception of 4 countries (HU, IT, LU, PL). In addition, two countries (EL, MT) have also set other gender specific targets, defined in terms of unemployment rate and participation in ALMP for Greece, in terms of training courses addressed to female returners for Malta. Moreover, five countries (IT, LU, BE, EL, MT) have set a national target for childcare. Thus, among these 12 countries, only one (PL) did not set any national target concerning gender equality in 2008.

Table 7.2 – Setting of national targets in 2008 NRPs and the 60% Lisbon target

	Without a female employment target	With a female employment target
A. Above 60% Lisbon in 2007, <i>of which:</i>	DE, DK, EE, FI, FR, PT, SE, SI, UK	AT, CY, IE, LT, LV, NL
- with other gender specific targets	DE, PT, SE, SI, UK	IE, NL
- with childcare target	DE, EE, PT, UK	AT, CY, IE, LT
B. Below 60% Lisbon in 2007, <i>of which:</i>	HU, IT, LU, PL	BE, BG, CZ, EL, ES, MT, RO, SK
- with other gender specific targets	-	EL, MT
- with childcare target	IT, LU	BE, EL, MT

Source: Box 7.1.

The comparison between the two groups of countries (above and below the 60% target) shows, as expected, that the share of countries with “other gender specific targets” is higher in group A than in group B (47% and 17%, respectively). However, it also shows that the share of countries with a “national childcare target” is higher in group A than in

group B (53%¹⁰ and 42%, respectively), despite the fact that it is in the second group of countries that lack of childcare is a serious constraint limiting female employment.

In general, the setting of quantitative targets by Governments in the NRPs is valuable. On the one hand, targets allow the assessment of progress achieved and/or to signal difficulties; on the other hand, the setting of targets should imply the adoption of policy measures aimed at reaching them. In particular, setting quantitative targets in the field of gender equality and/or childcare is important; however, it is not sufficient for effective positive developments. Comments by EGGE experts on targets identified at the national level in the field of gender equality point out some critical issues (see box 7.2). The remarks are rather interesting, suggesting a variety of problems.

It is pointed out that the focus on reaching a high female employment rate hides lack of attention to the quality of female employment (AT, DE, LT), with negative implications in terms of gender equality (occupational segregation, vertical segregation, gender pay gap, and women's emigration). Moreover, the lack of attention on the quality of female jobs in countries with high female employment rates also implies some misinterpretation on the key issue of skill shortages: the Danish expert underlines the lack of a gender perspective in the approach developed in the NRP to face the current skill shortage.

The setting of quantitative targets might also reveal some contradictions, for example: quantitative targets can be set, but with no mention of policy initiatives explicitly planned to reach the target (as is the case of Italy with childcare); a quantitative target for female employment can be set while relying on employment policies that tend to reinforce existing stereotypes, without paying attention to other gender equality issues (as is the case of the Czech Republic); a very large number of quantitative targets in the employment field can be set, but disregarding the gender perspective (as is the case of Belgium); very ambitious targets for female employment can be established in the NRP, but they appear unrealistic in the light of the current economic situation (as is signalled in the case of Greece, Spain and Ireland); finally, important targets might be reached (such as the 60% female employment rate in France), but without any mention in the NRP.

BOX 7.2: Employment targets (quantitative targets versus attention to quality of jobs)

1. AT

(p. 17) Since Austria has already met the Lisbon targets of overall employment (and female employment), the Austrian government feels no need to set any national employment targets. The fact that the ratio of women in full-time employment only amounts to about 50% is not an issue; neither is the very high (and increasing) share of female part-timers (especially of those working short hours and in low-quality jobs). Basically we can say that Austrian labour-market policies focus on the quantitative dimension of employment (in terms of reducing unemployment rates) while the **quality of employment** as well as activation measures (e.g. training) are largely ignored.

(p. 21) Unlike the previous NRP, the Austrian NRP 2008-2010 sets a national target for increasing the female employment rate: 3 p.p. between 2007 and 2010. This is already positive, since for many years the Austrian government denied the importance of setting national employment targets for women. The problem, however, is that no reference to the quality of these additional female jobs is made. Since the increase in female employment over the last years was above all due to (marginal) part-time (often of low quality) the additional question should be if this increase will be due to an increase in "bad" (marginal) part-time or "good" full-time jobs. In addition, the Austrian NRP 2008-

¹⁰ The share is much higher excluding the countries with universal childcare services (DK, FI, SE).

2010 does not mention any explicit policies to support this target.

2. BE

(pp. 26-27) National targets are set for:

- the employment rate of the total population aged 15-64 (Lisbon target): 70%
- the employment rate of the female population aged 15-64 (Lisbon target): 60%
- the employment rate of the population aged 55-64 (Stockholm target): 50%
- the average labour market exit age ≥ 62 years
- the participation of long-term unemployed in active labour market measures: 25%
- the offer of guidance to young unemployed before their 6th month of unemployment: 100%
- the offer of guidance to all adult unemployed before their 12th month of unemployment: 100%
- public childcare provisions for 0-3 yrs (Barcelona target): 33%
- the percentage of premature school leavers $\leq 10\%$
- the percentage of 20-24 year olds with a degree of higher secondary school: 85%
- participation of adults in lifelong learning (2 targets): 12.5% should participate each month in a lifelong learning programme and 1 on 2 workers should follow a training course each year.
- the unemployment rate of people of foreign nationality or origin: it should not exceed the unemployment rate of nationals

This list illustrates the inadequacy of these targets from a gender perspective. No gender dimension whatsoever is developed in these targets and as the employment chapter explains further, policies to achieve these targets are in no way disaggregated by sex.

5. CZ

(p. 10) The need to increase part-time work has been identified by Czech government and new policy has been announced. The objective is to achieve a level of part-time employment of at least 10%. The problem is that these discussions send out a clear message regarding the gender division of roles and presumably will have a negative impact on developments in the area of gender equality. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs issued a press release presenting the entire issue under the title: “Part-time Employment for Mothers with Small Children Has a Future. It should be much easier than before for mothers to return to employment from parental leave.” Employers who provide part-time employment to a parent following maternity or parental leave will be able to take advantage of a reduction of social insurance payments by 1500 CZK (about 60 EUR). Similarly, this should also apply if employers hire disabled people or people over the age of 55. According to the Minister, employers can reduce costs by hiring people in these categories and will be able to hire more people. This policy as it is formulated: (1) conserve gender stereotypes, (2) turn women into a “special” category of worker in the labour market, and (3) disadvantage those men who would like to participate in caring for children, take parental leave and then also return to the labour market.

6. DE

(p. 4) During the last years the general female *employment rate* has continued to increase, but the increase has not been accompanied by an overall increase in women’s working time. The increase in the female employment rate in the previous years is above all and in 2007 only based on more part time occupations. The increase of part time occupations goes hand in hand with an ongoing increase of marginal part time employment – predominately performed by women. Part time and marginal part time are closely connected with low wages and/or low incomes and low or no entitlements for social insurance benefits. The increase of marginal part time is one effect of the labour market reform (*Hartz-reform*) which brought predominately women into insecure employment.

(p. 7) The absolute number of employed persons has risen and the employment rate of both, men and women, has increased. The at first sight positive general developments in the labour market have been accompanied by structural changes in the labour force: slight drop of employees subject to social insurance contributions since 2000; low growth rate of full-time compared to considerable increase of traditional part-time employment as a dependent employee; ongoing increase of marginal part time employment (*mini job*); rising share of self-employment, temporary work (*Leiharbeit*) and fixed term contracts at overall employment.

The structural changes have different effects on the employment situation of men and women. During the last two years we could observe a slightly stronger increase of employment subject to

social insurance contributions for men than for women. In 2007 45% of employees subject to social insurance contributions were women. Still more female employees in the former East Germany (49%) than in the old West Germany (43%) are subject to social insurance contributions.

The vast majority of all part time employees are women. In June 2007, 3.9 million (84%) of 4.7 million dependent part time employees were female. The increase in the female employment rate in the previous years is above all and in 2007 only based on more part time occupations. At the same time, also relatively more men start working part time in 2006 and 2007 than in previous years. The part time employment patterns explain in parts the slow increase of the German overall working time volume in the last years. Compared to other EU member states Germany ranks in position 2, only the Netherlands have a higher share of part time employment. An important factor for the raising female employment rate has been the expansion of marginal part time employment since 2003. In June 2007 4.88 million persons (about 12% of all employees) were solely marginally employed, 67.5% of them were female.

7. DK

(p. 8) *Turning part-timers into full-timers.* Among the efforts of the present Danish government (supported by Danish Peoples Party) to enlarge the labour force (or just to expand the working hours) are the efforts of turning part-time employees into full-time employees, by altering the rules regarding supplementary unemployment benefit. It has been possible for employees holding a part-time job with a maximum of 29.6 hours a week to have a supplementary unemployment benefit for the remaining hours of a full time week of 37 hours, if they can leave their work without notice or be fired without notice. The supplementary unemployment benefit has now (by agreement of March 5, 2008) been limited to 30 weeks within a period of 2 years. It is possible to regain the right to a new period of supplementary benefit after 26 weeks with at least 30 hours work within 52 weeks (Ministry of Employment's homepage).

The protest from unions against the agreement (which as usual was not gender mainstreamed, in spite of the fact that all Danish laws and regulations have to be gender mainstreamed since 2000) has revealed the gender biased distribution of the use of part-time in the various sectors. The Danish Employees' association, the LO, states that many of the employees (and LO estimate that 20.000 persons will be affected by the new rules) will have no possibility of getting a full-time job. This is the case for a great number of women working in the public sector (LO's homepage). The Danish union of civil servants and salaried employees (FTF) argues, based on data from the Directorate of Employment and their own special investigation, that the use of supplementary benefit merely reflects the use of part-time in the various sectors. The data shows that about 100.000 persons had supplementary benefit from the 30th of June 2006 to the 1st July 2007. Two thirds of these were women. The investigation shows that the local and regional public sectors have many part-time employees, 24% of employees in these sectors are employed part-time with less than 30 hours a week, and within the social and health area 36% of employees are part-timers (FTF notat, 14.02.2007).

(p. 10) *Skill Shortages and segregation.* Skill shortage is not discussed as a gender problem, although skill shortage and bottlenecks are especially emerging at the most segregated parts of the Danish labour market: e.g. at the moment (in 2008) in the female dominated elder care areas and in the male dominated areas in construction and building. Former attempts to pilot women into bottleneck areas were however less successful, solutions as integration of immigrants at labour market and green cards have been introduced instead. Part of the skill shortage on the female dominated part of the labour market is due to the use of part time work – for instance in the social and health area. In fact 60% of nurses are part-timers with 28 hour a week, and it is calculated that the shortage of nurses could be met by two hours extra work by nurses with part-time jobs.

8. EE

(p. 8) As the employment of women in Estonia is already above the EU targets for 2010, increasing female participation in employment has been relatively neglected in policy development during 2006-2008. As a result there have been no specific measures implemented to increase female participation and reduce gender gaps in employment, unemployment and pay even though the problem is persistent in Estonia. Relatively more attention has been turned to the reconciliation of work and private life which also has a significant impact on women.

9. EL

(pp. 12) There are seven employment policy targets in the NRP of which three general and four gender-related. They all refer to 2015 and are the same as those of the Greek National Strategic Reference Plan 2007-2013 (NSRP), which has been approved by the European Commission for co-funding from the European Structural Funds. This is reasonable, since all the active employment policy measures that will be implemented in Greece in the following years, namely from 2008 to 2015, are included and will be funded by the NSRP.

The three general employment policy targets refer to the overall employment and unemployment rates and expenditure on active labour market policies as a percentage of GDP. All four gender-relevant employment policy targets concern women. According to the NSRP and the NRP, by 2015, the female employment rate should have reached 52%. In the same year, the rate of participation of unemployed women in active labour market policy measures ought to have risen to 25% (up from 17% in 2007) while the number of women who benefit from measures enabling the reconciliation of work and family life to 15,700 (up from 8,300 in 2007).

In our view, the female employment rate target is based on rather optimistic forecasts of the employment trend (projections for the period 2008-2010 are presented in a table of the employment chapter, section 6.3). This is because the impact of the international economic crisis on growth and employment trends was not taken into account by the authors of the NSRP, drafted some years ago when the forecasts for these trends were optimistic.

10. ES

(p. 28) With regard to the target on female employment, the 2008 Progress Report highlights positive evolution of the female employment rate during the last year. Indeed, the initial target of a 57% rate by the year 2010 seems now closer to its realisation (54.7% in 2007), although some precautions should be taken before providing forecasts for coming months, as the latest available data from the LFS showed a slight decrease during the third quarter of 2008 (from 56.02% to 55.97%). One of the aspects that should be also highlighted is the fact that the current slowdown of the Spanish economy, and more particularly the collapse of the construction sector, is negatively affecting male employment in a larger extent, as the net destruction of jobs is predominantly occurring in a highly masculinised sector. Hence, when monitoring the evolution of gender gaps, which in fact are sharply decreasing, it should be noted that a large share of the reduction is due to the destruction of male employment rather to the creation of female employment.

Policies to enhance female employment are tangentially addressed in the text of the 2008 Progress Report. The document refers to the results of the *Agreement for Better Growth and Employment*, signed in 2006 that contained incentives scheme to promote permanent contracts, highlighting the noticeable reduction of the temporality rate, but fails to disaggregate the information by sex.

11. FI

(p. 22) Both the Lisbon targets and the national targets are discussed in the NRP. The national employment rate target of 70% by the spring 2007 was achieved in the previous programme period 2005 - 2008. In 2007, the employment rate had risen to 70.3%. Prime Minister Vanhanen's second Cabinet was set to reach the employment rate of 72% during the current electoral term, i.e. to increase employment by another 80,000-100,000 jobs by 2011. As one of the very few references to gender in the NRP, it is mentioned that the female employment rate was 68.5% in 2007. However, there are no specific targets set for the female employment rate. The lack of such special gender target becomes more understandable when knowing that the employment and unemployment gap between women and men is very narrow in Finland, also when measured in full time equivalent - indeed, it is the lowest in the EU27. In any case, both of these figures - the overall employment rate as well as the female employment rate - exceed the Lisbon targets of 70% and 60%, respectively)

12. FR

(p. 24) Although France achieved, for the first time, the Lisbon target of a 60% employment rate for women, this is not recalled in the NRP. It is as if this progress in women's employment rate is not the result of an objective of French employment policy, but happened "by chance". Only the target concerning the employment of older people is mentioned, but the employment rate of older people in

France (38.3% in 2007) remains below that of the EU27 average (44.7%) and of the target
13. HU Concrete targets for the future employment rates were not set in the 2008 NRP, for neither women nor old people. The previous NRP did contain such commitments. In the Revised National Lisbon Strategy of 2006, a 53,2% female employment rate was forecasted for 2010, and 34,8% for the population above 55. These targets lag far behind those declared in the Lisbon Strategy, and yet they might actually become unrealistically high in the present economic crisis.
14. IE (p. 9) The Lisbon/Stockholm targets for employment have already been achieved in Ireland for 2007 and are likely to be reached for 2010. The current Irish employment rate is 68% (above the EU target of 67% for 2007) and on course to reach EU Target of 70% by 2010. Women's employment rate in Ireland - currently running at 61% - has already surpassed the EU target of 60% for 2010. However, since the Irish economy has fallen sharply into recession, current indications are that these positive employment rates are vulnerable and will not be sustained unless the economy emerges from recession by the middle/end of 2009.
15. IT (Grid 3) No employment targets for women are set (notwithstanding the very low female employment rate characterising Italy). A national target for childcare is set for 2010 (Barcelona target), without specifying the financial resources required for its achievement.
16. LT (p. 3) - There are a lot of positive changes in quantitative terms in gender equality in Lithuania during last years: increase of women employment level, real wages, etc. But quantitative progress of women employment in Lithuania has not yet matched in qualitative terms. Women face difficulties in reaching decision making positions. Work/life balance is one of the major differences persist women and men. Stereotypes are continued to influence equality between women and men: choices of education, training and employment, participation in domestic and family duties and representation in decision making jobs. The choice of study fields of students impacts on the gender segregation of the labour market both for occupations and economic sectors. (p. 5) Lithuania reached a 61% employment rate among women in 2006, thus exceeding the Lisbon target for 2010 by one percentage point. However, activity rates for both men and women declined between 2000 and 2006, given that unemployment rates for both men and women dropped considerably. Emigration from the country is one of the very important reasons influencing the considerable decline of unemployment in Lithuania. More women than men tend to emigrate from the country out of economical reasons (in 2005, 53% of persons leaving the country were women).
17. LU (p. 4) Most of the employment policy measures that were implemented in Luxembourg fall under the first priority "Attract and retain more people in employment". The problem for Luxembourg is not to create more jobs, but to succeed in attracting more Luxembourg people, mainly women, to the labour market.
18. LV (p. 4) Compared to other EU Member States, the overall participation rates in Latvia are rather high and in 2007 exceeded the target set for 2010 by 1.3 percentage points. Female employment rate in Latvia (64.4% in 2007) is higher than the EU average, and has exceeded the EU average by 6.1 percentage points. Male employment lagged behind the EU average in 2007, but taking into account annual increase, it achieved the EU average (72.5%) in 2007. In 2007, a new Programme for Implementation of Gender Equality 2007-2010 (PIGE 2007) was adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers. With respect to employment, the main target is to increase the female participation rate. (p. 5) Economic development in Latvia in the recent years has a positive impact on the situation of the labour market. Over the period of 2005-2007, the number of people in employment grew by 3.2% on annual average, while the unemployment rate went down. Already in 2006 all the most

relevant employment targets set for 2008 were achieved, and in 2008 the target established for female employment for 2010 was achieved.

(p. 16) Taking into account that Latvia has already reached the employment target for 2010 (defined in the Latvian National Lisbon Programme for 2005-2008), a new objective is brought forward for 2010 (in the 2008 NRP): to reach 70% employment, including 67% in female employment and 55% in employment of elderly. The chapter on employment policy includes a paragraph which mentions that Latvia still has “remarkable reserves” (p. 47) for female attraction to the labour market. It is described that women face problems to return to the labour market after the child care leave, and there is a high number of registered unemployed women (7% in 2007). The main reasons are nonflexible work organisation and lack of child care facilities.

19. MT

(pp. 18-19) The target for women’s participation in the labour market is set at 40% by 2010. The NRP states “the primary challenge in achieving this target emanates from indications that the major hurdle is a cultural one. A major obstacle is to entice middle aged and older women to return to work” (p.35). It is interesting to note that despite awareness of the situation, government fails to draw up policies to support the target. For example, an increase in maternity leave and the provision of childcare services are of no relevance to middle aged and older women. Indeed, there are no policies to encourage and support the economic activity of this particular target group of women. Nevertheless, the NRP points out “through these measures, government has shown its commitment towards providing an encouraging framework and improved support services for mothers and women returning to work” (p.35). Additionally, a part-time employment register was launched in 2008 “for women looking for part-time jobs” (p.35) and who through recent legislation are entitled to pro rata benefits and national insurance contributions. The inadequacy in the measure is obvious in that the most unused work potential is among women working part-time as it traps them into dead end jobs while reinforcing their traditional role as home makers and carers. Moreover, the NRP provides no specific pathways out of non standard work and working times, to avoid risks of long term traps and segmentation of women in disadvantaged employment forms.

(p. 20) Despite claims of good practice, Malta still lacks a coherent policy strategy aimed at encouraging women to participate in market work. For example, the 2008 NRP states that “Maltese society places a great deal of emphasis on the concept of the family, thus it is a known fact that attracting females back to the labour market is particularly challenging” (p. 15), and “mothers are the primary educators of their children, thus it is believed that these can undertake occasional remunerated educational service work that will not disrupt their family routine and child rearing” (p. 15). To my understanding, these statements in the NRP are a contradiction in terms as they go against policies of active ageing, lifelong learning, non formal and informal education, and above all gender equality, and instead encourage gender differences in earnings and women’s dependency on men. In practice, gender equality policies in Malta are based on traditional assumptions that leave the basic gendered structure of Maltese society untouched.

20. NL

(p. 3) Compared to other EU Member States, the general participation rates in the Netherlands are quite high. Moreover, the Netherlands has already reached the Lisbon target of the European Employment Strategy of 70%. In addition, the female employment rate of 69.6% is significantly higher than the Lisbon target of 60%. It has to be taken into account, though, that the employment rate is calculated in headcount. As a result of the high Dutch part-time rate the female employment rate drops significantly if calculated in full-time equivalents: from 69.6% to 44.4% in 2007. This high part-time rate has been an important reason for the European Council to give the Netherlands the CSR.

(p. 7) The policy note of the new government on emancipation is titled *More chances for women* and focuses on the period 2008-2011. With respect to employment, the main target is to increase the female participation rate, both in persons and in hours. In addition to the national target of a female participation rate of 65% in 2010, the government subscribes the ambition of the social partners with respect to participation. For women, this would imply a participation rate of 74% in 2016.

(p. 13) *Women working part-time/ Taskforce ‘Part-time Plus’ (GL 18)*. On 1 April 2008 the

Taskforce ‘Part-time Plus’ has been established for a period of two years. The target of the Taskforce is to encourage more women to work or rather to encourage women to work more hours. The taskforce emphasises that full-time employment of all women is not their ultimate goal; freedom of choice is essential in this respect. Moreover, the flexibility offered by part-time work is considered as an important asset of the Dutch labour market. An increase in the number of working hours of particularly women with small part-time jobs is therefore a more realistic goal for the Taskforce. In its activity plan the Taskforce, in addition to financial considerations, emphasises the cultural dimension of part-time work: the number of working hours is to a large extent determined by cultural beliefs. These beliefs translate into a certain company culture and become visible in the involvement of partners in the household, beliefs of friends and family and beliefs in the media with regard to ‘good motherhood’. The Taskforce wants to provide more insight into the possibilities and restrictions regarding the female participation rate in order to contribute to a cultural change. This cultural change should result in an increase in the number of working hours. The activity plan includes research, debates, pilots, information on the internet and communication. The plan focuses not only on women, but also on men, employers and other relevant actors (politicians, media, social partners etc). The budget of the Taskforce is € 5 mln (Taskforce deeltijd + 2008).

22. PT

(p. 31) In the 2005-2008 NRP, it was settled that the rate of female employment should rise up to 63%, in 2008. By now it is evident that this target will not be accomplished (it was 61.9%, in 2007), but we can’t find in the document any justification for lack of compliance. The target for rate of employment of older women disappeared.

25. SI

(p. 26) The 2008 NRP does not set any specific (quantitative) gender related national targets, rather it refers to a general target of “ensuring opportunities for both sexes and preventing discrimination in the labour market”. This target is to be applied “horizontally across all measures” (pp. 34).

(pp. 27-28) Compared to the last NRP, this year’s document pays less attention to the main strategic documents related to gender equality namely the *Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men* and the *Periodic Plan for 2008-2009*. The 2008 NRP does not report comprehensively on the positive developments and achievements based on the aims defined by the resolution. However, all the gender equality related measures that are envisaged and mentioned in the NRP are well oriented and have positive potential for gender equality. Considerable attention is paid – both in the document and in policies and measures - to the problem of reconciliation of work and family life, which is positive, especially as overcoming of existing stereotypes concerning gender roles is taken into consideration. Additional attention needs to be paid in future to overcoming differences in division of other unpaid domestic family work besides care work. It is very positive that some gender related problems (such as sexual and other violence) got the attention in the policies and the NRP.

It would be needed to set more gender specific and preferably quantitative targets concerning still existing gender related problems and to use and to report on envisaged monitoring mechanisms on planned policies and measures. In that way it would be easier to evaluate existing measures and modify them in order to better answer the existing employment and gender equality challenges.

26. SK

(p. 16) One of the quantitative target defined in the 2008 action plan is concerned with the female employment rate. It is established to increase the employment rate of women aged 15-64 by 2.6 p.p. in comparison with the average rate in 2007. However, it will be difficult to achieve this aim; to succeed, this quantitative target has to be interconnected with the adoption of special measures focused on women. Horizontal segregation still persists in education as well in professional orientation of women, resulting in deep gender imbalances by sectors of economy. The share of girls and young women studying technical schools is very low. According to the OECD-PISA survey of knowledge and skills of 15 year old students as well as according to actual research findings, the skills of girls, particularly in mathematics, are insufficiently developed. The situation is very similar in tertiary education and results in visible gender imbalances among the students by disciplines. The overall share of students and graduates in technical programmes of studies in Slovakia is lower than

in other countries and particularly very low is the share of women. Nevertheless, the problem of unfavourable educational structure by field of study is a general problem and it concerns not only women.

27. UK

(p. 18) The government has an 80% employment rate for the working age population. The policy approach to achieve this target is focused on the supply-side of the labour market, in particular on ALMP (activation programmes, tax/benefit reform) to move those on benefits into work. In the last couple of years more attention has been given to lifelong learning, but this is still focussed primarily on raising the skill levels of low-skilled workers and the non-employed rather than re-skilling at multiple points in the life course. There are also several developments which are compatible with the emergence of a life course perspective on employment (policies for older people, reconciliation measures), but other elements – such as promoting healthy working conditions, the particular reconciliation (elder care, grand children) and flexibility needs of older workers – are virtually absent.

The employment guidelines state that “the quality of jobs (pay and benefits, working conditions, access to lifelong learning and career prospects) are crucial for a flexicurity approach”. This aspect of employment policy remains narrowly subordinated to the emphasis on moving those on benefit into work, rather than considering job quality for a larger portion of the workforce, of which the gender pay gap is a key concern for women.

The main thrust of policies to raise the employment rate for women – as opposed to specific groups of women such as lone parents – is on childcare policies and flexible working. A major problem is that motherhood typically steers women into part-time employment, much of which is low-paid and poor quality. While there have been some measures to improve the quality of part-time work (e.g. the employee ‘right to request’; a fund to encourage positive workplace innovation; improvements in the National Minimum Wage) what is lacking is a concerted and systematic focus which included action to reign in the long working hours which are expected in many workplaces. This ‘organisational culture’ of long working hours fuels segmentation between full-timers and part-timers and prevents transitions between the two across the life-course - which runs counter to the ethos of flexicurity.

(pp. 24-25) In the discussion of employment policy the 2008 NRP reports a few quantified employment rate targets. It states that the government target is to secure an overall employment rate in excess of 80%. To contribute to this goal there is a target to get one million more older workers to remain in, or re-enter employment; to reduce the number of Incapacity Benefit claimants by one million from 2005 levels and an indirect reference to the previously announced government target of a 70% lone parent employment rate by 2010 (paragraph 5.26). There is also a related target to get 250,000 disadvantaged people into work by 2010 via the ‘City Strategy’ and another for the full participation of young people in employment, education or training: all 16 year-olds by 2013 and all 17 year-olds by 2015 (specified in the introductory chapter of the NRP).

The employment chapter notes that the UK is one of the few Member States which has already exceeded the Lisbon employment targets; and records that in July 2008 the overall employment rate was 74.9%, the female employment rate had reached 70.3% and the rate for older workers (aged over 50 to State Pension Age) was 70.3%. In order to raise the employment rate certain disadvantaged target groups are identified for measures to increase their employment rate: lone parents, ethnic minorities, older workers, those with the lowest qualifications, and residents of local authority (municipal) wards (small areas) with poor labour market positions. There is no female employment rate target.

The analysis implies a degree of government complacency with the female employment rate for the gender gap in employment rates is no longer a focal point now that the head count employment rate for women has crossed the Lisbon target. There are two problems with this approach to target setting. Firstly, the NRP lacks a discussion as to whether a full-time equivalent employment rate might be more suitable for monitoring gender gaps in employment given the high rate of female part-time employment. Secondly, although some women are targeted via the focus on lone parents (given that they account for more than 90% of all lone parents) there is no assessment of the gender gaps in employment rates discussed in relation to the other targeted disadvantaged groups. Some of

this assessment has taken place outside of the NRP, for example in relation to ethnic minority groups, but the fact that it is not reported here is perhaps indicative of the lack of importance attached to such gender gaps. Yet it is unlikely that the overall employment rate target will be reached without a concerted mobilisation of women as well as men because the employment rate of women is lower than that for men in most, if not all, of the target disadvantaged groups.

Source: National Reports on 2008 NRPs (Part A and Part B).

Experts were asked to specify policy measures explicitly considered in the 2008 NRPs to close existing gender gaps. Box 7.3 presents a list of these policies, together with a synthetic description. There are 8 Member States (CZ, DE, EE, HU, LV, PL, RO, SK) that do not explicitly consider policies to close gender gaps in their NRPs; the lack of specific policies is surprising in the case of those countries that have set a national target for the female employment rate (CZ, LV, RO, SK). All of the other 19 Member States present policy measures explicitly focused on gender. The focus is on only one key issue in 11 countries (AT, BG, DK, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, MT, NL, UK), but on more than one in 8 countries (BE, CY, EL, LT, LU, PT, SE, SI). It is interesting to look at the areas of intervention of those policy measures identified by Member States in the 2008 NRPs. The area receiving the greatest attention is the *gender pay gap*: it is explicitly considered by 11 countries (AT, BE, CY, DK, EL, FI, FR, IE, LU, SE, UK). The enhancement of *female employment* is explicitly considered by 8 countries (CY, EL, ES, IT, LU, NL, PT, BG). *Gender segregation* (including desegregation in education) is addressed by 5 countries (BE, EL, PT, SE, SI) and *female entrepreneurship* by 4 (LT, PT, SE, SI). Other areas of intervention include women returners (LT) and the unemployment gender gap (SI).

BOX 7.3: Policies to close gender gaps in 2008 NRPs

	Description	Comments
1. AT	Gender pay gap	Measures almost the same as in the previous NRP
2. BE	Gender segregation, Gender pay gap	<i>Policies to tackle gender segregation</i> : neutral designation of occupations and short traineeships to allow young girls to become acquainted with male-dominated professions. <i>Policies to tackle the gender wage gap</i> : annual report to follow up this gap and set forth policy recommendations, reform job classification systems. <i>Policies to tackle horizontal segregation</i> : “Femmes de la construction”, project to attract more women into construction in the Walloon region.
3. BG	Employment rate of women aged over 55	Measures to promote employment and reintegration of women aged over 55.
4. CY	Gender pay gap female employment	Female employment was considered in the previous NRP but not the gender pay gap. This can be considered an improvement. However, measures to narrow the gender pay gap are not explicitly addressed.
5. CZ	-	No policies to close gender gaps are mentioned in the 2008 NRP.
6. DE	-	A sentence saying that “existing differences which women face in their professional careers and gender-specific pay differences are to be further reduced” (paragraph 81) is included!
7. DK	Gender pay gap	The first equal pay statistics to be published in autumn 2008.
8. EE	-	There are some measures (e.g. childcare, flexible work) that may close gender gaps. However, they are not explicitly targeted to closing gaps.
9. EL	Female employment, gender pay gap, desegregation in employment	The NRP reports on the progress of past or on-going concrete policies/measures. In the paragraph on forthcoming policy measures there is a declaration of intent to continue and intensify targeted and integrated ALMPs to close the gaps in employment and pay, further desegregate

		occupations by gender and increase women's employment availability.
10. ES	Female employment	Gender gaps are not explicitly address in the NRP, but some of the measures, especially concerning the enhancement of female employment rate, are indirectly pointing in that direction.
11. FI	Gender pay gap	Equal pay programme targeted to reduce gender pay gap from the present 20% to 15% is mentioned, but very shortly.
12. FR	Gender pay gap	-
13. HU	Gender pay gap	There are no specific policies to close the gender pay gap or address segregation.
14. IE	Gender pay gap	Stated commitment to research and policy review the gender pay gap
15. IT	Female employment	There is only a generic commitment of the Government towards the raise of female employment rate.
16. LT	Female entrepreneurship; Women returners and elderly women	Promoting entrepreneurship of women, analysis and dissemination information about success stories of businesswomen; organisation of training (information days) for businesswomen. Organisation of training for women coming back to the labour market after a long break and elderly women to encourage them to work.
17. LU	Female employment; Gender pay gap	Action Plan of social partners, Classification of functions
18. LV	-	There are no specific policies to close gender gaps.
19. MT	Female employment	(1) Training courses for women returnees; (2) <i>Employment Aid Programme</i> for disadvantaged groups among whom are inactive women (co-funded by the European Social Fund to be launched at the end of 2008); (3) a <i>Gender Equality Programme</i> to raise awareness about gender equality, work and family life (to be launched in 2009). It will include themes such as flexibility at work, overcoming gender stereotypes, sharing of family responsibilities. It aims to target inactive women, lone parents, registered unemployed women, and employers. Besides the measures already introduced, policies to make work more attractive and indirectly close the gender gap in employment will include plans to introduce further reforms in the taxation framework: revision of income tax rates; thresholds will be raised (p.38).
20. NL	Female employment	Dutch policies have a strong focus on increasing the participation rates in persons and in number of working hours.
21. PL	-	No policies to close gender gaps are mentioned in the NRP 2008-11. IR 2006 vaguely mentioned narrowing retirement income gap; IR 2007 mentioned programme Active Woman 50+ aimed at increasing employment (indirectly narrowing employment gap).
22. PT	Female employment; female entrepreneurship; desegregation in employment	The main policies aiming to contribute to increase women's employment are the increasing of care services for the children, the elderly and the disabled, and the support to female entrepreneurship; meanwhile there are references to the repository of gender equality measures in the domains of labour and employment measures launched some time ago to combat sex segregation of labour market.
23. RO	-	No policies to close gender gaps are mentioned in the implementation report 2008.
24. SE	Female entrepreneurship; gender pay gap	Increase the percentage of new businesses started by women to 40% by 2010. Eliminate unjustified wage differentials between women and men within the state sector. Not as explicit in 2006-2008.
25. SI	Female entrepreneurship; desegregation in education; unemployment gender gap	Policies directed to increase of women entrepreneurs, reduction of educational segregation, reduction of unemployment gender gap
26. SK	-	No policies to close gender gaps are mentioned in the 2008 NRP.

27. UK	Gender pay gap	Key initiatives: a) <i>public sector gender duty</i> which includes ensuring compliance with the Equal Pay law and has triggered initiatives in many parts of the public sector, including employment terms in private sector contractors via procurement guidelines; b) upgrading of <i>national minimum wage</i> ; c) <i>Public Service Agreement</i> target to raise the number of large employers conducting Equal Pay Reviews to 45% by 2008
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Source: National Reports on 2008 NRPs (Part B, Grid 3).

7.3 A quantitative assessment of NRP coverage of policy initiatives, GM and expected GIA by priority area in Member States

National experts were asked to provide an assessment of employment policies considered in the 2008 NRPs in the four policy priority areas (as specified in fig. 4.1). For any given policy initiative, they had to specify the *NRP coverage of the policy initiative*, distinguishing between “not in NRP, but discussed by expert”; “in NRP and discussed by expert”; “in NRP, but not discussed by expert”. They also had to specify if *gender mainstreaming* of the policy initiative was included in the NRP (simply saying yes or no). Finally, they had to provide a *gender impact assessment* of the policy initiative (saying if the impact was negative, neutral or positive according to the information available and/or their own judgement). Grid 4 reports some quantitative information on employment policies in Member States, based on the national experts’ assessment of 2008 NRPs.

For EU27, the total number of policy measures considered by national experts (see Grid 4) is rather large: 420, with an average of 15.5 policies per country. Of these policy initiatives, 11.7% were considered by EGGE experts in their pre-assessment (Part A of national reports) but not included in the 2008 NRPs; 62.8% were considered both by experts and explicitly mentioned in the NRPs; finally, 25.5% were discussed in the 2008 NRPs, but not by experts in their pre-assessment. Two clarifications are required to avoid possible misunderstanding in analysing the NRP coverage of policy initiatives.

First, not all policy initiatives discussed by national experts in Part A of their reports (and counted in Grid 2) have been explicitly included by EGGE experts in their quantitative assessment of the 2008 NRPs (i.e. counted in Grid 4, column 1) for different reasons. In particular, experts had to adjust their presentation of policy initiatives to changes in the format of the NRP (where this occurred, it called for the grouping of some policy measures, previously presented separately) and/or changes in the employment strategy developed by Governments (because of a radical reformulation of employment policies, as occurred in Bulgaria¹¹, or of a change in the political coalition in power, as occurred in Italy). Grid 2 (see chapter 4, above) shows that 357 employment policy initiatives have been considered (for EU27) by experts in Part A of their national reports. Grid 4 (below) reports 313 policies for EU27: 49 policies “discussed by experts in Part A, but not in NRP” (column 1) and 264 policies “discussed by experts in Part A and in NRP” (column 2). The difference between the two figures (i.e. policies discussed in Part A but not included in Grid 4, column 1) is relatively small (only 44 policies), by and large explained by some reformulation of policy initiatives.

¹¹ 23 policy measures were considered by the Bulgarian national expert in Part A (on the basis of previous NRP). The employment strategy was completely reformulated in order to respond to the Council recommendations. Hence, the 2008 NRP presents 14 new policies.

Second, the 2008 NRPs include 107 policies that were not discussed by EGGE experts in their pre-assessment. For the most part these are really “new” policies, not made public at the time of writing the pre-assessment (August 2008). However, it might also include policies that were already in force, but that experts did not consider, for example because of their marginal role. We do not have sufficient information to distinguish within this group of policies. Therefore, for the sake of simplicity, we refer to all these 107 policies as “new” (though some of them are not really new).

There are substantial differences across countries in terms of number of employment policies explicitly considered in the 2008 NRPs (see Grid 4, columns 2 and 3). For the European Union as a whole (EU27), there are 371 policies in the 2008 NRPs (of which 107 are to be considered as “new”) with an average of 13.7 policy measures per country. We can group countries as follows:

- ♦ *up to 10 policy measures* in 11 countries: CY (9, 1 new), CZ (10, 3 new), EE (8, 1 new), FR (8, 2 new), IE (10, 2 new), IT (9, 3 new), LT (7, 2 new), MT (9, 1 new), NL (8, 1 new), PL (9, no new policies), SK (5, 2 new);
- ♦ *between 11 and 15 policy measures* in 9 countries: BG (14, all new), DE (12, 4 new), DK (12, 2 new), EL (11, 4 new), FI (14, 3 new), LV (11, 1 new), PT (12, 2 new), RO (13, 6 new), SI (13, no new policies);
- ♦ *over 15 policy measures* in 7 countries: AT (17, 2 new), BE (25, 15 new), LU (18, 4 new), ES (33, 6 new), HU (35, 14 new), SE (24, 5 new), UK (17, 7 new).

The number of “new” policies increases as we move from the first group (18 in total, 1.6 on average) to the second group (36 in total, 4 on average), and to the third group (53 in total, 7.6 on average).

Given the rather large overlap between the policy measures considered by experts in their pre-assessment and those considered in the 2008 NRP we should expect similar outcomes in terms of distribution of policies across the four policy priority areas, gender mainstreaming and gender impact assessment.

Table 7.3 shows that the distribution of the policy initiatives considered in the pre-assessment (as summarised in Grid 2) by priority area is not dissimilar from the distribution of the policy initiatives considered in the NRP assessment (as summarised in Grid 4), though the distribution of what we called “new” policies shows a higher share of policy initiatives in priority area 3 (i.e. investment in human capital).

Tab. 7.3 The employment policy initiatives discussed by EGGE experts by priority area

	Policies considered in Grid 2		Policies considered in Grid 4			
	N.	% Total policies	N.	% Total policies	% in NRP (excl. new)	% new in NRP
Priority area 1	157	44.0	183	43.6	45.8	40.2
Priority area 2	76	21.3	84	20.0	22.0	15.0
Priority area 3	76	21.3	93	22.1	18.6	32.7
Priority area 4	48	13.4	60	14.3	13.6	12.1
Total	357	100,00	420	100,00	100	100
(n.)				(420)	(251)	(93)

Source: Grid 2 and Grid 4.

The overall assessment in terms of *gender mainstreaming* of the 385 policy initiatives discussed by EGGE experts in Part B of national reports is rather unsatisfactory: only 31.7% of all policies have some gender mainstreaming. The review by country (see Grid 4 for details) tends to confirm, with few exceptions, what we found on the basis of the pre-assessment (see Grid 2 and section 4.3). Finally, the overall evaluation of the 385 employment policies in terms of *gender impact assessment* shows a better picture than that outlined on the basis of the pre-assessment (see Grid 2): about 42% (instead of 32%) of all policies considered record a positive impact; another 34.5% (instead of 46%) of policies have a “neutral” impact, that is they leave unchanged existing gender inequalities, while another 12.7% (instead of 14%) of policies have a negative impact, that is they tend to reinforce existing inequalities¹².

¹² The results do not sum to 100 due to the lack of information on GIA for 42 policies (11%).

GRID 4: Summary of NRP coverage of policy initiatives, GM and expected GIA by priority area in Member States

	POLICIES (n.)	NRP coverage of the policy initiative			GENDER MAINSTREAMING of the policy initiative			GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT				REMARKS
		1	2	3	Yes	No	Na	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Na	
1. AT												There are 2 new policy initiatives (in NRP) both with an expected positive gender impact: a) permanent monitoring of the gender pay gap; b) the setting of a national employment target to increase the female employment rate (by 3 p.p. between 2007 and 2010). GM in NRP: low (24%) GIA: mainly positive (47%)
1. attract more p.	10	-	9	1	3	7	-	2	3	5	-	
2. adaptability	4	-	4	-	-	4	-	2	1	1	-	
3. investment in hc	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	
4. flexicurity	2	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	
Total policies (n.)	17	-	15	2	4	13	-	4	5	8	-	
% distribution	100	-	88	12	24	76	-	24	29	47	-	
2. BE												15 (out of 25) policy initiatives are new. All of the new policies are not gender mainstreamed (also lack of details in the NRP) and the expected gender impact is unclear. GM in NRP: very low (8%) GIA: mainly neutral (36%) or positive (24%)
1. attract more p.	15	-	10	5	1	14	-	3	5	4	3	
2. adaptability	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	
3. investment in hc	6	-	-	6	1	5	-	-	4	1	1	
4. flexicurity	3	-	-	3	-	3	-	-	-	1	2	
Total policies (n.)	25	-	10	15	2	23	-	4	9	6	6	
% distribution	100	-	40	60	8	92	-	16	36	24	24	
3. BG												All 14 policy initiatives are new, only 1 of which is gender mainstreamed, i.e. policy aimed at increasing employment of people aged 55-64, which would contribute to the decrease in gender employment gap especially for women aged over 50 years. GM in NRP: very low (7%) GIA: mainly neutral (71%)
1. attract more p.	6	-	-	6	1	5	-	-	2	4	-	
2. adaptability	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	
3. investment in hc	5	-	-	5	-	5	-	-	5	-	-	
4. flexicurity	2	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	
Total policies (n.)	14	-	-	14	1	13	-	-	10	4	-	
% distribution	100	-	-	100	7	93	-	-	71	29	-	
4. CY												Only 1 policy measure discussed by expert, but not considered in the NRP: new law on part-time work. Only 1 new policy initiative (in NRP): New Modern Apprenticeship Scheme. GM in NRP: relatively high (60%) GIA: mainly positive (50%)
1. attract more p.	3	-	3	-	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	
2. adaptability	2	-	2	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	1	
3. investment in hc	2	-	1	1	-	2	-	-	1	-	1	
4. flexicurity	3	1	2	-	1	2	-	-	1	2	-	
Total policies (n.)	10	1	8	1	6	4	-	1	2	5	2	
% distribution	100	10	80	10	60	40	-	10	20	50	20	

5. CZ													
1. attract more p.	7	1	4	2	-	7	-	5	-	1	1	Only 1 policy measure discussed by expert, but not considered in the NRP: equality for fathers taking care of their child from 6 weeks of age. 3 new policy initiatives (in NRP): childcare services as an entrepreneurial activity; paternity leave (7 paid days); gender equality in education and science. GM in NRP: very low (9%) GIA: mainly negative (55%)	
2. adaptability	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-		
3. investment in hc	3	-	2	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	3		
4. flexicurity	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Total policies (n.)	11	1	7	3	1	10	-	6	-	1	4		
<i>% distribution</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>36</i>		
6. DE													
1. attract more p.	4	-	3	1	1	2	1	2	-	1	1	4 new policy initiatives (in NRP): reducing unemployment insurance contribution; unemployment insurance; national integration plan for migrants; employment services for long-term unemployment. GM in NRP: low (25%) GIA: mainly negative (50%)	
2. adaptability	3	-	2	1	-	3	-	2	-	-	1		
3. investment in hc	3	-	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-		
4. flexicurity	2	-	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	-	-		
Total policies (n.)	12	-	8	4	3	7	2	6	2	2	2		
<i>% distribution</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>16</i>		
7. DK													
1. attract more p.	5	-	3	2	-	5	-	3	2	-	-	1 policy measures discussed by expert, but not considered in the NRP. 2 new policy initiatives (in NRP): lower tax on labour; Job Scheme to increase the labour supply (seniors, persons with reduced working capacity; qualified foreign labour) GM in NRP: none GIA: mainly uncertain (58%)	
2. adaptability	3	-	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	3		
3. investment in hc	4	-	4	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	4		
4. flexicurity	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-		
Total policies (n.)	13	1	10	2	-	13	-	4	2	-	7		
<i>% distribution</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>77</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>54</i>		
8. EE													
1. attract more p.	3	1	2	-	2	1	-	-	-	3	-	Only 1 policy measure discussed by expert, but not considered in the NRP: extending parental benefit and improving the access of fathers Only 1 new policy initiative (in NRP): raise the awareness of different options for arranging flexible work relations. GM in NRP: moderate (44%) GIA: mainly positive (67%)	
2. adaptability	2	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	2		
3. investment in hc	3	-	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	3	-		
4. flexicurity	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1		
Total policies (n.)	9	1	7	1	4	5	-	-	-	6	3		
<i>% distribution</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>78</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>33</i>		
9. EL													
1. attract more p.	10	1	5	4	3	7	-	2	-	4	4	2 policy measures discussed by expert, but not considered in the NRP. 4 new policy initiatives: “one start - one opportunity” scheme; youth entrepreneurship; free childcare services to foster women’s empl.; subsidies to firms for employing unemployed > 45 yrs. GM in NRP: low (20%) GIA: mainly positive (40%)	
2. adaptability	2	1	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2		
3. investment in hc	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-		
4. flexicurity	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Total policies (n.)	13	2	7	4	3	10	-	2	-	5	6		
<i>% distribution</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>45</i>		

10. ES												7 policy measure discussed by expert, but not considered in the NRP.
1. attract more p.	10	2	7	1	6	4	-	-	5	5	-	6 new policy initiatives: Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration; microcredit for women entrepreneurship; Programme “Campus of International Excellence”; Strategic Plan for Professional Training; minimum wage; social dialogue. GM in NRP: low (35%) GIA: mainly neutral (52%)
2. adaptability	6	1	4	1	4	2	-	-	3	3	-	
3. investment in hc	11	1	8	2	2	8	1	-	6	4	1	
4. flexicurity	13	3	8	2	2	11	-	1	7	5	-	
Total policies (n.)	40	7	27	6	14	25	1	1	21	17	1	
% distribution	100	17	68	15	35	62	3	3	52	42	3	
11. FI												4 policy measure discussed by expert, but not considered in the NRP.
1. attract more p.	6	1	4	1	2	3	1	-	2	3	1	3 new policy initiatives (in NRP): to improve study placement, to increase early start in universities, to accelerate graduation; vocational adult education reform project; education measures for immigrants. GM in NRP: low (33%) GIA: mainly positive (56%)
2. adaptability	8	3	5	-	4	2	2	-	-	6	2	
3. investment in hc	3	-	1	2	-	2	1	-	2	1	-	
4. flexicurity	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	
Total policies (n.)	18	4	11	3	6	7	5	-	4	10	4	
% distribution	100	22	61	17	33	39	28	-	22	56	22	
12. FR												2 new policy initiatives (in NRP): reinforcing the obligation to negotiate on pay inequalities at sector/company-levels; reinforcing access to life-long training.
1. attract more p.	3	-	3	-	1	2	-	2	-	1	-	GM in NRP: low (25%) GIA: evenly distributed across negative, neutral and positive impact
2. adaptability	2	-	1	1	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	
3. investment in hc	2	-	1	1	-	2	-	-	1	1	-	
4. flexicurity	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	
Total policies (n.)	8	-	6	2	2	6	-	3	2	3	-	
% distribution	100	-	75	25	25	75	-	37	25	38	-	
13. HU												14 policy initiatives in NRP but not discussed by expert in Part A: reform of social allowance system; contribution allowance in disadvantaged micro-regions; empl. of disadvantaged people; re-organisation of casual work into permanent employment; strengthening labour inspection; minimum wage regulation; training.
1. attract more p.	14	4	7	3	5	9	-	1	7	6	-	GM in NRP: low (37%) GIA: mainly positive (45%) and neutral (43%)
2. adaptability	9	-	4	5	4	5	-	1	3	4	1	
3. investment in hc	11	4	2	5	4	7	-	-	5	6	-	
4. flexicurity	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	
Total policies (n.)	35	8	13	14	13	22	-	3	15	16	1	
% distribution	100	23	37	40	37	63	-	9	43	45	3	
14. IE												2 new policy initiatives: Expanding the Workforce support process focused on women returnees based on needs assessment; OECD review of Irish activation policies.
1. attract more p.	5	-	3	2	3	-	2	-	-	4	1	GM in NRP: moderate (50%) GIA: mainly positive (70%)
2. adaptability	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	
3. investment in hc	2	-	2	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	
4. flexicurity	2	-	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	
Total policies (n.)	10	-	8	2	5	3	2	-	2	7	1	

<i>% distribution</i>	100	-	80	20	50	30	20	-	20	70	1		
15. IT													8 policy measures discussed by expert, but not considered in the NRP.
1. attract more p.	7	4	2	1	7	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	3 new policy initiatives: complementary childcare services for children 2-3 yrs; continuous training (financed by Law 236/93); reform of education. GM in NRP: high (65%) GIA: mainly positive (65%)
2. adaptability	5	1	3	1	3	2	-	-	2	3	-	-	
3. investment in hc	2	-	1	1	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	
4. flexicurity	3	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	
Total policies (n.)	17	8	6	3	11	6	-	1	5	11	-	-	
<i>% distribution</i>	100	47	35	18	65	35	-	6	29	65	-	-	
16. LT													1 policy measure discussed by expert, but not considered in the NRP: research on national flexicurity.
1. attract more p.	4	-	3	1	4	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	2 new policy initiatives (in NRP): integration of gender equality aspects in employment policy; project for broadening the range of choice of study (students 14-19 yrs). GM in NRP: high (88%) GIA: mainly positive (88%)
2. adaptability	2	-	2	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	
3. investment in hc	2	1	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	
4. flexicurity	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total policies (n.)	8	1	5	2	7	1	-	-	1	7	-	-	
<i>% distribution</i>	100	12	63	25	88	12	-	-	12	88	-	-	
17. LU													4 new policy initiatives: introduction of a cheque service system for childcare access for households in risk of poverty; promoting access to education and LLL; promoting scholar success to reduce number of students leaving prematurely school; promoting teaching competences.
1. attract more p.	7	-	6	1	3	4	-	-	4	3	-	-	GM in NRP: low (17%) GIA: mainly neutral (44%) or positive (44%)
2. adaptability	6	-	6	-	-	6	-	1	1	4	-	-	
3. investment in hc	3	-	-	3	-	3	-	-	2	-	1	-	
4. flexicurity	2	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	
Total policies (n.)	18	-	14	4	3	15	-	1	8	8	1	-	
<i>% distribution</i>	100	-	78	22	17	83	-	6	44	44	6	-	
18. LV													1 new policy initiative: "Supported employment measures to target unemployed" (2008-2013). GM in NRP: none. GIA: neutral (100%)
1. attract more p.	6	-	5	1	-	6	-	-	6	-	-	-	
2. adaptability	2	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	
3. investment in hc	2	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	
4. flexicurity	2	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	
Total policies (n.)	12	-	11	1	-	12	-	-	12	-	-	-	
<i>% distribution</i>	100	-	92	8	-	100	-	-	100	-	-	-	
19. MT													3 policy measures discussed by expert, but not considered in the NRP: redeployment schemes assist long-term unemployed and over 40s; equal treatment to protect against racial/ ethnic discrimination; education reform agreement.
1. attract more p.	5	2	3	-	1	4	-	-	3	1	1	-	1 new policy initiative (in NRP): flexicurity pathway.
2. adaptability	3	-	3	-	1	2	-	3	-	-	-	-	
3. investment in hc	3	1	2	-	-	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	
4. flexicurity	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	
Total policies (n.)	12	3	8	1	2	10	-	3	7	1	1	-	

<i>% distribution</i>	100	25	67	8	16	84	-	25	59	8	8	
20. NL												GM in NRP: low (16%) GIA: mainly neutral (59%)
1. attract more p.	9	2	6	1	8	1	-	-	3	6	-	4 policy measures discussed by expert, but not considered in the NRP: Vazalo Act (supporting lone parents' empl.); training obligation for lone parents on social assistance; targets with respect to human capital; Act on Flexibility and Security (evaluation). 1 new policy is announced: "Talent to the top".
2. adaptability	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	
3. investment in hc	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	
4. flexicurity	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	
Total policies (n.)	12	4	7	1	8	4	-	-	6	6	-	GM in NRP: high (67%) GIA: neutral (50%) or positive (50%)
<i>% distribution</i>	100	33	59	8	67	33	-	-	50	50	-	
21. PL												3 policy measures discussed by expert, but not considered in the NRP: lower social security contributions for parents; temporary relief from social security contributions for self-employed; flexible and secure contracts. GM in NRP: very low (8%) GIA: mainly positive (93%)
1. attract more p.	3	-	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	3	-	2 policy measures discussed by expert, but not considered in the NRP: all specialities of the armed forces open to women; adaptability of enterprises and worker's reconciliation of work and family life. 1 new policy initiatives: creation of the 'Equality Portal'
2. adaptability	3	2	1	-	1	2	-	-	2	1	-	
3. investment in hc	2	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	1	1	-	
4. flexicurity	4	1	3	-	-	4	-	1	-	3	-	
Total policies (n.)	12	3	9	-	1	11	-	1	3	8	-	GM in NRP: relatively high (57%) GIA: mainly positive (93%)
<i>% distribution</i>	100	25	75	-	8	92	-	8	25	67	-	
22. PT												1 policy measure discussed by expert, but not considered in the NRP. 6 new policy initiatives: transition from school to work; youth employment; improve quality of PES; lifelong vocational training; part-time work in post-retirement phase; services for the reinsertion in the labour market. GM in NRP: low high (28%) GIA: mainly neutral (86%)
1. attract more p.	3	1	2	-	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	1 policy measure discussed by expert, but not considered in the NRP. 6 new policy initiatives: transition from school to work; youth employment; improve quality of PES; lifelong vocational training; part-time work in post-retirement phase; services for the reinsertion in the labour market. GM in NRP: low high (28%) GIA: mainly neutral (86%)
2. adaptability	6	-	4	2	4	2	-	-	-	6	-	
3. investment in hc	3	-	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	2	1	
4. flexicurity	2	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	
Total policies (n.)	14	2	10	2	8	6	-	-	-	13	1	GM in NRP: relatively high (57%) GIA: mainly positive (93%)
<i>% distribution</i>	100	14	72	14	57	43	-	-	-	93	7	
23. RO												All policy measures discussed by expert are considered in the NRP. 5 new policy initiatives: reduction of social security contributions/ payroll tax for 18-25 yrs old; women to start businesses; rehabilitation chain; free preschool also
1. attract more p.	4	-	1	3	-	4	-	-	4	-	-	All policy measures discussed by expert are considered in the NRP. 5 new policy initiatives: reduction of social security contributions/ payroll tax for 18-25 yrs old; women to start businesses; rehabilitation chain; free preschool also
2. adaptability	3	-	3	-	2	1	-	-	1	2	-	
3. investment in hc	5	1	3	1	1	4	-	-	5	-	-	
4. flexicurity	2	-	-	2	1	1	-	-	2	-	-	
Total policies (n.)	14	1	7	6	4	10	-	-	12	2	-	GM in NRP: low high (28%) GIA: mainly neutral (86%)
<i>% distribution</i>	100	7	50	43	28	72	-	-	86	14	-	
24. SE												All policy measures discussed by expert are considered in the NRP. 5 new policy initiatives: reduction of social security contributions/ payroll tax for 18-25 yrs old; women to start businesses; rehabilitation chain; free preschool also
1. attract more p.	18	-	15	3	4	14	-	8	5	4	1	All policy measures discussed by expert are considered in the NRP. 5 new policy initiatives: reduction of social security contributions/ payroll tax for 18-25 yrs old; women to start businesses; rehabilitation chain; free preschool also
2. adaptability	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	
3. investment in hc	4	-	2	2	1	3	-	-	-	4	-	
4. flexicurity	6	-	6	-	3	3	-	1	4	1	-	

Total policies (n.)	29	-	24	5	9	20	-	10	9	9	1	for 3 yrs; break traditional gender patterns in school. GM in NRP: low (31%) GIA: evenly distributed (1/3 each)
% distribution	100	-	83	17	31	69	-	34	31	31	4	
25. SI												No new policy initiatives (in NRP). GM in NRP: relatively high (54%) GIA: mainly positive (54%)
1. attract more p.	4	-	4	-	2	2	-	-	3	1	-	
2. adaptability	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	
3. investment in hc	4	-	4	-	3	1	-	-	1	3	-	
4. flexicurity	4	-	4	-	2	2	-	1	1	2	-	
Total policies (n.)	13	-	13	-	7	6	-	1	5	7	-	
% distribution	100	-	100	-	54	46	-	8	38	54	-	
26. SK												1 policy measure discussed by expert, but not considered in the NRP: the revision of the Labour Code. 2 new policy initiatives: housing support; interconnection between education and employment. GM in NRP: low (17%) GIA: mainly neutral (83%)
1. attract more p.	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	
2. adaptability	2	1	-	1	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	
3. investment in hc	2	-	1	1	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	
4. flexicurity	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	
Total policies (n.)	6	1	3	2	1	5	-	-	5	1	-	
% distribution	100	17	50	33	17	83	-	-	83	17	-	
27. UK												1 policy measure discussed by expert, but not considered in the NRP: good quality part-time work. 7 new policy initiatives: policies to increase the overall employment rate; ALMP; from Income Support to Jobseekers Allowance; employment measures for people in social housing; women's entrepreneurship; increase 16-18 year olds in education, training or empl. GM in NRP: relatively high (56%) GIA: mainly positive (78%)
1. attract more p.	11	-	7	4	3	8	-	1	-	8	2	
2. adaptability	4	1	2	1	4	-	-	-	1	3	-	
3. investment in hc	3	-	1	2	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	
4. flexicurity	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total policies (n.)	18	1	10	7	10	8	-	1	1	14	2	
% distribution	100	5	56	39	56	44	-	6	5	78	11	
EU27												
1. attract more p.	183	19	121	43	66	113	4	29	55	84	15	
2. adaptability	84	10	58	16	33	49	2	14	22	36	12	
3. investment in hc	93	9	49	35	21	69	3	2	45	36	12	
4. flexicurity	60	11	36	13	15	44	1	7	28	21	4	
Total policies (n.)	420	49	264	107	135	275	10	52	148	177	43	
% distribution	100	11.7	62.8	25.5	32.1	65.5	2.4	12.4	35.3	42.1	10.2	

Legend:

NRP coverage of policy initiative: **1** not in NRP, but discussed by expert in pre-assessment (Part A); **2** in NRP and discussed in Part A; **3** in NRP but not discussed in Part A.

Source: National Reports on 2008 NRPs, Part B.

7.4 Examples of policies favouring gender equality

In this section we report on the range of policies identified, by experts in the Member States, as having potential positive effect on gender equality. While this is not a census of all the policies favouring gender equality at the Member State level, it is based on the assessment of expert members of the EGGE network and reflects both good examples of recent innovations and developments of other policies that have been implemented in previous years. The policy developments likely to have a positive impact on gender equality fall into a three groups. Firstly, and least widespread, a group of policies where the elements of a coordinated approach to gender mainstreaming have been implemented. Secondly those policies aimed at particular sources of disadvantage for women namely childcare, child benefits and leave arrangements, and the gender pay gap (parallel themes to those developed in chapter 6). Thirdly, those aimed more generally at integrating women into the labour market or particularly areas of the labour market – women returners, entrepreneurs, etc.

A number of Member States have adopted a more integrated approach to promoting equality, particularly Spain with the *Strategic Plan for Equal Opportunities* and Belgium with the *Gender Mainstreaming Law*. In both cases attempts have been made for gender equality and a gender dimension to be integrated across a broad range of policy areas. In Ireland the *Equality for Women Measure* also encompasses a range of equality initiatives but, unlike in Belgium and Spain, the expert assessment is that the strategy is largely an aspiration. The Irish case illustrates the weakness of policies lacking adequate budget and targets even when aspirations are high.

Childcare and reconciliation measures are two areas where there are clearly equality benefits for policies providing adequate support for working parents, both mothers and fathers. A number of experts highlight advances in care provision as measures likely to promote gender equality, in most cases these related to childcare (AT, EE, FR, HU and LT) but there is also recognition of the uneven impact of a weak provision of eldercare (CY). On the other hand, enhanced leave arrangements can act as a trap for women where they are developed in the face of a limited supply of care facilities that constrain women's return to work. However, where leave is compensated so that it is paid at a level to make it attractive to the less well off (RO) or even some men (AT) there are potential benefits. Indeed in many member states enhancements to leave arrangements have included elements to promote male participation in parental leave (AT, CZ, DE, EE, EL, FI and SE). Unfortunately maintaining transferability of leave entitlement between women and men may do little to break stereotypes around who cares for children (EL). Employers also have a role in reconciliation and the experts from Latvia and Slovenia point out schemes to encourage employer participation as having a potentially positive effect on equality.

The gender pay gap has been a constant theme in this report both as a priority area for future policy and also as an area where the European Commission and some Member States have been active. Expert members of the EGGE network have recognised some of the positive developments at the Member State level with enhanced data collection (DK and FR), monitoring (AT), increased coverage of minimum wages (CY) and initiatives to cut public sector pay gaps (SE and UK) all highlighted.

The third group of policies highlighted by experts include those aimed at increasing the level of female employment or the proportion of women in certain areas of the labour

market and include incentives to join the labour market (BE, IT and SE), entrepreneurship (CY, EL, ES, IE, LT, PT, SE and SI), breaking down segregation in certain areas (AT, CY, DE and PT), and employment of returners, lone parents and older workers (BG, EL, HU, LT, MT and UK). The service cheque systems in a number of Member States have been encouraged to promote employment in the formal economy (BE and LU). However, interestingly, while in Belgium an extension to childcare is regarded as a potential threat to the professionalisation of the sector, in Luxembourg the cheque system is used to increase access to childcare.

BOX 7.4: Example of policies favouring gender equality (“Highs”)

	Description	Comment
1. AT	<i>Reform of the childcare benefit.</i> A reform of the childcare benefit was introduced to allow women and men to better reconcile employment and childcare.	The reform is expected to have a positive impact as it entitles claimants to receive higher childcare benefits for a shorter period of time; this could help to increase the appeal for fathers to take up parental leave and at the same time reduce career breaks for mothers. But further measures to overcome the gendered division of labour urgently needed.
	<i>Expansion of childcare services.</i> For the first time concrete measures (including financial allocations) have been adopted.	Childcare services are seen as a precondition for women and men to reconcile employment and childcare duties. Positive impact, but not enough to offset the pressing shortage of childcare services.
	<i>Measures to close the gender pay gap</i> (including the permanent monitoring).	Permanent monitoring of the gender pay gap: a set of indicators is being developed at present in order to monitor the gender pay gap. Could be an instrument to shed light on the causes of the gender pay gap and therefore help to reduce it.
	<i>Measures for ‘non-traditional’ training and occupation choice of girls and young women.</i> PES measures to encourage girls and young women to enter ‘non-traditional’ or ‘male-dominated’ training and occupations as well as governmental programmes encouraging young women in ‘research and technology’.	All measures are targeted at girls and young women. Only “soft” policy interventions, some additional “hard” measures needed to change gender segregation
2. BE	<i>Gender mainstreaming law.</i> This law, adopted in 2007, aims at guaranteeing the integration of a gender dimension in all federal policies. It stipulates that at the beginning of its term the government should present the strategic objectives towards the promotion and/or realisation of gender equality in all policy domains that it will pursue during its term. The financial credits that are reserved within each federal department for gender equality actions need to be explained in a “gender note” (gender budgeting).	This law has the potential to significantly impact on gender equality. However, the NRP fails to mention it.
	<i>Employment bonus.</i> The employment bonus was introduced into the fiscal system in October 2004 to replace the earned income tax credit. In 2008 a higher bonus is expected to increase the purchasing power of the low-income population. The policy reduces the	From the gender point of view, individualisation of the ‘employment bonus’ implies that both partners are potentially eligible and, more importantly, that the income of one has no effect on the eligibility of the other. At present the employment bonus amounts to 143 € per month

	amount of social contributions payable by low-earners.	for a full-time worker earning a wage at the level of the guaranteed average monthly minimum (1336 € as of May 2008). For wages above this level the bonus decreases and becomes 0 for a wage of 2161 €. As of October 2008, the bonus will increase from 143 to 175 € and the monthly minimum wage will reach 1361 €. This higher bonus is expected to increase the purchasing power of the low-income population. It will also effectively reduce employment traps as it increases the difference with the unemployment benefit and as such makes work pay.
	<i>Service voucher.</i> A system of “service vouchers” was introduced in January 2004 as an incentive towards a more active job search. In 2008, the number of workers in this system is estimated between 90 000 and 120 000 for a total of 62 million vouchers bought. Of all workers employed in this system 46% were formerly (long-term) unemployed, 39% are low-qualified and 14% do not have the Belgian nationality. This voucher system aims at fighting undeclared work, financing the social security system, and responding to the demand for reasonably priced household services (like housecleaning, washing and ironing, sewing, errands, preparing meals). Given the nature of the services, the system has provided many women who were active in the shadow economy with an official labour status (an acknowledged, protected and secure employment contract).	The main merit of the service voucher system is that it extends the possibility of externalising time-consuming household tasks to less well off families as well because of the affordability of the vouchers. As a result, it alleviates the multiple burden of women not only in higher income categories but also in low-income households. Some voices have suggested to include childcare services in the system. However, opponents have fiercely protested against this proposal advancing the argument that childcare should not be commercialised in the same way as other household tasks at risk of jeopardising its quality. Given the highly feminised nature of the childcare profession, an extension of the service voucher system to include childcare risks harming the professional status of many childminders as well as the value of their education and degree.
	<i>Increase in the maximum authorised amount of income from work for persons living with an unemployed household head.</i> Before July 1, 2008, an unemployed person was considered a family head if his/her partner did not receive any work-related or replacement income, except for a net salary of 414 € per month. This system generated a risk to lose the right to the highest unemployment benefit (in case the unemployed person is a family head) if the partner took up a paid job. As of July 1, 2008, the amount a partner can earn is pulled up from 414 to 600 € gross per month.	This change has decreased the negative impact on women’s activity of the former system. As far as the unemployment allowance is not individualised in Belgium, the female partners of unemployed men are discouraged to take on work because that implies that their partners lose part of their unemployment allowance.
3. BG	<i>Assistance for retirement.</i> The program aims at including unemployed people in pre-pension age in measures under the Employment Promotion Act for acquiring training or qualification. In particular, it aims to increase employment opportunities for unemployed women aged over 50 years and for unemployed men aged over 55 years.	The target is quantified to minimum 8000 people to be included in employment. This measure specifies gender to the extent, to which the financing of the programme refers to female and male age groups. This policy should contribute to reduce the old age gender employment gap, since women are in a more unfavourable position regarding job placement at age over 50 years.
	Improving the <i>access of people with entitlement for pension to the services</i>	In order to encourage women’s participation, in 2008 further amendments to the law were

	<p><i>provided by the Employment Agency, including participation in programmes.</i></p> <p>The programme will encourage employment in the upper age brackets, regardless of the individual's retirement status.</p>	<p>adopted, under which mothers can transfer maternity leave (up to the age of 3 years of the child) not only to unemployed person, but also to pensioner. The person in charge of the child care is included in an employment scheme under the Employment Promotion Act and is paid a minimum wage. Many grandmothers will take the advantage of the scheme as far as in Bulgaria grandmothers' care for the child</p>
	<p>Reallocation of financial resources under the largest labour market program "<i>From social assistance to employment</i>" in favour of the regions where the unemployment level is higher than the average.</p>	<p>The initiative concerns changes in the mechanisms for financing regional projects or allocation of funds under Human Development Operational Program. The gender impacts of this programme have been proven during the years the programme operates, since women are the majority of its beneficiaries. The main problem is the temporary character of employment and the low level of permanent employment of the beneficiary.</p>
4. CY	<p><i>Increase of services for dependants (elderly, disabled, other dependants).</i> During 2007-2008, grants co-financed by the ESF were provided to 31 care programmes developed through partnerships between NGOs and local authorities</p>	<p>About 60 work positions were created to cover the needs of the programmes and approximately 200 women benefited from the care facilities. The measure will be fully implemented by December 2008.</p> <p>The expected impact is positive, but the extent is difficult to assess.</p>
	<p><i>Increase of the minimum wage.</i> The minimum wage is to be gradually increased to reach 50% of the national median wage, as a means of protecting the vulnerable and specific groups of employees (clerks, shop sales assistants, school assistants, traffic wardens for students, child carers).</p> <p>Moreover the Council of Ministers decided to expand the coverage of the Minimum Wage Order (as of 1.7.2008), in order to include two additional occupational categories, that of security guards and of employees with sanitation and caring duties in clinics, private hospitals and houses for the elderly.</p>	<p>Before the extension of coverage and according to the Business Census of 2000, the share of workers with a minimum wage was estimated 11%. After the extension of the coverage the above percentage increases to 14%.</p> <p>The expected impact is positive, especially in regard to the gender pay gap since most of the occupations covered by the minimum wage legislation are female-dominated.</p>
	<p><i>Women's entrepreneurship programme:</i> a scheme for the encouragement, strengthening and reinforcement of women's entrepreneurship</p>	<p>The scheme has been completed for the programming period 2004-06 and also included in the new programming period 2007-2013 with a total budget of €5 mln (will be co-financed by the ESF). Two calls for participation are scheduled for the period 2007-2013.</p> <p>Positive impact but extent is difficult to assess. The programme must be further advertised and promoted.</p>
5. CZ	<p><i>Paternity leave of seven calendar days.</i> Father's weekly paid leave during the period from the birth till six weeks.</p>	<p>It could have positive impact on gender equality but it needs to be followed by incentives for equality during parental leave as well.</p>
	<p><i>Gender equality in education and science and research.</i> A plan to elaborate a long-term strategy "aimed at ensuring inclusive policies</p>	<p>The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports will develop a concept that "will be the basic document for setting and implementing a long-</p>

	in education from the point of view of equal opportunities of women and men and effective strategies of lifelong learning”.	term framework of education focused on ensuring equal opportunities for women and men in the access to economic activities, increase of the degree of competitiveness of women in the labour market, balancing of the social status of women and men caring for children and family members in need”.
		If implemented the effect will be positive.
6. DE	200 new professorships only for women.	Not mentioned in text (2008 NRP) but in serial number 8 of the list.
	<i>Parental leave regulations.</i> Parental allowance (<i>Elterngeld</i>): the old system of child raising allowances was replaced by an income related parental allowance in January 2007.	The <i>Elterngeld</i> compensates 67% (1,800 € per month at the most) of the net sum of earned income lost by the parent who cares for the child during the first year. It is paid for at least 12 months. The entitlement is prolonged for two additional months in cases where the father also takes leave for two months as a minimum.
7. DK	The first <i>Equal Pay Statistics</i> in the Cooperation Committee (to be published in Autumn 2008)	This is the result of changes to the equal pay law of 2006 – postponed from 2000, where the law demanded a more comprehensive statistic.
	<i>A study of the gender wage-differences 1997-2006</i> (commissioned by the ministry of employment, expected in late 2008,)	This is the only initiative that has a time schedule – probably yet another exposure of the relatively high gender pay gap in Denmark - compared to the EU and compared to the fairly compressed Danish wage structure.
8. EE	<i>Develop an integrated care system</i> in order to enable working-age people with a care giving responsibility to enter the labour market and reconcile work and private life	Measures include: formulate further principles to help reconcile work and family life; create supplementary kindergarten places; pay a per capita allowance to parents of kindergarten children to finance childcare services and pre-primary education by local municipalities (that do not guarantee kindergarten places). The care facilities will help to reconcile work and family and facilitate enter to the labour market.
	<i>Extending parental benefit and improving the access of fathers.</i> The eligibility of fathers to parental leave has widened, the benefits of paternity leave were increased, the parental benefit was prolonged to 18 months.	This should encourage fathers to take up leave and share the care work which will improve the gender equality. However, due to the very long parental leave the career break of women remain very long.
9. EL	<i>Scheme encouraging entrepreneurship among higher education graduates (2006).</i> 60% quota for women’s participation (though not referred to in the 2008 NRP)	It is expected to benefit to men and women proportionally to their relative shares of the unemployed.
	<i>Parental leaves in the new Civil Servants Code (2007).</i> Fully paid parental leave in form of transferable right from women to men – non transferable right of both parents who have a third child to paid career break	It is positive that the first leave was previously maternal and now has become parental. However, transferability weakens the impact on changing the gender division of labour.
	<i>Bonus in insurance time for mothers with insufficient insurance record for independent and decent level of retirement pensions.</i> The reform of the pension system (2008) sets:	The bonus in insurance time is favourable to women with insufficient insurance record willing to establish independent rights for a pension. Incentives for delayed retirement will impact

	the abolition of the right of mothers with underage children to reduced pension at the age of 50; the extension of the bonus in insurance time to mothers for the second child; disincentives for early retirement and incentives for delayed retirement for both men and women.	more on men while disincentives for early retirement on women.
10. ES	<i>Strategic Plan for Equal Opportunities (SPEO)</i> . The SPEO is one of the main policy instruments contained in the Frame Law of gender Equality (FLEEWM). The plan articulates four major principles: redefinition of a model of citizenship, empowerment of women, gender mainstreaming in public policies, and the acknowledgment of scientific and technical innovation as a main engine of social change.	The SPEO was already approved for the period 2008-2011. The measures gathered in the Plan are structured in twelve axes (social and political participation, economic participation, co-responsibility, education, innovation, knowledge, health, image, social inclusion and diversity, domestic violence, foreign affairs and international cooperation, and guarantee of equal rights), and for each one of them main objectives, operative objectives and actions are defined.
	<i>New programme for promotion of self-employment</i> . One of the most important measures gathered in the document (2008 NRP) is the improvement of the benefit for those unemployed workers who establish themselves as self-employed, from 3.000 to 5.000€, which in the case of unemployed women reaches 7.000€.	Since the program came into force, the share of self-employed women has decreased from 13.4% to 13.0% whereas the male rate has slightly augmented (from 20.4% to 20.6%)
	<i>Implementation of the National System of Dependency</i> . The so-called fourth pillar of the welfare state will establish mechanisms of personal assistance and economic benefits for those who require it for their personal autonomy and development, including measures to facilitate their access to the labour market. The project has stipulated a budget of 12.3 billions € for a gradual implementation in the next 8 years and is expected to create directly or indirectly around 300.000 jobs, mostly for women. The positive effect over female employment is briefly mentioned in the report	On the one hand, it is likely that the provision of long-term care services and economic benefits of the system will benefit in a large extent to female population, as women show greater degrees of disability and dependency at older ages. On the other hand, since women are much more frequently engaged in the provision of long-term care services (as professional, undeclared or family work), women will benefit from the creation of new jobs in the sector, the improvement of working conditions and the relief of family burdens that the system will imply in the long run. However this measure may contribute to the segmentation of the labour market in terms of occupational specialisation.
	<i>Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration</i> . The Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration is a comprehensive document addressing major action lines and principles in the area of social and labour inclusion of immigrants. Measures aim not only to the immigrant population but is rather focused on awareness and sensitiveness of national population about the immigration phenomenon. Although the plan includes relevant gender mainstreaming measures, the NRP does not mention any of them	The NRP dedicates a whole chapter to the gender perspective of the strategy, defining 3 overarching objectives, with a great emphasis on the most vulnerable situations (domestic violence, sexual exploitation, etc.). The gender mainstreaming of the measure seems adequate and complete. The overall gender impact of the measure is to be qualified as indirect, due to the strategic character of the measure (its effective impact will depend on the success in its implementation in specific measures). Its contribution rather affects the construction of an optimal institutional and policy framework
11. FI	<i>Equal Pay Programme</i> : has set a target to reduce the gender pay gap to 15% by the year 2015. The working group aiming at designing	Such development would mean that the hiring a young woman to open-ended employment relationship would no longer be a more risky

	‘Finnish model of flexicurity’ by 2010 has emphasised the need to level out flexibility and security among different employee groups so that the young women would not have to bear the main burden of labour market’s needs for flexibility.	investment for an employer than hiring a young man. In this respect, the policy trend is right and a lot has already improved. However, a lot still remains to be achieved.
	<i>Reforms in legislation and policies regarding fixed-term employment:</i> In 2003, the Government gave instructions to reduce the use of fixed-term contracts especially in the public sector. Changes have taken place in the legislation on social security regarding temporary workers’ sickness and family allowances, and the reform of the Act on Annual Holiday (2005) includes several improvements for those on fixed-term or part-time contracts.	Fixed-term employment is often seen as a good method for the flexible use of labour. The problem is the fact that most of the fixed-term workers themselves are not that happy with their situation of financial insecurity and uncertain future. All these points are important for gender equality, since the majority of fixed-term workers are women.
	<i>Reforms in family leave system</i> Reforms regarding the more equal division of the employer costs due to parenthood between female- and male- dominated sectors (See Part A.3)	Also the levelling out of employer costs from family leaves as well as encouragement of fathers to share family leaves are steps into the right direction.
	<i>Action Plan on Gender Equality of the Government Programme</i> with all its targets and measures included	This includes training and awareness in ministries, comprehensive schools, in education of teachers and kindergarten teachers.
12. FR	<i>Comparative situation report Men/Women.</i> Report on gendered data provided by companies on the parameters of comparison of women's and men's employment conditions in order to pinpoint any pay gaps; conditions regarding career developments; and finally information on the general situation of women (working time, gender balance of occupations, work-life balance and so forth)	Only 30% of companies provide these compulsory gendered data.
	<i>Reduction of pay gaps:</i> compulsory bargaining is envisaged in order to abolish pay gaps by December 2010. There are penalties for those companies, which do not embark on “loyal and serious” negotiations: a sector-level agreement without measures for abolishing pay gaps cannot be extended; company pay agreements will only be registered if negotiations have been opened on this topic; finally, in three years, if necessary, a financial contribution will be introduced, based on the total wages bill for companies, which have not embarked on negotiations.	An assessment of the number of agreements signed in the context of the 2001 law shows that only about 2% of companies have signed such agreements. Their impact is small, even if there have never been so many agreements before on this topic (about 150 agreements have been listed).
	Development of validating skills acquired on the job and also training, “rendering career paths secure”: this is to be done through ‘modernising the employment contract’. It also demands compensations regarding the unemployed via stricter controls	The aim of “rendering career paths secure” is reduced to rendering unemployment secure... The unions wanted to limit their impact by demanding that “termination by negotiated agreement” should be described as a form of dismissal and only authorised by a member of the employment tribunal.
	Developing childcare facilities: introduction of	A report has just been made on this legal right. It

	the legal right to childcare.	indicates that about 350,000 additional places are needed in order to meet families' needs. But given the cost (1 to 4 billion €), the choice seems to be in the process of being directed towards reinforcing the role of childminders, rather than crèches, which are acclaimed (but much more expensive). The report recommends measures that are considered dangerous by the CGT
13. HU	In mid-2007, the 'Start Plus' programme was introduced – with the support of the ESF – to promote the employers taking on parents whose child care benefit (GYED), assistance (GYES) or support (GYET) has recently expired. Under the 'Start Plus' programme a significant reduction in social contributions are available to employers (for 2 years).	In the period from mid-2007 to October 2008 more than 17 thousand 'Start Plus' cards were given out to parents to promote their return into the labour market.
	Development services to combine work with family duties	A policy decision requires every municipality to find nursery places for all multiply disadvantaged children from the age of 3 by January 2009, and to satisfy all demands for nursery education by August 2010.
	<i>Labour market programmes to reintegrate women into the labour market:</i> tailor made services and training courses for women in order to return to the labour market as an employee or a female entrepreneur.	In 2007, 4372 women were involved in training, and 3266 of them finished it successfully. The number of women getting vocational guidance was 2865.
	<i>The New Knowledge Action Program</i> concentrates EU and government budgetary financial resources on further development of infrastructure of early child development. It has great impact on reconciliation of family and working life obligation of parents, most of all mothers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing network of district nurses will be expanded and the remuneration of district nurses will be increased - The network of Sure-Start programs will be extended - The scope of family day care centres will be increased in small settlements under 1000 inhabitants. Professional early education will be provided for all children above 3 years. - On family demand, local authorities should provide childcare services for all children above the age of 3 regardless of the employment status of the parents. - In small settlements integrated nursery-kindergarten facilities should be made available for children between 2-6 years.
14. IE	<i>Increased maternity leave</i> , entitlement to 26 months paid leave and 16 weeks unpaid leave.	Policy likely to result in increased levels of employment among women in the 25-40 age sector. However, parental leave remains unpaid and there is no entitlement to paternity leave a position which reinforces gender inequalities, particularly in relation to care responsibilities.
	<i>Statutory minimum wage:</i> protecting those on low incomes, and on taxation reform aimed at improving the situation of those on low pay.	Inequality persists as a strong feature of Ireland's high growth and poverty rates among women lone parents, those living alone as well as those in low paid employment remain high.
	<i>Equality for Women Measure:</i> encompassing specific targeted gender equality initiatives	However, the strategy itself is largely "aspirational" and lacking in budgets, timeframes and targets. As yet there is no detail as to what new institutional arrangements will be

		put in place. There is a promise of an inter-departmental structure and a monitoring unit, including the social partners, statutory agencies and NGOs.
	<i>Female entrepreneurship supports: the launching of a new pilot initiative ‘Going for Growth’ aimed at providing a support mechanism for women entrepreneurs.</i>	One of the few specific references to gender comes in the chapter on microeconomic policy which includes a section on women’s entrepreneurial activity, accounting for around one third of new business set-ups
	<i>GM as a principle in NRP.</i>	Such a strategic horizontal policy approach to GM, based on interdepartmental structures with an implementation and monitoring role and proper level of resources, is necessary in order to give full effect to gender mainstreaming.
15. IT	<i>Reduction of taxation on labour for enterprises (higher for hiring women).</i> The Financial Law for the year 2007 (L. 296, December 2006) introduced a set of financial measures aimed at raising employment level, with a particular concern for women access to the labour market. Firstly, the law introduces incentives for employability: it deals with the reduction of the fiscal taxation for enterprises (the so called “ <i>cuneo fiscale</i> ”). Secondly, the law introduces a reduction of the taxable base for those enterprises offering a typical contract to women. This incentive is higher for those Regions where women unemployment rate is 100% higher than the European average.	This is the first time for Italy that a selective approach to employment incentives has been developed. These measures are linked to GL 18 and they deal with regional disparities. The financial effort aimed at sustaining women employability through fiscal benefits for enterprises has been renewed in 2008.
16. LT	<i>Integration of the gender equality aspect in employment.</i> The following initiatives are considered: - organisation of training for women coming back to the labour market after a long break and elderly women to encourage them to work and learn; - seminars (with the participation of social partners) intended for changing stereotypes related to roles of women and men in economic activities.	Older women returning to the labour market face different problems: how to present to the employer, how to search for a job, how to prepare business plan and etc. Vilnius University Gender Studies Centre organized 2 seminars-trainings, where 60 social partners participated. The following themes were presented: Influence of stereotypes on gender communication in organisations, Process of and stereotypes of socialisation, Advanced paternity in Lithuania, Opinion of Lithuania academic society on gender roles on the labour market, Opinion of non-governmental organisation on gender roles on the labour market, Status of women on the labour market of EU countries, reconciliation of work and family in EU.
	<i>Assurance of accessible and affordable childcare facilities.</i> The model of improvement of conditions of child’s living and education conditions starting from birth and finishing with commencement of compulsory education was drafted in 2008 (coordinated with the concerned institutions).	Accessible and affordable childcare facilities positively influence possibilities to participate in the labour market.
	<i>Promotion of female entrepreneurship</i>	Initiatives considered: to analyse and disseminate information about success stories of business women to organise campaigns of information days for businesswomen

17. LU	<i>Services voucher system for childcare access for the household in risk of poverty.</i> The 2008 NRP announces the introduction of a cheque service system for childcare access for the household in risk of poverty.	This policy would contribute to the rise of feminine employment
	<i>The revision of the concept of caring for school-age children outside the school and the increase of childcare places.</i> This is part of the policy “maison relais” (MRE)	This policy would contribute to the rise of feminine employment
	<i>Classes given to employers and trade union representatives on the job evaluation system</i> (in collaboration with the Chamber of Trade and Chamber of private employees).	Informing classes on the analytical system of evaluation according to Katz and Baitsch. It would lead to a better knowledge of the issue (gender pay gap) and to changes towards more equal wage setting .
	<i>National Action Plan adopted by the social partners on the stereotypes on the labour market</i>	It is a good example of the practical involvement of the social partners in the gender equality problematic
18. LV	<i>Support to the Capacity building on labour market and gender equality policy implementation in the responsible institutions, information dissemination and increasing understanding”</i> (ESF financed this national programme)	During the previous period, ESF financed this programme on social dialogue. However, there is no more information provided on the results and implementation of the programme (in the 2008 NRP) (pp. 16-17).
	<i>Family friendly entrepreneur/enterprise.</i> It will be implemented in future.	In order to popularize family friendly enterprise and entrepreneur, who offer family friendly policy and services, a long term project “Family friendly entrepreneur” is ensured. One of the criterions is orientation of the business policy towards reconciliation of work and family life (p. 16).
	<i>Alternative “child minders” scheme.</i> Child minding short term facilities for younger school age children	Financial support is provided to develop services for supervision (pieskatīšana) of preschool and early school age children (p. 16).
19. MT	<i>Tax credits for women returners</i> (Regulations 2005). Women returnees benefit from a tax credit set off against the tax in respect of gains of profit from the said employment; credits of contribution for parents for child rearing where social security contributions will be awarded, under specific conditions, for the purpose of pensionable income.	This is a positive policy initiative to encourage women to return to work.
	<i>Recognition of women in family business</i> (January 2007). Men and women working within a family business will be allowed to register on the company’s books and thus be entitled to social benefits including a pension.	This measure provides recognition of women’s (and men’s) contribution in the informal economy.
	<i>Increase in maternity leave on full pay from 13 to 14 weeks.</i>	As of January 2008, paid maternity leave increased by one week.
20. NL	<i>Extension of parental leave.</i> Period of parental leave will be doubled. Moreover, all (new) parents taking parental leave will receive a fiscal benefit (50% of the minimum wage) (this last policy measure in recently announced and was not public yet at the time of writing	Positive, though the level of payment remains rather low.

	Part A)	
	<i>Fiscal policies to increase the participation rate of women.</i> These fiscal policies include the abolishment of the transferral of the general tax credit and raise of the combination tax credit. Both explicitly aim to increase the participation rate of women.	The fiscal measures create clear incentives for labour force participation and as such lower the gender employment gap.
	<i>‘Talent to the top’.</i> The charter ‘Talent to the top’ is signed in May 2008 by more than 40 prominent organisations in the profit and non-profit sector. By means of their signature these organisations commit themselves to formulate targets with respect to women in top positions, to take specific measures in order to attain the targets and to report on progress on a yearly basis to an independent committee.	Given the low share of women in top positions, measures to increase this share are positive. In order to be successful, compliance with the charter needs careful monitoring.
21. PL	<i>ALM: wider access.</i> Groups entitled to ALMPs increased from 6 to 10; incl. women returning to the labour market after childbirth, lone mothers with children below 18 years old, and job seekers.	Facilitating access to ALMP services to a greater number of lone parents, mothers, job seekers and ‘entitled persons (e.g. 45+, not just registered unemployed) may increase women’s participation in such programmes and potentially their employment.
	<i>Active ageing.</i> Participation in activate measures and changes to pension and disability systems aim to prolong employment. NRP mentions programme: 50+ Solidarity of Generations (some attention to gender, e.g. debate on retirement age equalisation).	Among older workers female employment and retirement pensions are lower than male – this is recognised by policy makers and activation of older female workers may contribute to narrowing of gaps given sufficient support for their participation.
	<i>Lifelong Learning.</i> LLL Strategy to be developed in 2009; approach includes: lowering mandatory (pre-)school age; new actions for the unemployed; preparation of national qualifications framework; vocational training for adults, including 50+	Lower mandatory pre-school and school ages may have potentially positive impact on gender in facilitating mothers’ earlier return to employment.
22. PT	<i>The universalisation of maternity and paternity rights to all workers, independently of qualifying condition.</i> The family benefit for children and young persons has been reinforced in relation to the number of children, and the pre-natal family benefit has been granted for the first time in 2007, helping women during their pregnancy. These are universal, and entitled to them are national citizens and foreigners, refugees and stateless individuals who fulfil the general and specific qualifying conditions (in terms of legalized migration). They are means-tested. Maternity and paternity benefits were extended to all women and men independently of their working situation, having or not payments for the social security, and single mothers has been credited with an extra 20% of the monthly benefit for children and young. They are called “social benefits”. The maternity social benefit amounts to 1290€ for a leave of 120 or 150 days. The situations of health risk for the mother or for the child will be also	These are important measures to support mothers and fathers, especially those with low income. However, the impact on the increasing of the fertility is uncertain: analysts forecast a slight impact, meanwhile the government hopes for a heavy one.

	subsidized during all the period in which they occur.	
	<i>Support to female entrepreneurship.</i> Encouraging female entrepreneurship as a factor for innovation and competitiveness through vocational training and re-skilling, financial incentives, micro-credit, creation of organisational networks, meetings and sharing good practice.	The creation of self-employment is frequently just a way to access to a precarious and low paid job instead of remaining in the condition of unemployed. The problem with this policy is the fact that it is practically the only one envisaging the reinforcement of female employment.
	<i>All specialities of the armed forces are from now on open to women.</i> The armed forces opened the employment of women in all military specialities.	All specialities of the armed forces were opened to women. The fact that it is not mentioned in the NRP reveals disarticulation of the strategy for mainstreaming gender equality. In spite of the low number of women that will be affected by this measure, it is symbolically relevant.
23. RO	Developing a social protection system in assuring a system necessary for social inclusion.	This initiative brings some measures for reconciliation of family life and career in order to develop an anti-discriminatory strategy in the labour market between men and women and to revised social security schemes and taxation system in order to make work more attractive.
	<i>The raised benefit of parental leave</i>	A measure taken by the government to solve the problem of childcare was to raise the benefit of parental leave to about 120% of average wage, a measure with implications for family life.
24. SE	<i>Gender Equality Bonus.</i> This bonus, which can amount to SEK 3,000 per month, is provided to parents in the form of tax relief.	It is hoped that the bonus will encourage fathers' to use a greater part of parental leave and mothers to return to work earlier. This measure should lead to a lower gender pay gap and lower differences in total earnings over the life cycle and a greater responsibility in childcare by fathers.
	<i>Gender relations in school.</i> Measures to break traditional gender patterns in school and promote gender equality. The Government has allocated resources for a three year project (2008-2010)	A gender delegation will be established to analyse and propose measures on gender differences in education and to counteract traditional gender patterns. Further measures are taken, for example, training for teachers and school staff on gender patterns as well as measures to reach a more even gender distribution within the teacher education.
	<i>Women's entrepreneurship.</i> Programme to increase the number of women who start and run business	The Government has initiated a special programme for women's entrepreneurship covering 2007-2009 and in addition funds have been allocated for the creation of a network of ambassadors for women's entrepreneurship. The ambassadors are to inspire others, tell their story and share their experiences as entrepreneurs.
	<i>Eliminate unjustified wage differences between women and men in the state sector</i>	The Government has introduced a specific programme (2008-2010) to support women's careers in the state sector with the aim of eliminating unjustified wage differentials between men and women by 2010.
	<i>In-work tax credit.</i> The aim is to make it more	The Government argues that the in-work tax

	worthwhile to work for those outside the labour market, contributing to an increased labour supply from those already in employment. The in-work tax credit was introduced in 2007 and reinforced by a second step in 2008. A third step will be introduced as of 1 January 2009.	credit helps to strengthen the incentives to work more hours, especially for low- and middle income wage earners, such as women working part-time. One study claim that the policy seems to lead to an equalisation of the differences between men's and women's working time and earnings (SNS 2008). According to the Government this measure has reduced the average tax and the marginal tax for low- and middle-income earners. If this is the case, this will benefit more women than men, since women more often than men belong to the low- and middle income earners.
25. SI	<i>Promotion and support of reconciliation of work and family life.</i> Policy initiatives include: a) support to employers for providing programmes and measures for easier reconciliation strategies (Project of Family friendly companies); b) research on the issues of reconciliation, monitoring of EU indicators on reconciliation; c) improvement of public and support services for reconciliation; d) publicly covered fees for childcare for the second and every next child if a family has more than one child in the kindergarten; e) right to part-time of parents who mind and care for more than one child until the youngest is six years old; f) promotion of active fatherhood; g) improvement of public and support services for reconciliation (co-funding of pre-school education programmes for second child if it is in the kindergarten with the first one).	Reconciliation of work and family life is area in which the measures are well developed and would certainly have positive impact on quality of life and work as well as on gender equality.
	<i>Programmes for promoting women's self employment and entrepreneurship.</i> Information, motivation, training of different groups of female students, potential entrepreneurs.	Because of the special programmes aimed to female entrepreneurship positive impact could be expected. However, analysis of increase of the gender gap in self-employment is needed.
	<i>Initiatives for reduction of educational and professional gender segregation.</i> Policy measures include: - further education and professional training of teachers and counsellors employed in secondary schools on motivating of girls and boys for gender non-traditional choices in educational fields un school and out of school activities; - preparation of recommendations and models for guidance of girls and boys in school and out of school activities where the opposite sex is dominating and development of indicators on inclusion of girls and boys in school and out of school activities; - development of indicators for monitoring equal gender opportunities in education.	Measures are well oriented. It would be useful to set measurable targets and to monitor and evaluate results.
26. SK	<i>Introduction of teleworking.</i> The revision of the Labour Code introduced for the first time	These innovations can be seen as an improvement (in terms of adaptability) for

	in the SK Republic the possibility of telework (and more flexible work organisation).	workers with family responsibilities. The possible impact on women with small children is positive.
27. UK	<i>The Gender Duty:</i> The aim of the gender duty is to highlight and speed up the progress towards gender equality. For example, public authorities and non-public sector organisations providing public services must make progress in positively promoting equality rather than just prevent discrimination.	By establishing gender equality schemes, public authorities will be obliged to consider having objectives that address the causes of the gender pay gap as well as ways to deal with them e.g. through changing recruiting methods, introducing flexible working and conducting equal pay reviews. The legal responsibility is placed on the public authorities - they must demonstrate that they treat men and women fairly; including compliance with the Equal Pay Act. This general duty is thus a new legal tool which has the potential to deliver important progress on gender equality in the public sector, with some extension of impact to the private sector via procurement.
	Closing the gender pay gap is one of the indicators of the new <i>Public Service Agreement on equalities</i> .	A survey for the EHRC in February 2008 documents an increasing proportion of organisations carrying out equal pay reviews (Schafer et al., IFF forthcoming). The proportion of employers who have completed an equal pay review has increased to 13%, while the proportion currently conducting their first equal pay review has risen from one in fifty in 2005 to one in twenty in 2008.
	<i>The skills policy:</i> for increasing the basic/intermediate skill levels of the workforce	It has a strong focus on further reform to active labour market policies and the benefits system, including integration of job search services and training (Job Centre Plus). This package of reforms sets new requirements on the unemployed to participate in training and from 2009 the 'flexible New Deal' will be rolled out which streamlines the existing New Deals and further strengthens the skills and training requirements.
	Further development of <i>childcare & related reconciliation measures</i>	There is continued progress in relation to reconciliation measures although there are still shortfalls in the availability and affordability of childcare. There is also evidence of GM in the policies for older workers and training for low-skilled adults, although weaknesses still remain in the scope of reform.
	<i>Lone parent employment policy:</i> From April 2007 all lone parents who have been on benefit for at least a year and whose youngest child is under 14 are required to attend six-monthly work focused interviews.	Previously this requirement only applied to lone parents where the youngest child is over 14. This change to the policy reflects the government view that lone parents have an obligation to seek work once their child attends secondary school at the latest, in return for some additional support. This additional support includes piloting a new premium – the Work Related Activity Premium – 'so that lone parents are better off if they take serious steps towards preparing for work'.

Source: National Reports on 2008 NRPs (Part B, B.3).

7.5 Examples of policies that would improve if GM were used

While there is rather unsatisfactory evidence of policies that have been adequately gender mainstreamed there are many policy areas that would have benefited from gender mainstreaming or more thorough gender mainstreaming. The importance of gender mainstreaming is illustrated in policies that are apparently gender neutral as well as those that may appear to have a more obvious gendered effect. Here we present some examples of policies that have been retrospectively analysed from a gender perspective or proposals that have been identified as potentially benefiting from gender mainstreaming.

In box 7.5 we present the example of a policy that was considered to be largely gender neutral and not gender mainstreamed in its initial implementation yet subsequent analysis has shown that the previous positive assessment of the policy disguised a gendered impact with negative effects for women. Similarly the example of the 2006 reform of the Spanish tax system demonstrates the potential negative effects of non-gender-mainstreamed policy measures (box 7.5). The recent proposed reforms to the Italian tax system are similarly predicted to have negative consequences for women (box 7.6).

BOX 7.5 Retrospective gender analysis of policies

LU – Luxembourg

The 2007 Evaluation report of the previous NRP was rather in favour of this measure, that has also received a positive judgment from the Commission:

«In December 2006, the European Commission stressed that the “effectiveness of active measures undertaken with regard to households benefiting from the Guaranteed Minimum Income (RMG) is now fortified”. The two measures mentioned above are contributing to this effectiveness and will continue to be implemented in 2008”

The 2008 NRP is more critical of this measure given the fact that the first evaluations, from a gender perspective, have shown that this measure is rather unfavourable for women:

«If the principle of a fixing a maximum length of time for active measures of the Guaranteed Minimum Income (RMG) contributes to make insertion on the labour market more attractive, the statistics established by the SNAS showing that the implementation of this apparently gender neutral measure creates an indirect gender discrimination.

Breakdown of beneficiaries of the RMG excluded from the activation measures (%)

	Women	Men
2005	79	21
2006	84	16
2007	84	16

As underlined by the Higher Council of Social A (CSAS) in 2008, the reproduction of the traditional model of the men working and the woman staying at home is worrying. This could lead to a re-examination of the practice of fixing the length of the activation.» (free translation)

* *Implementation report 2007 for the National Plan for Innovation and Full Employment*, www.odc.lu.

** Programme national de réforme du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg dans le cadre de la stratégie de Lisbonne, 2008, pp. 48-49.

ES – Spain

(p. 18) At the end of 2006 the Government undertook a reform of the **Personal Income Tax** in order to lighten the relative taxation of labour income over the rest of income sources. The new regulation also considers a reduction in the number of income bands to levy and in the tax rate of the highest band. According to the Ministry of Economy, the reform of the Income Tax will involve an average reduction of 6%, and will imply a 17% of savings for 60% of taxpayers. In addition, 40% of the

current tax payers (those bearing the lowest incomes) will be exempt of any income taxation after the implementation of the reform. Several studies have attempted to assess the gender impact evaluation of the reform, yielding a critical evaluation in terms of “fiscal discrimination”. More particularly, the aspect that has received greater criticism is the maintenance of joint declarations for married couples, which according to the European Commission and the OECD has important negative effects for the female employment supply. It has been also noted that the reform has not overcome the discrimination suffered by lone parents: simulation studies prove that under equal conditions, lone parental families are more highly levied.

Source: National Reports on 2008 NRPs.

Even where gender mainstreaming machinery is in place it needs to be applied. The case of Belgium is emblematic: a very innovative and important law was enacted in 2007 on Gender mainstreaming, but the impact of this law on the 2008 Belgian NRP is nil. According to the Belgian national expert:

“Except for the sole sentence in the introductory chapter of the 2008 NRP: “the formulation of these priorities, to be completed by an approach that keeps a vigilant eye on gender, constitutes the global framework of Belgium’s employment strategy”, there is no reference whatsoever to gender throughout the entire programme.

The 2005 NRP announced that the federal government would elaborate instruments that are necessary to promote an integrated approach to the gender dimension and that the social partners would help to include a gender dimension in the social dialogue. This intention was not repeated neither in the 2006 NRP nor in the 2008 version. Nevertheless a new law was adopted in 2007 on the subject of gender mainstreaming. It is a very clearly formulated and ambitious law and therefore it is almost shameful that after having announced such policy intentions in 2005, the NRP fails to even mention this law in 2008.” (BE, National Report, p. 28)

Box 7.6 lists a wider range of recent policies that, in the view of the EGGE experts, would have benefited from a gendered analysis in advance of development. As with other sections of this NRP analysis these policies fall into similar broad policy areas identified elsewhere (for example, sections 3 and 6).

Flexicurity is one policy area urgently in need of a more thorough gender mainstreamed approach. Women are already at risk of greater levels of precariousness on the labour market so policies to adjust the balance of flexibility and security can pose a particular threat for women. There are few examples where Member States have attempted to gender mainstream flexicurity policies and the example of Finland is perhaps one of the more positive cases (see table 7.4). Elsewhere the roll out of Flexicurity policies is identified as particularly problematic for gender equality (AT, DE). Similarly the example of the need to gender mainstream pensions for part-timers in Belgium demonstrates how Flexicurity approaches need to consider women’s disadvantage across the life course.

An example highlighted by the Danish expert illustrates how gender mainstreaming would offer benefits for men as well as women. While policies to promote educational levels have been very successful for women’s enrolment rates, in some Member States men’s performance at certain levels of the education systems falls behind that of women. Gender Mainstreaming of policies in this area would highlight how gender gaps in favour of women might require attention for men’s qualifications, particularly those from ethnic minorities. On the other hand, however, the gender mainstreaming of educational policies with closer links to the labour market would underline the importance of the segregated nature of job opportunities and open up training and integration programmes for women as well as men (EE, SI, SK).

The Road Map requires gender mainstreaming across all policy areas and the example of the changes in the Italian schooling system – driven by education and training targets – highlights how there can be a negative impact on women and their access to the labour market from across policy fields. Similarly planned restructuring of the public sector in the UK poses unequal gender risks both in terms of employment and access to services, while the so called Technological Plan in Portugal misses the opportunity to modernise educational production, health and public administration systems in a gender-mainstreamed manner.

BOX 7.6: Examples of policies (“Lows”)

AT – Austria

(p. 22) The rather central (and large) subsection on “**common flexicurity principles**” only mentions women once, by referring to the active labour market policy measures listed in the subsection on “Women and gender equality policy measures” (NRP 2008-2010: 42). The continually falling quality of women’s jobs (in terms of increasing instability, insufficient social security protection, jobs offered only with low levels of qualification and low pay) due to the increase in atypical employment (especially marginal part-time) is not even mentioned in the Austrian NRP 2008-2010. In addition, it should be noted here that the amendments to the *Working Hours Act* are bound to impact quite negatively on gender equality. Given the already long (male) working hours, these additional possibilities to extend daily working hours will make even more difficult – if not impossible – for persons with care duties (mostly women) to accept full-time work and harder for men in full-time jobs to share household and family care duties more equally with women. In the context of the so called *Flexicurity Package*, “job suitability” criteria have been further tightened. Tighter criteria, however, will not help to combine the promotion of “flexibility through security” and gender equality. To do so, a set of different measures would be necessary.

BE- Belgium

(p. 33) **Pension reform.** In the fall of 2008, a national conference will take place on the reform and consolidation of pension systems. The NRP provides no details but it would really be a disaster if no gendered approach was adopted in this conference given that retired women are a group that is most vulnerable to poverty. Women’s pensions remain much lower than men’s because they are much more likely to have had a discontinuous professional career. The employment chapter does state that pensions of part-time workers will receive special attention at this conference. This points to some gender awareness at least but no further comments are made or no further information is given.

(p. 38, B.3) The recent emphasis on **activating the unemployed** (*policy area*: active labour market policies) and more severely conditioning the eligibility to unemployment benefits could turn out particularly harmful for women. Given that childcare solutions for the unemployed are still in an embryonic phase, many women may fail to meet the new requirements of job search and availability for the labour market and thus lose their right to unemployment compensation

DK – Denmark

(p. 15) An important example of the lack of gender awareness in the NRP 2008 outside the employment chapter (but of importance from a supply point of view) is the lack of gender awareness concerning **education**. Annex 2, *Initiatives that promote the education policy objectives*, gives gender disaggregated statistics and reveals a gender bias as well as an ethnic bias in youth educational programmes, in short cycle higher education and professional bachelor programmes. The data show that men have higher drop out rates – especially men of non-Danish origin. Furthermore, even though young men have a higher drop out rate, they do not compensate by embarking on new programmes. The data in the Annex thus reveals that young men in Denmark are lagging behind young women according to education, which is not mentioned in the NRP.

One of the Danish Government’s two main objectives is that “at least 95% of a youth cohort must complete a youth education programme by 2015. An intermediate aim is to ensure that at least 85% of all young people are to complete a youth education programme by 2010” (NRP 2008, p. 7).

The question is if this is a realistic target, since data from 2000-2006 only shows an increase from 82 to 83% (tab. 2.2, Annex 2), and data reveal that only young women of Danish origin meet the target for 2010 in 2006 (by 86%), and since Denmark in fact seems to have a problem concerning education of young men, young women of non-Danish origin and especially young men with non-Danish origin. This is crucial as this lack of education influences the supply of qualified labour and it may also influence the continued and persistent development of the gender and ethnic segregated labour market, which is also not discussed in the NRP.

EE – Estonia

(pp. 7-8) To increase employability among youngsters, a *Youth Work Strategy 2006-2013* has been implemented which among else defines the principles of different aspects of youth work, including work education and the principles of financing and collecting information on strategy implementation. As a result in 2007 the career counselling program for youth was developed in all Estonian counties and the work education network was active (covering the Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour Market Board and youth organisations). The strategy also foresees voluntary work and participation in informal training for youth, developing entrepreneurial culture and work education among youth and the related information and counselling service. As a result of the implementation of the strategy, youth should be better integrated to the society, better informed of the labour market developments and consequently more competitive in the labour market. However, the strategy is gender neutral, i.e. there are no references to gender impact. Still, youth counselling and career services can be potentially deepening gender segregation in the labour market by guiding boys and girls to certain gender-specific domains. Thus, impact of youth policies for gender segregation should be monitored and necessary measures implemented accordingly.

(p. 14) Education is very strongly gender segregated – women attend more academic and men vocational education and also the study fields differ drastically (Leetmaa, 2008). This leads to high occupational and sectoral segregation in labour market which, in turn, leads to inequalities in wage and most probably also in working conditions.

One of the potential tools for improving the investment in human capital is to help young people to choose appropriate and suitable education paths and study fields. According to the *Development Plan of the General Education System 2007-2013*, there has been a lot of attention turned to the development of the career counselling system in schools, mostly with the support of the European Social Fund (ESF). Career counselling is also provided in the framework of adult education. According to the Progress Report of the LLL Strategy 2005-2008, the government has aimed at creating a career counselling system which would be accessible to all age groups and in all Estonian counties (at least one career counsellor in every county). However, there are no gender specific measures for gender mainstreaming in the career counselling system in order to reduce gender segregation. Instead, the system is guided by the demand in the labour market thus focusing more on the quality of career choices. Thus, the role of career consultants is increasingly important in providing gender neutral advice and encouraging people also following paths which are less gendered.

(p. 25) Since there is significant gender inequality and gender segregation in the field of education in Estonia, the policy could significantly benefit from gender mainstreaming process. The proportion of low qualified employees is higher among men, there are more drop-outs among boys, also men and women are concentrated into traditionally male and female fields of studies. Since, a special attention is turned to popularizing science and technology which is traditionally male field of study it important to take gender aspect into account to increase the participation of females in these areas.

HU –Hungary

Package of measures for combating informal employment. It is well known that there is a high degree of gender related segmentation in informal employment in Hungary. Nevertheless, there are no empirical gender focused evaluations of major segments of informal employment and the programme does not include well-targeted gender-related policies to offer and to promote formal employment possibilities for these groups (e.g. service voucher system in the field of house keeping services or childcare services).

IT – Italy

(p. 23) The absence of gender mainstreaming is particularly critical with respect to two policy initiatives announced in the 2008 NRP: (i) reduction in schooling hours (in all types of schools: maternal, primary and secondary schools); (ii) shift from individual taxation to family taxation.

(p. 16) The so-called “reform of the education system” represents the core of the employment chapter of the 2008 NRP. The background analysis reports that Italy has not reached the target of the Lisbon “Education and training 2010” in terms of drop-out rate, key competencies level, percentage of people with at least a high school diploma, number of people with a S&T universities degree, lifelong learning participation rate. However, the proposed reform (which has been recently adopted) is exclusively focussed on the “rationalisation” of the use of resources in terms of human resources and instrumental resources. It is not clear how the envisaged reform can contribute to cope with the problems of the Italian education system. The impression is that the only objective of this “reform” is to cut and not to invest in a better way the available resource. The whole discussion on the rationalisation of public spending in education (i.e. “cuts”) is presented without considering the impact on families, hence on women. In particular, it is very clearly stated that it will be necessary to increase the number of students per classroom and reduce quite significantly the number of schooling hours in all types of schools (maternal, primary, secondary). The implication is very clear: education in the schooling system will take place only in the morning; children will have to be looked after by their families (their mothers) in the afternoon. It is implicitly assumed that the primary responsibility of mothers is to take care of their children.

(p. 23) The approach outlined in the Italian NRP shows a clear contradiction: on the one hand, it is announced that efforts will be made to increase the availability of childcare services in order to favour female employment; on the other hand, it is announced that the schooling system will be changed quite drastically (not to improve education, but exclusively to reduce public spending). Both the numbers of teachers and the number of schooling hours will be reduced, putting the burden on the families, hence on women.

(p. 19) The 2008 NRP announces the introduction of a new income **taxation** measure, called “*quoziente familiare*”. The announcement of a radical change in income taxation (from individual taxation to one based on the household composition) raises several problems. It would imply a shift from individual taxation to one set at the household level. The announced changes in the taxation system have been planned to help families with dependent children, with only one earner (the male breadwinner). Given the lack of gender mainstreaming in the whole NRP it is not surprising that there is no discussion of the potential (negative) impact on second earners (i.e. women). This is very critical for a country with an extremely low female employment rate (only 46,6% in 2007).

PT – Portugal

(p. 20) The Technological Plan is an important policy instrument that aggregates and articulates many initiatives around 3 pillars: knowledge, technology and innovation. It looks for the upgrading of the qualification of Portuguese population, to overpass the scientific and technological retard, and to speed up the pace of innovation. Within the scope of the Technological Plan, the government is energetically implementing its policy of modernizing all the relevant subsystems – education, production, health, public administration.

(p. 37) The **Technological Plan**, clearly an important instrument of NRP, identifies a set of initiatives to modernize all the relevant subsystems: education, production, health, public administration. However, it does not integrate a gender equality perspective. The Technological plan encompasses all kind of measures: some will have positive impacts on gender equality; meanwhile others will have negative or neutral impacts. In the text of the Technological Plan, references to gender gaps or gender equality measures are absent. The only mention is made within the frame of a measure to incentive the telework, which is considered to raise the female participation in the labour market.

SI – Slovenia

(p. 16, B.3) Lack of GM/GIA in *guidance and assistance in seeking employment*. Some of the existing programmes/measures of **Active Employment Policy** (such as programmes of helping occupational choices and employment planning, programmes of education, training and re-training of employed/unemployed) should pay additional attention to gendered educational and occupational

choices of young women and men as the decrease of gender segregation could help in achieving equal opportunities and also diminishing bottlenecks and shortages at the labour market.

SK – Slovakia

(p. 15-16) *Inclusion of the long-term unemployed into the labour market.* The share of long-term unemployed is the highest within the EU. The decreasing number of unemployed contributes to the increase in the number of long-term unemployed persons. The group of long-term unemployed predominantly consists of jobseekers with low qualifications that have little or no work experience or habits. will be introduced A new instrument of active labour market policy will be introduced: an allowance to support disadvantaged jobseekers in their search for employment. The idea is to facilitate the access of disadvantaged jobseekers to the labour market and gradually contribute to reduce regional differences in long-term unemployment. The new measure will allow unemployed workers to remain on the labour market for at least 6 months and will assist them in looking for employment, in training for performance of work activities, in starting a new job (when assistance is required).

This policy initiative lacks gender mainstreaming, hence any gender impact assessment, even if the situation in long-term unemployment is rather different from the gender point of view in term of education or age structure.

UK – United Kingdom

(B.3, p. 23) Lack of GM/GIA in the planned public sector restructuring (para 2.6-2.8): without a GIA this programme of rationalisation may impact negatively on women's employment conditions and/or their access to care services (children and elders).

Lack of GM/GIA in the reform of ALMP: the potentially negative impact of the requirement to be available for full-time work or training through the new integrated employment support and skills services, and (from 2009) the provisions of the flexible New Deal.

(Short Response, p. 4) Examples where GM and GIA would be pertinent in the chapters on macroeconomic and microeconomic policy but no such reference is made

- If the initiation of 'policy reviews on cross-cutting issues' included GM within its remit that would be a positive development, but there is no mention of this in the text and it is unclear if this was part of the approach taken (paragraph 2.4).
- The discussion of ongoing efforts to deliver efficiency savings in the public sector (paragraph 2.6-2.8) may have particular implications for women's employment conditions given their greater concentration than men in public sector employment; and also women as service users if this efficiency drive leads to reductions in childcare and other care services.
- There is no assessment of how the various new measures to assist first-time buyers in the housing market and for the expansion of social housing (paragraph 2.11, 2.20) can be expected to have a potential differential gender impact given women are (i) on average in an inferior financial positions as single people (ii) more reliant on social housing via their situation as lone parents, low-income older people, women escaping domestic violence.
- There is no discussion of gender in relation to pensions reform (paragraph 2.26-2.27), although this policy reform was gender mainstreamed.
- There is no mention of GIA in relation to the policy of a light regulatory framework for small businesses, initially focussing on employment law (paragraph 3.10-3.12). Gender Impact Assessment will be pertinent given the pronounced gender segregation of employment whereby a larger proportion of women's employment is concentrated in small firms (as well as very large companies) than is male employment.

Source: National Reports on 2008 NRPs (Part A and Part B).

8. GENERAL SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT OF THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN THE NRPS FOR EMPLOYMENT

The overall assessment of Gender Mainstreaming in the 2008 NRP process by the experts in the EGGE network is rather bleak. The vast majority of the NRPs are reported as being gender blind or gender neutral and limit their discuss of gender to a narrow range of policy domains. In some cases such an approach reflects limited attention paid to women’s employment but elsewhere there are gender blind NRPs in Member States with a stronger track record in gender equality, for example Denmark.

Even where gender is discussed the expert assessment is often that there is a lack of specifics and required detail or proposed measures are assessed as weak (for example, regarding the gender pay gap in Belgium). Nevertheless there is some positive evidence to report. The use of gendered targets and statistics in the NRP of Member States such as Greece represents an improvement. Similarly the experts in Cyprus, Lithuanian, Luxembourg and Portugal all report some positive developments or an improvement on previous NRPs. On the other hand, the Latvian expert’s assessment is that gender has a lower profile in the 2008 NRP.

The lack of an adequately gender-mainstreamed approach means that proposed measures and developments in the NRPs present potential risks for equality and women’s employment in the Member States. For example the experts from Austria and Germany both point to the potential risks to women’s job quality of the continued promotion of flexible jobs and those mini-jobs that fall outside a system of social protection. However, there are also perhaps more subtle risks resulting from a focus on Points-to-Watch and targets rather than an approach based on integrated gender mainstreaming, as highlighted by the experts of Cyprus and Ireland.

The absence of adequate gender mainstreaming means that experts have pointed out a number of priority areas that need urgent consideration (table 8.1). Perhaps unsurprisingly the gender pay gap is highlighted as an important area in need of attention but also some of the causes of the gender pay gap in the form of persistent segregation and the need to address inequalities in access to decision making positions are stressed.

Table 8.1 Priority Policy Areas Identified by National Experts

	<i>Member States</i>
Gender Pay Gap	BE, BG, CY, CZ, DK, FI, HU, IE, MT, SK, UK
Segregation / Decision Making	EE, ES, FI, IE, PT, RO
Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming	ES, FR, HU, IT, LU, NL, SI
Reconciliation (leave)	DK, HU, SE
Job Quality	AT, DE
Ethnicity and gender	BG, DK, MT, NL
Childcare	CZ, EL, HU, IE, LV

The absence of a gender-mainstreamed approach also represents a missed opportunity in the view of some experts at the Member State level. As we have seen above a number of Member States have implemented comprehensive gender mainstreaming laws yet the

NRPs made no mention of these (BE) or failed to adequately apply the principles (ES). Elsewhere gender mainstreaming had the potential to avoid the unintended unequal consequences in the implementation of policy (see box 8.1) – for example, in the case of traps created by the RSA in France – or to improve analysis behind policy proposals – for example, the need to recognise gender segregation (CY and EE).

Finally an improved gender mainstreaming approach would also allow a more considered analysis of the potential impacts of the financial crisis. A number of experts raise the prospects of the advancing recession on gender equality (for example UK, EE, HU and SK). The likely consequences on women, men and gender equality of the financial crisis will be important issues for the future NRP process.

BOX 8.1: General summary (2008 NRPs)

<p>1. AT</p>	<p>Although the Austrian NRP addresses the gender pay gap, sets a target to increase female employment and concrete measures regarding the reconciliation of childcare and employment, this cannot be seen as an adequate gender mainstreaming approach, since it hardly presents any other gender-sensitive or women-specific policies. In addition, with regard to some policy areas a gender mainstreaming approach or/and women specific measures would have been of great importance (and should therefore be highlighted by the Commission). Especially with regard to the increase in (marginal) part-time work and the continually falling quality of jobs for women (in terms of increasing instability, insufficient social security, jobs offered only with low levels of qualification and low pay), policies and even a discussion of the problems are still missing. In addition, the ‘24-hours home care’ scheme will further increase ‘bad’ female employment relationships, also with regard to full-time jobs. Furthermore policies to change the gendered division of labour (on of the main reasons for the persistent pay gap not adjusted by working time) are absent and the amendment of the Working Hours Act will further aggravate the situation.</p>
<p>2. BE</p>	<p>The main finding from this evaluation of Belgium’s 2008 NRP is that the gender dimension is systematically left out, be it with respect to major or minor gender equality challenges. The NRP shows no evidence of gender mainstreaming and the overall policy approach to address the identified problems and difficulties on the Belgian labour market is not sufficient in gender terms. This clearly illustrates that the new law on gender mainstreaming that was adopted in 2007 has thus far no real-life implications. The NRP does not even mention it.</p> <p>Amongst the main challenges for gender equality figure the persisting gender wage gap (mentioned but proposed solutions are too weak), the disadvantaged labour market position of non-national women (not identified as a specific problem) and the lack of sufficient child care arrangements, especially for the unemployed and outside office hours. Obviously, there are many more challenges. A crucial first step is to disaggregate all statistics by sex, this exercise will put forth those problems and challenges that call for a gendered policy approach and finally, some political goodwill is needed to design gender-specific and adequate solutions to the identified problems and difficulties. The complete absence of a gender dimension throughout the whole Belgian NRP needs to be underlined.</p>
<p>3. BG</p>	<p>The NRP 2008-2010 does not pay much attention to gender issues being more focused on concrete specific recommendations, among which gender has not been presented. That is why it lacks gender specifications and details, in comparison with the NRO 2007-2009.</p> <p>However, assessing both programs we have to say that there is still a lot to be done in order to have NRP, which is comprehensive from gender point of view. First, in this aspect there is a need to include the gender among the priorities of the policy. Second, there should be a more systematic and deeper gender analysis, on which to base the problems and needs of specific gender policies. Third, not only relevant institutions should be established, including NGOs, but there should be active and initiative gender-oriented institutions, dealing with the</p>

	<p>current gender problems important for the society, but not with problems studied by institutions abroad or inside the country, which are not hot issues today. One problem of real importance is the role of young women with small children for the expansion of the labour force. A very hot issue is the old alone women or women living in the countryside and their employment and family life. A hot but hard problem is the one related to ethnic genders and Roma women in particular.</p>
<p>4. CY</p>	<p>As a PTW, the very high gender pay gap has received attention in the NRP. However, attention was not paid to an equally disturbing percentage: women in decision making positions or women managers. One of the reasons of the high pay gap is the very low number of women in high ranking positions (the share of women managers is estimated to be 14-15%); however, no concrete actions for increasing this number has been proposed in the NRP. In addition, there seems to be no reference to women in ethnic minority groups, women immigrants, including the very high percentages of foreign domestic workers. It should be noted, however, that the reference to women and gender (in)equality is much improved from past submissions.</p>
<p>5. CZ</p>	<p>Employment policies in the Czech Republic lack systematic focus on gender equality, on the gender aspects of the Lisbon and Barcelona targets and on measures to close the gender gaps. The approach of the NRP for 2008–2010 is not adequate for the promotion of gender equality. Policies for gender equality are very limited and only concern two issues. Implicitly, gender equality is developed in the area of <i>reconciliation</i> of work and family life where some measures can have negative impact on gender equality (the use of gender stereotypes) and some policies can have positive impact on gender equality (e.g. the paternity leave of one week between the birth and six weeks of the child). Some policies that have been announced and could have positive impact on gender equality have not been implemented and the weaknesses in some policies announced have been corrected in the NRP (promotion of part-time work). The only area with an explicit focus on gender equality is the area of <i>education - science and research</i>.</p> <p>Two main issues that should be prioritised are: 1) access to childcare services; 2) gender pay gap. The Czech Republic is far from meeting the Barcelona targets and the unmet demand for childcare services is increasing especially for preschool age children. Gender pay gap is a persisting problem that is not on the political agenda, not even mentioned in the NRP.</p>
<p>6. DE</p>	<p>The German NRP is a document of national policy priorities amongst which gender equality in society or in the labour market is not a primary target. The document includes gender aspects only where the Lisbon strategy has set a clear gender target, in other areas gender related programmes, which do exist, are not even mentioned. Gender dimensions are only visible with respect to the labour market and the recent increase recorded in women's employment rate. But the quality of jobs is a big problem, leading to a growing number of low paid and poor women. We think that women's employment opportunities lack quality of employment (as they are often mini-jobs, part-time jobs, low paid jobs etc.) and that the pure increase of women's employment rate above the Lisbon target is not a success. The NRP addresses child care facilities on a prominent part of the paper, but does not address “better jobs” for women. The emphasis put on education and training policies is not related to a gender assessment nor does it address gender differences within the relevant policy areas.</p>
<p>7. DK</p>	<p>The Danish NRP is embarrassingly gender blind. One may wonder if it is out of ignorance or arrogance. The NRP states (in section 4.6 on ‘gender’) that the government is working on realising the goals and on the implementation of the initiatives stated in the EU's Equal Opportunities Pact. This does not mean that Denmark has finally launched an independent equality institution to monitor equality, after the present government closed the national centre for gender equality, when it came into power in 2001.</p> <p>The following questions should be addressed. (1) How are the intersections of gender and ethnicity, gender and age, age and ethnicity, and gender, age and ethnicity in real life taken into consideration according to initiatives of investing in people and modernising the labour markets? (2) What are the potential actions in solving the gender pay gap, when yet another study (in late 2008) reveals that it cannot be explained by factors as skills, education and</p>

	experience? (3) How will the government and the social partners solve the problem of bottlenecks in the Danish labour market – without a gender assessment – as the bottlenecks are closely related to the gender segregation?
8. EE	<p>Although the female employment is quite high in Estonia and meets the Lisbon targets, the gender pay gap, gender segregation and impact of parenthood on employment are among the highest in the EU. There are some measures that deal with gender specific problems in a quite adequate way, but more systematic approach to gender mainstreaming should be applied in all areas of policies.</p> <p>Reducing the gender pay gap is one of the gender related aspects that has been pointed in the NRP. Still, the NRP gives no measures to directly address the gender pay gap. As the issue is highly connected to very large gender segregation (both on the labour market and education) and the impact of parenthood on the employment, these are some of the issues which should be prioritised and dealt with in order to decrease the gender pay gap.</p>
9. EL	<p>A number of positive developments can be observed. The NRP makes use of gender disaggregated statistics for the description of the labour market situation and sets many more quantitative targets than in the past relative to women's employment, unemployment and participation in employment policy measures. Moreover, it includes a clear commitment to the improvement of the conditions for gender mainstreaming of all general policies in the coming years (infrastructure, mechanisms, tools, and representation of women in decision-making). Finally, it contains a great range of measures focusing on the promotion of the employment and employability of mothers. However, it also suffers of weaknesses. Targets on female employment and unemployment rates do not take into account the recent economic downturn and the gloomy economic prospects for the next years while there are still no targets on the coverage of children by care services. Besides, some new leaves and entitlements for free childcare are associated only to mothers and not to both parents thus reproducing the role of women as main carers, and there is a pervasive impression that Greek equality policy in the area of employment is only concerned with women's employment and not with changes in gender roles, relations and value systems. This is a restrictive interpretation of gender mainstreaming.</p> <p>The need for continuing progress in the provision of childcare services and considering setting targets on childcare coverage rates should be highlighted.</p>
10. ES	<p>In general, the visibility of gender issues in the 2008 Progress Report of the Spanish NRP is somewhat deficient and it does not succeed to capture the actual gender implications of many of the measures implemented since the boost of the Lisbon Strategy. It should be noted that when gender issues are explicitly addressed, it is usually in connection to measures exclusively aiming to women, rather than applying a gender mainstreaming in every branch of public policy. Gender mainstreaming is still poor, but there are evidences of some progress (not highlighted in the report). Better and more frequent evaluations of gender impacts should be applied in order to comply with the mandate of the recent FLEEWM, which calls for the attachment of a gender impact assessment to every new strategic and legal initiative in the socioeconomic field. Particular attention should be put on the gender impact assessment of the implementation of the National System of Dependency, including both positive and negative effects (greater supply of female employment against greater occupational segregation).</p>
11. FI	<p>The main gender challenges in the Finnish labour market are the gender pay gap, the prevalence of fixed-term employment among women and the fathers' low take-up rate of family leaves. A special attention should also be given to immigrant women.</p> <p>These challenges are barely or not at all discussed in the NRP. It is very hard to find any evidence of gender mainstreaming in the report despite the government's new principle on gender mainstreaming. The use of gender disaggregated statistics also is limited. Gender is a bit more visible in the Appendix II, but the match between the report itself and the Appendix is not very good.</p> <p>It is important to include the gender perspective in the preparation work of the Finnish flexicurity model and to discuss it. Fixed-term employment is such a gender equality</p>

	challenge in Finland that gender can simply not be ignored when addressing the phenomenon. All in all, a clearer gender perspective is called for in the NRP.
12. FR	The 2008 NRP develops no gender mainstreaming approach, as was the case of the two previous NRPs. There are measures promoting equality, but they are limited to pay inequalities and do not concern other forms of inequality (employment, unemployment, training, fight against segregation). Even the issue of childcare, which was quantified in the previous NRP, is hardly referred to and only from the angle of families, not equality. And yet, in France, other measures regarding equality exist, but are not referred to here. On the other hand, many employment policy measures could reinforce inequalities in the labour market, because they do not incorporate the gender perspective. The typical case is that of RSA, a measure that seems socially equitable and ought to make it possible for many excluded people to return to the labour market, but which runs the risk of reinforcing “insecurity traps”. Because of a total absence of gender mainstreaming, we are in a contradictory situation between the implementation of measures promoting equality, on the one hand, and the development of measures that are seen as being neutral, but in fact have an indirect discriminatory impact on women, on the other.
13. HU	<p>Despite of the implementation of gender-related initiatives, the employment situation of women has deteriorated over the recent years in Hungary. One dimensional target-oriented approach of the gender equalising policy is one of the reasons for this failure. Gender issues are absent in the handling labour market problems. Another important reason for the failure is the lack of knowledge on the gender-specific impact of different education, social and employment policy initiatives. Decision makers have insufficient knowledge on the impact of increasing the minimum wage on segregated labour markets whilst there is a lack of up to date evaluation on the impact of family benefits on female employment and gender wage gaps.</p> <p>The 2008-2010 NRP for Hungary builds on goals and priorities set out in the earlier version of the programme. Although, gender issues and gender equality have gained some prominence in the last years, these changes are mostly results of mandatory request to do so by the EC. However, the recent financial and economic crisis might slow down this progress, pushing gender mainstreaming out of the Government’ priority aims.</p> <p>The NRP fails even to mention some important gender issues like gender pay gap, gender segregation, the special problems of single parents, providing care for old and ill relatives, as a precondition of reconciliation work and family duties, besides kindergartens. Consequently, adequate responses are also missing.</p>
14. IE	<p>The Irish NRP emphasises on policies towards competitiveness and ensuring an adequate supply of labour, including skilled workers. Where the NRP refers specifically to women it focuses on women as a source of increased labour supply in a high growth economy and to increased childcare provision as its stated central policy approach. Migrant workers and older workers are also viewed as important sources of additional labour supply. In relation to equality and inequality issues, the emphasis is on the role of the National Minimum Wage and the newly established National Employment Rights Agency (NERA) in protecting those on low incomes, and on taxation reform aimed at improving the situation of those on low pay.</p> <p>The Irish NRP is presented as predominantly gender 'neutral' but can in parts be assessed as largely gender 'blind'. It lacks an analysis of the specific situations of women and men in relation to the different guidelines, much of the data presented is not gender disaggregated, and policy initiatives are presented without references to their potential impact on women and men, or on different sectors of women and men. Notable exceptions to this are the new round of the Equality for Women Measure and the new small scale initiative to support female entrepreneurship. The extent to which gender equality issues and gender mainstreaming are addressed through these sorts of measures within the Irish policy process will depend on the extent to which they are focused on and adequately resourced.</p> <p>Although Irish women's employment position has been changing fast, women continue to be concentrated in persistent areas of poverty and low pay representing a subordinate economic</p>

	<p>position, which can only be addressed by bringing a gender equality perspective across the policy spectrum. Policies to tackle structural gender inequalities require a combination of targeted positive action initiatives together with a mainstreaming approach ensuring the gender inequalities are addressed in each policy arena. Under the current policy system, specific gender based employment goals are likely to be achieved in Ireland (such as the level and rate of women’s employment) but gender equality goals are unlikely to be achieved.</p>
15. IT	<p>The major issues addressed by the policy makers between 2006 and 2008 in terms of equal opportunities can be identified in two groups: i) policy for supporting women participation in the labour market through the provision of childcare services; ii) policy for increasing employment rate through financial incentives. Less has been done to mainstream gender approach in the field of workers adaptability, or to foster the participation of adult population in training initiatives, in the framework of a life-long learning approach.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the main finding from the assessment of the Italian’s 2008 NRP is that the gender dimension is marginalised (limiting the discussion to atypical contracts and childcare) and systematically left out from the general discussion. The absence of gender mainstreaming is particularly critical with respect to two policy initiatives: announced changes in schooling hours; announced shift from individual taxation to family taxation.</p>
16. LT	<p>Compared to previous NRP progress reports, the current report contains more references to gender. However, gender mainstreaming is limited. The key topics of the 2008 NRP are changes in employment rate, increasing participation rates of older workers, increase of work supply and increase availability of childcare. Several important issues remained rather gender-blind: wage differences, creation of network of competences, flexicurity, and integration of social risk groups. Some measures for implementation of policy initiatives in some cases controversial.</p> <p>Special attention should be paid to rural women situation and diminishing of regional disparities.</p>
17. LU	<p>The gender dimension is generally present in the NRP. Moreover one should have in mind the general mechanism of gender mainstreaming in Luxembourg, that imposes a GIA of all measures proposed and adopted by the government and administrations. The analysis of this mechanisms, detailed in the NSR, but not in the NRP, show that gender mainstreaming is considered as a challenge and one of the objectives of the government of Luxembourg. This analysis (see NSR) also shows that the need for gender training of civil servants is large. Important measures have been adopted in this direction. When considering the BEPG in the NRP, gender analysis is not apparent and has probably been neglected in policy areas not directly concerned with the labour market or social inclusion.</p> <p>It remains that the analysis of the document only is too restrictive to have a correct evaluation of the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming and GIA in Luxembourg. In particular, an in-deep analysis of what has been discussed during the process of elaborating the NRP and the measures adopted should give a better view of GM in Luxembourg. In particular, an analysis of the different evaluations that are foreseen would help to a better understanding of GM in Luxembourg.</p>
18. LV	<p>In the 2008 NRP, gender dimension is considered only in the paragraph about the “remarkable reserves” of female labour. There is no gender mainstreaming, no gender specific policy, seldom use of gender disaggregated statistics. Two critical remarks can be made: (1) the gender dimension was more visible in the previous NRP; (2) there is no clear link between increasing female employment and solution of preschool education and young school age child care.</p> <p>Child care for small children (< 3 yrs) should be developed. At present, public preschool education institutions (kindergartens) are available only for children starting from age 3. That results in need of parental longer stay out of labour market, which increases higher risk of unemployment after longer break. It is still necessary to highlight the need to increase availability of preschool education, not to concentrate to development alternative child care - of short term “child minding”. If the alternative care can work for the younger school age</p>

	<p>children, it is definitely not a solution for preschool age children. This alternative is not a solution for better reconciliation work and family life and is not a policy towards increasing female employment (under existing dominating employment patterns).</p>
<p>19. MT</p>	<p>Malta’s overarching concern is to step up efforts to increase the overall employment rate, particularly that of women. However, the earning experience of most women in Malta illustrates that state policies are tied to an extreme variant of the male breadwinner model, and women are constrained by traditional gender roles and norms.</p> <p>Malta has implemented fiscal measures to attract women into the labour market, however, Malta still lacks a coherent policy strategy to encourage specific groups of women to earn. For example, the NRP states “a major obstacle is to entice middle aged and older women to return to work” (p.35). Despite awareness of the situation, government fails to acknowledge that women are not a homogeneous group.</p> <p>Overall, the gender mainstreaming approach in the development of policies is still missing in the Malta NRP and active measures lack an explicit gender perspective with adequately tailored training possibilities. A more strategic approach is needed for mobilising measures specifically for the purpose of achieving gender equality.</p> <p>A main issue that should be prioritised with respect to gender in the NRP is the integration and participation of migrant women into the labour market. <i>Migrant women</i> are the most marginalised in Maltese society, and tend to suffer multiple discrimination and social exclusion often linked to child poverty. The NRP fails to mention migrant women. In addition, the gender pay gap deserves special attention. Whereas in some EU countries the persistence of the <i>gender pay gap</i> has initiated a range of policy measures, the Malta NRP fails to mention it. Although the law in Malta enforces the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, it is up to the social partners to implement the policy.</p>
<p>20. NL</p>	<p>The key topic of the 2008 Progress Report on the Dutch NRP 2005-2008 is increasing participation rates in headcount and (especially) in full-time equivalents. The report pays specific attention to women and the policies presented to increase their participation rate seem appropriate. With regard to the workings and outcomes of the labour market, the NRP remains rather gender-blind (e.g. payments, flexicurity and educational attainment). Moreover, policy attention does not always translate into effective policy measures. For example, taskforces and advisory groups may be useful in order to raise awareness, they are also rather non-committal.</p> <p>A main issue that should be prioritised with respect to gender in the NRP is the monitoring of current policies. In addition, the position of women from ethnic minority groups deserves special attention. Women from ethnic minority groups, particularly Turkish and Moroccan women, have the lowest participation rates.</p>
<p>21. PL</p>	<p>Given women’s low employment rates and high unemployment and inactivity rates, the policy approach promoting labour market gender equality requires explicit effort towards increasing women’s employment and narrowing unemployment and inactivity gaps. The NRP underlines the need to increase employment through human capital development, ALMPs, and tightening of social security systems, but mainly in a gender neutral manner. The new attention of policy makers accorded reconciliation of work and family policies is positive; however, in the current form, the proposed measures suggest flexible employment and leave arrangements for mothers and do not consider the role of fathers – this reinforces the traditional division of labour. The overall policy approach, framed by demographic and social exclusion, gives more (instrumental) attention to gender. The NRP 2008-11 does not adequately take gender equality into account, the use of statistics and targets is poor, policy reforms and the expected results are vague, many areas discussed in section A are not referred to in the NRP, and gender mainstreaming is not applied.</p>
<p>22. PT</p>	<p>(p. 29) At the surface the 2008 NRP seems a better integrated plan, but, once scrutinized, we understand that the connections established with the several plans promoting gender equality are very superficial, outside the employment chapter, frequently made under the format of general statement.</p>

	<p>(p. 32) The mainstreaming of gender equality does not know significant developments in the field of employment. It is given continuity to the already launched policies of expansion of care services, aiming a better reconciliation of work and family, and making work pay, bringing more women into the labour market and employment, but without addressing the existing inequalities. There are no measures targeting directly: the high level of segregation, both horizontal, vertical and transversal; the gender pay gap; the low participation of women in the socio-economic processes of decision making.</p> <p>(pp. 37-38) The new NRP deals with some of the problems needing urgent intervention, that is, the high level of precariousness, the high unemployment, especially among young people, the low qualifications of the Portuguese labour force, and the low salaries paid, in general. As, in general, the gender gaps regarding employment and unemployment are below the EU average, they received a soft answer in this NRP, almost reducible to the promotion of female entrepreneurship. Most of the solutions put forward to overcome them didn't take into account gender equality concerns. Particularly illustrative of this is the dramatic cut of the use of gender disaggregated statistics, even at the level of the diagnosis.</p> <p>Main issues that should be prioritised with respect to gender in the NRP are the combat against segregation of labour employment, the gender pay gap in the private sector and the low participation of women in decision taking processes. There is an urgent need to integrate gender equality concerns into the policies addressing the problem of youth unemployment and the policies tackled by the Technological Plan. Another main issue that should be prioritised with respect to gender in the NRP is the monitoring of current policies.</p>
<p>23. RO</p>	<p>The NRP 2007 and 2008 take into account the main objectives and priorities which are in the Lisbon Strategy. These objectives are followed by the some proposals for the actions in an implementation process. Unfortunately many initiatives from the strategies remain without results in the field of institutions, or in daily life. If we compare with 2005-2006 we can observe a sharp decreasing in the actions field oriented to the assuring equality between man and women especially on the labour market. There are not a real interest in changing the mentalities and to assure the opportunities for a real equality between man and women on the labour market. It is too much ideology in this strategies and a very little effort for actions. Active measures for supporting the women on the labour market is not a priority in this moment for the Government.</p> <p>Areas that require special attention are: a) policies for women on the political agenda and in the field of decision makers b) active and direct measures in an actions manner on the anti-discriminatory women policy on the labour market and c) antidiscrimination policies for women in the highest position in different fields (especially political, decision makers, and professional domains).</p>
<p>24. SE</p>	<p>According to the Government the overall goal is to restore the work-first principle and fight labour exclusion. This is to be achieved by measures making it worthwhile to work, making it easier and less costly to take on new employees and making it possible for more enterprises to start up and grow. The most important measure to strengthen the work principle is the in-work tax credit. It is designed in a way that lowers the tax on wages relative to other income. Additionally stricter requirements have been enforced as far as other income is concerned such as unemployment and sickness insurance, which means bigger differences between those who have a job and those who do not. Many persons have left the unemployment insurance and employers might in the near future be less willing to employ unemployed people in new start and step-in jobs and there is a risk that many will dependent on very low incomes as they become unemployed or sick.</p> <p>How well or bad the new measures will work in a situation with a world wide financial crisis and a deeper economic recession remains to be seen. Men's employment is probably more threatened than women's since men work in manufacturing and construction while women work in the public sector and in the service sectors which probably will not be so badly hit. Gender equality measures will continue to be introduced, but it might be more difficult to convince men to take parental leave even with the help of the gender equality bonus and a child-raising allowance might be an alternative to unemployment for women. The two</p>

	measures suitable to be highlighted are new start jobs and child-raising allowance.
25. SI	<p>In spite of some improvements in recent years in both activity and employment rates for both sexes in Slovenia, the gender gaps are still considerable and some indicators show deterioration in gender equality (slower decrease of female unemployment, increasing gender gap in both activity and employment rates, more discouraged workers and labour reserve among women, increasing gender gap in the share of workers with temporary agreements, increasing gender gap in self-employment in favour of men). Further consideration of how existing gender differences should be tackled is needed. The gender mainstreaming of employment policies in Slovenia would be important for reaching objectives of the employment strategy and gender equality.</p> <p>The 2008 NRP declares a general gender related target of ensuring equal opportunities for both sexes and preventing discrimination at the labour market that is to be applied “horizontally across all measures”. It would be useful to set more gender specific and preferably quantitative targets (regarding flexible employment, self-employment, employment and activity rates, segregation and gender pay gap) and to use and to report on envisaged monitoring mechanisms on planned policies and measures. In that way it would be easier to evaluate existing measures and modify them in order to better answer the existing employment and gender equality challenges.</p>
26. SK	<p>The situation in employment in the recent years was strongly influenced by positive economic development. Significant changes were adopted in the legislation related to the employment and the labour market. After the extensive amendment to the Labour Code was prepared also another extensive amendment to the Act on employment services. Whilst the Labour code was focused more on the implementation of flexicurity principles, the Act on employment was targeted to the disadvantaged groups of population and to the prevention from exclusion from the labour market. The impact of both documents on gender equality is only indirect and intermediated.</p> <p>The problem of persisting gender wage gap is permanently reflected in the practise not sufficiently. In regard to the significant postponing of the retirement age of women, more attention would be pay to the problem of employability of elderly women in the labour market.</p>
27. UK	<p>There has been quite a lot of activity in relation to gender mainstreaming and gender equality in recent years, some of which is not reflected in the style of reporting adopted for the NRP. Part of the impetus for this activity has come from the recommendations of the Government’s Women and Work Commission (WWC), which was set-up in response to an earlier recommendation that the UK should take action to redress the gender pay gap. Many of the recent and planned reforms and initiatives are beneficial for women, in particular the improvements in childcare and reconciliation measures, the pension reform and the Gender Duty on the public sector. However, shortfalls remain and the gender pay gap persists. One of the criticisms made of the WWC was that ‘harder’ measures to tackle the gender pay gap were rejected in favour of ‘softer measures’ such as training, and promotional campaigns to increase opportunities for part-time work in better quality jobs. Furthermore, the deteriorating economic climate may place new hardships on some groups of women – particularly those with low skill levels or resident in disadvantaged areas – which may fuel a widening of gender inequalities.</p>

Source: National Reports on 2008 NRPs (Part B).

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