



European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)  
Confédération européenne des syndicats (CES)

# **ETUC Charter on Gender Mainstreaming in Trade Unions**

*adopted by  
the ETUC Congress in Seville, 23 May 2007*

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## **Introduction**

As expressed in "ETUC's vision of Europe", adopted by the X-th Congress in Prague 2003, the ETUC is committed to

"Gender Equality", and should

- *"Demand the inclusion of gender equality among the fundamental values of the EU and its inclusion in the shared competences of the EU;*
- *Ensure the acquis communautaire regarding equal pay and gender mainstreaming is maintained across all policies and encourage women's representation in all decision-making bodies."*

To implement its commitment, the Prague Congress 2003 adopted ETUC's third Equality Plan.

The implementation of this plan was discussed in the ETUC Executive of June 2006 on the basis of a mid-term review, in the autumn of 2006 research was carried out on the basis of a questionnaire to all affiliates, and a conference was held in March 2007 in Berlin to develop tools and instruments for gender mainstreaming.

This Charter is based on the outcomes of the survey<sup>1</sup> and the recommendations adopted by the Executive and the gender mainstreaming conference.

## **Political context**

Achieving gender equality in Europe continues to be a major challenge for all stakeholders at national and European level. A lot of progress has been made since the first European Community Treaty almost 50 years ago introduced the obligation to guarantee 'equal pay' for men and women. On that basis an extensive body of equal treatment-legislation has been developed. Also, the labour market participation of women has been steadily increasing. However, progress has come to a halt in recent years, and in some countries reverse trends can be observed.

<sup>1</sup> ETUC survey 2006-07 " Women in Trade Unions: bridging the gap"

- The *gender pay gap* is still around 15 percent on average in the EU-27, but in some countries more than 20 percent, while in several countries even increasing again.
- Despite the fact that women in the meantime have closed the education gap, the majority of them is still found on the *lower end of the skills and pay scale*. Investing in training and life long learning for women is still not seen as an economically viable investment.
- The increase of female employment has been mostly in highly feminised jobs and sectors, such as public and private services, and they tend to have *more precarious employment conditions* (part time, fixed term and other forms of 'flexible' contracts).
- Childcare and other facilities and measures to improve *reconciliation of work and private life* are in most countries still *very insufficiently* available and often with poor quality or at too high a price. Moreover, they are still seen as 'facilities for women' instead of for parents.
- Although the employment rate (in terms of number of women in paid employment) for women is now on average 55,7 percent (compared to men 70,9 percent) and they form around 42 percent of trade union membership, their *representation* and visibility at all levels of decision-making is *far from proportionate*.

Recently, there is new attention at EU level for the importance of taking action on all these matters:

- The European Social Partners have reached an agreement in spring 2005 on a *Gender Framework of Actions*, in which an integrated approach is advocated on occupational segregation, women in decision-making, work-life balance and equal pay.
- The European Commission has issued a *Roadmap for Equality between men and women*, running from 2006 to 2010, announcing initiatives especially on reconciliation of work and family life and equal pay.
- The Council of Ministers has adopted at the Spring Summit of 2006 a *Gender Pact*, calling on all actors at national and European level to increase efforts and actions on gender equality, close the gender gaps in employment and social protection, and meet the demographic challenges by promoting better work-life balance for women and men.

In all these documents, there is a clear reference to the importance of full and equal participation of men and women in the workplace, the labour market and society at large as being vital to the development of a competitive and prosperous Europe.

For the ETUC and its affiliates, there are many urgent reasons to increase efforts and actions in this regard. In many of ETUC's member organisations the increase in membership has been female, and their unionisation rate on average (although not in every particular country) is now more or less proportional to their labour market participation.

However, as the research that was carried out among affiliates has shown, there is still a persistent representation gap, and gender-mainstreaming is still not properly implemented everywhere.

Therefore, on the occasion of its congress in Seville in 2007, it is proposed *not* to present a new Equality plan, but to call for a stronger commitment to better implement the previous plans.

Urgent measures should be taken to improve performance of ETUC and affiliates in the forthcoming years, to close the representation gap between women and men at all levels in the trade unions, and to ensure gender mainstreaming in all processes of policy and decision making in the interest of both men and women and the future of the trade union movement.

By adopting this Charter, ETUC and its affiliates express their renewed commitment to take such urgent measures.

## **Article 1**

### **Gender mainstreaming: essential for social progress and sustainability**

Gender equality is an essential element of democracy in the workplace and in society.

The ETUC and its affiliates confirm their commitment to pursue gender equality as part of their broader agenda for social justice, social progress and sustainability in Europe, and therefore adopt a gender mainstreaming approach as an indispensable and integral element of all their actions and activities.

To this end, they adopt the following definition of gender mainstreaming:

#### ***Definition and key elements of gender-mainstreaming***

A. *"Gender mainstreaming is: the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making<sup>2</sup>.*

B. *This involves not restricting efforts to promote equality to the implementation of specific measures to help women, but mobilising all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality, by actively and openly taking into account at the planning stage their possible effects on the respective situations of men and women (gender perspective). This means systematically examining measures and policies and taking into account such possible effects when defining and implementing them.<sup>3</sup>"*

C. *Gender mainstreaming associates itself with equal visibility, empowerment and participation of men and women in public and private life. Women's priorities and needs should be accorded equal respect with those of men. Men are a 'gender' too, and an integral part of a gender approach. They are thus required, alongside women, to adapt their behaviour in order to reach gender equality.*

<sup>2</sup> Council of Europe, 1998

<sup>3</sup> European Commission, 1996

ETUC and its affiliates recognize that gender mainstreaming clearly regards women as well as men.

Essentially, the choice for implementing gender mainstreaming means a choice for structural change, regarding both women's and men's roles in public and private life, at home and in the workplace. It means that the burden of adjustment will be more evenly spread on women and men, workplaces and societies, with higher long term benefits in terms of labour participation, gender equality, fertility, and full utilisation of male and female human capital.<sup>4</sup>

## **Article 2**

### **Effective implementation of the Equality Plan and the Gender Mainstreaming Charter**

- 1) ETUC and affiliates shall take concrete and targeted measures to *improve the visibility* of the Equality Plan and the Charter on Gender Mainstreaming and promote a '*sense of ownership*' and shared responsibility among all relevant actors at all relevant levels.
- 2) The ETUC Congress clearly expresses that more commitment and action is needed to implement the Equality Plan 2003 and the Charter. ETUC affiliates will take up the responsibility to introduce, implement and monitor equality plans, where not already existing, in their national or sectoral federations before the next Congress.
- 3) The appointment at the political leadership level in each organisation of a person that is responsible for the monitoring of the gender mainstreaming process in the organisation should be considered. This person would, preferably *not* be the same person as the one being responsible for (gender) equality, to clearly embody the notion of *shared responsibility* on this matter.
- 4) Progress will be evaluated by a mid-term review between the congress of Seville and the following congress.

## **Article 3**

### **Extending gender mainstreaming**

#### ***A. Gender-mainstreaming in all areas of social policy***

The *revision of social security and welfare systems, including pensions*, is everywhere in Europe on the agenda. Discussions on demographic change and ageing populations are putting more pressure on the debates.

In addition, recent discussions on *flexicurity* and the *modernisation of labour law* have put the issues of addressing precarious work and labour market segmentation (the growing gap between 'insiders' and 'outsiders') high on the agenda. It is more important than ever that ETUC and affiliates recognize the gender dimension of these issues, and 'gender-proof' all proposals and solutions in this regard.

<sup>4</sup> ETUC position on the Reconciliation of work, private and family life, December 2006

## **B. Gender-mainstreaming in Collective bargaining**

Mainstreaming gender equality in *collective bargaining* remains a major challenge, and demands stronger cooperation with and commitment of especially the industry federations and sectoral and branch unions at all levels. The following measures will be taken:

- a) explicitly inviting, supporting and training women to participate in collective bargaining committees and negotiating teams, including in EWC's;
- b) investing in training of collective bargaining negotiators, men and women, at all relevant levels in gender equality issues;
- c) conveying clear messages that a gender perspective should be included, not only when discussing specific facilities for women/parents such as childcare and flexible working arrangements, but also when negotiating recruitment, pay systems and wage increases, life long learning, restructuring etc.
- d) a renewed effort will be made by ETUC and its affiliates to reduce the gender pay gap. As a first step, the ETUC will set the example by setting clear targets in its yearly coordination note on collective bargaining to reduce the pay gap for instance with one percent per year.

In order to realise this objective, actions must be developed at the national and sectoral level, including revision of job classification and systems of job evaluation.<sup>5</sup> Activities and progress will be monitored.

- e) ETUC and its affiliates at all relevant levels will actively pursue the implementation of the Gender Framework of Actions, agreed between the Social Partners at European level in 2005.

## **C. Tools and guidelines to implement gender-mainstreaming**

ETUC and affiliates adopt a clear commitment to implement gender-mainstreaming in all areas of policy-making and activity, and recognize that this demands the development and adoption of *tools, mechanisms and guidelines*.

- a) 'gender-mainstreaming' seems a difficult concept to understand and implement; it will therefore be considered to put the issue before the ETUC-Executive for a more detailed discussion; the basis for such a discussion could be formed by a set of draft guidelines, leading to the publication of a small brochure for dissemination;
- b) as a first step, the ETUC will set the example by introducing the policy that every document presented to its Executive Committee as well as the Congress must contain a gender impact assessment, and at least indicate with a short motivation if and how the gender perspective has been included.

<sup>5</sup> ETUC resolution on the coordination of collective bargaining 2003-2004 and the participation of workers, adopted by the Executive Committee on 17-18 March 2004

## **Article 4**

### **Elimination of the gender representation gap:**

#### ***A. The provision of good and comparable data***

To measure improvement, and find out where additional action is needed, *good and comparable data* are indispensable.

- a) ETUC shall develop tools and instruments to help affiliates in gathering data on women's participation and representation in trade unions at all levels, and will introduce an annual "8 March Survey", that will be presented around International Women's Day to the Executive Committee.
- b) Affiliates express a clear commitment to providing the ETUC with all the necessary data. Failure to do so will be publicly addressed at the Executive Committee and the next Congress.
- c) It is recommended that affiliates provide gender specific data to the ETUC on the occasion of paying their affiliation fees.

#### ***B. Actions to increase the amount of women in positions of decision-making***

- a) There is a *persistent lack of women in positions of decision-making* in trade unions. A combination of measures is needed, and a much more coherent and focussed approach.
- b) Several affiliates have good experience with quantified targets and clear rules that have to be observed, to achieve at least proportional participation and representation. These practices will be gathered and evaluated by the ETUC Women's Committee, with a view to develop recommendations for further action.
- c) The ETUC shall develop, together with the training department of the ETUI-REHS, a good practice manual and training courses aiming at increasing the amount of women in positions of decision-making at all levels within trade unions.
- d) Gender audits, mentoring programmes and other forms of support for women to take up leadership roles in unions should be introduced by affiliates.

#### ***C. Including a gender-dimension in the State of the European Trade Unions exercise***

The ETUC 'State of the European Trade Unions' exercise, to take place every 2 years in the ETUC Executive, will explicitly address the 'state of women in the trade unions', by assessing the developments in female membership and the reduction of the representation gap.

## **Article 5**

### **Strengthening the role of equality policies and bodies: a dual approach and proper resources**

ETUC affiliates are - for many different reasons related to history and culture - in different stages of developing and strengthening the role of women in their organisations. A *dual approach* remains necessary, also at European level. On the one hand gender issues should be integrated in general policy-making by general structures. On the other hand, the role of specific equality bodies should be strengthened.

This includes providing the representatives of such equality bodies with one or more reserved seats with voting rights and/or at least the clear right to speak in decision making bodies, where they could comment on policies and decisions, take initiatives and offer expertise.

ETUC and its affiliates commit themselves to clearly  *earmark adequate budgets and support staff* for women and gender equality policies.

## **Article 6**

### **Enhancing the role and visibility of women in all ETUC structures:**

- 1) The option of conducting a gender-audit of the ETUC will be considered, after having studied the process and outcomes of similar experiences in the former ICFTU and other international organisations.
- 2) The ETUC website should be adapted to give more visibility to all actions and activities on gender equality by the ETUC, its Women's committee and affiliates.
- 3) Affiliates will take the need for gender parity into account, when sending representatives to the Executive Committee and the next Congress, as well as to standing committees, working groups, negotiating committees and conferences. Monitoring progress..... Delegations to Congress should be gender-balanced, as a very minimum in proportion to the female membership of the organisation. Women in delegations should have equal positions and voting rights.
- 4) In due time before the next Congress, the Executive Committee will discuss the adoption of appropriate sanctions ('sticks and/or carrots') to reward good performance or penalize bad performance, in accordance with the Equality Plan and the Charter on Gender Mainstreaming.

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