



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION
TO THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

**Framework Strategy on Gender Equality
Work Programme for 2001**

I - Introduction

The EU has a long-standing commitment to promoting gender equality, enshrined in the Treaty since 1957. To further this policy, the Commission adopted, in June 2000, the Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality¹.

The Community work towards gender equality in the period 2001 to 2005 will take the form of a comprehensive strategy which will embrace all Community policies in their efforts to promote gender equality. In this time period, the Commission will, through the involvement of all Commission services, progressively work to achieve the goals set out in the Framework Strategy.

The Framework Strategy unites and co-ordinates the different initiatives and programmes across the Commission under a single umbrella, around clear assessment criteria, gender proofing and evaluation, monitoring tools and the setting of benchmarks. This new approach raises the profile of the range of existing Community activities for the promotion of gender equality, and ensures their global consistency by identifying overlaps thus optimising efficiency and visibility inside and outside the Commission.

The Strategy is underpinned by an annual work programme the objective of which is to identify and bring together the priority actions that each service develops every year, with the aim of:

- translating idealistic ultimate goals, as spelt out in the framework strategy, into realistic and measurable stages or phases,
- facilitating the measurement of progress in the implementation of the framework strategy and the continuous internal evaluation,
- constituting the basis for reporting and increasing visibility with regard to the Commission's commitment to gender equality.

The gender equality work programme includes pro-active interventions, i.e. adjusting policies by applying gender mainstreaming and/or reactive interventions by implementing concrete actions designed to improve the situation of women in society. The targets of each Commission service are therefore split between achievements dedicated to the integration of a gender perspective in policy initiatives and specific actions addressed to women.

As the annual work programme is prepared jointly by Commission services, the pledges made by each service will be used as the performance indicators for that service. Progress and achievements are monitored by the Commissioner's Group on Equal Opportunities, supported by the inter-service group on equal opportunities. The "Annual Report on Gender Equality" will report on the achievements each year.

II - Fields of intervention of the Framework Strategy

The Framework Strategy encompasses the following fields of intervention:

¹ Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions towards a "Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality (2001-2005) COM(2000) 335 final.

1. PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN ECONOMIC LIFE

This area focuses on the gender gaps in the labour market and the ways to tackle them. The aims are to increase the employment rate of women, to reduce the unemployment rates among women, the gender segregation of the labour market and to significantly reduce the gender pay gap which still remains at 20%.

2. PROMOTING EQUAL PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

This area covers the lack of women's participation in decision-making bodies. The actions include strategies and instruments to promote women political, economic and social decision-making at all levels, including activities in external relations and development co-operation.

3. PROMOTING EQUAL ACCESS AND FULL ENJOYMENT OF SOCIAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN AND MEN

Here, the objective is to effectively apply gender mainstreaming to all policy areas which have an impact on women's daily life such as transport, public health and the fight against discrimination on other grounds, to continue to improve the application of Community legislation, in particular on social protection and in the areas of parental leave, maternity protection and working time and to find ways and means of more easily reconciling family and working life.

4. PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN CIVIL LIFE

This area covers the enforcement of human rights of women through promotion of human rights of women, enforcement of equal opportunity rights and strengthen the fight against gender-related violence and trafficking in women.

5. PROMOTING CHANGE OF GENDER ROLES AND STEREOTYPES

The objective is to overcome stereotyped images of women and men and the need to change behaviour, attitudes, norms and values to take account of the evolution of the roles of men and women in society. The actions cover gender mainstreaming in particular in education, training, culture, science, media, youth and sports policies.

III - Priority actions for 2001

Besides policy-specific initiatives, the following priority actions will be implemented by all Commission services:

- Conduct gender impact assessment of selected policy areas, which have up to now not been gender mainstreamed, i.e. to take in to account the potentially different impact on men and women respectively of policies which appear on the face as gender neutral. This would be done as part of the *ex-ante* policy analysis and planning stage and at the implementation and evaluation stages.
- Since gender impact assessment implies gender desegregated data in the relevant policy area, each service will collect gender desegregated data and systematically breakdown by gender all statistics with information on individuals.

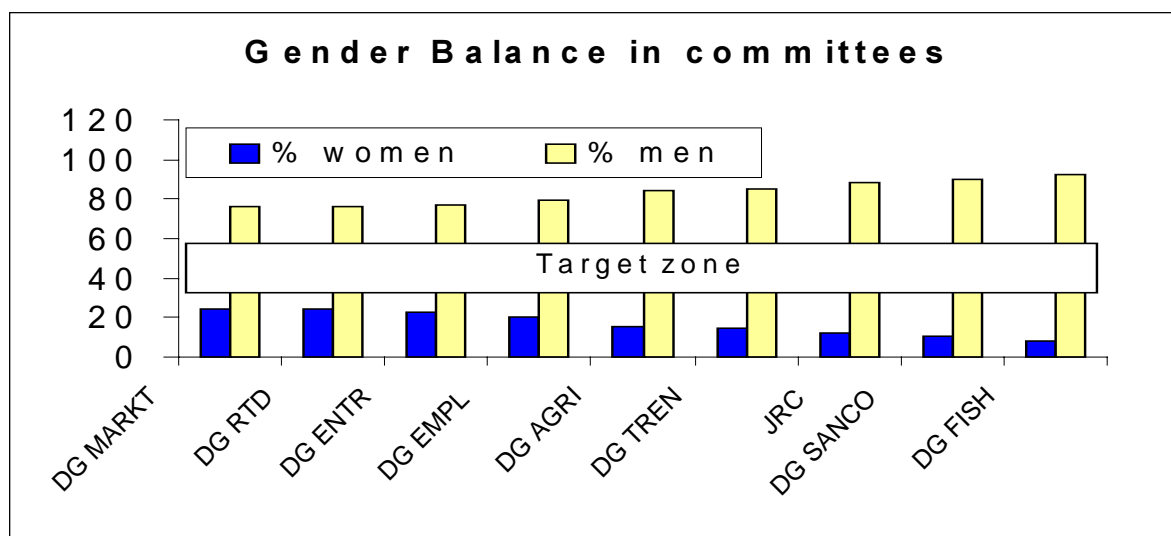
- Insert in all calls for proposals and expressions of interest a reference to the gender equality policy of the Community and that women are particularly encouraged to submit proposals / expressions of interest or to be involved in their submission. Wording such as "*The European Community has the task to promote equality between women and men and shall aim in all its activities to eliminate gender inequalities (articles 2 and 3 of the EC Treaty). In this context, women are particularly encouraged to either submit proposals or to be involved in their submission.*"

IV. - Gender balance in committees and expert groups

The implementation of Commission Decision 2000/407/EC of 19 June 2000² to improve gender balance in committees and expert groups is a visible manifestation of the Commission policy of equality. This Decision applies to existing and new committees and groups and sets the target of 40% minimum participation of women and men. To achieve this, particularly in committees and groups which are already in existence, gender participation can be balanced at the time of replacement of members (or at the end of the term of appointment).

In this context therefore all services of the Commission dealing with such committees or groups will remind Member States, social partners, NGOs and professional bodies of the need to put forward four names (with at least one of each sex) from which a gender balance can be achieved by the Commission when it appoints members.

Following a first review of the current balance within committees and groups, the opportunity for progress can be seen:



As set out in the Communication accompanying this Decision³, the implementation of this Decision will be set out in a report, with statistics, and Commission services which have not improved the gender balance will be expected to justify why this is the case.

² Official Journal L 154, 27/06/2000 p. 34-35.

³ 2000/C 203/03, OJ 18.7.2000, p. 4-5.