

# SOCIAL EUROPE

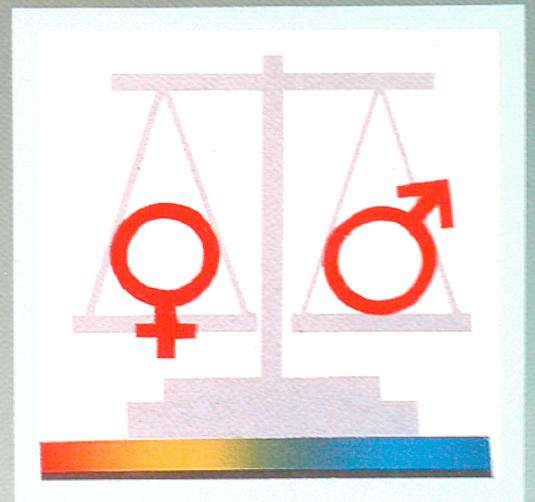


Evaluation of  
women's involvement in  
European Social Fund  
cofinanced measures  
in 1990



COMMISSION OF  
THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR  
EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS



SUPPLEMENT 2/93



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**EVALUATION OF WOMEN'S  
INVOLVEMENT IN EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND  
COFINANCED MEASURES IN 1990**

*Final report written  
for the Commission of the European Communities  
DG V*

Marie-Christine LEFEBVRE  
Coordinating consultant

Brussels, February 1992

This report reflects the opinions of the authors and not necessarily  
those of European Community institutions

## ABBREVIATIONS

CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
COPA	Committee of Agricultural Organizations in the EEC
CSF	Community Support Frameworks
EAGGF	European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ERGO	Community action programme for the long-term unemployed
ESF	European Social Fund
IDO	Integrated Development Operation
IRIS	European Network of vocational training projects for women
ISFOL	Institute for the development of vocational training for workers (Italy)
LEI	Local Employment Initiatives
NOW	New Opportunities for Women - a Community initiative to encourage equal opportunities for women in training and employment
PEDIP	Specific programme for development of Portuguese industry
PEDRAA	Specific programme for development of the autonomous region of the Azores
POPGRAM	Operational programme for the autonomous region of Madeira
PRODEP	Portuguese educational development programme
RACINE	Network for support and utilisation of European innovations (France)
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
VDAB	Regional agency for training and employment - Flemish Community of Belgium

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Assessment of operations co-financed by the ESF** **The situation after the first phase 1989-92**

#### **1. BACKGROUND**

The rules governing the Structural Funds stipulate that Community action be covered by ex-ante and ex-post assessment designed to gauge the impact and effectiveness of structural assistance in relation to the objectives set, and to analyse its influence on specific structural problems.

Under the terms of Article 26 of Regulation 4253 this assessment:

- must be carried out within the framework of the partnership;
- must receive the assistance of the competent authorities in the Member States;
- must be concerned with their effectiveness at three levels i.e. in terms of the objectives of the Structural Funds, of the Community Support Framework (CSF) and of the forms of assistance;
- must make use of the various particulars of the monitoring arrangements in order to gauge the socio-economic impact of the operations;
- must be carried out by reference to macro-economic indicators based on regional or national statistics, to information yielded by descriptive and analytical studies and to qualitative analyses.

The CSFs for Objectives 3 and 4 set out the arrangements for assessment.

Following the first stage of implementation of the reform of the Structural Funds, particularly as regards Objectives 3 and 4, a first stocktaking of assessment activities can be made.

These assessment activities took place in a difficult context because of:

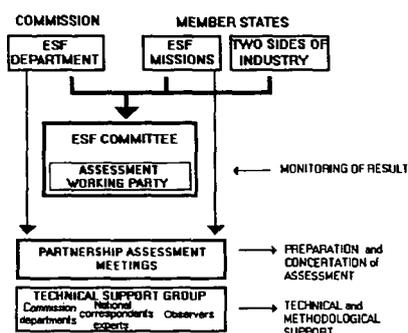
- the very complexity of the assessment methods, interaction of other policies and other players, the wide range of problems in the different Member States, the diversity of the structures involved, the capacity and experience available in the field of assessment, etc.;
- the strain placed on Community and national ESF management structures by the work required to implement the new approach stipulated in the reform;
- the lack or inadequacy of existing structures, at both Community and national levels, to prepare, manage and assess the plans and programmes provided for by

the rules. These structures were set up in an outdated context and were not accompanied by the necessary readaptation measures, and are thus hardly geared technically and methodologically to the kind of management a planning-based approach requires;

- the very formal and ambiguous character and content of the first generation of CSFs which makes their assessment difficult and sometimes encourage a dual assistance approach, national and Community;
- the lack of experience of the consultants as regards the new approach and their problems in breaking with the assessment approach used for the former projects.

## 2. THE FORMALISATION NEEDED FOR THE PARTNERSHIP

In order to facilitate the preparation and concertation of assessment operations, and on the basis of a proposal from the ESF departments in June 1991 to the ESF Committee, the partners decided to formalise the partnership in this context and give it the following structure:



The meetings of the partnership are attended by the representatives of the ESF departments and the representatives of the ESF missions in the Member States and are designed to prepare, concert and monitor assessment.

The technical support group (TSG) comprising the representatives of the ESF departments, other divisions from DG V, the Task Force for Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth, other DGs (VI, XVI and XXII) and Community institutions and networks (CEDEFOP, MISEP), as well as national officials and experts, and its objective is to perform the technical and methodological groundwork for partnership meetings.

The working party on assessment established within the ESF committee comprises representatives of the ESF departments, the ESF missions from the national administrations and the two sides of industry in each Member State, and provides the forum for presenting the results of assessment.

All in all, over 10 working and consultation meetings are held yearly. These meetings bring together nearly 100 officials and experts from the Commission and the 12 Member States.

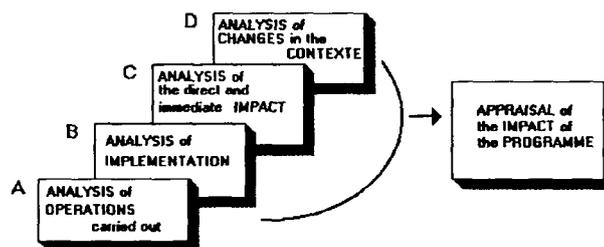
## 3. ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT

Despite the difficulties referred to in 1.1 above, a series of assessment operations were carried out in 1991-92:

- **ex-ante and ongoing assessment of the CSFs of Objectives 3 and 4** (March/July 91), the aim being to appraise their contents and quality, to clarify their objectives and strategies, to analyse the implementation problems one year after their approval, and to suggest possible changes, particularly in relation to the new economic outlook;
- **thematic assessments** (mid-91/mid-92) concerning different types of operations, different categories of recipients or different methodological issues:
  - operations around **recruitment aid**
  - policies on the **long term unemployed**
  - operations in favour of **women**
  - operations in favour of **disabled persons**
  - **regional structures** for the preparation, management and assessment of policies targetted at training and employment.

These thematic assessments use the following common methodological approach:

- description of the operations planned in these contexts under the CSFs
- criteria and methods for preparing these operations
- relationship between these operations and all operations of the same type carried out nationally or regionally
- their feasibility and their probable effectiveness
- cumulative action with other national and Community programmes
- any proposals for their improvement;
- etc;
- **Concertation on an ex-post assessment methodology** (March 91/February 92) between the ESF departments and the national administrations. This concertation was based on work by a group of specialised institutions. This methodology provides for ex-post assessment based on **four types of analysis**:



Going beyond the oversimplified approach based on considering the placement rate as the only worthwhile indicator, this methodology provides for specific methods to carry out these analyses and thus stresses the merits of encouraging other additional analyses and offers pointers for the organisation of preparatory operations in 1992;

- **Overall appraisal for the Community initiatives operation (May/September 92).** This appraisal was undertaken in order to encourage the partners concerned to give thought to the overall concept of the initiatives, the response given by the national administrations to these initiatives, the structures and procedures introduced for their implementation, etc.

These assessments were all based on reports and working documents submitted by external consultants working under contract for the Commission. The reports were drawn up fairly quickly in general (3 months) using simple and homogenous methods in order to provide the partners involved with the possibility to use these reports and documents to redirect or improve the operations.

All in all over 70 consultants have taken part in assessment work, involving 138 contracts and a budget of nearly 3 million ecus.

#### 4. THE RESULTS OF THESE ACTIVITIES

The aim of all these assessments was to **get the partners to jointly seek out ways to improve the effectiveness of operations co-financed by the ESF.**

The documents and reports produced by the consultants were thus disseminated to those responsible for the operations co-financed (ESF departments, ESF missions in the national administrations, the ESF Committee's technical assessment group and the monitoring committees), and an introductory presentation was made by the consultants themselves at partnership meetings or meetings of the Committee's technical assessment group.

These working documents and reports are the result of a compromise between, on the one hand, the necessary rigour and depth, and, on the other, the need to guarantee the **practical usefulness** of assessments. What they in fact do is to play a **backup and advisory role** for those responsible for these operations.

As regards the conclusions of these reports:

- most of them confirm the problems in carrying out actual assessments on the basis of an excessively vague content of the CSFs and OPs and stress the operational problems which the new approach has engendered;
- the problems, objectives planned operations and anticipated results should have been better quantified;
- the qualitative analyses on the concept of Community assistance and its breakdown and consistency in relation to other Community or national policies and programmes should be improved.

Considering the objective set for these assessments and in order to guarantee open and positive cooperation by the partners, dissemination of these reports has been restricted to the partners involved in the preparation and implementation of operations.

The assessments undertaken have nevertheless made it possible to use this first stage to create **better awareness** among all the partners as regards assessment, to promote the **conceptual and methodological clarification** needed, to settle "who does what" in this context in each Member State, and to **formalise the first Community partnership structures** on assessment.

## **5. An example: ASSESSMENT of the participation of WOMEN in operations co-financed by the ESF in 1990.**

This issue of Social Europe is given over to assessment of participation by women in operations co-financed by the ESF in 1990. This first thematic assessment was launched in June 1991.

The European Social Fund is in fact the most important financial instrument of the Community for putting its policy on equal opportunities into practice in the field of training and employment. Integrated in the new evaluation policy planned by the European Social Fund, this evaluation analyses the instruments established for the improvement of the situation of women in the employment market.

Furthermore, coming at a key period for the Structural Funds, that of the reform and definition of its future orientations for the years following 1993, it has allowed the appropriate authorities to examine the current situation of women, so as to be able to adapt the means of intervention to the economic and demographic realities.

This assessment was intended to gauge the potential impact of ESF actions on the situation of women in relation to the labour market, and to guide the choice of action to be taken under ESF operations, particularly the NOW (new opportunities for women) initiative.

It was based on analysis of CSFs and the OPs of each Member State in 1989-93, the analysis being entrusted to a coordinating consultant.

The assessment covered the following points:

- qualitative and quantitative description of the participation of women in operations implemented under the CSFs and OPs,
- description of the methods for preparation, management and assessment of these operations,
- analyses of the relationship between the specific operations targeted at women co-financed by the ESF and all women-related operations pursued in each Member State,
- opinion on the consistency and effectiveness of this action nationally and at Community level.
- opinion on the cumulative and complementary action between specific operations targeted at women and other Community programmes or networks in the same context,
- recommendation to improve the implementation of CSFs and OPs in this context,
- recommendations for the improvement of operations and policies under the ESF to promote the vocational training of women.

The national assessments were carried out over a period of five months and the overall assessment was completed at the start of 1992.

The Member States, and particularly the national coordinators of the NOW initiatives, were consulted on the choice of national assessors.

This study was entrusted for the national assessments to the following consultants:

- Belgium: Mrs Ada Garcia - UCL, Walloon Sociology Group,
- Denmark: Mrs Elna Bering - CASA Centre Alternative Social Analysis,
- Germany: Mrs Suzanne Seeland - Athena (International Human Resource Development),
- Greece: Mr Makis Kavouriaris PRAXIS,
- Spain: Mr Enrique Del Rio - PRO EMPLEO,
- France: Mrs Anne-Marie Lucas - Quaternaire Education,
- Italy: Mrs Lea Battistoni - ISFOL,
- Ireland: Mrs Evelyn Mahon - University of Limerick Social Research,
- Luxembourg: Mrs Nadine Spoden ILRES,
- Netherlands: Mrs Lisbeth Bloeme - NSS,
- Portugal: Mrs Anne-Marie Deleltrez,
- United Kingdom: Mrs Claire Callender - Institute of Manpower Studies.

The coordination of the study as a whole, including the production of the final report published in the issue, were entrusted to: Mrs Christine Lefebvre, Consultant, G.G. & P. Brussels.

The publication of this final report has been carried out with a view to improving transparency through better information concerning the actions of the Commission of European Community, particularly as far as women are concerned.

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# INTRODUCTION

## 1. GENERAL BACKGROUND

DG V invited 12 national consultants (see list in annexe) and one coordinating consultant to assess women's involvement in measures cofinanced by the ESF.

The Commission asked this consultancy team to produce a picture of women's involvement in CSFs and OPs at the end of the first year of operation of the new system introduced by the reform of the structural funds. The reference year for this assessment is therefore 1990.

The consultants were also asked to draw any conclusions which would be useful for the future and make recommendations.

This study of women has been run as part of the evaluation strategy which DG V is applying in conjunction with the authorities in the Member States.

Other assessments have covered such subjects as the long-term unemployed, employment assistance and the disabled. The teams of consultants worked separately and the ESF unit in charge of the assessment ensured that they were consistent.

It is perhaps a pity that the assessments of the various areas have been compartmentalised in this way, given that they all used the same basic Commission plan and consulted the same CSFs and OPs.

A greater degree of collaboration and consultation between the team coordinators would have helped our thinking and made the assessments more consistent and complementary.

Having read the final reports by the coordinators of the other assessment teams, we both note that their conclusions are similar to and bear out the results of our study and agree with the recommendations they have made\*. This final report will therefore focus on the specific nature of women's involvement and not deal with any of the more general aspects covered by the other teams.

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\* *"Evaluation ex-ante des Cadres Communautaires d'appui pour les objectifs 3 et 4 de 9 Etats Membres". Final report for DGXXII - Xavier Gizard - Quaternaire Développement - Paris, September 1991.*

*"Ex-ante evaluation of ESF Actions on behalf of the long-term unemployed" Group TEN, (Paris) - Institute for Policy Research (Leyden) - PA Cambridge Economic Consultants (Cambridge).*

*"Ex-ante evaluation of recruitment incentive policies foreseen in CSFs and OPs" Institute for Policy Research (Leyden).*

## 2. METHOD

The targets of the assessment of women's involvement in ESF cofinanced measures were formulated, in the light of the Commission's suggested plan, as being to:

- 1) produce a quantitative and qualitative description of women's involvement in the CSFs and OPs authorised in 1990 by looking at general and specific measures;
- 2) describe how women and their affairs are taken into account in the preparation, management and evaluation of general operations and specific measures for women;
- 3) describe relations between the ESF-cofinanced general and specific measures and all the schemes run for women in each of the Member States;
- 4) give an opinion as to the feasibility of these measures and say how efficient they are and how consistent at national and Community level;
- 5) give an opinion on the relation between the specific ESF-cofinanced measures and the Community's employment and vocational training programmes for women, with a view to highlighting synergy; give an opinion on relations between NOW and the general and specific measures in objectives 3, 4 and 1, with a view to highlighting complementarity;
- 6) make suggestions and recommendations to make the CSFs and OPs more efficient as regards programming and running employment and vocational training operations for women.

The coordinating consultant came up with a working method to achieve DGV/D/1's above six objectives.

When elaborating this, we obtained prior information from DG V - no easy task bearing in mind the absence of any assessment background, the poor statistical material on the category of beneficiaries under scrutiny (women) and so on.

It was essential to consult the CSFs and OPs to get an idea of the information they contained before designing the analysis charts, but the problems of obtaining the relevant documents were such that this was only a superficial exercise.

So, in the absence of references, the method was constructed more or less from scratch. It was approved by the Commission and then proposed to the national consultants - who made one or two adjustments to reflect the national situations, but otherwise accepted it as it stood. It proved difficult to apply in all but France and Luxembourg. Access to the OPs was a problem, details of women's involvement in the OPs were vague or wanting and so on.

National consultants used a wide range of sources in addition to the OP analysis for the quantitative analysis, working on balance application forms for 1990 wherever possible, as well as annual reports by the national and/or regional authorities and by training agencies and even applications for assistance in some cases. For the qualitative analysis, they worked on interviews with and/or questionnaires from people involved in preparing and implementing CSFs and OPs - ESF missions, for

example, national, regional and local employment and vocational training authorities, training agencies, private firms and promoters and managers of ESF cofinanced measures. They also interviewed national and/or regional women's policy leaders and the Member State's correspondents of the networks reporting to the Equal Opportunities Unit in DG V.

Although the OPs of the Community's NOW initiative had not been approved by the time the assessment was made, we asked the consultants also to make contact with the people in charge of preparing and running NOW in the Member States.

### **3. ASSESSMENT**

Work began on 24 June 1991 when DGV/D/1, the coordinating consultant and the 12 national consultants met in Brussels.

But there were problems with collecting quantitative data and planning interviews and there was no-one to contact in the national authorities over the holiday period, so things did not really get under way in the Member States until September 1991.

There was a second joint meeting in Brussels on 23 September 1991 to solve the problems and check whether things were moving in the direction the Commission intended.

The coordinating consultant and the national consultants produced an interim report in October 1991.

The final reports were handed in between mid-November 1991 and mid-January 1992.

The difference in the rates of progress in the different Member States was such that collaboration between the coordinating consultant and the national consultants had to be based on bilateral discussions and the last meeting at which ideas were to be pooled was cancelled.



## **ASSESSMENT, POINT 1**

*Quantitative and qualitative description  
of women's involvement in the CSFs and OPs*



## **ASSESSMENT, POINT 1**

### ***Quantitative and qualitative description of women's involvement in the CSFs and OPs***

#### **1. PRELIMINARY FINDING**

The first thing to say is that women have only a low profile in CSFs and OPs.

This is partly because of the nature of the documents under scrutiny - they relate to global programming - and partly because women are in a marginal position in the CSFs and OPs, i.e. in the disadvantaged categories, along with the migrants and the disabled.

#### **1.1. CSFs AND OPs ARE PROGRAMMING INSTRUMENTS**

As Xavier Gizard said in his final report for DGXXII, assessment is the poor relation in the new programming system set up by the reform. The tools of evaluation were not provided at the outset and are apparently still wanting.

CSFs and OPs are tools of programming, not evaluation. The (very limited) information about women in CSFs and OPs is very general, lending itself to a more or less plausible forecast of the number of people in a particular budgetary pigeonhole, rather than a series of operational targets which can easily be evaluated afterwards.

The only forecasts relating to women's involvement in ESF-cofinanced measures are the amounts earmarked for specific schemes in the CSFs and the breakdown of beneficiaries by sex in the OPs.

There is not enough information on economic sector, type of job, level of qualifications, rate of occupational integration, newly created stable jobs, the financing of childcare facilities, etc.

It is not possible to get very far with an evaluation of women's involvement using details supplied by the CSFs and OPs. Closer analysis means going to the promoters and the schemes themselves - no easy matter in this case, given the very limited time available.

As we said in the introduction, national consultants used balance applications, assistance applications and annual statistics from the national authorities and the promoters in addition to the data from the CSFs and OPs. But these sources too provide only general information which is of no help in making the description any more than a quantitative, audit-type exercise.

So women do not have a very high profile in the CSFs and OPs - a problem when it comes to collecting data and one which must be solved as a matter of priority if we are to obtain usable ex-post evaluations in the future.

## **1.2. WOMEN ARE SEEN SOLELY AS A DISADVANTAGED CATEGORY OF BENEFICIARIES**

The second finding is that women are in only a marginal position in the ESF assistance programming process set up by the reform.

Women are only specifically taken into account as a disadvantaged for which special schemes are run. The CSFs and OPs only approach employment and vocational training for women through specific measures and there is no particular strategy for involving them in general measures - unless specific schemes are used to complement general ones and related to women who are also getting the benefit of general measures (as in Portugal).

Furthermore, special priorities for women are provided only in the CSFs for objective 1 regions and for objectives 3 and 4. The CSFs for objectives 2 and 5b make no special provisions for specific measures for women.

The low profile of women in the CSFs and OPs and the place to which they are confined (disadvantaged categories only) are no encouragement to the Member States to see the occupational integration of women as a major political priority.

## **2. WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE CSFs**

### **2.1. QUANTITATIVE DESCRIPTION OF WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE CSFs**

The CSFs for objective 1 regions and the CSFs for objectives 3 and 4 lay down the amounts to be allocated to particular priorities for women. So the information is about the size of the budget allocation to be provided and not the number of beneficiaries. (The OPs contain details of the volumes of beneficiaries).

In accordance with the guidelines for ESF assistance with objectives 3 and 4, the specific measures involve providing employment and vocational training for women who want to go back to work after a long period at home (objective 3) and integrating women in occupations in which they are badly under-represented (objectives 3 and 4).

The amount involved for this special action for women is in the region of ECU 380 million - 5% of the total earmarked for all objective 3 and 4 measures (including in objective 1 regions).

In 1986, the amount earmarked for specific measures was only 7% of the total amount for all ESF-financed operations - so the specific schemes are getting a better deal now, although a breakdown by country reveals large differences between one Member State and another (see table 1). The two Member States which spend the most on specific measures are Denmark and the Netherlands. Apart from Spain, which is on a level with the United Kingdom, none of the objective 1 regions have much for specific measures.

Denmark plans to give women 17.1% of the total amount earmarked in the CSFs for objectives 3 and 4 and the Netherlands 15.9%, but the figure is only 1.1% in Greece, 1.5% in the Mezzogiorno (objective 1) and 1.9% in Ireland.

TABLE 1

*Proportion of funds set aside for "women" priority areas compared with total funds set aside for CSF objectives 3 and 4 (1990-93)*

Member States	% for "women" priority areas
Belgium	3,4%
Germany	5,2%
Denmark	17,1%
Greece	1,1%
Spain	7,0% (of the funds for objectives 3 and 4 in objective 1 regions) 5,2% (of the funds for objectives 3 and 4 outside objective 1 regions)
France	2,4%
Italy	
Mezzogiorno	1,5% (of the funds for objectives 3 and 4 in objective 1 regions)
Centre/North	3,4% (of the funds for objectives 3 and 4 outside objective 1 regions)
Ireland	1,9%
Luxembourg	3,3%
Netherlands	15,9%
Portugal	3,3%
United Kingdom	
Great Britain	7,6% (of the funds for objectives 3 and 4 outside objective 1 regions)
Northern Ireland	- (no "women" measures in objective 1 regions)

TABLE 2

*Sum authorised for specific measures for women as a % of total funds for ESF operations (1986, by country)*

Member States	% for specific measures
Belgium	-
Germany	1,2%
Denmark	1,4%
Greece	-
Spain	0,3%
France	0,8%
Ireland	0,1%
Italy	0,8%
Luxembourg	-
Netherlands	2,4%
Portugal	0,08%
United Kingdom	1,4%

However, compare these percentages with the 1986 figures (see table 2) and all the Member States emerge as having made an effort to promote the financing of specific measures for women.

So, the move from projects to programmes seems to have helped trigger or increase the Member States' interest in the particular situation of women on the job market and got them to provide specific responses to the specific needs of women.

## **2.2. QUALITATIVE DESCRIPTION OF WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE CSFs**

A look at the CSFs confirms that women have a low profile and are only of marginal importance when it comes to establishing priorities.

The general finding of the national consultants is that there is practically nothing in the way of socio-economic analysis of women's work. This absence of any real diagnosis is reflected in the way priorities are formulated, i.e. in very general terms, with no qualitative criteria or specific indicators. However, although prior analyses of women's status are wanting in some Member States - Ireland, Greece and Portugal, for example - they are available in others.

Not only do the CSFs take a very general approach to women. We found the terms they used to be very standardised and uniform, echoing the typologies of schemes laid down in the guidelines for ESF assistance and leaving little room for national diversity.

The CSFs refer to the rate of unemployment among women and to the increasing number of women coming onto the job market. They also highlight the fact that women are short on vocational qualifications. The measures suggested are aimed at improving their qualifications and training them for jobs in which they are under-represented. The priorities they define are not proper operational targets whose effects could be observed and measured. Qualitative aspects are not taken into account and therefore do not figure in the definition of the objectives.

We shall not go any further before analysing women's involvement in the CSFs. The overall problem of the vagueness and lack of strategy of the CSFs received in-depth coverage in Xavier Giscard's final report for DG XXII and, given the general, imprecise nature of the CSFs, the national consultants put priority on analysing the operational programmes.

However, Portugal is worth a mention here, as its Institute for Employment and Vocational Training has produced a dossier setting out practical details of the CSF women's employment proposals and laying down the aims of the specific measures.

This is an interesting approach in that it makes it possible to compensate for the general nature of the CSFs and draw attention to the specific problems of women's employment and vocational training.

But the dossier still has to be properly distributed and the proposals it makes have to be borne in mind when OPs are devised and implemented.

### **3. WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE OPs**

#### **3.1. QUANTITATIVE DESCRIPTION OF WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE OPs**

##### **3.1.1. INTRODUCTION**

The quantitative analysis was particularly difficult, as already mentioned. There was a particularly impressive pile of documents to consult - given that the analysis dealt with all OPs run with a view to objectives 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5b. Most of the study time was spent on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of OPs and there was not a great deal left over for the national consultants to synthesise the results or make recommendations and suggestions for the future.

However, this first appraisal of women's involvement in cofinanced schemes gave us the chance to produce a complete picture of the situation by the time the system set up by the reform of the structural funds had been operating for a year.

The mass of data in the national reports cannot easily be condensed in a summary document - which could not in any case convey the depth of the analysis which national consultants produced for each Member State. This summary report therefore deals with only the most outstanding trends and readers are invited to consult the national reports in DG V for the rest.

The second point to be emphasised here is that the heterogeneity of the sources of information (operational programmes, applications for assistance and for balance, statistics and annual reports from the national and/or regional authorities, promoters and data gathered in interviews) is such that the results of the quantitative analysis can only be considered as estimates.

The reliability and consistency of data collected in this way is not always guaranteed. However the point of this evaluation was to produce not statistics, but a first overall picture of women's status.

##### **3.1.2. LIMITATIONS OF THE QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS**

We abandoned the idea of tables breaking down the amounts of financing by sex. The data available usually only come from calculations based on estimates of the number of women beneficiaries and were no foundation for reliable conclusions.

It is a pity we have no information on the amounts committed to childcare facilities. We obtained no details of the ESF's underwriting of childcare costs, since such amounts are not accounted for separately. This type of information on childcare, and especially on accompanying measures in general, can only be obtained from the schemes themselves.

We were unable to find out how far women benefited from the measures provided for in Article 1(2), which accounts for 5% of the ESF's annual allocation. Our basic aim was to pay particular attention to women's involvement in innovatory schemes and in guidance and counselling operations for the long-term unemployed, as provided for in Article 1(2). The only details we were able to get were of a guidance and counselling operation run in the United Kingdom to help people already benefiting

from objective 3 and 4 training schemes (women make up 32% of the beneficiaries of this programme).

The data on the rate of occupational integration of women benefiting from ESF cofinanced measures are not really reliable, except in the case of Denmark, where forecasts of this rate are based on an assessment of the results of the previous years. The figure is 65-75% for men and women alike.

### 3.1.3. RESULTS OF THE QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE OPs

Women made up 41.3% of the total beneficiaries of ESF cofinanced measures in 1989. The results obtained in our study show that this figure, which covers women's involvement in both general and specific schemes, was on its way up in 1990, to an estimated 45% (see table 3).

TABLE 3

*Women's involvement in all ESF cofinanced measures in 1990*

Member State	Total beneficiaries	of whom: women	% female beneficiaries
Belgium	42.102	17.599	41,8
Denmark	8.088	4.824	59,6
Germany	594.424*	272.246*	45,8*
Greece	372.588	176.334	47,3
Spain	545.895	265.759	48,6
France	153.211 (obj. 3 et 4 uniquement)	79.670*	52*
Ireland	-	-	36,7*
Italy	119.847	48.963	41
Luxembourg	677	271	40
Netherlands	35.752	16.762	47
Portugal	270.157*	124.813*	46,2*
United Kingdom	345.345	128.853	37
* estimated figure			

It was obtained from data collected by the national consultants. It should be considered as an estimate because it is not based on official statistics and the statistical sources of the data collected at national level are neither homogeneous nor always comparable.

■ In some countries (Denmark, Greece, Luxembourg and the Netherlands), the data come from balance application forms and/or annual reports by the national authorities and more or less reflect reality.

- Ireland's data come from figures and estimates drawn up by the promoting agencies and organisations.
- The sources for the other Member States are varied - provisional data from the OPs, figures from balance applications, estimates and/or statistics from project promoters and, in the case of Belgium and Germany, applications for assistance too.

It is as well to remember that national consultants used what data were available and that those data were not always exhaustive.

The figures for Germany relate to only some of the 11 Länder (the five new Länder in the former GDR are not included in this assessment ), as the national consultant did not have access to the relevant (OP and accounting) documents for Nordrhein-Westfalen, Hessen and Schleswig-Holstein.

The rates of women's involvement by country show that Denmark has the highest overall score here, with women representing 59.6% of beneficiaries in 1990.

The lowest rates of women's involvement are in Ireland (36.7%) and the United Kingdom (37%).

As regards the United Kingdom, there is a difference between Great Britain and Northern Ireland - where the average rate is only 30%.

Table 4 compares women's involvement in general and specific schemes, thereby making it possible to measure the importance given to specific schemes in the Member States.

It emerges that the majority of women (89%) were involved in general schemes and that only 11% of female beneficiaries of ESF-cofinanced measures were involved in the specific schemes.

The two Member States which use specific schemes most are the Netherlands (29.6%) and Denmark (22.8%).

The rate of specific schemes is also high (21.4%) in the eight German Länder concerned here.

The Member States which make least use of specific schemes are Greece (0.2%) and Portugal (0.4%). In Portugal, however, the low percentage may be partly accounted for by the fact that the specific schemes are for women already getting the benefit of general measures.

In the United Kingdom, there is a considerable difference between Great Britain and Northern Ireland:

- In Great Britain, 14 536 women have had the benefit of specific schemes. This represents 12.3% of women beneficiaries and 4.3% of all beneficiaries.
- In Northern Ireland, only 106 women have benefited from specific schemes. This represents only 1% of women beneficiaries and 0.3% of all beneficiaries.

These figures are due to structural differences between the two places, to differences in the two labour markets and to the low percentage of working women in Northern Ireland.

**TABLE 4**

*Comparison of women's involvement in general measures (i.e. for men and women) and specific measures (i.e. for women only) in 1990*

Member State	Total female beneficiaries	of whom: general measures	%	of whom: specific measures	%
Belgium	17.599	16.788	95,4	811	4,6
Denmark	4.824	3.725	77,5	1.099	22,8
Germany	8.926*	7.020	78,6	1.906*	21,4
Greece	176.334	176.029	99,8	305	0,2
Spain	265.759	242.453	91,2	23.306	8,8
France	76.670**	75.419**	98,4	1.251	1,6
Ireland	-	-	-	-	-
Italy	48.963	46.342	94,6	2.621	5,4
Luxembourg	271	229	84,5	42	15,5
Netherlands	16.762	11.809	70,4	4.953	29,6
Portugal	124.813**	124.371**	99,6	442	0,4
United Kingdom	128.853	114.211	88,6	14.642	11,4
* 8 of 11 Länder only, not national figures					
** estimated figure					

### 3.1.4. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT (SPECIFIC MEASURES)

As we have already made clear, specific schemes are only provided for objectives 3 and 4 and for objective 1 human resources operations. Specific schemes for women are not provided for either objective 2 or objective 5b.

Specific schemes are of only marginal interest in the OPs because only a small number of women are involved and only small amounts are allocated to them - and, of course, because specific schemes are separated from all the other "mixed" or general schemes.

Table 5 gives an idea of specific schemes in 1990, comparing beneficiaries with beneficiaries of all ESF cofinanced measures.

### 3.1.5. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT BY OBJECTIVE

The breakdown of women's involvement by objective shows that women are represented in objective 3 above all (see table 6). The objective 3 OPs also contain the measures with the highest forecasted rates of women's involvement.

TABLE 5

*Female beneficiaries of specific measures as a % of all beneficiaries, 1990*

Member States	Total beneficiaries	Female beneficiaries of specific measures	%
Belgium	42.102	811	1,9
Denmark	8.088	1.099	13,6
Germany*	20.393	1.906	5,4
Greece	372.588	305	0,08
Spain	545.895	23.306	4,3
France	153.211	1.251	0,8
Ireland	-	-	-
Italy	119.847	2.621	2,1
Luxembourg	677	42	6,2
Netherlands	35.752	4.953	13,8
Portugal**	270.157	442	0,19
United Kingdom	345.345	14.642	4,2

\* Only OP forecasts for the Länder: Berlin, Bremen, Saarland, Baden Württemberg, Bayern, Niedersachsen, Hamburg and Rhineland-Pfalz  
\*\* Estimated figure

- This is borne out in all Member States bar Italy, where women are under-represented in measures designed to help the long-term unemployed over 25 and benefit mainly from objective 4 measures for young job-seekers.

This high rate of women's involvement in objective 3 schemes may be explained by the fact that women are more prone than men to long-term unemployment (except in the United Kingdom, where the rate of long-term unemployment is lower among women than among men). It is also partly due to the weight which specific measures have in objective 3.

A look at the breakdown of specific measures by objective shows that most of them are run with a view to objective 3 and therefore involve beneficiaries who are older than 25.

For example:

- In the Netherlands (1990), 3946 women took part in specific schemes under objective 3, as against 1007 under objective 4.
- In Portugal, two OPs deal with specific schemes - OP 8 (objective 3) involves 285 women and OP 13 (objective 4) involves 157 women.
- In the United Kingdom, 9874 women (67.5%) have benefited from specific schemes under objective 3 and 4795 (32.5%) under objective 4.

- In Spain, the specific schemes have been run mainly for objective 1 (8438 women involved, as against 4695 for objective 3 and 2952 for objective 4).
- In Denmark too, there are twice as many beneficiaries of specific schemes for objective 3 as for objective 4.

*Women's involvement in the special objective 1 measures*

The overall rate of women's involvement in objective 1 OPs is relatively high (except in Northern Ireland, where it is only 28%), given the low rate of working women in the regions in question. However, national consultants highlighted the fact that women were under-represented in some specific objective 1 measures (such as training schemes for people in employment and for people with contracts of apprenticeship), particularly in Greece and Portugal.

- In Greece, women only represent 22.5% of the beneficiaries of schemes for people employed in firms - even in a sector, such as public services, where there is a lot of female employment. There are 90 509 students in vocational training at secondary level, but only 16 236 of them (17.9%) are girls. And only 11% of those under contracts of apprenticeship are girls.
- In Portugal, women only represent about 30% of the beneficiaries of in-service training schemes and apprenticeships. But there are plenty of them (71%) in the employment programme for long-term adult unemployed which gives them the opportunity neither to obtain training nor overcome the discrimination which they meet on the job market, although they it does offer them an alternative to being out of work.

This under-representation of women in schemes providing qualifications directly related to employment in firms is a source of concern for the future. It highlights the barriers and obstacles keeping women away from the job market. Positive action programmes and positive discrimination measures have to be encouraged in both education and the firm if women are to take more advantage of these objective 1 operations.

### **3.1.6. RATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES IN THE OPs**

Generally speaking, the difference in the numbers of OP schemes projected and actually implemented shows the limitations and problems of the process of programming in a field as difficult to quantify and to grasp as human resources. In particular, we noted that there was a relatively large percentage of unimplemented specific schemes in 1990 in all countries but Denmark.

- In Spain, for example, additional figures from the national consultant suggest that specific schemes actually benefited 16 324 women, or 3.6% of all beneficiaries.
- In Germany, Bayern earmarked DM 5 846 700 (42.9% of the total amount) to finance a specific programme. But nothing was actually committed in 1990 or 1991 and no specific programme has been run in this Land - which has a low rate of unemployment and a low rate of female unemployment in comparison with the rest of Germany.

TABLE 6

*Number of % of female beneficiaries per objective (reference year 1990)*

Member State	Objective	Total beneficiaries	Female beneficiaries	% women
Belgium	2	8.877	3.545	40
	3	18.811	8.546	45
	4	14.402	5.504	38
	5b	12	4	33
Denmark	2	1.053	500	47
	3	5.211	3.308	63
	4	7.115	4.069	57
	5b	114	72	50
Germany*	2	-	-	41
	3	-	-	51
	4	-	-	50
	5b	-	-	36,5
Greece	1	196.393	83.963	43
	3	40.474	22.718	56
	4	135.721	69.653	51
	6 (3 + 4)	176.195	92.371	52
Spain	1	274.612	140.413	51
	2	92.670	27.815	26
	3	55.242	36.614	66
	4	121.575	60.490	50
	6 (3 + 4)	1.796	427	24
France*	3	72.118	-	53
	4	81.093	36.610	45
Ireland*	1	-	-	34
	3	-	-	54
	4	16.997	6.411	38
Italy*	3	-	-	33
	4	-	-	48
Luxembourg*	3	135	-	42
	4	542	-	35
Netherlands	2	7.133	2.476	35
	3	17.107	9.107	53
	4	11.512	5.179	45
Portugal*	1	120.130	-	38
	3	30.599	-	64
	4	89.522	-	47
	other (**)	29.464	-	38
United Kingdom	1	20.924	5.763	28
	2	103.889	33.098	32
	3	102.378	42.423	42
	4	109.997	44.251	40
	5b	8.157	3.319	41
	Vocational Guidance	315.465	100.949	32

\* estimated figure

\*\* OID Setubal/OID Norte Alentejo/Pedraa/Popram/Prodep/Pedip/Ciencia

Bayern, which had very little to do with ESF schemes prior to the reform, is also an example of how difficult it can be to implement a new system of regional programming.

- In Belgium, the rate of implementation of specific schemes is only 37% for objective 3 and 56% for objective 4.

In the interviews, subjects said that the problems of running specific schemes arose either because it was hard to attract women to this type of operation or because prefinancing was difficult. Specific schemes are often run by small promoters without the operating capital of the big training agencies and they are handicapped by having to wait a long time for payment. They do not have the means of prefinancing the projected schemes themselves and the financial risk forces them to give up.

A common argument from the Commission is that, if a Member State thinks a specific scheme is good enough for cofinancing and inclusion in an OP, then it should provide the prefinancing itself. This would be valid if the schemes in question were strategically and politically important, we feel, but it is hard to defend in the case of things as marginal as the specific schemes - except in Denmark and the Netherlands and some of the German Länder (Bremen, for example, has taken this financial risk).

However, in some Member States, the number of women benefiting from specific schemes exceeded the forecasts for 1990.

- In the Netherlands, the actual rates of women's involvement are:

- objective 2: 35%, as against the 23% forecast (+12%);
- objective 3: 53%, as against the 40% forecast (+13%);
- objective 4: 45%, as against the 27% forecast (+18%).

The large differences in this country can be explained in various ways. First of all, the Dutch system of training has been designed and organised to cater for the specific needs of women. Second, the recent regionalisation of the programming and management system for ESF-cofinanced measures has caused errors in the forecasting.

- In Belgium (more modestly) the overall number of women beneficiaries exceeds the forecast by 5%.

- In Greece, the actual rates of women's involvement are also higher than forecast:

- objective 1: 43%, as against 36% (+ 7%);
- objective 3: 56%, as against 54% (+ 2%);
- objective 4: 51%, as against 47% (+ 4%).

### **3.2. QUALITATIVE DESCRIPTION OF WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE OPs**

As we have already made clear, the information contained in the operational programmes does not show what happens in the field. Nor does it give us any idea of the qualitative side of the schemes. And the information yielded by the applications for balance relates above all to accounting and statistics required for audit purposes.

The breakdown of beneficiaries by sex on which we based our evaluation is typical of the sort of hard-to-predict information which the Commission wants and the Member States provide in the form of plausible estimates.

The qualitative analysis of women's involvement in the CSFs and OPs is founded basically on interviews and on replies to the questionnaires which the national consultants designed in the light of the methods suggested by the coordinating consultant.

### **3.2.1. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN GENERAL MEASURES**

We use the term "general measures" to refer to schemes which are theoretically open to men and women without distinction.

As the figures we extrapolated from the data supplied by the national consultants suggest, women's involvement in these schemes is on the increase. Women are even in a majority in Denmark (about 60% of beneficiaries) and in France (around 52%).

However, an analysis of the breakdown by sex of the number of beneficiaries by economic sector suggests that women's involvement in general measures fluctuates widely (from 0% to 100%). ESF-cofinanced measures tend to reproduce the sexual discriminations of the employment market, with male-dominated sectors, female-dominated sectors and more or less mixed sectors. This horizontal segregation of general measures is illustrated below.

- In Portugal, women work in the traditionally female sectors (craft, the tourist trade, hotels and catering). Few or none are employed in science or technology or even learn about new technology in traditionally female areas of activity (such as cutting).
- In Northern Ireland (UK, objective 1), women make up 62% of beneficiaries in tourism and only 5% in the electricity sector.
- In Luxembourg, no women at all are involved in the new industrial technology schemes (robotics, digital machines, etc), but they are in the majority in the office automation sector and in health care and personal services.
- In Italy, the most segregationist sectors (less than 10% female) are heavy industry, metal construction, chemicals, the building trade, timber and transport. The so-called mixed sectors (11-49% female) are electronics, electrics, computing, commerce, banking, insurance, catering and craft trades, and the female-dominated ones (50% plus) textiles, clothing, health care and social services, tourism and company services (see table 5 of the ISFOL report on women's involvement by sector).
- In Belgium, the most discriminatory measures are in technology (28% of women beneficiaries provided for in the OPs). Although the applications for balance suggest more female involvement than anticipated, women are still in a minority (34%).

The OPs provided for 45% women's involvement in the tourist sector, but the figure has gone up to 65% (the highest rate of involvement by sector).

The Belgian consultant found women to be generally under-represented in

traditionally male preserves (the building trade), poorly represented in advanced sectors such as electronics and computing (office automation being the exception) and in a majority in the services sector (tourism). See point 1.2.10 of the Belgian report.

- In Ireland, women are in the majority (58%) in the tourist OP and in the minority in the agriculture and fisheries measures (10% of women in the rural development OP).
- In Germany, federal programmes run by the Federal Labour Office have 6.2% of women on advanced technical courses and 42% on retraining schemes (which include health care and social services).

The national reports also show that women are concentrated in operations relating to a smaller number of economic sectors than men. This focusing on a few sectors of the economy reflects women's status on the employment market and aggravates the perverse effects of sex-based segregation in both ESF-cofinanced measures and on the employment market. In Europe in 1989, 6.1% of the people working in agriculture were women and the figure was 19.2% in industry and 74.7% in services.

It all goes to show that ESF-cofinanced measures may well be open to men and women in theory, but they are neither neutral nor asexual in practice and they reproduce the discriminations of the employment market. It would take more than bumping up the number of women involved in general measures to do away with this discrimination, just as it would take more than bumping up women's employment rates to do away with the division between the traditionally male and traditionally female sectors.

#### GENERAL MEASURES REPRODUCE THE SECTORAL SEGREGATION OF THE EMPLOYMENT MARKET AND THE CONCENTRATION OF WOMEN IN A FEW SECTORS OF ACTIVITY.

Our intention was to confirm or disprove the idea that women were also victims of vertical discrimination when it came to qualifications.

The first problem was that the information on levels of qualification is not always - and indeed rarely - broken down by sex. However, data collected by the national consultants suggest that the percentage of women beneficiaries declines as the level of qualifications rises.

- Denmark is the exception here, with higher levels of qualification and courses leading from a middle to a higher level.
- Italy stands out too, but because little is done for the long-term unemployed and women are strongly represented in objective 4 measures.

Young Italian women tend to take medium- and higher-grade courses leading to jobs in the tertiary sector. The rate of female involvement at this level is an estimated 46%. The improvement in the average level of scholastic attainment of girls is boosting this tendency.

However, the rate of female involvement in schemes providing basic qualifications leading to skilled manual work is an estimated 35%. Women want this kind of

work, above all, in the high-density employment areas of northern and central Italy, where there is a demand for skilled labour and training is geared to what the firms want.

The example of Italy shows that getting better qualifications does not necessarily mean landing a better job when there are no outlets on the employment market. This is often borne out in the Mezzogiorno, where the rate of unemployment among young university graduates is high and training schemes are a way of looking after jobless youngsters with no real prospects of finding work.

The majority of women are thought to start out with the wrong qualifications or no qualifications at all and end up with a basic qualification. But a larger percentage of men with no qualification at the outset end up with medium-grade qualifications.

There are a number of factors behind the fact that the more qualifications a scheme involves, the fewer the women who follow it. It reflects the relatively poorer level of qualifications of women on the employment market and it depends on the people the scheme is aimed at - the more it is geared to the disadvantaged, the lower the qualifications involved are likely to be.

It is also as well to remember women's outlook and motivations when faced with schemes which lead to advanced qualifications and are therefore more demanding. And let us not forget that the traditional idea of men being the ones with the advanced qualifications affects the choices made by both promoters and women.

So women are apparently less ambitious than men when it comes to improving on their basic level of qualification.

### **3.2.2. ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT (TYPE OF MEASURE)**

We found that, in general and specific schemes alike, women benefit mainly from training operations and are in a minority in employment assistance schemes and measures directly related to the creation of new (salaried and self-employed) employment. The situation in Denmark is different, as here women are in the majority in both training and employment creation schemes.

■ In Belgium, only 10 out of 100 women beneficiaries get employment assistance and 90 out of 100 help from a training scheme. Women's involvement in employment assistance schemes is an estimated 32.4%. In contrast to the general trend, Belgian women make up almost half the beneficiaries of schemes to create self-employed work (48.3%).

■ In France, women are in the majority in objective 3 schemes such as vocational conversion courses (75%), upgrading courses (56%) and contracts to go back to work (56%), but in a clear minority in schemes to assist jobless would-be businessmen (24%) and offer direct assistance for employment (36%). In the objective 4 OP, girls make up 42% of the beneficiaries of the training measures and 41% of the employment assistance and self-employment measures. However, the analysis which the national authorities made of the youngsters involved in all training schemes, cofinanced or not, suggests that the rate of women's involvement is 65%.

- In Germany, women represented 41.2% of the beneficiaries of the training schemes and only 28% of the employment assistance schemes in the pilot programmes run by the Federal Labour Office.

The predominance of women in the training schemes and their minimal involvement in employment assistance and job creation schemes call for some comment.

It must be remembered that ESF philosophy has always been to focus on training schemes rather than direct aid for employment and/or job creation. It would perhaps be as well to question the pertinence of an approach which concentrates on training and isolates other measures. Vocational training gives the trainee a better chance, indeed, but it is no guarantee of employment.

And it is particularly true in the case of women. Women not only have to cope with the problem of no qualifications - which can be handled by getting some training - but also overcome the reluctance of potential employers, particularly in the traditionally male sectors.

The most innovatory strategies run in the Member States (in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) use an integrated approach geared to occupational integration of the individual.

This concentrates on the following combination:

**UPSTREAM** individual assessment, advice and guidance, followed if necessary by pre-training, upgrading and self-assertion.

**TRAINING FOR A QUALIFICATION** based on the needs of the individual and on the needs of local firms and economic operators and on the real possibilities of employment.

**DOWNSTREAM** aid for employment and job creation, plus back-up for trainees in the firm.

The upstream measures we described occur in ESF activity under two headings:

- vocational guidance schemes (eligible when they accompany training schemes);
- guidance and counselling schemes for the long-term unemployed (Article 1(2) of the ESF regulation).

It is difficult to find figures for back-up measures of this sort in the OPs, except in the United Kingdom, where they figure in a separate programme for beneficiaries of objective 3 and 4 training schemes, with a women's involvement rate of 32%. The same kind of measures exist in Portugal, but only as an addition to specific schemes.

What we have found is that these accompanying measures are used with both general and specific schemes, but are not the general rule as yet.

Historically speaking, accompanying measures were born in the early 1970s (the reference here is the French women's association "Retravailler"). They were used in connection with specific schemes for women and, like many innovations which are marginal to begin with, they were taken up by the official (vocational training) systems and applied to a wider public.

### 3.2.3. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN SPECIFIC MEASURES

The term "specific measures" refers to schemes set up to cope with the specific problems which women encounter on the job market. These problems are of two kinds.

#### *Structural*

- Unemployment rates are higher among women than among men.
- Women are more prone than men to long-term unemployment (except in the United Kingdom, the official statistics suggest) and find it more difficult to get onto the employment market.
- Women are over-represented in insecure jobs, they are under greater threat of unemployment and have the poorest rates of pay.

#### *Socio-cultural*

- The sex-based segregation of the labour market confines women to a limited number of (traditionally female) sectors of the economy and keeps them firmly at the bottom of the professional ladder.
- Women are short on scientific and technical culture.
- Family responsibilities mean that women are less available for the job market.
- Cultural models based on women-children-home still strongly influence the way society in general (and the labour market in particular) is organised and permeate the way women and girls behave and choose to live.

*The priorities for the ESF assistance provided through specific measures are:*

- training schemes to help long-term unemployed women (objective 3), paying particular attention to returning mothers (i.e. women seeking to go back to work after a long period at home bringing up their children);
- training for women in sectors in which they are under-represented (objectives 3 and 4).

In practice, specific training schemes are often (but not systematically) accompanied by the following back-up measures:

- childcare, involving actually performing the service or paying an allowance for it to be done elsewhere;
- upstream measures - individual assessment, counselling and vocational guidance, pre-training and upgrading, self-confidence and self-assertion;
- downstream measures - job seekers' workshops, back-up for occupational integration, monitoring of trainees in the firm etc.

### *The target public*

Making returning mothers a priority category has certainly had a snowball effect in countries such as Belgium, (Northern) Italy, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany and France, where it reflects a need.

This concept is tied to a precise model of family organisation which sends mother home to look after small children and lets her go back to work again afterwards.

The model is unknown in Denmark, where women stay at work even when they have babies. Running the family is not just the job of the mother in Denmark and not something taken care of solely in the private sector either. Fathers and the community also bring up the children. Danish mothers get 26 weeks' maternity leave and childcare is the responsibility of the municipality.

In 1988, for example, 79% of mothers of under-10s were working, 40% of them part-time, and 8% were unemployed.

As far as the Danes are concerned, the economic and social cost to the community of mothers returning to work is higher than the cost of running schemes to enable them to stay there in the first place.

In objective 1 regions, as the Portuguese report makes clear, the scenario of the mother returning to work is not that of the majority of women. It does not apply in a society where the extended family still looks after small children and where the low standard of living precludes women leaving even insecure employment temporarily.

The phenomenon of mothers returning to work occurs in all Member States which (also) have a high rate of women working part-time (i.e. Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom). There is less part-time women's work in Denmark and it is uncommon in the objective 1 regions.

The notion of returning mothers and the tendency towards part-time work for women therefore seem to reflect the same model of family structure.

In this model, the woman shoulders most of the family responsibilities on her own and is only partly available for work - a handicap when it comes to a job and a career and one which leads her to accept insecure types of employment.

The priority given to returning mothers in the specific measures is not therefore a blanket one across all the Member States.

### *Aims of the specific measures*

The priority of the specific measures laid down in the OPs is to train women for sectors in which they are under-represented.

In several Member States, the people in charge of running schemes of this sort have said they find it difficult to attract women to training courses leading to "male" jobs. Indeed, not all women are willing to invest in technical training or to work in a male environment where they will be isolated and have to prove themselves.

In Denmark, for example, women's constant demand for advanced training for traditionally "female" jobs has led the organisers of specific schemes to revise the priority aims and open them to all sectors of the economy. Portugal has done the same.

### ***Childcare***

The national consultants' analysis shows that the majority of specific schemes are backed up by childcare operations, the commonest form of assistance being to pay trainees an allowance to cover this service.

This is a flexible approach with the advantage of leaving parents free to choose how they want their children looked after, but it only really works when there is a proper supply of childcare services - which is rarely the case outside Denmark, the Netherlands and some of the German Länder.

The system of allowances ignores the basic issue - the shortage of childcare infrastructure, the problem of the standard of the services on offer and the pay and working conditions of the people who man them. Inadequate infrastructure is the problem of objective 1 regions (where there is a possibility of ERDF cofinancing through NOW) above all, although other parts of the Community where there is no provision for cofinanced facilities also have a shortage.

We did not collect any figures on how much the ESF provides to run childcare facilities.

However, the national reports not only suggest that people under-utilise the possibility of ESF cofinancing, but that the promoters do not know enough about it either, especially in objective 1 regions.

### ***Implementation of specific measures***

(cf page 16, 3.1.6. - Rate of implementation of schemes)

As we have seen, specific measures can be a problem to run, especially in objective 1 regions. The national reports suggest that the most difficult schemes to get going in objective 1 regions are those to do with training long-term unemployed women for jobs in traditionally male sectors. Potential employers do not seem to be interested in these adult women obtaining new qualifications either. The rate of implementation of specific schemes run for objective 4 is higher in objective 1 regions, on the other hand.

The opposite trend applies in the other parts of the Community, with better rates of implementation of specific schemes for objective 3 than for objective 4 (as in France and the Netherlands, for example).

However, even in the more developed regions of the Community, it is no easy matter to get women who have been unemployed for a long time to go in for schemes leading to male jobs - hence the importance of having back-up measures upstream (to motivate the trainees) and downstream (to "sell" the new qualifications to the employers and help the trainees integrate into a job).

Downstream measures are still the exception, even in specific schemes.

The effect of upstream accompanying measures can be assessed by looking at the drop-out rate.

We were unable to make any precise evaluation of the rate at which women dropped out of the training courses, but our findings suggest that it is:

- higher in general schemes leading to male jobs with no accompanying measures;
- not so high in these schemes when individual back-up is provided for trainees;
- very low in specific schemes, including those leading to male jobs, when back-up is provided.

Women may sometimes drop out for reasons unconnected with the course. Trainees may be “forced” to stop for family reasons (husbands may object) or because of lack of infrastructure (childcare, transport, caring for an aged relative, etc) or lack of money (the allowance may not cover the cost of attending the course or it may be less than the unemployment pay or replacement income).

#### *Diversity of specific measures*

In fact, the term “specific measures” covers a wide range of initiatives from schemes involving only women to schemes with high added value (innovatory methods, accompanying measures upstream and downstream, courses leading to qualifications, future-oriented sectors, new technology, etc).

However, before listing specific schemes according to the degree of innovation or qualification which they involve, we should look at the potential of the target public and avoid penalising initiatives which look after the under-educated and under-qualified who are in danger of permanent unemployment. Schemes which aim to reclassify the disadvantaged by offering them some form of (social as much as vocational) qualification are in no way comparable (in terms of either qualification obtained or rate of employment afterwards) to schemes offering technical skills to people already in possession of their basic training.

#### **4. SUMMARY OF THE DESCRIPTION OF WOMEN’S INVOLVEMENT IN THE CSFs AND OPs**

Women are only marginal in the programming process. They have only a low profile in the CSFs and OPs. They are only considered as a disadvantaged category, along with migrants and the disabled. Women’s employment and vocational training are only approached through specific schemes. Statistical information on women’s involvement is wanting.

The amounts set aside for specific measures are an average of 5% of the total which the CSFs provide for objectives 3 and 4. They vary considerably from one Member State to the next (17% in Denmark, for example, and 1.1% in Greece) and are low in objective 1 regions.

Women represented about 45% of the total number of beneficiaries of ESF-cofinanced measures in 1990, as against 41.3% in 1989. In view of the lack of reliable data and the provisional nature of the OP figures, this 45% has to be considered as an

estimate. It masks the fact that the rates of women's involvement vary widely from one objective to another (they are in a majority in objective 3 OPs and there are fewer of them in objective 2 and 5b OPs) and from one measure to another (women benefit mainly from training measures and little from employment assistance and job creation measures).

The general schemes (i.e. for men and women) tend to reflect the segregation of the employment market - women are in a majority in schemes related to traditionally female sectors of activity and in a minority in the traditionally male sectors. They apparently also get a narrower choice of training offered to them than men. And they seem to be less ambitious about qualifications.

The specific schemes deal with a very small number of beneficiaries and are only marginal in the programming system, except in Denmark and the Netherlands, both of which offer backing and encouragement, particularly when it comes to helping women who have been unemployed for a long period.

The priorities of the specific schemes are to provide training for women who are returning to the employment market after a long period away and for women who can then work in sectors in which women are under-represented.

These aims - which are social and cultural as much as economic - seem more difficult to achieve in objective 1 regions than in the better developed parts of the Community.

The so-called "accompanying" measures seem to be less common in objective 1 regions. Elsewhere, they are the rule with specific schemes. And they are gradually being used with general schemes too, particularly for the long-term unemployed.

The possibility of cofinancing childcare facilities are under-utilised and little known to the promoters of these schemes, particularly in objective 1 regions.

WOMEN ARE IN THE MAJORITY IN OBJECTIVE 3 MEASURES, PARTICULARLY THOSE PROVIDING TRAINING FOR THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED, WITH VERY HIGH RATES OF INVOLVEMENT.

THIS "FEMINISATION" OF SOME TRAINING SCHEMES REFLECTS HIGHER RATES OF UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG WOMEN THAN AMONG MEN.

IT ALSO REFLECTS WOMEN'S DRIVE TO GET ONTO THE EMPLOYMENT MARKET.

IT IS GRADUALLY LEADING SCHEME MANAGERS TO TAKE MORE NOTICE OF THE SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE FEMALE PUBLIC. BUT THIS CATERING FOR THE FEMALE DIMENSION DOES NOT OCCUR AT THE TOP IN THE CSFs AND OPs.



## **ASSESSMENT, POINT 2**

*Catering for the female dimension  
in the methods of preparation, management and assessment  
of ESF-cofinanced measures*



## **ASSESSMENT, POINT 2**

### ***Catering for the female dimension in the methods of preparation, management and assessment of ESF cofinanced measures***

#### **1. OBJECTIVES**

This description covers both general and specific measures.

The point of it is to highlight :

- interaction between the structural labour/employment policy, as put into practice by the CSFs and OPs, and the structural equal opportunities policy;
- the effect of the structural equal opportunities policy on the structural labour/employment policy.

This refers us to two priority aspects of the Community's structural policies:

- the employment policy ;
- the equal opportunities policy.

The description is a two-level one. It deals with the CSFs and the OPs and it deals with the schemes themselves. There is no discussion of the content, since the focus is on the methods used at the three stages of implementation of the general and specific schemes - i.e. for the preparation, management and assessment of the operations.

The national consultants were invited to work on the (general and specific) schemes. Before presenting a synthesis of findings in the Member States, we shall make one or two remarks on catering for the female dimension in the methods used to prepare, manage and assess the CSFs and OPs.

#### **2. CATERING FOR THE FEMALE DIMENSION IN THE METHODS OF PREPARATION, MANAGEMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF THE CSFs AND OPs**

There is little interaction between the structural employment policy and the equal opportunities policy in the CSFs and OPs.

##### **2.1. PREPARATION**

The description of women's involvement in the CSFs and OPs (cf. preliminary findings on pp 8 and 9) showed that there was not enough prior analysis of women's status on the job market.

There is no such analysis in Greece, Portugal or Ireland and these three Member States urgently need a monitoring system for the women's employment market so they can identify the specific characteristics of the female labour force (active and non-active) and find employment opportunities which are good for women - i.e. new vocational outlets, unsatisfied offers of employment, opportunities to create self-employed posts, etc.

The other Member States have made differing degrees of effort to investigate women's status on the job market, but there is little sign of the results of their analyses in the CSFs and OPs. Yet an analysis of the specific situation of women has been provided for and the plans which the Member States have presented for objectives 3 and 4 have to contain an analysis of the situation on the national employment market, women's employment included.

A clause in the CSFs says that schemes and measures brought in under the CSFs have to be in line with the Community's equal opportunities policy and legislation and, if appropriate, help get them across. It makes particular reference to applications for training schemes which will make it easier for women with children to go back to work.

As it stands, this clause does not contain any operational objectives, other than for returning mothers.

But, as we have seen, this category of people, advanced as a priority category, does not involve a significant public in all the Member States and only covers one particular aspect of women's status on the job market.

It would be better to extend the field of priorities so that Member States can make a more efficient job of adjusting aims and means in the light of the needs detected in socio-economic analyses which have been or are to be run.

The clause highlights training schemes - but we have already shown that the value of training is limited unless it forms part of an occupational integration "itinerary" and is accompanied by measures both upstream and downstream.

We have already stressed the fact that women are not integrated across the board in the programming process. The fact of including them solely in one of the disadvantaged categories laid down for objectives 3 and 4 is particularly diminishing and makes for the marginalisation of specific measures designed for female audiences.

Reducing them to one disadvantaged category reflects the idea that the occupational integration of women is a problem rather than a resource. However, Denmark has adopted a different strategy and is atypical of the Member States generally.

**THE FACT THAT THE FEMALE DIMENSION IS ONLY TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN SPECIFIC MEASURES IS AT VARIANCE WITH THE STRATEGY OF MAINSTREAMING (HORIZONTAL INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN ALL ASPECTS OF THE COMMUNITY'S STRUCTURAL POLICY) WHICH IS A FEATURE OF THE THIRD MEDIUM-TERM EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAMME.**

Mainstreaming does not mean applying the same treatment to men and women without distinction. It means bringing in positive discrimination measures to help women whenever prior socio-economic analysis suggests this to be necessary.

The analysis of general schemes has indeed shown that ESF cofinanced schemes are not neutral, nor asexual, but reproduce the discrimination observed on the labour market. Specific schemes alone are not enough to reverse the discriminatory tendencies which we have observed. Indeed, they are in only a marginal position in the programming process and, other than in Denmark, the Netherlands and one or two German Länder, only involve a few beneficiaries.

Specific schemes are a strategic option which not all Member States have gone for.

- France and Belgium lean towards mainstreaming.
- Portugal and Denmark have opted to run supplementary specific schemes for women already involved in general schemes. (Running the specific schemes has been a problem in Portugal and it would be premature to try and evaluate them now). This strategy has the advantage of building bridges between general and specific schemes and moving in the mainstreaming direction. It would be a good idea to guarantee these specific schemes the extra resources they need really to take off so as to see whether the strategy actually works and can produce the effects of mainstreaming. Avenues to mainstreaming are not yet available. The system of running supplementary specific schemes backing up general schemes might be one.

The idea of positive discrimination for women has not yet gotten across. This at least is what emerges from the interviews which the national consultants ran in the national authorities and the big training agencies. All subjects are in favour of doing away with direct discrimination, but some of them are against positive discrimination because discriminating in favour of women is discriminating against men and - they maintain - being over-protective of women is tantamount to keeping them in a position of weakness. By contrast, some Member States (the five new German Länder and the Netherlands) have a women's quota system which forces promoters to recruit a minimum number of women.

Not only is there a cultural barrier here. Some States have legal barriers too.

- In Spain, there is a ban on positive discrimination in favour of women in recruitment.
- In the United Kingdom, the Sex Discrimination Act prohibits positive discrimination. The situation is identical in Ireland.
- Germany uses specific schemes a lot and even encourages them in some Länder, but schemes which are 100% female are precluded by Article 3 of the Constitution.

Lastly, a mainstreaming strategy means involving the people in charge of the equal opportunities policy in the Member States at every level. However, we have found that, in practice, these people intervene only in specific schemes and that, even in this limited framework, they simply propose and advise and have no real powers of decision.

It is worth noting that several of the ESF mission officials interviewed said that, when the question of equal opportunities was brought up in meetings, it was often by the ESF representative. This shows that the Commission can offer encouragement here. The fact that national ESF missions do not currently have anyone officially in charge of equal opportunities is a brake on the drive to take the female dimension into account in all aspects of the Community's structural policies.

A major achievement of the Community's NOW initiative is certainly that it has made it possible for the Member States to set up coordinating facilities for the NOW operational programmes and that it has "officialised" and augmented collaboration between the ESF missions, the national and regional employment and vocational

training authorities and the people in charge of equal opportunities.

The Member States which come closest to the mainstreaming model - Denmark and some of the German Länder, for example - are those with the closest collaboration and partnership between the national and regional authorities and the people in charge of equal opportunities. They are also the ones where all the Ministries - and not just the Ministry of Employment or Social Affairs - take account of the female dimension in their decisions.

SO THE IMPACT OF THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICIES ON STRUCTURAL POLICY AS A WHOLE IS LIMITED TO SPECIFIC MEASURES. THE CSF CLAUSE CALLING ON MEMBER STATES TO REMEMBER THE LEGISLATION AND THE COMMUNITY POLICY ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IS TOO VAGUE AND TOO RESTRICTIVE TO HAVE ANY REALLY TANGIBLE EFFECT.

THE NOW INITIATIVE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO BRING ABOUT BROADER MOBILISATION FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES - PROVIDED THAT THE NOW OPs HAVE AN EFFECT ON THE SYSTEM AS A WHOLE AND ARE NOT CONFINED TO A LARGE-SCALE SPECIFIC SCHEMES OPERATION.

## **2.2 MANAGEMENT**

As things stand, OP management by ESF missions at national and regional level does not cover the qualitative aspects of the implementation of the projected schemes and measures. It is administrative and budgetary management involving a large amount of work which was made even larger by the reform and it is unrealistic to expect the same teams to take qualitative considerations into account too - particularly since this is a different sort of work for which they are currently unprepared.

## **2.3. ASSESSMENT**

This has been the poor relation of the reform of the structural funds so far. A partnership procedure between the ESF and the national authorities is being run with a view to setting up assessment procedures. It is too early to say just how far these new procedures are going to take the female dimension into account, but it is vital to ensure that they actually do so from the word go.

As things stand, it is the financial commitments and flows of recipients which are assessed. It is difficult to measure the effect (in terms of occupational integration) of schemes by reference to data contained in the final account forms. The amount of information which the ESF requests from the national authorities apparently generates a great deal of paperwork in the Member States, without being properly exploited, with a view to a more qualitative assessment, in the Community - that, at least, was a common opinion of subjects interviewed in the national and/or regional authorities.

The figures (on, say, newly created stable jobs or rates of vocational integration) from the Member States are apparently also often plausible estimates of parameters which are difficult to measure *ex-ante*. Only long-term evaluations based on monitoring trainees after their courses will yield reliable information.

#### **.4. ADDITIONALITY**

The analysis of the process of putting OP schemes into practice in the field shows the limitations of additionality. The northern Member States tend to select such schemes from the existing range as meet the Community criteria and are eligible for cofinancing. In this case, ESF assistance is an extra for the public programmes and makes it possible to increase the number of beneficiaries. The preparation procedures are more procedures for selecting existing schemes with, as a corollary, a tendency to carry over schemes run as part of national public programmes which had cofinancing previously.

As a number of national consultants have pointed out, continuity is more important than innovation.

Things are different in the southern Member States, where public programmes, and women's schemes especially, are highly dependent on ESF support. These countries have had to analyse the socio-economic situation and make an effort with their programming, whereas those in the north have been able to rely on existing analyses and on public programmes which were already operational.

However, the effect of additionality is greater in the northern Member States in the case of specific schemes and the ESF plays a more strategic part in pro-women measures in the Community as a whole.

#### **CATERING FOR THE FEMALE DIMENSION IN THE PREPARATORY WORK FOR GENERAL AND SPECIFIC MEASURES**

The way in which the female dimension is catered for depends on how much importance the promoters attach to equal opportunities. There is quite a difference between general and specific measures.

Of the general schemes examined by the national consultants, the following points can be made:

There is some opposition to the idea of "positive treatment" for women, while others admit to having never taken a detailed look at the question and feel that they have never had to deal with specific problems encountered by women trainees. Others again are very "aware" and seek to cater for the specific needs of women. This may take a somewhat fortuitous, unplanned form: where the people running a training centre come up against a specific problem, they tend to resolve it in a way which is favourable to female trainees and take note of the experience for future reference.

In other words, we have found a very uneven spread of awareness of the equal opportunities issue among promoters and managers. This is something that might be resolved by an information drive on the part of the promoters and managers of general schemes, e.g.

- In Belgium, the VDAB (Dutch-language employment service) has made arrangements for a pamphlet to be distributed in all regional and local centres.
- In Denmark, there is a methodological guide on training for women.

■ Portugal has conducted an information campaign on specific measures.

We have already stressed the lack of information in particular on the eligibility of childcare measures and the under-utilisation phenomenon. It is important here to underline a remark made in the report for the United Kingdom to the effect that the cost of childcare measures is included in the overall cost of the scheme and thus boosts the “cost price”. It is important to bear in mind that the promoters of training schemes are competing with one another in their quest for funding and that they will shy away from showing average costs which are above their competitors’.

It might be preferable to have separate accounting arrangements for childcare expenditure and to make them subject to a higher rate of cofinancing.

The current situation is that cofinancing is available only for the operational costs of childcare services attached to training centres. In practice, it would seem that this criteria does not meet the real needs of parents. This solution can only be justified if the training centre is not too far away from the family home. Few mothers are prepared to make long journeys with one or more young children.

The duration of the training scheme is also of some relevance in that, if the mother already has made alternative childcare arrangements, she is unlikely to move her children to somewhere else for just a few months.

Thus, in Berlin, two childcare centres attached to training centres and capable of taking in a very large number of children are in fact under-utilised, being used by mothers only really as a stopgap arrangement. They do, though, provide facilities for training migrant women as childcare workers.

It is important not to overestimate the room for manoeuvre available to promoters wishing to introduce innovations for women, particularly in the case of local associations or initiatives. We have already pointed out the cumbersome nature of bureaucratic procedures and the sluggish way that financial channels operate. We might also stress the need to comply with national and/or regional administrative rules, which do not always leave much room for flexibility and innovation. Thus, in Germany, the length of training schemes leading to an officially recognised certificate is fixed by the Federal authorities.

### **3.1. REGIONAL LEVEL**

With the reform of the structural Funds, the regions have become fully-fledged players in structural policy. The Member States have followed on by setting up decentralised structures for the selection, implementation and management of Fund activities. The national reports indicate that the ESF regional coordinators are mainly concerned with administrative and financial management activities. The amount of red tape leaves them very little time to address the qualitative aspects, including the female dimension.

Nonetheless, the regional - or local - level would appear to be more suited to a detailed analysis of the labour market, companies’ needs, target populations and women in particular.

The extent to which the female dimension is taken into account varies widely from country to country, and from region to region. The best practices highlighted by the consultants are based on grassroots partnerships involving the training centres, the regional labour market administrators, and the social partners: i.e. the unions and the employers.

Factors we have found which are conducive to catering for the female dimension are:

- Involvement in the decision-making process at regional level of a (female) coordinator/adviser responsible for equal opportunities policy (Saarland and Denmark).
- Existence of national and/or regional programmes for women, with regional objectives or anti-unemployment programmes with a specifically female aspect (Spain, Denmark, Netherlands, France, Germany in general and Bremen and the Saarland in particular). These programmes provide a framework for regional action and have a multiplier effect.
- Awareness activities aimed at local and regional target groups (e.g. government employment agencies, social partners, companies).

THE ABOVE EXAMPLES SERVE TO ILLUSTRATE THREE MAIN CONDITIONS FOR THE INCLUSION OF THE FEMALE DIMENSION: A CONTACT PERSON, A FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME WITH OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES, AND A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT.

### 3.2. PREPARING SPECIFIC MEASURES

The priorities spelt out at Community level in the guidelines for ESF assistance have a definite effect on the planning of specific measures in the Member States.

- Thus, Bremen has set up a new programme for women returners under objective 3, and accompanying measures for women under objectives 2 and 4.
- In Italy, specific measures have been organised for women returners, a target group which had not been given priority treatment hitherto.
- Denmark has put in some planning effort on the creation by women of self-employed activities, including training measures, an area which had been under-exploited hitherto.

In the majority of specific measures examined by the national consultants, the accent is on accompanying measures and taking account of the profile and needs of the target groups. As a result, the drop-out rate is relatively low. The most difficult activities to put into operation are specific training measures in sectors where women are under-represented. The main problems encountered in the preparation phase here are as follows:

*Problems in recruiting female trainers for technical sectors.*

People and organisations promoting specific measures seek to appeal to women, even

in technical branches, so as to reinforce the “cultural role model” aspect of female trainers and to help trainees reconcile femininity and technical work.

This recruitment problem highlights the need to make provision for training measures for trainers in the technical branches.

***Problems in motivating women to follow training courses leading to traditionally male jobs.***

A number of managers of specific measures have said when interviewed that they “went out looking for women” to try to persuade them to take part in training courses. This reticence on the part of women can be explained by the random nature of the job-seeking phase at the end of a training course and the problems women experience in overcoming cultural barriers.

One solution which has proved successful is the “open workshop” scheme. Such workshops are highly flexible, working on the “hands on” principle, and enable women to become acquainted with computers, machinery, etc. and see how they get on before going in for theoretical training.

***Problems in interesting potential employers in new skills acquired by women.***

The weakness of specific measures has been the absence of partnership arrangements with business, which has to be persuaded of the worth of the new skills acquired by women. Although the shortage of skilled labour has accelerated the tendency to recognise and acknowledge these new female job profiles, there are still cultural barriers. Denmark, the Netherlands and a number of German Länder can give examples of sound practice in this regard.

Making contact with potential employers before launching the scheme is a practice which is becoming widespread throughout the Member States. This makes it possible, on the one hand, to make potential employers aware of the situation, and on the other, to assess their requirements in terms of manpower and to have some idea of real employment prospects for trainees once their course is over.

Positive action in firms, with the aim of improving the occupational environment, may be seen as a complementary solution. Such schemes are one of the priority aspects for women in the Belgian CSF for objectives 3 and 4.

### **3.3. HOW SCHEMES ARE SELECTED**

The female dimension is not one of the explicit criteria set out in the specifications imposed on scheme-promoters, apart from specific measures.

The female dimension is not taken into account in schemes in respect of traditionally male sectors, e.g. in industry (objective 2), nor in fishing or agriculture (objectives 1 and 5b) where women workers are very few and far between. The same applies to training measures for high-grade technicians.

This type of scheme is planned and implemented with a male target group in mind. Scheme-promoters tend to express the view that they cannot imagine women taking

part, the aim being to transmit technical know-how rather than to pay special attention to disadvantaged target groups.

However, the emergence of a new “philosophy” geared to more qualitative criteria is helping to highlight the specific problems faced by women.

The “qualitative” approach is most at evidence in objectives 3 and 4. The persistence of a hard core of long-term unemployed, who are difficult to “reclassify” irrespective of whether they are male or female, casts doubt on conventional methods and makes the case for this new approach, which is more socially and individually oriented, and which is used to devise an “occupational integration itinerary”.

Within this new “qualitative” approach, the criteria for the selection of schemes place the stress on:

- the creation of partnerships and of local consortia, as described above (point 3.1.2.);
- “accompanying measures”, both upstream and downstream;
- specific targeting: e.g. young jobseekers, unemployed people without any basic training, ethnic minorities, lone-parent mothers, ex-drug addicts, the homeless, etc.
- the needs and abilities of these target groups, in respect of training content, methods and organisation. This sometimes produces novel solutions, such as the creation of a “training bus” scheme for rural areas in Bremen, or more conventional measures such as flexible working time, childcare facilities for both mothers and fathers (usually organised by local authorities, as in Denmark), recognition of qualifications acquired by women in respect of housework and child-rearing (Netherlands).

With a view to extending the number of potential scheme-promoters and creating a climate within which applicants seek to emulate one other, some regions have sought to provide information in advance to all potential promoters (Saarland).

- In the United Kingdom, the NCVO (National Council for Voluntary Organisations) has set up a selection procedure based on qualitative criteria (with each criterion being allocated a points total, promoters being selected on the basis of their overall score, cf. page 53, point 3.6. of the UK final report).
- In the Arhus region (Denmark), the promoter of a specific measure was chosen by competitive tender.

But regionalism is not a panacea, particularly where there is some measure of disagreement between the national and regional levels. This may give rise to an impasse (e.g. in Spain, for certain specific measures) or, conversely, give voluntary organisations the chance to show their dynamism and occupy the field. Thus, in Lombardy (Italy), project proposals come from grassroots organisations, including a large number of projects for specific schemes presented by women’s associations (60% of the promoters of specific measures in Lombardy are grassroots organisations).

### 3.4. HOW TRAINEES ARE SELECTED

We have not deliberately pinpointed discriminatory practices in selecting trainees, but indirect discrimination does persist. Such discrimination can take two forms: (a) arising from the eligibility criteria for particular target groups as laid down by the ESF, thus ruling out a female population fringe, (b) arising from the criteria used to select trainees.

#### 3.4.1. THE LATENT FEMALE LABOUR FORCE

##### *Unregistered unemployment in the female population.*

Under the current rules, potential participants in training and employment aid measures have to be officially registered unemployed.

The fact is that, in the Community, the rate of employment registration at public employment services is much lower for women than for men. It is thought that only 30% of female jobseekers in the Community actually receive unemployment benefit (cf. Employment in Europe - 1991). In the United Kingdom and Ireland, for instance, married women whose husbands are in work have only limited access to unemployment benefit, which tends to put them off seeking registration as non-compensated unemployed.

Women are also more prominent than men in temporary and part-time jobs and in undeclared work. Such atypical forms of employment bestow no right to unemployment benefit (or only subject to restrictive conditions which women do not always fulfil).

There are also more women than men among the very long-term unemployed, who run the risk of being excluded from the system once they reach the end of the entitlement period (the exception here is the United Kingdom, where there are more male than female long-term unemployed).

IT IS REASONABLE TO ASSUME, THEN, THAT THE PROPORTION OF NON-REGISTERED WOMEN, WHO THUS HAVE NO ACCESS TO ESF COFINANCED MEASURES, IS HIGH, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE AT PRESENT NO PRECISE FIGURES TO BACK THIS UP.

##### *Women who are dependent on assistance schemes.*

In a number of Member States (e.g. France and Ireland), women receive social allowances on the strength of their individual situation, particularly mothers of lone-parent families, and are not required to actively look for work. Given their financial and childcare problems, they have very little incentive to break out of their dependent situation and cannot meet the cost of training courses or cope with the other problems in actively looking for work, nor deal with the problems of organising family life.

##### *Economically non-active women.*

The employment rate for women in the European Community is below that of the United States, Japan and the Scandinavian countries (which explains why Denmark is

untypical in this regard).

In the Community, the proportion of women of working age registered in the official statistics as economically inactive is the same as the proportion of economically active women, i.e. 47%. In the United States the ratio is 35% non-active to 60% active. Whenever there is an increase in job supply, it is found that a large proportion of such new jobs are taken by people who are thought to be non-active, a majority of them women.

Thus, the latest Community statistics (cf. Employment in Europe - 1991) show that female employment increased by 9% compared with +4% for men. Of a total of 10 million new jobs, 6 million were taken by women (a large number of them part-time). At the same time, the number of women officially registered unemployed fell by only 600 000.

This would seem to indicate, on the one hand, that there is no systematic linkage between the number of net jobs created and the unemployment pattern and, on the other, that a large proportion of women in the Community regarded as economically non-active are in fact looking for work.

**THE LATENT FEMALE LABOUR FORCE IS SERIOUSLY UNDER-ESTIMATED AND IS NOT REFLECTED IN THE OFFICIAL UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS. UNEMPLOYED WOMEN MAKE UP ONLY A SMALL PROPORTION OF THE POTENTIAL FEMALE TARGET-GROUP FOR EMPLOYMENT MEASURES COFINANCED BY THE ESF. FOCUSING ON FEMALE RETURNERS IS A START TOWARDS DEALING WITH THIS PROBLEM.**

### **3.4.2. QUALIFICATIONS**

We have already underlined the fact that women are poorly represented in general training measures in respect of high-grade qualifications, traditionally male occupations and scientific and technical sectors.

This may be due to the fact that selection criteria are geared to male applicants and tend to be indirectly discriminatory vis-à-vis women, although in theory anyone may apply.

The national report for Ireland gives a good illustration of this type of indirect discrimination; here are three examples:

- The practice of interviewing applicants tends to work to the detriment of women and is less "neutral" than written procedures.
- The basic training and/or experience required, particularly in scientific and technical subjects, again works to the detriment of women. In many cases, the criteria are excessively rigorous and greater flexibility would open up schemes to women who have a level of training which is compatible with the required criteria.
- Checks are carried out on applicants' basic training and vocational experience, generally speaking, on the basis of a male view of a typically linear career, whereas women have more of a tendency to leave and re-enter the labour market. In addition, no account is taken of experience acquired outside the labour market (e.g. in running a family budget, planning family life and practical know-how).

IT WOULD BE AN INTERESTING EXERCISE TO MONITOR THE CRITERIA APPLIED FOR SELECTING TRAINEES. THIS WOULD BRING OUT ANY FORMS OF INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION WHICH ARE BANNED UNDER THE DIRECTIVE ON EQUAL TREATMENT IN ACCESS TO VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND INDICATE CERTAIN FORMS OF POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION IN FAVOUR OF WOMEN. THE COMMISSION MIGHT DISTRIBUTE A "CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE" AND ENCOURAGE THE MEMBER STATES TO IMPLEMENT "CROSSOVER" TRAINING SCHEMES FOR GIRLS, PARTICULARLY UNDER OBJECTIVE 1 IN RESPECT OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND APPRENTICESHIPS.

#### **4. CATERING FOR THE FEMALE DIMENSION IN THE MANAGEMENT PHASE**

Clearly, the extent to which the female dimension enters into management methods will depend on how far it was taken into account at the preparatory stage.

In some cases, even where no special attention has been paid to the specific needs of women in the preparatory phase, managers suddenly confronted in practice with the problems posed by female trainees take specific measures to resolve specific problems.

Such direct-response changes may concern:

- planning working hours to fit in with school hours;
- organising a "pre-training" phase where women cannot keep up with a technical course;
- availability of managers (especially women) to help women to find solutions for transport or childcare problems;
- informal organisation of help with guidance, counselling and jobseeking.

THIS SHOWS THAT, WITH SUFFICIENT INFORMATION FROM PROMOTERS AND MANAGERS AND WITH A MORE SOPHISTICATED PRIOR ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS AND CAPABILITIES OF TRAINEES, SUCH CHANGES COULD BE INTRODUCED AT THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PHASE.

It is also important to note that, the more female trainees there are in a group, the more positively the female dimension is treated by managers and trainers. Having a mixed target group has a very positive effect on the way the specific needs of women are catered for. It is also the basic philosophy underlying the specific (i.e. women-only) measures.

#### **5. CATERING FOR THE FEMALE DIMENSION IN THE ASSESSMENT PHASE**

We have already made the point that assessment was the poor relation of the reform of the structural Funds, but that an assessment procedure is currently being set up in partnership with the Member States.

The national consultants have found that a large proportion of managers actually

carried out assessments, albeit for internal use only. In a large number of Member States, it would seem that this assessment exercise is not encouraged by the national administrations in charge of ESF cofinanced activities. In other words, managers are a potentially potent source of information.

The problem is deciding what ought to be assessed: the training scheme itself or its effect, i.e. occupational integration. The situation at present is that assessments relate to the training itself and only exceptionally to the effect.

Taking account of the female dimension in assessments made at individual scheme level clearly depends on the way in which the female dimension is taken into account in the preparatory and management phases. This depends in turn on the proportion of female trainees.

Generally speaking, the more the procedures are geared to the qualitative assessment of individual occupational integration itineraries, the easier it is to monitor the development of female target groups in and following the training phase. Currently, this type of integration follow-up assessment remains an exceptional measure in the ex-post assessment phase.

Clearly, any assessment of occupational integration can only be carried out over the long term (i.e. 6 months, 1 year or 2 years) and will require human and financial resources which are not universally available. Using computer and statistical programmes is not enough to produce a qualitative assessment which, in terms of both training and its effect, will always have to be carried out at the level of the schemes themselves, requiring targeted surveys based on a sample population in each Member State. There is no point in trying to elevate to national and Community levels too much information which is difficult to collect and for which the promoters ultimately resort to giving plausible estimates, and which in the final analysis are used only patchily, if at all.

The lack of the kind of statistics which would make it possible to assess the participation of women, along with the dubious reliability of the available figures, was a major handicap for the national consultants in the first analysis of the participation of women in cofinanced schemes.

It is not enough to have just a men-women breakdown of recruitment rates and of new jobs created and of the nature of the economic sector if the aim is to establish at what level of the occupational hierarchy women find employment, whether the job equates with their qualifications, whether it is an insecure or part-time job, and whether the return to work can be sustained.

IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT TO AGREE ON A MINIMUM LEVEL OF DATABANK INPUT, BUT THERE IS NO POINT IN OVERFACING MANAGERS AND PROMOTERS WITH EXCESSIVELY LONG AND EXCESSIVELY COMPLICATED FORMS. IT IS A RISKY BUSINESS TO COMBINE ADMINISTRATIVE, FINANCIAL, QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA IN A SINGLE FORM. CLEARLY, THE DISHEARTENING ASPECT AND THE COMPLEXITY OF THE OPERATION WILL ALWAYS BE A SOURCE OF APPROXIMATION, NOT TO SAY ERROR.

IT IS MUCH MORE IMPORTANT TO ENSURE, RIGHT FROM THE PLANNING PHASE, THAT THERE IS A CONSENSUS AS TO THE OBJECTIVES (INCLUDING

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE FEMALE DIMENSION) AND THE ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES, THAT THE EQUISITE TOOLS AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE, THAT THE CHANNELS FOR CIRCULATING INFORMATION ARE IN GOOD ORDER, AND THAT THE INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE EX-POST PHASE.

Taking account of the qualitative aspects in the assessment seems to be a concern which is making its way up the ladder of priorities on the part of the national administrations responsible for employment and vocational training. Procedures are currently being set up in the Member States, e.g. the United Kingdom.

The situation is different for specific measures which have, right from the outset, been subject to assessment and study, large numbers of which have been listed in the IRIS Network. This assessment effort for specific measures receives support from the Commission, more particularly from the Equal Opportunities Unit, within the context of research into employment and vocational training for women and via the IRIS Network.

In the Member States, this effort is supported by equal opportunities policy units. For instance, in France, the Secretariat of State for Women's Rights uses qualitative assessment procedures for major specific schemes (cf. final report for France, Annex I).

An assessment procedure for general schemes might take a lead from this specific-scheme effort. Use might also be made of experience gained in setting up the ERGO databank.

However, the assessment exercise on specific measures has, it must be pointed out, related essentially to training measures and the creation of self-employed activity by women, rather than to occupational integration.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Taking account of the female dimension in the methods used to prepare, manage and assess ESF cofinanced measures depends on the impact in each Member State of national and regional equal opportunities policy on employment and labour policy.

It also depends on the impact, at Community level, of equal opportunities policy on structural employment policies.

The amount of attention given to the female dimension depends on qualitative aspects which, as we saw earlier, are not taken sufficiently into consideration in the preparation, management and assessment phase.

A more "qualitative" approach at all levels would make it easier to take into account not just the specific difficulties encountered by women in terms of occupational integration, but also the specific difficulties faced by other target groups.

Taking account of the specific needs of each group of individuals facing particular occupational integration problems requires a more flexible approach, and a capacity for measures to be adapted to changes in economic activity and labour supply and demand. The most appropriate level at which to gauge such development and make the necessary changes is the regional or local level.

This is also the most appropriate level for organising grassroots partnerships, incorporating a structure designed specifically to take account of the female dimension. Any such structure would have to be sufficiently empowered to play an effective role in the decision-making procedure. Above all, it would have to be incorporated in a European network to provide the requisite logistical, methodological and especially moral support.

Among the people interviewed in the national and/or regional administrations, employment agencies, training centres, etc., the national consultants came across women who, over and above their allotted task, have adopted a "pioneering" attitude to ensure that more account is taken of the female dimension. Such people are generally isolated and need information, encouragement and support, particularly in the southern Member States.

The Community might provide the requisite information and support by funding back-up structures, meetings, transnational seminars, codes of good practice, etc. in the Member States.

The Commission might also work towards ensuring that more account is taken of the female dimension in the monitoring committees and in all the partnership structures with the Member States in which it has representatives. This would require the officials concerned to undergo a training programme in equal opportunities policy.



### **ASSESSMENT, POINT 3**

*Description of the relations between specific and general ESF  
cofinanced measures and each Member  
State's mainstream activities for women.*



### ASSESSMENT, POINT 3

#### *Description of the relations between specific and general ESF cofinanced measures and each Member State's mainstream activities for women.*

The first point to note is that there is a very large measure of convergence between national programmes for women and the broad lines of the Community structural policy.

As a result, the priorities espoused by the ESF influence the priorities adopted at national level. This knock-on effect from Community down to national level is particularly evident in activities directed at women.

The Community legal framework based on the equal treatment directives; the ESF activities for women and, more recently, the NOW initiative; the guidelines and priorities for the medium-term equal opportunities programme all serve and have served as a powerhouse for the development of national policies for women.

The ESF's catalytic role is particularly crucial in Member States where policies for women are a recent development. For instance, in Greece, there is not one specific scheme for 1990 apart from those receiving Community cofinancing.

This marked convergence also has its origin in the fact that, in the northern Member States, governments tend to use ESF funds to finance existing public programmes.

In the southern Member States, Community funding plays a strategic role in implementing employment and vocational training policies. It is important to bear in mind that the development of national employment and vocational training policies is closely linked to the Member States' level of economic and socio-cultural development. This includes the promotion of jobs for women.

The strategies adopted for implementing measures for women vary from country to country, but the ESF always makes a significant contribution to their funding.

As we have already pointed out on a number of occasions, Denmark tends to be untypical of the rest of the Member States. Denmark has, for more than 10 years now, pursued a "jobs for women" policy aimed at enabling women to have exactly the same access to employment as men. In so doing, Denmark (which has the highest level of female economic activity in the Community) is on a par with the economic and cultural model adopted by the Scandinavian countries and cannot be compared with the other Member States in northern Europe.

THE FACT REMAINS, THOUGH, THAT IN DENMARK, AS IN ALL THE MEMBER STATES, NATIONAL EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AGENCIES ARE NOT OFFICIALLY INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ESF COFINANCED ACTIVITIES. AS WE HAVE SEEN BEFORE, SUCH AGENCIES PLAY THEIR PART IN PROPOSING AND PROGRAMMING SPECIFIC MEASURES, BUT HAVE NO SAY IN THE DECISION- MAKING PROCEDURE.

This lack of involvement on the part of national equal opportunities agencies in implementing the structural policies is paralleled by the lack of involvement of the same agencies in national employment and vocational training policies. There is

some evidence that this situation is now changing, e.g. by the attachment in France of the Secretariat of State for Women's Rights to the Ministry of Employment and Labour, or by the creation and/or strengthening of "women's units" within national administrations responsible for employment, labour and vocational training.

## **1. NATIONAL MEASURES FOR WOMEN**

Member States' national strategies are so diversified that it is difficult to make out any overall pattern. Some Member States prefer to draw up specific national programmes for women, while others include a special element in their national employment programmes, and others again pursue no fixed strategy.

We have therefore opted to give a general view of national systems, based on information provided by the national consultants.

### **1.1. IN BELGIUM**

A range of initiatives have been set up without any real fixed strategy. The situation in Belgium is characterised by the multiplicity of agencies responsible for equal rights and the promotion of employment for women. Belgium has no fixed strategy to act as a framework for the variety of initiatives brought into being by national, regional and community (in the Belgian sense of linguistic community!) institutions.

At the moment, some of these initiatives have to function on a shoestring, while other well-stocked budget resources remain untapped. For example, Belgium has chosen to encourage positive action in companies, and employers organising no such activities are required to pay over a certain percentage of their gross wage bill to the employment fund. Several thousand million Belgian francs have now been paid over by employers who prefer to pay than to take positive action, despite the fact that support and finance structures have been placed at their disposal by the Secretariat of State for Social Emancipation and the Ministry for Labour and Employment.

Positive action measures are also organised in the Belgian public services, as in Denmark and certain of the German Länder.

### **1.2. IN DENMARK**

The national equal opportunities plan is common to all ministries, the aim being for the female dimension to be taken into account in all policies devised and implemented by all ministries. The plan also sees the national administrations as employers and requires an investment effort in terms of human and financial resources for jobs for women in the civil service.

As regards employment and vocational training policy, the emphasis is placed on the need to get men to play their full part in promoting equal opportunities, by demonstrating that they to have a vested interest, more particularly in terms of the positive effect on the whole of the training system, by the input of innovative methods developed under specific measures.

### **1.3. IN GERMANY**

Most of the specific measures are financed by the Länder and not by the national authorities, given that Article 3 of the constitution prohibits the idea of positive action. At national level, the Ministry for Women and Young People finances only pilot projects, such as guidance and counselling centres, and recruitment aid accompanied by training and back-up in firms for female returners.

Berlin, Hamburg and North Rhine-Westphalia have their own equal opportunities legislation. Here, the strategy is based on positive action in firms and in the public services.

North Rhine-Westphalia had plans for giving precedence, for the granting of public subsidies and competitive tendering, to companies with equal opportunities plans, even if their price quotation was not the lowest; however, this practice was outlawed by the European Community under the competition rules.

As we saw earlier, specific measures fall essentially within the Länder remit, with major differences between one Land and another. The rigidity of the federal structure and rules on employment and vocational training sometimes act as a brake on Länder initiatives.

### **1.4. IN GREECE**

As we have already stressed, measures for women in Greece are highly dependent on ESF funds. Greece has no programme promoting the employment and vocational training of women.

Unlike Italy (and to a certain degree like Spain), women's associations play only a minor role in Greece.

A number of positive measures have been set in motion in Greece, in addition to specific schemes cofinanced by the ESF. These provide for higher recruitment bonuses paid to employers giving jobs to women (this system was abandoned in 1988) and assistance for the setting-up of women's cooperatives. These initiatives have had little impact on women's occupational situation and have had no positive knock-on effect, according to the national consultant. The creation of small businesses and self-employed activity are often the only alternative to unemployment in parts of southern Europe characterised by the poor development of the economic fabric and the lack of jobs for women, but do not appear to be in line with the predominant women's employment models.

### **1.5. IN SPAIN**

Spain has set up two plans for employment and vocational training:

- the FIP (vocational training and integration plan)
- the PEPA (adult ongoing education plan).

The country's equal opportunities policy is run by the Instituto de la Mujer, which has existed for almost 10 years and was in 1988 attached to the Ministry for Social Affairs. The Instituto de la Mujer has regional sub-units and is active in promoting specific ESF cofinanced measures. It has pushed an inter-ministerial cooperation arrangement designed to ensure that the female dimension is taken more into consideration under the FIP and PEPA plans. Such cooperation would appear, though, to have had no practical effects so far.

## **1.6. IN FRANCE**

the Secretariat of State for Women's Rights draws up an annual vocational integration and training programme for women. The programme receives ESF funding and is publicised in a circular sent to the regional prefects and to the regional delegates responsible for vocational training.

The key elements of the programme are specific schemes, centring on traditionally male sectors of the economy which offer real employment prospects, and the qualification record centres, which are also accessible to persons employed in companies.

The weak point of the programme are the post-training follow-up activities, which remain the exception.

## **1.7. IN IRELAND**

Ireland is characterised by the lowest rate of female employment in the Community (30%) and unemployment rules which penalise married women. The Ministry of Labour is responsible for equal opportunities policy, but there is no real political will to put this policy into practice. As in the United Kingdom, the role of the Employment Equality Agency is restricted to giving advice and monitoring the application of equal treatment rules in employment.

As Ireland is a highly centralised country, it is difficult to promote initiatives and stimulate partnerships at regional level.

It is important to bear in mind that the economic fabric in Ireland is underdeveloped and that job opportunities are scarce, even for skilled labour. There is a high rate of mobility of skilled labour in Ireland, but this is not a viable solution for women because of their family responsibilities.

The national consultant has identified only two specific measures cofinanced by the ESF for 1990. It would seem that policy in Ireland is to give priority to family matters rather than to equal opportunities, in which respect it is much akin to Luxembourg.

## **1.8. IN ITALY**

Italy had no legal basis until recently for promoting equal opportunities in employment between men and women, which tended to limit the possibilities of developing equal opportunities initiatives. The new law (125/91) is an important stimulus in promoting positive action.

Given that employment and labour policy and vocational training are matters for the regions, the range of activities tends to vary from one region to another with a very marked difference between the Mezzogiorno on the one hand and the regions in central and northern Italy on the other.

The strengthening of the regional role in structural employment policy is a positive factor in improving the planning and programming process. However, programming capacity at regional level in Italy is very patchy, particularly as regards equal opportunities. The absence of a legal basis and of a national programme as a stimulus to public initiative has led unions and voluntary organisations to set up training initiatives for women and support structures for the creation of women's cooperatives.

### **1.9. IN LUXEMBOURG**

The active female labour force in Luxembourg includes a strong contingent of immigrant labour in lowly jobs. The skilled labour force finds employment mainly in the services and health sector, with a strong element of workers commuting in from border regions.

The Ministry of Labour has a women's employment committee and working groups addressing specific subjects. Disadvantaged women, and especially mothers of lone-parent families, are a priority target group for action for women. Specific schemes in the office automation sector make it possible to meet the specific needs in terms of a skilled labour force in the services sector, but are not really a true reflection of any commitment to promote equality between men and women in employment.

### **1.10. IN THE NETHERLANDS**

As in Denmark, the trade unions have played an important role in promoting employment and vocational training for women. Thus, seven of the nine women's training centres are grouped together in a trust run by the women's associations in the Dutch trade union federation. These centres provide almost 1000 full-time places per year.

Almost all of these centres receive ESF cofinancing. On completion of the training course, trainees are monitored for a year.

The multiannual employment plan (1990-94) provides each year for a specific number of female beneficiaries (50 000 in 1991). The long-term aim is to reach equality of financial effort for the male and female population groups. Specific female trainee quotas (15%) are laid down for certain training schemes.

### **1.11. IN PORTUGAL**

Portugal has, strictly speaking, no national policy or national programme on equal opportunities. But, like the other Member States, it does run a number of activities which do not receive ESF funding. These are coordinated by the labour and employment equality commission (CITE) and by the equality and women's rights commission (CIDM). These two bodies have an essentially advisory role. Projects so far in Portugal concern the following initiatives:

- financial incentives for firms recruiting women in sectors where women are under-represented;
- assistance for modifications to sanitary installations and workplaces in firms recruiting women;
- help in the creation of small businesses by women;
- childcare facilities;
- pre-training activities.

It is important to bear in mind that, in Portugal, specific measures rank as accompanying measures for women taking part in general training schemes.

### **1.12. IN THE UNITED KINGDOM,**

Employment and vocational training policy, as well as equal opportunities policy, is marked by the non-interventionist approach which characterises the way public affairs are run.

The United Kingdom has no strategy or national policy for promoting employment and vocational training for women. Community policy for women thus has a “symbolic” role and ESF funding for specific measures plays a crucial role in imparting legitimacy and credibility.

Initiatives are designed, planned and implemented by the major training bodies, technical colleges, voluntary organisations, etc. The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) has a mainly watchdog role in respect of the application of legislation outlawing discrimination based on sex. It can intervene on employment matters but not on vocational training.

In the United Kingdom, as in Belgium, female returners are treated as unemployed persons, subject to certain conditions, and may thus be eligible for employment and vocational training promotion measures.

## **2. COMPLEMENTARITY BETWEEN NATIONAL MEASURES AND ESF COFINANCED MEASURES**

There is de facto complementarity between national measures and ESF cofinanced measures in as much as the national measures cover aspects of equal opportunities policy which are not taken into consideration for ESF assistance.

There is also de facto complementarity between specific and general measures funded by the ESF in as much as the specific measures place the emphasis on target groups, training methods, etc. which concern women and which are not priority aspects of the general measures.

However, bearing in mind the limited powers of the national agencies responsible for policies for women, and the lack of impact that specific measures have on the general

mass of cofinanced measures, there are legitimate grounds for wondering whether there is any complementarity strategy between ESF measures and national measures.

It is evident from interviews conducted in the Member States and at Community level that, at national level, the authorities responsible for the female dimension implement initiatives in those sectors where they are authorised to intervene, but do not go beyond that.

In concrete terms, activities conducted at national level are either those concerning training and vocational integration but which are not eligible under the ESF criteria, or positive action. Most of the positive action measures are directed at firms, but can also address public services in their employer guise, schools, etc.

Mention should also be made of publicity campaigns which are directed at a general change of attitudes.

## **2.1. INELIGIBLE MEASURES**

Ineligible measures are essentially:

- Measures concerned with taking stock of a situation, guidance, counselling and pre-training which do not accompany training measures and/or are not directed solely at the unemployed, but which also work to the benefit of women in employment.

Such is the case in France, where this type of initiative is regarded wholly as a training matter and receives public funding. Such measures may be run by centres specialising in this particular type of intervention and which do not organise vocational training in the strict sense of the term.

- Tax incentives for firms recruiting persons with an occupational integration handicap, e.g. women, the disabled, etc.
- Fixed-length recruitment measures in “public utility” jobs, generally at local level (e.g. Belgium, France).
- Training measures for women in firms not covered by objective 1 and 2 regions.

The eligibility or not of this type of measure in the Member States goes beyond the female dimension and has its roots in the choice of unemployment policy priorities.

## **2.2. POSITIVE ACTION**

All the Member States run positive action measures, the target group here being private-sector firms with, as a subsidiary target group, the public sector, including the State as employer.

The difference between positive action and measures for women under the structural Funds may be summed up as follows:

- The aim of positive action is to work on the occupational environment and on

women as a target group. In this respect, positive action in firms would appear to be a useful complement to measures designed to encourage the vocational integration of women in traditionally male occupations.

- Positive action is not aimed so much at combating unemployment as at promoting the interests of women in work. In other words, positive action is for women who already have a job. What it seeks to do is to provide skilled training for women in insecure jobs and/or low-grade employment threatened by technical change and company restructuring programmes. It also aims to promote career planning for women and to encourage their progress up the career ladder.

Promotion of women to high-ranking jobs in the public and private sectors is a very important factor in promoting women's interests in general in the employment sphere.

Studies carried out in the United States and Europe indicate that, once a 40% level has been reached for women in the middle and higher management ranks, the occupational environment tends to alter in favour of women.

It is not enough to promote occupational integration for women - they also have to be given career opportunities. These two aims are complementary and should be pursued in tandem. It is quite possible to encourage women to enter the labour market without seeking equality between men and women at work. This is somewhat true of the situation in the Netherlands, where there is public-sector support for the employment of women, but where 60% of women hold part-time jobs.

### 3. CHANGING ATTITUDES

One priority aspect of the work being done by national authorities responsible for equal opportunities between men and women is providing information and raising the awareness level of society in general to the equal opportunities issue.

This goes beyond the work environment as such and takes in, for example, schools and education in general. After all, it is patently absurd to continue to organise and provide public funding for training schemes which are both obsolete and inappropriate and which everyone knows will not enable girls to find jobs. These are precisely the girls we subsequently come across taking retraining and vocational training courses.

It is vital to work on the attitudes of parents and pupils to persuade girls to choose future-oriented courses. It is not enough to push girls into jobs and sectors which are being abandoned by men. On the contrary, we must make an effort to anticipate occupational change and encourage women to choose new occupations and new trades and avoid the temptation to reform male bastions.

Public-opinion awareness activities seek also to promote a fairer balance in family responsibilities between men and women and to demonstrate alternative family models. The fact is that the lack of task and responsibility-sharing is a serious obstacle to the occupational integration of women. The need to combine work and family responsibilities pushes women into "choosing" part-time jobs and "accepting" insecure forms of employment which enable them to reconcile their dual

responsibilities, often to the detriment of their occupational status. Public-awareness work seeks also to promote alternative feminine models with a view to lending legitimacy and credibility to non-traditional and innovative female job profiles. This type of public-opinion campaign is necessary to make a viable and lasting job of getting women into traditionally male occupations in particular. Public-awareness activities are necessary to create a favourable context and bolster the positive effect of measures designed to promote the employment of women.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

We have sought, very briefly, to show the range of diversity and divergence between national situations.

We have also stressed that, in some of the southern Member States, the development of measures specifically for women would be very limited were it not for ESF cofinanced activities, and that the whole range of policies for women is highly dependent on ESF intervention.

In the northern Member States, ESF intervention for women tends to act as a motor, although the direct impact in financial terms is limited.

Over and above the financial impact of ESF assistance, the way the Community level impinges on the national level is principally by way of the equal treatment directives, which have forced the Member States to incorporate the concept of equal treatment into their national legislation.

ESF cofinanced activities concern only one aspect of equal opportunities policy, i.e. employment and the labour market, and vocational training. National policies on measures and policy for women address other aspects over and above the occupational sphere.

In other words, there is some degree of de facto complementarity between ESF cofinanced measures for employment for women and measures addressing a change of attitude in society in general.

The complementarity aspect will be discussed in more detail under point 4.

One final remark needs to be made before closing this chapter. It concerns measures in place in the Member States with a view to reconciling occupational and family responsibilities, such as career breaks, extended maternity leave, the payment of a replacement allowance to the mothers of lone-parent families, etc. All these measures encourage women to stay outside the "world of work". Combined with other measures such as tax relief for single-income couples, such measures tend to promote family policy rather than female employment.



#### **ASSESSMENT, POINT 4**

***Opinion on the feasibility of measures,  
the consistency of operations at national and Community level,  
and their effectiveness***



## Assessment, point 4

### *Opinion on the feasibility of measures, the consistency of operations at national and Community level, and their effectiveness*

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

As we stressed in point 3 of the assessment, it is difficult to give an overall opinion on the consistency and effectiveness of measures for women taken at national and Community levels.

The fact is that there is such a diversity of socio-economic situations, cultural models and practices in the various Member States and regions that a stock-taking exercise is a very difficult matter.

We shall endeavour to come up with a global statement based on the opinions of the national consultants and to set out certain avenues which could be explored on the basis of this general statement. We shall start by looking at the national level and move on to the Community level.

Before attempting a diagnosis of the Member States' measures in terms of equal opportunities, it is important to bear in mind a number of points:

Any equal opportunities policy, any policy for promoting women's employment affects both the public and private spheres and contains an ideological dimension. The important thing is to develop cultural models to be taken on board by men and women; to bring about a change in attitudes; to alter the organisation of work and of family life; and to change society.

This ideological dimension has been played down in the northern Member States, where equal opportunities is becoming a way of managing (human, female) resources by way of measures seeking to promote employment and vocational training for women. The idea of equality has gained in legitimacy and credibility thanks to national legislation guaranteeing equal treatment between men and women, in response to Community directives.

In employment, women have gained in status and are increasingly being regarded as "professionals" in their own right, with stereotyped ideas of women's and men's respective roles losing ground.

The ideological dimension of the men/women equality issue is a touchier point in the southern Member States, but also in Ireland and Luxembourg. Here, cultural resistance is more marked.

The southern Member States are going through a transitional phase, with their national employment and equality policies becoming adapted gradually to Community policies.

■ Thus, in Spain, the State-run equal opportunities plan reproduces the content of the second Community medium-term equal opportunities programme.

Any diagnosis of the effectiveness of Member States' measures in the field of equal

opportunities must take account of this “ideological” component and consider the overall context: the level of socio-economic development, dominant cultural models, resistance to change, etc.

It is also essential to realise that, when it comes to changing attitudes, the response time must be measured in years, or even decades. As a result, we have to take a look at equality-promotion measures in terms of both effort and effect. Above all, we have to analyse whether the measures adopted in the Member States make it possible to raise and sustain interest, commitment and cooperation around this theme.

It is also important to define clearly, before proceeding to a diagnosis, precisely what we want to evaluate:

- equal opportunities policies in general,
- legislation guaranteeing equal treatment and their level of application,
- equal opportunities in terms of national employment and labour policies,
- the promotion of the female dimension in national and regional-level activities within the framework of the Community structural policy.

## **2. NATIONAL LEVEL**

The national consultants did not have enough time to produce an exhaustive analysis of all the above aspects (nor was any such analysis specified).

The title of this point 4 says quite clearly that what is required in an “opinion”. We shall concentrate, then, on the twin aspects of “work and employment” and “ESF cofinanced measures”. We shall endeavour to identify the strong and weak points by reference to specific examples described by the national consultants.

### **2.1. THE STRONG AND WEAK POINTS**

The positive aspect is that all the Member States have integrated the equal treatment concept into their legislation and policies on employment and training. Via the CSFs and OPs, the question of employment and vocational training for women has become part and parcel of the process of programming initiatives to combat unemployment.

All the Member States have set up special agencies responsible for equal opportunities, with special reference to work and employment for women.

There is consensus on what constitutes the specific problems facing women:

- problems in occupational integration and a high level of unemployment,
- the strain of family responsibilities,
- the lack of vocational qualifications,

- concentration of women in a small number of economic sectors, at the bottom of the career ladder, and in atypical employment forms.

There is agreement in principle on the need to make provision for initiatives and programmes to tackle these problems. This consensus, this agreement in principle, manifests itself in the form of recommendations, joint opinions, declarations of good intent, etc.

The problem is how to circumvent the blockages so as to make the existing structures work and implement the planned programmes and initiatives.

**THE FIRST PIECE OF ADVICE WE CAN GIVE IS THAT THE FIRST STEP MUST BE TO CREATE THE POLITICAL WILL IN THE MEMBER STATES TO IMPLEMENT THE PLANNED PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES, PROVIDED OF COURSE THAT THE PROPOSED MEASURES CORRESPOND TO GENUINE NEEDS ON THE PART OF THE (FEMALE) TARGET GROUPS AND TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT, AND OF RESISTANCE TO CHANGE.**

The national consultants have noted in some of the Member States problems in the effective implementation of specific measures provided for in the OPs. The example of positive action in Belgium likewise serves to illustrate this inability to implement initiatives for women in the national context. On the other hand, the national reports describe employment measures which have met with very great success among the target populations, as is the case in France.

It would be important to produce an in-depth analysis, taking account of the national economic and social context, the factors working to the advantage of/hindering the implementation of measures for women, with a view to drawing operational conclusions for future reference.

## **2.2. REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS**

Following the reform of the structural Funds, the regional level has become an active party to the programming and planning process. The national reports bring out the new regional structures which have been set up in the Member States. Within this new context, it would be useful to make provision in the Member States for "Regional observatories for women's employment and work" so as to measure:

- the characteristics of regional female labour force supply (including the latent female labour force);
- the characteristics of labour force demand, the real openings for the female labour force, and the identification of new employment opportunities in all sectors, both male and female;
- the gearing of public and company initiatives to regional labour supply and demand;
- the discrepancy between measures envisaged and measures actually implemented;

- the points of resistance to change and the success factors;
- the results obtained in terms of occupational integration.

We are not advocating the setting-up of groups of experts to carry out studies, but merely encouraging regional grassroots partnerships. It is also important to improve the information available on the situation of women in the labour market and to bring the female dimension more into play in the preparatory, implementation and assessment phases.

Apart from the United Kingdom, where there is no information at regional level, and Ireland, which runs a highly centralised employment and vocational training policy, commitment to the regional level comes out clearly in the majority of Member States.

This takes the form of the creation of regional structures responsible for running employment policy. These structures are also designed as points of consultation and cooperation with local economic operators (e.g. Netherlands, Denmark, France, Spain).

**IT IS ESSENTIAL TO ENSURE THAT REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS INCLUDE THE EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF DELEGATES, ADVISERS, COORDINATORS, ETC. RESPONSIBLE FOR TAKING ACCOUNT OF THE FEMALE DIMENSION AND WITH SUFFICIENT DECISION-MAKING POWER TO INFLUENCE GENERAL EMPLOYMENT POLICY - NOT JUST THE FEMALE DIMENSION, AS IS THE CASE AT PRESENT.**

The effectiveness of regional partnerships between persons and organisations concerned with employment policy, vocational training and equality policy in employment varies from country to country:

- In Belgium, there is an evident lack of coordination and consistency.
- In Denmark, equal opportunities advisers are well integrated into employment policy implementation at regional and national level, the latter being the programming level.
- In the Netherlands, the agencies responsible for equal opportunities are present at national level but not at regional level.
- In Italy, provision is made for equal opportunities advisers at regional level in the new law on employment equality, but the scheme is not yet operational.
- In Spain, there are cooperation structures, but they do not appear to work very well in practice.

### **2.3. COOPERATION AT NATIONAL LEVEL**

- Certain situations in Germany and Spain show that inflexibility at national level can block innovative initiatives at regional level.
- The case of Belgium illustrates the fact that the absence of synergy between the various levels (i.e. State, linguistic community, region) can have deleterious effects.

- In Luxembourg, the women's employment committee is in regular contact with the Ministry of Labour, but this has brought no change in the situation of women on the labour market for want of a real strategy for the promotion of work for women.
- In France, the Secretariat of State for Women's Rights is attached to the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Vocational Training. Employment and vocational training for women are entirely the responsibility of the Secretariat of State, and the Ministry of Labour takes no initiative.

All these examples demonstrate the need for the effective integration of equal opportunities policy into national employment policy, and for programmes and/or activities in the interests of female employment to be integrated into national employment and vocational training plans, as is the case in Denmark and the Netherlands. The aim of the integrated approach is to avoid blockages and inconsistency between initiatives taken at all levels.

Integration between employment policy and equal opportunities policy should be based on inter-ministerial cooperation structures, and on relay points between the national and regional levels. The problem of relations between the national and regional levels far exceeds the remit of this study and we would not seek to raise the matter. The national consultants have highlighted the problem in a number of Member States.

Any such inter-ministerial cooperation structures should make it possible to involve all the ministers concerned as participants in the equal opportunities policy scene. This is the strategy currently advocated in Denmark. The consultants have all stressed the marginalisation of equal opportunities policy and the relative isolation of agencies responsible for equal opportunities matters. It is important to give these agencies legitimacy, credibility and power, as enjoyed in France by the Secretariat of State for Women's Rights, so as to give them more weight vis-à-vis their colleagues.

It is also necessary to formalise and "institutionalise" the interministerial equal opportunities cooperation structures. The national consultants have given many examples of effective informal cooperation. This type of cooperation can have a positive effect on getting the female dimension taken into account in employment and vocational training policy, but it is a fragile type of cooperation, being based on personal relations. There is less commitment on either side and no real "symbolic" value. The remaining problem is whether or not there is any real political determination to implement the proposed initiatives, and to make the structures work.

**CURRENTLY, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN EMPLOYMENT AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING IS SOMETHING WHICH REGULARLY APPEARS ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA, WITHOUT HOWEVER BEING A MAJOR POLITICAL PRIORITY. IT MIGHT BECOME ONE IF THE SHORTAGE OF SKILLED LABOUR AND THE EFFECT OF FALLING BIRTH RATES ON THE LABOUR POOL MEANT THAT THERE WAS NO ALTERNATIVE TO CALLING ON THE RESERVE POOL OF FEMALE LABOUR. THAT BEING SO, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO IMPROVE WOMEN'S QUALIFICATIONS, GIVE THEM THE SKILLS TO ADAPT CONTINUOUSLY TO A CHANGING TECHNOLOGICAL WORLD, AND POINT THEM TOWARDS FUTURE-ORIENTED CAREERS IN ALL ECONOMIC SECTORS.**

The point of directing women towards future-oriented jobs in all economic sectors goes much further than the principle of training women in sectors where they are currently under-represented, and means that there will have to be a prospective analysis of labour demand, which brings us back to our earlier idea of “regional observatories”.

It also means making the vocational training system sufficiently flexible to react promptly, to keep in step with technological innovation, to adapt training supply to new career profiles and to guarantee access for women to these new occupations. (This remark applies also to schools, particularly vocational and technical teaching.) It is essential to bring employer-based vocational training systems into line with the public education system (e.g. the German dual system) and to extend the effects of integrating the female dimension in vocational training by positive action in firms and in the teaching environment, particularly in apprenticeship systems (objective 1).

*Here are a few examples of sound practice which might be circulated and advocated:*

- In Portugal, a series of television spots show instances of inequality between men and women at work. There is a campaign in primary schools to encourage children (boys and girls) to take an interest in science and technical subjects, with a special message for parents.
- In Ireland, there are regional projects to promote high-quality teaching in physics and chemistry in schools for girls, by specially trained teachers.
- In Denmark and the United Kingdom, there are courses and seminars designed for teachers to make them more aware of the effects of stereotyped presentations of male and female role patterns on choices made by girls.

These examples highlight the need to intervene very early in the school environment, to organise information campaigns on equal opportunities among teachers and trainers, and to train instructors in teaching methods which are specially geared to girls and women.

## **2.4. OCCUPATIONAL INTEGRATION**

In all Member States, we have found that pride of place is given to training schemes, both in specific and in general measures.

Unfortunately, vocational training is not in itself a job-creator. Nonetheless, it is a *sine qua non* in terms of avoiding marginalisation and sustained unemployment, particularly for women who have had no vocational training or whose training is no longer appropriate. For instance, the discrimination on the labour market and in companies remains, even if we train large numbers of women in those sectors where they are under-represented. Hence the need to introduce measures designed to encourage the occupational integration of women and to change the business climate. The problem is particularly crucial in the case of specific measures: apart from Denmark and the Netherlands, the number of people affected is so low that there is no prospect of a significantly measurable social change.

THE NEED TO WORK TOWARDS OCCUPATIONAL INTEGRATION RATHER THAN JUST TOWARDS TRAINING AS SUCH MUST BE ADVOCATED WITH ALL DUE URGENCY. BY PROVIDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR TRAINING. THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMUNITY ARE IN EFFECT AIDING AND ABETTING THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF TRAINING WITHOUT TAKING A SYSTEMATIC LOOK AT THE IMPACT THAT TRAINING HAS ON JOBS.

It is evident from the national reports that monitoring measures going beyond the training phase are still not sufficiently widespread, particularly as far as specific schemes are concerned. Obviously, follow-up activities require additional human and financial resources which are not available in all the Member States and which might require technical assistance funding.

Taking a look at experience reported on in the national reports (e.g. Greece and Portugal), it would seem that recruitment aid has not played any really positive role in terms of promoting women's employed status. On the contrary, such aid has tended to work in favour of the recruitment of women to relatively unskilled jobs in traditionally female sectors like textiles and clothing. What is more, there would seem to be no guarantee that such new recruits enjoy any protection from dismissal once the financial incentive has worn off.

Information which would make it possible to measure the impact of recruitment aid on occupational integration for women is conspicuous by its absence in the other Member States, such that it is difficult to know whether the Greek and Portuguese experience is a general one.

The other problem is posed by the funding of job creation schemes, for a fixed period, for the long-term unemployed in non-productive projects in the public interest. This type of recruitment is not eligible for ESF aid and is most common in France and Belgium.

While it is true that such measures are more social than economically-oriented, in that the aim is not lasting occupational integration but merely a move to combat the marginalisation of the unemployed, it does give young people looking for their first job the chance to get an initial idea of what work is like.

The Belgian and French experience does not meet with universal acclaim. Such subsidised jobs tend to be a drain on the public purse and carry with them an element of "acceptance" of unemployment. Nonetheless, with appropriately rigorous project selection criteria, and evaluation of the resultant job experience and of the impact in terms of occupational integration at the end of the employment period, we should perhaps take a fresh look at whether such projects should remain ineligible, particularly in employment black spots and for target groups for whom occupational integration is a particular problem.

This type of project might be particularly suited to unskilled female target groups. It might also be one way of offering services in sectors which are not covered at present and of responding to the general paucity of care structures for small children and older children outside school hours, home help for the elderly, home care for sick children, etc. It might also be a means of training and employing jobseekers in activities to do with the countryside and the urban environment, crop harvesting, waste management, etc.

## 2.5. CHILDCARE SERVICES

*Reconciling work and family responsibilities* is still seen as a matter for parents, and more particularly women, and not as a problem which society as such should address. The availability of women on the labour market depends in part on what childcare services are available. The situation at present in the Community is that such services are very inadequate.

Even in Member States whose care structures in this area are superior to the European norm, like Denmark, the Netherlands and certain of the German Länder (especially Berlin), there are still needs which have to be met.

The large-scale availability of childcare infrastructure in Denmark is designed to avoid any breaks in women's professional careers and to reduce the resultant economic cost (e.g. the cost of providing vocational training for women returners).

The problems encountered by women in reconciling family life and work, and the general lack of childcare infrastructure, together go some of the way towards explaining why women are so keen on part-time jobs, despite the negative aspects of all atypical forms of work (e.g. career prospects, social rights, pay). In the Community, 40% of married women want a part-time job, compared with only 25% of women jobseekers as a whole and only 5% of men (cf. *Employment in Europe - 1991*).

With regard to ESF projects which have been studied in the Member States, it is very difficult to get at information on the extent to which childcare needs are taken into account. We have no information on the cost of such measures, the extent to which childcare costs are covered, or the percentage of ESF funding which goes to childcare infrastructure operating costs.

As we have seen, the most widespread form of financial intervention is to pay an allowance for childcare costs (both specific and general measures). Childcare facilities at a training centre itself remain the exception. Childcare problems are mainly taken into account in the context of specific measures, although certain managers of both specific and general schemes work in conjunction with childcare centres run by local authorities. (Local authorities in fact play an important role in promoting childcare infrastructure).

*Other childcare-related measures are as follows:*

- Some Member States allow for the tax deductability of childcare costs for families where both parents are at work. Others provide for employers to make a compulsory contribution to the overall cost of such services.
- Firms are beginning to play an active part in promoting childcare services. Thus, some companies employing a substantial number of women have set up in-house crèches.
- The trade unions also have a part to play, using collective agreements as a vehicle. Thus, in France for example, collective agreements provide for special leave for parents whose children fall ill.

These few examples show that something is being done, but it can hardly be called a systematic policy, neither in the Member States nor in structural Fund interventions.

Currently, the structural Funds (i.e. ESF and ERDF) are the sole source of Community funding for childcare services. Structural Fund assistance for childcare facilities is presented as an openly accessible facility, but in practice, it tends to be used very patchily and very warily by project promoters and managers.

The rigidity of the eligibility criteria was mentioned by a number of training project promoters as an obstacle to the use of Community funds for the improvement of childcare structures, in that only the operating costs of childcare facilities attached to training centres were eligible, and ERDF funds for childcare infrastructure attached to training centres were only eligible in objective 1 regions under the NOW initiative. The fact is that the lack of infrastructure is widespread and capital costs and rents cannot be cofinanced. It is also evident that requiring the childcare facility to be attached to the training centre does not always meet the needs of parents who prefer a service near the family home.

Currently, childcare measures being taken in the Member States are aimed primarily at eliminating a source of conflict between employers and their female workers and to prevent parents being absent from work where their children are ill or during school holidays.

There can be no doubt that the growing pressure of female labour on the job market will add to the demand for childcare services. The role of employers and trade unions will probably become more important here, and the resultant needs will clearly have to be met in part from private funds and in part from the public purse.

There may be a case for encouraging the creation of childcare services by women themselves, under a cofinancing scheme for encouraging self-employed activity and the creation of small businesses by women.

Another important aspect which receives little attention at the moment is the lack of childcare services outside school hours. The childcare problem is, after all, not restricted to small children; older children too need looking after. Apart from Denmark, Belgium and France, where children can stay at school all day from the age of three on, children are in most cases only looked after for part of the day, and these times may vary. In some Member States, there is very little in the way of childcare for children between three and six years of age. Not all national school systems make provision for school meals at lunchtime. Most systems require homework to be done after school, and little provision is made for looking after children during the school holidays.

Limiting childcare problems to small children does not meet parents' needs. If we are serious about helping women to reconcile work and family life, we need special initiatives for children from birth to the age of 12.

The ESF can take the lead and act as a catalyst in developing childcare services. The NOW initiative has brought out the shortcomings and encouraged initiatives in the field, with special reference to objective 1 regions. The important thing now is to assess the impact of initiatives taken under NOW on the full range of structural Fund interventions.

### **3. COMMUNITY LEVEL**

#### **3.1. GENERAL BACKGROUND**

The programming system born of the reform of the structural Funds has, in a way, "institutionalised" the fact that the female dimension has to be taken into account in ESF operations. The Member States are required to go through a programming procedure which includes analysis, planning, selecting priorities and medium-term strategies in a subject which is not a major political priority, i.e. equality of access to employment, vocational training and measures to combat unemployment.

However, the marginal and limited status of women - seen only as one of the disadvantaged population groups - and the low profile of women in the CSFs and the OPs mean that certain reservations are in order.

More than half of the population of the European Community are women. From a purely statistical point of view, they cannot then be regarded as a minority. Nor do they constitute a social class which is concentrated at a particular level on the socio-economic ladder. It is a fact, though, that women suffer discrimination due to their being women, on the labour market, in access to employment and in access to training.

Thanks to the various equal treatment directives, direct discrimination is now disappearing, but indirect discrimination remains. The status of women on the labour market is not dictated solely by economic and/or social factors, but also by cultural factors and general social attitudes. The absence of childcare facilities, policies which work in favour of keeping women at home, constitute barriers to occupational integration. The development of atypical forms of employment has been facilitated since 1975 by all governments, who have tended to see such facilities as a means of combating unemployment and of helping firms acquire a flexible labour force. Women have gone in en masse for such forms of employment, a move which has exacerbated the tendency to use female labour as a reserve labour force and has tended to equate women's work with a lowly status and women's pay with pin money.

The female labour force is also more prone to unemployment, given that women tend to occupy the more insecure jobs and the lower qualified posts which are more sensitive to technological change.

Female employment thus covers a number of aspects which go beyond the sphere of ESF operations and require measures over and above those provided for in the current ESF guidelines for women.

- The female dimension is totally absent from objectives 2 and 5b.
- In objectives 3 and 4 and in the human resources priorities in objective 1, the female dimension is catered for only in specific measures.
- The approach to female employment (as a disadvantaged category) advocated in the CSFs is not conducive to a more integrated and more global strategy aimed at the elimination of indirect discrimination and the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities. This approach contradicts the policy of mainstreaming advocated in the third Community medium-term programme on equal opportunities.

- The fact that specific measures are kept on the sidelines, so to speak, of the overall programming process is not a help in boosting the impact of such operations on the full range of employment-promoting measures, nor does it encourage a more widespread use in the OPs.

The NOW initiative should make it possible to build a bridge between ESF assistance for women and the third equal opportunities programme, with a view to stimulating the integration of the equal opportunities principle into all structural measures. Possible points of synergy between ESF cofinanced activities, the Community's policy on equal opportunities and the NOW programme will be looked at in chapter 5. We shall concentrate here on ESF cofinanced activities.

### **3.2. ESF OBJECTIVES AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The reform of the structural Funds showed that the remit of the ESF is first and foremost a social one in the interests of population groups which are most threatened with exclusion, by way of two main objectives: combating long-term unemployment (objective 3) and the occupational integration of young people (objective 4). In objective 1 regions, the ESF has a wider remit in terms of maximising human resources.

Under objectives 2 and 5b, ESF involvement takes the form of (training) projects featuring in ERDF and EAGGF priority intervention areas.

The target groups eligible for assistance under objective 3 are the long-term unemployed, and in objective 4, young people looking for their first job. Under the human resources aspect of objective 1, the ESF also works for young people in education and apprenticeship systems and for people in paid employment.

Currently, female target groups are regarded as disadvantaged categories under objectives 3 and 4 and under the "human resources" banner in objective 1. There are no specific measures set aside for women in objectives 2 and 5b.

The priorities laid down for ESF operations for women are the sectoral diversification of women's employment and the occupational integration of women who have remained outside the working environment for family reasons (i.e. women returners).

Integrating the equal opportunities principle as an operational objective into ESF operations means extending the priorities and target groups at both Community and national level. It might be helpful to take a look at a few examples of this.

#### **3.2.1. STATISTICAL PRACTICE**

The nature of the labour market and the structure of employment have changed so much that simple concepts of employment, unemployment, etc. are no longer adequate indicators of a real world which has become more and more complex, particularly as far as the female population is concerned.

The precise figure for what we might term the reserve labour force, or rather the number of people involuntarily out of paid work, is undoubtedly much higher than

the unemployment figures would seem to indicate, particularly if we include people who are presently under-employed.

The statistical techniques used in evaluating unemployment need to be redefined to give a more realistic picture of the involuntarily inactive female population.

### **3.2.2. LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT**

The concept of long-term unemployment, as used in the Community as an eligibility criterion, includes only people who are officially registered unemployed or treated as such (e.g. women returners in certain Member States) and leaves out of consideration a substantial proportion of the adult jobseeking female population who have had no stable occupational activity in the past. Moreover, the consecutive 12-month period of unemployment used at Community level to define long-term unemployment is regarded by a large number of experts as too long to be an accurate reflection of exclusion and marginalisation phenomena (cf. the definition of long-term unemployment used in Denmark).

Taking a look at the ESF remit, which we have defined as combating exclusion, there is perhaps a case to be made for a shift from the current concept of "long-term unemployment" (i.e. based on administrative criteria) to a concept of "potential labour experiencing difficulties in occupational integration", which is more flexible and is capable of adapting to national and regional realities. Occupational integration, which is currently the priority objective for the under-25s, should also be introduced as an operational objective for the jobless adult population groups.

### **3.2.3. REMODELING OBJECTIVES 3 AND 4 AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Evaluation studies carried out on the way the reform of the structural Funds has been implemented sometimes refer to doing away with the distinction between the over-25s (objective 3) and the under-25s (objective 4), seen as an artificial barrier without any real basis in fact.

As far as women are concerned, though, we might reasonably claim that there are profound differences between the two population groups, and that there is every justification for giving priority to specific measures aimed at women who are over 25.

The disparity between age classes is much more marked for women than for men and can be explained by the fact that women aged between 25 and 49 have to cope with the problem of reconciling work and family responsibilities.

Whether we are talking about women seeking to re-enter the labour market after a long career break for family reasons, the long-term unemployed (and, as we know, long-term unemployment is more prevalent among women than men except in the United Kingdom), or women coming from the "non-active" labour reserve, these adult females all suffer from an accumulation of handicaps compared with their male counterparts of the same generation:

- prolonged absence from the labour market, or in some cases total lack of experience of the labour market;

- obsolete or non-existent vocational qualifications;
- family responsibilities (the dominant “family model” of father going to work and mother staying at home).

These handicaps, which are of an economic, cultural and social nature, justify the provision of specific measures for this target group, combining training and accompanying measures.

The problems encountered by girls are first and foremost of an occupational integration nature, followed by school career guidance and the choice of training courses.

Of course, it is important to make provision for vocational training activities to remedy what may have been an inappropriate starting position, but priority must go, in our opinion, to positive measures aimed at diversifying vocational choice among girls, guidance at school to point them towards future-oriented courses, and activities directed at firms to persuade them to recruit girls.

### **3.2.4. DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE (OBJECTIVES 5B AND 1)**

We saw in the quantitative analysis of the participation of women in ESF cofinanced measures that the rate of female participation was low for objective 5b. The qualitative analysis of OPs in objective 1, for the agricultural and fishing sectors (cf. in particular the report for Ireland), likewise indicates a low rate of female participation in these sectors.

Of 9 million people employed in agriculture, 3 million are women with “helper” status (figures from COPA). These women are an indispensable element in the running of family farms, which still account for 90% of all farms in Europe.

In some of the southern Member States, the proportion of women working in agriculture is closer to 40% (COPA figures). These women will have an essential role to play in developing new socio-economic activities connected to farming, such as farm holidays, handicraft trades and the marketing of folk and cultural traditions.

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO DEVELOP VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE, PARTICULARLY IN THE LIGHT OF THE REFORM OF THE CAP.**

The substantial fund of know-how acquired by women in farmers’ trade unions in northern Europe could serve as a starting point for the development of accompanying measures:

- transport services;
- geographical spread of training supply or mobile training structures;
- childcare services at residential seminars;
- “stand-in” service to enable women on farms to find a replacement for the farm work so that they can take a training course.

Assistance in the creation of women's cooperatives should be reinforced, with particular reference to assuring the viability of such enterprises:

- market research;
- management training;
- access to finance.

### **3.2.5. COMPANY TRAINING ACTIVITIES**

Currently, skill training in companies and training in the use of new technologies are covered by objectives 1, 2 and 5b. They are not eligible under objectives 3 and 4 where they concern people who already have a job.

A qualitative analysis of the participation of women in ESF cofinanced activities would appear to show that women derive less benefit than men from this type of activity, e.g. in Denmark and Greece.

The female labour force is especially vulnerable to the negative consequences on jobs of the introduction of new technologies.

It is essential, then, to ensure that more women take part in this type of activity by making provision for upgrading activities, pre-training and confidence training for women themselves, as well as awareness-raising activities aimed at the occupational environment: employers, trade union delegates, works councils, trainers, etc. Equal opportunities advisers could assume responsibility for this awareness work in firms.

### **3.2.6. RECRUITMENT AID**

As analysis of women's participation in ESF cofinanced measures shows that women benefit less than men from this type of measure. On the other hand, the national reports for Greece and Portugal indicate that recruitment aid measures have not had any positive effect on the quality of women's jobs: it would seem that women are still being recruited to relatively unskilled jobs in traditionally female sectors. There is insufficient information from the other Member States to enable us to establish whether the Greek and Portuguese experience is a general one.

A number of Member States have used value-added recruitment aid to provide an incentive for employers to recruit women in trades in which they are under-represented. The additional cost is designed to cover the cost of providing the requisite sanitary installations and equipping the workplaces. This type of initiative may have some degree of interest, but we have no information on the real impact of such measures.

It is not enough just to say that we need to increase the number of female beneficiaries. What we first need to do is to analyse why women benefit less and what the impact of such recruitment aid measures is on employment for women.

### **3.2.7. TRAINING THE TRAINERS**

Currently, training measures aimed at trainers or instructors are eligible under objective 1.

Looked at from the point of view of equal opportunities, we ought to be extending eligibility to training programmes for trainers under the other objectives too, taking in training programmes for equal opportunities advisers.

The objective here would be twofold:

- to make trainers (both men and women) aware of the equal opportunities issue and to widen the training of equal opportunities advisers, which is at the moment almost always organised within the framework of specific measures (objectives 3 and 4);
- to train female trainers in traditionally male disciplines. It is important, if we really want to bring about sectoral diversification of female employment, to develop “models” to serve as a reference for trainees, both male and female.

### **3.3. RAISING THE PROFILE OF WOMEN IN CSFs AND OPs**

The qualitative and quantitative analysis of the participation of women in CSFs and OPs showed the analysis in respect of CSFs to be very cursory and the information in the OPs to be inadequate and not always reliable.

This unanimous finding calls for a move to improve the collection of statistics and for a more thoroughgoing analysis.

The important thing will be to decide what has to be done in the ex-ante and ex-post phases.

The low profile of women could be raised by adopting the following initiatives:

#### **3.3.1. INTRODUCING SPECIFIC INDICATORS IN THE SYSTEM FOR THE ONGOING OBSERVATION OF THE POTENTIAL LABOUR FORCE**

A move towards the ongoing observation of the potential female labour force should make it easier to define the female target groups and to improve the match between training supply and labour market trends.

The observation effort should also extend to the agricultural sector, self-employed activity and jobs in the public sector, and not be restricted to paid employment in industry and services.

The specific indicators should relate to:

- basic training, in terms of qualification levels and sectoral diversification;
- vocational qualifications and the match between qualification levels and jobs occupied;

- women's professional careers (less linear than male careers);
- atypical forms of employment, by economic sector;
- women's employment, by economic sector and by type of job occupied;
- women's unemployment by economic sector;
- women's vocational profiles sought by firms.

The ESF could take a lead here in working for the introduction of this type of indicator in the ongoing employment observation mechanisms at Community and national levels. Support could also be given in objective 1 regions via the technical assistance funds.

It might be a good idea to carry out an audit at Community level of existing observation systems and conduct a policy of circulating examples of sound practice.

### **3.3.2. SETTING UP A COMPUTERISED AND STANDARDISED DATA GATHERING SYSTEM**

This system should make it possible to construct a Community-level databank on ESF cofinanced measures. Work is currently in progress, although apparently fraught with difficulties.

The problem of the reliability of data that the Member States are asked to supply in the ex-ante phase is no closer to solution, particularly as far as the sex breakdown is concerned.

At present, the mass of data broken down by sex is inadequate and the national consultants are unanimous on calling for improved statistics on the participation of women in the ex-post phase.

The kind of data that need to be broken down by sex are:

- the number of female beneficiaries for each type of measure;
- the number of women per beneficiary category;
- the number of women at the various qualification levels at the start and on completion of training measures;
- the amount of funds earmarked for women in general measures;
- the amount of funds allocated to childcare measures and the breakdown by type of operation (e.g. payment of an allowance or operating costs for childcare facilities);
- a comparison between male and female recruitment rates;
- a breakdown of the number of jobs created for each type of measure (e.g. recruitment aid, general training scheme, specific training scheme) and the ratio of women to men of those deriving benefit from such job creation activities;

- the sector of activity and the nature and level of jobs obtained by women on completion of training schemes;
- the match between the job obtained and the level of qualification acquired on completion of a training scheme.

Management of the current Community-level databank could be improved to make it more operational and to facilitate access to the information it contains.

### **3.3.3. INITIATING QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE EX-POST EVALUATIONS**

Given the complexity of the above data, an ex-post evaluation of this type would, for the time being, appear to be feasible only at individual “scheme” level, on the basis of a sample system. The breakdown by sex of this type of information can only be integrated into a databank once the computerised system has reached maturity at both Community and national level.

If we want to find out the real impact of measures on the situation of women, we have to analyse the rate of recruitment and the number of jobs newly created in the long term (and not on completion of training schemes, as is the case at present). This will require a monitoring system.

Ex-post evaluation on a sample basis should thus relate to both the effort and the effect of training.

### **3.3.4. EVALUATING IN-HOUSE TRAINING**

There is insufficient information to enable us to evaluate the participation of women in vocational training measures carried out on firms’ initiative, i.e. outside the public training system. It is vital to have more information on the training effort put in by firms for women, particularly with regard to objectives 1, 2 and 5b.

### **3.3.5. ANALYSING THE SPECIAL SITUATION OF MIGRANT WOMEN**

Currently, migrant women are sometimes included under the heading “women” and sometimes as “migrants”, without any consideration being given to the possible interaction between discrimination based on sex and discrimination based on ethnic origin.

The figures available at Community level on the employment of female immigrants indicate that they have a high rate of economic activity but are concentrated in insecure jobs, which are often undeclared.

Generally speaking, it would seem that the occupational integration of migrant women is given only marginal consideration in terms of ESF operations, despite the fact that migrant women are the subject of certain specific measures.

### 3.4. CONCLUSION

As we pointed out earlier, the ESF has an essentially social remit, which has to be exercised within a regulated framework and which limits ESF operations in respect of equal opportunities to certain disadvantaged categories.

It would be possible, though, to boost the ESF's impact by making changes to the way the ESF is run. Although the ESF is first and foremost a financial instrument which is managed along administrative and financial lines, the reform of the structural Funds has served to highlight the "catalyst" role of the ESF. As far as equal opportunities are concerned, the ESF has an important dual role - symbolic and operational - which is exercised by the way it finances measures for women and for childcare facilities.

This role can be strengthened by making the management style more flexible and more differentiated from region to region, particularly as regards definition of target groups, priority interventions, eligible measures and rates of assistance.

Applying rigidly uniform rules tends to have a weakening effect. The ESF should be enabled to give much more support to measures for women in the southern Member States and in Ireland and to support only more targeted operations in the northern Member States.

The funds available under Article 1(2), covering 5% of the ESF's annual budget, have a strategic role to play in promoting equal opportunities in that they enable finance to be provided for innovative activities, studies and research, and guidance measures for the long-term unemployed. We have insufficient information to enable us to measure the impact of how these funds are being used, but they do represent an important form of assistance which could be extended.

## ASSESSMENT, POINT 5

*Give an opinion on the relations between specific measures cofinanced by the ESF and Community programmes on employment and vocational training for women, with a view to bringing out points of synergy.*

*Give an opinion on the relations between NOW and specific and general measures under objectives 3, 4 and 1 with a view to identifying elements of complementarity.*



## ASSESSMENT, POINT 5

*Give an opinion on the relations between specific measures cofinanced by the ESF and Community programmes on employment and vocational training for women, with a view to bringing out points of synergy. Give an opinion on the relations between NOW and specific and general measures under objectives 3, 4 and 1 with a view to identifying elements of complementarity.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

For 30 years now, promoting equal opportunities between men and women has been a priority ESF concern, ranging from the first pilot projects up to the recent NOW initiative.

In the first instance, in the 1970s, the Commission funded a wide range of preparatory studies with a view to identifying the main problems encountered by women. From 1976, the Commission tended to accord priority funding to a restricted number of training measures, acting as pilot projects.

Since the 1977 reform, the ESF has been able to finance vocational training measures for women over the age of 25 who are unqualified or insufficiently qualified, who have lost their job or wish to return to work after a career break. A budget heading was set up to this effect.

Between 1984 and 1989, ESF priorities acquired a new element in favour of women, enabling the ESF to fund training-employment operations in sectors where women are under-represented or in traditionally male occupations.

Over and above the more targeted effort over recent years, it is important to intensify the exchange of experience between the more developed and the less developed regions. Thus, the Commission launched the NOW initiative on 18 December 1990 to stimulate transnational measures and to boost the synergy and complementarity effect between equal opportunities and training and employment policy.

The Commission has made it its objective to improve the coordination and synergy between ESF assistance and theme-related Community programmes, the aim being to enhance the consistency and boost the effectiveness of Community intervention.

In concrete terms, we have been asked to express an opinion on the points of synergy and complementarity between

- cofinanced measures as analysed by the national consultants,
- the Community programmes and networks run by DG V's Equal Opportunities Unit, and the NOW initiative.

The depth of analysis varies from one consultant to another.

It is important to remember that the evaluation exercise was carried out at the time the Community networks were being reorganised and before the NOW initiative OPs had been approved (i.e. between September and November 1991).

It would be interesting to carry out the same exercise again some time in the future, using better information and with the necessary critical distance, to enable a judgement to be made.

To facilitate the task of analysis, we shall take a separate look at the networks run by the Equal Opportunities Unit and the NOW programme.

## **2. THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE MEMBER STATES**

### **2.1. THE NETWORKS**

For the purposes of this evaluation exercise, it was agreed with the Commission and the national consultants that consideration would be given to possible points of synergy with the following networks:

- IRIS and the working party on vocational training for women
- Local employment initiatives (LEI)
- Childcare facilities and other measures for reconciling men's and women's professional and family responsibilities
- positive action in firms
- situation of women on the labour market

### **2.2. GENERAL REMARKS**

The general comment made by the national consultants is that the networks run by the Equal Opportunities Unit are having little impact at present on the general programming, management and evaluation system for ESF cofinanced operations.

The persons questioned in the national and/or regional administrations and in the various training agencies are often even unaware of the very existence of such networks.

The situation changes when we take a look at organisations responsible for women's issues and the management of specific measures. Nonetheless, the impact of the networks remains limited, apart from a few examples of good practice which will be discussed briefly and non-exhaustively in point 4 below.

Creating synergy is essentially a matter of personal relations and is not the result of a full-blown strategy, either in the Member States or at Community level.

#### **2.2.1. NATIONAL LEVEL**

The experts in the networks contacted by the national consultants are aware of this lack of synergy with ESF cofinanced activities, and of the limited impact of their work on the situation of women. They also underlined the lack of synergy and cooperation

between the various networks, pointing out that, because of the very limited resources made available to them, they could not disseminate information, nor take up personal contact, nor arrange inter-network cooperation. The experts deplored their isolated situation, but pointed out that neither the national nor the Community levels had expressed any desire to set up inter-network cooperative structures or strategy, nor similar arrangements between the networks and the ESF cofinanced activities. This type of cooperation did not feature, they maintained, in their initial remit.

As a result, then, there is no synergy at national level, apart from special cases. However, it is important to temper this somewhat negative impression by pointing out that the networks were in the process of being reorganised at the time the interviews were carried out and that the NOW programme (whose aim is precisely to initiate more dynamic interaction between Community policy and structural action for women) had had no visible effect as yet at grassroots level, apart from in a few Member States (see point 4 below).

### **2.2.2. COMMUNITY LEVEL**

We have already made the point that the ESF is a Community financial instrument. The reform of the Structural Funds replaced individual project funding by a scheme of Fund assistance programmes.

This new system requires a consistent approach in respect of Fund-financed employment and vocational training on the one hand and, on the other, the programmes run by the Equal Opportunities Unit, whose role is to design and give impetus to the Community's equal opportunities policy, draw up the medium-term action programme (now in its third edition) and obtain back-up from the networks of experts. The NOW initiative is currently the centrepiece of this new coherence strategy.

One point we can make is that, within the Equal Opportunities Unit, the networks appear to be run as separate entities and there appears to be no systematic quest for synergy.

This lack of consistency is felt at Member State level. The networks' experts interviewed by the national consultants are of the opinion that the impetus for setting up a synergy and coherence strategy should come from the Community. This will require structures, financial and human resources in the Member States, and a direct systematic collaborative effort at Community level. Working meetings should be held regularly to bring together the national members of the networks and the national agencies responsible for running specific measures for women.

The results of the research and the experience and know-how accumulated by the networks are neither circulated widely, nor are they put to any great use. They are known only by a limited number of experts, which tends to reduce still further the impact and visibility of the networks at national level.

It seems to us that, if it is to be really effective and consistent, the new strategy of synergy between ESF funding for women and Community theme-based programmes should also seek to reinforce points of synergy between the networks reporting to the Equal Opportunities Unit.

### **3. THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES NETWORKS**

We have already made the point that the Commission's Equal Opportunities Unit (DG V) runs a variety of networks, which were reorganised at the end of 1991.

Apart from the network of consultants on positive action in firms, the networks we have studied are continuing to operate.

At the beginning of 1992, the networks of independent experts operational in the field of equal opportunities covered the following subject areas:

- application of equal treatment directives
- situation of women on the labour market
- steering committee for equal opportunities in the media
- childcare and other measures designed to reconcile men's and women's professional and family responsibilities
- local employment initiatives
- women and the decision-making process (recently created, its first field of study will be politics)
- equal opportunities at school

The working party on vocational training and the IRIS network are not networks of experts and must be considered separately.

The working party brings together representatives of the Member States' central administrations, while IRIS is a network of training programmes.

#### **3.1. THE IRIS NETWORK**

IRIS was set up in December 1988 following the Commission Recommendation of 24 November 1987 of vocational training for women. IRIS does not fund projects but merely brings together in a network training programmes which centre on the specific training needs of women. It currently covers 333 such programmes, 40% of which receive ESF cofinancing. IRIS is primarily a network for information, exchange and promotion of vocational training for women. It is designed to lead in to a second phase centred on the evaluation and development of methodologies and material for training, and on the dissemination of good practice.

The Member States are involved in running the network via the working party on vocational training for women, which has two representatives from each Member State: one for the national training organisation, the other for the equal opportunities body.

The objectives of IRIS are: to create national and transnational linkages between the training programmes, by involving the social partners and the public authorities, and by promoting innovative vocational training schemes.

The main activities of IRIS are: dissemination of information, organisation of national and transnational seminars and of inter-programme exchange visits, provision of subsidies for presentations of model training programmes.

### **3.1.1. SYNERGY WITH ESF COFINANCED MEASURES**

There is a de facto synergy in that 40% of the measures covered by the IRIS network are in fact ESF cofinanced measures.

The importance of the IRIS network resides in the fact that it is a channel for extracting specific measures out of what may be a marginal situation. The networking of such specific measures is a vital element in boosting their public profile and stimulating the exchange of know-how between Member States. Inter-programme exchange visits are an effective basis for setting up collaborative linkage between training schemes.

In order to be included in the IRIS network, training schemes are put through a selection process. The criteria used for this purpose places the emphasis on the innovative nature of course content and methods, on the new technologies and on the sectoral diversification of women's employment, on accompanying measures, etc. To be incorporated into the IRIS network can be seen as being awarded a quality label.

The second phase of IRIS should produce an evaluation of training methodologies which are specially adapted to female target groups, and the dissemination of information on these methodologies. As we have seen, the qualitative evaluation of specific measures was not well developed under the current ESF system. IRIS might play a "quality control" role and be involved in evaluation and the dissemination of good practice.

Another task for the IRIS network is to involve employers and trade unions in the development of vocational training for women. We do not have the requisite instruments for measuring the impact of IRIS in the Member States on the social partners.

However, we have taken a look at the problem facing managers and promoters of specific measures of the acceptance by companies of new qualifications acquired by women. We have also mentioned the role which the unions might play in terms of promoting employment and the vocational training of women, more particularly by way of collective agreements. As a matter of principle, IRIS's role in promoting vocational training for women to the social partners thus meets a need which we encountered in the description of ESF cofinanced operations.

The final important aspect we would emphasise in respect of IRIS input to ESF cofinanced measures is in the potential role of the working party on vocational training for women in as much as this IRIS steering group, which meets twice a year, brings together representatives of the national vocational training organisations and representatives of the national equal opportunities bodies.

We do not have the information we need to assess the impact this group has had. What we can do, though, is to point out the restricted role played by the national

equal opportunities bodies in vocational training policy. The whole point of the working party is that it offers a forum for consultation and cooperation.

### **3.1.2. THE LIMITS OF SYNERGY BETWEEN IRIS AND ESF COFINANCED MEASURES**

The IRIS network catalogues vocational training measures for women organised for target groups which comprise 100% women or more than 50% women.

As we have seen, the majority of women are involved in general measures, and specific measures account for only a marginal proportion of ESF operations. Moreover, providing training for women by way of specific measures is not the recommended strategy in all the Member States, and the mainstreaming strategy advocated by the third equal opportunities action programme presupposes that know-how acquired in the course of specific measures is passed on to general training measures, and that the dissemination of good practice, innovative methodology or exchanges of know-how are not restricted to the kind of measures which tend to be frequented in the main by female target groups.

To ensure that a real element of synergy arises from ESF and IRIS activities, it would be interesting to work out in what way IRIS can contribute to the integration into general schemes of methodologies and content developed successfully under specific measures.

This presupposes that the measures listed in IRIS are subject to proper evaluation.

We have also stressed the need to make the transition from a “training” response to a “occupational integration itinerary” response and to change the balance of ESF funding in this respect.

It would be interesting to see how the “occupational integration” dimension is taken into account during the IRIS selection process and how this dimension will be treated in the IRIS evaluation phase.

### **3.1.3. THE ESF: A SOURCE OF FUNDING FOR MEMBERS OF THE IRIS NETWORK**

We have found that, in the Member States, small-scale promoters find it difficult to have access to cofinancing. The national consultants have stressed the frequently innovative value of projects run by promoters from voluntary organisations at local level and the demotivation they experience in the face of cumbersome financial arrangements and sheer red tape.

The report for Germany clearly shows the financial and administrative obstacles to access cofinancing for small-scale projects, particularly those presented by women’s associations. Small promoters tend to lack information on the way the ESF works in the Member States and are often at a disadvantage vis-à-vis national and regional administrations responsible for selecting projects.

IRIS might be a suitable information channel, providing support for grassroots projects and helping to facilitate access to cofinancing arrangements.

## **3.2. THE LEI NETWORK**

### **3.2.1. INTRODUCTION**

The network of LEI experts was set up in 1987 to complement the local employment initiatives for women programme, which grants start-up funds for the creation of businesses by women. The network supplies information and offers assistance and advice to women wishing to take up such grants.

The LEI target groups are disadvantaged women with major occupational integration problems, i.e. the long-term unemployed, migrants, lone-parent heads of household and the disabled.

There is thus de facto interaction between the activities of the LEI network and ESF operations aimed at the creation of self-employed jobs, and convergence of the target groups.

### **3.2.2. POSSIBLE SYNERGIES**

The main synergy potential is between LEI and specific measures aimed at the creation of small businesses by women. The LEI network might act as a contact point for a specific measure by giving concrete form to the occupational integration objective.

The Community financial support which is forthcoming from the system of grants reinforces the credibility of the project and facilitates access to a bank loan. However, the impact of LEI remains limited, given the restricted number of grants per year and the relatively low level of funding available.

The most promising advantage of the LEI network would appear to be to enable female applicants for business start-ups on conclusion of a training scheme to benefit from the support, advice and follow-up available from the network experts.

### **3.2.3. THE LIMITATIONS OF THE LEI NETWORK**

During the interviews, the network experts said how disappointed they were at the low level of funding available to enable them to carry out their support and follow-up mission, especially over the long term (long-term accompanying measures being particularly important in the case of disadvantaged target groups).

Currently, the network experts are used mainly in a fund management capacity and are not equipped with the resources to extend the guidance activity to the many applicants who fail to qualify for grants. Nor do they have the requisite resources to make sure that information is passed around to women, nor to influence regional and local development agents and authorities.

The main criteria to be applied to ensure the viability of projects run for disadvantaged female target groups are:

- the need to meet local needs, in both traditionally female and non-traditional sectors;
- the need to exploit female know-how to the full.

Looking for an innovative feature and giving priority to projects in traditionally male sectors are not valid criteria as far as this type of project is concerned. The fact is that extricating oneself from a dependent situation, taking charge of one's own career and finding one's niche on the labour market are innovative activities in themselves as far as marginalised female population groups are concerned.

The LEI criteria do not exactly match the priorities laid down for specific ESF cofinanced measures. It seems to us, though, that given the particular target groups, the criteria in force for LEI projects are more realistic and are better suited to the profile and to the needs of the female target groups.

#### **3.2.4. FUTURE PROSPECTS**

The local employment initiatives for women have made a fresh start. The LEI programme has acquired more budget resources, which will ensure that more women can obtain funding, and which will increase the individual sums available (in 1991, grants increased from ECU 1000 to ECU 1500 per job created, up to a ceiling of ECU 7500 per project). Part of the programme will be especially earmarked for the new German Länder.

The experts we interviewed stressed the need to ensure that grants were paid over more quickly and to simplify the paperwork which merely endorses the view advanced by a large number of promoters of ESF measures.

They also came out in favour of an IRIS-type networking procedure. Activities cofinanced by the ESF for the creation of businesses by women could join in this network, which would then be responsible for project monitoring and support. This counselling and guidance service might even be organised for projects which had failed to receive funding, but which might have been classed as a useful exercise by the network experts.

All this presupposes the availability of more resources for the experts and restructuring of their remit, which is currently geared primarily to funding management.

### **3.3. THE CHILDCARE NETWORK**

#### **3.3.1. INTRODUCTION**

This network's remit is to evaluate the information on childcare services in all the Member States, carry out awareness-raising activities and propose to the Commission a range of options in areas concerning the reconciliation of work and parental responsibilities.

The network has laid down its programme of work for 1992. It intends to pursue its examination of the way the structural Funds are used to set up childcare services and

the way such services are created in rural areas. A practical guide to the implementation of the Recommendation on childcare will be drawn up. Studies will be carried out on the situation in the Member States and the cost of childcare services. A database will be created so as to facilitate the dissemination of information in the Member States and the Community institutions.

A variety of publications are planned, more particularly a working document on the quality of childcare services. The network is also preparing a seminar on the way work and family responsibilities are reconciled in the Community and in the Scandinavian countries.

### **3.3.2. POSSIBLE SYNERGIES**

The role of the childcare network in terms of the way the female dimension is taken into account in ESF cofinanced activities needs no further comment, in that structural Fund aid (i.e. ERDF and ESF) is currently the sole source of Community finance for childcare measures.

The network's analysis work is thus concentrated on the way the Funds are used. It is important to make the point that the network has, under the NOW initiative, helped to draw up a guide on the possible forms of structural Fund intervention for childcare facilities. It would be helpful if something could be done to reinforce cooperation between the ESF and the network vis-à-vis this particular activity.

Apart from the analysis work, the network has set itself the task for 1992 of disseminating a range of information. We have already made mention on a number of occasions in our report of the general lack of information on the eligibility of childcare expenditure, the under-utilisation of this possibility, and the paucity of initiatives outside specific schemes and/or certain Member States (i.e. Denmark, the Netherlands and certain of the German Länder).

We have also pointed to the urgent need within the ESF system to conduct a public-awareness campaign on the possibility of cofinancing and the eligibility criteria. The information campaign on the sources of finance and how to access them must be aimed primarily at the promoters of specific and general measures, the managers of training centres, and the authorities responsible for the particular measures. This campaign could effectively be coordinated with the information campaigns run by the network.

The departments responsible for the ESF could also become more active in the dissemination of studies, booklets, etc. produced by the network via the usual consultation and partnership structures between the ESF and the Member States.

Under NOW in particular, the structural Funds will have a vital role to play in promoting childcare structures. It would make sense to involve the network experts in evaluating the impact of the structural Funds in NOW (as regards the childcare aspects).

### **3.3.3. FUTURE PROSPECTS**

In this report, we have highlighted the general lack of childcare infrastructure. We have also mentioned the limited impact of the structural Funds in this respect, given the restrictive eligibility criteria governing Fund operations.

In its earlier reports the network advocated the idea of a Community childcare programme.

Clearly, any such idea goes well beyond the structural Funds system and would require a very long time to become operational.

One possibility in the shorter term for making the ESF more effective in the childcare sphere might be to widen the eligibility criteria and, for instance, to admit the cofinancing of childcare services for children of school age, and the cofinancing of services which are not restricted to training centres, but which include skill record centres, placement services or short-stay facilities to enable mothers to actively look for work.

### **3.4. THE “SITUATION OF WOMEN ON THE LABOUR MARKET” NETWORK**

Created in 1983, this network seeks to analyse the obstacles, problems and challenges facing women in the field of employment in Europe.

The impact of this research on the process of programming ESF cofinanced specific measures is virtually zero. The network experts appear to have no contact with the organisations responsible for programming specific measures.

In Portugal, the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEPF) has commissioned a study from the network to pinpoint the priority areas for intervention in respect of training and jobs for women. This is the only instance of collaborative effort which the national consultants managed to come up with.

One possible source of synergy might be the creation of a consultation process on the choice of subjects for study, involving the ESF and the Equal Opportunities Unit.

### **3.5. THE “POSITIVE ACTION IN FIRMS” NETWORK**

This network of consultants, set up in 1984, instituted and monitored positive action in the twelve Member States, the aim of positive action in firms being to improve working conditions and the status of female workers. Such positive action can also have a “training” aspect.

The network has produced a practical handbook on the creation and management of positive action programmes in firms and training for women. This is based on the experience acquired by the network and presents the basic principles and the appropriate procedures for such measures. It summarises the tasks to be performed in the preparatory and management phases, and can serve as a guide for anyone wishing to establish positive action measures in firms. The ESF departments might usefully play a part in disseminating this guide via their consultation and partnership links with the Member States.

In our report, we have stressed the importance of positive action in firms. Given the current ESF operational rules, positive action might be encouraged, especially under objectives 1, 2 and 5b, for which the ESF can intervene in the interests of company employees.

Under objectives 3 and 4, positive action is important in encouraging the occupational integration of women on completion of training schemes, particularly in traditionally male occupations. The specific contribution of positive action is that it can influence the occupational environment, helping to change working conditions and people's general attitudes. It must not be designed solely with female workers in mind, but must include men as well as agents of change.

We also stressed in our report the importance of measures aimed at getting women promoted to management posts in companies, and the positive catalytic effect that this can have on the general situation of women. This type of positive action goes beyond the scope of the ESF and targets a different group entirely. It seems to us, nonetheless, that this is an important part of an overall strategy for promoting equal opportunities, which might be taken into account by the new network dealing with women and the decision-making process.

#### **4. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE**

Regrettably, there is insufficient information for us to produce an exhaustive analysis of current instances of good practice in the Member States.

We should like primarily to show the type of synergetic effect which can be achieved.

##### **4.1. IRIS IN FRANCE**

France was the first country to finance a national organisation and technical assistance structure for IRIS by enlarging the scope of RACINE, which already fulfilled this role for other Community programmes.

Since 1990, RACINE has played an active part in developing the IRIS network in France, which has 41 member programmes, including some cofinanced by the ESF. Meetings have been held to bring these programmes together around such common themes as occupational integration itineraries for women and new jobs accessible to women.

##### **4.2. THE LEI NETWORK IN GREECE**

The synergy we have found between ESF cofinanced specific measures and the LEI network is due to a great extent to the dynamism shown by the network coordinator, who is based in Greece.

We have already stressed the importance of developing self-employed activities for women in the southern Member States, where employment opportunities are limited, and we have also reported on the problems encountered by the Greek consultant in implementing specific measures aimed at the creation of women's cooperatives, one of the problems being cultural resistance.

The LEI network operates downstream of cofinanced measures and makes its know-how (and in some cases financial aid) available to women wishing to set up cooperatives.

In 1990, there were 349 applications for grants from women who had followed a course of training under one of the specific measures. 101 grants were made and 365 jobs created, in both traditional and non-traditional sectors.

An information centre for local employment initiatives for women is in place in Thessaloniki and has been operating since 1988. It is in contact with the Equal Opportunities Secretariat, and with the promoters of ESF cofinanced specific measures, but not with the administration responsible for specific-measure OPs.

### **4.3 INTER-NETWORK COOPERATION IN DENMARK**

In Denmark, cooperation at national level between the networks is encouraged. A report on the activities of all the networks is published annually and disseminated throughout the country.

This type of initiative might usefully be encouraged in all the Member States. It makes it possible to capitalise on and disseminate experience and know-how acquired by the networks, and constitutes a first step towards a synergy strategy. It is quite conceivable that this type of publication might include a report on ESF cofinanced measures. Comparing experience on paper would bring out the various consistencies and inconsistencies and would give a single picture in each Member State of the sum total of Community work in the equal opportunities field.

## **5. THE NOW (NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN) INITIATIVE**

### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

The NOW initiative is an integral part of the Third Equal Opportunities Action Programme (1991-95), despite being a structural Fund cofinanced operation (involving the ESF and, to a lesser extent, the ERDF) and subject to structural Fund operational rules, eligibility criteria and intervention procedures.

NOW has spawned Operational Programmes in the Member States which are designed to be complementary to the CSFs.

NOW was launched in December 1990 to cover the period 1991-93, although the OP preparation and programming phase was not completed until the end of 1991.

Apart from France, where the programme got underway at the beginning of November 1991, the national consultants have not yet been able to make a very detailed analysis of points of complementarity between ESF measures and NOW.

The analysis centred, then, on the anticipated points of complementarity, by reference to the NOW objectives and target groups, and on the NOW preparatory phase, rather than on an analysis of actual measures.

## **5.2. FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

NOW has a budget of ECU 120 million covering a period of three years. This is a considerable amount of money in absolute terms, but is relatively limited if we look at the number of beneficiary projects. Despite the limitations, the very short deadlines, the wide range of objectives and the complexity of operations (particularly the transnational partnerships) NOW has aroused a great deal of interest among the Member States and had a motivating effect on national administrations.

From the point of view of project promoters and potential operators, NOW has created an enormous demand, and the number of projects presented to the national administrations far outstrips the level of funding available.

Generally speaking, it would seem that the NOW OPs provide for project selection criteria which stress the qualitative aspect. Prominence is given in the OPs to measures which have not received much attention hitherto, i.e. mainly guidance, counselling and pre-training measures, along with downstream operations (e.g. job search techniques) integrated fully into a training and occupational integration "itinerary".

Complementary activities such as the creation of crèches, the financing of childcare costs and training for childcare staff are included as accompanying measures for training schemes.

Because of budgetary constraints, the role of NOW is that of a catalyst for the development of national policies for the integration of women.

Its impact on national policies will be evaluated on an ongoing basis, with special reference to objective 1 regions. This will enable the Commission to decide on the basic elements for a possible subsequent reorientation of ESF priorities for women.

## **5.3. THE OBJECTIVES UNDERLYING THE COMMUNITY'S HUMAN RESOURCES INITIATIVES**

The operational objectives of the NOW, Euroform and Horizon initiatives are consistency and synergy with (a) ESF cofinanced measures and (b) theme-related Community programmes.

They may be summarised as follows:

- to promote only measures of a transnational nature;
- to promote activities of a model and innovative nature, capable of having a multiplier effect on other ESF cofinanced measures;
- to supplement CSFs and to take into consideration those aspects which are insufficiently or imperfectly covered in the CSFs;
- to reinforce Community action programmes and to make for better coordination and greater effectiveness of Community measures.

These are very ambitious objectives and fully justify the substantial resources which

have been set aside, such as technical assistance facilities. In analysing the specific measures, we were able to identify the implementation problems, hence the importance of technical assistance, particularly in objective 1 regions.

A special information effort has been made in the preparatory and implementation phases, both at Commission level and in the Member States. For instance, a NOW launch seminar took place on the initiative of the Commission in January 1991 and was the subject of a widely-circulated report. An information pamphlet on NOW has been produced, along with a guide presenting the three initiatives: NOW, Euroform and Horizon. A supplement to this guide has been produced by the childcare network in a bid to ensure better utilisation of structural Fund potential for childcare services under NOW. The three Community initiatives are also reported on regularly in an information bulletin.

This significant PR effort (by way of seminars, an inventory of OPs and cofinanced projects under the Initiatives, publications, etc.) compares with the lack of information dissemination which we have highlighted on a number of occasions in this report.

Alongside this information drive, a special supportive effort has been devoted to objective 1 regions, with the Commission financing trips for experts to these regions to improve the information filtering through to potential promoters and to give them the tools they need to set up transnational projects.

With a view to guaranteeing the requisite coordination and consistency between ESF operations and programmes and networks run by the Equal Opportunities Unit from the very start of the NOW initiative, an interdepartmental coordination unit has been set up, bringing together the ESF geographical units, the Equal Opportunities Unit, DG XVI and DG XX.

This unit also works in close conjunction with the national coordinators.

#### **5.4. THE SUPPORT STRUCTURES**

Under NOW, the ESF provides 100% funding for national coordination structures to provide linkage between

- the national and Community levels;
- the operators and national administrations (for national coordination);
- the operators and administrations in the other Member States (for the coordination and monitoring of transnational partnerships).

National coordination can be helped by a support structure to provide such services as the requisite linkage with the local and regional levels and with activities in the field. The support structure can also be responsible for managing the "qualitative" aspects which, as we pointed out earlier, are not taken into account at present (particularly the female dimension).

The national coordinators appointed by the Member States operate as partners

within a Community network financed by the Commission. Four meetings of the NOW coordinators network took place in 1991. Coordinator networking is particularly important for making sure that information is circulated and transnational partnerships are implemented and monitored.

These national coordination structures, the networking arrangement and the support structures are an effective response to the need for linkage between the various levels of responsibility, a need which became apparent in the analysis exercise conducted by the national consultants.

Given the novel nature and the relative complexity of the three new initiatives (NOW, Euroform and Horizon), the Commission has set up a technical assistance bureau to provide the necessary logistical back-up for the initiatives, more particularly by way of a databank and a project monitoring system.

## **5.5. NOW ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

Under NOW, Community intervention will be concentrated on measures of an innovative nature with multiplier effect potential, given the need to utilise specific measures as pilot projects, a point which we have stressed in this report.

The target groups for NOW are the same as for ESF cofinanced specific measures, i.e. LTU women and women returners.

Eligible measures cover a variety of priorities:

- The reintegration of women into the labour market and moves to combat any worsening of the kind of insecurity and exclusion phenomena which currently characterise women's employment.
- Guidance and counselling measures for LTU women or women wishing to return to work after a prolonged career break. Vocational training measures, including pre-training, and employment aid for these categories and for unemployed women and women in insecure employment in objective 1, 2 and 5b regions.
- The upgrading and promotion of women's qualifications, changes to the business culture to enable women to set up their own businesses or cooperatives. We have found in this evaluation that these measures are not sufficiently covered in schemes carried out in 1990.

Such measures include training modules at all stages of the businesses' development, financial support measures for the creation of self-employed activities, and start-up aid for information services to facilitate the creation of craft activities or small businesses. These information services will be financed by the ERDF for objective 1 regions only.

- Highly important complementary measures directly linked to the above measures:

A first series of measures concerns the creation of crèches (funded by the ERDF for objective 1 regions), the operational costs of such crèches and the training of workers in the childcare sector. The stress here is on the creation of crèches in conjunction with vocational training centres or industrial enterprise zones.

A second series of measures covers support structures (e.g. networks and transnational partnerships) and all technical assistance measures.

NOW gives priority status to “accompanying” measures (e.g. guidance, counselling, etc.) and employment access measures.

NOW focuses on the creation of small businesses and cooperatives by women, the occupational reintegration of women, and the development of childcare structures.

NOW also gives priority status to measures decided on jointly by the social partners and the vocational training organisations.

The NOW priorities thus respond positively to the shortcomings we have noted in this evaluation, confirming the positive response to the principle of complementarity between NOW and ESF operations.

## **5.6. NOW AND THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES NETWORKS**

Under the preparatory and programming phase, a system of cooperation has been developed in the Member States and at Community level between organisations responsible for running specific schemes, organisations responsible for equal opportunities, and the equal opportunities network experts.

It has to be said that, in certain Member States (e.g. Portugal) the same person is responsible for specific measures, NOW, and the LEI and IRIS networks. This situation has been encouraged by the ESF, which explicitly invited the Member States to appoint national coordinators from among people particularly competent in the field of employment and vocational training for women. Obviously, the idea here was to achieve some degree of synergy between NOW, ESF activities and the equal opportunities programmes and networks.

Another point is that NOW is at the “confluence” of structural measures for women and equal opportunities programmes: NOW is one of the main components of the Third Equal Opportunities Programme, and will be implemented in conjunction with the Community’s IRIS, LEI and childcare networks. The Commission has laid great store by the fact that representatives of these networks should be involved in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of NOW in the Member States.

The experience and know-how acquired within the IRIS and LEI networks have greatly facilitated the programming of NOW OPs. The IRIS contribution has been particularly important, e.g. in setting up transnational partnerships. The childcare network has also played a part in a range of projects.

NOW offered the opportunity, in the phase prior to the creation of OPs, to carry out a detailed analysis of the situation of women on the job market, something which was lacking in the CSFs. This opportunity has been particularly well used, e.g. in France. In Portugal, studies have been commissioned from the network of experts dealing with the situation of women on the labour market.

## 5.7. CONCLUSION

The aim of NOW should then be to supplement the work of the structural Funds (i.e. ESF and ERDF) in respect of women's employment. NOW is perfectly consistent with ESF specific measures designed exclusively for women.

The original feature of NOW is that its transnational partnership structure should facilitate the transfer of know-how to objective 1 regions, where very few specific measures are in place at present.

NOW should also facilitate the emergence of truly innovative measures targeted at full-scale occupational integration (or reintegration) itineraries, and not just at vocational training per se.

NOW is based on experience acquired in specific measures cofinanced by the ESF since 1978, and on the work of the equal opportunities networks.

NOW can only become fully effective, though, if the kind of dynamism which goes into this new Community initiative is passed on to the general measures cofinanced by the ESF, and to the measures designed at national level to promote equal access to training and employment for women.



## **ASSESSMENT, POINT 6**

*Make suggestions and recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the CSFs and the OPs with regard to the programming and implementation of measures for the employment and vocational training of women*



## **ASSESSMENT, POINT 6**

*Make suggestions and recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the CCFs and the OPs with regard to the programming and implementation of measures for the employment and vocational training of women*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

We shall not give exhaustive coverage here to suggestions and recommendations we have made earlier in the text.

The specific question we have to tackle is the way the female dimension is taken into account in the CSFs and the OPs in the process of programming and implementing ESF cofinanced activities.

The NOW initiative constitutes a first "experimental" response to this question, whose effects cannot as yet be measured, but which cuts across the critical points brought out by the national consultants.

The diagnosis made by this study is, given the tight deadline and the lack of evaluation tools, just a first step, which will have to be explored further and refined. This is why we would prefer to suggest certain avenues which should be explored, rather than to make recommendations.

### **2. GENERAL BACKGROUND**

Since the CSFs and OPs were drawn up, the economic and social situation in the Member States has changed dramatically:

Unemployment is once again on the increase in the Community (+ 11% between November 1990 and November 1991) and is now affecting economic sectors which used to be regarded as those to which the future belonged, e.g. computers and the services sectors, which employ a large proportion of the female labour force.

We are now facing an odd kind of unemployment situation with, on the one hand, a hard core of long-term jobseekers and, on the other, a shortage of skilled labour.

Vocational profiles are changing rapidly. To take one example, in the United Kingdom, new types of qualification have been introduced in the vocational training system (National Vocational Qualifications).

These examples serve to show that it is essential to make provision for adaptation mechanism in the OPs and for ways of modulating intervention mechanisms. It is difficult, for instance, to meet forecasts for the creation of stable jobs in an area hard hit by a wave of mass redundancies. It is also difficult to establish which traditionally male sectors should be opened up to women when we see white collar workers from the industrial sectors at the head of the dole queue.

It would be unrealistic to devise strategies for taking more account of the female dimension by extrapolating from the general context. The fact is that promoting

employment for women is not a major priority and will become increasingly difficult to achieve in a depressed economic context. However, the foreseeable impact of the declining birth rate on labour supply, coupled with the shortage of skilled labour, gives women an important opportunity which has to be taken into account in programming ESF activities on their behalf.

### **3. IMPROVING THE WAY THE FEMALE DIMENSION IS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE CSFs AND THE OPs**

- 3.1.** The first step must be to cease regarding women as a disadvantaged category and to integrate the equal opportunities objective into the full range of ESF operations.

This means extending the scope of specific measures under objectives 1, 2 and 5.

- 3.2.** There is a clause in the CSFs referring to the Community legal framework guaranteeing equal treatment in access to employment and vocational training. This clause might serve as a basis for a systematic scrutiny of direct and indirect discrimination in the Member States in respect of access to employment and to vocational training.

- 3.3.** The statistical practices used in the Member States for counting the number of unemployed should be reviewed to give a clearer picture of women's unemployment, to take account of the "latent" female labour force and of the number of people who are under-employed.

Taking account only of the registered unemployed for objective 3 rules out a substantial number of women who are in fact looking for a job but who are statistically regarded as "non-active".

**OVER AND ABOVE THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM, IT IS IMPORTANT TO BEAR IN MIND THE PROBLEM OF THE MARGINALISATION AND ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION OF A LARGE NUMBER OF DISADVANTAGED WOMEN.**

- 3.4.** Since 1977, the ESF has been authorised, on the strength of a Council Decision, to intervene and finance training measures for women in occupations in which they are under-represented. Nonetheless, sectoral segregation remains an inescapable fact on the labour market.

The lack of sectoral diversification of women's employment and the feminisation of insecure and atypical forms of employment remain the two most worrying characteristics of the employment situation for women. It would be important to finance, under the technical assistance banner, research into these two subjects and to bring in the network of experts responsible for analysing the situation of women on the labour market.

The aim would be to look for new, modulated ways of intervening, differing from country to country and from region to region.

- 3.5.** The priorities laid down for specific measures should be defined less rigidly so as to take account of national and regional situations. The concept of "female returners",

for instance, does not reflect a significant target group in all of the Member States. The lack of sectoral diversification in employment for women can only be solved over the very long term as it is dictated as much by cultural factors as by economic and social considerations.

**IT IS IMPORTANT IN THE MEDIUM TERM TO WORK TOWARDS THE AIM OF PROMOTING FEMALE EMPLOYMENT IN ALL FUTURE-ORIENTED SECTORS, WHETHER TRADITIONALLY MALE OR TRADITIONALLY FEMALE.**

Specific measures should be established primarily for adult females, with the objectives being extended and defined as follows:

- integration or reintegration of female adults on the labour market,
- mobility of economically active women towards more future-oriented sectors,
- improved working conditions and career prospects in all sectors,
- transition from insecure employment to stable employment.

**3.6.** Recent studies indicate that women continue to reconcile work and family responsibilities to the detriment of work.

It is important to encourage and extend the use of the structural Funds for measures promoting the reconciliation of the two aspects: ERDF funds for the construction of childcare services - eligibility of childcare services operating costs and the cost of childcare services by the ESF.

The cofinancing of childcare facilities must be encouraged in both specific and general measures, in training schemes, and in measures relating to job search and recruitment. We have to go beyond the idea of crèches for small children and also provide cofinancing for childcare services outside school hours. Use of the structural Funds for childcare services is a form of intervention which is not well enough known and under-utilised. It must be highlighted in the OPs and be given much more publicity.

**3.7.** Using the training option as a response to the long-term unemployment issue has been institutionalised by the massive funding effort on the part of the ESF and the Member States. We need to move on from this to the idea of a "individual integration itinerary" and to extend the eligibility conditions to include upstream accompanying measures (e.g. guidance and counselling, individual assessments, pre-training, confidence training, etc.) and downstream measures (job search workshops, monitoring activities and supportive efforts in firms, etc).

**3.8.** The transversal integration of the principle of equal opportunities in the CSF and OP system will require the presence of a "resource person" responsible for taking charge of the female dimension in the formulation of plans at national level, in consultation with the Community level, in the monitoring committees and in the full range of partnership structures.

This person will also be required to liaise with the Community, national and regional organisations responsible for equal opportunities. He/she must be sufficiently

empowered to influence all the programming processes and not just the programming of specific measures. Finally, he/she must have access to the requisite financial and human resources.

**3.9.** To improve implementation of the additionality principle and to enhance the “catalyst” role of the ESF in respect of women’s employment and vocational training, ESF funding should be available, in terms of specific schemes, only for genuinely model and innovative activities in the northern Member States. On the other hand, in objective 1 regions, intervention rates might be boosted to ensure that measures for women, which have an important symbolic role, are also effective in practice.

**3.10.** The sectoral segregation of the labour market and the lack of qualifications on the part of the female labour force must be combated by preventive as well as curative strategies, i.e. at school, and not just later in life. The current situation is that guidance and vocational training activities for girls in education are eligible for funding only under objective 1. We should be developing positive action in schools throughout the Community so as to have an early effect on the attitudes of girls, their parents, teachers, etc. and to act on teaching structures and methods, particularly vocational and technical teaching. These are all tasks which might be taken over by the Human Resources Task Force and the Equal Opportunities Unit.

#### **4. IMPROVING THE WAY THE FEMALE DIMENSION IS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE PROGRAMMING AND IMPLEMENTION OF MEASURES**

##### **4.1. INVOLVING THE LOCAL PARTNERS**

Efforts to provide training for women in sectors in which they are under-represented, along with attempts to improve the skill level of the female labour force, only have a chance of genuinely improving the occupational integration of women if they are combined with measures addressing the work environment in general: trade unions, employers, and the full range of actors on the local development scene.

It would be sensible to involve local economic operators, unions, employers, etc. right from the initial programming stage. This would make it possible to bear in mind the real labour needs at local level and would make it easier to assess the real chances of occupational integration for women and to adapt the measures accordingly. It would also make it possible to alert the economic environment to the need for equal opportunities and to gain business acceptance of the new career profiles acquired by women.

At the same time, we should be developing positive action in industry and making provision for the eligibility of accompanying measures. A long-term monitoring system for the integration of women into non-traditional jobs should also be put in place. This would make it possible to provide support for women and to measure the impact of training measures and/or individual occupational integration itineraries on jobs for women.

We should also be encouraging the trade unions to include in collective agreements anti-discriminatory clauses and/or clauses providing for positive discrimination with a view to introducing the equal opportunities principle into working conditions.

## **4.2. UPGRADING SPECIFIC OPERATIONS**

Of the sum total of ESF assistance, specific measures account for only a marginal number of the beneficiaries.

They do, however, act as a model, i.e. as a catalyst for the gradual integration of equal opportunities throughout ESF interventions.

The specific measures must be used and managed as model or pilot activities. This means reintroducing into specific measures the individual project management approach, given that project level seems to be the appropriate ad hoc level for developing and upgrading innovative methods.

Put in concrete terms, this means:

- networking such activities, making use of the experience and accumulated know-how of IRIS;
- setting up selection methods based on qualitative considerations and enhancing compliance with the principle of additionality in the northern Member States; modulating selection criteria and the choice of target groups and priorities as a function of the special situation of women from region to region; taking account of the overall socio-economic context and of cultural factors and prevailing attitudes;
- encouraging the emergence of innovative experiments by helping them to clear the various administrative and financial barriers; this will require the circulation of information on operating rules and ESF eligibility criteria via the national organisations responsible for equal opportunities; the simplification of procedures and the shortening of payment periods;
- inviting the Member States to adopt this new selection practice.

Specific measures should be subject to ad hoc evaluation and monitoring, taking into account the quality aspects and leading to the drawing-up and dissemination of codes of good practice.

## **4.3. TRANSFERRING EXPERIENCE AND KNOW-HOW FROM SPECIFIC MEASURES TO GENERAL MEASURES**

By using specific measures as model activities, i.e. as pilot projects capable of generating grassroots training methods and vocational integration tools which are better adapted to the specific needs of women, it should be possible to achieve an impact and a multiplier effect on the full range of ESF cofinanced activities.

To do so, we have to :

- Remove the specific measures system from its current marginal situation and give the widest possible circulation to information on the methods and content of training, with special reference to accompanying measures and childcare services.

This information campaign should be directed at the national administrations responsible for employment and vocational training, the ESF representatives at national and regional levels, the local economic operators, businesses and the social partners.

- Find effective strategies for transferring the accumulated experience and know-how from specific measures to the general system of measures for vocational training and employment aid; it would be useful here to analyse and compare current practices in the Member States and to circulate specific examples of effective strategies.
- Invite the national and/or regional organisations responsible for the selection of measures to introduce the concept of equal opportunities into the selection criteria.

For example:

- give priority to measures with set quotas of female beneficiaries,
- give priority to measures which provide for childcare facilities,
- give priority to measures undertaking to recruit female trainers,
- penalise measures which use discriminatory practices and methods (either direct or indirect).

This will require the dissemination of codes of good practice, as well as an information campaign targeted at organisations responsible for the selection of measures, potential promoters, etc. on what is meant by equal treatment, equal opportunities, direct and indirect discrimination and positive discrimination.

#### **4.4. UPGRADING WOMEN'S KNOW-HOW**

All too often, we tend to highlight the “handicaps” and “shortcomings” of the female labour force and forget to mention traditional female know-how. Obviously, the prime consideration must be to bring out the specific needs of women and to find the appropriate responses. It is also important, though, to upgrade the potential female labour force as a “resource”. By making a more positive and more dynamic presentation of the role of women on the labour market, we could have a positive effect on women themselves and on their occupational environment.

#### **5. CONCLUSIONS**

The programming system born of the reform of the structural Funds can help to improve the way the female dimension is taken into account in ESF operations. The Member States are required to make an effort to programme (i.e. analyse), plan and choose priorities and strategies in the medium term in a subject area - women's employment - which has not hitherto been a major political priority.

However, the limited status reserved for women - among the disadvantaged categories only - in the programming effort, and the low profile of women in the OPs are not conducive to integrating the equal opportunities principle into national employment policies.

Redirecting ESF operations for women towards a policy of mainstreaming and of integrating the female dimension into the overall planning process is necessary, but so is the need to reinforce the use of specific measures.

The situation of women on the labour market is not determined solely by economic factors, but is also a matter of attitudes: although working women have become an acknowledged element in the labour force, people still tend to think of women in terms of their family (i.e. motherly) role.

The rate of female employment in the European Community is below that of the United States of the Scandinavian countries. Pay for women is still regarded as pin money and the female labour force as a strategic reserve.

In a bid to change attitudes, any policy working towards women's employment must be based on public-opinion campaigns and provide for the cofinancing of positive action in firms. The principles of equal treatment and equal opportunities, and the concept of positive action, should be introduced into collective agreements.

The absence of appropriate structures, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, for childcare arrangements, and the absence of shared family responsibilities play a major role in women's acceptance of part-time and atypical jobs, despite the insecure nature of such forms of employment.

The childcare problem can only be solved by way of the measures currently provided for under the structural action banner. The Member States must be encouraged to set up development programmes for childcare structures, to involve the social partners, the non-commercial sector and the local authorities, and to strengthen the role of the structural Funds.

At its meeting on 7 November last, the Standing Committee on Employment, bringing together the Member States' Social Affairs Ministers and the European social partners, affirmed the need for active policies in favour of women's employment and came out clearly in favour of the development of childcare structures. The Committee recommended that the social partners and the public authorities cooperate with a view to finding solutions to the funding problems.

By the year 2000, the number of people leaving the labour market is expected to exceed the number of people prepared to return to it. The currently "latent" female labour force is a potential source of the skilled labour force shortfall. This is a golden opportunity for women and a challenge for European society.

The Community's structural action will play a catalytic role in enabling women to take advantage of this situation and will encourage the optimal utilisation of human resources in Europe.

Following the Maastricht Summit, the Commission and the Member States expressed in the protocol on economic and social cohesion their desire to see greater flexibility in the arrangements for the award of structural Funds resources and the desire for a modulation of the levels of the Community participation in programmes and projects in certain countries. They said it was their intention to make for greater flexibility in the way that structural Fund monies are awarded so as to take account of the specific needs which cannot be met under the current structural Fund arrangements.

They affirmed their intention to take more account of the ability of certain Member States to contribute to the own resources system.

Article 119 of the agreement between the Member States, apart from the United Kingdom, states (in paragraph 3) that the application of the principle of equal pay for male and female workers for equal work shall not prevent any Member State from maintaining or adopting measures providing for specific advantages in order to make it easier for women to pursue a vocational activity or to prevent or compensate for disadvantages in their professional careers.

This desire for greater flexibility in structural Fund applications and the reaffirmation of the principle of equal opportunities, including positive discrimination, should make it possible in the near future to strengthen the role of the ESF in promoting employment for women.

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# Eastern Europe and the USSR

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## THE CHALLENGE OF FREEDOM

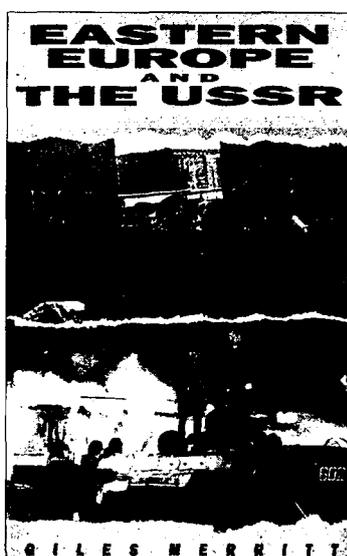
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GILES MERRITT

The sparks of unrest that leapt from Berlin in November 1989 to Moscow's Red Square in August 1991 are firing an explosion of political and economic change. Out of the ashes of Communism is emerging the shape of a vast new European market-place stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

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Community officials, politicians and industrial leaders, and analyses the factors that will determine whether the emerging market economies of Eastern Europe can truly be absorbed into a single European economy.

Immensely readable and often disturbing, this important book contains much up-to-date and hitherto unpublished information on such major East-West problem areas as energy, environmental control, immigration, trade relations, agriculture and investment. It also examines the arguments surrounding a 'Marshall Plan' for Eastern Europe that would emulate the famous US aid programme that helped relaunch the economies of Western Europe in the aftermath of World War II.

For anyone concerned about the future of Eastern Europe and the USSR, whether from a political, social or economic standpoint, this book is essential reading.

# Bulletin of the European Communities

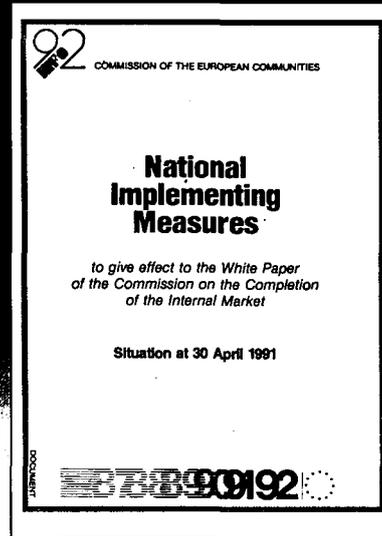
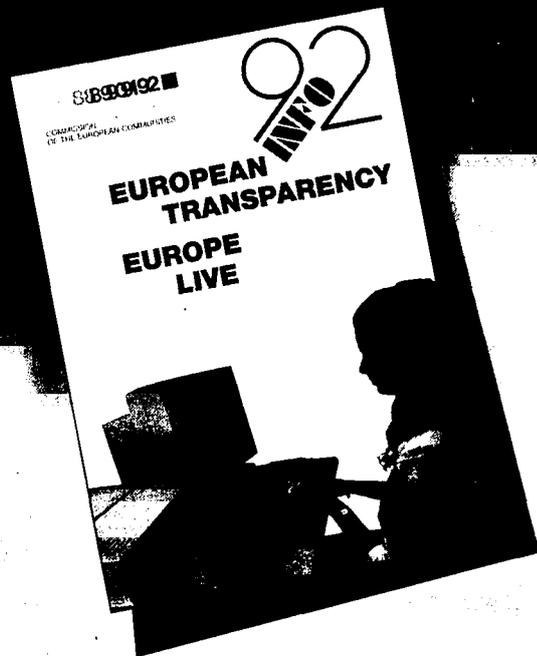
The *Bulletin of the European Communities*, which is issued 10 times a year (monthly, except for the January/February and July/August double issues), is an official reference publication covering all spheres of Community activity.

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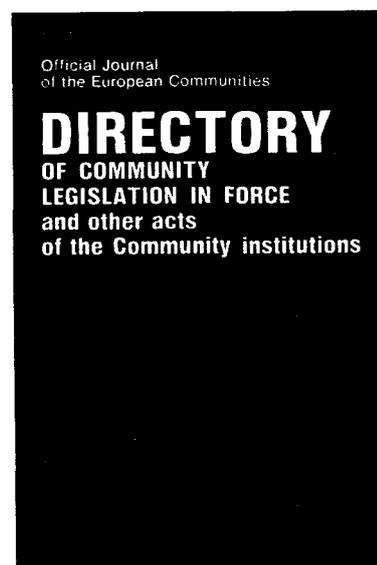
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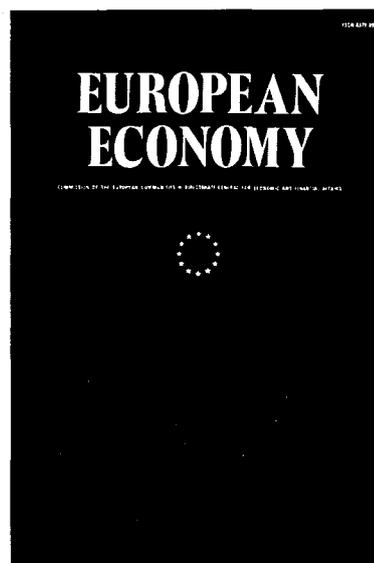
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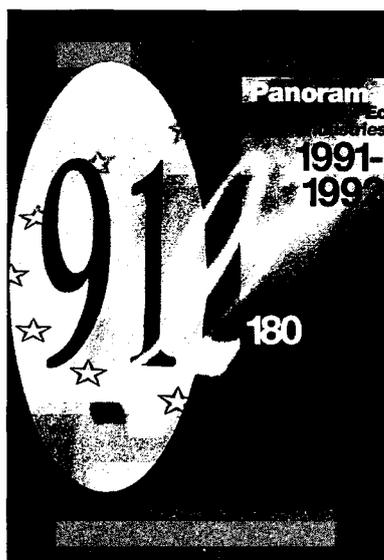
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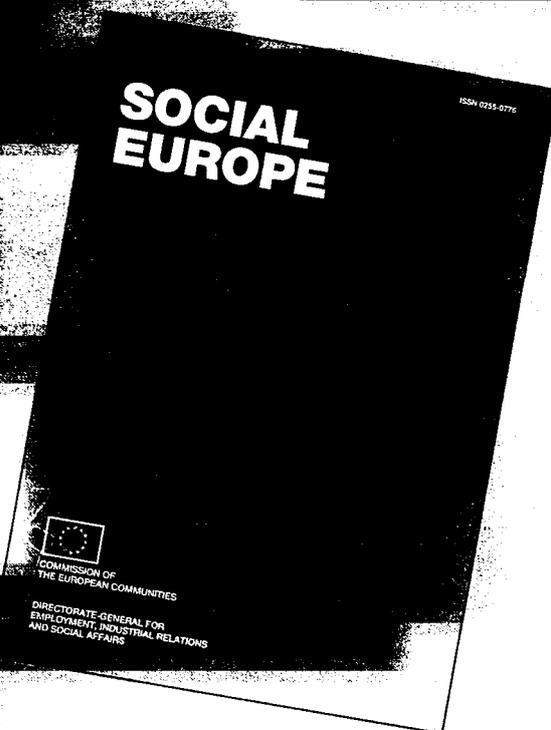
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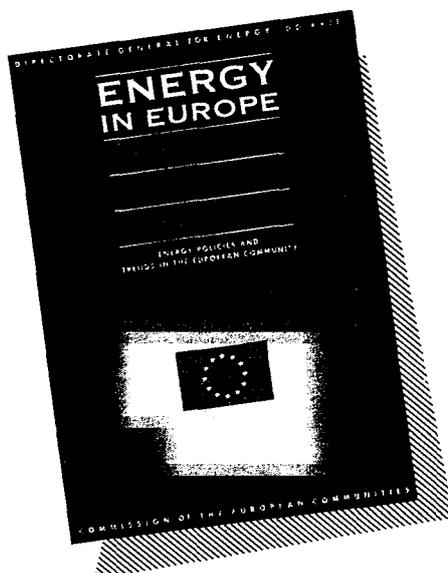
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