



Draft Minutes of the 51st Advisory Committee of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Meeting (1 June 2018)

Welcome and introduction

Welcome by Chair Mercedes Fernández Pérez (ES)

The Chair presented usual housekeeping rules and reminded that documents to be discussed during the day were available in the compendium, which was sent beforehand by e-mail.

1. Adoption of the draft agenda

EIGE asked for time on AOB to inform the members on EIGE's work and possible need for their contributions. No other amendments from the members, the draft agenda was adopted.

2. Adoption of the draft minutes of the meeting on the 7th of December 2017

The minutes of the last meeting, 7 December 2017, including comments by the members, were adopted. The Chair gave Director Irena Moozova a quick word before continuing with the agenda. Irena congratulated Ireland on the Referendum repealing the 8th amendment.

3. Presentation of the Report on Barcelona Objectives - Greet Vermeulen, EC Gender equality Unit

Comments and questions:

Italy: Reform of the childcare system in Italy has led to more children participating in formal childcare. Childcare facilities have been integrated into the school system, which means that they become free as schools are free in Italy. Attending kindergartens is not mandatory, but attending school is mandatory. Complete rethinking of the system, such as the physical premises, staff training, and free services can help to try to achieve the Barcelona objectives in Italy.

Malta: Highlighted the positive experience of introducing free childcare in Malta. This has led to the increase of women's labour market participation and economic independence. Free childcare has also enabled participation of children with diverse backgrounds.

ETUC: Welcomed the Barcelona objectives, as the approach is very comprehensive. ETUC highlighted the importance of looking at the accessibility and quality of childcare, not just affordability. Childcare should be moved from the margins of the social and public life into the centre. ETUC pointed out that that in some contexts, the more you invest in childcare, the more expensive it becomes. Demand drives the market, and

wages are not increasing significantly. Due to austerity measures in many countries, private companies have increased their share of childcare service providers. In some cases, this has led to expensive and bad quality childcare. Good education and career development prospects are crucial to attain committed staff.

Portugal: Access to childcare is not a problem in Portugal, but the low birth rate is. The financial crisis led to cuts in salaries and lower birth rates. It is too expensive for the families to have children and combine women's labour market participation. The government wishes to lower the age for mandatory participation in school, from 5 to 3. We should also think about elderly care, when visioning the future combination of caring and women's labour market participation. There is a lack of elderly care facilities in Portugal.

BusinessEurope: Important to close the gap between families' needs and businesses' needs to retain women at the work place. Some municipalities may lack sufficient public funding to provide for parents' needs, hence they go for private childcare facilities, but the cost is partly compensated by subsidies. Price is driven by staff costs and costs of real estate. Companies are more and more interested in contributing to childcare facilities. BusinessEurope is organising a seminar with social partners on 12 June to discuss gender pay gap but also childcare. The example of Malta will be presented there and there is still an open spot to present a national example if another MS is interested to share its experience.

EWL: Barcelona objectives should be more ambitious. When revising Barcelona objectives, other care responsibilities should be included as well.

EC: Thanks for all the comments, please send us your national examples. We need to see this as an investment for children. It can also be seen in a broader context as it can have an impact on certain decisions in life. We are doing our best to keep the targets, which are included in the social scoreboard.

4. Other recent developments in gender equality in the EU

a) Update on the last meeting of Committee on the Status of Women: Committee on Status on Women in New York - Greet Vermeulen

EWL: Good conclusions reached, but what is the next step? Is it foreseen to have a follow-up meeting?

Portugal: We lost on many issues important to rural women, especially rural migrant women. Problems with the paragraph on family: women and girls are still seen as more prone to domestic sphere, men as bread winners.

UN Women: Good discussions and conclusions, but follow-up plays an important role. How to translate those conclusions to strategies, work plans, action plans and so on. Next CSW theme: Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

BusinessEurope: Europe can and should take a leading role when it comes to implementing the sustainable development goals. In that respect, Europe has a good level of social protection compared to the rest of the world, so Europe can contribute substantially with concrete examples and experiences to next year's CSW agenda.

Austria & the Netherlands: Both had NGOs in their delegation during the negotiations, which was very helpful in guaranteeing accurate language etc.

b) Update on ending violence against women and Mutual Learning Programme in gender equality - Carla Pambianco

Greece: Greece was invited by the EC to speak about the seminar it held in February in Athens on the needs of women refugees. Greece highlighted the importance of the Mutual Learning Programme seminars. They bring added value to all the participants through exchange of practices, development of strong informal networks, and strengthening European solidarity and identity.

France (Secrétariat d'Etat chargé de l'Egalité entre les femmes et les hommes): Thanked Greece for a great seminar. Special thanks on the interesting panel discussion on refugees, in addition to a site visit to a refugee camp. The group published an opinion on the topic in 2016, but France is suggesting that it may need to be reviewed and updated as the refugee situation has changed tremendously since then.

c) Information on the 2018 Report on equality between women and men - Agnieszka Bielska-Decugniere

No comments

d) Irena Moozeva - Sharing the news on the Director vacancy of EIGE. The aim is to broaden the profile of the candidates. Members were urged to disseminate the information with their networks to find the best possible new Director for EIGE.

e) Europe 2020: 2018 draft country-specific recommendations - Outi Niiranen

EWL: What is happening after 2020? Will the European Semester system continue?

EC - Outi Niiranen: We do not know yet whether the European Semester will continue in the same format post-2020. However, there is a clear reference in the European Social Fund that funding decisions will be based on the European Semester.

EC- Irena Moozova: There is a WG assessing the impact of the European Semester procedures. The aim is to find a robust mechanism, which is efficient, less complicated and connected with the funding period.

f) Status of the Work-life balance initiative - Fabian Luetz & Greet Vermeulen

EWL: Concerns over WLB package and not reaching an agreement on time. A coalition of NGOs concerning WLB has been launched in the light of upcoming EPSCO, and they are very open to national representatives joining the coalition.

ETUC: Strong support for the WLB initiative. We need carers' leave to guarantee people's rights to care for their dependants.

EC - Irena Moozova: It is a "now or never" moment. The upcoming Coreper/Council meeting is the crucial moment for the WLB proposal.

g) Status of the call for proposals under REC (Rights Equality and Citizenship programme) - Véronique Pain

No comments

h) Funding in the next MFF – Muriel Bissières, Programme and financial management Unit

EWL: Expressed concern over direct references to gender equality disappearing in the next MFF and general discussion. The word gender is diluting and gender equality is "mainstreamed away". Visibility means

prioritizing and allocation of funding and resources, thus direct references to gender equality are crucial. Particular concern regarding the European Structural and Investment Funds, as the ex-ante conditionalities have been removed from the general regulation. This is directly linked to gender equality, as it was included in the ex-ante conditionalities. Merging gender equality with enabling conditions is a sign of diluting gender equality as a priority. If gender equality is not prioritized, there will be no funds and resources. Gender equality and gender budgeting should be a priority in the next MFF.

Portugal: Raised the question of whether we are losing gender equality as a goal.

Greece: Concerned that EC believes that gender equality has been achieved. Issues, such as pay gap and GBV persist. Greece finally ratified the IC in April. Harmonisation with domestic laws will make the implementation process easier.

Malta: Persisting gender inequality leads to GBV and women's lower economic status. Gender Equality needs to be high on the agenda.

Slovenia: Full support to previous comments. Proposal to the EC: information on who is in the WG, so the members know whom to contact in their home countries.

EC - Irena Moozova: Expressed the full support for keeping gender equality high on the agenda and highlighted the support of Director-General Tiina Astola. Everyone is working hard to ensure that gender equality will be a priority in the next MFF and with the next Commission.

EC - Outi Niiranen: The new proposal for the European Social Funds keeps the dual aspect. Promotion of gender equality and women's labour market participation will be present, and there is a specific Article 6 on equality between women and men. In addition, there is a specific objective on promoting women's labour market participation. The horizontal priorities of the ex-ante conditions were cut down, but gender equality is still present through the Charter of Fundamental Rights. There is also a new specific thematic enabling condition on women's labour market participation and work-life balance. This means that when Member States wish to invest in this area, they need have a national strategic framework for gender equality. This applies to investments under the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund. EC stressed that women's labour market participation and work-life balance are still prioritized and present in the funding priorities.

h) Alvaro Oliveira - Equality bodies

BusinessEurope: Encourages the collaboration between equality bodies and social partners. In many countries they work together but not always the case. This can contribute to close the gap between existing legislations at national level and their implementation. BusinessEurope can provide ad-hoc contacts in the member federations if needed.

5. Information from current and future Presidencies: Bulgaria, Austria, Romania

a) Bulgarian Presidency

- The Bulgarian Presidency identified women in the digital world as a key gender inequality issue to focus on during the Presidency. EIGE prepared a research note on "Women and men in ICT: a chance for better work-life balance" for the Presidency. This research has been presented by EIGE in various events during the Presidency.

- During the last CSW meeting in New York, Bulgaria, Estonia and Austria organised a side event on women in the digital world
- Bulgaria launched a European Network of Women Leaders in the digital industry, called Coalition Women leaders@digital for Europe.
- High-level SHEleader@digital conference, organised by the Bulgarian Center of Women in Technology (BCWT), in partnership with the Ministry of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the European Commission.
- The Presidency is working on the WLB directive and European Disability Act

b) Austrian Presidency

- Aims of the Austrian Presidency are to inspire an open and future-oriented dialogue about gender equality and strengthening the topic of gender equality on the EUs agenda
- With these objectives in mind the focus will be on “Youth and gender equality” and thus monitoring the area of “the girl-child” of the Beijing Platform for Action in cooperation with EIGE and discussing emerging topics, including potentials and risks of digitalisation
- Restoring the political attention needed to achieve positive change in the area of gender equality is crucial; therefore, high-level political debate shall be encouraged
- There will be a high-level group on gender mainstreaming on 23-24 July for which invitations have already been sent,
- An informal meeting of Ministers for gender equality will be hosted in Vienna on 12 October
- In parallel to the informal Ministerial Meeting, the conference on “Gender Equality and You.Young voices.Joint initiative” on 11/12 October will be dedicated to the future priorities for the work on gender equality. Young people will be actively involved and discussions between them and Ministers for Gender Equality facilitated
- Draft Council conclusion on gender equality, youth and digitalization will be tabled and negotiated in autumn with the aim to present them to the EPSCO for adoption in December 2018. The conclusions will be based on a report by EIGE on the same topic.

c) Romanian Presidency

- The Romanian Presidency’s priority will be on combatting and ending GBV and developing emergency protection measures to protect women. This will support the implementation process of the Istanbul Convention. The second priority will be on increasing the economic independence of women and men by reducing gender discrimination in business and reducing the gap on women’s labour market participation. The third priority will focus on addressing the gender pay gap.
- The Presidency will draft a conclusion on measures to address the gender pay gap to be presented in the EPSCO in June 2019
- Plans to organise a conference on GBV in Bucharest

- The Romanian Presidency intends to continue the dialogue on EU strategy on gender equality and to make progress in the pending negotiations.
- High-level international conference on gender-based violence and the Istanbul Convention on 4 - 6 June 2019 in Bucharest
- High-level international conference on gender equality, gender discrimination and power relations on 8 - 9 March 2019 in Bucharest
- High-level group on gender mainstreaming meeting on 6 - 7 March 2019
- The Presidency will work together with EIGE on gender pay gap

Comments and questions:

Portugal: Everyone in Europe will be focusing on CSW in March 2019, while the Romanian Presidency is planning to organise a high-level group meeting and high-level international conference. This leads to a time clash, as people cannot attend these two events at the same time. Request to organize these events possibly earlier in February.

The Chair of the Advisory Committee meeting echoed this comment and strongly urged the Presidency to change the date of the high-level group. Romanian representative promised to forward the comments and requests to change the date.

Sweden: Sweden organised “The International Conference on Men and Equal Opportunities (ICMEO)” in April 2018, and thanked the countries which contributed. Sweden has also established a new Swedish Gender Equality Agency in early 2018. One of the agency's main tasks is to increase the impact of the Government's gender equality policy and make a real difference to people's lives.

6. Presentation of the EIB Group Gender Action Plan 2018-19: Promoting gender equality and women’s economic empowerment in our business - Eleni Kyrou, European Investment Bank

Comments and questions:

Malta: What financial preparations are in place at the EIB to implement the Gender Action Plan?

EIB’S RESPONSE: The Action Plan’s aim is to focus on integrating a gender lens in EIB Group’s business and, as such, on promoting a new way of thinking in the Group’s approach to its investing, lending and advisory activity. For example, when offering intermediate lending to SMEs, looking at how such loan could support women’s businesses. This means that there is not a separate budget per se for the Gender Action Plan.

EIGE: EIGE has built a tool for governments and ministries to use regarding gender budgeting. EIGE is happy to work with EIB on developing their toolkit and developing a gender responsive approach.

EWL: Welcomed the GAP as crucial next step, as investment is not gender neutral. Will there be a day that it will become legally binding for EIB’s clients to have to follow the GAP and the requirement of gender budgeting?

ETUC: Welcomed the efforts to support women’s economic empowerment. What criteria will be developed to measure successful outcomes of the GAP within the next five years? How can we be sure that it will reach

women, how can women use this to access training in digitalization? What conditions are set to guarantee the planned outcomes?

BusinessEurope: Expressed interest in working together with the EIB through pilot projects. Question on possible different approaches to international and European projects. How is EIB different or similar with the GAP compared to other global financial institutions, such as, WBG and EBRD?

EIB'S RESPONSE: There is an action item under the institutional foundation pillar of the GAP, which commits the Bank at developing a system for ongoing sex disaggregated data collection, results measurement and monitoring. The EIB will focus the next few years on implementing the GAP and demonstrating that investing with a gender lens is an effective and good investment, delivering on both bankability and impact. However, the GAP is not seen as a five-year-project, rather a longer-term commitment by the EIB. Initial run is for five years, but the outlook is to continue after that in an updated format, building on lessons learnt.

EIB'S RESPONSE: The EIB hopes that the various EU and EU MS initiatives addressing gender inequalities will also be reflected in the Bank's shareholders' discussions on better integrating a gender perspective in the Bank's business. The EIB relies on the whole ecosystem developing gender equality strategies and methods so that synergies and a reinforced impact arises thereof.

7. Presentation of the mandates for the 2018 Opinions

a) Future gender equality policy after 2019: old and new challenges and priorities

France (Secrétariat d'Etat chargé de l'Egalité entre les femmes et les hommes) - Alexis Rinckenbach, Chair of the working group

There are only six Member States (BE, DE, ES, FI, SE and FR) represented in the working group. More members are welcomed in the WG, particularly, Member States to guarantee a diverse approach, whereas seven representatives of social partners and civil society showed their interest. The chair asked COPA to keep to one representative only instead of three. Thank you also to CoE and EIGE for participating. A "stagiaire" has been recruited and her task will be to work on this mandate for the next three months. The mandate gives a direction rather than a list of questions and tries to be clear and as general as possible to avoid sensitivities. The Advisory Committee already worked on a similar opinion in 2014 to help the Commission come up with a strategy, but the Commission only issued a working document despite 23 ministers having written to the Commissioner at the time. This opinion is still a good text to get inspiration from, although a lot has changed since then (e.g. the #metoo movement), and we already are in the future. So we need to reflect this change. The Chair is keen on receiving innovative inputs to be included in the opinion and encourages the members to feel free in their contributions. The deadline to send inputs is 15 June with some flexibility. The first draft of the opinion will be presented in October 2018.

EWL: Intersectionality should be the key approach in the new strategy, as it is crucial to look at all different aspects of women's lives.

Slovenia: Happy to join the WG. It is important to push for new strategy and have funds to implement the strategy.

Austria: Happy to join the WG.

Malta: There are great difficulties with pushing the gender equality agenda into ministries' work. Malta can possibly join the WG, if resources suffice, as they are already in the other WG.

Norway: Happy to join the WG.

EC - Outi Niiranen: The aim is to have the opinions feed into the new strategy for the EC.

b) New challenges for gender equality in the changing world of work

Estonia - Chair of the working group

Aim of the WG is to formulate ideas regarding the positive and negative trend of changes in the world of work into policy suggestions. It is a very up-to-date topic, which builds on the work-life balance initiative as well as the gender pay gap action plan. The Chair of the WG also encouraged other Member States to join the WG. The mandate has been sent to the WG members. The deadline for suggestions is 15 June, first draft to be sent out by the end of June, deadline for comments 3rd August, then Opinion send to all Committee members on 21st of September for consultation. Opinion is to be finalised in October and presented in the next Advisory Committee meeting in December 2018.

EC - Fabian Luetz:

Topic discussed regarding changing world of work in other areas and platforms have been, for example, digitalization, STEM and AI in the context of gender equality. These could be possibly included in the opinion.

ETUC: Important to look at the increasing precariousness in many areas and jobs and its effects.

BusinessEurope: UEAPME is part of the WG to represent the employers. The mandate should be clearer about about what is changing and how fast it is changing. Employment issues in the industry (not only in tech and online platforms) are also a key issue, as well as the demographic change.

EC - Greet Vermeylen: Although the topic of changing world of work has been discussed a great deal in the past few years, the WG has an opportunity to really focus on bringing added value through the focus on gender.

8. Any other Business (AOB)

EIGE: Asked for members' input in their upcoming studies and reports through good national examples and assisting EIGE in validating data on Member State reports. EIGE is also working on a study on violence against women and developing guidelines and common standards for police services. They are planning to conduct qualitative interviews and need the committee members' help in choosing the appropriate people to interview. EIGE is also in the process of updating their gender statistics database, so members are asked to update their countries information in the database and validate the data depicting the Member States' current situations.

Portugal:

- Expressed its interest to participate to a future Opinion to be proposed by Italy for 2019 on increasing birth rates in a rapidly aging Europe from a gender perspective.

- Portugal will be hosting the "UfM Women4Mediterranean Conference 2018" on 10 - 11 October in Lisbon.
Invitations to be sent out very soon.

Provisional date for next meeting: 4 December 2018 (to be confirmed about two months before)

9. List of Participants

Family name	First name	Member State / Equality Body / Observer organisation
Adam	Zoe	Germany
Al Alousi	Basim	The Netherlands
Alliks	Ingus	Ministry of Welfare - Latvia
Aunemo	Helga	EFTA
Baumruk	Petra	Ministry of Welfare, Iceland
Bellander-Todino	Ingrid	European Commission
Bielska- Decugniere	Agnieszka.	European Commission
Bissieres	Muriel	European Commission
Campos Fernandes	Ricardo	Women's Committee of COPA
Charalambous	Dora	Ministry of Justice and Public Order- Gender Equality Unit - Cyprus
Collins	Mary	EWL
Cravero	Guillaume	BusinessEurope
Dąbrowska	Magdalena	Poland, Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment, The Chancellery of the Prime Minister
De Boer	Arnold	Conseil de l'Egalité des Chances entre les Hommes et les Femmes - Belgique
Dimitrescu	Gianina	Romania, National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men
Dutta	Piyali	Bundesrat - Germany
Elliott	Iris	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
Erlendsson	Hjalti Geir	EFTA secretariat
Fernández-Pérez	Mercedes Alicia	Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality - Spain
Gortnar	Maruša	Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities - Slovenia
Ielite	Inete	Latvia, National Gender Equality Council
Ivanova	Irina	Bulgaria, MLSP
Ivarsson Lantz	Kristin	CEEP
Jansen	Tina	Germany
Joly	Carine	Belgium
Katsivardakou	Theodora	Greece, General Secretariat for Gender Equality, Ministry of Interior
Knight	Kaisa	Ministry of Social Affairs - Estonia
Laiviera	Renee	National Commission for the Promotion of Equality, Malta
Lasen Diaz	Carolina	Council of Europe

Luetz	Fabian	European Commission
Marques	Andreia	Portugal
Mills	Gloria	European Trades Union Confederation
Mondekova	Anna	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family - Slovakia
Moozova	Irena	European Commission
Murphy	Therese	EIGE
Niavarani	Jacqueline	Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs - Austria
Niiranen	Outi	European Commission
Nilsson	Bengt	Sweden
Nilsson	Sara	Swedish Gender Equality Agency
Oliveira	Alvaro	European Commission
Pain	Véronique	European Commission
Palma	Michele	Italy
Pambianco	Carla	European Commission
Raevaara	Eeva	Finland, Gender Equality Unit, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
Rinckenbach	Alexis	France, Secrétariat d'Etat chargé de l'Egalité entre les femmes et les hommes
Ringhofer	Karina	Provincial government Burgenland - Austria
Ruscito	Rosanna	ETUC
Sares	Anita	Portugal, Commission for Equality in Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
Schumacher	Dagmar	UN Women
Sechi	Cinzia	ETUC
Smith	Kathryn	UK
Sørlien	Petter	Ministry of Children and Equality - Norway
Steeger	Jean-Philippe	CEC European Managers
Sterk	Tamara	Croatia
Uzelac	Slavica	Eurocadres
Vermeylen	Greet	European Commission
Wickler	Isabelle	Ministry of Equal Opportunities - Luxemburg