



Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

22 May 2014

Draft Minutes

Welcome and introduction

The chair, Ms **Tanja Olsson Blandy (SW)**, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

The chair informed the audience that the relevant documents for the meeting were available in the handed-out compendium. Copies of the 2013 Report on progress on equality between women and men were also made available to the participants.

1. Adoption of the draft agenda

The draft agenda was adopted.

2. Adoption of the draft minutes of the meeting of 28 November 2013

The draft minutes were adopted.

3. Information from the Commission on recent developments in gender equality in the EU

The chair welcomed the Commission's Equality Director, **Salla Saastamoinen**, and DG JUST's Gender Equality Head of Unit, **Daniela Bankier**, and invited them as well as other colleagues from the Gender Equality Unit to give information on recent developments in the area of gender equality.

Detailed information was provided on the following subjects:

- the 2013 Report on progress on equality between women and men,
- developments with regard to the Europe 2020 strategy,
- equal pay and the gender pay gap,
- state-of-play of the negotiations concerning the women on boards' proposal for a directive,
- violence against women,

- the outcomes of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York (March 2014),
- the programme of exchange of good practices,
- state-of-play of the calls for proposals.

On **Europe 2020, FR, SW, and EL** expressed their support to have an ad-hoc opinion adopted in order to provide a timely input to the public consultation on the revision of the EU 2020 Strategy (the public consultation will conclude on 31 October). **ETUC** reminded participants that ECOSOC published an opinion on the lack of gender aspects in the Europe 2020 Strategy and that ETUC would also be available to contribute to the ad-hoc opinion.

Equinet is to share its report on the role of equality bodies in the EU 2020 Strategy once it is published. **UN Women** will also be contributing with a strong gender component to the UN's overall answer to the public consultation.

It was agreed that additional details on the practicalities for the adoption of an ad-hoc opinion on this subject were to be provided to all AC members in the 2nd half of June.

ETUC reiterated the need to involve social partners in the monitoring of various directives (namely the parental leave directive) and thanked the Commission for its involvement in the development of the social partners' gender equality toolkit. The Commission took note of ETUC's request on actively involving social partners in the upcoming conformity check of the parental leave directive.

With regard to **violence against women**, the **Council of Europe** informed everyone that in August 2014 the Istanbul Convention would enter into force. France recently ratified the convention as the 6th EU Member State (MS) of the current 12 contracting parties. The Council of Europe also drew the attention of the audience to its March study on the implementation of the recommendation on the protection of women against violence.

UN Women thanked the Commission for its role in the **CSW's 58th session**. Media analysis showed a substantial increase in CSW coverage. Media outlets from 55 countries covered the meeting; social media (Twitter and Facebook) also generated great interest. The Secretary General will soon be issuing a report on CSW's methods of work. **EWL** applauded the fact that the EU talked with a unified voice on global issues and added that, throughout CSW's works, cooperation with civil society was very constructive. EWL also informed the audience about the report on Beijing + 20 that is to be published in October 2014 and will feed into post-2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDG) discussions.

UEAPME signalled that it is willing to participate in the upcoming **exchange of good practices on entrepreneurship** (September 2014). It highlighted the fact that Europe was lagging behind in terms of female entrepreneurship and that UEAPME's members had good practices to share in this specific field (awareness-raising, training, access to finance).

Regarding **calls for proposals**, **FR** raised the issue of a recent DG EMPL call giving a 2-month deadline to submit proposals: FR considered this timeframe too tight for national administrations to respond to calls. The Commission answered that its presentation on scheduled 2014 calls for proposals was intended to specifically address this type of problem by warning AC members and their respective national administrations of the upcoming 2014 calls early so that applicants have sufficient time to prepare well-structured high-quality proposals. Additionally, the Commission suggested that participants consult DG JUST's website and carefully read the Rights, Equality & Citizenship (REC) 2014 Annual Work Programme as useful indications on this year's priorities can be found there.

The **Chair (SW)** of the Advisory Committee (AC) added that, unlike the PROGRESS Programme, the **REC Programme** did not foresee an earmarked percentage of funds for its specific strands: there is

thus an additional incentive for national administrations to proactively screen the REC's Annual Work Programmes.

LT enquired about the possibility to receive by email the **presented PPT slides**. The Commission agreed to circulate the slides to all AC members after the meeting.

4. Information from current and future Presidencies

Mr **Dimosthenis Tremos** informed the AC that **GR Presidency activities** in the area of gender equality included, amongst others:

- **Brussels, 22/1/2014**, Presentation of the Programme of the Hellenic EU Presidency on gender equality by Ms Vasso Kollia, Secretary General for Gender Equality at the Government of Greece, to the FEMM Committee of the European Parliament.
- **Athens, 6-7/2/2014**, Meeting of the High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming: presentation of the EIGE Report "Women and the Economy"/ Council Conclusions to be adopted by the Employment & Social Policy (EPSCO) Council in June.
- **Athens, 27-28/2/2014**, Consultation meeting on good practices on women's entrepreneurship; the event was organized by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and it was supported by the Greek General Secretariat for Gender Equality.
- **Brussels, 5/3/2014**, European launch conference on the FRA Survey on violence against women; the event was jointly organized by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the Greek General Secretariat for Gender Equality/ Council Conclusions on violence against women to be adopted by the Justice & Home Affairs (JHA) Council.
- **New York, 10-21/3/2014**, 58th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW); Greece delivered the statement on behalf of the European Union at the Opening Session of the 58th CSW and cooperated closely with the European External Action Service (EEAS) in the framework of the 58th CSW.
- **Athens, 20/3/2014**, European seminar "Gender-based Violence in Sports, Minors' Protection"; the event was organized by the General Secretariat for Sports and the Hellenic Ministry of Culture & Sports. Council Conclusions will be adopted by the Education, Youth, Culture & Sports Council.
- **Athens, 4/4/2014**, European conference "Women and Girls Go Digital"; the event was organized by the Greek General Secretariat for Gender Equality as a follow-up of the "Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs", an initiative by the European Commission.
- **Athens, 28-29/4/2014**, European conference "Families in the Crisis: Finding work-life balance in a difficult economic context"; the event was organized by the Confederation of Family Organizations in the European Union (COFACE) with the support of the Greek General Secretariat for Gender Equality.

Mr **Michele Palma** from the **forthcoming Italian Presidency** (starting in July 2014) presented the general outline of the **planned activities that are all to take place in Rome**:

- **8-9 July 2014**, European conference on "Promoting gender balance in economic decision-making".
- **18-19 September 2014**, Meeting of the High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming.
- **17-19 October**, a joint event on equality "Non-discrimination and vulnerable groups".
- **23-24 October 2014**, High-Level EU Presidency Conference on the Beijing Platform for Action.
- **24 October 2014**, Informal Meeting of the EU Ministers for Gender Equality.

- **November 2014**, Meeting of the EU Roma Network on “Best practices for the use of Structural Funds for Roma people inclusion policies”.
- **21-28 November 2014**, Special section on “Diversity Management” during the Employment Week.

Finally, Mr **Ingus Alliks – forthcoming Latvian Presidency** (starting in January 2015) – stated that the work of the LV PRES will be based on three values: involvement, growth and sustainability. In the areas of employment, social policy and equality, LT has transformed these values into the **Presidency's priority - inclusive and sustainable labour market participation**.

More specifically, in the field of gender equality:

- The **High-Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming** will take place in **Riga on 22-23 January 2015**.
- **Gender equality in the context of external actions** is one of the defined priorities for the Latvian Presidency. EU coordination will be ensured at the 59th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in 2015. Two side events and active participation in the general discussions as well as in other events are planned.
- The European Institute for Gender Equality in collaboration with the Latvian Presidency will present the second edition of the **Gender Equality Index in Brussels in June 2015**.

Gender mainstreaming and a gender perspective are both to be applied while organising the following events:

- A **high-level meeting on disability** focusing mainly on accessibility issues, labour market participation and the gender aspects regarding care for dependent family members. This meeting will take place in Riga in May 2015 contributing to the implementation of the EU Disability Strategy (2010-2020).
- Conference on “**Healthy lifestyle and eating as an essential prerequisite for children’s welfare/wellbeing**”.

5. Opinions to be prepared in 2014

5.1. Opinion on "Gender Equality in the European Union in the 21st century: remaining challenges and priorities"

The AC was introduced to the mandate of the opinion on "Gender Equality in the European Union in the 21st century: remaining challenges and priorities" that is to be prepared by the Working Group (WG) and chaired by Ms Pauline Moreau from the Irish Department of Justice and Equality.

Gesa Böckermann/JUST D.2 gave a presentation on the context of the opinion and explained the individual questions the mandate addresses: identification of current challenges, options for solutions, future priorities to the gender equality policy, instruments to be used and governance models.

Next steps: the approved mandate is to be sent to the WG on 23/05/2014 and a draft report is expected to be sent to all AC members in October 2014. The formal adoption of the opinion is foreseen for November 2014.

Confédération Européenne des Cadres (CEC) informed the AC that positive changes occurred due to the legislative proposal in the area of women in top economic decision-making positions, but that very limited progress was made for women in lower positions of responsibility. The upcoming

opinion should look into women at all levels of responsibility and not focus only on leadership positions.

BUSINESSEUROPE highlighted the risk of this opinion to be just a catalogue of a wide variety of issues given the (indicative) 10 page limit. **BUSINESSEUROPE** also stressed the importance of including comprehensive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in (a potential) new strategy.

Equinet put the accent on the need to also reflect on the interaction between gender equality and other areas of discrimination. **EWL** thanked the Commission for giving civil society the opportunity to be involved in this exercise and highlighted the need for leadership in gender equality from both the "to-be-appointed" new EC and the new EP. **EWL** is to provide input on how synergies with the post-2015 MDG agenda could be found.

SW raised the concern of gender equality becoming more of a mere legislative measure rather than an independent fully-pledged policy of its own.

The Chair of the WG, Ms **Pauline Moreau** from the Irish Department of Justice and Equality, welcomed all the inputs given during the meeting and added that she is looking forward to working on this much awaited opinion.

5.2. Opinion on "How to improve quantitative data collection at national/European level on Violence against Women (VAW)?"

Lucie Davoine/JUST D.2 introduced the Committee to the "How to improve quantitative data collection at national/European level on Violence against Women?" opinion that is currently being prepared by the WG.

The Chair of the WG, Ms **Monika Ksieniewicz from the Polish Government Office for Equal Treatment**, presented a first outline of proposed recommendations. These relate to policy, legislative and practical aspects of data collection relating to Violence against Women.

In response to a **Council of Europe** question, the Commission detailed the next steps before the adoption of this opinion: once validated by the WG (in July, most probably), the draft opinion will be sent to all AC members for their own formal comments and recommendations (either at the end of July or at the beginning of September). Written adoption of the opinion is expected to take place before the next AC meeting in November.

EWL welcomed the first outline of recommendations. **EWL** would favour using the terminology "violence against women" (rather than gender-based violence) to ensure consistency with the Parvanova report, the Istanbul Convention and the forthcoming Council conclusions.

IE asked for more details about the UN-ESTAT survey: the Commission clarified that this would be an exhaustive data collection exercise to be repeated annually. Data collection would be limited to the cases reported to the police, but it would still serve as a benchmark.

6. Presentation of the 'Gender Segregation in the Labour Market' report by the European Network of Experts on Gender Equality (ENEGE)

Lucie Davoine/JUST D.2 introduced this point of the agenda and invited **Mr Brendan Burchell** to present the report (PPT slides have meanwhile been sent to all participants).

The study has resulted in a statistical tool to analyse occupational gender segregation in the EU, based on the existing data from the Labour Market Surveys. This will help to understand gender segregation in the labour market and its causes in order to make the right policy choices. The

audience was very interested to hear about the investigated links between occupational segregation and the gender pay gap.

IE informed the audience that it had recently carried out an analysis of the Beijing platform and found very little progress in segregation over the past years. Women still tended to go for public sector jobs, as they allowed for better work and family life reconciliation; this, despite a growing number of private companies offering more flexible working arrangements.

UK enquired if further data was available on women entering public sector jobs, as women might start off their careers in the private sector but move to the public sector in child bearing years. Brendan Burchell explained that he would have to look at the data with a greater level of detail.

FR raised the question of how couples make decisions on entering the labour market and where one member of the couple might choose to take a more stable, public sector job, whereas the other a 'riskier' job. Mr Burchell agreed that statistics on couples would be most valuable, but added that such data was not available.

The Segregation Report is now being finalised. The Report is to be distributed to the AC as soon as it is released.

7. Any other business

UN Women informed participants about the countdown to Beijing +20 activities:

- National reviews will be finalised on 31st May.
- Regional reviews (including one for Europe) will be held in the format of multi-stakeholder meetings.
- A global review will be presented as the Secretary General's report during CSW59.
- The progress on Beijing report will be discussed during the September 2015 meeting.
- The UN Women world progress report will focus on social and economic rights.
- UN Women will organise monthly events on 12 critical themes. Further information will be sent to the EC. A first meeting will take place in June on women and the environment. Another meeting will focus on closing the gender gap & agriculture to be held in Rome mid-October.
- The global leaders' achievement summit will be held adjacent to the September 2015 meeting where heads of states will share information on progress made on gender equality.
- A communication campaign will run under the title "Empowering women - Empowering humanity - Picture it", showcasing women and men who attended Beijing. UN Women requested MS to come forward with suggestions on who could provide testimonials from their countries.
- The social media "He for She" campaign is about engaging men. Men in leadership positions will be asked to explain what gender equality means to them. Again, MS are requested to come forward with suggestions of male leaders from their countries.
- A youth campaign "Beijing – what?!?" will run to raise awareness amongst younger generations.

UN Women asked for MS' active participation and to add an info point on Beijing+20 on the next AC agenda.

The **Swedish Equality Ombudsman** drew attention to the fact that there were no further funding possibilities for gender equality transnational cooperation under the European Social Funds (ESF). This type of transnational network was crucial for fostering gender equality in the ESF but the new proposed ESF themes do not cover gender equality any longer. SW pleaded for any possibilities for maintaining this network. The Commission is to come back to Sweden with additional details on this specific question.

The **Swedish Ministry of Education and Research (Gender Equality Division)** informed the Committee about a seminar on legislation on prostitution which will – probably – be organised back to back with the next AC in Brussels. The audience was also informed that the Nordic Forum organised by the Nordic Women's Movement will be held in June in Malmö.

Before closing the meeting, the Chair informed the participants that the provisional date of the next AC meeting is 27/11/2014 (date to be confirmed in October 2014).