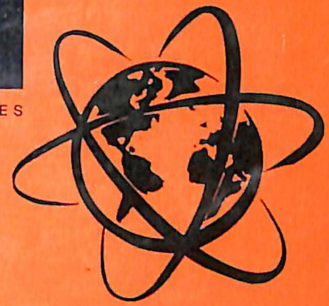


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EQUALITY ORIENTED PERSONNEL POLICY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Editors:
Sarah Nelen
Annie Hondeghem

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EQUALITY ORIENTED PERSONNEL POLICY
IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

International Institute of Administrative Sciences Monographs

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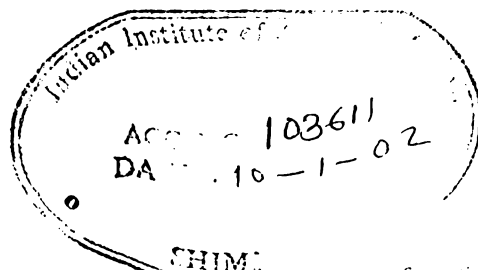
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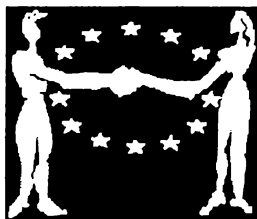
PREFACE

Without the support of many people and organisations, this book would never have been written. Therefore, we want to thank in the first place the European Commission, and in particular their Equal Opportunities Unit in the Employment and Social Affairs DG, for the financing of our project within the framework of the 4th community action programme on equal opportunities for women and men. This action programme may well be one of the best examples illustrating that specific gender equality initiatives are successful and remain necessary. We do hope indeed that the 5th action programme will be approved soon by the EU member states. We want to thank as well Mrs Miet Smet, the former Belgian Minister responsible for Equal Opportunities for men and women for her co-financing of the project. The partnership with people from Norway, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Belgium and the Flemish Community, has led to a very fruitful and interesting co-operation. The knowledge and insights gained through the exchange of our experiences, could never have been gathered in another way. Therefore we want to thank all of our partners for their valuable contribution, the time they have invested in the project, their hospitality and flexible co-operation across the European borders. Finally, we thank all the discussants attending the two seminars held within the context of this project on January 28/1/1999 in Brussels and 21/6/1999 in Leuven.

*Prof. Dr. Annie Hondeghem
Sarah Nelen*



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Medium-term Community action Programme on equal
opportunities for women and men
(1996-2000)

INTRODUCTION

By: Annie Hondeghem, Sarah Nelen

The present publication "Equality oriented personnel policy in the public sector" is the result of an intense collaboration on a European level between academics on the one hand and civil servants in this policy field on the other hand. In the framework of the 4th community action programme on equal opportunities for women and men (1996-2000) of the EU, we worked together for almost one year on how to integrate the equal opportunities dimension into personnel policy in the public sector. Next to the Public Management Institute of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, different ministries in different countries participated. In Belgium, the Equal Opportunities Unit of the federal Ministry of Labour and Employment together with the Ministry of Civil Service co-operated, while on the Flemish side, the Emancipation Affairs Unit in the Ministry of the Flemish Community (Department General Affairs and Finance) took part in the project. In Norway the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration participated, in the Netherlands the Ministry of Internal Affairs and in the United Kingdom the Corporate Strategy and Diversity Division in the Cabinet Office gave their full support.

Setting up such a European project with different partner countries each with their specific personnel policy, is not always evident or easy. However, the exchange of sometimes very divergent but often also very similar international experiences has been a fascinating and instructive experience. Issues regarding equality and personnel policy which are considered perfectly normal in one country can arouse amazement in another country. Nevertheless, there was always a common ground, if only by discovering the common problems those do exist of course. Maybe the clearest example is the existence of horizontal and vertical segregation. A constant in most government administrations is that women and men often have different tasks and responsibilities (horizontal segregation) and that women are underrepresented in higher functions (vertical segregation). The mixed composition of the group of partners involved in the project, both academics and policy actors, was an asset: the academic 'theory' could always be tested against the daily policy practice in different countries. You can find the result of this co-operation in this book.

This book is not intended exclusively for specialists in the field of equality and personnel policy, like for instance equality officials and researchers in the field of gender studies. On the contrary, an important aim of this publication is to inform as many actors as possible in the large field of personnel policy and to rouse their interest in pursuing an equality oriented personnel policy. As a matter of fact, this is an important condition for the success of such a personnel policy. Obviously, a limited group of experts is needed to develop specific expertise in the field of equal opportunities and personnel policy. But working towards gender equality via personnel policy should not be the exclusive responsibility of a small group of professionals. Only if different actors active in the field of personnel and HRM policy each try to integrate a gender dimension in their own policy field, results can be achieved.

What is the relevance of a book about "equality oriented personnel policy in the public sector"? Why giving explicit attention to 'gender' in personnel policy? A typical reaction often heard indeed is that "people in our organisation already have equal opportunities" and "it doesn't matter whether somebody is a man or a woman as long as the person is qualified." Research has shown very clearly however that the starting point of formal equality used by several organisations, in and outside the public sector, whereby

everybody is treated in exactly the same way, in practice leads to unequal chances for men and women.¹ The discrepancy between the starting point and the actual practice gives ground to the thesis that underlying processes are at work here. Ironically these processes are often covered up with the 'cloak of equality'. The actual practice shows indeed that big gender differences are not completely past yet, not even in the public sector. On the contrary, apart from already mentioned phenomena such as horizontal and vertical segregation, also the wage gap between women and men is an international given, women in government administrations are more likely to be employed in precarious statutes (e.g. temporary contracts in stead of a permanent appointment) and many more women than men work part-time, which has an adverse effect on their career.

So much more than formal equality declarations is needed in order to achieve more gender equality at the workplace. For today no longer direct discriminations but more subtle, indirect mechanisms and underlying processes account for the (re)production of gender inequalities. A lot of these factors are related to circumstances outside the labour market, such as care responsibilities and the education of children. Often as a result of societal relationships and social norms people take individual decisions which affect the organisation. Nevertheless, the organisation itself can also play an important role and contribute to reinforcing or, on the contrary, countering inequalities. Not only societal and individual trends count, also the organisational culture, procedures and rules prevailing in an organisation can have an important influence in order to break through certain gendered patterns. The best proof hereof maybe is that not only between countries there are serious differences (compare the Scandinavian countries to the rest of Europe) but also within one country there are similar organisations of which some have already a considerable number of women in management levels and others almost have no female middle managers. Thus gender relations are not the same in all organisations. Organisations clearly can make "a difference".

It is also to their own advantage if organisations pursue an equality oriented personnel policy. An American research revealed that the 100 companies who spent most attention and means to integrating equality and diversity in their personnel policies, had better business results than the average profit margins². Working on an equality oriented personnel policy thus means working on improving the quality of personnel policy and it yields -in the literal and figurative sense- profit. More and more organisations come to see that employees are one of the most important resources. The involvement and performance of the staff are critical success factors of a well functioning organisation. All talents and capacities should be fully used and developed. Often this is not yet the case, one of the reasons being that "the staff" is seen as an undifferentiated category and no attention is paid to the specific situation and individuality of employees. Taking into account a "gender" dimension in personnel policy in return means paying attention to differentiation and offer full scope to develop individual competencies. It is clear that the pursuit of equality oriented personnel policy is not only to the benefit of women or is only meant for women. It is to everyone's advantage since it is about the pursuit of a good personnel policy, which has a positive influence on the whole of the work climate and work sphere, inclusively the interaction of work and private life. This has a positive influence on the motivation of employees and consequently on their efficiency. This means a surplus value for the organisation and society as a whole is created.

So an organisation can make a positive difference regarding gender relations at work. This book is about how to make this difference. Especially the public sector has an important exemplary function to fulfil in this field and should not lag behind developments in the private sector. Most government administrations have outlined a policy paying attention to equality and equal opportunities objectives with regard to their

personnel. Too often though this remains a policy that mainly exists on paper and does not work that well in practice. This book wants to make a contribution to a more effective equality oriented personnel policy, which takes into account recent policy insights and developments regarding gender, equal opportunities and personnel policy. On the one hand, theoretical understandings are explained, on the other hand concrete instruments and exemplary cases are presented which illustrate how different government administrations in different countries try to work in practice towards an equality oriented personnel policy. Although the book focuses specifically on the situation of the public sector and gives examples of projects in public administrations, most of it will also be of interest to other organisations.

In the first part of the book, the specific situation of the public sector as an employer will be examined together with evolutions and recent developments in the field of public personnel management. Also the positive and negative consequences of these tendencies for the pursuit of an equality-oriented policy will be evaluated. In the second part, an analysis of the most important strategies and evolutions in thinking about equality policy in general and equality and personnel policy specifically will be given. By giving concrete examples, we will try to make clear what these strategies do signify. In a third part, three instruments in the form of checklists are presented, by means of which an organisation can check to which extent they do meet certain criteria and recommendations as regards equality oriented personnel policy. In the last part of the book, five specific projects in the field of equality and personnel policy in Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and the Flemish Community are presented. These projects will each be tested against the previously formulated theoretical insights regarding equality oriented personnel policy. Finally, a reference list can be found at the end of the book with the list of people who co-operated in this publication and their contact details. They can always be contacted for additional information.

PART 1: RECENT TRENDS IN PUBLIC PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT AND GENDER CONSEQUENCES

By: Annie Hondeghem, Sarah Nelen

1. From Public Administration to New Public Management

While the rise of the 19th century nation states involved the development of a public administration, based on a bureaucratic model, at the end of the 20th century a new model of government administration is replacing the old system. The traditional and hierarchical Weberian bureaucracy was characterised by its process oriented nature and the accent lied on the correct application of the rules and procedures. From this point of view, the civil servant was only responsible for the implementation of policies. Several societal factors however have put pressure on the bureaucratic model and contributed to the appearance of a new model, the so-called "New Public Management" (NPM).

Five important societal factors explain the evolution from public administration over public management to the New Public Management. On a political level, the breakthrough of neoliberalism in the USA and the UK gave rise to new values adding to the changes in the public sector. Reagan and Thatcher considered Friedman's theory regarding monetarism as an ideal basis for their policies. This implies that the role of the public sector must be reduced to an absolute minimum in order to give scope for the development of the free market. From this perspective, it is logical that the new public administration should henceforth be led in terms of economical motives, effectivity and efficiency. A second factor is of an economic order. The economic crisis of the seventies and the consequent slackened economic growth explain why public finance was under pressure. In a later stage, the stringent Maastricht criteria on EMU also led to the cuts in public spending. The poor legitimacy of governments and public authorities in general is a third important factor. The low electoral turnout and political participation, the rise of extremist parties and the distrust of the public sector are typical phenomena of the nineties. New theoretical currents with a very economic approach to politics, like public choice, neo-institutionalism, principal agent theory etc. are a fourth explanatory factor. Finally, internationalisation under the impulse of international organisations like the OECD and consultancies (Ernst & Young, Anderson, etc.) has added to the introduction of the New Public Management.

Already in the sixties and the seventies, the first steps towards the introduction of management principles in the public sector were taken. Since the eighties and the nineties, important steps have been made with the introduction of the concept of the New Public Management. Not only the functioning of public administration is organised on a new pattern, but the public sector itself and the place of the public sector in society is questioned. The basic idea is that the public sector has become too cumbersome and should restrict itself to its core tasks. Public administration is not about delivering services anymore, but is about creating the conditions for the society to do so. As Osborne and Gaebler put it "government has to steer instead of row"³. With the paradigm shift from the bureaucratic to the managerial model, a shift is also taking place in the central values dominating public governance. The juridism of the public sector with its values of justice, equality and legal security is being eroded and yields for economism, including principles such as the "3 E-values": economy, efficiency and effectivity.

Hood⁴ has defined the New Public Management through seven characteristics ("doctrines"). His typology gives a clear idea of what NPM is about.

Table 1: New Public Management according to Hood

Doctrine	Meaning	Justification
1) "Hands-on professional management"	Active, visible, discretionary control of organisations from named persons at the top, "free to manage"	Accountability requires clear assignment of responsibility for action, not diffusion of power
2) Explicit standards and measures of performance	Definition of goals, targets, indicators of success, preferably expressed in quantitative terms	Accountability requires clear statement of goals; efficiency requires "hard look" at objectives
3) Greater emphasis on output controls	Resource allocation and rewards linked to measured performance; break-up of centralised bureaucracy-wide personnel management	Need to stress results rather than procedures
4) Shift to disaggregation of units in the public sector	Break-up of formerly 'monolithic' units, unbundling of U-form management systems into corporatized units around products, operating on decentralised one-line budgets	Need to create "manageable" units, gain efficiency advantages of use of contract or franchise arrangements inside and outside the public sector
5) Shift to greater competition in public sector	Move to term contracts and public tendering procedures	Rivalry as the key to lower costs and better standards
6) Stress on private-sector styles of management practice	Move away from military-style public service ethic, greater flexibility in hiring and rewards, greater use of PR techniques	Need to use "proven" private sector management tools in the public sector
7) Stress on greater discipline and parsimony in resource use	Cutting direct costs, raising labour discipline, resisting union demands, limiting compliance costs to business	Need to check resource demands of public sector and "do more with less"

2. From personnel administration to personnel management and HRM

Parallel with the general evolution from public administration to New Public Management, one can observe a similar evolution from a mere personnel administration to a dynamic personnel policy and Human Resources Management (HRM) in the public sector. Since the late eighties, most western European countries have engaged in human resource management reforms in their national public administrations. In general, the reasons for changing the way people are managed in the public sector are related to economic strain on the public sector that has increased the demand for greater efficiency and better quality, often with a smaller public service workforce as a result. Other major factors driving the evolution towards HRM include: efforts to strengthen managerial accountability, changes in the labour market and the need for the public service to remain a competitive employer and the demand for increased transparency in public spending.⁵

In contrast with the traditional model where personnel administration is a very static matter and where the civil servant was just an anonymous number in a huge administration, HRM starts from the principle that people are at the heart of the matter and that an optimal use of human resources is crucial for the organisation. One can distinguish the following central elements of HRM:⁶

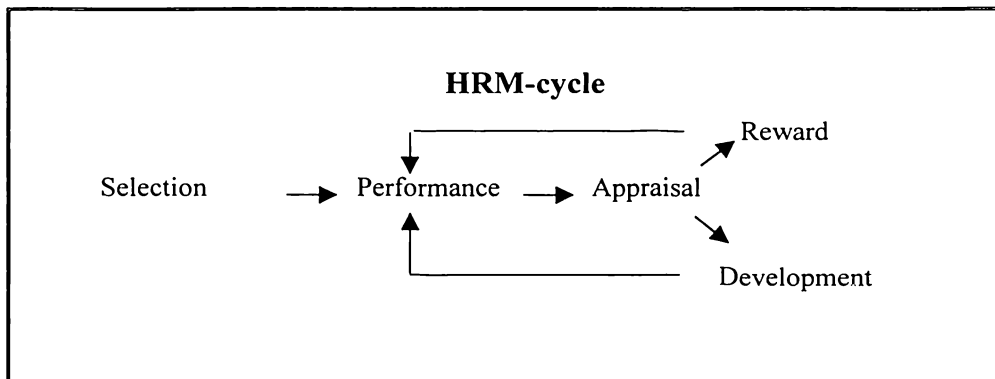
- 1) Personnel is of strategic importance for the success of an organisation
Personnel are no longer seen as a pure cost-factor but as human capital in which to invest. People are of strategic significance for the success of the organisation. The question is: what makes the difference, why are some organisations successful and others not; the answer which is given to this question by the human resources management theory, is that successful organisations invest more in their personnel
- 2) Personnel management must be integrated in the general strategic policy of the organisation
HRM should be an integral part of corporate planning. The organisation strategy has clear consequences for HRM-policy, therefore HRM can not be isolated but must be integrated in the global framework in which the organisation is functioning. Policies and practices for managing people should be in line with and support other reforms and strategies ensuring the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of public services. Inversely, management reforms in other areas should support a modern human resources management. Also, in designing the organisational strategy, one has to take into account the human potential of the organisation.
- 3) A positive vision on human capacities
Human beings are full of potential and are motivated. The personnel want to realise itself through its work and are a source of possibilities. Therefore, the organisation must create opportunities to develop these potentials. Everybody must have equal opportunities to participate in the decisionmaking.
- 4) Decentralisation of personnel responsibilities
Traditionally, the personnel function is the responsibility of three actors: topmanagers, line-managers and the personnel unit. In HRM the role of line-managers is stressed. They are the first responsible for guiding and coaching their personnel. This also means that leadership must be an important selection criterium for line managers. Line managers must have enough discretionary power to decide on human resources. This implies decentralisation and devolution. Personnel responsibilities are thus being decentralised from staff to line-managers. On a more general level, one can observe the same decentralisation trend of responsibility for HRM from central management

bodies to individual departments and agencies.

5) HRM consists of a coherent and integrated set of HRM-instruments

HRM is characterised by a consistent and integrated set of personnel instruments. Selection, performance appraisal, reward and development are critical instruments for strategic personnel management. These instruments must be coherent one to another. Therefore one can speak about an interdependent HRM-cycle, as illustrated below. The human resources management cycle is only as strong as its weakest link.

Figure 1: HRM-cycle ⁷



6) Contingency approach

There is no best way to manage personnel. Each organisation must look for a personnel policy that fits best to its organisational structure and culture, to its strategy and environment.

These ideas, which come from the private sector, have also been applied to a certain extent to the public sector. From the eighties onwards we observe a gradual evolution in the public sector from a traditional personnel approach to a modern human resources management. The rate of change has been different among countries. Especially in countries with a tradition of public law (e.g. France, Belgium), this evolution has been much slower than in other countries (like e.g. UK and the Netherlands).

3. Changes in the field of personnel management in the public sector

Modernisation of personnel management has been an important aspect of change in all OECD-countries. From an OECD-survey of 1993 it appeared that in the period 1989-92 most of the key reforms initiatives were in the field of personnel management ⁸.

In one of the last OECD-publications⁹ a table was published with an overview of the measures taken in the field of personnel management.

Table 2: OECD-countries reporting changes in personnel management in the period 1987-1992

Measure	Number of countries
Downsizing or limits to size of public sector workforce	22
Decentralisation or devolution of HRM	16
Significant new management development programmes	15
Equal opportunities initiatives/policies	14
Classification or job design reforms	13
More flexible working time arrangements	12
Running cost budgets for line departments and agencies	11
Comprehensive HRM strategy	11
Performance appraisal system	10
Significant new recruitment, selection or promotion arrangements	8
Reforms or restructuring of pay systems	8
Formal job evaluation systems	8
Simplification of organisational structures (eg flatter organisations)	7
Assessing managers' performance on HRM responsibilities	7
Performance management systems	6

It appears from the table that **downsizing** has been one of the most important measures in the field of personnel management. This fits into the strategy of new public management to reduce the public sector to its core tasks.

Another important measure is the **decentralisation** and **devolution** of the personnel function. The personnel function is organised in a new way. There is a new distribution of responsibilities between central bodies, departments or agencies and line managers. On the one hand there is a decentralisation from central bodies to departments and agencies. On the other hand, within departments and agencies certain personnel responsibilities are being assigned to line managers.

These reforms appear to be a critical success factor in the evolution from a rule-bound bureaucracy to a performance management model. Decentralisation and devolution have indeed some important advantages:

- personnel policy can be adapted to the specific needs of the organisation
- personnel policy can take into account the specific situation on the market
- personnel decisions can be taken in a shorter period of time
- and last but not least, it is an important tool to enhance the responsibility and accountability of public managers in general

A third measure is the introduction of new **management development programmes**. In several countries we see that top management is treated in a distinct way. Special HRM policies are developed for them. In some countries, like the UK and the Netherlands, we see the emergence of a Senior Civil service¹⁰.

Equal opportunities policies are mentioned as a fourth area of change. As the period under investigation deals with 1987-1992 probably new legislation and measures concerning positive action are referred to here.

A fifth area of change is **classification systems**. These are a result of organisational changes, like e.g. the flattening of careers.

The introduction of more **flexible working arrangements** is also important. Throughout the public sector, we see an evolution from standardised working arrangements to more flexible ones. The traditional civil servant working from 9 to 5, from Monday to Friday, on a full-time basis, spending the whole of his or her career in the public sector, with a fixed salary increasing with promotion and seniority has almost disappeared. New arrangements have come into being. Examples are: part-time employment, flexitime, sabbatical leaves, career interruption, job sharing, fixed term contracts, mixed careers between the public and the private sector, performance related pay, etc.

4. Gender consequences of changes in public management and HRM

The above described evolutions can have negative as well as positive effects on gender. Gender mainstreaming in personnel policy can contribute to a positive balance, because it aims at identifying and preventing negative effects on women of public personnel policy.

4.1. Negative gender consequences

As mentioned earlier, the evolution towards New Public Management is characterised by the idea of a too cumbersome public sector, which should be reduced and should be concentrating only on core functions. In this logic of rationalisation and efficiency, the more precarious and part-time jobs are more often subject to shrinkage than other functions. Statistics show that in a large majority of cases much more women than men occupy these kind of jobs. In the Belgian federal ministries for instance only 68% of the women have a permanent appointment (32% of women have precarious short-term contracts) while 88% of the men do have a permanent appointment. A negative consequence of the introduction of the New Public Management model could therefore be that more women than men lose their jobs in the public sector and become unemployed.

On top of this, there is a risk that the principles of social justice -like gender equality- fade into the background in the new context of economism where the 3 E-values are prevailing and are promoted (economy, efficiency, effectivity). This in its turn might make it more difficult to maintain and implement the existing equality measures or to introduce new equality strategies.

A one-sided interpretation of the "Human Resources" concept, might put too much stress on the "resources" aspect of the concept. In this very business-like perspective of HRM, only the strategic availability and steering of personnel is stressed and only the management of personnel, given a determined strategy, is important. The "human" aspect is neglected and no attention is paid to the question whether all personnel, women and men alike, have scope to develop their talents, abilities and personality through their work and whether they are motivated and contented employees.

The focus on 'performance' management can put more stress on people and decrease the possibilities for activities outside the work-related context. Moreover, in a study of S. Corby¹¹, it was found that men are more beneficiary of new systems of performance related pay, even in the case men and women had the same appraisal.

Also decentralisation and devolution can hold a risk. The protection of fundamental values like equal opportunities, which was most looked at by central staff agencies, can be considered as less important. Indeed, individual departments and agencies are foremost interested in achieving their own short term organisational goals, not in defending the longer term interests of government or society at large. In giving more discretionary power to line managers, there is a danger that gender discrimination and gender bias will increase. The shift to an enhanced role for line managers involves a shift away from expertise in equality matters, because know-how in this field is traditionally to be situated in central personnel and/or equality units. L. Dickens mentions also the context in which line managers have to operate as "bad news" for gender equality.¹² This context is often one of tight financial control. Line managers increasingly become "budget holders" and do not see the relevance of equality as an organisational goal. Equality then risks to be precluded by the pressure to achieve direct results in financial terms.

4.2. Positive gender consequences

The evolutions in the field of public management and personnel policy also have positive gender consequences.

Private sector employers become more and more aware of the importance to attract female employees because they constitute a very important, highly educated and qualified part of the labour force today. In several countries women outnumber men in graduating at the universities. Not to be able to hire women therefore implies a loss of highly qualified human capital. As Hood underlines, New Public Management involves a shift to greater competition and rivalry with the private sector and to private-sector styles of management. In the public sector, it might become more difficult to attract competent people if no attention is paid to what a public employer specifically can offer to candidate public servants. Salaries are often a component in which the public sector cannot compete with the private sector but the modern image of an equal opportunities employer paying attention to the individual situation and profile of its employees might be an effective way to attract qualified candidates who are hesitating between a job in the public and the private sector.

Even if a too one-sided economic "resource" approach to HRM might be a gender risk, one has to recognise that HRM stresses the human factor much more than the traditional model of personnel administration used to do. HRM puts the human being in the centre of attention, which is an important step forward in terms of gender. Employees are now seen as individuals, women and men, who are important for the organisation and who are no longer considered as "the" anonymous civil servant of the traditional public administration model. HRM is characterised as well by the evolution from a functional to a competency based approach in personnel management, which is a step further away from the traditional rather "male"-oriented model. The difference between a functional and a competency based approach in personnel management is that in the first approach emphasis lies on functions, while in the second approach emphasis lies on staff capabilities and behaviour. Competencies refer to the skills and abilities of members of an organisation to do their jobs effectively. Competence management includes the recruitment, development and retention of competencies within the organisation.

Modern human resources management underlines the necessity of a flexible and versatile organisation in an increasingly changing society. Flexibility is a central concept in the HRM-model. The concept can be looked at from the viewpoint of the employer. Here flexibility means that the employer has the capacity to adapt the organisational design and the number of personnel to changing circumstances. Flexibility however can also be looked at from the viewpoint of the employee. Here we can define the concept as the capacity of employees to adjust their working situation to (changing) personal circumstances. Measures in the field of flexibility can be used as a leverage for women and men to search for a better combination of work and care and for more balance into their lives. More and more organisations begin to recognise the value of “balanced lives” as important for both their employees and the organisation itself. They even recognise that “excessive commitment” to the organisation can be negative, as the extreme example of the Japanese phenomenon of *karoshi* (‘death from overwork’) illustrates.¹³

PART 2: EVOLUTIONS IN THINKING ABOUT EQUALITY AND PERSONNEL POLICY

By: Annie Hondeghem, Sarah Nelen

1. Evolutions in equality policies for women and men in general

Internationally, we can see a very clear evolution in gender equality strategies. Equal opportunities policies have changed because the results were inadequate, even after several decades of policy efforts in this field. The strategies used were not effective enough, therefore, thinking about gender equality has moved from an initially very legal and theoretical approach over a more active and output-oriented approach in the seventies and eighties towards, recently, a structural and proactive way to tackle gender imbalances.

T. Rees characterises these three broad approaches to equal opportunities as « tinkering », « tailoring » and « transforming ».¹⁴

1) « Tinkering » or the legal approach

Tinkering can be equated to the legal equal opportunities model and basically means that there are formal references to equality and equal opportunities in the legislation. So, in theory equality « exists ». In practice however, this strategy has proved insufficient and the law often remains dead letter.

2) “Tailoring” or the positive action approach

Since the legal approach is not sufficient, « tailoring » or positive action is a necessary supplement to the first model. Specific actions and measures focused on the situation of women are needed to try to turn the legal and passive equality clauses into real opportunities for women. However, as Rees argues, the impact of positive actions is limited because they are based on a « deficit model ».¹⁵ Positive action focuses on the characteristics of the underperforming group (women) and tries to make good their « deficiencies » so that they can perform and compete better within the existing system. It is not concerned however about the characteristics of the existing (male) system that is never questioned.

3) “Transforming” or the mainstreaming approach

In order to challenge the structural status quo, which might reproduce and reinforce gender inequalities, a « transforming » model or mainstreaming approach should be adopted. Gender mainstreaming has been defined by the Council of Europe as: « *the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making* ».¹⁶ Gender mainstreaming means « changing the mainstream » or the general policies and procedures which should systematically take into consideration the differences between the conditions, situations and needs of men and women.

Mainstreaming is a sophisticated, long-term approach involving substantial changes that can not be implemented overnight.¹⁷ It is also a quite recent strategy, which became only a bit more widespread since the UNO Beijing Conference on women in 1995. Nordic countries such as Sweden and Norway do have a longer tradition in the field of mainstreaming of equal opportunities. The European Commission adopted a

Communication on mainstreaming, entitled “Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities” in 1996. Today the new Treaty of Amsterdam formalises in its article 3 the Community commitment to gender mainstreaming and the Commission is making systematic efforts to implement its mainstreaming strategy. Nevertheless, generally speaking, there is not enough experience or expertise yet in Europe in operationalising the concept of mainstreaming in practice. Therefore it is crucial that meanwhile (and “meanwhile” will probably be a prolonged period of time) a triple strategy of 1) legislation, 2) positive action and 3) mainstreaming is followed. These three approaches should not be seen as mutually exclusive but as complementary.

2. Evolutions in equality and personnel policy

Regarding equality oriented personnel policy, one can observe the same historical shift in strategies as for equality policy in general: from equal rights over positive action to mainstreaming. As for equality policy in general, the combination of these three approaches is necessary in order to conduct a successful equality oriented personnel policy. A combination of two arguments explains why such an equality oriented personnel policy is important:

1) a “justice and democracy” argument: a real democracy has to ensure that women and men participate equally in the state’s decision making, it is not “just” that men monopolise representation in the state sector

2) an “economic and resource” argument: an organisation will gain by integrating more women because it means an introduction of new perspectives and ways of solving problems and it contributes to changes in organisational processes, culture and management styles

The two arguments are both important reasons for having an active gender equality strategy. The economic argument should be handled with care however. This “business-case” for gender equality should not be used to turn gender into a “personal qualification” which puts pressure on women to behave in accordance with stereotypical images of e.g. “the female manager”. Gender differences exist but should not be exaggerated, there should be enough space for “individuals” who do not necessarily have to behave “womanly” or “manly”.¹⁸

In what follows we will discuss the evolution in thinking about gender and personnel policy in detail.

2.1. Equal rights

An organisation that intends to conduct a successful equality oriented personnel policy, needs in the first place, a visible formal or legal framework providing for equal rights and equal treatment for men and women. Equality as a theoretical and legal concept basically implies that no individual should have fewer rights or opportunities than any other. Today, almost everybody supports this principle and most employers in the public sector do have indeed certain general clauses about equal opportunities, equal treatment and non-discrimination, as regards selection, promotions, pension schemes etc. One illustration hereof is the equal opportunities chapter in the Civil Service Management Code in the UK. The first paragraph of this chapter stipulates that « *Civil Service equal opportunities policy provides that all eligible people must have equality of opportunity for employment and advancement on the basis of their suitability for the work. There must be no unfair*

discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, or (in Northern Ireland) community background. ».

These kind of general commitments can be considered as a condition sine qua non for an effective emancipatory personnel policy. It is necessary that the organisation clearly embraces equality and non-discrimination as important principles. However, it is not sufficient because without further active measures, there is a considerable risk that the principles will not be applied. As Rees puts it « a statement to the effect that an organisation has an equal opportunities policy is clearly not sufficient to ensure its application ».¹⁹

An illustration of the importance of a legislative frame for an equality oriented personnel policy, is the legislation regarding **maternity rights**. In a traditional, purely economic logic and without any legislation, an employer would probably prefer a male employee to a pregnant female employee. The European Equal Treatment Directive (76/207/EEC) has helped to curb open discrimination in the EU against married and pregnant women. Nevertheless, even if maternity protection is one of the oldest examples of specific equality legislation, the number of court cases in this field shows that the law has not been taken for granted yet by all employers, whether they are from the private or the public sector. Besides the cases brought to court, there are even more cases in which women do not take the step of going to court and are being discriminated by their employers. After all, it is not obvious for an employee to go to court against her or his own employer. Only recently (1998) a woman on pregnancy leave from a Ministry in Belgium, was financially discriminated. This female civil servant had to go two times through a qualifying period before being granted a pay rise because due to her pregnancy leave she "interrupted her work more than 30 days". The personnel service in this Ministry bluntly denied the fact that pregnancy leave is, according to the law, not an interruption of work but has to be put on the same footing as a period of active service. The woman in question decided not to go to court for personal (not to spoil the atmosphere in her working environment) and financial reasons (costs of a legal case). Only after initiatives from the positive action official in the Ministry and the Equality Unit in the Ministry of Labour and Employment, the Personnel Service decided to alter its decision.

Another good example of the importance but also the risk of weak application of a legal equality principle is the European « **equal pay for equal work** » article in the Treaty of Rome.²⁰ Since as early as 1957 (the Treaty of Rome on a European Economic Community), all employers in the public and the private sector in the EU are bound by article 119 of this treaty, laying down the principle of equal pay for equal work. In practice however, the art. 119 case is a good example of the limited impact of legislation. From 1957 till 1976 article 119 remained dead letter. It was only thanks to the pressure from committed groups and individuals testing and extending the law, that article 119 has developed beyond more than a formal statement. This was a very slow evolution but still after that, the effectual implementation, took a lot of time. The article contained many ambiguities (e.g. what exactly does « equal work » mean, or what exactly does « wage » mean ?) which were hard for lawyers and claimants to resolve and define. The effectiveness of the equal-pay principle had to be tested several times before the national courts and the European Court of Justice before the principle became more firmly established. But even today we still notice an important wage gap between men and women.

Legislation is needed, it is a starting point but not a wonder drug. The limited impact of legislation and equal rights declarations as a model for emancipatory personnel policy is also illustrated by the high levels of vertical (few women in middle and top management

functions) and horizontal segregation (women hold other functions than men) in the public sector, although women theoretically have been granted « equal access » to all of these functions. The mere formulation of equality rights will not in itself create equality: more active measures are required in order to monitor, implement and complete legislation and general equality declarations.

2.2. Positive action

At the end of the seventies and during the eighties, several organisations, especially in the public sector started implementing positive action programmes to encourage more effective equality of access in the working place. The public sector has an important exemplary role to play in this area. In 1984 the Council of Ministers of the EU approved a recommendation on positive action (1984/635/EEC). The EU defines positive action as *"measures targeted at a particular group and intended to eliminate and prevent discrimination or to offset disadvantages arising from existing attitudes, behaviours and structures"*.²¹ This however is a very broad definition, which does not convey the different interpretations of the term positive actions in different countries. Also it stresses the "structural element" while this is more a basic characteristic of mainstreaming and not of positive action since the inherent limits of this concept make it very difficult to tackle structural problems. The European definition reflects more or less what is meant by positive action in e.g. Belgium but not in the United Kingdom which has a very tight legal definition of positive action. Therefore the following definition of positive action might be more useful: *"a generic term for programmes which take some kind of initiative either voluntarily or under compulsion of the law, to increase, maintain or rearrange the number or status of certain group members usually defined by race or gender, within a larger group"*.²²

Compared to equal rights, positive action shifts the emphasis from equality of access to creating conditions for women more likely to result in equality of outcome by "equalising starting positions".²³ Positive action includes both a quantitative and a qualitative aspect. In quantitative terms the objective of positive action is to realise an equal representation of men and women at all levels and in all positions. Equal representation does not necessarily mean fifty/fifty but can take into account the "supply" of qualified women, e.g. through the number of women available in lower management levels, the number of graduated women in universities, the situation of women in the labour market in general etc. A quantitative instrument often used for positive action is "target figures" for the number of women and men in organisations. Examples in the public sector where target numbers have been used are the Netherlands, the European Commission, the federal ministries in Belgium and Norway.

The qualitative aspect of positive action deals with the general improvement of employment conditions. It is concerned with the aim of removing barriers for women at work and with specifically assisting women in order to ensure more effective equality of access. Examples in this area are: specific training courses for women (e.g. women and leadership, assertiveness), encouraging applications from the underrepresented sex in certain jobs and attention to the presence of women in selection boards. In the Netherlands and Belgium, also childcare initiatives or parental leave are sometimes presented as positive action instruments. C.L. Bacchi warns for the potential negative consequences of such a broad interpretation of positive action: "While these reforms are doubtless needed, the implications of bracketing them with 'positive action' should be considered. They become in this interpretation add-ons for 'women', rather than essential social security policies. In this way the reforms reinforce the conventional division of domestic labour."²⁴

As pointed out before, an important reason why positive action is a necessary but not a sufficient complement to anti-discrimination legislation, is the fact that a more systemic solution and structural adjustment is needed. The starting point of positive action is that individual barriers prevent women from being successful in the workplace while unequal power relations are neglected. Positive action can be considered as a “compromise strategy” but not as a solution since it is only dealing with the symptoms of problems, not with the causes. In other words: “The real cause -the traditional gender based division of market and non market activities and the incompatibility of employment and family responsibilities- remains intact.”²⁵ Besides the fact that it is a temporary compromise solution, the lack of interest of leading officials or even their opposition and that of others to positive action as a policy instrument are other factors explaining its limited impact. This opposition is often linked to misunderstandings about the term “positive action”. Today still, positive action is wrongly put on a par with the controversial concept of “positive discrimination”. While positive discrimination in theory can be a part of positive action, in practice it is hardly accepted or applied effectively to public personnel policy in any country in Europe. Carol Lee Bacchi clearly distinguishes positive discrimination or “hard” programmes from “soft” programmes.²⁶ Soft positive actions are “encouraging” policies to increase the possibility that members of underrepresented groups be hired, appointed or promoted, these include initiatives such as targeted recruiting policies and training programmes. Hard positive action refers to policies which specify that being a member of an underrepresented group counts in assessing candidates for appointments and promotions, quotas are one illustration of this. Hard positive action has been adopted sometimes in the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Germany but in general we see in these countries a trend away from these measures which are talked about a lot but hardly ever used.²⁷ Another reason explaining the limited interest of leading officials in positive action is that they can not see it as a win-win situation at all. Since it is exclusively focused on one group (women), they intend to believe it is necessarily at the disadvantage of the other group (men). They don’t see the advantage of the organisation either.

The lack of interest of the top and middle managers in positive action combined with the false interpretations of the concept, contributes to the isolated position of equality officials, which constitutes another element accounting for the limited impact of positive actions. Since support from their superiors is often lacking, these officials can spend very little time on positive action policies because other issues have priority. Also the appointment of specific officials responsible for positive action (even if in reality they can not spend much time on this responsibility), might serve as an excuse for the management that the “women’s issues” are dealt with and takes all responsibilities away from the top management. All these reasons led to the decision in Norway to abolish all specific positive action officials and only rely on a mainstreaming strategy where all equality responsibilities were given to top management. This drastic solution seems to work in Norway but it would probably be much too early for most other states because commitment of the top officials is not sufficiently present yet. The merit of most positive action instances, even if they can not solve structural problems, is that they very clearly point at problems, touch the sore spot and make “women’s issues” visible.²⁸ Positive action is a way to keep gender equality issues visibly on the agenda or to put new problems on the agenda. This is an important complement to the mainstreaming approach. If positive actions were replaced by instead of complemented by “broad organisational change” some of the necessary political discussion would be neutralized. The risk is then that everything becomes “structural” and very diffuse.²⁹

2.3. Mainstreaming

Although they are necessary conditions, legislation and positive action are not sufficient conditions for an effective equality oriented personnel policy. The limited impact of legislation and positive action points to the structural nature of gender inequalities in the workplace and the need for an integrated solution, such as mainstreaming. In practice however, experience with mainstreaming equal opportunities into personnel policy is limited and the borderline between positive action and mainstreaming is not clearly cut. As stated in the Council of Europe Report on mainstreaming: the main difference between positive action and mainstreaming is the actors involved and the policy aspects to be addressed.³⁰ In order to try to illustrate the difference we will put things here in a caricatural way. One could say that the starting point for positive action is a specific woman's problem. A specific women targeted measure is then developed by officials of the public equality machinery (e.g. an Equal Opportunities Officer). The starting point for mainstreaming in contrast, is an existing policy. The policy process is then reorganised so that the actors normally involved take a gender perspective into account and gender equality can be reached as a goal. As Rees puts it « it means not simply looking at the barriers to women's progress up the ladder, but asking whether the ladder is the right shape and size, or even whether it is necessary to have a ladder at all ».³¹ An example might make things clearer. In a positive action approach, the promotion of women is seen as a problem. The action proposed would then be to give special training to women on e.g. « women and leadership », « combination of family and working life » etc. In a mainstreaming logic, the starting point would be the existing « promotion » policy and the existing regulations in this field would be questioned from a gender perspective. The solution would then e.g. be to apply a gender impact assessment to this policy. In stead of problematizing women, policies are problematized.

This change in the definition of what exactly the policy problem consists of, is linked to the theoretical origins of gender mainstreaming, namely the conceptual shift from an analysis of "women's questions" into a "gender"-analysis. Gender has become a crucial concept which, to the opposite of the term "sex", does not refer to biology but points at the sociological and cultural differences between men and women which have been learned, change over time and have wide variations both within and between cultures. It is about culturally determined views on the tasks, roles, characteristics and skills associated with men or women. Often a hierarchical connotation is linked to these views on masculinity and femininity: implicitly or explicitly, deliberately or undeliberately a subordinate distinction according to sex is made whereby the female norm is mostly subordinate and the male norm predominates. The difference between positive action and mainstreaming is that the latter questions the male norm and does not promote it as "the" norm. Gender equality means taking into account and valuing equally differences between men and women instead of maintaining a gender hierarchy.³² Mainstreaming gender equality in personnel policy means that not a woman's problem but the organisation of the public administration is at the heart of the matter. The public sector should be organised in such ways that there is a better balance between the diverse interests, ways of life and work that men and women may have.

Another example which gives a better idea of what mainstreaming is about and what the difference is with traditional approaches, are the recent initiatives in Belgium in the field of equal pay. As outlined earlier, although all EU member states have been bound by art. 119 since 1957, in practice a substantial gap of 26% subsists between the wages of male and female employees in Belgium. A large part of that wage gap cannot be explained by so-called « objective » factors (e.g. differences in education and training, part-time

work,...) but must be linked to hidden mechanisms of gender hierarchy and discrimination in job evaluation systems and the job classifications which are the result of it.³³ Therefore, the existing job classifications should be revised and the focus has to be on the introduction of gender neutral classifications. To this end, a campaign was launched in 1996 to give employees and social partners greater insight into job evaluation and make them aware of the role they can play in this process. A workbook and teachers pack were published explaining how a sex neutral job classification can be developed using a checklist for equal opportunities.

Mainstreaming is a fundamental strategy and therefore it may take time before it is implemented. Positive actions are a much faster way to react to inequalities. It will always be easier to make changes in the margin (organising a special training e.g.) than transforming an existing policy. In the long run, however, the impact of the latter strategy is more important, while positive action will only have a «marginal» effect. Nevertheless, we want to underline once more the necessity of combining the three strategies (legal model, positive actions and mainstreaming). The example of the equal pay case illustrates the importance of the combined use of the three approaches. Without art. 119 (legal model) there would not have been a basis for initiatives and studies looking for structural solutions in the field of sex neutral job classifications (mainstreaming). Since in Belgium the determination of wages traditionally belongs to the competence of the social partners, who bargain on a sectoral level, an effective equal pay policy would come down to sensitising (positive actions) the employers' and employees' organisations so that in the long term they can take into account the gender perspective in their negotiations.

Compared to other policy areas, mainstreaming gender equality in the field of personnel policy has one major advantage. A lot of expertise in the field of personnel policy and equality does exist already through the experience of most governments with positive actions for their personnel. While in other policy fields the relevance of gender still has to be checked and detected, it is very clear that personnel policy has gender implications. A lot of sex disaggregated statistics are already being collected by personnel units, horizontal and vertical segregation is "mapped", often some case-studies within the public sector in specific countries have been done, more theoretical research on equality aspects of personnel policy exists, ... Nevertheless, mainstreaming equality in personnel policy is definitely a complicated process and it cannot be reduced to a simple recipe or step-by-step plan. It should be stressed that mainstreaming is always situation-, policy- and country specific although, some general facilitating conditions and recommendations for a mainstreaming methodology have been identified by the Council of Europe in its gender mainstreaming report (1998). We will list them here in a schematic way and comment briefly on their concrete meaning for mainstreaming into personnel policy.

Table 3: Facilitating conditions & recommendations for a mainstreaming methodology

MAINSTREAMING IN GENERAL	MAINSTREAMING INTO PERSONNEL POLICY
1) Mainstreaming Prerequisites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> political will specific gender equality policy statistics comprehensive knowledge of gender relations knowledge of the administration necessary funds and human resources participation of women in political and public life and in decision-making processes 	1) Mainstreaming Prerequisites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> support of the minister with overall responsibility for personnel policy and the equality minister specific officials dealing with equality and personnel policy in each ministry, contacts with the ministry with overall responsibility for equality all personnel statistics split by sex comprehensive knowledge of gender relations funds/human resources (specific equality officials) a critical mass of female politicians and civil servants facilitates mainstreaming in personnel policy
2) When, what, where to mainstream? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all stages of the policy-cycle (planning, decision, implementation, evaluation) most of the policy areas (especially where there are major reforms) all policy levels (national, local,...) 	2) When, what, where to mainstream? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all policy-cycle-stages, especially the planning stage recruitment, selection, performance, appraisal, reward, career development (the whole HRM-cycle) on a centralised (ministry with overall responsibility for personnel) and decentralised level (each ministry)
3) Possible techniques and tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>analytical</u> (statistics, surveys and forecasts, research, checklists, guidelines, gender impact assessments, monitoring, ...) <u>educational</u> (awareness-raising and training courses, flying expertise, manuals, leaflets, ...) <u>consultative-participatory</u> (working and steering groups, databases, conferences, hearings,...) 	3) Possible techniques and tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>educational</u>: making the link between gender and personnel policy visible and understandable (e.g. gender training, information leaflets,) <u>analytical</u>: concrete instruments (which help) to integrate a gender dimension into personnel policy (e.g. good personnel statistics, checklists, gender impact assessment, pilot and research projects, monitoring reports) <u>consultative-participatory</u>: actively involving and making responsible a broad range of (policy-)actors (e.g. set up new structures, organise network meetings for people from different personnel policy-areas, organise conferences on specific themes)
4) Who are the actors? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> politicians administration gender equality machineries researchers and experts pressure groups, NGOs media supranational institutions 	4) Who are the actors? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> minister responsible for personnel policy and the minister responsible for equality alliances with interested female politicians top officials, HRM-people, line-managers, trainers, recruitment and selection officials, equality officials researchers/experts in gender studies & personnel policy to assist projects, do research, provide training networking with motivated women within the organisation and with women's organisations trade unions international organisations as a forum to exchange information, they are often advanced regarding mainstreaming and personnel policy (e.g. European Commission, DG IX)

PART 3.

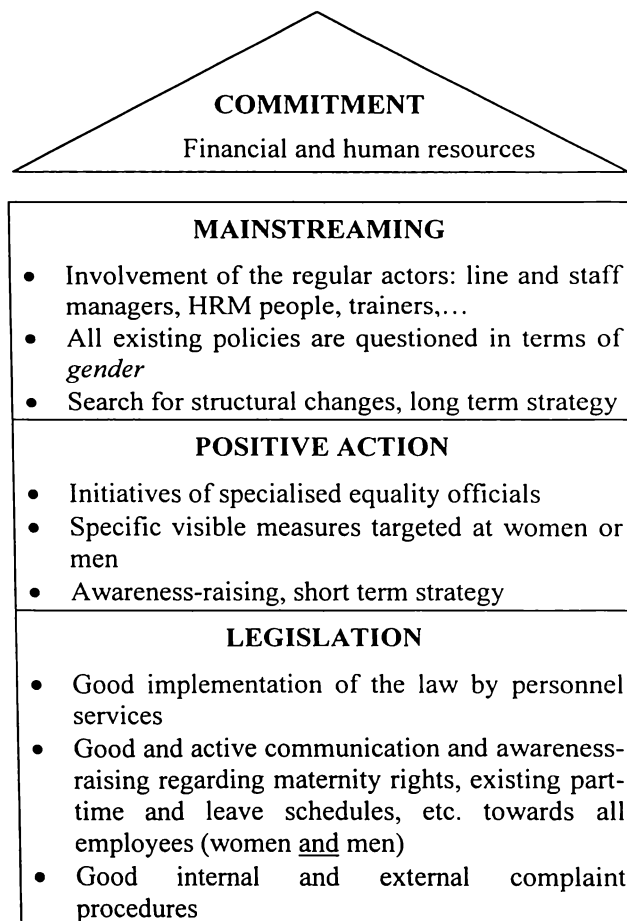
SOME INSTRUMENTS FOR AN EQUALITY ORIENTED PERSONNEL POLICY

By: Annie Hondeghem, Sarah Nelen

1. Checklist for the basic structures of an equality oriented personnel policy

The first checklist constitutes the basis of each equality oriented personnel policy. Without a number of basic structures such a policy can not be realised in practice. The checklist builds on the threefold analysis made in part two (equal rights, positive action and mainstreaming) and adds another essential component, namely the genuine commitment of the organisation. The checklist can be presented symbolically in the shape of an 'equality house', consisting of three levels, with the commitment of the top of the organisation as the 'roof'.

Figure 2: Equality house



1) Legislation

- **Are all the European Directives in the field of equal opportunities implemented into national legislation (as regards the public sector)?**

These directives often concern matters indirectly or directly relevant to personnel policy e.g. equal pay for work of equal value (1975), equal access to employment, vocational training and working conditions (1976), equal treatment in statutory social security schemes (1979), equal treatment in occupational social security schemes (1986, 1997), protection of pregnant workers (1992), parental leave (1996), shift of burden of proof in sex discrimination cases (1997), part-time work (1997). Possible gaps regarding the implementation of European legislation should be filled as soon as possible. Any specific equality legislation in addition to the required European initiatives, e.g. legislation on minimum quota for the underrepresented sex in special committees and advisory bodies should be encouraged and monitored.

- **Do formal references to gender equality exist in the statute/mission statement/management code of the organisation?**

It is important that the organisation underlines in a formal way its intention to guarantee equal treatment and equal opportunities between men and women. In this way the organisation makes clear that gender equality is one of its fundamental objectives and concerns and that it is acknowledged as a part of the broader corporate strategy. Reference to an active equality oriented personnel policy could complement the statements about the objective of equal rights for all employees.

- **Is the necessary know-how regarding specific equality legislation available?**

Personnel units should be well informed about the existing legislation in the field of equal opportunities and they should follow up existing and new case law in this area in order to interpret the own rules and legislation in a correct way. Knowledge and expertise are the first indispensable conditions to ensure the application of the law.

- **Are women and men sufficiently informed about their rights?**

All employees should be correctly informed and well aware of their rights. Transparency is a key word. Active communication, not only through leaflets but also through personal advice on all possible leave schemes (parental leave, maternity leave, ...), part-time work, maternity rights, sexual harassment, etc. is important.

- **Is existing equality legislation monitored and regularly evaluated?**

Personnel units can be an important source to give feedback on existing legislative measures and their concrete impact on employees in the public service. Problems experienced by employees regarding aspects of equality law related to personnel policy, which are observed by or reported to personnel units can serve as an important input for adaptation of the law or new legislative initiatives, also on EU-level.

- **Is support available for people who want to enforce their rights before the court?**

Structures for the enforcement of the law (such as e.g. the Scandinavian concept of "ombudsman/woman") are important. Women and men who feel discriminated should be able to make a complaint to a specific internal reporting point or to appeal directly to a court. The support and expertise of labour unions regarding equality matters is also a crucial factor to ensure successful enforcement of equality rights.

2) Positive Action

- **Have specific positive action or equality officials been appointed?**

Each ministry, department or agency should have an official who develops positive actions and sets departmental/agency objectives and plans. They can serve as the immediate contact point for individual women or men reporting particular gender-related complaints or problems for which they can search an individual solution. Depending on the number of personnel in the department or agency, this can be a full-time job or a task next to other responsibilities. It is important that the officials of the different departments/agencies network with each other and come together sometimes to exchange information, inspiration and good practices.

- **Does a specific Equality & Personnel Policy Unit exist ?**

Next to contact persons in each department or agency, there should be -ideally- an equality & personnel policy unit³⁴ located in the Ministry with overall responsibility for personnel. Here people work exclusively on equality issues linked to personnel policy. The unit serves as a centre of expertise and as a motor for the overall positive action strategy of the civil service. They can point at specific problems, develop own initiatives and specific positive actions. This unit can constitute the link between the different equality officials and can organise network meetings between them. The unit has the task of identifying specific gender problems, making them visible and trying to address them directly. Besides their traditional role regarding the overall positive action strategy in the civil service, they also have a newer but crucial role regarding mainstreaming. They constitute an important “medium” for starting gender mainstreaming. Their experience and expertise is an important starting point for implementing a real mainstreaming approach. This unit can initiate the mainstreaming process and ensure the necessary co-ordination, feedback, follow-up and monitoring.

- **Are the specific equality/positive action officials and the equality unit visible enough?**

Equality officials should not be too much isolated or operate in an invisible policy niche. If positive actions are initiated but not communicated and spread, their scope and effects will be very limited. Awareness raising is one of the important tasks of these officials, which means they have to make the whole of the organisation aware of the equality objectives and strategies. A first prerequisite is of course that all civil servants are aware of the existence of the specific equality officials or the equality and personnel unit. One way to increase the chances to have a more visible policy is to have a short presentation of the unit or the officials each time new employees start working in the organisation. It can either be a direct and personal presentation during the traineeship or a leaflet with information can be included in the welcome pack of new civil servants. It is strategically important that the organisation passes a strong message regarding equality policy during this starting period of new employees, when they get their first impressions of how the organisation works and what is fundamental for the organisation.

- **What are the status and the position of the equality/positive action officials and the equality unit?**

Equality officials should be appointed on a sufficiently high level. Although in theory they should not all be university-degree holders (or equivalents), in practice this helps them to realise effective positive actions. The credibility and the status of these officers are very important because they often have to confront opposition and reactions that “there are no problems anymore with equality”. Although there are

often very motivated and capable persons on lower levels dealing with equality, positive action works best where responsibilities are placed quite high up. This positioning also helps to guarantee that individual equality officials in a ministry or agency can effectively spend some of their time on positive actions, if it is not their full-time responsibility. For newcomers in an organisation or persons on lower management levels it might be more difficult to convince superiors that positive actions are an important part of their job and that they need time for it. Especially when it comes to the co-ordination function of an equality unit or of a specific official regarding mainstreaming, a high position in the hierarchy is crucial. The function of such a co-ordinator is to ensure that line managers are aware of their role and contribution in implementing the mainstreaming strategy. Someone who has no formal mandate or high function can not do this.

3) Mainstreaming

- **Are the regular actors in the field of personnel policy involved in mainstreaming?**
Mainstreaming, as opposed to positive action, is not the task of a few equality specialists but should be the responsibility of all the regular actors in the field of personnel policy. This includes the competent minister, top officials, line managers, HRM-people, selection-officials, trainers, trade unions etc. Depending on the subject or specific mainstreaming project, the actors playing a crucial role should be clearly defined, as well as their exact tasks. Obviously, the assistance of specific equality experts remains important as well, especially in an initial phase where they can initiate and co-ordinate the mainstreaming process, set up new structures etc. They have an advisory role and can help the officials reflect on what a gender perspective means and when it is relevant. However, they are mainly supposed to listen and help regular actors but they are not expected to do their work.
- **Is the concept of “gender” well understood by the different actors normally involved in personnel policy?**
Mainstreaming means introducing a gender dimension into personnel policy. In order to mainstream successfully, the concept of "gender" should be well understood by all the regular actors in the field of personnel policy. It is not sufficient that a simple paragraph about “women” in policy documents is added. A proper understanding of mainstreaming and gender equality is necessary. "Gender" refers to social differences between women and men, it is a culturally specific definition of femininity and masculinity and therefore varies in time and space, in contrast with the word “sex” which refers to the biologically determined differences, which are universal. Gender equality means identifying and valuing equally the differences between men and women and their diverse role in society. It means changing the structures in society which contribute to maintaining unequal power relationships between women and men in order to reach a better balance between the various female and male values and priorities in society. Gender training and general awareness raising courses by equality experts at the level of a unit or a department are an important tool to ensure sufficient knowledge to make the mainstreaming strategy work. A specific checklist could be elaborated, like the Flemish Community has done, with a definition of gender expertise and a list of indicators for gender expertise (e.g. educational background, membership of certain professional organisations, networks,...).

- **Are all statistics related to personnel matters split up by sex ?**

Knowledge about gender relations is a prerequisite to take into account a gender dimension in policy-making. All statistics should therefore routinely be disaggregated by sex and at the same time by all background variables which are important (age, ethnic origin, ...). Current data and data collection methods might have to be questioned: which data are split up by sex, what criteria are used to gather data and what are the underlying assumptions and values of these criteria? It is not only important to collect these gender-specific data, but even more to analyse them and to examine trends and changes in gender relations.

- **Is gender equality an objective in performance agreements?**

Performance management systems are a vital instrument to integrate and link gender equality closer with the organisational goals and strategies. Gender equality and a more equal representation of male and female civil servants could be one of the criteria in performance agreements (contracts for the organisation as a whole or for individual managers). Linking pay awards to performance evaluations could then be an important means to hold managers accountable for real gender equality outcomes. Also for the appraisal of individual civil servants dealing with matters related to personnel policy, one criterion could be to which extent they try to take into account a gender perspective.

- **Do public reforms or new policy proposals regarding personnel policy take into account a gender perspective?**

Mainstreaming at an early stage of the decision-making process is probably the most effective way to work on gender equality. The earlier a gender perspective is taken into account, the more likely it is that policies will really take gender into account and not just add a gender paragraph at a later stage. Policy reforms in the field of public administration or new proposals are therefore an important “window of opportunity” to mainstream. A well-developed instrument for mainstreaming in the policy preparing stage is the “gender impact assessment”. After the gender relevance of a measure is checked (by answering the question whether the proposal concerns one or more target groups and whether there are differences between women and men in the policy field, e.g. regarding rights, resources, participation, gender values and norms), the current situation and expected trend are analysed and likely developments resulting from the introduction of the proposed policy are compared and assessed, according to gender relevant criteria.

- **Is a gender perspective taken into account in the implementation and evaluation of the existing personnel policy measures?**

Although the policy-preparing stage is crucial and reforms or new policy initiatives should be focused primarily, also the other policy stages are relevant for mainstreaming. Not only implementation but also evaluation of existing rules and procedures should be looked at. As far as implementation of policies is concerned, gender proofing might be a useful mainstreaming tool: all official documents, letters etc. should be screened to see whether the language used is gender-neutral. If existing policies are evaluated, it is very important to assess the effects these measures had on gender relations given the possible input of the evaluation to the development of new policy initiatives.

4) Commitment

- **Is a genuine commitment of the administrative and political top present?**

Rhetoric support in favour of an equality oriented personnel policy is one thing but it is not the main thing. It is definitely important that politicians and top officials visibly support the objective of an equality oriented personnel policy. However, actions speak louder than words, so instead of mere lipservice, a genuine commitment of the political and administrative top management responsible for personnel policy is needed. Especially “mainstreaming” is becoming a very fashionable word, but it should not be reduced to a slogan, mainstreaming is not an end in itself, the aim is to achieve gender equality and a balanced representation of female and male civil servants at all levels of the organisation.

- **Are sufficient financial resources liberated to pursue an effective equality oriented personnel policy?**

An effective equality oriented personnel policy is not without any financial implications, on the contrary, it requires a reallocation of existing funds. Without financial means, building and transferring legal know how with regard to equality, hiring specific equality officials, adapting existing procedures and tools, setting up new channels of co-operation and providing necessary gender trainings for policy makers will not be possible. Not freeing enough resources will undermine the achievements of good results.

- **Are sufficient human resources liberated to pursue an effective equality oriented personnel policy?**

An effective emancipatory personnel policy requires the involvement of the regular actors (in line with the mainstreaming logic) with regard to personnel policy but also the involvement of specific equality officials (in line with the positive action logic). These equality experts do not only have a role in developing specific positive action measures in the organisation, but also have a function of support, developing an overall strategy, co-ordination and monitoring. It is important that these equality officials are appointed at a sufficiently high level in the hierarchy and that they have really the time to do their job, so preferably some of them have a full-time responsibility of equality official.

- **Have target figures been established and approved?**

The formulation of realistic target figures for the number of female and male civil servants in the organisation, to be approved at the highest level, are an important means to test the commitment of the organisation to real progress. Target figures are a means to quantify a part of the objectives of an equality oriented personnel policy. They make the equality goals very concrete and facilitate the monitoring of results. The time framework that accompanies the target figures puts pressure on the different actors in the field of personnel policy to really pursue an equality oriented personnel policy.

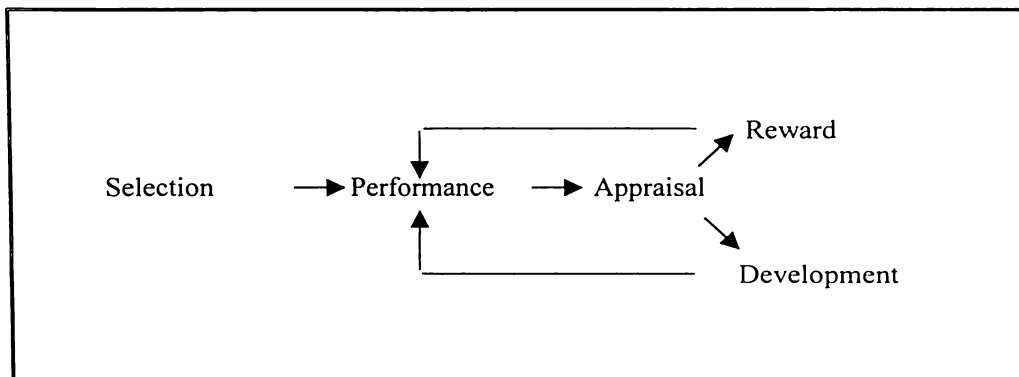
- **Is an overall plan regarding equality oriented personnel policy present in the organisation and approved at the highest political and administrative level?**

A coherent global equality plan in the ministry or department with the overall responsibility for personnel policy is needed. This plan can set out short, medium and long term goals, it can indicate the overall priorities, define the key actors, lay down their responsibilities, describe the different tools and techniques that will be used and foresee detailed monitoring procedures. The plan should be evaluated and adjusted on a regular basis, this is the responsibility of a specific equality official.

2. Checklist for the integration of equality in the HRM-policy cycle

Whereas the first checklist concerned more the structures of an equality oriented personnel policy, the second checklist deals with the content of the policy. The starting point here is the HRM-policy cycle, in which essential instruments of personnel policy are contained. For each part of the cycle, examples are given of how an equality dimension can be taken into account.

Figure 3: H+R Management -Cycle ³⁵



Prerequisite

- **Is there a genuine H+R Management in the organisation?**

An equality oriented personnel policy will be easier to pursue in organisations where there is a real balance between the “human” and the “resources” aspect of HRM. If an organisation focuses in a very narrow way on the economic aspect of HRM and considers personnel only as an economic resource, there is a risk that fundamental values as equity, democracy and equality are neglected, while these are important principles underpinning an equality oriented personnel policy. The validity of values such as equality, equity, ethical conduct and political impartiality should be emphasised, alongside principles such as efficiency, accountability and other performance oriented values.

1) Selection

- **Are job descriptions and competency profiles checked on gender neutrality?**

Job descriptions and competency profiles are important instruments of human resources management as they are the starting point of many other personnel instruments (selection, appraisal, pay, ...). Positive action officials should therefore check whether in designing job descriptions and competency profiles, there is a gender bias. Due to horizontal and vertical segregation, women and men have often different functions in the organisation. If the current situation (e.g. only male managers) is serving as a model for the ‘ideal’ job description and competency profile, there is a high risk for a gender bias in the design of the profile (e.g. of the post of manager). This risk can be avoided by suggestions of an equality official to have e.g. mixed panels of female and male civil servants who determine the new profiles. Another measure is to examine the functional requirements and see whether they are really essential for good performance. There is indeed a risk to exaggerate functional requirements (such as the number of degrees, continuous period of specific

professional experience) which might eliminate possible candidates, e.g. women.

- **Is there a balance in the recruitment between men and women?**

Because of security of tenure in the public sector, recruitment is an important moment in personnel policy. A balanced recruitment requires in the first place that as many men as women are candidates for vacancies. This often needs a special effort, definitely for functions that are characterised by horizontal segregation. In order to reach the underrepresented group, equality officials can suggest the use of specific recruitment channels or warn for the different reach of existing channels towards men and women (internet e.g. is used more by men than women). Another measure is to add a specific paragraph in advertisements with a special appeal to female or male candidates. Referring to specific working conditions and services (e.g. flexible working hours, childcare during holidays) can make organisations more attractive as well.

- **Is personnel selected in a gender neutral way?**

Selection tests can unintendedly favour one sex or put a sex at a disadvantage. Research has proven that members of selection committees (men as well as women) can have very stereotyped images about candidates. After a thorough analysis of several selection interviews, Danish researchers found out that female candidates get other types of questions than male candidates. Interviewers tend to give more open questions to men and they get more time to answer them than women do. Specific measures to counter this kind of gender bias include guidelines or trainings to make the members of selection committees aware of gender aspects. A balanced composition of the selection committees, in order to enhance the confidence of the underrepresented sex, is an easy positive action measure in this field. Research has shown as well that men and women have different results for certain tests (e.g. men are better at mathematical tests, women are better at linguistic tests). So it is very important that the kind and number of these tests in a selection procedure is balanced, in order to guarantee equal opportunities. Changing the existing selection systems might however be a rather lengthy reform process. The role of positive action officials here could be of pointing at the gender dimension of selection tests and to try to urge the selection officials to look for a “mainstreaming” solution.

2) Performance

- **Are good working conditions for men and women ensured?**

Good working conditions are very important for an employee's satisfaction and consequently for his/her performance. Modern technology can improve physiological working conditions to a high degree. But not only physiological, also psychological working conditions are important. Special attention should be paid to problems such as stress and sexual harassment, which can be of special interest for women.

- **Can working patterns be combined with care responsibilities?**

Working patterns are an important factor to facilitate the combination of work and care. A good balance between working and private life influences an employee's performance and functioning within the organisation. Flexible working hours (per day, per week, per month, per year) can increase a person's freedom to organise work in function of her or his private situation. The rule that no meetings are organised after 5 pm is relevant in this context. Home- and telework can avoid time-consuming travelling, working arrangements such as part-time work and career interruption should be options as well. Sufficient childcare facilities are also important. Although childcare is not in the first place the responsibility of the employer but of society at

large, supplementary measures can be taken with a view to a better combination of work and care. During the holidays childcare can be organised. Also for elder or ill persons, the employer can take initiatives.

3) Appraisal

- **Is personnel evaluation gender neutral?**

Evaluators must be made conscious of stereotyped thinking. Men and women who perform equally, must be evaluated and rewarded in the same way. In the development and operationalisation of evaluation criteria, the evaluation norms should be gender neutral and the male norm should not be prevailing. For example if personnel is evaluated on a factor as “commitment to work”, a person who is working part-time should not de facto be evaluated worse than a person working full-time because of this working arrangement. A specific positive action measure during the appraisal moment of the HRM-policy cycle would be to integrate a specific module on gender in the training of evaluators.

- **Are new appraisal systems questioned in terms of their gender implications?**

Currently, new appraisal systems are being introduced in several countries. This is a chance for equality officials to encourage the regular policy actors to mainstream a gender perspective into these systems which are aimed at improving the functioning of personnel, but also at assessing performances with a view to appraisal. E.g. the trend towards self-assessment and 360 degree appraisal should be questioned in terms of gender. At first sight, women might seem to benefit from these new methods because they give a more comprehensive picture of an individual's performance than can be provided by a purely top-down appraisal, where often only men are part of the promotion boards. Providing multi-source feedback represents a challenge to normal hierarchical concepts of management and many values associated with it. Moreover, research indicates that women show greater self-assessment accuracy than men. Nevertheless, it may still be that with these new systems individuals are being assessed on dimensions that are gender biased, so this should be investigated and looked at.

4) Development

- **Do men and women have equal opportunities for training and education?**

In our “knowledge society”, the importance of training and education is increasing. Therefore it is crucial that men and women have equal opportunities to continuing education so that they have equal chances to develop their career. In the selection of candidates for training, attention should be paid to a balanced composition of the group. In general, training programmes should be oriented towards all personnel, and not just a selective group (e.g. top managers). Also the organisation of training courses is important: they should be organised at moments which are compatible with care responsibilities (e.g. not on holidays or late in the evening). In order to fulfil specific needs of women, it might be useful to organise specific trainings (such as women and leadership, career planning, networking, combination of work and family, ...). Although these courses are useful for both men and women, in practice more women than men attend them. A positive action measure would be to encourage especially men to attend.

- **Do men and women have equal opportunities in career development?**

In general, women make less career in public services than men. There are two main reasons for this. First, stereotypes and prejudices still play an important role, whether they are consciously or unconsciously used. Often, women are still not expected to make a career. There are still prejudices against women in leadership positions but women themselves often do not strive for promotions because they have another conception of a successful career. They might prefer a career which leaves them the opportunity to develop themselves and which can be combined with a balanced private and family life. In terms of positive action, possible measures to increase the number of women in middle and top management positions are: setting up systems of mentorship and networking, specific trainings to enhance women's self-confidence in making a career, encouraging potential female candidates for a specific promotion (e.g. the equality official can send them a personal letter encouraging them to apply), etc. The second reason why fewer women get promotions is linked to structural barriers and the gendered nature inherent in most of the career systems in the public sector, leaving women poor career perspectives. These barriers include e.g. the incompatibility of part-time work with promotions. A gender mainstreaming approach should be encouraged here by the equality officials because positive action measures will only help individual women but will not provide for fundamental changes.

5) Reward

- **Is the principle 'equal pay for equal work' realised in practice?**

In practice women still earn much less than men for work of equal value. In the public sector, the situation is better than in the private sector because objectivity has always played an important role in personnel policy. Civil servants are often paid according to their function/grade and seniority. Discrimination however is still possible. Therefore the issue should be given sufficient attention by equality officials. Although the best strategy to ensure gender neutrality of pay systems is probably a mainstreaming approach (the involvement of regular actors, structural reforms), equality officials can put the issue at the fore. First of all, job evaluation systems and job classification systems can be gender biased. Functions that are occupied mostly by men can be over-evaluated, on the contrary, functions which are mostly occupied by women can be under-evaluated. Secondly, we see an evolution towards performance oriented pay. Civil servants are paid increasingly according to their personal achievements. Line managers are thus assigned broad discretionary power to fix salaries. There is a danger that men's performances are evaluated better than women's performances. Performance oriented pay systems should therefore be controlled regularly on gender neutrality.

3. Checklist for mainstreaming equality into quality management

A lot of companies in the private sector already pay attention to quality management in their organisation but little by little, also the public sector becomes more and more interested in the concept of “quality management”. Increasingly, organisations in Europe accept that “Total Quality Management” is a way of managing activities to gain efficiency, effectiveness and competitive advantage thereby ensuring longer term success - meeting the needs of employees, their customers, financial and other stakeholders and the community at large. The “EFQM excellence model”, a concept of the European Foundation for Quality management is an important example of a model that helps organisations to reach the goal of “business excellence”.

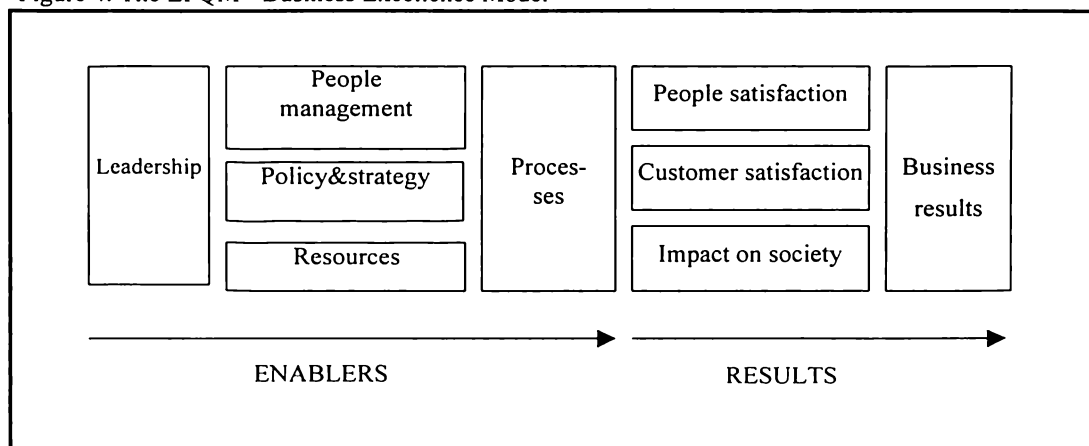
The EFQM’s mission is:

- to stimulate and assist organisations throughout Europe to participate in improvement activities leading ultimately to excellence in customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, impact on society and business results
- to support the managers of European organisations in accelerating the process of making Total Quality Management a decisive factor for achieving global competitive advantage.

In Belgium, the federal Equality Unit together with the Flemish Quality Management Centre and the ‘Association Walonne pour la gestion de la Qualité’ worked on a European project called ‘Putting the E into Quality’. Within quality-thinking, equality and diversity can be seen as indicators which maximise the quality and creativity of an organisation and lead to better contacts with clients (or in the case of the public sector: “citizens”). The conclusion is that the EFQM-concept can perfectly be applied to the “equality”-theme. Concretely speaking, the equality topic can be fully integrated in the nine criteria of the EFQM-model. In this way equality becomes an integral part of quality management. In our view, “Putting the E into Quality” is a good example of mainstreaming into personnel policy “at large”. Although the model is mainly focused on the situation of private companies, it can be used - mutatis mutandis - also for the public sector.

Below, the EFQM-business excellence model is shown and we shortly present the checklist drafted by the Belgian federal Equality Unit and the Flemish Quality Management Centre in 1998 on equality and the EFQM model. It is important to notice that in the mean time, the EFQM-model has slightly been adapted (April 1999) so the checklist is based on the older model. The equality Unit plans however a new publication on this theme. For further information you can contact: *Ariane Dierickx and Carla Rijmenams, Dienst Gelijke Kansen, Cel Tewerkstelling – Ondernemingen, Ministerie van Tewerkstelling en Arbeid, Belliardstraat 51, 1040 Brussel, T: 02/233 41 99 (Fr) or 02/233 41 84 (Nl)*. Also a new European project is underway to integrate equality in the improved EFQM-model. The result will be a CD-ROM in three languages (also in English) with very concrete examples on how to mainstream the “E” into quality management. The CD-ROM will be available free of charge at the end of 1999. More information about the project can be asked at the Flemish Quality Management Centre (*Vlaams Centrum voor Kwaliteitszorg*), *Researchpark Zellik, Pontbeeklaan 43, B-1731 Zellik, Belgium, T: +32 2 466 03 06, F: +32 2 463 27 28, e-mail: vck@vck.be*

Figure 4: The EFQM - Business Excellence Model



Checklist: Putting the “E” Into Quality

- By means of the first criterion, “leadership”, the commitment of top management to the equal opportunities issue is being probed. The following questions are raised:
 - how does management inspire, support and enhance an equal opportunities culture?
 - has the equal opportunities policy been written out?
 - has anyone been appointed who has to follow up the equal opportunities policy?
- The second criterion, “policy and strategy”, enables to examine which procedures guarantee an equal opportunities policy in the organisation. Relevant questions here are:
 - is the equal opportunities policy truly incorporated in the general organizational objectives?
 - which procedures do exist to ensure that these objectives are met?
 - are any means released to realise equal opportunities?”
- The third criterion, “people management”, identifies equal opportunities in all aspects of human resources management, including recruitment and appointment, promotion, career planning, performance appraisal, reward and training.
- Under the fourth criterion, “resources”, information and data on equal opportunities is being collected. Staff and company information split up by sex is central here.
- In the fourth criterion, “processes”, we examine how “total quality management” and equal opportunities can be integrated into the organisation. Relevant questions here are:
 - does a working group on “quality” exist in the organisation?
 - are equal opportunities a theme in this work group?
- The sixth criterion of the EFQM model, “customer satisfaction”, tries to establish a link between motivation, performance and quality of products and services. Important questions here are:
 - how visible is the equal opportunities policy for the outside world?
 - is there a balanced apportionment between male and female employees who are in direct contact with the citizens?

- The seventh criterion, “people satisfaction”, is completed by the information obtained from a continual dialogue with employees. In these interviews several themes emerge: working conditions, reward, communication and atmosphere, sexual harassment on the work floor, personnel turnover and efflux.
- The eight criterion, “impact on society”, reflects the image and profile of the organisation concerning the equal opportunities issue.
- The ninth and last criterion, “business results”, looks into the future of the organisation by means of company results. Equal opportunities as a marketing instrument can give a competitive edge. Moreover, the organisations whose composition matches that of society, are more likely to have an instinctive feeling of society.

PART 4: CASE STUDIES IN FIVE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATIONS

1. BELGIUM: The realisation of target figures for the number of men and women in the federal ministries

By: Maria De Leeuw, Jacques Druart, Annemie Morris and Carol Vanhoutte

1.1. Time-schedule

a) The research project on target figures

On July 25 1997, the federal Council of Ministers approved a report on a five years' federal positive action policy. This report included a proposal to elaborate target figures. On the initiative of the Minister responsible for equal opportunities for men and women, the research project "*Indicators and target figures. Instrument for a proportional representation of men and women in the federal ministries*"³⁶ effectively started at the beginning of 1998. The research was completed by the end of 1998 with indicators and target figures determined for every federal ministry.

b) The conference on target figures

The research project on indicators and target figures as well as the policy recommendations formulated in the report were presented at a conference organised in April 1999 with the support of the Minister responsible for equal opportunities for men and women as well as the Minister of the Civil Service.

c) Development of a mainstreaming strategy

On the basis of the recommendations in the research report on target figures and as announced at the conference in April, a project to develop a more integrated approach towards equality and personnel policy was started in May 1999. The elaboration of a proposal to appoint a mainstreaming official in the Ministry of the Civil Service is the main starting point for this new strategy.

d) Commitment of the administrative and political top

Before the end of 1999, the report on target figures and the mainstreaming proposals will be presented to the Board of Secretary Generals. Depending on the agenda of the new government after the elections of June 1999, the proposals will also be submitted for approval to the new Council of Ministers later this year.

1.2. Objectives

Establishing indicators and target figures is clearly not an objective in itself, the target figures rather constitute an instrument to realise equal opportunities for men and women in the public sector. Consequently, the main objective was not to set target figures but to realise them through the pursuit of an effective policy strategy. Therefore, the aim of this case is to try to realise the target figures by pursuing a dual policy strategy: specific (positive) actions on the one hand and an integrated approach (mainstreaming) on the other hand.

a) Positive action

Positive action is an already existing policy approach in the Belgian federal administration. The royal decree of February 27 1990, constitutes the main legal basis for this policy for women in the public sector. Every public service residing under the royal decree, has to appoint a positive action official. The positive action official has to draft an analytical report which contains detailed gender differentiated statistical data and on the basis of this quantitative analysis, the positive action official has to draft an equality plan. Every public service also has to compose an internal guidance commission with advising and controlling competencies. Besides these two instances provided by the law, other actors are active as well: a federal positive action co-ordinator, a positive action network and regional contact persons who support the different positive action officials.

The objective of the case is to come to a new impetus for the existing positive action strategy. As this policy approach is often confronted with a lack of interest or resistance from the different ministries and public services, a new dynamic is needed. Only with a revitalised positive action strategy, it will be possible to realise the target figures and to achieve a proportional representation of men and women in the public sector.

b) Mainstreaming: a more integrated approach

Besides improving the positive action policy, the other objective of the case is to make a start with introducing mainstreaming as a new policy approach towards equality and personnel policy, in order to realise the target figures and a gender balance in personnel policy. Mainstreaming of equality into personnel policy is a new approach that does not exist yet on the federal level. Although the importance of the existing positive action policy cannot be denied, many policy aspects to be dealt with concern the federal personnel policy in general and the personnel statute in particular, both being interdepartmental issues. Therefore, isolated actions only have a limited impact. To be able to realise structural long-term changes, the integration of a gender dimension into the federal personnel policy will be crucial. It should be stressed however that the aim is to pursue a dual strategy: mainstreaming will have to be complementary to a powerful positive action policy and cannot replace the existing positive action policy.

1.3. Areas of personnel policy concerned

The realisation of target figures clearly affects two important aspects of the federal personnel policy: recruitment and promotion. The research project on indicators and target figures shortly examined the important role of the "Central Recruitment Office" in the recruitment and selection of statutory staff. The recruitment of statutory staff is based on exams organised by this Central Recruitment Office. The analysis of the recruitment data shows that more women than men drop out at three important stages of the selection procedure: the enrolment, passing the exam and the actual appointment afterwards. The research project formulates several policy recommendations for recruitment as well as for promotion.

But besides recruitment and promotion as specific areas of personnel policy, it is even more important to stress that this case deals more with strategies and new ways to pursue an effective equality oriented personnel policy than with concrete personnel policy aspects. The case suggests a more integrated approach for all important interdepartmental areas of personnel policy, namely a mainstreaming strategy. Positive action is stressed as a strategy to implement personnel policy in each department.

1.4. Policy actors in charge of (monitoring) the case

In the course of this case, the federal Ministry of Labour (which has overall responsibility for the federal equality policy for men and women) closely collaborated with the federal Ministry of the Civil Service (which holds the overall responsibility for the federal personnel policy).

The federal co-ordinator of positive action was the contact person in the Ministry of Labour. She is a member of the Equal Opportunities Unit in this Ministry and has overall responsibility for the federal positive action policy. Her function is to initiate joint actions, organise training for the positive action officials and to formulate policy recommendations for new strategies and initiatives concerning positive action. She also co-ordinates the network meetings of the federal positive action officials, which take place every two months.

The overall responsibility for personnel policy lies within the Ministry of the Civil Service. There were three main contact persons in this Ministry: the two positive action officials and a third civil servant responsible for Human Resources Management. They are all to be situated in a HRM-Unit under the immediate authority of the Secretary General of this Ministry.

1.5. Other policy actors or target groups involved

It is the positive action officials who are responsible for the annual follow-up (and if necessary also for the adjustment) of the target figures. However, the realisation of the target figures is a shared responsibility of several policy actors and not only of the positive action officials. Especially the commitment of the top management is crucial: they must clearly support the targets and the mainstreaming objectives. Therefore, the political and administrative top are the most important target group the case tries to focus on.

1.6. Link with the theoretical structure of an equality oriented personnel policy

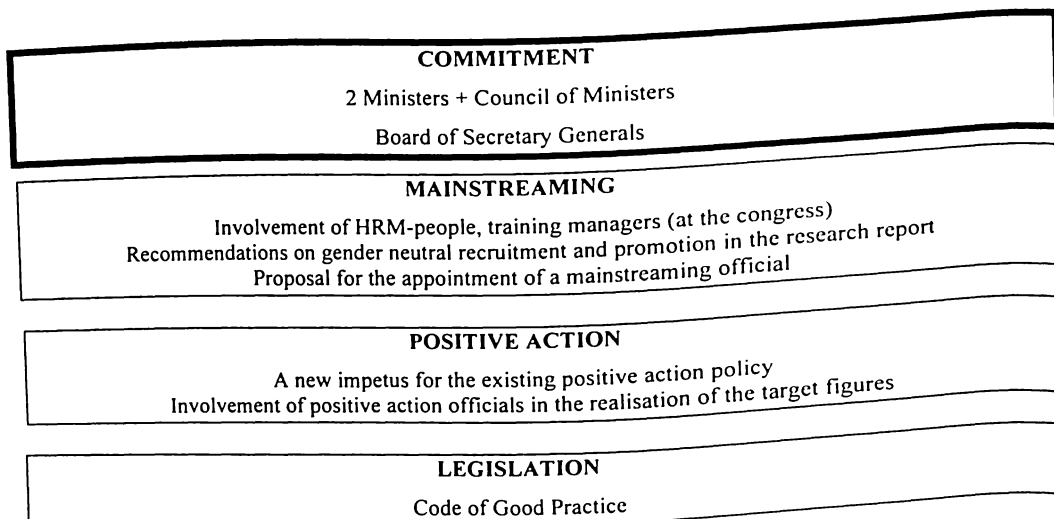
The main pillars of the structure of an equality oriented personnel policy as described in the third part of this book, are more or less all present in this case.

It is clear that “commitment” is an important pillar as regards the realisation of the target figures. Not only the support of the two Ministers involved (Equality and Civil Service) was sought but also the support of the entire Council of Ministers and certainly the commitment of the Board of Secretary Generals.

Furthermore, the aim of the case is to introduce “mainstreaming” as a more integrated approach towards equality and personnel policy at the federal level. The proposal to appoint a mainstreaming official in the Ministry of the Civil Service should be the beginning of a comprehensive mainstreaming strategy and shows the importance the case attaches to this pillar of an equality oriented personnel policy. Also the fact that leading officials and regular actors in the field of personnel policy are an important target group in the context of this case comes under the mainstreaming pillar as well.

Besides the objective of a new integrated approach, a strengthening of the existing positive action policy is a second objective of the case. In this way, the “positive action pillar” of the structure is paid attention to as well. The important role of the positive action officials regarding the realisation, the follow-up and possibly the adjustment of the target figures is not neglected either.

Finally, the Code of Good Practice presented at the conference on target figures, wants to clarify the existing legislation on positive action. This means that the importance of legislation as one of the pillars of an equality oriented personnel policy is stressed as well.



1.7. Description of the content

a) The report on target figures

The objective of the report was to elaborate a methodology and to set quantitative objectives for the number of men and women in the federal ministries. The starting point was to elaborate realistic target figures that should be attained within a period of five years. Therefore, a survey was made of the number of vacancies to be expected within a 5 years period. Consequently, a proposition to fill in the vacancies is given. The standard to fill in the vacancies at level 1³⁷ (the highest level) is:

- parity for recruitment
 - 1/3th of women for promotion to middle and top management
- For all the other levels the standard is parity for recruitment and promotion.

Target figures are quantitative objectives without any legal obligation, as opposed to quota. With regard to the realisation of the figures, the choice of these words is very important. By making it clear that target figures are not the same as quota, the aversion and the hostility and consequently also the controversy and the isolation that is experienced too often in relation to positive actions, is avoided. By framing target figures in the general context of a quantitative approach towards personnel policy and by making use of a terminology and an angle that is well known also outside the usual opportunities "fancub", leading officials responsible for personnel policy are more easily motivated to support equality policy. In this way, target figures offer an opportunity to bring the overall positive action policy indirectly to the attention of the middle and top management. This helps to give it a new impetus, which is one of the main objectives of this case.

b) The follow-up of the target figures

The research report on target figures formulates several policy recommendations in order to make the realisation of the target figures successful. They are situated at four different levels:

- 1) The use and methodology of indicators and target figures
- 2) Recruitment
- 3) Promotion
- 4) The positive action policy in general

The follow-up of the target figures in the context of this case, concentrates on the last area of policy recommendations, which deals with policy strategies to realise the target figures.

• The presentation of the figures at a special conference

A conference on the research on indicators and target figures was organised on April 20th 1999. This half-a-day conference was a useful instrument as regards the sensibilisation of leading civil servants, which is an important prerequisite for more effective positive actions. Through the presentation of the report and contributions of different speakers, attention could be given to the general positive action policy and several of its attendant problems.

The conference was a collaboration between the services of the Minister responsible for equal opportunities for men and women and the Minister of the Civil Service. Both Ministers attended the congress, holding respectively the opening and closing speeches in which they underlined the importance of the realisation of the target figures and an equality oriented personnel policy. A representative of the Secretary General of the Civil Service Ministry launched the proposal to appoint a mainstreaming official, which was afterwards the starting point for the next part of this case: a detailed and elaborated proposal for the appointment of such a mainstreaming official (cf. *infra*). The conference had a large turnout: more than 200 civil servants, several of them being leading officials, attended the conference. Intendedly, the invitations had not only been sent to the 'usual' participants of seminars on equal opportunities but specifically to line managers, personnel managers and those responsible for training. By way of the indicators and target figures, all these people were introduced to the positive action issue at large, which was a useful awareness-raising exercise.

After the author had explained the report, a 'Code of Good Practice'³⁸ on positive action was presented. Much too often, the federal positive action legislation is carried out according to the letter of the law but not according to its spirit. This Code is meant to overcome the gaps in the existing legislation on positive action and is designed for personnel and line managers as well as positive action officials. The Code stresses that positive action should be seen as a permanent process and not as a once-only initiative: every five years an analytical report and a global action plan should be drafted while on a yearly basis, a detailed year-plan should be drawn up. The Code also includes recommendations regarding the appointment of the positive action officials, their tasks and their time exemption for the job. The role of the internal guidance commission and the regional contact persons is explained as well. After the presentation of the Code, a Norwegian expert presented the Norwegian case on target figures and a European civil servant talked about 'Mainstreaming and equal opportunities in the selection procedures of the European Commission'. In making the link with other countries and the Commission, we wanted to stress the relevance and the importance of the subject on an international level. At the end of the morning, a number of persons were asked to take part in a roundtable discussion and to give their opinion on the report and the other presentations.

A member of the Central Recruitment Office, a member of the HRM-Unit of the Ministry of the Civil Service, a positive action official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as a member of the Council for Equal Opportunities (a federal advisory body) participated.

Furthermore, on the occasion of the conference, different publications were presented and given to all the participants as part of a sensibilisation strategy. Besides the exhaustive version of the report on target figures and its annexes, a summary report of the research was made available in order to reach a larger target public who actually reads the documents. Also a small leaflet, which explains the aims and the structures of the positive action policy and which included the contact details of the federal co-ordinator, was distributed. Also after the conference, these leaflets were distributed on a large scale so that all federal institutions were made aware of the existing positive action policies. Also the Code of Good Practice was published in a small and reader-friendly version so that it does not remain a dry legal document. All these publications have a uniform layout and style and should add to the visibility of the positive action policy.

- *The presentation of the target figures to the Board of Secretary Generals*

As the commitment of the administrative top is crucial, before the end of the year the report on target figures will be presented to the Board of Secretary Generals. Their commitment to the realisation of the target figures will be asked and their role in supervising the correct application of the Code of Good Practice on positive action will be stressed. Also the proposals on mainstreaming as an effective strategy to achieve the target figures next to a reinforced positive action policy, will be explained at this meeting.

c) Proposal for the appointment of a mainstreaming official

- *Role and position of the mainstreaming official within the Ministry of the Civil Service*

The Federal Ministry of the Civil Service has a supporting role towards every other ministry or public institution. Therefore it is composed of several specific units:

- the Central Recruitment Office : responsible for the selection and recruitment of civil servants
- the Federal Training Institute: responsible for training
- the General Administration Unit: regulations and statutes
- the Federal Office for Purchases: responsible for all kinds of supplies to the federal civil service
- the Office for Public Purchases and Subventions: control over public contracts
- the Consultancy Bureau for Organisation and Management: managerial advice
- the Office of the Secretary General: co-ordination and policy

The support of the Ministry of the Civil Service to the other ministries covers many fields, several of which concern personnel policy. Personnel policy in the Belgian federal administration is organised in a quite centralised way. A more integrated approach of equality and personnel policy, must therefore start within the Ministry of the Civil Service where the main lines of the personnel policy are sketched. The mainstreaming official could e.g. co-operate with the Central Recruitment Office to examine recruitment and selection procedures on gender bias, consult with the training department and examine in co-operation with the relevant policy actors the wide range of statutory regulations on gender bias.

It is a strategic choice to place this mainstreaming official within the Office of the Secretary General of the Civil Service Ministry where the impact on the personnel policy

is the most effective. It is also within this Office that the official can obtain the most useful and recent information on personnel policy. The mainstreaming official shall therefore be part of the direct staff of the Secretary General where he or she can directly formulate possible policy changes.

To ensure sufficient influence, it is also necessary to make sure that the mainstreaming official works at a high level. The proposal therefore consists of recruiting a Counsellor General (rank 15) or a Counsellor (rank 13) with a rank 15 mandate.³⁹ Such a high level is certainly justified to make sure that the official, whose role is in fact also interdepartmental, will be a credible discussion partner for leading civil servants (Secretary Generals and Director Generals) in other ministries and public institutions and to make sure he or she will be able to sensitise and convince them.

The choice to give the mainstreaming official a mandate of a limited period (5 years) is necessary because it is a specific and specialised function which demands a certain creativity and imagination. The mandate might be renewed in order to make sure that the specific skills are not lost. Five years is the minimum period to be able to carry out some concrete projects.

• *The selection of the mainstreaming official*

The mainstreaming official should be recruited among the civil servants of the federal civil service. This option has preference to the recruitment of an external expert on mainstreaming. Being a civil servant could be an advantage for his or her role of discussion partner at a high level for the other ministries.⁴⁰ A good knowledge of administrative functioning will have priority over a mere specialisation in the field of mainstreaming. Furthermore, the role of the mainstreaming official is not so much conceived as that of an expert but as that of a co-ordinator, a driving force who can always call on the necessary specialisation through subcontracting.

Applicants will be called for through the official 'state' journal (Belgisch Staatsblad). The vacancy will be opened to every civil servant with rank 13 (possible promotion) or 15 (possible transfer from another department). The selection will be organised by the Central Recruitment Office and the jury will be composed of leading civil servants and specialists outside the civil service. The jury will have to consist of an equal number of men and women.

The profile of the mainstreaming official could be the following one:

Experience

- experience in the civil service
- project management

Knowledge

- civil service
- organisational aspects (social psychology of organisations), HRM

Skills/personality

- sensitivity to gender equality issues
- good communication skills
- negotiation skills
- authority
- analytical mind, critical spirit
- autonomy, independence
- impartiality, discretion, professional ethics
- strategic mind

- ability to innovate
- motivation, perseverance

Furthermore the candidate should also be fluent in French, Dutch and English.

Eventually, it will be up to the Council of Ministers to subscribe the need of a mainstreaming official in the specific area of personnel policy within the federal government.

1.8. Problems and bottlenecks

a) Political will

It is a risk to talk about gender mainstreaming without implementing it. The initiative of elaborating and preparing a mainstreaming strategy on paper, starting with a proposal for the appointment of a mainstreaming co-ordinator was important, but now the will to really endorse and implement these proposals will be even more important for the realisation of the target figures. A problem with a view to a quick implementation however is the political vacuum period that has been experienced in Belgium in 1999 due to the resigning government (since April 1999), the elections (June 1999) and the formation-process of the new government (June-July 1999). For a great deal, it will depend on the new Minister for Equality on the one hand and the Minister of the Civil Service on the other hand, what will happen next. They will need to be informed as soon as possible about the mainstreaming proposals. It will also be important that the decision to start with mainstreaming in the field of personnel policy gets the approval of the new Council of Ministers. But with the formation of the new government all these aspects are delayed.

b) Support of the top management

As with the support of the political top, also the commitment of the administrative top is not consolidated yet. Due to time constraints⁴¹, the middle and top management in the federal administration were initially not involved in the project on target figures. In a similar project on target figures in Norway, on the contrary, top officials in each ministry were consulted at different moments regarding the development and the final choice of the target figures. Obviously, the bottom-up approach followed in Belgium has its disadvantages: the top officials still have to be informed about the target figures and their important role in the follow-up. Also, they have to be convinced still of the added value of mainstreaming within the field of personnel policy and the pioneering role that the Ministry of the Civil Service can play in the implementation of mainstreaming within the federal ministries.⁴² Unfortunately, in the actual political climate (dioxin-crisis, elections and formation of a new government) it was not possible yet to put the subject of the target figures and mainstreaming on the agenda of the Board of Secretary Generals. Several appointments have been cancelled at the last minute.

1.9. Status of the case

The research project on target figures was ended at the end of 1998 and presented to a large audience at the congress in April 1999. The report itself and the strategies to realise the targets still have to be presented to the Board of Secretary Generals and the new ministers. This is an important next step to take. Due to the change in government, the other steps to be taken next are not sure yet. The agenda and priorities of the new political actors will be crucial.

Furthermore, it has to be mentioned that the concrete statistical follow-up of the target figures (annual follow-up by the positive action officials, annual presentation of the results to the top management and adjustment of the target figures by the positive action officials if necessary) is not elaborated in every detail yet. Specific responsibilities still have to be assigned and clear arrangements and guidelines about timing and reporting still have to be made. This will be done in the context of the positive action networks, preferably also with the support of the top management.

1.10. Results and conclusions

We learned from this case that indicators and target figures, as a modern quantitative instrument of personnel policy, offer an ideal opportunity to indirectly bring the overall positive action policy and the broader issue of an equality oriented personnel policy to the attention of a large public. Target figures present an ideal frame in which other aspects of personnel policy, like e.g. recruitment and promotion can be integrated. Furthermore, they encourage policy makers to search for effective strategies to make sure that the targets can be realised in practice. In this way, the federal initiative regarding target figures for the number of men and women in the ministries, resulted into a reinforcement of the existing positive action policy and also made it possible to make a first step to a mainstreaming approach.

Probably, the most significant weakness of the project has been the uncertain political context, before and after the elections in June 1999. There has been of course the support of the two (former) ministers involved without which the research project as such could not have been realised. But there is a clear imbalance between a top-down and a bottom-up approach. The transitional stage in the political landscape could have been a reason to put the whole project aside for a while and to wait for the agenda of the new government. However, a choice was made to continue in the meantime with a bottom-up approach and to follow-up some of the recommendations in the report on target figures and to elaborate further policy proposals. Nevertheless, some decisions can not be made without the effective support of the political and administrative top. The policy actors involved in monitoring the case are aware that the next steps to be taken will be crucial to ensure the success of the project.

2. THE NETHERLANDS: Testing the gender neutrality of the procedure used for filling vacancies of the ABD-Office

By: Francine J.N. ten Hoedt-van Rintel and Nelly Riksen-Borsje

2.1. Time schedule

A study of gender neutrality in the procedure used for filling the vacancies of the ABD-Office took place from March to July 1999. During this period, a study of the literature was undertaken and talks were held with career advisors of the ABD-Office. This consequently led to a presentation of the provisional results at a working conference held in Leuven on 21 June 1999. During this conference, participants discussed the case. The recommendations that were made at the time have been incorporated into this report.

2.2. Objectives

The General Administration (Algemene Bestuursdienst or ABD) consists of senior managers from the central government from level 17 upwards. The ABD has around 350 members, only 19 of whom are women. In spite of legislation in the field of equal opportunities, positive action and provisions incorporated in labour conditions, it appears difficult to achieve a fair distribution of men and women in top positions. A number of actions were undertaken to bring about a change in this situation such as an examination of the proportionality of men and women in senior positions and the reasons why women leave government employment (outflow). An examination into gender neutrality in the procedure for filling vacancies is also relevant in this context.

2.3. Areas of personnel policy concerned

This case relates to the field of recruitment and selection and more specifically to the nomination policy for top civil servants. The term nomination policy includes all activities aimed at finding the right person, at the right time, for the right position. This covers the whole spectrum of inflow, throughflow and outflow of the ABD. The filling of vacancies is an important part of this as well as the organization of inflow, throughflow and outflow activities, i.e. discussing career prospects, looking for candidates and help with drawing up candidate profiles.

2.4. Policy actors in charge of (monitoring) the case

The government of the Netherlands is made up of eight sectors. One of these is the 'national' (Rijk) sector covering 13 ministries.⁴³ The Ministry of the Interior and relations with Overseas Territories (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties or BZK) acts as representative of the employer. The departments are themselves responsible for internal personnel policy and its implementation and BZK plays a coordinating role in this regard. This means that BZK is responsible for collective labour agreement negotiations with the sector, draws up agreements with the ministries concerned about the implementation of collective agreements and makes recommendations relating to personnel policy. Acting in this way, the Ministry of the Interior can make recommendations to the ministries about promoting women to higher positions.

Every ministry is responsible for its own personnel policy. There is an interdepartmental policy for the management development of senior civil servants, which is the role of the

ABD-Office. The ABD was set up to enhance the quality of the civil service, under the responsibility of the Minister of the Interior. Up till now, the area of operation of the ABD extended to all civil servants from level 17 upwards. This includes positions such as Secretary General, Director General, their respective deputies and directors. In accordance with the intentions of the second Kok (Dutch Prime Minister) cabinet – expressed in the 1998 government agreement – as from 2000, civil servants at level 16 will also be included in the ABD.

The ABD-Office was set up in September 1995 to define preconditions for achieving the aims of the ABD. The ABD-Office develops policies and coordinates the implementation. This is carried out in close cooperation with the departments. From an organizational point of view, the ABD-Office is under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior and hence directly under the Minister of the Interior. The ABD-Office employs 26 people including seven career advisors and five policy officials. A precondition for discharging this task is establishing the appropriate conditions for organization development of the civil service in its entirety and each individual department. The activities of the ABD-Office are mainly focused on the personal development of top managers based on the idea that only individual development leads to organization development.

The policy of the ABD-Office is directed at five target areas: appointment policy, career advice, individual development, interdepartmental synergy and research and development. As all ministries are responsible for their own management development policy, the first area, that of appointment policy, is the most important activity of the ABD-Office.

This case has been dealt with by Nelly Riksen-Borsje, policy official at the Ministry of the Interior, Director General, Management and Staff Policy responsible for the emancipation portfolio and Francine ten Hoedt-van Rintel, policy official and holder of the emancipation portfolio at the ABD-Office.

2.5. Other policy actors or target groups involved

Although strictly speaking the case is dealt with by the ABD-Office, the results of the enquiry can also be used to formulate recommendations for the departments belonging to the national sector.

2.6. Link with the theoretical structure of an equality oriented personnel policy

The aim of the project is to test to what extent the equal opportunities aspect has been incorporated into the procedure for filling vacancies in the ABD-Office. Where necessary, recommendations have been made. The guidelines for equality oriented personnel policy cover three aspects where policy can be focused:

1. legislation
2. positive action
3. mainstreaming

The most important matter is sufficient commitment especially by management. The checking of the procedure for filling vacancies against the guidelines is especially aimed at point 2, positive action and point 3, mainstreaming. Attention has also been paid to commitment.

2.7. Description of the content

The procedure for filling vacancies maintained by ABD can be briefly summed up as follows⁴⁴:

- The departments have to report any vacancy occurring at level 17 and upwards to the ABD-Office.
- The ABD-Office notifies interested parties and other departments about these vacancies.
- The ABD-Office gathers a number of suitable candidates for the post, based on indications drawn up by the departments and proposes a number of candidates to the department with the vacancy.
- The department chooses one or more candidates from this list for an initial discussion.
- Based on this discussion, the department chooses one or more candidates and the departmental recruitment procedure is then followed. As soon as a suitable candidate has been found, the department reports this to the ABD-Office which then rounds off the process by directly notifying all other persons involved.

Rapid communication and care is crucial to this recruitment and selection process - rapid communication to serve departments and ABD staff to the best of their ability and care to avoid damaging the interests of those involved.

The checking of the procedure for filling vacancies against the guidelines produces the following results:

a) Legislation

The guidelines indicate that focusing on legislation is the easiest but also the least effective way to tackle the problem of gender bias. Legislation or regulations can easily degenerate into a paper tiger instead of turning it into a powerful instrument by properly implementing its spirit and provisions. Legislation is hardly relevant in this specific case but an enquiry can be carried out concerning the emphasis placed in the guidelines on providing information to staff on legislation and regulations. The question should be asked if the ABD-Office has provided enough information about the procedure to the ministries and ABD staff. The answer to this question is affirmative. The procedure was created in close cooperation with the various ministries. ABD staff has been informed of the procedure. Moreover, every candidate who is approached in connection with a vacancy is told about the procedure. A brochure is being written to spread the message even further.

b) Positive action

In this book, positive action is described as: "actions and measures to help specific groups, i.e. women in specific situations, i.e. on the labour market, to catch up". In the case of the ABD-procedure for filling vacancies, positive action takes the form of what is known as the "women's file" of the ABD-Office which includes data on female staff working for the ABD and potential ABD female staff members (at lower levels and externally). If a ministry announces a vacancy, the women's file is first consulted to see if there are any suitable candidates. This method of operation has become so convenient that it is not even mentioned in the procedure. If a department asks for a female candidate, everything is done to offer as many female candidates as possible. It is evident that when it comes to positive action, quality is always the main priority.

c) Mainstreaming

The main points of mainstreaming are:

- 1) examining existing policies
- 2) examining the role of those persons involved.

Testing the procedure used in filling vacancies therefore can be called mainstreaming because an existing procedure is examined from a gender perspective. However, as to mainstreaming, the ABD-procedure is far from being the most ideal subject for examination as those areas where gender bias may appear are often areas in which the department with the vacancy is actively involved. Taking this into account, attention should be paid to the start of the vacancy, drawing up job and competency profiles and choosing candidates for the selection procedure. The ABD-Office is able to make recommendations on these subjects to the ministries and offer training courses to selectors working for the ministries. Furthermore, it is important that a policy official working for the ABD-Office has the subject of gender specifically included in his/her portfolio.

d) Commitment

There exists true commitment within the ABD-Office to promote gender equality but translation into actual figures and actions relating to vacancy filling procedures has not (yet) happened. Studies have, however, been carried out about the position of women on the labour market especially for top jobs. In 1998 a report was published entitled "Evenredig, nog even niet" ("Proportionate but not quite yet")⁴⁵ containing the results of studies done into the distribution of men and women in senior positions within government. In the autumn of 1999, a report was published on the reasons why women leave the civil service. The results of these studies and this project were incorporated in recommendations to the departments. There are also plans to investigate the gender neutrality of ABD management skills. Contact has also been made with the Danish School of Public Administration which has an international programme for women managers.⁴⁶ A number of women managers of the ABD are following this programme.

2.8. Problems and bottlenecks

In the first place, the time aspect played an important role in the implementation of the case both in the choice of the subject and the implementation itself (only three months). The choice of the subject would have been easier in 1998. The ABD-Office undertook a study at that time relating to the proportionality of women in senior positions. The project would have fitted perfectly into this study. The choice of the subject would also have been easier if there had been more time given to completing the project. The ABD-Office is currently doing a study on why women leave the civil service. This study will be completed in the autumn of 1999, too late to be included in this project. Another problem was the difference between positive action and mainstreaming. Positive action can be seen as a part of a mainstreaming policy; both are not as easy to distinguish than it might appear from the guidelines.

2.9. Status of the case

The case was completed in July 1999. The results will, together with those of the above-mentioned studies, be used to develop Management Development policy for senior managers in the civil service.

2.10. Results and conclusions

To sum up, it can be said that the ABD-procedure for filling vacancies tested against the guidelines presents a positive image. There is commitment by the ABD-Office to give equal opportunities a role when drawing up policy by including this subject in the policy portfolio of a policy official, by having studies done and by participating in (international) initiatives relating to this topic.

The procedure has been sufficiently published, care has been taken regarding communication and the code of conduct offers clarity for all those involved. The procedure is transparent which means that informal decision making which could be disadvantageous for women is avoided. Testing the procedure against the guidelines has translated mainstreaming into practice. This represents a starting point for an investigation into the policy as a whole.

Checking the procedure against the guidelines and the discussions held during the congress in Leuven resulted in a number of practical recommendations that are discussed below.

(1) Formalise the procedure for filling vacancies especially the use of the "women's file".

It is ironic that a ABD-Office practice that actually should be a matter of course in every selection procedure, has to be formalised into positive action.

(2) Agree with the departments that at least one, preferably several women, be placed on every candidate list.

Due to the limited number of women in senior posts, it is impossible to make it obligatory to put at least one (but preferably more) women on every candidate list. This would mean that women eligible for mobility would have to be put on every candidate list whether or not this entails a perfect match between candidate, post and department. This is in conflict with the mission of the ABD, i.e. guaranteeing the quality, integrity and professionalism of the civil service and is furthermore in two aspects unfair towards female candidates. In the first place, the ABD-Office tries to find a tailor-made candidate to fill the vacancy. This means that account is taken of the vacancy, the mentality of the department and the tasks to be carried out. If a suitable female candidate is available, she will certainly be proposed but only due to her qualities and not because the ABD-Office wants to satisfy the requirements of positive action. Secondly, obligatory placing on the candidates' list means that individual women would appear on the list more often than individual men. The number of women in senior positions is much smaller than the number of men. This implies that a woman will get more refusals than a man which may damage her reputation unnecessarily.

(3) Use gender neutral language when drawing up job profiles and vacancy notices.

This recommendation is supported by the Bureau. In 1998, ABD management skills were developed for use in drawing up job profiles and vacancy notices. The idea was to use gender neutrality when describing management skills. This will be specifically tested again in the autumn of 1999.

- (4) When evaluating the filling of vacancies, ask participants specific questions concerning the gender neutrality of the procedure.*
- (5) Make sure that there is a woman in every selection committee.*
- (6) Train members of selection committees to be aware of gender aspects.*
- (7) Develop target figures, e.g. for appointing a specific percentage of women or for proposing a certain percentage of women for appointment for a vacancy.*

Laying down target figures can have a positive effect as long as they are realistic. It is useless to stipulate that the percentage of women in senior positions should increase by 50% if there are not enough female candidates.

- (8) Investigate what percentage of women ask spontaneously for promotion to higher positions, how often this is agreed to and how often refused due to the interests of the organization.*

Every year a report is sent to the Lower House by the Ministry of the Interior relating to personnel policy in the civil service in which nearly all staff information is divided up between men and women including data on rank and position. Making an inventory of the number of women who spontaneously ask for promotion and are given it, is hardly possible as this occurs within the departments. Knowing what goes on in this case can lead to awareness of specific patterns if they exist. It would be interesting to know what happens after a promotion is refused due to the interests of the organization.

- (9) Draw up indicators on the number of women who are proposed for a job, the numbers who are actually appointed, how often women are proposed for a position, etc. and this per department. This would provide insight into the developments per department.*

Small numbers are in this case a handicap. At the moment, it is difficult for the departments to get more women into senior positions because not enough women are in the "pipeline". It is therefore important to increase the number of women in posts directly under senior management.

*ANNEX 1: The ABD-procedure to fill vacancies**A) The vacancies*

1. All ABD-vacancies are reported to the Director General of the ABD.
2. The Director General of the ABD reports the vacancy to:
 - Members of the Board of Secretary Generals
 - Members of the ABD
 - Personnel Directors of the ministries
 - Management Development-advisors of the ministries

B) The function profile

3. The department with the vacancy (hereafter called 'the principal') makes up a function profile, with at least the following elements:
 - Formal functional requirements
 - Relevant internal and external factors
 - Specific knowledge and skills
 - Overview of future themes, priorities and developments in the policy field of the function
 - Relevant ABD-management competences
 - Required management style

C) List of possible candidates

4. To make up the first list of possible candidates the ABD-Office uses:
 - The ABD-database
 - The own relations network
 - Applicants
 - Candidates recommended by the principal, Secretary Generals, Personnel Directors or Management Development-advisors
5. The ABD-Office makes a first selection of proper candidates.
6. The ABD-Office consults the principal about this list.
7. After this consult a final list is fixed.
8. The Secretary Generals of the ministries where candidates work, are informed about possible nomination of one of their officials.

D) Consulting possible candidates

9. The ABD-Office consults candidates about:
 - the content of the function profile
 - the course of the procedure
 - the number of candidates (anonymous)
 - questions the candidate may have
10. Candidates inform the ABD-Office whether they are interested in a nomination. The ABD-Office subsequently informs the principal of which candidates may be invited for an orienting conversation.

E) About the orienting conversation

11. The principal invites the nominated candidates for an orienting conversation. Subjects dealt with are: content of the function, functional requirements, organisation, organisational culture. The conversation is open-ended. The aim is to inform each other and to examine expectations.
12. After this conversation both candidate and principal decide on taking the next step to the departmental selection procedure. Parties will inform one another and the ABD-Office about their decision.

F) About the departmental selection

13. Candidates follow the departmental selection procedure. These procedures may be different for each ministry. An assessment may be required.
14. During the selection procedure both candidate and principal inform the ABD-Office about the progress.
15. The principal chooses one candidate.

G) About the settling

16. The principal informs all candidates and the ABD-Office about the results of the selection procedure.
17. The ABD-Office contacts all nominated candidates to evaluate the procedure.
18. The ABD-Office formulates an advice to the minister of the Interior concerning the assignment.
19. The decision can only be published after the necessary approval is obtained:
 - All assignments on ABD-level require approval of the minister of the Interior
 - Assignment of a Secretary General requires also approval of the Cabinet
 - All ABD-assignments need to be confirmed by her Majesty the Queen
 - In some cases a positive advice of the Internal Security Service is needed
20. The principal and the ABD-Office arrange procedures as to how the assignment will be published.
21. The principal formulates a Royal Decree. Both the principal and the ministry of the Interior sign the decree.

*This procedure applies to all selection procedures on ABD-level in the central government. Special conditions may oblige deviations.
The principal and the ABD-Office may agree upon a different procedure.
In all circumstances the code of conduct will be in force.*

*ANNEX 2: The ABD code of conduct to fill vacancies***Transparency**

- Selection procedures have to be reliable and therefore transparent. Therefore the ABD-procedure to fill vacancies has to be followed from start to end, in line with this code of conduct. This results in a clear and consistent procedure and sharing of responsibility for all involved, especially the candidates.

Confidence

- Confidence is the base of every assignment procedure. The principal and the ABD-Office share responsibility. Both during and after the orientation phase and the departmental selection procedure privacy has to be warranted.
- Of course the candidate is also responsible to warrant confidence during and after the procedure. Candidates will never be informed about the names of other candidates in the procedure.

Communication

- The ABD-Office informs all persons directly involved (ABD-members, Board of Secretary Generals, Personnel Directors or Management Development-advisors) in time, correctly and completely during the first phases of the procedure. As soon as the departmental selection procedure starts, the principal takes over.
- Special attention is required to informing all candidates as soon as the principal has made a choice. The principal has to prevent that candidates are informed otherwise. As the nomination only can be published after approval of the minister of the Interior and in some cases of the Cabinet, confidentiality must be granted.

Carefulness

- Carefulness in the procedure means: scrupulous pursuit of all phases of the procedure with ongoing communication to all involved.
- Especially the accurate formulation of requirements and conditions the principal makes to applicants are essential for the scrupulous pursuit of the procedure. We have to prevent candidates to generate wrong expectations about content and context of the vacancy. The principal has to offer the function profile as soon as possible to the ABD-Office. This function profile must be as accurate as possible. Changing the profile during the procedure has to be avoided, since candidates are selected by using the function profile. In case of a change, the recommended candidates would not meet the profile anymore.
- Carefulness means being in time. Long periods between contacts with the principal, the candidates and ABD-Office in a selection procedure are improper. The ABD-Office is due to finish the preselection phase within two months at the most. The departmental selection procedure has to be finished equally within a term of two months. The finishing touch can not be limited in time. It depends strongly on the approval of the assignment or the results of a security test.

Responsibility

The ABD-Office is responsible for:

- Announcing the vacancy
- The first shortlist of candidates
- Informing the departmental management of the possible nomination of one of their officials
- Approaching and informing the candidates
- Follow-up and evaluation

The principal is responsible for:

- Announcing all ABD-vacancies to the ABD-Office
- Specification of the function profile
- Information about the vacancy within his own department
- Informing the candidates about and during the departmental selection procedure
- Content and pursuit of the departmental selection procedure
- Selection of a candidate
- Informing all candidates about the results of the selection procedure
- Adequate settlement and communication about the assignment

3. NORWAY:

The draft of a new action programme for the promotion of equal opportunities for men and women in the Royal Ministry of Labour and Government Administration

By: Merete Sandstad, Wigdis Andresen, Anne Christoffersen

3.1. Time-schedule

Since 1993, the Royal Ministry of Labour and Government Administration (MLGA) has produced every second year an action programme for the promotion of equal opportunities between men and women in the ministry. These programmes are based on the evaluation of the results achieved during the two previous years, and new target figures are set on the basis of these results. The Department of Administrative Affairs is responsible for the evaluation and for drafting the new proposal for an action programme. Subsequently, the programme is submitted for comments to all the sector departments in the Ministry, as well as to the trade unions. The action programme is then discussed and agreed upon in a meeting with top managers, and eventually it is approved by the Secretary General. It is essential that the targets are supported by the top management, because they are responsible for following-up the targets.

The evaluation of the former action programme usually starts in January. An executive officer in the Department of Administrative Affairs is responsible for working out relevant statistics. Proposals for actions to be taken are integrated into the proposal of the new action programme. Around the 1st of April, the programme is sent to the sector departments and the trade unions. By the 1st of June, the programme is usually agreed upon and accepted. The workload for producing an action programme is stipulated to be approximately 1-1½ months work for one employee, although several other employees are also involved.

This edition of the action programme is the fourth one and covers the years 1999-2000. This programme is based on the evaluation of the results achieved through the years 1997 and 1998.

3.2. Objectives

Regarding the promotion of equal opportunities, the MLGA has not always been working with action programmes. Until the early nineties, promoting equal opportunities was the responsibility of a special committee in the ministry - a committee that was meant to be a driving force in this field. However, the committee lacked real influence and the members ran out of good ideas concerning how to achieve progress. Therefore, in 1991, the ministry decided to abolish the equal opportunities committee and to organise this work like any other personnel-related work, through the normal chain of command and responsibility. This means that the promotion of equality became rooted in the manager group. All top managers in the ministry are evaluated now on the basis of their achievements regarding progress on equal opportunities. This is done in the annual planning and development dialogue with the Secretary General.

Action programmes have proved to be quite effective tools in the work towards equal opportunities. This process of continuous measuring, evaluating and setting new targets is the driving force in the work towards equal opportunity in the Ministry. In addition to these specific equality measures, we also have annual personnel statistics, where all indicators are split up by gender.

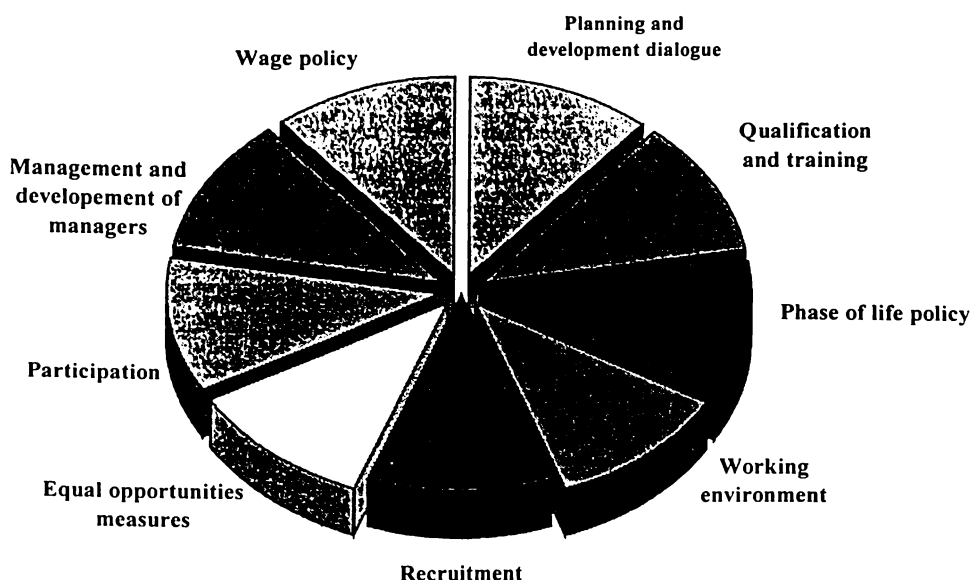
Even though equality has been on the Ministry's agenda for many years there are still some problems which need to be solved. Therefore, these are the main objectives of the current action programme (1999-2000):

- A gender balance in all categories of posts
- Remove unreasonable salary differences between men and women
- Diminish the gender differences regarding recent appointments
- Fair and equal division of qualifying tasks between men and women

3.3. Areas of personnel policy concerned

As can be derived from the description of the content of the action programme later on, the programme is broad and touches almost all areas of personnel policy. The Ministry's personnel policy is presented in the following cake diagram:

Figure 5: Areas of personnel policy in the MLGA



The areas most important to the action programme are:

1) *Wage policy*

The state sector's wage policy assumes that every area of activity, on the basis of tasks, budget and personnel situation, shall have a wage policy as an integrated part of the personnel policy. An explicit goal in the ministry's internal wage policy is that the result of negotiations shall contribute to equal wages for women and men.

2) *Planning and development dialogues*

Annual planning and development dialogues between managers and employees are a cornerstone of the ministry's personnel policy and of its way to achieve its goals. Feedback on results is given to both managers and employees concerning tasks, expectations, training and development for the next period.

3) *Qualification and training*

The ministry's goal is to develop result-oriented, efficient and well-qualified staff members, to encourage employees to develop their professional and personal skills and to promote gender equality. This is done by making qualification and training plans for every employee. Managers shall see to it that women are given the same opportunities as men, and that a proper distribution as regards gender and experience is achieved when setting up internal groups and projects.

4) *Phases of life*

The ministry's personnel policy takes into account that employees go through various phases of life in their job career. This has paved the way for employees to decrease their workload and work less if this is desirable or necessary at a certain moment. The ministry has flexible working hours arrangements to combine career/job and family. Part-time work is also used, mostly by women in reproductive age and home office arrangements are becoming more and more popular.

5) *Recruitment*

When advertising vacancies for posts where men outnumber women, women are encouraged to apply. In job categories where women make up less than 40%, at least one qualified woman is called to the interview. Before appointment up till the level of deputy Director General, all recommendations must be submitted to the advisory council. One person in this council is an equality representative who shall ensure that women are not discriminated during the selection procedure. All recruitment up till management level is public: anyone may have access to the list of applicants containing information on professional experience and education. As far as managerial positions are concerned, qualified women are actively sought after.

6) *Special equal opportunities measures*

As illustrated by this case on the new action programme, the ministry also develops special equal opportunities measures.

7) *Management and the development of managers*

It is important for the ministry to have more women in management so that women exert more influence on the decision-making processes. Since more and more women have completed a higher education and increasingly participate in the labour market, it is only reasonable that the proportion of female managers increases correspondingly. Women's participation is also important because women possess competencies complementary to men's. Equal representation of both sexes will therefore lead to better decisions. In the general training of managers, development of women and how to achieve equal opportunities is emphasised. In addition, female middle managers will be offered special training and coaching.

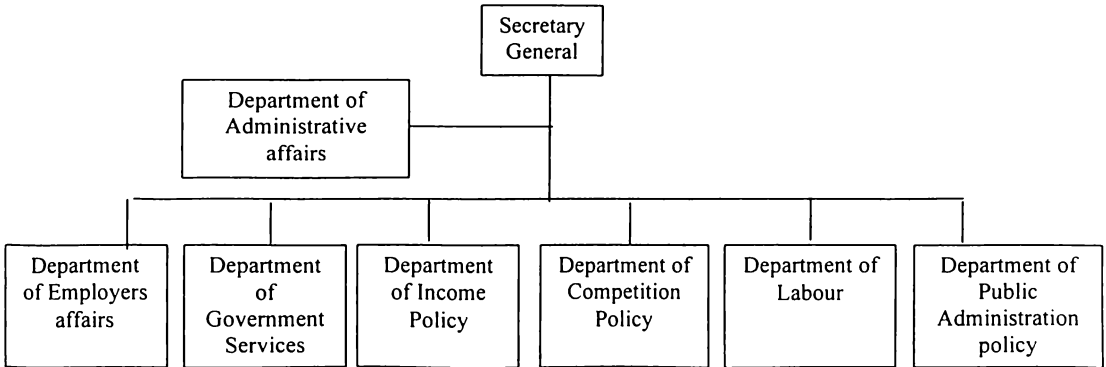
3.4. Policy actors in charge of (monitoring) the case

Since 1991, the work on equal opportunities for men and women in the ministry has been organised, like any other personnel-related work, through the normal chain of command. This means that the equality responsibilities are divided between the Department of Administrative Affairs and the individual line managers. Within the Department of Administrative Affairs, the section manager of the ministry's personnel affairs (a deputy Director General) is responsible for working out policies and strategies in all human resource areas. This includes equality policy, and consequently the evaluation and production of action programmes. The follow-up of the action programme is a shared task of the Department of Administrative Affairs and the individual line managers in the ministry.

The MLGA was established on the 1st of January 1998, replacing the former Ministry of National Planning and Co-ordination. The MLGA has a staff of 208, and consists of seven departments. Generally speaking, the MLGA is responsible for the frameworks of the public personnel policy and has a specific responsibility to make sure that all economically active men and women are treated equally (Department of Employer's Affairs). The Ministry is responsible for the Government's employment, administration, collective wage negotiations and working conditions. As the employer of the overall state sector, the MLGA is responsible for the legislation that every ministry has to adhere to, although this legislation is often quite general and flexible so that each ministry may adapt it to a certain extent to their own context. All ministries in Norway shall have equality policy mainstreamed as an integrated part of their policy field on the one hand and as an integrated part of their personnel policy on the other hand. All ministers regularly have to report on equality issues in each ministry's policy field to the Minister of Children and Family Affairs, which has overall responsibility for gender equality in Norway. The statement is also submitted to the Norwegian National Assembly (the Storting).

The MLGA has an internal network responsible for mainstreaming equality in the ministry's specific policy field. The network is headed by the Secretary General. Every department is represented in this network by at least one manager at the level of deputy Director General. Although the network deals mainly with mainstreaming equality in the ministry's general policy field, the network is also kept informed about the equality action programme in the field of personnel policy and other aspects of the internal personnel situation.

Figure 6: The Ministry of Labour and Government Administration



3.5. Link with the theoretical structure of an equality oriented personnel policy

In the ministry's action programme all the elements of the 'equality house' can be distinguished: legislation, positive action, mainstreaming and commitment.

a) Legislation

There are formal references to equality in the Ministry's personnel policy, which the action programme takes into account. On the one hand, there is the "Equal Opportunity Law", on the other hand, there are two overall agreements, which are both to be adjusted and agreed upon by the social partners in each ministry or agency. Thus, when we talk about the Basic Wage Agreement and the Basic Agreement, we mean 'the Agreement' and the Ministry's interpretation and adaptation to this agreement.

The equal opportunity law shall promote equal opportunities for both sexes, but it is also intended to improve the position of women. The public sector shall ensure equal opportunities for women and men in all areas of social life. Women and men shall have equal possibilities and rights to education, labour and individual development. The law states that differential treatment leading to inequality is not permitted, except when the purpose is to eliminate factual differences.

The Basic Agreement is a flexible agreement that sets the frames of the state's personnel policy and is adjusted to each ministry's own circumstances. For the MLGA this means that:

- an equal opportunities perspective shall be incorporated in the Ministry's normal planning and policy documents (mainstreamed)
- the ministry is obliged to prepare an annual internal report on the promotion of equal opportunities (personnel statistics and the action programme for promotion of equal opportunities).

The Basic Wage Agreement shall contribute to enabling the Ministry to recruit, develop and retain qualified personnel, encourage learning, and contribute to achieving equal opportunities and equal wages for men and women. The public sector in Norway has a wage policy that economically rewards factors like individual achievement, results, development and contribution, so there will never be total equality as regards salary. It is important however that these salary differences can not be linked to gender.

b) Positive action

Positive action is an instrument for promoting equality and eliminating factual inequalities. It focuses on the under-performing group and attempts to make good their 'deficiencies'. Positive action must not be understood in terms of assigning quotas, which are not used in the MLGA. Qualitative and quantitative aspects of positive action are closely related to one another. The improvement of women's positions within the ministry is a qualitative aspect of positive action. One example is the ministry's participation in mentor programmes for female managers. A quantitative aspect of positive action in the ministry is the guidelines favouring women in wage negotiations. Women are entitled to a greater share of the total funds available than a simple proportional comparison would indicate. This is laid down in the Basic Wage Agreement.

c) Mainstreaming

Several factors clearly indicate that a mainstreaming strategy, as defined by the Council of Europe, is pursued in the MLGA in order to promote gender equality in personnel policy. Every aspect of the MLGA's personnel policy e.g. is considered to have an equality dimension. The action programme for equal opportunities in the ministry has top level acceptance, which shows that the whole organisation is committed to the programme. This is also mirrored in each manager's decentralised responsibility for the follow-up of the programme in his or her particular section or department. There is no special equal opportunity official in the Ministry. The deputy Director General in the Section of Personnel Affairs has a specific monitoring responsibility to make sure the plan is followed in the whole ministry. In the action programme, suggestions are made which may cause changes in the personnel policy.

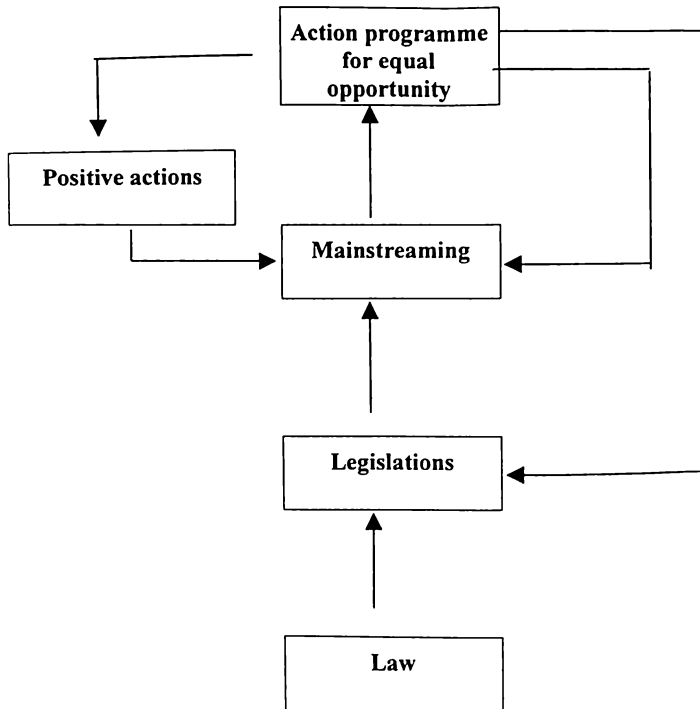
d) Commitment

The point of working with action programmes is situated in the 'commitment' part of the house. Action programmes, approved by the top management, and agreed upon by the trade unions, do indicate indeed the commitment of the organisation. As mentioned earlier, individual managers are responsible for achieving the target figures and the equality responsibilities of the top managers are followed-up in the planning and development dialogue with the Secretary General.

e) Discussion

We have tried to connect the Ministry's action programme for equal opportunities to the theoretical framework of the house. Theoretically it is possible to separate the four pillars of the equality house (legislation, positive action, mainstreaming and commitment) but in practice they are often mixed and used at the same time. Legislation on positive actions e.g. exists in Norway, especially regarding differential treatment (hard positive action). In our view it is not possible today, to reach total equality without differential treatment. For instance, although the ministry has mainstreamed successfully, it is a paradox that women are outnumbered by men in leading positions. Therefore, one of the most important priorities in the future will be raising the number of female managers, with a specific focus on top managers. In order to realise this and as a complement to mainstreaming, hard positive action will be necessary because in Norway it is legal to treat one group different as long as the result of the treatment is in accordance with the mission of the Equal Opportunity Law. We will try to exemplify this process and the interaction between the different pillars by presenting the following figure:

Figure 7: Dynamics of the theoretical approach



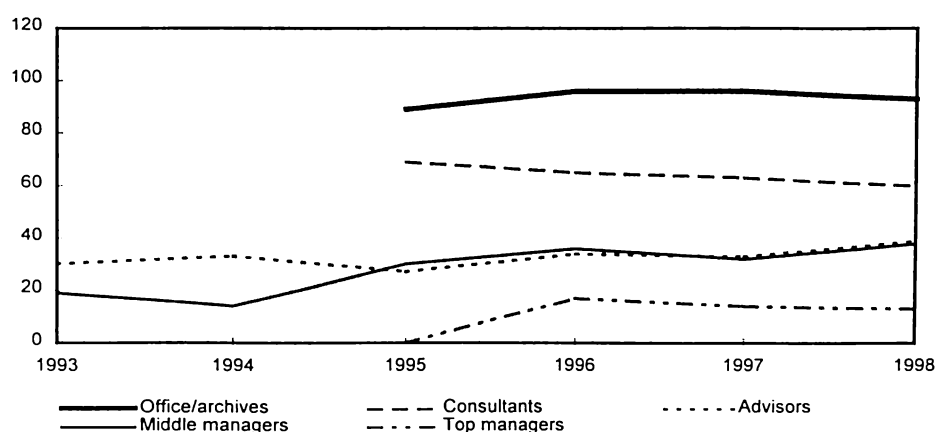
Every ministry and agency must make its own adjusted agreements based on the law. These must be agreed upon by the social partners and they are the basis for a mainstreamed personnel policy. The personnel's situation is evaluated in action programmes, on the basis of annual personnel statistics, where every relevant variable is split up by gender. The results are evaluated and proposals to diminish inequalities are drafted. In some cases it might be decided that positive actions are needed to diminish inequalities, or to ease conditions for the underperforming group. In other cases changes to the existing personnel policy may be necessary (mainstreaming). Suggestions implicating changes in an agreement must be negotiated with the social partners and usually lead to a change in personnel policy. Thus, mainstreaming, legislation and positive action are closely connected. They must be looked upon as an "on-going" process involving three integrated - not separate elements.

3.6. Description of the content

In the present action programme, four main action points can be identified: to achieve a better gender balance in all categories of posts, to remove unreasonable salary differences between men and women, to reduce the gender differences regarding new appointments and to achieve an equal division of qualifying tasks.

a) A gender balance in all categories of posts

Figure 8: Proportion of women in different categories of posts 1993-1998



Even if there has been a positive trend the last years, the ministry has to strive further for a better gender balance in all categories of posts. The Figure shows the evolution of the proportion of women in different posts in the years 1993-98. Both the executive officer and office/archives category traditionally have had a high proportion of women (respectively 60 and 93% at the end of 1998). However, since women's share is decreasing, there won't be a focus on increasing the proportion of men in this category.

By the end of 1998, there were 39% of female advisors, so the previous target of 40% women was practically achieved. Nevertheless, more efforts should still be made in this category because both the internal basis for recruitment (60% women executive officers) and the external basis are good (more women than men under 40 have completed higher education). The target figure proposed for female advisors for the next period will therefore be 50%.

The previous target figure of 40% female middle managers was virtually achieved by the end of 1998, with 38% women in this category. It is important that the Ministry continues to strive towards a higher proportion of women here, especially to improve the basis for recruitment of female top managers. Therefore a target figure of 50% for the end of the year 2000 is proposed.

The number of female top managers unfortunately has decreased. The target figure at this level was 30%, but the Ministry has only one top female manager, representing 13%. This decrease is *not* due to the fact that there are fewer women, but to the fact that management was extended by one man. The recruitment of more female top managers must remain a priority but the previous target of 30% was unrealistic. However, adjusting the target downwards would be a poor signal. Therefore the proposal is to maintain the objective of 30% but to extend the time frame to four years (2002).

To reach a better gender balance in all posts, the following initiatives are proposed:

- Development of own management potential. Encouraging female managers will be emphasised through participation in training and coaching programmes.
- A continued participation in the mentor programme for managers. Till now four female managers participated in 'The Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry' mentor programme. The Directorate of public management has now developed a specific mentor programme for the government sector.
- A continued participation in the government's project 'Women, Quality and Competence in the state sector', which is run by the MLGA. The intention is to increase the number of female top and middle managers from 22% in 1997 to 30% by 2001. In the context of this project, the ministry participates in a network along with six other ministries and seven agencies.
- The MLGA commits itself to actively searching women for the competence database.
- Each manager is responsible for the implementation of equality measures in his/her department, in line with the action programme. The responsibilities of individual managers for achieving the target figures shall be followed-up in the planning and development dialogue, where managers in the framework of their individually negotiated salary contracts shall be assessed on their ability to recruit and encourage women.

b) Remove unreasonable salary differences between men and women

Among the national employers' and employees' organisations it has been agreed that there shall be wage negotiations within the Ministry for 0,55% of the total funds available for wages. In the MLGA's internal wage policy, criteria have been established for evaluation of positions and persons, through annual dialogues between the employer and the employees. These are the point of departure for the evaluation of staff members by managers. The reasons for wage rises must be related to one of the following factors: individual achievement⁴⁷; the need to retain highly qualified employees; unwanted and unreasonable wage differences; change in job content.

An explicit goal in the ministry's internal wage policy is that the result of the negotiations shall contribute to equal wages for women and men. To this end, mandatory guidelines have been applied to the internal negotiations. Therefore women have since 1993 (with the exception of 1995) had higher placements in the wage scale in internal negotiations than their total proportion would indicate. Although women receive more wage scale placements than men do, this is not reflected in the total payments balance. The reason is that men have higher wages than women, because they dominate for example the managerial stratum in the ministry. In order to even out unfair wage differences between the sexes, the following initiatives are necessary:

- The fixing of salaries must be based on gender neutral criteria.
- Qualifying tasks, including managerial tasks, shall be given to women on the same footing as to men.
- The mandatory guidelines favouring women in internal wage negotiations, will be continued to be applied.

The next issue will illustrate that recruitment also might have an impact on the existing salary differences between men and women.

c) Diminish the gender differences regarding positions among new appointments

Research has shown that the gender wage gap in the overall state sector is not due to direct wage discrimination but rather to the fact that women are appointed to more poorly paid positions than men, even if they have the same qualifications. This seems to be valid for the MLGA as well. In 1997-98, 19 persons were appointed in the executive officer category, nine women and ten men. Four of them were appointed as 'executive officers' and fifteen as 'senior executive officers'. The new 'executive officers' were all women, all with a university degree. Of the fifteen newly appointed "senior executive officers", ten were men and five were women. The analysis indicates that, even though women and men do not differ according to level of education, women are to a larger extent appointed in lower positions that are more poorly paid. In the same period, 37 advisors were appointed, 16 women (43%) and 21 men (57%). As many as eight out of nine (89%) newly appointed advisors in the lowest advisor code (A) were women. They are on average 5 years older than the new men and may be expected to have 5 years additional professional experience. Nevertheless, they are paid only slightly more (NOK 5500) than their younger male counterparts. In the higher code B, only 29% of the newly appointed advisors were women, on average two years older than the men. In spite of this, men were paid NOK 26 500 more than their female colleagues.

Differential position placement of women and men thus seems to be a factor that partly explains the gender wage gap in the MLGA. It can be difficult to propose actions to prevent this development, especially if the reason is found outside the ministry. For instance, it might be that women apply for different types of jobs than men do. Anyway, some actions can be proposed:

- Vacancy advertisements should be examined in order to assess whether they attract one sex rather than the other one.
- There should be two contact persons, of opposite sex, in the advertisement and during the recruitment process.
- In vacancies for positions where women are under-represented, they should be encouraged to apply. For managerial positions, qualified women should be actively sought for.
- Awareness raising among managers regarding the appointment of women to poorer paid positions compared to men is necessary.

d) Equal division of qualifying tasks

Unfortunately, there are no statistics regarding the assignment of qualifying tasks. However, it is important to raise manager's awareness that they must assign this kind of tasks fair and equal between men and women and that they have to think about a task's visibility and prestige in the assignment process. Following initiatives are proposed:

- All managers in the MLGA are responsible for distributing tasks so that women and men receive the same opportunities for career development. They must guard that relevant candidates participate in the various development projects and that women are assigned management tasks in the same way as men, particularly with a view to develop management experience for internal recruitment to managerial positions.
- The equal opportunities aspect will be taken up in middle management training.
- Participation in mentor programmes for female managers will be continued.
- Coaching of female talents in order to motivate women to apply for management positions.

3.7. Problems and bottlenecks experienced during the case

Top managers in the Ministry are evaluated on the basis of what they achieve in the area of equal opportunities. Except for this rule, there is no tradition of control mechanisms or formal sanctions for not having an active equality oriented personnel policy in the Norwegian state sector. For the moment this is not a problem for the promotion of equal opportunities in the MLGA, because there is a genuine commitment and interest in equal opportunities. What also helps is the fact that both the manager of the Section for personnel and the Secretary General are women, interested in equality matters. It might however be that in other ministries this system might work less well if personal interest and commitment is lacking. In such cases there are no real sanctions against these ministries.

3.8. Status of the case

In August 1999, the draft of the plan will be sent to the ministry's departments and the unions for comments. The plan will then be revised or changed according to the comments. Finally the plan will be approved by the Secretary General. The plan will be presented at a meeting with the internal network for equal opportunities, and at a meeting with top managers in the ministry by early autumn.

4. FLANDERS:

“Gender in Balance”: an action research to integrate gender in the personnel policy of the Flemish government administration

By: Yvonne Benschop, San Eyckmans, Hedwig Van Roost and Mieke Verloo

4.1. Time-schedule

The action research “gender in balance” in the Flemish government administration ran from January 1998 till March 1999. The project consisted of different phases that more or less followed this time-schedule:

B(asis)-phase:	January 1998
A(doption)-phase:	end of January 1998
L(earning)-phase:	February-June 1998
A(nalysis)-phase:	July-September 1998
N(shading ⁴⁸)-phase:	October-December 1998
S(election)-phase:	January-February 1999

The gender in balance project was round off with an international congress in March 1999.

4.2. Objectives

Since 19 December 1990, the Flemish government administration has had a special mandatarly for Emancipation affairs who is responsible for the realisation of equal opportunities for men and women in the administration, through the pursuit of a positive action policy. Gradually, this positive action policy in the Flemish government administration evolved from a policy that emphasised all the equality deficiencies of the organisation into actively co-designing and counselling plans and measures aimed at eliminating the deficiencies. This integration approach is beneficial for equal opportunities for women and men and simultaneously, it represents a considerable HRM quality improvement. As a matter of fact, a fully-fledged inclusive policy helps to stimulate and develop everybody’s talents. The objective of the research project “gender in balance” is to provide the concrete means and instruments required launching such a successful integration process.

4.3. Areas of personnel policy concerned

The action research “Gender in Balance” deals with all aspects of personnel policy in the Flemish government administration: training, staff and HRM. In the Flemish administration, these areas of personnel policy are the responsibility of three so-called Permanent Interdepartmental Task Forces (PIWs in Dutch): the HRM PIW, the Staff PIW and the Training PIW. These PIWs are led by the Board of Secretaries General. In the different PIWs, civil servants of the divisions responsible for the personnel policy of the Ministry as a whole participate; the civil servants dealing with implementing personnel policy in the different departments are also involved. The PIWs discuss policy developments, implementation and assessment in the different areas of personnel management and attune them to one another. The PIWs have a strategic task in developing policy visions aiming at the best possible quantitative and qualitative staff. Moreover, they must inform the management and they play a major role in collecting data and drafting indicators for monitoring staff development. Finally, the PIWs have an operational task in supporting the management and the officials assigned to implement the

personnel policy.

4.4. Policy actors in charge of (monitoring) the case

1. The Emancipation Affairs Service

The initiative to start the action research comes from the Emancipation Affairs Service. The Emancipation Affairs Service is responsible for the internal emancipation policy of the Flemish administration and aims at guaranteeing equal opportunities for female and male employees. The Emancipation Affairs Service is situated in the General Affairs and Finance Department and its mission is defined as “trying to contribute – through positive action – to realise equal opportunities for the women and men who work for the Flemish authorities”. An integrated gender approach occupies a central position here: the issue of gender must be a continuous point of attention in all sections of the administration and in the organisational development process as a whole. The Service is composed of five persons: the mandatar, two assistants and two secretaries.

2. The Catholic University of Nijmegen

The research project was carried out by two researchers of the Catholic University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands, Dr. Mieke Verloo and Dr. Yvonne Benschop. After an extensive serious analysis of the project proposals received after a call, their proposal seemed to come up best to the expectations. Right from the start, there was an agreement that their research must be much more than a final report. The project had to result into concrete proposals to have more balanced gender relations in the Flemish government administration. The researchers also were to have a continuous dialogue with the HRM-people and the civil servants responsible for personnel management and training. In this way, the researchers were constantly confronted with the practical realities and problems in the every-day situation of the Flemish administration and they could immediately modify their proposals and instruments if they were not very useful for the civil servants concerned.

3. The Board of Secretaries General

The importance of having the commitment of the top of the organisation can not be stressed enough. Without the support of the top for the research project and without their decisions to assign responsibilities and tasks to the personnel, HRM- and training managers in order to make them implement the research, this project would not have had a chance to succeed.

4. The members of the interdepartmental task forces (PIWs in Dutch) on HRM, staff and training

The researchers were not to start from a definitive plan established in advance. An important part of their task was to examine together with the people responsible for personnel policy, where there were bottlenecks, which issues the organisation was dealing with at that moment and where there were opportunities to formulate concrete proposals to come to a better gender balance.

4.5. Link with the theoretical structure of an equality oriented personnel policy

The gender in balance project clearly falls into the mainstreaming layer of the structure of an equality oriented personnel policy. The research is a clear example of a “(re)organisation of policy processes in such a way that the regular actors in the field of personnel policy integrate a gender perspective into their work”, which fits with the Council of Europe definition of gender mainstreaming.

The prerequisites for gender mainstreaming in the field of personnel policy, as specified in the first chapters of this book, are relatively favourable to the Flemish government administration. Projects means as well as an emancipation infrastructure (the Emancipation Affairs Service as an internal think tank) are available. Next to that, the top of the Flemish administration indicated by financing and launching this action research project that the political and administrative levels support the project. Also the fact that the top management was involved and consulted from the beginning of the project onwards, indicates their commitment. The strategies used in the gender in balance project are a combination of analytical, educational and consultative techniques, as recommended.

4.6. Description of the content

The purposes of the research project were discussed at a meeting of the Board of Secretaries General in late January 1998. The researchers convinced the top of the administration of the importance of gender neutrality within the administration in order to guarantee equal opportunities for male and female staff members. Only in this manner, the available talents and potential can be fully used. The aim was that the research project would not remain a theoretical body of work. On the contrary, the researchers had the task to work in a “tailored” way. They were constantly in contact with the officials responsible for HRM, training and staff policy. In this way, the researchers were aware of the practical realities in the government administration and they gained better insight into the way that administration works. As the Board had clearly underlined the importance of the research project, the three interdepartmental task forces intensively monitored the gender in balance project. They played a major role in developing the action plan. Meanwhile, the task forces merged into one single task force; the latter will further monitor and implement the plan in the future. The Emancipation Affairs Service always had and will have a supporting function.

The Gender in balance project intends to provide the means for a cyclic personnel policy process, in which the organisation itself is responsible for embedding the gender angle. The proposed approach is based on the Dutch letter word “BALANS” (balance in English) as the project consists of the following phases: **Basis** (Basis in Dutch), **Adoption** (Adoptie), **Learning** (Leren), **Analysis** (Analyse), **Shading** (Nuanceren) and **Selection** (Selectie). The project wants to contribute to a BALANCE in the gender relations in the Flemish government administration which are twisted.

Basis: The first phase has laid the basic foundation of the project. First of all, some choices were made regarding the aims of the organisation when integrating the gender angle into personnel policy. A consultative strategy was used in this stage: by means of talks with key persons in the field of gender, personnel policy, the scope of the project was given a more concrete shape. The Emancipation Affairs Service gave advice on whom to select as discussion partners. These talks resulted in a note with the fundamentals for a mission statement on gender and personnel policy in the Flemish government administration.

Adoption: The second phase is the adoption phase. A meeting of two hours was set up with the Flemish top civil servants, in order to obtain the required top level commitment to the project. In order to limit the seminar group size, only the seven Secretaries General and two Directors General – specifically involved in personnel policy – were invited. The researchers were responsible for the organisation as far as the contents were concerned. At the meeting, the mission statement was thoroughly discussed and it was concretised and validated to a greater extent. First and foremost, this phase was based on a training strategy: a gender knowledge transfer of the researchers to the participants was a major function of the meeting. The aim of this phase was to establish at the top of the organisation a feeling of “ownership” towards the project. Eventually, a final mission statement was drafted and approved. This text served as input for the next phase.

Learning: The third phase is the learning phase. Here the researchers paid visits to the three interdepartmental task forces (PIWs). In this way, specific knowledge on the personnel policy cycle and gender relations was gained. One could also check which gender knowledge was already available in the task forces. On the occasion of the first visit, the PIWs were requested to indicate where gender is relevant in their policy development, implementation and assessment processes. The PIWs were provided with an instrument for this self-assessment: SMART (Simple Method to Assess the Relevance of policies to Gender). This instrument is meant to make a rapid screening of policy intentions and policy domains. The result is a brief description of the relationship between gender and each policy domain. Applying SMART does not require extensive knowledge of gender; that is why it can – in principle – be used by all civil servants. The European Commission and the Scandinavian Countries are now in the midst of gaining experience with the (adapted version of the) SMART instrument. When visiting the PIWs for the first time, the instrument was shortly explained and agreements were made about who was going to draw up the self-assessment. A second visit was paid after a month, on this occasion the results of the self-assessment were discussed. As the PIWs carried out their own analyses, the SMART instrument contributed to sensitising the civil servants for the gender issue. In this learning phase, three different strategies were used: analysis (the self-assessments by means of SMART), training (civil servants applying SMART) and consultation (visiting the PIWs).

Analysis: The next phase was a period of analysis mainly done by the researchers but a steering group within the administration was involved as well in this phase. The analysis attuned the PIW self-assessments to one another, completed them where necessary and added a theoretically based analysis about gender policy in personnel policy. By means of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), the strengths and weaknesses regarding gender in the Flemish government administration’s personnel policy were subsequently identified. The analysis indicated where the PIWs differ from one another and where they have similarities as far as the integration of a gender perspective is concerned. The SWOT analysis resulted in a comprehensive proposal regarding the integration of gender in the personnel policy cycle (development, implementation and assessment). This proposal was made operational in the next phase of the project.

Nuanceren (Dutch) /**shading**: This phase consisted of two consecutive parts. The first part made the proposal more concrete in co-operation with the different segments of the organisation. The analysis concentrated now on their specific situations and an action plan was formulated in order to realise the Strengths and Opportunities and to minimise the Weaknesses and Threats. This meant that a plan of action and a set of instruments were developed, leading to made-to-measure work for each PIW. Questions that were answered included: where does one need which expertise, who must consult when and with whom, which instruments must be used when and by whom ?

The second part of this phase consisted of testing the plan by implementing the proposals. Three actors were involved in this part:

- the different PIWs that execute the plans themselves;
- the researchers, available in a helpdesk function for monitoring the implementation;
- specialised agencies for providing the required training programmes and courses.

Selection: Finally, the selection phase was based on recording the experiences in the shading phase. A final report was written about the implementation experiences, entitled "A new start", containing an adjusted action plan on the basis of the feedback of the civil servants. The report proposed a structure of responsibilities, instruments and procedures in order to embed the gender perspective into the personnel policy cycle in the Flemish administration. The concrete action points in the action plan include the following issues:

- *New employees focus groups:*
The staff assessment and rewarding process is based on abstract standards of what a good employee is. This abstract standard must become more concrete and be more in line with the real lives of employees. In order to gain insight into this matter, knowledge is required of the wishes and experiences of the "new employee" who combines paid and unpaid work (see also 1991 OECD report, giving shape to structural changes). Through focus groups with this category of employees, it can be checked how they experience assessment and validation. The insights derived from that may be used as examples and be communicated to others in the organisation as "best practices". Participants of these focus groups may be selected through time management courses and / or work and family courses set up already by the Training Division. It is agreed upon that the HRM Division leads the operation. In 1999, they should start deliberations with the Emancipation Affairs Service and the Training PIW/ Training Division.
- *Mentoring*
A mentoring project may contribute to better balanced gender proportions. Here, the organisation establishes contact between experienced civil servants, willing to share their knowledge, experience and information, and new staff members. As men hold higher positions and act as mentors much more frequently, it is essential to organise this project in such a way that young women also gain access to mentors. By organising mentor programmes, newcomers become more familiar with the organisation and the threshold for establishing contacts may be lowered. This mentoring project must involve as many male as female newcomers.

- *Redefining the concept of part-time work in the statute*
The definition of part-time work in the statute should be modified as soon as possible. Part-time work should be defined as related to the size of the assignment and not anymore as “reduced performances”. Part-time work should become possible for anyone, irrespective of the function level.
- *Research into the effects of the different selection procedures*
The different selection procedures and channels now used by the Flemish government administration may have different effects on the number of women and men appointed. Research into the effects of selection procedures on the gender proportions may provide insight here. This research is contracted out.
- *Repeating double assessment*
In 1997, a ‘double assessment’ for heads of Divisions was conducted: on the one hand candidates were assessed by leading officials in the organisation, on the other hand, an external agency did an assessment as well. The results differed very much in gender terms: women had far better results when assessed by the agency than when assessed by the organisation. So these double assessment brought home that assessments are not gender-neutral. In order to gain an insight into gender bias and possible improvements thereof, it is good to repeat these double tests in the future.
- *Identifying “hi-po’s “ for Management Development*
In order to provide the organisation with good managers in the future, people with management potential must be identified in due time. To this end, a discussion can be held about the profile of a ‘high potential’ at the Flemish administration and on the gender aspects of potential assessments in general. This may be a theme in the discussion regarding the appointment of Heads of Division. When there is a clear picture of that profile, a wider search can be set up for female ‘high potentials’ to participate in MD-programmes. The best solution for programmes of this nature would be a composition on the basis of equal representation (men and women) because they could then function as a lab for the Flemish administration of the future in which gender proportions are balanced.
- *Telework research*
The effects of telework on the organisation as a whole and on individual staff members in particular must be monitored by means of research. The latter must be of a consultative nature and must monitor all telework projects in a systematic manner, always in dialogue with the individuals involved.
- *Personnel policy transparency; research about the commitment standards*
First of all, it is important to continue to enhance the transparency of the personnel policy. This is perfectly in line with the personnel management processes launched already. The organisation must make it more clear and explicit what the standards for being a civil servant and giving leadership are like, this in line with the general principles in the Charter of the Flemish government administration. The standards of what ‘commitment’ means must be made explicit. To this end, performances must be managed not only through output, but the input must also be clearly measured. When doing so, the relationship between the time spent and the eventual output can be monitored and so a better insight into results is gained. In order to raise the transparency of personnel policy and to render standards explicit, scientific research into work pressure must be conducted. This research should be contracted out.

Finally, the gender in balance action research project was rounded off with an international seminar on 18-19 March 1999. The Flemish Minister of the Civil Service and several leading officials attended the seminar.

In June 1999 new gender in balance projects started in several Flemish Public Institutions. These follow-up projects do not only guarantee continuity, but they also make an extension and cross-pollination possible as insights and experiences may be exchanged among the different organisations. The new project's research team was extended with Flemish researchers also. This gender in balance project extension will constantly add new impulses to the innovation process of the Flemish government administration already launched in 1998.

4.7. Problems and bottlenecks experienced during the case

When monitoring the mainstreaming process, it is highly recommended to devote attention to possible bottlenecks. When we consider the experiences gained in the past year, we expect the following challenges on the implementation road that require action:

1. Lack of gender knowledge

It turned out to be necessary to increase the knowledge of gender relations and gender dynamics in the organisation. On various occasions, it became obvious that additional training and expertise was required. Although working with the gender in balance project in itself had a sensitising effect, there were still additional needs for more information. Therefore, the researchers were assigned a helpdesk function, assisted by trainers specialised in the field, in order to facilitate the application of the gender in balance instruments.

2. Fighting window-dressing tendencies

Another major challenge was fighting the window-dressing tendency. Experience teaches us that it is more tempting to pay lip service to the complex emancipation problems than to really take action. The raised visibility of equality issues going hand in hand with the activities in the context of the project risk causing resistance. The solution here was to present gender as a major aspect of personnel management innovation, in this way emancipation was rather associated with progress and professionalism. The organisation was therefore motivated to contribute to the project and to really change things. The international congress of the Emancipation Affairs Service on March 18 and 19, 1999 was also an excellent initiative in this context. The congress illustrated that the mainstreaming developments with regard to personnel policy are going fairly well in the Flemish administration and can be considered as a "best practice" towards other countries.

3. Patience

Embedding a gender angle in personnel policy is a tough and slow process that consequently requires quite some patience. The complexity of gender issues combined with the continuously changing personnel management dynamics bring this about. The fact that the implementation process is often a slow and gradual process should not necessarily be considered as a negative fact. It does take time to have all responsible officials heard about (aspects of) the project and planned actions. But it is worth it because only in that way they will feel involved, which increases considerably the chances of success of these actions.

4. Monitoring

Although the detailed action plan already laid down arrangements regarding actions for the next two years, it will be crucial to monitor these arrangements and to check regularly whether additional agreements are required. These monitoring activities are necessary because of staff changes that may thwart the planned implementation, because of time pressure, low priority and dodging responsibility phenomena. Moreover, at a later stage it might be necessary to integrate new trends and opportunities that form input for new actions. Insights and experiences learned in the context of the new mainstreaming projects in the Flemish institutions might make this necessary. As a matter of fact, the present detailed plan of action is not meant to be a definite blueprint for the future of gender integration in personnel management, the plan should be monitored and adapted if needed. This monitoring of the gender in balance project is in the hands of the Emancipation Affairs Service and will be reported on in the regular reports of this service.

4.8. Status of the case

“Gender in balance” started in January 1998 as a co-operation project between the Flemish government administration and the Catholic University of Nijmegen. The different phases of the action-research (Basis, Adoption, Learning, Analysis, Nshading, Selection) were completed and an overall action plan was drafted. The research results were introduced at an international congress in March 1999. Meanwhile some priority actions are being implemented and the project is being followed-up by various civil servants who are each made responsible for implementing specific actions and concrete proposals in line with an agreed time schedule. These actions and proposals remain to be confirmed by the Board of Secretaries General.

Since the project and ‘gender’ as a new issue were introduced in the Flemish government administration, gender has been considered more and more as a major innovation contributing to better personnel management and the emancipation policy is being associated with progress and professionalism.

Six follow-up “gender in balance” projects in Flemish public institutions started in 1999. Exchanging experience between several organisations will then be possible. The following six Flemish public institutions were selected: Openbaar psychiatrisch ziekenhuis-REKEM, Vlaams Instituut voor het Zelfstandig Ondernemen, Vlaamse Land Maatschappij, Vlaamse Water Maatschappij, Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding and Kind en Gezin. Their selection was based on applications submitted by the public institutions themselves. Clear support from their management was an important criterion for their selection. These parallel research projects will contribute to further continuity and they will also lead to broadening the scope. Cross-pollination will be possible by exchanging insights and experiences between the different organisations.

4.9. Results and conclusions

Since the action plan was introduced, the individual civil servants responsible for personnel policy have been more convinced of the need to integrate a gender perspective into the general personnel policy. This is due to three main reasons:

1. The staff responsible for personnel policy was involved in the project from the very beginning onwards. It is much easier to convince people to change a number of things in the organisation if they have been preparing these proposals with you before.
2. The fact that the gender in balance action plan proposes very concrete actions and that the organisation lays down a clear division of tasks and a timing. A distinction is made between action points (feasible in the months and years to come) and points of attention (elements that might be considered when certain themes are really dealt with in the administration). In this way, people responsible for personnel policy suddenly see possibilities and responsibilities that were not clear or hidden before.
3. The integrated approach and methods encourage people to co-operate. Earlier, some departments were willing to work on gender equality indeed, but they were reluctant because of the investment of time and staff. The coherent gender in balance project with central support from the researchers and the Emancipation Affairs Service has now encouraged them.

It becomes clearer at each interdepartmental meeting that the HRM policy and emancipation policy of the organisation are complementary. Often, they are on the same wavelength and they want to achieve the same things. As a matter of fact, the gender in balance project is not only advantageous for women in the organisation, every civil servant benefits from it and the quality of the organisation's personnel management improves.

5. UNITED-KINGDOM: The diversity pilot

By: Alison Schofield and Lois Leeming

5.1. Time-schedule

September 1998: The pilot was discussed and set up.

January 1999: Pilot departments provided the Cabinet Office with information on:

- Features of an organisation in which diversity is valued
- What is happening towards cultural change in their own department
- Analysis of barriers to organisational change
- What needs to happen
- Who needs to be involved

January 1999: A workshop was held to agree vision and way forward.

February 1999: Start of drawing up the model.

Mid 1999: Progress was reviewed.

Late 1999: The model will be finalised.

5.2. Objectives

In the UK we have well-established anti-discrimination legislation, covering law on sex discrimination, race relations, disability discrimination and, in Northern Ireland, community background.

In the British Civil Service, we are also guided by a Management Code, which sets out regulations and instructions for the management of the Civil Service. Since 1984, the Civil Service has introduced programmes for action to overcome the under-representation of women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. These guide the progress the Civil Service makes in achieving equality of opportunity and we monitor our progress in relation to their contents in several areas including recruitment and selection, training and career development and monitoring of representation.

Although we have made some progress, we still have not achieved fair representation at all levels of the Civil Service. In particular, women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities are still under-represented in the Senior Civil Service. We have a good understanding of why this may be the case and we are working to improve this situation. One of the key issues is that the culture of the Civil Service must be supportive of an organisation in which everyone's talents are fully utilised to meet business outcomes and people are valued both for the differences they bring to the organisation and for their ability to work together. For example, to have a really family friendly culture we must tackle head-on the issue of long hours working. Although the Civil Service has policies and procedures in place which offer part-time working, career breaks and childcare facilities, most staff who uses these services is in junior grades. It will need a real change of culture - in particular led by management attitudes - to break this mould.

The Civil Service believes a diverse workforce is critical to the effectiveness of the organisation which serves a diverse society, and that a Civil Service which reflects at all levels the diversity of our society (men and women, people from differing ethnic and other backgrounds) will be stronger than a Civil Service which has a white male dominated,

monolithic culture. Part of our modernising agenda includes a strong emphasis on mainstreaming equality into our policymaking, service delivery and Human Resources policies and practices. This mainstreaming agenda featured strongly in the Modernising Government White Paper, published in March 1999, which affects the whole public sector, including the Civil Service. The Modernising Government White Paper also announced the setting of targets for the Senior Civil Service as part of the aim to address under-representation of women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities, and to change the culture so as to tackle inequality. Departments are being required to set targets at levels below the Senior Civil Service. For example, the target for 2004/5 is that 35% of the Senior Civil Service (the most senior 3,000 civil servants in a Civil Service of almost half a million) will be women in 2004/5. In 1998 the figure was 17.8%. The impact of setting targets will be far-reaching. The Civil Service will not only look different – it will also be different. The targets will also provide a good tool to measure progress against. The immediate impact of setting targets is to identify and remove obstacles blocking the full participation of those whose contribution we have not previously fully valued.

Additionally in the context of the Modernising Government agenda, we are continuing work to change behaviours in the workplace and examine how new ways of working will impact on different groups.

Work is also underway to:

- Define the Civil Service culture of the future which values staff for who they are and what they bring to the work, not for their ability to fit a mould.
- Mainstream equality issues so that all management and personnel approaches reflect the needs of the range of people in the Civil Service.
- Establish a dialogue with a variety of people inside and outside the Service to engage their help in creating an inclusive Service, at the same time as promoting a better understanding of the Service we wish to be.

Our case study is known as the Diversity Pilot. The Diversity Pilot began with the aim of developing a coherent strategy to mainstream diversity and bring about a culture change in the Civil Service so that:

- Every individual is valued for who they are and what they bring.
- Individuals' differences are harnessed to create a really productive environment.
- The Civil Service is effective in serving a wider society.
- Our equality initiatives are given new momentum.

Its purpose is to develop a model strategy or strategies to create a workplace in which differences in people are valued, the potential of every individual is realised, different means to an end are respected and organisational goals are met. The vision of the pilot was that departments and agencies will be recognised and acknowledged by departmental staff, the wider Civil Service, and the general public at large, as an employer that values the differences that people bring to it, reflects the full diversity of society and is strengthened by that diversity.

The focus on diversity does not detract from the Civil Service commitment to equal opportunities, and we still have a raft of specific actions targeted at women, people from ethnic minority backgrounds and people with disabilities. However, we are now taking a twin-track approach to a diverse and inclusive culture. Equal Opportunities work is the foundation, the minimum from which every department must develop. Diversity work will build on this foundation.

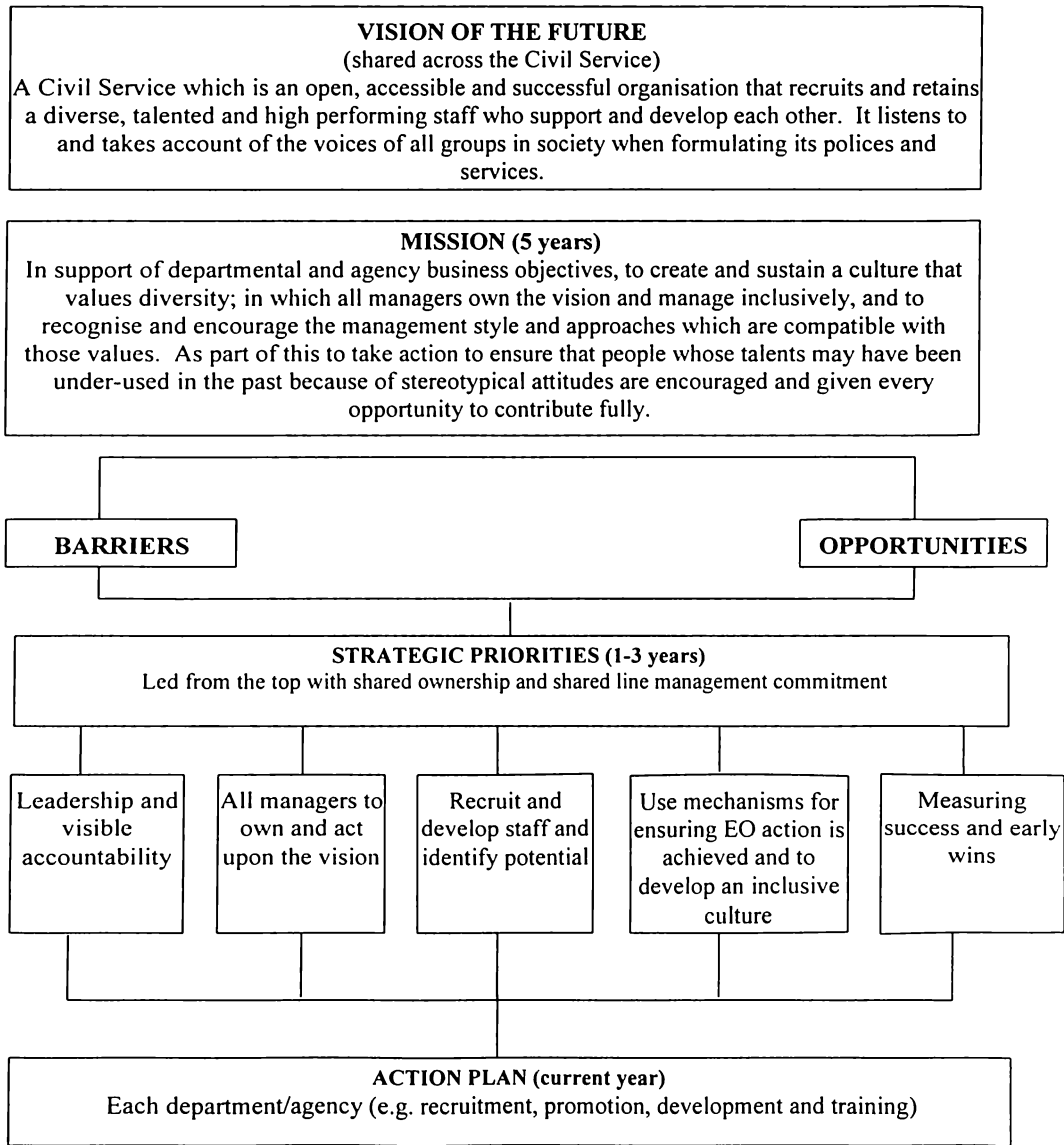
The Diversity Pilot reports to a Diversity Sub-Group of the Civil Service Management Committee. This Sub-Group is chaired by Nick Montagu, who is Permanent Secretary to the Inland Revenue. It is the remit of the Sub-Group to overview work in hand and to identify priorities for departments to make real progress in the Civil Service diversity agenda. The Sub-Group reports to the Management Committee for the Civil Service, which is chaired by the Head of the Civil Service.

5.3. Areas of personnel policy concerned

All areas of personnel policy are concerned. Part of the aim of this work is to make diversity an integral and mainstreamed part of all personnel policy, processes and procedures. A common theme in the information the pilot departments submitted in the early stages of the pilot was that there was a need to mainstream diversity, rather than having it as a 'add-on' to personnel practices. As such, it involves attracting, recruiting, training and developing and retaining staff.

This approach is consistent with the intention to produce a framework for action, which will help to ensure that equality of opportunity is truly mainstreamed into the everyday actions of all those who work in the Civil Service.

Figure 9: A framework for action to achieve our vision



5.4. Policy actors in charge of (monitoring) the case

This pilot has top-level commitment from the Head of the Civil Service and 3 Permanent Secretaries. In each of the 3 pilot departments, there are policy representatives who are taking this work forward. The policy representatives in each of the pilot departments will be responsible for ensuring that the pilot is implemented in their department.

The work is being overseen and facilitated by the Corporate Strategy and Diversity Division of the Cabinet Office. The Division's responsibilities include providing best practice advice on diversity policy and best practice to Ministers, and Civil Service departments and agencies. It also has the support of the Diversity Sub-group, the Advisory Panel to the Head of the Civil Service, other departments and external expertise.

A consultant is being commissioned to develop a toolkit (map and guidelines) of approaches and actions for a management to use in promoting a diverse workforce as part of a consortium project within the pilot. The consultant will work in partnership with the three departments to deliver solutions in line with their needs and resources.

5.5. Other policy actors involved/target groups

The target group is the whole Civil Service (consisting of departments and agencies). We are also hoping that the Civil Service will become an exemplar for other organisations.

5.6. Link with the theoretical structure of an equality oriented personnel policy

The Diversity Pilot falls within the mainstreaming layer of the equality oriented personnel policy model.

The Civil Service is making a concerted effort to move away from the concept of equality being an isolated issue or an add-on to personnel practices. Rather, developing a Civil Service in which diversity is valued and harnessed is becoming an acknowledged part of the broader corporate strategy. Part of our modernising agenda includes a strong emphasis on mainstreaming equality into our policymaking, service delivery and Human Resources policies and practices. This mainstreaming agenda featured strongly in the Modernising Government White Paper, which affects the whole public sector, including the Civil Service. The Diversity Pilot began with the aim of developing a coherent strategy to mainstream diversity and bring about this culture change. Such a change in culture will not only have important consequences for the effectiveness of the organisation, but it will also demonstrate our commitment to integrity, the needs of people and valuing individuals.

5.7. Description of the content

Three departments are taking part in the pilot: Inland Revenue, Home Office and Customs & Excise. The Cabinet Office provides central co-ordinating support: working with the 3 pilot departments to help develop successful individual projects, facilitate contributions from others and ensure exchange of information etc with other departments.

During the first stage of the pilot (September 1998), the pilot departments identified:

1. What had been done/was being done towards developing a culture which values and mainstreams diversity. Under this heading the departments provided information about various booklets, notices, publicity items, training and briefing and policy, procedures and practices.

2. Gaps between the current and desired situation. In this section, the Home Office identified a lack of coherence in strategy, a perception of tokenism and a lack of understanding of the benefits of creating an organisation which values diversity. Customs and Excise mentioned low levels of recruitment, movement and exits from the department, lack of representation in feeder grades for the Senior Civil Service and a long-hours culture causing problems for people who want to work on a part-time basis. Some of the Inland Revenue's gaps included the perception that stereotypes were acting as a barrier to capitalising potential from staff, the need to reflect more accurately the diversity of the customers which it serves, and the need to value difference rather than trying to make people conform to the majority behaviour.

The Cabinet Office identified what was being done centrally. It also laid out its aims that were to have a Civil Service which:

- Provides a high quality and effective service to the Government and all parts of society
- Reflects, at all its levels, the diversity of society
- Is recognised as an organisation where individuals are valued.

Cabinet Office objectives included:

- To ensure that civil servants are able to develop policies and services which meet the needs of all parts of society
- To have a Senior Civil Service which leads by example, and, by eliminating under-representation of women, ethnic minorities and disabled people, represents the public it serves and the people it manages
- To attract, recruit and develop a workforce which represents, at all levels, the diversity of society
- To ensure that all staff can effectively be a part of and, where appropriate, manage a diverse workforce
- To be recognised, both internally and externally, as an accessible Service which values and seeks to benefit from the diversity of society and is a positive place for all to work.

All parties also outlined their expectations of the pilot. The pilot departments had different approaches:

- The Home Office wants to become an organisation where people enjoy their work, and are able to achieve their best; and where people work together in teams across organisational boundaries and use their skills to the full. They also want an organisation that mirrors society as we would like it to be: a community of optimism, equal opportunity and achievement, providing some of the most fulfilling work there is.
- Customs and Excise see that the Board's vision and core values of integrity, impartiality, courtesy and helpfulness will be supported by a commitment at all levels to change and make real progress rather than simply dealing with problems as they arise.
- One of the benefits seen by Inland Revenue is that employees will be conscious of the different needs of different customers because they are aware of the diversity of people inside the organisation and because the Revenue will have a culture in which differences are understood and welcomed.

A workshop was held for pilot departments in January 1999. In preparation of the workshop, pilot departments were asked to expand on their earlier analysis by identifying:

1. Characteristics of a diverse organisation

Inland Revenue's definition of a diverse organisation included feeling that all employees are encouraged to realise their potential, enabling staff to learn from working in a diverse organisation so that they can better serve the needs of their customers, and having a management culture which is inclusive and values individual differences.

For the Home Office, diversity is seen as operating at organisational (e.g. open-minded), business (e.g. the organisation reflects the communities it serves), legislative/policy/practice (e.g. following and setting best practice) and management levels (e.g. treating staff as individuals).

Customs & Excise also mentioned reflecting the community the organisation serves, valuing individual differences, equal access to organisational opportunities and benefits, and routine proofing of policies.

2. Initiatives underway

For the Inland Revenue, initiatives underway include the implementation of an ethnic minority development programme, supporting the Windsor Fellowship sponsorship scheme and developing a new childcare strategy.

The Home Office identified top level commitment, the introduction of targets, liP and a pay and grading review.

A range of activities were identified by Customs & Excise including networks of change agents, guidance on equal opportunities proofing issued to all senior managers and awareness training for managers.

3. Additional actions needed

Some ideas generated from Inland Revenue included the need for a new approach to managing diversity that should be incorporated into the departmental HR strategy, awareness training for all key staff and a mentoring programme.

The Home Office identified a lack of vision for the modern Home Office, a need to win over middle managers and the need for more statistics to cover all types of communities. Customs and Excise felt the need to concentrate on better integration of equal opportunities into the Department's planning system, raised awareness at junior and middle levels and a better understanding of the reasons why current barriers exist.

4. Barriers to achieving the changes

The Inland Revenue and Home Office mentioned restrictions on resources. Other barriers identified by Customs and Excise include low levels of awareness, resistance to change in certain areas and few senior role models for minority staff.

5. Key players

The Home Office thought everyone could be a key player. Key players in the Inland Revenue include the Board, the Departmental Management Committee, trade Unions and all staff. All managers, Departmental and Local trade Union Side and the business community were also highlighted by Customs and Excise.

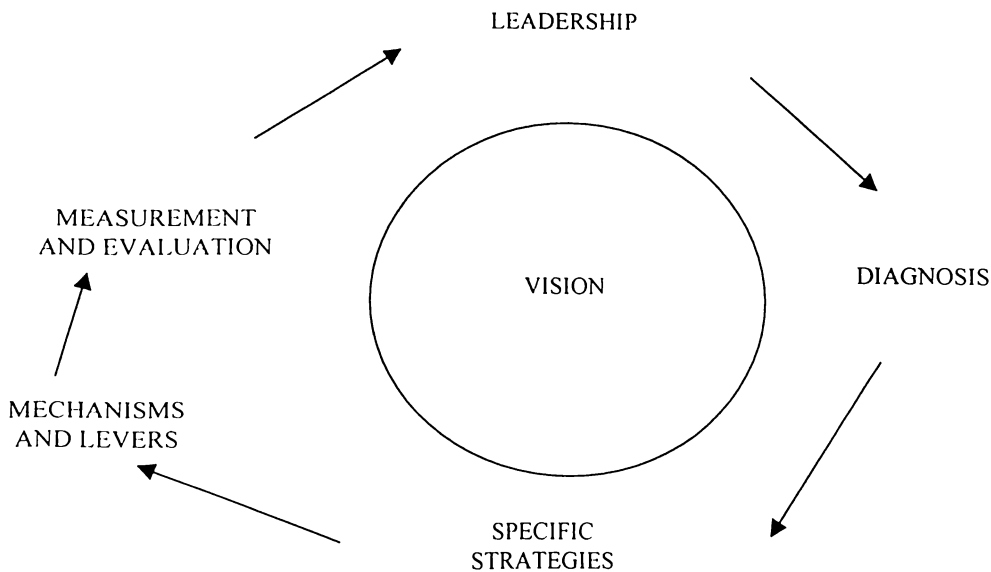
As a result of the workshop, the Cabinet Office drew up a specification to commission a consultant to develop a toolkit (map and guidelines) of approaches and actions for a management to use in promoting a diverse workforce. The tools will be used in education and training programmes and will focus on enhancing key organisational processes – recruitment, induction, training and appraisal. This sub-set of the pilot formed a consortium project within the diversity pilot and will run between July and October 1999.

The findings of the workshop also fed into the management Committee, the White Paper and a meeting between Permanent Secretaries. In March 1999, the pilot departments met with the Head of the Civil Service and the Cabinet Office to discuss progress.

In June, pilot departments were presented with a vision statement and cyclical process model of organisational change (see next Figure). Each pilot department's progress in achieving a culture which values diversity is being assessed against the model, and specific recommendations are being flagged up for future work, thereby providing a good tool to measure progress against. Departments are being asked to contribute towards a paper that summarises progress for a meeting of permanent secretaries that will take place in October 1999.

The overall vision of the Diversity Pilot is to be recognised and acknowledged by departmental staff, the wider Civil Service, and the general public at large, as an employer that values the differences that people bring to it, reflects the full diversity of society and is strengthened by that diversity.

Figure 10: Cyclical model of creating and sustaining a culture that values diversity



Leadership	Demonstrate and spread ownership of the vision/aims
Diagnosis	Determine the gaps and agree the main issues to be tackled and how
Specific strategies	Develop plans to support the overall aim (including being recognised internally and externally as a culture which values diversity)
Mechanisms and levers	Use mechanisms and levers for driving and communicating change
Measurement and evaluation	Assessing progress and the need for future action

5.8. Problems and bottlenecks experienced during the case

It is difficult to tackle the culture of an organisation in a pilot study. All we can realistically hope to achieve is an examination of the processes involved in developing a model strategy to help create a culture which values diversity.

Moving from buy-in of the vision/aims to concrete plans/strategies to move the work forward is also a critical issue.

5.9. Status of the case

The consortium project will run between May and September 1999.

Early results from the Diversity Pilot will be presented at a meeting of Permanent Secretaries in October 1999 (Autumn Sunningdale).

5.10. Results and conclusions

By early October 1999, some initial results of the project will be put forward.

The outcome of the consortium project will be that a process model will be put forward to departments.

CONCLUSION

As mentioned in the introduction, an important aim of this publication is to contribute to a better and more effective equality oriented personnel policy in the public sector whereby indirectly the quality of personnel policy itself is improved. The analyses in the first part of this book do indicate however that the general context the public sector in Europe has to be situated in, is not unanimously positive with a view to the pursuit of an equality oriented personnel policy. The fact that principles such as rationalisation, efficiency and consequently also the shrinkage of the public sector are in the ascendant, primarily affects the employment possibilities of women, rather than men's. Moreover, in case of a too one-sided focus on performance management and a radical decentralisation towards line management, there is a risk that values such as equality and equity are pushed aside and that the centrally developed expertise regarding equal opportunities is lost. Yet there are positive aspects to the new trends in personnel management as well: much more often than in the past, the "human" aspect is stressed in personnel policy thanks to the rise of Human resources Management (HRM). The evolution within HRM from a functional towards a competency based approach does illustrate the increased stress put on individual capacities and people's possibilities in stead of 'the function' in itself. This offers an appropriate point of departure for the pursuit of gender equality and the valorisation of differences between people via personnel policy. Because of greater competition and scarcity on the labour market, an effective equality oriented personnel policy can be considered as an asset of the public sector compared to the private sector to attract the best employees.

Historically, a clear evolution can be observed in the strategies used to pursue equality policies. As indicated in the second part of this book, this evolution also applies to equal opportunities and personnel policy. From an originally merely formal and legal approach, there was a shift to a more active strategy emphasising the specific problems encountered by women (positive action) and today a more proactive and structural way to deal with inequalities can be observed (mainstreaming). We argue that a good equality oriented personnel policy assumes that a combination of these three historically developed strategies (both a legal and a positive action as well as a mainstreaming approach) is needed.

Initially, the public sector called upon legislation and formal anti-discrimination declarations to achieve equality at the workplace. This is a good basis but not a solution to ban indirect and more subtle forms of discrimination. Equal rights and values like equality and equivalence have only a minor effect and far too often remain paper tigers.

At the end of the seventies and during the eighties there is a switch to 'positive action' policies: targeted measures are taken to counteract specific disadvantages that women experience at the workplace. Compared to equal rights, this positive action approach tends to shift the focus from formal equality to material and factual equality. The problem however is that positive action measures start from the individual barriers that prevent women from moving up the ladder in an organisation, whereas more structural causes are overlooked. In other words, the symptoms of the problem are tackled, but not the underlying causes. Moreover, internationally the positive action approach tends to come to a deadlock as a result of lack of interest and support from the top of the organisation. The policy is wrongly equated to only one aspect of it, namely positive discrimination, an instrument not used in most countries' public personnel policy.

In order to make structural progress, a more fundamental approach is needed, called 'mainstreaming'. The merit of this strategy is that it highlights the crucial scientific concept 'gender'. The term gender does not refer to biological but to socio-cultural

differences between men and women and to culturally determined norms concerning tasks, roles and characteristics associated with men or women. To take into account gender is to acknowledge that many rules, policy measures and procedures in personnel policy are only apparently gender-neutral. In reality they fit much more into the traditional life patterns of men on account of the classical labour division. Gender mainstreaming in public policy means that the obviousness of the so called abstract (but in practice male) norm for the employee and his full-time availability is questioned and can no longer serve as the only point of reference for the working out of a personnel policy.

Mainstreaming distinguishes itself on two critical points from positive action: first what concerns the policy actors, next concerning the relevant policy aspects. Whereas positive action mainly places the responsibility with some experts in the field of equal opportunities, mainstreaming emphasises the role and the commitment of the regular policy actors in the field of personnel policy. As far as the policy aspects are concerned, positive action focuses on specific women's problems, whereas mainstreaming questions certain aspects of the existing personnel policy. Women are no longer the problem, but the current personnel policy is questioned and checked on possibly different policy effects on men and women.

Notwithstanding the fact that mainstreaming is a vogue word in the equal opportunities jargon and is an untranslatable concept, it is of great importance as a new strategy to pursue a more effective equality oriented personnel policy. Only by taking gender equality as a responsibility of several policy actors and after an in-depth analysis of the meaning of 'gender' and how the gender perspective can be integrated in the various sub-domains of personnel policy, new gender relations will emerge in the long run. This means that the differences between people are more appreciated. It also means that not only one working method or one management policy is valorised but that there is room for diversity.

Mainstreaming as a new strategy has its disadvantages too: there is not much experience in the field of integral working and it is an explicitly long-term strategy. Moreover there is the great risk that 'everybody' but in fact 'nobody' takes overall responsibility and that nobody has a global overview or follows up progression. Therefore, it must be made very clear that also legislation and positive actions remain important. The three strategies must be seen as complementary and the three levels must be operational at the same time.

The necessity of different strategies and instruments working out an equality oriented personnel policy, is also illustrated in parts three and four of the book. The first checklist included in part three, dealing with the instruments, shows what the organisational and structural terms are for a 'house' with a good equality oriented personnel policy. The three above-mentioned strategies (legislation, positive action and mainstreaming) each constitute a level of the house for which can be checked whether the organisation meets the necessary requirements. The central dome of the house is the genuine commitment of the organisation. Without this commitment and the listed indicators to measure the engagement, the three strategies cannot be executed effectively.

A second checklist refers to the concrete policy domains of the HRM-cycle in which emancipation objectives can be integrated. For each of the HRM domains (selection, performance, appraisal, development and reward) examples are given of how the policy could contribute to more balanced gender relations. A last checklist points out how equality objectives can be integrated in a quality policy of the organisation.

The five initiatives concerning equality oriented personnel policy in the different countries set out in the last part of the book, reveal that the best approach is a mix of instruments and strategies. The case concerning the realisation of target figures in the federal public

administration in Belgium, illustrates that despite the willingness of the government to work towards gender mainstreaming in personnel policy, also the current approach via positive actions remains important. They want to realise the projected target figures by relaunching the current positive action policy on the one hand and starting up mainstreaming on the other hand. For both strategies, the case emphasises the need to enhance the support from the administrative and political top, which is not always easy.

In the Dutch case the ABD-procedure to fill in vacancies for top civil servants, is tested on gender neutrality. The required commitment within the ABD-Office is available and the global evaluation of the procedure is rather positive. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement. On account of the decentralisation of the personnel policy, the sensibilisation of line managers and people responsible for personnel policy in each ministry will be very important in the future. Only in this way can a genuinely gender-neutral selection and appointment of Dutch top civil servants be guaranteed. The vacancy filling is after all a shared task of the ABD-Office and the ministries.

The Norwegian case shows how every two years a new action programme on equal opportunities for men and women is drafted systematically in the Norwegian Ministry of Labour and Government Administration. The decentralised personnel policy is far from a problem here: equal opportunities are incorporated in the task package of the individual line manager, but it is also the business of the trade unions and the top of the ministries. The content of the action program shows that detailed sex specific statistics are scrupulously analysed and that far-reaching actions are formulated. It is also clear that much attention is being paid to the drafting and realisation of clear target figures.

The English case is a pilot project concerning 'diversity', which was started up in several British departments. The aim is the development of a coherent strategy to mainstream diversity and to alter the organisational culture in the British Civil Service. In this manner, each individual is appreciated for what he or she is. Different ways to reach the same goal are respected and the differences between people are used to bring about a productive work environment. Worth noting is that the United Kingdom, unlike most other countries, explicitly defines equality in a broader sense than gender equality and that ethnicity is especially emphasised. Via mainstreaming and under the new term 'diversity' the government tries to give a new impulse to equal opportunities initiatives.

Also in the Flemish community the 'gender in balance' research project clearly focuses on mainstreaming as a new strategy to develop a gender equality personnel policy. In co-operation with two Dutch researchers an ambitious action research was set up. This project triggered off an important process in the Flemish administration, in which the civil servants responsible for personnel policy and the top of the organisation were involved right from the start. This participatory way of working is a good example of how the success rate of the execution of a project and the implementation of research recommendations can be increased.

Although most of the presented projects differ a lot, they are all partly⁴⁹ or fully⁵⁰ mainstreaming oriented. Anyhow, it is striking that most projects were initiated and followed up by specific actors responsible for equal opportunities and personnel policy. This clearly illustrates the importance of specific actors and measures such as positive action. These experts are a sort of 'mediators' to start up the mainstreaming strategy and to make it possible.

The Norwegian example is in this respect the exception to the rule. In the early nineties the decision was made in the public sector to transfer the full responsibility for equal opportunities and personnel policy to the regular policy actors, especially the line managers in each ministry. This seems to be working well in Norway, not by chance a highly emancipated country (8 out of 19 ministers being women for instance). So the required political support and interest is actually available.

As far as equal opportunities in general are concerned, the Scandinavian countries can be quoted as trendsetters setting the tone. Probably this also applies to the field of equality oriented personnel policy and there will be an evolution towards the responsabilisation regarding equality of the regular actors responsible for personnel policy. However, the bulk of the European countries are not yet up to the mark of the Scandinavian countries. Therefore most countries need more political will on the one hand and a greater real support and interest from the administrative top on the other hand.

Consequently, in our opinion, specific gender experts will be indispensable in most countries for a long time, until the moment the organisation has acquired mainstreaming as a strategy; has made it operational in the different sub-domains of personnel policy, and can guarantee the necessary follow-up. Let us hope that this book may contribute to this.

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²⁹ C.L. Bacchi, op.cit., p. 136

³⁰ Council of Europe, op.cit., p. 16

³¹ Rees, op.cit., p. 47

³² Council of Europe, op. cit., p. 8

³³ Chris Van Laere, "Introducing equal pay for work of equal value in collective bargaining: Belgium", OECD-conference on "changing labour markets and gender equality: the role of policy", 12-13 October 1998, Oslo

³⁴ E.g. the Corporate Strategy and Diversity Division in the UK (located in the Cabinet Office), the "Dienst Emancipatiezaken" in the Flemish Community (within the Department of General Affairs and Finance) or the Non-discrimination and Equal Opportunities Unit of the European Commission (situated in DG IX, Personnel and Administration). On the Belgian federal level there is no specific Unit for equality and personnel policy but there is a federal coordinator for positive action (located in the Equality Unit, in the Ministry of Labour and Employment, not in the Ministry responsible for personnel policy). Norway does not have a specific unit or specific positive action officials anymore

³⁵ N.M. Tichy, C.J. Fombrun, M.A. Devanna, "Strategic human resources management", Wiley, New York, 1984

³⁶ A. Hondeghem, S. Nelen, "Ken- en stuurgetallen. Instrument voor een evenredige vertegenwoordiging van mannen en vrouwen in de federale ministeries", Brussel, 1999, 127 pp. + bijlagen

³⁷ The Belgian Civil Service consists of 5 different levels (4,3,2,2+ and 1), level 1 being the highest level (mostly university degrees)

³⁸ Federaal Ministerie van Tewerkstelling en Arbeid belast met het beleid voor gelijke kansen voor mannen en vrouwen, *Code van goede praktijk voor positieve acties*, Brussel, 1999, 9 pp. Zie ook *Omzendbrief van 20 april 1999* (Belgisch Staatsblad van 15 mei 1999)

³⁹ Within level 1 (highest level) the ranks range from 10 (beginners) to 17 (Secretary General)

⁴⁰ Because it has to be said that federal civil servants sometimes tend to distrust the intentions of someone outside of the civil service !

⁴¹ Originally, the research project could only last 5 months but it was finally extended with a few months

⁴² On the federal level, mainstreaming has not been applied yet in other policy fields, so it would be a pilot project for the Ministry of the Civil Service

⁴³ The national sector includes the ministries of General Affairs, the Interior and Relations with Overseas Territories, Finance, Economic Affairs, Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries, Education, Culture and Science, Social Affairs and Employment, Transport and Public Works, Public Health, Welfare and Sport, Housing, Town and Country Planning and Environment, Foreign Affairs and Defence

⁴⁴ The overall procedure for filling vacancies based on a code of conduct is described in Annex 1

⁴⁵ "Evenredig, nog even niet" ("Proportionate but not quite yet"), Standardization of participation of women in senior positions in the civil service, February 1998, study carried out by De Jong & Van Doorne-Huiskes and Partners, Utrecht commissioned by the ABD-Office and Staff Management Department of the Civil Service

⁴⁶ "Crossing the Boundaries, Programme in international and strategic leadership for women managers in the public sector", The Danish School of Public Administration

⁴⁷ Including both results over a long period and extraordinary efforts over a shorter period

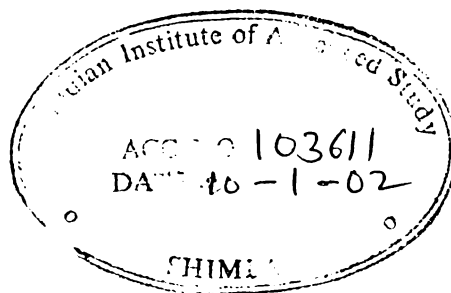
⁴⁸ "Nuanceren" in Dutch

⁴⁹ Belgium, Norway and the Netherlands

⁵⁰ Flanders and the United Kingdom

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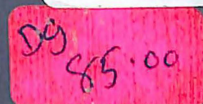
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