



Consultation concerning the “Fifth Progress Report on Economic and Social Cohesion”

Hereby we confirm our Authority’s support of this Position Paper formulated by the Learning Network on Gender Mainstreaming within the European Social Fund – *The European Community of Practice on Gender Mainstreaming*:

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The European Community of Practice on Gender Mainstreaming is a community dedicated to integrating the gender dimension into the European Social Fund (ESF) programmes (2007-2013) in relation to the EU 2020 strategy.

The goal is that gender mainstreaming shall be an integral part of future ESF management at the end of the network’s lifespan – from planning, programming, implementing to monitoring and evaluation.

The network is funded by the European Commission.



EUROPEAN UNION
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In cooperation with
 **Arbetsmiljö
forum**

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Consultation concerning the “Fifth Progress Report on Economic and Social Cohesion”

Gender Inequality poses a severe threat to future progress on Economic and Social Cohesion of the European Union.

The Member States represented in the network are concerned that gender equality is lacking in the preparatory documents for the Fifth Progress Report on Economic and Social Cohesion. The Cohesion Report fails to consider gender equality and the dual approach to gender equality. This is after all the main strategy used in Community Gender Equality Policies. We consider therefore that the documents lack in quality, failing to address the specific issues facing women as well as men within the European Union.

None of the documents published in relation to the new employment and labour market policies in the light of EU 2020 are based on either a gender impact assessment or the new gender equality strategy.

The Cohesion Report has two “marginalized” chapters on gender equality (page 189) and equal opportunities (page 231), mostly related to the 2000 – 2006 period of the Structural Funds. These chapters present considerations on gender equality mainly based on the increased employment rate for women. This increased employment rate is indeed the case as far as “head counting“ is concerned. However, a more in-depth study of working patterns shows a different picture for women in the EU: a decrease in paid working hours and an increase of precarious employment (see EP, 2010/2018(INI)).

In the Cohesion Report, reference is made to the EU Gender Equality objective “economic independence of women and men”, an objective clearly following an “egalitarian” gender equality model. But no reference is made to EU Commission evaluation findings that more efforts are needed to effectively promote gender equality.




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In October 2010, the European Parliament published a report on precarious employment which has a clear gender dimension. The Parliament asked the Commission to tackle precarious employment in the framework of the new employment guidelines (Report A7-0264/2010). Here is a clear connection between the employment rate (head count) and the fact that in many EU Member States the volume of employment (in terms of full-time equivalent) women (and men) has decreased in real terms.

The final Cohesion Report will serve as the reference for the new Structural Funds period. Therefore, it is indispensable that the Gender Mainstreaming strategy – meaning that a gender perspective must be integrated into all steps of planning – needs to be coherently integrated into the Cohesion Report.

The Network urges the European Commission, the European Parliament, as well as the Member States, to ensure that the principles and regulations on gender equality agreed since the ratification of the Amsterdam Treaty will be integrated into the Cohesion Report and into all future policy developments adopted as a result of the Cohesion Report.

Finally, some concluding remarks:

- **More developed regions are more competitive**, because they:
 - are more innovative
 - have a better trained population
 - have higher rates of employment
 - have better infrastructure
 - analyse the relevance and impact of gender on all policies
- Well-being and life satisfaction are strongly linked to a gender perspective. If an analysis of the gender perspective is not carried out, it is difficult to effectively promote gender equality, thus creating an unrealistic picture of well-being and life satisfaction. The current economic crisis has further underlined the need to develop new models for gender equality that build on the principle that both men and women should be economically independent – and not depend on other people for their basic existence.
- Better coordination is needed between regional development and other EU and national policies. The Gender Equality Strategies of the European Union are currently missing from the report and should to be included in all future policy developments. Furthermore, there is no reference to the dual approach to gender equality in the report.



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