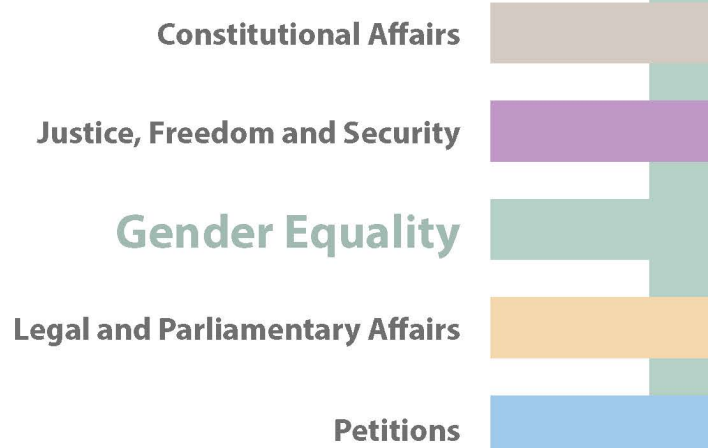


DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES

POLICY DEPARTMENT **C**
CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS



Gender Equality Plans in the private and public sectors in the European Union

STUDY FOR THE FEMM COMMITTEE



DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES
POLICY DEPARTMENT C: CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND
CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

Gender Equality Plans in the private and public sectors in the European Union

STUDY

Abstract

This study aims to map existing Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) in the public and private sectors in the EU Member States, as far as data are available. It aims to analyse how GEPs have both impacted and are impacting the economic situation of women in the EU, analyses national legislation and collective agreements in connection with GEPs, analyses the impact of the crisis and subsequent austerity on GEPs and, more in-depth, analyses the substance and impact of GEPs in the private and public sectors in two Member States, Austria and Spain.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALMP	Active labour market policies
B-GIBG	Bundes-Gleichbehandlungsgesetz
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
EC	European Commission
EIGE	European Institute of Gender Equality
EOASB	Equal Opportunities, Anti-discrimination and Social Benefits
GB	Gender budgeting
GEP	Gender Equality Plan
GSGE	General Secretariat for Gender Equality
HR	Human resources
LOMLOU	Ley Orgánica por la que se Modifica la Ley Orgánica de Universidades
MINECO	Ministerio de Economía, Industria y Competitividad
NAPGE	National Action Plan on Gender Equality
NAP	National Gender Equality Plan
OPI	Organización pública de investigación
NMWR	National Machinery for Women's Rights
MLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Policies
MS	Member State
REGCON	Registro of Convenios y Acuerdos Colectivos
RTDI	Research, Technology, Development and Innovation
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Gender mainstreaming has been adopted as the European level strategy¹ to promote equality between women and men, and to combat gender discrimination. It involves integrating a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policy making (policies, regulatory measures, and spending programmes).

The goal of gender mainstreaming is the transformation of unequal social and institutional structures and organisations into equal and fair structures for both men and women.

Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) and Gender Action Plans can be defined as strategic and tailored initiatives meant to define the legal framework and the operational conditions to implement gender mainstreaming and put them into practice at the workplace. They are characterised by the identification of a set of strategic actions meant to reach, in a defined length of time, expected results in terms of gender equality.

GEPs and Gender Action Plans may have a legal basis (required by national or regional laws) or be required by collective agreements (as the product of collective bargaining processes at national, local, or firm level), or more simply they can be individual initiatives at organisational level. They may be applied in both the public and the private sector. For the private sector, they may involve only one firm or, when they are envisaged by collective agreements, they might regard more organisations or even the entire sector, mirroring the scope of application of the collective agreement. Similarly, in the public sector, they may involve a particular organisation or different governance levels (country, regional, and local).

In their most effective versions, GEPs include tailored indicators for measuring success and foresee the implementation of specific training on gender competences to ensure adequate follow-up of the plan.

In the specific context of research organisations and higher education institutions, the European Commission² promotes the adoption of GEPs by research performing organisations and research funding organisations and defines a GEP as a set of actions.

Aim

The overall goal of this study is to map the existence of GEPs in the public and private sectors in the EU Member States, according to EU-level available data and information. The study also aims to: analyse how GEPs have impacted/are impacting the economic situation of women in the EU, analyse national legislation and collective agreements in connection with GEPs, and analyse the impact of the crisis/austerity on GEPs.

Two Member States – Austria and Spain – have been analysed in more depth to investigate the substance and impact of GEPs in the private and public sectors.

¹ See: <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming>.

² European Commission Communication on “A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth” (COM(2012) 392 final), available at: http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/era-communication_en_2012.pdf.

Conclusions

A high variability in scope of the mapped typologies of GEPs has been found. Variability relates to the type of work organisation in which the GEPs are expected to be implemented, the institutional context in which the regulation on GEPs has been drafted, the disciplines addressed, or the type of gender biases to address.

According to the definition of the European Institute for Gender Equality – EIGE³ (tailored for research organisations and higher education institutions), a GEP can be broken up into different steps or phases, each requiring specific types of interventions: an analysis phase including gender disaggregated data collection/analysis and procedures, processes and practices for gender assessment; a planning phase, where objectives are defined, targets are set, actions and measures are planned, resources and responsibilities are attributed and timelines are agreed upon; an implementation phase, in which activities are implemented and outreach efforts are undertaken; and a monitoring phase, in which the process and the progress are regularly followed through and assessed.

In most successful cases, GEPs include monitoring and evaluation processes to measure progress and impact. Typically, indicators adopted in GEPs may be both quantitative and qualitative. The former are aimed at assessing the impact of adopted measures, the latter are aimed at assessing the strategic impact of the plan and the institutional changes that cannot be gauged by quantitative measurement.

In many GEPs, a lack of a detailed monitoring/evaluation process, including the absence of specific quantitative/qualitative indicators, has to be signalled, hindering the assessment of their effective impact from an external perspective.

The main weaknesses identified are the difficulty encountered in designing and implementing monitoring/evaluation processes and the difficulty in obtaining cross-country comparable data for similar indicators. This is the reason why for many GEPs it is difficult to assess the actual impact.

The mapping exercise has also shown that every EU Member State has adopted different approaches in their gender equality legal frameworks in accordance with the EU directives. As a result, GEPs may present different scopes. In some cases, there are specific laws that promote the adoption of GEPs and/or their adoption is supported by action plans and national programmes. In a very limited number of cases, tripartite bodies are put in place to support the adoption of GEPs in working organisations and/or to monitor the respect of anti-discrimination laws. Notable is a tripartite commission existing in Portugal.

Most GEPs are aimed at increasing the participation of women in employment and at decreasing the gender pay gap by annual/biennial/triennial obligatory reporting. In terms of the impact of GEPs on the economic situation of women in the EU, the overall picture of Europe shows that this impact is very hard to gauge at a macro level although some positive results have emerged at micro level.

An important element that contributes to the existing difficulties in detecting the concrete changes related to the implementation of GEPs is the absence of adequate reporting, monitoring, and assessment tools/reports in most of the cases. In particular, except in a few

³ See: EIGE “Gender Equality in Research” at: <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/tools-methods/gear/objectives-gender-equality-research>.

cases, often neither quantitative nor qualitative indicators are properly operationalised in GEPs. This hinders impact assessment and comparison across evaluations.

The economic crisis has had a direct impact on gender equality and indirect effects on GEPs. Direct impact of the crisis on gender equality consisted in an initial reduction of gender differences in all relevant indicators for employment, unemployment, wages, and poverty due to a worsening of the situation of men. Then the situation of women worsened due to the retrenchments in public administration and welfare benefits and other provisions worsening the conditions for women.

The economic crisis has had indirect effects on GEPs, as gender equality has been rarely taken into account in anti-crisis measures. Gender equality has been downgraded as objective and only some countries have introduced innovations in the field of gender equality (in particular some Eastern European countries).

Recommendations

In line with the findings from the study, recommendations for action at EU and Member State level are put forward.

Member States should be encouraged - by means of appropriate concrete support, including additional resources - to adopt binding rules to promote the definition and implementation of GEPs in national public and private organisations. Regulations should stipulate a careful design and implementation of data collection from a gender perspective, and the achievement of GEPs should be properly monitored. This should be implemented at both micro (level of implementation of individual GEPs) and macro level (Member State level).

Member States and the European Commission should be invited to monitor the impact of GEPs and to support the collection and sharing of successful practices.

Member States and the European Commission should encourage sharing of knowledge about GEPs, providing opportunities for discussion on methods, tools, and indicators.

More in general, the European Commission should also use incentives and award criteria for Member States, which support the collection of data and monitoring of the effective implementation of GEPs.

Moreover, the European Commission and the Member States should be encouraged to promote the participation of social partners at EU and Member State level in designing, implementing, and monitoring/evaluating GEPs. Specific attention should be paid to involving social partners in the public and private sector.

1. GENDER EQUALITY PLANS

KEY FINDINGS

- Gender mainstreaming is the pivotal strategy adopted at European level to promote equality between women and men, and to combat discrimination.
- Gender mainstreaming involves the integration of a gender perspective at every step of the policy-making process.
- Gender Action Plans and Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) are strategic and tailored initiatives meant to define the legal framework and the operational conditions for implementing gender mainstreaming in practice at the workplace.
- There is a high variability in the purpose, scope, and adopted tools in GEPs.
- Monitoring and evaluation tools are pivotal for the success of GEPs. The lack of a detailed monitoring/evaluation process, and the absence of specific quantitative/qualitative indicators in many GEPs is the reason why it is difficult to assess their effective impact from an external perspective.
- Successful adoption and effective implementation of GEPs in work organisations entails a participative approach to ensure the effective commitment of relevant stakeholders.

1.1. Background and definition

Gender mainstreaming, as a European-level strategy for achieving gender equality, involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures, and spending programmes. The overall aim of gender mainstreaming is to promote equality between women and men, and to combat discrimination.

The point of departure for the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy is represented by the differences between the life patterns of men and women. Once the differences are acknowledged, then actions to transform the unequal social and institutional structures and organisations are designed and put in place.

Gender Action Plans and GEPs are the strategic and tailored initiatives meant to define the legal framework and the operational conditions for implementing gender mainstreaming in practice at the workplace.

GEPs and Gender Action Plans may have a legal basis or simply refer to collective agreements. They may be implemented in the public or in the private sector and at different levels of governance, and involve large or small organisations. In any case, their expected results in terms of gender equality are expected in a defined length of time.

In their most effective versions, GEPs include tailored indicators for measuring success, and they envisage the implementation of specific training on gender competences to ensure adequate follow-up of the plan.

In the specific context of research organisations and higher education institutions, the European Commission⁴ promotes the adoption of GEPs by research performing organisations and research funding organisations. The European Commission defines a GEP (according to the indications of EIGE) as a set of actions aimed at:

- conducting impact assessment/audits of procedures and practices to identify gender bias;
- identifying and implementing innovative strategies to correct any bias; and
- setting targets and monitoring progress via indicators.

GEPs are the main tool promoted by the European Commission to tackle systematic institutional change in research organisations. This is achieved by targeting human resources development strategies, institutional governance, research funding allocation, institutional leadership and decision making, as well as research programmes.⁵ EIGE supports the European Commission in the theoretical work for the elaboration of GEPs in this specific context.⁶

1.2. Purpose and scope

The scope of GEPs may vary strongly, depending on the type of work organisation, the institutional context in which they are conceived and implemented, the type of gender biases and the inequalities identified as part of the diagnosis.

The way gender biases and inequalities themselves are addressed by GEPs can also vary, along with the chosen approach and the availability of internal or external gender expertise. For instance, ethnographic research might be adopted to promote the change in the organisational culture, or quantitative statistical tools may be used to calculate the gender gap in wages and to propose adequate change.

More recently, gender inequalities have been increasingly addressed accounting for other inequality grounds at the same time. This is defined as “intersectional approach” and considers the impacts on individuals of other inequality grounds (disability, age, sexual orientation, religion, or ethnicity) and gender inequality. The assumption, which is corroborated by statistical analysis, is that gender inequalities interact with other forms of inequalities (if a woman is at disadvantage, then a woman with disabilities would suffer a double disadvantage, or an old man suffers from specific diseases more than an old woman). Addressing other inequalities intersecting with gender may offer efficient leverages for

⁴ European Commission Communication on ‘A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth’ (COM(2012) 392 final), available at: http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/era-communication_en_2012.pdf.

⁵ Genport (2016), Implementing gender equality plans in research performing organisations: Where to start?, Genport policy brief.

⁶ See EIGE webpages at: <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/tools-methods/gear/objectives-gender-equality-research>.

change and can also inspire comprehensive actions and strategies. However, it should be taken into due consideration that this additional attention requires more analytical resources, more data, and a broader range of expertise than tackling gender separately from other inequality grounds.

According to EIGE, a GEP⁷ in research organisations and higher education institutions can be broken up in different steps or phases, each requiring specific types of interventions:

- an analysis phase, in which sex-disaggregated data are collected and procedures, processes, and practices are critically assessed with a view to detecting gender inequalities and gender bias;
- a planning phase, in which objectives are defined, targets are set, actions and measures to remedy the identified problems are decided, resources and responsibilities are attributed, and timelines are agreed upon;
- an implementation phase, in which activities are implemented and outreach efforts are undertaken so as to gradually expand the network of stakeholders; and
- a monitoring phase, in which the process and the progress are regularly followed through and assessed. Findings from the monitoring exercise(s) allow adjustments and to improve interventions, so that their results can be optimised.

This definition can be extended to most of the Gender Action Plans in work organisations, regardless of their scope or implementation.

1.3. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation activities are key to the effective implementation of Gender Action Plans and GEPs.

In the planning phase of GEP activities, quantitative indicators to monitor participation are immediately identified because most GEPs start from a participative approach, so the identification of quantitative indicators for participation will ensure the monitoring of institutional/organisational participation.

At the beginning of the first implementation steps of the plan, qualitative indicators and qualitative targets are identified. They do not need to be outlined earlier since they are aimed at monitoring the achievement of substantial organisational changes.

In the most successful cases, the monitoring and evaluation process includes all the following methods and activities to measure progress and impact:

- monitoring conducted by a monitoring team within the organisation, possibly with the support of monitoring experts. It includes:
 - the development of relevant monitoring indicators according to the objectives, target groups, and implementation contexts of the action plan; and
 - the collection of relevant qualitative and quantitative data according to the monitoring indicators developed;

⁷ Available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/tools-methods/GEAR/what-gender-equality-plan-gep>.

- self-assessment conducted by a monitoring team within the organisation. It provides the interpretation of collected data by a monitoring team within the organisation;
- evaluation conducted by external evaluators. It is based on the results from the monitoring and the self-assessment phases. It additionally includes documentary analysis and on-site interviews to obtain an independent picture of the implementation process, providing feedback and suggestions for improvements.

Typically, indicators found in Gender Action Plans and GEPs might be quantitative or qualitative:

- quantitative indicators are usually linked to the measurement of improvements of the initial conditions of gender equality in the organisation: number of women in key institutional positions; number of women in top and middle leadership positions; number of women/men having access to strategic organisational resources; number of women/men attending GEP activities; gender pay gap reduction; etc.
- qualitative indicators tend to assess strategic impact of the plan. They are linked to GEP specificities and tend to assess strategic institutional changes such as: adoption of gender mainstreaming in organisational mission/vision; adoption of permanent gender equality initiatives; adoption of long-term programmes (mentoring, women leadership); institutionalisation of work-life balance measures; establishment of gender equality committees; etc.

The lack of a detailed monitoring/evaluation process and the absence of specific quantitative/qualitative indicators in many GEPs is the reason why it is difficult to assess their effective impact from an external perspective.

1.4. Stakeholders involved

For the adoption and effective implementation of Gender Action Plans and GEPs in organisations, a participative approach is crucial. It ensures stakeholders' effective commitment to GEP objectives. Furthermore, the participative approach can efficaciously limit explicit and implicit reluctance of the organisation to changes.

The most successful GEPs identify and define key objectives of the institutional change and related activities by using the tool of Gender Participatory Audits⁸ in which all relevant stakeholders are involved.

The type and number of stakeholders to be involved in the Gender Participatory Audit may vary according to two factors: the organisation-specific characteristics and whether a specific action to identify the relevant stakeholders was undertaken at the beginning of the audit.

In a typical working organisation, a complete list of relevant stakeholders includes:

- board members (women and men);
- top management members (women and men, if different from board members);
- middle management (women and men);

⁸ See as an example "A manual for gender audit facilitators: The ILO participatory gender audit methodology" available online at: http://www.oit.org/gender/Informationresources/WCMS_187411/lang--en/index.htm.

- union/workers' representatives;
- human resources (HR) department leaders and representatives (women and men);
- women's committee representatives (if any);
- representatives of different professional groups (women and men; in research organisations, for example, senior and junior researchers but also technical and administrative staff);
- key external partners to the organisation.

2. MAPPING EXISTING GEPS IN THE EU

KEY FINDINGS

- Member States have adopted tools to promote gender equality according to their legal framework and existing EU directives
- In some cases, there are specific laws that promote and/or are supported by action plans and national programmes. In other cases, action plans and national programmes without a specific legal framework are found. In a few cases, tripartite bodies are put in place to support the adoption of GEPs in working organisations.
- The common focus of GEPs is to increase female employment rates and decrease gender pay gaps by an annual/biennial/triennial obligatory reporting system. In this chapter, a detailed overview by country is presented.

2.1. Overview of the European scenario

The overall picture of Europe shows that every Member State has adopted gender equality approaches in their legal framework in accordance with the EU directives. Within these frameworks, Gender Action Plans and GEPs are in place showing different nuances and different scopes. In some cases, there are specific laws that promote Gender Action Plans and GEPs, possibly supported by action plans and national programmes (e.g. in Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Spain, Finland, and Sweden). In other cases, action plans and national programmes without a specific legal framework are found (e.g. in Bulgaria, Cyprus, and the Czech Republic).

In a very limited number of cases, tripartite bodies have been put in place to support the adoption of GEPs in working organisations and/or to monitor compliance with anti-discrimination laws. In this sense, it is worth mentioning the tripartite commission existing in Portugal.

The common focus of GEPs is to increase female employment rates and decrease the gender pay gap through an annual/biennial/triennial obligatory reporting system.

The following paragraph presents an overview of the EU-28 Member States for which sufficient information on the existence of GEPs was available for the assessment.

2.2. National legislations and collective agreements in connection with GEPs

Austria

See detailed case study.

Belgium

At community level, local GEPs have been in force since 2005. Additionally, in 2012,⁹ a law on reducing the gender pay gap was adopted. The law provides for the calculation and publication of gender differences in pay and labour costs in the annual audit of companies. Firms with more than 50 workers should also analyse the internal wage structure from a gender equality perspective.

Czech Republic

Gender equality policies are coordinated by the Department for Equality of Women and Men,¹⁰ which focuses on equal opportunities for both genders;¹¹ in each ministry there is a Gender Equality Coordinator, who is responsible for the promotion of equality between women and men and for the implementation of the National Gender Equality Plan (NAP). The NAP touches upon various aspects of socio-economic life (decision-making positions, labour market, reconciliation of work, violence, and stereotypes) and is constantly monitored by the responsible ministries.

Denmark

Denmark developed methods to encourage gender mainstreaming such as: gender impact assessments of legislative proposals, mandatory sex-disaggregated statistics in selected areas, and the submission of annual monitoring reports from each ministry to the Minister for Gender Equality. Additionally, the central administration, regions, and municipalities are obliged to submit gender equality assessment reports.

Germany

The German Parliament has recently adopted a law proposed by the Government, aiming to ensure equal pay for work of equal value for women and men in the same workplace. Among the initiatives of the act,¹² the most relevant for the aims of the present study are the

⁹ Law on reducing the gender pay gap, available at: http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/mopdf/2012/08/28_1.pdf.

¹⁰ Gender Impact Assessment, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/exchange_of_good_practices_at/cz_comments_paper_at_2014_en.pdf.

¹¹ The Government Council for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, available at: <https://www.vlada.cz/cz/pracovni-a-poradni-organy-vlady/rada-pro-rovne-prilezitosti/the-government-council-for-equal-opportunities-for-women-and-men-29830/>.

¹² It prohibits direct or indirect pay discrimination based on gender, provides a legal definition of "equal work or work of equal value", as well as of other concepts in connection with "equal pay", introduces the legal right of an individual employee to request information on the company's fixed basic gross salary and on one or two salary components (in companies with more than 200 workers), and enhances the rights of the Workers' Council to enforce the employee's right to information.

following: it encourages employers with more than 500 employees to put measures in place to regularly audit the pay structures with a view to ensuring equal pay; the act also obliges employers with more than 500 employees to provide regular updates on the status of measures to promote equality in general and wage equality between men and women or to explain why there are no such measures in place, with the publication of the reports as attachments to the company's management report.¹³

Estonia

There was an action plan to reduce the gender pay gap 2012-2015 but it was not renewed.¹⁴ The plan included five objectives: to improve the implementation of the present GEP; to improve the work-life balance; to promote gender equality, particularly in the education field; to reduce gender discrimination; and to analyse pay systems and organisational practices in the public sector and improve them if necessary.

Ireland

The current framework for gender equality policies is the National Women's Strategy 2007-2016.¹⁵ The main goal of this strategy is "to implement gender mainstreaming as the principal instrument for the achievement of gender equality in Ireland".^{16 17}

Finland

Since 1987, the Equality Act has provided the framework for gender equality. The Non-Discrimination and Equality Board (2015) is in charge of the implementation of anti-discrimination policies including gender equality.

Since the 1990s, the Finnish government has issued action plans for gender equality, which are monitored and evaluated.

France

The legal framework relies on Law no. 2014-873 of 4 August 2014 for real equality between women and men¹⁸. The aim of the law is to assure that women's rights are respected and to tackle the deepest cultural roots of gender inequalities. The implementation regulations of

¹³ For further information on the Draft Act of the Federal Government to Promote Transparency in Pay Structures (*Gesetzentwurf der Bundesregierung, Entwurf eines Gesetzes zur Förderung der Transparenz von Entgeltstrukturen*) of 11 January 2017, see the website of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth, available at:

<http://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/germany-government-proposes-law-to-reduce-gender-pay-gap/>

¹⁴ Country report on gender equality, available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/ge_country_reports_d1/2016-ee-country-report-ge_final_en.pdf.

¹⁵ National Women's Strategy 2007-2016, available at:

<http://justice.ie/en/JELR/National%20Womens%20Strategy%20PDF.pdf/Files/National%20Womens%20Strategy%20PDF.pdf>.

¹⁶ EIGE, Going for Growth (support to women entrepreneurs), available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/good-practices/ireland/peer-support-helps-womens-businesses-grow>

¹⁷ EIGE, Laws and policies, available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/countries/ireland/laws-and-policies>.

¹⁸ Available at: <http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000029330832>

the law include a specific focus on women and employment. The law raises¹⁹ sanctions against small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (with 50 or more employees) if they do not respect the obligations concerning gender equality.²⁰ According to the regulations, large firms (with 300 or more employees) have to negotiate an action plan. SMEs (with 50 or more employees) have to define an action plan and inform the state services about it.²¹ The action plans or negotiations have to include wage topics. Moreover, a website has been created for SMEs to help them comply with the law.

Italy

Positive Action Plans (PAPs)²², which can be considered a form of GEPs for the public administration, are tools to be compulsory adopted by public administrations to implement gender equality initiatives. With the aim of monitoring and assessing gender equality policies, the Strategic Impact Assessment on Equal Opportunity (VISPO) is defined at central level and applied to the evaluation of some initiatives at local level.²³ In more recent years (2010 onwards), the fragmentation of aims and activities for Equal Opportunities Committees (which are now in charge of not only gender equality initiatives but also of wellbeing and safety in public administrations), combined with the reduction of available resources, have limited the possibility for these initiatives to have an impact.

Lithuania

The current national plan for gender equality is the National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for 2015–2021, implemented in 2015.²⁴ The programme pursues four main priorities: equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market (including reducing the gender pay gap, which covers increasing salaries in female-dominated sectors);²⁵ gender balance in decision making; gender mainstreaming (especially in culture, education and science, national defence, and international obligations); and increasing management effectiveness. The programme is implemented by the National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Implementation Plan 2015-2017.

Luxembourg

The Ministry of Equal Opportunities is responsible for gender equality and its implementation by adopting the gender mainstreaming strategy and positive actions.

¹⁹ Country report on gender equality, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/ge_country_reports_d1/2016-fr-country_report-ge_final.pdf

²⁰ Decree no. 2012/1408, available at: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000026792583&categorieLien=id>

²¹ Professional Equality, Obligations for Companies, available at: <http://www.familles-enfance-droitsdesfemmes.gouv.fr/dossiers/egalite-professionnelle/obligations-des-entreprises/>

²² Envisaged by article 48 of the legislative decree 198/2006, available at: <http://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/deleghe/06198dl.htm>

²³ The current situation of gender equality in Italy, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/epo_campaign/131203_country_profile_italy.pdf

²⁴ Country report on gender equality, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/ge_country_reports_d1/2016-it-country_report-ge_final.pdf

²⁵ Comments Paper – Lithuania, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/exchange_of_good_practice_be/lt_comments_paper_en.pdf

Triennial gender equality action plans have been in place since 2006 and impact assessments on relevant policy measures are envisaged. Gender equality is also considered at local level as many local administrations signed the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life. Action plans and initiatives are made available at national level through the Ministry of Equal Opportunity website,²⁶ where further information on policy making for gender equality is available.

Malta

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality was set up in 2004 as part of the framework of the Equality for Men and Women Act of 2003.²⁷ It receives complaints, conducts research, and raises awareness. Most notable is the Equality Mark. The Commission also manages the online Directory of Professional Women. Since 2015 a new Equality Act has been in force.

Netherlands

There is a National Gender Equality Plan in force and its implementation is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science, which promotes gender equality at all governance levels. The most recent plan²⁸ includes specific attention to participation in the labour market.

Portugal

In 2014, the Council of Ministers adopted a resolution in order to reduce the gender pay gap. In addition, the Council of Ministers every three years prepares a report on wages for women and men in state-owned companies. Private companies with more than 25 employees are encouraged to implement a gender wage analysis as an anti-discrimination strategy.²⁹ As a consequence, employers (public authority entities and employers of domestic service workers are exceptions) are obliged to prepare an annual report to inform the Ministry of Labour and Employment.³⁰

Spain

See detailed country case.

²⁶ Cas de bonnes pratiques, available at : <http://www.mega.public.lu/fr/societe/politique-niveau-communal/mesures/outils/cas-bonnes-pratiques/index.html>.

²⁷ Equality laws in Malta are available at: https://ncpe.gov.mt/en/Pages/Rights_and_Obligations/Equality_Laws.aspx.

²⁸ OCW (2013), Core Issues emancipation policy 2013-2016 (*Hoofdlijnenbrief Emancipatiebeleid 2013-2016*), available at: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2013/05/10/hoofdlijnenbrief-emancipatiebeleid-2013-2016>.

²⁹ Country report on gender equality, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/ge_country_reports_d1/2016-pt-country_report-ge_final.pdf.

³⁰ Gender segregation in the labour market and education in Portugal, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/exchange_of_good_practice_dk/pt_comments_paper_dk_2015_en.pdf.

Sweden

Since 2006, in Sweden a National Gender Equality Plan has been in force. Gender budgeting/auditing is currently implemented at national level by annexing a specific gender assessment to the measures included in the budget law. In 2009,³¹ Sweden set out the Anti-Discrimination Act to reduce the gender pay gap and promote equal pay growth opportunities for both genders. Moreover, the act calls for a survey every three years in order to monitor the reduction of the gender pay gap, which is an obligation for companies with 25 or more employees.³²

United Kingdom

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has created a framework for the public sector about equal pay reviews. Additionally, a working group has been established to deal with pay discrimination, covering all workers in higher education, as well as manual, administrative and teaching staff.³³

³¹ Discrimination Act, available at: http://www.government.se/contentassets/6732121a2cb54ee3b21da9c628b6bdc7/oversattning-diskrimineringslagen_eng.pdf

³² Country report on gender equality, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/ge_country_reports_d1/2016-se-country_report-ge_final_en.pdf

³³ Country report on gender equality, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/ge_country_reports_d1/2016-uk-country_report-ge_final.pdf

3. IMPACT OF GEPS ON THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF WOMEN IN THE EU

KEY FINDINGS

- Existing difficulties in detecting the impact of GEPs relate to the absence of adequate reporting, monitoring, and assessment tools/reports.
- There is a lack of adequate indicators (both quantitative and qualitative) in the plans. Gender statistics at country level (macro) specifically designed to mirror changes are lacking, and similarly there is a lack of properly designed indicators at work organisation level (micro).

3.1. Overview of the European scenario

The overall picture of Europe shows that although the majority of the EU countries have proper legislation on gender equality, and in many cases have adopted plans as tools to promote gender mainstreaming, the economic situation of women is still less than satisfactory.

An important element contributing to the existing difficulties in detecting the concrete changes in terms of impact determined by the implementation of Gender Action Plans and GEPs is the absence of adequate reporting, monitoring, and assessment tools/reports in most of the cases.

Additionally, the lack of adequate indicators (both quantitative and qualitative) in the plans and the absence of gender statistics at country level (macro) and work organisation level (micro), as well as the lack of tailored monitoring systems (except for a few virtual cases), makes it difficult to precisely assess the impact.

When comparable indicators of the economic situation of women in the EU - such as active participation in the labour market, presence in decision-making positions, and gender pay gap - exist, they might be used as impact indicators for Gender Action Plans at macro level but they cannot be used to gauge the changes at micro level (organisation), as it has to be borne in mind that they may be influenced by additional factors, external to the scope of the Gender Action Plan.

Since in most countries' recent GEPs the reduction of the gender pay gap has been indicated as one of the targets for Gender Action Plans, we have used the trends concerning the gender pay gap as an indicator of the impact of GEPs in the cases where no specific indicators were mentioned in the GEPs.

4. THE IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS ON GEPS

KEY FINDINGS

- The main measures used to deal with the economic crisis that has affected Europe since 2008 have been austerity and fiscal consolidation. The attention to gender equality policies has diminished during the crisis.
- There is a lack of indicators and respective data for a cross-country comparison of possible impacts of GEPS.
- The only indicator that is close to the issue and for which data are available for almost all EU-28 countries is the gender pay gap, which is influenced by many factors besides GEPS).

4.1. Overview of the European scenario

The economic crisis that has affected Europe since 2008 started with a credit crunch before evolving into a sovereign debt crisis. The main measures used to deal with these issues are austerity and fiscal consolidation. The report "The Impact of the Economic Crisis on the Situation of Women and Men and on Gender Equality Policies",³⁴ edited by Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini and Istituto per la ricerca sociale for the Network of experts on employment and gender equality issues (EGGE) and the Network of experts in gender equality, social inclusion, health and long-term care (EGGSI) in 2012, focused on the 27 Member States, four European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries, Switzerland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland, plus Turkey, Cyprus, and Macedonia. In order to analyse the impact of the crisis on the labour market, the analysis spanned the period from the second quarter of 2008 to the first quarter of 2012 and in order to focus on the social impact of the crisis, the temporal span was widened to between 2005 and 2010. The main results on women and men can be summarised as follows:

- due to an increase of male unemployment rates, low employment rates, and a reduction in wages for both men and women, the gender gaps in employment, unemployment, wages, and poverty went through a levelling down, which cannot be considered as a positive factor;
- the crisis started with a credit crunch. At the beginning, the retrenchment was not so consistent but this changed after the first phase, and the effects of the crisis were different during the first and second phase. Initially, the main sectors affected were the male-dominated ones (e.g. manufacturing); however, when the governments started to intervene with the retrenchment, the effect of the measures fell back to women-dominated sectors (public administration). This last effect can be very dangerous for gender equality: the fiscal consolidation seems to affect more women than men due to measures such as pension reforms, wage freezes, or cuts, and owing to the overall reduction in care-related benefits. It cannot be ruled out that fiscal consolidation will directly affect the disparities in gender equality.

³⁴ Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130410_crisis_report_en.pdf.

The impact of the crisis on gender equality policies can be summarised as follows:

- during the crisis years, almost few countries developed gender equality measures in their agenda or included gender mainstreaming;
- the gender equality issue has been taken into account in about one tenth of the policy measures or initiatives implemented to respond to the crisis;
- some countries have introduced innovations in the field of gender equality (in particular some Eastern European countries).

There is a lack of indicators and respective data for cross-country comparison for the possible impacts of GEPs. The only indicator that is close to the issue and for which data are available for almost all EU-28 countries is the gender pay gap. However, this indicator is influenced by many factors besides GEPs (among them, employment rate, gender segregation in occupation, and effective working hours). These factors during a time of crisis are sensitive to wide variations and so is the gender pay gap.

In addition, according to Eurostat, the gender pay gap narrowed due to: the decrease in productivity bonuses (immediately affected by the crisis), which concern mainly men; and the gender sectoral segregation as women are generally more present in the public sector, where the pay gap is smaller. Finally, existing gender policies have contributed to preventing an increase of the pay gap.

5. CASE STUDY – GEPS IN AUSTRIA

KEY FINDINGS

- The Austrian legal framework stipulates that every public institution including universities must enact a GEP (*Frauenförderungsplan*).
- Austrian labour legislation allows for the formulation of a GEP in company/works council agreement at company level but this is not compulsory. However, the Federal Ministry for Family and Youth awards the “workandfamily” title to companies after a standardised process of audit.
- There is no comprehensive analysis of the impact of GEPs on female representation or on the economic situation of women either at company level or at regional or national level due to the lack of data and complexity of the interventions. Only specific information on the implementation processes is available in specific cases.
- The effects of the implementation of GEPs in federal ministries, however, have been evaluated (Leitner, 2016) concluding that GEPs are a form of “soft law”, since the development is monitored but not tied to sanctions or incentives.
- During the economic crisis, the development of audits for private-sector companies indicates that the discussion about the crisis might have made companies more reluctant to the implementation of GEPs. As to the public sector, there is insufficient information to gauge changes in the implementation of GEPs.

5.1. Mapping exercise – where are GEPs implemented

5.1.1. Public sector

The Austrian Nationwide Equal Treatment Act (*Bundes-Gleichbehandlungsgesetz*, B-GIBG, in force since 1993) prohibits all forms of discrimination³⁵ based on sex/gender, ethical, religious, or political background, age, or sexual orientation in the context of employment or an educational contract.³⁶

Furthermore, the B-GIBG stipulates that every public institution must enact a GEP. Public institutions include: all federal ministries,³⁷ the Austrian Parliament, the Austrian Court of Audit, the highest courts (the Supreme Administrative Court and the Constitutional Court),

³⁵ Discrimination on the grounds of disability/handicap is excluded because it is regulated by specific laws (*Bundes-Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz* stipulates anti-discrimination in everyday life; *Behinderteneinstellungsgesetz* addresses anti-discrimination in working life).

³⁶ Educational institutions are obliged to conclude an educational contract with every prospective student to determine the mutual rights and obligations.

³⁷ Federal Chancellery; Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment, and Water Management; Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports; Federal Ministry of Education; Federal Ministry of Europe, Integration, and Foreign Affairs; Federal Ministry of Family and Youth; Federal Ministry of Finance; Federal Ministry of Health and Women’s Affairs; Federal Ministry of the Interior; Federal Ministry of Justice; Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, and Consumer Protection; Federal Ministry of Science, Research, and Economy; Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation, and Technology.

the Office of the Austrian President, the Austrian Ombudsman Board, as well as former state-owned companies.³⁸

The GEPs contain measures to reduce gender gaps among staff. The main focus is on internal HR policies addressing recruitment, promotion, further training, pay, and reconciliation of work and family life (e.g. part-time work in management, daddy month, fathers on childcare leave, and composition of decision-making bodies). However, they often address the use of gender-neutral language, prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace, and gender training for managers as well. Specific measures to promote women in their career are often envisaged in GEPs (e.g. mentoring, career development seminars, training, and support for female returners). In cases where women are underrepresented, the GEPs also take up the duty to favour the advancement of women (*Frauenfördergebot*) should a male and a female candidate be equally qualified.

Besides GEPs in public institutions, every year the Austrian Court of Audit presents the income report, which includes the analysis of the gender pay gap for civil servants.³⁹

Finally, every two years the government has to submit a report on the status quo of gender equality to the National Assembly.⁴⁰ This report focuses on female representation in all fields and at all hierarchical levels and it serves as a basis for assessing the recent developments in gender equality and the need for additional measures.

The B-GIBG is mirrored in the Equal Treatment Acts and the Anti-discrimination Acts of the nine Austrian Regions (*Bundesländer*). Three of them have an Equal Treatment Act also for municipalities (Upper Austria, Tyrol, and Vorarlberg).⁴¹

5.1.2. Higher education and research sector

The first GEP of the Federal Ministry for Science and Research was released in 1995 and addressed not only the federal ministry, as such, but also universities. With the Austrian Universities Act 2002, state universities became autonomous institutions (responsible for personnel and budget). Now universities are also responsible for gender equality policies and have to formulate a policy for women promotion (*Frauenförderungsplan*) and GEPs

³⁸ Statistics Austria, Austrian Labour Market Service, Austrian National Bank, Austrian National Library, Austrian Post, Telekom Austria, Federal Computing Centre, Austrian Broadcast Company, and Austrian Railways.

³⁹ Available at: <http://www.rechnungshof.gv.at/berichte/einkommensberichte.html>

⁴⁰ The last one was submitted in 2016 (BMFG, 2016).

⁴¹ Burgenländisches Landes-Gleichbehandlungsgesetz (LGBl. Nr. 59/1997 idgF); Burgenländisches Antidiskriminierungsgesetz (LGBl. Nr. 84/2005 idgF); Kärntner Landes-Gleichbehandlungsgesetz (LGBl. Nr. 56/1994 idgF); Kärntner Antidiskriminierungsgesetz (LGBl. Nr. 63/2004 idgF); Niederösterreichisches Landes-Gleichbehandlungsgesetz (LGBl. Nr. 2060 idgF); Niederösterreichisches Antidiskriminierungsgesetz (LGBl. Nr. 9290 idgF); Oberösterreichisches Gemeinde-Gleichbehandlungsgesetz (LGBl. Nr. 63/1999 idgF); Oberösterreichisches Landes-Gleichbehandlungsgesetz (LGBl. Nr. 8/1995 idgF); Oberösterreichisches Antidiskriminierungsgesetz (LGBl. Nr. 50/2005 idgF); Salzburger Gleichbehandlungsgesetz (LGBl. Nr. 31/2006 idgF); Steiermärkisches Landes-Gleichbehandlungsgesetz (LGBl. Nr. 66/2004 idgF); Tiroler Gemeinde-Gleichbehandlungsgesetz 2005 (LGBl. Nr. 2/2005 idgF); Tiroler Landes-Gleichbehandlungsgesetz 2005 (LGBl. Nr. 1/2005 idgF); Tiroler Antidiskriminierungsgesetz 2005 (LGBl. Nr. 25/2005 idgF); Vorarlberger Gemeindebedienstetengesetz (LGBl. Nr. 49/1988 idgF); Vorarlberger Landesbedienstetengesetz (LGBl. Nr. 50/2000 idgF); Vorarlberger Landes-Frauenförderungsgesetz (LGBl. Nr. 1/1997,73/1997 idgF); (Vorarlberger) Antidiskriminierungsgesetz (LGBl. Nr. 17/2005 idgF); Wiener Gleichbehandlungsgesetz (LGBl. Nr. 18/1996 idgF); Wiener Antidiskriminierungsgesetz (LGBl. Nr. 35/2004 idgF); (Wiener) Vertragsbedienstetenordnung 1995 (LGBl. Nr. 50/1995 idgF); Wiener land- und forstwirtschaftliches Gleichbehandlungsgesetz (LGBl. Nr. 25/1980 idgF).

(*Gleichstellungspläne*)⁴² addressing the fields of work-life balance and more general anti-discrimination policies (focusing on other dimensions than gender).

An analysis of the status quo of gender equality policies at Austrian universities showed that all 22 universities in the country formulated a policy for women promotion as part of their statute and implemented specific measures to increase female representation in fields and positions where women are underrepresented (Tiefenthaler and Good, 2011).⁴³

The Federal Ministry of Science, Research, and Economy implemented Gender Monitoring, which contains information on students and staff. The focus lies on female representation in all fields and at all hierarchical levels. This is complemented by three indicators of gender equality: the glass ceiling index, the gender pay gap, and female representation at different stages of appointment procedures for full professors. Data are updated yearly and are accessible online.⁴⁴

The existing legal framework requires different levels of commitment for different institutions: universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*), private universities, teacher-training colleges (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*), and non-university research institutions. For instance:

- universities of applied sciences and private universities have to address gender equality in their statute (goals, mission statement with regard to equality and measures);
- the legislation on teacher-training colleges stipulates that all colleges have to set up an equal opportunities working group but they do not have to draft a GEP;
- non-university research institutions, which are mainly funded by the Federal Ministry of Science, Research, and Economy, have to prepare and implement a GEP.⁴⁵

The Gender Monitoring of the Federal Ministry of Science, Research, and Economy contains information on female representation among students and staff of universities of applied sciences and private universities but no data on teacher-training colleges.

The largest non-university research institution – the Austrian Academy of Science (basic research) – developed a GEP (2012-2014) that has been in place since 2015. Furthermore, the Institute of Science and Technology Austria (ISTA) developed a GEP as required by the performance contract. Both GEPs address two strategic goals: increasing female participation and reducing the gender pay gap. The developments in gender equality will be discussed in the course of the negotiations for the next performance contract.

The Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation, and Technology provides incentives for non-university research institutions in the field of science and engineering to develop GEPs through the programme "FEMtech Career". The aim is to increase the number of female scientists employed in industrial research and to improve their career opportunities, thus

⁴² According to an amendment of the Austrian Universities Act in 2016.

⁴³ The *Gleichstellungspläne* are still under development. The first ones will be released in spring 2017.

⁴⁴ Available at: www.bmwf.wg.at/unidata.

⁴⁵ The GEP is due according to their performance contract. The federal ministry and universities/research institutions agree on a performance contract that contains goals and planned activities for a three-year period. The current performance contracts cover the period 2015 to 2018. Therefore, the next contracts will be negotiated in 2017.

upgrading the competitiveness of R&D-intensive companies. Companies and research institutions receive funding to implement structural measures, which:

- lead to equal opportunities for women and men (affirmative action plans, flexible work time schemes, etc.);
- increase the proportion of female scientists and engineers in the company or research institute;
- support female scientists and engineers in their professional careers (coaching, mentoring, further education and training, etc.); and
- implement activities that attract women into applied research.

The purpose is to improve the companies' structures and general working conditions in the long-term and to grant women access to higher positions. Companies are refunded between 50% and 70% of the total costs (max. 50,000 EUR) for gender specific initiatives. Measures might cover the following areas: public relations (development of a new HR communication strategy, new web presence, info material), HR management (recruitment), work-life balance policies, and support for female career development (coaching and mentoring for high potentials).

SMEs are funded (max. 10,000 EUR) to conduct a gender assessment of the current situation within the company. The analysis has to be conducted by external gender experts and the results have to be considered as a reference for developing concrete measures under the FEMtech Career programme.

An increasing number of research institutions are starting to develop and implement GEPs, since some state institutions established that commitment to gender equality is an additional asset for awarding scores in applications for funding, tenders, or calls for proposals. For instance, the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation, and Technology assigns additional points in its assessment of applicants (research and service proposals) for gender equality measures implemented at institutional level. The City of Vienna only concludes contracts with companies that implement at least some measures promoting women, or address gender gaps.

5.1.3. Private sector

Austrian labour legislation allows for the formulation of a GEP in company/works council⁴⁶ agreements at company level but this is not compulsory.⁴⁷ It is more likely to occur where company/works councils are strong (e.g. former state companies). However, there is no information available on how many companies have implemented a GEP under a company/works council agreement.⁴⁸ Federal authorities recommend that companies implement GEPs as this is also more convenient for them since human resources might be better allocated. In some institutions, like the Federal Ministry for Women's Affairs or the City of Vienna, social partners provide tools for companies on how to develop a GEP.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ For a definition, see: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/efemiredictionary/company-works-council>

⁴⁷ Although federal authorities tend to favour companies that have implemented at least some equality measures (Papouschek et al. 2009).

⁴⁸ An internet research only leads to the GEPs of the former state companies listed above.

⁴⁹ See for instance: MA57 2008; IV 2012; and BMBF 2014.

The Federal Ministry for Family and Youth awards the “workandfamily” title to companies after a standardised audit process, which is moderated by Familie & Beruf Management GmbH. The process to get the first award takes six months and comprises an analysis of the current corporate culture with regard to gender equality, the definition of agreed goals (jointly with management and employees), and measures to increase family friendliness.

Ten fields of action are addressed in the process: working hours, organisation of work, plan of work, information and communication policy, management culture, personnel development, remuneration components/benefits, services for families, parenthood/parental leave/return to work, and measures to promote health. After three years, the title can be confirmed following an update of the baseline analysis as well as a redefinition of goals and measures.

Depending on the size of the company, the audit costs between 7,000 EUR and 10,000 EUR for three years (auditor and expert fees). Companies may apply for an allowance between 2,000 EUR and 5,000 EUR for the audit and the first renewal.

The Federal Ministry for Family and Youth argues that audited companies will profit from a better work-family balance with regard to four dimensions: increasing motivation, increased loyalty of employees, reduced staff turnover, and a positive image as a family-friendly employer. All these factors are seen as contributions to increasing the competitiveness of the company.

The “workandfamily” audit process

The process is summarised in Table 1:

Table 1: Process for the attainment of the “workandfamily” title

First audit	Strategy workshop
	Auditing workshop
	Setting goals
	Assessment
Attainment	First certificate
Renewal audit	Inclusion in audit network
	Yearly report
	Re-auditing
	Assessment
Confirmation of certificate	
Attainment	Renewal

Source: www.familieundberuf.at

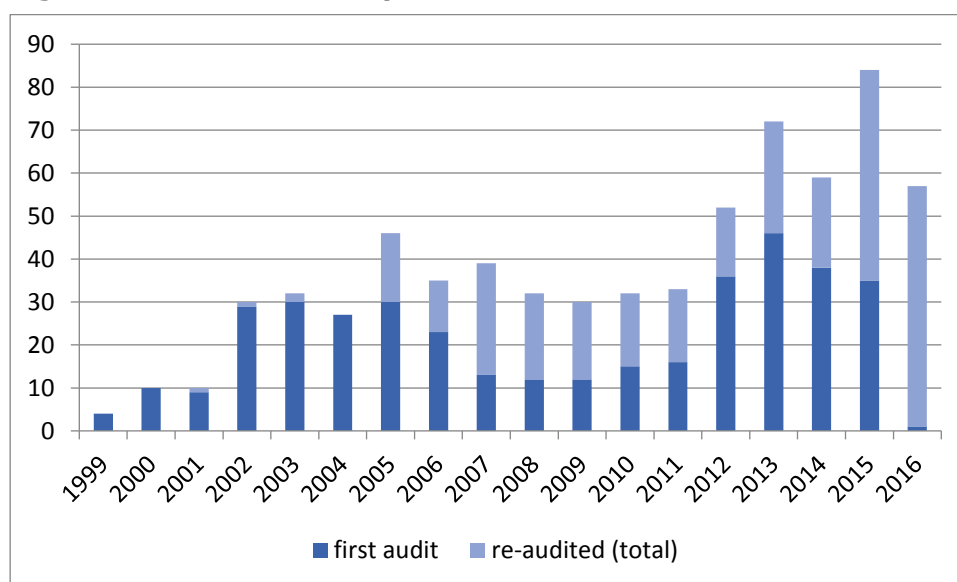
Small companies (five to 50 employees) have the possibility of being audited in a shorter procedure by the audit “workandfamily compact”. This audit addresses the 10 fields of action mentioned, but the number of criteria (questions) to be addressed in the baseline analysis is reduced from 180 to 135. While the standard procedure requires two workshops to get the first audit (a strategy workshop and an audit workshop), the compact procedure allows arranging both of them within one “audit day”. Further adaptations of the standard procedure are the audit “workandfamily higher education” for universities and universities of applied sciences as well as the audit “workandfamily health” for hospitals or long-term care

institutions. The main difference with the standard audit is the explicit consideration of clients (students, patients) in the context of the audit process and designed measures.

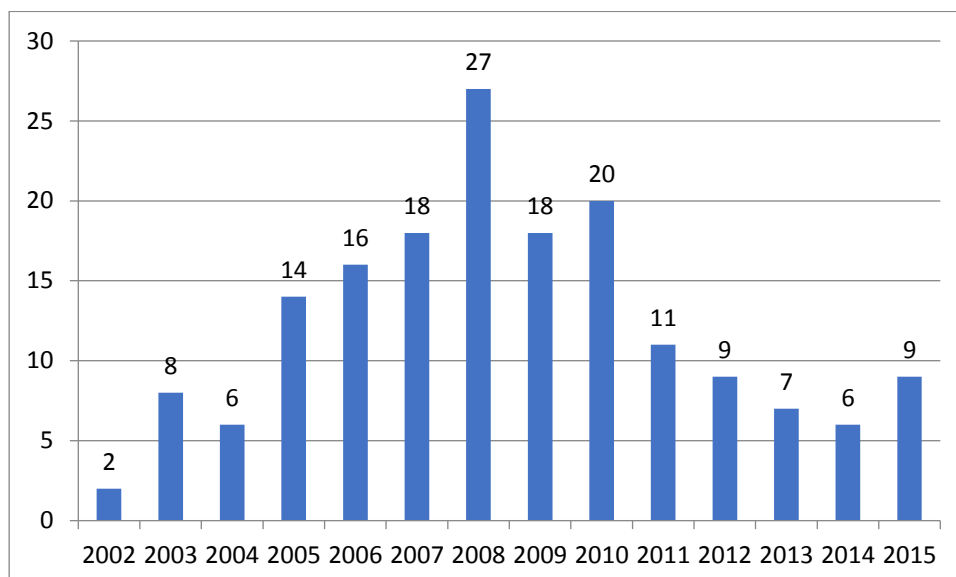
Results of the implementation of the "workandfamily" audit process

In total 386 companies have been awarded at least once (including 13 health/care institutions and 19 higher education institutions). By the end of 2016, 214 companies had a valid audit. The number of companies awarded per year has increased since the turn of the century, however, between 2007 and 2011 the number of companies awarded dropped significantly for the first time, but it has recovered from 2012 onwards. The number of expiring audits – companies that did not (successfully) re-apply for the audit – has varied significantly over time. The maximum number of expiring audits with no renewal was reached in 2008 (27).

Figure 1: Number of companies with first audit or re-audit



Source: www.familieundberuf.at/home/ (online database; access February 10th, 2017, own calculation)

Figure 2: Number of expiring audits (no re-audit)

Source: www.familieundberuf.at/home/ (online database; access 10 February 2017, own calculation)

Twenty nine per cent of all audited companies belong to the trade and services sector, 12% to the public sector, 11% are banks and insurance companies, and 11% health/care institutions. Eight per cent of companies belong to the information/counselling sector, 8% are engaged in tourism, 7% in industry, and 7% in craft. Twenty higher education institutions account for 5% of all awarded companies, while only 2% are transport companies. All higher education institutions have a valid audit. Companies in tourism and the trade sector are more likely not to be re-audited compared to financial services, industry, transport, and civil services. It seems that bigger companies and companies in sectors where women are underrepresented (like industry, transport) are more likely to be re-audited. Furthermore, company size matters; companies with a valid audit have on average 1,024 staff members whereas non-re-audited companies have on average 149 staff members. The average share of female staff does not differ significantly.

Table 2: Audited companies by sector

Sector	First audit	Re-audited in %	Average staff	Average % female staff	Audited companies by sector
Trade and services	112	43%	765	64%	29%
Civil services	46	61%	420	61%	12%
Financial services	43	77%	1,091	51%	11%
Health	41	49%	351	81%	11%
Information/Counselling	32	59%	112	63%	8%
Tourism	29	24%	216	53%	8%
Industry	28	68%	883	27%	7%
Craft	27	56%	81	36%	7%
Higher education institutions	20	100%	1,428	53%	5%
Transport	8	63%	1,683	37%	2%
Total	386	55%	633	56%	100%

Source: www.familieundberuf.at/home/ (online database; access 10 February 2017, own calculation)

One third of all audited companies are based in Vienna (133 or 34%). Companies from Upper Austria represent 18% of all audited companies and 15% of all audited companies are located in Lower Austria. Nine per cent of audited companies are based in Carinthia and Styria, 6% in Tyrol. The other four regions represent 2% to 4% of audited companies.

5.2. Analysis of impacts on the economic situation of women

Impact evaluations focus on the results that are directly attributable to a policy measure. They are based on information collected before, during, and after the implementation. To conduct impact evaluations, quantitative methods are adopted and therefore quantitative data are needed. Among quantitative methods “counterfactual analysis” is the most commonly applied as it can provide a comprehensive and systematic impact assessment of policy measures. It consists in the comparison between what actually happened and what would have happened in the absence of the intervention.⁵⁰ To apply quantitative methods and more specifically counterfactual analysis, it should be possible to clearly outline a set of relevant causes and the respective expected effects so as to relate the former to the latter.

In the case of the implementation of GEPs, the application of counterfactual analysis is hindered by the fact that GEPs usually contain a bundle of measures with overlapping causes and effects, which make it difficult to attribute effects to a single measure within this bundle (this is discussed by Wroblewski et al 2007 in relation to equality policies in the higher education sector).

For this reason and owing to the difficulty in obtaining reliable and systematic quantitative data, counterfactual analysis cannot be applied to assess the impact of GEPs. Therefore, it is impossible to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the impacts of GEPs on female representation or on the economic situation of women either at company level or at regional or national level. Only specific information about the implementation processes is available in particular cases, and this has been the object of specific assessments conducted by applying evaluation methods differing from counterfactual analysis.

Andrea Leitner (2007) analysed the effects of the gender mainstreaming strategy in the Austrian Labour Market Service. She depicted the importance of internal steering mechanisms (e.g. integration of equality goals in the balanced score card), which increase the commitment to equality strategies internally (with regard to staff) as well as externally (with regard to women as a target group of labour market policies). Leitner also analysed the implementation of GEPs in federal ministries (Leitner, 2016) and concluded that GEPs are a form of “soft law”, since their development is monitored but not tied to sanctions or incentives. She also touches on the feminisation of specific areas within the public sector, which supports the integration of women at the cost of increased segregation.

Wroblewski and Leitner (2010) and Wroblewski et al (2011) analysed the effects of university GEPs on the appointment procedures for full professors (case study approach). The analysis showed that universities with a GEP that contains a sound and comprehensive policy mix are not necessarily the universities with the most positive developments in terms of gender equality (share of female full professors).

⁵⁰ In public policy evaluations, counterfactual analysis is often conducted by comparing data collected before and after the implementation of the policy measure.

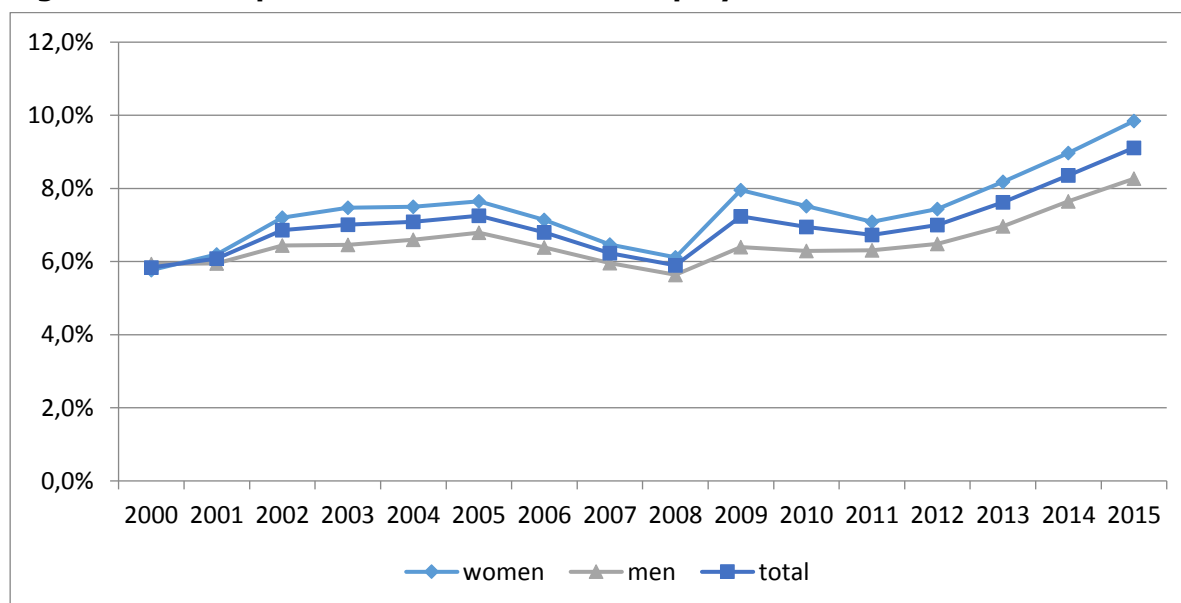
Catharina Werkhausen (2015) analysed the content and development of GEPs in nine private sector companies. She found increasing awareness of the management about gender equality issues, as GEPs mirror the commitment to gender equality of the company. This is in line with the results for the public sector summarised above. The City of Vienna commissioned a study on the benefits of companies implementing GEPs (MA 57 2008) to promote the exchange of good practices. The authors described concrete good practice approaches found in the companies analysed, although very little could be grasped on the impact of the measures.

5.3. Analysis of impacts of the crisis/austerity on GEPs

As to Austria, there is no comprehensive study available focusing on the impact of the crisis or austerity programmes on gender equality policies. This, amongst other reasons, is due to a lack of information on GEP enactment or implementation. Gender equality monitoring is implemented only for specific areas (e.g. for the higher education and research sector).

In times of budgetary restrictions, primarily publicly financed programmes – especially those for vulnerable groups (girls, refugees, asylum seekers, etc.) – receive greater scrutiny with regard to cost-effect relations or their potential for cost cutting in Austria. The development of audits for private sector companies indicates that the discussion about the crisis might have led to more reluctance in the strategy of companies – especially SMEs. However, the increase in the number of non-re-audited companies does not coincide with economic development. An increase in unemployment or a decline in GDP growth did not occur between 2008 and 2010, but later. One could conclude that the discussion of the crisis had a larger impact than the actual economic development.

Figure 3: Development of the share of unemployment



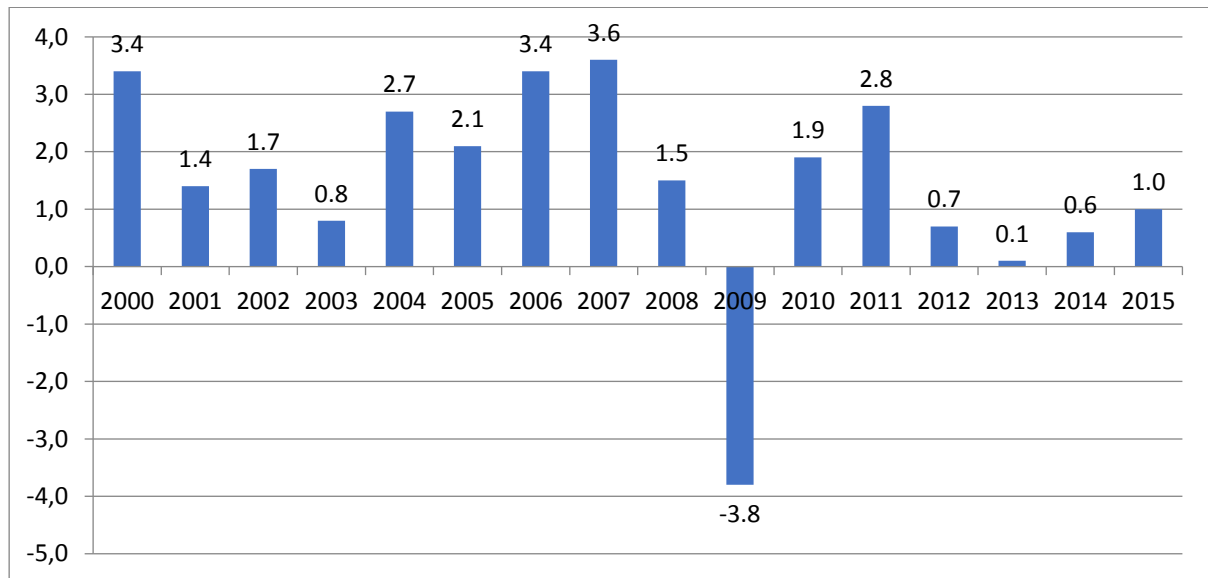
Source: Austrian Employment Service

In contrast, in the public sector the situation did not change in the context of the crisis, as the GEPs have been always mandatory for public institutions. However, as there is no information about the implementation of GEPs, it is difficult to gauge whether the

engagement for equality varied over time (e.g. with regard to the content of GEPs or budgets invested).

In the higher education and research sector, the situation did not change either. In that context, the monitoring activity implemented by the Federal Ministry of Science, Research, and Economy was crucial. Achievements in gender equality have to be explicitly discussed in the context of performance contract negotiations to increase commitment. Budgetary sanctions might be imposed on universities but, as yet, this has not happened.

Figure 4: GDP growth in %



Source: Statistics Austria

6. CASE STUDY – GEPS IN SPAIN

KEY FINDINGS

- The Law on Effective Equality between Women and Men (Law no. 3/2007) calls for the drafting of equality plans as a measure to promote equality in public authorities.
- The Basic Statute of Public Employees (Law no. 7/2007) also established the need to adopt equality plans in public administrations. In Spain, plans are therefore adopted and implemented not only at central state level but also at local and regional level. There is no register of GEPs in the public sector at national level. The Catalan government has, however, developed a pioneering register and a catalogue of organisations and companies with GEPs.
- The Organic Law to Modify the Organic Law on Universities (*Ley Orgánica por la que se Modifica la Ley Orgánica de Universidades*, LOMLOU, Law no. 4/2007) sets out the obligation to draft periodic reports on the application of the principle of gender equality (GEPs). In 2015, 73% of public universities and 33% of private universities (61% in total) had a valid GEP, while in 18% of public and 38% of private universities (24% in total) the new plan was in preparation. These plans vary greatly in terms of content.
- The Law on Effective Equality between Women and Men prescribes the mandatory adoption of GEPs for private companies with more than 250 employees. Whereas equality plans are not compulsory for SMEs, economic incentives to draft GEPs have been provided since 2011. An analysis of the 161 GEP collective agreements in the private sector, registered according to two-digit Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community (NACE) codes, reveals that the economic activity with the highest number of agreements about GEPs is the food industry with 9.3% of registered agreements. This is followed by motor vehicles, trailers, and semi-trailers with 8.7% of registered agreements, and retail trade, excluding motor vehicles and motorcycles, with 8.1%
- No comprehensive analysis exists on the effects of GEPs on female representation or the economic situation of women at company, regional, or national level. This is due to the lack of a culture of evaluation and to the problematic nature of measurement and evaluations.
- By promoting budget cuts and institutional restructuring, the austerity policies had a negative impact on gender equality policies and institutions (Lombardo, 2016:10).

6.1. Mapping exercise – where are GEPs implemented?

6.1.1. Public sector

In Spain the Law on Effective Equality between Women and Men aims “to eliminate the social obstacles and stereotypes standing in the way of achieving real, effective equality between men and women”.⁵¹ In order to attain this goal, the law calls for the drafting of equality plans as a measure to promote equality in public authorities.

The same law also regulates policy plans that are used as soft instruments to mainstream gender into different policy sectors (Lombardo, 2016:9). These plans are subject to approval by the Council of Ministers and include measures and goals that different governmental departments need to implement during a specific period of time (Bustelo, 2016). All draft laws, general regulations, and all legislative proposals made by the government should incorporate a report on gender impact. However, as Salazar (2016:8) notes, often “in practice it is overlooked or poorly executed”.

The implementation of gender mainstreaming is also under the responsibility of the Interdepartmental Commission for Equality (which includes representatives of all ministries). Gender units attached to each ministry develop key methods such as gender impact assessment and gender statistics linked to their specific area.

The Basic Statute of Public Employees also established the need to adopt equality plans in public administrations.⁵² In Spain, plans are therefore adopted and implemented not only at the central state level but also at the local and regional level (Lombardo, 2016:10).

There is no register of GEPs in the public sector at national level.⁵³ However, the Catalan government has developed a pioneering register and a catalogue of organisations and companies with GEPs.⁵⁴ In this database currently 78 plans are registered, 32 of which have been developed in public administrations. This initiative offers public authorities and companies an official certificate that assesses the contents of the plan in relation to legislations. The catalogue is a public information tool giving visibility to entities that have developed and implemented a GEP whilst it also serves as a reference point for entities that are in the process of developing their own plan.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Available at: <https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2007/04/13/pdfs/A16241-16260.pdf>. See also: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/djjustice_egelr_2010-2_final_commission_24february2011_en.pdf.

⁵² Available at <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2007-7788>. For more information, see also: <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/tools-methods/gear/legislative-policy-backgrounds/spain>.

⁵³ See: <http://www.igualdadenlaempresa.es/faq/home.htm#q22>.

⁵⁴ See: http://canalempresa.gencat.cat/ca/02_serveis_per_temes/07_treball_i_treballadors/03_relacions_laborals/06_igualtat_d_oportunitats_integracio_i_insercio_laboral/04_plans_d_igualtat_a_les_empreses/catalogue_de_plans_d_igualtat/.

⁵⁵ See: http://treball.gencat.cat/es/ambits/igualtat/igualtat_oportunitats_dones_empreses_i_treball/igualtat_empresa/sie/registre/.

6.1.2. Higher education and research sector

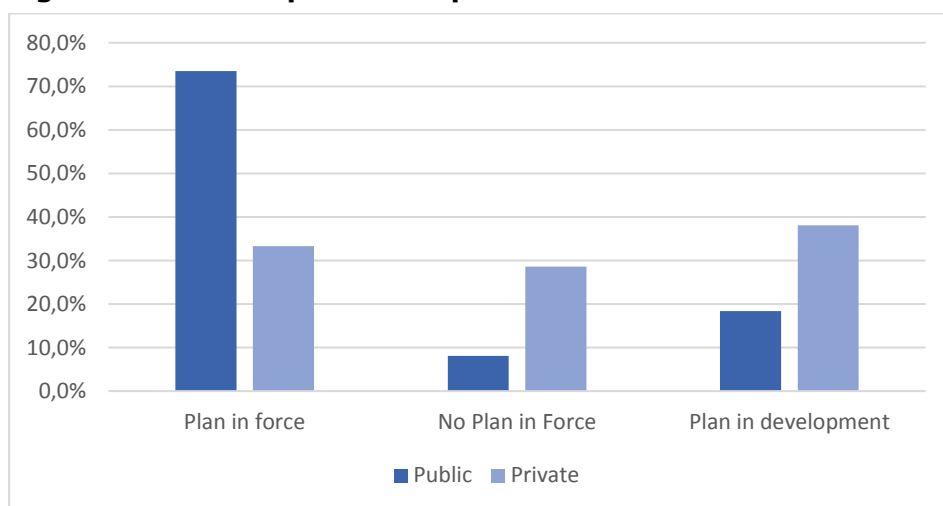
The Organic Law to Modify the Organic Law on Universities regulates gender equality specifically in universities, stating that “within their organisational structures, universities will feature equality units specifically for the promotion and implementation of tasks related to the principle of equality between women and men”.⁵⁶ The most important specific measures introduced by the act as mandatory for all universities are:

- the creation of equality units in all universities;
- the production of periodic reports on the application of the principle of gender equality (GEPs); and
- the balanced representation of women and men (60%/40%) on all boards for elections, promotion, and peer evaluation.

The Women in Science Unit produces the series “Women Scientists in Numbers” (*Cientificas en Cifras*) – first published in 2007, and subsequently in 2011, 2013, and 2015, which is the current and fourth edition of the series.⁵⁷ It analyses the relative presence of women at distinct levels and ambits of science in Spain, paying special attention to the careers of researchers in universities and public research organisations, the composition of decision-making bodies, and participation in RTDI (Research, Technology, Development and Innovation) funding calls. It also examines GEPs in public and private universities according to whether a plan is in force, no plan is in force, or a plan is under development.

In 2015, 73% of public universities and 33% of private universities (61% in total) had a valid GEP, while in 18% of public and 38% of private universities (24% in total) the new plan was in preparation. At the time, only 8% of public and 29% of private universities (14% in total) did not have a plan, nor had they started the process of elaborating a (new) plan.⁵⁸

Figure 5: Share of public and private universities with GEPs



Source: *Cientificas en Cifras*, 2015:65.

⁵⁶ Available at: <https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2007/04/13/pdfs/A16241-16260.pdf>.

⁵⁷ Available at: http://www.idi.mineco.gob.es/stfls/MICINN/Ministerio/FICHEROS/Informe_Cientificas_en_Cifras_2015_con_Anexo.pdf.

⁵⁸ The latest available data refer to 31 December 2015; see: *Cientificas en Cifras*, 2015:21, available at: http://www.idi.mineco.gob.es/stfls/MICINN/Ministerio/FICHEROS/Cientificas_en_cifras_2015_sin_anexo.pdf.

Plans vary greatly in terms of content. The more comprehensive ones cover topics such as: communication, image and language; the representation of women and men; employment procedures, access, selection, promotion, and development; remuneration; harassment, sexist attitudes, and perception of discrimination; and working conditions and personal, academic, work, and family balance measures.⁵⁹ Some also include a gender dimension in research content and gender balance in decision making.⁶⁰

The Science, Technology, and Innovation Law⁶¹ (Law no. 4/2011) extended to the adoption of GEPs beyond universities to also include public research organisations. The sixth point of the 13th additional provision establishes that “public research bodies” should adopt within two years “gender balanced plans” that will be monitored yearly. These plans should include measures to reward institutions that improve their gender balance indicators (RIO Country Report, 2015:69).⁶² Formal objectives of these institutional GEPs are defined within the Spanish Strategy of Science, Technology, and Innovation (2013-2020),⁶³ which provides the overall framework and includes:

- strengthening gender studies and research through gendered perspectives;
- diminishing the underrepresentation of women in the science labour market;
- making sex-disaggregated statistics available;
- developing gender sensitive tools for dissemination/communication.

The Spanish Ministry of Economics and Competitiveness (*Ministerio de Economía, Industria y Competitividad*, MINECO) and its Women and Science Unit formally monitor the implementation of equality plans through periodic reports. Eighty-eight per cent of public research performing organisations had a GEP in force in 2015.⁶⁴

6.1.3. Private sector

GEPs in companies were introduced for the first time by the Law on Effective Equality between Women and Men although some of the issues regulated by GEPs had already been addressed by other agreements between companies and trade unions through collective agreements; after the law had been passed, these issues continued to be regulated by these other agreements (Bodélon et al, 2014:6).

The Law on Effective Equality between Women and Men prescribes the mandatory adoption of GEPs for private companies with more than 250 employees. Whilst equality plans are not compulsory for SMEs, since 2008 annual calls have been providing grants for SMEs and entities (between 30 and 250 employees) for the preparation and implementation of these

⁵⁹ See the GEP from La Laguna, available at: <http://www.igualdad.ull.es/archivos/novedades/I%20Plan%20Igualdad%20de%20Género%20de%20la%20ULL%202014-2017%20v%2020-12-13%20def%20aprob%20ConsGob.pdf>.

⁶⁰ See, for example, the Autonomous University of Barcelona (<http://www.uab.cat/doc/igualt>).

⁶¹ Available at: https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2011-9617.

⁶² Available at: <https://rio.jrc.ec.europa.eu/en/library/rio-country-report-spain-2015>.

⁶³ Available at: <https://rio.jrc.ec.europa.eu/en/library/spanish-strategy-science-technology-and-innovation-eesti>.

⁶⁴ For Equal Opportunity Plans in state public research organisations (organización pública de investigación, OPIs) see: <http://www.idi.mineco.gob.es/portal/site/MICINN/menuitem.8ce192e94ba842bea3bc811001432ea0/?vgnextoid=333794dbd8c98410VgnVCM1000001d04140aRCRD>.

equality plans.⁶⁵ A 2011 resolution was passed, regulating economic incentives to companies with fewer than 250 employees, that voluntarily negotiate and implement a GEP (Valdés, 2011; Lombardo, 2016:10).

The responsibility for developing a GEP is attributed to the company, placing the onus on the latter to negotiate the plan with its employees. There is no "register" or "census" of GEPs or other tool at national level, so it is impossible to map the number of approved GEPs in companies in Spain (Bodélon et al, 2014:18). In fact, even when companies are obliged to have a GEP (this applies to companies with more than 250 employees), there is no legal imperative to notify an authority or to register the plan.

However, since 2010 registering and filing collective agreements has been compulsory.⁶⁶ Since the same year, it has been possible to legally register GEPs in the Roster of Collective Agreements (*Registro of Convenios y Acuerdos Colectivos*, REGCON), which is affiliated to the General Directorate of Employment, the relevant employment authority. The following may be registered:

- multi-employer collective agreements establishing the terms and conditions that GEPs must follow in companies;
- agreements that approve GEPs in companies concerned by multi-employer collective negotiations; and
- agreements that approve GEPs as a result of company collective agreements.^{67 68}

To date there are 167 collective agreements entries regarding GEPs in REGCON – 161 of these are in the private sector.⁶⁹ Equality plans adopted at the margin of collective agreements cannot be included in the register, nor can those where an agreement is not reached, or those where the company unilaterally adopts them.⁷⁰

The analysis of GEPs in collective agreements

An analysis of the 161 collective agreements featuring GEPs, registered according to two-digit NACE codes, reveals that the economic sector with the highest number of agreements on GEPs is the food industry with 9.3% of registered agreements. This is followed by the motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers sector with 8.7% of registered agreements, and retail trade, excluding motor vehicles and motorcycles, with 8.1%. The economic activities of accommodation, insurance, reinsurance, and pension funding, excluding compulsory social security, both had 4.3% of collective agreements with GEPs. This is followed by the food and beverages sector and the office administrative, office support, and other business support activities sector with both sectors registering 3.7% of all collective agreements with GEPs. The next three economic sectors with 3.1% of registered collective agreements with GEPs are wholesale trade, excluding motor vehicles and motorcycles, programming and broadcasting activities, and land transport and transport via pipelines. There are five

⁶⁵ See: http://www.msssi.gob.es/ssi/igualdadOportunidades/iEmpleo/Planes_de_Igualdad/conv_pdi.htm.

⁶⁶ According to Royal Decree no. 713/2010.

⁶⁷ When agreements allow equality plans in companies that lack their own collective agreement, and are not the result of a multi-employer collective agreement – these can be only filed.

⁶⁸ General Workers' Union (UGT), Registro de Planes de Igualdad, 2015:6.

⁶⁹ Six collective agreements concerning equality plans are registered under NACE code 83: public administration and defence: obligatory social security.

⁷⁰ UGT, Registro de Planes de Igualdad, 2015:3.

economic sectors with 2.5% of registered collective agreements with GEPs: manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products; electricity, gas, steam, and air conditioning supply; architectural and engineering activities, including technical testing and analysis; services to buildings and landscape activities; and social work activities without accommodation.

The following economic sectors registered 1.9% of all collective agreements with GEPs: water collection, treatment and supply; specialised construction activities; telecommunications; real estate activities; and security and investigation activities. The following economic activities registered just 1.2%: manufacture of wood and products of wood and cork, except furniture; manufacture of articles of straw and plaiting materials; manufacture of machinery and equipment n.e.c.;⁷¹ waste collection, treatment and disposal activities; materials recovery; civil engineering; publishing activities; information service activities; financial service activities, excluding insurance and pension funding; activities auxiliary to financial services and insurance activities; activities of head offices; management consultancy activities; and residential care activities.

The following sectors register just one collective agreement with GEPs: manufacture of beverages; manufacture of leather and related products; manufacture of paper and paper products; printing and reproduction of recorded media; manufacture of coke and refined petroleum products; manufacture of chemicals and chemical products; manufacture of rubber and plastic products; manufacture of other transport equipment; manufacture of furniture; construction of buildings; water transport; legal and accounting activities; scientific research and development; advertising and market research; other professional, scientific, and technical activities; rental and leasing activities; travel agency, tour operator, and other reservation service and related activities; creative, arts, and entertainment activities; gambling and betting activities; activities of membership organisations; and repair of computers and personal and household goods.

From 2010 onwards, companies have also been able to apply for an “Equality Stamp” or “Label”, which is granted to companies that provide evidence of good practices on the adoption of gender equality measures (Valdés, 2010; Lombardo, 2016:10). The prerequisites for gaining the “Label” have been deemed important for the creation of a procedure to evaluate the GEP process (Bodélon et al, 2014:66). The following aspects are taken into consideration:

- the equality measures or equality plans put in place;
- results;
- the implementation and evaluation of positive actions to combat discrimination; and
- the procedures and criteria of regular assessment or evaluation of such actions.

They also enable monitoring activities as each year it is necessary to submit a report that details the measures they are implementing for the GEP.

In particular, the most common themes GEPs aim to address are: access to employment, selection, contracting, promotion, training, remuneration, working time to facilitate work-life balance, prevention of sexual harassment, gender-based violence, company culture communication, raising awareness, and, to a lesser degree, occupational health.⁷² Issues such as access to employment, promotion, remuneration, positive action, and gender balance

⁷¹ Not elsewhere classified.

⁷² UGT, 2013:75-78.

have been identified as difficult to regulate through GEPs (Bodélon et al, 2014:49) since access to data about salaries – e.g. to tackle the gender pay gap – is very difficult to obtain as companies are not obliged by law to provide this sort of information (Bodélon et al, 2014:38). It has also been highlighted that there is a lack of sanctions to ensure compliance, and one year after the law had entered into force, very few companies had registered their plans (Bodélon et al, 2014:8).

6.2. Analysis of impacts of GEPs on the economic situation of women

6.2.1. Analysis of impacts of GEPs on the economic situation of women

No comprehensive analysis exists on the effects of GEPs on female representation or the economic situation of women at company, regional, or national levels. Regarding the research and higher education system, whilst “an intention to establish a culture of policy monitoring and evaluation” exists, effective instruments to achieve this goal are still limited (ERAC, 2014; RIO country report, 2015:11). This lack of a culture of evaluation is coupled with the problematic nature of measuring impacts and attributing a direct causal relationship between identified impacts and an implemented plan.

In Spain, in the research and higher education sector, the few evaluations of GEPs that have been carried out tend to estimate the degree to which the measures stipulated in the plan have been implemented or not,⁷³ and they do not go further than assessing the specific effects of these measures.

6.2.2. Analysis of impact of the crisis/austerity on GEPs

Despite abundant information on the impact of the crisis/austerity on gender equality policies in general, there is little specifically concerning the impact of the crisis on GEPs. There seems to be general consensus that:

“the years 2009-2016 show a general deterioration of Spanish gender equality law and social policies and the lack of incorporation of gender mainstreaming into policymaking. Austerity politics had a negative impact on gender equality policies and institutions, promoting budget cuts and institutional restructuring.” (Lombardo, 2016:10)

There are relevant examples of legislation with a negative impact on gender equality.⁷⁴ These legislative measures have been coupled with very significant budgetary cuts for gender equality with a major reduction from 2009 to 2013 corresponding to the years of the crisis.

⁷³ See http://www.uab.cat/doc/igualt_es for an example.

⁷⁴ It is worth mentioning:

- extending paternity leave from two to four weeks, which should have come into force in 2011. Proposed by Zapatero in Act no. 9/2009, this has not moved forward due to the economic crisis (Salazar, 2016:28);
- the Act on the Promotion of Personal Autonomy and Care for Dependent People has had a disproportionate negative effect on women (ibid); and
- Act 3/2012 on the Labour Reform has also had a negative impact on the right to work-life balance (ibid).

This is in comparison to the years directly preceding the crisis – between 2002 and 2008 – when the budget for gender equality was increased substantially.⁷⁵

Shortcomings of gender equality policies in Spain have been reported at international level,⁷⁶ including “the disproportionate impact of austerity policies in the workplace, which have already led to an increase in female unemployment, the impact of the wage gap between women and men and the precariousness of the jobs they occupy” (Salazar Benítez, 2016:2).

Bodélon et al (2014:60) asserts that the economic crisis has negatively affected the implementation and development of GEPs in companies stating that: “Gender equality is seen as an unaffordable luxury in times of crisis.”

Currently in collective agreements the issue of equality plans is one of the first casualties (Bodélon et al, 2014:68). This has been coupled with a reduction in the number of collective agreements signed in times of crisis.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ “If we analyse the total variations in the state budget and in the budgets of the Autonomous Regions in the two periods before and during the crisis, we can see in the period 2002_ 2008 that, in every analysed case, the budget for gender policies increased significantly reaching 57.2% statewide, whereas in the period 2009–2013 the budget decreased at all levels of the government (getting to _ 34.1% for the Central Government), with the exception of Andalusia where the budget for gender policies was increased by 15.5%” ([2], p. 28). Salazar, 2016. Lombardo, E and León, M. (2014), “Políticas de igualdad de género y sociales en España: Origen, desarrollo y desmantelamiento en un contexto de crisis económica.”, *Investigaciones Feministas*, 5:13–55.

⁷⁶ See the report by the Committee of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on 24 July 2015, available at: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fESP%2fC0%2f7-8&Lang=en.

⁷⁷ See: <http://www.empleo.qob.es/estadisticas/cct/welcome.htm>.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Conclusions

The mapping exercise has enabled us to identify some common features characterising the typologies of GEPs:

- the scope of GEPs can strongly vary, depending on the type of work organisation, the institutional context in which a GEP is conceived and implemented, the disciplines addressed, and the types of gender bias and inequalities that are identified as part of the diagnosis;
- according to the EIGE definition⁷⁸ (tailored for research organisations and higher education institutions), a GEP can be broken up into different steps or phases, each requiring specific types of interventions:
 - an analysis phase, in which sex-disaggregated data is collected; procedures, processes, and practices are critically assessed with a view to detecting gender inequalities and gender bias;
 - a planning phase, in which objectives are defined, targets are set, actions and measures to remedy the identified problems are decided, resources and responsibilities are attributed, and timelines are agreed upon;
 - an implementation phase, in which activities are implemented and outreach efforts are undertaken to gradually expand the network of stakeholders; and
 - a monitoring phase, in which the process and progress are regularly followed through and assessed. Findings from the monitoring exercise(s) allow for adjustment and improvement of interventions, so their results can be optimised;
- in the most successful cases, the GEPs include monitoring and evaluation processes to measure progress and impact. Typically, indicators adopted in GEPs are both quantitative and qualitative. The former are aimed at assessing the impacts of adopted measures, the latter are aimed at assessing the strategic impact of the plan and the institutional changes that cannot be gauged by quantitative measurement:
 - quantitative indicators might include: the number of women in key institutional positions, the number of women in top and middle leadership positions, the number of women/men having access to strategic organisational resources, and the number of women/men attending GEP activities (gender pay gap reduction, etc.);
 - qualitative indicators might include the following issues: the adoption of gender mainstreaming in the organisation's mission/vision, adoption of permanent gender equality initiatives, adoption of long-term programmes (mentoring, women leadership), institutionalisation of work-life balance measures, and the establishment of gender equality committees, etc.

⁷⁸ See: EIGE "Gender Equality in Research" at: <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/tools-methods/gear/objectives-gender-equality-research>.

The main weakness identified is the difficulty encountered in designing and implementing monitoring/evaluation processes and in obtaining cross-country comparable data for similar indicators. For this reason, it is difficult to systematically and comprehensively assess the actual impact of GEPs.

The mapping exercise has also shown that every EU Member State has adopted different approaches in their gender equality legal frameworks in accordance with EU directives: in the framework of these approaches, there are GEPs with different nuances and different scopes. In some cases, there are specific laws that promote the adoption of GEPs and/or their adoption is supported by action plans and national programmes. In a very limited number of cases, tripartite bodies are put in place to support the adoption of GEPs in working organisations and/or to monitor compliance with anti-discrimination laws. Notable is a tripartite commission existing in Portugal.

Most GEPs aim to increase women's participation in employment and to decrease the gender pay gap through annual/biennial/triennial obligatory reporting. In terms of the impact of GEPs on the economic situation of women in the EU, the overall picture of Europe shows that this impact is very hard to gauge at macro level but that some positive results have emerged at micro level.

An important element that contributes to the existing difficulties in detecting the concrete changes related to the implementation of GEPs is the absence of adequate reporting, monitoring, and assessment tools/reports in most of the cases. To be more precise, often neither quantitative nor qualitative indicators are properly operationalised in GEPs, with the exception of a few cases, thereby hindering the impact assessment.

Classic indicators of the economic situation of women in the EU - such as employment rates, presence in decision-making positions, and the gender pay gap - can be used as impact indicators for GEPs. However, since they may be influenced by additional factors external to the scope of GEPs, their sensitivity regarding the impact of GEPs is limited.

The economic crisis has had a direct impact on gender equality and indirectly affected GEPs. Some direct impacts of the crisis on gender equality includes levelling down of gender gaps in employment, unemployment, wages, and poverty due to a worsening of the situation of men. At the beginning of the crisis, the main sectors affected were the male-dominated ones (e.g. manufacturing). When the governments started to intervene with the retrenchment, the effect of their measures also hit female-dominated sectors such as the public administration and welfare services, worsening women's conditions.

The economic crisis also had indirect effects on GEPs. During the years of the crisis, few countries developed gender equality measures or included gender mainstreaming in their agenda. Gender equality issues were taken into account only in about one tenth of the policy measures or initiatives implemented in response to the crisis. Some countries have introduced innovations in the field of gender equality (in particular, some Central European countries).

7.2. Recommendations

In line with the findings from the study, recommendations for action at EU and Member State level are put forward.

Member States should be encouraged – by means of appropriate concrete support, including additional resources – to adopt binding rules to promote the definition and implementation of GEPs in national public and private organisations. Regulations should also address the careful design and implementation of the collection of data from a gender perspective, in order to properly monitor the achievement of GEPs. This should be implemented at both micro level (the level of implementation of individual GEPs) and macro level (Member State level).

The Member States and the European Commission should be requested to monitor the impact of GEPs and to support the collection and sharing of successful practices.

The Member States and the European Commission should encourage sharing knowledge about GEPs and provide occasions for discussing methods, tools, and indicators.

More in general, the European Commission should also use incentives and award criteria for Member States to support the collection of data and monitoring of the effective implementation of GEPs.

Moreover, the European Commission and the Member States should be encouraged to promote the participation of social partners at both EU and Member State level in terms of design, implementation, and monitoring/evaluation of GEPs. Specific attention should be paid to involving social partners in the public and private sector.

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