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GUIDE TO  
THE INTEGRATION  
OF GENDER EQUALITY  
IN LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT POLICIES



MADAM MAYOR

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## INTRODUCTION

Training in democracy, and in the experience of discriminations and inequalities, starts where people live, i.e. in the locality, large or small, urban or rural.

Gender-equality policies are a recent phenomenon. They were encouraged by supra-national organizations from the 1970s, when what is known as the "second wave" of the women's movement emerged. Political citizenship had become the rule in all the European Community countries. Formal rights, particularly in civil equality, were certainly not acquired everywhere but they were the likely perspective. On the other hand, equality in practice started to seem the goal for a new fight. It became obvious that the proclamation of formal gender equality constituted a necessary but insufficient condition for eliminating the discrimination, in particular indirect, which women suffered.

For women in many of the member states, the European Community played a predominant role in the development of anti-discrimination regulations and policies. These regulations, because of the EC fields of competence, initially related only to wage equality and women's situation in the labour market.<sup>1</sup> The Member States, to differing degrees, developed their own gender equality policies. From the middle of the 1970s ministers for women's rights or equal opportunity commissions began to appear. Both at the level of the European Union and the member states, the idea of mainstreaming - that is the integration of the gender equality dimension into all EC and national policies - developed in the 1990s. However, although the European Union takes the territorial dimension of its member states into account in many of its policies, local authorities only seldom develop - in their own field of competence - all-embracing gender equality policies.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Treaty of Rome only contained one article relating to gender equality, Article 119.

<sup>2</sup> On EC gender equality policies see Agnes Hubert *l'Europe des femmes, Identités en mouvement*, Editions Apogée, Rennes 1998 and Linda Hantraï (ed) *Gendered*



The town must however be considered a strategic place for analysis of gender discrimination and development of the policies intended to eliminate it. This is particularly the case with the widespread phenomenon of decentralization, leading local authorities to take on tasks that were previously the responsibility of central government.

It appears, from the statistics, that women remain under-represented in local assemblies and that their specific problems are seldom taken into account, except possibly in their role as mothers. A 2000-2003 survey in a hundred European Union cities<sup>3</sup> shows that local actors (elected representatives, local government workers, community organisations) find it difficult to introduce the concept of gender into their policies. This idea can even seem sometimes foreign to their mission insofar as the citizen is perceived as "neuter".

This guide is addressed to elected officials - whether national or local - to government employees, in particular of local authorities and particularly town councils, and to community activists. It was developed on the basis of their experience and practice, and through questioning them. We sought, not to recount all the problems and contradictions which we met during the study (on this to see the research report<sup>4</sup>), but rather to highlight examples of what is known as "good practice", at the local level. This does not always mean that these "practices" lead to positive results in relation to their goals. They may reveal the obstacles that gender equality policies meet on the ground.

In the following pages, there are more examples from practices in force in the Scandinavian countries than in Southern Europe. Where possible, there is reference to the "source place". References are sometimes to countries outside the European

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*Policies in Europe. Reconciling Employment and Family Life*, Macmillan Press, London 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Belgium, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Sweden.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.sh.se/genreetlocal>

Union and, within the EU, to countries that were not the subject of our study. But it is primarily on the basis of our research report that this guide was developed.



## **FIRST PART**

**Ensuring balanced participation of women and  
men in the local decision-making process**



## WHY?



***Because the participation of women in public decision-making is an internationally-recognized democratic requirement***

In the final document of the first UN World Conference on women's rights, in 1975 in Mexico City, the necessary presence of women in places where decisions are made, in particular on peace and the development, was mentioned. However the participation of the women in decision-making bodies was not, at that time, on the agenda of the feminist movements, except in Northern European countries. Other questions seemed the priority such as reproductive rights, the fight against violence or, in many countries, the access to education at all levels. We had to wait for nearly two decades for the subject "women in decision-making" to become topical. In 1979, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (known as the CEDAW Convention) began to pose the question of women's participation in public and political life. This Convention, which relates to political, civil, social and cultural life, is regarded

today as the international bill of rights for women.<sup>5</sup> UN member countries undertake, in ratifying it, to respect the articles. Local authorities can also base themselves on it. It is interesting to evoke the case of the application of the CEDAW Convention by cities in the United States. Although this country is one of the few not to have ratified it, certain cities and states however decided to implement it, for example San Francisco whose municipal executive council adopted, in April 1998, a statute envisaging its application.<sup>6</sup>

At the end of the 1980s and in the following decade, the supra-national institutions, soon followed by women's movements, began to argue that the male quasi-monopoly in power structures is the product of a structural discrimination, constitutes a handicap for development and is a fact which must challenge the very concept of democracy.

While we cannot claim to make an exhaustive survey, it is useful to mention some stages of this evolution. In 1989, the Council of Europe asked experts to think about the concept of "parity democracy". In 1990, the Council of Ministers of the European Union adopted the Third medium-term Community Action Plan on equal opportunities for women and men. This included a new topic for study and action: promoting the participation of women in the decision-making process in public, economic and social life. A network of European experts was created. This organized, in November 1992 in Athens, a first European summit on "Women and decision-making", bringing together women playing leading roles in their countries. These women, ministers and members of Parliament, adopted a Declaration stating that "the under-representation of women is a democratic deficit". In 1991, the OECD report on the place of the women in structural change contributed to widening the debate. It identified the scarcity of the women in decision-making bodies, particularly economic, as a brake on change, a bad distribution of human resources and one of the causes of the crisis of the developed world.<sup>7</sup> Preparation of the 5th World Conference on Women's Rights in Beijing was

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendices.

<sup>6</sup> See Iliana Landsberg-Lewis 9 (ed) *l'Egalité chez soi*, UNIFEM, 1998.

<sup>7</sup> OECD Women and Structural Change, New Perspectives, 1991.

finally the occasion, in many areas of the world, for an intense mobilization by NGOs on the topic of the necessary participation of women in political decision-making. The question was discussed in the intergovernmental conference. Many countries rejected the word “parity” as too strict. Under the pressure of the European Union delegation, led by the Spanish minister Christina Alberdi, the need for a “balanced presence” of women and men in public life was however mentioned in the final text.

After the Beijing Conference, the Council of Ministers of the European Union adopted on December 2, 1996, a Recommendation concerning the balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process.<sup>8</sup> At the time of the extraordinary session of the General Assembly of the UN known as “Beijing +5” in June 2000, in New York, the idea of such a participation was reaffirmed and, following the pressure exerted by the elected women members of the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), member countries undertook to take into account the question of equality at local level.

***Because municipalities are a place for training in democracy and in experience of inequalities and discriminations***

As regards representation of the women in elected assemblies at the national level, there is now monitoring of the statistics (how many men, how many women in government and in Parliament). Since 1985, the Inter-Parliamentary Union holds up to date gender-based statistics of the composition of all parliaments in the world. World summits periodically bring together nationally elected women; and the organization, which is based in Geneva, conducts a constant campaign for more women to be elected, so that women are not confined to social and cultural committees

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendices.



and so that their rights, as stated in the International Conventions, are the subject of debates within the Parliament.<sup>9</sup>

Monitoring of the gender composition of local councils and executives is more recent. It is still difficult to draw up gender-sensitive European statistics of local councillors. This data is not systematically listed by all EU member states. The study undertaken by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) within the framework of the 4th Community Action Plan for equal opportunities between women and men gives an indication of the place of the women in local councils. In 1998, one local councillor in five, in the EU, was a woman. Everywhere in Europe, women at the head of the municipalities were an exception. The same year, the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) adopted a charter intended to raise awareness of local elected officials, everywhere in the world, to the idea of equality of women and men at local level.<sup>10</sup>

## How?

### ***Raising the awareness level of the equality question***

Such a policy, at local level, can be a national initiative. It can also be a local initiative, and receive governmental support - or even European Union support. It can also be on the initiative of NGOs or associations of women elected representatives.

One of the reasons for the scarcity of elected women is that women, for various reasons, think less spontaneously than men of standing as candidates in elections. Governmental campaigns to encourage them to do so are one possible action.

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<sup>9</sup> The Inter-Parliamentary Union site gives constantly updated country statistics on women in parliaments and the reference texts of this international organization: [www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org)

<sup>10</sup> See Appendices.

**Portugal:**

The Commission on equality and women's rights, created in 1991, organized several conferences intended for a broad public. In 1993, this commission made television commercials on women's political participation. As a further step, some local councils, in particular of the autonomous areas of the **Azores** and **Madeira**, took up on their own account a project aimed at showing the logic of mainstreaming and at raising awareness of local councillors and the local authority to the need for municipal policies to encourage women's participation in political and public life.

**Contact:** <http://cidm.pt>

**Greece:**

The Secretariat General for Equality systematically conducts, before elections, a campaign to encourage women to stand as candidates and in favour of votes for women candidates. For the local elections, it very actively supported the adoption of a law for quotas on electoral slates. The pan-Hellenic network of local elected women supports local councillors in carrying out their duties and encourages women candidates in local elections.

**Contact:** [www.isotita.gr](http://www.isotita.gr)

**Italy:**

The National Commission for Parity and Equal Opportunity between Men and Women published, in 2001-02, a guide for women candidates in national and local elections - *Pari e di più: il Kit della candidata* - and, in 2003 a booklet aiming at promoting parity electoral laws on a regional scale - *Regioni: quali statuti e quali leggi elettorali*.

**Contact:** [commissione.parita@palazzochigi.it](mailto:commissione.parita@palazzochigi.it)  
[www.palazzochigi.it/cmparita](http://www.palazzochigi.it/cmparita)

**Belgium:**

The Equal Opportunities Department, created within the Ministry for Employment and Work in 1993, conducted many campaigns to raise public awareness on the question of women in decision-making bodies.. It also supported a pilot project with some Belgian local authorities.

NGOs with government support, organize awareness-raising and political education seminars, in order, in particular, to encourage women to stand as candidates.

**France:**

The association *Elles Aussi*, since 1992, has brought together several NGOs and organized through out France seminars to encourage women to stand as candidates in local elections.

**Contact:** [www.ufcs.org/repres/ellesaussi](http://www.ufcs.org/repres/ellesaussi)

**Finland:**

Women's organizations within political parties have organized common campaigns to promote women candidates in the parliamentary and municipal elections. Since 1988, NYTKIS, a network that brings together women's organizations of all the political parties and three non-party associations, has been particularly active in this field.

**Contact:** <http://www.nytkis.org/nytkisinfoeng.html>

**Italy:**

In spring 2003 there were in Italy, according to the census made by the National Parity Commission "women's political schools" in 88 cities. One of first was in Venice, launched by the deputy mayor responsible for equal opportunities.

**Portugal:**

In 1993 a network of locally elected women was created, the REMA. Before the local elections of December 2001, the REMA took the initiative to contact all the parties with seats in parliament to propose that its representatives be received in parliamentary audience in order to discuss, with each party, the importance of guaranteeing implementation of the policy of parity representation in the electoral slates for the municipal elections. In March 2002, the REMA published a guide to local authorities (*Guia do Poder Local*). This guide is addressed to locally elected women but it is also used as handbook for women in general, who are often unaware everything about the local political system.

**Contact:** Rede de Mulheres Autarcas Portuguesas  
REMA  
[fatimacavaco@oninet.pt](mailto:fatimacavaco@oninet.pt)

Associations of local councillors exist in all European countries. Women are a minority because they are fewer than the men in the elected councils but especially because it is generally the mayors, who are nearly 90 % men, who represent their councils in

this type of organization. Elected women have however mobilized at national and European level to get the idea of a balanced representation in local government adopted.

### **Europe:**

The **Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)** is a federation of national organizations of local and regional councillors. It is interesting because it is present in all the EU member and accession countries. Within the CEMR, elected women initiated a debate on the topic "Women, politics and democracy" in the 1980s. At the time of the fifth conference of Women Elected Representatives of Local and Regional Authorities which took place in Dublin in 1995 - and to which more than 500 elected women representatives came from all Europe -, adhesion to the concept of parity democracy was confirmed even if opinions diverged on the means of reaching it - through encouragement or legislation. In any case the women representatives ensured that all CEMR members became aware of the question of gender equality. This was clear at the XX General Assembly of the CEMR, held in Thessaloniki in 1996. With the assistance of the European Commission, a network of Women Elected Representatives of Local and Regional Authorities was formed. The Commission of Women Elected Representatives of Local and Regional Authorities has become a special place for meeting, and sharing local equality practices.

**Contact:** [www.ccre.org](http://www.ccre.org)

### ***Education from a young age***

Locally based initiatives directed at children, both boys and girls, can raise awareness of the idea of gender and involvement in public and political life.

### **Sweden**

In a crèche and nursery school for children of 1 to 6 years old in the town of **Gävle**, gender equality is defined as one of the teaching goals. Each child must be seen as an individual and not reflection of a gendered stereotype and must be able to develop their own abilities. He or she must be encouraged to go

beyond the qualities or faults associated with their gender and be proud of their sex. The staff has made a report and a film on their way of working for gender equality.

**Contact:** Björntomtens förskola,  
Tittmyrvägen 16,  
805 96 Gävle, Sweden,  
tel +46 26 16 10 20, fax +46 26 16 13 18.  
[www.skola.gavle.se/bjorntomten/](http://www.skola.gavle.se/bjorntomten/)

### **France**

Many cities have had Children's Municipal Councils since the end of the 1970s. In most cases, they are composed of an equal number of boys and girls. Although there is no formal study, many girls who have participated in the councils subsequently become politically active.

**Source:** entering "conseils municipaux d'enfants" in a search engine makes it possible to reach the sites of cities with children's councils.

### ***Working alongside women candidates and newly elected women representatives***

Elected women representatives, when they have experience of municipal life can encourage other women to be candidates, not only by supporting newly-elected women in their councils, but by promoting women to positions of responsibility when they can.

### **Sweden, Finland, Norway:**

The system of "mentoring" is frequent in the Scandinavian countries. An elected woman representative ensures the training of a new arrival in the "unspoken" rules of the functions of a municipal councillor and supports her so that she does not become discouraged

### ***By decisions of the political parties***

Some political parties have adopted internal rules on respecting a certain quota of women in their leaderships or on their electoral slates. The social democrat and liberal parties in the Scandinavian countries were the first to adopt and respect quotas of one or the other sex in their leading bodies and lists of candidates for all elections. The Green parties, since their emergence on the political scene, have generally applied the rule of parity for candidates in all elections.

#### **Sweden:**

In Sweden, where there is no national legislation on quotas, almost all parties, under the pressure of feminist organizations and women's associations in the parties, have introduced the "zip" system in the lists presented. This system means alternating women and men on the list and thus ensures de facto parity as well as the certainty of having women in useful positions. Sweden has the highest female representation, in parliament and within government, in the European Union, which proves that legislation is not the only means of improving women's presence in political life. Other forms of action, in particular voluntarist measures setting out numerical goals for the lists, can be effective.

#### **Denmark:**

In 1977, the Danish Popular Socialist Party decided that, in its leading bodies and on its electoral slates, there should be at least 40% of each sex starting with the local elections in 1988.\*

**Source:** Monique Leijenaar in collaboration with the European network of experts "women in decision-making", *How to create a gender balance in political decision-making*. European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs, Brussels, 1997. (translated into 11 languages).<sup>11</sup>

#### **Germany:**

The German Socialist Party (SPD) in 1979 opted for a differentiated and progressive strategy. Differentiated as the quotas initially were 40 % of women in the leadership bodies of

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<sup>11</sup> The indication (\*) means that the examples used are taken from this guide.

the party, but only 33 % on the lists of candidates. Progressive since it was expected that from 1998, this percentage would be 40 % for the electoral lists. The German Greens chose from the 1980s to have absolute parity in candidates. To make a campaign in favour of an increased presence of women in political life, the Greens in Hamburg, in 1986, presented an all-women list that was an unexpected success, obtaining 10 % of the votes.

### *Legislation*



In three European Union countries, electoral laws currently oblige parties to present a certain quota of candidates of each sex on the lists for local elections. Adoption of this legislation was always the subject of legal controversy and vigorous philosophical debate. In 1982, the French Parliament adopted a text imposing a

minimum threshold of 25 % of one or the other sex on the lists of candidates for the local elections towns of more than 3 500 inhabitants. This law was never applied and was in fact annulled by the Constitutional Council. We had to wait for the year 2000 and the revision of the French Constitution for the law imposing parity in towns of more than 3 500 inhabitants to be adopted and implemented (see below). The Italian law of March 25, 1993, also envisaged a maximum threshold of candidatures of the one or the other sex on the municipal lists. In communes of fewer than 15 000 inhabitants, this threshold was 75 %, and two thirds in those of more than 15 000 inhabitants. This law was applied at the time of the local elections of 1995 which saw the number of women elected almost double (passing from 6 % to 13 %). The Italian Constitutional Court then annulled the articles of the electoral law on quotas, including that for the municipalities. In the elections that followed, the percentage of women candidates and women elected dropped. A modification of the Constitution, in 2003, now makes it possible to amend the electoral law and envisages positive action on a national and regional scale.

#### **Belgium:**

The law of November 24, 1994 rendered invalid for all elections lists of candidates with more than 2/3 of the same sex. This measure induced a gradual increase in the number of women elected. From 20 % in 1994, the proportion of locally elected women for the whole country rose to 28 % after the local elections of October 2000 - with substantial differences according to region. Whereas in 1994, there were 18% women elected in Wallonia, 20 % in Flanders and 28 % in the area of Brussels-Capital, these figures were respectively 26, 27 and 38 % in 2000. There was also an increase -albeit slower- in the number of women burgomasters: from 5% in Wallonia and Flanders, against 11 % for the area of Brussels-Capital, the proportion passed to 7 % in the first two areas, and to 16 % for the Area of Brussels-Capital. The constitutional revision adopted in February 2002 guarantees equality of women and the men and legitimates the use of positive actions to reach that goal. An additional provision declares unconstitutional "unisex governments at all levels of decision-making". Thanks to this revision, two new laws (June 17 and July 18, 2002) introduced



gender parity for lists of candidates and alternation for the first two places.

**Source:** *Vers la démocratie paritaire. Analyse des élections communales et provinciales du 8 octobre, 2000.* Federal Ministry of Employment and Work, Equal Opportunities Commission, Brussels, 2001.

**France:**

The law of June 6, 2000 "relative to the equal access of women and the men to electoral mandates and elective functions" imposes 50 % of candidates each sex on municipal lists in towns of more than 3 500 inhabitants where the poll occurs within the framework of proportionality for the slates. The lists being "blocked" (the voters vote for a list without being able to cross out a name), there must be as many women as men in each block of six candidates. The lists that do not comply with this rule are invalidated. The local elections of March 2001 saw, in the municipalities where this law applied, the number of women elected rise from 22 % to 47,5 %. Even in the small towns where the law does not apply the contagious effect meant that the number of women candidates and elected increased. However there was only a small increase in the percentage of women mayors (from 6,5 to 7,5 %).

**Source:** l'Observatoire de la parité, a governmental body, monitors the effects and the limits of the law  
[www.observatoire-parite.gouv.fr](http://www.observatoire-parite.gouv.fr)

**Greece:**

Under article 116.2 of the Constitution revised by the law of May 2001, a balanced participation of candidates of each sex on the electoral rolls for local and regional elections is obligatory. Lists that do not comprise at least one-third women are invalid. The vote is however a preferential vote and not on "blocked" lists. The increase in the proportion of women elected at the time of the last elections of 2002 was limited, rising from 7 % to 12 % (and, as the principle of quotas did not apply to the mayoral election, there are still only 16 women out of 900 mayors, against 14 previously). One of the positive results of the adoption of quotas is that the number of town councils with no women at all dropped sharply, from 372 to 116 out of 900.

***Attention to the specific difficulties encountered by elected women representatives in local authorities***

Holding public office represents a heavy engagement: the hours spent in meetings and public activities are added to professional working hours and other daily activities. Women take responsibility, in all EU countries, for the bulk of domestic tasks and, if necessary, elderly relatives. As elected representatives they have insisted publicly on work within town councils being organized in a way that is compatible with all their other obligations. It seems that this demand is "heard" when their presence in local councils reaches a "critical mass" - estimated to be at least 30 %. It seems that below this figure they find it difficult to express the constraints they face. Above it, they are listened to by their colleagues without being considered "illegitimate". They can then put on the agenda the questions that were previously ignored by a predominantly male assembly: ensuring, for example, that the times and lengths of meetings are compatible with a personal and family life.

**Sweden:**

Almost all Swedish parties have women's federations which act in favour of women's demands and who promote women's place in political responsibilities. They organize training sessions for newly elected women representatives and propose candidates for the lists. The Social Democrat Party, which is the largest of the Swedish political parties, has a women's federation that actively defends women's place within the party. It published, ten years ago already, a guide for women on ways of promoting and supporting women candidates. Among many pieces of practical advice, it lists the five "autocratic" methods that men use towards women when they appear as new arrivals in councils that were up to then predominantly male: ignoring them, making fun of them, depriving them of information, double-edged punishment, making them feel guilty. This guide was translated into English and Spanish.

**Contacts:**

Federation of social democrat women:  
S-kvinnor, Box 70458, 107 26 Stockholm,  
tel: +46 8 700 26 00, fax +46 8 676 09 26  
<http://www.s-kvinnor.a.se/>

## IN WHICH FIELDS?

### *The elective functions*

In all European Union countries, local councils elected by universal suffrage are responsible for town government. Electoral systems differ from one country to the other and sometimes in the same country, according to the region or the size of the municipalities. The dominant form, for town councils, is election by list. These may be “blocked” (the order of the candidates cannot be changed, nor names crossed off). Elsewhere it may be a mode known as “preferential” and/or “mixing”: the voter can vote for several lists by making choices between the candidates. In most countries, finally, the mayors and executives are elected by the direct or indirect universal suffrage (by the local council). In others, the mayor is appointed by the government and/or municipal officials are named by the mayor without being elected representatives.

We have already mentioned the various measures aiming to increase the number of women in local elected assemblies. Measures taken by the mayor are important, even if - as decisions taken on a purely individual basis - they can be called into question by the next person to assume the function.

#### **Belgium:**

Following the local elections in October 2000 in **Mons**, the new burgomaster supported the entry of elected women in the municipal executive thus tripling their presence in this body, while the proportion of women elected to the Council was over the bar of 35 % (28 members out of 45).

**Source:** *Vers la démocratie paritaire. Analyse des élections communales et provinciales du 8 octobre, 2000.* Federal Ministry of Employment and Work, Equal Opportunities Commission, Brussels, 2001

#### **Italy:**

The woman mayor of **Cosenza**, in Calabria, named four women as deputies when she was elected, affirming that the law allowed her to do this. She named people she considered to be

appropriate for the function, without taking account of the balance desired by the various parties of the coalition that had supported her campaign.

**France:**

The municipal law on parity does not oblige town councils to name parity executive bodies. Some mayors have made it a point of honour to do so.

***Non-elected councils and consultative committees***

Through a desire for democratization and closer contact with the community, national and local elected officials call more and more often upon consultative bodies for advice. The opinion of these institutions is important in public discussions and orientates decisions. There are different ways of designating members depending on the country and the committee. The laws adopted generally relate to national consultative bodies.

**Denmark:**

A 1985 law stipulates that there must be balanced representation of women and men in bodies whose activities have a political impact on society and that the organizations entitled to propose people must present at least one male candidate and one female candidate.\*

**Finland**

The 1987 law on equality stipulates that women and the men sit in commissions and consultative committees on as egalitarian a basis as possible. A law, which came into force in 1995, introduces a minimum quota of 40 % of each sex in local and national authorities, except for the elected Council. At local level, quotas thus apply to the non-elected municipal executive committee, as well as to the committees that play an important part in the process of local decision-making. The municipality of **Raahe**, which has only 16 % of women in its town council, has 40 % in its executive.

The obligation of balanced gender representation applies moreover to the semi-public companies in which town councils are present, bodies that are made up of designated people.<sup>12</sup>

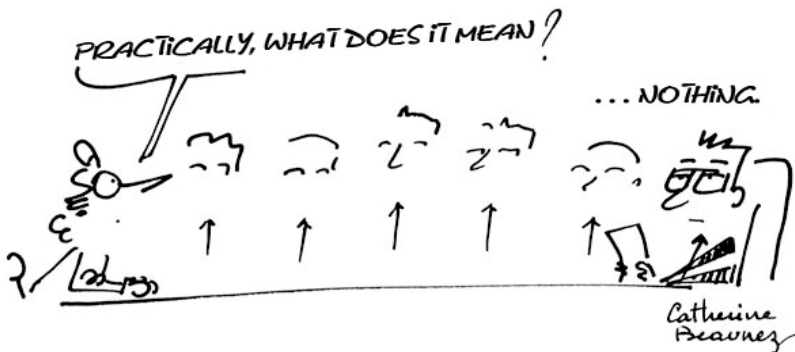
#### **Sweden:**

The governmental programme adopted in 1987 entitled "decision-making, influence and responsibility in all spheres of society" required that in 1992 the proportion of women in councils and public commissions reach 30 % in 1992, 40 % in 1995 and parity in 1998 \*

#### **Italy:**

In **Modena**, in the province of Emilio-Romagna, the deputy mayor responsible for town planning convinced the municipal executive committee to decide to impose a minimum of 40 % of women (or men) in the Commission of Public Building.

### **Local government**



Decentralization, which is being introduced everywhere, and the need to mobilize more and more specific competences have contributed to increasing the role of local government. As in the

<sup>12</sup> Our research has nevertheless shown that the changes in the management of Finnish municipalities over the last ten years have maintained flagrant inequalities between women and men because women are still largely excluded from the highest administrative responsibilities and because of the growing influence of unofficial management groups – almost exclusively composed of men – which intervene before decisions are taken by elected bodies.

national civil service, the highest posts of the hierarchy are mainly occupied by men and, in addition, the women who occupy administrative duties are mainly confined (as are women elected in local executive bodies) to social, educational and possibly cultural fields. Attention must thus be paid to the methods of recruitment and management of career of local staff.

#### **France:**

The post of “delegate for equal opportunity” was created within the municipal administration of **Rennes** in 1995. This led to concrete actions in several fields: training and qualification allowing women to reach better jobs, mixed boards for recruitment, recruitment of previously male fields, elimination of compulsory part-time posts which had been primarily women’s lot, and development of weekly or annualized part-time. Gender is now taken into account in personnel management.

#### **Belgium:**

The Royal Decree of February 27, 1990 recommends creation, at the municipal level, of equal opportunities committees. Most large cities created such a service. In **Antwerp**, the council created an “Emancipation service”, composed of three full-time civil servants, with its own budget and an internal monitoring commission. This service publishes reports which show that the proportion of women appreciably increased between 1990 and 2000 and that their statutory situation improved comparatively with that of the men (even if it is true that, overall, there is increasing use of short-term contracts). Vertical segregation decreased: women now represent nearly a third of category A executives (against less than 10 % ten years ago).

**Contact:** [karin.declercq@bz.antwerpen.be](mailto:karin.declercq@bz.antwerpen.be)

#### **Sweden:**

The federation of Swedish municipalities (Svenska kommunförbundet) conducted, in 2003, an active campaign to increase the number of women senior officials in local authorities. The Federation noted that while 79 % of municipal employees and civil servants are women, only 13 % of the general managers of local authorities are women. At the same time, it affirms that local authorities require competent managers and that they must find the means of promoting and recruiting women as well as men. On the basis of a serious study, and through a series of seminars on these questions, the Federation

seeks to highlight the factors that contribute to the recruitment of leading women and incite them to make their career in local government.

**Contacts:** Lena Lindgren, responsible for the campaign,  
tel: +46 8-452 7610 or +46 70-319 7610  
[lena.lindgren@svekom.se](mailto:lena.lindgren@svekom.se)  
Ingrid Tollgerdt-Andersson, author of the study,  
tel: +46 431-366 110, +46 70-810 4910

The towns of **Jönköping** and **Växjö**, have feminized the highest administrative posts. These two municipalities used recruitment services or more informal networks to recruit women. The elected officials estimate that a woman director in an administration has positive effects on the recruitment of other women. In **Jönköping**, the administration was reorganized in order to allow the women typists, previously grouped in a typing pool, to integrate into the different departments and benefit from internal training in order to be able to advance and earn higher wages. **Växjö** encourages civil servants, women and men, to make their careers within the local authority and thus ensure a basis for recruiting top women. A video was produced where municipal employees, elected officials and civil servants as well as local amateur actors played out scenes showing the various discriminations of which women are often victims within the framework of decision-making. The new employees and civil servants are encouraged to see this film.

**Contacts:** The video film of Växjö subtitled in English and its accompanying booklet can be obtained by telephoning or writing to:  
Jämställdhetskommittén, Växjö kommun,  
Box 1222, 351 12 Växjö, Sweden,  
tel +46 470 413 74 fax + 46 470 256 08  
[jamstalldhetskommitten@kommun.vaxjo.se](mailto:jamstalldhetskommitten@kommun.vaxjo.se)  
<http://www.vaxjo.se/vaxjowww/utsidan/index.asp>  
<http://www.jonkoping.se/>

For Jönköping, one can send a mail to the executive committee:  
[kommunstyrelse@jonkoping.se](mailto:kommunstyrelse@jonkoping.se)

The question of working conditions and the adjustment of working hours also plays an important role, certain measures facilitating women's careers within the administration.

#### **In Belgium:**

The town of **Huy** shows that the introduction of greater flexibility in working hours makes it possible for local authority employees to arrange their working time according to their needs, as long

as they respect their 35 hours per week. Thus measures available to all employees make it possible for women to advance in their careers: the possibility of following training courses during working hours, in particular (whereas before, these courses were outside working hours) was one of the measures likely to help women to obtain advancement.





## **SECOND PART**

### **Taking the gender dimension into account in local policies**



## WHY?

***Women's presence in decision-making bodies is not in itself enough to change management methods***

When women enter elected assemblies or reach functions of responsibility from which they were previously excluded, they are confronted with rules, customs, a culture that was developed in their absence. Because of their history, their experience, the specific responsibilities that fall to them, they have many difficulties in dealing with a system developed by men used to certain forms of rhetoric, or quite simply with working methods whose schedules do not take into account their daily responsibilities. This goes back to the question of what is democracy. Who is listened to and heard in the discussions? The opinions of the women and also those of young people (and a fortiori young women) as the new arrivals are often regarded as of little weight because of inexperience or difference. Women often have trouble deciphering the unwritten rules of the assemblies they enter and are in victims to various forms of misogyny.

The idea of democracy supposes ideally that the representatives responsible for decisions in the name of all are able to hear the diversity of social needs. That supposes not only listening to those requests but also collective analysis within the decision-making body and the administration.

***Access to municipal services is gender-differentiated.***

The town is the product of a history and the reflection of a culture. It is marked by the idea of separation between what is private and what is public, an idea strongly related to the idea of complementarity and not of equality of the sexes. While the borders between private and the public change through history,

the first was regarded as women's sphere and the second men's sphere.

In its urban planning, the possibilities for moving around, the safety guaranteed to citizens in public spaces, the city does not appear equal for all. As a Green councillor in Finland emphasized, a 50-year-old man uses municipal services much less than a thirty-year old mother of three. This explains the importance of the presence of women responsible for young children in local political bodies, so that they can bring their point of view, based on the experience than they have of a family's needs on a daily basis.

We can certainly list many inequalities differentiating old and young people, able-bodies and disabled, people from the country itself, or who look as if they are, and the people who look like foreigners, heterosexual and homosexual people, etc. But, in all these categories, women are likely to be victims of multiple discriminations related to their age, their handicap, their ethnic origin, their sexual orientation.

***Because decision makers, men and women, often do not recognise gender-related discrimination***

When elected officials, like civil servants and people responsible for community organizations - men and women -, are asked about the gender dimension in municipal policies they are usually at a loss. They say they work for "the general interest". The only field in which they consider policies specifically directed to women is generally in care of children, particularly very young children. It is thus mothers who are regarded as being concerned by policies in this field, not fathers. Throughout Europe, however, there is an increasing effort in towns and also in rural areas to see how municipal policies can be used to combat discrimination against women.

## How?

### *Statistical evaluation of gender inequality*

How many women, how many men? The question does not only concern elected bodies, consultative councils and committees or the local government administration. It is the starting point for understanding inequalities and possible discriminations in the city. These have first of all to be measured. However data broken down by sex, the precondition to an analysis of the inequalities between the women and the men, is still rare at local level.

#### **Norway:**

In 2001, the Norwegian central statistics office published a report entitled *The men and women of Norway in 2000*, which contains in particular an index of sex equality, which classifies the 435 Norwegian municipalities according to degree of equality. This index use data concerning investment in childcare, number of women in management posts in the local authorities, the number of women between 20 and 39, their level of qualification, the type of jobs which they have and their income. The idea behind this initiative was that it could be used in local pro-equality actions.

**Source:** Sixth report of Norway to CEDAW Committee,  
CEDAW/C/NOR/6.  
[www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/)

#### **Portugal:**

Local councils in several municipalities of **Greater Lisbon** (Amadora, Cascais, Lisbon, Loures, Oeiras, Sintra and Vila Franca de Xira) financed the edition of monographs concerning the evolution of women's presence in their respective communes: Protagonists of the Local Authority (*Protagonistas do Local Poder*). They include statistical data and information on the economic and social situation of the women in each locality.

**Contact:** [regimprens.na@mail.telepac.pt](mailto:regimprens.na@mail.telepac.pt)

#### **Belgium:**

In **Antwerp**, the "Emancipation service", which coordinates the equal opportunity policies of the city and works with the

University of Antwerp, produces gendered statistics and organizes information meetings.

### ***Analysis of local government functioning***

Who decides what in the city and as a result of what form of consultation and debate within the elected authority? The question is seldom put, except when dissatisfaction is expressed by elected officials, citizens and NGOs who say they are not listened to. It is particularly the case for women.

The examples of "good practice" in the matter are not numerous, but there are some nevertheless, and we should particularly note the creation in 2003, on the initiative of the town of Stuttgart, of a network of European cities anxious to explore this question.

#### **Sweden:**

The federation of Swedish municipalities proposes a method for developing a local gender equality policy already used by the municipal councils of various Swedish cities. It consists of analysing the number of men and women among the decision makers, the executives and the users of the municipal services, the allocation of resources (allowances, budgets, subsidies, time, services, spaces, etc.) according to gender and the possibilities of transforming this reality.

**Contacts:** [http://www.svekom.se/jamstalldhet/pdf/verkstan\(eng\).pdf](http://www.svekom.se/jamstalldhet/pdf/verkstan(eng).pdf).  
<http://www.svekom.se/jamstalldhet/index.htm>

#### **Portugal:**

In 1997, 20 000 copies of a Guide to local authorities in the feminine (*O Guia do Local Poder No Feminino*) was published, thanks to the financial support of a vast range of partners including the city councils of **Lisbon** and **Amadora**, several local councils (Juntas de Freguesia), a banking house and the publisher of two newspapers. The goal of this guide was "to make more visible female participation in local authorities" and to think of women's contribution in local politics. It is a consultation and reference document for local councillors and other social actors involved in the fight for parity, showing the

possible paths to follow and measures to implement in the field of equal opportunities, as well as proposals, initiatives and programmes already implemented at municipal level.

**Contact:** [regimprenss.na@mail.telepac.pt](mailto:regimprenss.na@mail.telepac.pt)

**France:**

The "Rennes equal opportunities" programme, financed by the European Social Fund in the framework of the NOW programme, made it possible to step up the actions undertaken by this city, by helping to legitimate positive actions in favour of women. Within the framework of the European "Equal Programme", it looks at the schedules of women managers and women service-workers; the heavy schedules for the first and the atypical schedules for the second make it very difficult to reconcile work and family life. It raises questions about the mechanisms to use to encourage women's involvement in municipal affairs.

***Creation of political and administrative structures responsible for gender equality***

Local policies regarding equality are generally initiated by a decision of the Council to name one or more members responsible for this field. This is an act of political good will. It is sometimes accompanied by the creation, under the aegis of this elected official, of a commission within the town council, or even of an advisory structure in which local community organizations concerned with the subject are invited to participate. Several large cities now have administrative teams responsible for this field and, in the best of the cases, entitled to ensure that political decisions, in all fields, take into account their gender impact.

**Finland:**

From the end of the 1970s (1979) until the beginning of the 1990s, voluntary experiments with equal opportunities committees took place in certain Finnish localities. From fifteen in 1981, they passed to thirty in 1985-1986 and fourteen currently, primarily in large cities. On the whole, forty Finnish



municipalities have tried this experiment, which represents approximately 10 % of the total.

Not being organized on any obligatory basis, these committees quickly ran into problems: lack of resources, lack of interest, lack support of from elected representatives, little activity from the committee itself... Partly because of local institutional reforms, the committees gradually disappeared. The result has been less active treatment (even sometimes none at all) of the question of gender equality. Local initiatives, when there is no obligatory aspect, are thus subject to political or social fluctuations, which call into question the lasting nature of these councils and their effectiveness. It also poses serious problems for the procedures in the committees: lack of a stable and recognized status, the appointment of members who do not have an influential position within their political party or in local politics in general. The towns of **Helsinki** and **Oulu** developed "operational" equal opportunities committees, which although sometimes in conflict with the municipal authorities, took actions in favour of gender equality.

**Contacts:** The joint site of three state authorities working to promote equal opportunities:  
<http://www.tasa-arvo.fi/www-eng/index.html>.  
And the site of the:  
Finnish association of local and regional authorities  
<http://www.kuntaliitto.fi/>

### **Portugal:**

Within the municipal parliament of **Lisbon**, a standing committee for equal opportunities was created, and the municipal executive decided that gender equality was a question with the same status as other fields of municipal intervention. The mayor must ensure it is coordinated and chairs the advisory council named on this subject - in which sit representatives of women's associations, the advisers for equal opportunities in the town hall, a representative of the standing committee of the municipal parliament and experts in women's rights. Each municipal service names an equality adviser, responsible for coordination with the trade unions and respect of equal access for women and men to promotion, and being a transmission belt to the municipal advisory council.

This system makes it possible to ensure an integrated and transversal equal opportunities policy and the integration at all levels of the administration, by men and women, of the gender dimension.

**Source:** Anna Coucello, "La parité au Portugal" in *Les femmes dans la prise de décision en France et en Europe*, edited by Françoise Gaspard, Paris, Harmattan, 1997.

**Contact:** Conselho Municipal para a Igualdade de Oportunidades entre Homens and Mulheres, Pelouro da Acção Social, Câmara Municipal of Lisboa, 1100-365 Lisboa

### Italy:

The 1990 and 1991 laws created various institutions for equal opportunities, not only at the national, but also at the local level, where it is necessary to distinguish: a) *Equal opportunities committees* in public companies and local institutions, which defend the rights of the employees and come under the national committee of the Ministry of Labour; b) *the Equal Opportunities Commission* - whose role is mainly political - composed of representatives of various local bodies (trade unions, women's associations, town councils); c) *Parity Advisers*, responsible for arbitration in specific cases of discrimination; d) the *Councils of Elected Women Representatives*, forming part of the town council, which have an advisory function on equal opportunities. However, the very relative weight of these institutions, whose financial resources are meagre, is directly dependent on the involvement of the women members and the formation of a female political community.

### ***Analysis of local budgets in order to measure discrimination***



An analysis of budgets making it possible to measure the resources which are allocated according to gender (gender budgeting) aims to measure the expenditure allocated majoritarily to women or to men or to both sexes, The analytical models are recent but some towns have already used them to reorientate their budgeting.

### **Sweden**

One of the local councils in the city of **Gothenburg** in Sweden analysed the way in which the city gave subsidies to the NGOs in the social sector. It noted that the predominantly feminine associations only received one-fifth of the municipal subsidies to associations - leaving aside hostels. Battered women's refuges received slightly more per person than male associations with centres for recovering alcoholics. But taking into account that the women are usually accompanied by their children the subsidies for men were in fact higher. Following this analysis, the local council for the area in question reorganized its subsidies, examining also the social interest and the need for each activity.

**Contact:**

[lars.lindskog@lundby.goteborg.se](mailto:lars.lindskog@lundby.goteborg.se)

or write to:

SDF Lundy, Box 22006,

400 72 Gothenburg, Sweden. tel: +46 31 - 366 70 00.

<http://lundby.gotenorg.se> (in swedish only)

### **France**

The annual social balance sheet published by the city of **Rennes** contains gendered statistics concerning municipal employees, one of the goals being to discover the elements that slow down or block women's careers, and to find remedies.

### **Italy**

Experiences of gender budgeting are taking place in the provinces of **Modena**, **Siena** and **Genoa**, with a network created to link these initiatives. The **Emilio-Romagna** region has asked for a feasibility study on this theme in order to determine the differentiated impact of municipal spending on women and men, and to discover the fields that are the least well resourced at local level in a gender perspective - notably childcare for under-3s, parental allowances and public transport.

**Contact:**

Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia

Dipartimento di Economi Politica,

51 Viale Berengario, 4110 Modena.

### ***Adoption of gender equality plans and forms of monitoring and evaluation***

Adopting a gender equality plan is the precondition to taking into account discriminations based on sex. Such a plan cannot be worked out without a statistical analysis. But it goes without saying this plan must be given the financial and human resources necessary and, moreover, that it will be effective only if it is matched by some form of monitoring i.e. periodic evaluation.

#### **Finland:**

The 1995 law envisages three types of obligations in the municipalities. The first relates to the gendered composition of the politico-administrative bodies with a quota of 40 % minimum of each sex. Local authorities moreover are obliged to promote equality in a systematic way. Finally, it is requested from them, as employers, to work in favour of gender equality in the professional sphere. The law requires that employers of more than thirty people must introduce measures to promote equality. This implies the introduction of equal opportunity measures in recruitment, career opportunities, working conditions or aiming to diminish sexual harassment. The last two aspects of this law seem the most difficult to evaluate.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Sweden:**

The gender equality committee, in the town of **Växjö** has the status of a municipal commission and manages its own budget. Its president is a deputy mayor and a member of the executive committee of the municipality. The gender equality programme applies to the municipality both as an employer and a body able to take political initiatives.

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<sup>13</sup> Our research has nevertheless shown that the changes in the management of Finnish municipalities over the last ten years have maintained flagrant inequalities between women and men because women are still largely excluded from the highest administrative responsibilities and because of the growing influence of unofficial management groups – almost exclusively composed of men – which intervene before decisions are taken by elected bodies.

The programme is detailed with clear goals. It has been translated in several languages and it is distributed to residents.

**Contact:** Jämställdhetskommittén, Växjö kommun,  
Box 1222, 351 12 Växjö, Sweden,  
tel: +46 470 413 74 fax + 46 470 256 08  
[jamstalldhetskommitten@kommun.vaxjo.se](mailto:jamstalldhetskommitten@kommun.vaxjo.se)

### ***Creation of women-orientated advice bureaux***

The importance of visible and easily accessible places for women wishing to obtain information on their rights or help in the steps to be undertaken in the event of difficulties in their professional or family life no longer has to be demonstrated.

#### **Italy:**

In **Modena, Venice, Schio, Granarolo** and other cities, "women's information booths" were created to inform and guide women in their professional and family lives and in particular to give them information on opportunities for local employment or training.

#### **Contacts :**

[http://www.comune.granarolodellemilia.bo.it/granarolo/avvisi/sportello\\_donna.html](http://www.comune.granarolodellemilia.bo.it/granarolo/avvisi/sportello_donna.html)

<http://www.comune.modena.it/informadonna/archivio.html>

<http://www.provincia.venezia.it/lavoro/donne.html>

<http://www.comune.schio.vi.it>

#### **Portugal:**

Linked to the "I wish myself well" programme and in partnership with Portuguese local authorities, "Women's information spaces" integrated into municipal structures were created in **Sintra** and **Montijo**.. In addition to their function in the labour market, they have resource centres. In collaboration with local, public and private initiatives, they encourage the creation of networks to facilitate knowledge about the lives of the female population in the different localities - which can be fully used by the local authority itself - and contribute to showing the importance of the action of women themselves in the economic, social and cultural development of the localities. This falls within the European programme, the European Network for Accompanying Women in Professional Reinsertion - REDA, and constitutes one of the

initiatives of the Commission for equality and the women's rights (CIDM.)

**Contact:** Comissão para a Igualdade  
e os Direitos das Mulheres -  
CIDM,  
AV Da República, 32, 1º, 1050-193 Lisboa.  
tel.: 217983000, fax: 217983098  
[www.cidm.pt](http://www.cidm.pt)

**Finland:**

The girls' centre in **Helsinki** is a youth centre only open to girls. It was created on the initiative of women researchers who noted that the boys determined the activities in youth centres and that the girls did not feel at ease. The goal was to allow them to spend time together, without being annoyed, or even badgered, as is often the case in the mixed centres. It does not replace the other youth centres, but offers different activities to its users in "girls groups". There are ongoing groups, where girls of the same age meet to speak about their life, to do theatre, dance, drawing - or any other activity chosen by the members who, with the help of the centre staff, decide what they want to commit themselves to getting involved. There are also "afternoon groups" where the girls can come after the school, as well as drop in centres, with cafes, computers, etc. Special events are organized on certain occasions, like March 8. Girls who wish can make appointments to discuss their problems with an adult, and the centre works in co-operation with the schools to offer sex education courses to adolescents.

**Contact:** <http://www.tyttojentalo.net>

**Greece:**

On the initiative of the KETHI (Research centre on questions of equality) and linked to the Secretariat-General for equality, advice and information centres for women have been opened, in the following cities: **Athens, Salonika, Patras, Heraklion** and **Volos**. In particular they help women in job seeking.

**Contacts:** [www.Kethi.gr](http://www.Kethi.gr)  
[Kethi@Kethi.gr](mailto:Kethi@Kethi.gr)

## ***Strengthening links with feminist organizations in the community***

Many initiatives relating to the promotion of equal opportunities were taken under pressure from organizations, groups or networks defending a feminist point of view, and in the first place those which carry out an ongoing fight for the recognition of women's rights or act concretely to help women, whether in traditional fields of intervention (education, family) or not (assistance to foreign and immigrant women, prostitutes...). It is not by chance that the most telling examples in this guide come from cities where the authorities created permanent links with community organization and feminist ones in particular.

### **Italy:**

In **Modena**, a "Women's Convention", adopted in 1999 on the initiative of various community organizations, made it possible to bring a gender dimension into the Pact for the City, by taking account of women citizens' specific needs. In **Venice**, the Women's Centre, run by the municipality, enjoys a favourable position and the municipality works with external research institutions, the political school for women and various associations, including the Centre against violence. In Calabria, women's associations played a decisive part in the fight for political renewal and against the Mafia, in particular in **Reggio Calabria** and **Lamezia**.

**Contacts:** <http://www.comune.venezia.it/c%2Ddonna/index.htm>  
<http://www.comune.modena.it/associazioni/cddonna/casa.html>

### **France:**

In **Rennes**, the links between the local authority and community organizations are historically close. They are important partners for elected representatives, particularly in innovations and thinking in the social field or in human rights, in particular for women. The assistant mayor responsible for equal opportunities, elected in 2001, has carried on the "women in the city" committee. This brings together women of all backgrounds (professional, academic, trade-union, political, associative). It meets every two months, and has an Internet site.

Links with departments of women's studies or gender studies in universities are important for nourishing the thinking of local councillors on the policies to develop, starting from an informed vision of the reality of male/female relations on a local level, and in particular bringing out previously-ignored questions.

#### **Sweden:**

The **Växjö** city council has developed training sessions on gender relations for elected representatives and all municipal employees and civil servants in order to shift mentalities and attitudes, and allow the integration of these problems into all fields of municipal life. A major national conference with academics, politicians and professionals in this field is organized every year by the city.

**Contact:** Jämställdhetskommittén,  
Växjö kommun, Box 1222,  
351 12 Växjö,  
Sweden,  
tel: +46 470 413 74 fax + 46 470 256 08  
[jamstalldhetskommitten@kommun.vaxjo.se](mailto:jamstalldhetskommitten@kommun.vaxjo.se)

#### **France:**

In cities like **Rennes** or **Toulouse**, the thinking on questions of equality comes at the same time from the universities, local education authorities and teacher training institutes, and the feminist networks of associations. In **Rennes**, researchers and elected representatives worked on the question women's abilities in politics and the obstacles which persist - the administrative staff have profited from training courses to know their rights. In 1990, the city asked the professor of feminist studies of the university of Rennes II for a study on the women executives in Rennes in order to understand the discrimination and obstacles persisting in access to the highest levels of management.

#### **Italy:**

In Italy, there is a course proposed by the University in collaboration with the elected local representatives. The deputy mayor for equal opportunities in **Venice**, proposed with other women teachers from the University a "women's political school" which was very successful, for two years, among local administrators and women who wanted to enter politics. In **Emilio-Romagna**, the links with academics made it possible for a study of local security policies financed by the region to include



two aspects of the gender question: immigrant women and prostitution.

**Contacts:** <http://www.comune.venezia.it/c%2Ddonna/index.htm>  
[http://www.regione.emilia-romagna.it/citta\\_sicure/](http://www.regione.emilia-romagna.it/citta_sicure/)

**Reference:** Del Re Alisa (2000). *A scuola di politica*. Milan: Franco Angeli; *Quaderni di Città sicure*, 1999, n° 16 and 17; and 2000, n° 19.

## IN WHICH FIELDS?

The areas of competence of local authorities vary from one country to another. However, it is likely that all decisions made at local level will have a differentiated impact on local residents, notably in relation to their gender. Moreover, there can be local policies directed at tackling discrimination against women.

### *Schedules and “public time use” policies*



It is often groups of women entering town councils or local women's associations that raise one of the main discriminations that women experience: time management, which is not the same as for men because they continue, in all EU countries, to take the main burden of domestic and family tasks. As elected representatives, women must face a political system that developed without them and where the time taken for meetings was totally disconnected from other functions, provided by wives. In addition to questioning town council schedules, the question of access to all municipal services of the city raises, in an all-embracing and complex way, gender inequalities. It should however be noted that the measures recommended by feminists, which aimed to better reconcile various life schedules (work, family, personal schedules) by allowing a better collective responsibility for family life, are often forgotten while following the goals of rationalization and flexibilization of administrative services.

#### **Italy:**

Following the debate initiated by feminists and elected women representatives, the town of Modena has introduced for a period, at the end of the 1980s, measures of harmonization encouraging concertation between users and suppliers of services. This experiment can be considered as an archetype of those which have been at the origin of the national law on coordination of time in the cities - a law adopted in March 2000 which establishes an explicit link between the coordination of schedules and support for maternity and paternity, as well as the rights to care and training. The changes that it involved however had only a limited range, the few municipalities concerned being generally satisfied with introducing flexibility in the opening of municipal administration offices. In **Modena** as well, some changes were introduced recently in the schedules of town council meetings so that they would be more compatible with family life.

#### **France:**

In **Saint-Malo**, the times of town council meetings were changed with the goal of reconciling public and family life, to make life easier for elected women representatives. Since the last local elections of 2001, the question of schedules has been put on the agenda of several French cities, including **Rennes**, **Poitiers** and

**Paris** - one of the principal problems being not to lose sight of the fact that one of the initial goals of talking about citizen time was a gender perspective.

**Spain:**

The mayor of **Torredonjimeno**, in Andalusia, has forbidden men to leave the house on Thursday evenings between 9 pm and 2 am. The goal is that at least one evening per week they should be involved in domestic tasks. The women can thus have all the public space, to enjoy themselves, meet, breathe. Men who flout this prohibition and appear in public places on Thursday evening are liable to a fine. The money collected is paid to an organization caring for women victims of domestic violence.

**Source:** *El Pais*, Madrid, quoted in *International Courier*, Oct. 9/15. 2003.

### ***Town planning***

Town planning is still seldom approached from the angle of gender relations because both for elected officials and municipal staff, it remains above all a masculine domain. The rare women who are responsible for town planning on a political or administrative level underline the machismo culture that generally reigns both in the professional and local authority services in this sector. However we know the importance of organization of local space, of the services available as well as the conception of big urban projects in making daily life easy or not.

**Sweden:**

The municipal political majorities in **Växjö** and **Jönköping** chose, following the breakthrough of women in politics in 1994, to name women at the head of so-called "technical" committees, previously completely dominated by men. The decision to impose women with experience from other sectors was made with the aim of breaking the "technocratic" approach that prevailed in the fields of town planning, transport and emergency services.

The first chair of the **Jönköping** town planning commission carried out a major project of urban restoration in dialogue with the citizens. It included the creation of new convivial public spaces designed to be attractive and safe for all, whatever their age, ethnic origin, sex, physical capacity, together. That meant working on lighting, a concept of public and private transport, on urban aesthetics, on the responsibility of bar and restaurant owners for what happens in front of their establishments, etc.

**Contacts:** [stadsbyggnad@sbk.jonkoping.se](mailto:stadsbyggnad@sbk.jonkoping.se)  
for Växjö: stadsbyggnadskontoret,  
Box 1222, 351 12 Växjö,  
tel: +46 470 - 436 00 fax: +46 470 - 75 38 27

### **Italy:**

Several municipalities, especially in **Venice**, have initiated innovative projects in town planning, in particular those concerned with policies for "child-friendly cities" and, in a more general way, the creation of parks, pedestrian islands, public parks, cycle tracks, etc. These policies are women-friendly, not only in their childcare activities, care of old or dependent people, but also their need to have public spaces for themselves. To think of the urban environment in terms other than "the workers" or "the citizens", as if they were neutral, makes it easier to find town planning solutions that take into account everybody's needs.

**Contacts:** <http://www.comune.venezia.it/legambiente/home.asp>  
<http://www.comune.verona.it/pib/prima.html>

## ***Safety in public spaces***

The question of safety is almost always regarded as not gendered. However, a gendered approach can be applied in order to increase women's safety and sense of security, particularly at the time as they move about in the urban environment.

### **Canada**

The city of **Montreal** has a gender-differentiated approach to the question of safety. Two types of actions concern transport in particular:

- the introduction of the service "Between two stops" allowing women and girls to leave buses in the evening between two regular stops to be nearer their destination or to use a better-lit path.

- the integration of criteria of women's safety in restoring several subway exits. These criteria are: see and be seen, know where one is going, hear and be heard, be able to escape or obtain help, live in a clean environment.

Thus, several subway stations are made completely in glass in order to avoid the recesses and to widen everybody's field of vision; there are many plans and the names of streets are clearly indicated; telephone help lines are available.

Other actions concern women in public space in a more general way:

- exploratory steps, that is surveys carried out by five or six women inhabitants of a district to try to identify the elements in urban planning which can provoke a feeling of insecurity. Their proposals are then sent to the municipal services concerned. This also makes it possible to develop participatory democracy and support the appropriation of public spaces by women.

- stickers which tradespeople can put in their window and which state clearly that women's safety is important to them too. Women know that these tradespeople will help them where necessary.

- All these actions were made possible by the existence of gender-based statistical data in partnership between women's groups and the authorities. There is a kit that describes all the actions and the initiatives concerning women's safety carried out in Montreal.

**Contacts:**

Anne Michaud,  
women and city programme  
[anmicho@ville.montreal.qc.ca](mailto:anmicho@ville.montreal.qc.ca)  
[www.femmesetvilles.org](http://www.femmesetvilles.org)  
(first international seminar on women's safety)  
[www.cafsu.cq.ca](http://www.cafsu.cq.ca)  
(action committee for women and urban safety)

**Italy:**

The town of **Vicenza**, in Venezia, organizes self-defence courses that can welcome 136 women, and in **Rubano**, close to Padua, there are courses in domestic, personal and economic safety, run by the participants themselves. More generally, teams of voluntary workers- women and men - intervene in Venezia during the night in prostitution areas, on the basis of

work on dialogue and information exchange, to limit the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and to give to the women concerned the possibility of leaving prostitution if they so wish.

**Contacts:**

<http://www.comune.venezia.it/prostituzione/home.asp>

<http://www.rubano.it>

### ***Assistance to victims of domestic violence***

Women are the principal victims of domestic violence, and women's organizations since the 1970s, have contributed to introducing this question as one connected to public policies. While their actions have contributed to sensitizing governments, it is generally at the local level that they acted and contributed to initiating the policies relayed by the municipalities. The few quoted examples cannot list all the experiences in the matter but can encourage us to an exchange of good practices.

**Italy:**

In **Bologna**, the Women's Centre Against Violence Against Women, was born in an informal way in the mid 1980s. The idea was to offer women victims of sexual violence the possibility to be welcomed in a house that was theirs. A training course abroad and exchanges with of European women's networks made it possible for this project to take shape and be an example. Today, there is on a national scale a network against violence, supported by the Ministry for the Equal Opportunities within the framework of the European programme Urban which involves nine cities: Venice (network pilot), **Catagne, Cosenza, Foggia, Lecce, Naples, Palermo, Reggio di Calabria** and **Rome**. An antiviolence bureau is active in Cosenza in the primary schools.

**Contacts:**

<http://www.women.it/casadonne>

[casadonn@women.it](mailto:casadonn@women.it)

<http://www.comune.venezia.it/nelmondo/progetti/>

<http://www.comune.venezia.it/c%2Donna/antiviol.html>

### **Finland:**

A centre related to the national programme "Tukinainen", located in **Helsinki**, offers support to women or girls who are victims of rape and sexual violence, with therapeutic and legal aid services for the victims. In addition it endeavours to influence professional and legal practices, and public opinion in order to prevent and decrease the violence against women. The centre employs lawyers, therapists and ensures a telephone help line. It organizes encounter groups for victims of various types of violence - childhood sexual abuse, rape... - or support groups for victims' relatives. The employees the centre are women and services to the victims are all free. The centre was founded by Unioni, a national feminist association and it is largely financed by the national lottery

**Contact:** <http://www.tukinainen.fi/>

Some Finnish cities - **Rovaniemi, Raahе, Oulu, Imatra, Helsinki, Vantaa, Turku, Lahti, Tampere, Pori, Jyväskylä, Vase and Kokkola** - opened refuges or of mother and child welfare centres, which depend on the National League of Shelters and whose financing is partly assured by municipal social services. The goal of these centres is to ensure the safety of women victims of violence by offering them a refuge, under conditions of intimacy, and protecting children who are victims or witnesses of violence or threats of family violence by protecting them from fear. A pregnant woman or with a newborn baby can remain also there for a limited duration: she will find help to learn how to deal with the problems of daily life with a child. They also organize support groups for violent men willing to break the vicious circle of violence as well as meeting places for divorced parents, women suffering from problems of postnatal depression, etc.

**Contacts:** <http://www.ensijaturvakotienliitto.fi/>  
<http://www.turvakoti.net/>

### **Greece:**

The cities of **Athens, Pirea and Salonica** created shelters for women victims of violence, where they can obtain the psychological and legal help necessary - but also find a refuge.



### *Urban mobility*

Transport is a particularly emblematic example of gender inequalities. Who decides on urban transport policy? Who uses such types of transport? The studies available on the matter show that the decision makers are men, that men are mainly car users and that the users of collective transport are women. However these seem very often quite unsuited to use with children or even loads like family shopping.



**Finland:**

In **Helsinki**, people travelling with small children in pushchairs travel free. They do not need tickets to take the bus, the tram, the subway or the local train. This practice was introduced initially to ensure the safety of children, because dangerous situations are created when an adult gets into the bus with a pushchair and then must leave it to go to buy and/or punch their ticket. The system also helps the parents of young children economically, and most beneficiaries are women. In addition, most buses have already been changed to “low” buses, without staircases and easily accessible with pushchairs.

The “service lines”, minibus lines, are specifically designed for people with mobility difficulties, in particular old people. They circulate near health centres, family planning centres, libraries, old people's homes etc and the number of stops is increased. There is staff to help people inside the bus.

**Contact:** <http://www.hel.fi/HKL/>

### *Care of young children*

What is called the “conciliation” of various schedules of people (work, domestic tasks, care of children, voluntary activities, leisure...) concerns all individuals, men or women. However, it is nevertheless the case that the constraints imposed by the presence of young children weigh particularly on women. Even if the state can help financially, in fact generally the local authorities create and manage - directly or through associations - childcare for children not yet in compulsory education, and outside school time. We do not propose to list all the existing systems but to point out some innovative experiences.

**Finland:**

In **Helsinki**, there are supervised parks for children (60 in all, some of which are for disabled children).. Parents can leave their children for a few hours, free or for a moderate sum. City employees supervise the children and organize activities for them. During the summer, a meal is provided for the children.

More regular leisure activities are organized in certain parks, such as “afternoon clubs”, which include a light snack for schoolchildren for a moderate sum. Suspending this service for financial reasons is under consideration, which will pose big problems for parents as primary school (for 7 to 12 year-olds) usually only has classes in the morning.

**Contact:** <http://www.hel.fi/sosv/english/service/playgrou.htm>

### **Italy:**

**Reggio di Calabria** set up a nursery school and a nursery open to the children of employees of the town hall and the municipal and regional institutions located in or near the seat of the regional council. The strongest example of innovative management of the municipal nurseries is in Emilio Romagna, in the town of **Reggio Emilia**.

**Contact:**

<http://www.municipio.re.it/retecivica/urp/retecivi.nsf/htmlmedia/asili.html>

### **Portugal:**

In **Alandroal** the local authority pays a travelling nursery-school teacher on a full-time basis, in order to ensure a pre-primary education in the isolated villages where there are too few pupils to open schools.

### **France:**

Municipalities in the Rhone department, in order to have a precise idea of the needs in childcare for very young children, have a specialized diagnosis service. This collects data for the department and supports initiatives at local level. It brings together the partners in charge of the diagnosis and formulation of proposals to the elected bodies. In the same vein, on the question of the reconciliation of work and family, there was a study in **Rennes** with the parents of the public nurseries on their needs, in the perspective of gender equality and a stated concern for the children's well being. **Mantes-la-Jolie**, offers different facilities for the various components of the municipality: parent-children “living places”, reorientation classes to support a link with the nursery school and emergency reception centres for the population of the Val Fourré, a difficult area.

## ***Employment***

Policies addressed to women are generally a national initiative. Local authorities usually only relay or support these policies, sometimes within the framework of projects co-financed by the European Union. Sometimes however cities take specific exemplary initiatives.

### **Sweden:**

The town of **Växjö** considers that gender equality forms part of labour law. The municipality sought to set up a new device for evaluating competences and the difficulty of the different work stations in the municipal services in order to allocate more equal wages to women and men, in order to challenge the tradition that trades known as “male” are paid better than the trades known as “female”. Its equality plan is regularly updated.

**Contact:** Jämställdhetskommitten, Växjö kommun,  
Box 1222, 351 12 Växjö, Sweden,  
tel: +46 470 413 74 fax +46 470 256 08  
[jamstalldhetskommitten@kommun.vaxjo.se](mailto:jamstalldhetskommitten@kommun.vaxjo.se)

### **Italy:**

In collaboration with the delegate for work and the vocational training for the area, the town of **Reggio di Calabria** ensures training in the tourism trades of about fifteen 40-year-old women, unemployed and badly qualified for reintegration into the labour market in a field where employment opportunities exist. This same city organized a course addressed to a score of women eager to become public transport workers - training ensuring them of jobs in the city's transport systems. In 2002, this city also organized a specific programme for disabled women, to help them to overcome the obstacles that confront them, through training courses and the constitution of a support network to help them find jobs.

**Contact:** <http://www.comune.reggio-calabria.it/intranet/Rete/pari-Oppor>

### **Portugal:**

Various Portuguese local authorities - **Covilhã, Loures, Montalegre, Montemor-o-Velho, Odemira, Sintra, Moura** - address women in a phase of professional reinsertion, through

services related to the “Women’s Information Spaces” mentioned above. The goal is to inform and help them in their search for employment or their professional reconversion. Acting as go-betweens for public and private organizations at the local level, these services are directed by teams from one to three people who, for the majority, are civil servants of the local or regional public administration, with appropriate training and capacities, and who were sensitized beforehand to equal opportunities questions. They also organize information and training activities for the women who want them, encouraging them to be autonomous and to acquire the skills or qualifications necessary to enable them to reintegrate into the labour market - including by creating their own jobs.

**Contact::** [www.cidm.pt](http://www.cidm.pt)

#### **Finland:**

In the towns of **Helsinki**, **Savonlinna** and **Joensuu** the projects that have obtained European financing were worked out to support the women wanting to create their own companies. In Savonlinna, the goal is to help unemployed women from various aspects of the service sector (social, health, trade, management, craft industry, domestic economy, food, tourism) to build their company by training and financing to help them to start up. There is also the question of supporting new forms of companies (collective, for example) as well as the spirit of initiative of people wanting to change trades, while decreasing the rate of unemployment in the city and by preventing the depopulation of the surrounding non-urban zones. In Helsinki, since 1996 there is an association of women entrepreneurs that distributes information, organizes courses, and maintains a programme of mentoring for new women entrepreneurs.

**Contact:** <http://www.naisyrittajyysskeskus.fi/inenglish.html>  
tel. +358 9 5422 4466; fax +358 9 5422 4455

## ***Sport***

Most girls' aspirations in leisure are different from those of boys. It is not inevitable, for example, that the projects in a number of large cities during the summer for young people who cannot go away on holiday are centred almost exclusively on sporting equipment concerning in their very great majority of men people (football fields, French boxing, etc), without taking account of questions of gender mixity and the specific needs of girls. In order to modify this established fact, it is in particularly important to make a survey of existing practices.

### **Sweden:**

The federation of Swedish municipalities developed, in 1997, a method of analysis of municipal activities to be used as a basis for a local anti-discriminatory policy. As concerns sport the analysis relates to the following questions: what is the distribution by sex of the users of football grounds and ice rinks? What is the municipal subsidy for the sports equipment used mainly respectively by men and by women? What time is allocated to the girls and to the boys in the ice rinks and on the football grounds? Etc.

**Contacts:** [http://www.svekom.se/jamstalldhet/pdf/verkstan\(eng\).pdf](http://www.svekom.se/jamstalldhet/pdf/verkstan(eng).pdf).  
<http://www.svekom.se/jamstalldhet/index.htm>

## *Integration of foreign and immigrant women*



Foreign and immigrant women generally tend to cumulate handicaps from an economic, social and cultural point of view. Not only are those who work often obliged to take low-paid and unqualified jobs (doing tasks which are those of the domestic sphere in the place of other better qualified and remunerated women), but a number of them are isolated from the society

where they live, because of cultural traditions pushing them to remain in the home.

Measures can however be taken to help them to leave the family unit and to enable them to form part of the community.

### **Finland:**

The international culture centre in **Helsinki**, Caisa, organizes various courses - Finnish language, data processing, Finnish society - intended for immigrant women to facilitate their access to teaching. Debates and seminars are organized on topics concerning the life of immigrant women in Finnish society. The orientation of the program is feminist, and it aims to provoke a feminist reflection on the women's living conditions, and to facilitate the communication between foreign and Finnish women.

At the Meri-Rastila primary school, which takes children from 7 to 12 and is located in one of the city districts with a high immigrant population, it was shown that the problem of immigrant families - in this case often of refugee families - was that the mothers found it difficult to integrate into Finnish society, more difficulties than the children and the men. Indeed, their husbands often forbid them to take the language courses proposed by governmental or municipal programmes and exercise close control over their comings and goings and any activities outside the home, which also prevents them from finding work many cases. However, activities at the school, and women's participation in them, because of their link to "maternal" tasks, are better accepted by the men. So the school created a module of free courses for the mothers of immigrant children - sewing courses, but also Finnish language courses and on Finnish society. The women could thus leave the house, meet and educate themselves without causing heavy family tensions. At the start, the courses were organized on the basis of volunteer teachers.

**Contacts:** [http://kulttuuri.hel.fi/caisa/index\\_en.html](http://kulttuuri.hel.fi/caisa/index_en.html)  
<http://www.kontu.la/mamu/>

### **Belgium:**

The town of **Antwerp** set up a specific project for elimination of illiteracy among immigrant mothers, named WFP, to allow them better social integration and a "harmonization" with their children's schooling.

**Contact:** [dienst.integratie@stad.antwerpen.be](mailto:dienst.integratie@stad.antwerpen.be)

**Italy:**

The town of **Venice** is one of the Italian cities where the local authorities are shown to be attentive to the problems raised by the policies of family regroupment and the difficulties met by immigrant women who arrive from their country of origin. Actions have been undertaken to enable them to find their feet and help them to find employment.

***Urban symbolism and culture***

In Europe, public places generally bear names of characters related to national and local history. For historical reasons, but also because women were made invisible in our cultural and political history, men dominate. To give all-too-often-forgotten women's names to urban space constitutes not only the beginning of a recompense but the means, for women and men, to situate themselves locally in history reinstating the gendered dimension of the nation and the city. Cultural spaces for artistic productions can and must also integrate the gender dimension, which is not always the case at the moment.

**Portugal:**

Various Portuguese municipalities have published books, catalogues or booklets highlighting the memory of women in municipal spaces, in particular through monuments or street names that evoke female characters from the history of the country.

**Sources:** Cidade com nomes de Mulher, Catalogue of the exhibition presented in Casa da Cerca, Municipal Art Gallery , Almada, March 8, 2001. A Mulher na Toponímia de Lisboa, Lisbon City Council.

**Italy:**

In **Stefanaconi**, in Calabria, a municipal villa - Villa Elena - devoted in particular to female art was opened to the public in June 2000. The Villa has become a place for meeting and socialization, especially for women. In addition to exhibitions that promote female art, it acts as a social and cultural centre and encourages female participation in city business.



In **Soverato**, another town of Calabria, there is a women's library that was created in 1996, on the initiative of a group of women eager to have a space for communication and interaction between women. Both a documentation centre and a discussion space, its goal is above all to constitute databases to contribute to the consolidation of the memory of women's place in history.

**France:**

In several French cities, women's associations have compiled statistics of street names consecrated to men and to women, and proposed to the town council women's names that should be given to public places.

## CONCLUSION

The study which was used as the basis for drafting this guide showed that while there is, within the European Union, an increase in local actions addressed specifically to women, it is very rare that cities take into account the gender dimension from the all-embracing point of view for elimination of discrimination between the sexes. Even if there is in almost all the countries an increase in the number of local elected women representatives, women are everywhere a minority in councils and rarely heads of municipalities. Certainly, a high number of elected women representatives is not enough to ensure that gender inequalities are taken into account. Nevertheless, we have noted that the increase in the number of women in locals councils is in itself a democratic asset likely bring up new questions for the political agenda

The policies implemented remain generally partial rather than conceived from an all-embracing point of view. In addition they often appear precarious, discontinuous and too often with derisory human and material resources. One of the major handicaps in the construction of exemplary local communities as regards gender equality is, however, less the money than the expertise. To imagine a gender-sensitive society, or even more a city, supposes, in addition to political good will, the provision of conceptual tools. Inequalities are not always immediately obvious. Tackling them requires first seeing them, as we have seen in relation to transport or budget analysis. We have seen a rise in consciousness in this respect. It is appropriate, moreover, that these practices and these techniques are spread. It is thus encouraging to note that cities now work in networks and that questions related to all forms of discrimination are the subject of exchanges of "good practices". We hope that this guide will contribute to this and that, in the near future, it will be enriched.



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SHE USED THE WORD:  
EVERYDAY

...

I FEAR THE WORST



## **ANNEXES :**

### ***A. Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women***

#### **EXTRACTS**

**The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly and entered into force on September 2, 1981.**

#### **Article 4**

1. Adoption by States Parties of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present Convention, but shall in no way entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; these measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved.

2. Adoption by States Parties of special measures, including those measures contained in the present Convention, aimed at protecting maternity shall not be considered discriminatory.

#### **Article 7**

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:

- a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;
- b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;
- c) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

#### **Article 18**

1. States Parties undertake to submit to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for consideration by the Committee, a report on the legislative, judicial, administrative or other measures which they have adopted to give effect to the provisions of the present Convention and on the progress made in this respect:



- a) Within one year after the entry into force for the State concerned; and
- b) Thereafter at least every four years and further whenever the Committee so requests.

2. Reports may indicate factors and difficulties affecting the degree of fulfilment of obligations under the present Convention.

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

***B. COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 2 December 1996 on the balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process (96/694/EC)***

**THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,**

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 235 thereof,

Having regard to the proposals from the Commission,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee ,

(1) Whereas the Council has adopted a series of legislative instruments and a number of political commitments in the field of equal treatment and equal opportunities for men and women;

(2) Whereas the Heads of State and Government, meeting within the European Council in Essen, Cannes and Madrid, stressed that the fight against unemployment and equal opportunities for women and men were paramount tasks of the European Union and its Member States;

(3) Whereas attention was focused on women's access to decision-making in Council Recommendation 84/635/EEC of 13 December 1984 on the promotion of positive action for women , in the second Council Resolution of 24 July 1986 on the promotion of equal opportunities for women, in the Council Resolution of 21 May 1991 on the third medium-term Community action programme on equal opportunities for women and men (1991-1995), in the Council Resolution of 27 March 1995 on the balanced participation of women and men in decision-making (10) and in Council Decision 95/593/EC of 22 December 1995 on a medium-term Community action programme on equal opportunities for men and women (1996-2000);

(4) Whereas the European Parliament in its Resolution of 11 February 1994 on women in decision-making bodies asked the Commission to 'step up implementation of the equal opportunities policy set out in the third Community action programme, to combat individual obstacles which hinder women from taking part in decision-making' and to define 'measures and actions to promote greater participation of women in the decision-making process';

(5) Whereas the Declaration and the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 4 to 15 September 1995) stressed the need to ensure that responsibilities, powers and rights are shared equally; whereas the Member States are committed to implementing the Platform for Action;

(6) Whereas participation in the decision-making process depends on representation on decision-making bodies at all levels of political, economic, social and cultural life and requires, in particular, presence in posts of responsibility and decision-taking positions;

(7) Whereas women are still under-represented in decision-making bodies, in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres;

(8) Whereas the under-representation of women in decision-making bodies is partly a result of the delay in women attaining equal civic and civil rights, of obstacles to their gaining economic independence and of difficulties in reconciling their working and family life;

(9) Whereas balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process is a requirement for democracy;

(10) Whereas the under-representation of women in decision-making posts constitutes a loss for society as a whole and may prevent the interests and needs of the entire population from being catered for in full;

(11) Whereas measures aimed at bringing about a balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process in all sectors should go together with the integration of the dimension of equality of opportunity for women and men in all policies and actions;

(12) Whereas balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process is likely to give rise to different ideas, values and behaviour which will result in more justice and equality in the world for both men and women;

(13) Whereas the Member States, the social partners, political parties and organizations, non-governmental organizations and the media play a key role in creating a society where there is a gender balance in the exercise of responsibilities in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres;

(14) Whereas it is appropriate to adopt guidelines to promote balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process with the aim of bringing about equality of opportunity for women and men and whereas it is appropriate, within the framework of the medium-term Community action programme on equal opportunities for men and women (1996-2000), to make those guidelines more effective through the exchange of information on good practice;

(15) Whereas the provisions of this Recommendation apply solely within the limits of Community competence; whereas equal treatment for male and female workers constitutes one of the objectives of the Community, insofar as the harmonization of living and working conditions while maintaining their improvement are, inter alia, to be furthered;

(16) Whereas the Treaty does not confer, for the adoption of this Recommendation, any other powers than those referred to in Article 235,

## **I. RECOMMENDS THAT THE MEMBER STATES:**

1. adopt a comprehensive, integrated strategy designed to promote balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process and develop

or introduce the appropriate measures to achieve this, such as, where necessary, legislative and/or regulatory measures and/or incentives;

2. (a) alert those involved in education and training at all levels, including those responsible for teaching materials, to the importance of:

- a realistic and complete image of the roles and abilities of women and men in society, free of prejudice and discriminatory stereotypes,
- a more balanced sharing of professional, domestic and social responsibilities between women and men, and
- balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process at all levels;

(b) at all levels of education and training, encourage girls and women to take part and express themselves in education and training activities as actively and fully as boys and men, so as to prepare them for an active role in society, including political, economic, social and cultural life, and in particular in decision-making processes;

(c) make public opinion aware of the importance of disseminating an image of women and men that neither reinforces nor consolidates discriminatory stereotyping of women's and men's responsibilities;

(d) without encroaching on their autonomy, encourage and support efforts of associations and organizations in all areas of society to promote women's access to the decision-making process and balanced participation by women and men in decision-making bodies;

(e) without prejudice to their autonomy, encourage and support the efforts of the social partners to promote balanced participation of women and men in their activities and highlight the social partners' responsibility for promoting and proposing women candidates for nomination to various assignments on public commissions and committees in the Member States and at Community level;

(f) devise, launch and promote public campaigns to alert public opinion to the usefulness and advantages for society as a whole of balanced participation by women and men in decision-making;

3. (a) promote or improve the collection and publication of statistics to provide a clearer picture of how women and men are represented at all levels of the decision-making process in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres;

(b) support, develop and encourage quantitative and qualitative studies on the participation of women and men in the decision-making process, and especially:

- on the legal, social or cultural obstacles impeding access to and participation in the decision-making process for persons of either sex,
- on strategies for overcoming such obstacles, and

- on the utility and advantages for society and for the operation of democracy of a better balance between the sexes in the decision-making process;

(c) promote, support and encourage initiatives creating examples of good practice in the various areas of the decision-making process and develop programmes for the dissemination and exchange of experience with a view to propagating activities;

4. (a) promote balanced participation by women and men at all levels in governmental bodies and committees;

(b) raise the awareness of those involved of the importance of taking initiatives to achieve balanced participation of women and men in public positions at all levels, paying particular attention to the promotion of a balanced composition in committees, commissions and working parties at national as well as Community level;

(c) provide for, implement or develop a coherent set of measures encouraging equal opportunities in the public sector and respecting the concept of balanced participation in the decision-making process, and ensure, when recruitment competitions take place, that women and men are, as far as possible, represented equally in the committees responsible for preparing competitions and in the selection boards;

(d) encourage the private sector to increase the presence of women at all levels of decision-making, notably by the adoption of, or within the framework of, equality plans and positive action programmes;

## **II. CALLS ON THE INSTITUTIONS, SUBSIDIARY BODIES AND DECENTRALIZED BODIES OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES TO:**

design a strategy for achieving balanced participation by women and men in the decision-making process in each institution, subsidiary body and decentralized body of the European Communities;

## **III. CALLS ON THE COMMISSION TO:**

1. encourage and organize, within the framework of Council Decision 95/593/EC of 22 December 1995 on a medium-term Community action programme on equal opportunities for men and women (1996-2000), systematic pooling of information and experience between Member States on good practice and the assessment of the impact of measures taken to achieve a better balance between women and men in the decision-making process;

2. to this end, and within that framework, step up its efforts to provide information, alert public opinion, encourage research and promote schemes aimed at achieving balanced participation by women and men in the decision-making process;

3. submit a report to the European Parliament, the Council and the Economic and Social Committee, for the first time three years after adoption of this Recommendation and thereafter annually, on its implementation, on the basis of the information provided by the Member States and the institutions, subsidiary bodies and decentralized bodies of the European Communities.

Done at Brussels, 2 December 1996.

For the Council

The President

E. FITZGERALD

### ***C. IULA Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government***

#### ***Preamble***

1. The World Executive Committee of the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), the worldwide association of local governments, meeting in Zimbabwe, November 1998;

2. Recalling the Worldwide Declaration of Local Self-Government adopted at IULA's 31st World Congress in Toronto, 1993;

3. Recalling the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the United Nations Declaration on Women and Platform for Action adopted in Beijing in 1995, in particular the principle, recognised in Article 344 of the Beijing Platform for Action, that international organisations, such as IULA, have an important role to play in implementing the UN Platform for Action;

4. Recognising that the reasons as to why women are not represented equally in local government are multiple, and that women and men throughout the world live under different conditions and women do not have the same access to and control over economic and political resources as men;

5. Considering that local government, as an integral part of the national structure of governance, is the level of government closest to the citizens and therefore in the best position both to involve women in the making of decisions concerning their living conditions, and to make use of their knowledge and capabilities in the promotion of sustainable development;

6. Emphasising that the mission of IULA cannot be realised without the equal and systematic integration of women into democratic local decision making and that democracy cannot be realised without

adequate representation, participation and inclusion of women in the local governance process;

**WE, THE MEMBERS OF IULA, REPRESENTING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WORLDWIDE, FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT:**

7. Democratic local self-government has a critical role to play in securing social, economic and political justice for all citizens of every community in the world and that all members of society, women and men, must be included in the governance process;

8. Women and men as citizens have equal human rights, duties and opportunities, as well as the equal right to exercise them. The right to vote, to be eligible for election and to hold public office at all levels are human rights that apply equally to women and men;

9. The problems and challenges facing humanity are global but occur and have to be dealt with at the local level. Women have the equal right to freedom from poverty, discrimination, environmental degradation and insecurity. To fight these problems and to meet the challenges of sustainable human development, it is crucial that women be empowered and involved in local government as decision-makers, planners and managers;

10. Local government is in a unique position to contribute to the global struggle for gender equality and can have a great impact on the status of women and the status of gender equality around the world, in its capacities as the level of governance closest to the citizens, as a service provider and as an employer;

11. The systematic integration of women augments the democratic basis, the efficiency and the quality of the activities of local government. If local government is to meet the needs of both women and men, it must build on the experiences of both women and men, through an equal representation at all levels and in all fields of decision-making, covering the wide range of responsibilities of local governments;

12. In order to create sustainable, equal and democratic local governments, where women and men have equal access to decision-making, equal access to services and equal treatment in these services, the gender perspective must be mainstreamed into all areas of policy making and management in local government.

**Local government as a service provider and enabler of sound living conditions**

13. Women have the right to equal access to the services of local governments, as well as the right to be treated equally in these services and to be able to influence the initiation, development, management and monitoring of services. The provision of services such as education, welfare and other social services by local governments, should aim to see women and men as equally responsible for matters related both to the family and to public life, and avoid perpetuating stereotypes of women and men;

14. Women have the equal right to sound environmental living conditions, housing, water distribution and sanitation facilities, as well as to affordable public transportation. Women's needs and living conditions must be made visible and taken into account at all times in planning;

15. Women have the right to equal access to the territory and geographical space of local governments, ranging from the right to own land, to the right to move freely and without fear in public spaces and on public transport;

16. Local government has a role to play in ensuring the reproductive rights of women and the rights of women to freedom from domestic violence and other forms of physical, psychological and sexual violence and abuse;

*Local government as an employer and in a strategic position to influence local society*

17. Women have the equal right to employment in local government and equality in recruitment procedures. As employees in local government women and men have the right to equal pay, equal access to benefits, promotion and training, as well as the right to equal working conditions and treatment in the evaluation of their work;

18. Women's often heavy workload of paid and unpaid work is a barrier to their ability to take part in decision making. Local government has an important role to play in providing affordable, professional and safe care services for children, older people and people with disabilities, be that directly or in partnership with the private or the voluntary sectors, and in promoting the sharing of household tasks by women and men on an equal basis. Men have the equal right and responsibility to care for their children and relatives and should be encouraged to do so;

**WE, THE MEMBERS OF IULA, REPRESENTING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WORLDWIDE, COMMIT OURSELVES TO:**

19. Ensuring that the conditions within our local governments and associations allow our beliefs as stated in this document to be realised;



20. Strengthening our efforts to make equal the number of women and men in decision-making bodies at all levels and in all policy areas, and our efforts to ensure women's qualitative participation in councils, committees and other groups related to decision-making in local government;

21. Applying the mainstreaming principle by integrating a gender perspective into all policies, programmes and service delivery activities in individual local governments and their representative associations at national, regional and international levels, and to developing methods for monitoring and measuring this mainstreaming work;

22. Looking for new ways to ensure that women are represented and actively participate by formal as well as informal means in the process of local governance;

23. Strengthening international and national cooperation between local governments, supported by national, regional and international associations of local governments, in order to further the exchange of experiences, as well as to devise and develop methods, policies and strategies that help offset barriers to women's participation in local decision-making;

24. Outlining, implementing and monitoring action plans for promoting equal opportunities in the municipal workplace, encompassing equal opportunities of recruitment, promotion, remuneration, as well as equal working conditions;

25. Working for changes of attitudes related to gender issues by awareness-raising in the education system and within the political and administrative structure of local governments;

26. Working actively with other actors of society, including national gender systems and organisations, the private sector, non-governmental organisations, professional groupings, women's groups, research institutes and trade unions in accomplishing the goals of this declaration;

## **WE CALL UPON NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS TO:**

27. Acknowledge that local government has a critical role to play in creating sustainable democracies and gender equal societies, and therefore, to grant constitutional, legal and financial autonomy to local governments to enable them to meet their democratic responsibilities;

28. Support, encourage and create opportunities and resources for local governments to work for and promote gender equality;

29. Recognise national associations of local governments as important partners in the development, promotion and support of gender equality at the local level, and in the exchange of experiences at the international, national and local levels;

30. Work in partnership with local government associations and their members to implement the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW);

31. Guarantee and enforce the right of women to a legal capacity identical to that of men and to the same opportunities to exercise that capacity, by ensuring equality and non-discrimination before the law and in practice;

32. Guarantee and enforce the right of women to participate in the democratic system, by ensuring women the equal right to vote, to be eligible for election and to hold public office;

33. Develop and augment knowledge in the field of gender by ensuring that statistics collected on individuals are gender disaggregated and analysed with a gender perspective, and to make available resources for academic research with a gender perspective, that can be of use for the development of gender equality in local government;

#### **WE CALL UPON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO:**

34. Implement the Beijing Platform for Action, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and this declaration;

35. Recognise the local level as the level of governance closest to the citizens with a critical role to play in attaining the objectives of gender equality agreed upon by National Governments through the United Nations, and therefore;

36. Work with Local Government and its institutions at all levels to promote the equal participation of women and men in local decision-making in all its forms, formal and informal;

37. Support programmes initiated by local governments and their associations aimed at increasing the representation of women in local government and local positions of leadership.

*Harare, Zimbabwe, November 1998*