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Editor's Note

This issue contains largely information on our March conference, "Estonian Women as Future Citizens in the European Union", which was greeted by Mr. Arhi Palosuo, EU Ambassador to Tallinn, and by the French Ambassador Jean-Jacques Subrenat. Ambassador Palosuo remarked on the economic progress made by Estonia and noted that comparable progress in the area of gender equality, toward which ENUT can contribute, needs attention in order to meet the requirements of EU membership. Ambassador Subrenat's remarks are published in this issue.

A significant result of the conference is the ratification of the European Social Charter by *Riigikogu*. Prior to the petition sent by the conference to the government and the members of *Riigikogu*, articles pertaining to gender equality were slated not to be accepted.

European Union Policy on Equality

Jacqueline de Groot, Vice-chairman, European Women's Lobby

The Council of Europe's Social Charter is not legally binding. Its adoption would mean a moral commitment to implement articles contained in it. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights will have a very different impact. The European Civil Society is asking for it to be part of the Union Treaty and, later, of the constitution. It will be legally

binding and become part of the *acquis communautaire*. Applicant countries must adopt the *acquis communautaire* to enter the Union. The EU Charter will include civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights, and governments will be obliged to take measures towards their implementation. All those rights are indivisible. The European Court of Justice will have the competence to render judgements having the force of law. These rights are consistent with the fundamental rights as defined in a number of international instruments, including the Social Charter of the Council of Europe as revised in 1996. Thus, the ratification of the Social Charter would be a good step forward.

It all began with Article 119 in the Treaty of Rome (1957) which states "equal pay for equal work". Our Founding Fathers were not as concerned with equality as with imperfect competition between countries where salaries were high for a predominantly male workforce and countries where salaries were lower because of the great number of working women. Women understood the usefulness of Article 119 when in 1965 the European Court of Justice ruled in favour of women strikers. Although much more qualified than men, women were paid less than unqualified men in the armaments factory of Herstal in Licge, Belgium. The Court also ruled in favour of a SABENA stewardess in a discrimination case. The airline's stewardesses were obliged to retire at age 40, and thereby, were denied access to a very generous pension plan for the cabin crew.

Based on court decisions after 1975, women obtained eight Directives on equal pay for equal work (in the Amsterdam Treaty, 1975, it became "for work of equal value"), equal access to work, to education and training, conditions of work and promotion. The second directive recognises the necessity of positive actions and differences between men and women on the matter of maternity. The 3rd and 4th directives concern equality in social security. Then came directives on equality in the field of self-employment, protection of maternity, parental leave, and the very hard won reversal of the burden of proof. The implementations of all these directives were subjected to numerous appeals to the European Court of Justice, which delivered important juridical decisions. Legislation and court decisions allowed the European Commission to adopt policies on positive actions, indirect discrimination, mainstreaming, guidelines for employment, access to the decision-making process, reconciliation between professional obligations and family life.

The Amsterdam Treaty recognises equality as one of the summary goals of the Community. This has been a major step forward, as the Community has only the competence which the Member States agree to give up in its favour. For example, until the Maastricht Treaty, the Community could address only economic issues and, therefore, violence against women was limited to the workplace only. Now, it has developed important programmes against domestic violence, trafficking in women and prostitution. Institutional mechanisms have been set up to carry the commitments to equality: the special group of Commissioners, a Unit for equal opportunities in the European Commission, and the Women's Rights Committee in the European Parliament are the main ones. Mid-term Action programmes fix the objectives and the ways to reach them for the next 5 years. We are at the end of the 4th Action Programme, and the 5th is under discussion.

Over the past few years, a spectacular development in our democracies has taken place. We are going from a representative democracy to a participative democracy. A civil

dialogue, parallel to the social dialogue already in force in most of the member states is involving the citizens in the decision-making process and the monitoring of the governance of their society. Therefore, citizens get organised through their NGOs. The Charter of Fundamental Rights should include an article that requires NGOs working in fields of general interest to be consulted before decisions are made affecting them.

The European Women's Lobby is already often consulted on matters related to equality. It now insists to be given the necessary means to co-operate with NGOs from the applicant countries to prepare for the enlargement of the Union. It is essential that women fully participate in the civil dialogue. We should discuss together how to make sure that the accession of your country to the Union will restore some of your lost rights and allow us all to go forward to a more equal and more humane society.

Equality Matters, One View on Gender Issues

*Jean-Jacques Subrenat**

An invitation to speak at the ENUT conference in Tallinn was a welcome opportunity to review notes on gender issues, and to sift through some personal views on the subject. I wondered why there were hardly any men attending the conference. Whatever the reason

I thought it useful for myself to look at social reality, including gender, because every man is a son, and may be a companion, a husband, a father, a brother, an uncle. Whereas ignorance might explain violent and unfair behaviour in past centuries, today information is readily available on subjects such as the burden of divorce and repudiation, unequal access to education, or the lack of voting rights for women in some countries. Surely, I thought, it is not possible for man to insulate himself from the more tragic reality of the world on the grounds that some of it concerns mainly women.

During the recent UN Extraordinary General Assembly on Women's Rights (New York, 5-10 June, 2000), there was heated debate on the gender situation world wide. Although the formal discussions and the final declaration may not have met the expectations of a number of delegates, the meeting provided the opportunity to measure recent progress, as well as what remains to be achieved. It is worth noting, for instance, that the problem of excision was not even touched upon at the Mexico conference 25 years ago, but it was discussed at the Nairobi meeting in 1985, and much debated in Beijing in 1995. As a result of this slow evolution, mutilation by excision, which is still performed in the name of tradition, has been outlawed in a growing number of countries.

At the Extraordinary General Assembly in New York, delegates from European Union countries were among the most active. This is not just a coincidence. Gender issues are enshrined in the Treaties of the European Union: the principle of equality between women and men (articles 2 & 3), provisions for appropriate action against discrimination based on gender, racial or ethnic origin (art. 13), equal opportunity and equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation (art. 141). At the recent European Union Summit in Feira, Portugal, it was decided that one of the main priorities

of the French presidency will be to promote equality between men and women in the workplace.

The situation is quite different from one EU country to another. In the case of France, it was felt that the place of women in public life had to be supported by appropriate legislation because today women represent only 10% in the National Assembly, 22% in municipal councils, and only 8% are mayors. The law on the implementation of *parité* passed in May, 2000, will have a deep effect on political life in France: in local (more than 2500 citizens) and regional elections, lists will have to have as many women as men candidates. As for general elections, political parties will be under the obligation to present a fairly equal number of women and men candidates (with a margin of 2%), and failure to comply will carry financial sanctions (for example, a party presenting only 40% of women would face a reduction of 10% in public campaign funds).

What is the perspective for a country like Estonia, which is preparing for accession to the EU? It seems to me that the pursuit of ever higher educational and vocational goals, the steady growth of the economy, the gradual implementation of the national programme on integration in Estonian society, all point to a more balanced society. I am looking forward to the pursuit of the debate, to which ENUT has already contributed greatly.

* in this paper, the author expresses purely personal views.

The Question of *Parité* in the French Legal Context

Eric Millard, Toulouse University

The question of *parité* (parity) in the French legal context could be summarised as follows: although legal provisions in France guarantee equal rights for men and women, in reality they have not produced equality. The concept of *parité* may give the last opportunity to think about gender questions in the legacy left by the French Revolution. *Parité* can be given a narrow definition as a demand for legal provisions that give equal representation for men and women in the governmental political organs, such as the parliament and local assemblies. A broader definition would demand extension of equality into all organs of society, both public and private. The demand for equality takes place in a complex context and is related to three issues: the Universalist theory, the women's movements, and the reality for women in the French society.

The legal framework is a legacy of the French Revolution and its principles on sovereignty assert that the Nation is indivisible. In this context, the political organs, such as the parliament or other political assemblies, are not required to be representative of the citizens (gender, ethnicity, religion), even if the universal right to vote, of course, implies representation. Any attempt to change the law so that the elected officials would be representative, could be considered a violation of this legal principle.

The declaration of "droits de l'homme" (rights of man) assumes that every (wo)man has the same rights by birth. This Universalist idea is held, too, by some women's movements for whom the main legal fight is to obtain equal rights between men and

women, and/or to have affirmative action in order to realise such legal equalities. On the other hand, in opposition to the Universalist theory, some movements maintain that there is a difference between men and women, and that the difference could be codified by law. In practice, even if women have the same political rights in France, as they have since the end of WWII, in practice it is not reflected. Women are only 10% of the members of the Chamber of Deputies (the situation is better at local government level). Likewise, in spite of much progress in legal equality at the work place and in family law, reality shows a different picture (differences in wages, opportunities for job promotion).

Parité appears in this context as an affirmative action to promote real equality between men and women in the political spheres. This demand was born in feminist movements in the early nineties, uniting the Universalists and Essentialists, and it has served as a vehicle that joined women on an issue after years of demanding rights to abortion, or divorce. New constitutional and legal provisions were adopted between June 1999, and the beginning of 2000.

The provisions, passed after many debates, are disappointing. The debate was mainly technical, focusing only on legalisms. Most seem to agree that *parité* is an answer to specific problems resulting from different situations for men and women in French society. Legal provisions are limited to narrow *parité* (political body), and give many opportunities for political parties to reduce concrete effects.

Although disappointing, these provisions are welcome. The legal results are soft, but the psychological effect of this reform on the French, and their attitudes, cannot be ignored.

Tasks for Estonia after Ratification of the Social Charter

Siiri Oviir, Member of Parliament

The Sixth Annual Report of the United Nations Development Program focuses for the first time on women's issues and a painful truth emerges: not a single country in the world treats its women as well as its men. At the same time, there is no doubt that unprecedented progress has been made in this century toward achieving equal status in certain areas, principally in education, health, and public service.

There is no doubt that women themselves have fought, with their intelligence, perseverance and vision, for the right to participate in public life and to lead it. Still, only 5% of governmental ministers in the world are women, 10% of parliament members are women, and what is most depressing - women receive less than a third of all income.

What progress in Estonia? Inequality between men and women only increases. In the larger picture, not much significance can be attached to the fact that the last elections increased the share of women delegates in the parliament from 11% to 18%, and that their numbers also increased in local governmental organisation. The Estonian woman has not invested less into educating herself than has the Estonian man. Estonian women, on the whole, are more highly educated than men and one might assume that this is reflected in their lives. But instead, surveys show that women's dissatisfaction is on the rise, due to the unequal demands made on them at work and at home. Urbanisation has

reduced men's share of household chores, while women's remains. A 1995 survey showed that 94% of women with full-time jobs also did the family laundry alone, and 87% of them also did the housecleaning alone. Statistics also show that Estonia has become a paradise for absentee fathers. Mass media glorifies middle-aged men's romances with women half their age. Single mothers comprise almost half of all family units, and the biological father seldom is held accountable or responsible for his children. Reasons for that range from a woman's pride, poor law enforcement, or clever hiding of income by the father. One definite parameter illustrates gender discrimination against women in Estonia. According to Estonia's Statistics Office, between 1994 and 1998 there were no professions where women earned more than men. The data for 1998 shows: the average hourly wage for men working at high level jobs was 42 kroons and 75 cents, while for women in the same category it was 31 kroons and 43 cents. Top male specialists received 35 kroons 50 cents, while women specialists received 28 kroons and 53 cents. Technicians, middle level specialists and teachers: 30 kroons and 06 cents for men, and 21 kroons for women.

It should be noted that the above listed problems affect directly, or indirectly, Estonia's future membership in EU. Central to the policies of EU is the question of how to guarantee equal opportunities in all areas for all members of society, because EU intends to become not only a union of wealth and markets, but a European union for people - men and women. The concept is in the Amsterdam Treaty, adopted in 1997 and signed by the governments of all member countries. Unlike other similar treaties, the Amsterdam Treaty considers equal opportunity guarantees to be EU's direct task.

In the chapter "Human Development in Transitional Societies" of the 1997 Annual Report of the European Regional Bureau it is emphasised that the unequal distribution of "costs" for men and women that the market economies brought is becoming costly for the whole society, principally for three reasons: first, the newly adopted laws have ignored the interests and needs of half of the population, and therefore, the legitimacy of the new political system should be questioned; secondly, a large part of qualified individuals with potential to be of value have become utilised in an inefficient way, which can be considered a waste of society's material and spiritual resources; thirdly, the losses by one gender negatively affect social integration and stability, and they increase social stress, resulting in harm to all the spheres of activity. All of this applies to Estonia, also.

What to do? First, we have to recognise that the developmental path Estonia chooses will largely determine the policies on rights and divisions of responsibilities, paid and unpaid labour at work and home. If Estonia strives to become a civil society, the requirement is an active citizenry that understands its opportunities, responsibilities, and rights. The citizen understands that active participation in important decision-making is essential, be that citizen man or woman. It is the task of the society to legislate the conditions for citizen participation. For Estonia, it also means recognition of all European legislation, including the European Social Charter.

Wage Differentials between Women and Men

Petra Lantz de Bernardis, UN Resident Co-ordinator in Estonia

There is limited research on the theme of equal pay for equal work or equal pay for work of equal value in Estonia so I have decided to look at the somewhat broader perspective of wage differentials and how they compare with European Union averages.

Earlier today we discussed the Social Charter of the Council of Europe and that *Riigikogu* last year ratified the Charter without including the article on equal pay for equal work for men and women. The justification was: while we would like to we cannot afford to just yet. In this context I think it is important to point out that Estonia has already established equal pay for equal work as a national policy goal by its ratification of several international declarations and conventions including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Convention of Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women and the ILO convention of equal pay for equal work. In an article that appeared on the opinion page of *Postimees* earlier this week, Ms. Heljo Pikhof also pointed out that the principles of equal pay for equal work are already accepted policies in Estonia, both in the constitution itself which prohibits discrimination because of gender, and in the law of salaries.

As pointed out by Marju Lauristin in her introduction to the UN sponsored publication "Towards a Balanced Society" released earlier this year, "there are still many traces of the traditional patriarchal society in the attitude to the role of women, and the situation at home and at work." A phrase that I have heard is: "we do not have any gender problems or gender inequality in Estonia, we do not even have separate words for he and she in our language". While I realise that equality was a word that rung very false during the period of Soviet occupation, it would appear unfortunate if this should remain a reason to avoid adopting a more modern European gender perspective today.

Different studies show that the average wages of women constitute between 63-65% of the average wages of men in Estonia. This male-female wage ratio is similar to the one noted in many European countries in the 1970s. The trend in most EU countries and developed nations is that the wage gap between men and women is decreasing. This trend has by no means been a natural evolution. It is the result of well-defined policy measures such as quota systems for decision-making positions; breaking of traditional gender patterns with regard to educational choices and occupational sectors, e.g. women work in healthcare and men are managing directors; changed family roles where men play a more active part in care and upbringing of children.

Existing studies show that the gap between average female and male wages has actually increased over the last few years. Rein Vöörman reports in the earlier mentioned UN publication that while women's average wages in 1992 constituted 80% of men's (that is the same as the current EU average), this ratio had decreased to 72% in 1997. Anu Narusk and Leeni Hansson pointed at the same overall trends in their publication "Life in Estonia", which noted that women's share of male average salaries decreased from 77% in 1993 to 65% in 1998. A recent study published by the Finnish Ministry of Labour noted that the gender wage-gap is considerably larger in Estonia than in Latvia and Lithuania, particularly so in new enterprises.

While this information is important in itself since it gives an indication of women's economic opportunities and status it tells us very little about the situation with regard to equal pay for equal work or work of equal value. EU member countries, especially the Nordic, have a long tradition in research and studies on male-female wage differentials. Occupational gender segregation, educational differences, absence from the work force in connection with child-birth, and shorter working hours have all been identified as important factors explaining women's lower wages. According to a sociological study "Lives of Generations" women receive lower wages than men even if their education and qualifications are the same. One important explanation for this, according to Rein Vöörman, is the unequal treatment of women as illustrated by the existing occupational gender segregation in Estonia. Vöörman makes a distinction between horizontal and vertical segregation. Women are over-employed in certain areas of activity (so called horizontal segregation) which are not considered prestigious and/or where wages are below average, teachers being an example of the latter. In addition, within specific areas of activity men hold the majority of higher positions and power with resulting higher wages (and perks).

To conclude and briefly sum-up, let me say that Estonia, just like all other countries in Europe (and in the world) has a male-female wage-gap. Since Estonia is certainly not known for lack or want of own ideas, I am convinced that a necessary political commitment something similar to the Tiger Leap could put the country on an EU fast-track with regard to improved gender equality, including narrowing of the male-female wage gap. We should not forget that economic independence in many ways is a foundation for the equality of women and men.

Equal Wages

Janek Laidvee, Law student at Tartu University

I. Origins at the EU

a. The Treaty of Rome.

The requirement to pay equal wages for equal work went into effect in a member states after the adoption of the Treaty of Rome (1957). The Preamble to the founding treaty of the Union contains the ideal of improving the quality of life for its people, and this is taken for granted in contemporary Europe. When negotiations for the EU agreement took place, two opposite concepts existed on social policies and the creation of a common market. The French opinion was that the harmonisation of the "social costs" of production is essential in order for business to have an honest and equal base, after barriers are removed to the free movement of persons and capital. The Germans proffered that the harmonisation of indirect or social costs is an inescapable byproduct of a common market. At the end, compromise was achieved and that is the reason why two different views are in the social policy articles of the founding treaty of the EU.

b. Equal pay directive.

The purpose of the directive was to harmonise the laws of the member states. At that time it was not yet clear whether Article 119 (equal pay for men and women) can be applied in a member state, but it was clear that an individual could turn to the courts, using the directive. The directive's Paragraph 1 states that Article 119 and the directive include the subject of work of equal value. In the event that job classification is used for determining a wage, the classification cannot have any gender discrimination. Likewise, all work agreements that are in conflict with the equal treatment principle have to be cancelled.

c. The Amsterdam Treaty.

The role of the social policies changes significantly. They are given a dominant role and social rights are mentioned already in the Preamble to the treaty. Advancement of equal rights between men and women is regarded as an obligation. The aim is to eliminate inequality and to promote equal rights. The former Article 119, mentioned above, becomes Article 141 in the treaty.

II. The Principle of Equal Pay in Estonian Law.

Paragraph 5 of the Wage Statute prohibits the increasing or lowering of wage because of gender, nationality, race, language, social standing, previous activity, religious, political or other ideological persuasion, or opinion on military service. Reduction in wage is prohibited because of a family situation, familial obligations, membership in a citizen organisation, or for representing workers' or employers' interests. Problems:

- 1)** The paragraph applies to situations where one is already working, and it does not prevent the determination of the wage, based on gender, at the time one is being considered for employment.
- 2)** It is unclear whether the law is applicable in cases of equal work and different work that is assessed as being equal.
- 3)** Legal protection. It is unclear what legal action a person can take; sanctions are lacking.
- 4)** Protection of the complainant against retaliation by the employer is lacking.

III. Equal work and different work assessed as being equal.

a) equal work

b) work deemed to have equal quality

c) direct discrimination. Unequal treatment of men and women at the workplace, due to gender distinctions

d) indirect discrimination. A seemingly neutral statute, norm, or criterion that becomes discriminatory when one gender benefits from it more than the other one.

IV. Different theories that explain unequal wages between men and women.

a) The human capital theory as neoclassical theory. Assumption is that on the free market prices and wages are always determined by supply and demand. The wage reflects the value of the product that a worker produces in a given amount of time. Hence, different wages are determined by the productivity of the worker, and by different market prices of the products. Neoclassical theorists argue that women's work is interrupted by familial obligations, a shorter time on the labour market, and less work experience, resulting in reduced human capital value.

b) Labour market segmentation theories. These theorists argue that division of labour cannot be explained only by economic factors, but also by social, institutional and political conditions. Labour divides into segments governed by differences in stability of employment, conditions of employment, career opportunities and eligibility requirements, and also by wages.

c) The concept of women's capacity to work. This concept suggests that women's social and gender-specific roles have to be included in the explanations concerned with the occurrence of discrimination at the workplace. It is true that private, familial plans and the actual life situation determine decisions and opportunities for work much more in cases of women than men. Ostner (1978) and Beck-Gernsheim (1976) speak of historic social determinants, "feminine work capacity directed toward reproduction." Beck-Gernsheim argues that women have gender specific capacities and these biological gender differences are reflected in their occupation/career choices.

Women's orientation toward reproduction is closely tied to certain lack of interest in inherent career demands (competitiveness, initiative, prestige). The salient characteristic, instead, is the carrying out of certain functions. For that reason women are unwilling, to a certain extent, to place career interests before fulfilling of functions, and, therefore, are incapable of using them to their own advantage.

The deficiency of interest in a career for these women is due to the traditional lack of compensation for reproductive work. A person that is used to receiving almost nothing for her work (as, for example, a woman at home), is happy when she is paid anything. The lack of value attached to homemaking is, therefore, the reason behind the low wage for a woman at the workplace.

Gender Equality and the Burden of Proof

Gunilla Edelstam, Söderströms högskola

In most European countries there are laws about gender equality. Such laws can be found in the constitution of a country, or in the labour codes, or in a special gender equality law. For countries belonging in the European Union (EU), there are binding EU laws concerning gender equality. Also, European Council (EC) treaties and EC directives stipulate equal pay for equal work. Also, equal access to employment, vocational training, promotion and working conditions are guaranteed. The aim is to eliminate all discrimination in the workplace.

Promotion of gender equality is a very important part of EU social policy. It was introduced already in the basic EU treaty, the 1957 Treaty of Rome, to serve an economic purpose: "to correct or eliminate the effect of specific distortions, which advantage or disadvantage certain branches of activity". Later, it was recognised by the EU Court as a fundamental right, which serves a social as well as an economic function.

The national courts of the EU member countries are obliged to apply these EU gender equality laws in discrimination cases. However, when a discrimination case is taken to court and a woman claims damages, it can be difficult for her to prove that she has been discriminated against. This is true especially in cases of unequal treatment. The employer will, of course, say that he has misunderstood the situation. In reality, the law might then have very little effect.

The difficulties for the employee to prove discrimination and the clear aim of the EU to carry the gender equality through have led to an EU law which has the force of a directive. According to this directive (97/80) "it shall be for the respondent, i.e. the employer, to prove that there has been no breach of the principle of equal treatment".

A woman, who considers herself wronged, must present facts to the court from which it may be presumed that there has been discrimination, but after that the burden of proof is on the employer. He has to show that he has not broken the principle of equal treatment. If he cannot show this, he has to pay damages to the employee.

This directive goes into effect on January 1, 2001, in every EU member state.

Paternal leave - a strategy towards equal opportunities for both women and men

Peter Andersen Hove, Danish Equal Status Council

Traditionally the fight for equal opportunities between women and men has been women's fight against men. That way of thinking makes it logical to say, that if women shall be equal with men, women must "take" something from the men. Among traditionalist feminist in Denmark (and in other countries), it is still a normal way of thinking.

I do not like that way of thinking. Achieving equal opportunities is not a winner and loser game, it is a win-win game. And if it does not succeed, it is a loser game for both women and men.

But how can paternal leave be a strategy towards equal opportunities for both women and men?

For the last 50 years, men have traditionally been working outside the home, while women have been working at home. This way of living has caused men to dominate the labour market, while the roles at home, are dominated by women. It gives men benefits on the labour market, and it gives women benefits at home. But in reality it is more correct to say, that it gives women problems on the labour market, and men problems at home.

In Denmark women work almost as much full-time as do men. But it is still mainly the woman that takes care of the children and does the housework. As a result of this, men get better jobs and better salaries than women do, because women are not able to work as much as men do. So, it is very natural that men get better jobs and better salaries. Men and women are competing with each other on the labour market on unequal terms. On the other hand, women are also competing with the men at home on unequal terms. Men do not have the same possibilities of taking care of children as women have. This is partly because of the different expectations towards women and men on the labour market. But it is also because women have the power at home.

My vision is to change those patterns, and give women and men the same opportunities on the labour market as well as at home. The tool is paternal leave. If men begin to use paternal leave, they will become just as "bad risks" at work as women have been for many years. And women will be able to focus as much on work as do men, if men begin to do their share of childcare and housework.

I am very much aware that these things do not happen overnight. I am also aware that many people will have to rethink the way they look at, and expect from, women and men. Parental leave does not mean that we can forget all the other work that is being done in order to achieve equal opportunities for women and men. But I am very sure that men are, in many ways, the keys to a society where people have the same opportunities, regardless of sex. We have not achieved my vision in Denmark yet. Actually, I must admit that we are very far from the goal. But we have a goal on the horizon, and we have started a process towards that goal.

Women's Opportunities in the Labour Market

Reet Laja, ENUT Board Member

Employment policies and the advancement of equal opportunities in EU.

Employment policies became one of EU's most important concerns only in 1992 when the EU treaty was signed. The reason behind it was the idea of a European domestic market, that included the creation of the so-called European social space. The second reason for its importance is the increasing numbers of unemployed, which reached already 12% of eligible workers in 1995 (Symes 1995).

The Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 is another important document concerning employment policies, as is its companion founding treaty, the European Economic Union, which contains a chapter on employment. At the November, 1997, Luxembourg summit conference, EU member countries' leaders adopted employment policies, which serve as the basis for forming employment policies in member countries for the immediate future. The basic direction is following:

* enlargement of the labour market in order to prevent unemployment

*new business development needs adoption of new business policies that facilitate the creation of new jobs, especially in the areas of service and high tech industries

*support for adjustments required of businesses and workers

*for the strengthening of equal opportunity policies, the addition of articles that call for inclusion of women, the long-term unemployed and the handicapped.

Reorganisation of the labour market can bring two kinds of results. Shortening of work hours can cause women to seek employment more and more in order to maintain the necessary level of income for the family. Also, during economic recession, women are more likely than men to be laid-off from work, or they are forced to accept temporary jobs.

In the interest of guaranteeing equal opportunity, focus has been placed on three basic areas – gender desegregation in the labour market and appreciation of women's work, combining of work and family life, and inclusion of women in the decision making processes. Gender equality is not only a requirement, but also a necessity for a flourishing European economy ("Equal Opportunity is the Future" Congress in Brussels, September, 1998).

Equal opportunities for men and women in the Estonian labour market. With a view of ensuring equal opportunities in the labour market, the following **measures** shall be taken:

Informing stakeholders about problems related to equal treatment of men and women in the labour market. Public awareness of such problems shall be raised by various media channels, organising workshops, seminars and training events on inequality of men and women in the labour market, related problems and possibilities to alleviate or resolve these problems.

Enhancement of indicators of national statistics, including administrative statistics, methods, analysis and forms of presentation of data collection. Research on the situation of men and women on the labour market shall be organised.

Implementation of the principle of equal opportunities of women and men in employment. The law on equal opportunities and implementation and supervisory mechanisms of equality legislation shall be developed. Existing legislation shall be harmonised with internationally acknowledged gender equality principles and goals.

Enhance the access of women to employment. A special training programme will be developed for integrating into labour market persons who have been out of employment for taking care of children, disabled or elderly family members. In the process of vocational counselling women will be motivated to work on non-traditional jobs.

Development of women's business opportunities. Access shall be provided to business information, training, business support services and women's business information through employment offices and business centres.

Merger of family obligations with work duties. The system of social services for increasing availability of flexible child care, home nursing services for the elderly, and the disabled shall be developed further. Provision of such services is one opportunity to

develop a small business. Awareness shall be raised through the media channels on the possibilities to use child leave and to achieve a better balance of home chores.

Indicators for measuring results. Figures for employment for men and women, figures for unemployment, employment figures in the different business sectors, participation in schooling and training, share by women in leading positions of employment, numbers of fathers using child care time off from work.

How to measure results. Evaluating the results of guaranteed equal opportunities in the labour market has been a rather mechanical process in the EU countries, also. Data has been compared without going into substance and causes. Validity of comparative measuring methods is difficult to establish, especially in the area of gender equality, because results are influenced by national characteristics and international trend. It is difficult to apply other countries' experiences and practices, or to adopt their methods, in one's state structures, institutions and social preferences because of the differences. Different countries have different priorities and problems, and context cannot be compared. For these reasons, it is advisable to reflect thoroughly whenever one measures accomplishments in the area of equal opportunity. Results have to be evaluated, however, and that is one of our goals in which women's organisations can make a contribution.

Constructing Family life and Parenthood after Divorce - the Case of Estonia

Ingegerd Municio-Larsson, Södertörns högskola

How is family life and parenthood regarded after divorce? What stories do divorced women and men tell about their marriage, and how do they arrange their relationship after divorce? Do men, as fathers, define their parental duties in the same way as do women, as mothers, after family break-up? And, in comparison to other countries, does Estonia differ in these respects?

According to interviews conducted on my behalf by Estonian social scientists Leeni Hansson and Uno Saar, there is something special about Estonian parents, their stories of family life and their way of constructing parenthood after divorce. On the other hand, we will also find similarities when Estonia is compared to the three other countries - England, Spain and Sweden - covered in the study on divorce. As one male interviewee said, when referring to the time before the divorce, "We were playing a happy family, but real life is absolutely different."

One problem told by all is the shortage of housing. This problem creates relations of dependency on a wide circle of kin. Depending on whether their place was acquired through her relatives, or his, one was left with a feeling of indebtedness and insecurity as to her/his right to stay there.

Another family stress factor in Estonia was the unstable situation with regard to work opportunities. There are many stories about looking for work and accepting it wherever one can find it. The current economic situation forces parents to have income earning as their first priority, and their relationships with their children become secondary.

Economic insecurity is unique to Estonia. Nothing comparable is reported in the other countries. Sweden offers a very stable alternative, both as regards benefits and work, while England and Spain are somewhere in between. The different benefits offered to low income families in England constitute a secure income, but an income at a low level. In Spain, very little public assistance is available, but the labour market generally offers work opportunities.

In the interviews, specific questions were asked about assistance or direct support from officials, either state or municipal. In this respect, Estonia offers, again, an extreme example. The women and men interviewed generally did not expect any public assistance. Neither had they turned to non-governmental sources for assistance when trying to solve the problems involved with divorce. Furthermore, they did not expect this kind of assistance.

Minimum court involvement in divorce seems to be the way things are handled in Estonia, but not in England and Spain. Thus, the interviewed women and men having to resort to the divorce court are exceptions in Estonia and in Sweden. In the other two countries, separation, divorce and alimony issues are always decided in court, and lawyers are regularly involved in these processes. In England, applications are submitted to official agencies, similar to the ones in Sweden, in order to receive whatever benefits are offered to one-parent families, of which many fall into the low income category.

Spain and Estonia have similarities in their lack of national assistance. Such assistance is constantly being demanded in Spain by associations of separated mothers and fathers. In Estonia, most women and men interviewed do not protest against the lack of such assistance. Instead, they repeated in the interviews that it is the duty of each family to support their children.

In addition, shortage of day-care service and supervision of children after school require constantly organising and scheduling of grandparents and close kin, sometimes even neighbours, to look after the children. This demanding activity gives the impression that children constitute for their parents a problem to be solved rather than a source of joy. After divorce, this problem is left to the mother, her grandparents and kin. Barter is not mentioned.

The divorced women see their ex-husbands also as ex-fathers. Consequently, they do not take measures to force their ex-husbands to pay alimony with regularity. Neither do they want the child to keep close contact with his father. This seems to be accepted by the ex-partners. Those who fight for visiting rights seem to be an exception. One of these ex-fathers defined the situation in the following way: "My ex-wife and her new partner, that is the family of my son. My new partner and I are the family of her son. If I insist on seeing my son, he might not accept his stepfather as the new father."

This differs very much from the way father and child relationships are described in the other countries, where the ideal of continued relations is pictured, although this ideal is often difficult to achieve.

Women and Integration in Estonia

Katrin Saks, Estonia's Minister of Ethnic Affairs

Looking at changes that have occurred in Estonia in recent years, it can be stated that one of the positive developments has been in people's attitudes toward cultural and linguistic differences. Looking closer at the media, it is apparent that more and more attention is paid to the need to strengthen ties between people of different origins, that Estonia is home to people of more than 100 ethnic backgrounds who have small or large problems in adjusting to the conditions here.

The recent campaign by the Integration Agency, "Many wonderful people", was successful. Even if the posters - for instance "Do you know Kristi and Nastya?" - did not appeal to you personally, the comments and good-natured criticism are an indication that the campaign made an impact. The aim was to make people think about these things, to be touched personally by making us think about the positive experiences we have had with people of different nationalities, and, thus, help us to think of Estonia's multinational character today not as a problem, but as an opportunity. Nobody looked with malice at the message of these posters. On the whole, the reaction was positive and friendly. Every one of us has a role in encouraging positive attitudes.

On March 14, the Government of the Republic approved the national program, "Integration in the Estonian Society 2000-2007", which will become an integral part of the activities of the national and local governments, and non-governmental organisations. It is the first time in Estonia that such a broad, yet explicit, national plan of activity in the interest of integration in Estonia has been worked out. Although the emphasis is on language as a means of communication, it is clear that progress in integration depends on legal, political, and socio-economic developments on the integration landscape. For that reason, it is necessary to tie the activities of the national program with the developmental activities of the social, economic and regional programs already in effect. Although the national program is not directly involved with legislation, possibilities in this area can be seen. In addition to a population with a common heritage, Estonia has linguistically and culturally diverse peoples. We recognise our common ties as well as those that are different, and this is a source of stability and connectedness. For that reason we talk about integration of the Estonian society. In other words, integration in Estonia means unifying of the society, on one hand, and the preservation of ethnic differences, on the other. It is essential for the integration process to have two parts: Estonians and non-Estonians have to participate equally in the society's unifying process.

The national program was designed with input from the public. After presenting the draft program for public discussion in January of this year, it received many comments. In addition to the comments from the ministries, proposals were made by several factions in the parliament, the President's Roundtable, numerous county and local governments, specialists from the Tartu University to the Tallinn Pedagogical University, the Estonian Language Institute and the Jaan Tõnisson Institute. Cultural societies and minority representatives actively participated in the work of special commissions and public discussions. Individuals and establishments, including kindergarten directors and students, sent proposals via letters and e-mail. The final document was considerably larger than the original one, and items can always be added to it.

What has been the women's role in the integration of Estonia's society, and what should it be in the future? Looking at the practice that has been followed to date, we already have the answer. Considering how many women are involved in the activities of the different non-profit organisations and agencies on the integration landscape, it is difficult to overestimate women's role. Women have organised children's language camps, Estonian farm life for Russian children, and many other different integration projects. Statistics tell the story: Integration Agency funded projects in 1998-1999 amount to 120. Women have headed 74 of them. In addition to the language camps and host families, these include Estonian and Russian speaking women's joint projects, working with problem Russian youth, organising events for children of different nationalities.

What has been so surprising about these projects is the fact that new and interesting ideas are born at these projects. The word "integration" by itself is too abstract, and often discourages people from becoming involved. But the projects and activities involving people in different events and programs have brought together people from different groups more than long newspaper articles and state documents could have ever done. In this respect, women's role is best revealed, because women prefer concrete activities and are not afraid to put their hands to the task, if needed. I do not mean to underestimate the value of men's projects, but let's face it, social projects by women are simply more successful. We have a more sensitive social nerve. Let's use it to our advantage and apply it to the benefit of a stable and integrated Estonia.

And one more thing that touches women. Presently, the Phare language program for adults is in place, and successful graduates get half of their school payment refunded. Incidentally, we hope that this year at least 6000 people will pass exams successfully. Early indicators are that women have more initiative in this area, also.

In Estonia, women have a large role as the transmitter of national identity, language and culture. That is true, also, for many other nationalities. I have noticed that women are the leaders of many national-cultural societies and the keepers of cultural traditions. Only recently, I saw that again at an observance of the Estonian Language Day.

Dear women, you have cause to be proud of your role in Estonia's complicated integration process.

A Synopsis of the Conference

Reet Laja, ENUT Board Member

The participants considered the conference a success in every way. Its title, lectures and workshops were well chosen. In the opinion of women, greater knowledge about EU and the European Social Charter was valuable. The socio-economic situation in Estonia became more transparent for the women's organisations and the network gave new experiences for women to work together. Upon returning home, the participants were asked to share with others the information they had obtained. The conference's petition for ratification of the Social Charter to the Government and the members of Parliament was considered important.

It was considered important to establish an organisation that will advance women's interests in public policy. The need for constantly new information on the EU, wages, quota systems, and professional standards was acknowledged. The goal for each woman is to know about equal opportunity and the EU. Opinions were expressed that Estonian women's movement must become a stronger and more united network. Women's and men's roundtables should encourage co-operation. Then, more dialogue on equal opportunity will occur between men and women at conferences. Greater effort must be placed in the future on working with the media, so that their understanding of the problems will be better.

The women's organisations look forward to new information rich meetings.

ENUT Gave me Good Running Shoes

Liisa Pakosta, Vice Mayor of Tallinn

It is amazing how much support the simple phrase, "It's the same for others", can give a tender soul. No matter what the circumstances, women entering politics need empowerment and the experiences of fellow travellers. No one doubts that women need effective hints in order to succeed in politics. The training I received from ENUT helped me to cope, and herewith I will list some practical lessons:

- * women are attacked always more, because they are easier targets and often too weak an opponent. Hence, one must always analyse soberly: did I do something wrong or was the attack unwarranted.
- * men are nice colleagues, but in the achievement of their interests they are willing to use body language, as shown by the former Norwegian parliamentarian Beret Ås. Already the recognition and observance of such body language have given me many amusing moments, rather than caused me anguish.
- * women are portrayed in the press as one-dimensional beings and the knowledge that this does not happen only with me has preserved my sense of balance.
- * women are emotional and therein lies their strength, especially when insistence on results and clear programs are added. Cold figures in an emotional context acquire human qualities.
- * do not fear to ask for support from other women, whether they are in the opposition or in the coalition. Many interests are shared and the fact that politics are dominated by males make it necessary for women to be united. Whether social policy, public transportation, or toys for a kindergarten - there is not much politics in it and needs are too great to ignore any potential partner.
- * do not hesitate to ask for advice or help. Stronger policies are derived from consultation, others' opinions, and discussions. This is emotionally intelligent politics!

I encourage everyone to participate in the training of women - the benefits are greater than an observer can see. Without the preparation, I probably would not have had the courage to enter politics. I hope that the number of courageous women will constantly increase!

Other Events

March 23-24: ENUT organised the conference "Estonian Women as Future Citizens in EU".

April 13: ENUT Roundtable on "Prostitution", led by Juri Kalikov.

May 2: Carol Kahn, Clinical Sexologist and a founder of the Women's Resource Center in Modesto, California, gave a lecture at ENUT on "Sex Every Night? Who Wants it?"

May 3: ENUT Roundtable on "Everything You Want to Know But Were Afraid to Ask", led by Sexologist Carol Kahn.

May 5: Seminar "Estonian and Finnish Women in the Period of Dramatic Changes" in Helsinki, *Tieteiden talo*. Seminar was organised by the Estonian Institute in Helsinki and ENUT.

May 9: Professor Gunilla Edelstam, Södertörns høgskola, Stockholm, gave a lecture on "The Burden of Proof According to EU Regulations Concerning Equality Questions" and Senior Researcher Ingegerd Municio, Söderstörns høgskola, lectured on "Constructing Parenthood after Divorce – the Case of Estonia".

June 10: Ilvi Cannon, Board Member of ENUT, spoke at the Põlva Women's Union conference. The topic was "Estonian Women's organisations".

June 21-23: Seminar on "The Initiative for a Democratic Order and Equal Rights" was held at the Tallinn Pedagogical University. This is the first in a series of seminars on gender sensitivity in the classroom for Estonian teachers.

Coming Events

Seminars devoted to the topic "The Initiative for a Democratic Order and Equal Rights" will continue in the fall. The seminars are sponsored by ENUT, Estonia's Ministry of Education, and the Foreign Ministry of the Kingdom of Norway. The seminars teach teachers and administrators on how to achieve gender sensitivity in the classroom.

A November men's studies seminar, designed for researchers, and representatives of men's civic and business organisations, is on the calendar. About 80 participants are anticipated to this two-day seminar.

A seminar on minorities is planned for the end of September or October. Presently, the title under consideration is "Equal opportunity questions in integration policies". Women in integration policies, problems related to gender, citizenship and employment are some of the subjects that would be addressed. The realisation depends on funding. The one-day

Fall lectures will include Valve Kirsipuu's observations on the UN Women's Status Report, and a presentation by Ronit Ben-Dor, Israeli Charge d'affaires in Estonia, on the Israeli women's situation.

The first issue of a women's studies journal in Estonia will appear in October. The journal will introduce women's studies and feminism. The articles will address feminism in Eastern Europe, sexual violence in women's autobiographies and life stories, the works of artists Karin Luts and Kaja Kärner, and changes in work and family values. Among the authors are Suzanne Lie, Tiina Kirss, Toril Moi, Katrin Kivimaa, Maarika Tiggemann, Mirjam Hinrikus, Leena Kurvet-Käosaar, Lynda Lange, the late Anu Narusk, Eda Sepp, Leeni Hansson, ja Virve-Ines Laidmäe. The journal will include, also, some book reviews.