

**Project:      Development and Implementation of Strategies for the Foundation and Optimisation of Local Instances of Gender Equality**



***Report***

**International Seminar: 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> of January 2008  
Brixen, South Tyrol, Italy**

Partners of the Project Group:

Base –Frente Unitaria de trabalhadores / Portugal

Arbeitnehmer-Zentrum Königswinter (AZK) / Germany

Lietuvos Darbo Federacija (LDF) / Lithuania

Centro Social de Trabajadores (C.S.T.) / Spain

Arbeiter-, Freizeit- und Bildungsverein (AFB) / Italy (South Tyrol)

Democratic Trade Union Confederation of Romania (CSDR) / Romania

Fondazione Luigi Clerici (FLC) / Italy

Koepel Van Christelijke Werknemersorganisaties (ACW) / Belgium



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## 1) Context of the seminar

Gender equality has been one of the principles of the European Union ever since the foundation of the European Economic Community in 1957, and it is regulated in the treaties governing the union. The "Development and Implementation of Strategies for the Foundation and Optimisation of Local Instances of Gender Equality" project, which is sponsored by the European Commission, aims to promote gender equality, especially with respect to the gender pay gap, the participation of women in the labour market or in professional training, their participation in the decision-making processes, as well as the compatibility of professional and family life for both men and women.

The goal of the project is to raise awareness about the importance of gender equality, co-existence, and educational structures and instances. The European approaches in questions of employment and gender equality, as well as local initiatives ought to be sponsored, and an impetus should be given to the promotion of the European Employment Strategy.

At the beginning of the project, an assessment was made of the situation regarding gender equality on a local level, and an analysis was made of the conditions which prevail at that particular level, to help develop strategies for effective measures and actions. After the evaluation of the different scenarios, possible solutions and measures were discussed, and the various activities of the project partners from the participating countries were coordinated.

The project wants to reach social agents, in particular schools, kindergartens, companies, and those who are active on a municipal level and in the context of social dialogue.

## 2) Content of the seminar:

### Current situation of the project.

At the beginning of the seminar, Heidi Rabensteiner, the project manager and director of AFB, welcomed the participants to the seminar. She said the event represented the successful conclusion of the project, which was to be announced in a press conference the next day. She referred to the extensive amount of documents and brochures which had been made available to the participants of the seminar, after which the day's agenda was discussed, detailing the planned activities.

Maria Rainer Federspiel, the project coordinator of AFB gave a short summary of the stages of the project so far, followed by words of the general secretary of EZA, Roswitha Gottbehüt, who welcomed the participants on behalf of her organisation. She insisted on the important role of Brixen in the context of gender equality and the effects it had on politics and society in South Tyrol.

The special role of the experts and the importance of the work that had been done on a local level was highlighted. Even in the year 2008, gender equality will play a major

role in the work of EZA, and continuity will be guaranteed with the help of another project which they will coordinate. Ms Gottbehüt thanked all participants who had contributed to this project.

Grit Terborg gave a quick overview of the steps which have been taken so far and the goals which have been achieved. Among those are the products of the project such as the folders available in eight languages with suggestions for seminars, which have been elaborated for three different target groups, and which are currently print and will be sent to the partner organisations as soon as they are available.

In February, the final report for the European Commission will be elaborated. Ms Terborg placed emphasis on the fact that ideas for further projects and project applications still can and should be sent to EZA in the future.

Carmen Ionescu could not attend the seminar due to illness but sent her best wishes. Francisco Rivas Gómez and Sabine Möller also sent their warmest regards to the participants.

### **Evaluation of the overall project**

Zsuzsanna Detrich presented the evaluation of the overall project, one of the aims of which was to present data which could help future projects. In her presentation, Ms Detrich focused in part on the conclusions which had been drawn from the previous project in Elewjit.

During the first planning phase of the project, it became clear that the communication between the different partners and the experts was one of the most important aspects, and that materials elaborated at the seminars should be sent within the established deadlines. The work groups should make an effort to ensure that all the participants are equally involved.

The conference in Portimão represented a new element in the course of the project. The results of the entire conference, the elaborated documents which were presented, as well as the work which was accomplished received positive feedback.

However, the social agents could have been more deeply involved in the preparation of the conference, and some of the presentations could have been less extensive.

Grit Terborg highlighted the fact that the negative points which were uncovered during the evaluation will be useful for other projects.

The consultant explained how personal meetings and the questionnaires which she had developed for the evaluation had been used to obtain the feedback.

The participants were given the opportunity to present their own points of view and suggestions. Here are some examples:

- Vincenzina Zanetti suggested that the problem of the language barrier could be overcome by deciding for a standard language. When choosing the ex-

perts, this should be taken into account, and only those should be chosen who are able to speak it.

- Jesus Casado mentioned that the individual activities of the partners on the local level and their development should be included in the evaluation.
- Roswitha Gottbehüt brought the attention to the European level, referring to the differences between the situations in different countries, because of which it is not surprising, in her opinion, to experience initial problems.
- Maria Baptista Lourenço emphasized that her organisation was able to make new contacts with social agents at the conference, which, together with the publication of the declaration, helped to provide the larger public with access to information regarding gender equality.
- Nisa Punnamparabil-Wolf stressed the fact that each seminar gave the host country the opportunity to present its own distinct situation. Because of the different scenarios each country faces, the Declaration of Portimão, which was signed by all the participating organisations and which declared a common goal for all, represented a great step forward. It remains to be seen how the results can be applied to the individual countries.
- Danguole Boguseviciene pointed out that projects like these should be given priority, and that the collected data will be very useful in this context.

Zsuzsanna Detrich concluded that the results of the project have taken on a special role, though the personal learning process of the participants could have received greater attention. She also suggested that the partners should evaluate their future work at a local level.

### **Development and finalization of the action plan**

It was suggested that all the proposals for actions plans should be summarized on two pages, and ought to be integrated in the end product, the work folder for the social agents.

The action plan, which is not oriented around specific dates but indicates time frames, should serve as a guideline for social agents to ensure that it can be used at any time in the future. The individual action plans which have already been elaborated by the partners should continue to be valid and ought to be passed on to the European Commission.

The action plans which had been elaborated so far were summarized during the course of the seminar, in order to produce a consistent document ready for printing and general distribution.

To this end, the action plans of the individual organisations, which were partly available in the folders at the seminar, were analysed and questions were answered. The action plans of CST and of BASE-FUT were presented personally by their representatives and incorporated into the document during the group session. The participants agreed that the following categories should be established for the action plans:

Goals	Action	Target Group	Partner	Time Frame
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Using the example of Spain, one line of the action plan was prepared jointly. The participants were divided into two groups, in which the plan was finalized and the accompanying explanatory texts were formulated. After the work was accomplished, the groups presented their results to each other.

For the sake of completeness, press reports which were published after the seminar should be sent to the EZA office, in order to include them in the final report. The Declaration of Portimão as well as other project material was sent to the member centres and interested people. All of the products will be published on the EZA homepage in the available languages.

### **Statement of intent of the partners aiming to ensure sustainability**

All partners have committed themselves to implement their own detailed action plan and time lines. Differences in structure and setting in the participating countries will lead to diverging time frames, though they will not result in qualitative issues.

## **Products**

The folders, cards and brochures are currently in print. The elaboration of the product as a whole was laborious and it was difficult to find a print shop. This circumstance, the time needed for the necessary corrections as well as delays in the invoicing process are the reason why the product is not yet available. The documents will probably be handed out to the partners at the end of February.

The material which was elaborated for and used in the work folders, such as the Power Point presentations of all the educational concepts, will be made available to the partners in digital form, so that they can be distributed on their homepages. The pending accounts of the partners should be sent to the EZA office as soon as possible. The corresponding parameters for the funding should be respected and questions regarding the issue should be discussed at the beginning. The final report ought to be finalized shortly after Easter and sent on to the European Commission.

## **Organisational matters and comments**

The participants voiced their desire to engage in other projects focusing on gender equality. EZA is constantly looking for project offers that might fit in with their current network of partner organisations. The programs of the European Commission are especially interested in European networks, who will keep receiving their support in the future. It is important, therefore, to understand what the agenda of the European Commission is. A possible candidate might be the “2010 as the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion“ project.

## **Homework**

The translation of the shared action plans into Dutch, Lithuanian and Romanian should be done in the near future and the partners were asked to find suitable candidates for the job. The introduction which was written today also still has to be translated into the different languages. It would be appreciated if this could be done by the respective organisations, since they are familiar with the topic and the pertinent vocabulary of the subject matter. The text will be sent to the partners in English or in German.

## **Final round**

At the end, Grit Terborg expressed her gratitude to all the participants of the project for the work accomplished, the AFB for the successful organisation of the seminar, and the interpreters for their patience and hard work.

Artur Kalnins ([kalnins@eza.org](mailto:kalnins@eza.org)) and the other already familiar members of the staff will be available for any questions regarding project development.

In the final round of the seminar the participants gave positive feedback regarding the achievements of the seminar, and expressed how much they appreciated the fact

that they were able to make new contacts. The presence of participants from different backgrounds allowed partners to see things from another perspective and to gain insight into the experiences of other countries. The project turned out to be very process, result and future-oriented, and the insights that were made will not only be useful for this project but also for future projects in which the respective organisations will engage.