

# Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women (H)

The role of institutional mechanisms or national machineries, as a way to promote the status of women, acquired international relevance during the World Conference<sup>1</sup> on the International Women's Year, held in Mexico in 1975, which called for their establishment. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for Equality, Development and Peace (BPfA) 1995<sup>2</sup> not only identified institutional mechanisms for advancement of women as one of the 12 critical areas of concern but also as the crucial area to ensure developments in the other 11 areas.

According to BPfA 1995<sup>3</sup>, national machineries for the advancement of women have been established in general in all Member States to design and support for policies that promote the advancement of women. At the same time, these mechanisms are frequently hampered by unclear mandates, lack of adequate staff, training, data and sufficient resources, and insufficient support from national political leadership.

National machinery for the advancement of women should be the central policy coordinating unit inside government with a main task of supporting government-wide mainstreaming of a gender-equality perspective in all policy areas. The necessary conditions for an effective functioning of such national machineries should include:

- a) location at the highest possible level in the government, falling under the responsibility of a cabinet minister;
- b) institutional mechanisms or processes that facilitate, as appropriate, decentralised planning, implementation and monitoring with a view to involving non-governmental organisations and community organisations from the grass roots upwards;

- c) sufficient resources in terms of budget and professional capacity;
- d) opportunity to influence development of all government policies.

In addressing the issue of mechanisms for promoting the advancement of women, governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively. In order to address these problems, the following strategic objectives were set and agreed to be implemented by the national governments.

## The strategic objectives

- H.1 Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies
- H.2 Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects
- H.3 Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.

## Indicators

In June 2005, the Council of the European Union invited the EU Member States and the European Commission to strengthen institutional mechanisms for promoting gender equality and to create a framework to assess the implementation of the BPfA in order to create a more consistent and systematic monitoring of progress.



During the Finnish Presidency in 2006, a report<sup>4</sup> was prepared and three indicators were proposed. The Council of the European Union adopted the conclusions<sup>5</sup> in the 2006.

The aim of the indicators developed by the Finnish Presidency was to measure the attainment of some of the key objectives of BPfA critical area H and, at the same time, focus on relevant political targets of the EU and Member States. The indicators are useful elaborations of both the first and the second objectives concerning the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women that are put forward in the BPfA. The indicators cover both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the institutional mechanisms, which are necessary in order to evaluate to what extent the two objectives have been met.

The existing European databases did not include the necessary data for that survey and, therefore, a special survey to collect data was needed. The Finnish Presidency prepared a questionnaire and collected the data with the aid of all Member States.

## Indicator H1

**Name:** Status of governmental responsibility in promoting gender equality

**Concept:** This indicator includes sub-objectives which can be summarised as follows: responsibility for gender equality policies should be awarded to the highest possible level of government, such as a cabinet minister; the national machinery should be located at the highest possible level of government and there should be clearly defined mandates, adequate resources, ability to influence policy, formulate and review legislation, and provide staff training; governments should also establish procedures to allow the machinery to gather information on government-wide policy issues at an early stage and use it in the policy development and review process; the government should report regularly to legislative bodies on progress in the

efforts undertaken and the government should promote the active involvement of the broad and diverse range of institutional actors in the public, private and voluntary sectors in the work for equality between women and men.

This indicator measures the existence and responsibilities of the governmental gender equality body. Directive 2002/73/EC<sup>6</sup> provides that Member States shall designate and make the necessary arrangements for a body or bodies for the promotion, analysis, monitoring and support of equal treatment of all persons without discrimination on grounds of sex. These bodies may form part of the agencies in charge, at national level, of the defence of human rights or the safeguarding of individuals' rights. Member States shall ensure that the competences of these bodies include independent assistance to the victims, conducting independent surveys on discrimination and publishing independent reports and making recommendations (Article 8a). Indicator H1 is based on the first set of the BPfA strategic objectives on institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women and includes questions about the highest responsibility for promoting gender equality at the governmental level, the existence, location and functions of the governmental gender equality body as well as the accountability and cross-sectionality of the government gender equality policies. Indicator H1 is a sum indicator with a maximum value of 10.

**Data source:** Calculation of the indicator is based on the special survey for the collection of data during the Finnish Presidency in 2006, more information is available in the report<sup>7</sup>.

**Published:** Data are available in the report<sup>8</sup> of the Finnish Presidency (2006) (the table 'Indicator 1: Status of governmental responsibility in promoting gender equality', p. 26).

**Notes:** The indicator was calculated for 2006 and was not available for all EU Member States. The indicator is not updated.

The data for 2006 are reliable and comprehensive. The indicator takes into account the differences between national bureaucracies through a graded calculation which is based on levels of responsibility and terms of reference which all states can use.

## Indicator H2a

**Name:** Personnel resources of the governmental gender equality body

**Concept:** Adequate resources are a basic element for progress in gender equality. A government commitment to promoting gender equality can, therefore, be measured in terms of resource allocation to the governmental gender equality body.

The indicator indicates the ratio of personnel resources available to the governmental gender equality body compared to the size of the Member State in terms of population. It thereby represents a government commitment to promoting gender equality in terms of resource allocation to the governmental gender equality body. The number of employees is given in person-years meaning full-time, all-year employment excluding all project personnel that do not receive funding from the state budget. The indicator is calculated from the ratio of employees per population (million) in each EU Member State and it describes the deviation from the median.

**Data source:** Calculation of the indicator is based on the special survey for the collection of data during the Finnish Presidency in 2006, more information is available in the report<sup>9</sup>.

**Published:** Data are available in the report<sup>10</sup> of the Finnish Presidency (2006) (the table 'Indicator 2a: Personnel resources of the governmental gender equality body (full-time, all-year employees in person years)'; p. 28).

**Notes:** The indicator was calculated for 2006 and was not available for all EU Member States. The indicator is not updated.

Data concerning personnel was requested for the year 2005. As the numbers of the personnel are changing more or less all the time, many Member States updated the data in September 2006. This may cause minor unreliability in the exact figures given in this report, but does not substantially affect the results.

The functions and mandates of a governmental gender equality body require a certain minimum of employees regardless of the population. This means that even the smallest states need to employ a certain minimum, which tends to result in top scores for the smaller Member States. The indicator does not take account of the size of the Member State's government budget as a whole since that would have made the indicator much more complex.

## Indicator H2b

**Name:** Personnel resources of the designated body or bodies for the promotion of equal treatment of women and men

**Concept:** Adequate resources are a basic element for progress in gender equality. A government commitment to promoting gender equality can, therefore, be measured in terms of resource allocation to the governmental gender equality body.

Indicator 2b indicates the ratio of personnel resources available for the designated body for the promotion of equal treatment of women and men compared to the size of the Member State in terms of population. It thereby represents a government commitment to promoting gender equality in terms of resource allocation for the protection and promotion of equal treatment in accordance with Directive 2002/73/EC<sup>11</sup>. The number of employees is given in person-years



meaning full-time, all-year employment excluding all project personnel that do not receive funding from the state budget. The indicator is calculated from the ratio of employees per population (million) in each EU Member State and it describes the deviation from the median.

**Data source:** Calculation of the indicator is based on the special survey for the collection of data during the Finnish Presidency in 2006, more information is available in the report<sup>12</sup>.

**Published:** Data are available in the report<sup>13</sup> of the Finnish Presidency (2006) (the table 'Indicator 2b: The personnel resources of the designated body or bodies for the promotion of equal treatment of women and men (full-time, all-year employees in person years)', p. 30).

**Notes:** The indicator was calculated for 2006 and was not available for all EU Member States. The indicator is not updated.

Data concerning personnel was requested for the year 2005. As the numbers of the personnel are changing more or less all the time, many Member States updated the data in September 2006. This may cause minor unreliability of the exact figures given in this report, but does not substantially affect the results.

The functions and mandates of a governmental gender equality body require a certain minimum of employees regardless of the population. This means that even the smallest states need to employ a certain minimum, which tends to result in top scores for the smaller Member States. The indicator does not take account of the size of the Member State's government budget as a whole since that would have made the indicator much more complex.

### Indicator H3

**Name:** Gender mainstreaming

**Concept:** Mainstreaming gender equality is presented as the second main objective of

the BPfA critical area of institutional mechanisms. According to the BPfA, governments should seek to ensure that before policy decisions are taken, an analysis of their impact on women and men respectively is carried out. Governments should also evaluate the impact of employment and income policies to ensure that women are direct beneficiaries of development. Governments should promote a gender perspective in legislation and give all ministries the mandate to review policies and programmes from a gender perspective. Inter-ministerial coordination structures should be established. In addition to the objectives addressed to governments, the BPfA includes objectives addressed to national machineries, advising them on promoting gender-mainstreaming. These objectives, however, deal more or less with the same issues as those directed at governments.

Indicator H3 is based on the second main objective of the BPfA critical area of institutional mechanisms and indicates government commitment and status of gender-mainstreaming in the Member States. It includes questions of the status of commitment of the government on gender-mainstreaming in public administration, structures of gender-mainstreaming and the implementation of gender-mainstreaming methods. Indicator H3 is, again, a sum indicator with a maximum value of 10.

**Data source:** Calculation of the indicator is based on the special survey for the collection of data during the Finnish Presidency in 2006, more information is available in the report<sup>14</sup>.

**Published:** Data are available in the report<sup>15</sup> of the Finnish Presidency (2006) (the table 'Indicator 3: Gender mainstreaming' on p. 31).

**Notes:** The indicator was calculated for 2006 and was not available for all EU Member States. The indicator is not updated. The data are comparable between countries.

## More information

### Policy documents

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995 (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>).

Council of the European Union, Union, Draft Council conclusions 'Review of the implementation by Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action — Beijing + 15: A review of progress', Brussels, 10 November 2009 (<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st15/st15487-ad01.en09.pdf>).

Council of the European Union, Draft Council conclusions 'Review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action — Indicators in respect of Institutional Mechanisms', Brussels, 30 October 2006 (<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st14/st14376-ad01.en06.pdf>).

Council of the European Council conclusions on Review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action — Indicators in respect of Institutional Mechanisms, Brussels, 30 November and 1 December 2006 ([http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/91957.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/91957.pdf)). The European Commission's Strategy for equality between women and men 2010–2015 (COM(2010) 491 final of 21 September 2010) (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52010DC0491:EN:PDF>).

European Commission, Communication from the Commission 'Europe 2020 — A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth', Brussels, 3 March 2010 (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF>).

European Commission, Communication from the Commission 'A Strengthened Commitment to Equality between Women and Men — A Women's Charter', Brussels, 5 March 2010 (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0078:FIN:EN:PDF>).

### Reports

Rai, Shirin (ed.), 2003, *Mainstreaming gender, democratising the State? Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women*, Manchester University Press, Manchester ([http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=mrnsNR5UHQkC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=mainstreaming+gender,+democratizing+the+state&ots=7wfjW\\_0huo&sig=2i4oHlv8SmzX4ak1Fa8NaEEESkE#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=mrnsNR5UHQkC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=mainstreaming+gender,+democratizing+the+state&ots=7wfjW_0huo&sig=2i4oHlv8SmzX4ak1Fa8NaEEESkE#v=onepage&q&f=false)).

Strengthening National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women — National Mechanisms for Gender Equality in EU Member States and candidate Countries and other Developed Economies of the UNECE Region, Regional Study 2010, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe ([http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/publication/UNECE\\_2010\\_Regional%20study\\_EU%20et%20al.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/publication/UNECE_2010_Regional%20study_EU%20et%20al.pdf)).

## Notes

1. Rai, Shirin (ed.), 2003, *Mainstreaming gender, democratising the State? Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women*, Manchester University Press, Manchester ([http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=mrnsNR5UHQkC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=mainstreaming+gender,+democratizing+the+state&ots=7wfjW\\_0huo&sig=2i4oHlv8SmzX4ak1Fa8NaEEESkE#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=mrnsNR5UHQkC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=mainstreaming+gender,+democratizing+the+state&ots=7wfjW_0huo&sig=2i4oHlv8SmzX4ak1Fa8NaEEESkE#v=onepage&q&f=false)).
2. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995, p. 84 (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>).
3. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995, p. 84 (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>).
4. Council of the European Union, Draft Council conclusions 'Review of the implementation by



- the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action — Indicators in respect of Institutional Mechanisms', Brussels, 30 October 2006 (<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st14/st14376-ad01.en06.pdf>).
5. Council of the European Union, Council conclusions on Review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action — Indicators in respect of Institutional Mechanisms, Brussels, 30 November and 1 December 2006 ([http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/91957.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/91957.pdf)).
  6. Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of the 23 September 2002 amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:269:0015:0020:EN:PDF>).
  7. Council of the European Union, Draft Council conclusions 'Review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action — Indicators in respect of Institutional Mechanisms', Brussels, 30 October 2006 (<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st14/st14376-ad01.en06.pdf>).
  8. Council of the European Union, Draft Council conclusions 'Review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action — Indicators in respect of Institutional Mechanisms', Brussels, 30 October 2006 (<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st14/st14376-ad01.en06.pdf>).
  9. Council of the European Union, Draft Council conclusions 'Review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action — Indicators in respect of Institutional Mechanisms', Brussels, 30 October 2006 (<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st14/st14376-ad01.en06.pdf>).
  10. Council of the European Union, Draft Council conclusions 'Review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action — Indicators in respect of Institutional Mechanisms', Brussels, 30 October 2006 (<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st14/st14376-ad01.en06.pdf>).
  11. Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of the 23 September 2002 amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:269:0015:0020:EN:PDF>).
  12. Council of the European Union, Draft Council conclusions 'Review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action — Indicators in respect of Institutional Mechanisms', Brussels, 30 October 2006 (<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st14/st14376-ad01.en06.pdf>).
  13. Council of the European Union, Draft Council conclusions 'Review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action — Indicators in respect of Institutional Mechanisms', Brussels, 30 October 2006 (<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st14/st14376-ad01.en06.pdf>).
  14. Council of the European Union, Draft Council conclusions 'Review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action — Indicators in respect of Institutional Mechanisms', Brussels, 30 October 2006 (<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st14/st14376-ad01.en06.pdf>).
  15. Council of the European Union, Draft Council conclusions 'Review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action — Indicators in respect of Institutional Mechanisms', Brussels, 30 October 2006 (<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st14/st14376-ad01.en06.pdf>).