

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS

*N.B. Provisional version to be added to by each partner*

### **1. General information on the public sector and appraisal of gender inequalities in this sector (elements of analysis and statistical data)**

#### *1.1. Summary presentation of the area of economic activity, workplaces and technical and economic development of the sector*

As was the case for the metal industry, it is particularly difficult to define the boundaries of the public sector in the various countries covered by this study. Indeed, this sector sometimes only covers central administration (ministries), but can also include local and regional authorities, as well as health and education... Access to homogenous data is, in fact, impossible. Depending on the context, some reports have included certain areas of activity in line with union membership and possibilities of carrying out field studies.

In all of the European countries covered by this study, there is ongoing reform of the state, which is more or less well integrated in the social and political landscape and has reached different stages of progress. Such reform often aims at decentralising certain activities to regional and local authorities - as well as privatisation and reducing the number of staff on permanent contracts. Finally, there is also a general process of modernisation of public services (improved quality, introduction of performance criteria and development of new technology, etc.). Thus, in **Italy**, ongoing reforms involve introducing a private management model, which affects more than half of civil servants (the others are in local authorities (670,000) and health services (680,000)). In the **Netherlands**, privatisation concerns the post office, transport and energy, namely sectors that were considered to be part of public responsibility up until now. But this trend seems less intensive than in other European countries and involves a mixed economy system, where state involvement is not completely excluded. There is often a search for financial partnerships (via major private companies or participation of users).

In **France**, since 1982-3, when laws on decentralisation were adopted, the break with the state was reinforced. Since 1984, three kinds of civil and public servants exist: in state civil service (ministries and army), local and regional authorities (1.5 million employees) and public hospitals.

In Denmark, the public sector involves 3 levels: the state level, covering the ministries, some administrative units such as universities and some state owned companies; counties (14) and their institutions; and municipalities (275) and their institutions.

**Table I. Data on employment in the public sector**

	Total employment	Proportion of women
Austria	580.354 <sup>???</sup>	55,5 % <sup>???</sup>
Belgium	923,852	46%*
Denmark	<u>???</u> 946,646 state level:182,674 counties: 192, 107 municipalities: 474,167	<u>???</u> state level: 45% counties: 76% municipalities: app. 78%
France	2,302,403	49% (55.7% except for military in 2000)
Italy	3,108,803	50.6% (2000)
The Netherlands	551,000	40% - 58%**

Sources: national reports

\* This figure applies only to federal public services (former ministries) involving only 62,188 employees.

\*\* 40% in central public administration and 58% of employees covered by *FNV AbvaKabo* (employees of central administration and health services, etc.).

\* In Austria, developments in the public sector have been strongly influenced by the transformation of government administration<sup>f</sup> from the realm of state sovereignty to a service-oriented approach to policy. This has affected government bodies, institutions and foundations on the federal, state and local levels. This process began as early as 1996 with the privatisation and outsourcing of services, including the postal and telecommunications, administration, the federal data centre, and the Austrian postal banking system (see *Personaljahrbuch* 2002, p. 2). This development had a significant impact on the employment situation.

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## 1.2. Appraisal of gender inequality

Decentralisation processes thus exist in all the countries concerned. There is generally a drop in the number of state employees (often as a result of not replacing those who retire). For example, in **Italy**, between 1990 and 2000, reforms of the state led to a 4% drop in staff (except for security). However, in the **Netherlands**, in spite of privatisation, in some parts of the public sector, employment is still increasing (+10% between 1996 and 2002). In Denmark, there are two opposing trends: privatisation and public financial support to parallel services, e.g., childcare and seeling off state owned services; but at the same time, the proportion of public employees has been growing.

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\* There are often many women in public employment and their share is generally increasing. In the **Netherlands**, women are over-represented in public employment, notably, in education (55%) and health (79%).

<sup>f</sup> This figure applies only to federal public services (former ministries) involving only 62,188 employees.

\* In Belgium IN BELGIUM ??? between 1991 and 2001, the percentage of women increased from 42% to 46%, whereas that of men dropped by 4%. Women in positions of responsibility increased from 2.6% to 6.2%. Until 1997 – following on from a recruitment freeze – the number of employees dropped by 3.4%.

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\* In Italy, the proportion of women has increased in ministries, including in positions with responsibility. Women are present in so-called "women's occupations" (education and health), but also because recruitment procedures in the public sector are recognised as being less discriminatory than in the private sector.

\* In France, the proportion of women (over 50% since 1981) in civil and public services (excluding security) continues to increase. New occupations are highly feminised and some are filled almost exclusively by women, such as help for the elderly and childcare... The growth of staff in civil and public services is concentrated in these new occupations and has, therefore, contributed to feminising the sector. In 2000, women represented 49% of all those working in the civil and public services (55.7% excluding security). It should be noted that there are 10% more women in local and regional authorities (59% are women) than in civil and public services in general.

\* In Austria, the public service sector is traditionally one of the most important areas of femal employment. Women currently make up 55.5% of all employees in this sector.

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\* In Denmark, the public sector – at county- and municipality-levels - is highly feminised (more than 76% of employees are women), whereas at state level, only 45% of employees are women.

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### *Occupational segregation*

Our study shows that women remain, however, over-represented in less qualified positions:

\* In the Netherlands, absence of career opportunities for women explains their frequent departure and job mobility. This is the case of administrations and universities. Efforts have, therefore, been made to develop careers in ministries and local authorities. Working conditions (notably stress in the health services) also explain resignations.

\* In Belgium, there are 4 levels, depending on diplomas (level 1 refers to university diplomas and level 4 refers to those with no qualifications). Women account for only 32.2% of level 1 staff and 74% of level 4 staff. Most (almost 4,000) of the latter are women on contracts (i.e. without civil servant status). Men make up the majority of all levels, except level 4...

\* In Italy, vertical and horizontal segregation is not so great, but it does still exist in some occupations (notably universities and research). PLEASE GIVE MORE DETAILS??? segregation is less marked than horizontal segregation in all sectors, but still persists in health (especially in health occupations) and university education (lecturers). On the basis of Treasury data (1996), it was calculated that the vertical segregation index in these sectors was 0.23 et 0.19 respectively. In other sectors, the index is lower: local authorities (0.09), ministries (0.07), police force (0.02) and schools (0.14).

\* In **France**, there are three hierarchical grades of civil and public servants: grade A (higher level executives with at least baccalaureate + 3 years' higher education); grade B (lower level executives with between baccalaureate and baccalaureate + 2 years' higher education); grade C (clerical staff, service workers and manual workers). In the (state) civil service as a whole, women are in the majority. Over a period of 10 years, there have been more women than men in grade B. Since 1998, there are proportionately more women in grade A than grade C. This can be explained by the very strong feminisation of staff in education (excluding higher education) - 66% are women. Women account for 62.5% of grade A staff in this part of education. The Calmou report on women's access to executive positions in the civil and public services in general made a clear verdict: the higher one rises in the hierarchy, the less one is likely to find women. In this highly feminised sector, they only represent 33% of grade A executives. In 2000, women only occupied 13.7% of top level civil and public service positions (compared with 12.5% in 1998).

\* Strongly horizontal and vertical forms of segregation still largely determine female employment in **Austria**. This is especially the case in the private sector, but is also of significance in the public service sector. On the horizontal level there is a concentration of women in typically gendered areas, such as health care<sup>2</sup> (83.9%), teaching (53.4%) or the general public administration sector (50.8%). With respect to higher education (23.4%), the police and gendarmerie (6.2%) and the military (1.0%), women are significantly underrepresented, although one should point out that in the later two areas female employment as only introduced a few years ago. There is, however, a very interesting improvement in the area of judges and district attorneys (*Staatsanwältin*), where the percentage of women has increased from 29.5% in 1995 to 37% in 2002. This positive development is most likely not yet over, considering that this sector is experiencing a significant gender transition phase. The catching-up phenomenon can also be seen amongst graduates in the fields of higher and secondary education, where there has been an increase from 38.1% to 43.2% and 40.0% to 43.0% respectively in the time period under study. It should also be pointed out that women dominate in the unskilled sector (63%).

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\* In **Denmark**, there is segregation at all 3 levels of the public sector, e.g., in primary and secondary schools, which are administrated by municipalities, approximately 64% are women, but only 4% are school managers. Very traditional women's jobs both in counties and municipalities are services, administrative jobs, teaching and health care.

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### *Atypical jobs*

Non civil servant status jobs (notably with private sector contracts) are becoming increasingly frequent.

\* In the **Netherlands**, ~~the development of~~ part-time work is the norm in several sub-sectors of the public employment sector, notably in health services (50% of jobs are part-time) and education. On the other hand, in general, the percentage of part-time workers is lower in public administration than generally in the Dutch economy. Moreover, flexible, short term contracts have developed more than elsewhere. Conversely, in the civil service, the possibility of having long part time work (4 days) has been increased, in order to attract more women and men.

<sup>2</sup> In following, all data refers exclusively to the federal sector; data has not been collected for the state and local sectors

\* In **Belgium**, almost a third of federal public service staff are on contracts and they are mainly women: 13.4% of men and 48.7% of women are in this situation.

\* In **Italy**, 4.4% of jobs are with non-standard contracts (fixed-term, parasubordinate or temporary), of which about 46% are occupied by women. 4.4% of them are part-time (83.7% of which are occupied by women). In all, 8.8% of public jobs are non-standard - this is lower than the general proportion of such jobs in Italy.

\* In **France**, analysis of jobs in local and regional authorities shows that 72% of permanent staff work full-time - 8% have chosen part-time work and the remaining 20% are "non full-time jobs" (i.e., jobs that have been created for a period of time that is shorter than the normal working week and have not been chosen by the employees concerned). Moreover, 13% of those with civil servant status have such "non full-time jobs", compared with 53% of those who do not have civil service status. Women not only make up the majority of the latter (70%), but also non full-time work is to be found mainly in this kind of job (i.e., 53% of those, who do not have civil service status, have non full-time jobs). This analysis shows that many women are concerned by non chosen part-time work, which is combined with job insecurity. Many jobs involve less than 28 hours per week and are mostly occupied by women in difficult situations, who can be called upon to do a few hours' work here and there according to needs. Conversely, some of those, who do not have civil service status, benefit from very privileged jobs - they are most often in grade A jobs and have been able to negotiate their position and pay - they are "luxury" "non civil servants" and mainly men.

\* In **Austria**, in the public sector as a whole, traditional employment structures are still common. A total of 68.6% of all employees are "tenured" (*Beamte*) civil servants, 31.0% are contractual employees, 0.3% are apprentices and 0.2% are categorised as "other." Full-time employment predominates. Only 14.3% of all employees work part-time whereby and women make up the largest part of this group. It should be emphasised here that the wish to work part-time has increased from year to year. Until 1997, tenured civil servants, who wanted to work part-time, were only permitted to decrease their working hours by 50%. As of 2003, employees now enjoy a sliding scale of part-time employment, that can be tailored to the needs of each individual. The majority of all part-time work can be found in the administrative sector, as well as amongst the teachers, instructors and unskilled workers.

\* In **Denmark**, only 11% of public sector employees work part-time - 68% of them are women and more than half work in municipalities.

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### 1.3. Industrial relations

\* In the **Netherlands**, as in most countries in the study, public sector collective bargaining, notably on pay - depend mainly on government decisions. However, there are certain margins for manoeuvre in health services and some areas of education. The biggest collective agreements in the country cover these sectors (210,000 people are covered in care institutions are covered by one large collective agreement, 155,000 in hospitals and 340,000 in education). The whole of the sector is characterised by a strong presence (90-95%) of works councils, 45% of whose members are women. All three trade union confederations (*FNV*, *CNV* and *Unie*) are present, but also small unions, that play a pressure group role, even if they sometimes only represent a particular category of employees. *AbvaKabo FNV* is the main union representing central administration and health etc. employees with 360,000

members. Despite attempts to merge, a separate FNV sector union organises employees in education, *AOb* (71,600 members).

\* In **Belgium**, public sector workers with and without civil service status are represented by three sector unions: one is affiliated to *CSC* and another to *FGTB*. The third - neoliberal - is in principle independent, but has signed a cooperation agreement with *CGSLB*. In fact, union membership of public sector employees is complex. Those, who do not have civil servant status, continue to be members of the sector union, to which they belonged previously. But, in some cases, which are exceptions, whole categories of private and public sector employees are represented by public sector unions. Unlike other countries such as France, the rate of unionisation in the public sector is lower than amongst workers in the private sector. The unionisation rate is estimated to be 66% (60% men and 40% women). Union relations in the public sector, in general, and in ministries, in particular, are covered by different rules than the private sector. A law, that was adopted on 12 December 1974, regulates relations between public authorities and unions. The collective bargaining process is institutionalised. Competent public authorities can only make decisions after negotiations with representative unions within committees, that were created for this (committee A for all public services, committee B for provincial and local services and committee C for all federal and regional services). There are also consultative committees at the level of services, which play a role similar to that of works councils and welfare and prevention committees in the private sector.

\* In **Italy**, negotiations are carried out between all three unions (*FP CGIL*, *FPS CISL* and *PA UIL*) and ARAN (agency that represents the whole of public administration). *FP CGIL* is the biggest union in the public sector with 369,059 members (17% unionisation rate). *FPS CISL* has 315,053 members and *PA UIL* has 313,038 members (including teachers, who are in a separate union in *CGIL*). Since 1993, an important agreement established the existence of representation bodies, RSU, which play the role of works councils. Moreover, second-level (local) collective bargaining has developed alongside the reform of the state. This level envisages a new system of classification, which will lead to greater mobility; a pay system, that will introduce productivity and merit criteria; a new profile for executives; as well as flexibility of services...

\* In **France**, most civil and public service union members are in local and regional authorities and that is why our study concentrates on this sector. In *CFDT*, for example, 64% of members are in local authorities (especially technical services) and 15% in *département* authorities (especially social services). This situation reflects one of the features of unionisation in this sector - regardless of which union, those working in technical services are more involved in unions, than those working in administrative services. Moreover, this difference is a result of gender differences - there are many more women in administrative than in technical services. During workplace elections for *CAP* (joint administrative commissions, that are responsible for examining individual situation - promotion and penalties) and *CTP* (joint technical commissions, that are responsible for collective aspects of work), *CGT*, *FO* and *CFDT* received most votes in that order, but in 2001, *CFDT* came second. *CGT* is the biggest union, both in terms of numbers of elected representatives and also in terms of members (58,9000).

\* In **Austria**, unlike most private employers, state authorities are not members of the Chamber of Economy (*Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, WKÖ*) employers organisation. In general, the public administration has three hierarchical levels – federal (national), provincial (*Länder*) and local (*Gemeinde*). Public sector employees are represented by separate trade unions, which largely reflect the differentiation of the state: the Union of Public

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Services (*Gewerkschaft Öffentlicher Dienst, GÖD*) represents civil servants and contractual employees of the federal and provincial administration; and the Municipal Employees' Union (*Gewerkschaft der Gemeindebediensteten, GdG*) organises the employees of local administration.

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Public employees' unions - both federal/provincial and local - have relatively high density rates. More than 80% of all employees in local administrations and 60% of all federal and provincial public employees are members of the respective unions. Membership figures tended to be fairly stable in the 1990s. and s Small declines in absolute membership primarily ensued from declining employment in the public administration.

Despite this differentiation in both state authorities and trade unions, negotiations take place jointly on behalf of the public sector as a whole. This means that representatives of the federal state, the *Länder* and the local authorities participate in these negotiations on the side of the employers. Preparations for pay bargaining are made by the state's personnel development division, which is responsible for supporting politicians with relevant documents and calculations. The personnel development division has been shifted between various governmental institutions several times in the past decade, due to the redistribution of government competencies regarding the public administration. First, it was transferred from the Office of the Federal Chancellor to the Finance Ministry, and since April 2000 the division is subordinate to the Vice Chancellor of the governing coalition of the People's Party (*Österreichische Volkspartei, ÖVP*) and the Freedom Party (*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ*). Mirroring the employers, the trade unions form a joint committee for the negotiations. In recent years, a demand to split up the negotiations has been made by the employees of several public administration departments. Among them are departments with a strong corporate identity, such as diplomatic departments and the public audit office. However, these efforts have not yet been translated into separate negotiations.

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\* In Denmark, public sector employees are organised indifferent trade unions, according to their original job functions. These unions have organised themselves in umbrella organisations or confederations, covering a number of unions:

- *DMCE* – Danish confederation of municipal employees – covers 16 LO unions, organising employees in the local and regional public sector. *DMCE* represents approximately 400.000 employees.
- *StK* – Association of Danish State Employees Organisations – is one of the LO cartels and represents about 90.000 employees at state level.
- *AC* – Danish confederation of professional associations – has 22 member organisations with approximately 250.000 members with university degrees or similar higher level education. About 81.200 of its members are public employees.
- *FTF* – Salaried employees and civil servants confederation – organises more than 100 independent unions. Three quarters of its members work in the public sector. The biggest members unions are the Danish teachers union (80.000 members), the Danish nurses union (70.000 members) and the Danish pre-school teachers union (58.000).
- *CFU* – *Centralorganisationernes Faellesråd* – negotiates on behalf of state level employees. It represents *AC*, *FTF* and *StK* and covers 98% of all state-level employees.
- *KTO* – Association of local government employees' organisations – negotiates on behalf of approximately 630.000 county and municipal employees. It covers 55 member unions, representing *LO*, *AC* and *FTF* and other organisations.

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## 2. Position of public sector union leaderships regarding women and equality

\* In the **Netherlands**, *AbvaKabo* and *AOB* have long traditions of involvement in equality issues. They were the first unions to have a women's committee and equality officers, who were in temporary positions at the beginning, but now are permanent. According to *AbvaKabo* rules, women members - just as young members and those belonging to ethnic minorities - have special rights, for instance special seats in boards and can have separate organisations at local level. Thus, 61% of (full-time equivalent) employees of the union are women and their proportion is on the increase (55% in 1999). A third of those in decision-making management positions are women, as are a third of union officials (negotiators). Representation of women amongst activists is not very good (on average, 35% - only 20% in central administration and two-thirds in health services). Thus, women only represent a quarter of the national board (executive committee), but 42% of the executive council (day-to-day leadership body). The situation in *AOB* is somewhat different - 48% of all employees of the union are women (down from 64% in 1999), as are 42% of those with managerial responsibilities, but only 15% of the national board and 39% of the executive council.

\* In **Belgium**, equal opportunities have always been an important topic for *CGSP FGTB*. The concept of mainstreaming was introduced in internal union management three years ago, when - at inter-sector level - there were campaigns on the glass ceiling, career planning and classifications etc. *CCSP CSC*'s approach to gender mainstreaming is entirely in line with *CSC*'s inter-sector policy. This explains why *CCSP CSC* has not adopted general resolutions on gender mainstreaming at recent congresses. *CCSP CSC* has, however, worked on incorporating its concept of gender mainstreaming in issues concerning management of public service staff. Gender issues are part of the general defence of workers' interests and are constantly incorporated in union action. In public services, few women occupy high-level positions. Much has yet to be done, in order to achieve equality with men. Gender issues in public services, therefore, mainly concern career possibilities.

\* In **Italy**, gender mainstreaming is an important topic in the sector, since the Beijing world conference on women (1995). But, unlike other sectors, the concept has spread more quickly, both theoretically and practically, in civil and public services. Policies in favour of equality have been negotiated and equality committees have been created, in order to promote valorisation of women in the public sector. A big presence of women in the sector has led to many women in unions. A code of good conduct against sexual harassment has been adopted, but this, in fact, reveals major problems in this area, especially in the health service. Internally, non-discrimination standards are implemented in *FP CGIL* (40% women amongst members of works councils). There are many women in other unions, but we do not have figures.

\* In **France**, it is estimated that, in local and regional authorities, 40% of *CGT* members and 57.3% of *CFDT* members are women. In the *CGT*, therefore, women are under-represented, compared with the sector: *"There is a male tradition in technical services, that have existed longer and coexist with more recent union branches, that have been created around developing sectors, such as schools, culture and administration and where there are mainly women... therefore new members are more often women. But it is not easy to make members in these new sectors, precisely because they are women, who are traditionally less involved in unions. Moreover, they work more closely with councillors and are therefore less unionised"*. (woman *CGT* public sector officer). Neither *CGT* nor *CFDT* sector unions have women's commissions, but only a national woman officer, who is responsible for gender balance, amongst other things. Nevertheless, special attention has been paid to the issue of women's representation in union structures: in *CGT*, the national bureau is made up of 5 women and 3



men, the executive committee of 24 women and 27 men and the general secretary is a woman. Moreover, *CGT* is the only union to have a delegation with parity in the higher civil and public service council (national collective bargaining body). In *CFDT*, women's participation in leadership bodies is on the increase: in 1995, there were only 12 women (out of 39) in the national council, but now there is parity: "*There was clearly a desire to implement practices, that we defend elsewhere, and to seek out women activists. We tried, whenever possible, to replace those, who left the leadership body, by women candidates.*" (*CFDT* woman national officer).

**Table 2. Representation of women in public sector unions**  
**(PLEASE FILL IN THE GAPS IN THE TABLE???)**

	Number of union members	Proportion of women members	Proportion of women employees in the public sector	Proportion of women in <u>elected</u> day-to-day leadership bodies	Proportion of women in executive committees	Other indicators
<b>Austria</b> <i>GÖeD</i>	234.187???	47.5%???	55.5%???	???	9.8%???	2 women as head of a federal department, 7 executive officers (46.7%)???
<b>Belgium</b> <i>CCSP CSC</i>		52%	46%	25%	25%	1 woman general secretary
<i>CGSP FGTB</i>		42%		11%		
<i>SLFP</i> (associated <i>CGSLB</i> )						

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Denmark	???	???	???	???	???	???
<b>France</b>						
<i>CGT public services union</i>	58,900	40%	49% -55% (except for military)	62.5% (5/8)	47% (24/51)	1 woman general secretary; 35% of congress delegates; gender parity in delegation to the higher council
<i>CFDT Interco</i>		57.3%		40% (4/10) national secretariat	50% (19/39) national council	50% of congress delegates
<b>Italy</b>						
<i>FP CGIL</i>	369,059	40%	50.6%	<del>3/9</del>	<del>68/180</del>	40% of members of works councils are women; 1 woman national secretary
<i>FPS CISL</i>	315,053	<del>No data</del>		<del>2/7</del>	<del>Not available</del>	1 woman national secretary
<i>UIL – PA</i>	313,038	<del>No data</del>		<del>1/5</del>	<del>20%</del>	1 woman president of central committee; 1 woman national secretary (out of 6); 21.7% general secretaries (10/46)
<b>Netherlands</b>						
<i>AbvaKabo FNV</i>	360,000	47%	58%	<del>4225%</del> (executive council)	<del>2542%</del> (national board)	1/ <del>woman out of 3</del> national trade union officials (negotiators)
<i>AOb</i>	71,600	57%	58%	<del>3915%</del> (executive council)	<del>1539%</del> (national board)	1/ <del>woman out of 5</del> national trade union officials (negotiators)

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Sources: national reports

**Table 3. Structures responsible for equality within public sector unions**  
 (PLEASE ADD TO THIS TABLE)

Austria	???	<a href="#">Department of Women's Affairs</a>
Belgium CGSP FGTB CCSP CSC SLFP CGSLB		Women's bureau No specific structure No specific structure
Denmark	???	
France SP CGT Interco CFDT		National officers responsible for gender balance issues, amongst others
Italy		Plans for creating equality commissions
The Netherlands AbvaKabo FNV AOB		Women's committees and <del>full time</del> equality advisors

Sources: National reports

\* In Austria, in comparison to all other ~~labour~~ trade unions, the Public Sector Union (*GOeD*) organises the second most ~~female~~ women employees, with 111,135 members, just behind the large Private Sector Employees Union (*GPA*). Percentage-wise, ~~the~~ *GOeD* has the second highest concentration of women, with 47.5%, and is topped only by the industrial Hotel, Restaurant and Personal Service Workers Union (*HGPD*), which is a typical “~~female~~ women’s organisation.” These quantitative figures mean little, however, if women are not represented according to their numbers in the organisational hierarchy of the ~~labour~~ unions. And this is definitely not the case; women are still strongly under-represented. The percentage of women in the top two organisational levels of ~~the~~ *GOeD* is low, with 9.8% in the Federal Board (*Bundesvorstand*) and 16.6% in the Directory (*Präsidium*). This is the case despite the fact that ~~the~~ *GOeD* has had a Women’s Affairs Section since 1965.

The conditions, ~~under~~ in which the struggle to introduce equality in labour unions has been carried out, are much better in the public sector than they are in the private sector. The federal Equal Treatment Act for the public sector was introduced in 1993. It contains a clause stipulating positive action for women. This clause must be fulfilled through the introduction of a distinct positive action plan for women in all areas of public sector employment. ~~The~~ *GOeD* was encouraged to incorporate the ~~log~~ rationale of an institutionalised positive action policy, because of the gradual implementation of the government’s equal opportunities measures, although it had tended to drag its feet in this respect until recently. ~~The~~ *GOeD* was significantly influenced by the general social debate on gender equality during this period, as well as ~~ast~~ the discussions and struggles within ~~the~~ trade-labour unions as a whole, which significantly strengthened the hand of ~~women~~ the ~~female~~ *GOeD* members and ~~functionaries~~ officers.

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**3. Analysis of trade union action, activities and agreements (where they exist) from a gender perspective in the public sector**

Measures and policies on gender equality have often been adopted in civil and public services, thus guaranteeing a high level of rights for civil and public servants. From a trade union point of view, there are sometimes negotiations, but one cannot say the fight for equality is a declared priority, as they have relatively protected status. But with ongoing reforms of the state, some demands indirectly concern increasing numbers of women.

### 3.1. Pay

As in many sectors - but perhaps in an even more marked way - unequal pay in civil and public services is not directly identifiable. Recruitment rules and equality principles guarantee equal rights to equivalent posts. However, we know that inequality exists between departments and jobs that require, for example, the same level of qualifications or in terms of career for men and women occupying the same post. There is, therefore, indirect discrimination, which requires detailed analysis, that is still rarely carried out in unions.

\* In the **Netherlands**, pay collective bargaining is marked by the fact that pay levels are lower than in the private sector. Pay is an important issue, especially for women working in the public sector. There is a pay gap, as in the private sector. *AbvaKabo* pinpoints discrimination in job evaluation schemes (especially in hospitals and central administration). Thus, the **National Commission on Equal Treatment-commission** has studied in detail job evaluation in the health service. However, it was not *AbvaKabo*, that initiated this approach, but small critical union branches, that represent nurses. They tried to encourage women to complain individually - without any real results - but a study of this area has been started. Policies against unequal pay are centred on the rights of part-time workers and flex-workers and also on the negative influence of leaving work to look after one's children. More generally, the union has initiated a global approach to the issue of unequal pay, by looking more closely at women's careers and the sharing of family responsibilities. *AOb* focuses less on job evaluation and more on individual claims, risks of career breaks and the effects of part-time work.

\* In **Belgium**, as in the Netherlands, for a long time, it was accepted that public sector pay was lower than private sector pay. Differences in pay were compensated by greater job stability in the public sector. The situation is in the process of changing. Pay has caught up to a certain extent in the public sector and job stability is considered to be less important. In the context of recent public service reforms, the authorities are seeking other ways of calculating pay, which will take more account of quality of work and individual performance. From a gender mainstreaming perspective, it should be observed that the constitutional principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination were introduced in civil and public servants status. It can be said that today there is no longer pay discrimination in the public sector. Nevertheless, pay differences can result from indirect factors - classification of functions is probably one cause of discrimination. According to *CGSP*, women often make sacrifices, i.e., choose a less advantageous situation at work, in order to make it easier to combine working and family life - such choices always lead to lower pay. For this reason, in collective bargaining, *CGSP* emphasises measures, that can help to reduce the direct and indirect financial repercussions of such choices for families. In *CCSP's* view, the method of fixing pay in public services means that the problem of equal pay for equal work is not so evident as in the private sector. But, that does not mean that hidden problems have not come to the forefront. For example, several years ago, *CCSP* managed (by referring to European directives) to improve the situation of staff employed on contracts by the federal authorities. Most of the staff, who benefited from these measures, were at lower levels in maintenance and catering, i.e., mainly women.

\* In **Italy**, even though the pay system is complex and variable in different parts of the public sector, pay issues remain central in collective bargaining. Pay is fixed according to a basic rate, a bonus depending on which part of the civil and public service one works in, a variable element and a special allowance for those with civil and public servant status. Gradually, the variable element is becoming more important and is reflected in criteria concerning performance and individual merit. Before the reform, the variable element for executives was only 5% - now it is 40%. As far as unequal pay is concerned, indirect gender discrimination also exists, as in other sectors. The way in which pay is calculated is not discriminatory, but women trade unionists denounce the existence of a pay gap. However, there are no precise analytical data. Discrimination is indirect, in that the pay gap reflects the difficulties women have in working overtime and going on training. Although the public sector was one of the first to introduce this issue in collective bargaining, there are no concrete measures, notably in the area of pay.

\* In **France**, unequal pay is not an issue, that is dealt with directly. In fact, gender equality as such is rarely addressed. The main demand of both of the unions studied concerns transforming insecure jobs into permanent ones. This aspect is the one that is considered to be most important and mobilises most people currently. As many of those without civil servant status are women, when there is action to defend those with insecure jobs, women are most concerned. *"Fighting against insecurity involves fighting on behalf of women."* (Woman *CFDT* national officer). In the context of the "Sapin law" on transforming insecure jobs, many agreements have been signed regarding "non full-time jobs", that are less than half-time. The specific problems of childminders, who are all women, has mobilised many people: absence of civil servant status, lack of recognition and low pay, that is below the legal minimum wage. Union officers emphasise that problems in administrative work, where there are many women, also led to raising issues concerning gender equality. *"There are two angles on approaching occupational equality - either from the point of view of insecure jobs or that of administrative work"*. (Woman *CGT* equality officer). In both unions, work has been done on administrative work. *"We want to be able to compare technical and administrative jobs... in order to harmonise careers in relation to qualifications. We want to make both pay scales coherent."* (Woman *CGT* equality officer). The issue of recognising qualifications in administrative work reflects recognition of women's occupations and explains the existence of unequal pay.

\* Even though the Federal Equal Treatment Act in Austria forbids the unequal treatment of men and women in the area of ~~income~~pay, gender remains a key factor in determining the levels of ~~male~~men's and ~~female~~women's pay-incomes. For example, the ~~income of women's~~ pay in the federal civil service was 25.8% below that of men in ~~the year~~2002.

Mis en forme

As a rule, ~~the~~ pay is higher in the public sector – among other reasons because of the high percentage of academics in this field – than it is in the private sector and jobs tend to be more secure. Even today, the concept of a "life-long-position" still predominates. It can be assumed - with respect to the public sector in general, as is the case for employees of the Vienna Municipality - that employment is long-term and that there is very little fluctuation.

For the employee representatives – according to a statement of the Women's Affairs Secretary –~~the~~Public Sector unions do not see fair gendered pay to be a topic that needs to be dealt with immediately. The last pay reform negotiations were in 1994 and at the moment there are no steps being taken to renegotiate ~~the~~pay regulations in this sector. However, according to an interview, "~~pay reform will be the next big negotiation story", mainly because ~~the~~pay~~

Mis en forme

income disparities between various career tracks are largely based on ~~work~~job evaluation schemes that lead to a significant level of unequal treatment. In various federal states, e.g. the state of Upper Austria, measures to deal with this problem have been introduced, including steps to meet gender disparities. As a matter of principle, the whole debate about a fairer form of ~~work~~job evaluation should be carried out from a gendered perspective, according to the Women's Affairs Secretary. It is, however, unlikely that this demand will meet with success because of the current lack of awareness within the ranks of the Public Sector unions as well as because of the great significance of this project.

### 3.2. Working time and work-life balance

\* Working time has for years been an important collective bargaining topic in the **Netherlands** - in the fight against unemployment and for improving working conditions and reconciling family and working life. As elsewhere, part-time work has been an important topic for *FNV*, which has developed a twofold strategy: in predominantly male sectors, where full-time work is the norm, *FNV* defends the right to long part-time ~~work~~jobs (more than 28 hours per week). In sectors, where there are many women, such as the health service, it was a matter of improving conditions of part-timers and enabling them to have longer working hours. The working week is, on average, 36 hours, which is shorter than in the private sector (38 hours). There is a flexible system of lengthening or shortening working hours, as well as different modalities for shorter working hours, e.g., time savings account and paid training leave, etc. Employers accept these forms of flexibility, which are easier to introduce than external flexibility.

\* In **Belgium**, men and women have the same rights in the same functions. Nevertheless, discrimination does still exist and public authorities have introduced positive action, in order to deal with it, e.g., working hours arrangements, parental leave, part-time work and reduced working hours. In recent years, *CCSP* has raised gender issues mainly from the point of view of work-family life balance. This approach concerns primarily women workers. Various studies have examined why public services are attractive for potential staff and it appears that this aspect is very important for many of them. This demand is approached from the angle of active support for the right to work part-time (in the past, the public sector played an important role in this area). In the public sector, career breaks are still used, not a time credit system. In several ways, this system is more favourable, than a time credit system (**EXPLAIN THE DIFFERENCE???**). In the past, *CGSP* always said that it would not accept that the private sector system be introduced into the public sector, without keeping existing advantages. *CGSP* also strongly supported introducing the 4-day week (Vande Lanotte law). This law is used mainly by women employees. It is very successful, but *CGSP* general secretary thinks that there should also be other measures, that make men take on board responsibilities of family life. She thinks that the existing ten days' paternity leave should be made compulsory.

\* In **Italy**, working time is not a central collective bargaining topic for the state civil service. However, at local authority level, it has become very important. There have been new measures regarding part-time work. Women use part-time work more, while men and women use it for different reasons. Men use it for having a second job, whereas women use it in order to be able to reconcile working and family life better, especially after parental leave, which coincides with when children can be looked after collectively. Since legislation, that was adopted in 1997, they can work part-time and then return to full-time work after two years.

Since the civil and public service agreement signed in 2001, new forms of part-time work are recognised as of right (horizontal, vertical and mixed part-time). Moreover, services cannot refuse a request for part-time work (up to a total of 25% per service), but if the limit is reached, priority is given to those, who care for children or elderly people.

\* In **France**, shorter working time is a very topical issue. There is no general agreement on this in civil and public services - it is negotiated separately. Both unions seem to regret this situation. "*Shorter working hours have been negotiated locally, because a framework agreement has been refused, so agreements vary greatly - some are good and others not.*" (Woman CGT equality officer). It should be emphasised that in none of the negotiations on shorter working hours were there demands regarding gender equality. Moreover, it seems that the issue was not dealt with as such in the different debates in leadership bodies. However, indirectly, the situation of women was taken into consideration in demands concerning the future of part-time work, when the 35 hour week was introduced - and almost all part-timers are women.

\* In Austria, wWork/ILife balance has been a top issue over the last few years, both on the political and the labour-trade union levels. Although the work/life balance debate continues to highlight the needs of working women, the federal government has emphasised the need to increase the number of men, who are willing to take advantage of parental leave, and has therefore also began to highlight the needs of working fathers.

Mis en forme

The primary gendered demand of the Public Sector unions (GÖD) – and especially its Women's Affairs section – is to determine how the calculation of seniority (length of service)seniority and working years has affected women's careers, especially with respect to the use of parental leave. Major headway has been made with respect to the inclusion of parental leave in the seniority schemes, as well as the guaranteeing of the right to return to the same job after parental leave. Examples of this are the right of employees to have the first two years of their parental leave per child considered in full when calculating their seniority; if an employee remains at home until the child reaches school age, 50% of the parental leave years are added to their seniority.

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In principle – according to the interviewee-partner – working hours are not an important topic. Despite the existing 40 hour working week, there is currently no debate on reducing working hours. It is seen as an achievement, however, that many laws now include the right to work part-time. The various organisations in this sector have introduced a wide variety of work-organisation plans, that vary between branches and departments. Flexitime is not anchored in the law and has been introduced where work organisation and open-minded employers permit it. One of the major barriers to progress remains the-implementation within the legal framework. Furthermore, management still assumes that it is "normal" for employees to be on the job full-time, which obviously discriminates against women, who are less able to live up to these expectations than are most men. For this reason, working part-time must still be considered a disadvantage for femalewomen's career advancement. The areas in which demands for improvements will be key ones in the future include: the implementation of a life-long working time models, the possibility to work part-time on less than a half-day basis, as well as the management of core workforce positions, which remain full-time positions and can only be filled by one person, thus preventing the introduction of job-sharing.

**Table 4. Data on working time in the public sector**

(PLEASE ADD DATA TO THIS TABLE)

Austria	?? <u>40 hours</u>
Belgium	38 hours on average over 3 months
Denmark	<u>37 hours</u> ???
France	35 hours, implemented according to decentralised agreements
Italy	<u>36 hours</u> ???
The Netherlands	36 hours

Sources: National reports

#### 4. Obstacles and factors that foster gender mainstreaming

\* In the **Netherlands**, parliamentary debates have contributed to gender mainstreaming being taken on board in central administration and education. However, the approach is rendered difficult in some sectors, where there are many women, because of the cost of introducing such measures, given the large number of women concerned. Moreover, some occupations (employees in childcare, homehelps, nurses and welfare sector) had weak union traditions, which are now developing.

\* In **Belgium**, in *CGSP's* view, assessment of women's participation in union activity is made regularly by the executive committee and women's bureau. The union is very conscious of the fact that only 11% of union officers are women, compared with 42% of the membership. One of the reasons for the under-representation of women in *CGSP* structures is perhaps the result of different approaches amongst women and men to union careers. Men focus immediately on the structures and positions they want to reach. Women, on the other hand, want to work in the union in order to achieve certain objectives. The national union officer for staff in ministries confirms that women activists are less likely to accept compromise in collective bargaining if it does not coincide with their expectations. Within federal public services, on which research has been carried out, solutions to problems of equal treatment and gender mainstreaming are mainly decided upon by the authorities, which are pushed in this direction, as much by democratic political action as by union action. The union movement is becoming increasingly conscious of the primordial role it plays, whereas in the past, it sometimes had reflexes that were too male-dominated. The union movement would have greater legitimacy if it consolidated and activated current measures, that are taken at inter-sector level.

\* In **Italy**, the main area of implementation of gender mainstreaming concerns collective bargaining. Thanks to union women's committees, the conditions of working women have improved. The main bargaining topics include atypical employment, recognition of qualifications and rights to maternity and parental leave. Thus, the issue of regulating flexibility, notably for women, who make up the majority of employees with atypical jobs, is a bargaining topic (especially at local level) and is the subject of legal measures in the health service and education. Thanks to the experience of women "veterans" in collective bargaining and works councils, gender mainstreaming is developing. However, problems of time and availability remain obstacles for women. There are problems of inexperience and absence of adequate training for young women - as is the case in all sectors.

\* In **France** - especially in *CFDT* - there are quite a lot of women union officers at branch and *département* levels, but the higher one goes towards the national level, there are fewer women. The explanation, that is often given by union officers who were interviewed is the



high degree of availability that is still demanded of those who take on union responsibilities - especially at national level - and is difficult to reconcile with family life. The idea is taking hold that the way unions function should be changed, in order to enable men and women to be able to reconcile trade union commitments and family and personal life. As the woman CGT equality officer emphasised, that could happen by changing the timing of meetings and limiting the number of meetings outside Paris (by using electronic communication more effectively)... but all of this is not so easy to introduce. Finally, the place and involvement of women in the union movement appear often to be related to strong challenging of the very nature of union commitment today, which seems to be changing compared with the traditional very strong - almost sacerdotal - personal commitment.

\* In Austria, over the past few years, gender mainstreaming has enjoyed increasing interest within the trade-labour unions. Based on the Ministerial Council Decisions (Ministerratsvorträge) - founded based on article 7, section 2 of the Federal Constitutional Acts on Gender Mainstreaming of 2000, 2001 and 2002 - it has been determined that there is a need to implement gender mainstreaming in the public sector on a variety of levels. Thus, the existing legal conditions could be seen as supportive factors for the introduction of gender mainstreaming. A further supportive factor within the labour trade unions can be found in the present setup in which two GÖD representatives are members of the inter-ministerial working group for the implementation of gender mainstreaming (Interministerielle Arbeitsgruppe zur Umsetzung von Gender Mainstreaming - IMAG). This working group coordinates the gender mainstreaming activities within the public sector and also assumes a networking function between the various governmental institutions, labour trade unions and NGOs. Within the GÖD, no decision on gender mainstreaming (GM) has been passed, however, the Women's Affairs department has introduced a variety of measures to support this agenda. The interview partner has stated that one of the major weaknesses in implementing the concept of gender as a mainstream issue is that gender remains a "women's issue", men do not see themselves as a gender (but rather as the norm) and thus have remained resistant to this agenda. "The problem is that the women's organisations are highlighting the gender issue and this makes it difficult for men to identify with the issue." (interview of the Women's Affairs Secretary) It has been equally difficult to anchor the dual strategy with respect to gender mainstreaming. A further barrier can be found in the fact that no resources have been allocated in order to propagate the gender mainstreaming agenda.

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## 5. Tools envisaged by each public sector union to improve the situation

\* In the **Netherlands**, various tools have been introduced, such as creating networks, investing in education and awareness, using checklists regarding equality in workplaces. This approach also concerns other "special groups" (young people and ethnic minorities), who are all needed for developing unions. *AbvaKabo* explicitly recruits women for courses for new members and for helping members to become active in the union. It is also a matter of fostering the presence of all "special groups" within the national board, by having suitable individual coaching. In *AOB*, the approach is similar, with a system of "mentors", linking more experienced active members with women members, who are training to become active members.

\* In **Belgium**, *CGSP* general secretary is in favour of quotas for ensuring the presence of a minimum number of women within union structures, until such time that there is balanced

representation. Organising experience shows that other measures, such as requests coming from union leadership to elect women to executive committees, have not proved to be very effective. Often, the conservative attitude of men activists - above all, amongst the older generation - is a barrier for women activists. The negative aspect of quota systems is that once women have been nominated and elected, they are asked to do all sorts of representative tasks and there is often no time to do their "normal" work. Another notion, that was introduced by *CGSP*, was to have more efficient meetings. It was simply a matter of fixing the times of the beginning and end of meetings - preferably during working hours - and an agenda that identified priorities at the beginning of meetings. This is a way of short-circuiting informal decision-making, often used by men. *CGSP* does not have a specific campaign on equal opportunities, but tries to include it in its training programmes and publications. Given that few women participate in residential courses, *CGSP* decided to organise more non-residential courses or limit them to one or two nights.

\* In **Italy**, measures for fostering the presence of women in leadership positions involve more training for women's delegations and promoting their professionalism in union issues. *FP CGIL* also organises regular meetings on women, notably during national congresses. Other measures concern, above all, gender mainstreaming in collective bargaining. Methodology regarding gender analysis in the sector is worked out and proposals are made for second-level (decentralised) bargaining. Important themes for fostering women's participation are as follows:

- increasing the number of women in training;
- fostering women's participation in joint committees;
- creation of equality committees;
- making working hours more flexible and promoting part-time work;
- balancing the presence of women in all occupations.

\* In **France**, in both unions, officers, who were interviewed, emphasised the fact that the issue of gender equality should be present in all discussions and themes and at all levels: "*We think that it should be transversal - equality should be everywhere and so should women - they should not be separate. The same as for young people.*" (Woman *CGT* equality officer). Even if there are no specific sector union rules on this, officers try to introduce this issue as often as possible, notably in terms of women's representation in different bodies. Moreover, in *CFDT*, a sector union gender balance charter was adopted in 1993, but it seems that it is not used, as current officers, whom we interviewed, only vaguely knew about it. However, such a tool seems to us to be highly relevant, if it is really used by everyone.

**1993 gender balance charter  
of *CFDT* Intercor sector union, France**

Charter's objectives:

- continue to examine in more detail the situation in the union;
- consolidate unionisation of women;
- promote occupational equality;
- increase the gender balance of bodies;
- foster women's access to positions of responsibility.

It proposes some organisational and financial measures for implementing the objectives, such as:

- introduction of indicators for measuring the proportion of women in union branches and highlighting precise gender discrimination in public services;
- implementation of effective and constant communication on this issue at all hierarchical levels;

- ensure that all occupational sectors include occupational equality in their demands;
- highlight career discrimination by drawing up comparative tables.

It seems that gender mainstreaming is beginning to become part of sector union concerns, even though it is difficult to give it concrete and explicit content: "For us, it has an applied meaning in terms of representation, when we reflect on the composition of commissions, etc. at all levels. It has always been like that. That seems to be accepted, but in our national commission and bureau, we do not think about - nor have we had any discussion at all - on gender mainstreaming, even though we are participating in your study" (Woman CGT equality officer).

\* In Austria, the public sector union (GÖD) uses its own labour-union publications, as well as its regularly scheduled training programmes, in order to propagate gender mainstreaming and to anchor its goals and content within its own ranks. An example of this can be found in the September 2003 edition of the labour-union's national publication (GÖD aktuell), which was entitled: "Gender Mainstreaming: Right on Track?" The lead article in this issue was written by the Women's Affairs secretary, who highlighted the main steps needed to introduce this agenda. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on awareness raising and sensitivity training within the ranks of the labourtrade union's functionaries/officers. To date, two training programmes have been completed with a total of 60 participants; a third training programme is planned for the fall. During the last training programme, one third of the participants were ~~male~~men. Several years ago, the Social Democratic labour-union faction within the GÖD (FSG) carried out a survey, in which they determined the level of knowledge and acceptance ~~for~~of gender mainstreaming issues within the organisation. The results were "demotivating", according to the interviewed Woman's Affairs Secretary. Not only did both men and women show little interest for the issue as a whole, the survey also found out that very few of those questioned actually understood the gender mainstreaming agenda, e.g. most were unable to differentiate between GM and positive action programmes for women. It is mainly men in high positions who proved to be openly apprehensive about the gender mainstreaming agenda, largely because they see it as a threat to their privileged positions within the organisations. This can be seen as a key barrier to the whole gender mainstreaming project, which is largely based on a "top-down" model in which leadership must play a key role in propagating and implementing policy changes. One of the main results of this survey, which will have great significance in the future, is the recognition that awareness-raising and sensitivity training will need to lay the groundwork for improvement. One of the GÖD's plans for the immediate future is to introduce a gendered approach to its own media. Within the ranks of the employees of the Ministry of Finance, a gender working group has introduced a gendered checklist that can be used when developing income tax policy; this checklist had no impact on the last round of tax reforms, which was recently completed.

In Austria a tendency does exist to "pedagogically" introduce each wave of reform; thus gender mainstreaming has been dealt with, within the government as well as the labourtrade unions, first and foremost as a training, awareness and publicity issue. This phase is to be followed, according to national tradition, by concrete policy steps.

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In conclusion, the public sector - of the three sectors that we have studied - presents interesting results for our study. Indeed, it is a sector with many women and is undergoing restructuring, but the existence of civil and public servant status has repercussions for the implementation of equality policy, that is defended by unions and also partly by the state as employer. It is, therefore, possible to consider that the respective situation in the countries covered by this study are concerned by converging approaches. All actors have indicated, for example, that there is no direct discrimination in the public sector and that particular attention is paid to respecting equality. But, when one looks more closely, all unions recognise that indirect forms of discrimination exist, despite protective civil and public servant status. In the area of pay, some unions (in the Netherlands and Belgium) have taken on board the issue of job evaluation as a source of gender discrimination. Others have emphasised the growth of job insecurity for employees, who are often not permanent and are generally women. Finally, in terms of career and access to decision-making positions, no country escapes the glass ceiling in the public sector (high level positions in the state civil service and universities, etc.).

Unions are all mobilised internally and regarding action on equality, sometimes with strong traditions in this area (the Netherlands). Public sector unions can be considered to have real policy aspirations for internal and external equality (in their demands). But statistical data on the presence of women in union leadership positions do not show any real difference compared with the other sectors. Obstacles to women's access, that have already been clearly identified, are still prevalent, namely low level of availability of women and the maintenance of a male model of activism...