
Equal opportunities and collective bargaining in the European Union

Selected agreements from Ireland

Phase II

WP/97/18/EN



**EUROPEAN FOUNDATION
for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions**

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING
IN THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**SELECTED AGREEMENTS FROM IRELAND
PHASE II**

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1. INTRODUCTION

Phase two of the Project on Collective Bargaining and Equal Opportunities in Europe is concerned with the collection and analysis of equal opportunities agreements. Draft Guidelines and a Draft Model/Analysis of an Equal Opportunity Agreement have been prepared and given to the National Rapporteurs for assistance. (See Appendix 1).

The agreements selected should demonstrate different methods of achieving equal opportunities, across different subjects and sectors. The assumption is that good collective agreements can be applied more widely.

The analysis of the agreements attempts to elucidate the features which could allow for equal opportunities to be potentially transposed outside the specific national, sectoral or subject context.

The framework for analysis based on the Draft Guidelines for Stage 2 leaves it to the Rapporteur to explain:

- why that agreement was selected
- what are its particularly good features
- which aspects of national context explain these specific features
- any aspects of how it was reached which help explain its innovative character

In accordance with the Draft Guidelines for Stage 2 if all efforts fail to produce agreements in any worthwhile number, the term "collective agreement" covers a wide spectrum. It can include not only formal agreements, but where workers consent to policies produced by employers. Furthermore, the Draft Guidelines state that if even on this wide definition, there can be found no worthwhile number of agreements, Rapporteurs may wish to consider measures which are functionally equivalent material aiming to achieve equal opportunities for women.

For the purpose of the Stage 2 report for Ireland the following agreements and policies were selected for analysis:

1. The Programme for Economic and Social Progress (Sections 92-120) This is an agreement negotiated between the Irish trade union movement, the Irish employers groups and the Irish government. It is a social and economic policy for the period 1990-1993 and part of the agreement has explicitly attempted to address discriminatory practice.
2. Equality of Opportunity in the Irish Civil Service. This was initially a self declared equal opportunity agreement and thereafter obtained the full support of the Civil Service group of unions.
3. Midland and Mid Western Health Boards Employment Equality Policy. This is a self declared equal opportunity policy which was developed following a research project on personnel practices in these two health boards. The policy has the full support of the unions.
4. Aer Rianta. Equal Opportunities Policy. This is a self declared equal opportunity policy and was one of the first of its type to be developed in Ireland. The unions fully support it.
5. The Electricity Supply Board. Equal Opportunity Policy. This is a self declared equal opportunity policy with full trade union support.
6. An Post. Equal Opportunity Policy. This is a self declared equal opportunity policy with full trade union support.
7. R.T.E. Equality in Employment Policy. This is a self declared equal opportunity policy with full trade union support.
8. Allied Irish Banks Limited. Equal Opportunities Policy. This is a self declared equal opportunity policy with full trade union support.
9. Fruit of The Loom International Ltd. Equal Opportunity Agreement. This agreement was negotiated and agreed between the company and S.I.P.T.U. trade union.
10. Superquinn Limited. Equality of Opportunity Agreement and Policy. This was initially a self declared equal opportunity policy, and updated in consultation with the trade unions following participation in a European project.

The Draft Guidelines for Stage Two of this Report defined "good" collective agreements as consisting of three types:

- (a) self-declared EO agreements
- (b) agreements which explicitly attempt to address discriminatory practice
- (c) agreements which appear good once they are considered in context.

The majority of agreements and policies selected for analysis for the Report for Ireland mainly come within (a) above, i.e. self declared EO agreements. Some of these however explicitly attempt to address discriminatory practices.

2. PROGRAMME FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS (1990-1993) (See Appendix 2)

2.1. Introduction

The material used in the present analysis of the Programme for Social and Economic Progress is based on an analysis of the actual programme which has been published by the Government and is widely available. (See appendix 2 for relevant sections of the Programme).

The P.E.S.P was a tri-partite agreement negotiated by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the Irish Business Employers Confederation and the Government. It covers the period 1990-1993 and agreed in January 1991. It was the first element of a strategy to accelerate and sustain substantial employment growth with accompanying social progress in the 1990's, through the maintenance of a low inflation economy with a stable exchange rate. For this purpose the PESP provided specific proposals for the early years of the 1990's on:

- (1) macro-economic stability policies, geared at low inflation and low interest rates, and
- (2) a programme of fundamental structural reforms, which included issues concerning equal opportunities.

The material used in this report was obtained from several sources. The primary source being the PESP. This programme was published by the Government and is available from Government Publications (Dublin). Other material used in the analysis of this programme came from the Central Review Committee which is representative of the Government, Irish employers and the Irish trade union movement. This committee regularly publish reports on the progress of the PESP.

The PESP was applicable to all employees employed in the Republic of Ireland. While it was negotiated at central level, reflecting the corporatist system of industrial relations (which has been in operation in Ireland since 1987), the agreement was directly applicable to all employees in all industrial sectors at all levels. The agreement included pay increases, tax reform, employment and training (which included an equal opportunities component) among other issues.

Why was the PESP selected as a 'good' agreement?

The PESP was the outcome of negotiations between the Irish trade union movement, Irish employer groups and the Government. It was a follow up to the first corporatist agreement negotiated in 1987 - the P.N.R. (the Programme for National Recovery). It should be noted that since 1987 the culture of Irish industrial relations had been evolving towards a tri-partite system of collective bargaining. The PESP is quite an exceptional agreement from an equal opportunities perspective. The agreement showed a firm commitment by the social partners to eliminating inequality and equal opportunity at work and in education. For example, in the area of education, the PESP made special provision for mature students and lone parents, of which a significant number of Irish women availed. The Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme was expanded by 1,000 places in 1992 and a further 900 places were provided from September 1993. The eligibility requirements for participation in the scheme were revised to include lone parents and others. The vast majority of lone parent families in Ireland are headed by women. As already mentioned in the Phase One report for Ireland, lone parenthood in Ireland is a poverty trap in many cases. It was envisaged the educational developments aimed at lone parents and mature students under the PESP would be of particular assistance to Irish women.

One of the main barriers preventing women entering and participating in the labour market, or a key factor forcing them leave it is the lack of child care services in Ireland. This point has also been raised in the Phase One report for Ireland. The PESP provided for increased financial support for pre-school services in disadvantaged areas. The PESP also acknowledged the need for a policy to encourage the development of child care services as a collective responsibility. A Working Party was established by the Minister for Labour to advise on the potential for early action to develop a number of prototypes of day care services. The Working Party reported to the Minister for Equality and Law Reform in 1994.

A Civil Service creche was established in May 1992, and in accordance with the commitment in the PESP £1 million was allocated in the 1994 Estimates for Child Care facilities generally.

Why is the PESP an exceptional agreement?

For the first time within the corporatist industrial relations system, equal opportunities has formed part of the bargaining agenda and obtained the support of the Irish trade union movement and Irish employers. This equality focus of the PESP has been carried through into the following agreement - the Programme for Competitiveness and Work (1993-1996). The PCW addressed the issue of the need for reform of the equality legislation, taking account of developments in national and European law.

During the PESP also, a Code of Practice on Sexual Harassment at work was prepared and published by the Employment Equality Agency. This code provided a framework for employers and trade unions to develop their own code for their place of work.

In the State sponsored area of Irish business, the monitoring of equal opportunities was extended to the Health Boards and Local Authorities in 1991. A national survey of female middle management in local authorities and health boards was carried out to establish their views on selection and promotion procedures and training and development needs. An equality network of senior local authority officers was established with responsibility for matters relating to equal opportunities.

2.2. Identification of Agreement

Date of Agreement: 1990
Duration of Agreement: 3 years

2.3. Parties to Agreement

Employer: Federated Union of Employers (now I.B.E.C.) the Confederation of Irish Industry, the Constructive Industry Federation, the Irish Farmers Assoc., the Government

Trade Union: The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (representative of approximately 90% of Irish trade union membership).

2.4. Type of Agreement:

- National
- Private and Public Sectors
- Sector: all sectors
- Occupation: all occupations covering all employees in the Republic of Ireland.

2.5. Sector: All sectors of the Labour Force are covered by the Agreement of which 34% are women. (March 1996 Labour Force Survey)

2.6. This Agreement succeeds the previous Programme for National Recovery (1987-1990) which united the Government and the major economic and social interests in Irish society. The Government accepted the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' proposal to adopt a long term strategy for the development of the economy over the next decade which was agreed by the Irish employers organisation and farming organisations. The P.E.S.P. provides a strategic framework for the nineties, a significant section of which covers Equality.

Good Features/Qualities of Agreement

This is an agreement which is good in context because it provides a formal basis and framework for aspects of equality bargaining to take place.

Special Features

- Full social insurance cover extended to part time workers earning £25 or more per week. Those in regular part-time employment are eligible for social insurance benefits. This agreement will extend to a significant number of Irish women in the labour market on a part time basis.
- The Health Promotion Unit of the Department of Health is co-operating closely with several women's organisations on matters relevant to women's health in pursuance of the P.E.S.P. commitment to develop health promotion in the work place.
- Monitoring of equal opportunities in State Sponsored Bodies was extended to Health Boards and Local Authorities in 1991.
- A second Equality Focus Award Scheme was undertaken during 1992 by the Employment Equality Agency. The Scheme is being reviewed by the Department of Equality and Law Reform in the context of the broader equality approach.
- The Minister for Equality and Law Reform received the Report of the Working Party on Childcare for Working Parents.
- The Irish Civil Service agreed to establish a creche in May 1992.

- Upper age limit in most competitions for posts in the Civil Service and Local Authority Service have been substantially raised. (This will facilitate a significant number of women wishing to re-enter the labour market).
- A system of gender proofing has been introduced into every Memorandum for Government.
- A strategy to establish gender balance on to membership of Boards of State Sponsored bodies with the objective that no one sex should hold more than 60% of places on any one Board.
- Proposals to reform employment equality legislation to cover discrimination in employment on grounds such as parental status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, nationality and national or ethnic origin.
- Legislation on sexual harassment to be introduced taking into account European Union recommendation and Code of Practice on the Protection of the Dignity of Women and Men at Work.

2.7. National Context

Format

This is a formal agreement between the Government, the Irish employers and the Irish trade union movement. It contains a section on Equality and Equal Opportunity (page 38-42).

Legal Effect

Not legally binding between company and union in accordance with Irish practice, but forms part of the terms and conditions of employment for all Irish employees (1990-1993).

2.8. Field of Application: Geographical Area

National

2.9. Field of Application: Industry

All sectors of industry in Ireland.

2.10 Field of Application: Unions

All unions affiliated to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (approximately 90%).

2.11 Employee Coverage

All employees working in the Republic of Ireland. in all occupations and grades.

3. THE IRISH CIVIL SERVICE (See Appendix 3)

3.1. Introduction

The information used for the present analysis of equal opportunities in the Irish Civil Service was supplied by the Department of Finance, Personnel Section and the Civil and Public Service Union.

The equal opportunities guidelines and Policy for the Irish Civil Service were published in 1986. The Guidelines were drawn up to provide a statement of basic principles on which the on-going development of an equality policy could be based. A Sub Committee was established to monitor the general implementation of equality policy. This Sub Committee is a joint union management body and meets approximately once a month.

Changes in the composition of the Civil Service are monitored on an on-going basis by means of reports from the Staff Information System, the computerized data base in the Civil Service which is maintained by the Department of Finance. The Irish Civil Service is one of the largest Irish employers. Traditionally it has provided employment for females in the clerical/administrative areas, following the completion of second level education.

The selection of the Civil Service Equal Opportunity Policy is important in consideration of the fact that it is a significant employer of female labor in the Irish Republic. At the end of 1993 there were almost 29,000 employees serving in the Irish Civil Service, of whom slightly less than 46% were women.

Statistical information on departmental and inter departmental promotion competitions and on open competitions is collected from the Departments and from the Civil Service Commission by means of Monitoring Equality Policy forms. There has been little change in the percentage of women in the top four general service grades since 1992, but the number of females in the Higher Executive Grade has increased significantly (from 32% in 1992 to 36% in 1993). Women are poorly represented in certain specific areas and grades in the Civil Service. For example, in the Custom and Excise Service and among audit staff.

Why is the Civil Service policy a good policy?

The Irish Civil Service is a major employer of women where job segregation and the feminisation of the labour process are still in evidence. Part of the reason why this pattern of employment continues is cultural. Traditionally, Irish women on completion of their second level education found safe secure employment within the civil service. A job in the civil service has traditionally been regarded as a 'good' job, but for women seldom has it been regarded as a career. Prior to 1973 Irish women had to resign from their jobs on marriage.

The equal opportunity policy of the Civil Service was initiated in 1986 and has been evolving and expanding ever since, incorporating many interesting aspects and innovations. For example, a career break scheme is available which offers between one and five years for child rearing and certain other domestic purposes. The number of people on career break at the end of 1993 was 2,290 of whom 71% were female. The single most common reason for taking a career break in 1993 was child rearing and other domestic purposes.

The job sharing policy of the Irish Civil Service provides further evidence of an equal opportunities issue which was needed by many employees in the service. The job sharing scheme has been very successful and many Irish companies developed similar schemes, based on the experience of the Irish Civil Service. Again 97% of those engaged in job sharing are women. While there are people job sharing in a wide variety of grades ranging from clerical assistant to assistant principal grade, 76% of those job sharing are in the clerical level grades.

As evidence of the level of commitment to equal opportunity issues, the Irish Civil Service carried out research into the question of participation rates in inter-departmental competition from Higher Executive Officer to Assistant Principal Officer. The research sought to establish the various issues which might influence decisions whether to seek promotion. Some factors identified by the research into differences between the promotion seeking behavior of men and women were as follows:

- (1) There was a strong relationship between certain demographic factors and promotion seeking, both between male applicants and non applicants and as between men and women.

- (2) There was some evidence that family responsibilities may be responsible for differences in promotion seeking between men and women. Family responsibilities tended to act as an incentive for men to seek promotion but is a disincentive for women. This would seem to reflect differences in the perceptions of the roles of the men and women within the family.
- (3) However, there were clear indicators that initiatives taken in recent years facilitated the combination of work and family responsibilities, such as job-sharing, has encouraged women to seek promotion.
- (4) A significant relationship emerged between self-confidence and promotion seeking behavior and there was also a relationship between gender and level of encouragement of this measure, women being less encouraged by this factor than men. Accordingly, levels of self confidence may be contributing to gender differences in promotion seeking.

In the area of Training the Civil Service recognise that training has an important role to play in the development of equal opportunities, particularly in helping to promote a change of attitude to ensure an equal opportunity environment. In 1992, a Departmental Training Officers' sub committee on equality related training was established for the purpose of developing a training brief with an equality focus. The brief is now used in induction programmes and targets all new staff. It covers such issues as equality legislation, sexual harassment as well as the Civil Service equality policy and equality initiatives. More experienced civil servants are given training which includes wider equal opportunities issues and encourages Supervisors to consider ways of facilitating staff advancement.

Why is the policy exceptional?

As stated earlier the Irish Civil Service is a major employer of female labour. In 1986 the Civil Service recognised the need to develop an equal opportunity policy and established a joint union management committee to evaluate and monitor its implementation. This continuous monitoring has resulted in refinements and amendments to the policy.

The civil service policy is a major success, although there is still ample room for improvement. For example the issue of the feminisation of the labour process in the lower clerical grades is still a real issue to be addressed but may involve a wider cultural issue emanating from the Irish value system which perceives clerical jobs as 'women's' work and employment in the civil service as a good job for women and not as a 'career' for women.

3.2. Identification of Agreement

Date of Agreement: 1986 Duration of Agreement:
Irish Civil Service Policy
on-going evaluation and
review.

3.3. Parties to Agreement

Employer: The Irish Civil Service
Trade Unions: The Irish Civil Service Group of
Unions (Assoc. of Higher Civil
Servants, Civil and Public Service
Union, Civil Service Blind
Telephonists Assoc., Federated Union
of Government Employees, Public
Service Executive Union, Union of
Professional and Technical Civil
Servants).

3.4 Type of Agreement

- National
- Public Service
- All Grades

3.5. Sector

Services: Public Sector
% of Women: 45% . Workforce =32,000
all grades

3.6. Equal Opportunities Policy and Guidelines for the Irish Civil Service emerged following their publication in July 1986. The implementation of those principles is a matter for the Equality Section of the Department of Finance and the Personnel Officer in each Department. A joint management/union sub-committee established in 1987 meets approximately once a month for the purpose of monitoring the general implementation of equality policy.

Good Features/Qualities of the Agreement

- Self Declared equality of opportunity agreement
"Equality in the Civil Service"

- The Policy and Guidelines state that the Civil Service, as an employer, is committed to employment policies, procedures and practices which do not discriminate on grounds of sex or marital status and which promotes full equality of opportunity between men and women.
- Promotion and recruitment is by competition and open to both men and women and the Civil Service is clearly committed to a policy of equal opportunity.
- A career break scheme of between six month and five years are available for child-rearing and certain other domestic purposes. (The number of people on career breaks on 1st. March 1994 was 1,373 of whom 75% were women. The single most common reason for taking career breaks was child rearing and other domestic purposes 43%)
- Job Sharing: Staff may opt to job share for period of one year or more, provided a partner is available and a suitable post exists. In general job sharers enjoy pro-rata arrangements with their full time colleagues in relation to pay and other conditions of employment. (98% of job sharers were women at the end of 1993 and 80% of those in job sharing were in grades below Executive Officer level).
- Creche Facilities: A creche was opened in April 1992 for children of civil servants.
- Maternity Leave and Promotion: During a period of absence on maternity leave (up to 14 weeks) an employee is to be treated as if she has not been so absent, and such employees should continue to be considered for promotion in the usual way while on maternity leave. If selected for promotion, the timing of their appointment in the new grade should not be affected by the fact that they are on maternity leave.
- Sexual Harassment: The Civil Service Policy on sexual harassment includes in its definition "unreciprocated, unsolicited behaviour of a sexual nature to which the recipient objects" and furthermore "uninvited persistent pressure for dates which becomes offensive to the recipient and to which the recipient has made his/her objections known to the officer making the requests".

- **Women Who Resign on of Following Marriage:**
A Civil Servant who resigns her position in the Irish Civil Service for the purpose of, on or following marriage may be re-instated if:
 - (i) she does not get married, or
 - (ii) she becomes a widow, or
 - (iii) she can establish to the satisfaction of the Minister for Finance that she is not being supported by her husband.
- **Adoptive Leave:** Available to women and in certain cases to some men also.
- **Training:** There is a Training Scheme which provides training courses for women in management grade. The course which was introduced in 1984 is specifically designed to encourage middle management grades to develop and enhance their management potential.
- **Flexitime:** Available to certain grades but not all grades.
- **Use of Language:** Official forms and documents are appropriately designed for completion by either men or women.

3.7. National Context

Format

The Equal Opportunities Policy and Guidelines for the Irish Civil Service were published in July 1986. These are a set of formal Guidelines published in booklet format (with an annual review of their implementation published also), provide a statement of basic principles on which the on-going development of an equality policy could be developed for all sectors of Irish industry.

Legal Effect: The equal opportunity policy forms part of the terms and conditions of employment of all civil servants, most of which reflect E.U. legal standards and Irish legal regulations.

3.8. Field of Application: Geographical Area National

3.9. Field of Application: Industry Service: The Irish Civil Service

3.10 Field of Application: Unions The Irish Civil Service group of unions - see above

- 3.11 **Employee Coverage:**
All Irish Civil Servants

- 3.12 **Employee Coverage: Occupations**
All grades within the Civil Service, with
specific issues available to certain grades
only, e.g. flexitime

NOTE:

Industrial relations matters concerning Irish Civil servants up to and including Higher Executive Officer level (Assistant Principal level for certain professional and technical grades) are dealt with through the Civil Service Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme. The Union or Staff Association which has recognition for particular grades under the Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme may represent employee views at this forum. The conciliation machinery functions at two levels, the General Council and the Departmental Councils, the former generally dealing with issues common to the Civil Service as a whole and the latter with departmental matters and the local application of general principles formulated at General Council. Where agreement cannot be reached at conciliation level the matter may be referred to arbitration provided it falls into the category of issues which are arbitrable under the rules of the Scheme.

A separate Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme exists for civil service grades not included in the main scheme but below Assistant Secretary level.

4. THE MIDLAND AND MID-WESTERN HEALTH BOARDS
(See Appendix 4)

4.1. Introduction

For the purpose of the present analysis, the material obtained and used was supplied by the Local Government Staff Negotiations Board and the Impact Trade Union.

Ireland has eight health board regions. The Health Boards employ large number of professionals in the medical and para-medical areas. The vast majority of these are women. (approximately 71%). Most women in the Health Boards are employed as nurses, social workers, home helps, canteen workers, physiotherapists and clerical/administrative workers. Only 7% of management in the Health Boards are women.

Why is this a 'good' policy

The Midland and Mid-Western Health Board recognised the gender imbalance in their occupational grading structure and initiated a research study into the Boards' personnel practices and procedures. The research findings of this study assisted in developing an equal opportunities policy. The policy has the full support of the trade unions.

162 women were randomly selected from middle and senior levels of the administrative nursing and

para-medical hierarchies in the two Health Boards. The focus of the research was on the organisation culture and procedures, since these were seen as the key barriers to women's promotion in the health boards. The research vividly documents the fact that women see barriers as arising from a hierarchical style of management which made it difficult for them to be "visible", as well as the less than positive attitudes to the whole area of women in senior positions. They saw such attitudes being reflected in the recruitment, training and promotion areas as well as in the types of job experience available to them.

In the administrative section these women were competing within what is still, especially at senior levels, a male world. Men's chances of promotion from the lower to the senior grades are four times greater than women's in these Health Board areas. The chance of promotion is roughly one in two for men and one in eight for women.

The women surveyed stated that the adoption of targets showing increased numbers of women in senior management would send a signal that the organisation was serious about equality.

Using the Health Boards' own data base the research showed that women's chances of promotion are very low, (1 in 28), whereas men's chances of promotion, on statistical grounds, is twice as good as the women's, although they are also quite low (1 in 14).

The patterns of job segregation and lack of promotion and career development for women employed in industry in Ireland is not peculiar to Health Boards, as has been pointed out in the phase one report for Ireland. This pattern is repeated across industry in Ireland in general and is repeated in other E.U. member states.

Why is the Policy exceptional?

The Health Boards are major employers of Irish female labour in Ireland. This policy represents the first attempt in the Health sector to develop an equal opportunity policy. It has the full backing of the Minister for Health and the trade unions with representative status in the health sector. These developments are very much in line with European social policy and reflect the Government and social partners commitments under the PESP and the PCW with regard to giving collective bargaining an equality focus and improving the position of women in the health services area.

The health services in Ireland is dominated by women, yet this is not reflected in the management or senior professional grades. The development and implementation of an equal opportunity policy is a positive step towards reducing discrimination in the health services area. However, a lot more work needs to be done in order to change the culture, attitudes and value system which supports and upholds the feminisation of the labour process in the lower grades within the Irish health services.

It is felt this agreement/policy could have wider application in the other Health Board areas and is conducive to potential transposition.

4.2. Identification of Agreement

Date of Agreement: 1996

Duration : Policy agreement
(monitored on an
on-going basis)

4.3. Parties to Agreement:

Employer: Midland and Mid Western Health Boards
Trade Union: Impact Trade Union

4.4. Type of Agreement

- Regional
- Health Services
- Occupations (all grades)

4.5. Sector

- Health Services
- % of women employed:32%. Workforce =3,072
Midland Health Board
- % of women employed 33%. Workforce =3,970
Mid-West Health Bd.

4.6. The policy follows negotiations between the Health Boards and the Impact Trade Union on equal opportunities and positive action at work.

Good Features/Qualities of Agreement

- Self declared equal opportunity policy

Special Features

- Policies and procedures adequate to secure equality of opportunity and a harassment free working environment will be maintained and revised regularly.

- The use of gender neutral language will be promoted both in verbal and written communication.
- Women in senior management positions will be profiled in the Board's magazines and other publications for the purpose of promoting desirable role models.
- Staff with home responsibilities will be assisted where possible, by all practicable means to integrate their domestic roles successfully with their work life by the use of existing practices which facilitate equality of opportunity, e.g. career breaks, job sharing
- Training courses will be provided to meet the needs of part time staff and those with domestic responsibilities who are unable to stay away from home overnight.
- The use of lengthy seniority/service requirements in promotion which may indirectly discriminate against women will be avoided where possible.

4.7. National Context

Format:

This policy is the first of its type to be developed for the Irish Health Board sector.

Legal Effect:

Not legally binding between the company and the union in accordance with Irish industrial relations practice.

4.8. Field of Application: Geographical Area Regional

4.9. Field of Application: Industry Health Services

4.10 Field of Application: Union Impact Trade Union

4.11 Employee Coverage: Categories All employees working in the two Health Boards

4.12 Employee Coverage: Occupations All grades and occupations.

5. AER RIANTA
(See Appendix 5)

5.1. Introduction

In February 1994 Aer Rianta and the Group of Unions in the Company published "Towards Constructive Participation: A Positive Approach to Management/ Union Relationships". This document states that "the Group feel that we can best achieve success and adjust to changing circumstances by accepting that the trade unions have a legitimate and central role in strategic decisions and policy making in addition to their role in day to day relationships between management and staff".

In reflecting the proactive approach adopted by Aer Rianta and the trade unions, the agreement states (page 3):

"Aer Rianta management and the Group of Unions accept that jointness is the fundamental principle of their future approach to maintaining and developing the company and managing its business and opportunities".

The agreement further recognises that both parties undertake to jointly pursue a policy of equal opportunities and the elimination of discriminatory practices and policies.

Aer Rianta is the Irish airline authority and was established in the 1940's. It has three bases in Ireland - Dublin, Cork and Shannon. It is one of the leading 'model' Irish companies in the field of equal opportunities and was one of the first Irish companies to develop equal opportunities policies. Their policies are conducive to potential transposition - at a European level.

The material used in this analysis of Aer Rianta policies and agreements was obtained from the Personnel Manager and the Equal Opportunity Manager in Aer Rianta. A copy of their Personnel Policy was supplied by the company for perusal. Their policies are very innovative in that they were developed very early in the 1980's and included such issues as the employment of women in non-traditional areas, bullying at work, sexual harassment, paternity leave, career breaks etc. Many years before such issues were subject to collective bargaining between unions and management Aer Rianta was unilaterally introducing them.

Why is it a 'good' policy

Aer Rianta management witnessed significant levels of employee dissatisfaction in the 1970's. The

Personnel Manager at the time (now the General Manager) had a special interest in equal opportunity issues, long before these issues became topical in industrial relations.

The emphasis of the Company at all material times has been constructive participation of which equal opportunities forms part of the agenda. The company adopted a very proactive approach in developing its policies. They did not utilise the traditional collective bargaining route. Equality issues were not part of the agenda of trade unions in the 1980's in Aer Rianta.

An important features of the Aer Rianta policy is that the company have recognised the special needs of some of its employees - mainly women - for a more flexible approach to their work. The company responded by developing a job sharing policy - long before it appeared on the trade unions' agenda in Ireland.

Why is it an exceptional policy?

It is generally recognised that part time work is one of the most significant ways to combine work outside the home with family responsibilities. The percentage of job sharers in Ireland is much less than in other European member states, however, the rate of job sharing is increasing in Ireland.

Aer Rianta were the first company in Ireland to devise a job sharing policy. At the time this was regarded as a revolutionary move and produced many skeptics from both the employer and trade union side. Aer Rianta guarantees pay equity with full time employees as well as a provision on equal treatment regarding other terms and conditions of employment. The company's attitude to job sharing has always been very positive and is reflective of European trends on the need to provide flexibility in working arrangements. Within the company there is a positive acceptance of a career path for job sharers. The Aer Rianta job sharing scheme because of its age (i.e. length in operation) and its success, has been adopted by many other Irish companies wishing to accommodate the needs of their staff particularly female employees with dependents.

5.2. Identification of Agreement

Date of Agreement: 1982

Duration: Two years, renewable.

5.3. Parties

Employer: Aer Rianta.

Trade Union: Federated Workers Union of Ireland
(now known as S.I.P.T.U.)

5.4. Type of Agreement

- National
- Semi-State
- Sectoral (Airport Personnel)

5.5. Sector

Services: Irish Airport Authority

% of women employed: 28%. Workforce = 1,600
Full time

5.6. Agreement follows a recognition by Aer Rianta and the Union of the need to facilitate staff who are not in a position to work a full week but do not wish to terminate their employment.

5.7. Good Features/Qualities of Agreement

Self declared equal opportunity agreement:
Family/Work interface. Page 1 "both parties see this programme as designed only to facilitate staff who are not in a position to work a full week but do not wish to terminate their employment. For example, parents of young children are regarded as ideal candidates..."

Special Features

- Working hours shall be on the basis of alternative two and three day working weeks with the prevailing number of daily hours.
- Each shared job shall be recognisable and potentially interchangeable with full time job and shall have and retain a job description comprising the duties and responsibilities of the job as a whole.
- Job sharing staff will be entitled to apply for all jobs advertised on Staff Vacancy Notices. Since such notices will only be for full time positions, it follows that transfers and promotions will be to full time positions except where a direct exchange is convenient and acceptable to both the management and staff members involved.
- For payment purposes, job sharers will be classified as working half the prevailing basic week. Consequently each job sharer will be paid half the prevailing full time rates.
- Annual leave entitlements will be the same as those applying to full time staff, paid on a pro rata basis.

5.8. National Context

Format

This is a formal collective agreement consisting of 4 printed pages and signed by the parties to the agreement. Its format is typical of Irish collective agreements generally, except that it is very unique in its subject matter, i.e. equal opportunity.

Legal Effect

Not legally binding between the company and the union in accordance with Irish industrial relations practice.

5.9. Field of Application: Geographical Area

Irish Airports which are controlled by Aer Rianta.

5.10 Field of Application: Industry

Service Sector: Irish Airport Authority

5.11 Field of Application: Union

S.I.P.T.U.

5.12 Employee Coverage: Categories

page 1 "parents of young children are regarded as ideal candidates"

Clerical and administrative grades.

6. THE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY BOARD (E.S.B.)

(See Appendix 6)

6.1. Introduction

The E.S.B. is a very important employer in Ireland. Since its establishment in the 1930's the E.S.B. has been the sole supplier of electricity in Ireland. This situation is about to change with E.U. developments which may in turn impact on the status of equal opportunities in the company.

The information and material used for the purpose of the present analysis was supplied by the Personnel Department and the Equal Opportunity Manager in the E.S.B.

The Electricity Supply Board was established in 1927 under the Electricity Supply Act. It has a virtual monopoly of the supply and distribution of electricity. The company is managed by a Board and a Chief Executive, who under the Act is Chairman of the Board as well as in effect managing director of the company. The Board, including its Chairman is appointed by the Government. In 1993 a total of 10,772 people were employed in the ESB. There were 8,919 men and 1,855 women in the ESB. (82.8% male and 17.2% female). These figures include all part time and non regular employees. Men and women tend to be concentrated in different areas/occupations,

reflecting traditional job segregation trends and patterns. This pattern of traditional job segregation is augmented when the categories of employment are examined. For example, there are no female employees in senior management, or working as technologists, technical supervisors, control room operators, safety services officers, departmental assistants, fisheries conservation staff, communication technicians or mechanical fitters. Women are very strongly over represented as clerical officers (83%) canteen staff (91%) office cleaners (100%) and canteen managers (79%). In the traditional male areas of work where a minority of women are employed they make up 5% of engineers, 3% of chemical technicians, 1% of the electricians, 4% of porters/watchpersons, and 2% of other technical and training staff.

Within the ESB also more women are to be found in part time work (both temporary and regular) and in job sharing. On the other hand there is a greater number of males on consultancy work and employed as trainees and apprentices.

On the subject of remuneration in the ESB women earn, on average, less than men, and in categories where both men and women are employed, women are on lower average annual salaries. A noticeable exception to this pattern is in the position of drawing office assistant, where women earn, on average £900 more per annum than males in the same category. A similar trend exists for the position of canteen manager, where female earnings are approximately £500 greater than that of males. Some of these differences can be explained with regard to age.

The length of male service in the ESB is almost twice that of female service

Why is the ESB policy a 'good' policy?

Equality of opportunity has been a commitment within the ESB since the early 1970's. In 1974 there was an enquiry into the employment/re-employment of married women in the ESB. Two years later, there was a study of the consequences of the ESB Employment Policy in relation to married female officer staff. In 1977 a report was completed on the employment of female officer staff in the ESB.

In 1988 the company issued its Equal Opportunity Policy and Code of Practice. Initially the emphasis was on gender equality but now in the 1990's the focus has begun to broaden to include other barriers to equal opportunities. The ESB's European Positive Action Programme states the company now has moved on to address 'issues and barriers which prevent all staff from reaching their full potential'.

In 1994 the Cost and Competitive Review (CCR) was completed and made important recommendations on restructuring for the future sustainability and viability of the company, arising from an EU Directive creating a single market for electricity supply in the Union. In theory this means allowing external generating and supply companies to operate within Ireland, and the ESB would thus lose its monopoly position.

One of the most important of the CCR recommendations is the reduction of staff by approximately one third.

In 1986 the first Equal Opportunity Officer was appointed by the company, with a brief to encourage women into non-traditional areas of employment. In 1988 the company published its first equal opportunity policy. An Equality Review Group was established to examine the employment of women in the ESB. The Group reported in 1990 and the recommendations were used as the basis of the ESB's Positive Action Programme.

The Equal Opportunity Officer was upgraded and re-structured, with a Manager (with senior management status) appointed for on a three year rotational basis. An Equality Council was also established with a consultative and advisory brief to keep ESB management informed on equal opportunity issues. The Council completed its term of office in 1993 and was replaced by a Joint Equality Council established by the ESB and the ESB Group of unions. The Council reports directly to the Company and the group of unions. In addition local equality committees have been established for the purpose of 'working in partnership to identify and resolve equality issues at local level'.

The ESB were equal opportunity conscious since the early 1970's. They were one of the first companies in Ireland to develop an equal opportunities focus in their policies. A formal equal opportunity policy has been in operation since 1988 and has resulted in various positive developments within the company to enhance the position of women and promote equality. One of the most important and striking aspects of the ESB's equality policy is that the policy has expanded to reflect a proactive approach by the company. The policy itself facilitates and encourages the recruitment of women into non traditional work areas, it recognises equal opportunity as a major corporate issue and has appointed an Equality Manager and a Joint Equality Council.

Why is the policy exceptional?

The ESB were one of the first companies in Ireland to develop an equal opportunity policy and made sufficient resources available to fund it.

What makes the ESB Policy exceptional is that apart from devising a formal policy, the company also established a formal structure within the organisation to promote and implement the policy. The appointment of the first Equal Opportunity Manager in 1991 with senior management status, the company have incorporated an Equality Performance Programme into its Business Plans beginning with the business plans for the period 1992-1996. Each business unit must outline its plans in the area of equal opportunities. The implementation of these plans is monitored by the Equal Opportunity Office.

A Talent Bank of women in the ESB has been established and is currently controlled by the Equal Opportunity Office. It can be accessed by managers seeking a particular skill or by people setting up task forces or working groups.

As part of the setting up/realising the Equality Programme targets in the Business Units, the following is a list of the discriminatory skills training for women on offer through the Equal Opportunity Office:

- career development for women
- personal effectiveness for women
- professional image
- giving women a voice
- image and self projection seminars

The Company have a Personnel Management Information System (PMIS) and the Equality Performance Programme is monitored regularly; data is collected on changes in occupational status etc. within the company.

It should be noted however that the CCR which will have a major impact on the employment levels and structures within the company, it may also impact indirectly on the achievements to-date in the area of equal opportunity. This issue will be explored in the phase three report.

Date of Agreement: 1988

Duration of Agreement: Adopted as policy. Reviewed regularly.

6.2. Parties to Agreement

- Employer: The Electricity Supply Board
- Unions: The E.S.B. Group of Unions.

6.3. Type of Agreement

- National
- Semi-state sector
- Sectoral: Services (electricity supply)
- Occupational: All grades and occupations

6.4. Sector

- Services: Energy (electricity production)
- % of women employed: 14%. Workforce = 9,087

6.6. Agreement follows a review of existing Terms and Conditions of the E.S.B. employees. A Code of Practice was drawn up by the Joint Working Party and agreed by management and trade unions. It provides comprehensive guidance on the application of equal opportunity policy and the practical implications of current equality legislation.

6.7. Good Features/Qualities of the Agreement

Self Declared Equal Opportunity agreement and it attempts to explicitly address discrimination in work practices.

Special Features

- page 4 of the Agreement states: "The Working Party suggested that the Policy Statement should be expanded to cover a range of other grounds. While no employment laws exist to cover discrimination other than grounds of sex or marital status, the E.S.B. policy can certainly be taken to extend to factors such as race, colour, creed, sexual orientation, political preferences, age or disablement, which do not affect performance of the job"
- Special training including single sex training may be required to prepare women for participation in non-traditional roles, especially supervisory and management roles. Such training initiatives will be developed as part of the implementation of the equal opportunities policy.
- The E.S.B. will facilitate job rotation, subject to work requirements and will in particular ensure that women have equal equal opportunities in this regard. Work should not be allocated in such a manner as to disadvantage men or women in the matter of gaining work experience.
- Reasonable efforts should be made within existing arrangements to enable staff to combine their work and family responsibilities.
- All pay agreements, whether negotiated through the mechanism of a national pay round or as an internal E.S.B. agreement will take the provisions of the Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act 1974 into account.

6.8. National Context

Note: Part 3 of this project is based on a detailed case study of the E.S.B. wherein issues will be dealt with in more detail.

Legal Effect

Not legally binding between the company and union in accordance with Irish industrial relations practice.

6.9. Field of Application: Geographical Area National

6.10 Field of Application: Industry

Services: One company providing 100% of the Irish electricity supply

6.11 Field of Application: Unions

The E.S.B. Group of Unions.

6.12 Employee Coverage:

All employee of all occupational categories working in the E.S.B.

7. AN POST

(See Appendix 7)

7.1. Introduction

The information utilised for the purpose of analysis of An Post was supplied by the Irish Business Employers' Confederation (I.B.E.C.).

An Post is major employer in the Irish Republic. It provides the national postal service. While it is a large employer by Irish standards, employing 7,393, only 12% of its employees are female. Job segregation is very visible within the company. In the 1980's An Post set about changing the gender composition of jobs within the company, with consultations with the recognised trade unions.

Why is the policy a 'good' policy?

An Post is a national organisation with strong traditional demarcation of jobs based on gender. It was necessary to develop an equal opportunity policy to introduce change. To-date some changes have occurred in the gender balance of jobs particularly in the area of postal deliveries. Traditionally this job was 100% male, today there are a significant number of females doing this job. The equal opportunity policy has provided a framework within which the company can work to achieve a change in its traditional culture and value system.

Why is it an exceptional policy?

It is too early yet to state that this is an exceptional policy. An Post is a company with a long history of traditional values and a very turbulent industrial relations climate. In the 1990's technology impacted to a very significant extent on the jobs and the nature of work being

carried out by the Company. At this early stage it would appear that the equal opportunity policy in An Post has transcended the traditional value system and is slowly achieving progress in what was a very traditional company with strongly defined roles for men and women within it.

7.2. Identification of Agreement

Date of Agreement: 1992
Duration of Agreement: Now adopted as policy and reviewed regularly.

7.3. Parties to Agreement

Employer: An Post (the National Postal Service)
Unions: An Post Group of Unions

7.4. Type of Agreement

- National
- Sectoral: Service - Postal service
- Occupational: all grades

7.5. Sector

- Services - Postal Service
- % of women employed: 12%. Workforce = 7,393

7.6. Agreement follows a review of existing terms and conditions of employees in An Post in order to reflect current equality practices.

7.7. Good Features/Qualities of Agreement

Self declared Equal Opportunity Agreement

Special Features

- An Post regards promotion of employment equality and equality of opportunity as an important element of a modern personnel policy.
- An Post accepts that female participation in all grades is desirable and is opposed to any discrimination on the grounds of sex or marital status in its recruitment and promotion policies.
- Initial assignments and subsequent sideways moves will be arranged in such a manner as to ensure that employees generally are not confined to narrow restricted areas of work which would restrict their potential for upward mobility
- The policy will be monitored and kept under review by a Joint Management /Staff Committee.

7.8. National Context

Format

This is a formal policy statement of An Post on employment equality and equal opportunity and reflects the outcome of negotiations between the company and the trade unions on these issues.

Legal Effect

Not legally binding between the company and the union in accordance with Irish industrial relations practice.

7.8. Field of Application: Geographical Area National

7.9. Field of Application: Industry

One company, which provides 100% of all Irish postal services.

7.10 Field of Application: Unions

An Post Group of Unions

7.11 Employee Coverage

All employees in all occupational categories in An Post.

8. R.T.E. (RADIO TELEFIS EIREANN)

(See Appendix 8)

8.1. Introduction

The information utilised for the purpose of the present analysis of Equal Opportunities practices and agreements in R.T.E. have been supplied by the Irish Business Employers Confederation (I.B.E.C.) and R.T.E.

Why is this a 'good' policy?

During the early 1980's when the European Union was involved in actively promoting equal opportunity programmes, R.T.E. was taking note of these developments and participated directly in the process. In drafting the organisation's equality policy, RTE took a very broad approach. Apart from consulting the internal groups of unions and staff associations, RTE also consulted with a number of broadcasting organisations in the U.K.

Since May 1988 an equal opportunity statement is included in all Managers and Supervisors handbooks. In it RTE's commitment to the promotion of equality among staff is clearly expressed. The company recognises the importance of employment equality as a means of developing the full potential of all employees and of creating a climate in which equal opportunity becomes a reality.

33% of RTE's workforce are female. Over the last ten years the Company has encouraged women to participate more in the planning, production and presentation of programmes, so that the portrayal of women through the radio and television reflects the changing role of women in Irish society. Positive action programmes have been developed to provide encouragement to some women to move into non traditional job areas and for others into executive or management positions.

An interesting aspect of the policy is, for example, the Guidelines for Interview Boards require interviewers to give special consideration to female candidates and to make a special report on unsuccessful female applicants. Guidance meetings for unsuccessful candidates - of both sex - are also arranged on request. Age limits were removed from job advertisements and this important step has been particularly helpful to women wishing to return to the labour force.

Why is it an exceptional policy?

One of the most encouraging outcomes of the 'Women in Broadcasting' Report has been the Programme Production Familiarization course. This was developed as a result of a recommendation that the Staff Development Officer should 'study ways of enabling women to acquire the necessary skills and experience to facilitate greater participation in programme production'. This is part of RTE's equal opportunity policy.

According to the Personnel Manager in RTE, the courses have been a great success and perceived positively by the participants. Women from clerical areas who have participated on the programme have benefited by becoming more aware of skills they have, or could develop, in either programming or operational areas and have had the confidence to apply for vacancies in such areas when they arise.

The 'Women Into Management' course was developed in 1988 with the objective of preparing women working below management level to take on greater managerial responsibilities and to operate effectively, exercising inter-personal skills as well as more technical or knowledge based skills. This programme was partially funded by the European Commission.

In more recent times RTE has embarked on a policy of integrating men and women as participants in specially designed in-house management development courses. These are action based project orientated

programmes and consist of modules over a six month period. To-date 32 women have participated in these courses.

RTE have also developed an "attachment" policy where a person can work in another department for a period of time in order to gauge one's interest and ability to perform in a different working environment. This facility is open to males and females and has been utilised by a number of employees. The objective is to facilitate males and females in giving them experience in non traditional job areas.

8.2. Identification of Agreement

Employer: R.T.E. Authority
Trade Union: R.T.E. Group of Unions and
Managers Association

8.3. Type of Agreement

- National
- Semi-State
- Sectoral: Services: Broadcasting
- Occupational: all levels and grades

8.4. Sector

- Services: Broadcasting
- % of women employed: 33%. Workforce =2,000

8.5. In 1977 a Women's Representative Committee made recommendations to R.T.E. Management on the need for an expanded role for women in broadcasting. Subsequently, the R.T.E. Authority set up a Working Party to examine the position of women in broadcasting. The Working Party consisted of RTE staff, management and trade union and members and representatives from three outside bodies - the Council for the Status of Women, the Employment Equality Agency and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. The Working Party reported in 1981 and most of its recommendations were accepted and subsequently implemented by the RTE Authority. As a follow-on from the 1981 Report of the Working Party, the Personnel Department of RTE took some positive steps throughout the 1980's to improve the employment opportunities available to women. In June 1989 the Board of Management requested the Personnel Department to carry out an assessment of the existing situation regarding equal opportunities in RTE and to make recommendations on this matter. Discussions were held with employers and staff representative bodies. Written submissions were received also from the RTE Trade Union Group and the RTE Managers' Association.

8.5. Good Features/Qualities of the Agreement

Self declared equal opportunities policy. It is also a policy which attempts to explicitly address discrimination.

Special Features

- Guidelines for interview boards
- Job Sharing Scheme
- Flexitime: Staff in non-shift areas can opt for flexitime
- Career Breaks
- Study leave
- Sexual Harassment
- Training and Staff Development
 - (a) Programme Production Familiarization Course was developed to enable women to acquire the necessary skills and experience to facilitate greater participation in programme production
 - (b) Women into Management Courses: to prepare women working below management level to take on greater managerial responsibilities and to operate effectively as well as more technical or knowledge based skills.
- RTE Women's Forum:
This is a staff movement established by women to improve their position in the organisation. RTE has demonstrated its support for the Women's Forum by subsidizing special events on International Women's Day as well as providing funds for evening seminars.
- RTE Childcare Co-Op.
In conjunction with the Trade Union Group, a child care co-operative was established in 1987, located on site. RTE bears the cost of the building and maintenance. The Childcare Co-Op is run on a co-operative basis, with an overall management committee working in conjunction with an operational committee, elected by parents whose children attend the creche.

8.6. National Context

Format

The agreement is based on Policy Guidelines developed initially in 1977 and updated under the Policy "Equal Opportunities for All: Review and Recommendations", November 1991.

Legal Effect

Not legally binding between the company and the union in accordance with Irish industrial relations practice.

8.7. Field of Application: Geographical Area National

8.8. Field of Application: Industry One company, which is the National Television Authority.

8.9. Field of Application: Unions The RTE Group of Unions and Managers' Association

8.10 Employee Coverage All employees employed by RTE in all occupational groups.

9. ALLIED IRISH BANKS PLC (See Appendix 9)

9.1. Introduction

Allied Irish Banks plc is a major employer in the Financial Services Sector in Ireland. They employ a significant number of female staff and have been involved in the development of equal opportunity policies for women since the 1980's

The information used in the present analysis was supplied by the Personnel Department of A.I.B. and the Irish Business Employers Confederation (IBEC).

AIB instigated its first Personal Development Programme - positive action programme - in 1987. To-date a significant number of staff have been put through the programme which was designed to enhance promotional prospects and to encourage the development of male and female staff with potential within the organisation. AIB have also introduced a number of special initiatives. For example, the enhanced career break scheme. This scheme allows staff to take between 6 months and 5 years leave who wish to pursue other interests outside the workplace. Furthermore, AIB are in the process of introducing an enhanced maternity and adoption leave scheme, allowing staff the opportunity of taking an additional 6 months leave or elect for a part time return to work.

At the present time AIB are reviewing and updating its policies on equality, equal opportunity and sexual harassment with a view to enhancing its existing programmes and policies.

Why is this a 'good' policy?

The negotiation and implementation of the AIB policy gave formal recognition to the gender imbalance which exists in the company, and which is endemic in the financial services sector in general. There has always been a gender imbalance in banking grades, with females employed in the low grade, low skilled low paid work. The objective for AIB in developing its policy was to alter the gender balance and reduce the feminisation trends in certain job categories within the bank.

Why is this an exceptional policy?

AIB developed and organised positive action programmes for the purpose of customising and developing experiences for identified staff who themselves are motivated by the desire to develop a career within AIB.

In addition the programme seeks to accelerate the development process of individuals to enable them to obtain a complete overview of the organisation and to equip them to effectively compete for vacancies as they arise. According to AIB's Staff Relations Manager, the results to-date have been highly encouraging with a significant number of staff advancing for promotion.

In the area of flexible working practices, AIB have introduced a number of special initiatives. One of the most significant of these is the Enhanced Career Break Scheme. This scheme allows staff to take between 6 months and 5 years and is available to staff who wish to pursue other interests outside the workplace. In addition permanent part time work options are available, as well as special leave arrangements.

According to AIB's Staff Relations Manager the thrust of AIB's equality policy is to maximise the opportunities available to staff. AIB has recently launched a project called "AIB 2000" which seeks to develop a set of values which will support the organisation's vision to be the leading Irish banking group for the year 2000 and beyond. AIB state this objective can only be achieved where there is equality of opportunity for all staff to contribute in a meaningful way using individual talents and skills.

9.2. Identification of Agreement

Date of Agreement: 1992

Duration of Agreement: AIB Policy. Reviewed
on a regular basis

9.3. Parties to Agreement

Employer: Allied Irish Banks Ltd.
Trade Union: Irish Bank Officials Association

9.4. Type of Agreement

- National
- Private Enterprise
- Sectoral: Service (Financial Services)
- Occupational: all grades

9.5. Sector

- Services: Financial Services
- % of women employed:50%: Workforce = 15,300

9.6. This Policy follows discussions and negotiations carried out by the Joint Bank/IBOA Committee on Equality. The introduction of the Bank's employment equality policy is designed to create better management practices and more rewarding opportunities for all staff.

9.7. Good Features/Qualities of Agreement

Self declared equal opportunity agreement and it attempts to explicitly address discrimination.

Special Features

- It should not be assumed that family commitments lead to limited career aspirations.
- Management should encourage employees to consider career paths which hitherto or # traditionally may have been seen to be the preserve of a particular category/grouping
- The Bank should provide equal opportunities for the training and development of disabled employees and should also ensure that where possible, disabled employees are facilitated in making a full contribution through the alteration of work situations and the adjustment of modification of equipment.
- Disabled persons should receive full consideration for employment as suitable vacancies arise.

9.8. National Context

Format

This policy was drawn up the Joint Bank/IBOA Committee on Equality, and is representative of similar agreements operating in other parts of the Irish Financial Services Sector.

Legal Effect

Not legally binding between company and union in accordance with Irish industrial relations practice.

9.9. Field of Application: Geographical Area
National

9.10 Field of Application: Industry
Services: One company which is a large employer
in the financial services sector.

9.11 Field of Application: Union
The Irish Bank Officials Association

9.12 Employee Coverage
All employees working in the Company.

10. FRUIT OF THE LOOM INTERNATIONAL LIMITED
(See Appendix 10)

10.1 Introduction

Fruit of the Loom International Limited is a subsidiary of an American multinational. It is mainly involved in textile manufacturing for the export market. It is located in the North West of Ireland - Co. Donegal - where it is a major employer.

The material utilised in the present analysis was supplied by S.I.P.T.U. Trade Union which has negotiation rights with the company.

Why is this a 'good' policy?

In 1995 an equal opportunities agreement was negotiated with the trade union (SIPTU). This type of agreement is unique in the textile manufacturing sector in Ireland and it could be transposed to the wider Irish textile industry. It is deemed a "good" agreement, because it employs a large number of females and along with the trade union SIPTU has attempted to develop equal opportunities policies to reflect current EU regulations.

Why is it an exceptional policy?

It is too early yet to assess the impact and effectiveness of the policy on the workforce. However, according to the trade union SIPTU, it feels this policy is quite exceptional in that this is the first time such a policy has been negotiated on equal opportunities issues in the textile manufacturing sector. It is large employer of women and the company is anxious to reflect European trends in their employment policies.

10.2 Identification of Agreement

Date of Agreement: 1995

Duration of Agreement: To be reviewed regularly

10.3 Parties to Agreement

Employer: Fruit of the Loom International
Trade Union: S.I.P.T.U.

10.4 Type of Agreement

- Private Enterprise
- Sectoral: Textiles
- Occupational: all grades

10.5 Sector

- Manufacturing: Textiles
- % of women in sector
- Workforce =

10.6 This agreement follows negotiations between the Company and the Trade Union on the development and implementation of an equal opportunities policy. This is the first agreement of its type for textile manufacturing sector in Ireland.

10.7 Good Features/Qualities of Agreement

Self declared equal opportunity agreement. This agreement declares an intention to promote equality of men and women. It has relevance for gender equality in a sector of industry where the feminisation of the labour process is very visible.

Special Features

- The Company is committed to the provision of equal opportunities for all employees and prospective employees regardless of category relating to recruitment, training, promotion and all other conditions of employment.
- All positions in the Company are open to suitable qualified applicants irrespective of sex or marital status on the basis of their competence, capability and suitability to meet the requirements of the job and will have an equal opportunity as others to progress within the organisation.
- The Company has drawn up in consultation with SIPTU (trade union) a policy dealing with sexual harassment in the workplace. An important aspect of sexual harassment policy is that "if a complaint is substantiated, it may be regarded as serious misconduct and could result in disciplinary sanction up to and including dismissal". This shows that the company views sexual harassment as a most serious offence.

- All employees, including managers and supervisors will be made aware of the Company's obligations towards its employees in the area of employment equality.

10.8 National Context

Format

SIPTU (trade union) has negotiated several "equal opportunity" agreements with a number of employers in Ireland and has utilised a standard format agreement for this purpose. (See Model Agreement in Appendix).

Legal Effect

Not legally binding between the company and the union in accordance with Irish industrial relations practice.

10.9 Field of Application: Geographical Area

Local: Fruit of the Loom International operates in one part of Ireland only - the North West.

10.10 Field of Application: Industry

Manufacturing Industry: Textiles

10.11 Field of Application: Union

One trade union recognized in the company. SIPTU.

10.12 Employee Coverage:

All employees and all grades.

11. SUPERQUINN

(See Appendix 11)

11.1 Introduction

Superquinn is a large supermarket chain operating in Dublin City and County, which promotes a positive corporate image in the context of it being a "good" employer as well as being environmentally conscious and customer service orientated. It is a major employer in the Irish supermarket retail sector.

The information and material utilised in the present analysis was supplied by the Mandate Trade Union, the Employment Equality Agency and Superquinn.

Superquinn were the first company in the Irish grocery retail sector to develop an equal opportunity policy back in the 1980's. This was a proactive move on the part of the company in this area. It appeared that the equality policy was a great success. However, in an effort to establish its effectiveness Superquinn and Mandate trade union joined with the Employment Equality Agency in the Quality Through Equality project, sponsored through the E.U. NOVA Scheme. The project looked at procedures and practices and training within the Superquinn chain. In essence, the project attempted to assess the effectiveness of Superquinn's equal opportunity policy.

The results of the study were reported in November 1996. The company employs 3,285 people, of which 1,490 are male and 1,825 are female. Three quarters of the employees are under 30 years. Males tended to have longer service than females. Despite the fact that women make up 56% of the workforce there are no female senior managers in the company. Women tend to be clustered in specific areas of the business for example, as cashiers, office work etc whereas men tended to dominate the areas such as butchery, stores, etc.

Why is the policy a 'good' policy?

According to the research findings from the NOVA project there is a high level of commitment at senior levels in the organisation to equal opportunity issues. However, when the level of perception of the policy was examined, only 61% of males and 49% of females were aware of its existence. Superquinn do not have an Equality Officer so this might account for the low levels of perception with regard to the existence of a policy.

Sexual harassment is a key equality issue and Superquinn have a policy. Equal pay operates in the company, however bonus differentials do exist in areas like butchery, security and stores. These areas are predominantly male. Since the policy came into operation, its implementation to-date has included:

- A training programme for all managers and senior managers of Superquinn organised and run by the Equality Officer of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and an Equality Officer of the Labour Court
- A major theme of the training programme dealt with the issue: "How to Improve the lots of female staff in the Company"
- Company have carried out a survey to establish if there is a level of need for the provision childcare facilities for staff.
- Company are running a pilot scheme on the employment of 'older' women in the Company

Why is it an exceptional policy?

As stated above Superquinn were the first Irish retail grocery chain to develop an equal opportunity policy. What makes Superquinn's policy exceptional is the fact that it allowed its policy to be evaluated by the Employment Equality Agency and the Mandate Trade Union. The evaluation has revealed the problem areas in Superquinn policy. However the company also showed a strong willingness to improve. The results of the project will assist the entire retail sector in developing equal opportunity policies based on the issues highlighted by the research. This equal opportunity policy could have wider application within the Irish retail sector and could be transposed to other supermarket groups and retail outlets.

11.2 Identification of Agreement

Date of Agreement: 1994

Duration of Agreement: Policy. Reviewed regularly.

11.2 Parties to Agreement

Employer: Superquinn Limited
Trade Union: Mandate Trade Union

11.3 Type of Agreement

- Private Enterprise
- Sector: Service - supermarket retail
- Occupational: All grades

11.4 Sector

Services: Retail sector
% of women employed: 46%
Workforce = Figures not supplied

11.5 Agreement follows discussions and negotiations between Superquinn and Mandate on the development and implementation of an Equal Opportunity Policy

11.6 Good Features/Qualities of Agreement

Self declared equal opportunity agreement
page 1 of the agreement states "Superquinn is committed to a policy of equal opportunity in its employment practice. It will ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex or marital status"

page 2 states "Individuals will be selected promoted and treated on the basis of their abilities and merits and according to the requirements of the job, and will be given an equal opportunity to show their abilities and to progress within the organisation.

Special Features

- For the promotion of equal opportunities and best employment practice the policy document covers issues like recruitment, selection, interviewing procedures, staff/career development etc.
- Work will not be allocated in such a manner as to distinguish women or men in the matter of gaining work experience.
- As the lack of childcare facilities is one of main reasons why women leave the Company's employment, Superquinn will examine over the next 6 months the possibility of providing childcare facilities in order to allow staff to combine family and career responsibilities.
- The Union and the Employer recognise that sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and are committed to ending it.
- Superquinn will assign responsibility for monitoring and implementing the equal opportunity policy and guidelines to the Personnel Manager who is a member of the Board of Management.

11.7 National Context

This agreement/policy is one of the first equal opportunity agreements negotiated for the Irish retail sector. It represents an very positive development in the area of equal opportunities and collective bargaining and could be transposed to the Irish retail sector in general.

Legal Effect

Not legally binding between the company and union in accordance with industrial relations practice.

11.8 Field of Application: Geographical Local

11.9 Field of Application: Industry Services: the retail sector

11.10 Field of Application: Union The Mandate Trade Union

11.11 Employee Coverage All employees and all grades employed by Superquinn.