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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

Interim evaluation Report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Programme relating to the Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality 2001-2005

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Executive summary

The Council's decision 2001/51/EC¹ which establishes the Programme for the period 2001-2005, requires the Commission to evaluate it at mid-term with the assistance of independent experts and to submit an interim evaluation report to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. The interim evaluation by the external experts was finalised on 28 June 2004 and has been taken into account in the following Commission report.

During the period 2001-2003 the Programme has fulfilled its key objectives of raising awareness, improving policy analysis and developing the capacity of players to promote gender equality with a view to support the implementation of the Framework Strategy. The Programme covers the EU and EFTA countries. Candidate countries participated into the programme progressively according to the terms of their memoranda signed with the Commission.

The Programme is EU policy oriented and should demonstrate in all its activities an EU added value. It played an important role in supporting the development and the implementation of EU law concerning gender equality and the promotion of the gender dimension in the European Employment Strategy, the Social Inclusion / Protection Process and the Lifelong Learning Strategy. However some activities relating to capacity building of players to promote gender equality do not lend themselves easily to an evaluation due to their diverse nature. The wide range of outputs makes it difficult to compare them and to assess their EU added value. This should be further analysed in the course of the external evaluation.

The Commission intends to develop more systematic information on the outputs of the Programme and its various activities, following the preliminary findings of the external evaluation on this particular aspect.

¹ OJ L 17 of 19-01-2001

I – Introduction and context of the evaluation of the Action Programme

The Council's decision 2001/51/EC² which establishes the Programme for the period 2001-2005, requires the Commission to evaluate it at mid-term with the assistance of independent experts and to submit an interim evaluation report to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. This report covers the period 2001-2003.

In 2002 the Commission launched a call for tender for the evaluation of the Programme and the Framework Strategy for their entire period. Two bids were received. The bid submitted by Deloitte and Touche was selected and the contract was signed in December 2002. Deloitte and Touche experts were required to carry out the interim evaluation of the Programme by June 2003, an interim evaluation of the Framework Strategy by June 2004 and a final evaluation of both by June 2005 complemented with an overview of their results and impacts by June 2006.

The interim evaluation of the Programme took more time than originally planned and was achieved on 28 June 2004. The external evaluators assessed the relevance and the external and internal consistency of the Action Programme in relation with the Framework Strategy. The assessment of effectiveness was carried out through an analysis and synthesis of final reports of the actions and projects funded by the Programme in 2001. The executive summary of the report is available on the Commission website³ and its main findings and recommendations are taken into account in the following Commission report.

II – The role of the Programme in promoting gender equality

II- a The Programme in support of the European Framework Strategy to promote gender equality

Equal treatment of men and women is a fundamental principle of European Community law. There now exists a substantial body of secondary legislation in this field, whilst Article 2 EC recognises the promotion of equality between men and women as a specific task for the Community. Further, Article 3 EC states that the Community shall aim to eliminate inequalities and to promote equality between men and women in all its activities. This is implemented through what is commonly called gender mainstreaming which consists of the incorporation of a gender equality perspective in all policy fields and at all stages of policy making.

With a view to creating a common umbrella for the whole Union, the Framework Strategy on Gender Equality 2001-2005⁴ embraces all EU policies and actions and generates synergy between the key Community instruments involved in the promotion of gender equality and the elimination of inequalities, i.e. legislation, gender mainstreaming and funding tools. The Framework Strategy operates in five fields, economic life, equal participation and representation, equal access and full enjoyment of social rights, in civil life and gender roles

² OJ L 17 of 19-01-2001

³ http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/evaluation/gender01_en.html

⁴ COM(2000)335 final

and stereotypes. In each field, operational objectives are defined which mobilise as appropriate the various EU policies and measures⁵.

The Gender Equality Action Programme 2001-2005 "co-ordinates, supports and finances the implementation of horizontal activities under the fields of intervention of the Community Framework Strategy"⁶. 50 million € have been allocated to the Programme for the period 2001-2005, to which the contributions from EFTA and from applicant countries have to be added (Tab.1). The Programme is not designed to replace other Community instruments but to complement them.

II- b- Main features of the programme

The Programme is structured in three objectives corresponding to the three following strands:

- ***Strand 1*** aims to promote and disseminate the values and practices underlying gender equality. It covers awareness raising activities with a view to reinforce the Community dimension of the promotion of gender equality. This may include trans-national conferences, seminars and campaigns, large-scale events at EU level, publications, and internet sites.
- ***Strand 2*** aims to improve the understanding of issues related to gender equality by evaluating the effectiveness of policies and practice. It funds the development of comparable statistics and indicators, EU analysis of the gender dimension of policies and measures, the follow up of the implementation of Community equality legislation, studies and the publication of an annual report on Gender Equality.
- ***Strand 3*** aims to develop the capacity and effectiveness of key players (NGOs, social partners at EU level, trans-national networks of regional or local authorities) to promote gender equality.

Possible actions for each strand are detailed in the annex of the Council decision on the Programme. Actions should be implemented in a trans-national framework with a view to developing Community added value. The Programme contributes to strengthen cooperation and partnership between actors involved in the promotion of gender equality, in particular, national authorities, Equality bodies, social partners and NGOs.

II-c Participation of non EU countries into the programme

In addition to the EU Member States, the programme is open to the participation of applicant countries and EFTA/EEA countries in the terms of Article 10 of Council decision 2001/51/EC.

II-c-a Participation of EFTA/EEA countries

The three EEA/EFTA countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway participate in the gender equality Programme in accordance with the conditions established in the EEA Agreement⁷.

⁵ Such as gender equality legislation, the European Social Fund, the Community initiative EQUAL, the DAPHNE, STOP, MEDA and PHARE programmes, the European Employment Strategy, the Social Inclusion Process, etc.

⁶ Article 2 of Council decision 2001/51/EC

⁷ In particular its article 82 and the Protocols n°31 and 32; and the decisions of the EEA Joint Committee amending Protocol 31

Their total cash contribution to the operational and administrative budget of the Programme is 950 000 euros for the period 2001-2005. In addition, part of their contribution to the administrative budget is paid in kind by the secondment of a national expert to the European Commission. The participation of EEA countries is on equal footing with Member States and based on solidarity⁸.

II-c-b Participation of applicant countries as at the end of 2003

The programme is open to applicant countries in accordance with the conditions established in the Europe Agreements, the additional Protocols and the decisions of the respective Association Councils. Participation of candidate countries in the Programme is progressive. It is defined in the Memorandum of understanding signed with the Commission. Eight Memoranda were signed in 2002 with Hungary, Latvia, Estonia, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Romania and Slovenia. Three further memoranda were signed in 2003 with Poland, the Czech Republic and Turkey.

For the first year of participation in the programme the contribution amounts to 30,000 € each. It covers:

- Actions 2, 4 and 6 (awareness raising event to help integrate the acquis communautaire in the field of gender equality) of strand 1
- Action 3 concerning the database on decision-making in strand 2
- Administrative support⁹

The contributions for the second and following years vary between 30,000 € and 150,000 € according to their level of participation in the various strands as specified in the memoranda and, for strand 3, depending on the size of the population.

III– Implementation of the programme for the period 2001-2003

A programme Committee constituted of representatives of the participating countries assists the Commission in implementing the Programme. It is involved in the general guidelines for its implementation, the annual working plans and corresponding allocations, the procedures for selecting the actions to be supported and the monitoring and evaluating criteria.

III– a – Budgetary commitments

For the period 2001-2003, appropriations amounted to 30,616,800 €, including 616,800 € from the EFTA countries (cf.Tab1). The operational budget (part B) amounted to 29,739,122 € of which 28,912,255 € was committed. The lower rate of commitment in 2003 can be explained by the need to re-launch the tenders for the two networks of experts on an enlarged basis in order to ensure genuine competition and by a late withdrawal of a sub-delegation to ESTAT following the revision of the DG EMPL-ESTAT partnership in autumn 2003.

⁸ Which implies that contributions to the EEA/EFTA States from the EU budget are not limited to the amounts that the EEA/EFTA States contribute to the budget

⁹ Includes the coverage of expenses to participate to the Programme committee meetings and to trans-national events/ conferences

III- b - Actions carried out

Strand 3 "building capacity of key actors" received the biggest share of the annual budget (39 to 52 %). It was implemented with annual calls for proposals open to all actors mentioned in the Council decision. Strand 1 "awareness raising" came second with 35 to 42 % of the budget mainly used to fund the project selected under the annual calls for proposals addressed to national authorities and equality bodies. Strand 2 "analysis and evaluation" spent 5 to 24% of the annual budget.

The Programme committee set annual priority themes for the calls for proposals as follows: equal pay in 2001, reconciliation of work and family life in 2002, women in decision making in 2003.

- Actions carried out under strand 1, "awareness raising":

Thirteen European conferences and seminars have been funded. They were organised by the Commission or by the Council Presidencies and covered key policy themes in relation with the five fields of the Framework strategy. The Council Presidency conferences dealt with men's role in gender equality (Sweden), equal pay (Belgium), violence (Spain), care services (Denmark), ICT (Greece), decision making (Italy) and gender mainstreaming (Ireland). The six European events directly organised by the Commission related to women and gender issues in the economy (economic development, mainstreaming gender in the Broad Economic Guidelines), in the external relations and human rights (Euromed, trafficking, Muslim women) and in preparing for enlargement.

Restricted calls for proposals, addressed to the national authorities and equality bodies of the participating countries,¹⁰ were launched every year. They aim to develop more synergy between national policies, which is a key concern of the Framework Strategy for Gender Equality.

During the period 2001-2003, 25 projects were co-financed in line with the three priority themes. The external evaluators made a first appraisal of the 2001 projects on equal pay. These projects aimed at exchanging experience and good practice to improve job classification and evaluation systems, to remove sex discrimination and barriers to women's advancement in employment. Several of them made explicit links with the relevant EC legislation and the National Action Plans of the European Employment Strategy. Their main features are trans-national conferences to which the Commission and other European Institutions are invited. Other outputs are studies, handbooks or CD-Rom of good practices, toolbox, websites and press releases.

- Actions carried out under strand 2, "analysis and evaluation"

This strand is dedicated to three main types of actions:

- the development of statistics and indicators
- the analysis of the gender aspects of policies and measures
- other analysis and evaluation relevant to promote gender equality

Concerning statistics and indicators, the bulk of the activities has been sub-delegated to Eurostat in the framework of a multi-annual agreement signed between DG EMPL and

¹⁰ For candidate countries, depending on the terms of the memoranda signed with the Commission

ESTAT. The overall objective is to develop comparable European wide gender-sensitive statistics relating to main European policy fields.

Following a project funded under the previous programme, a study was funded on common definitions and methodologies for the collection of comparable data on care for children. A preliminary overview of available data on care for other dependants was also commissioned. Concerning time use, developing comparable data is a long term process to which ESTAT and EMPL have been involved over several years. Common guidelines for data collection had been set in 2000 and 13 European countries have collected new data on this basis since 2000. The Commission published a Statistic in Focus on "how men and women spend their time" in December 2003. In addition the Action programme funded the publication of a more detailed pocket book, planned for June 2004. A study on a wider use of time use data in EU policies should be completed in 2004. The next step should be the settlement of a common database on which ESTAT is currently working. Concerning lifelong learning, the Action Programme contributed to a 2003 specific Labour Force Survey module where collected data are disaggregated by sex. The first results should be available in autumn 2004.

In addition to the cooperation with ESTAT, the Programme financed the setting up of a European database on women in decision-making positions and several Eurobarometer surveys on ICT usage and literacy and parental leave. The database on decision-making shows inter alia the gender distribution in European governments and parliaments and the gender balance in national central administrations, top 50 publicly quoted companies, central banks, major NGOs and social partners.

In the field of policy analysis, the Action Programme finances two European expert networks to assist the Commission in the assessment of the gender dimension of policies. The Employment expert network analysed the annual National Action Plans for employment using the common methodology they had developed in 2000 for gender impact assessment. The network also contributed to the assessment of the gender dimension in the National Action Plans for social inclusion in 2003. The network conducted two further studies, one on the factors behind the gender pay gap and another on employment and gender indicators (employment and unemployment gaps in full time equivalent, part-time, gender segregation, etc).

The legal expert network gives advice and relevant information to the Commission in the analysis and monitoring of national legislation and policies in the field of gender equality. It also contributes to the development of new legislative instruments at EU level. In this context, the network writes regular Bulletins on legal and judicial developments at national and EU level and reports on particular topics. The network gave an input to the preparation of the future European Convention and on the recent proposal for a directive on equal treatment in the access to and supply of goods and services. The two expert networks contributed to the impact assessment on the recasting of the existing directives in the field of gender equality. The legal expert network was also required to provide an assessment of the gender equality dimension of the first national reports on pensions in 2002 and, in 2003, a report on the implementation of the gender equality directives in the field of occupational pensions following the case law of the European Court of Justice.

Following the Nice European Council asking for the establishment of a European Institute for gender issues, a feasibility study was funded which delineated common features for a possible Institute. Finally, this strand also funds the current evaluation of the Framework Strategy and its supporting Programme.

- Actions carried out under strand 3, "capacity building"

Strand 3 is implemented with annual open calls for proposals on the three priority themes with a view to improving knowledge, exchanging good practice and developing trans-national networking. 44 trans-national projects were funded from a total of 218 submitted proposals for the period 2001-2003. The priority themes were not exclusive and a number of projects diverged from them. As noted by the external evaluators, the priority themes had considerably less impact on the nature of the projects submitted and funded in the open calls than in the restricted calls addressed to the national authorities. Many projects nevertheless concerned employment and social affairs in 2001 and 2002. In 2002, projects on reconciliation were carried out in various domains, such as scientific research, healthcare and rural areas, as well as the role and situation of men as father or in care services. In 2003, when the priority theme was decision making, fields such as local and regional political mandates, public administrations, rural areas, culture, and the environment were investigated.

The outputs of these projects are mainly trans-national seminars and conferences, manuals of good practice, training courses and tool kits to mainstream gender in specific areas, databases, websites and multimedia material. Projects often focused on local and/or regional concerns and only a few of them explicitly related their activities to EU policies and drew recommendations or opinions directly related to them. This was also noted by the external evaluators in respect of 2001 call that they started to analyse. They found it difficult to compare their rather divergent outputs and to assess their European added value.

The Programme's decision states that projects may be undertaken by NGOs or social partners at European level and trans-national networks of regional or local authorities and of organisations which aim to promote gender equality¹¹. For the period 2001-2003, project promoters were mainly trans-national networking of NGOs or of local or regional authorities. Social partners were promoters of five projects (11 % of the total number) and partners in a few others.

The Council decision sets the minimum requirement for trans-nationality in the calls for proposal at three countries which applies at two levels. The first level applies to project promoters. They should be organised in pre-existing networks covering at least three countries. The Commission progressively tightened the conditions with a view to encouraging promoters to maintain their trans-national bounds beyond the 15 months of the projects. The second level of trans-nationality relates to the partnership which is specifically established for the implementation of the projects. While the promoter's networking is organised between similar type organisations, partnership around the projects involved a wide range of partners, including universities, research centres, social services or equality bodies.

III- c- Involvement of all parties concerned

In line with the Framework Strategy, the Commission gives particular attention to the involvement of all the parties concerned in the programme activities. The cooperation with Member States authorities is particularly strong and active all through the strands. They are involved in the implementation and the monitoring of the Programme through the Programme committee.

¹¹ Annexe of the Council decision 2001/51/CE

The three EFTA countries, Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein, have also representatives on the Programme Committee and take an active part in particular under strand 1 (the restricted calls for proposals and the other funded events) and under strand 2 (development of statistics and expertise) Representatives of European NGO networks are invited to all European events. Trans-national networks of NGOs actively participated in the open calls for proposals under strand 3 very often in partnership with local or regional authorities or with their financial support. However their participation as project promoters varies according to the priority themes. All but one project in the call on reconciliation were run by NGOs. In the two other calls they share the projects equally with the local and regional authorities.

The participation of social partners in strand 3 as project promoters has been very limited. In spite of the fact that the three priority themes are closely related to employment, they run only two projects on equal pay, one on reconciliation of work and family life and two on decision making. This is linked to the fact that they submitted fewer projects than NGOs and local or regional authorities.

Other members of civil society, such as universities and research institutes, statistical offices and media, have been involved as partners in trans-national project under strand 1 or 3.

III – d Information and dissemination of the Programme's results

There are three main vehicles to make the results known to a larger public, namely European level conferences and seminars, the Commission website and Commission's publications. Information about the Programme and its results is placed on the Commission's website on Gender Equality: http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equ_opp/index_en.htm. This website displays the calls for tender and calls for proposals, the fiches of the selected projects, the studies, statistics, bulletins of the legal expert network, etc. However outputs of subsidised projects belong to the project's promoters who are in charge of their dissemination.

In addition to the website, the Commission published annual reports on Gender Equality in the EU¹². In 2003, the format changed following the increased attention given at European level to the promotion of gender equality. The European Spring Council of 20-21 March 2003 invited "the Commission to prepare, in collaboration with the Member States, an annual report to the European Spring Council on developments towards gender equality and orientations for gender mainstreaming of policy areas". The 2003 report responded to that request and was submitted to the European Spring Council 2004¹³.

Conferences organised by the Commission or the Council Presidencies are major opportunities to put together the outputs of various activities of the Programme on a specific policy topic and discuss them with NGOs, social partners and other actors of civil society. They are announced and reported on the following website: http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equ_opp/information_en.html#eve.

III – e – Contribution of the Programme to European policies

The Programme is not conceived to fund local, regional or national activities. It is EU policy oriented. It supports the promotion of gender equality and the elimination of inequalities in

¹² COM(2002)258 final of 28-05-2002; COM(2003)98 final of 05-03-2003; available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equ_opp/report_en.html

¹³ COM(2004)115 final of 19-02-2004

the implementation of EU policies and contributes to strengthen the capacity of the various actors to do so. Trans-nationality and EU added value should guide activities in all its strands. However this is achieved to various degrees by the different funded activities.

Concerning the trans-national projects funded under the open calls for proposals of strand 3, the external evaluators found it more difficult to assess their EU added value, and this, in spite of priority themes and selection criteria set with a view to highlighting topics in direct relation with the promotion of gender equality in EU policies. This will require further investigation in the course of the external evaluation.

The trans-national projects funded under the restricted calls addressed to Member States authorities appear to be more focused on EU policies concerns when exchanging national experience. Strand 2 activities which always cover all EU countries¹⁴ contribute directly to improving the gender dimension in EU policies. This could be illustrated by the contribution of the Programme to support the gender dimension of the European Employment Strategy (EES), the Social Inclusion/ Protection processes and the gender equality legislation.

The three priority themes used for the calls for proposals are connected with the EES and are also relevant for the Social Inclusion/ Protection processes. The 2001 theme of equal pay, was the subject of the very first EC directive in the field of equal treatment¹⁵. Closing the gender pay gap is a key target of the EES and should contribute to lifting women out of poverty. The external evaluators noted that several projects run by the national authorities in 2001 related to the EES and its National Action Plans but the EES was barely referred to in the strand 3 projects.

The 2002 priority theme, reconciliation of work and family life, is again a key topic of the EES and the Social Inclusion/ Protection processes. Improving reconciliation and providing affordable and adequate care for children and other dependant persons will help parents in low income groups. The right to parental leave is enshrined in the EC directive 96/34/EC which put into effect the framework agreement concluded by the social partners on 14th December 1995. The third priority theme on women in decision making has a role to play across the fields of intervention of the Framework Strategy and in particular in the EES. The deficit of women in decision making posts as been identified has a factor influencing the remaining gender pay gaps. The theme is also important with regard to the position and rights of women in our democracies which are dealt with in one of the intervention fields of the Framework Strategy for gender equality.

The Employment Expert Network funded under strand 2, has been strongly involved in assisting the Commission in assessing three consecutive sets of annual National Action Plans on Employment and the 2003 National Action Plans for social Inclusion. The network analysis on indicators and on gender pay gap fuelled further discussion with Member States at the Council Committee on Employment (EMCO) and was crucial in the revision and updating of the EES indicators in 2002. It influenced the choice of the "unadjusted" pay gap indicator, instead of the "adjusted" pay gap as key indicator¹⁶.

¹⁴ Even further when they include EFTA and/ or candidate countries

¹⁵ Directive 75/117/EEC –OJ L 45, 19-02-1975

¹⁶ The adjusted pay gap measures the pay differentials between women and men, adjusting data by sector, occupation, education/skill level, experience and age so that data relate clearly to discriminatory pay differences. This allows for measurement of gender discrimination in differences in earnings within

Statistical work funded by the Programme¹⁷ and carried out by Eurostat, is a chief source for the development of indicators in the European Employment Strategy and the Social Inclusion Process. The funded study on childcare is meant to pave the way for setting indicators to monitor the implementation of the quantitative targets set by the European Council in 2002. Findings from the study have been used to define variables on childcare in SILC¹⁸ funded by the Action Programme for social inclusion.

The Action Programme also contributed to specific modules on life-long-learning and on reconciliation¹⁹ in LFS²⁰, which is the key source of statistics for the EES. The corresponding data will be collected in 2004 and 2005 respectively. They should contribute to identify gender gaps in access to education and training while at work and to better understand the huge differences in the use of reconciliation provisions between men and women.

These modules should also contribute to mainstream gender in the implementation of the "Concrete Future Objectives for Education Systems" defined in 2003, the work programme for the Education and Training 2010 process, the Copenhagen Process, the Lifelong learning pillar of the European Disability Action Plan and the Lifelong learning Strategy in general.

Concerning women in decision-making positions, the database launched by the Commission in 2003 will serve as an important tool to keep track of progress towards the goal of balanced representation of women and men in all levels of decision-making.

The legal expert network provided a significant contribution to the monitoring of the national legislation in the field of gender equality and to the development of new legislation. It alerted the Commission about problems encountered in the implementation of the EC directives and contributed to the preparation of two major legislative proposals, a new directive on access to goods and services launched in 2003 and the recasting of the existing equal treatment directives in the area of employment and occupation launched in April 2004.

In the field of social protection, the legal network has been involved in the recent European Pension Process, based on an open method of coordination between Member States. Among the common objectives set by the Council in 2001 to ensure adequate and sustainable pensions, one invites the Member states to "review pension provisions with a view to ensuring the principle of equal treatment between women and men". The legal expert network helped with the assessment of the first national reports produced by Member States in 2002.

III-e- Preparing for enlargement

2002 was the first year of implementation of the memoranda signed with the Commission, for six acceding countries (Estonia, Latvia, Hungary, Cyprus, Slovakia, and Slovenia) and two other candidate countries, (Romania and Bulgaria). These countries were able to participate in the Council's Presidency conferences and other European events, the Programme committee's meetings, and the creation of a database on women in decision making. Their payments also

sectors or occupations. The unadjusted pay gap does not take into account these adjustments and consider discrimination in a broader sense, in line with the EC Treaty which refers not only to "the principle of equal pay... for equal work" but also for "work of equal value". This approach takes into account the undervaluing of jobs undertaken primarily by women.

¹⁷ In cooperation with other Action Programmes on Employment incentives and Social Inclusion

¹⁸ Survey on Income and life conditions which will cover the whole EU + EFTA

¹⁹ Budgetary commitment on 2004 budget

²⁰ Labour Force Survey

contributed to the dissemination costs. In addition Hungary has been partner in one project on reconciliation run by the Austrian national authorities.

In addition, each country submitted a proposal²¹ for an awareness raising event which mobilises key actors on issues related to gender equality, such as European legislation and gender mainstreaming into policies. However, due to the delay in receiving the countries contributions and making them available to the Programme, the agreements for subsidies were not signed until 2003 and Hungary was not able to run its project.

2003 was the first year of participation for the Czech Republic and Poland. Two awareness raising projects were supported by the Programme for these countries²². Turkey's first year was planned for 2003 but had to be postponed as its corresponding contribution was not paid.

For their second year of participation under the terms of the memoranda, the countries contributions reached the Commission between April and September 2003, to which about two months had to be added for the funds to be available to the Programme. Only the Turkish contribution was not paid.

The eight above-mentioned countries also participated in action 1.5 (restricted call for proposals addressed to national authorities) in 2003. Consequently Latvia was selected as project promoter and Estonia, Hungary, Latvia and Romania were partners in 5 other selected projects.

Participation in the experts networks (strand 2), which was requested by Bulgaria, Latvia, Hungary and Romania has been postponed to 2004 due to the moving of the experts networks contracts from 2003 to 2004.

Six countries (all except Slovakia and Slovenia) have also participated in strand 3. Hungary, Cyprus and Romania are partners in five of the selected projects.

Considering the under-utilisation of the candidate countries contributions, the Commission decided to transfer 500 000 € of the candidate countries 2003's contribution to the Programme's 2004 budgetary appropriations.

Finally, the Commission has organised a *European conference in Malta in April 2004* during which, on the eve of the accession, soon-to-be and current Member States will exchange experience on the implementation of the gender equality legislation, the mainstreaming of gender in employment, social inclusion, social protection and the Social Funds.

IV - Conclusions and perspectives

The Action Programme has been designed to support the implementation of the Framework Strategy on gender equality with three main objectives, raising awareness, improving analysis and evaluation and developing the capacity of players to promote gender equality. Experience from the first three years shows that the funded activities meet the objectives. Furthermore activities designed to raise awareness will in the process build up capacity - and vice-versa - and both kinds of action either rely on or can be expected to promote policy analysis. This

²¹ Action 1.6 of the Programme ; specific restricted call for proposals VP/2002/5

²² Action 1.6 of the Programme ; specific restricted call for proposals, VP/2003/20

makes the classification of the eligible activities into the three strands somewhat artificial as noted by the external evaluators.

The programme has an important role to play in supporting policy cooperation at European level. The broad formulation of the main objectives of each strand allows the funding of a large diversity of projects with different durations, types of users, and objectives to respond to the variety of objectives defined in the Framework Strategy on gender equality. Valuable direct contributions have been made by activities funded under strand 2 (such as expert networks and statistical work) and strand 1 (such as Council Presidency and Commission's conferences). The trans-national projects run by national authorities have contributed to reinforce synergy among national policies on gender equality.

On the other hand, the contribution of trans-national projects subsidised under strand 3 is less apparent. The wide range of their outputs – on which the Commission has no direct say as they belong to the project's promoters – and the diversity of their trans-nationality make it difficult to compare them and to assess their EU added value. Many projects deal with the development of methods and tools for which it is still too early to assess their impact. This will require further investigation in the course of the external evaluation.

Considering the preliminary findings of the external evaluation, the Commission intends to develop more systematic information on the outputs of the Programme and its various activities. The Commission welcomes the recommendations formulated by external evaluators in their interim report. It is important to improve the synergy between the three strands by encouraging the sharing of information and knowledge between the various activities.

For this purpose a regularly updated Commission website should be the major source of information and this message should be clearly passed to all projects promoters. The comparable statistics developed by EUROSTAT in cooperation with the Member States, the studies conducted by the expert networks, the Commission' assessment of National Action Plans for Employment and social inclusion are all accessible from the Commission website. European conferences are also an opportunity to make the Programme's outputs relevant to the theme of the conference better known.

Finally, it should be borne in mind that the fundamental *raison d'être* of such a Programme is its European added value. The Programme has to contribute to the development and the implementation of EU law concerning gender equality and to the promotion of the gender dimension in EU policies. This should be further analysed in the course of the external evaluation. In the context of the enlarged European Union, the Commission will be attentive to keep all activities funded by the Programme in line with this fundamental requirement.

ANNEX

1 - Budget appropriations and overall commitments for the period 2001-2003

2 - Participation of candidate countries – 2001- 2003

3 - Commitments for activities under strand 1 - 2001- 2003

4 - Commitments for activities under strand 2 - 2001- 2003

5 - Commitments for activities under strand 3 - 2001- 2003

The list and fiches of the subsidised projects selected under the calls for proposals in 2001, 2002 and 2003 are available at the following address:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equ_opp/fund_en.html

The external evaluation and the response from the Commission are available at the following address: http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/evaluation/gender01_en.html

Tab 1 - Budget appropriations and commitments for the period 2001-2003

In euros

		2001	2002	2003	2001-2003
Appropriations Part A	EU	290,000.0	270,000.0	300,000.0	860,000.0
	EFTA	5,452.0	5,745.6	6,480.0	17,677.6
	Total	295,452.0	275,745.6	306,480.0	877,677.6
Commitments Part A		225,398.62	225,762.0	210,576.51	661,737.13
Appropriations Part B	EU	9,710,000.0	9,730,000.0	9,700,000.0	29,140,000.0
	EFTA	182,548.0	207,054.4	209,520.0	599,122.4
	Total	9,892,548.0	9,937,054.4	9,909,520.0	29,739,122.0
Commitments Part B		9,784,386.84	9,898,458.93	9,229,409.24	28,912,255.01
Total Appropriations		10,188,000.0	10,212,800.0	10,216,000.0	30,616,800.0
Total Commitments		10,009,785.46	10,124,220.93	9,439,985.75	29,573,992.14

Source : SINCOM 2

Tabl 2- Participation of candidate countries in the Action Programme on Gender Equality

2002

Countries	as planned in the memoranda		Implementation	
	Contribution €	Strands / specific actions	Payment of contribution ²³	Implemented Actions ²⁴
Bulgaria	30.000	1(2,4 et 6)+ 2.3	Delayed - Feb 2003	20,000 € committed in Sept 03 for an awareness event
Cyprus	30.000	1(2,4 et 6)+ 2.3	Delayed –Nov 2002	20,000 € committed in Sept 03 for an awareness raising event
Czech Rep	-	-	-	
Estonia	30.000	1(2,4 et 6)+ 2.3	Delayed – Feb 2003	15,758.17 € committed in Sept 03 for an awareness raising event
Hungary	30.000	1(2,4 et 6)+ 2.3	Delayed – Sept 2002	Submitted project not funded as draft agreement not signed by HU Partner in one project (restricted call
Latvia	30.000	1(2,4 et 6)+ 2.3	Delayed – Aug 2002	19,197.96 € committed in Nov 02 for an awareness raising event
Poland	-		-	
Romania	30.000	1(2,4 et 6)+ 2.3	Delayed – Dec 2002	19,885.95 € committed in Aug 03 for an awareness raising event
Slovakia	30.000	1(2,4 et 6)+ 2.3	Delayed – Aug 2002	17,316.55 € committed in Dec 02 for an awareness raising event
Slovenia	30.000	1(2,4 et 6)+ 2.3	Delayed – Oct 2002	18,908.08 € committed in Dec 02 for an awareness raising event
Turkey	-		-	

All contributions include administrative support to cover expenses to participate to the Programme Committee and European events

Action 1-2: participation to the Council Presidency conferences

Action 1-4: dissemination /publications and websites

Action 1-6: specific awareness raising events organised in each candidate country on the European gender equality policy

Action 2-3 covers only the database on decision-making for the first year

²³ Due by 31 March 2002

²⁴ In addition to administrative support for the Programme Committee, European events, Council Presidency conferences and dissemination costs.

2003

Countries	as planned in the memorandum		Implementation	
	Contribution €	Strands / specific actions	Payment of contribution ²⁵	Specific actions ²⁶
Bulgaria	120.000	1 + 2.3 + 3	Delayed - April 03	
Cyprus	60.000	1 + 2.3 + 3	Delayed - July 03	Partner in one project (open call)
Czech Rep	30.000	1(2,4 et 6)+ 2.3	Delayed - May 03	19,982.15 € for an awareness raising event signed in dec 03
Estonia	60.000	1 + 2.3+3	Delayed - May 03	Partner in 2 projects (restricted call)
Hungary	120.000	1 + 2.3 +3	Delayed - Aug 03	Partner in one project (restricted call) Partner in three projects (open call)
Latvia	90.000	1 + 2.3 +3	Delayed - April 03	One trans-national project selected under action 1.5 Partner in one project (rest call)
Poland	30.000	1(2,4 et 6)+ 2.3	Delayed - April 03	19,506.79€ for an awareness raising event – agreement signed in Dec03
Romania	150.000	1 + 2.3 +3	Delayed - July03	Partner in one project (restricted call) Partner in one project (open call)
Slovakia	30.000	1 + 2.3	Delayed - May 03	
Slovenia	30.000	1 + 2.3	Delayed - Sept 03	
Turkey	30.000		Not paid	
10 countries	720.000,00			

Additional participation for the second year:

Action 2.3: Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, and Romania also planned to participate to experts networks. As the signing of the new contracts had to be postponed to 2004, their participation will be effective in 2004.

Strand 3: open call for proposals based on annual priority themes

²⁵ Due by 31 March 2003

²⁶ In addition to standard participation to Programme committee, European and Council Presidency conferences, dissemination costs and database on decision making

Tab 3- Commitments for Activities funded under Strand 1 "Awareness raising"

CMT = commitments in €

	2001		2002		2003	
	Activities	CMT	Activities	CMT	Activities	CMT
Conferences	- SE Presidency conference - Men and gender equality	63,215.68	- ES presidency conference - Domestic violence	128,893.77	- IT presidency conference – "Women in decision making processes"	250,000.0
EU events	- BE Presidency conference - Gender progr + equal pay-	186,311.0	- DK presidency conference - Care facilities	308,989.3	- IE presidency conference "New horizons for gender equality"	218,575.76
	- Forum on women's role in economic development	6,680.0	- EL presidency conference on women and ICT (June 03)	268,192.93	- Malta conference - Gender and Enlargement	119,410.61
	- seminar Euromed	3,500.0	- EU conference on trafficking	206,264.63		
	- seminar-gender mainstreaming in the Broad Economic Guidelines	10,100.07	- web streaming conference on Muslim women	21,444.0		
Restricted calls	Call VP/2001/01 – 10 projects	3,398,238.15	- Call VP/2001/22 - 4 projects	1,546,579.88	- Call VP/2002/07 - 8 projects	2,954,412.62 ¹
			- Call VP/2002/13 – 3 projects	1,057,925.39	- Call VP/2002/5 - 8 Candidate Countries projects	155,989.0 ²
Other s	- Gender European label for enterprises	460,000.0	- Meeting of projects promoters	40,607.77	- Call / VP/2002/20 – 2 Candidate Countries projects	39,488.94
	- CD Rom campaign violence	1004.0	- miscellaneous	8,394.18	- miscellaneous	194.85
	- miscellaneous	16,114.38				
Total		4,145,163.28		3,587,291.85		3,738,071.75

¹ It includes 80,000 euros of Latvia 's contribution

² It includes the commitment for HU. It has to be withdrawn in 2004 as the agreement has not been signed by HU.

Tab 4- Activities funded under Strand 2 Analysis and evaluation"

	2001		2002		2003	
	Activities	CMT	Activities	CMT	Activities	CMT
Statistics indicators			- Study on development of comparable statistics on childcare - Study on development of comparable statistics on care for other dependants - Pocket book on Time Use data - Study on possible wider use of Time Use Survey - Contribution the 2003 LFS module on life long learning -Eurobarometer on ICT usage and literacy with sex breakdown -European database on women in decision-making positions	95,757.31 49,452.0 47,000.0 20,011.0 249,912.0 155,431.16 456,000.0	- European database on women in decision-making positions - Eurobarometer on parental leave -Eurobarometer on ICT and gender	374,320.0 46,616.84 154,303.9
Assessing policies	- Employment experts network - Legal experts network	305,500.00 245,850.00	- Employment experts network - Legal experts network	305,500.0 245,850.0	- Employment experts network - Legal experts network	Postponed to 2004
Other activities	Feasibility study on a European Gender Institute	39,898.89	External evaluation of the Programme et of the Framework Strategy	889,500.0	- External evaluators for the calls of proposals - Survey on ICT and gender	34,690.0 55,009.7
Total		591,248.89		2,514,413.47		664,940.44

CMT : commitments in euros

Tab 5 - Activities funded under Strand 3 "Capacity building"

	2001		2002		2003	
	Activities	CMT	Activities	CMT	Activities	CMT
Open calls for proposals	- priority theme : Equal pay 17 Projects	5,047,974.67	Priority theme on reconciliation of work and family life – 11 Projects	3,796,753.61	Priority theme, women in decision making – 16 Projects	5,101,874.96

CMT : commitments