



Priority sector:
Human and Social Development

EEA GRANTS 2009-14

The EEA Financial Mechanism shall contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities in the European Economic Area, and to strengthening the bilateral relations between the EEA EFTA states – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway – and the Beneficiary States. The programme area shall contribute to these two overall objectives.

Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance

Objective

Gender equality and work-life balance promoted

Expected outcomes

- Gender issues across policies and practices mainstreamed
- Awareness raised and research on gender issues promoted
- Successful national policies and best practices on gender equality exchanged
- Balance between work, private and family life improved
- Gender balance on company boards improved
- Gender pay gap reduced
- Gender equality ombudspersons/ authorities established
- Capacity of gender equality organisations and networks strengthened



Relevance of support

The EU has made significant progress through its efforts to promote gender equality. Nonetheless, many EU Member States are still facing considerable challenges when it comes to addressing the gender dimension of issues such as access to employment, reconciliation of work, private and family life, pay gaps, participation in political and economic decision-making, and multiple discrimination against ethnic minorities.

Equality between women and men is a fundamental right, a common value of the EU and the EEA EFTA States, and a necessary condition for the achievement of the EU objectives of economic growth, more and better employment and greater social cohesion. The 1996 Communication on 'Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities' and the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997, Art. 2 and 3 (elimination of inequalities and promotion of equality between women and men), Art. 13 (anti-discrimination) and Art. 141 (equal pay), create the legal basis for promoting gender equality and fighting gender-based discrimination within the EU.

The current policy framework for actions to promote gender equality at EU level includes the Roadmap for Gender Equality 2006-10, the European Council 2006 European Pact for Gender Equality and the 2008 European Commission Communication on 'A better work-life balance'. In March 2010, the European Commission adopted the Women's Charter, setting out the priorities to be addressed by the new strategy for Gender Equality 2010-15. The Charter aims to include a gender perspective in all EC policies for the next five years, with a specific focus on promoting equal economic independence, reducing the gender pay gap, improving the representation of women in key decision-making roles, promoting the eradication of gender-based violence, and promoting gender equality beyond the EU.

Suggested activities

- Measures to increase awareness at national, regional and local levels through data collection, educational programmes and campaigns targeting both women and men on issues of gender equality and anti-discrimination

- Research structures and activities on gender issues, including but not limited to poverty, women's participation in decision-making and public life, equal economic independence for women and men, and balancing work, private and family life
- Activities to ensure gender mainstreaming in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policy, research, legislation, programmes and resource allocation at national, regional and local levels
- Measures to reduce the gender pay gap, including awareness-raising, initiatives to promote gender equality in the workplace, and efforts to improve the supply and quality of statistics
- Measures to foster the capacity of public authorities to develop gender mainstreaming and promote gender equality
- Mainstreaming and awareness activities to promote the reconciliation of work, private and family life
- Establishment of gender equality ombudspersons/authorities
- Information and awareness-raising activities on gender mainstreaming techniques through workshops, seminars and training, and manuals
- Exchanges between social partners, NGOs, the private sector and local and national governments
- Advocacy activities on gender equality
- Capacity-building for gender equality organisations and networks
- Exchange of best practices between EEA EFTA and Beneficiary State entities on gender mainstreaming and awareness

Programme area specificities

- Particularly relevant for civil society
- Suitable for small grant schemes
- Suitable for involving small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

Reduce economic and social disparities
Strengthen bilateral relations