

# GUIDE TO TRADE UNION GOOD PRACTICES OF THE

EUROPEAN PROJECT ON

*Parity between  
women and men  
in Trade Union  
Organisations*



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Unión  
General de  
Trabajadores

# **GUIDE TO TRADE UNION GOOD PRACTICES OF THE**

**EUROPEAN PROJECT ON**

***PARITY BETWEEN  
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## 1. PROLOGUE

The purpose of this Guide, which is an outcome of the European project *"Parity between women and men in trade union organisations"*, is to support those who, from their position within their trade union (trade union representatives, workers representatives, etc.), are directly involved in implementing and monitoring the application of the principle of equality between men and women in the workplace and decision making processes.

The long-term objective is to increase and consolidate the representation of women in all structures of trade union organisations, in the boards responsible for collective bargaining and social dialogue, so as to enhance their quality of life and employment.

Trade unions participating in this European project are committed to creating a society based on social justice, solidarity and equality. For this trade union commitment to be pursued we must equip ourselves with the appropriate means to enable women to participate in our organisations, that is instruments which will enable us to further and better mainstream the gender issue into sectoral as well as national level trade union activities.

For this reason, we must continue to raise awareness regarding the lack of women in decision making positions, which is where the capacity lies to adopt measures which can bring about important changes in the workplace, and promote a culture of collaboration with other institutions, both national and international, in an endeavour to find solutions to problems of great importance to working women.

Trade unions need women just as women need trade unions: working women can gain respect through their trade union membership as well as effective recognition of their rights. More and more, working women are particularly at risk in an ever-increasingly global and deregulated labour market, and the protection of women workers is a main priority of trade union organisations all over the world.

It is in this context that the project *"Parity between women and men in trade union organisations"* came to be. The purpose of the project was to consolidate our commitment, by accepting our responsibility from a social and labour stand point to support working women. This most important enterprise must be pursued by each individual but also by society at large.

The work which has been done in order for this Guide to be created would not have been possible without the co-funding received from the European Commission's General Directorate for Employment and Social Affairs and the Spanish Ministry for Employment and Social Affairs, given that the day to day activities of our trade unions would have made it impossible for this project to be materialised.

When we talk of gender equality and balanced participation in decision making bodies and processes we are talking about a priority objective which will receive a great deal of attention in 2005 on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the *Beijing Conference*.

It is our hope that the recommendations included in this Guide will serve as a tool for trade union organisations in those countries that have recently joined the European Union and all those organisations engaged in the processes of social dialogue.

## 2. THE VALUE OF A TRANSNATIONAL PROJECT

The project *"Parity between women and men in trade union organisations"*, has adopted a European and trans-national approach, within the framework of subsidies granted by the European Commission's General Directorate for Employment and Social Affairs.

The project contributes to the implementation of the Community Action Plan on Gender Equality (2001-2005) in its objective to develop the capacity of agents in promoting gender equality, particularly by fostering the exchange of information and good practices and the creation of a community-wide network.

The project's trans-national nature is not just a mere formality, nor is it restricted to the organisation of visits and occasional contacts between European agents; rather it requires a concerted effort from the partners. This effort consists of the trans-national partners assuming a formal commitment to work with each other and this requires specific time and dedication as well as sharing interesting experiences which can be exported to other countries.

This Guide to Good Practices is the fruit of productive collaboration and compilation of good practices from the following trade union organisations:

- DGB from Germany
- FNV from the Netherlands
- TUC from the United Kingdom
- UGT from Spain as promoter

The Guide provides a series of examples of good practices in balanced participation which have been implemented by the participating trade union organisations as well as the conclusions and strategies proposed by each with regards future developments.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

In order to fully understand the rationale behind the work which has been done it is important to clarify some basic concepts.

The term “gender” is used in this Guide to refer to the socially acquired differences between men and women, which change with time and vary enormously from one culture to another and even within the same culture.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, gender is a structural difference affecting the whole population and vulnerability according to variables such as race, ethnic group, social class, age, disability and sexual orientation, etc.

Gender and equality must be incorporated into all actions and political activities starting at the planning stage, and paying close attention to the effects these have when implemented, supervised and finally evaluated. This is known as gender mainstreaming.

Having established these common concepts, each of the partner organisations has conducted research works whose ensuing result is the base for this Guide. Said research is a first step towards the accomplishment of a core objective: to enhance and consolidate the representation of women in trade union organisation structures, in collective bargaining and social dialogue boards, with a view to improving quality of life and employment for women.

The research has been conducted using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, which has meant that the data compiled has been supplemented on the one hand with numerical data on the number of women present in each organisations’ structure and on the other with an analysis of the factors which have had a bearing on the greater or smaller number of women present and in the ways this represents progress or a step backwards in so far as existing trade union policies on equality.

The research begins with a quantitative analysis to identify how many men and women participate in the structures of the participating Organisations:

- Data has been collected to identify how many men and women are active on the labour market in each partner country.
- We have gathered figures from each partner organisation regarding the overall trade union membership according to gender and according to the way each organisation is structured. We have also tried to find information on men and women’s participation in collective bargaining and social dialogue boards.

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<sup>2</sup> “100 palabras para la igualdad” Glosario de la Comisión Europea de términos relativos a la igualdad de oportunidades entre mujeres y hombres, 1998.

In the qualitative analysis the following aspects have been considered:

- The evolution of trade union gender policies implemented by each organisation and on the mechanisms and strategies followed.
- In order to obtain a better understanding of trade union gender policies we have looked very closely at social realities. More specifically, we have listened to what the men and women in each organisation have to say. This has been done by way of four discussion groups held during the translational meetings; from these sessions we have obtained information regarding:
  - Difficulties and problems encountered by women when applying for a position.
  - Reasons for the differences observed in women's history of participation within each trade union organisation.
  - A description of women's situation within Trade Unions and the positions they hold.
  - Opinions expressed by men and women in regards to women's participation in each partner Trade Union.
  - Opinions expressed by men and women concerning the policies on equality which have been implemented in the trade unions.

In summary, the quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted for the purpose of this project will help to better understand the relationship which exists between higher levels of participation of women in all trade union organisation structures and political progress made regarding employment and social protection from the gender perspective in terms of both collective bargaining and social dialogue.

## 4. THE BASIC PREMISE: A COMPARATIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS COMPARADO

For the national research works, each participant trade union has collected data to provide an insight into the situation of women in the organisations as well as the labour markets in each country involved in the European project.

The social and economic situation in Germany, The Netherlands, United Kingdom and Spain are very different, which has meant that for a comparison to be made a series of initial concepts have had to be unified. Following the contributions from each country at the trans-national meetings, a consensus was reached in regards to concepts such as "activity rate"<sup>1</sup> and "unemployment rate"<sup>2</sup>, based on the OECD definitions.

The first data collected refer to Activity Rates broken down by gender. Table and Graph 1 show that the United Kingdom has the highest rate of activity for men (83.90 %) and women (69.20 %). In all the countries which took part in the project women represent the lowest percentages of activity, ranging from 69.20 % in the United Kingdom to 55.7 % in Spain. Spain is quite a striking example given that besides having the lowest percentage for women, the gap between men and women is also the largest of the four countries (25.4 percentage points). Germany has the smallest gap (13.5 points). In spite of which it is also important to stress that in all four countries involved in the project the percentage for women is always lower than for men.

Concerning the reasons for inactivity, the gender gap is enormous. As the European Commission has stated, men are inactive mainly due to education and retirement, while women's inactivity is attributed, in almost half the cases of those between 25 and 54 years of age, to family and domestic responsibilities.

In addition, there is an issue which still remains unresolved; female participation may increase, but this does not necessarily mean that the gender gap is reduced as root cause is the structural inequality of the labour market.

Table 1:

### ACTIVITY RATE, 2003 (Labour Force participation rate)

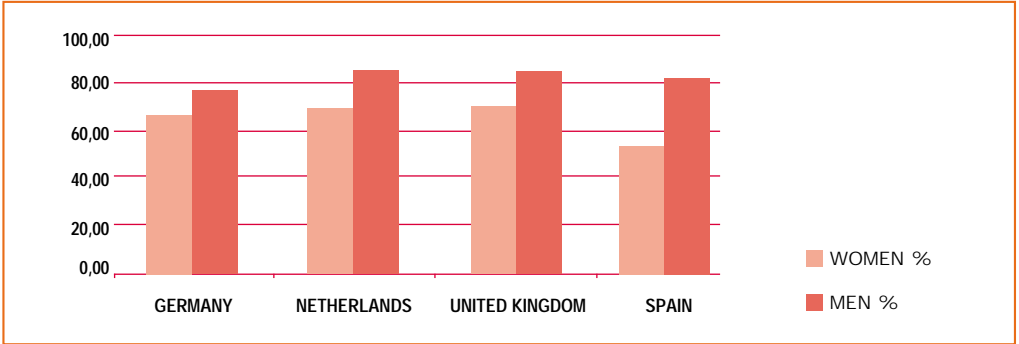
Source: OECD Employment Outlook OECD 2004, Statistical Annex

	% WOMEN	% MEN
GERMANY	64.50	78.00
THE NETHERLANDS	68.40	84.20
UNITED KINGDOM	69.20	83.90
SPAIN	55.70	81.10

<sup>1</sup> **Tasa Global de Actividad:** definida como el total de activos entre la población total (menor de 16 años y de 16 y más años). Indica qué parte de la población total de un país está en el mercado laboral y podría participar inmediatamente en la producción de bienes y servicios.

<sup>2</sup> **Tasa Global de Empleo:** es el total de ocupados entre la población total. Indica qué parte de la población de un país produce bienes y servicios.

**Graph 1**  
**ACTIVITY RATE**

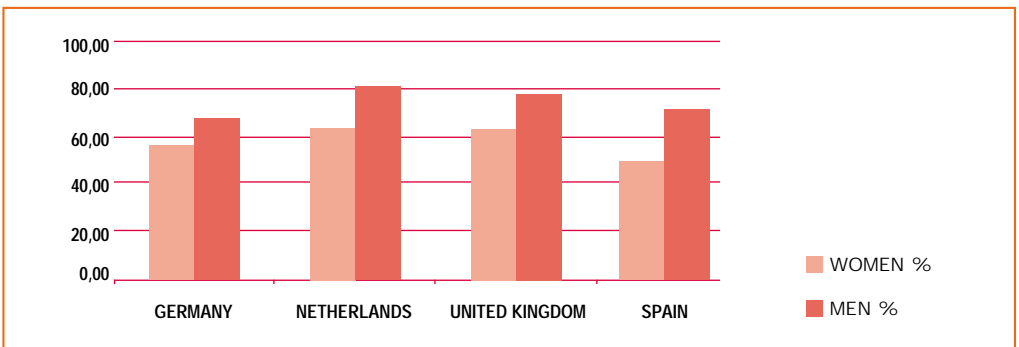


The analysis of employment rates among women in comparison with men shows that the gap is considerable, and Spain continues to have the lowest employment for women (46.8 %) as compared to men (74,5 %) and where the gender gap is as high as 27,7 percent. On the contrary, just as for Activity Rates, it is in Germany where the situation is more balanced: men (70 %) and women (58,7 %), in spite of the rate for women still being lower (12 percentage points).

**Table 2**  
**EMPLOYMENT RATES, 2003 (Employment/population ratio)**  
Source: OECD Employment Outlook OECD 2004, Statistical Annex

	% WOMEN	% MEN
GERMANY	58.70	70.00
NETHERLANDS	65.80	81.20
UNITED KINGDOM	66.40	83.90
SPAIN	46.80	74.50

**Graph 2**  
**TASA DE EMPLEO**

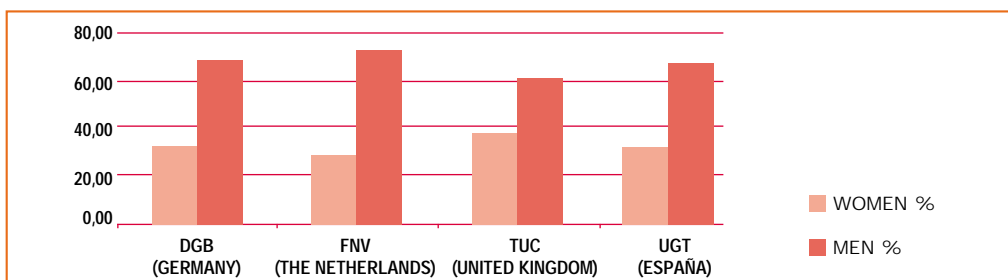


The unemployment rate is one of the factors influencing different trade union membership rates among both men and women. Sources for data collected regarding the distribution of membership are each of the trade union organisations and provide a breakdown of the number of men and women in each. These figures were updated on the following dates in each organisation respectively: DGB (2003), FNV (1/1/2004), TUC (2003), and UGT (31/10/2004).

**Table 3.**  
**MEMBERSHIP DISTRIBUTION**

	% WOMEN	% MEN
DGB (GERMANY)	31.80	68.00
FNV (THE NETHERLANDS)	29.80	70.20
TUC (UNITED KINGDOM)	39.00	61.00
UGT (SPAIN)	31.45	68.55

**Graph 3**  
**MEMBERSHIP DISTRIBUTION**



In all four trade union organisations participating in the Project there are fewer women members than men, and these figures range from 29,8 % in FNV (The Netherlands) to 39 % in the TUC (United Kingdom). It is worthy of note that in the United Kingdom the percentage difference between male and female membership is 22 for the TUC in the United Kingdom and 40.4 in the FNV in The Netherlands.

This can be attributed to a series of variables:

- Later incorporation of women to the labour market and thus later involvement in Trade union issues.
- The Trade union structure is considered “Male territory”, and working habits and the organisation as well as training hours have all been male driven and oriented.
- Reconciliation of family and the working life, a responsibility attributed to women, is another reason to explain why there tend to be fewer female members.

## 5. INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE EQUAL GENDER REPRESENTATION AND THE CURRENT SITUATION IN DIFFERENT INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

### ■ The United Nations

The United Nations Organisation has played a pivotal role in support of demands for equal opportunities for women and has paid particular attention to the need to increase the presence of women in decision making positions in all fields.

Along these lines the United Nations' first World Conference on Women held in Mexico back in 1975 already highlighted the need for a more equitable distribution of power between men and women. Twenty years later the Beijing Conference incorporated the principle of "parity" into the text of its final document.

In so far as the internal structure of the United Nations Organisation, the General Assembly in Resolution 57/180 points to its concern with improving the gender ratio to 50 in all categories throughout the United Nations System but more particularly in decision making positions.

### ■ European Level

The European Union acts as a driver of national equality policies and creates initiatives of great interest to ensure that equality between men and women in its Member States is accomplished. One initiative to highlight is the European Employment Strategy, which defines equal opportunities as one of its main priorities and encompasses the objectives set out at the Lisbon Summit in 2000 through which the target is to increase employment rates among women as a crucial component of economic development.

The objective of equitable participation of men and women in decision making bodies in all areas of society is a community commitment and since 1991 has been a corner stone of the Community Action Programmes on equal opportunities.

The current *Community Action Programme on gender equality* (2001-2005) is based on the Framework Strategy on equality between men and women and the principle of gender mainstreaming. The objective is that all Community policies and actions should embrace this principle. In this respect this 5th Programme is even more ambitious than its predecessors and includes equal participation and representation of women and men among its 5 main objectives.

Notwithstanding the above mentioned initiatives, and according to the findings of the European Commission annual report on headway made so far in equal opportunities, the salary gap still remains to the detriment of women, who continue to suffer the highest unemployment rates and are still underrepresented in senior management positions and politics.

On the other hand, the adoption of Directive 2002/73/CE of the European Parliament and Council, dated September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2002, which modifies Directive 76/207/CEE, *regarding the application of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in so far as access to employment, training and professional advancement as well as working conditions*, is particularly important not only because it includes definitions of the principle of equal treatment, direct and indirect discrimination and sexual harassment, but also because it urges the social partners to make the principle of equal treatment a reality.

Finally, also worthy of comment is the fact that European Union Council approved *Recommendation, 2 of December 1996, regarding equal participation of men and women in decision making processes*. The objective is to encourage the Member States to promote equal participation in all areas of society (politics, the economy, the justice system and the media) encouraging the efforts of social agents to promote equal participation between men and women in their activities. Along these lines the Declaration of the Paris Conference in 1999 on "Men and Women to Power", in which a special reference was made to promoting equal participation of women in positions of responsibility and decision making within workers organisations.

#### ■ International confederations and organisations: ETUC and ICFTU

In today's increasingly global economy where women are particularly at risk, the defence of workers' interests inspired by the principle of solidarity, requires to act at international level.

Trade union membership and the protection of women workers is a high priority for these organisations all over the world. The trade unions need women as much as women need the trade unions because joining forces is the only way to ensure that their work rights are upheld.

At international level, there are two large trade union Confederations to which the organisations involved in this project belong:

- The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), founded in 1949.
- The European Trades Union Confederation (ETUC) founded in 1973.

#### *A) European Trades Union Confederation*

Some of the conclusions drawn from the analysis and from the working paper drafted by the ETUC point to the idea that opinions and traditional stereotypes women hold regarding the "appropriate" role for women to play result in lack of confidence in themselves and that they could hardly be accepted as representatives and spokespersons for men, who may not be willing to relinquish their power and feel threatened by active and decisive women.

According to the ETUC it must be taken into account that trade union structures reflect the labour market's natural tendency to segregate. The trade union traditions and ways – the way meetings are run, the slang, the language, the problems women encounter in accessing the training programmes – all of this contributes to increasing the barriers women encounter.

As a result of the above, very few women ever manage to overcome this so called "glass ceiling" or invisible wall of subtle conditions imposed upon women and which continue to make it difficult for them to rise to the higher decision making levels. What is more, those women who do manage to ascend thus far are then expected to shoulder enormous responsibilities to help the trade unions to improve the level of women's representation.

In 1992, the ETUC's Executive Board adopted a resolution<sup>3</sup> which declared among other things, that *"it is essential that women participate in the central decision making bodies of the trade unions"* and it was decided that every four years a Conference on Women should be held, the first in 1995, where a declaration would be issued regarding the progress of women in decision making processes in ETUC member trade unions. 1995 also saw the approval of the first ETUC Equality Plan.

The current Equality Plan was approved at the Prague meeting in May of 2003 and has three core objectives:

1. To eliminate the gender representation gap in decision making bodies.
2. To broaden the scope of gender «mainstreaming».
3. To strengthen the role of the body responsible for gender equality policy.

On the other hand, although there are very few studies concerning women's presence in trade union decision making bodies and processes, the ETUC has attempted to collate data in 1993, 1998 and 2002 on the number of women in the trade unions.

It is not by happen chance that this research initiative has been undertaken in the European context, as the UE is encouraging women to participate in decision making processes through instruments and tools which promote this objective and permit the co-financing of this type of data collection exercise.

One must also consider how difficult it is to generalise about the situation of women in the different trade union organisations to which they belong. This is particularly clear if we look at the large number of national identities this involves, regional sensitivities as well as affinities in ideology, not to mention the differences between national confederations and professional federations.

The periodic surveys conducted by the ETUC reveal that the special measures and structures for women trade union members continue to play a very important role in the generation of equal opportunity and gender representation related issues and policies. However, if women are to break through the glass ceiling which keeps them out of the high level decision making positions in trade unions and if active women trade unionists at regional and national level are to rise to the high positions in the European arena, then clearly many more such measures are needed.

Here are many women who could potentially be the decision makers of the future in the trade unions; but for the time being the barriers standing in their way are insurmountable. What is required are compre-

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<sup>3</sup> "Una orientación hacia la integración sexual en la política de la CES", de diciembre de 1992.

hensive and far reaching action programmes which include special integration measures and strategies to enable a greater number of women to participate in decision making processes at national and European level.

The ETUC groups these strategies, which have been adopted by the Trade Unions, into the following categories:

- conferences on women held more or less regularly;
- committees on women or equality issues;
- units on women or equality;
- reserved positions in executive bodies;
- guarantees for proportional representation and changes in the election procedures;
- new approaches to Trade union activities;
- gender perspective in training.

Two important points have emerged from the conclusions of the ETUC analysis:

1. It would seem that a large number of women members is not sufficient to guarantee proportional representation of women in the executive bodies. Nor it would seem does it guarantee that the bodies responsible for equality issues be conferred a certain level of autonomy, either because they lack financial support or because they are just not sufficiently incorporated into the decision making bodies.

2. Even in a situation where there is perfect "representation" of women in the trade union decision making bodies, the use of real "positive action" programmes (reserved positions or a quota system) must necessarily be accompanied by a holistic policy which guarantees equal rights for men and women in the organisation (in summary, political engagement).

These measures, or positive action, serve as a stop-gap, while the demands made by women workers in regards to trade union activity, society and economic and political terms are taken into account.

### ***B) The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions***

The ICFTU has a Women's Committee since 1956, when women barely represented 7 percent of total membership. The committee is very active and has played a crucial part in the elaboration and orientation of the ICFTU actions and policies, and has energetically encouraged the women among its members to actively participate in Trade Unions undertakings. The following is the strategy implemented by the Committee:

- In the regional organisations of ICFTU to promote the importance of the Women's committees among its members, so that women workers' opinions are taken into consideration in all matters dealt with by the trade union and to serve as a catalyst for change within the trade union movement;

- To improve women's representation in executive bodies, particularly the Executive Board and the Congress, introducing positive action measures with the medium-term objective of achieving gender balance between men and women;
- To promote education and training for women trade unionists in areas such as equal rights, trade union membership and basic trade union training;
- To mainstream equality and gender into all policies, programmes and activities undertaken by the ICFTU and its members.

The most outstanding political guidelines and action programmes put together by the Women's Committee are: the Plan for Positive Action for the integration of Women in trade union organisations, the Plan for Positive Action for the Integration of Women in Cooperation for Development; the Trade Union Policy on Family, Violence Against Women, and two important policies on sexual harassment, one referring to the work-place and another in Trade Unions.

The work of the Women's Committee proves that this type of structure is an efficient instrument through which Trade Unions can deal with women-related demands and issues and are necessary, and in the measure to which women are underrepresented in trade union executives.

These structures contribute to ensuring that women take their rightful place in other bodies with greater energy and confidence and in themselves promote solidarity among women both within and outside of the Trade Unions.

At present the ICFTU is developing a three-year worldwide campaign to promote trade membership (2002-2005), under the slogan *"Unions for Women and Women for Unions"*, which focuses on organising four groups of women workers:

- women workers in the informal economy and atypical women workers,
- young women,
- migrant women and women from ethnic minority groups,
- other groups which the trade union organisations consider priority, such as women in the public sector, Industrial free-trade zones, etc.

The campaign has set itself an ambitious target: that of doubling the number of women members and to bring about an important increase in women's participation at executive level and in the decision making process.

## 6. CLASSIFICATION OF GOOD PRACTICES DEVELOPED BY THE PARTICIPATING TRADE UNION ORGANISATIONS

### 6.1 Background: women and diversity

In order to understand the context and the development of good practices explained in this section, some thought must be given first to the concept of diversity.

Women do not define themselves by their gender alone. We are not a homogenous group, rather we are characterised by our diversity of national origin, ethnic or racial background, sexual orientation and economic status, etc. This is reflected, on the one hand, by the social and labour situation in each country, and on the other by the way women are represented and how they participate, in each Trade Union.

This is why solutions aimed at overcoming this lack of representation of women at the highest levels of decision making must necessarily be attuned to the specifics of each Trade Union.

Notwithstanding the idiosyncrasies of each country and the different situations of women members (problems of access to employment and professional advancement, the specificities of reconciling family and work, etc.), Trade Unions can together find answers to the common problems.

So, the Trade union organisations must demand that women's social and labour rights be given just and fair treatment in themselves, within a framework of full acknowledgement of the social liberties offering the Rule of Law.

### 6.2 Good practices in each of the participating organisations

The following examples of Good Practices are the result of a joint programme conducted with our trans-national partners: DGB (Germany), FNV (The Netherlands) and the TUC (United Kingdom). The choice of good practices is based on the trans-national working visits and on research analyses carried out by each of the project partners.

This team effort resulted in a classification of the examples which the trade union organisations have defined as "good practices" with the aim of obtaining our project's basic goal: to *"increase and consolidate women's representation in collective bargaining negotiations and in social dialogue boards"*.

Some of these practices could have been included in more than one of the agreed subject areas, but we have chosen to feature each individual practice only in that subject field which is closest to its core intent.

A good practice must in all cases be understood as a positive point of reference in an advance towards equality. Given that the purpose of this Guide is to provide a definition and analysis of good practices in

balanced participation by men and women in trade union organisations, we must point out that the concept of “good practice” must be understood as a relative term and not as an absolute, meaning that it should be taken as part of the trade union context in which it appears and as a function of the participating trade union’s existing political, socioeconomic and temporary circumstances. The singularity embodied in many of these meanings may make it impossible to apply a systematic approach and turn them into policies. Thus, in the Guide the terms used to define a given practice as good (“good clause”, “positive example”, interesting practice”) shall be used as synonyms<sup>4</sup>.

First, and seen as common features in selected good practices, we find a constant element when all trades unions address regulation of:

- quotas and proportionality
- trade union structures dealing specifically with women’s issues
- establishment of information networks

Many of these measures have been promoted by international trade union organisations (CES/ETUC, ICFTU), which have indicated to their member trade unions the need to adopt specific policies aiming at achieving concrete results in the field of equality.

Second, the texts of DGB and TUC reports include a number of measures addressed at safeguarding and improving the role of women in the union whenever the possibility of mergers between trade unions organisations arises<sup>5</sup>.

On the other hand, both the TUC and the FNV reports highlight the fact that initiatives and solutions mentioned regarding equal opportunities for men and women are being extrapolated in order to improve the situation of specific groups facing particular problems, such as migrant workers, lesbians and gay workers, etc.

### 6.3 Thematic classification of good practice examples

#### A) INCREASE FEMALE MEMBERSHIP

- Campaign to sign up women (UGT)
- Organisation Academy (TUC)

#### B) ACCESS TO MANAGEMENT AND DECISION MAKING POSITION

- Organisational structures for working women (UGT)
- Quotas and proportionality (UGT)
- Quotas and by-laws (DGB)
- Representation and gender parity as part of Social Dialogue processes (UGT)

<sup>4</sup> No obstante, la expresión de “ejemplo positivo” no debe confundirse con la de “acción positiva”: si bien todas las acciones son ejemplos positivos, no ocurre igual a la inversa.

<sup>5</sup> Para una información más detallada, se recomienda consultar los informes de investigación nacionales, colgados en la página web: <http://www.ugt.es/Mujer/proyecto europeo/proyecto europeo 2004.html>

- Reserved positions (TUC)
- Mentoring (DGB)
- Positive Action (FNV)

### *C) FACILITATION WITHIN THE UNION*

- Courses and training towards equality (UGT)
- Information networks (DGB)
- Conciliation Policies: compatibility of working hours, child care centres (FNV)

### *D) KNOW THE TRADE UNION*

- Data gathering/survey March 8 (FNV)
- Monitoring- control y seguimiento continuos (DGB)

### *E) PERMANENCE IN THE TRADE UNION AND COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY*

- Trade union equal opportunities plans for men and women (UGT)
- Review of Collective Bargaining platforms (UGT)
- Participation in Collective Bargaining and social dialogue processes: collective bargaining from a gender-based point of view (UGT)
- Referendum: new methods in decision-making (FNV)
- Measures aimed at specific women's collectives based on ethnic origin, race or sexual orientation (FNV)
- Commitment to equality (TUC)
- Women's Committees and Conferences (TUC)
- Equality Audit for All (TUC)

### *A) INCREASE FEMALE MEMBERSHIP*

#### ■ **CAMPAIGN TO INCREASE FEMALE MEMBERSHIP (UGT, Spain)**

**Objective: to increase the number of women members of the trade union to match the parallel increase of women in the labour market.**

The Confederate UGT's Women Department, together with the Confederation's Organisational Secretariat, is preparing a Campaign for Women's Membership. It is a campaign, for the first time, exclusively aimed at women, and shall lead to an evaluation of the increase in the number of members resulting from this campaign.

The affiliation campaign will include three Spanish Regions: La Rioja, Navarra and Cantabria. Two companies belonging to each State Federation (professional sectors) which comply with the following criteria shall be selected in each of the three Regions:

- Companies with more than 50 workers (one small and one medium-sized company)
- One company with a majority of women workers and a second where women workers are a minority

The affiliation campaign shall include a mid-term and final evaluations, and shall be monitored throughout the process.

A number of specific and individual actions shall be carried out in each of the companies selected in order to increase the number of women affiliates.

#### ■ THE ORGANISING ACADEMY (TUC, UNITED KINGDOM)

**Objetivo: formación de personas como especialistas en organización sindical.**

Early in 1998 the TUC Organising Academy opened its doors to 36 candidates to become "Academy Organisers" for a 12-month period so that, through intensive training, they may be employed as specialists in trade union organisation.

Training of organisers is carried out through a programme including theory-based classes and practical exercises which involve the organisation of projects monitored by an experienced tutor. The students are then hired jointly by the TUC and the sponsoring trade union; the expectation is that they will continue their activities as organising guides with the capability of managing their own campaigns, either with the sponsoring trade union or else with a different TUC trade union.

One of the more important activities for the organisers has proven to be direct recruitment through visits to workplaces and ensuring the affiliation of additional workers, particularly in sectors such as retail sales and telephone call centres, in which the organisation of trade union representation is weak.

A review of the Academy's operation carried out on its 5th anniversary concluded that there had been a considerable success in recruiting new members and activists, particularly women and young workers. Besides, the activities of organisers have included, in the majority of cases, actions in the field of collective bargaining and workers' organisation.

### *B) ACCESS TO MANAGEMENT AND DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS*

#### ■ ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES AIMED AT WORKING WOMEN (UGT, Spain)

**Objetivo: to meet women's demands within the trade union and to facilitate labour market improvements for women outside the trade union.**

The Confederation's Department for Women was established on the occasion of the 33rd Confederation Congress (1983).

The rapid changes which followed women's gradual incorporation to the workplace during the 80's forced the trade unions to take a position in their role as organisations.

It then became necessary to promote specific demands and to share them with other trade unions, bearing in mind their need to find a space of their own.

Our trade union, as a setting which mirrors the diversity and social realities of the workplace, echoed the idea by creating the Department for Women. Its objective was to eradicate the widely-acknowledged mechanisms which led to working and social discrimination. The intention was not to set it apart as a separate or different area of action since, given the very nature of its activity, its vocation has always been that of integration.

At the 34<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Confederation (1986), the work done by the Department for Women's Affairs was recognised, and was urged to continue its activities. The Executive Committee appointed a Responsible for the Department, that should be provided with financial and staffing resources necessary to fulfil its mission and responsibilities.

Departments for Women's Affairs were also established in Federations and Unions, at National and Regional level

Some of the duties assigned to Departments for Women's Affairs include:

- Actively pursue an increase in women's representation in decision-making entities within the union-Executive Commissions, Committees and Congresses.
- Provide information, training and advice regarding women's affairs.
- Participate in studies, drafting and implementation of trade union policies with particular bearing on women.
- Pursue the inclusion of women in candidate lists for trade union elections and in negotiating committees involved in collective bargaining activities.
- Facilitate women's access to the union's institutional representation.

### ■ QUOTAS AND PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION (UGT, Spain)

**Objective: to guarantee women's participation in decision making and monitoring positions by ensuring true equality with men.**

The Resolutions adopted during the 37<sup>th</sup> UGT Confederation Congress (1998) included a clause in the union's by-laws aimed at increasing the number of women within the organisation by implementing a system based on quotas and proportional representation, as follows:

*"The Confederation shall implement a system for participation in Congresses, Committees and Executive Commissions at all levels which guarantees the presence of men and women in the aforesaid bodies more in keeping with the reality of UGT membership. This presence shall tend*

*towards proportionality in terms of the number of affiliated members of each gender in each Federation and Union. As a general guideline members of either gender shall not account for more than eighty percent or less than twenty percent members of total membership”.*

It is important to point out that in the 38th Confederation Congress the quota system was compulsory and not simply a recommendation, as was initially proposed in the Resolutions adopted during the 37<sup>th</sup> Confederation Congress. This implied a qualitative change by introducing a formal obligation: “...*In all cases a minimum participation of twenty percent shall be guaranteed to each gender in those organisations with that same or higher percentage of participation*”. This change shall have a direct influence on trade union bodies, with a resulting significant increase in terms of representation for women. Women’s demands will consequently be considered at all union levels.

Three months after this guaranteed participation was introduced the results of the implementation of the positive action measure became evident, and it was on this basis taken as an example of Good Practices by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC).

#### ■ QUOTAS AND BY-LAWS (DGB, Germany)

**Objetive: to improve women’s participation as part of internal processes leading to the promotion of equal opportunities within the trade union.**

The Ver.di, service sector trade union is the result of a merger of several German trade unions which took place in 2001. Women trade union members had included in the constitution documents specific clauses concerning equality related issues such as the following:

- Minimum women’s quota: establecida en todos los órganos y comisiones, y con carácter proporcional a los miembros femeninos activos en cada sector.
- Establishment of internal working women’s structures:
  - Establishment of women’s councils at federal, regional and municipal levels. At local level a parallel system of local women’s group (not compulsory).
  - Creation of representative binding structures for representation in specialised areas.
- Representation of women’s needs in trade union committees:  
Women’s councils at each level and women’s representatives in specialised sectors send a trade union steward to the management body in each sector and specialised area.

Collective bargaining rules regulates participation of an additional representative for women’s policies and parity in national collective committee.

- Internal women’s work officers:  
A general labour agreement was regulated in order to represent the interests of women workers within the trade union, and came into force in December 2003 with the aim of fostering measu-

res leading to equality among trade union staff. Stewards, voted by trade union women workers, hold the “ad honorem” position for a 4-year period. Their mission is to coordinate activities carried out by the different organisations member of the trade union of particular interest to women and to support measures leading to conciliation between professional activities and family life.

#### ■ REPRESENTATION AND PARITY IN THE SOCIAL DIALOGUE PROCESSES (UGT, Spain)

**Objective: to improve women’s participation in social dialogue processes in which their rights and interests are upheld.**

By agreement between the majority Spanish trade union organisations, the UGT is their single representative in the European social dialogue process on a gender perspective. The Confederation’s Women Department participates in this framework through the ETUC, whose current President is the UGT’s Secretary General.

Besides participation at a European level, there are at present two national-level good practices in the framework of the social dialogue: a parity-based composition of the UGT’s representation within the process, and the implementation of a specific working group aimed at dealing with gender issues as part of the development of Inter-Confederation Agreements for Collective Bargaining.

#### ■ RESERVED POSITIONS AND MINIMUM QUOTAS (TUC, United Kingdom)

**Objective: to reserve positions for women within National Executive Committees and to introduce minimum quotas for women in specific executive bodies.**

In 1979 the TUC implemented a series of by-laws entitled “*Equality for women within the trade unions*” which support the idea that affiliated trade unions should guarantee women’s representation in decision-making bodies through the mediation of additional positions or through co-optation<sup>6</sup>.

The initial aim was to reach “some degree of women’s representation”, but progress has been made towards obtaining proportionality, that is, reaching the same proportion of representation within decision-making bodies as the number of women trade union members.

More specifically, the general trade union T&G implemented a “minimum proportionality” statute in 1998, which establishes that the number of women members sitting on Advisory Committees must be proportional to the number of women registered in an electoral constituency.

The TUC adopted a binding decision making it compulsory for all trade unions to commit to promoting equality free of all discrimination. In order to ensure that this decision was implemented in practice and that it led to tangible results the TUC made it compulsory for all trade unions to

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<sup>6</sup> Elección entre los propios miembros.

audit<sup>7</sup> their equality policy standards as well policies, structures, activities related with collective bargaining, education and other services, and review its own role as employer.

There are very few TUC member unions which reserve positions to women within their national executive committees.

The TUC itself has decided to expressly reserve two positions for women in its Board of Management, although they have progressed and currently two out of three executive positions are held by women.

#### ■ MENTORING (DGB, Germany)

**Objective: to improve women's training and skills to support them in obtaining access to better professional and trade union positions, increase their social and technical competence and facilitate access to knowledge obtained by experienced workers.**

This programme was launched in 2000 and lasted 15 months. All DGB member trade unions participated, involving the creation of 16 two-person teams or tandems whose main objective was twofold: to support women in the workplace and in trade union activities, and to train them in order to help them in accessing and executing new functions.

Mentoring is a personal learning process in which each woman who participates commits to making an effort to attain personal and professional development.

Mentoring tutors (men and women) provide support and share their knowledge with sponsored women and help them increase their motivation, with special attention to young trade union women workers.

The project evaluation highlights the fact that mentoring has provided sponsored women with better knowledge of their professional opportunities and trade union policies, and also being more self-confident, and offers interesting suggestions concerning problem solutions and the creation of informal networks.

#### ■ POSITIVE ACTION (Industriebond, FNV, The Netherlands)

**Objective: to promote hiring women within the trade union itself and thus make headway in equal opportunities policies developed within the trade union.**

Use of this tool began a year after the initial publication (1986) of the March 8<sup>th</sup> Survey concerning women's representation among trade union workers, defined in a different Section of this Guide (*Know the trade union – "Collection of Data – March 8th Survey"*).

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<sup>7</sup> Ver en epigrafe posterior la Buena Práctica "Auditoría para Todos".

The trade union responsible for implementation of this measure, active in the industrial sector<sup>8</sup>, launched a special hiring campaign addressed exclusively to women in 1986. Until that time the trade union staff was recruited with a preference for active members (mainly men), but this round also accepted non-union members. The example soon spread to other trade unions and to the Confederation.

This new recruitment method was also the beginning of a radical change in trade union labour culture. One of the main elements in this process of change has meant that a trade union worker can be part-time (4 days per week), while the idea until that time was that full-time dedication was necessary.

Soon after that a number of new trade union conditions were established for men and women trade union workers – children's day care centres, improvement in conditions for leave, regulation of part-time work, improvement in policies on sexual harassment, etc., for the entire FNV membership as well as for affiliated trade unions.

This set of measures adopted in the area of balancing work and family, applicable not only to women but also to men members of the trade union, has been included in the framework collective bargaining agreement in the FNV Confederation as well as in the majority of member trade unions.

### *C) FACILITATE WITHIN THE TRADE UNION*

#### ■ COURSES AND TRAINING IN EQUALITY (UGT, Spain)

**Objective: to provide basic knowledge regarding the benchmark and situation on equal opportunities between men and women by fostering an exchange of information and experience.**

The Confederation's Department for Women is responsible for managing courses addressed to organisation officers, trade union representatives, members and other workers, etc.

The objective of these courses is to provide training based on a gender perspective to all those interested in learning about this issue and obtaining resources to contribute to achieving equality between men and women in the workplace.

#### ■ INFORMATION NETWORKS: WORKS COUNCIL MEMBERS (DGB, Germany)

**Objective: to promote the exchange of information and experience among women who face similar situations in the workplace and the trade union, thus making use of previously-obtained information.**

In the recent past a large number of women's networks have been established under the coordination of the DGB Confederation. One outstanding example is that of the IG Metall trade union, which dates from 1997.

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<sup>8</sup> Posteriormente se fusionó con otros 3 sindicatos para convertirse en FNV Bondgenoten.

With the creation of these networks it has been possible to overcome the feeling of many women Works Council members, who have the feeling that they are acting alone, particularly when they try to implement measures whose objective is to achieve equality in the workplace. This task is especially difficult in sectors such as metal and related activities, in which the workforce is essentially male.

The network facilitates exchanges of experiences among women workers and provides information on issues of current interest regarding policies aimed at achieving equality, strategies and legislation. It is useful in strengthening the position of women workers and therefore increases their negotiating capacity.

Besides, through the use of new technologies (Internet), informal networks provide resources which lead to quick and direct access to updated materials and information.

A number of conditions have proven to be necessary to ensure the success of networks, such as:

- availability of sufficient personal and financial resources
- demand for the creation of a network: a feeling of need for communication within a given group
- group with a solid social identity
- social relations and responsibility for the network in the hands of a specific person
- concept of the network as something of intrinsic importance
- in the case of virtual networks, availability of the appropriate technical structure.

■ **CONCILIATION POLICIES: COMPATIBILITY OF WORKING HOURS, CHILDREN'S DAY-CARE CENTRES (FNV, The Netherlands)**

**Objective: to improve the quality of life of working men and women in the trade union and to serve as example that may be transferred to other organisations.**

This is a good practice which derives from "positive action", discussed in the Section which deals with this issue.

*D) KNOW THE TRADE UNION*

■ **ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN UGT MANAGEMENT BODIES (UGT, Spain)**

In 2003, the UGT promoted this analysis on a joint basis with the Women's Foundation, so as to better understand the problems and obstacles which stand in the way of increased women's presence in management bodies of UGT Trade union Confederation structure. It meant a further step towards an awareness-creation and action plan in the organisation, started with Objective 100 and the quota system, also with the purpose of promoting increased representation and participation.

The obstacles women encounter in participation and permanence in management bodies rooted in the dynamics and operation of the organisation, training schedules which have been tailored to men's habits and interests, all of which have resulted in a structure which represents major difficulties for women.

The organisational structure itself is a problem, and so women propose a more equitable participation in terms of cross-cutting activities, team work, efficient meetings, and better quality in working schedules, etc. The more significant obstacles women face in terms of access to management positions are found embedded in the trade union itself, while men believe that what prevents women from having access to those positions are issues beyond the trade union and have far more to do with balancing work and family life.

This is a clearly stereotypical view, based on prejudice, and reflects a social reality which is not alien to the trade union, given that traditional opinions are implicit to the person.

The analysis reveals inequalities, between men and women, in the way they conceive equality policies launched by the trade union, in the presence and role played by women within the union itself, and in the development of women's union activities, which has obviously been hampered by women's tardy incorporation in the workplace and a still slower participation in trade union life.

This analysis has served as an inception for projects such as the ongoing Project *"Parity between women and men in trade union organisations"*.

### ■ COLLECTION OF DATA – March 8 Surveys ( FNV – The Netherlands)

**Objective: to obtain information, compare and annually review internal situations in trade unions with respect to equality between men and women in order to promote measures for further progress.**

The Department for Women's Affairs has, since 1984, gathered data concerning the situation of women in the Confederation and in affiliated trade unions. The more important results are published on a yearly basis, on March 8th – International Women's Day.

The March 8th Survey is the basis for equality policies in the FNV and its member trade unions. It is occasionally used as justification or means to obtain legitimacy in advocating the need for stronger policies by way of benchmarking the various trade unions.

The document-survey also occasionally provides an inventory of equal-opportunity policies.

Over the years, the survey, addressed to women, has been combined with other similar initiatives aimed at young members and as well as black and migrant members.

■ **MONITORING (DGB, Germany)**

**Objective: to become acquainted with what real progress has been achieved in women's and men's participation in the trade union and propose measures aimed at continuing to make headway in equality.**

This is a trade union with a large women's presence and was the first member of the DGB to decide to back in 1986 to introduce the objective of promoting women's presence within the organisation. This in turn required that a report be drafted in writing every time a Trade union Congress was organised, describing the real situation of women in the organisation and listing measures to be adopted with the purpose of reaching women's quotas.

These reports have provided very valuable information and also bring to light some of the weaknesses observed during the period of reference. This is very useful for problem analysis and adoption of measures to improve the situation. What is more, the data collected also enables a comparison of the evolution of the different structures which enjoy a degree of autonomy from the Trade union Congress.

*E) PERMANENCE IN THE TRADE UNION AND COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY*

■ **TRADE UNION ACTION PLANS IN THE FIELD OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN (UGT, Spain)**

**Objective: to progress in the attempt to reach the objectives set for achieving equal opportunities between women and men within the trade union and on behalf of its members.**

The Confederation's Department for Women has submitted proposals for lines of action aimed at attending to women's demands, which have become embodied in Trade Union Action Plans aimed at Equal Opportunities. These Trade Union Action Plans respond to specific, concrete objectives and activities and provide an appropriate setting in which to ensure real equality can be materialised at the various operative levels. The plans include a series of measures which given their implementation within the UGT and beyond can be considered positive actions.

There have been, to date, four Trade Union Action Plans for Equal Opportunities, ranging from the first plan approved just prior to the 35<sup>th</sup> Confederation Congress to the 4<sup>th</sup> Action Plan in which we are currently involved.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Trade Union Action Plan for Equal Opportunities was approved within the framework of the 4<sup>th</sup> Women's Conference, held immediately before the UGT's 35<sup>th</sup> Confederation Congress (1990) and was developed during that congressional period.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Plan highlighted actions aimed at:

- Objective 100 for equality: To increase the presence of women at all levels within the Organisation. This was a basic pillar and became the basis for the discussion of a quota system to be implemented as part of the Resolutions adopted during the 37<sup>th</sup> Confederation Congress.
- Ensuring that Collective Bargaining becomes a means to achieving equal treatment and opportunities.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Trade Union Plan for Equal Opportunities was launched prior to the 37<sup>th</sup> Confederation Congress. This Plan aimed at becoming a basic instrument of reference for the organisation and was slated to play an active role in achieving true social equality between both genders. The main objective was to mainstream, or integrate, the various positions held by women members of the UGT concerning proposals in the field of equality into all Organisation policies and activities.

The main objectives for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Trade Union Action Plan are focused on the following:

- Promote the role of Departments of Women's Affairs so as to channel measures and actions aimed at achieving full equality between women and men in the workplace and within the trade union itself.
- Actively participate throughout Trade Union structures in order to guarantee mainstreaming equal opportunities policies into all UGT global policies.

Resolutions approved during the 37<sup>th</sup> Confederation Congress include the approval of the so-called quota system, in response to the demands defined within the contents of Objective 100 of the Trade union Action Plan, which proved fundamental in the process to attain true equality in terms of representation, and which marks a "before" and an "after" in women's representation and participation within the organisation.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Trade Union Action Plan for Equality was approved by a Confederation Committee for the first time (2000) in accordance with solutions adopted during the 37<sup>th</sup> Confederation Congress (1998) with the intent to obtain an increase in women's presence and participation in trade union activities at all levels, as well as to generate the design of trade union strategies based on equality. Some of the main objectives are:

- To increase women's trade union membership, with particular attention to those sectors where there is a relatively weaker trade union representation. At the same time aiming at a system for women's representation coherent with the percentage of women's membership in each market sector or region.
- To reach a level of women's representation in tune with percentages of women's membership in each market sector or region.

- To make progress in terms of the contents of Collective Bargaining processes regarding equality, while at the same time trying to increase women's participation in Collective Bargaining committees and processes.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Trade Union Action Plan for Equality was developed during the period of the 38<sup>th</sup> UGT Confederation Congress (2002). This Plan must be a point of reference to ensure that the various levels of the trade union organisation promote their various action plans, designed to match their areas of activity, the specific characteristics of members and their particular needs in terms of both women's participation and trade union representation and integration of a gender-based point of view in their various activities.

Some of the main objectives are:

- Mainstreaming the gender perspective in all trade union policies
- Ensure, through Social Dialogue and Collective Bargaining, the application of the principle of equal treatment for women and men.
- Through Collective Bargaining processes guarantee the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities between women and men.
- Consolidate and increase women's presence in decision-making, management and control positions.

On the other hand, the quota system was finally made compulsory and was not seen as a recommendation for positive action to bring about a qualitative change. Three months after including this guaranteed participation, the result of the launch of this positive action measure became evident. The measure has, in fact, been defined as a positive action measure adopted as an example of Good Practices by the ETUC.

#### ■ REVIEW OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PLATFORMS AND DRAFTING OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING POSITIONS UNDER A GENDER PERSPECTIVE (UGT, Spain)

**Objective: to further pursue objectives defined in order to achieve equal opportunities between women and men within the trade union and on behalf of members.**

Collective Bargaining Agreements, insofar as they stand for an agreement between workers and employers that regulates working conditions, must include specific clauses that guarantee equality between women and men.

Federations normally contact the appropriate Department for Women's Affairs, and on that basis analyse the text of agreements underwritten or requested, ensuring that they do not include any form of gender-based discrimination.

■ **PARTICIPATION IN COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PROCESSES AND IN THE SOCIAL DIALOGUE: COLLECTIVE BARGAINING FROM A GENDER-BASED PERSPECTIVE (UGT, Spain)**

**Objective: to improve women's participation in collective bargaining processes with a view to bringing subjects of concern into the framework of collective bargaining.**

Within the framework of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA-2002) signed in December 2001 by Trade Union Confederations UGT and CC.OO and employers' organisations CEOE and CEPYME in the interest of providing guidelines for negotiations to be held in 2002, it was agreed that Monitoring Committee, among other actions, should conduct a survey. This provided an analysis which, besides focusing on the possible factors which hinder the achievement of equal opportunities for men and women, and identifying specific obstacles, would highlight potential appropriate practices aimed at increasing the possibility of achieving this objective with particular emphasis on the role of social agents. This working group includes, significantly, representatives of the UGT Confederation's Department for Women.

Recommendations drafted by the working group were included as part of the 2003 Collective Bargaining Agreement, which has been extended to cover 2004 as is explained in further detail in the UGT national research work.

■ **REFERENDUM: NEW METHODS APPLIED IN DECISION MAKING (FNV, The Netherlands)**

**Objective: to improve women's participation in decision-making processes.**

In 2003, a referendum consultation method was used as opposed to the traditional decision making system of convening a meeting of all active trade union members which is typically attended in the main by men.

The main subject under discussion was a series of issues concerning nation-wide negotiations among the three agents - trade union confederations, employers' organisations and the government. All members were invited to cast their vote by post; the percentage of women participating was higher than it has ever been in previous decision making consultations.

A second referendum was held in May 2004 on labour policies which Government submitted to social agents. This time members could vote by post, by Internet, or by telephone.

As a result of the good turnout obtained in terms of women's participation in the decision-making process, the FNV is considering incorporating the use of referendum methods to the Confederation by-laws at the next FNV Congress, to be held in 2005.

■ **MEASURES ADDRESSED TO SPECIFIC WOMEN'S GROUPS DEFINED ON THE BASIS OF ETHNIC OR RACE ORIGIN, OR ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION (FNV, The Netherlands; TUC, United Kingdom)**

**Objective: to respond to the collective needs of groups of women with specific characteristics, and promote their access to processes of participation as well as decision-making positions by overcoming additional types of discrimination.**

The FNV Department for Women's Affairs has been working closely with the Department for Ethnic Minorities for almost 10 years. They have jointly organised activities to include the participation of black and migrant women. The staff of both Departments is also composed of black and migrant workers.

On the other hand, equality audits held in the TUC are addressed at evaluating equality and non-discrimination not only in regard to women and gender issues, but also to respond to other variables (members from the back and ethnic minorities, the disabled, young people, lesbians and gays, bisexuals and transgender, etc.).

#### ■ WOMEN'S COMMITTEES AND CONFERENCES (TUC, United Kingdom)

**Objective: to promote information and experience exchange among women within the trade union and support the creation of working groups focused on progress and difficulties encountered by women trade union members.**

Over one-half of trade unions who responded to the first equality TUC audit have specific national institutions or bodies aimed at women members or operate General Committees for Equality which deal with women's rights issues.

A number of these committees spring from informal networks created by women themselves, and have -with time- become bodies with a more institutionalised function within trade union structures.

Many committees hold annual or biennial women's conferences which may also submit requests or send delegates to the trade union's national conference meeting.

Beyond this issue and in relation to good practices discussed in the Section headed "*Measures for specific women's groups based on ethnic and race origin or sexual orientation*", the TUC's T&G held, in 2002, a Conference on Women, Race and Equality, to address common areas of interest on equality and non-discrimination.

#### ■ COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY (TUC, United Kingdom)

**Objective: that all participating Trade Unions would reach an effective commitment on equality at all levels of action.**

In 2001, delegates to the Congress agreed that all trade unions should adopt a "firm commitment aimed at promoting equality for all parties", which implied a modification of legislation whose aim was to turn that commitment to equality into a prerequisite for TUC membership. Every trade union thus committed to prohibit discrimination "within its own structures and in all activities, including in-house employment practices".

This concept arose from activities carried out within the framework of the internal analysis of institutional racism but was then extended to include all types of inequality and discrimination.

All TUC-member trade unions therefore agreed to incorporate the following clause as "good practices standard" into their by-laws:

*"The objects of the union shall include:*

*a) the promotion of equality for all including through:*

*i) collective bargaining, publicity material and campaigning, representation, union organisation and structures, education and training, organising and recruitment, the provision of all other services and benefits and all other activities;*

*ii) the union's own employment practices.*

*b) to oppose actively all forms of harassment, prejudice and unfair discrimination whether on the grounds of sex, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, colour, class, caring responsibilities, marital status, sexuality, disability, age, or other status or personal characteristic."*

So as to support these initiatives and evaluate their practical implantation it was decided that every two years the TUC should conduct an equality audit among its members whose results should be presented to the Congress. The first audit was done in 2003 as is explained under the chapter "Equality for all audit".

## ■ EQUALITY FOR ALL AUDIT (TUC, United Kingdom)

**Objective: to evaluate progress made and problems encountered when implementing the provisions and measures adopted by the organisation to promote the principle of equal opportunities.**

Conducted every two years, the TUC's first equal opportunities audit consisted of a 100-item questionnaire covering issues such as gender, race, disability, sexual orientation and age. The trade unions were given six months to respond and collate all the necessary information.

The TUC felt it would be useful to assess that first audit before embarking on the second. The results indicated that many of the participants considered that the audit had helped them to get gender and collective bargaining related issues into the Union's agenda. The majority of those participating in the review were of the opinion that the audit had brought to light many of the shortcomings of trade union policies and actions, as well as some of the gaps in information encountered at the internal level.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

This Guide meets the expectations it set out to achieve under the European project "Parity between women and men in trade union organisations", whose long-term objective is to increase and consolidate women's representation across all the trade union organisation structures, in collective bargaining bodies and Social Dialogue Boards, to improve women workers' life and employment conditions.

Taking into consideration the specific characteristics of each affiliated trade union organisation and the socio-economic situation in each one's respective country, the good practices identified can be extrapolated to other European trade unions. The data and the experiences collected regarding women's presence in decision making positions in trade unions highlight the fact that it is still necessary to defend both the institution of quotas for women as well as structures within trade union organisations aimed specifically at dealing with the issues concerning women workers.

In relation to the objective of increasing women's participation in National and European collective bargaining and social dialogue processes to improve women's work conditions, it must be reminded that there are specific situations to each country and a common process of a European social dialogue.

From this perspective it should be stressed that the work of the social partners is based on structures of representation which provides men and women a forum in which their voices can be heard when it comes to outlining their own working conditions. Therefore, and in order to allow women to define their own needs and interests and to establish their priorities for action, it is necessary that a) an adequate number of women take part in the process and b) that the participant women are entitled to make decisions.

This Guide has identified a number of good practices in the social dialogue, but as yet it has not been possible to find mechanisms to identify exactly how many women actually participate in the collective bargaining boards.

It is still necessary to broaden further the scope of application of collective bargaining agreements as there are many women workers who (due to their working conditions and the sectors they work in) fall outside their reach. Not only should collective bargaining agreements be more far-reaching, but their content also needs to be improved with more and better contents in terms of fighting discrimination, as well as from the gender perspective, including the opinions of those women directly affected.

It is therefore paramount that women participate in processes of negotiation, and a very positive view is taken of the open Social Dialogue process with gender perspective at European level and in which the trade union organisations participating in this project are engaged through the European Trades Union Confederation (ETUC). The process will come to a close in February 2005: the intention is to submit concrete proposals to the European Union Council meeting in the spring, which may will lead to the adoption of binding decisions by all Member States.

## 8. WEB SITES OF INTEREST

**PROJECT WEB SITE.** Good Practices Guide and research activities carried out by each member trade union:  
*<http://www.ugt.es/Mujer/proyecto europeo/proyecto europeo 2004.html>*

### OFFICIAL INSTITUTIONS FINANCING THE PROJECT

- **Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs, European Commission (Dirección General de Empleo y Asuntos Sociales–Comisión Europea):**  
*[http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/index_en.html)*
- **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales):**  
*<http://www.mtas.es/>*

### TRADE UNIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE PROJECT:

- **Confederation's Department for Women – promoting institution (Departamento Confederal de la Mujer de UGT) - promotor:**  
*<http://www.ugt.es/Mujer/mujer.html>*
- **Partners:**
  - **FNV (The Netherlands):** *<http://www.fnv.nl>*
  - **DGB (Germany):** *<http://www.dgb.de>*
  - **TUC (United Kingdom):** *<http://www.tuc.org.uk>*

### OTHER CONTACTS OF INTEREST:

- **European Trade union Confederation (CES/ETUC):**  
*<http://www.etuc.org>*
- **International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU):**  
*<http://www.icftu.org/default.asp?Language=ES>*



MINISTERIO DE TRABAJO  
Y ASUNTOS SOCIALES

*Por Solidaridad*

OTROS FINES DE INTERÉS SOCIAL



Comisión Europea