

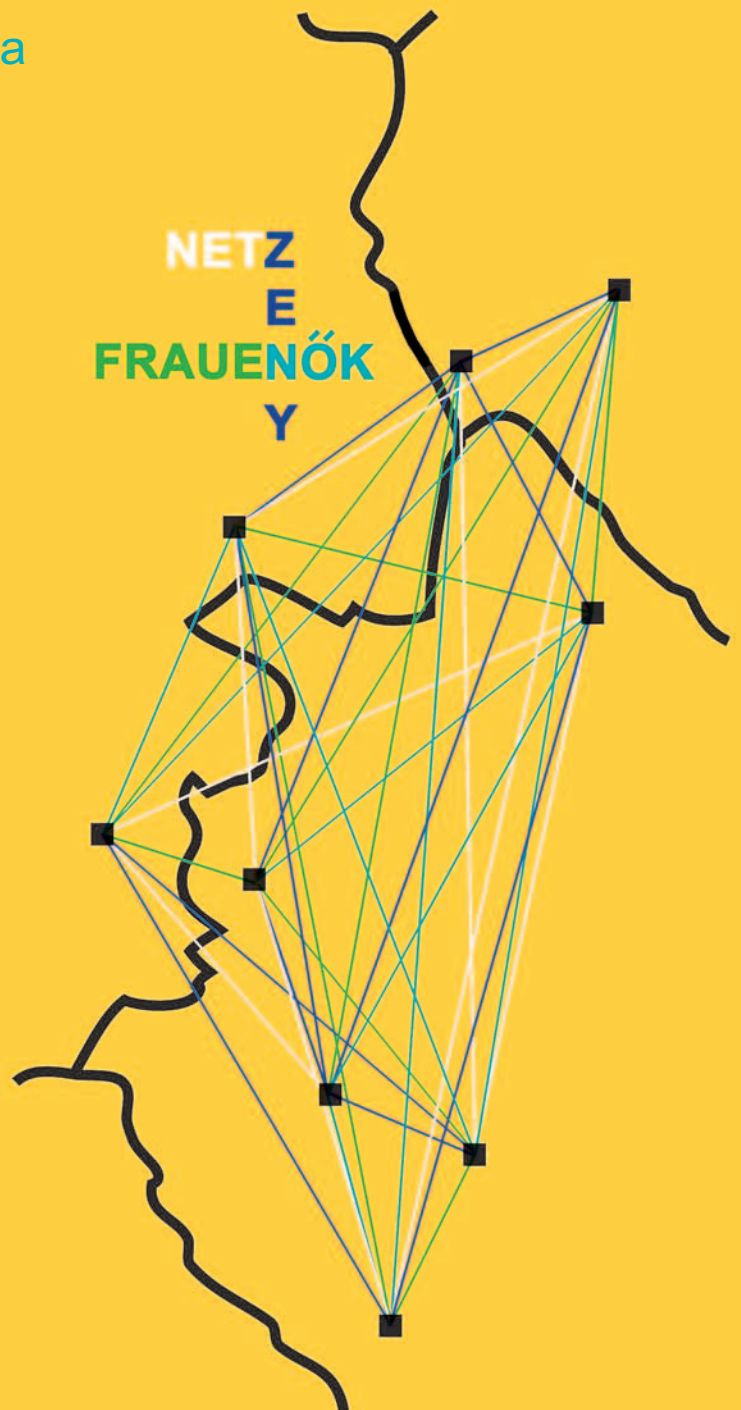
POWER

Promotion of Women in European Border Regions

Austria – Hungary – Slovakia

Final Report

Grundtvig 2 Project within the
Socrates Programme of the EU



Judith Jakowitsch, Mariana Szapuová, Anett Molnár (eds.)

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Eisenstadt (Austria):

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Preface

From August 2004 to July 2006 the Research Society Burgenland (*Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft*), the NGO 'Women for the XXI. Century' (*Nők a Századért Egyesület*) and the Gender Studies Centre at the Faculty of Philosophy / Comenius University of Bratislava (*Centrum rodových štúdií, Filozofická Fakulta / Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave*) worked together in the Grundtvig 2 project 'POWER. Promotion of Women in European Border Regions'.

The aim was – in view of the recent EU-enlargement – to analyse the situation of women in the neighbouring countries Austria, Hungary and Slovakia, to examine similarities and differences and to move a foot towards a transnational co-operation of women's and gender institutions by networking activities.

Through the project's activities, contacts between women's institutions in the border region Austria-Hungary-Slovakia were established, aiming to build up a women- and gender-network as a platform to discuss women's issues and to develop common strategies to better the situation of women. Focal points were the qualification of women, their future position within a common labour market, the exchange of experiences and methods in the area of life-long learning, the sensitisation for social, political, cultural and economic differences within the partner countries and the identification of common interests.

To achieve these aims, three workshops – one in each country – took place. Each 2-days workshop comprised different elements: a presentation of the partner institution of the country where the workshop took place; an overview on the general situation of women in the respective region and active women's and gender institutions; speeches of experts on special topics; study visits to some of the initially presented women's and gender institutions or women's projects; discussions with the experts and representatives of the visited organisations. On 22 May 2006, the results of all three workshops were presented at the final conference in Bratislava including once more speeches of experts on special topics.

We would like to avail the opportunity and thank all persons who helped to prepare and participated at the workshops – in many cases sacrificing their free time –, who wrote and held speeches about their experiences regarding women's and gender issues or on their daily work with women and to those who helped us realise the study visits by hosting us at their organisations. May this documentation be a nice memory to all who participated and an incentive for other women in other border regions!

Judith Jakowitsch (*Research Society Burgenland / Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft*)
Mariana Szapuová (*Gender Studies Centre / Centrum rodových štúdií*)
Anett Molnár (*Women for the XXI. Century / Nők a Századért Egyesület*)

Workshop 1 Bratislava, November 2004

From 28 November to 1 December 2004 the first workshop of the POWER project took place in Bratislava, Slovakia. Host organisation was the Gender Studies Centre at the Comenius University in Bratislava.

After an overview on women's and gender institutions in the region by Viera Klementová (Open Society Foundation) on the first workshop day the well-known sociologist Zora Bútorová talked about 'Gender Equality and Women's Issues in Slovakia, with Respect to the Region of Bratislava and Trnava'. Adriana Mesochoritsová (EsFem) informed about violence against women in Slovakia and the way Slovak politicians tackle this problem.

Besides the respective five participants from Slovakia, Hungary and Austria there were some additional 20 women from the region of Bratislava. After the speeches there was an active exchange of opinions.

The second workshop day was dominated by study visits at three well-known and very active women's institutions: 'Pro Choice Slovakia', introduced by Oľga Pietruchová, 'EsFem', presented by Monika Bosá and 'Professional Women', where we met the heads Dagmar Simunková und Zuzana Vranová.



Violence Against Women in Slovakia

Adriana Mesochoritisová

The problem of violence against women was a taboo topic in Slovak society for a long period of time. Although politicians during communist rule officially accepted many international documents on human rights, they failed to implement them in real life. This neglect of human rights obligations has had far-reaching consequences. While other countries started to deal actively with the phenomenon of violence against women in the 1970s, the then Czechoslovakia together with other Eastern Bloc countries did not address this issue at all. This has led to a situation in which there is not only inadequate knowledge but also inadequate institutional backup for women facing the problem of violence and for the human rights of women in general.

The historical discontinuity of 'women's issues' mentioned above prevented the evolution of a new cultural debate in post-communist countries, which led in turn to the fact that the political agenda paid no attention to violence against women even after 1989. Indeed, political life was thereafter more than ever concerned with general issues and problems related to the transformation of society.

In the mid-1990s, this agenda started to be discussed more insistently at international forums. There is now clear agreement at the level of the UN, the Council of Europe and the EU that the continuing problem of violence against women prevents women from fully making use of their basic human rights and freedoms, and represents a fundamental obstacle to achieving equality between men and women. In 1995, the year of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, an important milestone occurred in the history of the EU and UN: All participating countries, including the Slovak Republic, expressed their agreement and political will to fight against all forms of violence against women and to develop strategies to eliminate this phenomenon. This development in the area of women's human rights protection at international level had domestic ramifications, as a number of changes were observed in public discourse within the Slovak Republic.

Changes After 1995 (Beijing Conference) in the Slovak Republic

New institutional mechanisms for the protection and support of gender equality began to emerge only in connection with the Beijing Conference. One year after the Conference, the Co-ordination Committee on Problems of Women (*Koordinacny vybor pre problematiku zien / KVPZ*) was founded. This was established as an advisory, co-ordinating and initiatory governmental body focusing on the promotion of women's interests and the needs of women in society. Opinions and decisions expressed by this Committee had an advisory character for the government and the parliament. However, over time, the status of the

Committee gradually decreased and in 2003, it ceased operating altogether. The next step in establishing a system of institutions supporting women's rights was the foundation of the Equal Opportunities Department (*ORP*) in the Slovak Ministry of Labour, Social and Family Affairs in 1999. Its remit is the formulation of a governmental equal opportunity policy and the elimination of inequalities between women and men. In 2003, the remit of the department was extended to include the problems of anti-discrimination (under the extended name, 'Department of Equal Opportunities and Anti-discrimination') and the it also began to implement measures aimed at combating discrimination against marginalised national minorities and ethnic groups.

After the 2002 national election and in response to pressure from NGOs, a Commission of Equal Opportunities and Status of Women in the Society at the National Council Board for Human Rights, Nationalities and Status of Women was established. The commission again only has an advisory character.

Concerning domestic legislation dealing with the problem of violence against women, the Slovak Republic had adopted two relevant pieces of legislation by 2004: (1) The National Programme of Action for Women in the Slovak Republic (*NAP*) (1997), which formulated national priorities, one of them exclusively focused on violence against women, in this area for the next 10 years. (2) The Policy of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2002), which devoted seven out of 31 provisions to the problem of violence against women.

However, the wording of the National Programme of Action for Women in the Slovak Republic and the Policy of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men was both too general and too 'bureaucratic', reflected very little of the results of contemporary gender-based research, or the perception of women's rights as human rights. Moreover, no financial support was allocated from state budgets to implement the action plan. Annual evaluation of these documents is purely a formal matter: the government only receives a report of measures adopted, all related documents are seen as 'non-problematic' and no independent monitoring mechanisms have been established. Institutional mechanisms formed are in fact just 'drafts' of required support institutions. Institutions have not been established on the basis of specific legal acts and thus have only a limited ability to act. None of the institutions established works outside of its departmental field of action. In such a situation one cannot speak of a consistent government policy of equal opportunities and implementation of a gender equality standpoint at a national level. The current structure of national mechanisms (both institutional and legal) in the Slovak Republic falls far short of meeting the requirements of international conventions and approved documents (Filadelfiová, 2002). One of the main reasons for this is that political leaders consider the issue of violence against women and gender equality issues as only marginal problems (and as instruments for accomplishing one of the objectives of pre- and post-accession strategies, as insisted upon by NGOs and the EU). A statement from the Beijing +5 Conference noting 'A major obstacle to eliminating violence against women is the poor

understanding of its causes and the lack of political will and determination', applies to the Slovak Republic more than to some other countries.

Non-governmental Organisations

It could be stated that it was only feminist non-governmental organisations who brought the topic of violence against women to the forefront of professional as well as public debates. These NGOs undertook the first surveys on violence, organised professional conferences, seminars and media campaigns, established crisis centres and help-lines, initiated new legislative changes, and published a number of professional-level publications on the subject.

The Fifth Woman Campaign (*Piata žena*)

Piata žena (Fifth Woman Campaign) is the name of the first nation-wide media campaign to take place on the subject of violence against women, organised by seven organisations working in the area of the human rights of women (*Pro Familia*, *Možnosť voľby*, *Fenestra*, *EsFem*, *Aspekt*, *Altera*, *Alliance of Women of Slovakia*) in 2001/2002 and 2002/2003. The campaign consisted of two levels. Level 1 (sub-level) consisted of: press conferences, public lectures, seminars, discussions, media appearances, launch of a free information-line, launch of a dedicated website (www.stopnasiliu.sk), a human rights march, the publication of related books, theatre performances and political negotiations. Level 2 (upper level) involved: campaign broadcasts on television and radio and a print version of the campaign.

This was the first nation-wide campaign using multi-media resources (reaching a total of 2.5 million people). It caused wide professional and public debate and significantly contributed to removing the taboo surrounding the topic and to eliminating myths and prejudices regarding the issue of violence against women. Attention paid by media and political parties to the topic and the improvement of the position of female NGOs related to negotiations with government institutions were a great asset.

Legislative Changes

NGOs played an important role, not only during the preparation but also during the adoption of many legislative changes in the area of violence against women. It is assumed that the Fifth Woman Campaign helped with the adoption of many changes. The most significant changes include:

(1) Criminal Law: cases of abuse of close persons and those in the care of offenders considered covered by criminal law were extended as follows: ex-husbands, partners and ex-partners as well as parents of a common child and persons having lived or currently living with the offender in a common household were included in the definition of the term 'close person'. Sentencing guidelines for criminal offences related to domestic violence

were increased. The possibility of compulsory treatment for offenders committing an act of violence against a close person or person in their care was introduced. Injunctions not to approach the injured party by within less than five metres and injunction orders not to stay near the residence of the injured party were also amended.

(2) Rules of Criminal Procedure: Provisions allowing the questioning of minors were amended in favour of taped interviews that are not permitted to be repeated. The approval of the injured party is no longer required to initiate criminal prosecution of the offender accused of having committed a premeditated criminal act.

(3) Civil Procedure Code: A new type of preliminary measure was amended, which can prevent the offender from entering the residence of a close person or a person in their care, a suspected victim of his violence. The term for publication of the preliminary measure related to a minor, children or persons endangered by violence was shortened to seven days.

(4) Civil Code: A regulation was introduced which prevents (even during co-ownership, and until partition by the court) an offender from using the flat or house of a married or formerly married couple. The court will decide in which cases an offender is eligible for compensation for loss or exchange of a home.

(However, the campaign failed to achieve the amending of the Police Force Act, which would have granted the police powers to ban an offender from entry into a residence, in order to protect a victim until the court issued a preliminary measure.)

The area of sexual violence also saw several significant changes: The term 'carnal abuse' was replaced with the term 'sexual abuse' which has a wider definition, definitions of rape and sexual violence were amended and now stricter penalties are possible in more circumstances (including those involving an act of violence against a close person or a person in the care of the offender). Amendment of the Act on Compensation of Crime of Violence Victims has made it possible to compensate victims of sexual violence in the same manner as any other victims of violent crimes, and thus prevents the seriousness of the offence being trivialised.

The Second Year of the Campaign

The second year of the campaign was undertaken in 2002/2003. The main objective of the campaign was to increase public knowledge about and awareness of violence against women, and to create pressure on relevant state institutions. The main *leitmotiv* of the campaign was to direct attention to the legal (criminal law) consequences of violence: violence against women is not a 'tradition', but a crime, a problem society must deal with. The second year of the campaign confirmed that the attitude of the media, professionals and the public had started to change. The issue of violence against women became one of the key topics of women's human rights and many feminist NGOs became actively

involved in the campaign. *Piata zena* became well-known not only concerning the theme of violence against women, but also women's problems in general won significant respect from the public and professionals. Though the campaign was pursued on a nation-wide scale only for the first two years, individual NGOs continued with their activities – maintaining public debate on the issue and influencing public opinion in favour of a systematic approach to these problems. The Fifth Woman Initiative remains an umbrella organisation of feminist NGOs in Slovakia.

First National Survey on Violence against Women in the Slovak Republic

NGOs co-operated on a survey, undertaken by the sociologists Jarmila Filadelfiová and Bernardina Bodnarová commissioned by the Centre for Family and Labour Studies. The survey was entirely funded by foreign donors. The most significant findings include:

Violence Against Women From Men – Non-Partners

Up to 74.4% of adult Slovak women have personally experienced at least one act of sexual harassment and/or sexual or physical violence from a man (non-partner). Almost 45.0% of women have faced sexual proposition from a man (non-partner) and 38.9% of Slovak women have suffered from sexual violence (defined as sexual harassment and/or attempted intercourse and/or rape) by a man who has never been their partner.

Harassment and violence against women outside a relationship was committed by an unknown man in 39.2% of cases, and by a man known to the woman (from work, school, neighbourhood, friends and relatives) in 60.8% of cases.

Violence Against Women Committed by a Partner

Almost every third adult woman in Slovakia who had a partner (at the time of the survey or in the past) has had a personal experience of violence by at least one of her partners: precisely 29.3% of Slovak women aged between 18 and 65. Violence by a current partner has been experienced by 25.2% of all women with a partner – in other words, by every fourth woman.

National Strategy for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women

Despite rather significant legislative changes, many problems remain still un-addressed – especially in the areas of support for women, prevention of violence and related research. In 2002, the Slovak government charged the Ministry of Labour, Social and Family Affairs with preparing a National Strategy for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Family Violence – nevertheless, this was not accomplished until 2004. Central government authorities (a panel of experts at the Government Council for Crime Prevention), together with NGOs joined the panel of experts at ORPA participating in the preparation of this strategy.

Despite receiving strong professional support, the draft version of the strategy, which proceeded from a feminist and human rights standpoint and which prioritised the elimination of inequalities between women and men and the reduction of gender stereotypes, was not enforced. On the contrary, the submitted and adopted version did not focus specifically on violence against women, but was extensively widened to include other categories (children, disabled and elderly citizens) and did not sufficiently take into account gender perspectives. This strategy, formulated as it is, prevents the recognition of the societal and structural aspects of problems, that is, the fact that violence against women has significant societal causes, mechanisms and consequences. NGOs protested during the amendment procedure against such a strategy and called on the Ministry of Labour, Social and Family Affairs of the Slovak Republic to reconsider and revise the strategy (the NGOs organised a public petition to this effect, which was sent to the representatives of the Ministry). The Ministry of Labour, Social and Family Affairs only partially accepted the proposed amendments and an almost unchanged version of the strategy was approved by the government on 16 November 2004.

Conclusion

Despite numerous positive steps and initiatives, the phenomenon of violence against women – as a consequence of the general societal imbalance between men and women – still receives inadequate recognition in the society. A further problem is that we tend to overestimate the impact of the changes that have been achieved. Men being the leading political representatives (there is no woman in the Slovak government) refuse to take responsibility for the current situation and to recognise the extent and consequences of gender inequality, despite the fact that they have the power to act in favour of women threatened by violence. Generally speaking, the majority of people admit that what happens to women is bad and unjust, but ‘we still haven’t realised our responsibility as a society to help these women, our duty to protect a woman’s right to live without physical abuse’¹. Some express the opinion that we are too impatient, that such changes must be implemented step by step and that we want everything to be done now and quickly and are only able to criticise everything. I should like to answer these criticisms with Ann Jones’ words: ‘There is no valid reason for the change to be implemented slowly and painfully and only after thousands of other women are hurt or killed. Things will change, when people stop being indifferent. Things will change, when a great number of people follow certain principles and start to act based on those principles’.²

Adriana Mesochoritisová, EsFem, Bratislava (Slovakia)

Endnotes

¹ Ann Jones: *Nabudúce bude mrtva*, in: *Piata žena. Aspekty násilia páchaného na ženách*. Aspekt, Bratislava 2001, page 174

² Ann Jones: *Nabudúce bude mrtva*, in: *Piata žena. Aspekty násilia páchaného na ženách*. Aspekt, Bratislava 2001, page 174, page 185.

Women, Men, And Equality of Opportunities

Zora Bútorová/Jarmila Filadelfiová/Ol'ga Gyárfášová/Jana Cviková/Katarina Farkašová

Introduction

Following the 1998 parliamentary elections, the focus of the public debate on key issues in Slovakia's development shifted gradually. As fears of authoritarian threats subsided, and favorable events seemed to follow one another – particularly Slovakia's continuing integration to the European Union (EU), the increasing openness of Slovak society towards cultural influences from other countries, and the rise of the younger generation – issues such as the quality of life slowly came to the fore. The public's attention was also drawn to relations between women and men, and to the status of women in society. The increasingly lively public debate on these topics not only helped to unveil previously taboo or neglected issues in women's everyday lives, but also tested society's readiness to accept the idea of equal opportunities.

This chapter examines the gender issue from three perspectives. First, we explore the general situation of women in Slovak society. Second, we look at how women's status is perceived by men and by women. Third, we study the attitudes of various public actors toward women's issues, putting special emphasis on the activities of women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Slovak Family: Ideal and Reality

Since the beginning of the 1990s, Slovak women and men have not only witnessed dramatic political and economic changes, but also participated in fascinating demographic processes.

The aging of the population; the feminization of the older population, and the growing solitude and poverty of elderly women; the increasing average life expectancy, which is advancing faster among women than among men; the substantial decline in the abortion rate and the increase in women's use of contraceptives; the dramatic drop in the birth rate, combined with the increasing age of first-time mothers; better planning for parenthood; the decline in the marriage rate, combined with the tendency to postpone marriages; the increase in the number of extra-marital births; the weakening of the two-children family model, and the decline in the average number of children per family; the moderate increase in the divorce rate, and consequent increase in single-parent families – these processes are changing not only the demographic profile of Slovak society, but also the nature of gender relations.

Despite the above-mentioned trends in marriage and divorce, the matrimonial family remains an almost universal model in Slovakia: more than 90% of Slovaks get married at least once in their lives. The traditionally high appreciation of marriage has outlasted the 20th century: According to a survey within the framework of European Values Studies, almost 90% of Slovaks do not consider marriage an obsolete institution (European Values..., 1999/2000).

Notions of Ideal Family Relations

Slovak culture follows a traditional model, in which the man is the breadwinner and the woman the homemaker (Bútorová, 1996; Bútorová/Filadelfiová/Guráň/Gyárfášová/Farkašová, 1999). According to a survey by the Institute for Public Affairs, 80% of respondents deemed it very important that the ideal man be able to provide financially for his family, while 76% believed that the ability to take care of the household was a very important attribute of the ideal woman. At the same time, however, 44% believed that an ideal man should be able to take care of the household, and 23% expected the ideal woman to provide financially for her family (Empirické..., 2002).

According to the same survey, most Slovaks do not favor the strictly patriarchal family model featuring little male participation in childcare and chores, the concentration of most decision-making in the hands of the 'head of the family,' and an authoritarian way of raising children. On the contrary, respondents' statements suggested that they incline to a partnership model: 68% of women and 55% of men believed that both partners should participate in raising children and taking care of the household. The opposite notion, that the woman should shoulder the entire responsibility for running the house-hold, was much less frequent, particularly among women (16% of women, 27% of men).

As for decision-making in the family, 79% of female respondents and 61% of male respondents stated that the man and the woman are partners and therefore should decide important matters together. Only 8% of women and 22% of men endorsed the opposite opinion.

In their opinions on child rearing, most people in Slovakia prefer a participatory approach. As many as 62% of female respondents and 52% of male respondents believed that parents should involve children in decisions on family affairs, while only 13% of women and 20% of men argued that children should be brought up to obey without discussion.

Women in Slovakia are stronger advocates of the partnership model. However, there are also significant differences within both gender groups. The most significant factor is the level of education that respondents have achieved: the higher the education, the more women and men tend to reject the patriarchal family model. At the same time, women of all education categories display a stronger inclination to partnership than do men. The gap between the attitudes of men and women persists across all age categories; even

the youngest women are stronger adherents of the partnership model than their male counterparts. It can be attributed to a traditional socialization in Slovakia that reproduces gender stereotypes.

Division of Family Duties

Most women and men in Slovakia claim that in an ideal family, both parents should participate equally in bringing up the children and doing housework. But what is the reality of everyday family life? As sociological findings show, women bear a much greater burden of household responsibilities than men. According to the statements of female respondents, it is they who usually cook (88%), clean (81%), do the shopping (68%), and take care of children (67%). On the other hand, men most often do maintenance and repairs in the household (86%). The most balanced division of labor is in family administrative matters; according to 44% of female respondents, the partners equally shared these duties (Empirické..., 2002).

However, a closer look shows that the female and male perceptions of the division of labor in the family are slightly different, as both men and women tend to emphasize their own contributions to household and family duties. The question thus arises which interpretation – female or male – is closer to the truth. We believe it is the female interpretation, since men's behavior in the family often contradicts the ideal that they extol in their verbal statements, that of a balanced division of responsibilities.

A deeper analysis allows us to identify differences in the labor division models in families of various social backgrounds. The most significant factor is again education: more educated partners more often share family responsibilities. This applies particularly to taking care of children, regular shopping, and taking care of administrative matters.

A comparison with a survey conducted in 1995 (Bútorová, 1996) reveals that over the past seven years, there have been no substantial moves toward a more balanced division of labor in Slovak families. Apparently, such changes require a longer period of time, during which especially young people are exposed to gender-sensitive education.

Education and Equal Opportunities

The education attainment of Slovak women and men has reached similar levels for the past several decades. The ratio of university graduates is approximately the same among employed women and men. Among employed women, the most numerous are women with full secondary education (i.e. with A levels). Another characteristic is the slightly above-average share of women with only elementary education. On the other hand, among employed men one finds an above-average share of men who graduated from secondary vocational school without final examinations (i.e. without A levels). (Bútorová/Filadelfiová/Gyárfášová/Cviková/Farkašová, 2002)

The equality that exists between women's and men's educational status is also reflected in public opinion: according to 77% of female and 80% of male respondents, women and men have equal chances to attain secondary and university education (Empirické..., 2002).

Nevertheless, there are significant differences among fields of study, reflecting traditional gender-specific socialization. Among all secondary schools, only agricultural schools, conservatories, and secondary grammar schools have an equal share of female and male students. Among secondary vocational schools, girls have 80% of places in economic, medical, pedagogical, and librarian schools, while boys dominate in forestry and industrial schools (Evaluation..., 1998).

In 2000, the share of women among university students was 49.0%, while among external (i.e. not accepted to full-time day studies) students it was 60.6%. While women prevailed among pedagogical, medicine, pharmacy, social sciences, and humanities students, men dominated at the technical faculties (civil, mechanical, and electrical engineering; architecture, etc.), as well as among students of mathematics and information technologies. Economics, agriculture, music, and dramatic and fine arts attract equal ratios of female and male university students.

Gender Inequalities on the Labor Market

Structure of Employment

During the past several decades, Slovak society has undergone a substantial change. The country, which had been largely agricultural as late as the 1950s and 1960s, experienced intense industrialization after 1970. During the 1980s and 1990s, the service sector grew dynamically. Women and men participate differently in the three sectors of the economy. In 2000, 70.5% of the female labor force was employed in the tertiary (i.e. service) sector, 25.5% in the secondary (i.e. manufacturing) sector, and 4% in the primary sector. Among the male labor force, the ratio employed in the tertiary sector was far smaller (44%), while the share employed in the secondary and primary sectors was substantially larger (47% and 9%, respectively).

The differences between women and men in terms of their preferred fields of study are reflected in their employment structures. Men dominate in industries such as construction (92%), mining (87.5%), production and distribution of electricity, gas and water (82%), as well as in agriculture (72.5%). These traditionally male industries have recently been joined by sectors like transport and telecommunications (70%), real estate and research and development (over 60%). Most of these industries require technical education and vocational and professional training.

On the other hand, women outnumber men in light industry, trade and catering services (approximately 60%), and especially in the health service and social security (over 82%), education (almost 80%) as well as banking and insurance (almost 70%). With the sole exception of banking and insurance, women's branches have the lowest average wages in the national economy.

A general increase in the educational attainments of Slovak women has gradually led to their prevalence among scientists and white-collar professionals (62%), as well as among technical and medical staff (61%). On the other hand, men outnumber women among legislators and top managers (69%).

Since 1990, the country has experienced rapid growth in its private sector, which from the outset created more job opportunities for men. The share of women employed in the private sector was 41.5% in 2000, while the share of women employed in the public sector equaled 50.5%.

The representation of women among entrepreneurs was only one in four (25.5%) in 2000. Women represented 24.5% of entrepreneurs without employees and 28.5% of entrepreneurs with employees. Although the overall share of women in the private sector has somewhat increased, it remains a male domain. On the other hand, women prevail among household members who help to run a family business (70%).

Income Inequalities

The average wage of a Slovak woman is about 75% of the average wage of a Slovak man. This income gap persisted throughout the 1990s, varying only 2-3% during the decade.

Even when women and men have identical levels of education, this is no guarantee that they will be paid the same wage. In 2000, women earned lower wages in each education category, ranging from 65% to 78% of men's wages. This disproportion did not decline with an increase in level of education. On the contrary, over the past two years the greatest wage gap between men and women has been in the category of people with university degrees.

Wage differences between men and women exist in all categories of occupation, and do not decrease as one moves up the career ladder: The wage gap was the greatest among legislators and top managers.

The income gap between men and women also tends to increase with age. In 2000, the greatest difference was among the oldest employees (almost 30%), compared to the youngest employees (13%) and the 20-24 age group (10%).

These data indicate that income discrimination against women exists in Slovakia. Moreover, these wage differences are consequently reflected in women's retirement pensions, which in general are lower than men's pensions. Wage and pension differences indicate that poverty is becoming feminized in Slovakia.

Unemployment among Women and Men

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the unemployment rate in Slovakia has grown dramatically, from 1.6% in 1990 to 18.8% by 2000. The ratio of women to the total unemployed was about 50% throughout the 1990s, although in the last three years of the decade it declined slightly, dropping to 45.7% in 2000.

Since 1994, the long-term unemployed have represented the largest category of unemployed people. In 2000, 46.3% of unemployed women and 41.3% of men had been without jobs for longer than one year, meaning that they were no longer entitled to receive unemployment benefits but had to live on social welfare. Unemployment especially affects women and men with little education.

The unemployment rate is lower among women between 20 and 29 years, although that does not necessarily mean that they are more successful on the labor market. Many young women cope with the absence of job opportunities by staying at home with small children or leaving the country to take jobs abroad, for instance as au pairs. The share of unemployed women in the middle-aged brackets, however, is increasing, although in the over-50 age group the ratio of unemployed women and men levels out again.

All in all, unemployment in Slovakia does not show significant gender inequalities. On the other hand, serious gender differences can be observed in employment, especially in the feminization of certain branches and professions, the over-representation of men in top management posts, and wage discrimination against women.

Selected Women's Organizations from 1998 to 2002

An Increasingly Diverse and Vibrant Scene

Dozens of women's NGOs now operate in Slovakia (Glosár..., 2002; Adresár..., 2000). Many of them, including those founded after 1989, are inspired by the activities of traditional women's associations, while others are brand new and aim to address the current problems of women in Slovakia. Some of the recently established organizations focus on women's civil rights, especially from the viewpoint of gender equality (Bútorová/Filadelfiová/Guráň/Gyárfášová/Farkašová, 1999). These organizations are the focus of this section.

The most active among the women's organizations that strive to improve women's rights and participation in public life is the *Aspekt Women's Association* (www.aspekt.sk),

established in Bratislava in 1993. Jana Cviková and Jana Juráňová, pioneers of contemporary Slovak feminism, spearhead the association. Since 1993, the group has published *Aspekt*, a feminist cultural review. It also organizes educational events, administers a library, provides expert consultations, and cooperates with other NGOs and the media. Since 1996, it has published books.

The *Alliance of Women in Slovakia* was launched in 1994 (key personality: Katarína Farkašová). This Bratislava-based human rights NGO monitors the enforcement of international documents on women, and publishes information on women's issues. It also combats domestic violence and trafficking in women (www.alianciazien.sk).

The *Alliance of Women in Slovakia* inspired the formation of a strong group of female lawyers called *AdvoCats* for Women. Since 2000, the group has been active as an independent civic association (key personalities: Zuzana Magurová, Henrieta Kollárová and Zuzana Tomášová.)

The civic association *Pro Familia* was established in Humenné in 1994. It focuses on violence against women and is represented by Eva Sopková, a pioneer and leading expert in this field.

Fenestra, a Košice-based women's interest association (key personality: Monika Grochová) has the same focus. Since 1999, *Fenestra* has operated the *Fenestra* Crisis Center. Apart from that, the association pursues legislative, media, and training activities (www.stopnasiliu.sk).

Eset – za rodinu bez násilia (For Families Without Violence) is a Bratislava-based civic association that specializes in preventing gender-related violence by challenging gender stereotypes among children and young people (key personalities: Monika Bosá and Adriana Mesochoritisová). The group organizes lectures and workshops at all types of schools. It also educates teachers and trains volunteers and aides to help victims of violence. Together with the *Alliance of Women in Slovakia*, *Eset* operates a crisis center.

*Alter*a is a civic association of lesbian and bisexual women based in Banská Bystrica (key personality: Marianna Šipošová). Its main aim is to increase public tolerance for non-heterosexual lifestyles, and to lobby legislators to adopt the necessary changes. The group operates a contact, information, and counseling center, and organizes cultural, social, sports, and educational events.

In January 2002, a new project called *Q Archive/Documentation and Information Center* was launched in Bratislava (key personality: Anna Daučíková). The project operates as part of Ganymedes, a movement for the equality of homosexual citizens in Slovakia (for further details see Daučíková/Bútorová/Wallace-Lorencová, 2002).

Recently, the NGOs listed above began to coordinate their initiatives. Among the most important joint projects is one called *Možnosť voľby* (Pro Choice), which promotes respect for the human rights of women and children. This moderate pro-choice platform is committed to reproductive rights defined by UN documents and the IPPF (International Planned Parenthood Federation) Charter on Sexual and Reproductive Rights. The platform was established in 2001 in reaction to an attempt by one of the ruling coalition parties, Christian Democratic Movement (*KDH*), to have a provision on the protection of life from conception incorporated into the Slovak Constitution (Cvicková/Juráňová, 2001a). *Pro Choice Slovakia*, a Bratislava-based civic association headed by Oľga Pietruchová, promotes respect for reproductive and other rights of women (www.prochoice.sk, www.moznostvolby.sk).

Another important coordinated initiative was the first nationwide feminist media campaign that targeted violence against women, claiming that something needs to be done about the fact that every fifth woman in Slovakia is abused. This campaign called One Woman in Five (www.piatazena.sk) was jointly organized by a group of women's NGOs (*Fenestra*, *Pro Familia*, *Aspekt*, *Alliance of Women in Slovakia*) and was supported by foreign donors. The initiative also sought to strengthen the negotiating position of women's NGOs in lobbying for legislative changes. This effort was successful: in 2002, the parliament approved a cabinet bill amending several laws to help combat domestic violence (Záverečná správa..., 2002).

The issues of domestic violence and violence against women are tackled the most actively by *Fenestra* and *Pro Familia* in eastern Slovakia, *Aspekt*, *Alliance of Women in Slovakia*, *AdvoCats for Women*, *Eset*, and *Možnosť voľby* (Pro Choice Slovakia) in Bratislava, and *Altera* in Banská Bystrica. Not only do these organizations directly help women who have been the victims of violence, and operate crisis hotlines (*Fenestra*, *Pro Familia* and *Alliance of Women in Slovakia* together with *AdvoCats* and *Eset*), they are also active in expert education and training (e.g. publishing, training volunteers and aides, counseling and supervising new crisis centers, running asylum houses for victims of violence, etc.). These NGOs also advocate inclusion of their agenda in official policies (by lobbying, participating in commissions, etc.), participate in public education, and operate a number of websites that focus on violence against women (www.stopnasiliu.sk; www.piatazena.sk; www.moznostvolby.sk; www.feminet.sk; www.aspekt.sk; www.alianciazien.sk).

The issue of violence is also addressed by other NGOs, for instance the *Centrum nádej* (Hope Center) from Bratislava, *Children's Fund of the Slovak Republic*, *DKC Náruč* (Open Arms) from Žilina, *Slonad* from Nitra, *Emauzy* from Holíč, and others. Since 1998, many texts on domestic violence have been published in an attempt to acquaint the Slovak public with the foreign experience. Most have been published jointly by *Aspekt* and *Pro Familia* (*Aspekt*, No.3/1998 and No.1/ 1999; Fröschl/Löw, 1999 and 2000; Herman, 2001; Cvicková/Juráňová, 2001b).

Another noteworthy civic association is *Professional Women* (key personality: Dagmar Šimunková) that was established in Bratislava in 1995. It organizes training programs and seminars for women pursuing careers in politics, public life, media, and business. The organizational constituents of the association are the *Clubs of Professional Women* and the *Democratic Institute of Professional Women* (www.zutom.sk/profwomen.sk).

In November 2000, 50 NGOs from all over Slovakia jointly established the *Women's Forum 2000* to advocate the increased participation of women in decision-making in politics and public life. In August 2002, the *Women's Forum 2000* gave birth to a new organization called the *Association Women's Forum 2000*.

Women's NGOs and the Cultivation of Gender Sensitivity

Room for the cultivation of gender sensitivity in Slovakia has increased substantially over the past three years. This has been due mainly to cooperation between the NGOs *Aspekt*, *Alliance of Women in Slovakia*, *Altera*, *Eset*, *Fenestra*, *Možnosť voľby* (Pro Choice Slovakia), *Pro Familia*, and between the *Center for Gender Studies* at the Arts Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava and other pedagogues at various universities (e.g. Prešov University and the University of Matej Bel in Banská Bystrica). Another efficient platform for educating the public has been drawing connections between art, literature, theatre, and theory, all of which have a rich tradition in Slovakia (e.g. the *Na Rázcestí* (At the Fork in the Road) Puppet Theatre in Banská Bystrica, the Theatre Institute in Bratislava, and authors and theoreticians from various fields cooperating in the *Aspekt* review).

This cooperation received a boost from the protests against the Basic Treaty Between the Slovak Republic and the Holy See, initiated by NGO representatives in the Expert Group for Education and Research, Gender Analyses and Statistics at the Coordinating Committee for Women's Issues. The protesters called particular attention to the risks of ignoring the human rights of women and children as they are defined in international documents (*Vyhlásenie členiek...*, 2001; Kliment, 2000-2001; Cviková, 2000).

The cooperation developed further during the campaign *Iniciatíva za možnosť voľby* (Pro Choice Slovakia Initiative), which was launched in February 2001 and protested attempts to outlaw abortions. However, the greatest joint effort by women's NGOs so far was the first nationwide feminist media campaign aimed at combating violence against women – *One Woman in Five*.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, gender consciousness has been cultivated, and gender-specific approaches in various scientific disciplines explored by Zuzana Kiczková and Etela Farkašová, later joined by Mariana Szapuová. In 2001, these three women established the *Center for Gender Studies* at the Arts Faculty at Comenius University in Bratislava, which gave an institutional basis to their previous lecturing, as well as to the

activities of the *Club of Feminist Philosophers* (active since the beginning of the 1990s). The Center is the first educational and research institution of its kind established on academic ground in Slovakia that specifically focuses on gender issues (www.genderstudies.fphil.uniba.sk).

Cooperation between formal and informal educational institutions, for instance between pedagogues from the *Center for Gender Studies* and NGOs like *Aspekt*, *Q Archive*, and *Eset*, is of utmost importance. Collaboration with teachers and pedagogues has shown that they are the most interested in dealing with gender stereotypes. This issue has been thoroughly examined in seminars jointly organized by the *Club of Feminist Philosophers* and *Aspekt*, as well as in a number of radio broadcasts and press articles. Gender-specific socialization was the focus of issue No.2/2000 of the *Aspekt* review, titled *We Are Not Born as Women, We Become Them*. The *Aspekt* publishing house also printed the first book for girls that focused on undermining gender stereotypes (Juráňová, 2000). Together with the *Community of Slovak Writers*, *Aspekt* organized a discussion on books and textbooks for elementary school grades I-IV (www.aspekt.sk). Monika Bosá from *Eset* analyzed the gender stereotypes found in sexual education textbooks for secondary schools (Bosá, 2002).

Over the past several years, several publications dealing with gender theory have been printed (Mitášová, 2000; Kiczková, 2000). A book called *Fragile Strength: Twenty Interviews about the Life Stories of Women* (Bútorová, 2001) examined gender issues through interviews with Slovak women leaders and prominent personalities from various fields. A number of surveys have also been conducted. The *Bratislava International Center for Family Studies* (www.bicfs.sk) extended its publishing plan to include gender issues (Kvapilová/Porubánová, 2001; *Mozaika rodiny*, 2001). Recently, a research report under the title *Domestic Violence in Slovakia* (Bodnárová/Filadelfiová, 2002) was published. The number of expert and political conferences dealing with gender issues has grown steadily.

In its 20 issues published so far, the feminist cultural review *Aspekt* has discussed many gender-specific issues in culture, science, and politics, for instance *Násilie II* (Violence II) (*Aspekt* No.1/1999), *Osobné je politické* (The Personal is Political) (No.2/1999), *Patriarchát* (The Patriarchy) (No.2/2000 and 1/2000), *D(r)ámy* (Dramas) (No.1/2001) and *Telo sa stalo slovom* (The Body Has Become a Word) (No.1/2002). The *Aspekt* publishing house has brought out more than 50 expert publications, books for children, and books of fiction so far.

In January 2002, a feminist Internet journal was launched at www.feminet.sk, which also publishes the discussions of an email group released at zeny@changenet.sk. In fall 2002, the *Sme* daily paper began to publish a weekly supplement headlined *A Woman's View*.

The Position of Women in Public Perception

Hierarchy of Women's Issues

Which issues do women in Slovakia consider the most pressing? As the spontaneous reactions of the respondents of the 2002 survey by the Institute for Public Affairs suggest, the answer is mostly issues concerning their work (78%). Among these, Slovak women are bothered particularly by income inequality (27%), unemployment (16%), and the related discrimination against women when recruiting and laying off workers, especially concerning young women with small children, and women in their forties and older (15%). Another 12% of female respondents complained about the work regime and labor conditions that were unsuitable for women, while a further 8% criticized general discrimination against women at work. (Bútorová/Filadelfiová/Gyárfášová/Cviková/Farkašová, 2002)

The second most pressing issue is childcare and family care (44 %). Within this category, female respondents were particularly critical of the government's social policy and its insufficient care for families with children (31%). A further 10% complained about the double burden that women face at work and at home. Interestingly, only 3% mentioned the unequal status of women in the family, patriarchal relations, and the unjust division of labor within the family.

Third and fourth rank belonged to violence against women (including trafficking and sexual harassment) and overall discrimination against women in society (14% each). Women's fears that their age of retirement would be increased ranked fifth (13%).

Only 9% of female respondents perceived their under-representation in managerial and elected positions, or discrimination against women in politics, as pressing issues. This indicates that Slovak women underestimate the importance of their active participation in decision-making as a prerequisite for solving their own problems.

A particularly noteworthy finding was that female respondents did not include planned parenthood and women's reproductive rights among their pressing problems, indicating that Slovak women are satisfied with the status quo as well as with government policy regulating reproductive behavior.

A comparison of the data from 2000 and 2002 shows that over the past two years, public awareness of the need to address women's issues has significantly increased, particularly among women. For instance, the proportion of women who consider problems in the workplace and on the labor market as pressing has grown from 41% in 2000 to 78% in 2002. Women's awareness of the importance of child care and family care issues doubled from 22% to 44%; awareness of the urgency of domestic violence increased from 4% to 14%; sensitivity to general discrimination against women in society rose from 7% to 14%; and fears of an increasing female retirement age from 2% to 13%.

Men tend to be less sensitive to most of the issues that women consider pressing. However, over the past two years that sensitivity has increased considerably. All in all, the proportion of people who are sensitive to discrimination against women in society has increased considerably over the past two years. Among women it has grown from 32% to 76%; among men the increase has been from 14% to 41%.

Secondly, despite a substantial growth in sensitivity to discrimination against women, gender differences in perception have persevered. While a convincing majority of Slovak women in 2002 interpreted women's issues from the viewpoint of discrimination (76%), only a minority of men – though a significant one – shared this perspective (41%).

Thirdly, in the perceptions of women and men alike, the workplace and labor market are the dominant areas of discrimination against women, cited in 2002 by 50% of female respondents and 27% of male respondents.

It should be added that the increased sensitivity of the Slovak public to women's issues has not been brought about by some dramatic worsening of the position of women in Slovakia, but instead reflects a far more intense public debate on women's issues.

Ways of Improving the Life of Women in Society

What exactly should be changed to improve the lives of women in Slovakia? From 14 options, female respondents were asked to choose the top three measures (Bútorová/Filadelfiová/Gyárfášová/Cviková/Farkašová, 2002). All of top options selected were related to immediate social and financial conditions. Approximately one in two female respondents (54%) believed that the situation of women would improve the most if their wages were increased to the level of men's wages. About the same proportion of women (53%) demanded a suitable work regime, and labor conditions that enabled women to combine their work and family duties better. Almost half of female respondents (46%) believed that their lives would improve the most if the government increased its financial support of families.

Women viewed other measures as substantially less effective. About one in four (26%) wanted the preferential treatment of men when recruiting and laying off workers to be eliminated. The same number emphasized the need to eliminate society's indifference toward domestic violence. Less than one fifth of women (18%) cited more affordable services to help women care for members of their families.

While 15% demanded greater representation of women in public and management posts, only 3% wanted better preparation and training for women to take greater responsibility in decision-making.

And what about changes in education to overcome traditional 'stronger' and 'weaker' sex gender stereotypes? Only 13% of female respondents considered it important to lead

boys in the family and at school to treat women as equal partners, and 7% emphasized the need to develop self-confidence and self-respect among girls.

Finally, few women seem to realize the need to strengthen women's awareness of their rights (8%), or to publicly criticize violations of women's rights (5%) and expose displays of male superiority (7%).

These findings indicate that when thinking of ways to improve their situation, Slovak women tend to cling to solutions that produce an immediate relief or remedy, and seem to underestimate the fact that gender disparities will not disappear by themselves.

Inequality of Opportunities

People in Slovakia are critical of the status of women in society. Most women (82%) and men (56%) believe that women have fewer opportunities. Only 15% of women and 34% of men think that the status of women is equal to that of men (Empirické..., 2002).

How does the public interpret the opportunities that Slovak women and men face in various situations? According to the data from the 2002 survey by the Institute for Public Affairs, the majority of female and male respondents feel that women and men receive equal treatment in only two situations: when applying for secondary or university study, and when in need of major medical treatment. In other important spheres of life, however, women's chances are seen in a bleaker light. A majority of female and male respondents believe that men get preferential treatment at work, whether in terms of remuneration, promotion, applying for a new job or retaining a job during layoffs. Women are also seen as disadvantaged in their political aspirations. The fact that men receive preferential treatment at work and in politics was stated not only by an overwhelming majority of female respondents but also by most male respondents, although the majority was somewhat smaller.

How to Deal with Women's Unequal Work Opportunities

Most Slovaks believe that men have better chances at work. But how do they feel about this? As many as 63% of female respondents are convinced it is not right that women are disadvantaged. Fewer men support this opinion (40%), but they still represent the most numerous group.

Another one in four women and men (25% and 24%, respectively) do not endorse the preferential treatment of men, but believe it can't be changed. Only 12% of men and 3% of women consider the preferential treatment of men to be justified and, consequently, do not insist it be remedied. Finally, 3% of women and 22% of men do not think men have better opportunities at work.

Advocacy of Women's Rights

Do women in Slovakia try hard enough to improve their position in society and exercise their rights? As many as 74% of women and 51% of men say they do not. Over the past two years, criticism of women's passivity has grown considerably stronger (Bútorová/Gyárfášová, 2000).

Feminism in Public Opinion

As the above findings indicate, the Slovak population's sensitivity to women's issues and gender inequality has increased over recent years. A growing proportion of women and men maintain that gender equality has to be taken seriously and believe that in order to achieve it, women and men need to step up their efforts. Attitudes toward feminism have undergone a change as well. (Bútorová/Filadelfiová/Gyárfášová/Cviková/Farkašová, 2002)

A comparison with a similar survey conducted in 1995 (Bútorová, 1996) shows that women in Slovakia have grown slightly more positive or neutral about feminism, while the share of negative attitudes has decreased. Among men, this shift is even more visible. Nevertheless, the majority of people are still far from holding a positive or neutral view of feminism.

Gender Equality Policy in Slovakia

In Slovakia, the issue of equal opportunity did not become part of the national political agenda until the second half of the 1990s. That this happened at all was due largely to the international commitments that Slovakia had made, and to the country's accession to the EU.

Slovakia has participated in all international conferences on equal opportunity organized by the United Nations, and has signed all adopted documents. At the 5th World Conference on Women Beijing+5, Slovakia supported a joint standpoint taken by most EU member states and reaffirmed its pledge to implement the Beijing Platform for Action.

The formation of a gender equality policy (GEP) in Slovakia has also been influenced by the activities of women's NGOs, which supported the commitments undertaken at UN conferences, as well as EU guidelines.

Emergence and Shaping of National GEP Mechanisms

History of Emerging National Institutions

The first official body to promote equal opportunities for women and men was the Government Committee for the Woman and Family, which lasted only 2 years (1991-1992).

New mechanisms promoting gender equality were not created until after the 4th World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995. One year after the conference, the Coordinating Committee for Women's Issues (*KVPŽ*) was established as a Slovak cabinet advisory body focused on promoting the interests of women in society. The committee unites representatives from the parliament, government ministries, NGOs, and research institutions.

Another step was the establishment of the Department of Equal Opportunities (*ORP*). In 1999, the Slovak parliament founded the Parliamentary Commission for Women (*PKŽ*) under the parliamentary Committee for Human Rights and Minorities, which was to outline and submit legislative changes to improve women's position in society.

Legislation and Equal Opportunity

Slovakia has acceded to all international documents on equal opportunity. However, the public remains poorly informed of these documents, and even experts and government officials do not always know exactly what commitments Slovakia has undertaken.

The Slovak Constitution does not specifically address gender equality, but only makes rather general statements about non-discrimination. Parliament has not yet adopted a specific law on gender equality, although certain issues related to gender equality and the protection of women have been incorporated into existing laws, mostly in the areas of employment and family.

Consequently, Slovakia opposes discrimination against women without having defined what that discrimination consists in by law. Before the 2002 elections, parliament declined to discuss a law on equal treatment, originally known as the anti-discrimination act.

National Documents on Equal Opportunity

Based on the recommendations of the Beijing Platform for Action, the *KVPŽ* in 1997 prepared the National Action Plan for Women in the Slovak Republic (*Národný...*, 1997) defining the national priorities of the gender equality policy for the next 10 years (Bútorová/Filadelfiová/Guráň/Gyárfášová/Farkašová, 1999).

In 1998, Slovakia as a signatory to the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) submitted the Situation Report on the Slovak Republic to the Convention. In June 1998, the report was evaluated by the UN Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Among other observations, the Committee stated that preferential treatment for men in employment and politics had persisted in Slovakia (*Vyhodnotenie...*, 1998).

In March 2001, the cabinet approved the Concept of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (Konceptia..., 2001), which it then submitted to the various parliamentary committees.

Current Status of the GEP

Approach of the Cabinet and Parliament Between 1998 and 2002

Over the past four years, almost all cabinet and parliament officials treated the equal opportunity issue as a marginal one, and as being foisted on Slovakia from the outside, particularly from the EU. Their attitude was often influenced by prejudice against the women's movement and against feminism.

The cabinet and parliament took two different approaches to gender equality documents. First, when discussing documents that formed a key part of Slovakia's accession to the EU, as well as commitments arising from Slovakia's membership in international organizations, officials expressed the conviction that while it was important to adopt these documents, they were often unnecessary for Slovakia, since the country had managed to solve most of these problems during the communist period. These arguments were especially common when the documents concerned employment legislation or the availability of kindergartens and pre-school education.

Secondly, both executive and legislative officials were often reluctant to adopt such documents, or to discuss them at all, especially when domestic experts submitted legislative bills or proposed recommendations on equal opportunity.

Equal Opportunity in Political Parties' Election Programs and in the Government's Program Manifesto

This lukewarm attitude to gender equality was also seen in the election programs of the political parties that entered parliament in September 2002, which gave only marginal attention to gender issues and the women's agenda. While four years ago at least one important political party (the Slovak Democratic Coalition – *SDK*) had devoted a separate and fairly long chapter in its program to women's issues, in 2002 this was not true of a single party that entered parliament.

On the other hand, the program manifesto of the second Dzurinda administration for 2002-2006 was the first document of its kind since November 1989 to have explicitly mentioned equal opportunity. The new government pledged to 'support equal opportunity in our society, including the increased representation of women in public life.' The government also promised to 'continue to promote non-discrimination and equal treatment in everyday life, particularly in employment opportunities, professional training, promotion, labor conditions, and remuneration' (Programové..., 2002).

Status and Activities of National GEP Mechanisms

During the first Dzurinda government, the parliamentary Commission for Women was almost invisible. Moreover, the Commission did not have as much power as a full parliamentary committee, which was the main reason behind a proposal before the 2002 elections that a separate parliamentary Committee on Equal Opportunity for Women and Men be established. Unfortunately, this attempt failed in the new parliament; all that happened was that the name of the existing committee was changed to the Committee for Human Rights, Ethnic Minorities, and the Status of Women. However, gender equality is only one of the items on the agenda of this rather general committee, while the term 'status of women' fails to meet the original objective: to create a mechanism to promote equal opportunity for women and men.

Slovakia continues to lack an executive body that would take full responsibility and wield real power in the field of equal opportunity. The structure of the national mechanism has not been clearly defined, individual institutions do not have any real power to initiate legislation, or to steer the government's gender equality policies. The government mechanism in this area consists exclusively of advisory bodies (i.e. the Coordinating Committee for Women's Issues and the Department of Equal Opportunities) that are under the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family, a politically 'weak' ministry. Since these institutions were not established by a specific law that would shelter their legal status, they depend on the good will of the ruling coalition, and their existence is threatened every time the government changes. On top of that, they have no local or regional networks or control mechanisms to implement the GEP.

The powers and activities of the Department of Equal Opportunities at the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family are too broad, and the department is understaffed.

The Coordinating Committee for Women's Issues is entrusted with 13 tasks, some of whose size and complexity would seem to require they be assigned to a separate institution similar to those successfully operating in other countries, for instance Spain. In Slovakia, all of these tasks are handled by two employees at the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family, along with volunteers (experts and NGO representatives). The advantage of the Committee is that it is clearly designed to cooperate with foreign institutions. The body also provides a suitable discussion platform for NGOs and decision-makers, as well as for the evaluation of proposed legislative bills. At the same time, as an institution it has no power, financial resources, or ability to influence legislative and decision-making processes.

The priorities and objectives of the national GEP (articulated in the Concept of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and the National Action Plan for Women in the Slovak Republic) are too vague, and are not based on critical feminist thinking or on an

understanding of women's rights as an integral part of human rights. The concept of equal opportunity was approved before funding was provided for its enactment. No independent control mechanisms were created to supervise implementation of the GEP and the functioning of institutional mechanisms. Although Slovakia elected its first ombudsman in 2002, this official does not deal with specific gender equality issues.

Given this situation, it is difficult to speak of a consistent government gender equality policy or of gender mainstreaming at the national level. The current structure of Slovakia's national mechanism (i.e. institutions and legislation) is far from that required by international conventions and ratified documents.

The GEP has become a tool for fulfilling one of the tasks the country has to complete before it joins the EU. It is unfortunate that the issue had to be pushed to the fore from abroad. In previous years, the government failed to show sufficient interest in GEP to see it reflected in laws, regulations, and funding. Now, institutions without real powers are handling the equal opportunity agenda, which risks declining into the mere formal observance of principles.

The Future of National GEP Mechanisms

Neither Slovakia's political establishment nor the general public fully understand that women's rights are an indivisible part of human rights. Therefore, it is important that activities be pursued that are designed to increase awareness of women's rights, and particularly to put pressure on government officials. The only way to transfer the issue of gender mainstreaming to the lower levels of society is first to ensure that it is grasped and endorsed by government members. It is also important to underline the importance of GEP funding, since no program can be put into action without adequate resources.

In the near future, the government should examine equal opportunity laws in other European countries and prepare a new Slovak law. Gender equality policy must also be backed up with adequate institutions that have well-defined powers. The Slovak government should establish a special executive body to deal with gender equality. In Western Europe, this function is performed either by a separate ministry or by various government bodies headed by a cabinet member. In any case, such institutions should not have merely advisory roles.

Also, the issue of gender equality should be incorporated into the Competence Law and the Law on the Civil Service that define the powers and tasks of state institutions and civil servants. At the moment, the equal opportunity agenda is only an implicit part of family policy.

Another important issue is coordination between Slovakia's international commitments and its domestic policy, as well as the compatibility of important policy documents approved

by the government. The Concept of State Family Policy and the Concept of Equal Opportunities of Women and Men should be brought into harmony, as their premises and objectives are contradictory in some places (Konceptia..., 1996; Konceptia..., 2001).

The institutional mechanisms for enacting equal opportunity policies vary among European countries. Most EU member states use a combination of institutions and bodies at the government, parliamentary, and civic levels. In September 2002, a joint project by the Slovak government and the EU, called MATRA, proposed the following institutional model for GEP in Slovakia (Institutional..., 2002).

1. At the legislative level, the model recommended that a parliamentary Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunity be established. Such a committee should have clear ties with other institutions – the Section on Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities, the Dialogue Platform for Gender Equality, the Expert Group on Gender Equality, as well as the European Parliament Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities.

2. At the executive level, the agenda should be steered by the Government Council on Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities. The Council could be chaired by the deputy prime minister, and its members could be ministers or deputy ministers of all the relevant ministries (or the ombudsman) who would be entitled to actively shape the preparation and consideration of bills and other government documents. The council should take prime responsibility for implementing the GEP, and would be accountable and report directly to parliament.

A new Section on Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities located at a ministry or at the Government Office would provide technical and monitoring support to the Council. This section would continue and upgrade the work of the current Department of Equal Opportunities at the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family.

The MATRA model also proposed that gender units/focal points be created at all relevant ministries, sections, and departments concerned with GEP. These units would report to a ministry representative on the Government Council for Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities. Offices on gender equality and equal opportunities should also be set up in regional and local governments.

3. At the civic or independent level, the model recommended that several bodies be created. An independent body called a Dialogue Platform for Gender Equality (on the national level, and similar to the existing Coordinating Committee for Women's Issues) should serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences between government officials (including those from the Section on Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities), trade unions and employers, and representatives of political parties, women's NGOs, and research bodies. Similar platforms should also be established at the regional level.

It would also be desirable to create an independent Gender Equality Expert Group with seven to nine civil society, university, research, and think-tank experts to provide advice on key areas outlined in the National Policy for Gender Equality.

The third body envisaged by the model was a Center for Human Rights/Equal Treatment that would supervise enforcement of the anti-discrimination law. Here, the issue of gender equality would be incorporated into a broader context of preventing and eliminating discrimination of all kinds. In other words, the center would broaden the general ombudsman's current powers.

This model was presented in October 2002, immediately after the parliamentary elections. Obviously, the true challenge in the coming period will be to transform this idea into a viable, functioning mechanism.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we identified some crucial circumstances that shape the different opportunities that women and men have in Slovak society. We spoke of the persisting patriarchal patterns that dominate everyday life in many Slovak families, of discrimination against women on the labor market, and of the insufficient participation of women in economic and political decision-making.

At the same time, we noted that over the past several years, the sensitivity of the Slovak public to women's issues has increased. Both women and men have become more aware of the importance of respecting women's rights, and of the need to challenge discrimination against women. An intense public debate on gender inequality has increased the number of women and men who believe that Slovak women should defend their rights more actively.

It is ironic that such a favorable shift in public opinion occurred at the same time that gender equality policy was meeting prejudice and indifference from executive and legislative officials in Slovakia. Gender equality policy thus remains merely on paper, as the institutions entrusted with implementing equal opportunity policies have so far lacked sufficient power to enforce the international commitments taken on by Slovakia.

The shift in public opinion towards greater gender sensitivity and respect for equal opportunity was triggered by three favorable circumstances. First, there was a considerable shift in society towards democracy and the rule of law after 1998; without such a political change, it would have been far more difficult to generate the energy necessary for cultivating gender sensitivity. Second, Slovak society, preparing to join the EU, has been repeatedly shown what kind of relations between women and men are expected of a full-fledged EU member. Third, the greater energy and better coordination of women's NGOs has increased understanding of women's issues.

Last but not least, we should not overlook the fact that although Slovakia now has a purely male cabinet, the current parliament has the most female MPs since the collapse of communism [...]. Women were also appointed to higher posts in the current parliament than in the previous one.

As for the future, attention must be paid to the gender implications of reforms to the health care, pension, and education systems. We can expect that the voice of women's NGOs will be heard when the country adopts these strategic decisions. However, it will be equally important to incorporate gender mainstreaming into the government's overall reform strategy and, in a broader sense, into the very building of a democratic society.

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Notes

1. The authors of this chapter would like to thank Peter Guráň, director of the Family Policy Section at the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family, for his valuable input to the section on gender equality policy.

2. This section of the chapter is based on a study by Jarmila Filadelfiová, written for the publication On the Road to the European Union: A Guide Not Only for Women (Na ceste..., 2002), and background material provided by Peter Guráň.

Workshop 2

Keszthely, May 2005

From 30 to 31 May 2005 the second workshop of the POWER project took place in Keszthely, Hungary. Host organisation was the NGO 'Women for the XXI. Century'.

After a welcome by Zemankovics Ferenc (deputy major of Keszthely), Maczuczka Éva (Member of the Local Government of the County of Zala and City Council of Keszthely) gave a lecture on the representation of women in political bodies in Keszthely and Zala county. Asbóthné Toma Judit (Hungarian Women's Association, Budapest) informed about women's institution in Western Hungary, Éberhardt Éva (Queen's University, Belfast) about 'Gender and EU-enlargement' and Hóbor József (political scientist) about women's problems from the viewpoint of men. The evening was spent with vivid discussions with the speakers at the 'Vital Forum'.

On the second day we visited the 'European Info Point' presented by Nagy Anita. Afterwards Guitprechné Molnár Erzsébet analysed the situation of women in Zala county and the Hungarian Member of Parliament Csiha Judit gave an overview on women-related Hungarian legislation. The workshop finished with study visit at the 'Wine Women' who promote wine produced exclusively by women.



Women in the General Assembly of Zala County and in the Body of Representatives in Keszthely

Éva Maczuczsa

I wish to discuss the problem of equal opportunities between men and women in the European Union through the example of women in public life and in decision-making procedures especially in the General Assembly of Zala County and in the Body of Representatives in Keszthely. The subject of my university study thesis concerned this issue, and some local research had also been undertaken in this field. This paper discusses some of the data included in these studies.

General Remarks

Having investigated the structure of society in relation to gender, it was not surprising to discover that the life expectancy trend of men and women is the same nationally as in Europe as a whole. The life expectancy of women at the time of their birth is almost 6 years more than that of men. Women generally live 9 years longer than men. On average there are 1.1 women for every man among the population.

Table 1: Population as of 1 January 2004.

	total	men	women	share of women
Hungary	10,117,000	4,804,000	5,313,000	52.5%
Zala County	296,705	141,431	155,274	52.3%
City of Keszthely	21,079	9,854	11,255	53.3%

Comparison of Research Results With the Data From Secondary Literature

One of constitutional means of exercising the rights of public life is the right to vote and be voted for in elections. However, there is a difference between a voter taking part in the elections and having the right to vote, and those standing as candidates. The former (the silent majority) exercise their right by throwing a voting paper into a ballot-box, but the latter are also involved in public affairs. Candidates present themselves to the public, where they and their actions and words will be judged. Women tend to prefer the former activity, voting, to the latter, in which they take a public stand and fight for the interests of their own or those of other people. Thus differences in behaviour between men and women help to explain why there are only a few women in the decision-making bodies.

In the first legislative period after political transition, there were hardly any women in the General Assembly of Zala County and in the Body of Representatives in Keszthely. In the latter a woman was elected later due to a by-election. The reason for this low level of participation could be the degree of social uncertainty. As in times of war, women preferred to stay at home and take care of the family. However, the number of female candidates has increased steadily in recent years. In table 2, we see that the ratio of elected women compared to the female candidates is almost the same as that of men. It remains true that only a few women are involved in decision-making procedures. In my opinion, this is related to the low number of candidates. (20% of all female nominees for parliamentary elections in Hungary in 2002 were elected but their share among all members of parliament is only 9%.) We need to increase the number of candidates in order to have more elected women serving on public bodies.

Table 2: Dates of the Elections 2002.

	share of women among all nominees	share of women among all elected representatives	share of elected men from all male nominees	share of elected women from all female nominees
Hungary	34.7%	-	20.0%	33.0%
Zala County	15.8%	12.5%	12.4%	9.4%
City of Keszthely	17.6%	23.5%	11.6%	20.0%

In Keszthely, there was a difference between the number of women having been elected in the individual election districts and the number of those who came from the party lists. Only one woman was able to become a representative of a public body through such a list. From ten individual election districts there were four women elected as representatives of the public body. This means that women can only rely upon themselves; they are generally not thought by men to be such strong candidates and men tend to argue that if they fail in individual district elections, then they don't deserve to come in through the list. The negative attitudes of male voters need to be changed. Women are as high-calibre politicians as men, but they are generally not consulted when the lists are compiled by men in an informal setting, such as in a pub, drinking beer, while the fundamental principle of political power is still having powerful friends. The group of decision makers may be called the political elite, or leadership pyramid. There have only been men at the top here during the last 16 years of autonomous government in Zala County and in Keszthely and this is still the case today.

My study investigated two public bodies of decision makers; in these, there were only men in leading positions acting as chairmen and deputy chairmen, while there has as yet been no instance of a female mayor. There were also no female candidates in the election

periods. We can find the same situation concerning lower positions. There are more and more deputy chairmen and deputy mayors but we cannot find any women among them. At the level of chairmen and deputy chairmen of committees, the situation is a little better. Although there are still few women among them.

Table 3: The Composition of the General Assembly of Zala County.

	1994-1998	1998-2002	2002-2004	2004-present
total of representatives	40	40	40	40
total of women /	2	5	5	6
share of women	= 5.0%	= 12.5%	= 12.5%	= 15.0%

Table 4: The Composition of the Body of Representatives in the City of Keszthely.

	1992-1994	1994-1998	1998-2002	2002-present
total of representatives	17	17	17	17
total of women /	1	1	2	4
share of women	= 5.9%	= 5.9%	= 11.8%	= 23.5%

Conclusions According to my Research and the Relevant Literature

The rate of women in the Zala County is 52.3%, in Keszthely 53.3%. If there were to be a fair representation according to gender in the General Assembly of Zala County, there should be 21 women from the 40 members. At least one of the three deputy chairmen should be a woman. The chairman could be either a man or a woman. In the Body of Representatives in Keszthely, there should be nine women in the 17-member body, where one of the chairmen should be a woman and the mayor could be a woman too.

In our town, Keszthely, the number of female representatives has increased during the last three election periods since 1960 and is now twice as much as it was beforehand. We may hope that this number will be twice as much again after a further three periods, bringing the percentage of women among representatives to 47%. We hope that this dream will become reality in about 15 years' time and that the percentage of men and women among representatives of public decision-making bodies will reach the ideal of 50-50%.

Éva Maczucza, Member of the Body of Representatives of Keszthely, Member of the General Assembly of Zala County, Keszthely (Hungary)

The Design of Policies Relating to Women in Hungary

József Hóbor

Women in the modern world play an important – not to say irreplaceable – role in manufacturing and service industries and in the cultural sphere. However, according to the nationalistic Christian politicians of the former Hungarian government, women were idealised as mothers, within a mythologised family setting (breastfeeding their children or cooking, supporting their husbands on the one hand while on the other, tied to a domestic world). These ‘ideal’ women have no history; there is no interest shown in what has happened to them and what will happen to them in the future – they stand simply for the abstract construct ‘mother’, who will ascend to Heaven (as Mary did before them). Despite this outdated vision, luckily, the real emancipation of women is already a fact.

However, it is regrettable that there is inadequate political acknowledgement of this fact. It is not possible to make policy at the cost of women – any society allowing such policies will simply fail to develop. Hungarian society is currently experiencing problems associated with the considerable decrease in the number of marriages and even greater downward trend in the number of births. The government committee (which was nicknamed the ‘stallion committee’, because it had no female members) charged with addressing these problems, and including ministers of the government led by Viktor Orbán, proved unable to identify the underlying cause of such problems, because they took the wrong approach.

Their approach failed to take account of the decisions made freely by independent women. Women in the Hungary of today wish to combine having children with having a career, and generally opt for having either one or two children at most in order to retain opportunities for advancement in the working world.

Common experience shows that women perform equally well to their male peers at the level of higher education. Young women appear to enjoy academic advantages through their tendency to mature earlier and yet, when it comes to beginning their working lives, women begin to experience problems and disadvantages, where, if they were to compete on a fair basis with men, their natural advantages which show through in academic performance might prevail in their careers too. Furthermore, marriage and especially the birth of a child has a strong impact on women’s overall opportunities. The patriarchal division of labour and expectations, which also exists in the family setting today (and which, according to research by the author, seems to remain strong today) can limit the chance for restarting a woman’s career. In general, it is very difficult for women to obtain recognition for achievements made before this juncture.

The marriage rate is currently at a very low level and the trend shows a considerable ongoing decline. This is only partially caused by the fact that a lower age group was

studied here. It must be noted that women wish to create security in their lives but on their own terms. Where many of our grandmothers wanted to find this security in a good marriage, these days, women wish to be independent within their marriages too. A considerable number are concerned about their own careers and professional success and prefer to live in a long-term relationship, which requires a less abiding commitment. (Unfortunately the legally arranged, contracted form of this common law-marriage in Hungary is not frequent – in Western countries, by contrast, the common-law marriage is almost on a par with the marriage-contract.)

In these common-law marriages, there is little room for children. Few children are born into marriages today, and even fewer into common-law marriages. An underlying reason for this is that women are exposed by child-rearing to even greater insecurity in such a setting. The wages of the 'breadwinner' are often not enough for the maintenance of the family and the wages of women are generally less, (particularly as they are likely to be downgraded after the birth of children). So the connection to a partner, which originally appeared emancipated, becomes one of dependence. This situation can only worsen after subsequent births.

In this context, women who would like to progress in their careers receive little support either from the family ('you should concentrate on looking after the children only, what happens with your workplace is not interesting') or from the workplace ('you have to focus on your work, we don't care about your children') or from the society as a whole. But if the society doesn't value the fact that it is only women who can bear children, then women will simply not have children. If women are not given any support from society as a whole to enable them to reproduce the society (by bringing children into the world) then society is making decisions that are against its own interest. This is a 'schizophrenic' situation.

Today's women need societal guarantees that bearing children will not destroy their careers and their existential and intellectual security. Education systems need to be in place that can ensure that they are receiving the knowledge they need to compensate for the knowledge deficit, which has arisen in the time they have spent away from working world. The government should compensate the companies for the financial losses caused by workers replacing full-time with part-time work and it should make up the incomes of families in which full-time income is replaced by part-time income (depending on the age of the child). The status of motherhood and the guarantee of a chance to continue a career have to be dealt with together. It is not sufficient to speak about the emancipation of women where that equality exists only by law. It is necessary to give women support and a break from work in order to promote the birth of children, who will ensure the perpetuity of the society. To conclude: Being a mother must not be viewed as reducing the effectiveness of women, it should be seen as promoting it.

József Hóbor, Political Scientist, Zalaegerszeg (Hungary)

Workshop 3 Burgenland, September 2005

From 19 to 20 September 2005 the third and last workshop of the POWER project took place in Burgenland. Host organisation was the Research Society Burgenland.

In the mornings, the programme comprised speeches by Helene Sengstbratl (managing director of the regional branch of the Labour Market Service Austria), Karin Tertinegg (Junior Researcher at the Institute for Human Sciences), Sonja Kögl (Women's Office of the Province of Burgenland), Nina Piniel (Women and Family Information and Counselling Centre in Oberpullendorf), Christa Varga (Day Mothers Burgenland) and Judith Jakowitsch (Research Society Burgenland).

In the afternoons, study visits lead us across the province: Wilma Fischer welcomed us at the Women's Service Centre 'Die Tür' in Mattersburg where we also learned about the projects 'Die Heinefrauen' and 'MonA-net'. In Oberwart, Renate Holpfer presented the 'Association Women for Women' and afterwards Annemarie Reiss hosted us at the Domestic Abuse Intervention Centre Burgenland where we learned about the Centre's work from Dagmar Pollhammer and about the project 'Mama's Küche' from Hermine Gruber. In Neusiedl/See, Karin Behringer-Pfann welcomed us at the Women and Family Counselling and Information Centre 'Der Lichtblick' and we stopped by the office of the project 'Koryphäen' which was presented by Eva Steindl.



On the Situation of Women in the Austrian Province Burgenland

Judith Jakowitsch

Introduction¹

In terms of area and population size, Burgenland constitutes one of the smallest provinces of Austria. The population of Burgenland stands currently at c. 278,000 spread over an area of 3,966 km². Burgenland is characterised by the small-scale structure of its human settlements. The provincial capital Eisenstadt is by far the largest population centre in the province, yet has only c.12,000 inhabitants.

Burgenland is divided into seven districts. *Neusiedl/See*, *Eisenstadt-Umgebung* and *Mattersburg* form what is generally referred to as 'the northern part', *Oberpullendorf* constitutes 'the middle' and *Oberwart*, *Güssing* and *Jennersdorf* make up 'the southern part'. The cities Eisenstadt and Rust are two additional administrative units.

Burgenland is the most eastern province of Austria. It borders on Slovakia to the north-east, on Hungary to the east, and shares a short common border with Slovenia to the south. Because of the pronounced north-south elongation of the province, stretching over 160 km yet having a width of between 4 and 60 km, it has proved very difficult to develop as a regional unit. There remain economic disparities between the peripherally located southern part of the province and the northern part, which partly lies only 50 km from the Austrian capital city of Vienna.

Burgenland is also the youngest Austrian province. In 1918, after the end of the First World War, the young Republic of Austria managed to obtain the largely German-speaking region of western Hungary, granted to Austria by the victorious powers in the Peace Treaty of Saint Germain (1919). However, Hungarian resistance to this decision meant that it was not until 1921 that this region, under the new name of Burgenland, finally became a part of Austria.

The demographic structure of Burgenland was always characterised by diversity. Approximately 10% of the current population belong to one of the three officially recognised ethnic groups in the province. The largest group consists of Burgenland Croats. According to the 2001 census, there are c. 20,000 people (7.3%) who have Burgenland-Croatian as their language of everyday speech. The ethnic Hungarian minority group comprises some 5,000 persons (2%). There are no confirmed figures for the number of Roma living in Burgenland, since on one hand, association with this ethnic group is still connected with

a certain social stigmatisation and on the other hand, Burgenland-Romanes as the language of the Roma is barely in use among the younger generation, thus there is no simple categorisation criterion which can be used.

Concerning religious affiliation, Burgenland contains a relatively high proportion of Protestants (13%) in an otherwise predominantly Catholic Austria, a situation deriving from the more liberal laws governing religion in the Hungarian half of the Habsburg empire, to which Burgenland belonged.

Because of its peripheral location and rural structure, Burgenland has been the poorest and backward province of Austria for decades. But since joining the European Union on 1 January 1995 and more recently, since the EU-accession of the neighbouring countries Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia, Burgenland has had many chances to make up for historic disadvantages.

Related developments regarding demographic behaviour, participation in education and on the labour market, political participation and lifestyle – which will be described in detail in the following text – took place more rapidly and on a wider scale than in the rest of the country, enabling Burgenland to catch up with the rest of Austria in many respects.

Demography²

The 15 May 2001 census registered 277,569 inhabitants in Burgenland³. As in most countries in the world, the share of women is higher than the share of men. In Burgenland, 51.2% of the population is female which is a little lower than in Austria as a whole (51.6%).

The reasons for the higher share of women are threefold: Firstly, more men than women die under the age of 70. Secondly, women have a higher life expectancy than men. In Burgenland, women born in the year 2003 have a life expectancy of 81.0 years compared to 75.9 years for men. Thirdly, there is a lack of men among the generation which is now 70 years or older due to losses incurred during the Second World War. By the year 2030, when the generation which lived to see the Second World War will have died, the share of women is projected to decline to about 50.9%.

Compared with the 1991 census, there was a population increase of 6,689 people or 2.5%. But this positive development is put into perspective by three facts. Firstly, the population of Austria as a whole increased faster, by 3.0%. Secondly, the demographic growth is the result of a relatively high immigration (an influx of c. 13,700 people), which more than compensated for the negative ratio of births to deaths (minus c. 5,900). And thirdly, the demographic development during this decade varies considerably at the micro-level. The winners were predominately communities in northern Burgenland with access to (recently built) sophisticated transport infrastructure.

The decline in the number of births mentioned above started in the 1960s. Before this, on average about 5,000 babies were born annually, where the current figure is down to 2,200. The number of deaths has remained stable over the last 40 years at about 3,000 annually. Consequently, while the ration of births to deaths was positive until 1974, it has since then always been negative.

Whereas in the 1960s a woman had about three children on average, the fertility rate in Burgenland declined to 1.24 in the year 2003 (Austrian average: 1.38). The average age of a mother at the birth of her first child rose from 24.5 in the year 1991 to 27.2 in the year 2003. The share of babies born to unmarried mothers rose from 13.6% in the year 1991 to 27.5% in the year 2003.

On average, 2.6 persons live in each Burgenland household. This figure is declining steadily, while the number of households is increasing – rising from 94,951 in 1991 to 106,221 in 2001. The increase is especially dramatic regarding single-person households. In 2001, these represented more than a quarter of all households (26.1%), compared to about a fifth in the year 1991 (21.8%). Two-thirds of all single people are elderly women, the larger part of the rest are young male adults. A steep decline can be observed regarding households containing five or more persons.

The number of marriages taking place annually has almost halved from 1,931 in 1961 to 1,208 in 2003. The share of first marriages (marriages which are the first for both bride and groom) declined from 92% in 1961 to 66% in 2003. 160 couples getting married already had common children, which represents a share of 15.6%. The number of divorces increased sharply, from 75 in 1961 to 495 in 2003. This means that nowadays about 40% of all marriages end in divorce.

The average age of those getting married in Burgenland is 28.4 years for women and 31.6 years for men. The ages of both have risen steadily, which is due to longer periods spent in education and therefore later entry into the workforce.

Education⁴

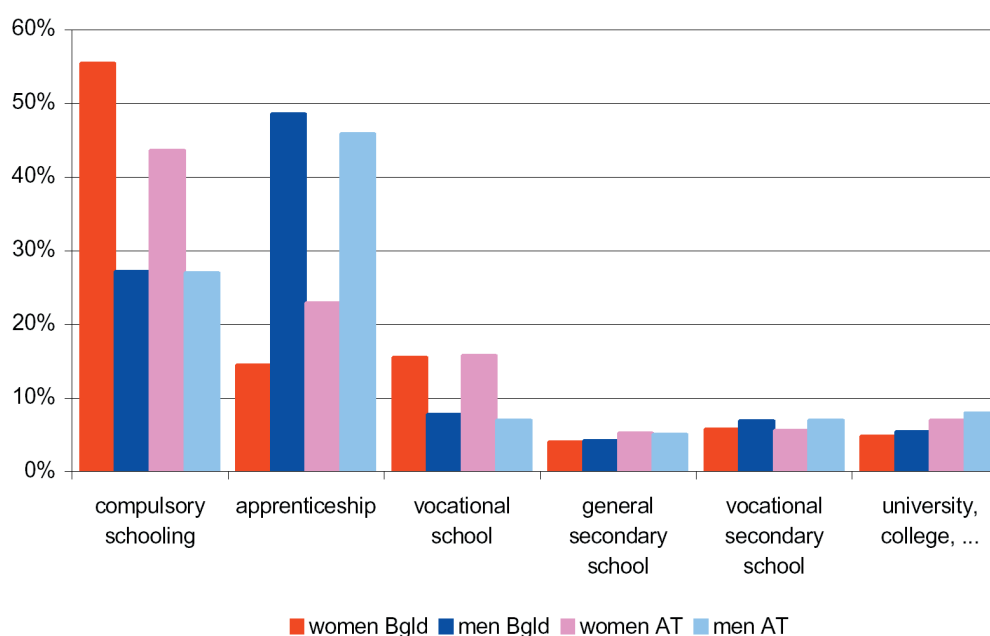
55.4% of Burgenland's women have only completed compulsory schooling.

The educational background of the population in Burgenland aged 15 or older is still marked by the lack of education of women in former times. In Burgenland, 55.4% of all women only have compulsory schooling as their highest level of education, compared with only 27.2% of men.

Generally, the qualification level of the Burgenland population is lower than that of the rest of Austria, while the qualification level of women in all provinces is lower than that of men. Consequently, women in Burgenland are off worst nationally as far as their

educational background is concerned. However, this is only true for older generations. Younger generations are heading for further education to a bigger extent – girls more than boys and in Burgenland more than elsewhere in Austria.

Table 1: Qualification level of women and men aged 15 and older in 2001.



Among 20 to 34 year olds, the share of women with compulsory schooling as their highest level of education comprises 21.7%, which is much less than the average among the age group of 15 and older but still means that one out of five young women did not receive any further schooling or vocational training. The respective figure for men among 20 to 34 year olds is only 9.9%. However...

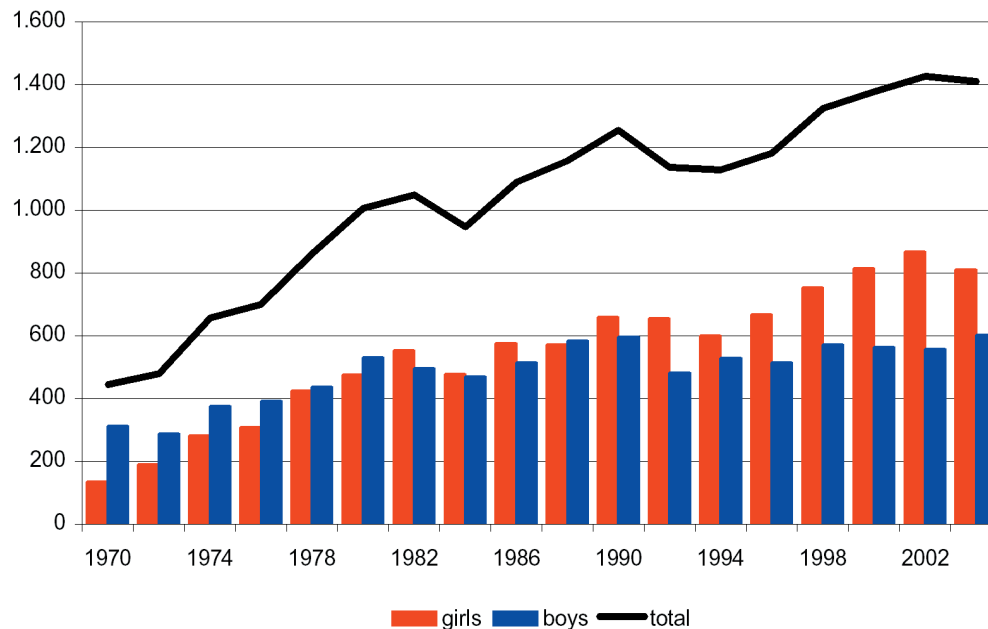
... a large and still growing portion of girls and women nowadays seeks to continue in further and higher education, even tertiary education.

From the mid-1970s, the popularity of vocational schools (at which attendance lasts 3 to 4 years and does not finish with a general qualification for university entrance) declined sharply among boys (numbers decreased from c. 1,800 students in 1974/75 to about 850 students in 2004/05) and, to a lesser extent, also among girls (falling from c. 2,100 students in 1974/75 to about 1,400 students in 2004/05).

The number of people taking final exams grew steadily during this period, as did the share of girls doing so. In Burgenland, since 1981, more girls than boys have left school

with a general qualification for university entrance. In 2004, 57.4% of all graduates were girls.

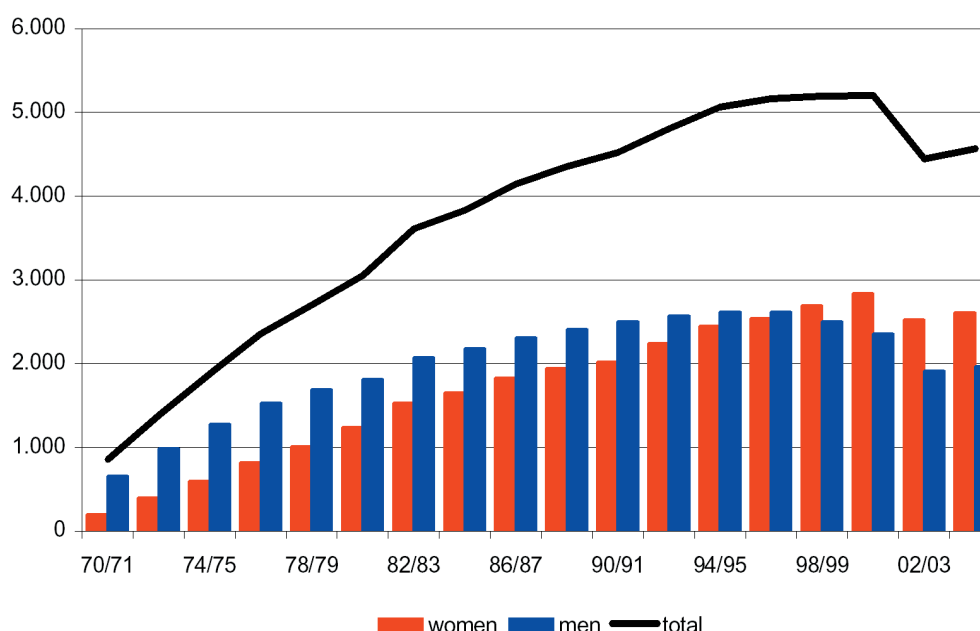
Table 2: Burgenland people taking final exams.



Responsibility for the rising number of people taking final exams during recent decades lies with the growing popularity of vocational secondary schools (at which attendance lasts 5 years): The number of female students rose almost five-fold from some 680 in 1974/75 to c. 3,500 in 2004/05, while the number of boys tripled from roughly 1,000 to 3,000. This rise in the number of students at vocational secondary schools becomes even more impressive if one considers the decline in the birth rate during the last three decades (see above). This indicates that the proportion of young people attending a vocational secondary school in relation to the respective age group has risen even more sharply than the attendance figures alone suggest.

Concerning students from Burgenland at Austrian universities (there is no university in Burgenland itself), there have been more female than male students since the winter term 1997/98. In the winter term 2004/05, 57.0% of all students coming from Burgenland were women (Austrian average: 53.5%). In 2004/05, 52.4% of all students attending the recently-founded colleges in Burgenland itself were women, while 53.4% of students graduating in 2004 were female.

Table 3: Students from Burgenland at Austrian universities.



The generally positive trend according to which more and more women are enrolling in further education is put into perspective if we examine the quality of education.

Students at vocational secondary schools with a focus on the textile and fashion industries as well as those training nursery teachers are almost exclusively female. However, since the declining birth rate already mentioned reduces the need for nursery teachers (the same is true for the teaching profession as a whole) and the textile industry is generally shedding workers, working prospects for graduates are not bright. Technical professions, which would promise far better chances on the labour market, are dominated by male students.

The same picture emerges in academic education. 51.6% of all people with tertiary education in Burgenland are female, but only 37.2% of those with a university education are women, while the share of women with a college degree is 39.5%. The gender balance among people with tertiary education is only produced by the fact that academies – predominately teacher training academies for compulsory schools⁵ – are dominated by women: 71.9% of the graduates of these academies are female.

Among the different branches of university education, a distinctive horizontal segregation is obvious: The share of women is especially high for example in teacher training (75%) and psychology (69%), branches included in philosophy/human sciences. Other fields preferred by women are languages: German, English and French (most language students plan to become teachers at secondary schools) are, for example, included among the philological/cultural sciences.

Table 4: Students at vocational secondary schools in Burgenland in 2001.

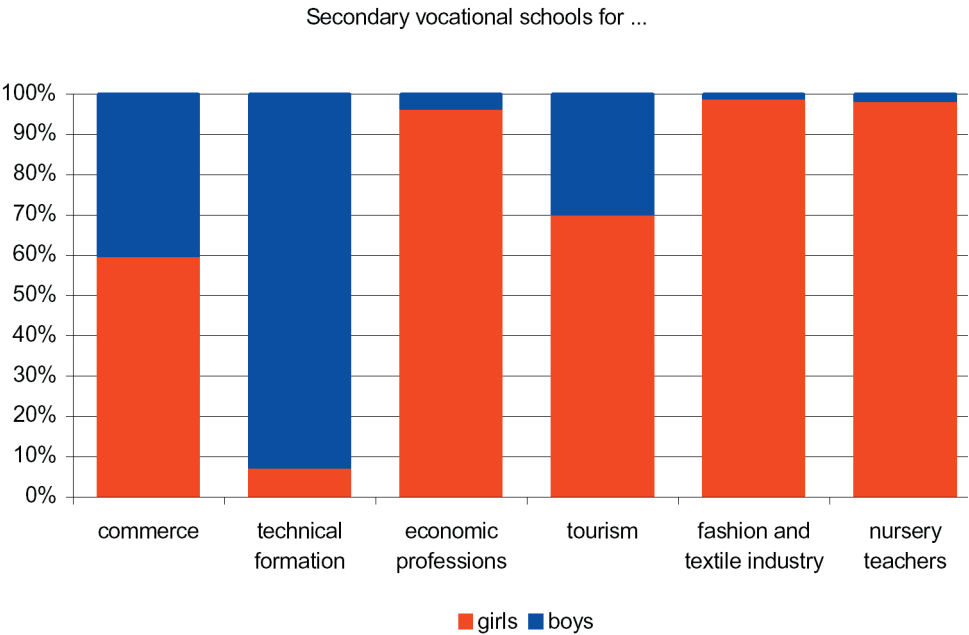
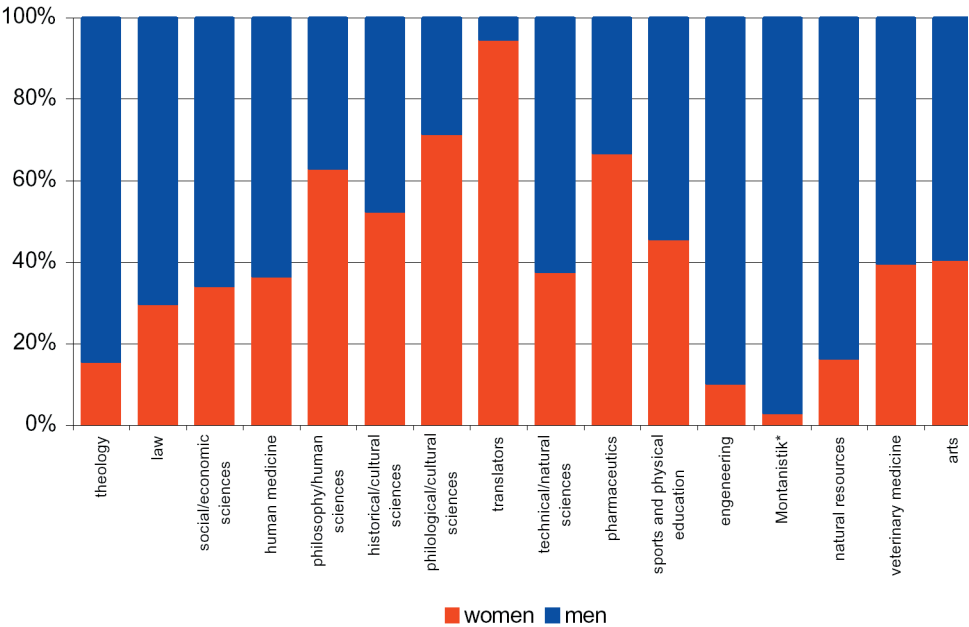


Table 5: Students from Burgenland by branches in 2001.

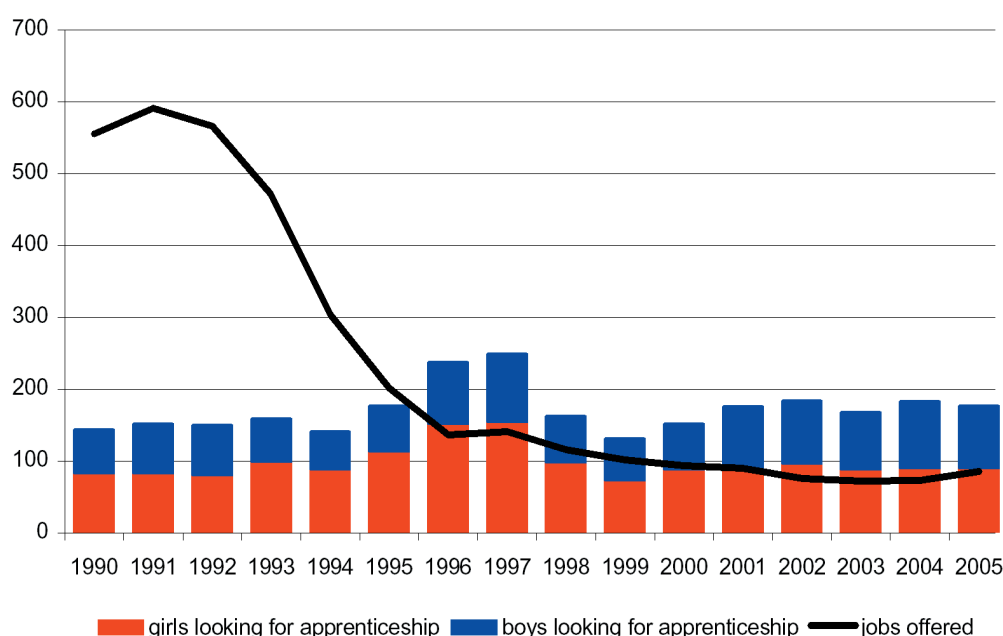


* Montanistik is a special field taught at a specialist university situated in the town of Leoben. Subjects include physics, chemistry, electrotechnology, mathematics and information technology, mineral resources and petroleum engineering, industrial environmental protection, waste management and disposal engineering.

More than 50% of all female trainees are found in only three different jobs.

In 2005, 2,854 apprentices were undergoing training in Burgenland businesses, compared with 4,045 in 1990. The reason for the rapid decline in the number of trainees is, above all, a decline in the number of companies willing to take on trainees: In 2005, from 177 young people looking for an apprenticeship in Burgenland, only 86 were offered places; in 1990, by contrast, 144 young people were able to choose from among 555 places.

Table 6: Apprenticeships in Burgenland - offer and demand.



Apprenticeships are not as popular among girls as they are among boys. This is true for Burgenland and for Austria as a whole, but the share of girls among trainees is especially low in Burgenland (23% – 655 out of 2,854) compared with Austria as a whole (33%).

Nonetheless, the share of girls seeking apprenticeship places, however, is generally high: In the last 15 years, this figure has regularly been over 50%, sometimes even over 60%. The primary reason for this contradiction is that girls are generally more selective than boys about the type of apprenticeship they will apply for.

Although apprenticeship schemes operate in some 170 different occupations in Burgenland, in 2005 81% of all female trainees were found in only 10 different jobs, and 52% in only three. The favourite training post for girls is as a retail salesperson (30.2%), hairdressing comes second, with a share of 15.5%, and the hotel and catering industry attracts some 6.6% of female trainees.

Among boys, 59% of all trainees are found in only ten different jobs, and 28% in only three. The most popular occupation among male trainees is as a car mechanic (13.7%), with 8.1% training to be electricians and 6.4% opting to train as plumbers (and related professions).

Of course, the preference of girls or boys for certain jobs would not be bad *per se* were it not that, as a rule, 'girls jobs' are less prestigious, less numerous, poorly paid, offer hardly any promotion prospects and include working times in the evening and at weekends. For example, the gross monthly income in accordance with collective agreements for a trained retail salesperson is c. 970 Euros, while for a car mechanic, the figure is 1,330 Euros.

Labour Market

Increase in female employment rate in the last decade.

In March 2000, the EU 'set itself a new strategic goal for the next decade: to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion'⁶. The overall employment rate was planned to reach or surpass 70% and the employment rate of women to reach or surpass 60% by the year 2010.

By the year 2001, both aims had already been achieved by Austria as well as by the province of Burgenland. But had it not been for an increase in the number of women in employment, there would not have been a rise in the employment rate at all. In fact, employment rates for men decreased from 1991 to 2001, in Burgenland as well as in Austria as a whole.

Chart 1: Employment rates 1991 and 2001.

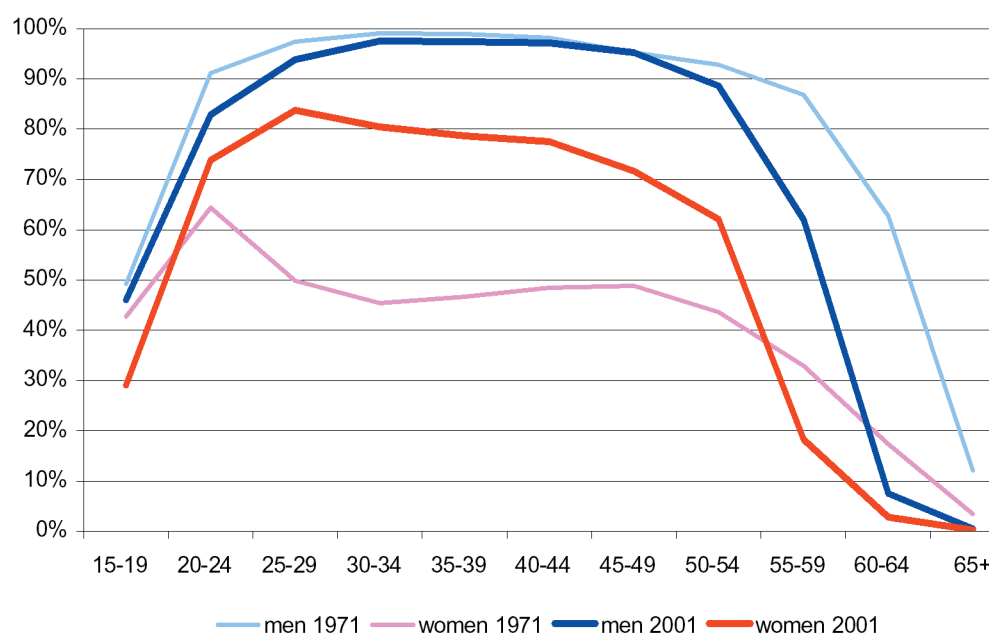
	1991		2001
BURGENLAND			
women	52.2%	+ 8.2	60.4%
men	79.9%	- 0.2	79.7%
Ø	66.4%	+ 3.8	70.2%
AUSTRIA			
women	58.0%	+ 3.8	61.8%
men	81.1%	- 1.1	80.0%
Ø	69.7%	+ 1.2	70.9%

It is also noteworthy that the increase of the employment rate for women is bigger in Burgenland than in Austria as a whole. In 1991, the difference between the employment rates for women in Burgenland and in Austria as a whole was about 6 percentage points, in the year 2001, it was only c. 1.5 percentage points.

But as far as disparities between women and men are concerned, the proportion of women who are employed is still lower than that of men – regarding all age groups. The least difference between the sexes can be found among the 20 to 29 year old population (when most people have finished their education and do not yet have children). The activity rate of women is highest among 25 to 29 year olds (more than 80%), among men 97% of all 30 to 44 year olds are economically active.

The graph below also shows that there was hardly any change regarding the activity rate of men of prime working age (30 to 50 years) since 1971, whereas the employment rate of women rose exactly in that age group. The activity rate of women declined among the age group of 15 to 19 year olds – due to increased participation in further education mentioned above. It may also be noted that compared with 1971, women and men tend to retire at an earlier age (or find themselves unemployed at the age of 55 and unable to re-enter the labour market).

Table 7: Employment rates of women and men in Burgenland 1971 and 2001.



A general problem with employment rates is that they not only quantify employed people per population of a certain age, but those employed plus job-seekers per population of a certain age. As a consequence, the existence not only of more employed persons but also of more job-seekers boost the employment rate. It is therefore wise to look in more depth at the number of employed and unemployed people.

Rise in female employment mainly due to part-time jobs.

But the simple figure of employed people hides another important fact, namely that, especially in recent years, many newly created jobs and jobs taken on by women are so-called 'atypical' jobs (part-time or minimal employment, irregular and temporary work, work on call, etc.). The share of part-time employees (12 to 32 hours per week) among the total employed almost doubled from 6.4% in 1991 to 12.2% in 2001.

In absolute terms, this means that the number of women in full-time employment rose by only 811 (2.2%). At the same time, the number of women employed part-time more than doubled, increasing by some 6,742. Part-time employment of men also increased sharply although at a much lower level and is still insignificant: 93.3% of all part-time employees were women.

Chart 2: Burgenland workforce by working time 1991 and 2001.

	1991		2001
FULL-TIME EMPLOYED			
women	37,225	+ 2.2%	38,036
men	71,112	- 1.0%	70,369
Ø	108,337	+ 0.1%	108,432
PART-TIME EMPLOYED			
women	6,728	+ 100%	13,470
men	399	+ 143%	971
Ø	7,127	+ 103%	14,441

The same situation can be found among those on minimal contracts (1 to 11 hours a week). The share of women among these employees was c. 81%. Such arrangements accounted for 2.4% of those in employment.

Care duties are the most important reason for part-time employment for women.

According to a special survey by 'Statistik Austria' undertaken in 2004⁷, 21.1% of the employed respondents said they were working on a part-time basis – 39.9% of all female respondents and 5.0% of all male respondents. Among the women working part-time, 44.5% said they had chosen this form of employment because they had to take care of children or sick relatives. Among the men working part-time, this reason accounted for only 1%. The major reason for men choosing part-time employment was to combine working with (further) education: 28.7%; only 5.2% of women cited this reason.

However, part-time work is not always a voluntary form of employment – some employees had simply not found a full-time position. This reason accounts, equally for both sexes, for roughly 9% of the part-time workers.

But the huge impact that care duties seem to have on the decision between part-time or full-time employment is still surpassed by another factor: education.

According to eurostat⁸, women with a low level of education seem to leave the labour market as soon as they become mothers, whereas women with a higher level of education stay economically active even if they have two, three or more children.

Additionally, it seems that part-time employment is only attractive for married mothers or mothers living in a partnership who can count on a husband's or partner's income. 63% of employed married mothers of children under the age of 15 were employed part-time in 2001, compared with only 54% of all employed mothers who were single parents (with children under the age of 15). Additionally, single mothers were more often economically active (showing an employment rate of 89%) than married mothers (73%).

Since care duties are one of the biggest hindrances to women entering the labour market, kindergartens and other child care institutions are an important aid.⁹

Presently (in the school-year 2005/06) there are 31 crèches in Burgenland which take care of a total of 472 children aged 0 to 2 years. Crèches are rather new in Burgenland, the first three having started in the year 1990/91 with 42 children. All in all, 13.4% of all children up to the age of 2 are looked after in crèches in Burgenland (Austrian average: 10.2%).

Kindergartens are much more common: 7,414 children were cared for in 186 institutions, which means 96.4% of all children aged 3 to 5 years. This figure is the highest compared with figures for all other provinces in Austria (Austrian average: 82.7%).

Schoolchildren are taken care of in after-school institutions (*Hort*) or in mixed-age childcare institutions¹⁰. In Burgenland there are 41 such institutions taking care of 299 children and 11 after-school institutions taking care of 291 children. In 2005, 5.2% of all children aged 6 to 9 years were looked after in one of the two forms of child care facilities. This figure is relatively low compared with the rest of Austria (Austrian average: 11.9%).

Traditionally, kindergartens are not primarily considered as day care centres but more as pedagogical institutions: 38.4% of all children in kindergartens have a mother who is not economically active. The other childcare institutions appear to be primarily an aid for working mothers: 23.7% of the mothers of children in crèches, 16.2% of the mothers of children in after-school institutions and 13.7% of the mothers of children in mixed-age childcare institutions are neither employed nor self-employed.

The same conclusion can be drawn from the number of children who have lunch at such childcare institutions: Almost all children in mixed-age childcare institutions (97.3%) and in after-school institutions (98.3%) as well as 75.6% of all children in crèches but only

44.1% of all children in kindergartens stay for lunch. (But of course this is also due to the fact that all institutions besides kindergartens offer lunch whereas almost a quarter of all kindergartens close before 2 o'clock p.m.)

72% of Burgenland's employees commute, yet only 38% of these are female.

Another problem for many women wishing to work in Burgenland is their lack of mobility. That lack of mobility is partly a result of their care duties, which result in their preference for part-time jobs: one cannot/does not want to spend too much time travelling for a 20 hour-per-week job; additionally, public transport infrastructure is poor and an extra car in many cases is too expensive (in relation to the income from a part-time job) and some simply do not have a driving license.

Consequently, the share of women among non-commuters equals that of men (49.3% versus 50.7%) but the share of women among commuters is lower than that of men (37.9% versus 62.1%). The further the job is away from one's home the lesser the share of women. Among the 41,680 people who commute to another province (a third of all those in paid employment) only 33.6% are women.

Chart 3: Burgenland commuters in 2001.

	women	men	total
gainfully employed	50,333	71,884	122,217
non-commuters	49.3%	50.7%	34,746
commuters	37.9%	62.1%	87,471
to another village	42.8%	57.2%	27,388
to another district	41.1%	58.9%	17,547
to another province	33.6%	66.4%	41,680
abroad	31.1%	68.9%	856

Almost 80% of working women are employed in the tertiary sector.

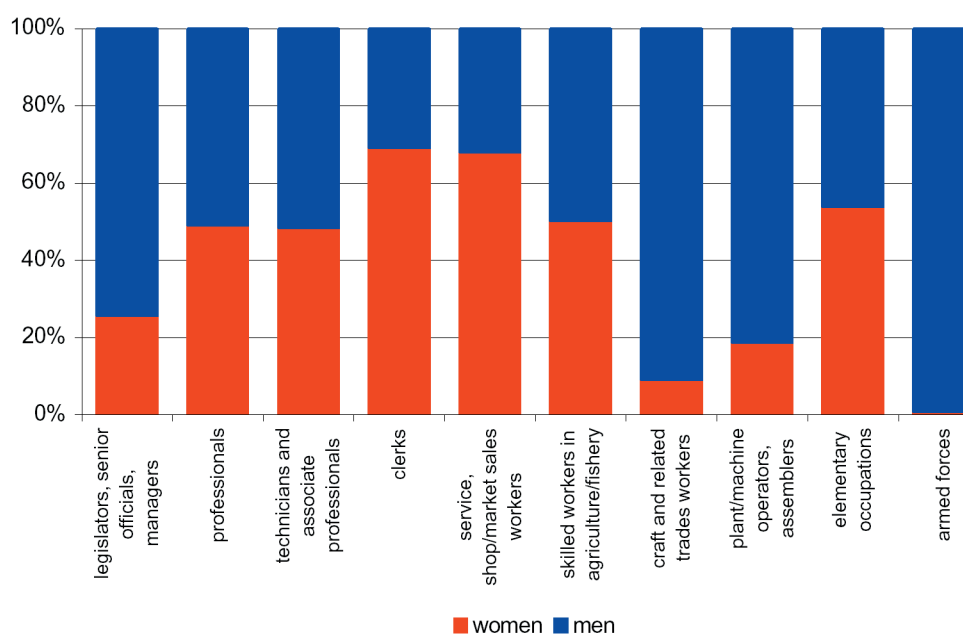
In addition to the difference in hours spent in paid employment, there are other differences between positions predominately held by women and men respectively. As already demonstrated regarding education, there is also a horizontal segregation regarding the labour market.

In the last 30 years, the significance of agriculture and forestry declined sharply: In 1971, 27% of all those in paid employment worked in this sector, in 2001 this sector only accounted for c. 5%. By contrast, the service sector comprised in 1971 29% of all those in paid employment, in 2001, this figure was already 65%. The rise of the service sector is mainly due to the increased employment of women who seek and find work in this sector.

But as already mentioned concerning education, women are very selective and tend to choose only among a narrow range of possible jobs.

According to ISCO-88 (International Standard Classification of Occupations), there are 10 major groups, 28 sub-major groups, 116 minor groups and 390 unit groups among the occupations. Regarding the 10 major groups, the preference of women for service occupations is obvious. Regarding the 28 sub-major groups, the dominance of women in certain fields of occupation is even more striking.

Table 8: Economically active women and men by occupation groups (ISCO-88) 2001.



Not surprisingly, women make up only 25.7% of legislators, senior officials and managers. The share of women among professionals is 49.0% but only a few of these are engineers (13.1%) or medical doctors (38.5%); the majority of them are university-educated teachers (64.4% of whom are female). Also among technicians and associate professionals, women represent almost half of employees (48.3%), but only a few are physical and engineering science associate professionals (14.5%) whereas women form the majority of life science and health associate professionals (81.3%) and of teaching associate professionals (78.2%). The near-balance between the sexes among elementary occupations results from a high share of women among sales and services elementary occupations (75.9%) in contrast to a low share among labourers in mining, construction, manufacturing and transport (28.5%). Naturally, given the structure of military service in Austria, the share of women among those serving in the armed forces is insignificant (0.8%).

97.8% of the 2,508 people who received parental leave payments in the year 2004 (who are also counted among those in paid employment) were women, only 56 persons (2.2%) were men.

Income

A total of 183,780 pay slips were processed by the fiscal authorities in Burgenland in 2003. Of those, 63% belonged to employees and 37% belonged to retirees. The average gross yearly income of a male employee was 66.1% higher than that of a female employee, and the average gross yearly income of a male retiree was 70.8% higher than that of a female retiree. The difference in net yearly incomes was a little less compared with the gross yearly incomes, because low incomes are taxed at a lower rate.

Chart 4: Average yearly revenues 2003 – all pay slips (Burgenland).

	employees (all)		retirees (all)	
	gross	net	gross	net
men gain ...% more than women	66.1%	56.0%	70.8%	57.9%
women gain ...% less than men	39.8%	35.9%	41.5%	36.7%

These figures are put into perspective by the above-mentioned fact that more women than men are employed on a part-time basis and therefore have lower incomes, which result in lower pensions. But if only incomes of women and men who are employed full-time throughout the whole year are compared, male employees' gross yearly incomes are still 44.9% higher, and male retirees' gross yearly incomes are 70.5% higher. The bigger difference between the sexes regarding employees and retirees is due to the fact that many women only receive a substitute pension as a widow.

Chart 5: Average yearly revenues 2003 – only full-time and all-year contracts (Burgenland).

	employees (full-time + all year)		retirees (all year)	
	gross	net	gross	net
men gain ...% more than women	44.9%	38.2%	70.5%	57.6%
women gain ...% less than men	31.0%	27.6%	41.3%	36.5%

The least difference regarding the average gross yearly incomes of female and male employees is found among public servants (women earn 11% less than men). Female labourers and clerical workers receive about half of the income of their male colleagues.

Generally speaking, incomes in Austria as a whole are higher than those in Burgenland – with the exception of labourers, where women in Burgenland earn 2.1% more than their colleagues in Austria as a whole and men in Burgenland earn 6.6% more.

Political Participation

Although, as stated in the first chapter, women make up more than half of the population of Burgenland, their representation in political bodies and functions is much lower.

On the provincial level, two out of seven representatives of the government of Burgenland are women, which means a share of 29%. Among the 36 members of the parliament of Burgenland one-quarter is female (nine women).

On the community level, women participate even less frequently. Six out of the 171 mayors in Burgenland are female, which means a share of 3.5%. In the community councils, women make up 16% of all representatives (485 out of 3,051).

On the national level, women from Burgenland are rarely found as representatives as well. Three of the seven members of the Austrian national council (parliament) who come from Burgenland are women, but none of the three members of the Austrian federal council who come from Burgenland are female. (All in all, 28% of the 183 members of the national council and one-quarter of the 63 members of the federal council are female.)

After the Second World War, there was not a single woman in the government of Burgenland until the late 1980s. During the legislative periods 1987-1991 and 1991-1994, Christa Krammer from the Social Democrats was the first and only woman. During the following legislative periods 1994-1996 and 1996-2000, Christa Prets, also from the Social Democrats, was the only woman in the government. Since 2000, Verena Dunst (Social Democrats) acts as a member of the government of Burgenland. She has gained a female colleague since May 2004: Michaela Resetar from the Christian Democrats. After the elections on 9 October 2005, both women again became members of the government.

The first woman in the parliament of Burgenland after the Second World War, Hilde Borik, was in office only for one year (1945-1946). After her resignation, there was no woman until the legislative period 1960-1963. A significant rise in the share of women in the Burgenland parliament was seen in the legislative period from 1977-1982, when five women were appointed members of parliament. There were also five women during 1982-1987, but from 1987-1991 there were again only two. During 1996-2000 and 2000-2005

there were seven women in the parliament, on 9 October 2005, nine women were elected members of parliament.

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Endnotes

1 The text of the 'Introduction' is taken largely from: Lang, Alfred/Polsterer, Andreas: Burgenland. From the Periphery to the Centre of Europe in Lang, Alfred/Ehlers, Nicole/van Kempen, Lenny (ed.): Education across Borders, Eisenstadt 2005

2 The text of the chapter 'Demography' is taken largely from: Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft (ed.): 'frauenbasisdaten', Eisenstadt 2005, pages 6 – 9.

3 Unless otherwise noted, all figures in this and the following chapters – and especially the figures used for charts and in tables – are the result from the most recent census and therefore refer to the year 2001. The figures were published in: Statistik Austria (ed.): Volkszählung 2001. Hauptergebnisse I Burgenland, Wien 2002 and Statistik Austria (ed.): Volkszählung 2001. Hauptergebnisse II Burgenland, Wien 2004

4 The text of the chapter 'Education' is taken largely from: Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft (ed.): 'frauenbasisdaten', Eisenstadt 2005, pages 10 – 13.

5 In Austria, teachers for compulsory schools are trained at special academies (*Pädagogische Akademien/Pädagogische Hochschulen*), only teachers for secondary schools need a university degree.

6 <http://europa.eu/index.en>, Lisbon Council 23 and 24 March 2000

7 Statistik Austria (ed.): Arbeitszeitorganisation und Arbeitszeitgestaltung. Modul der Arbeitskräfteerhebung 2. Quartal 2004, Wien 2005

8 European Labour Force Survey 2003, published by: eurostat (ed.)/Aliaga, Christel (author): Gender gaps in the reconciliation between work and family life, April 2005

9 Most figures regarding child care facilities in the Burgenland are taken from: Statistik Austria (ed.): Kindertagesheimstatistik 2005/2006, Wien 2006. Additional information is taken from: Statistikreferat Land Burgenland, Europaplatz 1, 7000 Eisenstadt

10 Mixed-age childcare institutions are kindergartens which also take care of schoolchildren in the afternoon.

Framing 'Equality' in Austrian Gender Equality Policies – A Case of Gender Mainstreaming? Results from the MAGEEQ-Project¹

Karin Tertinegg

MAGEEQ is an international research project funded by the European Commission that attempts to analyse the meaning of gender equality in policies across Europe and the level of the European Union. The starting point was the assumption that there exists a vast variety of meanings of gender equality and that this fact can be expected to have impact on Gender Mainstreaming efforts across Europe.

Participating countries are Austria, the Netherlands, Greece, Spain, and two recent EU member states, Slovenia and Hungary. Using and further developing 'critical frame analysis' as a method, the project looks at policy texts in three policy fields in all countries. These three common issues are considered as crucial areas for gender equality policies, as they can be expected to be explicitly about gender and gender relations. These issues are family policy/reconciliation, domestic violence against women, and gender inequality in politics. Additionally, each country selected one specific issue of importance within its own national context to be analysed. For Austria and Slovenia, this issue is prostitution.

To analyse these policy fields, the project relied on and further developed frame analysis as a methodology. By using a set of 'sensitising questions', the policy documents were analysed according to a standardised set of questions in relation to different dimensions of gender in policies. The main structure comprises a diagnostic part and a prognostic part. The rationale behind this structure is the assumption that policy texts are supposed to identify something that is problematic and to propose strategies to solve the problem that was identified. In addition, we used the elements of 'roles in diagnosis and prognosis' to look at who is given a role, 'voice' to look at the speaker and 'balance' to look at the balance in diagnosis and prognosis.

We analysed policy texts by asking, for example: 'Who is speaking?'; 'What is the problem?'; 'Who is the problem holder?'; 'Who is responsible for the problem?'. Similarly, in the prognostic part, we asked: 'What is the suggested solution?'; 'Who should do something to solve the problem?'; 'Who is the target group for the suggested solutions?'. In both diagnosis and prognosis, we also asked how gender appears in these texts. Does it appear merely as a social category, as men and women? Does it appear as behaviour, identity, as something related to norms and symbols? Is gender the only inequality addressed in the text, or are other inequalities mentioned, such as class, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation and age?

Asking these questions resulted in identifying frames on gender equality in these issues. For the sake of our analysis, a frame is defined as an 'organising principle that transforms fragmentary or incidental information into a structured and meaningful policy problem, in which a solution is implicitly or explicitly enclosed'. By analysing the dimensions of the policy texts according to a set of standardised questions, the methodology allowed us to detect frames as entities and to compare them with each other, across countries and across a time-line.

Results for Austria

A broad outline of the results in each of the three common issues of family policy, domestic violence and gender inequality in politics can be made.² I will try to point to some of the most interesting findings for frames and shifts of frames in each issue. Special attention will be given to family policy, as it can be shown that the shifts occurring in frames in this field can to a great extent also be detected in the other issues. The findings are structured according to the following questions: What is the problem?; Who has a problem?; What should be done to solve the problem?; Who should do something?; Is gender equality a concern for policy makers?

Family Policy

What is the problem? – Labour market participation of women? Founding a family and caring for children? Although the frame on 'reconciliation of work and family life', which we found to be hegemonic in Austria until 1999/2000, stressed the importance of labour market participation of women, a more equal sharing of family and care work between men and women was continuously part of this frame. This emphasis was not only found in parliamentary debates and party programmes, but also reflected continuously in media articles at the time. By 1999, the discourse took on quite divergent concepts in the election campaigns and in the new governmental coalition's plans.

After 1999/2000, there is a major shift as a clear focus on the family emerges in the framing. The dual-breadwinner-model, in the new frame, is modified as a model of one (male) main breadwinner, with another (female) additional contributor to family income. To stress the fact that women are mainly regarded as 'additional income earners', it is held that they may feel 'forced' to work since the income of the main – male – breadwinner is no longer sufficient for an entire family. Implicitly, women are seen as preferring to – or, as expected to prefer to – care for their children at home, only choosing gainful employment if they are 'forced' by economic restraints to do so. The 'force' of having to (re)enter gainful employment is contrasted to the argument of 'choice between work and family'. In this new frame, the economy has an ambivalent position. The negative depiction of economy (economic restraints forcing women to leave the family) is opposed to the positive depiction of family in economic terms: family as 'enterprise' (Government Program-

me 2003). Businesses are also called upon to create a more family-friendly world of work. In this frame, the economy is thus depicted as both negative (danger to families), positive (role model for socialisation), and responsible for providing family-friendly conditions.

These highly contradictory frames are all part of the shift of meanings in 'reconciliation' frames that has occurred. The original meaning of facilitating women's labour market participation and changing the unequal gender division of labour has shifted to encompass a value frame with respect to founding a family, caring for a family, and a gendered prioritising of family over gainful employment. This is linked to a demographic aspect of an ageing society and a decline in the birth rate.

What should be done? – Producing more national citizens? After 1999/2000, a new focus on family emerged in Austria: 'domestic work' was now to be 'valued equally to waged labour'; 'reconciliation' was contrasted to the concept of 'choice (of women) between work and family life'. 'Family' was de-gendered and the question of having children was politicised. In such a frame, the family is the centre of a good and prosperous Austrian society, and an ideal place to provide for a child's needs. The pre-modern, multi-child farmer's family is presented as a response to the perceived danger of 'erosion of families' caused by globalisation, modernisation and individualisation. Financial benefits are seen as stimulants for young people to give birth to more children, and for women in particular to give up employment and care for their children themselves. A demographic aspect is stressed: Austria is presented as a 'dying nation', in need of more (Austrian) children in order to keep up the pension and welfare system. Women now constitute a homogenous group of persons who are best capable to perform caring tasks within families. The importance of 'founding' a family, for women to perform care work within that family and to value this work equally to waged labour are central to the frame which we found to have become hegemonic after 2000. Men are seen as the (main) breadwinners, who, individually, should try to be more active fathers.

In contradiction to the focus on family as sanctuary, there is a simultaneous neo-liberal frame of 'choice' and a dual-breadwinner model. As for 'freedom of choice', 'reconciling work and family life' in the frame of the conservative parties takes on a strong, and contradictory, value frame: favouring – thus: 'choosing' – family and family work seems to be the normative priority, particularly for women. A re-traditionalisation of gender relations in family policy since 2000 is visible.

Where is gender equality in gender family policies? The family as a site of gender inequality or as related to gender equality questions has been barely mentioned in Austria, other than appeals to individuals to change their behaviour (calling for men to be 'more active fathers'). There are no references to Gender Mainstreaming. The family is seen as society's basic unit, as a sanctuary providing children with everything they need, in contrast to

public childcare which is seen as of lesser quality. Sharing responsibility for childcare between women and men is viewed as desirable, but only in the sense of appealing to men to change their roles as fathers and help women with childcare. This goes along with a call for more fathers' rights in the case of divorces.

In Austria a 'reconciliation' frame was strong in the mid-1990s, but by the onset of the new century there has been a parallel re-traditionalisation of gender relations (such as assigning a primary and 'natural' responsibility of women for care work), along with an individualisation of gender structures. The individual behaviour of young people, and (implicitly) particularly of young women, such as decisions on whether or not to have children, and at which age to give birth, is now seen as responsible for the 'demographic time-bomb'. While gender is de-articulated, the generation issue is politicised: reference is made to the ageing society and difficulties in maintaining the pension and welfare system. The young generation is blamed for not fulfilling the duties assigned to them by the 'generation contract'. Such framing can be seen as rather strengthening the role of women as primary care givers by now suggesting that society 'values care work equally' to gainful employment. It does not challenge the traditional division of labour nor attempt to put a more equal distribution of care work between men and women on the agenda, other than a weak appeal to change individual men's behaviour and assigning responsibility to 'the economy' in order to create a more 'family-friendly world of work'.

Conclusions

Our analysis shows shifts in the frames on 'reconciliation of work and family life' in Austria during the period 1995-2002. These shifts occur along changing (hegemonic) discourses attributed to political power balances (changes of government). These shifts do not occur along an even line without contradictions; the frames rather add conflicting or even divergent meanings. A gender equality perspective in the sense of a more equal sharing of family responsibilities between men and women was weakened between 1995 and 2003; in its place, a de-gendered frame focusing on the family/children as the smallest important cell of society has emerged.

Gender equality has become de-articulated as a goal. In such framing, the family is a de-gendered place of important socialisation and tasks for society, and there is a naturalisation of women and men and a re-traditionalisation of the distribution of labour. Even in the frames of the parties of the left after 2000, female gainful employment is not stressed as much as it was before 2000; rather, 'reconciliation' of work and family life for women is stressed. Austrian 'reconciliation' frames changed the original meaning of 'sharing responsibilities between men and women' to a value frame of founding a family and caring for family members, with a tendency to hold women responsible for the decline of families and birth rates where that value frame is particularly strong. A loss of potential for changing gender relations is apparent. This new frame seems to carry rather contradictory

goals: women are to be both primarily responsible for family care and domestic work – and, at the same time, be available for flexible forms of labour – because of their roles as caregivers. 'Choice' between family and work then is a metaphor for market-oriented flexibilisation: on the one hand, the new frame identifies women's (full-time) labour-market participation as a potential danger for the family-as-sanctuary; on the other hand, it is seen as inevitable that women must contribute to family income by preferably flexible part-time work.

Domestic Violence

What's the problem? – Violence against women? Domestic violence in families? Frames on domestic violence in Austria changed markedly during the period 1996-2003. Especially in parliamentary debates, the focus shifts from frames on violence against women to a de-gendered frame of domestic violence or family violence. Before 1999, the emphasis is on violence as committed against women and on women's right to bodily integrity and protection from violence in intimate relationships. After 1999, the integrity of the family is now at the centre of the attention. The family is seen as threatened by many things, and violence is identified as one of them. Women may happen to be the victims in this frame, but it may as well be any other family member. Domestic violence now should be punished and prevented, not so much because it affects women, but because it causes damage to the family as a degendered entity and as a sanctuary. Domestic violence is now seen as something that might cause 'erosion' of families. Also, the issue of child abuse is put much more to the centre of frames than before 1999.

What should be done? – Send perpetrators away? Or not interfere with people's privacy? In the early parliamentary debates on domestic violence, a frame was found that sees men as victims: if they are sent away by the police after committing violence at home, they may end up homeless or even without work if their home is also their place of work. This frame was used by FPÖ parliamentary deputies and was not found again after 1997. But the concern for protection of the private sphere against state intervention can be found throughout the period studied in the argument that state intervention must carefully consider if it is really necessary to intrude into the privacy, property and ownership rights of its citizens. Implicitly, these citizens are male perpetrators being violent against women. This frame is more frequently referred to, mainly by male FPÖ politicians. The FPÖ women's section on the other hand calls for a more severe punishment of perpetrators in cases of domestic violence. In this frame, perpetrators are not referred to as men, but as genderless. Anyone could be a perpetrator, someone who becomes violent at home. If reasons for violence are given, it is mostly in the sense that perpetrators are sick or perverted individuals behaving badly. Reasons for violent behaviour may include drug or alcohol abuse or exposure to violence during childhood. Structural reasons for domestic violence are usually not given. A reference to gender violence is seldom made.

Is domestic violence perceived as an issue of gender equality? Apart from the early parliamentary debates, there is a general consensus that domestic violence should be punished. Most speakers locate domestic violence as the problem of individuals as family members: some individuals commit violence against some other individuals (who may happen to be women). Aggression by men and dependency of women are individualised. Power structures in society, unequal distribution of resources and unequal distribution of labour and care between men and women are rarely addressed in connection with domestic violence. If women are referred to as victims of domestic violence, it often happens in the sense of addressing women as powerless, helpless victims who are too weak to leave their violent spouse. In some cases, women are held responsible for the violence they are subjected to: if they were stronger and not so weak, they could leave their spouse and end the violence. When a connection to unequal distribution of labour between men and women is made, the emphasis is on women who are not financially independent from their spouse. There is no reference made to Gender Mainstreaming. In general, domestic violence is not perceived as an issue of citizenship or democracy, either.

Gender Inequality in Politics

Whose issue? Generally, only women are found as speakers on the issue of unequal representation of women in politics. Men are not participating in the discussion.

What's the problem? Most frequently, gender inequality in politics is framed as an issue of under-representation of women in the world of politics. The actual number of women in politics is too low, and should be raised. The assumption here is that if the number of women is raised, the problem is entirely solved and no more action is needed. But while most speakers share the view that there are too few women in politics, diagnosis usually is hardly elaborated any further than stating that there are too few women in politics. Reasons for the under-representation are usually not given. In parliamentary debates, there is no reference to politics as a male sphere of power or a sphere with strong male networks and traditions. Only in a few media articles is the issue framed as being about male-dominated structures in politics. If the problem is located with men, it is located in incorrect individual male behaviour and not in male structures in politics as a whole.

A slightly different accent can be seen in the frame that the problem is not that there are too few women in politics in general, but that there are too few competent women. This frame sees the reasons for under-representation of women being that women are not highly-qualified enough for a job in politics. The solution here is that women should become more qualified. If they become more qualified, there will be more women in politics. The structural reasons for under-representation are not mentioned, the problem is individualised. The accent here is on raising the number of competent women, and this is often used to argue against a women's quota: if a woman is qualified and competent

enough, she will not need quotas to get into politics. Quotas in this frame are seen as an aiding instrument – as 'crutches' – that helps women who are not qualified and competent enough to get into politics, and this is not seen as desirable. This frame was found frequently among FPÖ and ÖVP politicians. An interesting change of frames occurred in 2003, when ÖVP women adopted a strong frame in favour of quota.

Under-representation of women is never framed as a problem for democracy. It is framed in terms of inequality and unfairness, but the question of the quality of democracy is not raised in parliamentary debates. Only the Green party explicitly frame women's under-representation as being a problem for democracy. Usually, the problem is located in the organisation of labour, rarely in the organisation of citizenship. If the organisation of labour is referred to, it is in the sense that the unequal division of labour is a problem for female politicians who are mothers. FPÖ politicians in this respect refer to the concept of choice: women have the choice between a job in politics and the family. Women should be given better possibilities to choose between these two spheres, where politics are framed as a job just like any other. There is no reference to androcentric structures of politics.

Who is the problem holder? It is women who are seen as problem holders. Women are perceived as 'the other', as 'deficient', as 'lacking qualification, self-esteem and strength'. It is women who need to be supported or who need to become more qualified and self-assured themselves. Men do not appear as problem holders. Representation is always referred to as being under-representation of women and not overrepresentation of men in politics. Everyone agrees that there are too few women in politics, while no one sees the problem as that of too many men in politics. In the frame arguing that under-representation is due to a lack of women who are qualified or competent enough for political office, the qualification and competence of male politicians is never addressed. Similarly, men do not appear as target group or actors: they are not perceived as the one who should do something or as the ones who should be target group for proposed measures to solve the problem.

What should be done? – Should women be helped by quota, or should they help themselves? While there is a consensus that the solution should be to bring about a more equal representation of women and men in politics, speakers differ in what they see as the adequate means to get there. Quotas are controversial, but they are usually mentioned as the only non-individual strategy to increase the number of women in politics. Speakers who oppose quotas suggest that individual women themselves should see to it that they are better represented: by becoming more self-assured, by raising their qualification levels and competence. Connected to this is a difference frame: women are sometimes framed as naturally making a difference in politics. Women are described as being different merely because they are women. They are framed as having essentially womanly qualities such as commitment, ability to achieve consensus, a holistic approach to politics and a sense

for the practical. Women are also seen as automatically being in charge of women's issues and gender equality issues once they have entered politics. This sexual difference frame is applied by the FPÖ women's caucus and to a lesser extent by ÖVP politicians.

Where is gender equality in politics?

In the analysed documents, there is little reference to socially constructed gender roles and structural inequalities in politics. No reference is made to feminist research proposing measures to end inequality in politics. References to gender mainstreaming and EU policies are made, but these references are marked by a shift in time. During the mid-1990s, the Green party saw European Union legislation as an obstacle to gender equality policies in Austria. At the end of the 1990s, this changed with the new government coalition between ÖVP and FPÖ. Now the Green party and women's groups make reference to gender mainstreaming in order to argue for equal opportunity measures in politics in Austria. Diversity as part of European mainstreaming strategies is seen as problematic by one feminist actor, as it could lead to diminishing gender equality measures in the context of cutting state budgets.

Some Concluding Remarks for all Issues

Generally, women are seen as the ones who have a problem. Women are most often seen as the ones who should do something to solve the problem and as target groups for action. Men are often seen as the norm group and rarely seem to be the ones who have a problem, who should do something or who should be target groups.

A de-gendering of policies can be detected. In family policy, the focus shifts from gender equality towards a new priority on families, from women's labour market participation to the value question of founding a family, getting children and caring for them at home. In domestic violence, family as a de-gendered sanctuary takes the emphasis away from women's rights to bodily integrity. Gender inequality in politics is most often seen as a mere issue of sexual inequality, as a problem because the number of women in politics is too low. Reference to socially constructed roles, to structural inequalities are rarely made.

Gender structures are increasingly individualised. In all three analysed policy fields, the problem is mostly often located in individual behaviour. Individuals make the wrong choice (family policy), individuals sometimes become violent (domestic violence) and individuals lack competence and qualification (political participation).

Naturalisation and re-traditionalisation of men and women. Women are framed as weak, dependent and helpless (domestic violence), as being consensus oriented and having a sense for the practical (political participation) and as naturally able to best care for a child's needs (family policy). Particularly, gender roles in family policy are re-traditionalised

since 2000. Women are increasingly seen as primarily responsible ones for childcare and housework. Men are referred to as fully gainfully employed, as primary breadwinners.

Gender is de-politicised. Mostly, issues of concern for gender equality are not discussed in terms of citizenship and rights, but in terms of individual behaviour and labour. Socially constructed roles of women and men, structural inequalities between men and women and the question of unequal power relations were rarely found to be expressed in frames on the issues analysed.

Problems that concern gender equality are often seen as 'just a fact'. Usually, the question of responsibility or causality is not addressed: no-one seems to have caused the problem. No-one seems to be responsible for it. When responsibility is attributed, it is most often abstract entities such as society in general that are named.

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Endnotes

1 <http://www.mageeq.net>

2 Material that has been used for this presentation:

Birgit Sauer, Karin Tertinegg: Preliminary Country Study. Austria. Family Policy. Internal MAGEEQ report. IWM. 2004

Birgit Sauer, Karin Tertinegg: Preliminary Country Study. Austria. Domestic Violence. Internal MAGEEQ report. IWM. 2004

Birgit Sauer, Karin Tertinegg: Preliminary Country Study. Austria. Political Participation. Internal MAGEEQ report. IWM. 2004

Final Conference Bratislava, 22 May 2006

On 22 May 2006 the Final Conference of the POWER project took place at the festival room of the Comenius University Bratislava (Slovakia).

The approximately 40 participants and speakers were welcomed by Mariana Szapuová (Gender Studies Centre). After a short introduction to the project idea by Judith Jakowitsch (Research Society Burgenland) Anett Molnár (Women for the XXI. Century) reported on the project activities of the last two years. The morning session finished with the presentation of the comparative study 'Because Walls Cannot Talk ... They Safeguard the Perpetrators' by Erika Geser-Engleitner (University of Applied Sciences Vorarlberg).

After lunch, Dagmar Pollhammer (Domestic Abuse Intervention Centre Burgenland), Adriana Mesochoritsová and Zuzana Magurová (EsFem, Bratislava) as well as Anett Molnár (Women for the XXI. Century) presented on the legal situation regarding domestic violence in the three countries Austria, Hungary and Slovakia and discussed the perceptions of domestic violence in the respective populations. The Final Conference closed with speeches of Attila Benedek (expert to MEP Zita Gurmai) and Oľga Pietruchová (Slovak Women's Lobby) on the work of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and the European Women's Lobby.



Against Violence Against Women in Slovakia

Adriana Mesochoritisová

I am glad to have reconvened after such a long time and to have the chance to talk openly on such an important subject as violence against women. This paper presents only a short reflection on the theme of violence against women in Slovakia; more information is provided in the contribution of my colleague Zuzana Magurová.

My previous contribution ended by noting that many have criticised those of us campaigning on the issue, for not being patient enough, for wanting everything to happen too quickly even when change is happening step by step, and for being too critical.

I quoted Ann Jones's words: 'There is no valid reason for the change to be implemented slowly and painfully and only after thousands of other women are hurt or killed. Things will change, when people stop being indifferent. Things will change, when a great number of people follow certain principles and start to act based on those principles'.

Considering what has changed during the last year I regret to say that although some things have indeed changed, these are not changes for the better. In the period since our last meeting yet more women and children have died as a result of male violence. And many thousands of other women and children are still exposed to this threat and are living with the daily fact of violence.

The fact that every fourth a woman is exposed to violence in her own relationship no longer comes as a shock for many people. It seems that we have managed to raise public awareness but without achieving any practical changes as a consequence. After adopting a strategy that was not gender sensitive, the government took a further step with the National Action Plan for the elimination of violence against women. Such a move was long-awaited and we viewed this with high hopes that something would be done. However, the first sign that this would be an inadequate step came with the failure to invited any NGOs to participate in the creation of the Action Plan. And this despite the fact that many NGOs have played a major role in providing support for women victims of violence, and in prevention, and that they have a great deal of expertise in terms of finding solutions of these problems.

Worst of all is the fact that the Action Plan foresees even less measures than the Strategy contained, with the result that the opposite process has taken place to that which was hoped for: instead of the strategy outlining the framework and the Action Plan framing concrete solutions, the Action Plan provides less hope for action than the strategy had done.

Another cause for alarm is the fact that the government allocated no money from its budget for implementation, referring instead only to EU sources (which NGOs cannot obtain), and support for the tasks is only seen as coming from the budgets of individual ministries. It would appear that, as a result, the 'action' content of the plan is zero. Another important step was the disbanding of the only department, which worked in the field of gender equality – the Department of gender equality and anti-discrimination at the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of Slovakia. Of all days to do this, with heavy irony, the government chose International Women's Day, 8 March 2005 – indeed a nice present of the government to present to Slovakian women. The department was transformed into the Department of family and gender politics. At first glance, all seems well – finally we have a department, which contains in its name the word 'gender'. The problem is that when we look at this more deeply, we see that the affiliation of the gender issue to the family more than clearly indicates how our political representatives approach this subject. Only three of the people charged with running the department have any experience of this issue.

Of course, campaigning organisations reacted by protesting the moves and demanding a meeting with the Slovakian prime minister. We protested in front of the parliament building and received much media attention – for one day only. It is sad, but no-one is willing to listen to us any more.

I live in a country which is proud to be democratic, yet in our country there are still women and children exposed to violence, some of them dying from the impact of violence and in our democratic country, the government is looking on in silence.

In our democratic country, the government has still failed to provide Slovak translations of many basic international documents on human rights, meaning that the majority of the population doesn't even know what kind of human rights documents were adopted and ratified by their government. These people have been denied access to information that would provide them with protection via knowledge of whether their human rights are under threat. The idea of a 'society ignorant of human rights' is becoming a cliché. This is a dangerous situation, in which we demand real democracy without being aware how fragile the connection is between democracy and a meaningful approach to human rights.

Neglecting the dangers of such violence in terms of both damage to mental health and physical injury is shocking, and we should also be shocked by the general attitude of indifference, which may be understood but not excused. The political culture of the representatives of those in power has an impact on the whole culture of the nation. As long as the political elite fail to give a clear signal that they are not willing to tolerate the suffering of each fourth woman in Slovakia and don't begin to find solutions to the problematic of male violence, we have little hope that we will break down the unwillingness to act and the silence of ordinary citizens – both men and women.

The same indolence resulted in the failure of the last regional-level elections in Slovakia, where citizens as well as politicians were at fault. This indolence is not fatal, thank god: The indolence regarding the suffering of many women, however, can be just exactly that.

The question of what to do next remains: It is sometimes hard to see any answer, as there are so few activists and all are exhausted. Instead of this, I believe that with the help of women and men of the whole EU, we can have an effect on the indolence of democratic governments. We have to appeal to both the individual governments and also to representatives of the EU to break their silence and to allow women 'de facto' to enjoy their rights.

I believe that our hope lies in creating a network and transferring know-how and also in mutual help and support. I believe that a common European space will create a space for the wider protest of all of us to be heard and acted upon.

The sad thing is that we don't want very much. We only want to live without violence. We want the state to act upon its obligations in terms of the contract between the state and us as citizens, namely to protect us from any kind of attacks. In the absence of such protection, we shall have to learn to protect each other.

Adriana Mesochoritisová, *EsFem*, Bratislava (Slovakia)

Penal Aspects of Domestic Violence in Slovakia

Zuzana Magurová

The concepts of violence against women, gender-based violence or domestic violence are not codified in the Slovak legal system. No special legislation, such as a Violence Against Women Act, covers violence against women specifically. Cases of violence against women may be treated as a misdemeanour or criminal offence depending on the intensity and consequences of the conduct, and as such, they are considered either under the Act on Misdemeanours (Act no 372/1990 Coll. effective from 1 October 1990) or the Criminal Code (Act no 300/2005 Coll. effective from 1 January 2006).

It is striking that the crime of cruelty to animals became part of the former Criminal Code in 1991, but the crime of cruelty to ‘close persons’ – spouses, former spouses after divorce, intimate partners – only did so in 1999. Violent conduct was most often qualified in the Criminal Code as a violent act against an individual or a group of citizens, harm to health, the curtailment of personal freedom, blackmail, and so on.

An amendment made in the year 1999 to provision of § 215 of the former Criminal Code on cruelty to a person in care and custody represented a significant change within the penal system. Until this year, provision of § 215 only concerned violence against children and persons in care and custody (involving a child under 18 years, whether delivered into the care of the accused person following divorce or foster children or an adult person in the care of the accused person), and since 1 September 1999, it also concerned a ‘close person’, such as a spouse.

In cases of violence against women, it had been the case that there was no bodily harm as it is defined in the Criminal Code involved, (involving instead violence such as restraints upon personal freedom, invoking excessive fear or stress, economic dependency, and so on), and in some cases the bodily harm, whether intended or negligent, was considered a less serious criminal offence than abuse of a person in care or of a close person. Moreover, court procedures required a medical certificate confirming inability to work for a 7-day period, which was considered the most significant factor by the policemen when determining whether a criminal offence had in fact been committed. Despite this, there had been a number of judgements which stated that sick leave, although certainly an important criterion, should not be used as the only or the decisive criterion for bringing prosecutions (R II 1965).

Some provisions (especially § 163a of the former Criminal Code and § 49/d of the Act on Misdemeanours) continue to create problems concerning the judicial remedies available

to victims of violence against women. Both provisions established the right of the injured spouse (defined as either married or living in a form of cohabitation) to decide whether to agree to prosecution and whether prosecution could proceed. Consent that had been explicitly withheld could not be given again. Very often the injured spouse did not give consent and in the large majority of cases, the damaged spouse withheld consent fearing escalation of the violence actions by the perpetrator. Surveys of NGOs show that the intensity of domestic violence generally increases after victims reports the violence.

After the first campaign on combating violence against women, called '5th women', was organised by seven Slovak women's rights NGOs in the year 2001, they initiated and produced, in close co-operation with experts from legislative departments of the Ministry of Justice, drafts of amendments to legislation aimed at the elimination of violence against women. The author of this article was a member of the expert group working on the draft. The main objectives of the draft amendments were the following:

- 1) To achieve maximum effect through minimum amendments: The goal was not an extensive amendment, especially regarding the fact that the re-codification of the Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Code (finished in 2005 by adopting new codes), Civil Code and Civil Procedure Code were being prepared at this time. The focus was only on making the most necessary changes, in particular, the amendment to the Act on the Police Corps.
- 2) To stop violence at the moment of its highest intensity: It is generally accepted that violence against women occurs in a cycle (the phase of growing violence, the phase of an acute incident of violence, the 'honeymoon' phase and the phase of denial). The cycle is repeated periodically, tending to increase in terms of frequency and intensity. For that reason it is very important to interrupt and stop violence at the moment of the acute incident of violence, that is, when the victim faces most danger. This can be achieved through the immediate intervention by the police and the removal of the violent offender from the apartment or house. For this reason, the amendment to the Act on the Police Corps was considered to be crucial in enabling the police to act in that way. The aim of the draft amendment was to achieve a situation in which it is the offender, not the victim, who has to leave the house. The restrictive order prohibiting the offender from entering the house would not limit the offender's personal freedom or his work-related activities. Similar legislation has been adopted in Austria or Germany. However, this proposal was not accepted and in the year 2002 the amendments to the Criminal Code (effective from 1 September 2002), the Criminal Procedure Code (effective from 1 October 2002), the Act on Misdemeanours (effective from 1 October 2002), the Civil Code (effective from 1 January 2003) and the Civil Procedure Code (effective from 1 January 2003) were adopted.

As mentioned above, a definition of violence against women or gender-based violence is not contained in the Slovak legal system. The legislation – the Criminal Code or the Civil

Code – contains only the ‘gender neutral’ definition of a victim of violence as a ‘close person’. A close person is defined as a close blood-relative, sibling or spouse; other persons in a family or similar relationship are considered to be persons in a close relationship if harm done to either of them would reasonably be perceived by the other as his/her own harm.

Since 2002, this definition in the Criminal Code (§ 89/7) was amended for the purposes of offences mostly committed against women and the definitions of a ‘close person’ now includes not only a relative by blood, an adoptive parent, sibling and husband, but also a former spouse, partner, former partner, a parent of a couple’s child, as well as persons who reside or have resided in the same household with the offender.

After this amendment, violence against close persons – former wives, their children from previous marriages as well as against former partners started to be seen as a criminal act under § 215 of Criminal Code. This change was influenced by the general situation in Slovakia. After a divorce or break-up of a relationship, former spouses or former partners often remain living in the same household and a violent act committed under such circumstances is of the same nature as a violent act committed before the divorce or break-up of the relationship. At the same time, violent acts committed against former spouses and former partners have been included into the category of more serious criminal acts, similar to violent acts against a spouse or a partner.

Since the 1 October 2002, criminal procedure concerning the judicial remedies available to victims of violence has changed. Prior to this date, it was possible for the victim to withhold consent to prosecute the offender if the criminal act was committed against a close person. According to the amended provision of the Criminal Procedure Code in cases of violence against a group of citizens and against an individual, bodily injuries, limitation of personal freedom, extortion or rape committed against a person who is or was a spouse or partner of the offender at the time of the offence, the victim’s consent to prosecution is not required. A similar change was made in the Act on Minor Offences. Dealing with minor offences committed between close persons is an obligation of law enforcement authorities regardless of a victim’s consent, as is the case with other minor offences.

At the beginning of 2003, a new type of interim measure was introduced in the Civil Procedure Code, according to which an offender is not allowed to enter temporarily the residence of a close person or a person in care or custody if there is a reasonable suspicion that violence might be committed on that person by the offender. The deadline for issuing an interim measure is seven days. The purpose of this interim measure is to prevent the offender from staying in the same household in order to eliminate further violence and to achieve a situation in which it is the offender and not the victim who must leave the house temporarily

After the amendment of the Civil Code, since January 2003, if the spouse is violent, his/her right to use the estate or household may be limited or he/she may be deprived of his/her right to receive an alternative place of residence in case of cancellation of the joint rental agreement related to the household on the part of the injured party.

Last year, a new Criminal Code (Law 300/2005 Coll.) was adopted, which came into effect on 1 January 2006. The definition of a 'close person' included in the former Criminal Code (§ 89/7) was related to § 127/5 of the new Criminal Code: 'Under sections of Criminal Code § 189 – blackmail, § 199/2 – rape, § 200/2 – sexual violence, §201/2 – child sexual abuse, § 208 – cruelty against close persons or dependent persons and § 360 – assault, a close person includes not only a relative by blood, an adoptive parent, sibling and husband, but also a former spouse, partner, former partner, a parent of a couple's child, as well as persons who reside or have resided in the same household with the offender'.

The new Criminal Code also contains the same formulation of provisions concerning violence against a close person (former § 215) in § 208 Cruelty to a close person or a person in care or custody:

(1) Whoever is cruel to a close person or a person in his custody or care, causing physical or psychological suffering to such person mainly by (a) beating, kicking, punching, causing injuries and burns of any kind, humiliating, contemptuous treatment, stalking, making threats, exciting fear or stress, forcing into isolation, emotional blackmailing or any other behaviour jeopardising the person's physical or psychological health or limiting the person's safety, (b) groundless denying of food, rest or sleep, or denying of necessary personal care, clothing, hygiene, health care, housing, upbringing or education, (c) forcing the person to beg or to perform activities requiring excessive physical or psychological exhaustion regarding the age or health condition of the person, or to perform activities that may harm the person's health, (d) exposure to substances that may harm the person's health, or (e) groundless preventing of access to property that the person has a right to use shall be sentenced to 3 to 8 years of imprisonment.

(2) An offender shall be sentenced to between 7 and 15 years in prison if by committing an offence under subsection 1 (a) he/she caused serious harm to health or death, (b) because of peculiar inducement, (c) although he/she has been sentenced for such an offence in the last 24 months or has been sentenced for such an offence and released on parole, (d) if he/she has continued committing such an offence for a longer period, in a violent manner, threatens a person with violence or other serious injury, or abuses an emergency situation or the dependence of another person.

(3) An offender shall be sentenced to between 15 and 25 years of imprisonment, or an exceptional sentence if, by committing an offence under subsection 1, he/she caused a serious harm to health or death to several persons.

According to the NGOs who support the (female) victims of violence, the situation of victims seems no better than it was before the adoption of amendments of legislation in 2002. The implementation of penal legislation by some prosecutors, police officers and judges is not adequate. Their approach to victims reflects the prevailing public opinion that violence against women is an overestimated issue. Civil procedure legislation is also implemented by some judges inadequately. Courts in some cases have ignored psychological expert reports confirming that women have been victims of violence. The secondary victimisation of women by policemen, prosecutors, judges and lack of evidence is a problematic issue. Regulations in Civil Procedure Code are not adequate. The 7-day period stipulated for issuing an interim measure is a long time. It is necessary to adopt an amendment to the Act on the Police concerning the authorisation of police to prohibit access by the abuser to the house.

Action Plan on Violence Against Women

The national strategy proposal was prepared by the Department for Equal Opportunities and Anti-discrimination of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family in co-operation with NGO experts on violence against women. While the director of the Department for Equal Opportunities was on vacation, the Minister instructed officials within that department to change the text of the prepared proposal and to remove the parts dealing with gender issues of violence and prevention. This 'revised' draft did not reflect UN and CEDAW definitions of violence nor did it reflect a gender-aware approach. It also failed to mention several forms of violence such as trafficking in women and sexual exploitation and also European standards for crisis centres for female victims of violence. The draft was not focused only on women but also on children, disabled people and elderly people, leading many Slovak NGOs to object that a single strategy was not sufficient to offer protection to such different and specific groups. Although the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family cut short the consultation procedures, some objections submitted by NGOs were accepted and in November 2004, the National Strategy on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Families was adopted. The adoption of a 'non-gender sensitive' strategy of this kind led to the resignation of the Director of Department for Equal Opportunities and Anti-discrimination of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.

On 8 March 2005, the Department of Equal Opportunities and Anti-discrimination, which was established in 1999 by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, was abolished and transformed into the new Department on Family and Gender Policy. The Women's Lobby of Slovakia demanded that the government should create an independent body to enforce legislation on equal treatment with its own budget – the Governmental Representative for Gender Equality – and retain and strengthen the Department of Equal Opportunities and Anti-discrimination.

The National Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women was prepared by the new Department without any co-operation with NGOs and was adopted by the government during the parliamentary session on 24 August 2005. This document is a follow-up to the National Strategy for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women and Families and is the first 'governmental' material regarding the issue of violence against women.

Although the CEDAW definitions of violence were included in the final version of both documents, thanks to pressure from NGOs, these documents still fail to adequately respect gender sensitive attitudes and fail to include several forms of violence against women. The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Culture are charged with its implementation and the timeframe for implementation is 2005 to 2008. However, no budget has been allocated for its implementation, and the government is waiting for money from EU funds before further steps.

An expert group for the prevention and elimination of violence against women was created as part of the governmental council for the prevention of crime in October 2005. The group contains only three representatives of NGOs. Although the deadline for preparing specific standards and models for the professionals working with victims of violence against women was named as 31 May 2006, the expert group failed to hold a single meeting in the period leading up to this date.

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Domestic Violence in Austria

Dagmar Pollhammer

In Austria, the legal provision allowing the eviction of violent individuals from their homes for the purpose of protecting victims of domestic violence has been in existence for nine years and constitutes the core of the Law on Protection against Violence, which entered into force in May 1997.

There are three interrelated key elements of the Austrian Protection Against Violence Act. The Act provides for victims of domestic violence to receive comprehensive and complete protection against violence as well as extensive support and furthermore for victims to have the possibility of remaining in their own home. The three elements are (1) eviction and barring orders enforced by the police for a duration of 10 or 20 days, (2) longer-term protection by means of a protective temporary injunction under civil law and (3) victim support, violence prevention measures and co-ordination of intervention measures by establishing intervention centres.

Eviction and Barring Orders

If the police are called to undertake intervention in cases of domestic violence, they must assess the degree of danger involved. If it is judged that there exists a danger for life, health and liberty of a person, the police must immediately evict the perpetrator from the dwelling and prohibit the perpetrator from re-entering the dwelling and its surroundings for a period of 10 days. It is very important that this measure is not contingent on obtaining the consent of the victim, which could be counter-productive, given the great influence the perpetrator often exerts over the victim. The eviction of a perpetrator is a preventive measure and may be undertaken even where no act of actual violence has yet occurred.

If we consider the cycle of violence, it is vital that victims receive counselling and help immediately after a violent act has been carried out. Because of this, the police must inform the relevant Intervention Centre via fax or email about the eviction and barring order. Where under-aged children are involved, the Youth Welfare Department must also be informed.

Within the first three days after a barring order has been applied, the police must check compliance with the barring order. If the perpetrator violates the barring order, he can be removed from the dwelling and its surroundings by order and by the use of force, where necessary.

Temporary Injunction

During the 10 days of the barring order, the victim may apply for a temporary injunction from the Civil Law Courts, to extend the duration of the barring order enforced by the police to 20 days. Within this 20-day period, the Civil Law Court shall reach a decision on a temporary injunction, so that the protection afforded to the victim is uninterrupted. The temporary injunction from the Civil Law Court lasts for three months. If the victim intends to initiate divorce proceedings or proceedings to secure the dwelling, the duration of the temporary injunction is valid until these proceedings have been concluded. The temporary injunction can include a barring order for the home, the place of work, school and kindergarten of the children. Furthermore, it may be used to prohibit the perpetrator from having any contact with the victim. This temporary injunction can also be applied by the Youth Office for the protection of the children, and it is also possible to apply a temporary injunction without prior eviction of the perpetrator from the dwelling being carried out by the police.

Intervention Centres

The third element of the Protection Against Violence Act concerns the establishment of intervention centres in each Austrian province. 50% of the funding for these centres comes from the Federal Ministry of the Interior, and the other 50% is provided by the Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations. These intervention centres are operated as non-profit associations.

As mentioned above, the police inform the intervention centres about an eviction and barring order either by fax or by email. The intervention centres have a duty to contact the victims immediately and to support victims and their children in all matters concerning their protection and the securing of their rights. The intervention centres follow a proactive approach, meaning that rather than waiting for victims to contact them, they write letters or make phone calls to offer help. This is deemed necessary, because it is known that victims of domestic violence are reluctant to seek help from such an institution. Naturally, victims may decide freely whether they then wish to accept the help offered to them. One of the core tasks of the intervention centres is to assess the danger inherent in the situation and to plan safety measures together with the victims.

New Rights of Victims

In an amendment to the code of criminal procedure due to come into force on 1 January 2008, the rights of victims will be improved. A number of highly important changes involved in this amendment are due to be converted into law earlier than this date. These changes concern the psychological, social and legal support of victims in a criminal procedure setting, which entered into force on the 1 January 2006.

Victims of violence or sexual offences and close dependants of murdered people have the right to be accompanied during criminal procedures to make the experience of bringing charges easier for them and to help them to defend their rights. The psychological and social support on offer includes preparing the victims for the criminal procedure dealings and escorting them to the necessary examinations. Legal support consists of provision of legal advice and legal representation. The victims' support service is funded by the Federal Ministry of Justice and has authorised the intervention centres to offer psychological, social and legal support to victims of domestic violence.

Other rights of victims, due to enter into force on 1 January 2008 are (1) the right of victims to be treated with respect and dignity, (2) the right of victims with foreign mother-tongues to be provided with an interpreter and (3) improvement of teaching and information of victims about their rights.

Criminal Code 2006

The amendment of the Criminal Code 2006 includes two very significant changes concerning victims of domestic violence. **§ 107 StGB** punishes threats against the freedom, health and dignity or capital of a person. If a threat is expressed against the husband or other relatives who live in the same household, the prosecutor requires the authorisation of the victim to be allowed to prosecute the perpetrator. As mentioned above, this is counter-productive because the perpetrator often has great influence over a victim and may exert pressure on the victim not to authorise the prosecutor to act. The 2006 amendment of the Criminal Code has abolished this regulation. As of 1 July 2006, no difference is made between prosecuting threats of violence made against relatives and those made to unrelated persons.

Stalking is defined as insistent, malicious and repeated persecution and annoyance of a person. The aim of these acts is the injury of the affected person and this behaviour causes fear, mental anguish and panic. There are many different possible definitions of stalking behaviour. It may be that the stalker persecutes the victim with telephone calls, emails, giving unwanted presents, or by appearing at the person's home or workplace. In many cases, since stalkers manage to act within the law, that is, by refraining from carrying out any explicit threat or act of violence against the victims, a complaint made to the police is either not possible or not effective. There is currently little effective redress for victims of stalkers in Austria. Although victims of stalkers may apply for an injunction via the civil courts, this approach has little chance of success. On 1 July 2006, the so-called **Anti-Stalking Law** will enter in force aimed at dealing more effectively with this problem. The new development integrates a new paragraph within the Criminal Code. § 107a StGB concerns what is termed 'insistent persecution': (1) Whoever persecutes a person illegally and insistent shall be sentenced to up to one year of imprisonment. Insistent

persecution of a person is undertaken by somebody who affects the quality of life of another person in an in-acceptable way by continually (1) seeking the proximity of the person, (2) contacting him/her by telecommunication or by another forms of communication or by the use of a third person, (3) ordering goods or facilities involving the use of the person's personal details, (4) causing a third person to contact the victim by using personal details of the victim.

Additionally to the provisions in this new article in the criminal code, the victim has the possibility to apply for a long-term injunction via the civil courts. This includes (1) the prohibition against contacting the endangered person personally, by letter, telephone or in any other way, (2) the prohibition against the persecution of the endangered person, (3) the prohibition against staying at defined places, (4) prohibition against disclosure of personal details and photographs of the endangered person, (5) the prohibition against ordering goods or facilities in the name of the endangered person. This longer-term form of protection can be issued for up to one year.

This new paragraph has been criticised because it contains an exhaustive list of punishable behaviour by a stalker and there are many things that are simply not included. For example it is not clear whether persecuting someone by following him/her with a car, or by sending roses is covered under this article. Lastly, a further problem concerns the fact that there is little sympathy among the wider public or understanding of the frightening impact of such acts. As such, it remains to be seen what effect the new article will have and how the police, prosecutors and judges will act in the future as a result.

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