

HUNGARY

Beijing+10

Evaluation of the implementation of the UN World Congress on Women (Beijing, 1995) Platform for Action in Hungary

Part I: Review of achievements and obstacles in respect of gender equality and the provision of increased decision-making rights for women

Article 66 (1) of the Constitution prohibits discrimination between women and men the Republic of Hungary.

Act CXXV of 2003 on equal treatment and promotion of equal opportunities defined the concept of various types of discrimination, including discrimination based on gender, and includes a provision on its prohibition. With this Act the Republic of Hungary harmonised the directives of the European Union concerning equal opportunities for women and men.

Although legislation guarantees *de jure* equality of women and men, i.e., the right of both genders to equal treatment, there are still a lot of things to do before *de facto* equality is achieved.

This requires elimination of numerous forms of open (direct) and hidden (indirect) discrimination, as well as other positive measures that help establishing real equality.

The government has agreed to regularly evaluate the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and to review the results and make new initiatives in 2005 ten years after the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Results and challenges

The Act on “*Equal treatment and promotion of equal opportunities*” was adopted in 2003. In the Republic of Hungary the Constitution and other legal regulations state the prohibition of discrimination, yet the adoption of the new regulation is of outstanding importance. This Act provides that promotion of equal opportunities is primarily an obligation of the state with a declared purpose of providing effective legal protection to those suffering from discrimination. The Act allows for the enforcement of claims in the interest of the public, turns around the burden of proof in the case of violation of law and orders the establishment of a special authority proceeding in cases of violation of equal treatment from 2005. This Act constitutes harmonisation with the European Union Community legislation in this subject.

The first Minister without Portfolio for Equal Opportunities was appointed and the Government Office for Equal Opportunities was established in 2003.

There have been a lot of initiatives *to prevent violence against women and children too*. (See later.)

During the preparation for accession to the European Union, numerous large projects were launched to improve the situation of women:

“*The equal opportunities in the labour market*“ PHARE programme launched in 2002 is aimed at offering work opportunities for inactive women over the age of 40 in a disadvantaged situation in the labour market who intend to return to employment after caring for children or relatives.

The objectives of the programme include a study of good practices in EU Member States supporting integration and re-integration of women into the labour market, adaptation and implementation of such practices in Hungary, as well as support given to preparation for employment and self-employment and organisations executing employment schemes in the framework of pilot projects.

Hungary has been participating in the EU Community Action Programme under the title of *Equal opportunities for women and men* since 1998.

Hungary took part in the fourth action programme (1996-2000) with the following projects submitted in three successive years:

In the framework of the “*Know-how Transfer*” programme, the example of Irish and Austrian law enforcement in relation to equal opportunities assisted the activities of the Anti-discrimination Committee operating within the Ministry of Justice, promoting the best practice to Hungarian judicature.

“*Managing E-Quality*” was training on equal opportunities and family friendly approach for corporate managers, with long-term relations to the objectives of the Family-Friendly Workplace Project.

A conference was organised in September 2003 to promote the CEDAW Treaty and recommendations of CEDAW Committee and their Hungarian translations.

The annual **statistical pocket book** on the status of men and women, published by the government apparatus since 2000 helps to form social awareness and describe differences between women and men. (*Nők és férfiak helyzete Magyarországon 2000; 2001; 2002; 2003 – Situation of men and women in Hungary 2000, 2001 and 2002, 2003*)

Act L of 2003 on the National Civil Basic Programme was adopted in 2003. Under the Act, **civil organisations can apply for state support** to cover their operating expenses from 2004. Compared to the previous programme financing applications, it constitutes a significant progress to ensure viability of civil organisations.

Since 1997, taxpaying citizens can decide on the allocation of 1% of their tax, and they can offer it to civil organisations too. The state supports civil organisations from the budget doubling the amount collected in the form of personal income tax as described above. Regional and theme-based, so-called civil boards, democratically elected by civil organisations, decide on the allocation of support. No special women’s civil board has been established.

In 2000, Hungary prepared a consolidated 4th and 5th government report for the CEDAW Committee. This was the first occasion when the report was given wider publicity. In 2000, the report was compiled in co-operation of ministries and other institutions with nation-wide competence, involving various experts, and civil organisations were also invited to comment on the report. In 2001, the Hungarian Parliament ratified the Supplementary Protocol of CEDAW Treaty too.

The EU accession process had a very positive impact on the strengthening of the gender policy and approach in Hungary. The community policy on equal opportunities between women and men, which is considered part of the European common policy, has a very strong impact on the new Member States. Hungarian women representatives taking part in the work of the European Parliament as observers assisted common policy and common knowledge formation in the Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities and Social Committees with their interest representation activities and wide representation of the subject within Hungary.

Barriers and difficulties hindering the implementation of Beijing Platform for Action:

The "gender mainstreaming" strategy, a horizontal approach affecting specific policies has not been established in the public administration yet.

It is a progressive fact though that the general concept of equal opportunities is becoming widely known and spread among the public. The expression and concept of gender equality has not been spread widely yet.

The stereotypes of genders are changing very slowly in society. However, last year there was significant improvement in the awareness of the concept of equal opportunities in the Hungarian society. Equal opportunities for genders, as a part of the government policy, must be recognised by the people as an important tool of social integration.

Part II: Progress in the 12 critical areas defined in the Beijing Platform for Action and additional initiatives and measures identified in the 23rd extraordinary session of the UN General Assembly (Beijing+5)

1. Women and poverty

After the transformation in 1990, a considerable proportion of the Hungarian society sunk into poverty. Poor people include unemployed individuals, inactive women forced to leave the labour market and those who live on social support and other support from the central budget. In addition to the poverty of the oldest people, child poverty is also significant. Since there are many single parents raising children, mainly mothers, child's poverty is concentrated in these families coupled with women's poverty.

Hungary prepared a National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (2004-2006) in 2004 in co-operation with the Member States of the European Union to reduce poverty and social exclusion.

2. Women's education and training

In Hungary, the level of women's education is continuously rising, primarily among young women. The qualifications of women are higher than men in terms of school years. On the other hand, there are still stereotypes relating to traditional gender roles in various areas. The composition of women with higher qualifications is unfavourable. There are significantly fewer women with a university degree than women with a college degree. In scientific research, segregation in special areas and under-representation of women can both be observed.

A separate chapter of Act CXXV of 2003 on equal treatment and equal opportunities provides on education and training. According to the provisions of the Act, the requirement of equal treatment extends to all education, training and teaching activities which take place on the basis of requirements approved or specified by the state, and those for the organisation of which the state provides direct or indirect support.

An act or a government decree adopted on the basis of an authorisation involved in an act can provide on a mandatory requirement to give preference to a specific group of participants in training in relation to the training or education.

In terms of women's access to education, under Section 22 (1) of Government Decree No. 51/2002 (III. 26) on the fees and charges payable by university and college students and specific support available for them, women studying in paid courses of state-owned higher education institutions who receive state support on the first day of the given semester in relation to child birth or child raising, are exempted from the payment of education fees.

In higher education **gender studies** can be studied in Hungary, as an optional subject in Hungary in the framework of basic university training. The subject has developed in relation to particular scientific disciplines, because the institutional frameworks do not support and inter-disciplinary approach. There is no doctorate or PhD training on this subject in the Hungary. Women's science

centres operating in universities organise presentations and seminars, similarly to women's civil organisations offering training to various target groups. The level of institutionalisation and integration of women's science is low.

3. Women and health

By its resolution No. 46/2003. (IV. 16.) OGY the Parliament confirmed the **National Public Health Programme** outlining the tasks for the decade ahead, in order to improve the unfavourable health status of the Hungarian population. Both accepted ways to the accomplishment of a three year extension of life expectancy at birth, i.e. the improvement of the health status of citizens and the reduction of the frequency of the major illnesses, injuries and causes of mortality are included among the goals of the programme.

Promoting of primary prevention of the main causes of mortality and morbidity is an important objective. Special attention is paid to the following:

- Reduction of smoking,
- Prevention of alcohol and drug abuse,
- Spreading of healthy diet patterns and development of food safety,
- Promotion of physical exercise,
- Improvement of public health and prevention of epidemics,
- Creation of healthy physical environment.

In the course of the implementation of public health screening tests priority is attached to the following:

- Breast cancer screening: Mammography examinations of women once every two years between the ages of 45 and 65,
- Cervix screening, gynaecology examination of women between the ages of 25 and 65 at least once every three years, including cytology tests,
- Colon screening examination of women and men between the ages of 50 and 70 once every two years, based on identification by laboratory tests of blood hidden in faeces.

The goal of teaching young people about the *facts of life* is to prevent HIV/AIDS infection and to reduce the spreading of sexually transmitted disease. This **program** is aimed at increasing the **knowledge** of young people belonging to the 11-18 year generation about **matters of sex**, relationships between partners and marriage. The fight against the spreading of HIV/AIDS is focused primarily on screening high risk groups and drug users. To this end a bus has been equipped for the performance of HIV/AIDS screening tests, and it has been launched in practice.

One of the pillars of the concrete action plan is comprised of the installation of condom dispensing slot machines, the distribution of leaflets containing information about sexual matters and the provision of like consultancy at youth information and consultancy offices.

Under Act. CLIV of 1997 (Health Act) local governments provide a **district nurse service** in all settlements of the country under primary care. The district nurse services include the following

activities: protection of women, care for pregnant women, care for children aged 0-18, family care and public health tasks primarily in families under care. Family visits, and regular care for pregnant mothers and families with children represent an important part of district nurses' work. The district nurse service mainly intends to prevent, recognise and eliminate health, mental and social threats occurring in families subject to care. District nurses provide increased care for pregnant mothers in critical situations, propose social benefit for them and apply for accommodation in mothers' homes. During the family visits, district nurses also pay a lot of attention to identifying pregnant women who are not subject to medical care yet. District nurses inform families with children on the benefits available for them and provide assistance for their use. They participate in the mobilisation of the resources of families and individuals in a crisis, and try and find mental support. If necessary, they also propose child protection measures.

District nurses also participate in the education of children and young people in preparation for family life as well and they play an important role in the reduction of the number of abortions.

The Health Act also created the **status of a representative of patients' rights**. This representative protects the rights of patients in each health institution and assists them in studying and enforcing their rights.

Act XLII was adopted in 1999, on the **protection of non-smokers** and rules of distribution of tobacco products. Under the Act, a warning must be attached to each tobacco product in order to protect health (for example, *'Smoking of pregnant mothers damages their foetus's health'*).

Since the transformation, the health reform has always been one of the government's priority objectives, but its implementation method has always been subject to disputes within the society. In view of the fact that the health conditions of the Hungarian population are very unfavourable in international comparison too, the development of health care must remain one of the priorities.

In 2002, the Government adopted a resolution (Government Resolution No. 1036/2002 (IV. 12) Korm.) on the government tasks related to the implementation of short and medium-term objectives of the national strategic programme aimed at the **reduction of the drugs problem**. The resolution devotes outstanding attention to pregnant mothers and drug addict babies, launching special programmes for them.

Since 1999, the **National Women's Sports Festival** has been organised annually and more and more sports days have been held for women.

The **situation of women in sports** was used as a topic of a conference in the autumn of 2000 for the first time. The closing declaration of the conference accepted recommendations, and defined the directions of development in the area.

4. Violence against women

There have been a lot of initiatives in order to prevent violence against women and children.

Since the amendment of the Criminal Code in 1997, **forced intercourse and act of indecency is an activity subject to punishment even during marriage.**

Act XXXI of 1997 on the protection of children. and guardian administration (*hereinafter Guardianship Act*) regulates the operation of institutions where **domestic violence** can be placed jointly in Temporary Family Homes under the title of temporary care of children under primary child welfare services.

Temporary care of children must be provided in all settlements or it must be made available in institutions operating the service in another settlement based on a service contract. Provision of temporary care for children is the responsibility of local government, while institutions may be run by the state or civil organisations.

The child welfare service, competent according to the parent's place of residence, must be informed on the temporary care of children or joint placement of a child and parent, as one of the statutory tasks of the child welfare service is to provide care for children exposed to threats, and promote finding a solution for family conflicts and crises. The social worker of the child welfare services and the temporary family home placing the mother and child co-operate in the management of the family crisis, and elimination of physical injuries, causes and situations leading to violence within the family during the term of accommodation. However, there are still no women's shelters for women and mothers who are physically hurt.

The Minister of the Interior has issued No. 34/2002 BM Directive concerning the tasks required for the enhancement of the effectiveness of the measures aimed at protecting victims of crime - particularly victims of intra-family violence - on the basis of which No. 13/2003 measure has been introduced at the National Police Headquarters, which will guarantee that police operations in relation to intra-family violence is carried out in a 'pro-active' approach, in a victim-oriented manner and in line with the expectation of society as well as that the duties of the police are performed in a harmonised approach.

To this end as well as to ensure that citizens, victims, witnesses and volunteers - even criminals - encounter efficient and effective, proper measures, services and assistance, there is a definite need for training and for the improvement of the qualifications of professionals concerned.

Accordingly, a training programme combined with social skills development was launched in April 2004 for active police officers - organised by the MoI Crime Prevention Academy - with experts of the Academy, the National Crime Prevention Headquarters and the NANE (women for women against violence) Association working jointly as instructors.

A Crisis Centre, (telephone) Blue Line, a Telephone Witness system has been set up along with an aid phone line service operated by NANE Association.

Model programmes were launched in 2000 **to prevent violence**: physicians, lawyers, social workers and victim protection officers were trained on the subject of violence within families and human trade.

Two training courses were organised in co-operation with the National Police Headquarters (April 2000 and March 2002) for victim protection officers and representatives of civil organisations on the subject of actions against women's trade and forced prostitution.

Parliament adopted **Resolution No. 45/2003 (IV. 23) OGY on the development of a national strategy to prevent and effectively manage domestic violence**. The resolution rejects all forms of violence within families, including verbal abuse too. It highlights the priority of protection of human rights, to which everyone is entitled, stating that violence within families cannot be considered a private matter. The resolution expresses the recognition that a national strategy has to be developed in order to prevent violence within families. The resolution states that the activities of social institutions are absolutely necessary in terms of prevention, victim assistance and education, and calls for co-operation between public and social organisations.

The draft Law on Restraining Measures applicable due to violence within families was prepared on the basis of these assumptions. This draft bill will soon be discussed in Parliament. The draft bill highlights that the most frequent victims of violence within families are women and children.

The draft bill relates to Parliament Resolution No. 115/2003 (X.28) OGY on the National Strategy of Social Crime Prevention. The Government accepted a resolution on the government tasks related to the implementation of short, medium and long-term objectives of the National Strategy of Social Crime Prevention (Government Resolution No. 1009/2004 (II. 26) Korm.). One of the five priorities of the Crime Prevention Strategy is prevention of domestic violence.

The first **pilot crisis management centre** was opened in Budapest in December 2003. It provides assistance for people hurt through a telephone number which can be called free of charge. It provides complex services especially for victims in crisis of violence within families (women and children) on the phone and in person too (legal, social, psychological aspects). The centre collects data for methodology purposes based on the cases handled by it in order to prevent people becoming victims, manage the victims' situation and develop the legislative background. The centre also actively participates in the training of experts working in institutions and authorities proceeding in relation to the victims, including also inter-institutional training activities.

In 2003, **the chief of the national police headquarters introduced a measure for the implementation of police tasks relating to management of violence within families and protection of children**. The police departed from the approach that violence within families was a private matter and the police would not intervene until a tragedy happened. The police chief's standard provides methodology guidelines for managing the phenomenon within the police, the police conduct to be applied as well as co-operation of state and civil organisations assisting the victims.

In spring 2004, the ministry involved in the subject and the National Police Headquarters conducted a joint **campaign in the media** and mass publications **against domestic violence**.

The Hungarian Criminal Code orders punishment for all types of *sexual exploitation of children*. In order to protect children, the Criminal Code has been supplemented with a new provision concerning “Prohibited pornographic recording” as a result of the amendments adopted in 1997. Under the new regulations which entered into force on 1 April 2002, the legal fact changed compared to the previous situation and now even obtaining and keeping of pornographic records of children constitutes a criminal act. The transformation of new types of criminal conducts into a criminal fact was justified with the expectations stated in Article 9 of the Council of Europe Treaty on “Computer technology crime” signed in Budapest on 23 November 2001.

In addition, Hungary also signed the 2nd Supplementary Protocol of UN Children’s Rights Treaty.

A separate category of criminal act - **human trafficking** - (Article 175/B of the Criminal Code) was established in 1998, the relevant provisions have been in effect since 1 March 1999 trafficking in human beings.

An **amendment to the description of the category of the criminal act of human trafficking** entered into force on 1 April 2002, in accordance with the requirements specified in the Supplementary Protocol to the Palermo Treaty of the UN concerning the prevention, repression and sanctioning of human trafficking, particularly the trafficking of women and children. EU norms were introduced in the Hungarian legal regulations in line with the law approximation obligation, including *inter alia* the Council Frame Decision No. 629 of 2002 on action against human trafficking which entered into force on 1 August 2004.

Act LXXXV of 2001 on the protection of participants of criminal proceedings, those assisting prosecution enables provision for victims of human trafficking as well.

The latest amendment to the provisions concerning the criminal category of **human trafficking** was introduced by **act CXXI of 2001**. The amendment was necessitated by the requirements laid out in the Supplementary Protocol - to the UN Treaty against cross-border organised crime - concerning the prevention, repression and sanctioning of human trafficking, particularly the **trafficking in women and children**, for this international document called for the introduction of sanctions against criminal behaviours that had not been punishable beforehand. Accordingly, the Act expanded the range of the relevant forms of criminal behaviour and modes of criminal acts (Article 175/B of the Criminal Code.)

The amendment to Act XIX of 1998 on Criminal Proceedings also entailed a variety of progressive steps. The catalogue of the rights of victims was supplemented with the institution of **substitute civil action** and progress was accomplished in the field of the **protection of witnesses**. A separate piece of legislation was introduced on the Protection Programme, there is now a possibility for hearing witnesses via closed circuit telecommunication networks etc. Pursuant to the rules on the protection of the injured party it is now possible for such public service organisations covered by the act on public service organisations to proceed in the proceedings as have been set up for the representation of the interests of injured parties or certain groups of injured parties.

Having accepted the principles and recommendations of international organisations, the Government adopted a resolution (Government Resolution No. 1074/1999 (VII. 7) Korm.) on the legislative tasks and other measures for the **protection of crime victims and their relatives**, recovery and mitigation of their losses and damages.

Act LXXV of 1999 on the rules of action against organised crime and certain related phenomena as well as the related amendments to legislation specifies the zones under protection from the aspect of **prostitution** where no offers may be made for prostitution, yet the lack of maps laying out such areas has led to uncertainties in law. The Act defines the category of ‘sexual services’, the ‘zones of patience’ where prostitution is a legal activity for prostitutes having a health card in proof of regular medical checks, within zones of patience or, where no such zones have been designated, in the areas outside the areas under protection. Pursuant to the act since 1 September 1999 upon noticing prostitution activities on a regular basis each municipality with a population in excess of 50,000 must designate a ‘zone of patience’. No such zone has been designated in Hungary to date.

An **education manual** was published in 1999 by the Women’s Policy Secretariat under the title of Prostitution – soliciting for prostitution – human trade as background material for training experts for victim protection.

An aggression prevention programme was also developed for schools; in 2001 a **teachers’ manual** was published under the title of “*Managing aggression*”.

5. Women and war conflicts

One of the basic objectives of migration regulations, involving refugees and control of foreigners, was full **legal harmonisation** with the effective EU community legislation. We took significant steps in the process of accession of the Republic of Hungary to the European Union in terms of legal harmonisation and **development of the institutional system** in accordance with the already harmonised legislation.

Republic of Hungary, as one of the participating states of the UN Treaty against Organised Crime, has undertaken an obligation to criminalise human trade and protect victims. Our country treats the problem according to its weight, and the introduced policy and effective measures aim at prevention, investigation of crime and assistance of victims.

According to one of the new provisions of the new **Act on the Control of Foreigners**, which entered into force in 1 January 2002, foreigners co-operating with the justice organisations may receive a humanitarian temporary residence permit in Hungary.

The Ministry of Interior has been operating a **Victim Protection Office** since 1998. At present, victim protection offices operate at some 46 locations in Hungary in co-operation of local governments and other social institutions. The offices assist victims of human trade too.

In accordance with international war conflicts, the number of women applying for asylum in Hungary has been gradually falling in the last few years.

The Office of Immigration and Nationality Ministry of Interior has organised a **National Action Plan** to improve the situation of mainly single women placed in refugee camps upon the initiative of the UN High Commissionaire for Refugee Matters. The Action Plan is based on the High Commissionaire's guidelines developed for the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and conduct to be shown to violence victims. The main reason for the series of measures is that mainly women become victims of violent actions in various war conflicts and migration processes.

In accordance with the national action plan, **pilot programme** was launched at Debrecen refugee station in the autumn of 2003. Under this programme, single women and mothers raising their children alone are placed separately. A separate surveillance system was also developed in the project. With the help of security measures they have managed to develop an assuring and safe living environment for residents.

Women's clubs were formed as a special programme and members of civil organisations dealing with victims of torture and organised violence provide psycho-social assistance, individual and group therapy to all those who need it.

The guidelines of the UN High Commissionaire for Refugee Matters and the Hungarian National Action Programme treat **training of official and civil staff** dealing with victims a priority. Thus, within the framework of the pilot programme, members of suitable civil organisations have provided training for members of staff of non-governmental agencies and the Office of Immigration and Nationality Ministry of Interior, participating in the programme, since July 2004.

In view of the fact that, similarly to the other EU Member States, Hungary also considers **single women and mothers raising their children alone** a vulnerable group, the other two stations of the Office of Immigration and Nationality Ministry of Interior also try to accommodate individuals specified above separately and safely as much as it is possible.

Women and children placed in refugee camps receive **regular health services** from medical specialists (family practitioner, paediatrician, psychiatrist and gynaecologist) and trained nurses, i.e., women becoming victims of war conflicts have direct access to primary health care services.

The **nature of community camps accommodating illegal migrants** subject to a procedure controlling foreigners has changed during the legal harmonisation process. Some of the communal camps operated by the Border Guard before have been turned into an open community camp in accordance with the legislation applicable to the establishment of community accommodation facilities.

From now on communal camps will form the mandatory place of residence of foreigners violating the law in the case of whom execution of a foreigner control measure is hindered, and those who are subject to detention based on an authority resolution but the deadline has passed

and the condition causing the order of detention still prevails, as well as those to whom the authority controlling foreigners has issued a humanitarian temporary residence permit.

Foreigners placed in such camps are not strictly limited in their movement when they leave their accommodation, but it is necessary for the authority to regularly monitor the residence and lifestyle of such foreigners. The objective of this legal concept is to provide state care for foreigners who need it for a specific term.

The Immigration Office has established the accommodation facilities taking into account the recommendations of the parliamentary commissioner for citizens' rights made in 1998 as well as the provisions of the legal regulations. At the moment, there are four community accommodation facilities.

The accommodation facilities contain showers and wash basins with hot and cold running water, as well as toilets, *separately for the two genders*, for hygienic purposes, the number of which has been defined taking into account the number of beds at the accommodation facility.

Men and women are placed separately in community accommodation facilities, while families are placed together. Three meals are provided a day taking also into account religious regulations. Whenever individuals are accepted at the accommodation facility, all foreigners receive cutlery, personal hygiene items, bedding and a towel for personal use, which are exchanged every two weeks by the authority operating the accommodation facility.

The **Women Soldiers' Committee of the Hungarian Army** started its operation in November 2003, The Committee is responsible for analysing the status of professional and contracted women soldiers, reviewing the issues affecting them, and making proposals for the leaders of the ministry.

6. Women and the economy (employment and income position of women)

Low levels of employment among both men and women are a major challenge faced by employment policy in Hungary. During the transitional period the employment and activity of women declined at a rate similar to that of men. Since 1997 the level of employment of women has increased slightly faster than has that of men as a consequence of which their employment rate has increased to 50.9% and the difference between the rates of employment of the two genders has dropped to 12.5%.

Women account for 45% of the total number of employees. The rate of unemployment was 5.6% in 2003 - 0.5% lower than that of men (6.1%) - however, the ratio of inactivity is higher among women.

The decline of the participation of women in the labour market has also been accompanied by a spreading of conservative attitudes pertaining to women's employment, even among women. This attitude seems to have started to change only recently, particularly among highly qualified young women.

The low level of employment is partly a result of the extensive system of services and benefits relating to caregiving to children and relatives. Although no discriminative conditions are included among the conditions of entitlement to the various forms of assistance granted to the raising of children that would lead to an unfavourable status for men in comparison to that of women, yet these forms of benefits are used predominantly by women. This is one of the reason for young women dropping out of the labour market for several years which will then make it more difficult for them to return afterwards. According to various surveys however, women of higher qualifications will be more successful in returning to the labour market - even after having more than one children - than women with lower levels of qualifications.

The returning of women with children to the labour market is complicated by the scarcity of part time employment and other flexible forms of employment - e.g. distance working. In 2003 a total of 4% of all employees - 2.8 and 5.4% of men and women, respectively - worked in part time jobs.

In 2004 the Hungarian Parliament adopted new labour regulations on distance working, in line with the year 2002 frame agreement concluded between the European social partners. Though since 2002 the spreading of distance working opportunities has been facilitated by a variety of application programmes, its penetration is still rather modest.

There is no significant gender gap in terms of access to **up-to-date information technologies** in Hungary. Albeit the spreading of the use of computers and the Internet has only accelerated during recent years, women and men have largely equal access to such resources. The primary reason for this is that few households yet have computers and Internet connection (though persons who embark on purchasing computers have been offered substantial governmental financial assistance during recent years). For the time being however, the use of both resources is linked primarily to various institutions, schools or work places. On the one hand, access is balanced at such places, on the other hand, these are indispensable tools in the majority of areas of employment dominated by women (e.g. in service provision).

The employment of women is characterised by horizontal and vertical segregation alike. Horizontal segregation is indicated by the fact that women are employed in substantially higher percentages in sectors and jobs offering lower than average pays. In 2003 more than three quarters of people employed in the health and the education sector were women. This is explained partly by the low wages paid in these sectors and partly by the more favourable work conditions in these sectors from the aspect of the coordination of family and work place obligations. While a total of 45% of all employees are women, in clerical/office jobs and in supplementary type jobs requiring higher qualifications women account for 96 and 65% of employees, respectively. Vertical segregation is indicated by the fact that in the private sector only a tenth of managers constituting the top of the employment hierarchy and only 30% of all entrepreneurs are women.

Despite the higher level of qualifications the average gross earnings of women in 2003 are 19% lower than those of men. In comparable jobs, for work considered equivalent, women are paid 13-14% lower wages both in the public and in the private sector, on an average.

There is a link between employment segregation and wage differences: women employees are over-represented in the traditionally lower paid public sector.

At the same time, the public sector is less attractive for men due to the lower pays and this contributes to the increasing domination by women of certain vocations. During recent years however, substantial pay increases have taken place in the public sector. This has resulted in a significant increase in the income conditions of several traditionally 'female areas', reducing the wage gap between the genders affecting the average statistics of the economy as a whole. Public sector is growing increasingly attractive for men owing to the improving salaries, which in turn is leading to a reduction of labour market segregation. Another important step forward is that the amendment to the Labour Code (Act XXII of 1992) in effect since 1 July 2001 introduced the concept of '**equal pay for equal value work**'. Pursuant to this regulation from year 2004 the requirement of equal treatment is to be complied with in the establishment of compensation for work.

Increasing the rate of employment - including the promotion of the employment of women - is one of the priority objectives of Government. To this end, a variety of measures have been introduced recently to help women's participation in the labour market. The measures are promoting both the supply and the demand side. The employment of women is facilitated on the supply side primarily by improving the employability of women - paying special attention to disadvantaged groups of women - by facilitating the reconciliation of the requirements of family and employment while on the demand side it is facilitated by the provision of support to employers relating to the employment of groups in disadvantaged position in the labour market.

The returning to the labour market of persons inactive owing to child raising is facilitated, among other things, by the following measures:

- From the child's age of 18 month it is possible to take on part time jobs (or, if working at home, even full time jobs) whilst receiving child-care allowance, child-care fee or caregiving fee. Employees will be exempt from the payment of health contribution on employees receiving child-care allowance or child-care fee. The services are available for both parents under identical conditions. The child-care allowance may be assigned to grandparents after the child has turned one year old.
- In addition to the introduction of the new family support system - enabling the granting of support to both parents for child raising, as a basic citizens' right - women may also participate in labour market training programmes.
- In addition to the introduction of the new family support system - enabling the granting of support to both parents for child raising, as a basic citizens' right - a labour market reintegration training scheme was launched in 2000 to promote the returning of women to the labour market.
- Pursuant to Article 14 (1) c) of Act IX of 1991 on the promotion of employment and the provision for the unemployed, since 1 July 2001 it is possible to provide support to training for persons offered or accepted by the labour centre, who receive pregnancy and confinement benefit, child-care fee or caregiving fee. Since 1 January 2003 support may be provided pursuant to Article 19/C of the above Act for part time employment and for the performance of distance work.

- The detailed rules on such forms of supports and assistance are laid out in the amendments to the No. 6/1996 (VII. 16.) MüM decree issued by the Ministry of Education, as amended, concerning the various forms of assistance promoting employment and the forms of assistance that may be granted from the Labour Market Fund to the management of employment crises.
- Part time employment of those raising children below the age of 14 as well as those having been without a job for more than three months may be facilitated with financial assistance by paying the wages and contributions for such employees and by providing commuting cost reimbursement from the Labour Market Fund (pursuant to the No. 6/996. (VII. 6.) Decree issued by the ministry of labour.

The improvement of the employability of women in disadvantaged positions from the aspect of the labour market is also promoted by the labour market programmes of the State Employment Policy Service. Between 2004 and 2006 Hungary is spending substantial amounts from the funds of the European Social Fund (the Human Resource Development Operational Programme and the EQUAL programmes) on the improvement of the employment situation of women, the strengthening of businesses run by women, spreading of family friendly work places. Pilot programmes are also launched to reduce vertical segregation and the segregation of employment by gender.

The funds from the application schemes are expected to have indirect effects as well, contributing to the strengthening of the capacities of women's organisations, drawing increased attention to the labour market aspects of the social differences between the genders and they will also enrich the employment policy tools of the pilot programmes.

From 2004, several programmes will be launched to **improve the potential employment of women in a disadvantaged situation in terms of the labour market**. The employment offices launch integrated an labour market programme to support women intending to return to employment in four counties. Within the framework of the Human Resource Development Operational Programme of the European Structural Funds measure entitled Promotion of labour market participation of women between 2004-2006, considerable resources will be allocated to support alternative employment services assisting the (re)integration of women into the labour market or women remaining in the labour market, and promoting women becoming entrepreneurs.

It is an outstanding government effort to provide increased support for women aged over 40 who intend to return to the labour market and those who would like to take employment again after caring for children or other relatives. In this context, we have to support dissemination of **flexible types of employment**. To this end, from 2004, the payment liabilities of employers have been reduced (they are no longer liable to pay health contribution) based on part-time employees receiving child-care allowance, child-care fee and nursing allowance; the new employment support also promotes part-time employment of parents raising children aged below 14 too. In order to spread distance work, in 2004 Parliament supplemented the Labour Code with rules applicable to **distance work**, and the Act on Personal Income Tax has been supplemented with cost accounting options relating to distance work. Increase of distance workplaces could significantly promote labour market participation of individuals caring for durably ill or severely

disabled family members and would also improve the income generating capabilities of the families concerned.

In order to support co-ordination of employment and family obligations, the **Family-Friendly Workplace Award** has been announced annually since 2000 and has been awarded to companies and institutions implementing outstanding family-friendly measures.

Applications may be submitted in four categories – small, medium and large companies, as well as budgetary agencies and foundations – describing the established practices of the organisation. Six main subjects must be described in the application: models for working hours, training, further training, maintaining contact with individuals on child-care allowance, child-care fee, or child-rearing support ; events and holidays at the workplace, maintenance of child institutions; as a new feature, the application also contains educational programmes related to health preservation, prevention of diseases and avoidance of addictions.

Winners of the award are entitled to use the plaque “Family-Friendly Workplace” for a year. **In addition, the Human Resource Development Operational Programme (HRDOP) also supports dissemination of family-friendly workplaces in the form of expert consultation to applicant organisations between 2004 and 2006.**

Social policy, family policy

The components of the family support system are family allowance, child-care allowance, child-care fee, child rearing support fee (Hungarian abbreviations GYED, GYES and GYET), maternity grant, pregnancy and confinement benefit, child-care protection fee and nursing allowance, making sure that people can temporarily leave the labour market for the purpose of caring for their children or old and ill relatives.

Since 1 September 2002, the **family allowance amount** has increased by 20%. The eligible individuals received the increased amounts retrospectively still in 2002.

The Parliament has adopted resolutions concerning the prohibition of negative discrimination against and for the preservation of the health and ensuring of the protection of pregnant women and breast feeding women at the work place:

In its No.71/2003. (VI.24. OGY) resolution adopted by the Parliament of Hungary concerning the confirmation of the No. 183. Convention on the protection of motherhood adopted at the 88th session of the General Conference of the International Labour Organisation the Parliament confirms the No. 183 Convention of the protection of motherhood and declares that the duration of maternity leave is 24 weeks in the Republic of Hungary.

In its No.72/2003. (VI.24. OGY) resolution adopted by the Parliament of Hungary the Parliament approved the report on the No. 183. Convention on the protection of motherhood adopted at the 88th session of the General Conference of the International Labour Organisation along with the report on the No. 191 Recommendation on the protection of motherhood. Article 77 (2) of Act XXII of 1992 on the Labour Code was introduced in view of the No. 183 Convention on the protection of motherhood according to which no employee may be obliged to

undergo a test aimed at the establishment of pregnancy or to submit a certificate on pregnancy except where this takes place in the course of the assessment (examination) and appraisal of suitability for a given job pursuant to a legal regulation.

The above regulation prohibits negative discrimination based on maternity. Exception to this rule is comprised of cases where such examination takes place in the course of the examination and appraisal of suitability for a position for in certain jobs no pregnant women may be employed.

In order to offset the **extra expenses incurred at families at the beginning of the school year**, in 2002 an additional month's family allowance was introduced to eligible individuals payable in August each year. The extraordinary family allowance is primarily paid to cover schooling expenses, but all individuals eligible for the service receive it.

As a result of an **amendment to the legal regulation** on family support, the top age limit of eligibility for family support will gradually be increased by one year starting in 2003, thus from 1 September 2004 family allowance is payable until children studying in public education institutions complete their 23rd year.

In order to offset extra expenses incurred in relation to child birth and maternity, the **maternity grant** amount has also increased. Since 1 January 2003, the single maternity grant related to birth has increased to 225% of the **lowest retirement pension applicable at the time of child birth** compared to the former 150%.

Maternity grant for families with twins has increased to 300% of the **lowest retirement pension** for each child. For families with twins the child-care allowance amount has doubled since 1 January 2003 in order to offset the extra expenses incurred in relation to regular and concurrent needs. Simultaneously, the term of eligibility for child-care allowance has been extended for families raising twins until the child reaches school attendance age.

The **amendment to Act LXXXIV of 1998 on family support** gave an opportunity for mothers to return to the labour market once the child has completed one year of age. While they are at work, grandparents can care for children, and the thus increased expenses of grandparents are compensated with child-raising benefit, naturally in addition to the grandparent's pension obtained on his/her own right.

In order to **strengthen social responsibilities and solidarity, Act III of 1993 on social administration and social services (hereinafter Social Act)** has been **amended** to strengthen the guarantee of the right to social security as defined in the Constitution. Access to services established by municipal governments is also guaranteed with financial instruments. Since 2003, the proportion of direct funds from the central budget has increased from 75% to 90%, as a result of which these services can be provided to eligible individuals even in settlements struggling with shortage of funds.

The service period required for eligibility for early retirement pension includes a **child-care benefit** from 2003 in the case of women born after 1946 and men born after 1940, and it applies

for everyone in the case of reduced and brought forward pension. This extension of a right affects 1,500-2,000 individuals each year.

According to the amendment to the Labour Code, since 5 December 2002 **five days working time allowance is given to fathers** for the birth of their children. Fathers with babies are entitled to additional five days of holidays until the child completes two months of age, during which the central budget reimburses the employers the amount of the allowance.

7. Women in power and decision-making (political and public roles)

Women showed significant activity in the nomination process related to **parliamentary elections** in 2002. Approximately 20% of the total nominees were women. Despite the increasing proportion of nominees, only 9% of elected representatives are women.

Women's participation was more positive in **local elections**. After the local elections held in 2002, 14% of women were elected into the **mayor's position**. Their proportion is significantly lower in larger settlements. Only two of the 23 districts of Budapest have women mayors. On the other hand, the proportion of women mayors in counties with a typical structure of small villages is significantly higher. In settlements with aged population and often with a few hundreds of residents the population is more and more likely to elect a woman mayor.

The proportion of genders is more favourable in the **local councils** established after the 2002 elections. 34.7% of the elected local council members are women. While only 20% of male nominees were elected, in the case of female nominees the similar proportion was nearly 33% in local councils.

Before the **European parliamentary elections** held in June 2004, the parties committed themselves that at least one third of their nominees would be women. Fifty per cent on the list of nominees of the Hungarian Socialist Party were women. Of the 24 members of European Parliament of the Republic of Hungary, nine are women.

Of the parties the Hungarian Socialist party applies a 20% **quota** in its managerial bodies to ensure representation of women and young people aged below 35.

In 2002 and 2004, the National Conference of Women Mayors was held in Parliament, with the purpose of providing up-to-date technical information for women holding the mayor's office and strengthening their network.

8. Human rights of women

Article 70/A of the Constitution states the **women's rights to equal treatment**. The Constitution has a separate provision on the equal rights of men and women too, when in **Article 66 (1)** it states that "The Republic of Hungary provides equal rights of men and women in terms of all civil and political, economic, social and cultural rights."

Hungary ratified the Supplementary Protocol to the CEDAW Treaty in 2001.

The recommendations of the CEDAW Committee have been translated into Hungarian and have been widely published in a book format since autumn 2003.

The amendment to **Act IV of 1952 on marriage, families and guardianship (hereinafter Family Act)**, effective from January 2004, provides on naming conventions after marriage: men can also adapt the family name of their wives, and they can also link their names.

A Roma anti-discrimination service was established in October 2001, which helps Roma individuals – including a large number of women – in discrimination-type cases within the whole country. The free assistance extends to legal advice, initiation of lawsuits and legal representation.

A national legal assistance service provides opportunities for the poorest people to use judicial services since April 2004. “The people’s lawyers” give advice, edit official documents and applications for those in need, but for the time being they do not represent individuals in court yet.

In 2003, a “**mother and baby unit**” was established in **Bács-Kiskun County Prison** to accommodate together mothers and babies born while the mother is kept in prison.

9. Women and the media

In accordance with the provisions of Act I of 1996 on radio and television (the Media Act), the activities of broadcasting companies cannot violate human rights and they cannot be suitable – among others – to incite hatred against genders. If broadcasting companies violate the requirement of equal treatment of women, ORTT (National Radio and Television Board) launches proceedings against them.

In its annual report prepared for Parliament, ORTT prepares a statement each year on the distribution of genders in the news and background programmes of national broadcasting companies in specific programmes. In accordance with the 2003 statement, the gender composition of non-institutional actors in news programmes contained a significant inequality to the detriment of women. Nearly nine tenth of the appearing individuals were men, which did not show any change compared to the previous year.

According to the provisions of the Media Act, national interest representation organisations of women can delegate one person into the boards supervising public service media when the boards are established.

In the autumn of 2000, the closing declaration of the conference on the status of women’s sports considered coverage of women’s sports in media an outstandingly important area among the recommendations.

On 8 March 2004, Women’s Day, women “took over power” in editorial offices based on a UNESCO initiative, i.e., news were edited by women.

10. Women and the environment

In Hungary, the number and severity of diseases originating from environmental causes represent an increasing concern. Government Resolution No. 1117/2001 (X. 19) defines the National Environmental Protection Programme concept for the period of 2003-2008, the objectives of which include the analysis of human health and role of environmental impacts.

Dissemination of environmentally aware conduct patterns is still one of the most important tasks of the country.

11. Girl-Child

The children's rights representative, introduced in the Child Protection Act in 2003, protects the rights of children subject to child protection care and assists children in learning and enforcing their rights.

As a result of the modification of Act I of 1996 on radio and television in relation to legal harmonisation to the European Union, the Act now contains provisions protecting children. On the basis of these provisions, broadcasting companies are obliged to classify their programmes into categories corresponding to the absorption capacities of various age categories, and to mark them according to the category. In order to make categorisation easier, ORTT has developed a position, in which it defined the criteria for classification.

In 2001, an act announced the No. 182 Treaty of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on the prohibition of worst forms of child labour and immediately actions taken for its elimination (Act XXVII of 2001).

In 2000, the Republic of Hungary signed the Supplementary Protocol of the UN Treaty Against Trans-border Organised Crime – on the prevention, reduction and punishment of human trade, especially trade of women and children.

The Republic of Hungary signed the Supplementary Protocols relating to the UN Children's Rights Treaty – on the involvement of children in armed conflicts, on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography – in 2002.

Since 2002, centrally organised summer camps opened useful and intensive summer camps for 25,000 children free of charge. In the theme-based summer camps, supported based on applications (in maximum 50%), an increasing number of students can participate in useful camps organised in different parts of the country for 5-14 days a year.

Act LXIV of 1991 announcing the Treaty on Children's Rights established in New York on 20 November 1989 and Act XXXI of 1997 on the protection of children and guardian administration as well as its implementing decrees define and identify the legal framework within which the present child welfare and child protection system can be operated and developed.

The factors that increase the risk of child poverty most include lack of an income generating job of parents, being a member of the large family and a home in disadvantaged areas. Hungary operates a differentiated financial family support system to compensate disadvantages arising from these factors, which has an outstanding role in the Hungarian system of social services. The means-tested regular child protection support is the most important measure among the financial services of the family support system. On the basis of the service which has been operating since 1997, at the beginning approximately 800,000 children a year, and in 2003 nearly 700,000 children received support. The support was given to all families with children where the per capita income did not exceed the current pension minimum. This support form has a very important role in the life of poor families with children, with a low income and without an active income earner. The monthly support amount was a fixed amount in 2003, and later it was defined as minimum 22% of the **currently prevailing lowest old-age pension**.

Part III: Development of government institutions to promote improvement of women's situation

National mechanism (institutional system)

The Hungarian national mechanism ensuring equal status of women was established by a Government Resolution No. 2268/1995 (IX. 8.) Korm. **on the distribution of government work in women's policy** in 1995. The Women's Policy Secretariat began its operation within the framework of the Ministry of Labour based on this resolution. This was the only government-level organisation responsible for the improvement of women's situation. The secretariat did not have any regional or local organisations or institutions.

In 1996, the Women's Policy Secretariat became the Secretariat of Equal Opportunities and continued its operation. Later on, after the change of government in 1998, it continued its activities under the title of Women's Representation Secretariat, as part of the Department of Social Relations within the Ministry of Social and Family Affairs.

The Directorate General of Equal Opportunities was established within the Ministry of Employment Policy and Labour in 2002. This institution received a mandate clearly for co-ordinating the activities of various government agencies ensuring equal opportunities for men and women and reflecting the principles of equal opportunities in the specific policies (gender mainstreaming).

In May 2003, the director of the Directorate General for Equal Opportunities was appointed Minister without portfolio in charge of equal opportunities. Under Government Decree No. 107/2003 (VII. 18). **setting out the tasks and competence of the minister without portfolio for equal opportunities**, the main responsibilities of the minister include reflection and enforcement of equal opportunities in the activities of the Government.

The Government Office for Equal Opportunities was set up as of 1 January 2004 under the Government Decree No. 222/2003 (XII. 12) **on the Government Office for Equal Opportunities**. The Office is a public administration agency with national competence, operating under the control of the Government. The responsibility of the Office is to promote equal rights and opportunities, as well as equality of men and women.

Last summer 2004, several ministries merged into the Ministry of Youth, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. The Government Decree No. 289/2004 (X. 28). on the tasks and competence of the minister defines promotion of equal opportunities for men and women as one of the basic responsibilities of the minister. Within the same responsibility, the minister also performs tasks related to the co-ordination and control of the implementation of the CEDAW Treaty and prepares the reports on the enforcement of the provisions of the Treaty.

Women's Representation Council

The Government established the Women's Representation Council (hereinafter Council) with its Resolution No. 1059/1999 (V. 28). in order to accelerate the related legislation on equal

opportunities for women and action programmes and involve non-governmental organisations representing the interests of women. The Council is a consultative, criticising and proposal-making body, preparing the decisions of the Government, and co-ordinating the implementation and control of action programmes promoting equal opportunities for women. The members of the Council include representatives of NGO-s working on the improvement of equal opportunities for women, social organisations with national competence, representing the interests of women, and individuals performing outstanding scientific and practical activities in relation to equal opportunities for women.

The establishment of the Council promoted the publicity of subjects and disputes concerning the status of women and men for the first time. As a result of the provisions of the legal regulation on the Council, the Council has a right to review draft legal regulations and measures promoting equal opportunities for women.

National Action Programme

Following the 4th World Conference of Women held in Beijing, the Hungarian Government set up an Inter-ministerial committee for implementing the Action Programme, the main responsibility of which was to co-ordinate the Government's activities ensuring equal opportunities for women. The Action Programme aiming at the implementation of tasks stated in the so-called Beijing Declaration in Hungary was defined in Government Resolution No. 2174/1997 (VI. 26.).

In the government resolution, the Government set out tasks for itself in the enforcement of human rights of women, equal opportunities for women in the labour market and society, education concerning equal opportunities between genders, and prevention of violence within families. The decision also contained introduction of services supporting the strengthening of civil organisations and development of an information system containing adequate segregated data. No new national action programme has been prepared since the expiry of the deadline for the implementation of the government resolution.

The role of Parliament in the improvement of women's situation

Since the systemic change, there has been no improvement in the number of members of Parliament **reflecting the political role of women in Parliament**. Hardly 10% of MP-s are women. After the 2002 parliamentary elections, the number of women ministers increased, and then it gradually fluctuated. Certain high political functions are still held by women, thus the Speaker of Parliament, one of the opposition parties and the parliamentary fraction of the government party are all women. Although the opportunity of reflecting women's policy criteria exists in the parties of the left side and liberal centre (both in organisation and persons), there are no spectacular results. This is how participation of women in Parliament has practically stagnated on the left side too since the systemic change.

Women's aspects are not fully reflected in public policy issues in all cases yet, and gender mainstreaming attitude has not spread in this segment.

Of the **standing committees** within Parliament, the Women's Rights Subcommittee was established within the Committee of Human Rights, Minority and Religious Matters in 1998. Following the elections in 2002, the Subcommittee of Equal Opportunities was established in June 2003. However, the Committee does not only deal with women's matters, but also the position of social groups in a disadvantaged situation. The issue of equal opportunities between genders occurs as an aspect in the activities of several parliamentary committees (Employment Policy Committee, Social Committee).

By the end of 2003, the Demographic Policy Government Committee finished a programme under the title of **Demographic Policy Government Concept** seeking for answers to demographic challenges.

In its policy, the Hungarian Socialist Party lays increasing emphasis on the improvement of women's situation and equal opportunities between genders. The women's section actively participates in influencing decisions and reflecting women's aspects.

Part IV: Key tasks and measures aiming at their implementation

From 2004, one of the conditions of development funds received from the European Union is to eliminate disparities as a horizontal objective and promote equality between genders. This requirement must be reflected in all projects. This is how applicants (NGO-s, entrepreneurs, development agencies, authorities) may be made aware of the importance and need of ensuring equal opportunities for genders, because in each application one annex must describe the objectives intended to be achieved in relation to the subject using the Equal Opportunities Guidelines document as a guide, including also the method of implementation.

The “*Safe start*” programme, launched in 2004, is a service based on inter-sector co-operation, and operated together with civil organisations providing complex support to families raising small children aged 0-6 in disadvantaged areas, villages and housing estates in towns. The objective of the programme is to develop inter-sector and civil co-operation based on local needs in the health and social care of children and family care **in order to prevent reproduction of poverty**.

The county labour market programmes launched by employment offices regularly include **programmes aimed at various target groups of women**, which effectively promote women’s employment through services, training and supported practice, applied in accordance with the requirements of the target group.

The objective of the programme entitled “*Encouraging women to return to the labour market*” implemented within the framework of the Human Resource Development Operational Programme with the support of the European Social Fund is to launch projects that organise personalised training and supporting services in order to help women to return to the labour market or become an entrepreneur taking into account the specific needs of women.

The purpose of the programme entitled “*Promotion of co-ordination between family and employment obligations*” is to spread family-friendly work organisation and human resource management methods widely, and create a more balanced relationship between employment and family, with special consideration to strengthening the labour market position of women. Within the framework of the programme, approximately 4,000 women can use personalised services.

Since little attention has been paid to date in labour market programmes to the separation of occupations according to genders, innovative initiatives and new approaches are needed in this area. It is supported by one of the priorities of the EQUAL Community Initiative of EU from 2004 **reducing labour market differences between genders and employment segregation**. The purpose of the programme is to provide equal opportunities for men and women in the labour market by reducing differences between genders and vertical and horizontal segregation. In order to reduce **horizontal segregation**, the programme supports primarily attitude-forming activities and encourages people before career selection to try trades and areas that are traditionally dominated by the other gender, and also encourages increased involvement of women in research and development, as well as technical and natural sciences, In order to reduce **vertical segregation**, it supports initiatives that support the promotion of women at the workplace by introducing specific methods.

It is also important to highlight that both the Human Resource Development Operational Programme of the EU Structural Funds and the EQUAL Community Initiative of EU **share a horizontal objective of equal opportunities in all programmes.** The Monitoring Committee as well as experts monitoring the implemented projects devote outstanding attention to this theme. Statistical data are recorded in a breakdown according to women and men. The Human Resource Development Operational Programme and the EQUAL Programme Managing Authority have actively participated in the development of guidelines on equal opportunities that assist applicants in the interpretation and implementation of the subject.

Government plans

Under Article 36 of Act CXXV of 2003 on the promotion of equal treatment and opportunities, budgetary agencies and legal entities with majority state ownership employing more than 50 employees are obliged to adopt an **equal opportunities plan** under Article 70/A of Act XXII of 1992 on the Labour Code by 31 December 2004. In order to reduce discrimination in the labour market, the main target groups of positive measures defined in the equal opportunities plan are women, employees raising two or more children aged below 10 as well as single employees raising children aged below 10.

The Women's Representation Council has been strengthened since the autumn of 2004. New members are to be nominated and operating funds have been allocated to transform the Council to provide more effective interest conciliation and interest representation.

A horizontal principle of the projects of the National Development Plan is to promote equality of men and women in society. Our intention is to contribute to the controllability of implementation by defining quantified objectives and indicators for the projects.

Within the framework of the fight against violence within families, from 2004 strengthening of the institutional network and training of representatives of assisting disciplines as well as experts have been the key issues on the agenda.

Approval of the Law on Restraining Measures by Parliament and implementation of decrees related to execution.

Numerous specific steps have been taken to co-ordinate employment and family activities:

- According to the draft Act of the 2005 budget of the Republic of Hungary, there will be a significant increase in the amount of certain support types related to daytime care of children. With the strengthening of the institutional system, these measures are expected to make work easier while raising children, and will provide better opportunities for women to return to employment. Thus from next year the budgetary contribution for nursery care, which currently amounts to HUF 365,100 per child, will increase to HUF 462,900. At the same time, in addition to nursery care, the state also intends to encourage local governments to establish new family daytime care facilities by significantly increasing the current support amount (HUF 104,000/child) (to HUF 156,100/child). The family daytime care service

provides a solution for all working women who do not have any other possibility to put their children into other daytime institutions while they are at work.

- With the entry into force of the amendment to the Family Act on 1 January 2005, individuals receiving childcare benefit - apart from grandparents – may pursue activities generating income up to four hours a day *after the child has completed one year of age* or without any time limit if work is performed at home. The former regulations allowed individuals receiving child-raising benefit to pursue income-earning activities only after the child turned eighteen months of age. Another significant progress is that individuals receiving childcare benefit will be able to pursue part-time income generating activities only at weekends.
- As the amendments of Act LXVI of 1998 on health contribution enter into force on 1 January 2005, the number of those for whom employers do not have to pay health contribution will increase. This provision is expected to increase the willingness of employers to employ women raising children. According to the new regulation, the contribution does not have to be paid during the term of an unpaid holiday of an employee receiving childcare benefit taken in order to care for a child aged less than 14 or nurse ill children aged less than 12 at home.
- The draft restraining order amendments to the Social Act, submitted to Parliament, affects eligibility to nursing allowance too among other issues. The new regulation assists those in undertaking an additional burden, those who care for severely disabled people requiring increased care. Individuals caring for such people are unable to generate a supplementary income because of the increased nursing requirements, therefore they would receive a 30% higher amount than the current nursing allowance, which is identical with the lowest amount of old-age pension.