

Introduction

Throughout Europe, many Gender Budgeting initiatives have emerged during the last decades. Especially civil society initiatives have spread knowledge about the concept and ideas of Gender Budgeting and initiated its implementation. The broad range of activities throughout Europe – which is documented in this volume – shows that the idea has gained momentum. The dogma of gender-neutral budgetary policies is faltering.

There have been some achievements in several countries in bringing together budgetary and economic policy discussions with gender equality. Also state institutions get more and more interested and involved in the concept and its implementation. Apart from the need to consolidate and broaden existing Gender Budgeting projects it is now necessary to move on to the next level as well. Both, the linking-up of different initiatives in Europe as well as an increased focus on Gender Budgeting at the level of the European Union are essential next steps.

Against this background the Austrian civil society initiative *Watchgroup. Gender and Public Finance* decided to invite researchers and members of civil society initiatives working on Gender Budgeting to come to Vienna. Thus many of the leading European Gender Budgeting experts have met in Austria in February 2006. There was great interest in exchange of experience and in networking. The event was a place of encounter, scientific exchange and intensive discussions. It was an opportunity for taking a step back to look at where we stand in Europe. The conference of Gender Budgeting experts was supplemented by a public event as well as a plenary discussion with politicians and officials from Austria and Europe.

This publication aims to document the wealth of contributions and discussions during the event. It gives insight into where Gender Budgeting in Europe stands today and sheds light on perspectives for further development.

This event was only possible due to the support of our co-operation partners. The Renner Institute was fundamental in making this event possible by offering organizational and financial support. Equally important was the close cooperation, including financial support, with the Chamber of Labour regarding the expert conference. We would also like to thank the Austrian Green Foundation, BEIGEWUM, ATTAC and the Austrian Federation of Trade Unions for their support and cooperation in the context of the plenary discussion and the public event. The financial support from the MA 57, Frauenabteilung der Stadt Wien, the women's office of the city of Vienna, was equally a valuable contribution to realize the conference as planned.

We would like to cordially thank all who have been involved in preparing, supporting and realizing this event!

A special thank goes to Tanja Dobert and Johanna Kühbauer from the Renner Institute as well as to Katharina Mader, whose tireless engagement was essential in making this event possible.

Due to limited resources it was not possible to translate all contributions in this volume. Therefore you will find both German and English articles in this documentation.

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