

## 1.2 Background and idea of the conference

During the last years many initiatives have promoted Gender Budgeting and the integration of gender considerations into economic policy making at the national, as well as the regional and local levels. Still, at the European level Gender Budgeting has not really made any meaningful progress. To the contrary, gender concerns seem to get increasingly less attention in European institutions.

As soon as it became clear that Austria would not set Gender Budgeting on the agenda of its presidency of the European Union in the first half of 2006, the idea of a civil society conference was born. The idea was to build upon the current dynamics regarding Gender Budgeting in many European countries and bundle energies in order to promote and bring forward its implementation in Austria, in EU member states and within EU institutions.

Innovations with regard to integrating gender into economic policies have been brought forward frequently by actors outside government. Especially civil society organisations and scientists have been engaged to promote the issues and anchor Gender Budgeting in research and economic policy.

Time was ripe for intensified networking and other common activities, especially with regard to lobbying European institutions. The Austrian EU presidency was also an adequate occasion to bring the topic to the attention of the public in Austria and promote its implementation.

Thus, the Watchgroup. Gender and Public Finance – together with its cooperation partners – invited Gender Budgeting initiatives throughout Europe to meet in Vienna. The idea was to provide a space for exchange of experience, for discussions about methods and approaches as well as for networking. A public event to spread knowledge about initiatives in Europe and a round table discussion to involve politicians and officials from Austria and Europe rounded off the event. During this meeting the attending Gender Budgeting experts adopted a declaration addressed to decision makers in the EU and European governments asking for decisive action at all levels to implement Gender Budgeting by proposing concrete steps on the way forward.

### ***Objectives of the conference:***

- Strengthening civil society Gender Budgeting initiatives;
- Exchange of experience and linking-up of European Gender Budgeting initiatives;
- Lobbying for implementing GB at the European level;
- Giving impulses for further common work;
- Bundling of experience and of knowledge about GB;
- Exchange of information about international initiatives, methods and models as well as current developments;
- Establishing and deepening cooperation among experts;
- Exchange about how to promote the implementation of GB within European institutions.