

Fazit: GB kann ein Instrument für emanzipatorische Politik sein, aber es müssen gewisse Voraussetzungen gegeben sein, gerade aber die finanzpolitischen Rahmenbedingungen sind derzeit ungünstig, weil sie intransparent sind und dem demokratischen Prozess immer stärker entzogen werden.

6.3 Daniel Waterschoot: Gender budgeting – an instrument to foster equal opportunities in Europe? The view and current activities of the European Commission on gender budgeting

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for having invited me to this conference today on gender budgeting. I am very happy to take part in this panel discussion on a very important instrument for equality between women and men.

In the European Commission, we are committed to promoting equality and eliminating inequality between women and men. This commitment is enshrined in the Treaty of the European Community. The active participation of women in the labour market and the elimination of inequalities in all aspects of life is vital if the Union is to become a truly dynamic and competitive economy.

Effective gender mainstreaming is a challenging task for all organisations and in all countries. Gender budgeting is the application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. It means incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditure in order to promote gender equality. Political commitment at the highest level, adequate resources and visible strategies and initiatives are essential if we want gender mainstreaming to be an effective tool for the realisation of gender equality.

Let me give you a summary of some of the work the EU has been doing in the area of gender budgeting.

In 2001, the Belgian Presidency of the Union hosted an international conference on "Gender responsive budgeting". The conference was sponsored by the OECD in co-operation with UNIFEM and the Nordic Council of Ministers. Following this the European Commission organised a technical seminar aimed at strengthening gender mainstreaming in the work of the ECOFIN Council.

In 2003 the European Parliament held a public hearing and presented a report on gender budgeting. The report called on the Commission, Member States, regional and local governments and the European Parliament to carry out gender budgeting. It also emphasised that the successful implementation of gender budgeting requires a political commitment to achieving equality between women and men.

Following this, Commissioner Schreyer, responsible for the EU budget in the Prodi Commission, asked for an internal study in order to see if the Community budget might be analysed from a gender perspective. The analysis does not cover the entire budget but focuses on a number of specific fields: Structural Funds, in particular the European Social Fund, External Relations and Research. It is a quantitative analysis carried out ex-post. It represents a small but important step forward from the political point of view towards gender budgeting at European level.

The report is not finalised³² but preliminary findings show that many Commission departments fund specific activities to promote gender equality both within the Union and outside. More and more departments are developing ex-ante gender analysis as part of their policy mainstreaming. Hopefully,

³² Subsequent inquiry within the Commission on the status of this internal study revealed that there are "no activities on Gender Budgeting carried out in DG Budget", the "internal study" is not known of.

this approach will gradually filter through the budgeting process and lead to real ex-ante gender budgeting in the years to come.

The European Social Fund has supported projects on gender budgeting and gender auditing. Gender auditing is a broader concept. It aims to provide a gender analysis of the whole policy process, including the financial part. In the region of Emilia Romagna in Italy gender auditing has been applied with positive results. Although gender budgeting has been met with a good deal of enthusiasm, it has also encountered a certain amount of resistance. Some people have said that the budget process is a technical exercise for the benefit of all citizens, and therefore the gender issue is not relevant. But there is no average, gender neutral citizen. And no policy initiative is really neutral when it comes to gender, not even when it appears to have nothing to do with the differences between women and men! This is quite obvious when we deal with policies which are *directly* addressed towards people: education, employment, social security, health. But all policies have an impact on the lives of both men and women – although not always the same impact. Take for instance transport: women use public transport more than men. So deciding whether to build a motorway rather than expanding the metro system will have different consequences for men and women.

So why is gender budgeting important? For the same reasons for which gender mainstreaming is essential. Gender mainstreaming creates better policies because it gives policy makers more comprehensive analysis on which to base their judgement and decisions. Similarly, our common resources are spent more efficiently when the gender-related aspects of living conditions, needs and preferences are taken into account. Incorporating gender analysis at all stages and levels of the budgetary process is also good for transparency and accountability.

When we say that something is gender neutral, what we really mean is that statistical information is lacking, analysis is deficient and decisions gender blind. The aim of gender budgeting is to transform the political decisions of an administration, and to bring them into line with the objectives of equality between women and men. It is obvious that we find ourselves in a wide field of action. If you pass from a legislative position - of taking decisions and making laws - to their financing, and to their application in every day life, the gender analysis should be part and parcel of every one of these phases.

The experience of gender budgeting at European level has demonstrated some critical factors that represent important challenges for the future:

- There is a lack of knowledge about gender issues and a lack of skills – particularly in complex fields such as gender auditing and gender budgeting. So the first thing we need to do both in the public and private sectors is to strengthen these skills.
- Secondly, data and statistics are not sufficiently developed, although there has been progress during the last few years. I refer here not only to the necessity of having disaggregated statistics by sex, but also to the need to develop statistics and indicators capable of identifying gender issues. These problems are particularly acute at the local level, where detailed statistics are not available and the national statistical offices can offer very little help.
- Thirdly, we need strong political commitment and efficient cooperation between departments, ministries and administrations.
- And finally gender budgeting should go hand in hand with the integration of a gender dimension in all public policies - education, employment and urban planning, to name but a few.

These are some of the challenges that we will have to face in the future.

The Commission has adopted a proposal to establish an Institute for Equality between women and men. Once the Council of Ministers gives it the green light, the Institute will be an independent cen-

tre of excellence at European level. It will gather, analyse and disseminate reliable and comparable data and information needed by policy-makers in Brussels and in the Member States. The Institute, which we hope will be up and running by 2007, will stimulate research and an exchange of experience between policy-makers, experts and stakeholders. It should also help to raise people's awareness of gender equality issues in Europe. One of its main tasks should be to develop tools to support the integration of gender equality into all policies. So we can anticipate that it will be active in the area of gender budgeting. We certainly still need to carry out further research and deepen our methodological understanding of what gender budgeting entails and how it can operate in practice.

At the European Commission, we are currently preparing a roadmap that will show the way forward for equality between women and men for the period 2006-2010³³. This will follow on the Community framework strategy on gender equality that has been in place since 2001.

We will need to focus our attention on a number of priority areas and ensure stronger governance and a determined political commitment at all levels. Economic independence for women and men, the reconciliation of professional, private and family life, equal representation in decision-making, the eradication of gender-based violence and trafficking, the elimination of gender stereotypes and the promotion of gender equality in external and development policies are all key objectives the EU will continue to pursue in collaboration with the Member States.

The promotion of gender mainstreaming in combination with specific actions, the so-called dual-track approach, will also continue. And the EU will make full use of the structures and institutional mechanisms it has put in place for the formulation, coordination and implementation of gender equality policy.

Gender budgeting is an innovative approach and we will need to explore it further. I am glad to be here to exchange views with you on this important instrument which can contribute to foster equal opportunities for women and men in Europe.

6.4 Contribution of Gerhard Steger

Gender Budgeting wird vom österreichischen Bundesministerium für Finanzen nachdrücklich unterstützt. Wir tun dies aktiv in unserem ureigensten Wirkungsbereich, dem Budget und im Rahmen der geplanten weitreichenden Haushaltsrechtsreform in Österreich.

Im Vorschlag des Bundesministeriums für Finanzen für eine Änderung der haushaltsrechtlichen Verfassungsbestimmungen ist formuliert, dass die österreichischen Gebietskörperschaften, also Bund, Länder und Gemeinden bei der Haushaltsführung die tatsächliche Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern anzustreben haben. Der Begriff der Haushaltsführung bezieht sich dabei nicht nur auf die Erstellung, sondern auch auf den Vollzug des jeweiligen Budgets, daher ist auf den genannten Grundsatz der tatsächlichen Gleichstellung nicht nur im Rahmen der Budgeterstellung, sondern auch beim Vollzug des Haushaltes abzustellen.

Für den Bund ist in einer weiteren vorgeschlagenen Verfassungsbestimmung vorgesehen, dass im österreichischen Bundeshaushaltsgesetz Maßnahmen für eine wirkungsorientierte Verwaltung vorzusehen sind, wobei das Ziel der tatsächlichen Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern zu berücksichtigen ist. Dies ist der Angelpunkt für die Umsetzung des Gender Budgeting in der österreichischen Bundesverwaltung und soll nach entsprechender Vorbereitungszeit mit 1.1. 2011 in Kraft treten.

³³ Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social committee and the Committee of the Regions - A Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010, SEC(2006)275, March 1, 2006.