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Women Enhancing Public Sector

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

On behalf of:

Vas Megyei Önkormányzati Hivatal
Vas County Local Government Office



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Motto: „Arbeitsqualität ist Lebensqualität“ (A good quality workplace offers a good quality life), unknown workshop participant, NOWA, March 2021

Introduction

The „Women Enhancing Public Sector“ (WomEn-Puls ATHU116) project was carried out with the support of the Interreg V-A Austria-Hungary Cooperation Programme 2014-2020, its aim being to enhance women’s labour market participation and equal opportunities in the public sector in Zala and Vas counties in Hungary and in the federal state of Burgenland, and in both the public and business sectors in the federal state of Styria. To achieve this goal, a consortium was formed with the Zala County Municipality from Hungary as lead partner, and the Vas County Municipal Office, also from Hungary, the Umbrella Association of Counselling Centres for Women, Girls and Families in Burgenland (DAFF) and the NOWA Training Counselling and Project Management Organization (Styria) from Austria as partners.

The project included the following: based on the final research report, a professional training program was developed, a series of training sessions were held, leaders and decision-makers took part in awareness raising trainings, and general sensitisation workshops were held. In order to sustain and further develop the project results, a cross-border strategic institutional cooperation network was created. Our *policy recommendation* was prepared as a complement to the bilateral strategy and action plan, which is a summary of the project’s results. Its main target audience are politicians and policy-makers.

The public policies of states, although always built on certain values, are defined by the same standards: in order to plan a policy properly it is necessary to have data, and in the case of women’s policies this means sex-disaggregated data. It is important to carry out research based on these data, and in our case gender aspects must also be taken into consideration. In order to ensure that policy is not simply a top-down command but is accepted by society as well, the target groups and the professional and civil society organisations representing them need to be involved in the planning and the evaluation phases of policy making. Hopefully, our policy recommendation package, building on the collective results of the WomEn-Puls project, will contribute to the making of such policies.

1. Available policies

Influencing the circumstances for women's advancement in the workplace can happen both via national and European Union-level policies. Gender equality as one of the EU's fundamental values first appeared in labour market regulations in the form of the equal pay for equal work idea. However, other policy areas which also influence a woman's career path, like education and family or social policy, are national competences, so our mutual work has been influenced by the fact that, for historical reasons, Austria and Hungary partly differ in these matters. Whereas in Hungary during state socialism the dual earner family model became standard, and every citizen had to be actively engaged on the labour market from the 1950s on, so part-time work has not set foot, in Austria married women entered the labour market partially later, and part-time work for women with young children became the norm, which influences their earnings, their career prospects and their future pensions. While in Hungary women's CSOs suggest part-time work as an option for women and (men with small children) in their policy recommendations – similarly to other former state socialist countries – in Austria exactly the opposite is proposed: minimum 32 hours per week full time employment for both sexes. We have tried to harmonise these differing wishes in our recommendations.

Gender aspects in employment can arise in the following areas: employment rates, alternative work forms (part-time work, flexible working, etc.), unpaid housework and care work (caring for children, the elderly and the sick) and its share among genders, access to decision making positions, working conditions and organization of work, gender pay gap and, finally, women's economic independence. From a wider view, we must mention the question of (structural) violence against women, if harassment happens at the workplace or domestic violence occurs at home, which can influence the stress level, productivity or even the physical safety of women and of fellow workers as well. These themes are also important for the EU, for example, the reconciliation of work and private life is a key area, which is supported in EU policies by promoting the increase of the volume of childcare institutions (in 2002 the so called „Barcelona targets” were set up, according to which it would be ideal if 90% of children aged 3-6 and 33% of children aged 0-3 would attend crèches/kindergartens/schools). This is ideally supplemented by the system of childcare leaves (maternity, paternity and parental). Hungary has been taking a leading role in this for decades with its complex GYED-GYES childcare system (the abbreviations stand for Child Care Fee – connected to

employment – and for Child Care Support – universal); sometime its length of 3 years is criticised, but it is widely accepted and deeply rooted in Hungarian society. This system was further diversified by the introduction of the so-called „flexible parental leave” (flexible GYED), which encouraged women to return to their workplace earlier than the usual 2 years. The Austrian childcare system (*Mutterschutz, Elternkarenz and Kinderbetreuungsgeld*), which is equally complex, was developed somewhat later and already took into account the aspects of gender equality and the return of mothers to the labour market. The sooner the mother returns to work, the higher is the provision she receives, and the other parent (this is usually the father) is entitled to exclusive months that are lost if he does not use them. Unlike the Hungarian system, no distinction is made between mothers who are/have been previously employed (Hungarian GYED) and mothers who have dropped out of the labour market, or never have even entered it (Hungarian GYES). On the other hand, crèches and kindergartens, unlike their Hungarian counterparts run by the municipalities, are not free of charge and their opening hours are more restricted, too. High quality crèches and kindergartens with well-trained personnel have had a long tradition in both countries. In Austria all parents have been entitled to working part-time on demand since 2004 until the child is 7 years old, and often take advantage of it (especially mothers), while in Hungary part-time work is only available until the child is 4 years old (in the case of mothers with 3 or more children, until the child is 6), but employers are required to offer only the 4 hour version and is less prevalent (the reason being not the lack of popularity but the low wage one could get in a 4 hour job). Generally, it can be said that both Austria and Hungary follow a family-centred social policy, regardless of the political orientation of their governments.

Both countries have equal treatment laws and offices – in compliance with EU requirements – and there is or was a gender equality strategy (either complemented by a ministry for women’s rights or not): in Austria this is the “National Action Plan for Gender Equality in the Labour Market”, in Hungary the previous strategy was succeeded in 2020 by a ten year action plan entitled “Strengthening the Role of Women in the Family and Society”. This also reflects the policy value shift that has been characterising Hungary since 2010, according to which *gender mainstreaming* (the horizontal mainstreaming of the principle of gender equality in all policies) has been replaced by *family mainstreaming* (the horizontal enforcement of the principle of the family-friendliness in all policy areas). Austria, on the other hand, has traditionally been at the forefront of the application of gender mainstreaming in a complex way, encompassing many areas from policy design to budgeting. The twentieth anniversary of

its commitment to gender mainstreaming was celebrated in 2020.¹ Due to its federal structure, Austria can also have different equal opportunities strategies on the federal level too, such as the Styrian Women's and Gender Equality Strategy, which was adopted in 2020.² Labour organisations outside the European Union, like the International Labour Organisation (ILO) also address the situation of women in their conventions, which can be ratified by Member States may ratify. These are the following: Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention and Recommendation, 1958 (No.111), Workers with Family Responsibility Convention and Recommendation 1981 (No.156 and No 165.) and the Maternity Protection Convention and Recommendation, 2000 (No. 183. and 191.).

In addition to the women's policy/family policy background of a country, other factors that significantly influence the career options of women in the labour market are related to the general situation of workers in the country, regardless of their gender: such as the wage standard, the amount of work, overtime pay, fringe benefits, the esteem of civil servants and state employees, how much certain work organisational methods are used, what the working conditions and the management culture are like (including organisational protocols and the complaint mechanisms) and success of trade unions in advocacy.

Existing national/federal policies may serve as best practices bilaterally, or may need to be perfected and supplemented by new elements.

2. Aims

Our recommendation is designed as a complex policy pack for political decision makers. Our aim is to enhance women's labour market position in a way that neither only views working women as an industrial/labour market pool (for example in wars or during socialist forced industrialisation) nor as a demographic pool (arguing that in the developed world more babies are born where women's participation is high in the labour market, as in France or Sweden) but to discover the economic independence and professional achievement of them as well. The former protects women from exposed situations of single motherhood, domestic violence and poverty, the latter contributes to mental health and general wellbeing. Improving women's labour market position may come hand in hand with the changing roles of men in the

¹ <https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/frauen-und-gleichstellung/gender-mainstreaming-und-budgeting.html>

² https://www.verwaltung.steiermark.at/cms/dokumente/12374758_125465814/f76de72e/SteirFrauenGleichstellungsstr2020_EN.pdf

workplace and at home in caring responsibilities. Firstly, it creates competition and new group dynamics are formed (both mixed groups and meritocracy enhance achievement), and secondly, the more time is spent by men doing house and care work at home the more employers and society will change their expectations about work organisation and availability of men. So, the EU directive on an increased minimum paternity leave, legally binding from August 2022, equally falls into the category of gender equality policies, although it is aimed not at women but men.³

Lowering vertical segregation is included in the enhancement goals, so the number of women should be increased not just generally on the labour market, but in leading positions, too. In order to do this, apart from conscious selection (one form of this is the gender quota) it is important to develop leadership skills, to offer training, mentoring, coaching and to create a female support network from fellow colleagues. Our Toolkit developed during the project serves precisely this purpose.

Before a new agricultural, environmental, energy or industrial policy is introduced, usually a PESTLE (acronym for Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental) and a SWOT (acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis is done for impact assessment. It would also be beneficial to have such analyses before introducing gender equality policy measures. As all such policy changes have implications, not only legal and economic, but changes in social attitudes, lifestyles and values might occur, which may induce attraction or aversion. It is important to listen to women's opinions and that decision makers consult the diverse civil society organisations and trade unions that represent women and women employees, whether women's labour market participation is tackled from a women's rights and equal opportunities viewpoint or from a family policy and demography focused viewpoint, or even if the change is part of an austerity package and part of an economic policy.

³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/women-labour-market-work-life-balance/eu-rights-work-life-balance_en

3. Policy recommendations

Issue: *Pay transparency to reduce the gender pay gap*

Recommendation: Annual national strategies should be made in order to introduce sex-disaggregated pay reports where they are not available. The relevant EU directive should be ratified. It should be encouraged that the amount of pay is indicated in job advertisements.

Reasoning: Equal pay for equal work was the first legal principle of the equality between women and men in the EU, enshrined in the Treaty of Rome in 1957. This was further refined by a pay transparency directive in 2006, then a Commission Recommendation in 2014. The European Parliament developed a directive proposal in 2021 to introduce pay transparency through certain enforcement mechanisms. The goal is to reduce the gender pay gap. The reasons for the proposal are stated in its introduction in the following way: „The gender pay gap⁴ in the EU remains around 14%. The pay gap has long-term impact on the quality of women’s life, their increased risk of exposure to poverty and on the persisting pension pay gap, which is 33% in the EU⁵. The Covid-19 pandemic and its economic and social consequences makes it even more pressing to tackle this issue, given that the crisis has hit female workers especially hard⁶.”⁷ It is noteworthy that the higher we go in positions the wider the gender pay gap becomes: in leadership positions it is several percentage points bigger as compared to lower positions and salaries.

⁴ The gender pay gap indicator measures the difference between the average gross hourly earnings of male and female salaried employees, expressed as a percentage of the average gross hourly earnings of male salaried employees

⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20200207-1>

⁶ <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/policy-brief/2020/women-and-labour-market-equality-has-covid-19-rolled-back-recent-gains>

⁷ Proposal for a DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL to strengthen the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women through pay transparency and enforcement mechanisms COM/2021/93 final
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021PC0093.p2..>

GPG, or gender pay gap is an indicator that shows the difference between the average gross hourly wages of women and men, in the percentage of male employees' average hourly wages (without overtime). In the EU28 it was 11.2 in the public sphere in 2018.⁸

In Austria, companies with more than 150 employees are already compelled to produce such reports. This could be extended over smaller companies as well.

The principle of equal pay for equal work has been taken out of the Labour Code in Hungary, we suggest that it be reinstated. It is a general view in the public sphere that due to the fixed wage range system there is no gender pay gap there. In order to verify this statement, thorough research and surveys are needed.

Women's caucuses and committees of trade unions could organise special awareness raising training on the topic of GPG.

Although it is less typical of state and civilian institutions, the competitive sector is often characterised by job advertisements that do not specify the salary, and it is the applicant who must formulate her/his salary expectations. Taking into consideration that men and women are still socialised differently, and women are less competitive (and more cooperative)⁹, and they might have less basis for comparison in leadership positions, this custom hinders transparency and may disadvantage women employees.

Issue: *Granting flexible work arrangements*

Recommendation: All workplaces, if the work organisation form permits it, should offer flexible work arrangements: teleworking, flexible working hours, job sharing. The state should set an example for public employees, and state and corporate good practices should be shared and exchanged. Good practices and experiences of previous EU funded projects (e.g. the EQUAL Programme) should be evoked.

Reasoning: Flexible work forms have been present for decades among the solutions offered by equal opportunities experts. What was originally a tool to boost the labour

⁸ Women's Caucus of the Hungarian Trade Union Association, Magyar Szakszervezeti Szövetség Nőtagozata: *A nemek közötti bérkülönbség megszüntetése: szabályzat*. 2020. https://www.epsu.org/sites/default/files/article/files/Guide_GPG_HU.pdf Eurostat table. p. 3

⁹ See Horn, Kiss and Lénárd on: Gender differences in preferences of adolescents: Evidence from a large-scale classroom experiment. In *Journal of Economic Behaviour and Organisation*. Volume 194. February 2022, 478-522.o. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0167268121005254?via%3Dihub> (Downloaded: 2022. 21. January)

market participation of women with small children has become popular in the green, alternative, circular economic models as well, which emerged in the wake of global economic crises, the challenges of unemployment, then of labour shortage and climate change. The Covid-19 pandemic has also forcefully changed the world of work, and such flexible work forms as teleworking, and the „home office” have been made compulsory provisionally for many, with both advantages and disadvantages.

We suggest introducing flexible working time models for parents, with tax incentives for the employer. A few examples: both parents should work only 30-35 hours per week when the children are between 3-10 years old, or it should be made possible for them to work only in the mornings/afternoons. One job could be shared by two employees, in morning/afternoon shifts. The employee could spend one or two days per week in telework. When flexible working forms are introduced, however, we should keep in mind that constant accessibility and availability should not lead to work overruling private life in the strive for work-life balance, and digital availability should respect after-hours, weekends and holiday periods.

Issue: *Working time according to working women’s needs (full-time or part-time)*

Recommendation: Employees (first and foremost parents with caring responsibilities) should freely choose between part-time, full-time, flexible working time and telework or any combination of these until the youngest child is 14. Part-time employment should not preclude continuing in a managerial position. Childcare institutions should be guided by the working patterns of parents working full time in their opening times, and should be supported by other caring institutional networks (maybe even at the workplace), like summer camps, childcare organised during weekend training events, etc. Neither part-time, nor full-time should not become an expectation, but should remain a free choice.

Reasoning: The Hungarian and Austrian focus group interviews and the studies based on these, as well as the results of the preliminary workshops uncovered two different needs. Hungarian women would like to have more part-time work opportunities in order to reconcile work and family life more easily, while Austrian women would like to work full time. In Austria, part-time work is the biggest obstacle for women to be offered the

same career opportunities as men. This issue is strongly connected to the traditional role image of women as carers and homemakers. If considerably more full-time jobs are offered to women (minimum 30 hours per week) then they will be considered in the company's training and will be present at all meetings. They can be relieved of some of the caring and household tasks in different ways: by institutional help, by better sharing the tasks with husbands/fathers, or by delegating the task to professional helpers for money. Women must be represented in committees to have a say in decisions and be noticed.

In Hungary, the possibility of part-time work – which is guaranteed by the Labour Code until the child is 4 years old upon request – is limiting only because it leads to lower old age pension and pushes the already low Hungarian wage index even lower. One cannot work part-time in leadership position in a public post.

According to alternative economic models (see the Purple Pact by the European Women's Lobby) the whole labour market could be reorganised in a way that care and not growth is put in its centre, and the working time of all employees (regardless of sex) are set with prior calculation of time spent on otherwise unpaid social reproduction tasks (grocery shopping, cleaning, washing, ironing, cooking, caring for and transporting children, the sick, elderly parents, etc.).

Issue: *Increasing the number of women in senior management positions*

Recommendation: We recommend the mutual borrowing of best practices which have resulted in a growing number of women in senior management, and initiating social dialogue about possible techniques and tools. We recommend – based on EU and Austrian examples – the introduction of a gender quota on the boards of directors in companies with a minimum of 50% state owned shares, where the ratio of neither sex goes under 40%.

Reasoning: Increasing the number of women in decision making first emerged in politics (as a minimum goal the suffragettes set that women could get into the parliaments at all). In order to approach the number of women in society (50%) in leadership as well, several countries introduced gender quotas on party lists as a temporary measure. According to the OSCE, gender quotas help increase women's

political participation – together with other tools.¹⁰ Decades later, economic power also came into the view, next to the political one, as women were few on the boards of directors of large companies even in countries where women got their place in national parliaments already, for example in Scandinavia. This gave rise to the initiative in the European Parliament that gender quotas should be introduced in economic management as well. The Equaliser Foundation, gathering women managers in Hungary, was established to promote this initiative.¹¹

Focus group discussion conducted during the project emphasized that the workload is huge in the financial and business sector, work-life balance is nearly impossible because of the overtime expectations, so many women interviewed have transferred to public/state administration after their child was born, regardless of the much lower pay. On the other hand, economic actors have also realised that diversity is an economic advantage, because workplaces become more creative and they can choose the most talented and skilled employees from a bigger pool. So, business actors have set goals to put more women into top jobs without any external incentives to promote diversity. It is true, however, that nowadays this widening talent pool is not always narrowed down to women only but includes all sorts of minorities as well. Many global corporate companies have introduced equal opportunity or unconscious bias training.¹²

Although Hungarian public sphere works with a considerable female surplus, which results in statistically slightly more women in upper management positions, the project's focus group interviews revealed that in Vas and Zala counties, stakeholders perceived this differently, and although they encountered many female managers at the lower and middle management level (in some cases they were the interviewees), they perceived fewer women in senior management.

Although there are no legal obstacles in front of appointing women to top positions, and often neither education, nor training or portfolio, nor working hours or leading skills distinguish them from their male colleagues, invisible obstacles stand in their way: this is called the „glass ceiling”. To break the glass ceiling, one needs to acknowledge its

¹⁰ <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/4/6/366496.pdf>

¹¹ <https://egyenlitoalapitvany.org/celkituzes/>

¹² See for example the training material of Hungarian Telekom from 2019 https://oktatas.magyartelekom.hu/media/public/elotelet/tudattalanej_low/res/html5.html

existence, and both external help (maybe gender quota, or a complex educational package) and inner motivation are needed.

To conclude, quota regulations supported by other helping measures, targeted women leadership training and coaching can also be a valid approach in the public sector.

Issue: *Vocational and further training for women, even during maternity/parental leave period*

Recommendation: We recommend that the workplace keep connection with the parent even during her/his parental leave and should make it possible for her/him to attend training and team building events (company Christmas and name day celebrations, etc.) Civil and expert policies developed to make this succeed should be embraced by the state, too.

Reasoning: In European comparison, both the Austrian and the Hungarian maternity leave is considerably long. The complex Hungarian childcare system that was born in 1967 (i.e. in state socialism) and has been further developed ever since (including GYES/GYED/Flexible GYED), apart from the Slovak and Czech systems, offers the longest time possible to be legally spent at home with the child on a paid leave, which in the case of several children might even embrace a full decade. It is very important that the mother or father maintains connection with the company during this time as well, and the colleague on leave remains in the company community as if she/he were working there every day.

To help this, NGOs have developed different techniques from so called proactive GYES management to mother-friendly company policies.¹³ Proactive GYES management is a family-friendly HR program that includes setting up communication channels, coaching, meditation sessions at request, offering helpful information towards mothers with small children, while it also represents the interests of HR managers towards parents with small children.

¹³ See for example the work of Well-Being/ Jól-Lét Foundation: <https://jol-let.com/new/merfoldkovek/>

Issue: *Family-friendly forms of further training organising*

Recommendation: We recommend that in-service training should be organised in a way that parents with small children can also take part in them, and it should not cost them money, and that the state should support this form of family-friendly employment.

Reasoning A recurring theme of focus group interviews was that parents with small children, if they had no larger family around (grandparents or a cooperating parent) or paid help at home, could not attend several day-long training sessions and meetings. It is important to have access to training, as these are often one of the conditions for promotion.

A change in attitude would change this, so that the imagined standard employee is not the childless employee or the male breadwinner supported by a doting wife, but a woman or a man who also has caring duties and is still considered a valuable employee. The workplace can organise training sessions by subsidising (maybe even by a fringe benefit scheme) the travel and accommodation of young children and their carers, making them truly family-friendly. The state can support these experiments in the form of a family-friendly company award or in other forms. The Covid-19 pandemic has proved that digital presence is a real alternative, although not compatible with personal presence, so training can also be organised in a hybrid way to make it possible for people to connect online, if there is no other way for them to participate.

Issue: *Gender equality in language use*

Recommendation: In the workplace and in contracts, we use gender-sensitive vocabulary and grammar.

Reasoning: This suggestion does not apply, or applies less to the grammatically neutral Finno-Ugric Hungarian language (although some of the names and occupational titles carry stereotypes, e.g. "honatya" or „father of the homeland” for an MP), but the Austrian side has raised the need for this because of the specificity of the German language. A process of transformation and change in the German language is already underway and, although accompanied by social controversy, it is contributing to greater visibility and acceptance of women and to a change in social attitudes.

Issue: *Supporting fathers in taking part in childcare and housework*

Recommendation: We propose to promote the 10 days of paternity leave under the EU directive, to sensitise employers and to initiate social awareness campaigns.

Reasoning:

Gender equality public policy, inspired by the women's movements, has realised, partly because of social demand and partly because of the evaluation of the measures introduced to support women and mothers, that the emancipation of women must be accompanied by the emancipation of men, only while the first can bring about the fulfilment of women in education and the labour market, the second reinforces men's presence in the home, in care, in the household and in social reproduction. While there is an ideological/psychological debate about whether the disruption of traditional gender roles is a good thing, the demands of life and the modern economy have settled this debate and the process is underway. Whereas an earlier interpretation was that women should be 'masculinised', i.e. freed from all caring responsibilities (through state, institutional or privately purchased services: crèche, school canteen, cleaner, maid, etc.) or by postponing childbearing, or by conscious childlessness, (when the female role is separated from childbearing), another interpretation would shift the whole social order towards a more 'feminine' one, which valorises care work (see e.g. care economy).

Legal and economic regulations can also help to relax the definition of childcare as a woman's exclusive responsibility, especially if they are made compulsory: the possibility for the father to take some or all of the childcare leave, or for the father to take a certain part of it, or a paternity leave at the birth of the child (set at 10 days in the EU from summer 2022).¹⁴ It also promotes the possibility for the father, as well as the mother, to work flexibly or part-time, if they so wish. For the first three years of a child's life, and longer if required, it would be important to have the statutory possibility of reducing working hours for childcare reasons, with full wage compensation, but with the possibility for both parents.

A social campaign, and possibly public sanctions against the company or, in other approaches, bonuses to the company, should also be used to encourage men to take

¹⁴ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2019.188.01.0079.01.ENG

parental leave more easily and naturally (according to the focus group interviews, this is almost impossible in the private sector, or entails job loss or demotion.)

Of course, in families where mothers are single for whatever reason, they could be entitled to an extra week's caring leave on top of the existing leave, as they cannot share this with their partner.

Issue: *Housecare services offered as fringe benefit (cafeteria) ¹⁵ by the employer*

Recommendation: It is recommended to develop a form of occasional or regular home cleaning/childcare/sick and elderly care fringe benefit to complement the existing social safety net.

Reasoning: Unexpected child illnesses, unexpected illnesses of elderly parents in the family, the double burden of women (paid and unpaid work at home) reduce women's availability and can cause problems not only when taking up jobs but also when considering employees' promotion to management positions. Women may respond to this with increased stress levels (a breeding ground for a range of chronic diseases), particularly in the so-called "stress disorders". This can also be the case for women of the so-called sandwich generation, who, because of the postponement of childbearing, still have young children but also have to care for their parents/their partner's parents, who have already frail (it is up to their country to decide how much help they can get from the public health and social care systems, and their culture to decide how much help they can get or how much they see this as a family responsibility). On the other hand, both they themselves and employers will take into account in their decisions that a woman cannot be counted on in the same way as a man, that she is an inferior worker. This will have a knock-on effect on earnings and pensions, to the detriment of women. Nor should we lose sight of the fact that in wealthier countries and wealthier classes, buying domestic and care work is not such a big problem, although the people who work in this sector are often vulnerable, employed in the black economy and from a migrant or Eastern European background. However, a woman working for a lower wage

¹⁵ "Cafeteria" refers to a system in which people can choose from a range of options, especially one in which an employee can select a personal package of company benefits, e.g. meal voucher, travel contribution, clothing allowance or holiday cheque.

cannot buy these services on the market, so such an optional fringe benefit would be more socially just.

This form of cafeteria was developed in the 2000s in Vas County in the framework of an EQUAL project, the FeMale Assistance Card (NőTámogató Kártya) pilot project. This card, which has not yet been implemented at state level, would be an employer incentive benefit, a tax- and contribution-free element of the fringe benefit system for employees; it could be a state-funded (local or central) benefit of the social security system, a back-up service for the needy and inactive in state-supported training and employment projects; and it could be purchased on the services market with a tax discount for any private person with the ability to pay¹⁶.

Issue: *Making civil service jobs more family friendly, enhancing its moral appreciation in society and promoting the popularity of this career among the youth, emphasising its family-friendly features*

Recommendation: We propose to introduce a day off for public sector workers in Austria (as it already exists in Hungary – 1st July).¹⁷ Provide paid (state-funded) training and education for public employees. Launch a recruitment campaign emphasising the family-friendly values that can be found in public service jobs.

Reduce the workload of public service workers in Hungary and, while maintaining the leave allowance for workers with young children, value the work of workers without children or with other older children. It is recommended that, in order to build and maintain a good team spirit, organisations should be given a framework for organising work and study trips, family days and joint celebrations.

Reasoning: The focus group interviews showed that women in the public sector understood a career as achieving the following by moving up the career ladder: financial and job security, the opportunity for promotion, the opportunity to learn and grow

¹⁶ EQUAL H/8 „Modellértékű NőTámogató Rendszer” Fejlesztési Partnerség a Fejlesztési Partnerség : West Hungary Humán Szolgáltató Kht., Szombathelyi Kistérség Többcélú Társulása WH Consulting Kft. 2004-2008 <http://www.nokaholnapert.hu/html/011/011015.pdf>

¹⁷ Július elseje Magyarországon két ünnepnapot takar, melyek eredete 1992-re nyúlik vissza: az egészségügyi dolgozók Semmelweis napját, és a köztisztviselők és kormánytisztviselők napját. Míg az egészségügyben ez 2011-től általános szabadnap, 2017-től a köztisztviselőknek és kormánytisztviselőknek csak kiadható szabadnap (2001 és 2016 között szintén munkaszüneti nap volt).

professionally, autonomy, independent problem solving, and esteem. Positives were that civil service work is more family-friendly, working hours and holidays – although the workload has increased in recent years – are more predictable, plannable, closer to their home and, as there are more women in public administration (in Hungary), it is easier for women to fulfill their professional potential than in other sectors where there is more competition from men. It was also stated that there are four things that can motivate someone in the public sector: the salary, the professional challenge, a cohesive, good community and moral recognition.

The degree to which a workplace is family-friendly varies depending on the attitude of the management, but the Hungarian government's Family Friendly Workplace Award and the privately initiated Family Friendly Company Award are both examples of public commitment.¹⁸

The Municipality of Zalaegerszeg established the Family Friendly Workplace Award in 2019 with the collaboration of the Esély Európára Association, while the Vas County Assembly established the Vas County Family Friendly Workplace Award in its Municipal Decree No. 7/2018 (X.01.).

However, rewarding family-friendliness and supporting families with young children is not enough to retain a good workforce. In Hungary, with the entry into force of the Government Administration Act in March 2019, many workers have seen their leave reduced and their working hours increased. Although those with children under 10 received benefits, others were worse off. The state should set a good example, and act as an employer of choice for all its workers.

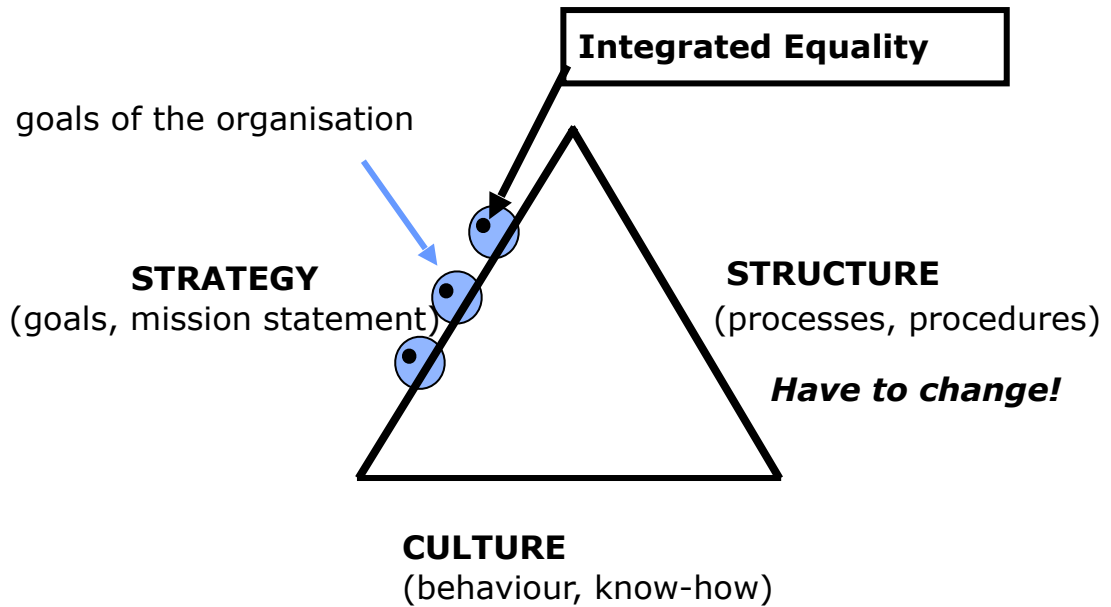
Issue: *Compulsory gender equality training courses in the public sphere from a wide range of topics on a choice basis*

Recommendation: We propose that, building on good examples, including Austrian ones, compulsory elective courses on the broad topic of gender equality should be introduced, one specifically for managers and one for each profession.

¹⁸ The prize, initially under the authority of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (professional concept: Well-Being/Jól-Lét Foundation), then its successor, the Ministry of Human Resources, and then the Minister without portfolio for Families, has been awarded since 2008. The similar Family Friendly Company Award of the Three Princes, Three Princesses Movement has been awarded since 2013.

Reasoning:

Figure 1.



The systemic triangle of the project (strategy-structure-culture, see Figure 1) reflected the professional view that equality between women and men cannot be achieved by legal and economic measures alone, but that society must be made aware of the different ways in which women are affected in all areas and be sensitive to the perspectives of women and girls. Several international conventions on women's rights emphasise the importance of education, awareness-raising and training.¹⁹

Training is an essential part of this. As the gender approach has been the subject of controversy around the world in recent times, we recommend that training should only be made compulsory if staff can choose between several options and can see that it will improve the quality of their work.

¹⁹ See for example the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention or its Recommendation to Prevent and Combat Sexism <https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/home> and <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/combating-and-preventing-sexism>

The following training courses are recommended:

- Gender equality public policy (in particular: gender sensitive language in German) for managers
- Gender budgeting
- Training and sensitisation on “intimate partner violence”
- “Gender equality in pedagogy” teacher training
- Women and family-friendly HR management

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