



EUROPEAN SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN EDUCATION

Working Group n°3 – Higher Education and Research

Meeting 8 February 2013

Minutes

Chair: Helen Fairfoul (EFEE)

1. Start of the joint meeting; adoption of the agenda; tour de table; introduction to the meeting and objectives of the day

The agenda of the meeting was adopted without modifications.

Bianka Stege (BS) and Alexandra Rüdig (AR) commended the positive work done by the working group until now, including the fruitful exchanges, and introduced the topics to be covered in the meeting.

2. "Through the Glass Ceiling" recommendations for Actions towards Gender Equality in Academic and Research Careers in the Irish Higher Education sector

As an introduction to the presentation by Joan Donegan (JD), a video on the work of the University College Cork on gender equality was shown (<http://youtu.be/XRCunrBDjCE>). She then explained more in detail the "Through the Glass Ceiling" initiative, including its aims, key principles and actions undertaken (Female Academics' Mentoring Scheme, Professional Development Programme,...) (see the presentation in **annex**).

Responding to delegates' question/comments, JD explained that: it was a deliberate choice to use only women as mentors, putting forward successful female models and encouraging young women to participate in the mentoring scheme; social dialogue processes can/should be used to put the issue on the agenda and to ensure that it leads to concrete action; the management of the university supports the project, but it would be helpful if the impact of the initiative, notably on productivity, could be assessed.

3. Achieving Excellence through Gender Equality in Academia: Experience from Ireland

Eileen Drew (ED) presented the activities promoting gender equality at the Trinity College in Dublin, which includes both actions with a focus on women themselves (WiSER – Women in Science and Engineering Research) and actions aiming at institutional change (INTEGER – Institutional Transformation for Effecting Gender Equality in Research) (see the presentation in [annex](#)).

Responding to delegates' question, ED added that: research shows that the "pipeline" does not work (a higher number of women at lower levels does not automatically lead to better representation of women at higher levels over time); there are no proven gender differences as regards preference for teaching and research; legislation can push for societal change (e.g. Iceland, which provides for 5 months (m/p)aternity leave for mother and father each).

In the ensuing exchange, the following observations were made:

- Even in Sweden, some consider that the efforts to foster gender balance in HE did not (yet) produce the desired results, as progress remains (too) slow; societal change should be fostered (see the example from Iceland); it should nevertheless be reminded that a 40/60 distribution is generally considered as balanced;
- Also in Sweden, in the public sector, 90% of the salary is maintained when taking parental leave, thus limiting the impact on the family income, also when the father takes it up;
- Men who wish to take parental leave often face negative reactions from employers and even friends, again showing the need for societal change;
- At some Danish universities, as an awareness-raising tool, financial bonuses are awarded to the institution if it selects a woman when at equal merit with male candidates;
- Evidence shows that inclusive collective agreements lead to greater equality.

4. Presentation of a possible joint research project on "what makes a good and interesting career in HE&R in the 21st century"

Helen Fairfoul, BS and Laurence Hopkins presented first ideas for a (small) research project to undertake a "European comparative study of the management interventions to support academic/research careers in universities" (see the first draft project proposal in [annex](#)). The project would be led by the UCEA (Universities and Colleges Employers Association), in close partnership with EFEE and ETUCE.

In the ensuing extensive exchange, reflections were made about the precise objectives and scope of the project, the research questions, the balance between the employers' and workers'/trade unions' perspectives, the importance to build on existing work in this area (Bologna, EU, UNESCO,...), the criteria to be used for selecting participating institutions, the composition of the project steering group.

It was agreed that the UCEA would establish a second draft of the project proposal on the basis of the discussion, for consideration by the social partners.

Annexes

- Point 2 – Presentation Through the glass ceiling
- Point 3 – Presentation Achieving Excellence through Gender Equality in Academia
- Point 4 – Document First ideas on research proposal

List of participants 08/02/2013

<p><u>Employers</u></p> <p>EFEE</p> <p>Mr Stelios CHRISTOPHIDES (CY) Mr Robert CLOAREC (SE) Ms Helen FAIRFOUL (UK) Mr Vidar HAANES (NO) Mr Gearóid HODGINS (IE) Mr Laurence HOPKINS (UK) Ms Sarah KIK (EU) Ms Eva Öquist (SE) Ms Nina PÄRSSINEN (FI) Ms Bianka STEGE (EU)</p> <p>10 employers representatives (5 women, 5 men) (2 EU, 1 new MS, 6 old MS, 1 non-EU)</p>	<p><u>Workers</u></p> <p>ETUCE</p> <p>Ms Karin ÅMOSSA (SE) Mr Noël BERNARD (FR) Mr Olivier BIREMBAUX (FR) Ms Joëlle CASA (IT) Mr Manuel PEREIRA DOS SANTOS (PT) Ms Sine PLESNER-HANSEN (EU) Mr Dieter POSCHARDT (DE) Ms Alexandra RÜDIG (EU) Mr Linas SUMSKAS (LT) Ms Ilze TRAPENCIERE (LV) Mr Jens VRAA-JENSEN (DK)</p> <p>CESI Ms Aurélie QUINTIN (EU)</p> <p>12 workers representatives (6 women, 6 men) (3 EU, 2 new MS, 7 old MS)</p>
<p><u>Other participants</u></p> <p>Joan Donegan (Assistant General Secretary IFUT) Ms Eileen DREW (Director of the Centre for Women in Science and Engineering Research – WISER)</p>	
<p><u>European Commission</u></p> <p>Mr Stefaan CEUPPENS (EMPL.B.1)</p>	