



Seagull

Gender Equality in Euroregion Baltic

**An overview of the current conditions
in the nine member regions**

Ylva Hallberg and Daniel Sköld

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Preface

The Euroregion Baltic (ERB) cooperation started in 1998. Since then the nine neighbouring partner-regions in Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden have established close contacts on the political level. After considerable preparations during 2001 the ERB Board and Council decided that it was time to develop the ERB cooperation to be more active and concrete. A decision was made to apply for EU funding of a project with the aim to deepen and concretise the ERB cooperation. The central objective of the Seagull project, approved in May 2002 by the Decision Committee of the Baltic Sea Region Interreg IIIB programme, is to work out a joint strategy for the long-term development and a more concrete Joint Transnational Development Programme (JTDP) for the entire region. The JTDP is planned to contain the most important cornerstones that are considered necessary for sustainable development of the ERB. The JTDP, to be adopted by the ERB Board and Council and by all member-regions, will form the basis for pre-feasibility studies resulting in investment proposals of key interest for the region and its cooperating partners.

The approved project programme underlines the importance of the perspective of developed equal opportunities as one of the key aspects for consideration. Equal opportunities is a wide concept, containing equal opportunities between different groups of people – race, social background, ethnic origin, sex, age, handicap, sexual preference, etc. In the light of the EU-policies that emphasise and focus on gender equality, and also in order to narrow the concept and making it more manageable, the WP1 working-group and the project leader agreed to focus on gender equality in this report.

Consequently the report contains a mapping as well as a socio-economic study of the gender equality situation in each member region of the ERB. It also contains reflections and conclusions to be used in the continuation of the Seagull project, for example in forming the basis for seminars in the regions and for elaborating on different activities in the JTDP.

Another motive for concentrating on gender equality is that gender is the most basic division of people. It is also very important from a democratic point of view as well as for increasing the possibilities for (economic) growth.

It is our firm belief that - when drawing up a Joint Transnational Development Plan, which also is sustainable, gender equality will be an important prerequisite.

The authors of this report are Ms Ylva Hallberg, Director of gender perspective issues at the County Administrative Board of Blekinge County, and Mr Daniel Sköld, Coordinator of European and Baltic affairs at Region Blekinge. It is important to emphasise that the comprehensions and conclusions given in the report are solely the authors', except for when a quotation is clearly stated. It is also important to highlight that the authors' wear their 'cultural glasses' when observing the state of gender equality in the ERB member regions. This means that all interviews, analyses and opinions are presented first after being processed by a person from a certain culture. Naturally the results are also coloured by this person's background and environment. This is true for any study or report, but is especially important to mention in this report since it deals with sensitive, complex and also provocative issues. Culture has shaped inequality and also influences how all of us perceive both equality and inequality.

This report should be regarded as a basis for discussions in the seminars to be arranged during the following phases of the Seagull project. Propositions for adjustments and amendments will be most welcomed in the view of the discussions to come.

Kalmar in June 2004

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Project Coordinator
of the Seagull project*

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Abstract

This report on gender equality issues is part of Work Package 1 (WP 1) within the Interreg IIB project Seagull DevERB. The aim of WP 1 is to construct a Joint Transnational Development Plan (JTDP) for all the nine regions of Euroregion Baltic (ERB). Gender equality is one of the horizontal goals to be incorporated within the documents as well as the activities of the JTDP.

This report, thus, aims to map the gender equality situation within all nine member regions of the ERB and from this material also seeks to draw conclusions in order to form a basis for concrete tasks and activities to be addressed by the JTDP. The scope of the report is wide as is the issue of gender equality. For each region certain areas have been studied which, depending on the information given, should be comparable between the regions. These areas are: national legislation and organisation; regional demography (population); education; labour market; influence and power; violence, and for some regions also; health and reproduction.

Extensive research and several interviews have taken place in each region. The information has, however, been difficult to retrieve since the documentation of these issues is low-priority in most places. Therefore, statistics and other information should be regarded as indicative of the gender equality situation rather than as being hard fact. In spite of these limitations the report does manage to give a considerably clear picture of how gender issues are perceived and worked with throughout the ERB.

The report clearly shows that a lot of work still needs to be done in order to achieve a state of equality between men and women. All regions within the ERB share the same problems though they differ in degree and depth from place to place. The report also shows that a gender perspective is integral in order to fully develop the potential of a region.

Introduction

The term *equal opportunities* is wide and concerns equality, not only for men and women, but also with regard to ethnic background, sexual preference, disability, age, social background, etc. In order to delimit the scope of this report the term 'equal opportunities' has been used only in reference to gender related issues. Thus, in this report equal opportunities goes by the same definition as gender equality.

Gender is socially and culturally constructed and reinforced. It stands for those differences between men and women that are not determined by biological factors. Therefore the conception of what is male and what is female differs from culture to culture and also over time. Gender roles and gender expectations may inhibit personal development and social mobility. It is important to perceive gender as a social construction and not a biological fact.

Gender equality is a political term. The goal with gender equality is to secure women's and men's equal rights, responsibilities and possibilities in society. This concerns such areas as; political power and influence; economical independence; the labour market; education; shared responsibility for the home and the children, as well as; freedom from gender-related violence.

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy aiming at reaching equality between the sexes. The strategy seeks to integrate the equality perspective into all activities and decision-making processes. Equality should be reached through the changing of norms as well as the redistribution of power and resources. Thus, gender mainstreaming works horizontally and should be effected by everyone working in a specific organisation or enterprise.

Used methods and sources of information

In the collection of data we have used books, statistical compilations and Internet web pages to support the semi-structured interviews that were performed in each member region. The interviews were all carried out on a rather informal basis with representatives from local and regional governments, civil servants, researchers and representatives from NGOs.

Information on gender equality has turned out to be very difficult to obtain in some cases. Suitable interviewees have been equally difficult to reach in some of the ERB member regions.

Since the statistical systems as well as the priorities on what to measure differ between all member regions, it has also been somewhat difficult to collect comparable data.

Criticism of the sources

The ERB-region may be a clearly defined region with only relatively small distances. There are many similarities between the ERB member regions, but one should also notice that there are quite a few differences. These differences are mainly results of different religious and economic situations, but also of different cultural heritages.

When visiting the regions, the regions' contact persons, according to certain guidelines, constructed the programmes for the interviews. The received picture of the gender equality situation is to a large extent dependent on what kind of people were interviewed. The interviewees' knowledge and interest in gender issues differed a lot. The interest in these issues seemed to, in many cases, depend on whether the interviewees were male or female, young or old. Also political and social interests as well as position played an important part in forming the interviewees' interest or disinterest in gender equality issues.

There are also differences between the countries regarding the access to statistics, especially statistics divided on sex. Also the contact persons' possibilities and readiness to give priority to the work involved in collecting the necessary statistics and data varied between the regions.

If there were sometimes problems in collecting necessary data, another problem was those regions with huge amounts of statistics and data to work through. What data is best used in giving a true picture of the gender equality situation? In the light of the limited time allowed for realising this report, it was sometimes difficult to find and choose the proper data and to make that data comparable between the regions.

Structure of the report

The gender equality report can be divided into four different parts:

- First, there is a statistical overview covering the entire ERB-region. The purpose of which is to facilitate the comparison of certain data between the different member regions.
- The second part gives an overview of the positions on gender equality taken by the UN and the EU. These positions will serve as starting points in the analysis of the gender equality situation in the member regions as well as in the ERB as a whole.

- In the third section there is a thorough presentation of the gender situation in each ERB-country and its member regions. These case studies cover a broad spectrum of political, economical and social life in light of gender equality.
- Finally, the fourth part consists of general conclusions as well as some suggestions on possible future methods, strategies and goals for the ERB concerning gender equality.

Basic Data and Statistics

National level

Gender Equality	Denmark		Latvia		Lithuania		Poland		Russia		Sweden	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Life expectancy	79.7	74.3	75.2	63.1	76.6	63.5	78.1	69.5	73.0	62.3	82.6	77.2*
Fertility rate					1.29		1.28				1.6	
Higher education %	19.5		14.9	13.5	14.5	11.9	11.1	9.0			30	27
Employment rate %					45.8	52.6					73,8	77,7**
Unemployment Rate %			11.5	14.5	12.9	14.6	18.7				3.6	4.4
Selfemployed %			6.5	7	11.6	18					4,5	9,9
Salaries F/M %					0.78		0.82				0,92***	
Rep. in Parliament	68	179	18	82	15	141	23% F		8%F		158	191
Rep. in Government	5	18	2	12	3	10	20.21% F				10	12
Managers/Top officials %							Ca. 33% F				23% F	
Law on Gender equality	Yes		No		Yes		No		No		Yes	
National machinery	Yes		No		Yes		Yes		No		Yes	

* 1998-2002

** 2001, 20-60 years

*** standard deviated

Regional level

	Bornholm		Kurzeme Planning Region		Klaipeda County		Pomerania		Warmia-Masuria Region		Kalinin-grad Oblast		Blekinge County		Kalmar County		Kronoberg County		
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	
Life expectancy									78.5/69.4										82,3/77,781.8/77,1 82.7/78.1
Fertility rate	1.743								1.36										1.72
Higher education	14.7/11.9											8.5/14.4							16.5/15.4 15,1/12,1 17,2/14,3
Employment rate	69.8/76.9						45.8/52.6		51.4/48.6										72,9/77,574,5/79,9 76,6/82,9
Unemployment rate	10.5/7.5		9.3				21.9		28.9										6.2/7.8 5,1/6,5 4,1/4,7
Selfemployed	5.6/15.4																		4,2/9,0 5,5/12,64.9/11.4
Salaries W/M	0.91 Priv 0.86 Pub.																		147,6/ 216,2 144,9/ 208,6 145.5/ 218.1
Rep. in Regional Gov.	6/21		20% F				3/13		11.46% F			9%F							35%/ 65% 44.5%/ 55.5% 42%/ 58%
Managers/ Top officials	24% F																		_____

Gender equality in UN and EU

As members of the United Nations and the Council of Europe, the countries with member regions of ERB are obligated to implement the international and regional human rights standards set forth by these institutions. Moreover, EU has clearly stated that women must have the same economic opportunities as men. Countries that are members of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) have also ratified the ILO core conventions that are prohibiting sex discrimination in the workplace.

Equal opportunities according to the UN

The UN's declaration of the human rights is described and defined by thirty articles. They are valid for all people regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political view and social position. Since 1948 the rights have been developed and specified in a number of conventions and declarations that have been adopted by the general assembly and other institutions. Many of the EU candidate countries are referring to the Human Rights as a law to prohibit gender discrimination. According to EU this is not enough. Separate laws about equal opportunities are needed.

UN adopted the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1993. The declaration recognises that discrimination against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between women and men, which constitutes a violation of human rights. Every fourth year all states are obliged to present reports on how the convention is put into practice. An amendment has recently been made which involves the granting of private individuals the right to appeal under the convention. It now remains for the individual member states to ratify this Protocol.

The Platform for Action is the final document from the UN Conference on Women in Beijing 1995. It was in Beijing that the principle of gender mainstreaming was decided.

Equal opportunities within the EU

The European Union has a goal to create equal opportunities for men and women. Equal opportunities are considered to be one of the basic principals of a democratic society and the political mission to stimulate

equality has been a central concern since the Rome Convention of 1957. Also the Amsterdam Convention has played a vital role in the formation of an equality policy for the EU. In addition several directives have been passed concerning equal pay, equal access, etc.

The Treaties or the "primary law" that concern Gender Equality are:

- The Rome Treaty 1957
- Equal pay, article 119
- The Treaty of Amsterdam, 1999
- Gender equality is a task of the Community, article 2
- A main objective (one of the fundamental goals) for the Community, article 3
- Actions to combat discrimination based on sex, article 13
- Labour market opportunities and treatment at work, article 137
- Equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, positive actions, article 141

The Directives or "secondary law" are laws adopted that must be transposed into the national legislation. A national law that contravenes a Directive must be changed. The Directives regarding Gender Equality are:

- Equal pay, (1975)
- Equal treatment relating to employment, vocational training, promotion and general working conditions, (1976 - amended by 2002)
- Social security systems (1978, 1986)
- Equal treatment for self-employed workers (also agricultural) and their spouses (1986)
- Pregnancy and motherhood. Measurements to improve working-conditions for pregnant women or women recently given birth (1992).
- Parental leave. Measurements to make it possible to combine family and working-life (1996).
- Burden of proof in cases of sex discrimination
- Framework agreement on part-time work.

Within the EU there are also some important *"soft law"* instruments or different strategies and programmes, the purpose of which are to integrate the aspects of equality in to all political areas as well as to introduce the concept of gender mainstreaming.

- Plan of Action 1996 - 2000. Integrating gender equality in all policy areas and separate programmes.
- The Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality 2001 - 2005. The Commission has identified five areas of central concern:
 - Equality in the economic life:
 - Equal participation and representation
 - Equal access to social rights for women and men
 - Equality in the civil society
 - To change attitudes and social roles
- The European Employment Strategy. One of four pillars of the guidelines is Gender Equality. Every year all member states are required to develop National Action Plans on Employment in line with the guidelines.
- The European Social Policy Agenda 2000. Defines specific priorities for actions the next five years, one of which is gender equality.
- The Structural funds. Member states have to indicate how they have integrated gender equality. Gender equality is a horizontal objective for all programmes within the Structural funds.

When it comes to the *enlargement of EU*, it is a basic requirement for all EU members as well as the candidate countries to accept and incorporate the regulations of the Community, called "acquis communautaire" (the *acquis*) – the EU legislation. The legislation on equal opportunities is a part of this requirement. Legislation on its own, however, is not enough to create equality. It is also vital to develop institutional and administrative structures that will facilitate the implementation and enforcement of gender equality. Thus, operative measures, such as support mechanisms, national machinery, ombudsman etc, are of crucial importance in the creation of an equal society.

Denmark – Bornholm

Introduction

During the 1970s Denmark were in the forefront concerning women rights and gender equality. The debate was alive and dynamic. Today, however, it seems as the debate has stagnated. Many changes have been made in Denmark since the 70s. The work towards an equal society has made serious progress and in many respects the Danish society has come a long way in reaching gender equality in many different areas. Despite all of this, gender equality issues are mostly considered on the national level and rarely on the local or regional level. Moreover, the issues are rarely discussed in the media or in the decentralised political debates.

The following part of this report will focus on Bornholm and the gender equality situation there. Naturally, also information from the national level will be considered in those cases where it is applicable to Bornholm. Interviews were conducted on Bornholm in March 2003.

Legislation

The Danish legislation on equal opportunities secures equal representation of men and women in the political life. Furthermore, the Gender Equality Act promotes gender equality including equal integration, equal influence and equal opportunities in all functions of society on the basis of equal status of women and men.

Danish law also commands every municipality to prepare a report on the local equality situation every second year. This report takes the form of a plan on equal opportunities.

Organisation

On the national level a Minister for Gender Equality is appointed. The minister is responsible for the Government's overall activities on gender equality and is also responsible for implementing the mainstreaming strategy. Furthermore the minister lays down rules and guidelines and also prepares an annual report and action plan for gender equality.

Under the Minister a Department of Gender Equality has been set up. The Department serves as a secretariat for the Minister and is responsible for preparation and implementation and also functions as an advisory body.

Finally, the Gender Equality Board deals with complaints about gender discrimination. The Board's decisions are final within the administrative system and can be brought to the court of law.

On the local and regional levels, at least on Bornholm, there is no publicly organised gender equality work except for the biannual equality report prepared by the municipality.

Population

In 2001 50,7 % of the population were female while 49,3 % were male. This is an increase of the proportion of the female population by 0,6 % since 1991. The levels are thus quite even and the slight increase on the percentage of females can probably be explained by ageing and differences in life expectancies between men and women.

The population decrease on Bornholm is partly due to low birth rates – the amount of children per family on Bornholm has not been calculated, but each family consists of 1,87 persons. There is also a considerable out-migration from the island to other parts of Denmark. People of all age groups move from the island, but only young people are not replaced through in-migration. Thus, 16-24 year olds is an underrepresented group on the island. There seems to be no gender difference in the migration patterns. As many women as men move to and from Bornholm. Unfortunately, the statistics does not make a gender division on this issue, but according to several interviewees no gender difference can be noted.

Education

Due to the economic structure of Bornholm (farming, fishing and tourism) as well as the lack of a local college or university, the level of education is quite low in comparison to the rest of Denmark. 13,3 % of the population on Bornholm has a higher degree from the university level. In all of Denmark the number is 19,5 %. Divided into men and women, 14,7 % of the women on Bornholm hold higher degrees while only 11,9 % of the men. Differences between the sexes are notable also on other levels of education – in other words there is an imbalance between men and women and their respective levels as well as areas of education.

Labour market

Bornholm has approximately 44 000 inhabitants with a decrease of roughly 200 inhabitants per year (1996-2001) due to out-migration as well as low birth rates. The economy is primarily based on farming, fishing and tourism but the production of exports is growing.

The unemployment rate on Bornholm was 8,9 % in the year 2000. Dived into male and female, 10,5 % of women were unemployed in comparison to 7,5 % of men. In total 46 % of the workforce is female and 54 % male. There are consequently some differences between men and women on the labour market. A slight majority of the workforce is male while a greater percentage of women are unemployed.

The labour market is, like in most other places, segregated on Bornholm. Women work mostly within the public sector and do to a greater amount also work part time. Women's salaries are generally lower than men's and the average woman earns 2/3 (statistics calculated on the national level) the amount of the average man.

Influence and power

The representation of women in boards and councils is fairly low. There is lack of statistics on these matters on the regional level.

In the Regional Assembly only 6 out of 27 members are female which is approximately 22 %. According to one female interviewee women easily make it to the top in politics, but few women are involved which explains the low level of representation. During the last mandate period three out of six mayors on Bornholm were women, which indicates that female politicians are accepted in the political life.

Violence

There is a woman's shelter in Roenne. Other than that there seems to be no information on violence against women on the regional level. Nationally, however, the Ministry on Gender Equality is working with these issues and is in the process of developing indicators on domestic violence against women.

Conclusions

The statistics show that clear differences exist between men and women on Bornholm. This is especially true when it comes to political representation and levels of pay where women usually end up underrepresented and undervalued.

As was mentioned above the debate on gender equality seems to have stagnated, especially on Bornholm. Most interviewees had not even thought about the issues despite the fact that they were politicians, civil servants, researchers and representatives of NGOs. There was, however, no interviewee who did not think that these issues were important, but most of them did not know how to incorporate the gender mainstreaming

aspect into their everyday work. Furthermore, media was mentioned several times as an important actor in raising public awareness and it was said that the media had failed in creating a debate on the gender issues.

Latvia – The Kurzeme Planning Region

Introduction

The debate on gender issues is relatively new to Latvia, but is especially important now as the country is a candidate for EU accession. Due to the accession the EU legislation on gender and equality issues has been incorporated into Latvian legislation. The general view in Latvia, however, seems to be that no discrimination based on gender exists.

This part of the report will focus on the Kurzeme Planning Region. Interviews were conducted in Riga in April 2003. Most of the case study is based on written material as few interviewees were met with.

Legislation

Latvia claim to have achieved legal equality of genders, mostly due to the adherence to EU legislation on the issue. No legislation in Latvia allows for discrimination on grounds of gender. A new Labour Law entered into force in June 2002 and bans discrimination in employment in accordance with the grounds covered by article 13 in the EC Treaty.

Organisation

There is no tradition of formal structures to combat gender inequalities in Latvia. In 2002 a decision was made to establish the Gender Equality Council that is now being constructed.

The Gender Equality Situation

The Kurzeme Planning Region has approximately 320 000 inhabitants with an annual decrease in the population of ca. 2000 people (1998-2001). This negative trend in demographics is due to low birth rates and out-migration.

Population

In the available statistics on population and demographics there is no gender division. Thus, there are no numbers showing how many women or men live in the region. It was just mentioned that the population in the region is decreasing due to low birth rates and migration. More people move from the region than to it. However, also in this statistics there is no division based on gender. Do more women than men leave the region or is the opposite true?

Labour market

The economy in the region is based on industry, trade and transport/communications. On the national level the share of men and women in the workforce is fairly equal. National statistics also show that fewer women than men are unemployed. 11,5 % of women is unemployed as opposed to 14,5 % of men (2001). In the Kurzeme Planning Region, however, this picture differs. There is no gender divided statistics on the regional unemployment rate, but the statistics show that in Kurzeme 59 % of the unemployed in 2001 were women. This means that in Kurzeme Region more women than men are unemployed.

In Latvia, as in most other countries, there is a concentration of women to the social sector. Furthermore there is a great gap in income between men and women – partly due to the fact that the social sector is traditionally low-paid, but even in the private sector the differences prevail.

Studies show that there is a link between the number of existing NGOs and the welfare of the people. Especially NGOs operating within the municipal sector increase this correlation. NGOs tend to lower social tension and offer non-traditional solutions. According to information from the 'Centre for Non-Governmental Organisations' there is no relation between involvement in NGOs and sex. Men and women equally take an active part in NGOs, although there is no statistics verifying or disproving this. Furthermore, women tend to be more involved in cultural and religious organisations as well as trade unions, while men engage in sports or recreation societies. Additionally, young people tend to be more involved in NGOs, especially in the ages between 15 and 24.

Education

On the national level more women than men have higher education. Moreover, according to the EFA 2000 Assessment Report on Latvia, women have equal educational opportunities as well as equal rights to stipends and assistance. The report claims that there is no gender discrimination in education in Latvia. Statistics from 1989 show that both in rural and urban areas females far exceed males in level of education. This is especially evident in younger age groups but the discrepancy exists in all age groups.

There is no sufficient statistics on education and gender on the regional level. The Kurzeme Planning Region has two institutions for higher education with approximately 5 000 students in total. There is no information on how many of these are women and men. Likewise there is no information on the educational levels of the total population in the region.

Influence and power

The Latvian President is a woman, but apart from this female representation in national as well as regional and local political life is low. The national parliament holds 100 elected members, but only 18 are women. In the District Council of Kurzeme 20 % are women. On the local level approximately 1/3 of the elected deputies are female.

Violence against women

National studies show that violence within the family is fairly common. One shelter for battered women exists in the country.

Prostitution is common and many are exposed to trafficking. However, no information on these issues has been encountered on the regional level.

Conclusions

The view is that no discrimination/inequality due to gender exists in Latvia or Kurzeme Planning Region. Since there is a great lack of good statistics showing the difference between men and women it is difficult to prove or disprove this conception. In some areas, such as political representation, there is an obvious difference between the numbers of men versus women in office. On the other hand, concerning education, the differences seem to be less.

The major problem in carrying out this case study has been the lack of information on gender equality issues and there is a great lack of statistics which is gender divided. Although there is legislation which secures equal opportunities there are few practical indicators to show whether this equality exists in real life or not.

Lithuania – Klaipeda County

Introduction

Klaipeda County in western Lithuania is characterised with a big harbour (Klaipeda) and many sea-resorts but also of rural areas with small villages and countryside. Despite a good economic growth during recent years there are big gaps between rich and poor and the poverty is considerable in many rural areas. The economic situation together with traditional gender roles has a big influence on the every-day life of women and men and on the conditions for attaining gender equality.

Organisation

Lithuania was one of the first countries in Central and Eastern Europe that set up an office on women's issues in the government. The issue of gender equality is handled in the government by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the officers working in the Division of Labour Market and Equal Opportunities.

In May 1999 the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania instituted the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman, which is an independent public institution accountable to the Seimas. The Ombudsman investigates complaints regarding direct and indirect discrimination on grounds of sex and sexual harassment. Other tasks are control of science and education institutions, informative activities and co-operation with public institutions and NGOs. The office is situated in Vilnius with seven employees including the Ombudsman Ausrine Burneikiene. Lithuania is the first and still the sole country in Eastern and Central Europe to have an Ombudsman of Equal Opportunities and a Law on Equal Opportunities.

The distribution by sex of persons who presented complaints to the Ombudsman (during the period march 2000 – march 2001) was 42 % women and 58 % men. Many complaints made by men described problems of the establishment and dispute of fatherhood. Women more frequently complained about discrimination at work.

The Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman plays one of the main roles in the national machinery on equal opportunities. The accompanying institutional structures include the Parliamentary

Commission of Family and Child, the Group of Women Parliamentarians and the Labour Market and Equal Opportunities Department in the Ministry of Social Security and Labour.

In March 2000 the Government established a permanently functioning inter-ministerial Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. The aim is to co-ordinate the activities of state institutions in the implementation of Equal Opportunities.

The Government has decided to run three National programmes:

- *The National Programme for Support for Families with children* where one goal is to provide conditions for people to combine occupational activities and parental duties.
- *The National Action Plan for Employment* where the segregation of the labour market and female entrepreneurship are two objectives of the programme.
- *The National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men* where the implementation of the strategy of Gender mainstreaming is one objective.

Legislation

In December 1998 the Seimas passed the Law on Equal Opportunities which came into effect the 1st of March 1999. The law acts in the fields of employment, education and service provision. The law is a result of the work accomplished by many women organisations. There were a lot of difficulties to gain hearings for the idea because the attitude was that gender equality was already guaranteed by other legal acts, for example Article 29 of the Constitution.

Article 29 sets forth a prohibition to restrict anyone's rights or grant privileges on grounds of sex, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, religion, beliefs and opinions.

The Equal rights for women and men are established in the majority of national laws; the Law on Elections, The Law on Referendum, the Law on Employment Contracts, the Law on Wages, the Law on Labour Protection, the Law on Support for the Unemployed and many others including the national codes. In the new Labour Code gender is not pointed out and the working relations are described commonly for both sexes. Women are uplifted only in the cases where there is a talk about pregnancy etc.

Population

The population in Lithuania is 3 475 600 people, 104 women per 100 men. In Klaipeda County the population is 387 000, of which 53 % are women and 47 % men. The fertility rate in the country is getting lower and was 2001 1,29 live births per woman. In the rural areas the rate was 1,85 and in urban areas 1,10. The average life expectancy at birth is increasing for men and 2001 it was 67 years for men and 78 years for women.

Education

Women in Lithuania are generally more highly educated than men. Women and men tend to choose traditional areas of education. Men tend to be oriented towards fields associated with physical labour whereas women are drawn to the service sector. Regarding higher education women study health care, education, teaching and business studies while men more often choose engineering.

Labour market

The employment rate is 48,9 % in total, 52,6 % for men and 45,8 % for women. Women make up more than half of the workforce, 50,3 %. Like within education sphere, the labour market is both vertically and horizontally segregated. Women earn less, about 78 % of the amount earned by men. Women hold lower positions and make up the majority of employees in low-paid sectors. Married women earn less than single women, whereas married men earn more than single men. This is true for many countries and poses the question of traditional sex-roles and women's responsibility for taking care of the children and the home.

The employed population in Lithuania consists of 50,3 % women and 49,7 % men. The unemployment rate according to official statistics is around 12 % and a couple of percentage units higher for men than women.

As in the other ERB-countries the unemployment is higher in rural areas, especially among men. It is difficult to analyse the employment situation in rural areas due to the definition of employment. People that get paid for one hour of work per week are considered to be employed. Almost 18 % of the population are farmers. There is a big difference between urban and rural areas and it is increasing. More than 25 % of the rural population was considered to live in absolute poverty in the year 2000.

In the beginning of 2003 seven Women Employment Centres were established in Klaipeda County, one in each municipality, financed by PHARE funds. Their target group is unemployed women and their main tasks are education (profession skills) and to stimulate entrepreneurship.

According to the project-leader it is more difficult for women to get a job because employers are afraid to employ women – since they will probably have children.

The law on parental leave allows both parents to stay at home with their children for three years, out of which one year is paid with 60 % of parent's average wage. The remaining two years the payment consists of 0,75 living standards. Not many men take advantage of this right.

Power and influence

Men dominate in the decision-making posts in society as a result of the vertically segregated labour market, even in areas where mostly women work. Also in politics men dominate. The Government consists of 20 % female ministers (three out of fourteen) and the parliament of 10 % women (15 out of 141). In the County Council of Klaipeda there are three women and thirteen men. The Governor, Ms Virginija Lukosiene, is the sole female governor in the country. On the local level there are no female Mayors in the entire country.

Women's NGOs are increasing in numbers and a lot of the progress in gender equality is due to their work.

Health and reproduction

On average in the world women live four years longer than men, but this difference is decreasing. In Lithuania this difference is much wider: more than ten years (67 to 78)! This difference is to a large extent a result of different lifestyles. Women and men have specific and different health problems. Women's problems are to a large extent related to reproduction while men more often are victims of accidents, trauma etc. The suicide rate among men in Lithuania is one of the highest in the world. The abortion rate is high; in 1998 there were 57 abortions for every 100 live births.

Violence

Violence against women, especially at home, is a big increasing problem. Every third woman says that she's been assaulted by a man.

Trafficking is a growing problem and it is estimated that around 1 500 Lithuanian women are sent to Western Europe for prostitution!

Impressions and conclusions

The gender equality situation in Lithuania has made progress in the last years, one example of this is the establishment of the Ombudsman and the new legislation. There is a growing awareness of the importance of

equal representation of men and women in politics but the "ordinary" citizen is still quite unaware of the gender equality situation and the mechanisms behind it.

Most of the interviewed people put an equal-sign between gender equality and the absence of active discrimination. As long as there is a law prohibiting discrimination many people tend to think that there are no problems. "We don't see many problems. We have different cultural backgrounds, and that's why you see problems where we don't find them". One of the interviewees said: "Here in Lithuania we don't like to wake up sleeping tasks"

Not even the female politicians wanted to recognise any problems. They assured us that they were not feminists and that they didn't experience any problems privately. After being asked if they really did not see any inequality between the sexes one of them said "of course we live in a mans world and women must be twice as competent and ambitious to succeed. I adjust to this fact and work hard". About the general situation in Klaipeda County, the same politician described the situation as a negative belief in the future, low birth rate (1,2), many abortions, young people moving to the city of Klaipeda, and problems for the population in the rural areas.

Poland – The Pomeranian and Warmia-Masurian Regions

Introduction

The gender equality situation in Poland could be summarised as: A steady but rather slow progress of women's position in society is taking place. A legal prerequisite is there through the anti-discrimination articles in the Polish Constitution, but a special Gender Equality Law would fasten up the progress towards Gender Equality. Important obstacles are the economic situation in Poland and the traditional views on the roles of women and men.

This is a description of the gender equality situation in the regions of Pomerania and Warmia-Masuria. The legislation is national and the social situation including norms and values is rather the same in the whole country. However, statistics show some differences between the regions, mainly concerning the labour market.

Legislation

Since Poland has applied for a membership in the EU from 2004, the country will be comprised by the Community legislation, its regulations, directives and recommendations. However, there is no specific law in Poland regarding gender equality.

The Polish Constitution (April 1997) is the most important legal act in Poland. Chapter II in the Constitution is about fundamental human and civil rights and they protect the equal rights and positions of women and men in society in all spheres of life. The article 32 guarantees gender equality and concerns all areas of life:

1. All persons shall be equal before the law. All persons shall have the right to equal treatment by public authorities.
2. No one shall be discriminated against in political, social or economic life by any reason whatsoever.

Article 33 relates to the equal rights of men and women at the labour market:

1. Men and women shall have equal rights in family, political, social and economic life in the Republic of Poland.
2. Men and women shall have equal rights, in particular regarding education, employment and promotion and shall have the right to equal compensation for work of equal value, to social security, to hold offices and to receive public honours and decorations.

A group of Polish female parliamentarians are for the second time in four years trying to convince the rest of the Parliament that it is necessary to adopt laws concerning gender equality in the Polish legal system. The current draft has its focus on the institutional mechanisms to control the process of implementation of the principle of equal treatment of women and men, the position of women at the labour market and in political life. When Poland becomes a member of EU, these paragraphs must be introduced to the Polish legal system as they are binding regulations according to the EU. Some changes have already been undertaken through amending the labour code, which besides the constitution plays a significant role in preventing and combating discrimination in working life.

The Polish legislation allows women to retire five years earlier than men (men at 65, women at 60). The opinion in Poland differs concerning the question whether an earlier retirement is a privilege or discrimination. A public opinion survey shows that the vast majority claims that it is a privilege.

Organisation

In 2002 there was established a Government Plenipotentiary for Equal status of Women and Men. The Plenipotentiary is the Secretary of State in the Chancellery of Prime minister and her name is Ms Isabela Jaruga. One of the duties of the Plenipotentiary is accomplishment of government policy within the scope of equal status of women and men. The other duty concerns other types of discrimination based on race, religion, age and sexual orientation. The duties within the scope of equal status of women and men include:

- making analysis and evaluation of the legal and social situation with respect to equal treatment and equal opportunities of women and men
- incorporating the principle of equal status of women and men into all the fields and scoped of the government policy

- analysing and evaluating the legal solutions in respect to equal opportunities
- expressing opinion on legal acts and other governmental documents drafts
- promoting, disseminating and propagating the issues related to equal opportunities
- co-operation
- inspiring and supporting the activities of groups
- initiating and implementing or co-ordinating and monitoring the implementation of governmental programmes aimed at achieving equal opportunities.

The duties also include preparation of reports on realisation of international agreements.

Population

In both Polish ERB-regions there is a surplus of women, 104 women per 100 men in W-M and 105 women per 100 men in Pomerania. As in the rest of the world there is a big surplus of older women. In both regions there is a deficit of women in fertile ages especially in the rural areas, which is a growing threat to the progress of society. The trend in the whole western world is that girls tend to leave home earlier in life than boys and that women more often move to larger cities than men do.

Education

When it comes to education the situation in Poland is the same as in most western counties. Women have higher education than men and the urban population have higher education than the rural population. If one look at the share of women professors, the situation is the opposite. In W-M there are 46 professors out of which only 6 are women! It also seems that the situation in Poland resembles that in other European countries regarding preference of branches of education among boys and girls – there are three times as many boys as girls who are studying technical subjects. The labour market in Poland shows the same sex-segregation as in the other ERB countries; women work mainly in the public sector in the areas of education, health and social services, whereas men work in the private sector in branches such as industry.

Labour market

The unemployment rate in Poland (January 2003) is high, 18,7 %. In the region of Pomerania the unemployment rate is 21,9 %, but it varies a lot between the different poviats. In Gdynia it is 10,2 % and in Nowy Dwor

Gdanski 38,9 %. The rate of women amongst the unemployed is 51,4 % in the region of Pomerania, in Gdynia 57,6% and in Nowy Dwor Gd. 51,4 %. In Warmia-Masuria the unemployment rate is even higher, 28,9 % of which the percentage of women is 53,3 %.

The amount of unemployed women with higher education exceeds that of men. For example in Pomerania, the rate of women is 61,8 % among unemployed with degrees from university and high schools.

There are quite a few projects mainly for women, aiming at reducing the unemployment rate. There is a more difficult situation for women in the rural areas and the aim of many projects is to stimulate female entrepreneurship for example in tourism and agro-tourism.

Power and influence

The table below shows the rate of women in national, regional and local governments. These figures should be seen in the light of the rate of women in the total population, 51,43 %.

Table. Participation of women in parliament and local governments 31/12-01

Type of government	% of women
Sejm	20,21
Senate	23
Gmina councils	15.84
City councils (powiat status)	20.12
Powiat councils	14.93
Voivodship councils	11.46

The percentages of women in national and local governments are low. The provincial parliaments have the lowest rate of women. In gminas and town councils the percentage of women is a little higher. The Senate holds the highest rate of women (23 %).

Among the fourteen ministers only one is female, the Minister of national education and sport. There has been a discussion of adopting a draft law on the equal status of men and women, where a quota system to guarantee equal representation of the sexes in the government is one important part. A current opinion poll shows that the idea of adopting a

new law that would guarantee equal status of women and men is supported by 32 % of the respondents whereas 59 % thinks the Polish constitution is sufficient.

A common view is that politics is a masculine occupation and that special efforts to promote women do more harm than good for the sake of gender equality. Another opinion is that there is a great distance between law and practice and that there is a lack of political will. "Gender Equality is still viewed as a joke. Even the prime-minister makes a joke of it!"

There are many non-governmental organisations in Poland and every fourth person is active in one. Most of the members are women but men dominate in the boards. Their tasks are mainly within the area of social services. Due to economic problems their grants are now cut down which results in difficulties to continue the activities.

Reproduction and health

In Poland a traditional view on family and the roles of men and women is still pre-dominant, even though younger people tend to look more and more on marriage as a "partnership" with equal rights. The paid maternity leave has recently been raised from three months to six months and it is compulsory for women in connection with giving birth. Some women's rights advocates think this is discrimination and that it might have a negative influence on the career-opportunities for women. There is a common feeling that employers are more willing to employ men than women, because "women have babies". Since 1966 both men and women have the right to up to three years of unpaid parental leave. Not many Polish men use this opportunity.

The issue of abortion is much debated in Poland. Abortion is only permitted if a woman's life is in danger, if she has been raped or the foetus is expected to be malformed. The strict legislation regarding abortions as well as the church's negative view on contraceptives has led to both big amounts of single young mothers in Poland and many illegal abortions. Among many people there is a fear that the EU membership will result in a new law that permits abortion out of social reasons.

Violence against women

Violence against women is a severe problem, particularly in the rural areas. One problem is that the imposed punishments are not very hard and mostly conditional. The amount of registered cases reported to the police are increasing and the assaults that are committed are much more frequent than those reported to the police. An opinion poll a few years ago showed that 18 % of the consulted women had been exposed to violence from

their husbands, 9 % often and 9 % sporadically. According to a report from the Swedish foreign ministry the real amount is probably between 20 and 40 %. In Poland there are seven Women's Centres, of which one is located in Gdansk. Their main tasks are guidance, legal advice, psychiatric support, education, dissemination of information, and carrying out campaigns.

Prostitution is not illegal in Poland. A severe problem is the prostitution you can see along the big transit road in Poland and the prostitutes are mostly women from the poorer neighbour countries. These women are "imported" by criminal gangs and are forced to prostitution. This "trafficking" is a growing problem.

Conclusions

An interview with a highly positioned female politician in Gdansk showed that gender equality is a rather difficult issue. Her opinion was that there is an improvement, but a slow one. "A bigger problem in Poland is the difficult situation in the country, both politically and on the labour market. This situation makes the psychological climate and also the competition very "hard". Therefore it is important for career women to get support from other women. It is difficult to make men involved in gender equality work. Many people feel that "politicians say that gender equality is important but they don't act like it". A big problem is that the number of newly born children is dropping. A common view is that the reason for this is not the lack of gender equality, but poverty."

It seems that there are two different views regarding gender equality. One is that there is no problem, women are not discriminated and the legal support is sufficient. The other opinion that is mainly put forward among women is that the norms and values in Poland are very traditional and even if the law gives the same opportunities for men and women, there is a big attitude-problem in the society.

Feminism is often confused with a pro-abortion attitude. A male politician expressed the view that the abortion issue is an issue for the women's rights movement since they are spokesmen for it and therefore looked upon as extremists.

Russia – The Kaliningrad Oblast

Introduction

”The Russian legislation doesn’t discriminate women, but there is no gender equality in Russia. The discrimination of women finds expression in the traditional roles of women and men and they are still deeply rooted in Russia. The un-equality is in the minds of the people”. This quote from a female politician in Kaliningrad shows very clearly the situation in Kaliningrad but it could also be significant for the whole Euroregion Baltic.

The Kaliningrad Oblast, in the near future surrounded by EU-member states, will find itself in a rather difficult situation. Some inhabitants think that Kaliningrad will be more isolated, some think that the location will speed up the development and the economic growth in the region.

Organisation

According to the Russian Constitution the State Duma shall elect an Ombudsman for Human Rights. A special law stipulates its authority. There are also 24 regional (out of 89 regions) Ombudsmen elected by the regional Dumas, of which four are women. The main tasks of the Ombudsman is to initiate debates and draw attention to different disproportions in society regarding human rights. Besides the Ombudsman there is a Commission for Human Rights directly under the Presidents Office.

Regional responsibilities for gender tasks are realised according to the Russian legislation by the State authorities.

Legislation

Russia has ratified all human rights conventions except for the optional protocol about abolishing the death penalty, consequently also the CEDAW convention. Nevertheless, since the 90s a moratorium on death penalty is introduced in Russia.

The Russian Constitution is a sufficient foundation for realising gender equality. Article 19:3 states that men and women shall have the same rights, liberties and possibilities for realising their lives. In addition to that, Equal Opportunities are secured in all laws in Russia.

A National Action Plan for the period 2001-2005, regarding an improvement of the status of women and a strengthening of the role of women in society, was authorised by a Resolution of the Government in June 2001.

The main topics of the plan are:

1. Methodological measures to implement the improvement of the status of women in society.
2. Women's status on the Labour market and improvement of working conditions.
3. Protection of women's health.
4. Development of social service for women, i.e. assistance to women suffering from violence.
5. Strengthening of family relations.

In April 2003 the State Duma accepted the Resolution About the Federal Law on "State guaranties of equal rights and freedom for men and women and equal opportunities for their implementation". Final acceptance of the Law is expected at the end of 2003.

As a necessary condition of a stable and sustainable development of the country, this Federal Law will increase the measures taken regarding the realisation of the state policy aimed at guaranteeing equal rights, equal opportunities and prevention of sex-discrimination. The Federal Law is a development of the Russian Constitution. There is also an international legal act, concerning women's rights, which is a component of the Russian legal system according to the Constitution.

At local level there has been attempts to change the local law and to integrate gender equality.

Population

The Kaliningrad region has about 946 000 inhabitants, out of which more than 75 % is urban. The proportion of men and women is 48% and 52 % correspondingly. Three quarters of the population are Russians.

The population is decreasing in spite of in-migration from the rest of Russia, the Baltic States and the CIS countries. The migration growth was established at the level of 4 000-5 000 per year and there are more than 30 nationalities constantly living in the Oblast.

The main reason for the population decrease is a low fertility rate, but also a high death rate. Since 2000 there was a tendency of increase of the fertility rate, but the death rate is also very high. The achievement of a zero balance between birth rate and migration on one hand and death rate on another is expected by 2007.

One of the reasons of demographic recession after the Soviet period was a mass dismissal of women as a result of privatisation and a subsequent reorganisation of state owned industrial enterprises. Often without regular work, women – as a rule accepted the conditions of the new employer – work without holidays and days off, with infringements of working conditions. The threat of losing ones job is very real for the workingwoman. Therefore the majority of families have to give up having a second child.

Education

The people in Kaliningrad are, in general, highly educated and the choices in the direction of the education are traditional.

The educational level of young women is higher than among men. The share of women with a special secondary education in proportion to that of men is 1.35. However, the number of men studying at University is higher than among women. This is connected with the fact that four out of six State Universities (Juridical Institute of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Military Institute of a Boundary Service, Baltic State Academy and NAVAL Institute) are focused first of all on subjects interesting young men. The other two Universities are Kaliningrad State University and Kaliningrad Technical State University.

Table. Number of people trained in state educational institutions in 2000/2001

	Female	Male	Female	Male
Total, 1000	81.7	93.6		
%	100	100	47	53
General educational institutions	77.8	72.4	48	52
Primary vocational educational institutions	5.5	7.1	40	60
Special secondary educational institutions	8.2	6.1	54	46
High schools	8.1	14.1	33	67
Post-graduate institutions	0.4	0.3	50	50

The number of people trained in universities increased in 2002 to 27.000 students, and in 2003 to 28.000 students.

Labour market

The employable part of the population (2002) constitutes slightly more than 65 %. The share of women among the people working in Russia is more than 47 %.

According to statistical data from the Federal State Employment service, the unemployment rate of the economically active population is 2 %, out of which 68,8 % is women. These people are registered in the State bodies of Employment service. The situation is worse in the rural areas than in the cities. In June 2003 nearly 9 000 people were unemployed out of which 6 300 were women. Nevertheless about 9000 vacancies officially exist in the Kaliningrad region.

According to the statistics of an International Work Organisation, the level of unemployment is much higher than stated by the Employment Service, however the rate of unemployed people decreased from 16,7 % in 1998 up to 9,7 % in 2003. This level is obviously overestimated. One of the reasons is that, according to the Russian legislation, about 1/5 of the unemployed (ILO) cannot be regarded as unemployed, since it mainly regards students and pensioners.

Among unemployed women there are many with higher education. Women may have the same formal rights to get a job but "women's reproductive role have a negative effect on their careers". Employers tend to hesitate in employing women because of the traditional role of women in Russia.

Irrespective of sex, the wage-level on the same position is equal for men and woman. However, men usually have higher-paid positions than women, especially in certain branches of the economy. As the labour market is segregated according to sex, women traditionally occupy posts in budget organisations, the social sphere, education, wholesale and retail trade, catering, etc, all with low level wages. But women also have posts and positions in financial and credit institutions, where the salaries are rather high.

<i>Branches of Economy</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
Wholesale and retail trade and catering	78%	22%
Financial and Credit Institutions	72%	28%
Educational institutions, Culture and Art	82%	18%

<i>Branches of economy</i>	<i>Share of woman wage-level of the man, %</i>
Total in Economy	69
Industry	82
Electric power industry	82
Fuel industry	93
Machine-building and metal-working	65
Building industry	92
Finance, Credit, Insurance	118
Administration	106
Food Industry	104

There are still many people and a great share is women, living beneath the poverty line in Russia, due to low wages, unemployment and single parenthood. In Russia nearly one third of the women have a wage-level beneath what is considered as being the minimum standard of living.

The density of the population beneath the poverty line was 40,7 % in 2001 and 33 % in 2002. The rate is expected to be 25 % in 2003 and 20 % in 2005.

While the living/subsistent wage has increased from 30 Euro in 2000 up to 65 Euro in 2003, the level of monthly average wages have increased from 50 Euro in 2000 up to 120 Euro in 2003.

In the Kaliningrad region unemployment is not the main reason for the big amount of poor people. The economic situation is getting better. If the tendencies of the existing rate of socio-economic development will be kept, it is possible to expect a doubling of the Gross Regional Product in the Kaliningrad region in less than 10 years.

It is difficult to find statistics reflecting the real situation in Kaliningrad. When estimating the living standard, it is necessary to take into consideration two important characteristics of the socio-economic situation in the Kaliningrad region which distinguishes it from the majority of Russian regions. The first one is a huge informal sector of the economy. This is caused by the development of cross-boarder trade, where women play an important role in the development of small and individual businesses (the share of women here is higher than in the rest of Russia). Secondly,

the Kaliningrad region has a deep social differentiation of the population. Just transforming average statistical parameters does not reflect the real situation, even less in Kaliningrad in comparison with other Russian regions. Kaliningrad Oblast remains an attractive region for migration from other regions of Russia and from foreign countries. Therefore it is possible to assume, that the valid standard of living of the population in the Kaliningrad region is not as bad as is shown by the official statistics.

Entrepreneurship

In the Kaliningrad region there are more male than female *entrepreneurs*, but about 1/3 of all companies are run by women. Women generally run smaller companies while men mostly run large companies. As was mentioned above, many women in the Kaliningrad region have small companies involved in cross-border trade. A project by Women's Enterprise Agency in Finland has recently started and very soon an office will open in Kaliningrad.

Influence and power

When it comes to women's *influence and political power* there is no gender equality. In the national Duma there are only 35 women among 450 members (8%). In the Government there is only one woman, vice Prime Minister Ms. Kareliva with responsibility for social issues. On the regional level there are 32 seats in the regional parliament where women have three (9 %). In the Kaliningrad Oblast there are two female and 20 male City Mayors and there are 7 female and 15 male Heads of City Councils. There are 336 deputies in the Kaliningrad region (in all representative bodies) of which 33 % are female and 67 % male.

Table. The share of women and men in governing bodies			
	Total	Women	Men
National Parliament	450	34	416
Regional Parliament	32	3	29
Mayors in Kaliningrad region	22	2	20
Councils of Municipalities in Kaliningrad region	22	7	15

The Governor is a man and among the 10 vice Governors there are 2 women. During the interview the constitutional judge Mr Bagalin said: "There is no equity even if the constitution forms a good base. The main problem is in women's minds. There are not enough women in politics and women are not aggressive and active enough."

Quota systems is a discussed issue in Kaliningrad region. Recently a proposal is given by Women of United Russia to allocate by quotas at least 40 % of representation for both sexes.

The "League of Women Voters of Kaliningrad Region, LIKO, is a regional public organisation, established in August 1998. LIKO is a non-political organisation. Its goal is to establish gender parity in the political and social spheres in Kaliningrad Region. In defining its tasks, it proceed from the facts that the state must provide equal possibilities for men and women not only de-jure but de-facto. It is necessary to seek equal representation of women and men in all bodies of administration. The League holds seminars and courses, runs projects, co-ordinates the activities of regional public organisations. From September 2001 the League is realising the programme "Gender expertise of the Regional legislation". The League has opened a public reception room for citizens.

In Kaliningrad region there are approximately 1500 NGOs of all kinds, of which 36 are women's organisations.

Health, reproduction

The average life expectancy for Russian men is 60 years while it is over 72 years for women. Problems with alcohol, the unhealthy living-conditions and "social" stress are the most important causes to problems with ill health. During the last year a deterioration of women's health in Russia has been noticed.

The number of births without complications are decreasing and the number of HIV-infected are increasing as well as cases of tuberculosis.

The number of HIV-infected has rapidly increased between 1991 and 2000, but measures are taken in the Kaliningrad region against the negative development. These measures are creation of centres of prevention and rehabilitation, due to assistance of the European institutions and local organisations. Advanced experience on HIV preventive maintenance is now transferred to other Russian regions.

In Russia there are two abortions for every birth, but the trend is towards a decreasing number of abortions.

In Russia, women have two social roles, to be gainfully employed and to have full responsibility for home and children. This mentality is very deeply rooted and even if the laws make gender equality possible, there is no gender equality in real life. For females just given birth there is an opportunity to stay at home for two months after birth with preservation of wages and seniority, and for three more years with preservation of seniority and child welfare payment. The share of payment is small – about 1/3 of living/subsistent wage during the first 1,5 year, and only about 1/40 of living/subsistent wage (approx. 2 Euro) during the 1,5 years left.

Violence against women

Violence against women is a big problem in Russia. In Kaliningrad there is a project concerned with starting a Crisis Centre for women but for the moment there is no money for finishing the centre. Also prostitution is a growing problem and the development regarding trafficking of women is worrying. One interviewed female politician said; ”men are not interested in discussing the problem with violence against women, they only want to discuss legalisation of prostitution”.

Conclusions

Kaliningrad was the ERB region where women, and also men, were most clear about their opinions – that gender equality does not exist in their region.

As a chairman of a committee of the Regional Duma said: ”There is a strong un-equality with respect to power and influence. There is a slow development for institutions. There is un-equality in all sectors of life. Women have the same access to education etc, but less chances to for example higher salaries. Their reproductive role influences their career. Men in power rather talk about legalisation of prostitution than of violence against women. You can find un-equality everywhere, even in prisons, where the worst cells are in prisons for women”.

All interviewed people declared that the legislation is acceptable but the inequality is in the minds of people. A main problem regarding gender equality seems to be women’s lack of power in politics.

Many people were interviewed, both women and men, with a lot of knowledge and understanding of the problem. Many projects and initiatives have started, for example a project regarding Gender Budgeting in the regional Duma together with the Ombudsman. At the Baltic Academy a Centre for Gender research, ”Parity”, has been developed. A group of students were, under their teachers’ guidance, creating a website (also in English) to spread the idea of gender Equality in Russia.

Sweden – The Counties of Blekinge, Kalmar and Kronoberg

Introduction

Sweden is known to be a country which has achieved a lot concerning gender equality. The Government's overall objective for its gender equality policy states that: "Men and women shall have the same possibilities, rights and obligations in all spheres of life". Even if women and men formally have the same rights, most Swedes do not consider society to be gender equal.

In the whole ERB-region the situation for people living in rural areas differs from that in urban areas. In the Southeast corner of Sweden (the counties of Blekinge, Kalmar and Kronoberg) there are only three cities with a population exceeding 30.000 inhabitants. One of the major problems for this region is that young people, more often women than men, tend to move to larger cities primarily because of better prospects for education and employment.

Organisation

The Minister for Gender Equality, also Minister of Democracy and Integration, holds the overall responsibility for the Government's policy for Gender Equality. There is also a State Secretary, political advisors and a special division within the Government administration for these issues. The Gender Equality Affairs Division prepares government decisions, co-ordinate gender issues within the government and initiates gender equality-promoting activities. Since 1995 every county in Sweden are obliged to have an expert on gender equality issues, employed at the County Administrative Board.

The Ombudsman for Equal Opportunities was established 1980 when the Act concerning equality between women and men came into force. The Ombudsman is appointed by the Government and has an independent status, which means that he/she reaches his/her own decisions in all individual matters. The primary task of the Ombudsman is to ensure compliance with the Act. The Ombudsman also provides assistance in disputes regarding violation of the Act's ban on sex discrimination.

Another important task is to review the employers' plans for equality measures and annual surveys of differences in pay.

Both regional authorities, such as County Councils and Regional Co-operation Councils as well as municipalities are obliged to have a gender perspective on all their activities. It varies quite a lot between different organisations how this obligation is dealt with. A few, often bigger municipalities such as Växjö, Karlskrona and Kalmar, have appointed a politician to have a specific responsibility for gender issues. The concept of mainstreaming implies that all officials and politicians should have knowledge enough to fulfil this obligation. However, this is not yet the case in all organisations.

The Government's policy on gender equality is based on the understanding of the existing power structure in society based on gender. The aim is the creation of a society in which women and men enjoy the same rights and opportunities, and bear the same responsibilities, in all areas of life. The strategy to be used in reaching this goal is gender mainstreaming. In the action plan for the coming four years certain areas are in focus:

- representation; equal share of power and influence
- equal salaries/wages for the same work or for work of equal value
- men's violence against women; prostitution and trafficking
- men and gender equality
- sexualising of public space

Legislation

The original version of the Equal Opportunities Act entered into force on July 1 1980. The purpose of the Act is to promote equal rights for women and men in matters relating to work, the terms and conditions of employment and other working conditions. The aim of the Act is primarily to improve women's conditions in working life. The Act prohibits sex discrimination in the labour market and requires that all employers, whether in the public or private sector, actively promote equal opportunities for men and women in the working environment. All employers with a minimum of 10 employees are required to prepare annual equal opportunities plans as well as a plan of action for equal pay.

The Act concerning the Equal Treatment of Students entered into force on March 1 2002. It prohibits discrimination in universities on grounds of sex, ethnic background, disability or sexual orientation.

In 1980 Sweden ratified the Convention of Elimination of all Discrimination of Women, CEDAW. Sweden presented its fifth report in year 2000 regarding the measures taken to carry through the actions of the convention.

Population

Of almost nine million people in Sweden, 562 400 people live in the south-east of Sweden. The south-eastern part has a common problem, namely a deficit of young people, mainly young women.

Table: Population per region divided by age group and sex in %, (2002)

Age Groups	Kronoberg		Kalmar		Blekinge	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
0-19	11.6 / 12.4		11.5 / 12.1		11.1 / 11.8	
20-39	12.0 / 13.1		11.0 / 11.8		11.5 / 12.9	
40-59	13.1 / 13.7		13.5 / 14.0		13.3 / 13.7	
60-	13.1 / 10.1		14.3 / 11.8		14.0 / 11.7	

The largest cities in the south-east – Växjö, Kalmar and Karlskrona – are better off concerning this deficit, partly because of the existence of a university or a university college, but also because the larger labour markets of these cities attract more people.

Education

The level of education is somewhat lower in the southeast of Sweden compared with the average for the country. In Sweden, as in most other ERB-countries women have a higher level of education than men.

Table: Amount of women and men with higher education divided by region (%) (2002)

Level of education	Kronoberg		Kalmar		Blekinge	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Higher edu.	17.2 / 14.3		15.1 / 12.1		16.5 / 15.4	

The choices of young people regarding their education are very traditional. Despite many efforts to influence students to make untraditional choices, the process of change is practically going in the other direction. Fewer men choose studies within the fields of education, health and social

security, whereas fewer women choose technical studies. This trend starts very early in childhood and gets more accentuated with age and choice of higher education.

Labour market

Also the labour market is strongly segregated according to sex. In Sweden there is a large public sector with responsibility for health, social security and education. About 50 % of all women work in the public sector while only 18 % of the men do so.

The rate of gainfully employed is high in Sweden, 79 % for women and 84 % for men (2001). Nearly half of all women work part-time primarily when their children are small. On the contrary men work most hours per week when they are in the age of having small children!

The unemployment rate in Sweden was (1 Jan 2003) 5,6 % - 4,8 for women and 6,4 for men.

	Kronoberg			Kalmar			Blekinge		
	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total
Unemployment rate	4,1	4,7	4,4	5,1	6,5	5,8	6,2	7,8	7,0

In Sweden there are many different activities available for unemployed people arranged by the society. The table above doesn't include these people.

The county of Kronoberg has one of the lowest unemployment rates in Sweden. This fact is mainly due to a tradition of many small enterprises. The county of Karlskrona, however, has a long tradition of big manufacturing companies and naval activities and many efforts are taken to stimulate the start of private enterprises. The county of Kalmar has a tradition of agriculture and forestry that has led to a big share of food- and wood-industries.

In Sweden women earn approx. 82 % of what men do. This is partly a consequence of the fact that many women work part-time and that women generally hold lower positions than men. When including these facts in the analysis, women still earn app. 8 % less than men!

Entrepreneurship

In Sweden 25 % of all companies are owned by women and women start 30 % of the newly started companies. Women mostly start companies within the areas of personal service and small trade, while men start companies mainly in the areas of industry and building. Consequently there is a big potential for enterprising among women. Many efforts are made to stimulate entrepreneurship among women.

Influence and power

Whereas the share of women and men in the Government is equal, the situation on regional and local level is not that good.

Table. Number of women and men in political bodies

	Blekinge		Kalmar		Kronoberg	
	F	M	F	M	F	M
County Council						
- delegates	20	27	28	35	20	25
- board	6	9	4	11	5	10
Regional Council	14	19	19	58	-	-
County Adm. Board	5	4			6	6

The low share of women at top-level positions in the economy counts as a big problem even if the situation is slowly getting better. Only 16 % of the members of the managerial groups in the private sector are women. Women hold only 9 % of the seats in the boards of 335 companies quoted on the stock exchange. This is an increase of 3 percent-units since 2002! The Government aimed at a share of 40 % women in these boards 2003. The Minister of Gender Equality has started a discussion about introducing a quota system in case the situation will not get better. The situation in the counties in the Southeast is even worse than the average for the country. Here the male tradition is stronger than in the big cities.

Health and reproduction

The average life length expectancy year 2001 in Sweden was 82 years for women and 78 for men. The expected life-length for men is increasing quicker than for women.

The fertility rate in 2001 was 1,6 children per woman and 1,4 children per man. This year a slight increase in births can be noticed.

Sweden has a good system for parental leave when children are born and when they are ill. In total, parents are entitled to stay at home with the children 480 days, of which 390 days are with payment of 75 % of the salary (up to a certain limit). The parents can "use" these days until the child is eight years old. Two months are reserved for each parent. Fathers "used" only 14 % of these days in 2001. When children are ill parents can stay at home 120 days per child and year.

Violence against women

Extensive work has been carried out during the last 10 years, to prevent violence against women. In the year of 2002 nearly 25.000 crimes (violence against women) were reported to the police. The number of crimes never reported is estimated to be around five times higher! There are women shelters run by women NGO in nearly all Swedish municipalities.

Conclusions

The author has been a specialist on gender issues since 1995 and is of course coloured by this in the way that all un-equalities get very obvious. Even if Sweden is counted as the most gender equalised country in the world, there are many problems that need to be taken care of. As being well aware of the situation in Sweden, you can hardly see Sweden as a country where gender equality is already realised.

The Southeast of Sweden, together with many other parts outside the big cities, struggle with a decreasing population. When working with regional development a main issue is to look upon the life conditions (work, having a family, recreation, service, culture etc) for both women and men.

The traditional view on the roles of men and women are hard to change. You always run the risk of a backlash the minute you stop the work of gender equality. You can always hope that the young generation will have a different attitude.

Analysis and conclusions

Similarities between the regions regarding gender equality

If you look generally on the gender equality situation in the whole ERB-region there are many conditions that are common between all member-regions. There was no surprise to find out a general conclusion regarding the situation in the ERB-region.

There is no gender equality in the ERB-region. The situation differs between the regions, but the difference is more in degree than of character!

The state of or the lack of gender equality is of course dependent on many factors, but the following are the *most obvious ones and they are also similar in all member regions*:

- The labour market is heavily segregated by sex, both vertically and horizontally.
 - Women have lower positions with lower salaries and less influence on working-conditions as well as on the development of the society.
 - Women and men work in different spheres of the labour market. Women mainly work in the fields of education, health, social welfare and small trade. Men mainly work with technical issues.
- The segregation is obvious when it comes to choices of education. The choices of education made by women and men are of course also the main reason for their choices of profession.
- The situation when it comes to people's opportunities to find jobs and suitable education is a better in towns than in rural areas. It also seems like women are the most exposed.
- A common threat to development in many areas, mainly rural ones, is a deficit of young people and mostly young women.
- Women run enterprises to a lower extent than men; in average one third of the new companies are started by women. Women also tend to run smaller companies than men and in the "traditional" women sectors.

- The economic and political power lies mainly in the hands of men. The top-positions in the big companies are held by men and this is certainly true in all member-regions. When it comes to political power the situation is slightly different.
- In all regions women have the main responsibility for the family and the home. This means staying at home with small and sick children as well as having the responsibility for the smooth running of the everyday life of the family. It also means taking care of elderly relatives although this is more the case in the Baltic countries and Poland.
- A common and growing problem is violence against women. The measures taken to prevent this violence differ between the countries although the consciousness about the problem nowadays is "there".
- Prostitution is a problem the whole ERB-region has in common, but the official "view" differs between the countries.

Interesting observations regarding the gender equality situation

Do women and men in the ERB-regions live in the same society?

Even if there were women who did not recognise a problem most of the women interviewed (and also other women met), deeply and overwhelmingly agreed upon the gender un-equality existing in society! Many felt discriminated upon and also heavily burdened by the main responsibility for the home and family. Some of the younger women though, told about a shared responsibility for the children!

If one compares these views given by women with most of the men you have to ask yourself: "Are women and men really living in the same society?"

Traditional sex roles

Even if the existence of traditional sex roles is present in all ERB member regions, you still can notice some differences between the countries.

It seems like Poland is the country where the tradition has greatest influence on the conception of how women and men should live their lives. The Catholic Church is very strong and especially its view on family planning and abortions is a very controversial issue. Many people, mostly older men, seem to mix this problem with gender equality and feminism. The Polish view within the field of reproduction of course has a big influence on the lives of women and men and is also a big contributing cause to the existing traditional sex roles in Poland.

Even if Lithuania is to the majority a catholic country the views on contraceptives and abortions are a lot more liberal compared with Poland.

The absence of insight or willingness to admit the problem of gender equality

This absence or un-willingness was observed to different extent in all ERB-regions. Most astonishing was the – to some degree – un-awareness met in Bornholm, as Denmark once was a leading country when it came to gender equality. During most interviews there was an unwillingness to admit problems regarding gender equality – of course this can be a consequence of the fact that gender equality already is or is experienced as realised in many areas.

This attitude was most common among men, but also some women didn't want to talk about problems. In one case a woman politician after some time of discussion said that of course there was no gender equality and women have to be a lot more ambitious than men to succeed. She also said that there are so many other problems to solve in society that she just had to struggle on.

Many interviewees started to say that there was no real problem and that the prerequisites for gender equality is given in the Constitution. When further questions were asked many admitted that there are some problems but they were mainly the result of traditional sex roles. "It's in the minds of people and it's difficult or take a long time to change."

The absence of men in the gender equality work

This is a problem all over the world. Perhaps it's natural because the common view on gender equality is that men will have to sacrifice and women will gain. Even in Sweden where gender is an accepted issue there is a lack of men in the practical work. This condition was obvious in all other ERB-regions, although a slight difference was noticed in the Kaliningrad region – at least in the interviews there were many men who had a big interest in this issue.

Young people

Certainly young people in all ERB regions have a different view on gender equality than older people. There are groups of students everywhere interested and studying gender issues. In Kaliningrad a group of students at the Baltic Academy and their teachers were working at a web site about gender. Their purpose is to inform and start a debate. The web site will

also be available in English! It's obvious that development work concerning the future must involve young people whose future is being influenced and decided upon!

Statistics

The lack of statistics segregated by sex is a problem as this is a prerequisite of making analyses and conclusions about gender equality. An analyses based on sex is essential for receiving adequate information about how women and men live their lives. As women and men on average live separated lives, it is obvious that a statistical average hardly show anything. Its value is significant for neither women nor men. Of course, accessible sex segregated statistics is not enough. You also need methods how to use it and of course realise gender analyses!

Want to – but don't know how

Among the interviewees who acknowledged a problem, many gave expression for the feeling that they of course want gender equality but they do not know how to do it. It seems like education and development of working methods are needed at all levels in society.

Recommendations and suggestions

The following recommendations and suggestions can be divided into two parts, which of course work together in achieving the aims of the Seagull project:

- Activities that contribute to a more gender equal society in general or specifically for different regions. Such activities of course are of importance for achieving results in the Seagull project.
- Activities that contribute to make the Seagull project qualitatively better and a JTDP that is sustainable and contributes to economic growth.

General suggestions and recommendations

- Raise the awareness of the importance of gender equality work by information, conferences, seminars and study-circles, education and networking. Politicians and higher official are important target groups.
- Improve the statistics and make it segregated by sex.
- Stimulate research in the area of gender equality and how it contributes to development and growth.
- Involve more men in the gender equality work. Both sexes gain from gender equality and both sexes are needed in the work.

- Support the formations of different networks, for instance for female politicians or for politicians interested in gender equality issues.

Suggestions and recommendations specially assigned to the Seagull project and the JTDP

- See to it that the *representation* of women and men is equal in decision-making and working groups and document the results.
- Develop and use *statistics* segregated by sex.
- The *project management* must be very clear about the importance of gender equality and see to it that decided measures really are carried through.
- All persons active in the Seagull project ought to have *education* about gender equality to certain degrees for different positions in the project.
- Give information about the necessity of developing the *social and cultural infrastructure* as well as the physical infrastructure.
- Make an in-depth study of how *clusters and innovation centres* also can be built up around "typical female" enterprises.
- Develop new, and use existing, *methods* on how to implement a gender perspective in development work.
- All *project proposals should be analysed* by how they affect women and men respectively. This should be documented.
- Consider – and if possible – *specify actions in the JTDP* that will contribute to gender equality and at the same time to a more positive regional development.
- Involve more *young people* in the project. For example the group of students in Kaliningrad who are eager to contribute to the Seagull-project. Use them and create groups of young people in the other regions. See to it that these groups don't work for themselves but are involved in the ordinary actions of the project.
- *Enterprising, especially among women*, seem to be a question of high priority in all member regions. Develop and support networks of entrepreneurs and specially see to it that the interests of women are considered. Use obtained experiences from other realised projects aimed at promoting entrepreneurship, especially entrepreneurship among women. Some examples are Business consultants for women, FEM research programme, Micro-credits for women, Resource Centres mainly for women.

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Ms Paulina Szczepanik, Sopot Institute for Social Research

Ms Ewa Kaminska, Council of the Non Governmental Organisations

Mr Brunon Synak, President of the Pomeranian Parliament

Ms Ewa Dargiewicz, Warmia-Masuria region

Ms Bożena Wrzeszcz-Zwada, member of the Board of Warmińsko-
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Mr Vladimir Bagalin – Constitutional judge, Ex (Former) Chairman of the Committee for Order and Security, International and Interregional relations

Ms Irina Gercik – Chairman of Regional NGO ” League of women’s voters of Kaliningrad region”

Ms Ludmila Zelinska – Chairman of standing committee on social policy and public health of Kaliningrad Regional Duma

Ms Ludmila Sokolovam – Deputy Head of Labour and Social Development Department of Kaliningrad Regional

Ms Natalija Lasskaja – Teacher of Baltic State Academy

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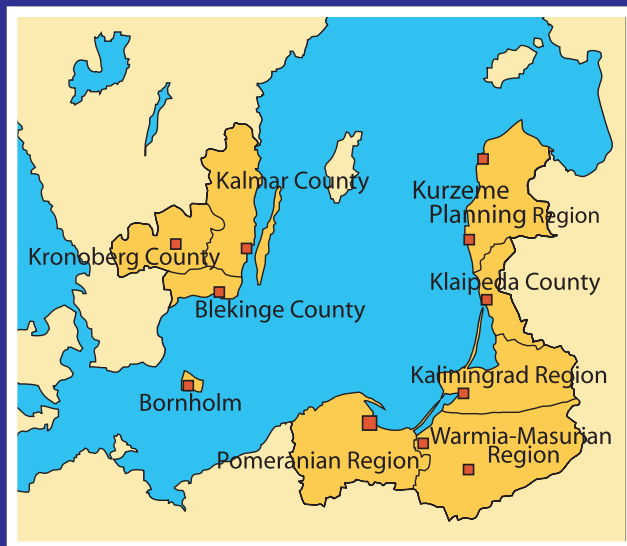
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Seagull is a project for the Euroregion Baltic (ERB) with the main purpose of developing and anchoring a long-term strategy and a joint transnational development programme (JTDP) for the region. The programme will form the basis for future investments in the environment and infrastructure, for building networks of innovative environments such as science parks, for development and cooperation of industrial clusters in the region, etc. It will thereby contribute to social, economic and environmentally sustainable development throughout the region.

www.eurobalt.org



This Seagull Report gives an overview of the current conditions regarding gender equality and how gender issues are perceived and worked with throughout the nine member regions of Euroregion Baltic.



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