

BREAK GENDER STEREOTYPES, GIVE TALENT A CHANCE

Review of the national situation for the purpose of
the workshop in SLOVAKIA

2009



Document produced in the framework of the Contract "Renewal n. 1 of VC/2007/0350 - Raising the awareness of companies about combating gender stereotypes", commissioned by the European Commission to the International Training Centre of the ILO in partnership with EUROCHAMBRES.

The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission. Neither the Commission nor any person acting on its behalf is responsible for the use that might be made of the information contained in this report.

Review of the national situation for the purpose of the workshop in SLOVAKIA

This document is supported by the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (2007-2013). This programme was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment and social affairs area, as set out in the Social Agenda, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy goals in these fields.

The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

The programme has six general objectives:

- (1) to improve the knowledge and understanding of the situation prevailing in the Member States (and in other participating countries) through the analysis, evaluation and close monitoring of policies;*
- (2) to support the development of statistical tools and methods and common indicators, where appropriate broken down by gender and age group, in the areas covered by the programme;*
- (3) to support and monitor the implementation of Community law, where applicable, and policy objectives in the Member States, and assess their effectiveness and impact;*
- (4) to promote networking, mutual learning, identification and dissemination of good practices and innovative approaches at EU level;*
- (5) to enhance the awareness of the stakeholders and the general public about the EU's policies and objectives pursued under each of the policy sections;*
- (6) to boost the capacity of key EU networks to promote, support and further develop EU policies and objectives, where applicable.*

For further information, see: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress/index_fr.html.

The information contained in this document does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.

Copyright © European Commission

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	2
1. STATISTICS	3
2. SITUATION AND STEREOTYPES	5
2.1. Women in the Labour Market	5
2.2. Occupational Segregation	6
2.3. The Role of SMES	10
2.4. Gender Stereotypes	11
3. SUCCESS STORIES	13
4. SUPPORT	15
ACRONYMS	17

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Statistical data	3
Table 2: Country Segregation Index	6
Table 3: Concentration of men and women in sectors of activities	6
Table 4: Occupational patterns of women's and men's employment	7
Table 5: Distribution of managers by sex in EU Member States (%)	8

FOREWORD

Does the European economy manage to make full use of its human capital?

The purpose of this document is to stimulate discussion of the above question from the perspective of gender equality.

This document has been prepared in the framework of “Raising the awareness of companies about combating gender stereotypes”, an EC initiative commissioned by the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, under a contract managed by the International Training Centre of the ILO in partnership with the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry (EUROCHAMBRES).

The initiative, which involves Chambers of Commerce and SME organisations in all EU Countries, along with Iceland and Norway¹, aims at helping SMEs discern how overcoming gender stereotypes can have a positive impact on productivity and competitiveness.

The country reviews do not aim to provide an exhaustive picture of gender issues in the labour markets of the countries concerned. They aim rather to enrich with country-specific information the tools which the initiative offers to all those engaged in improving SME competitiveness and productivity. They provide comparable statistical data and qualitative information on the different ways in which women and men enter into, and make progress in, employment and occupations in the various countries. They contain information on existing legislative provisions, public and private initiatives, and good practice. Suggestions on the impact of gender stereotypes are also provided, to initiate dialogue and action at enterprise level.

The final aim is to offer concrete suggestions on how SMEs in the selected countries can overcome gender stereotypes and tap into the business potential of applying gender equality principles in practice.

¹ In 2008: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain. In 2009: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, United Kingdom

1. STATISTICS

Table 1: Statistical data

Demography and Employment	SLOVAKIA			EU27		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
1. Total population 2007 (figure in '000)	2,618	2,775	5,393	241,652	253,437	495,090
(Figure in %)	48.5	51.5	100.0	48.8	51.2	100.0
2. Life expectancy at birth 2005 (%)	70.1	77.9		75.4	81.5	:
3. Fertility rates 2005 (%)	1.25			1.51		
4. Employment rate 2007 (%)	68.4	53.0	60.7	72.5	58.3	65.4
5. Unemployment Rate 2007 (%)	9.9	12.7	11.1	6.5	7.8	7.1
6. Activity rate 2007 (%)	75.9	60.8	68.3	77.6	63.3	70.5
7. Youth unemployment rate 2007 (%)	20.4	20.2	20.3	15.2	15.8	15.5
8. Long term unemployment rate 2007 (%)	7.4	9.3	8.3	5.6	6.6	6.0
9. Part-time work 2006 (%)	0.8	3.2	1.9	4.4	25.8	14.4
10. Employees 2007q04 ('000)	1,108	968	2,076	97,869	86,205	184,074
11. Self-employment 2007q04 ('000)	179	54	233	15,543	7,423	22,966
12. Entrepreneurs 2007q04 ('000)	57	20	77	7,587	2,375	9,963
13. Average hourly pay 2002 (in €)	2.40	1.70	2.08	13.79 ^c	10.40 ^c	12.56 ^c
14. Gender Pay Gap in unadjusted form 2006 ^e	22			15		
14.bis Gender Pay Gap in unadjusted form 2007	23.6			17.4		
15. Participation in decision-making 2007						
National Parliaments (%)	81	19	100	76	24	100
President in largest publicly-quoted companies (%)	80	20	100	97	3	100
Member of highest decision-making body in largest publicly quoted companies (%)	76	24	100	90	10	100
GEM Value 2007	0.630			:		
GEM Rank 2007	33			:		
16. Graduations of women and men in tertiary education 2004						
ISCED 5 (%)	43.1	56.9	100	40.8 ^c	59.2 ^c	100 ^c
(Ratio Women/Men)	1.3			1.4 ^c		
ISCED 6 (%)	55.0	45.0	100	56.8 ^c	43.2 ^c	100 ^c
(Ratio Women/Men)	0.8			0.8 ^c		
17. Single-headed households, 2005 (%)	3	5.7		14 ^c	14 ^c	
18. Children in childcare aged 0-2 years, 1-29hrs/30+hrs 2006 (%)	1/4			14/12		
19. Children in childcare aged 3 to mandatory school ages, 1-29hrs/30+hrs 2006 (%)	10/63			44/40		

NOTES: a - 2004, b - 2005, c – EU25, e - Estimation, g – The Pay Gap is the difference between men's and women's average gross hourly earnings as a percentage of men's average gross hourly earnings (for paid employees), p - Provisional, : - No data

Sources:

1: Eurostat Database

2, 3: Eurostat News Release, "A statistical illustration of the situation of women and men in the EU27", 32/2007, March 2007 and UNDP, Human Development Report 2007/08, Table 1

4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 European Commission, *Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines including indicators for additional employment analysis, 2008 compendium*

10, 11, 12: Eurostat Database

13: Eurostat, «Salaires bruts en Europe, Principaux résultats de l'enquête sur la structure des salaires 2002», *Statistiques en bref, population et conditions sociales*, 12/2005, Communautés européennes, 2005

14 : European Commission, *Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines including indicators for additional employment analysis, 2008 compendium*

14 bis: European Commission, *Report on equality between women and men 2009*

15: European Commission, DG EMPL, Database on women and men in decision-making and the Human Development Report 2007/2008 (for the GEM rank and value)

16, 17: European Commission, *The life of women and men in Europe – A statistical portrait*, Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2008

18, 19 (EU27 data): *staff working document accompanying the Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Implementation of the Barcelona objectives concerning childcare facilities for pre-school-age children* (COM (2008) 598).

2. SITUATION AND STEREOTYPES

2.1. WOMEN IN THE LABOUR MARKET

When one compares the share of economically-active women as a proportion of the total economically-active population in Slovakia with the same measure for the EU27 as a whole in 2007, the percentages are very similar: 45.1% for the former and 45.75% for the latter. Moreover, in Slovakia the percentage has been relatively stable since the 1970s;² the country's socialist past, with its centrally-planned economy, had this gender-related impact on the Slovak labour market.

As of 2007 the rate of women's employment in Slovakia lagged behind the EU27 average by 5.3 percentage points and also behind the goals set by the Lisbon Strategy (by 7 percentage points). Slovakia thus finds itself among the countries with the lowest rate of female employment in Europe. Furthermore Magdaléna Piscová, the editor of *Slovakia on the Way to Gender Equality*, states that the Slovak "women's employment rate has gone down slightly in recent years primarily because of longer occupational training and a slight increase in the number of women on maternity or parental leave" (p. 83).³

The female unemployment rate in Slovakia in 2007 exceeded the male unemployment rate by 2.8 percentage points, confirming a trend that started with the 1989 Velvet Revolution. The same goes for the female long-term unemployment rate. Part of the reason for this difference lies in the long-term inflexibility of the country's labour market which makes it difficult for Slovak women (who typically are the main family carers and household managers) to enter, re-enter or remain in the labour market.⁴ The very scarce availability of part-time jobs is reflected in the fact that in 2006 only 3.2% of women in Slovakia were working part-time (as opposed to 25.8% in the EU 27). Unusually long parental leave (3 years), the fact that it is almost exclusively women who take it, and the related lack of viable childcare facilities (especially for children of under three years of age) all contribute further to high female unemployment and long-term unemployment rates in Slovakia. But most strongly at risk of long-term unemployment in Slovakia - along with women following parental leave - are women of over 40 years of age.⁵

The gender difference in the youth unemployment rate cannot be explained by young women's lack of education. Indeed in 2004 Slovakia had 13.8 % more female tertiary education (ISCED5) graduates than male and, in this respect, was also above the EU27 average.

2.2. OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION

The Slovak labour market remains highly segregated and there are important gender differences between occupations and economic sectors. The rates of gender segregation in Slovakia are higher than the EU

² Bútorová, Zora et al., eds., *Ona a on na Slovensku: Ženský údel očami verejnej mienky*, Focus, Bratislava, 1996, p. 86.

³ Piscová, Magdaléna, ed., *Slovakia on the Way to Gender Equality*, European Roma Working Agency and Institute for Sociology SAS, Bratislava, 2006, p. 83.

⁴ For more information on this, see the final report on the research undertaken in 2008 by the Institute for Labor and Family Research available (in Slovak only) at:

http://www.sspr.gov.sk/texty/File/vyskum/2008/Bodnarova/Rodinne_potreby_zamestnancov.pdf

⁵ Piscová, Magdaléna, ed., *Slovakia on the Way to Gender Equality*, European Roma Working Agency and Institute for Sociology SAS, Bratislava, 2006, p. 92.

averages, standing at 22.4 for economic sectors and 29.5 for occupations, as indicated in Table 2 below. These indices measure gender segregation in the labour market; the higher the value of both indices, the higher the segregation bias against women.

Table 2: Country Segregation Index⁶

	Gender segregation in occupations	Gender segregation in economic sectors
Slovakia	29.5	22.4
EU27	24.9	17.8

Source: European Commission, *Indicators for monitoring the Employment Guidelines including indicators for additional employment analysis 2008 compendium*, pp. 52-53.

In 2005 men were mainly employed in construction, land transport, public administration, metal products, agriculture and the retail trades. Men's employment is less concentrated in a small range of sectors of activity than is the case for women. When compared to other EU countries, the concentration of men is particularly high in construction and land transport. Women are mainly found in education, health and social work, retail trade, public administration, hotels and restaurants and business activities. It is worth noting the low proportion of women working in typical male sectors such as construction, land transport, industry and agriculture. The above data suggest that work-related gender stereotypes exist in Slovak society which leads large numbers of women and men to specific educational and career choices. From the analysis in chapter 2.4 one can list the following stereotypes: "women are natural carers and like to serve the others; women are better suited than men to working with small children; women are better at communication; men are better drivers; men are better suited than women for such jobs which (one assumes) demand physical strength; men, unlike women, have a talent for technical matters".

Table 3: Concentration of men and women in sectors of activity (NACE 2 digit)⁷

% of women employed in:	SK	EU25	% of men employed in:	SK	EU25
Education	12.7	11.4	Construction	15.8	13.0
Health & Social work	12.6	17.2	Land transport	6.7	4.2
Retail trade	12.1	12.5	Public administration	6.2	7.2
Public administration	7.9	7.3	Metal products	5.2	3.1
Hotels & restaurants	5.6	5.1	Agriculture	5.0	5.2
Business activities	3.5	7.3	Retail trade	4.1	6.3
Manufacture food & beverages	3.0	2.2	Business activities	3.8	6.1
Wholesale trade	2.5	2.6	Wholesale trade	3.2	4.1
Agriculture	2.4	3.8	Education	3.1	3.8

⁶ The concentration of men and women in different occupations and economic sectors is measured with an occupational segregation index. Gender segregation in occupations is calculated as the average national share of employment for women and men applied to each occupation; differences are added up to produce the total amount of gender imbalance expressed as a proportion of total employment. Gender segregation in economic sectors is calculated as the average national share of employment for women and men applied to each sector; differences are added up to produce the total amount of gender imbalance expressed as a proportion of total employment.

⁷ NACE is an international classification of economic activities. The digits indicate the level of disaggregation. ISCO is an international classification of occupations: the higher the value, the greater the level of disaggregation.

Other service activities	2.0	2.6	Machinery	3.0	2.7
Cultural & sporting activities	1.9	2.1	Hotels & restaurants	2.6	3.4
Financial intermediation	1.8	2.2	Vehicle sale & repair	2.5	3.2
Construction	1.3	1.5	Manufacture food & beverages	2.4	2.5
Private households	0.7	2.3	Health & Social work	2.2	4.0
Top 6	54.8	60.8	Top 6	42.9	41.9

Note: Persons aged 15 years and over. No distinction is made between private and public sectors. The top six relate to the EU average which may not coincide with the top six in each country. In the adaptation the sectors have been ordered according to the importance of the sector in the country, but some important sectors might not appear.

Source: Adapted from "The concentration of women and men in Sectors of Activity", *Statistics in Focus publication (Population and Social Conditions, 53/2007 - NACE 2 digit)*, and for a comparison with EU aggregated data see "European Business: Facts and figures 2008", ISBN 978-92-79-07024-2 available from the Eurostat web page.

The next table shows how the top occupational groups for women differ from those for men. In 2005 women were concentrated in fewer occupations than men, not only in Slovakia but in most countries of the EU25. Women generally perform traditionally "feminine" (and badly paid) roles, for example administrative associate professionals, shop salespersons, care and domestic workers, along with work in housekeeping and restaurant services and as nurses and midwives. In comparison to the EU25 data, Slovakia has a particularly large number of women working in administration and in stores. Conversely, men predominantly work as building frame workers, motor vehicle drivers, physical and engineering science technicians and building finishers – jobs that are frequently described as "physical" and "technical". Their concentration in these professions is, in each of the above listed jobs, higher than the EU25 average.

According to the 2009 report on equality, Slovakia has a large gender pay gap of 23.6 % (table 1, 14bis).⁸ It should furthermore be added that the gender pay gap becomes progressively wider as one move up the hierarchy.⁹ This gender income gap can be attributed *inter alia* to the fact that women account for the majority of employees in feminised low-paid sectors and occupations (see above), while employers tend to prefer male applicants for the better-paid and sometimes more socially-prestigious positions.

Table 4: Occupational patterns of women's and men's employment (ISCO 3 digit)¹⁰

% of women employed as:	SK	EU25	% of men employed as:	SK	EU25
Administrative associate professionals	10.3	4.4	Building frame & related trades workers	7.4	4.7
Shop salespersons & demonstrators	10.2	8.0	Motor vehicle drivers	7.1	5.2
Domestic & related helpers, cleaners & launderers	5.4	7.6	Physical & engineering science technicians	4.6	3.6
Housekeeping & restaurant services workers	5.3	3.9	Building finishers & related trades workers	4.2	4.0
Nursing & midwifery associate	4.5	2.6	Managers of small enterprises	3.6	4.4

⁸ For national data and comment on the increasing pay gap: Filadelfiová, Jarmila, 'Rodová priepasť: Čo nehovoria štatistiky a výskumné dáta o odmeňovaní žien a mužov', *Aká práca, taká pláca?: Apekty rodovej nerovnosti v odmeňovaní*, Aspekt, Bratislava, 2007, p. 22.

⁹ Barošová, Margita, *Monitoring rodovej segregácie na trhu práce – analýza dopadov transformačných zmien*, Inštitút pre výskum práce a rodiny, Bratislava, 2006, p. 97.

¹⁰ ISCO is an international classification of occupations. The digits also indicate the level of disaggregation: the higher the value, the greater the level of disaggregation.

professionals					
Personal care & related workers	4.1	6.6	Machinery mechanics & fitters	3.6	3.5
Managers of small enterprises	2.2	2.9	Production & operations department managers	2.6	2.6
Finance & sales associate professionals	1.6	2.9	Shop salespersons & demonstrators	2.3	2.6
Secretaries & keyboard-operating clerks	1.4	3.7	Finance & sales associate professionals	1.9	3.3
Other office clerks	0.3	5.2	Architects, engineers & related professionals	1.4	3.1
Top 6	40.1	35.6	Top 6	30.5	25.5

Note: The top six relate to the EU average which may not coincide with the top six in each country. In the adaptation the occupations are ordered by the importance of the sector in the country, but some important occupations might not appear.

Source: Adapted from “The concentration of women and men in Sectors of Activity”, *Statistics in Focus, Population and Social Conditions* 53/2007.

As the table below shows, the proportion of female managers in Slovakia is less than half that of male managers and, further, decreased by 3.5% between 2001 and 2006. To some extent this reflects the prevailing social stereotype which postulates that men are, for various reasons, better suited for leadership and managerial positions than women.

Table 5: Distribution of managers by sex in EU Member States – 2001 and 2006 (%)

	Women	Men	Women	Men
	2001		2006	
Slovakia	31.2	68.8	27.7	72.3
EU27	30.1	69.9	32.6	67.4

Note: EU aggregate for 2001 is the value for EU-25 and not EU-27.

Source: Adapted from the *Report on equality between women and men*, pp.32. (European Commission, 2008. ISCO 12 and 13).

2.3. THE ROLE OF SMEs

The number and significance of SMEs in Slovakia increased in the first half of the 1990s and was an important manifestation of the transition of Slovakia's economy¹¹. In recent years SMEs accounted for up to 99% of all the country's enterprises when micro-enterprises are included in the final total.¹² When micro-enterprises are excluded the number decreases to approximately 14% of small firms and 3% of medium-sized firms.¹³

Furthermore SME entrepreneurship in Slovakia accounts for almost one-half of Gross National Product and creates job opportunities for more than two-thirds of all workers.¹⁴ The country's SMEs generate approximately 27% of exports¹⁵. Their biggest concentration is in the country's capital, with the Trenčín, Trnava, Žilina and Košice regions following.¹⁶ Sector-wise, most Slovak SMEs conduct business in foreign trade, commercial services and the financial sector, industry and construction.¹⁷

One of the most important sources of institutional support for SMEs is the National Agency for the Development of Small and Medium Entrepreneurship which, among other activities, produces annual reports on the situation of SMEs in Slovakia. This agency has repeatedly stressed the essential role of SMEs in the country, above all in the areas of job creation and regional progress.¹⁸ Where Slovak SMEs lag behind, in comparison to older EU Member States, is in the areas of innovation and life-long learning.¹⁹

According to SME Union – Slovakia, the biggest drawback for SME success is their under-capitalisation which, to a large extent, is determined by the conditions under which they originated. On the other hand their flexibility, in contrast with large enterprises, can be listed as one of their main assets.²⁰ The most recent public discussion on SMEs in Slovakia focused on the introduction of the Euro and the onset of the world financial crisis.

SMEs in Slovakia could find an interesting source of motivation, in the context of the introduction and successful realisation of gender equality programmes, in their ability to participate in the "Family Friendly Employer" contest. This has been organised by the Slovak Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family since 2000. The contest includes a special category targeted at small and medium companies entitled: "The Most Original SME Measure in Support of Family and Equal Opportunities."

Women heading and owning small and family firms in Slovakia have the possibility of networking as members of the organisation entitled "The Association of Women in Entrepreneurship". They can also take

¹¹ <http://leonardo.fiit.stuba.sk/Web/index.php?id=121&lang=sk&res=980>. Access: 28 Apr 2009.

¹² <http://leonardo.fiit.stuba.sk/Web/index.php?id=54&lang=sk&res=980>. Access: 28 Apr 2009.

¹³ Matulová, Slávka, et al., *Návrhy na zvýšenie kvality BOZPv mikropodnikoch, malých a stredných podnikoch*, Inštitút pre výskum práce a rodiny, Bratislava, 2007, p.10.

¹⁴ Národná agentúra pre rozvoj malého a stredného podnikania, *Stav malého a stredného podnikania 2006*, Národná agentúra pre rozvoj malého a stredného podnikania, Bratislava, 2007, p. 5.

¹⁵ http://www.sme-slovakia.sk/SME_importance.shtml. Access: 28 Apr 2009.

¹⁶ <http://leonardo.fiit.stuba.sk/Web/index.php?id=123&lang=sk&res=980>. Access: 28 Apr 2009.

¹⁷ Národná agentúra pre rozvoj malého a stredného podnikania, *Stav malého a stredného podnikania 2006*, Národná agentúra pre rozvoj malého a stredného podnikania, Bratislava, 2007, p. 23.

¹⁸ Národná agentúra pre rozvoj malého a stredného podnikania, *Stav malého a stredného podnikania 2006*, Národná agentúra pre rozvoj malého a stredného podnikania, Bratislava, 2007, p. 7.

¹⁹ <http://leonardo.fiit.stuba.sk/Web/index.php?id=121&lang=sk&res=980>. Access: 28 Apr 2009.

²⁰ http://www.sme-slovakia.sk/SME_importance.shtml. Access: 29 April 2009.

part in the contest entitled: “The Businesswoman of Slovakia” which was introduced in 1999 and still exists today.

2.4 GENDER STEREOTYPES

Gender stereotyping is a form of categorisation of what it means to be male or female; for example, what roles, occupations and work are deemed appropriate to women and men, often based on traditional attitudes; and inaccurate generalisations arising from perceived restrictions in choice for men and women. It diminishes the opportunities for women and men in the workplace, and reinforces inequalities experienced by women in access to resources, power and respect.

One of the most recent proofs that work-related gender stereotypes still exist and affect the way in which the Slovak labour market functions can be found in the results of a representative survey taken in 2006 under the project OD IS EQUAL *Slovakia on the Way to Gender Equality*. In the survey, 44.7% of the respondents agreed with the statement that “*the role of men is earning money, and the role of women is to take care of the house and family*”.²¹ 25% of respondents expressed the conviction that it was “men certainly” (38.3% chose the phrase “*men somewhat*”) who had an advantage over women in the Slovak labour market.²² 29% of the survey participants responded that when it came to wages or pay for work, preference was given to “*men certainly*”, whereas 45.7% stated that preference was given to “*men somewhat*”.²³ When asked about the sporadic or repeated personal experience of being at a disadvantage *vis-à-vis* one’s male colleagues, 61% of female respondents answered in the affirmative compared with only 30,4% of men.²⁴

The respondents of the above survey viewed access to secondary and tertiary education as unproblematic gender-wise.²⁵ However, the statistics showing the numbers of male and female students studying in particular fields at universities in Slovakia clearly indicate the persistence of certain gender stereotypes linked to young people’s educational choices. Thus in 2006 37.8% of all Slovak university graduates in the field of social sciences were women, whereas only 3% of women took a degree in natural and agricultural sciences and only 6% in technical sciences and IT.²⁶

In 2006 the Institute for Labour and Family Research carried out a representative research on sexual harassment and mobbing at work. The results revealed that 39.2% of all working women in Slovakia directly experienced either mobbing or sexual harassment or both.²⁷ Furthermore general public awareness of and sensitivity towards the issue proved to be quite low, indifference and ambivalence being the main attitudes of the Slovak population.²⁸

An older representative survey from 1995 entitled “A Woman in the Family, Work and Society” reflects

²¹ Bahna, Miloslav, ‘Gender Equality and the Labour Market in Slovakia. Report on a Representative Survey’, *Slovakia on the Way to Gender Equality*, European Roma Working Agency and Institute for Sociology SAS, Bratislava, 2006, p. 45.

²² Id., p. 54.

²³ Id., p. 55.

²⁴ Id., p. 61.

²⁵ Id., p. 77.

²⁶ Piscová, Magdaléna, Miloslav Bahna and Milan Zeman, *Podoby ženy*, Bratislava, Sociologický ústav SAV, 2008, p. 20.

²⁷ Holubová, Barbora, *Sexuálne a šikanózne obťažovanie žien na pracovisku: Prieňik do reprezentatívnych dát, prípadové štúdie a prevencia*, Inštitút pre výskum práce a rodiny, Bratislava, 2007, p. 4.

²⁸ Id., p. 4.

revealing information on the Slovak population's attitude to gender and leadership. When asked about their preferences concerning the sex of their superiors or managers, 40% of women respondents and 51% of male respondents viewed men as more acceptable.²⁹

3. SUCCESS STORIES

PROJECTS:

In 2001-2002 "Family Entrepreneurship in the Kysuce Region", produced by the Association of Women in Entrepreneurship, focused on the provision of incentives for and support to new female entrepreneurs at regional level, particularly in the area of (agro)tourism.³⁰

SMEs:

Winners of the contest "Family-Friendly Employer" – SME category:

1) Tatrakon Poprad

- Equal representation of women and men in top and middle management
- absence of discrimination against older women and women with higher education (i.e. balanced structure of men and women in the company, both age-wise and education-wise)
- gender-fair remuneration
- gender-fair recruitment
- gender-fair professional development and career growth
- educational activities which take work/life balance issues into account
- active approach in the area of employees' (and their families') activities
- existence of the non-discriminative company culture which is, further, enhanced by the company's Ethical Codex³¹

2) BK Group, Piešťany

- complex employee care, in particular in the area of financial allowances, gift certificates and financial bonuses for relaxation, sport and cultural activities, covering different expected and unexpected life situations (child birth, death in the family, natural catastrophes, social assistance in special cases)³²

3) Microsoft Slovakia, Bratislava

- support of employees' family life: regular family day with rich cultural programme as a form of networking and a way of introducing employees' family members into the life of the company
- flexi passes which can, for instance, be used for the purchase of a family vacation
- possibility for the employee's partner and children to use the services of a private medical centre
- accident and life insurance with the coverage in the amount of two annual employee salaries
- affirmative action³³

²⁹ Bútorová, Zora et al., eds., *Ona a on na Slovensku: Ženský údel očami verejnej mienky*, Focus, Bratislava, 1996, p. 94.

³⁰ <http://www.zzvp.sk/index.php?mod=page&id=124>. Access: 28 April 2009.

³¹ Barošová, Margita, *Participácia mužov a žien v rozhodovacích pozíciách*, Inštitút pre výskum práce a rodiny, Bratislava, 2007, pp. 33-34.

³² <http://www.employment.gov.sk/index.php?SMC=1&id=11248>. Access: 29 April 2009.

³³ Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, *Ústretovosť zamestnávateľov k rodine a rodovej rovnosti: Bulletin z medzinárodnej konferencie a slávnostného vyhlásenia výsledkov šiesteho ročníka súťaže Zamestnávateľ ústretový k rodine*, Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, Bratislava, 2007, p. 44.

4. SUPPORT

As a Member State of the EU, Slovakia is of course subject to both the primary and secondary “equal opportunity” legislation of the EC (**EC Treaty, The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, relevant EC Directives**).³⁴ As Monika Čambálíková jr. notes, the legislative and regulatory framework of the Slovak Republic is more or less compatible with EC legislation in the sphere of gender equality (p. 190).³⁵

The **Constitution of the Slovak Republic** stated that “Fundamental rights and freedoms are guaranteed to all persons, regardless of their, inter alia, sex and also guaranty that nobody can be harmed, advantaged or disadvantaged on the basis of his/her sex” (p. 193).³⁶

In compliance with the EU requirements, Slovakia also passed **The Anti-Discrimination Act** on May 20 2004 (Act no. 365/2004 Coll.), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of, among other categories, sex, and also provides legal definitions of discrimination (including its direct and indirect forms, harassment and sexual harassment, etc.).

Within the Slovak legislation relating to the area of equal opportunities for women and men and the principle of non-discrimination, the following can be listed (this information is taken from Čambálíková, jr., pp. 193, 198 and slightly supplemented):³⁷

SPHERE OF OCCUPATION:

Act no. 311/2001 Coll., Labour Code, as later amended

Act no. 5/2004 Coll. on Employment Services, as later amended

Act no. 312/2001 on State Services, as later amended

Act no. 552/2003 Coll. on Performance of Work in the Public Interest, as later amended

Act no. 553/2003 Coll. on Rewarding Some Employees when Performing Work in the Public Interest, as later amended

Act no. 308/1993 Coll. on Establishment of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights, as later amended

Act no. 125/2006 Coll. on Labour Inspection, as later amended

SPHERE OF SOCIAL SECURITY and PROTECTION OF MATERNITY AND PARENTHOOD:

Act no. 461/2003 Coll. on Social Insurance, as later amended

Act no. 195/1998 Coll. on Social Help, as later amended

Act no. 43/2004 Coll. on Old Age Pension Savings, as later amended

Act no. 650/2004 Coll. on Additional Pension Savings, as later amended

Act no. 580/2004 Coll. on Health Insurance, as later amended

Act no. 280/2002 Coll. on Parental Allowances, as later amended

Regulation of the Slovak Government no. 272/2004 Coll., as later amended

In addition to the above legislative support, one can add the existence of institutional support. In this respect the following institutions can be named:

³⁴ Čambálíková, Monika, jr. ‘Overview of the EC and the SR Legislation Regarding Gender Equality’, *Slovakia on the Way to Gender Equality*, European Roma Working Agency and Institute for Sociology SAS, Bratislava, 2006, pp. 183-85.

³⁵ Id., p. 190.

³⁶ Id., p. 193.

³⁷ Id., pp. 193, 198.

- Committee on Human Rights, Minorities and the Status of Women of the National Council of the Slovak Republic;
- Committee on Social Affairs and Housing of the National Council of the Slovak Republic (Commission on Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities);
- The Government Council of the Slovak Republic for Gender Equality;
- Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Department at the Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic;
- Slovak National Centre for Human Rights³⁸;
- Commission for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men at the Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic;
- The Public Defender of Rights;
- Slovak Women's Lobby;
- NGOs³⁹.

³⁸ For more info, see: OSI/ Network Women's Program, *Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (Overview): Monitoring Law and Practice in New Member States and Accession Countries of the European Union*, Open Society Institute, Budapest, 2005, pp. 100-01.

³⁹ For a tentative list, see <http://www.rovnopravnost.sk/adresar.html>. Access: 28 April 2009.

ACRONYMS

SK	Slovakia
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EU25	The 25 Member Countries of the European Union (from May 2004 to December 2006)
EU27	The 27 Member Countries of the European Union (as from January 2007)
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
NACE	Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSI	National Statistics Institute, Bulgaria
SME(s)	Small and Medium Enterprise(s)
UNDP	United Nations Development Program