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## **Moving Europe towards the Dual Breadwinner Model**

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## *Útdráttur*

Í skýrslu þessari er varpað ljósi á “nýja” hlið samrunaferilsins í Evrópu. Fjallað er um hvernig Evrópusambandið (ESB) hefur beitt atvinnustefnu sinni (European Employment Strategy) sem innleidd var árið 1997 til að þrýsta á samruna aðildarlandanna hvað varðar atvinnuþátttöku karla og kvenna á vinnumarkaði. Samruninn hefur að mestu falist í því að fyrirvinnuhlutverkið hefur færst yfir á konur, en karlar hafa það hlutverk ekki einir lengur (dual breadwinner). Aðildarlöndin hafa hins vegar ekki tekið á spurningunni um hvernig tryggja megi aukna hlutdeild karla í launaðri og ólaunaðri umönnun barna og aldraða. Auk þess hefur ekki tekist að draga verulega úr kynbundnum launamun, þrátt fyrir aukna menntun, atvinnuþátttöku og starfsreynslu kvenna. Fyrirvinnuhlutverkið er því kynskipt. Karlar vinna launaða vinnu og sjá fyrir fjölskyldunni á meðan konur vinna launaða vinnu og sjá um velferð fjölskyldunnar. Þróunin í átt til aukinnar atvinnuþátttöku kvenna hefur verið mishröð innan ESB, þar sem hún hefur m.a. mótast af ólíkri uppbyggingu velferðarkerfisins í aðildarlöndunum (path-dependency). Meginlandslöndin greiða t.d. í mun meira mæli en Norðurlöndin fyrir umönnun inn á heimilunum (t.d. Þýskaland og Austurríki) eða gera ráð fyrir að fjölskyldan sjái alfarið um umönnun og velferð fjölskyldumeðlima (Spánn og Ítalía). Þessi lönd eiga því í vaxandi mæli í erfiðleikum með að ná fram markmiðum ESB í atvinnu- og jafnréttismálum. Samruninn mun jafnframt taka langan tíma og verða umdeildur í löndum, þar sem ríkjandi pólitísk öfl eru ekki tilbúin að framfylgja markmiðum ESB í atvinnumálum.

The European Employment Strategy (EES)<sup>1</sup> is not only an interesting experiment with governance involving an open method of co-ordination instead of ruling by directives but also an important means to move equal opportunities to the centre of policy making within the European Union (EU). At the level of the EU, gender mainstreaming is a two-track strategy involving on the one hand special measures to improve the position of women and on the other hand integration of the gender perspective into all policies and measures implemented to improve the employment situation within the EU. Growth in women's employment rates across the member states is one of the main objectives of the EES. It is, at the same time, emphasised that measures to reduce gender gaps in, for example, pay and care of children should be implemented. The effectiveness of the EES in shaping labour markets in Europe is debated but women's employment has been growing in recent years leading to a greater convergence in women's employment behaviour across the member states. The EU has used the EES to move the member states towards the dual breadwinner model but the member states have, so far, made limited efforts to promote the dual earner and dual caregiver model.

In this chapter, the convergence pressures of the EES as concerns gender relations will be analysed. Thereafter, we will highlight the strengths and weaknesses of gender mainstreaming as applied in the EES. We will argue that the EU is using its decentralised policy co-ordination role and non-binding recommendations in the EES (1997) to push the member states towards policy convergence around the dual breadwinner model involving greater participation of women in paid work as well around a more individualistic notion of welfare which may have negative implications for women's employment in the future. The EES includes at the same time limited efforts to tackle and reach convergence around care-sharing among men and women which would require a

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<sup>1</sup> In the Amsterdam treaty (1997) a new Employment Title was adopted that committed the member countries to "high level" of employment. As a means to achieve this objective, the European Council and the European Commission establish annually Employment Guidelines (EEGs) involving four lines of actions or "pillars" to guide the member state policies on employment. The four pillars are entrepreneurship, employability, adaptability and equal opportunities. Since 1998, member states have been required to submit annually a NAP to the Commission indicating what measures it intends to implement under each of the four pillars. Every year, the Commission analyses systematically the NAPs and issues recommendations to the member states.

shift from family to individual right/responsibility in the tax, benefit and service systems of many of the member states. Measures to reduce gender gaps in hours of work and pay as well as the uneven representation of women and men across sectors and occupations in the EES have been scarce (see e.g. Council of the European Union 2001a: 35-39). In addition, the member states and the social partners have, so far, not managed to extend the scope of the EES to the local level by implementing gender mainstreaming at workplaces. In other words, insufficient efforts have been made to extend the EES from the supranational and the national levels to the local or workplace level.

### **I. Convergence**

One of the main priorities of the EES has been to achieve an overall employment rate of 70% and an employment rate of 60% for women in the EU by the year 2010. In 2000, only Denmark, Finland, Sweden and the UK had met both targets (see table 1 and Rubery et al. 2001a: 32). From 1997 to 2000, the difference between the lowest and the highest female and male employment rates narrowed. Hence, employment rates across the member countries have moved closer together since the introduction of the EES in 1997. The extent to which this convergence is due to the EES or to favourable economic conditions is, however, debated. During the period, the Nordic member countries and the UK had the highest female employment rate while Greece, Spain and Italy had the lowest female employment rate. If the absolute gender gap or the percentage difference between men's and women's employment rates is compared across the member states, a sharp North-South division prevailed during the period. Countries like Greece, Spain and Italy had the largest gender gap at the start and the end of the period while the Nordic member countries had the smallest gender gap. Moreover, the absolute gender gap became smaller across the member states or went from 19.7 percentage in 1997 to 18.5 percentage point in 2000 as women's employment grew faster than men's. Sweden was the only member country where the absolute gender gap had a small widening which was due to a greater growth in men's employment than women's employment. Hence, the behaviour of women within the EU has become closer to that of men at the same time as large differences exist across North and South Europe as concerns female employment.

**Table 1. Employment rates**

	<b>1997</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>absolute</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>absolute</b>
	<i>Men</i>	<i>women</i>	<b>gap</b>	<i>Men</i>	<i>women</i>	<b>gap</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	67.1	46.5	20.60	69.5	51.5	18.00
<b>Denmark</b>	80.5	69.1	11.40	80.8	71.6	9.20
<b>Germany</b>	71.9	55.3	16.60	72.8	57.9	14.90
<b>Greece</b>	72.1	39.3	32.80	71.1	40.9	30.20
<b>Spain</b>	63.4	33.6	29.80	69.9	40.3	29.60
<b>France</b>	67	52.4	14.60	69.3	55.3	14.00
<b>Ireland</b>	69.1	45.9	23.20	76.1	54	22.10
<b>Italy</b>	65.8	36.4	29.40	67.5	39.6	27.90
<b>Luxemburg</b>	74.3	45.3	29.00	75.1	50.3	24.80
<b>Netherlands</b>	78.3	57.4	20.90	82.4	63.7	18.70
<b>Austria</b>	76.8	58.4	18.40	77	59.4	17.60
<b>Portugal</b>	72.6	56.1	16.50	76.6	60.3	16.30
<b>Finland</b>	66.7	60.4	6.30	70.6	64.4	6.20
<b>Sweden</b>	71.1	67.7	3.40	74.8	71	3.80
<b>United Kingdom</b>	76.9	63.4	13.50	77.8	64.6	13.20
<b>EU15</b>	<b>70.4</b>	<b>50.7</b>	<b>19.70</b>	<b>72.5</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>18.50</b>

Source: *Employment in Europe 2001*

### *Hours of work*

The indicator on employment rates gives an incomplete picture of women's employment behaviour in Europe as it conceals different working time patterns across the member states. The absolute gender gap is wider if we use the full-time equivalent employment rates, which corrects for different hours of work but women work on average fewer hours than men in the labour market. Moreover, countries like the UK and the Netherlands perform worse if we change our indicator from employment rates (head counts) to full-time equivalent employment rates. The reason is widespread part-time work among women with young children in the UK and the Netherlands but these countries do not have extensive public provision of childcare. According to information from Eurostat, the Netherlands, Luxemburg, Germany and the UK have the highest share of voluntary part-time work (European Commission 2001: 70). Visser (2002: 34) claims, however, that Dutch women see the choice to work part-time as a progress compared with the

alternative of withdrawal. If the absolute gender gaps in full-time equivalent employment rates are compared, then the Nordic countries continue to have the smallest gender gaps. Among the countries with the largest gender gap are now continental countries like the Netherlands and Luxemburg as well as Greece and Spain. The absolute gender gaps were also much smaller across the Nordic countries than the rest of the member countries. From 1997 to 2000, the group of countries having the best and the worst performance as concerns this indicator did not change. The three Nordic countries had the smallest absolute gender gaps at the start and the end of the period while Spain, Luxemburg, the Netherlands and Greece had the widest. Hence, we can conclude that the member countries are on different development paths towards the dual breadwinner model. The Nordic countries are, for example, progressing towards a dual breadwinner model involving a full-time employment of men and women while other continental countries are moving towards a dual breadwinner model where men are full-time workers and women part-time workers, especially those with young children. The movement from the male-breadwinner model to the dual breadwinner model will depend on the institutional “stickiness” and the political conditions prevailing in the continental countries.

**Table 2. Full-time equivalent employment rates**

	<b>1997</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>Absolute</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Absolute</b>
	<i>Men</i>	<i>women</i>	<b>Gap</b>	<i>Men</i>	<i>women</i>	<b>Gap</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	67.1	40.5	26.60	74.4	46.6	27.80
<b>Denmark</b>	76.9	59.7	17.20	76.9	62.2	14.70
<b>Germany</b>	70.6	45.2	25.40	71.1	46.1	25.00
<b>Greece</b>	72.3	37.8	34.50	71.5	40	31.50
<b>Spain</b>	62	30.3	31.70	69	36.6	32.40
<b>France</b>	67.2	46.1	21.10	69.2	48.7	20.50
<b>Ireland</b>	67	39.3	27.70	75.8	45.2	30.60
<b>Italy</b>	64.7	34.3	30.40	67	36.7	30.30
<b>Luxemburg</b>	75	41.3	33.70	75.9	44.6	31.30
<b>Netherlands</b>	71.7	36.6	35.10	74.6	40.1	34.50
<b>Austria</b>	75.9	51.3	24.60	76.2	51	25.20
<b>Portugal</b>	72.8	53.1	19.70	76.6	57.1	19.50
<b>Finland</b>	63.5	55.5	8.00	69.3	60.5	8.80
<b>Sweden</b>	67.3	56.7	10.60	70	60.2	9.80
<b>United Kingdom</b>	73.1	48	25.10	74.4	49.7	24.70
<b>EU15</b>	68.7	42.6	26.10	71	45.3	25.70

Source: *Employment in Europe 2001*

### *Institutional dependence*

Institutional diversity is the main reason for the different development paths towards the dual breadwinner model. In countries where current institutional structures are based on the unpaid care work of women or cash-for-care provisions, the convergence towards the dual breadwinner model will involve a full-time male worker and a part-time female worker. The family provides care for children and the elderly in countries like Spain and Italy where women's employment rates are the lowest in Europe (see Esping-Andersen 1999 and table 1). Austria and Germany use cash-for-care schemes in the form of an extended parental leave to enable parents to care for young children at home (Leitner 2000; Mósesdóttir 2001a: chapter 3). These cash-for-care schemes reinforce the male breadwinner model or men's full-time work, as the payments are in most cases lower than is being paid for low-paying jobs in the labour market. Hence, the parent with the higher income (men in most cases) does not have a real choice as to whether he/she makes use of this right. (Leira, 1999: 272). Moreover, long and unpaid care leave place twice the burden of care on female workers due to the forgone earnings during the leave and to increased difficulties of re-entering the labour market (Bettio et al. 1998: 24).

In Europe, women take on the burden of reconciling work and family life by interrupting their employment during periods of work-intensive child bearing and rearing and then returning to the labour market as part-time workers. The traditional work pattern of, for example, German women is paid employment, marriage, withdrawal when children are born and then re-entry six or more years later. When women re-enter paid employment they generally enter into part-time work. Only educated women appear to be able to make the transition from housewife status to part-time and then to full-time work (see discussion in Mósesdóttir 2001a: chapter 3). In all the Nordic countries (Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) except for Finland, women increased their hours of work from 1996 to 2000 such that their employment pattern over their life cycle is approaching that of men (see OECD 2001: 209-224). A common characteristic of these countries is that the proportion of young children in publicly subsidised childcare is among the highest in Europe (see Bettio et al. 1998).

### *At the disposal of political will*

The convergence towards the dual breadwinner model will be controversial, contradictory and proceed over a long time in countries where the ruling parties are unwilling to adhere to the employment priorities of the EES as these contradict with their national agenda. There are signs of diminishing political support for the equal opportunity efforts in countries like Austria and Denmark after a conservative government has taken over from a social democratic government. The conservative government in Denmark has, for example, abolished the Knowledge Centre for Equal Opportunities two years after the previous social democratic government established it. Moreover, the council claims that the member countries placed less emphasis on the Equal Opportunities Pillar in 2001 than in previous years, especially in countries where gender equality has been weakest. According to the Council, the member states should concentrate their efforts on the following issues; equal pay, adequate care facilities and lifelong learning (Council of the European Union 2001a: 33-39). The effectiveness of the EES depends on how committed governments are to the implementation of the employment priorities presented every year in the European Employment Guidelines (EEGs). This dependence on the acceptance of ruling parties in the member countries is one of the main weaknesses of the EES. Since the introduction of the EES in 1997, social democratic governments have been a dominant political force in Europe. After recent elections in Italy, Denmark, the Netherlands and France, a shift towards a more conservative or right wing Europe has taken place. How favourable conservative and/or right wing governments will be to the implementation of the EES remains to be seen. In addition, employers have shown limited interest in the EES, which may make the implementation of the EEGs difficult in countries where the trade unions have been traditionally weak.

To conclude, the development towards the dual breadwinner model is path-dependent as it is influenced by the main characteristics of divergent welfare models (Mósesdóttir 2001a: chapter 5 and Pierson 1995). The method of open co-ordination at the same time as institutional diversity is permitted has prevented a full convergence among the



member countries around the dual breadwinner model. In other words, the EES is not able on its own to destroy the North-South divisions as concerns gender gaps in the employment rates since these are partly due to national-specific institutional conditions. However, the EES is pressuring countries towards convergence such that the distance between the different development paths of the member countries is becoming smaller. The speed at which the member countries are converging towards the dual breadwinner model will depend on the economic, political and social development within the particular country (see also Mósesdóttir 2001a: chapter 5 and 2000).

## **II. Gender Mainstreaming**

The weaknesses and the strengths of gender mainstreaming as applied in the EES will now be discussed since this approach has been used to pressure member countries towards a policy convergence around the dual breadwinner model. It was in 1999 that the Council recognised the need to mainstream equal opportunities across all four pillars (1. employability, 2. entrepreneurship, 3. adaptability and 4. equal opportunities) of the EEGs by introducing gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming is a product of transnational lobbyism of women's groups and national states at the level of the UN and the EU to ensure gender equality (see Mósesdóttir 2001b; True 2001). In the EEGs, gender mainstreaming is a two-track strategy involving on the one hand special measures for the advancement of women (listed pillar 4 of the EEG) and on the other hand the integration of the gender perspective into all policy areas (pillars 1, 2 and 3 in the EEG). So far, gender mainstreaming has been more prominent in pillar 1 than in pillars 2 and 3 (Rubery et al. 2001a: 49). The aim of the equal opportunities in the EES is to promote gender equality by: reducing gender gaps (unemployment, employment, gender segregation and pay); enabling the reconciliation of work and family life (flexible work arrangements and good quality child care); facilitating re-integration into the labour market. The objective is in other words to achieve equal position of men and women in the labour market.

Every year, there is a greater awareness in the EEGs that gender equality can only be achieved with the active involvement of different actors and with multiple measures implemented at the supra, national, regional and local levels. According to the Council '(S)ome progress has been made on implementing gender mainstreaming in terms of co-operation mechanism and gender impact assessment tools, but a comprehensive approach<sup>2</sup> is still lacking in most member countries' (Council of the European Union 2001a: 36). Since the implementation of the EES in 1997, the Council has made number of recommendations concerning equal opportunities to the individual member states. Austria has, for example, been asked to improve the gender gap in employment; Spain and Luxemburg have been requested to increase the female employment rate; Denmark, Finland and Sweden have been asked to find ways to reduce occupational and sectoral segregation; UK and Germany have been singled out as those countries that need to reduce the gender pay gap; UK has also been requested to improve the quality of childcare provision (Rubery et. al. 2001a: 2).

### *The meaning of gender mainstreaming*

Scholars have debated whether gender mainstreaming is "integrationist" involving the introduction of a gender perspective into existing policy process without challenging existing policy paradigms or "revolutionary" leading to a fundamental change in structures, processes and outcomes (see e.g. Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000; Verloo 2001). In the Nordic countries, gender mainstreaming has been perceived more as an integrationist approach while continental feminists tend to highlight its revolutionary potential in countries where gender equality has not been a political priority (see e.g. Behning and Serrano Pascual (eds.) 2001). In our view, gender mainstreaming is an instrument to reform policy processes in order to achieve transformation of prevailing gender relations. The main advantage of gender mainstreaming is that it pressures the EU and the member states to take a holistic view of gender (in)equalities involving different actors, institutional levels and measures. Gender mainstreaming has, for example,

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<sup>2</sup> 'Comprehensive here refers to measures covering consultative systems with gender equality bodies, including at regional level, gender impact assessment procedures for new legislation, provision of indicators and statistic, awareness raising in the form of information, training, surveys and other innovative approaches.' (Council of the European Union 2001:36)

highlighted the need to involve the social partners in efforts to reduce gender inequality, especially at the national, sectoral and the workplace level. The wage formation system is, for example, the single most important factor contributing to variations in the gender pay gap across countries. Gender mainstreaming is a well-suited instrument to be applied by governments and the social partners to reform policy processes within the wage formation system to reduce the gender pay gap. France has already announced that a law on occupational equality will soon be implemented requiring social partners to bargain over equality issues (Rubery et al.2001a: 71). Finally, scholars studying gender equality in Sweden, claim that further progress in gender equality depends to a large extent on whether changes in the culture of the workplaces will take place (Mósesdóttir 2001b; Haas and Hwang, 1999: 55). The social partners can use gender mainstreaming as a tool to change processes underlying gendered workplace cultures as it takes systematic account of differences in the situations of men and women and mobilises resources to reform the current conditions.

#### *Sanctions not allowed*

One of the main weaknesses of the EES is that it does not allow sanctions to ensure continuous progress towards gender equality. The EES involves what the political scientist call “soft law” or guidelines and recommendations as opposed to “hard law” or directives (see the discussion of Goetschy and de la Porte and Pochet in this publication). The member countries cannot be punished for failing to implement a “soft law” such that the member states have repeatedly been able to ignore recommendations made by the council as concerns equal opportunities. Moreover, disagreement among the social partners over measures to increase adaptability or flexibility and transparency at the workplace will inhibit a successful implementation of measures to enhance gender equality. Fathers in Iceland would, for example, not have gained their independent right to 3 months of paid paternal leave if had been left to the social partners to negotiate a longer parental leave as they could not come to an agreement. It was not until the Icelandic government felt pressured to implement the Directive on Parental Leave (96/34/EC) that a solution acceptable to all parties was found. The solution was to give men 3 months of paternal leave and women 3 months of maternal leave. The parents

could then divide additional 3 months between themselves (see Eydal 2001). Moreover, information about pay developments at the firm level is difficult to obtain without a legal obligation forcing them to provide such information. Moreover, legal obligation does not ensure on its own that employers act upon such information and implement measures to reduce the gender pay gap. Hence, the legal obligation must force employers to act upon information revealing gender gaps in pay. Another major weakness of gender mainstreaming as applied in the EES is that it is a policy approach. The focus is therefore not on non-policy areas such as how to achieve more equal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work among men and women which is essential if EES is to achieve more than some reductions in gender gaps or equalisation of men's and women's position.

### *Supply-orientation*

A closer look at how the member countries have applied gender mainstreaming in the EES reveals that it has mainly been understood in terms of activation. In other words, the member states have focused their attention on removing barriers preventing women from combining work and family life (Behning and Serrano Pascual eds. 2001). According to the Council, measures implemented by the member states to promote gender equality have had limited impact on the overall situation (Council of the European Union 2001a: 35). Most initiatives undertaken by the member states involve facilitating reintegration of inactive women to a lesser extent unemployed women (see also Rubery 2001a 4). Moreover, the EES has mainly focused on supply side factors such as women's lack of skills, the benefit and tax systems, care arrangements to a much greater extent than demand side factors such as lack of good jobs and employers' discriminatory practices (Mósesdóttir 2001b; Rubery 2001b). Demand deficiencies have not been the focus of the EES due to lack of co-ordination or a link between economic and employment policies at the EU level. Demand deficiencies have been more pressing than supply deficiencies in countries like Sweden and Finland where women's employment rates are already high. Falling public sector employment and insufficient employment growth in the private sector during the 1990s have contributed to these demand deficiencies (Mósesdóttir 2001a: chapter 3). Hence, the EES has not addressed the most pressing labour market

problems in all of the member states, which explains why it does not have a very prominent role in countries like Sweden (see e.g. Mósesdóttir 2001b).

The main drawback of gender mainstreaming as applied in the EES is that it neglects on the one hand the need for a change in men's behaviour and on the other hand the public-private division of rights and responsibilities, especially that of care work. By focusing on women's supply deficiencies, the EU and the member countries have avoided the sensitive question of how to reach a more equal distribution of paid and unpaid work between men and women. The member states have mainly focused on changing the behaviour of women and not the behaviour of men. The EES does, for example, not confront the question of how to get men to do more unpaid and paid care work. In the EEG for the year 2002, it is stated that the member states' policies "...should address all relevant conditions, such as men assuming domestic responsibilities" (Council of the European Union 2002/177/EC, 60/68). The EEG does, however, not include recommendations about how this could be achieved. Several studies show that men want to have a greater role in the care of their children. Over 80% of Icelandic and Swedish men use, for example, their right to paternal leave but few men are willing to extend their leave if it involves considerable drop in their pay (Mósesdóttir 2001a: chapter 3 and Eydal 2001).

#### *Dual care model*

Men need to be actively encouraged to take on unpaid care and domestic work if women's activation is not to lead to escalation of their workload, especially in light of the growing number of elderly people in need of care in Europe. In 1995, men spent on average 3 hours per week on care for small children and others in the EU while women spent 12.6 hours. The gender gap in domestic care work is smallest in countries such as Denmark and Sweden where women's employment rates are very high (Rubery et al. 2001b). Moreover, the EES needs to recognise that men have to change their job orientation to a greater extent than women if the distribution of men and women across sectors and occupations is to become more equal. When the Council recommends that countries like Sweden and Finland reduce gender segregation in their labour markets it

does, for example, not acknowledge that the share of women in male-dominated occupations is greater than the share of men in female-dominated occupations. Moreover, gender segregation is high in countries with high female employment, as some of the unpaid care work has been moved from the household to the formal economy where it has become paid work but remained female-dominated. In Sweden, welfare services in the public sector have been the main source of growth in paid employment and women have become the predominant group in “care” occupations that were previously performed in the household. Hence, gender segregation is higher in Sweden than in countries where these tasks are performed by women outside of the formal occupational structure of the labour market (Mósesdóttir 2001b).

#### *Public-private division*

The gender mainstreaming in the EES has not only been criticised for paying insufficient attention to the need for a change in men’s behaviour but also for not addressing the public-private division of rights and responsibilities. Countries showing lack of progress as concerns gender equality have been identified as countries with very little collective care for children and the elderly (Esping- Andersen 1999). Moreover, only four EU countries (Sweden, Finland, Denmark and France) have childcare services covering more than one third of small children. Hence, the gender gap in employment rates are more pronounced among parents with a young child (0-6 years) as women with young children tend to reduce their hours of work while fathers in many countries increase their hours of work (Rubery et al. 2001b: xii-xiv). The Nordic countries have demonstrated greater commitment to gender mainstreaming than other member countries but the institutional structures in these countries support near to full-time employment of women. An important drive behind the expansion of institutional care was the political consensus to meet over demand for labour in the 1960s by encouraging and enabling women to participate in paid work instead of allowing temporary immigration of foreign workers as was the case in West Germany (Mósesdóttir 2001a: chapter 3). Countries, which have received a policy recommendation to promote or continue gender mainstreaming efforts, are Greece, Germany, Italy, Spain and Luxemburg (Council of the European Union 2001b). A common feature of these countries is that the care of the elderly and children is

the responsibility of the family with or without the support of the state. Hence, the EES will not achieve a convergence around a dual breadwinner model involving gender equality in paid and unpaid work as it does not propose ways to reorganise the public-private division of care that ensures equal distribution of work between men and women and high quality services.

The need to address the private-public division of rights and responsibilities in the EES is becoming more pressing due to greater trade openness or globalisation and the spread of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The move towards what the EU calls the Knowledge-Based Society (KBS) will require a shift in the role of the welfare state away from providing some basic welfare towards establishing knowledge-based welfare or incentives for individuals to engage in life-long learning to reduce their risk of unemployment. In the EES, the responsibility for life-long learning lays with the individual. The question of how the costs of life-long learning should be shared between the individual, the firm and the state is not addressed in the EES, although people with insufficient skill levels are unlikely to have the resources to acquire the “right” kind of education and training. Moreover low skill workers in the EU face increasing difficulties in finding jobs at the same time as there exist skill mismatches and skill bottlenecks in the public and private sectors (see e.g. European Commission 2001: 45-50). The motivation of individuals to engage in life-long learning and social cohesion will be affected by the way costs are distributed among the different beneficiaries. Moreover, the transition towards the KBS will intensify pressures on individuals to be constantly crossing the boundaries between paid work, education and private life, which increases the risk of social exclusion of weak groups (see Serrano Pascual and Crespo 2001). Hence, women’s disadvantaged position in European labour markets needs to be counteracted if a shift towards the dual breadwinner model and a more personal responsibility of individuals to earn their right to work is not to lead to greater gender inequality.

### **III. Promoting dual care and dual earning**

In the EU, women's part-time work is widespread and increasing for both men and women. In 2000, 30% of employed women in Europe worked part-time while the ratio for men was only 6% (OECD 2001: 224). Women's greater engagement in unpaid work, especially care work, is the main reason for this gender gap in hours of paid work. The employment rate of women with young (0-6 years) children in all the member states is, for example, lower than that of women without children while the opposite is true for men. Men with young children even work longer full-time hours than employed men without a young child. The growth in women's employment has been followed by an increase in atypical part-time work. In some labour markets, there has been a trade-off between employment growth and quality of employment. In other words, female employment grew in some instances because women were more likely to accept lower quality jobs and in particular part-time jobs and not because of diminishing gender inequalities. Moreover, women face penalties as concerns promotion and pay if they allow care work to interfere with their working life (Rubery et al. 2001a and 2001b). Europe has moved away from the male breadwinner model with a full-time employed man and a housewife to a dual breadwinner model where men continue to work full-time and women work part-time work. The extent to which this pattern exists varies across the member states. As already mentioned, the hours worked by women are approaching that of men in the Nordic countries while women work very short hours in, for example the UK and the Netherlands (Warren 2000 and Visser 2002). In other words, the EU is far from attaining a model in which men and women participate equally in paid and unpaid work.

The unequal division of paid and unpaid work entails that men's and women's contribution to the household's earnings is unequal and we are still far from seeing a dual earner model arising in Europe (see e.g. Warren 2000). Moreover, women's greater educational attainment and participation in paid work has not led to corresponding increase in their contributions to the household earnings. According to information from Eurostat, the number of women employees in industry and services has risen by much more than that of men at the same time as the differential in earnings has narrowed only



slightly. Moreover, women's average earnings were more than 85% of men's in only four countries – Belgium, Denmark, Luxemburg and Sweden. In none of the countries did the average level exceed 90%. Portugal, Greece and the Netherlands were at the same time at the bottom of the ranking by the size of the gender pay gap (Clarke 2001). The gap in men's and women's earnings may be attributed to different occupational structure of men and women or to the concentration of women in low paying jobs (UK) or the undervaluation of female-dominated work (Nordic countries). As pointed out by Warren (2000), we need to differentiate between different classes of women when evaluating the form of the bread winning model. Warren found in his study of earnings in Denmark and the UK that high earning women had earnings very close to that of their partners in both countries. Hence, high earning women in these countries had moved closest to an equal partnership model. Women in part-time work had, on the other hand, low earnings and men were bringing home the 'family wage'. In every member state there exists on the one hand dual earner household consisting of two high earning individuals and on the other hand one-and-a-half earner households involving male breadwinner and a female secondary earners. In other words, the extent to which Europe have moved towards the dual breadwinner, dual earner and dual care model differ across the member states as well as within the member states.

## **Conclusion**

As a means to enhance the competitiveness and sustainable economic growth in Europe, the EU has used the EES to push the member countries towards a more equal participation of men and women in paid work. Since 1997, the employment rates across the member states have moved closer together but a sharp North-South division exists. Women's employment is much closer to that of men in the North while large gender differences in the South of Europe. Hence, the member states are on different development paths towards the dual breadwinner model and the convergence pressures of the EES are leading to a reduction in the distance between various the paths. The method of open co-ordination at the same time as institutional diversity is permitted has prevented a full convergence among the member countries around the dual breadwinner model. Convergence around a dual care and dual earner model has, so far, not been the main objective of the EES. The EU has stepped up its pressures on the member states to tackle these deficiencies through its commitment to gender mainstreaming involving a holistic approach to gender (in)equalities. Measures to promote dual care and dual earner model will, however, reveal the inherent contradictions between EU's equal opportunity policies and its social policies governed by the principle of subsidiarity which delegates responsibilities to the lowest possible level or to the family in case of care of children and the elderly. A commitment to this principle makes it difficult for the EU to adjust the public-private division of responsibilities to its employment objectives in the EES or to reach a convergence around a dual breadwinner, earner and caregiver model.

Equal opportunities have been a part of the EES since its implementation in 1997. The Council recognised in 1999 the need to mainstream equal opportunities across all four pillars of the EEGs by introducing gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming is an instrument to reform policy processes in order to achieve transformation of prevailing gender relations. The main advantage of gender mainstreaming is that it pressures the EU and the member states to take a holistic view of gender (in)equalities involving different actors, institutional levels and measures. One of the main weaknesses of the EES is that it does not allow sanctions to ensure continuous progress towards gender equality. Hence, member states have repeatedly been able to ignore recommendations made by the council

as concerns equal opportunities. Moreover, the EES has mainly focused on supply side factors such as women's lack of skills, the benefit and tax systems, care arrangements to a much greater extent than demand side factors such as lack of good jobs and employers' discriminatory practices. By focusing on women's supply deficiencies, the EU and the member countries have avoided the sensitive question of how to reach a more equal distribution of paid and unpaid work between men and women. The main drawback of gender mainstreaming as applied in the EES is that it neglects on the one hand the need for a change in men's behaviour and on the other hand the public-private division of rights and responsibilities. Men spend, for example 4 times less time on unpaid care than women and care occupations are very female dominated in most member states. The question of how the costs of life-long learning should be shared between the individual, the firm and the state is not addressed in the EES, although people with insufficient skill levels are unlikely to have the resources to acquire the "right" kind of education and training. Moreover, women's greater educational attainment and participation in paid work has not led to corresponding increase in their contributions to the household earnings. The gap in men's and women's earnings may be attributed to different occupational structures of men and women or to the concentration of women in low paying jobs (UK) or the undervaluation of female-dominated work (Nordic countries). The extent to which Europe has moved towards the dual breadwinner, dual earner and dual care models differs across the member states as well as within the member states.

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