

"PYRAMID OR PILLARS"

UNVEILING THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN ARTS AND MEDIA PROFESSIONS IN EUROPE"

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME
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**Human Resources Agenda:
Diversity through Equality in European Cultural Labour Markets**

**based on recommendations from the 2nd European Expert Meeting
Women in Arts and Media Professions
30 September to 2 October 1999, Hamburg, Germany**

Preamble

There is a rumour spreading around that the next millennium belongs to women. In fact, this rumour is well founded. As we approach the end of this century, we can find more women participating in political arenas, labour markets and educational structures than ever before. While such progress must be recognised, we must be careful not to be seduced by a rose tinted view of women's position in our society.

The culture and media sectors have been recognised as agents of socialisation and of change. Clearly, these sectors are part of a larger mechanism influencing and influenced by the various changes in society such as economics, labour markets, politics and social or ecological systems. The position of women working in the arts and media sectors can, therefore, be considered a significant indicator in determining the state of societal development.

About the Human Resources Agenda

In the past 20 years the size of the cultural labour force has grown exponentially. This growth has been largely due to the increase in the number of women in these sectors. General changes in the structures of the industries (expansion in production and distribution of new media), legislative changes and smaller policy interventions have been some of the factors which have led to the greater number of women participating in these labour markets. While it is true that significant inroads have been made, when taking a closer look at the details of women's working conditions and professional status, we find that a great deal of work is required if goals towards equality remain our focus.

The Human Resources Agenda is one of the main outcomes of the European Expert meeting on Women in Arts and Media Professions, held at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater, Hamburg, Germany from the 30 September to the 2nd October 1999. The expert meeting was organised by ERICarts and the Zentrum für Kulturforschung and was supported under the EU 4th medium term action programme for equal opportunities and the German Federal Ministry for Women, Youth and Seniors. Over 50 participants representing the arts, culture and media sectors from 12 European countries worked together to produce the following agenda which addresses employment policies, training and education, the social and economic status of women as well as political strategies for equal opportunities.

In order to avoid creating an atmosphere of apartheid, it is clear that such activities must be carried out by women and men together if real change is to be accomplished. This agenda is aimed at the European Commission, national, regional and local policy makers, practitioners and educators.

Human Resources Agenda:

Diversity through Equality in European Cultural Labour Markets

Developed by ERICarts in co-operation with participants of the 2nd European Expert Conference on Women in Arts and Media Professions

A. Cultural Labour Market Development in Europe

1. Cultural employment in Europe is distinguished by an increasing proportion of small businesses, outsourcing, self-employment, short term contracts and freelance work. This environment suggests that training programmes focusing on the development of business or entrepreneurial skills as well as career management would be valuable. A cross national study on the impact of changing employment patterns which examines specific social needs of all workers including pensions, health, maternity, child care etc, particular to this type of work, is required.

2. Employment hierarchies in culture and media institutions from both the public and private sector do not reflect diversity. According to the ERICarts study of women in arts and media professions across Europe, the journey to obtaining access to positions with decision-making powers or creative control passes through a number of gates or over hurdles. These passages are still to a great extent concentrated in the hands of men. While, progress towards women achieving senior level decision-making positions is on the rise, equality of presence is still far from being achieved. Two explanations have been offered including: 1) women are actively choosing to leave employment (particularly full time, permanent positions) because of their dissatisfaction with the workplace culture and 2) it is quite difficult for women to regenerate their careers following breaks to have children or engage in other social responsibilities. With regard to the latter, women re-entering the marketplace is not only a public policy but also industry efficiency issue which can be addressed through, for example, the implementation of re-training programmes, especially in the area of new technologies. Longitudinal research is required to track changes, specifically on developments of women's career paths – both formal and informal to help determine the specific reasons for the failure of employment hierarchies to integrate women in all levels of decision-making. A particular focus on two or three specific sectors such as new media, a musical field or cultural heritage over the next four to five years was suggested in order to take into consideration the diversity of issues within individual sectors themselves.

3. There is a high level of unpaid work carried out by professionals in the cultural sector. In fact, such "voluntary" work is mostly done by women and has become quite important for those who do not have traditional career paths. For example, we know that in fields such as libraries, women volunteers are the norm. Official recognition of this type of work would allow women to declare a level of expertise which they have obtained and is currently not considered in formal employment applications. Volunteer work as such, is an area which requires greater definition and investigation.

4. Is higher education becoming irrelevant in the cultural labour marketplace? Over the past ten years the growth in the number of female students is increasing and has reached proportional levels to the number of male students. In many arts, culture and media related courses, the number of female students is now exceeding the number of male students. There is evidence that females remain in academic institutions far longer than men and have acquired more graduate and post-graduate degrees. Male students are often dropped by companies before completing their studies.

In the ERICarts examination of women's professional employment status in the arts, culture and media, there emerged certain facts which are common across Europe: women's income level in comparison to men is on average 20-30% lower and their access to decision-making or other positions with creative control remains limited. These two facts do not reflect their qualifications and expertise. Is there a failure to allow women to progress to the extent that they ought to be able to given their qualifications and background of expertise or is there a shift in the criteria for employment which does not recognise skills acquired via higher education institutions? A closer profiling or skills audit coupled with an analysis of patterns of lower income would be required to determine the specific reasons for this situation.

5. Attitudinal problems remain the major obstacle in achieving a break through against gender discrimination in the work place. In order to help facilitate attitudinal change, specific activities could be organised around the theme of men and equal opportunities. Interesting cases about such an approach can be found in Sweden, Italy or Tenerife, for example.

B. Culture and Labour Market Policies in Europe

1. Equal opportunities legislation as a distinct area of employment policy making remains necessary today. It is clear that legislation and organisational policies on equal opportunities have been instrumental in helping women gain access to labour markets in the past twenty years. However, recent strategies focused on gender mainstreaming - aimed at integrating the principle of equal opportunity in all areas of policy making - have helped to create the perception that equal opportunities as a distinct and enforceable area of legislation is no longer required. The goal of gender mainstreaming to bring equality issues out of the margins and into the heart of policy making is laudable as a long-term strategy. However, specific agendas for equal opportunities will be necessary until there is evidence that women's presence in all spheres and at all levels of employment is the norm rather than the exception. Closer monitoring of culture and media organisations or institutions is required on an ongoing basis to determine whether, when and how gender mainstreaming policies should take over from specific equal opportunities programmes and legislation. This implies further investigation into the status of women in positions of creative influence or where they hold decision-making powers .

2. Public cultural policy debates need to reinstate focused consideration of the status of women working in the arts, culture and media. During the 1990s, cultural diversity and social exclusion have become priorities for public cultural policy makers. This shift has meant that questions regarding the status of women working in the arts, culture or media sectors have been implicitly dropped from policy agendas as evidenced in the UK or the Netherlands. In some countries, issues regarding women have been erroneously grouped with the new priorities of diversity, exclusion or minority rights. As women are not minorities, but in most cases "majorities", public policy debates and priorities on the status of women should be specifically reinstated.

3. Most organisations intent on pursuing gender mainstreaming still need to retain parallel, distinctly identifiable equal opportunities programmes. Moreover, successful gender mainstreaming depends on detailed organisational analyses and well-planned human resource strategies. The general concept of gender mainstreaming in employment policy as developed by the European Commission has until now been inadequately conceptualised, both in overall terms and specifically in relation to the needs of the culture, arts and media sectors. A serious approach to mainstreaming entails the adoption of a comprehensive set of strategies within organisations themselves 1) to raise

awareness about the "R"epresentation of women and men in decision-making bodies or positions; 2) to determine the allocation of "R"esources between men and women including time and space and not just economic resources and 3) to reflect on the norms and values ("R"ealia) which are used to make decisions in the organisation. A mechanism based on this three "R" method (already adopted by the Swedish local authorities) could be used to assess the activities of the cultural institution. The results could then be used to develop a mainstreaming plan to suit the organisations individual needs.

4. Accession countries to the European Union must comply with various guidelines and criteria prior to receiving member state status. Equal opportunities as part of the employment guidelines is one of those criteria. While an important development, these guidelines are being criticised for being too general and directed solely at the public sector whose status in such countries has decreased tremendously. In order to meet the expectations of the EU regarding equal opportunities, new, more specific, guidelines could be drawn up and made applicable many different public and private sector actors.

5. Tensions between culture, equal opportunities and labour ministries and their policies need to be resolved via co-operation on joint strategic plans to improve the professional status of women working in the arts and media.

C. Information and Communication

1. Statistical systems and categories used to collect data and information about employment are limited. There is a surprising and alarming need for official and organisational statistics to take a clear account of gender. In the ERICarts study, it was found that the increase in the labour market in the past 10 years has been due mostly to the increase of access to women in the arts, culture and media (sometimes by over 200%). Without gendered data, the impact of women's contribution and changes to organisational structures can not be determined.

2. Constant lobbying, careful monitoring and streams of information to the public about the professional status of women in the arts and media (eg. their poor representation in decision-making bodies or funding organisations, in higher teaching positions in universities or academies) does in fact make a difference as has been demonstrated in Germany as a result of over 10 years of research in this field or in Italy through the creation of Equal Opportunity bodies in every Ministry and state funded organisation. Acknowledging women's contribution to the arts and culture through their inclusion in textbooks is one way of securing a permanent record about their achievements and to provide "positive role models" for future generations. Additional resources on the European, national, regional or local levels to support such activities are required. Initiatives should not only focus on raising awareness among the public at large, but also directed toward women practitioners themselves as many do not realise the inequalities they face in labour market and are just happy that they have a job.

3. Information and communication about women's achievements in the arts, culture and media sectors remains necessary for the time being despite fears of marginalisation or ghettoisation of women's work. Collections of such work via Women's Museums or resource centres of Women in Music (of which there are now 27 throughout Europe), have been able to refute myths such as "there are no works of women available" or "women's work must be of lesser value/quality if they have not been able to participate in mainstream cultural institutions or the marketplace in general". Such venues have allowed works by women to be displayed and viewed by the general public – a right which is not necessarily guaranteed to them and can be considered as strategies as first steps

towards integrating the work of women into the mainstream.

D. At the European level

1. A clearly stated gender consideration in European cultural policy and practice does not exist and is required, for example in the new Culture 2000 programme.
2. There is insufficient promotion or dissemination of information on EU culture or media calls for tender or regarding the European Structural Funds. Most artists (and especially women) have little experience or knowledge in applying for Commission funding. Greater transparency is required.
3. European funding should not be focussed solely on large-scale projects undertaken by established public institutions or bodies, but on smaller grass roots projects and groups which are influential agents of change and are currently not adequately funded.
4. There is a lack of continuity within the European Commission. A more efficient system of following through from activities undertaken previously is required in order to avoid duplication and the re-initiation of projects and processes over and over again (eg. Pack and Vaz da Silva reports published by the Culture Committee of the European Parliament on the culture sector). In this context, recommendations made by projects supported by the Commission need to be taken more seriously into consideration.