



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

Distr.: General
22 June 2007
English
Original: English/French

**Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of
Discrimination against Women**

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under
article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms
of Discrimination against Women**

Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of States parties

Belgium*

* The present report is being issued without formal editing.

For the initial report submitted by the Government of Belgium, see CEDAW/C/5/Add.53 which was considered by the Committee at its sixth session. For the second periodic report, see CEDAW/C/BEL/2 which was considered by the Committee at its fifteenth session. For the combined third and fourth periodic report, see CEDAW/C/BEL/3-4 which was considered by the Committee at its twenty-seventh session.



Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Preliminary Comment: The Belgian Institutional Context	4
II. Features of the Policy of Gender Equality	4
III. Synthesis of the measures designed to implement the various articles of the Convention and to respond to the recommendations formulated by the CEDAW Committee	8
Article 1	8
Article 2	9
Article 3	15
Article 4	46
Article 5	49
Article 6	55
Article 7	60
Article 8	70
Article 9	76
Article 10	77
Article 11	88
Article 12	109
Article 13	117
Article 14	121
Article 15	121
Article 16	121
Annexes	
I. Federal level	129
II. Entites federees	130

Cautionary note

The present report synthesizes legislative, administrative, and other measures that have been adopted from June 2002 — the date of the oral presentation of the third and fourth national reports — to the end of 2006. For an exhaustive general survey of the measures in effect in Belgium with respect to eliminating discrimination against women on the territory of the Kingdom of Belgium, the national reports preceding the present report should be consulted, as well as the national contributions in response to the questions posed by the experts of the CEDAW Committee.

I. Preliminary Comment: The Belgian Institutional Context

Belgium is a federal constitutional monarchy made up of the Federal Government, the Communities, and the Regions.

The division of powers over the course of successive governmental reforms has evolved along two principle axes. The first relates to language and, in a larger sense, to culture. Belgian has three official languages: Dutch, French, and German. Belgium today is therefore made up of three Communities: the Flemish Community, the French-speaking Community, and the German-speaking Community. These Communities correspond to groups within the population. The powers of the Communities therefore relate to education, culture, and other “personalizeable” matters (certain aspects of health, for example).

The second axis of governmental reform has its foundations in history and, more particularly, in the aspirations of certain groups for more economic autonomy. The Regions are the consequence of these aspirations. The result was the creation of three Regions: the Flemish Region, the Brussels-Capital Region, and the Walloon Region. The Regions therefore control socio-economic matters such as administering the territory, housing, employment, energy, etc.

The Federal Government controls, among others, national defense, justice, finance, and social security, as well as having an important role in public health and internal affairs. A series of powers are divided equally among the Federal Government and the Regions, such as the economy, transportation, and the environment. The Federal Government, the Communities, and the Regions therefore, have different responsibilities, which they exercise autonomously. With respect to foreign affairs, each entity (Federal Government, Communities, and Regions) is responsible for the external part of their domestic areas of competence. The Federal Government, the Communities, and the Regions each have their own Government and Parliament, except the Flemish Community and Region, which have merged theirs.

The policy of gender equality does not constitute a subject in and of itself, but rather has a unifying character. This policy is implemented in all areas of action as a function of the powers held by the different levels of authority in Belgium. The structure of the present report reflects this state of affairs.

II. Features of the Policy of Gender Equality

1. At the federal level

The period 2002-2006 was characterized by the political will to substantially strengthen the institutional mechanisms dedicated to the struggle against discrimination based on sex and to the promotion of sexual equality.

Therefore, a new institution was created at the federal level in accordance with the law of 16 December 2002: the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men. It is an autonomous public agency having the missions of monitoring the state of equality between men and women, combating all forms of discrimination and inequality based on sex, and developing tools and strategies that are based on an integral approach to the area of gender. The Institute is therefore charged with sustaining and coordinating study and research, with presenting recommendations to public

authorities, and with providing legal assistance to the victims of discrimination based on sex. In addition, this public agency organizes support for associations that are active in the area of the gender equality and of elaborating a network structure with the different entities in the area of gender equality. The Institute began its work in 2004; it has been granted its own budget, which has risen from €4,265,000 in 2004 and from €4,367,000 in 2005, and its staff numbers roughly 30 members.

In addition, a second priority consists in developing the structural and effective tools to integrate the process of gender mainstreaming in the policies and the action areas implemented at the federal level. Therefore, at the initiative of the federal Ministry of Equality of Opportunity, a wide-reaching law was prepared during the period in question and adopted on 12 January 2007 (published in the Belgian Monitor on 13 February 2007) with a view to establishing in law the obligation for the Federal Government and the public administrations to systematically take account of the principle of gender mainstreaming throughout the decision-making and implementing processes. Other activities associated with implementing gender mainstreaming envision the organization of support, the preparation and production of brochures for key entities, as well as engagement in specific actions, especially in the area of statistics and public markets.

A third priority consists in the important work of improving existing legislation in the area of the struggle against discrimination based on sex. In 2002 various laws were adopted with a view to establishing parity in the electoral lists and to reinforcing the presence of women in the legislative assemblies at the federal, regional, and European levels. Efforts have also been made to significantly strengthen the legal obligation of reporting with respect to implementing the Beijing action platform and institutionalizing the integration of the gender perspective in all federal policies through the in-depth reform through a federal law of 1996.¹ Finally, the Federal Government has proposed a reform of the anti-discrimination laws with a view not only to increasing their visibility and the pedagogical character but also of coordinating the protection accorded victims of discrimination from whatever motive. This important legislative venture is currently under examination in the legislative chambers.

This period has also been marked by the launch of a national Action Plan for the struggle against domestic violence, between the federal and federated entities, which is to be coordinated by the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men and which focused on seven overarching strategic objectives: sensitization, training, prevention, care for and protection of victims, suppression and reparative measures, record-keeping, and assessment.

Finally, several initiatives have been established at the initiative of the federal Ministry of Equality of Opportunity and of the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men with respect to sensitizing and encouraging men to be change agents with a view to eliminating discrimination against women and to achieving a more egalitarian society, especially inviting them to sign a Charter for Change. Furthermore, many projects have focused on responding to the specific difficulties faced by women of foreign origin (a study of forced marriages and the genital

¹ The law of 6 March 1996 on monitoring the application of the resolutions of the world conference on women held in Beijing from 4 to 14 September 1995.

mutilation of women, the creation of juridical monitoring stations and of pamphlets on the application of international private law).

2. At the level of the federated entities

A. Flemish Region and Community

A minister responsible for Equal Opportunities was first appointed to the Flemish Government in June 1995, so the equal opportunities policy has existed for 11 years now in the Flemish Government. In the Flemish Government which took office in July 2004 the competence for the equal opportunities policy was entrusted to the Flemish Minister for Mobility, Social Economy and Equal Opportunities. As coordinating minister the Flemish minister responsible for Equal Opportunities is competent for the inclusive (or horizontal) equal opportunities policy for Flanders, across all policy areas and policy levels. Apart from that this minister pursues a specific (vertical) equal opportunities policy with his/her own priorities and resources. The overall task of the Equal Opportunities in Flanders Unit, which operates as an administrative unit from the horizontal department ‘Services for the General Government Policy’, is to prepare, implement and evaluate the equal opportunities policy as aimed at by the competent Flemish minister.

The Flemish equal opportunities policy devotes attention to the differences between social groups (diversity) as well as to the individual development of people (emancipation) within these groups, with no one being excluded (non-discrimination) and everyone feeling responsible for the mutual coherence (solidarity). The Flemish equal opportunities policy seeks to oppose discrimination mechanisms and focuses in the first instance on discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation and inaccessibility. It wants to make these mechanisms visible and discussible, to fight them and to prevent the development of new discrimination mechanisms. Within the framework of this report only the gender angle of the equal opportunities policy is explained.

For this term of office (2004-2009) four priority areas were defined in the equal opportunities policy, that is *socialisation, career development, living environment and policy participation*. Three of these four themes clearly apply to the gender issue.

Socialisation means making oneself familiar with the prevailing norms and values. It is a process which takes place in different sections of society: at home, in the street, at school, on the work floor...

The equal opportunities policy is intended to rid these processes of stereotyped and restrictive images which lead to unequal opportunities.

The preparation as well as the beginning and development of a *career* are characterised by inequalities. We refer in this context to the pay differences between men and women, the overrepresentation of women in the health care sector and of men in the ICT sector, the underrepresentation of women in management positions, etc. The equal opportunities policy wants to help identify and eliminate discrimination mechanisms.

For the moment, women are underrepresented in the political landscape. The equal opportunities policy aims at a proportional *participation* of men and women in policy.

Discrimination occurs in many areas of social life. That is why it is important for the Flemish equal opportunities policy to work across all policy areas as well. The Flemish minister responsible for Equal Opportunities has the coordinating task of encouraging and supporting policymakers in other policy areas in taking initiatives to promote equal opportunities. In the past, this was aimed at through an Interdepartmental Commission for Equal Opportunities. However, this approach was not always very successful. That is why the minister took measures necessary to design the coordinating equal opportunities policy in a more successful way. On 22 July 2005, the Flemish Government agreed in principle to apply the *Open Coordination Method* as a working method for the Flemish equal opportunities policy (see below).

Apart from the coordinating activities the Flemish equal opportunities policy also develops its '*own vertical activities*'. This means that expertise is developed which provides an insight into the situation of the target groups in the equal opportunities policy, into the problems they face and into possible solutions. Civil society is reinforced as well. Civil society is an important defender of the interests of the target groups and acts as an intermediary between them and the policymakers. In addition, the awareness of the public at large is raised through the dissemination of information and the launching of campaigns. Structural contacts are also developed with local and provincial authorities with a view to embedding and coordinating an equal opportunities policy within the different levels of government. Finally, we attune to the federal and international levels as much as possible.

B. French Community

The Government of the French Community has made equality of opportunity among men and women one of its priorities: increasingly its actions are guided by gender equality in a number of interlocking areas. Thus the governmental action program for promoting gender equality concretizes the principle of *gender mainstreaming* since it permits each Minister the authority to promote gender equality through concrete initiatives.

This program challenges each minister to promote three themes in areas that relate to his authority and to respond to social objectives: to combat sexist stereotypes and violence, to promote equality and the integration of the sexes in education, to reinforce social and cultural integration, to struggle against all forms of discrimination, to guarantee access to various services (education, health, etc.) for all in every age group, etc.

It establishes six general objectives towards the promotion of gender equality:

- to struggle against sexist stereotypes,
- to struggle against domestic violence,
- to promote equality and integration of the sexes in compulsory and higher education,
- to promote the study of and research into gender,

- to assure the equal participation of men and women in decision-making,
- to establish a coherent and internal system of statistics that are broken down according to sex for all the authorities of the French Community

An annual assessment of this program is included among the indicators of positive results.

C. Brussels-Capital Region

In the Brussels governmental declaration of 2001, the accent was placed on engaging government to foster respect for the principle of equality of opportunity. It is from this point of view that an “equality of opportunity” module was created in 2001 to be administered by local authorities and was charged with implementing the principle through projects aimed at local authorities.

The governmental declaration of 2004 amplified and systematized this initiative to act in the name of equality of opportunity, from the point of view of mainstreaming gender and diversity.

The governmental declaration and the general policy declaration issued by the new regional government made unambiguous reference to a policy of equality of opportunity:

“The Region intends to promote the equality of men and women throughout all of its policies. To do this, it shall conduct surveys and statistical studies on gender in all of its regional authorities. It shall designate, as a public service, a person who shall be responsible for equality and shall be on constant alert to maintain equality of representation between men and women. The government also pledges to report annually to Parliament on the policy of equality of opportunity between men and women.”

An ordinance of April 2006 requires each regional Ministry to annually report to Parliament on the policy on equality carried out within its jurisdictions. It must be emphasized that these powers overlap not only classical areas but also areas that have been scarcely investigated in the subject of equality: supervision of local authorities, security, employment, environment, mobility, transportation, and housing, and since then they have overlapped themes that are more classical such as the place of women in decision-making, including in politics, the struggle against insecurity in public life and against domestic violence...

Since 2004, this policy of equality has received its own constantly increasing budgetary appropriation.

III. Synthesis of the measures designed to implement the various articles of the Convention and to respond to the recommendations formulated by the CEDAW Committee

Article 1

Belgium has at its disposal an arsenal of measures of a constitutional, legislative, regulation-based, and decree-based nature regarding the struggle against discrimination based on sex and the guarantee of respect for the principle of the

equality of men and women in the economic, social, cultural, and political life of the country.

Generally speaking, the existing arrangements prohibit direct as well as indirect discrimination, sexual harassment, and harassment based on sex, as well as the encouragement of discriminatory practices based on sex. Various laws in force provide judicial recourse for the victims and punishments for the perpetrators of discrimination.

Article 2

I. Federal level

1. International obligations of Belgium regarding the struggle against discrimination based on sex

1.1. Lifting the condition formulated in article 15, paragraph 2 and 3 of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women

On July 8, 2002, the Belgian Government officially notified the Secretary General of its decision to lift this condition.

1.2. Ratification of the discretionary protocol of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women

The discretionary protocol of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women was ratified by Belgium on 17 June 2004, and entered into force on 17 September 2004. From this day, no communication has been submitted to Belgian authorities.

1.. Ratification of the protocol of 25 May 2000, supplemental to the Convention on the Rights of Children, on the participation of children in armed conflicts, done on 6 May 2002.

1.4. Ratification of the United Nations Convention against transnational organized crime as well as its supplemental protocol regarding the prevention, suppression, and punishment of trafficking in persons, in particular in women and children, done on 11 August 2004.

1.5. Signature of protocol No. 7 to the European Convention on Human Rights

Within Europe, Belgium on 11 May 2005 signed Protocol No. 7 to the European Convention on safeguarding human rights and fundamental liberties, article 5 of which guarantees the principle of equality between spouses concerning rights and civil responsibilities between them, and relations with their child regarding marriage, during marriage, and after its dissolution. The draft law affirming Protocol No. 7 was adopted by the Senate in plenary session on 14 December 2006 and in plenary session by the Chamber of Representatives on 18 January 2007.

1.6. Signature of Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights

Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention safeguarding human rights and fundamental liberties was ratified by several federal entities. Ratification by Belgium is expected in 2007.

2. Amending the Constitution

A specific provision affirming the principle of equality between men and women was inserted into article 10 of the Belgian Constitution on 21 February 2002.

In addition, a new article 11bis of the Belgian Constitution requires the legislature to adopt measures designed to guarantee this equality, particularly favoring equal access of men and women to elective and public offices. Since 2002, various laws have been adopted with a view to guaranteeing parity in the electoral lists (see article 7). Finally, this provision itself requires that the administrators at various levels of power be made up of persons of different sexes.

3. Legislative measures designed to combat discrimination based on sex, adopted since 2002

3.1. The law of 25 February 2003 aimed at combating discrimination and amending the law of 15 February 1993 creating a Center for the equality of opportunity and the struggle against racism (Belgian Monitor of 17 March 2003).

The law of 25 February 2003² may be considered an anti-discrimination law with general applicability as a consequence of the partial annulment of certain provisions by a decision of the Court of Arbitration handed down on 6 October 2004, which prohibited all limiting enumeration of the grounds for discrimination covered by the aforementioned law.

This law specifically prohibits gender discrimination, both direct and indirect, harassment, and the incitement to practice discrimination, in the following areas:

- conditions allowing access to wage-based, salary-based, or independent jobs, including hiring criteria and the recruitment conditions, in all branches of activity at all professional levels, including promotion, working conditions, layoffs, and remuneration, in both the private and public sectors;
- the hiring or promotion of an official or the appointment of an official to an agency;
- any mention in an official document or official minutes; and
- access to, participation in, and all other exercise of an economic, social, cultural, or political activity that is available to the public.

Any person deemed to be a victim of discrimination may file a civil and/or criminal suit.

The civil sanctions provided for by law are as follows:

(1) Nullification

Clauses in a contract that violate the provisions of the law are considered null and void.

(2) Injunction to cease and desist

At the request of a victim of discrimination or of an entity charged with representing her, an action may be filed in summary proceedings either before a court of the first instance, a labor court, or a commercial court in accordance with the nature of the

² Entered into force on 27 March 2003.

infractions. The action is customarily filed in four copies. Under pain of being declared void, it shall include information on the days, months, and years; the last name, first name, and place of residence of the plaintiff; the name and address of the physical or juridical person against whom the complaint is lodged; the subject matter and the grounds for the petition.

(3) Publication of the judicial decision

In addition, obtaining damages may be grounded in accordance with ordinary law. Otherwise, the law provides for three cases in which the worker is protected against layoffs:

- when the worker has filed a well-grounded complaint whether within the company in accordance with the procedures in effect, or a complaint filed with the Social Laws Inspectorate, due to alleged discrimination or racism on the part of the superior and concerning opportunities for promotion and working conditions, including layoffs. The complaint must be well-grounded and submitted in writing, and it must contain the grounds of the discrimination.
- when the Social Laws Inspectorate conducts an investigation concerning racism and discrimination in a company even in the absence of a formal complaint.
- when the worker has filed or will file a legal action regarding the opportunities for promotion, working conditions, conditions for layoffs, or on the basis of the law against racism and xenophobia.

In these cases, the employer may not terminate the employment contract except for reasons extraneous to the complaint or the lawsuit.

If the worker is laid off, the burden of proof that the grounds were not based on discrimination shall lie with the employer, and this shall be so even if the conditions of work were modified unilaterally during a period of 12 months following the filing of the complaint. If the employer nevertheless lays off the worker, the latter shall be able to petition for being rehired in the company. This request must be submitted to the employer in the form of a petition by registered letter within 30 days from the date of notice, from the date of layoff without notice, or from unilateral modification of the working conditions. The employer must render a decision within 30 days following the filing of the request. If the worker is not rehired, the employer must pay him, at the choice of the worker, either an indemnity equivalent to a fixed sum representing six months' gross remuneration, or an indemnity representing the damages actually suffered by the worker, in which case the burden shall fall on the worker to prove the extent of the damages suffered. This indemnity shall only be due if the worker has not been rehired and the layoff or the modification of the working conditions have been judged to be in violation of the provisions of law.

Regarding criminal sanctions, the law provides for imprisonment of from one month to one year and/or a fine of €50 to €1,000 for any person who incites others to discrimination, hatred, or violence with respect to a person, group, community, or members thereof, on grounds of sex, sexual orientation, civil status, birth, wealth, age, religious or philosophical convictions, state of health either current or future, handicap, or physical characteristic.

3.2. *The laws of 5 March 2002 with regard to the principle of nondiscrimination with respect to part-time workers (Belgian Monitor of 13 March 2002) and of 5 June 2002 with regard to the principle of nondiscrimination with respect to independent-contract workers of specific duration (Belgian Monitor of 26 June 2002)*

These two laws translate into Belgian law the Council provisions of 15 December 1987 (97/81/CE) concerning the framework agreement on part-time employment and of 28 June 1999 (1999/70/CE) regarding the framework agreement on fixed-term employment, which were adopted by the European Union.

The law of 5 March 2002 provides that with respect to the conditions of employment, part-time workers may not be treated less favorably than full-time workers in comparable situations on the sole grounds that they are employed part-time or for a fixed term, unless objective reasons justify different treatment.

Similarly, the law of 5 June 2002 provides that workers under a fixed-term work contract may not be treated less favorably than comparable workers under an open-ended contract with respect to the conditions of employment only on the grounds that they are hired for a fixed term, unless objective reasons justify different treatment.

Seniority, with respect to the specific conditions of employment, for these workers is determined on the basis of the same criteria as for workers of open-ended terms, except when different periods of seniority are justified by objective reasons.

In addition, this law requires the employer to inform workers who are under fixed-term contracts of vacant positions in the company so as to guarantee them the same opportunities for obtaining a vacant position as those that are offered to other workers.

In view of these two laws, the rights of part-time or fixed-term workers may be set relative to the duration of the term only when this is appropriate.

In addition, two royal decrees render the social monitors and the social inspectors from the Social Laws Inspectorate competent for monitoring compliance with the law of 25 February 2003 providing for combating discrimination as well as with the law of 30 July 1981 providing for the suppression of certain acts motivated by racism or xenophobia and its implementing ordinances. In question is the Royal decree of 15 July 2005 designating the officials charged with monitoring compliance with the law of 25 February 2003 providing for combating discrimination and amending the law of 15 February 1993 creating a center for equal opportunity and promoting the struggle against racism and its implementing ordinances, and the royal decree of 15 July 2005 designating the officials charged with monitoring compliance with the law of 30 July 1981 providing for suppressing certain acts motivated by racism or xenophobia and its implementing ordinances.³

3.3. *The law of 12 January 2007 on verifying the application of the resolutions of the global conference on women held in Beijing in September 1995 and integrating the dimension of gender within the totality of federal policies, published in the Belgian Monitor on 13 February 2007.*

³ Belgian Monitor of 2 August 2005.

This law, developed at the initiative of the federal Minister of Equal Opportunity during the period under examination, provides for:

1. The evaluation of the impact of gender for all draft laws and regulations undertaken by the Government with the goal of preventing or correcting any deleterious effects on the situation with respect to women and of taking into consideration their specific needs;
2. “Gender budgeting”: each draft of the general budget of expenditures must be accompanied by a notation on gender, explaining for each department the grants made in support of actions in favor of gender equality;
3. “Gender mainstreaming” of statistics: public services shall have to take care that the statistics that they produce are broken down according to sex and that indicators of gender are established.
4. The determination of strategic objectives at the beginning of the legislative session with a view toward gender equality in the declaration of Government and the general policy documents of each Minister, and the monitoring of progress achieved;
5. The improvement of the system of reporting to Parliament in implementing the Beijing platform of action: the law thus substantially improves the reporting obligation as provided in the law of 6 March 1996;
6. The creation of an interdepartmental coordinating group composed of designated high-ranking persons from the ministerial cabinets and the Federal administrations, in order to institutionalize the process of integrating the gender dimension;
7. The Institute for the Equality of Women and Men is charged with following and supporting the process of integration of the gender dimension in policies and public measures and actions.

The implementing measures required by the law are in the process of being prepared.

II. Federated entities

A. Flemish Region and Community

Since the last report from 2002 no new gender laws were voted in Flanders. However, the government is working towards two new decrees that will enhance the efforts against discrimination for women.

In 2005 the Flemish minister for Equal Opportunities started an initiative to unite the two existing quota decrees (from 1997 on quota in advisory bodies and from 1998 on quota in managing bodies of the Flemish Government) into one new decree. In the past years many questions were raised about the implementation of the two existing laws, that mostly came down to the clarity of the implementation. There were large discussions among the advisory and managing bodies, whether the quota decrees were to be implemented or not, which can be considered as a sort of resistance towards the implementation. On the other hand however a huge reorganisation of the Ministry of Flanders took place in the past years and found its final course in April 2006. Due to this reorganisation the two quota decrees had to be adapted to the new advisory and managing bodies that were created.

The creation of new and identical rules for both the advisory and managing bodies will lead to a greater transparency and better implementation. The draft Act is running its final course and will probably be adopted and start its implementation in the spring of 2007.

The second legal initiative that is being taken concerns the transposition of the EU directives in the field of anti-discrimination. Especially the latest Directive (2004/13) includes general measures to be taken for gender, which creates the opportunity to make an overall initiative.

Within the framework of the transposition of European Directives, Mrs Kathleen Van Brempt, the Flemish minister responsible for Equal Opportunities, is drafting a Flemish Parliament Act on Equal Treatment. This Flemish Parliament Act will fill the gaps that currently still exist after the transposition of three European Directives (Directive 2000/43/EC, Directive 2000/78/EC and Directive 2004/113/EC) into Flemish competences.

Flanders already has the following Flemish Parliament Acts:

- the Flemish Parliament Act of 8 May 2002 on proportional participation in the labour market;
- the Flemish Parliament Act of 28 June 2002 on equal educational opportunities.

The Flemish Parliament Act on equal treatment is intended to fill gaps that have arisen as a result of the new 2004 EU Directive (later date than the existing regulation) and to achieve an integrated solution for all Flemish competences.

A legal basis will be created for a Flemish plan on Equal Treatment, which will outline the policy measures planned by the Flemish Government in the short and long term, as well as the terms for the evaluation of the pursued policy.

B. French Community

The decree of the French Community of 19 May 2004 regarding the implementation of the principle of equality of treatment provides that all discrimination is prohibited, especially that based on sex. This decree is scheduled to be amended in 2007 so as to provide better protection for citizens faced with discrimination, both direct and indirect (i.e., an efficient system of sanctions, and protection against retaliatory measures...).

An evaluation of the amended decree is scheduled for two years after its entry into force.

C. Brussels-Capital Region

1. Ratification of the international instruments

The Region of Brussels has ratified:

- the optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women by the law of 7 February 2002 confirming the optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, adopted in New York on 6 October 1999;⁴

⁴ Belgian Monitor of 24 December 2002.

- the additional protocol to the Convention of the United Nations against transnational organized crime with a view to preventing, suppressing, and punishing the trafficking in persons, in particular that which is carried out to the detriment of women and children;⁵
- protocol No. 12 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which amends and enlarges the field of application of article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights⁶ so as to widen its protection for victims of discrimination, especially based on sex. It provides for both independent recourse as well as recourse before the European Human Rights Court, and in light of this fact facilitates recourse to legal proceedings.⁷

2. Factual data

In order to effectively assure judicial recourse on the basis of the law of 25 February 2003 cited above,⁸ the Government in Brussels in 2001 within the ORBEM (Brussels regional office for employment) created an antidiscrimination office that will follow those seeking work who are victims of discrimination, and will educate employers regarding their rights and duties in this matter.

The office is competent for all types of discrimination. On the basis of an average of 200 cases treated per year, nearly 5% are identified as discrimination based on sex.

Since 2002, several initiatives have been implemented in the Brussels Region on promoting awareness and education regarding the right to equality, especially equal-rights courts organized for officials in the Communities and Regions. These courts take account of the laws that are to be applied in the Brussels-Capital Region, whether from Belgian or international sources.

Article 3

I. Federal level

1. The agencies charged with promoting gender equality

II. 1.1. *The Institute for the Equality of Women and Men*

Created by the law of 16 December 2002,⁹ the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men is a public, independent body entirely engaged in the struggle against all forms of discrimination based on sex and in realizing and promoting the equality of

⁵ Law of 13 March 2003 ratifying the additional protocol to the Convention of the United Nations against transnational organized crime with a view to preventing, suppressing, and punishing the trafficking in persons, in particular of women and children, adopted in New York, on 15 November 2000, Belgian Monitor of 1 April 2003.

⁶ Article 14 of the CEDH defines and prohibits discrimination especially on the basis of sex: "The enjoyment of the rights and liberties recognized in the present Convention must be assured without any distinction based especially on sex, race, color, language, religion, political or any other opinions, national or social origin, belonging to a national minority, wealth, birth, or other situation."

⁷ Law of 13 February 2002 ratifying the protocol No. 12 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, done in Rome on 4 November 2000 (Belgian Monitor of 3 March 2003).

⁸ Belgian Monitor of 17 March 2003.

⁹ Law of 16 December 2002, on the creation of the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men, Belgian Monitor of 31 December 2002.]

men and women. Since the administrative beginning in 2004, a development plan 2005-2007 has been worked out that groups all the legal missions around the following five strategic objectives:

- providing juridical assistance to the victims of discrimination based on sex;
- implementing “gender mainstreaming”;
- conducting research;
- supporting workers in the field;
- preparing and applying the decisions of government and monitoring the effects of European and international policies.

III.

IV. The Institute is administered by an administrative board and a double management structure, and it executes its tasks under the supervision of the Minister responsible for federal policy in the area of equality of opportunity.

V.

1.1.1. The juridical mission of providing assistance to victims

In the implementation of the juridical mission of providing assistance to victims of discrimination, the Institute since 2004 has received complaints and requests for rulings regarding gender equality on the part of male and female citizens. In 2006, 262 complaints were filed, of which 164 were by women.

In order to optimize the professional processing of these complaints, a database has been created and since 1 November 2006 has been undergoing tests.

It shall make it possible:

- to handle complaints more efficiently and more effectively;
- to form the basis for the annual report on the Institute’s activities; based on the recorded data, the Institute will be able to prepare a systematic overview of the number of complaints, the languages, the geographical distribution, the nature of the complaints, the phases of processing, the referrals to competent authorities, and the closure of the files;
- to better disclose and resolve cases of discrimination in society;
- to introduce indicators that are comparable to those in use at the European and international levels;
- to develop a strategy for achieving justice in the area of discrimination based on sex;
- to communicate useful information to persons and institutions that are conducting surveys (sociological, juridical, or other) on the progress of gender equality in Belgium.

In this mission of providing juridical assistance, the Institute also undertook in 2004 and 2005 to support specific actions with respect to affording juridical protection to women of foreign descent, by financing a guidebook dedicated to the juridical protection of foreign women that is directed at professionals who are confronted with this problem on the ground.

In addition, a project extending over two years has been initiated in collaboration with the Cabinet of Ministers, charged at the federal level with preparing policy regarding the equality of opportunity, and a Center for Equal Opportunity and the Struggle against Racism: the goal is to form a juridical support network for women of foreign descent. This project has been realized on the basis of Vlaams Minderheden Centrum (VMC-- Flemish Center for Minorities) and the Association for the Rights of Foreigners (ADDE). The training section will be established in collaboration with the communities and regions.

A training course that was given in Marrakesh (Morocco) from 12 to 20 November 2005 on the Mudawana was also financed by the Institute. The Institute has also financially supported the creation of support centers for women of foreign descent.

1.1.2. Activities associated with the development and implementation of gender mainstreaming

The Institute for the Equality of Women and Men is specifically charged with developing tools and strategies that are based on an integral approach to the area of gender in federal policies.

To this end, it has been involved since its creation in:

- developing a federal action plan, “Statistics and Indicators of Gender”: the objective is to provide an arsenal of solid figures in order to diagnose, monitor, and evaluate federal policy in the area of equal opportunity. This plan formulates specific oppositions on the way in which the principle of gender mainstreaming can be structurally implemented in each public federal institution in the matter of “statistics and indicators” and regarding the way in which their coordination, support, propagation, and evaluation might be organized.
- actions aimed at general sensitization.
- laying the foundation for “gender mainstreaming” and sensitivity training for the federal administrations.
- developing a charter by the democratic political parties towards making equality between men and women a structural priority.
- contributing to the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the federal public activities, vis-à-vis the development of affirmative actions in federal public policies.
- in the provinces, implementing and co-financing a network of coordinators charged with assisting in the struggle against violence against women and for gender equality, in the sphere of socioeconomics, social life, and access to decision-making levels.

In addition, the Institute is conducting specific actions in the important area of employment:

- the EVA project (analytic EVALuation): work conducted on the systems of classification of functions with the objective of proposing effective solutions to resolving the problem of salary inequalities, done at the end of 2006.
- the report on salary inequality requested by the Federal Government on 8 March 2006.

- the “active fathers” project (sensitization and promotion of a paternity leave of 10 days).
- the Electronica project aimed at sensitizing persons active in the area of new technologies and the general public to equal access of men and women to new technologies, done at the end of 2003.
- the DIANE project, co-financed by the European program, Equal, in which quantitative and qualitative research has been done that has highlighted female entrepreneurship, available at www.amazone.be, and responses to the specific needs of women have been provided in the form of training, mentoring, and networking support.
- the Trade Union Charter adopted on 23 September 2004, after a research study of three years, co-financed by the General Research Administration of the European Union. This engagement at the “summit” of trade union organizations is important, and the effects show up in the annual evaluation which is made therein (this evaluation will be available in April 2007).
- the implementation of a database to be accessible over the Internet containing practices in favor of the equality of men and women within enterprises.

Finally, the following specific actions have been undertaken by the Institute in the struggle against violence against women:

- an action plan for the struggle against domestic violence: the Federal Government since 2001 has conducted an active policy of fighting against violence against women. In this context, a second national action plan against domestic violence (2004-2007) was approved by the Council of Ministers on 7 May 2004. The Institute is charged with coordinating this plan.
- a working group and a network of experts: all the work is supported by an interdepartmental working group and by a group of experts which are coordinated by the Institute.
- actions promoting sensitization, training, prevention, care for and protection of victims, suppression, record-keeping, and statistics.

1.1.3. Research¹⁰

Following the 49th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which evaluated the implementation of the platform of action of Beijing 10 years after adoption, the Institute for Equality of Women and Men organized eight symposia in 2005 and 2006 which had the objective of:

- synthesizing the challenges and aspects of the situation of women in Belgium;
- recalling the achievements and most recent developments in Beijing +10;
- promoting a gathering of all of the organizational and political actors with an interest in the question;

¹⁰ The list of publications of the Institute for Equality of Women and Men can be found in the annex.

- defining an action program and a political agenda aimed at Beijing +15, for the equality of men and women in Belgium; on this basis, to promote the clear engagement of political figures;
- challenging men to take an active role in the realization of equality.

The eight themes discussed in the symposia were the following:

- Sexual and reproductive rights and freedoms of women. Where are we now in respect to them? (28 April 2005)
- Which concrete tools are available to promote equality within a company? (28 June 2005)
- The trafficking in human beings — sexual exploitation — prostitution: 3 realities, 3 challenges? (13 December 2005)
- Gender and the elderly: a topic of its own (26 January 2006)
- Religions: women have the floor (7 February 2006)
- Inequality of women and men: one problem and specific tools (27 April 2006)
- Women in politics: halfway across the river? (19 June 2006)
- Gender and the media: how to go beyond and deconstruct the images and the stereotypical roles of men and women? (27 June 2006)

For each of the symposia, four general questions were raised:

- What are the main political priorities to be implemented with a view to assessing the spirit and the letter of the achievements of Beijing in Belgium?
- Beyond the factual realities, how should we interpret our own stake in the topics in terms of the social relationships between the sexes? Are we seeing the emergence of new arguments?
- How to permit men to play an active role in promoting progress in equality?
- How to discuss these topics in view of the realities confronted by immigrant men and women?

These symposia constituted a veritable updating of the knowledge that permits improvements in the thinking of political decision-makers and officials concerned in continuing to make progress towards gender equality.

In addition, studies were launched in 2004-2005 on the themes “Gender and Politics,” “Gender and Immigration,” “A Study of Gender within Social and Family Time,” and “Gender and Health.”

1.1.4. Support of women’s organizations

Four women’s associations working in the area of gender equality, have received a structural grant from the Institute, i.e., Amazon, the Council of Francophone Women in Belgium, le Nederlandstalige Vrouwenraad, and asbl Sofia.

In 2004, the total sum of structural grants was raised to €1,007,783. For the year 2005, this amount was raised to €1,010,750. In addition, financial support is annually furnished for targeted projects in the area of the gender equality, in amounts up to €194,674.58 in 2004 and €331,973.50 in 2005.

1.1.5. Reparation and application of the decisions of the government and monitoring European and international policies

This mission, carried out under the aegis of the Federal Ministry of Equality of Opportunity, can be conceived as grouped around the following actions:

- preparation and execution of governmental decisions in the area of gender equality;
- support for third parties at the request of the Government (for example, advisory bodies, etc.);
- the Secretariat of the Council for Equality of Opportunity between Men and Women;
- the consulting and expert services at the supervising Ministry and in the permanent diplomatic mission of Belgium to the European Union in the context of monitoring European policies, and, if appropriate, playing a diplomatic role;
- the contribution to the national coordination of assimilating European law and of implementing international law on gender equality.

For more information regarding the activities of the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men, see <http://www.iefh.fgov.be>.

1.2. The Council on Equality of Opportunity between Man and Women

At the request of the competent Minister for the equal opportunities policy or of another ministry, or at the request of organizations, groups, individuals, or at its own initiative, the Council is an advisory body that can prepare reports, undertake research, propose measures, and provide references and information regarding the equal opportunity policy. Its mission also consists in preparing reports for the National Labor Council when the latter so requests. To accomplish its assignments, the Council may gather all the necessary information and call on experts.

The composition of the Council reflects the largest possible social base and fosters balance between the ideological and social tendencies of its members so as to assure the force and dissemination of its opinions.

In 2004, the Council published an informational brochure on the contents of the CEDAW Convention.

For more information on the activities of the Council (especially on the opinions expressed during the period under examination) and to purchase the above-mentioned brochure online, visit: <http://www.conseildelegalite.be>.

2. Violence against women and children

Since 1867, sexual violence has been featured in Title VII “Of crimes and offenses against family order and against public morality.” At the time of the preparation of the law of 28 November 2000 on the criminal protection of minors, it was proposed to replace the infractions of rape and acts outraging public decency in title VIII “Of crimes and offenses against persons” to correspond to modern conceptions. It was also proposed to modify the definition of acts outraging public decency to make the infraction more objective. These changes were criticized by the Parliament, which feared that officials would have difficulty in applying them. The draft law was

therefore amended on these points to preserve the former situation. The Committee was able to be reassured by the fact that the classification of these infractions in Title VII has no impact on the unacceptable character of these infractions and on the way in which suppression is envisaged.

The Federal Government since 2001 has been carrying out an active policy of combating violence against women, including intra-familial violence. Regarding the Department of Justice, it is appropriate to mention a group of legislative and administrative measures recently undertaken to reinforce the existing mechanism in the struggle against this type of violence, which adequately reflects the above-mentioned recommendation.

2.1. General context

2.1.1. National action plan against conjugal violence (PAN)

Already in 2001, the first national action plan against conjugal violence was set forth following the decision of the inter-ministerial conference on equal opportunities of 14 November 2000. For the first time, the Government decided to prepare a plan for the joint struggle against violence against women. All of the actions under the aegis of the struggle against violence against women have for the first time been coordinated and established in a concerted manner. Participating in the evaluation of the first PAN, a new action plan against conjugal violence (PAN) for the period 2004-2007 was elaborated and its scope extended to the Communities and the Regions. In conjunction with the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men (IEFH), it was decided for 2004-2007 to specify the priority actions within an overall area, that of the struggle against violence between (ex)partners. The new PAN was elaborated on the basis of six overall strategic objectives: the elaboration of sensitization measures, education and training, prevention, the care and protection of victims, suppression, and record-keeping and statistics. On 8 February 2006, the inter-ministerial conference approved a consensus definition of intra-familial violence that corresponds exactly to the definition used in the circulars, COL 3/2006 and COL 4/2006 (see below).

2.1.2. Framework note on integral security (NSI)

The crime policy is an important component of security policy as defined in the framework note on integral security which was adopted by the entire Federal Government on 30 and 31 March 2004.

An integral and integrated policy is proposed therein:

Integral security is the concept encompassing criminality, incivility, and roadway security in the largest possible context, regarding all of its aspects. The fundamental idea in question is to pay ongoing attention as much to prevention and suppression as to following up on perpetrators and victims.

This concept of integral security therefore can generate an integrated approach. An integrated approach is a collaboration that is necessary involving all the actors that are involved in arriving at a common solution to the problem. In other words, all the initiatives as well as all the projects and tools must be as well-coordinated as possible, as parts of one overarching project.

The following strategic objectives have been detailed in the framework note on integral security with respect to intra-familial violence:

- sensitizing the population as to the seriousness of the phenomenon;
- increasing the will to speak out;
- improving record-keeping by police and the justice system;
- devising a uniform policy on crime;
- fostering a strengthening of the status of the victim before, during, and after a judicial proceeding.

2.1.3. Note on general policy

In the note on general policy of the Ministry of Justice of 20 October 2005, intra-familial violence is integrated into the section focusing on lines of force in the policy on crime, i.e., a definition of the phenomenon and a uniform coding system for the entire country. The phenomenon must be able to be treated objectively on the basis of dependable statistics.

2.2. *Legislative modifications and other strategic measures*

2.2.1. Directives

With respect to intra-familial violence, two documents have recently appeared reinforcing the existing plan of action with respect to the struggle against this type of violence:

- circular No. COL 3/2006 of 1 March 2006 from the Association of General Prosecutors associated with the Courts of Appeal (definition of intra-familial violence and of extra-familial child abuse, identifying and recording cases by the public prosecutor and the police);
- joint circular COL 4/2006 of 1 March 2006 of the Ministry of Justice and of the Association of General Prosecutors regarding the policy on crime with respect to spousal violence.

These two directives, which entered into force on 3 April 2006, promote four objectives:

- (1) to define the lines of force within the crime policy with regard to spousal violence;
- (2) to develop a system of identification and record-keeping that is uniform for the police and public prosecuting services;
- (3) to establish minimal measures to be applied in all the judicial jurisdictions within the country;
- (4) to propose tools and references to officials within the police and justice systems with a view towards supporting their work.

Throughout these directives, it is clear that spousal violence and intra-familial violence are to receive zero tolerance.

2.3. *The “Sexual Aggression Set”*

In order to guarantee the quality of studies on data on rape or outrages of public decency but also to limit the psychological distress resulting from sexual aggression and thus to avoid secondary victimization, a Sexual Aggression Set (SAS) has been adopted since 1989. This set takes the form of a conditioned set or of non-

conditioned material in bulk. The conditioned set includes instructions and medical material for physicians, instructions and recommendations for police officials, and information for victims.

Following the evaluation of the ministerial directive with respect to the Sexual Aggression Set of 15 December 1998, a new directive was adopted on 15 September 2005 and entered into force on 1 October 2005 (circular COL 10/2005 of the Association of General Public Prosecutors associated with the courts of appeal connected with the Sexual Aggression Set).

2.4. Other initiatives conducted by the federal public service of the Justice Department

The law of 28 January 2003, completing article 410 of the Penal Code, provides for family housing for the spouse or legal partner who is the victim of acts of physical violence by their partner. The same legislation, inter alia, increases the penalties in cases of physical violence between partners and grants a legal “basis” to a “temporary separation” of the perpetrators of violence between partners.

In 2006, this law was subjected to evaluation by the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men in the context of PAN.

Initiatives regarding therapy for the perpetrators of acts of spousal violence have been adopted for several years in the context of alternative judicial measures. The Ministry of Justice has financed projects providing for therapy for the perpetrators of violence. The focus is on bringing the perpetrator to become conscious of the seriousness of his acts and to assist him in finding different solutions as a response to conflicts. The Federal Government in 2004, 2005, and 2006, financed pilot projects for following the perpetrators of violence in an extra-judicial manner. The Institute for the Equality of Women and Men has evaluated these pilot projects.

2.5. The policy of combating violence perpetrated within the Ministry of Defense

In April 2004, the Ministry of Defense officially published its policy against violence and harassment. This policy places the accent on prevention and has since its inception established a real structure of prevention. It also provides for a procedure for filing complaints and for sanctions. Developing an informal procedure is especially emphasized. It is also in the context of this policy that the service of inspection and mediation was set up in 2003. The aforementioned has an extended jurisdiction and mobilizes a large network of mediators. It annually publishes a report and an analysis of the complaints that have been received, documents that serve as a basis for future changes when they are necessary. The policy against violence and harassment is also discussed during basic training and during the annual training sessions for all personnel.

3. Women Requesting Asylum

3.1. Legal provisions and practical applications for women requesting asylum

The law of 15 September 2006 amending the law of 15 December 1980 regarding entry to the territory, sojourning, and the registration and deportation of foreigners (which is required to be published in the Belgian Monitor) stipulates that acts of persecution in the meaning of article 1 of the Geneva Convention may specifically include physical and mental violence, including sexual violence or acts directed against persons by reason of their sex, or against children. This new law also

provides that the notion of a social group must be taken into consideration in the context of evaluating the motives of persecution.

The asylum courts of Belgium always pay attention to persecutions on the basis of sexual appearance, since they per se do not result automatically in recognition of the status of the refugee. No specific policy has been applied systematically to those seeking refugee status.

In any case, in accordance with article 8, paragraph 2 of the royal decree of 11 July 2003, whenever there are indications of persecutions associated with sex, the official of the competent service of the Foreign Office (OE) verifies whether the petitioner might object to being questioned by a person of the opposite sex, in which case his or her request is granted. In view of article 11 of the same decree, the official of the competent service also takes into account the specific circumstances concerning the person requesting asylum and specifically their membership in a vulnerable group.¹¹

In view of article 13 of the same decree, training in listening to those requesting asylum and in intercultural communication as well as fundamental training on the specific needs of vulnerable groups is given to personnel of the Office for Aliens that are charged with examining those requesting asylum. Similar provisions are envisaged for personnel of the General Commissariat for Refugees and for Stateless Persons (CGRA) in accordance with the royal decree of 11 July 2003.¹²

VI. Two coordinators have been designated by the Office for Aliens (one for each linguistic group) to examine those requesting asylum with reference to the problem of gender and to inform other members of the staff of the Office for Aliens with respect to the subject. These two coordinators have also undergone training in medical, socio-cultural aspects of genital mutilation that has been approved by the president and founder of GAMS, which was organized by the General Commissariat for Refugees and Stateless Persons and which has also participated in a study of crimes of honor. These coordinators also participate in conferences relating to the subject matter that they deal with. A new coordinator for the problem of gender was named on 18 July 2005 for the General Commissariat for Refugees and Stateless Persons. Said coordinator is specifically charged with determining and pursuing the directives of specific treatment of cases with respect to the problem of gender.

The new officials in charge of these cases at the General Commissariat for Refugees and Stateless Persons shall receive general training which shall include at least one study of a case relating to persecution on the basis of gender. This training includes specific training in gender questions. At the Office for Aliens, the new officials and interpreters shall also receive general training.

A brochure entitled "To request asylum in Belgium" has been distributed to women requesting asylum since the introduction of the procedure within the Office for Aliens as well as in A.S.B.L., nongovernmental organizations, and any body that is

¹¹ Royal decree of 11 July 2003 stipulating specific elements in the procedure to be followed by the service of the Office for Aliens charged with examining those requesting asylum on the basis of the law of 15 December 1980 on entry to the territory, sojourning, registration and deportation of foreigners (Belgian Monitor of 27 January 2004).

¹² Specifically article 3, paragraph 2, article 4, paragraphs 1 and 15 of the royal decree of 11 July 2003 stipulating the procedure before the General Commissariat for Refugees and Stateless Persons, and regarding its functioning (Belgian Monitor of 27 January 2004).

involved with the problem of asylum. This brochure is available in several languages and on the website of the Office for Aliens, at www.dofi.fgov.be.

At the Office for Aliens, women are questioned whenever possible by female investigators, and their interpreter is always a woman except in cases where there is no female interpreter for that language. A questionnaire with respect to female genital mutilation has been prepared in order to adapt the examination to reflect the problem as experienced by the candidate for refugee status.

At the General Commissariat for Refugees and Stateless Persons, a “focal point” has been implemented for women. This focal point means that the information gathered by documentation unit on the problem of gender-related persecution will be available to all; it assures follow-up in jurisprudence, and it is consulted in regard to difficult cases; it follows current events regarding these matters and participates in various conferences, working groups, and other meetings on the subject. A questionnaire regarding feminine genital mutilation has been prepared in order to modify the hearing to reflect the problems as experienced by a female candidate for refugee status. Furthermore, in the event that any need is detected for a medical or psychological evaluation, the official involved will suggest to a woman who is requesting asylum that she contact the associations that specialize in these questions.

Regarding statistics, the CGRA recently formed a database specifically addressing the problem of gender.

Number of requests for asylum, number of grants of refugee status, and the proportion of the number of grants of refugee status by CGRA in relation to the number of requests for asylum, by sex, 1994-1999-2004¹³

<i>Year</i>	<i>Requests</i>		<i>Grants of status</i>		<i>Ratio</i>	
	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>
1994	4 227	10 078	711	776	16.8	7.7
1999	12 444	23 297	599	636	4.8	2.7
2004	5 089	9 760	1 117	1 160	21.9	11.9

Table 1 shows the results of the asylum procedures. In 1994, 1999, and 2004, more men than women sought refugee status. However, in terms of percentages, the requests for asylum by women were granted significantly more frequently than were those by men. In 2004, for example, one woman requesting asylum in five (21.9%) received the status of refugee, but for a male requesting asylum, it was one in 10 (11.9%).

3.2. Care of women requesting asylum

Fedasil is the federal agency for caring for those requesting asylum. Its mission consists in organizing flexible, quality care for those requesting asylum in Belgium. Although the number of requests for asylum varies according to the international

¹³ *Source:* CGRA (compiled by SEIN), table published in the brochure “Women and Men in Belgium. Statistics and indicators regarding gender,” 2006 edition, published by the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men, page 24.

situation, reflecting political and economic changes, Fedasil in collaboration with a network of partners has a capacity of about 15,500 places.

During the first phase of the procedure for requesting asylum, those requesting asylum receive material assistance only sufficient for meeting their basic needs. Care is provided either in large care centers or in individual residences. In addition to housing and food, those requesting asylum receive social and administrative support as well as medical care. They may take part in a large variety of leisure, educational, and sports activities.

3.2.1. Statistics

The federal agency for caring for those requesting asylum systematically collects various kinds of statistical data, within which gender is an important category. It is possible at any time to obtain information on the number of women and men currently being treated in the care network, as well as on the progress of their case. Regarding individuals, data is collected on the administrative procedure, nationality, dates of arrival and departure, and the duration of their time spent within the care network. This set of statistical data permits Fedasil to draw conclusions on significant factors relevant to its mission and regarding its policies of care in order to improve and expand the quality of the conditions for those requesting asylum, of which the empowerment of women and the elimination of discrimination are integral parts.

Currently, approximately 38% of the total population in the care network are women, of whom 22% are adults and 16% are minors. The majority of these women are accompanied within the care network by a spouse or members of their family, although 6% are single women and less than 1% are unaccompanied girls. Unaccompanied girls constitute 28% of all unaccompanied minors and are considered especially vulnerable and thus receive appropriate care. Unaccompanied minors reside for proximately two weeks in two specially established orientation and observation centers and are then transferred to the most appropriate care facility. Pregnant women are also considered highly vulnerable and are therefore also taken care of. In recent years, Fedasil recorded between 320 and 400 births per year in the care centers.

3.2.2. Personnel

The personnel charged with providing care are increasingly conscious of the needs of those requesting asylum. They guarantee their well-being and their progress in different ways. Experiences and practices are exchanged and good acts are actively promoted.

- Social workers and other members of the staff are educated and trained by organizations with experience in helping those requesting asylum. Informational sessions are organized on subjects that are particularly pertinent regarding the problems of women requesting asylum, such as feminine circumcision and access to health care.
- Special attention is paid to parity between men and women in the recruitment of personnel. This is motivated not only by diversity policies or by male-female parity in human resources, but access to a female member of the staff must also be guaranteed at any moment. The Fedasil center at Saint-Troud was named in 2005 as the enterprise most favorable to women.

- Social assistants are required to be present in the evening to speak with women, who tend to be more available at this time of the day and less inhibited when they are visited than when they are required to go themselves to the social assistance office.
- Special attention is paid to caring for single women with children: the social assistant will explain the procedure and rules for requesting asylum in an environment that permits interaction and discussion.
- Particular care is given to making the staff conscious of the institutional rules requiring that all persons residing in care centers be treated in a fair and respectful manner and that discrimination of all sorts, racial or sexual, be prohibited.
- Domestic violence, abuse, or bad treatment of women is not tolerated and any perpetrator is punished. Personnel are encouraged to be attentive to signs of domestic violence and to intervene rather than wait for women to file a report.
- To the extent possible, efforts are made to make female interpreters available to women when they go for appointments to social or medical services.
- Whenever possible, efforts are made to assure access to female doctors and gynecologists.

3.2.3. Materials and infrastructure

- In a standard package of monthly materials, women receive items of feminine hygiene and tampons. Deodorant and razors are furnished upon request.
- Women have access to contraceptives through the medical services at the care centers.
- Restrooms for women are separated from those for men.
- Recreational halls are created for women and their children.
- In certain centers, women have a special room for watching television.
- In large care centers, women are housed in special wings.
- Women are questioned regarding their needs with respect to infrastructure and materials, and, whenever possible, their needs are met.
- Certain centers provide a room for ironing that is only accessible to women; similarly, certain centers provide kitchen stoves, sewing rooms, or beauty salons exclusively for women.

3.2.4. Activities

- Discussion groups are organized specifically and separately for women, men, women along with other immigrants who do not reside in the asylum network, single women who share a dormitory, or mothers. The principal objective of these discussion groups is partly to assure the free expression of feelings and experiences without intimidation or stress, and to discuss and resolve everyday problems themselves.
- Specific information is provided individually to residents regarding sexually transmitted diseases, maltreatment, abuse, legal recourse; and health care.

- Specific activities are organized for women, where special schedules that are specially accessible for women are set up, for example, for fitness, cyber cafes, basketball, swimming, aerobics, beauty salons, studios, cooking courses, hairdressing, knitting, jewelry making, patchwork, makeup, museum visits or other cultural events, as well as evening activities, offering to women a large choice of activities.
- Training courses specially aimed at women (sewing, hairdressing,...) are made available, and certain course modules are reserved for women.
- Day care is organized either by the care center or by the mothers themselves.
- The participation and cooperation of the care center in such regional events as Women's Day or Refugees' Day are assured.
- Medical care that is personalized for women, adolescents, and pregnant women is furnished.
- Specific information and care for young mothers and their children are provided either by the care center or by external sources where, alternatively, knowledge and experiences are exchanged in discussion groups organized specially for this purpose.
- Activities fostering exchange with volunteers or with the neighbors often result in multicultural meals and therefore carry a strong appeal for residents.

3.2.5. Conclusion

The elimination of discrimination and the empowerment of women require continuous effort. Fedasil is continually seeking to improve its practices and their impact. One project in the legal area currently underway assures implementation of a European directive (2003/9/EC) establishing minimum standards for the care of those requesting asylum. When the directive is translated into practical directions and instructions for all of the participants active in providing care, specific attention will be paid to women requesting asylum and to their specific needs.

II. Federated entities

A. Flemish Region and Community

1. The Open Coordination Method for mainstreaming

Since 2005, the horizontal component (mainstreaming) of the Flemish equal opportunities policy has been developed and embedded in a structural manner. To this end, the open coordination method is used.

In the autumn of 2005, after the Government's decision to use the Open Coordination Method as a working method, bilateral talks were held between actors of the Flemish equal opportunities policy on the one hand and representatives of the offices of the different functional ministers on the other. During these dialogues possibilities were discussed to integrate an equal opportunities angle into the respective areas of competence. After that, all Flemish ministers submitted proposals for strategic and operational objectives in the field of equal opportunities, and more specifically with regard to the issues of gender, sexual orientation and physical accessibility. These proposals were integrated into one 'memorandum of objectives' which was adopted by the Flemish Ministerial Committee for Equal Opportunities on 24 March 2006. This Committee then instructed the heads of the

departments to establish a new Equal Opportunities Commission with representatives from the thirteen policy areas.

This Equal Opportunities Commission first met on 19 May 2006. On that day it was agreed that the Commission members were to submit action plans for their departments for the agreed objectives before 15 July 2006. Meanwhile, the plans have been reviewed by the Equal Opportunities in Flanders Unit, who operates the secretariat of the Commission

After that, bilateral talks will take place between a representative of the official Equal Opportunities in Flanders Unit and the Commission members to discuss suggestions which might optimise the action plans. The idea is to finalize the drafting of the action plans early November. This day marks the official start of the implementation, although it has to be remarked that a number of the initiatives described in the action plans are already running.

The Equal Opportunities Commission will meet twice a month from September 2006 onwards. These meetings will be an opportunity to exchange good practices, to acquire further expertise with regard to the target groups and issues that are of central importance in the coordination process and to prepare and crystallize the next phases of the process (such as the reporting phase and the preparation of new objectives and/or action plans).

The Commission members are to submit a report on the progress of the implementation of the current action plans by 15 July 2007. By that time, they are also to submit both updated and new action plans.

2. Policy-oriented research

Scientific data on equal opportunities are indispensable in order to pursue a policy which meets the constantly changing needs in this respect. Indeed, the objectives of an equal opportunities policy must be attuned to the social reality. Through scientific research insights and knowledge can be acquired about the living environment of the different target groups, about the actual discrimination mechanisms that are of importance and about statistics that may substantiate the actual discrimination or unequal opportunities of the target groups. That is why the development of scientific research has been one of the most important instruments in the equal opportunities policy in the past ten years.

Since September 2001, scientific research has been invested in again through two new channels. With the establishment by the Flemish Government of 13 centers for policy-relevant research, a *Steunpunt Gelijkekansenbeleid* (Policy Research Center for Equal Opportunities) was also set up (So, Equal Opportunities is one of the 13 fields in which policy research is being organised specifically). This Center is structurally financed by the Flemish education minister for an annual amount of 619,733.81 euros (= mainstreaming), with a co-financing of 'Equal Opportunities in Flanders' for an annual amount of 247,890 euros. Apart from that, a budget of 124,000 euros has been reserved on the 2006 budget of 'Equal Opportunities in Flanders' for ad hoc research.

2.1. Policy Research Center for Equal Opportunities

VII. 2.1.1. Research¹⁴

Meanwhile, some of the research that was initiated since 2001 has been completed. Below, an overview is given of the research that was completed during this review period and of other current research.

An overview:

- Research completed in 2006:
- *Waar zijn al die kapsters naartoe? Positie van lagergeschoolde vrouwen op de arbeidsmarkt. (Where are all of the hairdressers? Position of low-educated women in the labour market)*

Researchers: Mertens, Tinne, Steegmans, Nico

Low-educated women have usually followed a course in the care and welfare sector; the professions in this sector have quite a low status. Hairdressing courses are popular among girls, yet 'hairdresser' is a bottleneck profession. Those who graduate can start a business of their own. So the profession does provide perspectives on the labour market. However, a number of them will never open their doors or will have to close them after a while. What moves them? Privileged witnesses from the educational sector, sectoral organisations and trade unions were interviewed and focus groups were organised with barbers and hairdressers, future hairdressers and former hairdressers.

- *De velvet triangle nader bekeken: netwerken, ideeën en strategieën binnen het Vlaamse gelijkheidslandschap van vrouwen- en holebibewegingen. (focusing on the Velvet Triangle: networks, ideas and strategies within the Flemish Equal Opportunities Landscape of gay and lesbian movements)*

Researchers: Godemont, Jozefien & Motmans, Joz

The Velvet Triangle is a theoretical concept of Alison Woodward (VUB) which refers to the existing and/or possible interaction between female policy actors, representatives of women's civil society and academics in the field of equal opportunities with respect to gender. It concerns a possible way of informal and open government in which participation by civil society is essential. The network, ideas and strategies of the velvet triangle are discussed in great detail in in-depth interviews and focus groups with policy actors and representatives of the civil society from women and GLB organisations.

- Ongoing research:
- Gender and ICT. 'Internet in het dagelijkse leven. Grenscondities van gelijke kansen in de netwerkmaatschappij' Interim report in 2005 *Een virtuele illusie of reële kansen? Gender in de netwerkmaatschappij* (Researcher: Laurence Claeys).(Internet in daily Life: border conditions of Equal Opportunities in a networking society).
- Combination of spheres of life. Interim report in 2006 *Roze wolk en zwarte sneeuw. Moederschapsrust bij zelfstandigen.* (Researcher: Marjan Van Aerschot) (Pink Clouds and Black Snow: Maternity Leave with the selfemployed)

¹⁴ You will find the list of publications 2002-2006 in Annex.

VIII. 2.1.2. Contacts with civil society

The Research Center maintains good contacts with civil society, among other things by attending workshops that are organised by civil society, by organising workshops on gender indicators to which the civil society is always invited and which it always attends, by cooperating closely with the “Rol en Samenleving” (Role and Society) documentation center, by cooperating with Sophia and Amazone, which allows the Research Center to acquire information about the women’s movement and to disseminate information about its activities and research outcomes, and by entering into cooperative ventures with different universities and gender research centers, as a result of which students can provide information to the Research Center and the Research Center can provide research outcomes to students.

In the context of ‘gender and ICT’, cooperation and exchange is taking place with Atel, with Digitale Ontmoetingen and with other ICT initiatives that have come about within the women’s movement.

At international level, the Athena-network and AOIFE are participated in. These are organisations that coordinate and support gender studies, research and education at European level. In this context the Research Center plays a leading role in a project which brings together policymakers, civil society and scientific research.

IX. 2.1.3. Integrated approach

Women feature (as research object) in all research units of the Research Center. They are also discussed in the following research carried out by research units which primarily focus on the respective target groups of the elderly, immigrants and gays, lesbians and bisexuals.

CEDAW members can find more information about the activities of the Flemish Policy Research Center for Equal Opportunities at their website (also in English) www.steunpuntgelijkekansen.be

2.2. *Research into the needs of women of foreign origin who are in a state of poverty*

The Flemish equal opportunities policy seeks to gain an insight into the survival strategies, the living environment and the needs of women of foreign origin who are in a state of poverty. Reason for this is the finding that there is grinding poverty among women of Turkish or Moroccan origin who, often as a result of a divorce, end up on their own. In view of this a study contract was announced in September 2006. The study must be completed by 15 July 2008.

3. **Cooperation with NGOs**

Civil society is an important partner in the development of an effective equal opportunities policy. Civil society acts as a contact point for the target groups, not just to report discriminations and bottlenecks but also to shape and help disseminate the equal opportunities policy. That is why it is essential to support civil society in the implementation of this policy, among other things through subsidies (grants).

During the past years this dialogue with and support of the civil society has evolved towards a more structural level through the ‘nominatim’ (i.e. by name) subsidisation by Equal Opportunities in Flanders of several organisations (NGOs), the operating objectives of which have a supporting effect on the equal opportunities policy in Flanders. In order to make this policy support even more effective a number of

commitments are entered into each year in consultation with the organisations that receive 'nominatim' subsidies. These agreements include additional efforts with respect to the evolution of the organisations.

The following organisations receive a 'nominatim' subsidy:

- Nederlandstalige Vrouwenraad vzw (Flemish Women's Council)
<http://www.vrouwenraad.be>

The Vrouwenraad is an umbrella organisation clustering women's organisations with various philosophical and ideological backgrounds. It concerns professional organisations as well as the women's groups of political parties, socio-cultural and autonomous associations. The organisation formulates opinions, publishes brochures and reports and tries to put their themes on different political agendas through lobbying.

Subsidisation in 2006: 421,000 euros.

- Documentatiecentrum Rol en Samenleving (Rosa) vzw (Documentation Center 'Role and Society') <http://www.rosadoc.be>

Documentatiecentrum RoSa has been collecting and opening up information and documentation about the position of women in society since 1978. The organisation is located at the Vlaamse Gelijkekansenhuis (Flemish Equal Opportunities House) where it manages an extensive library, among other things. RoSa is the largest documentation center for women in Belgium. RoSa regularly draws up fact sheets and also participates actively in the EU Athena project together with the Policy Research Center for Equal Opportunities and Equal Opportunities in Flanders. CEDAW members can find more information on the Flemish equal opportunities policy at the English-language website of the documentation center.

Subsidisation in 2006: 466,000 euros.

- Gynaika vzw <http://www.gynaika.be>

VZW Gynaika has been focusing on women artists since 1994. On the one hand it does so from a cultural/historical point of view, on the other hand it argues in favour of giving today's women artists the same chances of development as their male colleagues. Gynaika manages a database which contains information about hundreds of women artists (can be consulted by anyone) and regularly organises activities.

Subsidisation in 2006: 124,000 euros.

- Vrouwen Overleg Komitee (VOK) vzw (Women's Consultation Committee)
<http://www.vrouwendag.be>

The pluralistic, feminist VOK organises activities, supports initiatives, questions policymakers and raises awareness about women's emancipation. The Komitee is also well-known as initiator of the annual Women's Day which takes place on 11 November.

Subsidisation in 2006: 50,000 euros.

Steunpunt Allochtone Meisjes en Vrouwen (SAMV) vzw (Center for Immigrant Girls and Women) <http://www.samv.be>

SAMV tries to promote the emancipation and participation of immigrant women and girls by making them visible within the multicultural society and by focusing on

their specific needs. To this end, it closely cooperates with immigrant girls' and women's associations.

Subsidisation in 2006: 98,000 euros.

Next to this structural funding, grants are allocated to different projects from women's organisations.

4. Network of provincial coordinators

In the course of this review period the networking with equal opportunities officials of the Flemish provinces and inner cities continued. The idea of these meetings is to exchange information, deal with common themes and promote consultation and cooperation for new projects, for example.

Local equal opportunities officials also constitute an important channel for the dissemination of information and documentation about the Flemish equal opportunities policy. They are in particular important actors for the implementation of different aspects of the action plan entitled 'diversity in decision-making' (see Article 7 below). Women are an important focus group of these actions, but they are not the only one. Other underrepresented groups and subgroups also come under the aforementioned 'focus groups'.

5. Immigrant women

Today, immigrant women experience social problems in different areas of society. They are a priority subgroup for the current equal opportunities policy. The Flemish equal opportunities policy seeks to support both the internal and the external emancipation of immigrant women. Internal emancipation is about the emancipation as a woman within her own ethnic/cultural community. External emancipation refers to the emancipation as an immigrant in Flemish society. In the first year of the government's term of office, the Flemish equal opportunities policy makers entered into an exploratory dialogue with the target group itself during several informal talks with different groups of immigrant women.

The results of these talks were presented late 2005 in pictures and text in an accessible way by means of a calendar for 2006 which illustrates the social environment of immigrant women. 1,500 copies of this calendar were distributed.

This initiative was continued in the spring of 2006 with the establishment of a think tank for immigrant women. The think tank is composed of women who, given their ethnic/cultural background and/or professional contact with immigrant women, have the necessary expertise to convert new ideas into actions and to review existing policy measures. In this way, the equal opportunities policy is made to meet the target group's real needs and to acquire sufficient support.

The identified needs of immigrant women will be discussed with the competent Flemish ministers through the open coordination method.

6. Training initiative 'Steunpunt Internationaal Privaatrecht' (Center on International Private Law)

As indicated earlier, the equal opportunities policy requires an approach to immigrant women which focuses on gender as well as on ethnicity. That is why the equal opportunities policy has adopted a twin-track approach for this target group,

namely on the one hand an inclusive policy and on the other hand a specific policy whenever appropriate.

The fact that it is advisable to pursue a specific policy vis-à-vis immigrant women, among other things when international private law is concerned, clearly showed from the Commission for Intercultural Dialogue which was set up by the federal government on 23 February 2004. The reason for this is that immigrant women are faced, for instance, with legal conflicts between international family law, the international treaties signed by Belgium and certain fundamental values in our society. The uncertain situation of some women causes their legal status to become even more precarious. After all, it is difficult for women to assert their rights if they are not familiar with these rights and/or these rights are ignored in their own cultural and social context and about which they cannot obtain any information from any authority.

The Steunpunt Internationaal Privaatrecht started its activities on 1 December 2005 within the framework of the Vlaams Minderhedencentrum (Flemish Minorities Center). It is a pilot project which was set up at the initiative of the federal minister for equal opportunities in co-operation with the regions. International private law is the legal branch which comprises the rules which determine which national law applies to people of another nationality than the country in which they reside. It determines for instance which national law applies if people of a different nationality get married or divorced in another country than the country of their nationality. Therefore, in order to be able to give someone of foreign origin legal assistance in a concrete situation, one must be familiar with Belgian international private law as well as with the applicable foreign legal system.

The primary aim of the Center is to provide legal assistance to anyone asking for it. The target group consists in the first place of the parties directly involved, namely women of foreign origin and women with a foreign nationality as well as the intermediary services who are faced with this problem. The idea is for the Center to also organise training for people who deal with this issue professionally (lawyers, magistrates, civil servants of the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, legal advisors within the framework of legal assistance and professionals from the social and minorities sectors), in order to allow them to provide the proper legal assistance to the target group.

The Flemish opportunities policy financially supports this training initiative together with the Flemish minister responsible for civic integration and the Brussels State Secretary for Equal Opportunities.

7. The Gender Yearbook

Early 2006 it was decided to integrate four publications that were (partially) steered by the Flemish equal opportunities policy. It concerned in the first place the 'Jaarboek Gelijke Kansen' (Equal Opportunities Yearbook), an annual publication of the Policy Research Center for Equal Opportunities. Apart from that, the 'Genderzakboekje' (Gender Notebook) which contains statistics about the position of women and men in the labour market, had been published for some years. Thirdly, a publication was produced within the framework of the open coordination procedure to monitor the annual progress. Finally, the Flemish equal opportunities policy makers commissioned an essay to explain the career gap from a gender point

of view. The working title of the integrated publication is the 'Vlaams Genderjaarboek' (Flemish Gender Yearbook).

The 2006 edition of the Vlaams Genderjaarboek focuses on the gender pay and career gaps. It contains four parts. The first part provides statistics about men and women in a number of areas of social life that are inextricably linked to the labour market. A second part contains figures about the specific subject of men and women in the end of career phase. The first part is produced by the Steunpunt Gelijkekansenbeleid, the second one by the Steunpunt Werkgelegenheid, Arbeid en Vorming (Center for Employment, Labour and Training). The third part is also provided by the Steunpunt Gelijkekansenbeleid and focuses on the way in which the equal opportunities concept is fleshed out by the different Flemish policy areas. It starts from the gender objectives that were submitted by the different policy areas within the framework of the open coordination method. The fourth part is an essay by Prof. Dr. Luc Sels which approaches the career gap from a gender point of view.

The first Vlaamse Genderjaarboek will be published in December 2006. It will be published annually. In 2007 central focus will be on gender pay gap/career gap.

B. French Community

1. A specialized unit

To promote a dynamic for the equality of opportunity in matters within its jurisdiction, the Wallonia-Brussels French Community has a specialized office. The Head Office for Equal Opportunity depends directly on the General Secretariat of the Ministry of the French Community and on the Minister President of the Government of the French Community in charge of equal opportunity.

Its missions are:

- to promote and foster a dynamic for equal opportunity within the competence of the French Community;
- to be a resource center that is open to exchanges, reflections, and creativity;
- to provide information to the associations sector, to listen to it, to assist and sustain it in its research and proceedings;
- to initiate innovative experiences in the service of a concrete policy of equal opportunity by developing tools in the French Community.

Therefore, the Head Office for Equal Opportunity of the Ministry of the French Community handles questions of gender equality within the competence of the French Community. Relevant are personal matters such as different levels and types of education, higher education, scientific research, culture (music, dance, theater arts, permanent education, cultural centers, arts and letters, cultural patrimony, etc.), the promotion of health, sports, young people, assistance to young people, audiovisual and the media.

2. Partnerships and support of civil society

The Head Office for Equal Opportunity is developing its own various activities (sensitization campaigns, preparation and distribution of pedagogical tools, specific provision of notice on questions of including the dimension of gender, bilateral agreements at the international level, etc.) and is working in collaboration or in coordination with associations, universities, and/or other levels of authority.

It supports various networks of women's and/or feminist associations (engaged, for example, in the struggle against violence between partners and in the integration of the dimension of gender in the educational system) whose claims it conveys to the political authorities. The association sector prepares sensitization campaigns through their active participation with preparatory working groups.

It also finances and/or co-finances different projects emerging from the association sector. From 2000 to 2005 inclusive, 140 projects were financed (average annual budget dispensed in grants: €400,000).

Furthermore, within the Ministry of the French Community, the permanent education service is developing two types of action for gender equality:

(1) The grant structure of associations that are active in "women's" matters and challenges. These subsidized associations, whose social object is equality between men and women, are regulated by the decree of 17 July 2003. The promotion and protection of fundamental rights, as well as questions of emancipation are also at the center of the actions of permanent education.

These objectives are explicitly enunciated in article 1 of the 2003 decree. This decree has the objective "of developing actions by associations in the field of permanent education with respect to a critical analysis of society, the stimulation of democratic and collective initiatives, the development of active citizenship, and the exercise of social, cultural, environmental, and economic rights within a perspective of individual and collective emancipation of the public in privileging the active participation of targeted groups, and cultural expression." This object is assured by the support granted to associations that have the objective of fostering and developing, mainly with regard to adults:

- (a) an awareness and critical consciousness of the realities of society;
- (b) a capacity for analysis, choice, action, and evaluation;
- (c) the attitudes of responsibility and of active participation in social, economic, cultural, and political life.

The approach of the targeted associations is characterized by a perspective of equality and of social progress, with a view to constructing a society that is more just, more democratic, and more unified and that fosters the meeting of cultures by the development of active and critical citizenship and of cultural democracy.

In 2003, 2004, and 2005, there were 67 recognized associations in permanent education, which were active in "women's" challenges, and received structural grants. Several associations among these are recognized for a specific aspect regarding their social object, formulated in terms of the struggle against violence against women.

(2) Targeted grants for special projects initiated by associations organizing an event or activity that is focused on women. The support for such targeted projects with respect to gender equality is regulated by the circular of 15 May 2001, regarding grants for targeted projects in permanent education and in creative fields.

By way of example, in 2004, €38,750 granted for the support of targeted projects by associations regarding "women's" challenges concerned 11 projects, most of which were associated with women's immigrant associations or with their activities. In

June 2005, the list of targeted projects that were supported included 23 projects, of which 50% dealt with female immigrants.

3. Research policy¹⁵

Since 2002, the Head Office for Equal Opportunity has conducted several research programs:

- Infant diseases and care for sick children: a source of inequality between men and women? (2003)
- Newtonia — access of young women to scientific and technical studies at universities (2002)
- Newtonia — promoting the access of young women to university studies in sciences and applied sciences (2003)
- Research on the question of forced marriage, “Marriage: a choice for life? A survey of the aspirations and expectations of young people regarding marriage” (2004)
- Study of the assimilation by young people of sexist stereotypes as transmitted by the media (2006)

Since December 2006, a qualitative and quantitative study has been underway on violence in romantic relationships among young people.

In addition, the Head Office for Equal Opportunity has published each year since 2001 a report on its activities, which includes its priorities, missions, activities, working perspectives, as well as the totality of research studies and projects on civil society financed by its resources.

Publications of the Ministry of the French Community:

- Facts and Gestures No. 6: “Care for sick children: inequality between men and women,” 2002.
- Facts and Gestures No. 7: “Girls and careers in science and technology,” 2002.
- Facts and Gestures No. 12: “Studies and scientific careers in a feminine key,” 2004.
- Facts and Gestures No. 15: “Marriage chosen, marriage submitted to: what are the challenges for young people?” 2004.
- Facts and Gestures No. 22: “Young people and sexism on television,” 2006.
- “Together... Are we offering a road to equality?” a document of sensitization aimed at current and future teachers, April 2003.
- Pedagogical Manual, “Women/men in the world” targeted at young people 12-15 years of age, March 2004.
- “I love you, Violence seriously injures love,” a tool for prevention and sensitization of young people to violence in romantic relationships, targeted at 15-24 years, 2004.

¹⁵ The list of publications of the Head Office for Equal Opportunity can be found in the annex.

4. Local equal opportunity policy

In the activities of the network of provincial coordinators, the French Community intervenes through co-financing the salaries and operating expenses of the provincial coordinators, both male and female, that are active promoting provincial coordination (under the supervision of the permanent delegation) and through support for projects that are introduced as appeals to annual projects initiated by the coordinators for associations in the field.

Regarding their respective competences, the different partners (Federal Government, Community, and Region) are committed to pursuing and coordinating their local policy of gender equality as follows:

- (1) in supporting in each Francophone province a provincial coordination office (made up of two full-time coordinators).
- (2) in annually launching an appeal for projects whose objective is supporting pilot projects in the area of gender equality locally in the five Francophone provinces.
- (3) in assuring coherence in projects that are relevant to the socioeconomic aspects as coordinated by the provincial coordination offices.

5. A specific policy: the struggle against violence against women in the French Community

To repeat, the competences of the Communities with respect to the struggle against spousal violence lie principally in prevention.

The national plan for the struggle against violence against women, launched in November 2001, has involved the different levels of Federal Government, Regions, and Communities. At this point, it was not proposed to strengthen the legislative mechanism, but to better exploit the tools that already exist.

X.

The governmental action program for promoting gender equality, multiculturalism, and social inclusion, adopted on 25 February 2005, demonstrates the desire of the Government of the French Community to make the struggle against violence against women a policy priority. In particular, the action program provides that the French Community shall actively contribute to implementing a national action plan (PAN) against spousal violence 2400-2007. With respect to its competences, the three possible axes of intervention in the French Community in the context of the national action plan against spousal violence are sensitization, training, and prevention.

XI. Objective 1: Sensitization

- Campaign of sensitization and information, directed at young people, regarding violence in romantic relationships, circulated mainly in the schools, as well as in sports, cultural, and young people's centers;
- Governmental campaign of sensitization regarding spousal violence aimed at the general public;
- Information for media professionals regarding violence between partners in order to allow them to handle the question adequately, to discourage the

reproduction of stereotypes, and to convey a positive image of women and men;

- Sensitization of young people to the phenomenon of violence between partners in the context of sexual and emotional education;
- The creation and circulation among teachers of a spectrum of sensitization tools that are available in the French Community;
- Organization of a round-table discussion for young people on violence between partners;
- Sensitization of young perpetrators of violence in the context of providing assistance to youth.

XII. Objective 2: Training

- Initial training of teachers in gender equality / training future teachers in the concepts of male-female equality and in sexist stereotypes;
- Continuing training of teachers and of training personnel regarding gender;
- Continuing training of PMS agents regarding gender equality and sexist stereotypes;
- Integrating the idea of girl-boy equality within violence/conflict management training programs run by the IFC.¹⁶

XIII. Objective 3: Prevention

- Integration of the dimension of gender in the process of labeling textbooks and workbooks (including CD-ROM supports);
- Integration of the question of sexist violence in the guidelines for public relations personnel to assist creative persons in conceiving publicity messages that convey a positive image of men and women;
- Creation of an annual prize, awarded jointly by the French Community and professionals, to an advertisement and a program, either audiovisual or radio, which contributed to modifying the traditional representations of masculine and feminine roles and which promoted the principle of equality between the sexes;
- To develop sensitization with respect to women and men within the administration of the French Community and within related agencies.

Three years after the publication of the brochure, "Violence within Romantic Relationships," the Head Office of Equal Opportunity in November 2004 launched a new campaign of sensitization and of prevention of violence between partners, specifically for young people.¹⁷ This second campaign, entitled "I love you. Violence seriously injures love," has been enriched by the evaluation of the

¹⁶ Institute for Mid-Career Training.

¹⁷ The campaign was launched in the context of the International Day of struggle against violence against women, 25 November 2004, and the National Day of the struggle against violence against women in Belgium, 11 November 2004.

premiere and the commentaries generated by the relevant associations gathered in working groups for the purpose of editing the text of the brochure.¹⁸

Aimed at a public aged 15 to 25, and broaching a subject that is still largely taboo of verbal, psychological, physical, and sexual violence within romantic relationships among young people, this campaign is addressed both to the victim and the aggressor as well as to their friends and family.

It envisages several objectives:

- to permit young people to recognize the signs of psychological, physical, and sexual violence within their romantic relationships and those of their friends and family;
- to give young victims or witnesses of violence advice, as well as addresses and telephone numbers where assistance can be obtained;
- to combat and deconstruct the stereotypes and the myths that surround romantic relationships and violence.

In addition, the French Community has developed different partnerships with associations:

- “Belgian Francophone Network for eliminating violence among partners” (REV);
- Amnesty International during its national and international campaign on the theme, “Putting an end to violence against women,” regarding violence in the family, in the social milieu, and perpetrated by the state.
- The Association of Women’s Solidarity in its project, “Preventing violence done to women: Training future teachers in a nonsexist education,” conducted in the context of the DAPHNE program.

XIV.

Furthermore, the French Community has supported different actions directed at the question of female genital mutilation (colloquia, pedagogical tools aimed especially at sensitizing young people, etc.).

Also, to struggle against violence against women, the Office of Birth and Childhood (ONE)¹⁹ has:

- established a unit on “psychological and sexual harassment in the workplace,”
- placed advertisements for sensitization on violence against women in locations where medical consultations for children take place,
- produced brochures on sensitization regarding violence against women, placing them at the disposal of users of the services of ONE.

¹⁸ The following associations took part in the working group: Center for Women and Society, Center for Prevention of Spousal and Familial Violence, Collective against Family Violence and Exclusion, Women’s Solidarity and Refuge for Battered Women, Garance, Magenta, Praxis, Campagne Ruban Blanc.

¹⁹ The Office of Birth and Childhood (ONE) is a public service of the French Community. Its mission - with respect to existing laws and according to its announced operational mission - consists in approval, financial support, organization, accompaniment, monitoring, and evaluation of the care of children up to 12 years of age outside of their familial milieu.

Regarding audiovisual matters, following the invitation of the Government of the French Community to provide an opinion and recommendations on the use of information regarding cases of violence perpetrated against women, the Advisory Division of CSA has integrated this question in its opinion of 4 July 2006 entitled “Equality, multiculturalism, and social inclusion — presence and representation of women in the services of radio broadcasting” (see the integral text of the opinion on the Internet website of CSA at the address, http://www.csa.be/AVIS/ca_avis.asp), recommending to editors of the services and to other persons in the audiovisual world various measures on the journalistic handling of cases of violence against women, including violence between partners.²⁰

Within public institutions for the protection of youth, various measures have been taken or are being implemented to assure the rights and liberties of women, especially with respect to violence:

- Since 2002, the principle of diversity has been introduced among educational teams of public institutions for the protection of youth (IPPJ). It is notable that this diversity has existed for several decades among management teams and psycho-medical-social teams (PMS).
- In the context of preventing violence within the IPPJ, the General Administration for Assistance to Youth (DGAJ) has confirmed an agreement with the Service for Emergency Psychological and Social Intervention (SISU). Female personnel and young women who have been treated, especially those that have been victims of verbal, physical, or psychological violence, have the opportunity of appealing to the service of the Red Cross of Belgium.
- The institutions are organizing sessions of emotional and sexual education. These sessions are arranged by the family planning services.
- The DGAJ has commissioned studies and is setting up training programs for sexual abusers in order to provide more adequate care to minors who are entrusted to the IPPJ and thus to avoid recidivism.

Finally, it is necessary to recall that young people who have been treated receive the assistance of religious or moral advisers, who also provide education that traditionally includes these themes.

C. Walloon Region

1. Poverty

Inasmuch as in Wallonia the poverty rate is 18% for women, whereas it is 12% for men, it can be said that measures taken to secure for economically disadvantaged persons the right to lead a life of human dignity are contributing to a certain extent to reducing the discrimination against women.

Thus, benefits for moving and paying rent (ADEL), which are one form of financial assistance granted to persons who are leaving a homeless situation or an unhealthy residence for a healthy residence, are granted predominately to women. Other examples are measures in the area of energy, in particular grants to households with modest incomes (especially single-parent families, where the parent is often female)

²⁰ The Supreme Audiovisual Council (CSA) participates in the development and regulation of the audiovisual sector, handles applications, and when necessary punishes infractions.

for promoting rational energy use, energy economies, the use of renewable energy, and the guaranteed provision of a minimum of electricity and gas to disadvantaged persons.

2. The struggle against violence against women

The actions in the Walloon Region in the struggle against violence against women essentially relate to the functions of protection and reparation. The decree of 12 February 2004 with respect to the care, provision of accommodation, and escorting of persons in social difficulties permits the approval and subsidizing of 13 homes for mothers and of two refuges for female victims of spousal violence. Furthermore, assistance in moving and paying rent (ADEL) is also awarded to facilitate the accommodation of victims.

The Walloon Region also finances a center to care for the victims of spousal violence within a hospital as well as various public or private initiatives for ministering to the victims or sensitizing public authorities and civil society to the necessity of fighting against this violence. The assistance services to those requiring it in the Walloon Region include administrative and moral support to the victims.

The Walloon Region actively participates in the national action plan of fighting against spousal violence, especially by co-financing the therapeutic handling of perpetrators of violence and the coordination of equal opportunity policies in the provinces.

Within FOREM, a mechanism has been established for prevention and for the protection of workers both male and female from violence, psychological harassment, and sexual harassment at work. It consists in the insertion, in the new FOREM work regulation (in force from 1 January 2006), of a course of instruction regarding violence and psychological or sexual harassment at work, including:

- a declaration of principle;
- definitions and the legal scope of application;
- a declaration of the policy of prevention and protection;
- a description of the mechanism implemented;
- a description of the procedure to be followed by staff members and trainees who deem themselves victims of violence or harassment from other staff members or trainees (internal) or from other personnel (external);
- a flow chart of procedures for handling the complaints of staff members (internal);
- a description of disciplinary procedures and punishments;
- useful addresses;
- coordinates and contact addresses of persons trained in listening;
- a description of the available documentation.

The entire procedure is available for all staff members on the intranet of FOREM.

3. Women immigrants

The decree of 4 July 1996 regarding the integration of foreign persons or persons of foreign origin organizes the participation of seven regional centers. It also provides for grants to local initiatives of social development.

In this context, the Walloon Region supports numerous actions of social emancipation with regard to women immigrants, principally arising in populous areas. These actions are designed to permit these women to acquire the minimal conditions for charting a course of socio-professional integration through practical training in French as a foreign language and through providing sufficient socio-cultural knowledge of their environment. Approximately 150 initiatives are subsidized annually.

D. Brussels-Capital Region

1. Empirical data

The declarations of the Brussels Government for several years have placed the emphasis on equality, and the process has experienced a crescendo under this legislature.²¹ In order to foster the establishment of gender mainstreaming, the Region has made grants to several mechanisms.

The Ministry includes several services that are responsible in this area, both internally as well as externally.

- The administration for human resources and for equality of opportunity has a unit that is designed to promote equality and diversity within the Ministry. Internally, several training events in sensitization and communication are organized each year for personnel, especially with respect to legal information.

The Ministry is applying the royal decree of 27 February 1990 with respect to measures seeking to promote equal opportunity between men and women in the public services.

In this context, an official has been designated to be in charge of equal opportunity, an analytic report on personnel data broken down by sex is prepared, an equal opportunity action plan is formalized regularly, and an internal oversight body has been established.

The unit provides financial support to associations that develop projects in this area.

- An official charged with coordinating the struggle against conjugal violence is working towards the participation of Brussels in the federal plan for the struggle against conjugal violence 2004-2007. As an application of the recommendations from the Beijing conference, the unit draws up an inventory of initiatives undertaken in accordance with the objectives of the conference.
- Within local administrations, a coordination unit responsible for promoting gender equality at the municipal level has been established since 2001. From

²¹ Governmental declaration of 2004: "The Region seeks to promote gender equality throughout all of its policies. To do this, it plans to carry out surveys and statistical studies on gender in all of its regional jurisdictions. It plans to designate as a public service one official who shall be responsible for equality and shall in every instance attend to achieving balance in the representation of men and women. The Government also engages to present to Parliament an annual report on the policy of equal opportunity between men and women."

the point of view of mainstreaming, the unit is active within the regional administration to assure that gender is taken into account in the policies implemented within the context of monitoring local authorities. Courses and training programs focusing on the equal rights of men and women have been organized without interruption for local and regional officials since 2002 to permit the dissemination of information concerning both national and international legal provisions, including the CEDAW Convention. The program is constantly in action.

In 2005, the Region allocated a total of €90,000 in its budget for “General expenditures of the Head Office for Equal Opportunity.” An increase in this budgeted amount is the logical consequence of the political will expressed in the governmental declaration of 2004. However, one can also note a confusion that is caused by the term “equality of opportunity,” a term of many meanings if there ever was one. Providing differentiated structures in this regard, and being able to provide budgets that have been established from the point of view of gender budgeting, would improve the visibility of the policy of equality, and especially of the targeted populations.

2. Legislative acts

An ordinance regarding the preparation by the Government of an annual report evaluating the governmental policy of gender equality was adopted on 20 April 2006.²² The ordinance provides for the Brussels Government to annually submit an account following up on the Beijing objectives as reflected in its policies (strategic objectives, financial means, evaluation, etc.). This report is presented to the regional parliament.

Several charters for equality have been promoted at the Brussels level, specifically at the municipal level. The “Charter for the Women of Brussels” in December 2005 set out the goal that women be united and engaged in participating actively in local public life, in striving to attain parity representation in the municipalities, and in establishing a municipal magistrate for equality who disposes of sufficient human and financial resources.

The charter of the CCRE “Charter for equality of opportunity for women and men in local life” consequently places the emphasis not only on the participation of women in political and public life but also on the role with respect to equality of the municipalities as employers and providers of goods and services. These charters have been adopted by several Brussels municipalities. However, these are engagements of a general nature, instruments that are not mandatory and not enumerated, whose evaluation has turned out to be difficult. They lack all means of constraint.

With regard to psychological and sexual harassment, since the adoption of the law of 11 June 2002, the Region has organized several training sessions on protecting workers against violence at the workplace, placing the emphasis on gender for municipal officials.

Furthermore, the Region, via the regional coordination for the struggle against violence, has participated since 2002 in the coordination of the federal plan of the struggle against conjugal violence. The coordination that has been implemented in

²² Belgian Monitor of 9 May 2006.

this regard brings together the helping services of first providers and coordinates a regional plan promoting sensitization actions and prevention.

At the level of the French Community Commission of the Brussels-Capital Region, the decree relating to assistance services, aimed at victims and their relatives, defendants and parolees, and ex-convicts and their relatives, in addition to general services treating all types of infractions, also provides specific services for certain types of infractions.²³ Thus two services are planned and await approval, one for the victims and perpetrators of rape, the other for the victims and perpetrators of conjugal violence.

The decree regarding treatment centers offers care to homeless persons. Particular attention is paid to women and to families. Thus one center receives women (with their children) who are victims of conjugal violence, other centers specifically focus on (young) pregnant women, caring for them during their pregnancy and providing initial care after the birth. Beyond care, these centers are charged with assisting their charges in achieving or regaining their autonomy.

E. German-Speaking Community

The Asbl Prisma, financed by the German-speaking Community, organizes the functioning of the Guidance Center (Frauenberatung) and one of the refuge centers (Frauenfluchthaus) for women in difficult circumstances.

1. Care for women in difficult situations

1.1. Guidance Center

The Guidance Center for women in difficulties pursues the following objectives:

- to provide listening and support to women who have experienced situations of sexual, physical, and/or psychological violence;
- to devise solutions for situations arising within extremely difficult relationships;
- to support women going through divorce or separation;
- to support women who are confronted with death, grief, loss, or illness;
- to support women in crisis situations, who are seeking to change their situation in life;
- to carry out informational and sensitization campaigns.

1.2. Refuge Center

The Refuge Center lodges women and their children when their situation so requires. During 2005, 16 women and 15 children were lodged in the Refuge Center.

In 2005, 226 women consulted the Asbl Prisma (179 women for individual interviews; 33 women for juridical information; and 14 women to pursue specific therapies).

An increase can be confirmed for the age groups below 25 years and above 50 years.

²³ The Municipal Community Commission regulates and administers municipalities in two Communities (Francophone and Flemish) within the Region.

2. Care for those requesting asylum

The asylum office of the Red Cross for the German-speaking Community handles those requesting asylum, political refugees, immigrants and foreigners facing all sorts of difficulties, disadvantaged persons (those to whom the Geneva Convention applies), and most especially women, whether of foreign origin or not.

A new project which will be launched in January 2007 entitled, “Women’s Story Café,” aims at improving social contacts among women, extending the “network,” and removing all kinds of prejudice, distress, and ignorance by establishing a place for foreign and Belgian women to meet.

Article 4

I. Federal level

1. Within federal public offices

The royal decree of 27 February 1990 with respect to measures for promoting gender equality in the public services is applicable to many public services, especially to federal public services (SPF), scientific institutions, and public interest groups (OIP). It requires each public service to take actions that remedy actual inequalities affecting the opportunities for women through an equal opportunity plan.

This plan contains a description of the situations that require correction and a description of the affirmative actions that are envisaged. It designates the officials who are responsible for the implementation of these affirmative actions and the modalities involving a periodic and a final evaluation of the plan. This official is partially relieved of his or her duties within the institution in order to carry out this assignment. In addition, within each public service, an internal monitoring commission is to be created to prepare a report on the plan for equality of opportunity, to evaluate the affirmative actions, and to monitor the implementation of the affirmative actions.

However, the implementation of affirmative actions within the federal public sector has undergone an important evolution since the publication of the royal decree of 27 February 1990 with respect to measures taken to promote equality of opportunity between men and women within the public services and more specifically since the Federal Government set about integrating the gender perspective in the totality of its policies.²⁴

The system put in place by the aforementioned decree was the object of an evaluation that concluded by urging the integration of affirmative action measures for federal personnel into the personnel management policy as it has been established under the authority of the Ministry of Public Function. More precisely, this integration has been accomplished through the expedient of introducing a gender equality section in the “diversity” project to be implemented within the federal public function. This project is described in detail in the contribution relating to article 2 of the Convention.

²⁴ Royal decree of 27 February 1990 with respect to measures taken to promote the equality of opportunity between men and women in the public services, Belgian Monitor of 8 March 1990.

On 26 October 2004, a national event on diversity in the public services, produced by the SPF personnel and organization, made it possible for representatives of all federal departments, but also for regional and community departments, to promote actions and other inspiring good practices with respect to diversity in the public services.

In 2005, a standing diversity unit has therefore seen the light of day within the SPF P&O, in the context of the diversity action plan launched in mid-February by the Ministry of Public Function. A network of contact persons for each federal department has been constituted to act as a relay for sensitization measures.

For the sake of effectiveness, the network of “affirmative action” officials of federal public services has therefore been integrated into the network of officials charged with the diversity project. During a meeting on 3 May 2005, the members of the network were informed of the new “diversity project,” and the members of this network who were not parts of an SPF or a federal public agency were provided with information regarding initiatives conducted by the provincial coordination network and by the Communities. This information was circulated with the cooperation of the services concerned in order to permit the members of the “affirmative action” network not included in the “diversity network” to join in initiatives developed at their level of authority.

1.1. The “Action Plan 2005-2007 to Value Diversity”

The “Action Plan 2005-2007 to Value Diversity” envisages three target groups: disabled persons, persons of foreign origin, and women in functions where they are underrepresented.

This plan sets out specific actions with regard to women in sectors where they are underrepresented, including encouraging women to apply for technical or management functions, an active search for women able to be members of selection juries, verification of gender bias in the pre-selection of managers at Selor, and fixing objectives for numbers of women in functions under mandate. The number of women in management functions has slowly increased to 14.3% in July 2006.

A public relations campaign entitled “Women at the Top” has been conducted to encourage women to apply for management functions within the administration. The campaign was first conducted internally, with a letter sent in May 2005 to all the female officials at level A and the distribution of posters featuring mirrors with the message, “A future woman at the top? Seeing is believing!” In a second phase, the campaign was also conducted externally with announcements appearing in magazines. In accordance with this campaign, it has been possible to observe a first positive trend. The proportion of registrations of women in selection for higher positions and personnel functions, after the internal campaign, rose on an average by 2%, from 33% to 35% of women candidates of the total for the “fourth wave” (closed in September 2005, figures for internal and external candidates.) The proportion of female candidacies has increased during the last wave (December 2005), i.e., after the external campaign, reaching a total of 42%. It goes without saying that the efforts to encourage the candidacies of women must and will be continued.

Great importance is also placed on the sensitization of officials and their managers regarding possible gender bias as well as on the promotion of neutrality in terms of

gender (neuter job descriptions, editing job announcements so as to be neuter in gender terms, etc.).

Balance in private life/professional life is addressed by a pilot project on the problem of meetings that are late and/or ineffective and through the implementation of telecommuting pilot projects. The diversity unit, which was created to assure follow-up for the action plan, is charged with implementing the aforementioned measures.

2. Policy decision-making

The adoption of special measures with a view to accelerating the establishment of equality in fact between men and women has been carried out at all the levels of authority (the federal level and the federated entities) in order to strengthen the participation of women in policy decision-making. These legislative measures and their impact on the presence of women within Belgian political institutions are presented in article 7 of the present report.

3. Encouraging the use of paternity leave

Since 2002, the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men has conducted a campaign of information and sensitization on the issue of paternity leave. A leaflet produced in four languages was distributed to future fathers through many channels of which the most common are Internet sites. In order to sensitize the world of work (public and private employers, trade unions), a tool consisting of an animation has been created and is available in two languages on video and DVD. An inventory of tools regarding the implementation of paternity leave by local authorities has been generated and has demonstrated the necessity of remaining proactive in this matter.

4. The Charter for men who are engaged in realizing equality between men and women

On the occasion of a seminar that was held on 8 March 2006, the Federal Ministry for Equal Opportunity proposed a charter for men to sign that challenges them to be actively engaged in realizing equality. The Charter is available on the website of the Institute for Equality of Women and Men.

II. Federated Entities

French Community

A decree regarding the representation of the sexes within sports federations and associations (a minimum of 20% women on administrative bodies) was adopted on 20 June 2002. As of 31 December 2004, 24 federations, or 37.5%, had satisfactory levels of representation of women on their administrative boards.

In addition, the Government of the French Community on 17 July 2002 adopted a decree regarding the promotion of equal participation of men and women in advisory bodies.

This decree specifically provided that:

- among candidates to elective offices and applicants to advisory bodies there must be at least one man and one woman;
- the advisory bodies must have a minimum of 35% of the members of each sex.

- every two years the Government will submit an evaluation of the present decree to the Council of the French Community.

In order to integrate an approach that is mindful of gender equality within legislative provisions, policies, programs, and projects of general interest, a specific module on equality of opportunity has been integrated into the 2006-2007 training plan for the School of Public Administration.

Article 5

I. Federal level

1. The image of women and men

1.1. In advertising

In order to advance the struggle against gender stereotypes, the Senate of Belgium has on 15 February 2006 adopted a resolution regarding the image of men and women in advertising. The Institute for the Equality of Women and Men and the Commission on Advertising of the Board of Examiners for Advertising Ethics are included in this resolution in order to analyze and to study the topic and to implement specific actions, each in the area of their competence.

1.2. The Electronica project

In 2000, following the summit in Lisbon, the Federal Government pledged itself to promote equality of access to informational and communications technologies of men and women. The Head Office of Equal Opportunity of the federal public service, Employment, Jobs, and Social Dialogue, with co-financing from the European Social Fund, has carried out a project on this theme. This project, entitled Electronica, makes it possible to prepare and implement a sensitization campaign for the general public; four tools for sensitization and the deconstruction of stereotypes regarding access of women to careers and to training in informational and communications technology; and a qualitative study on the difficulties faced by students in choosing their area of studies and their occupations within informational and communications technologies. This project, carried out with institutional and consultation partners, was closed at the end of 2003.

2. The “General conditions of the family”

At the initiative of the Secretaries of State for Families and Disabled Persons, who succeeded each other during the period covered by the report, the “General State of Families” meetings were organized between 2004 in 2006, bringing together the institutional players at the federal, community, and regional levels, as well as players on the ground, which had for an objective “to understand and better support the family in all of its conditions.” The report regarding these general conditions and containing recommendations was distributed during 2007, and a portal site, www.lesfamilles.be, continues the work of collecting information and distributing results.

3. The struggle against certain socio-cultural behaviors, stereotypes, and prejudices within the Ministry of Defense

Within the Ministry of Defense, in the context of a strategic plan of diversity, measures have been taken in the areas of training and recruitment to eliminate certain socio-cultural behaviors, stereotypes, and prejudices.

3.1. Theater of diversity

In 2006, a theater of diversity was organized during basic training in the military. The goal is to sensitize soldiers to the existence of stereotypical thoughts and of prejudice in general. Several methods designed to deal with problems generated by prejudice or stereotypes have also been offered during sessions of the theater of diversity.

3.2. Training in diversity

Beyond the theaters of diversity available to soldiers during basic training, the Ministry of Defense has also wanted to offer opportunities for training to all soldiers, of whom certain ones are more targeted than others.

The open seminars, as their name indicates, are open to all soldiers. The objective of an open seminar on diversity is to raise consciousness regarding the theme of diversity in all of its aspects: ethnic origin, gender, age, etc., and to sensitize the participants as to the richness of diversity but also to the problems that can be encountered. The participants also learn to live diversity in the workplace.

The training of local mediators in the Ministry of Defense also contains a “diversity” module. In this module, phenomena such as stereotypes and prejudices are treated in greater depth.

3.3. Joint Individual Common Core Skills (JICCS) in the area of norms and values

The JICCS are the basic attitudes and competences which every soldier must be able to demonstrate. “Respect for others” (including in their diversity) is a part of this. A second theme of the JICCS concerns violence and harassment (see also article 3). The policy against trafficking in human beings will also be integrated into JICCS.

3.4. Image creation

The Ministry of Defense wants to clearly show that women working there clearly have their place in all of the existing positions in the same way that men do. During recruitment campaigns, advertisements also appear in periodicals that target a female audience. We might also note that the spokesperson of the Ministry of Defense is a woman.

II. Federated entities

A. Flemish Region and Community

1. Breaking through traditional role patterns through the vertical policy of the Flemish minister responsible for equal opportunities

There is a gap between what has already been legally achieved in terms of equal opportunities for men and women and what has been realised or accepted socially. Despite the huge progress that has been made since the advent of the women’s movement men and women still do not really have equal opportunities in various areas of community life. Moreover, it is important not just to point out the differences between men and women, but also the differences between women themselves. There are gender-specific characteristics and mechanisms that result in specific groups of girls and women lagging behind in terms of average level of education and work and in terms of socio-cultural and political participation. This is the case amongst others for single mothers, older women and immigrant women and girls. Finally, the equal opportunities discourse risks being narrowed down too

easily to ‘the same opportunities for men and women’. Men also face prejudices and unequal opportunities which prevent them from developing themselves. That is why fighting stereotypes about men and the ensuing discrimination is an important point of concern during this government’s term of office.

2. Cross-media campaign on equal opportunities and role patterns on the work floor and within the family

Within the framework of the thematic activities regarding ‘gender mainstreaming’ issue (ESF Priority 5) the Flemish equal opportunities policy has initiated the launching of a campaign to make the products that have been developed under ESF Priority 5 well-known, both to the public at large and to the actors involved. In co-operation with the Flemish minister for work, a new appeal was made to companies, social partners and civil society organisations to develop innovative pilot projects with regard to these combined problems within the framework of the strategic action plan on equal opportunities for men and women.

The Flemish equal opportunities policy wants to put the combination of work and family on the public agenda in a fresh and contemporary manner through a large-scale cross-media image campaign. Through talks in Flemish schools young people will be encouraged to think about equal opportunities and role patterns. Such an exchange of thoughts is also promoted within the immigrant community. Within the framework of this campaign several media channels, such as radio and TV, will be used. This campaign is also supported via a website and by means of specific publications.

3. Department of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media

In terms of staff policy, the Culture, Youth, Sport and Media policy area applies generally applicable measures that attract and allow women to hold an office (parental leave, flextime, gender neutral use of words for the recruitment procedures, job descriptions and new competence management,...). Some Bloso staff members, for instance, attended further training courses on the subject of gender-conscious staff policy (2005) and gender in balance (2002).

4. Intimate partner violence

In 2006, the Centers for General Welfare Work in Flanders were reinforced with 14 full-time equivalents to tackle intimate partner violence more efficiently. This amounts to an annual investment of 664,548 euros.

The idea is to closely guide all parties involved towards a new or better (co-) existence without violence, together with the police, public prosecutor offices, courts of law and other welfare and health facilities.

This approach is in line with the joint circular of the Minister of Justice and the College of Attorney Generals on intimate partner violence and fits in with the National Action Plan against Intimate Partner Violence.

B. French Community

The governmental action plan for promoting gender equality, multiculturalism, and social inclusion provides for fostering reflection among the Government of the French Community, the Supreme Audiovisual Council (CSA), and professionals in media and advertising with regard to handling the question of sexist stereotypes in the media.

A preliminary inventory of the existing mechanisms in this area, with a focus on the good practices put into effect in the member states of the European Union, has been accomplished by the Head Office for Equal Opportunity in order to lay the groundwork for consultations between the different agencies.

Thus in the French Community, several texts can be found that relate to human dignity, violence, and/or the protection of minors, namely:

- the decree on radio broadcasting,
- the management contract of RTBF (Belgian Francophone Radio and Television),
- the code of professional ethics signed by the members of the bureaucracy of the French Community,
- the code of ethics in advertising,
- the code of ethics in audiovisual advertising targeted at children.

Furthermore, in December 2005, the Head Office for Equal Opportunity initiated a study on the assimilation by young people of sexist stereotypes as conveyed by the media. The objectives of this study, which was conducted until December 2006 by a team at the University of Liege, were to:

- analyze the degree to which the media convey sexist stereotypes;
- analyze the degree to which the media influence the perception and the assimilation by young people of these sexist stereotypes, and their effects on the representation of the two sexes for young people;
- propose programs, if appropriate, to reduce the influence of these stereotypes on young people, and to assure an egalitarian representation of the two sexes as conveyed by the media.

The action program also announced the creation of an annual prize to be awarded jointly by the French Community and professionals, to an advertisement and an audiovisual or radio program which has contributed to modifying the traditional representations of masculine and feminine roles and which has promoted the principle of gender equality. To prepare the basis for the creation of the prize, a partnership was established between the Head Office of Equal Opportunity and the Audiovisual Service of the French Community.

The opinion of the aforementioned Advisory Division of CSA (Supreme Audiovisual Council) also developed the theme of the image and the representation of women in the media and resulted in various recommendations made by the Advisory Division to the editors of the services and to other persons within the audiovisual hierarchy. The Advisory Division called for vigilance with respect to the propagation of sexist stereotypes and to a better representation of the diversity of roles and functions of men and women, within radio programs, programs that are co-produced or commissioned for children, video clips, and television series. The Advisory Division also encouraged the advertising and education sectors to be vigilant regarding the question of the image of women and their gender in general.

The Advisory Division within this opinion provides different tools permitting the evaluation of the presence and the representation of women in the services of radio broadcasting. In addition, the recommendation for the protection of minors by the

Authorization and Monitoring Divisions of CSA (see the CSA Internet site at the address: http://www.csa.be/AVIS/cac_recommandations.asp), adopted on 21 June 2006, specifically makes the point regarding the jurisprudence of CSA with respect to the protection of minors and the application of the description as concerns violence and sex in the radio broadcasting services.

In the struggle against sex stereotypes and for family education, the Office of Birth and Childhood (ONE) has the general mission of assisting a child in relating to the family milieu and the social environment. It also has the mission of carrying out actions in support of parenthood and in promotion of health. This new way of understanding the missions of the Office, which is defined in the decree of 17 July 2002 regarding the reform of ONE, confirms it in its role as a body aiming at the overall protection of mothers and children.

These missions lead it to schedule, evaluate, and support pre- and post-natal consultations at the initiative of a volunteer committee, which itself may be a product of the NGOs or of local authorities. The Office also organizes regular consultations as well as tours of public-health vehicles serving rural areas.

Consultation sessions are held by gynecologists and midwives in prenatal consultations, by general medical practitioners who have been retrained, or by pediatricians in child consultations, routine consultations, or in public-health vehicles. The Office collaborates with more than a thousand doctors. More than 750 medical-social workers (TMS), whether nurses or social workers, assist the physicians and provide care to families during consultation sessions, whether they are on call or making home visits.

XV.

These services are provided free of charge by the Office to all families wishing to benefit from them and do not carry obligations or restrictions. In 2005, 12,530 future mothers were registered for the first time in prenatal consultations, 51,608 babies were registered during child consultations, and 137,975 children from zero to six years were registered.

In 2004, a reform was implemented in this area. In accordance with information received from the field, in 2005 it was possible to deepen reflection on the field within the consultation teams. The reform was also the occasion to specify certain aspects (improvement of the facilities, annual programs of activities, combined consultations,...). An evaluation of this reform was carried out at the beginning of 2006. It had a positive result in many aspects. A new evaluation of the implementation of this reform will be made in 2006, focusing on the evolution of ongoing problems (especially, providing information to the teams), the state of coordination occurring in the field, and the repetitions of the health and parenthood projects. These projects involved actions that aim at improving the health of and medical-social preventive measures for the child, whatever its sex, as well as its socio-economic position and culture, while fostering parenthood. The projects stem from different agencies within Infancy, which they share or collaborate with ONE on. They all have as their primary preoccupation the child and its family on the territory of the French Community. These actions are complementary to those within the assisting mission that continue to be performed, with which the Office is otherwise charged (early testing of vision and hearing, prenatal consultations, regular consultations, and child consultations,...).

Regarding sports, gender equality does not exist physiologically.²⁵ However, it is appropriate to work towards universal accessibility of sports activities. The launching of projects and the implementation of policies aimed at encouraging the participation of women in sports at all levels must be prepared and executed.

In view of the conditions or difficulties of female athletes' practice of sports, one must also note the presence of women among the directors of clubs and of sports federations, referees and judges, journalists, members of various advisory commissions, etc.

The following actions have therefore been undertaken in the French Community:

- Access of girls and young women to virtually all sports events, whether organized internally or externally, is promoted generally since the majority of events are mixed or female-centered. This free access destroys certain stereotypes and partly eliminates some customary practices.
- In order to develop women's sports and sensitize women of all ages, the French Community maintains and develops sports activities and/or leisure-type sports for all, family sports, school sports, sports developmental programs, young people's summer programs, etc.
- Women's sports generate moderate interest with media and sponsors, except when it concerns athletes at the highest level (for example, tennis and track and field). In visual promotions, the General Administration of Sports seeks to integrate and popularize images of diversity or of female athletes...
- Launching the Check Sport operation on 1 August 2005. This initiative promotes the integration, affiliation, and participation of young people from 6 to 18 years of age, who are socio-economically challenged, in the sports structures of the French Community.
- Statistical data is collected annually on attendance at sports events, the actions of the Sports for All service, and affiliations within known sports federations and associations.

Within education, the different committees charged with preparing evaluative tools in the French Community aim at promoting a non-stereotypical image of women throughout the production of said tools, especially in removing sexist stereotypes in all of their products. Similarly, following the decree adopted in 2006, relating to approval and distribution of textbooks and other pedagogical materials in compulsory educational institutions, the Managing Commission of Education will seek in coming months to guarantee that the textbooks and software submitted for its approval do not convey sexist stereotypes, thus assuring respect for gender equality.

In permanent education, the decree of July 2003 makes possible the active support of associations that promote sensitization actions and disseminate information to the general public with the goal of promoting changes in behavior and mentality

²⁵ The National Institute of Physical Education and Sports (INEPS), founded in 1955, became Adeps in 1964. In 1983, one of six general administrations within the Ministry of the French Community, the General Administration of Sports took on the responsibilities formally executed by Adeps. Adeps participates in the promotion, development, and implementation of an ever growing number of sports activities.

regarding the cultural challenges of citizenship and democracy. In addition, the Health Centers that are recognized and supported in permanent education are often active in regard to women. Prevention of and sensitization to the problems of AIDS are actions that are carried out by several permanent educational associations so as to be targeted at women (SIREAS, the Women's Collective,...).

C. Walloon Region

The Walloon Region each year supports and subsidizes initiatives undertaken by associations or local authorities with respect to fighting prejudice and practices based on stereotypes. These initiatives are evaluated and are summarized in the annual report that is admitted by the Walloon Government to the Walloon Parliament.

D. Brussels-Capital Region

Plans and charters of diversity in employment have been adopted with a view first of all to fighting against multiple discriminations. Although education is not the province of the Region, sensitization actions regarding diversity and the struggle against stereotypes have been conducted.

In September 2005, a colloquium for the general public and dedicated to the role of men in gender equality was organized by the administration of local authorities of the Brussels Region in collaboration with the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men. Open to the general public, it discussed the problem of masculine and feminine identities, and the role of men in policies that foster equality.

Article 6

I. Federal level

1. Trafficking and trading in human beings

For more than 10 years, Belgium has opted for a multidisciplinary approach to the problem of trafficking in human beings. This approach seeks to integrate at once a suppression dimension and a humanitarian dimension for fighting against this phenomenon. The protection of children represents an integral part of the struggle against trafficking in human beings, but Belgium nevertheless does not set out a specific initiative in this regard. It is therefore within the general context of the struggle against trafficking in human beings that the problem of trafficking in children is treated.

1.1. At the international level

On 17 November 2005, Belgium signed Convention No. 197 on the struggle against trafficking in human beings of the Council of Europe, adopted on 16 May 2005. The process of ratification is underway.

On 17 March 2006, Belgium ratified the optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Children, with regard to the sale of children, prostitution of children, and pornography portraying children, which was adopted in New York on 25 May 2000.

1.2. At the national level

1.2.1. Legislative developments regarding the struggle against trafficking in human beings

The previous law of 13 April 1995 containing provisions regarding the suppression of the trafficking in human beings and of child pornography has been replaced, with regard to initiatives relating to trafficking in human beings, by the law of 10 August 2005 amending various provisions with a view towards strengthening the struggle against trafficking in human beings and against the practices of sleep merchants (Belgian Monitor of 2 September 2005).

The first objective of this law is to bring our legislation into conformity with European and international provisions in this area, specifically the two additional protocols to the Convention of the United Nations against transnational organized crime, i.e., the protocol with respect to preventing, suppressing, and punishing trafficking in persons, in particular in women and children, and the protocol against illegal transporting of migrants by land, sea, and air, all three signed at Palermo on 15 December 2000.

The new law makes a clear distinction between trafficking in human beings and illegal transporting of migrants. These two crimes are henceforth clearly defined and are curbed on the basis of specific provisions: the Penal Code on trafficking (article 433quinquies) and a new article 77bis of the law of 15 December 1980 on access to territory, sojourning, registration and deportation of foreigners, for the illegal transporting of human beings (“law regarding foreigners”).

The new charge of trafficking in human beings has been substantially modified. In the first place, in addition to transnational trafficking (implicating the removal of the victim from his country of origin to a country of destination), the charge covers national trafficking, which is committed on the territory of Belgium without crossing the border. The charge of trafficking in human beings places the emphasis not only on the notion of the abuse of the victim, as was done by the law of 13 April 1995, but on exploitation.

Another innovation of the new law lies in stipulating the aim of exploitation. Several forms of exploitation are therefore enumerated: sexual exploitation (exploitation of prostitution and child pornography), exploitation of begging, exploitation through work (work under conditions that are contrary to human dignity), illegal trafficking in organs, and the commission of crimes. For the crime of trafficking in human beings to be committed, the exploitation is not required to be realized. It would nevertheless be necessary to prove that one of the forms of exploitation enumerated above was intended at the moment that the recruitment, transport, or lodging took place. These will generally constitute the elements of fact that will make it possible to establish an intention to exploit.

This law also introduces various aggravating circumstances, divided into three levels: aggravating circumstances connected with the quality of the victim and the perpetrator; those that are connected with the means of action, the circumstances of the act, and the consequences of the infraction, and finally aggravating circumstances connected to the implication of criminal organizations and the potential, unintended death of the victim or victims.

Finally, this law also modifies the punishments, due to the gravity of the crime of trafficking in human beings. The law thus provides punishments for the simple crime of trafficking in human beings by a penal incarceration of from one to five years (as is the case currently), and by a fine that is considerably increased, gradually rising from €500 to €50,000, so as to increase the deterrent and to take account of the profits that are generated by these forms of criminality.

As concerns recommendation 35 in accordance with which, “the Committee is also concerned by the fact that the suppression of the offense of procuring with a view to avoiding punishments at the level of cohabitation and facilitate the exploitation of prostitution,” it is appropriate to underline the fact that article 380, paragraph 1, clause 4, and paragraph 4, clause 4 of the Penal Code have broad scope regarding the suppression of the exploitation of prostitution or vice of any type.

If the legislature in 1995 eliminated the incrimination of cohabitation with a prostitute, it did not intend to legitimize exploitation by the cohabitant. It wanted to no longer stand in the way of a prostitute’s developing a stable emotional relationship, which could lead to her leaving the field of prostitution. If the cohabitant exploits the prostitute and does not contribute to the cost of the household and lives “at another’s expense,” the judge of the first instance may consider that exploitation of prostitution exists.

1.2.2. Other measures regarding the suppression of trafficking in human beings

Various other instruments aim at assuring an effective struggle against the phenomenon of trafficking. We may mention among others:

- the ministerial directive concerning the policy of search and pursuit in the area of trafficking in human beings, entitled COL 10/2004, which seeks to coordinate the policy of search and a pursuit in the struggle against trafficking in human beings on the ground. A new directive has nevertheless been adopted, so that it may be in conformity with new legislative initiatives. It will enter into force on 1 February 2007. This instrument specifically defines the role of Special Prosecutors for “trafficking in human beings,” who are designated in each judicial jurisdiction.
- the interdepartmental unit of the campaign against trafficking in human beings, which combines all the active federal agencies in the struggle against the aforementioned phenomena. It carries out simultaneously the missions of coordination, evaluation of results of the struggle against the illegal transport of and trafficking in human beings, and, when necessary, the formulation of recommendations.
- the sensitization of the interveners.

Training in the area of trafficking in human beings is foreseen in the training of police officers and in their advanced training, directed at active policemen in units that deal with trafficking and illegal transport, this training being organized by police academies. The Supreme Council of Justice also developed a two-day program of training for judges. These training exercises took place in 2005 and were repeated in 2006.

1.2.3. Measures assisting victims

(a) The granting of a residence permit

In its humanitarian section, the Belgian system in the struggle against the trafficking in human beings grants residence permits to victims who leave the place of exploitation, who cooperate with judicial authorities, and who accept care from a specialized care center. Currently, these initiatives are defined by a Circular of 1 July 1994 and in the directives of 1997, as amended in 2003. These mechanisms for protection were discussed in the previous report.

In the context of translating a European directive, this procedure of granting specific residence permits was introduced through a law.²⁶ In question is the law of 15 September 2006, amending the law of 15 December 1980 on access to the territory, residence, registration, and deportation of foreigners, published in the Belgian Monitor on 6 October 2006, and which is to enter into force at a date to be determined by the King. The procedure, which generally remains the same, offers this protection to victims of the crime of trafficking in human beings within the meaning of article 433quinquies of the Penal Code and to victims of certain forms of the illegal transport of immigrants. The statute of protection can be applied both to nationals of the member states of the European Union as well as to nationals of third-party countries.

Therefore, during the first phase of the period of reflection (45 days), the victim may make a decision regarding whether she will make a statement or not with respect to persons or networks that may have exploited her or whether she will prepare to return to her country of origin. If she decides to lodge a complaint or to make a statement, the victim will then proceed to the second phase of the period of reflection and will be granted provisional residence permission. In this case, she is entered in the registry of foreigners and is given a registration document for a maximum validity of three months' duration.

When the victim lodges a complaint or makes a statement immediately against the perpetrators of the crime, she may at the request of the care center that is charged with her care be granted a residence permit by the Ministry or its delegated official with a maximum three months' period of validity. In this case, the first phase is rendered in effect moot.

During the second phase of the period of reflection, the Royal procurator or the responding official will rule on whether to pursue the investigation or the judicial procedure as well as on the desire of the victim to cooperate and on whether she has severed her ties with the perpetrators of the crime.

When the victim has satisfied three cumulative conditions (the investigation or judicial proceeding has not yet been closed, the interested party demonstrates a clear desire to cooperate, and she has severed her ties with the exploiters), the Ministry or its delegated official shall deliver a registration certificate to the registry of foreigners for a six months period of validity.

²⁶ Directive 2004/81/CE of the Council of the European Union of 29 April 2004 relating to residence permits granted to nationals of third-party countries who are victims of trafficking in human beings or who have been the object of assistance in illegal immigration and have cooperated with the competent authorities.

The conditions for delivery, prolongation, renewal and withdrawal of the documents and residence permits are determined as a function of the progress of the judicial proceeding, and of whether the three cumulative conditions are met. When the Royal procurator includes in his requests the prevention of one of the aforementioned crimes, a residence permit for an unlimited duration may be delivered to a victim who has made an important contribution to the investigation.

(b) The role of specialized care centers

Three centers specializing in the care for and management of victims were created in 1995, subsidized jointly by the Federal Government and the federated entities (Communities and Regions). This refers to Pag-Asa (Brussels); Surya (Walloon Region); and Payoke (Flemish Region). These centers have a lodging structure (from 10 to 15 beds), maintained at a secret address, as well as a social center from which all the contacts with external partners are organized.

These centers and the multidisciplinary teams which make them up (educators, social workers, criminologists,...) have as their mission to provide various types of care to victims of trafficking in human beings:

- psychosocial care: to aid the victims in overcoming the situation that they have lived through and the trauma that they have endured, to help them to take charge of their life in the best possible manner and to work out with them a plan for a realistic future;
- administrative care: help for the victim in her efforts to obtain various residence permits; if the victim decides to return to her country of origin, the specialized center will contact the OIM (International Organization for Immigration) and will organize the voluntary repatriation of the victim.
- medical care;
- juridical care; the objective of these centers is to guarantee the defense of the rights and interests of the victim during the judicial proceeding on the facts of the trafficking of which she has been a victim, keeping her informed and providing her with a lawyer. The care centers may also constitute a civil litigant, in their own name or the name of the victim. This option is of considerable importance in these cases, where victims are often reticent in filing civil suits, especially due to fear of reprisals.
- lodging: the centers also have a reception house where victims requiring it can be lodged during a limited period. Then care becomes ambulatory.

Between 1999 and 2005, almost 900 victims were processed by the care centers: victims of sexual exploitation represent 34%, victims of economic exploitation 18%, victims of trafficking 19%, victims who were first the object of trafficking and then of exploitation 21%.²⁷

²⁷ This number is nevertheless more important in reality because not all of the centers have databases for the years between 1999 and 2003. See the report from the Center for Equal Opportunity and the Struggle against Racism, *The Policy of Belgium regarding Trafficking in Human Beings: Shadow and Light*, November 2005. This report can be found at the following address: www.diversite.be. The Center on the basis of 3 care centers has established a common database, making it possible to determine the profile of the victims that are handled by these centers.

When dealing with trafficking victims who are minors, the three aforementioned centers request support from the centers that specialize in providing lodging to minors. These centers provide specific assistance that is adapted to the situation of minors. In addition, with the implementation of the guardianship system for unaccompanied minors, the work of assistance is now shared between the guardian and the specialized care centers. In effect, it should be noted that since the law of 24 December 2002, the MENA (unaccompanied foreign minor) is cared for by a guardian whose task it is to represent him or her in all juridical acts and procedures set out by the law for foreigners. The guardian also has specific responsibilities relating to the protection of the minor person and relating to searching for members of his or her family. This task is carried out under the supervision of the “Guardian Service” (in force since 1 May 2004), which basically verifies whether the minor is legally entitled to benefit from the protection system, and, if so, assigns him or her a guardian.

2. Prostitution

Since 2002, there has been an evolution in the law regarding prostitution. The system in Belgium has always presupposed an abolitionist perspective, since all forms of exploitation of prostitution or vice are subject to sanctions (see article 380 ff of the Penal Code). The suppression of the incrimination of cohabitation with a prostitute did not have the objective of legitimizing exploitation by the cohabitant. It had the objective of no longer standing in the way of a prostitute’s developing a stable emotional relationship, which could lead to her leaving the field of prostitution. If the cohabitant exploits the prostitute and does not contribute to the cost of the household and lives “at another’s expense,” the judge of the first instance may consider that exploitation of prostitution exists.

II. Federated entities

A. Walloon Region

In accordance with its powers, the Walloon Region intervenes in the clandestine world of prostitution in the area of health and of social action. The Walloon Region supports a program of vaccination against hepatitis for female prostitutes in their workplaces.

The Walloon Region has also established social links that are designed to care for and assist any person residing on the territory, including those without documents. This initiative will be completed soon by the health links designed to assure fundamental care for every person, whatever their administrative or pecuniary situation.

In the Commission of the French Community of the Brussels-Capital Region, the decree relating to social action centers has made it possible to establish and fund a specific service for dealing with prostitutes. The service comes to the aid of male and female prostitutes, whether they wish to leave the world of prostitution or not, as well as to the victims of trafficking in human beings who find themselves in this situation.

Article 7

In Belgium as in three largest countries, the presence of women in political and public life is generally less than that of men. Since the month of January 2002, the Belgian constitution has formally guaranteed equality to men and women (article

10) and enjoins the legislature to adopt measures designed to guarantee this equality, specifically fostering equal access of men and women to elective and public office (article 11 bis).

I. Federal level

1. The establishment of parity in the electoral lists and the results during federal and European elections

Following the amending of the Constitution, several laws were adopted at the federal level to increase the presence of women in the federal, regional, and European legislative assemblies.²⁸ These laws henceforth prohibit political parties from putting forward electoral lists on which the difference between the number of candidates (incumbents or challengers) of each sex is greater than one. It also specifies that the first two candidates of each list must be of different sexes. A transitional provision, however, does not permit the first three candidates of any list to be of the same sex in the first elections following the entry into force of the different laws (legislative elections of 2003 — European and regional elections of 2004). Not respecting these provisions by the political parties will result the lists presented being invalidated.

Electoral list parity was applied for the first time during the legislative elections of 18 May 2003. As a consequence of these elections, the percentage of women elected rose to 34.7% for the Chamber of Representatives (19.3% after the elections of 1999) and 37.5% in the Senate (30% after the elections of 1999). The percentage of women elected during the European elections of 13 June 2004 has been 29.17%, representing somewhat less than after the elections of 1999 (32%). Currently, 28 women are numbered among the 71 senators in the Senate, amounting to 39.4%, 53 women among the 150 deputies of the Chamber of Representatives, amounting to 35.3%, and nine women among 24 deputies in the European Parliament (37.5%).

In a general way, a marked improvement in the presence of women within legislative assemblies can be observed following the application of the “laws of parity.” It is important to underline the fact that other modifications related to the electoral code (especially the expansion of certain electoral districts or the introduction of a threshold of eligibility) have contributed to the increase in the number of women in the assemblies.

2. The establishment of diversity in the executive branch

Following the amendment of the Constitution (article 11 bis) and parallel to the improvement in the measures aimed at strengthening the presence of women within the assemblies, the legislature adopted measures designed to guarantee the presence of persons of the opposite sex in the whole government of the country.²⁹ At the

²⁸ The law of 17 June 2002 guarantees an equal presence of men and women on the list of candidates for elections to the European Parliament (Belgian Monitor of 28 August 2002); the law of 18 July 2002 guarantees an equal presence of men and women on the list of candidates for elections to the federal legislative houses and to the Council of the German-Speaking Community (Belgian Monitor of 28 August 2002); the special law of 18 July 2002 guarantees an equal presence of men and women on the list of candidates for elections to the regional Walloon Council, the Flemish Council, and the Council for the Brussels-Capital Region (Belgian Monitor of 13 September 2002).

²⁹ Special law of 5 May 2003 guaranteeing the presence of persons of the opposite sex in the Flemish Government, the Government of the French Community, the Walloon Government, the

federal level, it is the Constitution that directly guarantees the presence of members of different sexes within the Government. It currently numbers 5 women among the 21 members of the Federal Government, amounting to 23.8%. Three women occupy the position of Minister, and two the position of Secretary of State.

3. Federal legislation regarding the presence of women within advisory bodies.

The law of 3 May 2003 designed to promote the equal presence of men and women in bodies possessing the power to issue advisory opinions³⁰ has once again amended the law of 20 July 1990 through the creation of instruments that are aimed at improving the application of the law:

- establishment of an official list of agencies that come under the application of the law;
- implementation of a commission whose mission is to provide opinions of general import on policy designed to promote the balanced presence of men and women in advisory and consulting bodies regarding the application of the legislative initiatives contained in the law of 20 July 1990.

XVI.

The implementation of this legislation (put in place by the commission and establishment of the official list) is currently underway at the federal level.

4. The presence of women within the federal administration

The Belgian federal administration is organized on the basis of four levels that correspond to the different levels of qualification;

- level A: officials in possession of a university diploma or a long-type diploma of higher studies;
- level B: officials having obtained a short-type diploma of higher education;
- level C: tenured officials having a diploma of secondary education;
- level D: officials who have completed the first cycle of secondary studies, without any other requirement of a diploma.

In 2006, 37.2% of those in a level-A position were women, 45.8% of those in a level-B position, 59.5% of those in a level-C position, and 51.4% of those in a level-D. In total, the male-female proportion within the federal administration was 50.1% male / 49.9% female. These numbers indicate that the proportion of women diminishes as a person rises in the administrative hierarchy. Women are in effect clearly in the minority at level A, in a minority at level B, although they are a majority at levels C and D in the federal administration. This tendency, however, is not completely linear since there are relatively more women at level C at level D. As regards the “functions of management and training,” the higher functions of the

Government of the Brussels-Capital Region, and among the regional secretaries of state of the Brussels-Capital Region (Belgian Monitor of 12 June 2003); the law guaranteeing the presence of persons of the opposite sex in the Government of the German-Speaking Community (Belgian Monitor of 12 June 2003).

³⁰ Belgian Monitor of 12 June 2003.

Belgian federal administration number 23 women among 184 positions in question (12.5%).³¹

Measures taken to promote and reinforce the presence of women at different levels of the Belgian federal administration are described in the part of the report devoted to article 2 of the Convention.

5. Sensitization and research regarding the theme of participation of women in decision-making

Following the application of the “parity laws” during the legislative elections of 18 May 2003 and during the regional elections of 13 June 2004, the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men commissioned from various groups of research universities three studies on the topic of the participation of women in Belgian political life. These three studies, which were published in December 2006, address respectively, “The participation of men and women in Belgian politics,” “The trajectories of women in Belgian politics,” and “The integration of the gender dimension within Belgian political parties.”

In the scope of its activities, the Council on Equal Opportunity for Men and Women, a federal advisory body, has published several opinions on the topic of the participation of women in political and public life. The list of the opinions submitted by the Council can be found in the annex.

II. Federated Entities

A. Flemish Region and Community

Following the application of the special law of 18 July 2002 ensuring an equal presence of men and women on the lists of candidates to the regional elections of 13 June 2004, the percentage of elected women at the Flemish Parliament amounted to 31.5% (19.5% following the elections of 1999). The Parliament currently counts 39 women among 124 deputies (31.5%). The Government of the Flemish Community currently counts 3 women among 10 ministers (30%).

1. Legislation

In practice Flanders is already a diverse society. A lack of diversity in decision-making suggests that there are unequal opportunities in political decision-making. The initiative taken by the Flemish equal opportunities policy, together with the Flemish minister responsible for Home Affairs, to modify the Municipal and Provincial Electoral Act³² with a view to attracting more women was brought to a favourable conclusion in 2006.

As a result, the lists of candidates for the municipal and provincial council elections were composed of 50% women and 50% men (“*The difference between the number of candidates of each sex must not be bigger than one on each of the lists of candidates for the elections*”). The first three candidates on each list included people of both sexes (“*The first three candidates of each list must not all be of the same sex*”).

³¹ For the federal administration, these terms refer to the offices of President, General Director, Director, and Human Resources Director.

³² The municipal electoral act, coordinated on 4 August 1932, as modified by the Flemish Parliament Act of 10 February 2006 modifying the Municipal Electoral Act, the Provincial Electoral Act, the Act on Automated Voting and the Flemish Parliament Act on the Monitoring of Election Expenditure.

2. Women elected after the elections of 8 October 2006, more than in 2000³³

The local elections took place October 8th, 2006. The results showed more elected women in most of the Flemish cities. In total, 33,4% women were elected for the municipal councils (27% women elected in 2000), and 36.7% for the provincial councils (29% women elected in 2000).

For more information please visit our website www.vlaanderenkiest.be.

3. Action Plan Diversity in Decisionmaking

Next to making new laws a campaign was launched for voting for diversity, which was only one of the actions of an Action Plan Diversity in Decisionmaking that was worked out in 2005.

3.1. The campaign was named 'Denk niet cliché. Stem niet cliché' (Don't think stereotype, don't vote stereotype) and aimed at showing the public that diversity is an added value for decisionmaking bodies.

3.2. Lokale politiek. Iets voor mij? (Local politics, something for me?)

In 2005, the 'Vereniging van Vlaamse Steden en Gemeenten' (Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities), with the support of the Flemish equal opportunities policy, developed the scheme and the accompanying brochure entitled 'Lokale Politiek? Iets voor mij?'. The idea was to encourage interested parties (local administrations, civil society organisations, etc) to organise information sessions, giving priority attention to population groups who are currently underrepresented in political decision-making bodies. During the information sessions the functioning of the political powers as well as the added value of diversely composed decision-making bodies are explained. The goal was to raise awareness, to provide information and to encourage people to participate.

In order to promote the implementation of this scheme, Equal Opportunities in Flanders cooperated closely with the provincial emancipation officers (see also article 3-4 nr 4). They were, for instance, closely involved in the drafting in 2005 of the inspiration folder entitled 'Lokale politiek. Iets voor mij?' via a steering group which met three times in total. On the basis of the folder they organised quite a number of information sessions in their own province in 2005. These actions aimed at the following objectives:

- to achieve increased participation of focus groups that are currently underrepresented;
- to put issues on the political agenda that have special relevance for the intended focus groups;
- to convince society of the added value of a diversely composed political government.

3.3. A third action was the organisation of lunch talks

At the request of the Flemish equal opportunities policy makers several 'ad nominatim' subsidised organisations organised lunch talks about the issue of

³³ Extract from an article for BinnenBand magazine, to be published in December 2006, Verkiezingen van 8 oktober 2006, Wie is verkozen: enkele trends, Katie Heyse.

diversity in decision-making. At these meetings local mandataries as well as representatives of the respective focus groups (disabled, immigrant women and gays, lesbians and bisexuals) were brought together to discuss how an equal opportunities angle vis-à-vis the mentioned focus groups can be integrated into the new local policy. Whereas the campaign entitled 'Denk niet cliché. Stem niet cliché' has a quantitative objective (namely to promote diversity in political decision-making bodies), the lunch talks have a qualitative objective (namely to create more attention for the specific needs of the specified focus groups in the policy pursued).

In this context, the *vzw Gelijke Rechten voor Iedere Persoon met een handicap* (npo Equal Rights for Any Person with a Disability) organised a lunch talk which was attended by a dozen local and provincial politicians from different political parties and different regions. They spoke to a number of experts in the field of disability about possibilities to pay increased attention to disabled people in the local and provincial policy. The *Vrouwenraad* (Flemish Women's Council) also organised lunch talks between 4 and 8 September in each Flemish province and drew up for the first time a memorandum for the local equal opportunities policy for men and women. During the lunch talks this memorandum was tested against the practice and the experiences of municipal and provincial mandataries.

After the municipal and provincial council elections the *Steunpunt Allochtone Meisjes en Vrouwen* (Center for Immigrant Girls and Women) has organised lunch talks in three cities (Antwerp, Ghent and Brussels). The federation for gays, lesbians and bisexuals will also organise lunch talks after the elections. The idea behind these talks is to also devote more attention at local level to the specific needs of the focus groups of the equal opportunities policy.

4. Quota laws

When we talk about decisionmaking we refer again to the actions of the quota laws that were already announced in article 2. As indicated earlier, the draft Act will be submitted to the Flemish Parliament in the next policy period. Apart from that a complementary policy is developed to get the new Act totally accepted in the different Flemish policy areas. Within this framework a number of additional statutory documents will be drawn up, such as a ministerial order with regard to the exceptional procedure and a ministerial circular. It will also be examined how information with regard to the composition of the Flemish advisory and managing bodies can be collected and managed in an optimal way. Finally, it will be studied how the composition of the Flemish advisory and managing bodies that have not been composed in accordance with the provisions of the Act can be adjusted.

B. French Community

The Parliament of the French Community currently numbers 24 women among its 93 deputies (21.5%). The Government of the French Community has four female Ministers out of six (66.7%). The portfolios occupied by women are the following: Presidency, Mandatory Education, Higher Education and Research, International Relations, Culture and Audiovisual, and Promotion of Health and Childhood.

Regarding local policy on equal opportunity and on subsidizing associations, numerous projects seeking to promote the participation of women in politics receive financial assistance each year.

The Government of the French Community on 17 July 2002 adopted a decree seeking to promote the equal participation of men and women in advisory bodies (Belgian Monitor of 13 September 2002). This decree provides that at least one man and one woman must be presented as candidates for elective office and as applicants to advisory bodies, and that these bodies must be made up of at least 35% members of each sex.

To provide the greatest possible publicity for the requirement of equal representation of men and women within advisory bodies, the Head Office of Equal Opportunity in 2004 prepared and distributed an informational brochure presenting the different requirements deriving from the decree of 17 July 2002.

The decree also provides that a report evaluating the decree be submitted by the Government to the Parliament every two years. Thus, in 2005/2006, the Head Office for Equal Opportunity began to evaluate the decree. This evaluation, besides the fact that it is in response to a requirement cited in the decree, has made it possible to demonstrate the obstacles and specific blocks currently holding up effective application of this decree within advisory bodies, to analyze the obstacles that are placed in the way of implementation, to make proposals for a revision of the decree, and to derive lessons for expanding the implementation of specific legislation promoting equal representation of men and women in decision-making bodies within the French Community. The evaluation report, submitted in June 2006, is currently being studied.

In the General Administration of Personnel and Public Function, it can be confirmed that an equal presence is strictly respected in the Education Council. Although the “principle of equal representation between the sexes” has been spontaneously applied since 1998, various draft decrees are currently aiming at introducing this principle in a formal way. Generally speaking, striving for equal representation is truly a part of the “culture” of the French Community, such as when members are to be designated as eligible to sit on the Court of Appeals, or in the meetings that gather together governmental representatives and those of the unions. Furthermore, the personnel statistics by level and grade, distributed by sex, demonstrate the respect for equality on the part of the General Administration.

C. Walloon Region

Following the application of the special law of 18 July 2002 guaranteeing the equal presence of men and women on the candidate lists in the regional elections of 13 June 2004, the percentage of women elected rose to 18.7% (10.7% after the elections of 1999).

The regional Walloon Council currently numbers 16 women among its 75 deputies (21.3%). The government of the Walloon Region currently numbers three women among nine total Ministers (32.3%).

Between 2002 and 2006, new legislative and regulatory provisions contributing to the reduction of discrimination against women at the regional level have been adopted by the Walloon Government:

- the decree of 28 November 2002 on following up on the resolutions of the Conference of the United Nations on women at Beijing;
- the decrees of 15 May 2003 promoting the equal presence of men and women on advisory bodies;

- the ordinance of the Walloon Government of 10 July 2003 regarding the creation of a Walloon Council of Equal Opportunity.

At the municipal level, several revisions of the Code of Local Democracy and of Decentralization adopted by the Walloon Government aim at guaranteeing the increased presence of women on the local political scene. On the electoral lists, the difference between the number of candidates of each sex may not be greater than one. In addition, the first two candidates on each list may not be of the same sex. The municipal Walloon colleges (executive bodies at the municipal level) must be composed of members of different sexes. At the provincial level, the requirement to have an equal presence of the two sexes on electoral lists as well as at the level of the provincial college is also being applied.

During the elections of 8 October 2006, 32% of those elected at the municipal level were women (26% after the elections of 2000), and almost 38% of those elected at the provincial level (29% after the elections of 2000).

The advisory councils created by the municipal council must themselves be composed of a maximum of two-thirds of members of the same sex. In the event that this condition is not respected, the opinions of the Council in question shall not be valid. Delays in applying this condition may be granted by the municipal council in accordance with a specified procedure. The Inter-Municipal Administrative Council (the association of municipalities with the goal of realizing a public-interest objective) must also be made up of at least one member of each sex.

D. Brussels-Capital Region

Following the application of the special law of 18 July 2002 assuring the equal presence of men and women on candidate lists for regional elections of 13 June 2004, the percentage of women elected rose to 46.07% (34.67% following the elections of 1999). The Parliament of the Brussels-Capital Region currently numbers 36 women among its 89 deputies (40.4%). The Government of the Brussels-Capital Region currently numbers 3 women among the 8 Ministers that make it up (37.5%).

1. Legislative acts

Since 2005, on each list presented in municipal elections, the difference between the number of candidates of each sex may not be greater than one, and the first two candidates must be of different sexes.³⁴ The different parties are therefore required to draw up their candidate lists with parity in mind. The incentive to conform to this requirement, in a system of scrutinizing the lists, is particularly effective since not respecting these provisions means the invalidation of the list.

Following the municipal elections of October 2006, more than 42% of those elected in Brussels were women (42.23%), whereas it was 38% after the elections of 2000.

Neither sex may make up more than 2/3 of the members of regional advisory bodies. Noncompliance with this regulation will cause the invalidation of the opinions that are rendered.³⁵

³⁴ Ordinance of 17 February 2005 guaranteeing the equal presence of men and women in municipal elections (Belgian Monitor of 9 March 2005).

³⁵ Ordinance of 27 April 1995, providing for the introduction of equal representation of men and women in advisory bodies (Belgian Monitor of 9 April 2002).

On the occasion of a question in 2004 put to the Ministers and Secretaries of State regarding the situation of male-female representation within advisory bodies, it turned out that of 22 regional advisory bodies for which numbers were obtainable, 11 did not conform to this ordinance. No advisory body had fewer than a third men, but half of them had less than a third of women. Certain advisory bodies did not have even a single woman among their members.³⁶ At the end of September 2005, the Secretary of State for Equal Opportunity submitted a report to Parliament on the subject. It indicated that the majority of advisory bodies are complying with these provisions. The number of requests for a dispensation regarding the 2/3 regulation is not known systematically. In the majority of cases, the reason cited for requesting a dispensation is the lack of female candidates.

Article 120 bis of the new municipal law provides that the municipal council may establish advisory councils. By “advisory councils” are understood “all assemblages of persons, (...), charged by the municipal council with rendering an opinion on one or more specific questions.” The rules aimed at reinforcing the presence of women within municipal advisory councils are the same as those described above for regional advisory bodies (no more than two thirds of the members of either sex, opinions are invalid in the event of not respecting said quota, the possibility of dispensations, if appropriate). It turns out that a study conducted in 2001-2002 by the administration of local authorities found that this article is widely ignored.

In June 2005, an ordinance on more equal representation of men and women in advisory bodies was voted by the Council of the Flemish Community Commission.³⁷ For its part, the Board of the Flemish Community Commission in 2005 introduced a “regulation for the creation, composition, and functioning of advisory councils and working groups in Culture, Education, Social Action, and Health.”³⁸ The advisory councils and working groups are created in a pluralistic spirit and tend to have a satisfactory level of equality between men and women.

2. Factual data

In accordance with the recommendations of the Council of Europe, the administration of local authorities in 2002 created a network of municipal elected officials interested in the problem of equality of opportunity between men and women. Training was provided each year for municipal managers, systematically integrating the perspective of gender. Since 2006, training has been afforded to a mixed group of elected officials.

To improve the recognition of gender in municipal policy making, a network of agents focusing on equality was created in 2002; presently there is one agent for each municipality. This network has received training that focuses on the management of personnel, integrating the concept of gender.³⁹ It meets once every trimester for the exchange of information.

³⁶ Council of the Brussels-Capital Region, Bulletin of Challenges and Oral Questions (2003-2004) Number 42.

³⁷ Raad van de Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie, Ontwerp van verordening houdende de invoering van een meer evenwichtige vertegenwoordiging van mannen en vrouwen in adviesorganen, Stuk 312 (2004-2005) — Nr. 2.

³⁸ Collegebesluit nr. 05/263, 19 mei 2005.

³⁹ “A centrist personnel policy for equality between men and women in the public sector. Training for members of human resource services of local administrations of the Brussels-Capital Region,” GSW-CEFESOC, October 2003.

Presence of women in Brussels public agencies

<i>Agencies</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total number</i>
Ministry of the Brussels-Capital Region (MRBC)	52%	48%	1 443
Regional Agency for Property (ARP)	5%	95%	1 941
Information Center for the Brussels Region (CIRB)	23%	77%	154
Brussels Institute for Environmental Management (IBGE)	32%	68%	617
Brussels Regional Office for Employment (ORBEM)	70%	30%	605
Port of Brussels	30%	70%	129
Society for Development for the Brussels-Capital Region (SDRB)	51%	49%	124
Emergency Fire Services and Medical Aid (SIAMU)	7%	93%	1 131
Housing Society for the Brussels Region (SLRB)	58%	42%	84
Total	28%	72%	6 628

Source: Employment Gazette

Distribution of men and women at different levels of Brussels administration

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total number</i>
A	38.66%	61.34%	1 146
B	52.80%	47.20%	572
C	52.41%	47.59%	1 017
D	19.97%	80.03%	1 312
E	8.67%	91.33%	2 181
Total	27.76%	72.24%	6 228

Source: Employment Gazette.

The 2004 analytic report of the Ministry of the Brussels-Capital Region indicates that the leading positions are only occupied by men (ranks A7, A6, A5), whereas the first women were found at rank A3 (Director), or 8.05% of the staff as opposed to 91.95% of men, although the overall staff is 49.23% women and 50.77% men. If the number of women does not stop growing, including in university positions, the access of women to supervisory positions will recede to a very minority position within Brussels public offices, and this despite the elevation of the level at which women are studying. No countervailing measure designed to correct this state of affairs has heretofore been adopted.

Article 8

I. Federal level

1. Representation of women in “outside” careers of the federal foreign service

The representation of women in diplomatic, consular, and cooperation attaché careers, established on the basis of the distribution per administrative class, is as follows:

1.1. Diplomatic career (as of 1 November 2006)

<i>Class</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>% Women</i>
1	16	3	19	16
2	99	10	109	9
3	91	18	109	17
4	127	23	150	15
Trainees*	22	5	27	20
Total	355	59	414	14

* 26 for the 2006 class (21 men and five women) and one (man) from a previous class.

In comparison with 2002, the overall percentage of women remains at 14%. In the case of trainees, this percentage is 20%.

1.2. Consular career (as of 1 November 2006)

<i>Class</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>% Women</i>
Class 1	6	4	10	40
Class 2	43	19	62	30
Class 3	27	8	35	25
Class 4	44	21	65	32
Trainees	0	0	0	
Total	120	52	172	31

The percentage of women is 31% as opposed to 28% in 2002.

1.3. Cooperation Attaché career (as of 1 November 2006)

<i>Class</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>% Women</i>
Class 1	6	0	6	0
Class 2	18	2	20	11
Class 3	23	4	27	17
Trainees	7	1	8	14
Total	54	7	61	13

The percentage of women is 13%, as opposed to 6.7% in 2002.

A general action plan for “equality of opportunity among men and women,” promoting the integration of a gender perspective in the policies of the federal services of the foreign service, foreign commerce, and cooperation and development, was launched in 2003. It reflects the strategic objective of increasing the access of women to diplomatic careers, paying particular attention to recruitment procedures and career trajectories, and balancing professional and private life, while also seeking a change in mentality.

The position of Family Officer has been established, which since June 2005 has been occupied by a woman. It is a trustworthy person who serves as an intermediary between, on the one hand, the staff members with diplomatic careers, their partners, and members of their families and, on the other hand, the Department. It requires the person to listen to problems regarding families, to provide assistance through giving advice, and to contribute to seeking solutions in conjunction with the administrative services.

Three women have been named at the level of Ambassador first-class out of 19 positions, for a total of 16% (as opposed to one woman out of 13 positions in 2002, or 8%). Eleven women exercise the position of the head of mission as Ambassador (Belgrade, Caracas, Havana, Lima, Nairobi, Nicosia, Tel Aviv, Zagreb) or Consul General (Casablanca, Montréal, New York) for 110 positions, or 10% (as opposed to six women heads of missions in 2002, or 5%).

Furthermore, other women occupy positions of great responsibility and international visibility within the foreign service, including the position of General Director of Cooperation and Development, General Director associated with European Affairs at the position of Ambassador, and member of Committee 133, or that of Director of the United Nations; and women diplomats have received special positions such as Special Envoy for immigration and asylum policy and Ambassador for policy regarding neighboring countries.

The federal foreign service endeavors under all circumstances to emphasize that access to a diplomatic career is governed by rigorous equal-opportunity conditions. This position is demonstrated, *inter alia*, during informational campaigns that are conducted by the federal foreign service in university institutions and other relevant organizations regarding diplomatic careers, and during regular participation in job fairs aimed at the general public. (Competitive examinations for the foreign service are organized by the Office of Administrative Selection (SELOR), under the aegis of the Ministry of Public Function.)

2. The participation of women in competitions organized by the Office of Administrative Selection (SELOR) for diplomatic careers in the foreign service

Between 2002, the baseline period, and 2005-2006, the foreign service no longer organized competitive entrance examinations. The data below reflect the situation after the recent examinations.

2.1. Diplomatic career

Linguistic role	Dutch			French		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Registrants	1 062	606	1 668	1 220	838	2 058
%	63.67	36.33	100	59.28	40.72	100
Graduates	15	2	17	12	4	16
%	88.23	11.76	100	75	25	100
% graduates/registrants	1.41	0.33	1.02	0.98	0.48	0.78

Source:SELOR.

Competitive diplomatic examinations took place between October 2005 and July 2006.

2.2. Consular careers

Linguistic role	Dutch			French		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Registrants	708	558	1 266	2 003	1 396	3 399
%	55.92	44.08	100	58.93	41.07	100
Graduates	5	5	10	3	5	8
%	50	50	100	37.5	62.5	100
% graduates/registrants	0.71	0.89	0.79	0.15	0.36	0.24

Source:SELOR.

Competitive examinations for consular careers took place between March 2006 and October 2006.

2.3. Cooperation Attaché for Cooperation and Development

Linguistic role	Dutch			French		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Registrants	1 062	606	1 668	1 220	838	2 058
%	63.67	36.33	100	59.28	40.72	100
Graduates	15	2	17	12	4	16
%	88.23	11.76	100	75	25	100
% graduates/registrants	1.41	0.33	1.02	0.98	0.48	0.78

Source:SELOR.

Competitive examinations for Cooperation Attaché for Development took place between October 2005 and April 2006.

3. The presence of (Belgian) women in international organizations

3.1. The United Nations

According to information provided by the Secretariat of the United Nations, in 2005, the number of Belgian employees rose to 231, of which 114 were women (49%) and 117 were men (51%).

By level, the male-female proportions were as follows:

Level	Women	Men	Total
Level D (directors D1-D2)	3 (33%)	6 (66%)	9
Level Professional (P1-P5)	30 (42%)	42 (58%)	72
Level General Services (G)	18 (82%)	4 (18%)	22
Field Service	1 (20%)	4 (80%)	5
Junior Professional Officers	29 (64%)	16 (36%)	45
Public Information Assistants	1 (100%)	0	1
UN Volunteers	27 (46%)	32 (54%)	59
Level L (experts)	4 (24%)	13 (76%)	17
Level LT (language teacher)	1 (100%)	0	1
Experts in technical assistance			
Security personnel	No data are available for these three categories.		
Maintenance personnel			

3.2. *The European Commission*

According to the statistics of the European Commission, the numbers of Belgians employed as officials and temporary agents in October 2006 were as follows:

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>
AD 16 (Director-General)	-	2	2
AD 15 (Director; Director-General)	3	18	21
AD 14 (Administrator; Head of Unit; Director)	7	59	66
AD 9-AD 13 (Head of Unit; Administrator)	164	587	751
Total	281	907	1 188
<i>% AD Belgium</i>	23.65	76.35	100
<i>% AD European Commission</i>	34.25	65.75	100
AST 8-AST 11 (Assistant)	123	343	466
AST 1-AST 7 (Secretary; Office Clerk)	2 232	1 056	3 288
Total	2 355	1 399	3 754
<i>% AST Belgium</i>	62.73	37.27	100
<i>% AST European Commission</i>	62.30	37.70	100

Source: COMREF Statistical Bulletin 10/2006.

In 2005, women were also named to important positions in the Department of Defense:

- for the first time, a woman was named as military attaché in China;
- a woman was named Commander of the Medical Component and was made a General;
- a woman was named Commander of the Department of State for Well-Being.

II. Federated entities

A. Flemish Community

The Flemish Foreign Affairs Policy Area comprises four fields: Foreign Affairs; International Cooperation; Tourism; and International Investment and Trade.

Most initiatives related to the elimination of discrimination against women in Foreign Affairs are situated in the policy fields of Foreign Policy and International Cooperation.

1. Foreign Policy

1.1. Elimination of discrimination of women at the workplace

Flanders supports a project of the ILO concerning the discrimination of women at the workplace in Central and Eastern Europe. Proportional participation of women at the labour market is an important aspect within the employment policy. Also Flanders conducts a policy concerning proportional participation and diversity which aims at various groups such as migrants, seniors, poorly schooled citizens, people with a handicap, women. The combination of work and family is an

important link to increase the participation of women at the workplace, for instance by the provision of sufficient facilities for childcare and after school relief. The project proposal gives a clear analysis of the problems, the target group and a concrete program of activities. Flemish expertise is guaranteed by the participation of the trade unions.

1.2. Access to health, education and social services in the Czech Republic

In 2003 a project, based on a Flemish example, was financed concerning the development of health, social and education services for sex workers in the Czech Republic. Objective of the project is to distribute general guidelines among sex workers concerning the prevention of STD, HIV/AIDS and other related diseases. The project started with a pilot phase in Prague, and was evaluated in order to continue with local support.

1.3. Equal opportunities in the civil service in South Africa

As part of the reform of the civil service in South-Africa, the minister of Civil Service Affairs, Ms. Fraser-Moleketi, signed an agreement with the International Training Center of the ILO. The minister wishes to increase the capacity of her ministry as to offer equal opportunities for men and women in the civil service, to increase the competencies concerning the analysis of gender issues, and to offer the proper services to men and women. The Flemish Administration for Personnel Development and/or an academic expert concerning gender equality in the civil service could act as technical partner in this project.

2. International cooperation

2.1. Gender as a cross sector issue

Gender is since 2002 a cross-sector issue in the development cooperation of Flanders with the partner countries, and the projects on development education. In Mozambique, South-Africa and Malawi different projects and programs are implemented in which women constitute an important target group. Activities are focussing on the vulnerable position of women related to the HIV/AIDS problem and the rights of women in reproductive health. This is the case for both the bilateral and the multilateral programs. Also in programs of cooperation in South Africa related to food security and the creation of employment by means small and micro-enterprises, women are considered as a specific target group.

Flanders also monitors whether the South African gender policy is mainstreamed and implemented in the projects it supports in South Africa. The South-African gender policy can be considered more outspoken than the Flemish and Belgian law related to gender issues.

In 2004 a UNAIDS project has been approved for Mozambique, in which advocacy has been taken up in order to eliminate gender inequalities in the Mozambican inheritance law.

In Morocco, projects of NGO's were supported during the 2003-2006 period, which were focussing on women's rights and the position of women in society. Specific attention was paid to the improvement of access to education and health for women, and the creation of employment for women.

From 2002-2003 a project of the ILO was supported which intends to contribute to the development of female entrepreneurship in Morocco by means of the elaboration

of a national strategy and the strengthening of the organisations of female employees, through training in Turin.

3. Tourism

In 2004 a screening was started related to the sustainability strategy of the Agency Flanders Tourism (Rapportage Duurzaamheid Strategie Scan Toerisme Vlaanderen). In this report the results were presented of an assessment of the extent to which staff of the agency considered the importance of equal treatment of men and women. The results showed that this issue was considered as very important by the staff, and that the Agency got a score of 4 (5 being the maximum score).

4. International representation of Flanders

There are nine representatives of the Flemish Government abroad, who are all male.

B. French Community

The representation of men and women in foreign service careers of the General Commissariat for International Relations of the French Community (CGRI), the Walloon Agency for Export and Foreign Investment (AWEX), the Division of International Relations of the General Administration of Foreign Relations of the Ministry of the Walloon Region (DRI), and the Association for the Promotion of Education and Training Abroad (APEFE) break down as follows: 34 women and 97 men.

C. Brussels-Capital Region

The number of attachés and regional representatives is 65 men and 24 women.

Article 9

I. Federal level

Belgium is responding to the requirements set out in article 9 of the Convention with regard to legislation on the question of nationality. Since the grand reform of the Belgian Nationality Code (CNB), undertaken in 1984, Belgium has in effect established complete equality between men and women with regard to changing and preserving nationality, regarding both the case of marriage as well as the case of a spouse's changing or losing nationality. Any spouse may change or acquire another nationality without having to obtain the consent of the other spouse. Furthermore, children, who are minors at the moment of this acquisition, automatically receive the nationality acquired by one of the parents, whether the parent is the father or the mother.

Access to Belgian nationality is a process that has been modified five times in the last 20 years. The principal focus of these modifications has always been to improve access (with greater speed, ease, simplicity, and efficiency) to Belgian nationality. The last modification with respect to access to Belgian nationality was introduced by the law of 1 March 2000, which sought to promote the assimilation of foreigners in acquiring citizenship. It was comprised of three principal innovations:

- (1) it provided for greater flexibility in the conditions of access to the declaration of nationality and to naturalization;
- (2) the law accelerates and facilitates the process of handling all procedures for obtaining Belgian nationality, while reducing to one month the delay required for

investigating the case by the office of the public prosecutor (and by the Office for Foreigners and the Office of State Security, for requests for naturalization) and establishing a triple system of sequential replacements for birth certificates;

(3) finally, the law eliminates the requirement of checking an interest in immigrating on declarations of option and on requests for naturalization. The initiation of the procedure henceforth presumes the existence of this interest; the naturalization questionnaire no longer contains questions on knowledge of languages or on the profession of the applicant, and the police investigation into the integration of the petitioner for naturalization has also been omitted.

As concerns mixed marriages, since 1985 marriage has not by itself affected nationality. In return, the spouse of a Belgian man or woman may acquire Belgian citizenship by the procedure of declaration, etc., after three years of joint principal residence in Belgium with the Belgian spouse (or six months of joint life in Belgium if, at the moment of declaration, the foreign spouse has been authorized or admitted within the previous three years to reside more than three months or to establish a domicile in Belgium).

These conditions of residence as well as minimum cohabitation requirements have the specific goal of preventing marriages of convenience with the exclusive objective of acquiring citizenship.

Article 10

In Belgium, everything related to education is under the jurisdiction of the Communities.

The population of Belgium older than 25 years of age according to education, age, and sex, hard numbers⁴⁰

Level of qualification	From 25 to 35 years		From 35 to 45 years		From 45 to 54 years		55 years and higher	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Minimal qualification	127 635	151 153	221 257	253 780	313 415	302 898	1 177 704	780 569
Average qualification	246 179	295 536	286 677	302 902	229 051	239 985	284 513	280 674
Highly qualified	309 393	254 458	278 689	253 897	178 175	191 080	165 826	217 245
Total	683 207	701 147	786 623	810 579	720 641	733 963	1 628 043	1 278 488

The amount of education is lowest in the case of Belgian women of 55 years and higher. Almost three quarters (72.3%) of this group has obtained at most a high school diploma. The majority of men 55 years and older (61.1%) are in the group of the minimally qualified. Only one woman in 10 in this older category (10.2%) has a diploma of higher education, as opposed to 17.0% of men of 55 years or older.

In the group of 45 to 54 years also, women are “minimally qualified” more often than men. 43.5% of women and 41.3% of men 45 to 54 years of age have a high

⁴⁰ The table is taken from the brochure, “Women and Men in Belgium. Statistics and Indicators of Gender,” 2006 edition, published by the Institute for the Equal Opportunity of Women and Men, page 78.

Minimal qualification = primary, some secondary education or no diploma; average qualification = secondary education; highly qualified = higher education.

school diploma. 75.3% of these women have not undertaken higher education, as opposed to 68.7% of men of 45 to 54 years.

For Belgians of the previous generation, the situation is the inverse. The percentage of women who are minimally qualified in the group of 25 to 34 years of age is 18.7%. Among men, this percentage is greater than 20%, more precisely, 21.6%. The difference is even greater in the case of the highly qualified: some 45.3% of the women between 25 and 34 years of age have completed higher education, whether in university or elsewhere, as opposed to only 36.3% of men from 25 to 34 years of age. Young women generally have better education than men.

A. Flemish Region and Community

1. Flemish Department of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media

Culture: In its 'Initiator' training, the Flemish Trainers' School pays special attention to learning how to create maximum participation opportunities for all. The course participants receive didactic leads to apply — where appropriate — the differentiation principle to girls/women. The 'Instructor/Trainer B' training deals with the specific developmental characteristics of girls/women and the relevant training aspects.

2. Flemish Department of Education and Training

2.1. EQUAL VLIR — equal opportunities project

Within this ESF project including partners from abroad, the Flemish counterparts will develop the following modules:

- Instrument to chart personnel development and work culture through self evaluation;
- Inventory of studies on career course of female researchers in EU in order to result into a suitable instrument for Flemish Universities;
- Analysis of transfer and career policy;
- Mentoring trajectory for female academics.

The aim is to develop instruments that prevent drop out and improve the transfer of female researchers.

2.2. Research: Student Careers in Artistic Secondary Education

Considering the relative small amount of pupils in Flemish Artistic Secondary Education, this form of education only plays a minor role in the educational system. Due to this small scale the Artistic Secondary Education is often left out of consideration in Flemish educational research. However, the elaboration of the educational structure of artistic education requires a comprehensive understanding of 1. the educational career of the pupils concerned and of 2. their transfer to higher education or to the labour market. Such an understanding involves that the available data on Artistic Secondary Education should be related to other aspects of artistic education, such as art directed branches or study in technical and vocational education, artistic higher education and part-time artistic education. Based on a study of literature, analysis of existing databases, interviews with experts and an extensive survey this study aims at gathering these data. Interesting to know about this study is the high participation rate of girls in Artistic secondary Education.

2.3. Research: Mathematics during secondary school education

In this study an analysis is made of the role of mathematics in selecting students for different tracks in (junior) high school. Flemish secondary schools were contacted. In the second part the beliefs and attitudes towards mathematics are measured among fellow-students, parents, teachers and advisers from educational guidance services. These measures have been related with each other and with the results of the first part of this research (including gender, belonging (or not) to a minority group and type of school). Student's motivation for mathematics was analysed as a function of gender and of beliefs and attitudes towards mathematics. A comparison was made of the motivation and interest for mathematics with the motivation for other courses in the program. This study showed that gender plays an important role with regard to attitude, confidence or uncertainty, ambitions in relation with Mathematics of teachers, parents and students.

3. Research: teachers workload

The aim of the research is to obtain an objective and representative picture of the teachers' workload and the variety of their tasks as well as the way they spend their working time in primary and secondary education (this related to their different methods of working). Gender and family issues - amongst other factors - play an important role in a teacher's workload.

4. Research: labour market preferences and prospects of graduates from teacher training courses

This research wants to pinpoint social and personal variables as well as labour market variables that play a role in the graduates' choice for the education sector or for their choice to delay this entry until they have gathered some work experience outside education, or, ultimately, for their choice not to opt for a job as a teacher at all. More specifically, the effects of both post graduate training and opportunities for career movements in schools will be scrutinised for their effect on the choice of staying in education or leaving education. As such, it was possible to determine to which extent the decree on the teacher training courses has a positive effect on the inflow and the connection with the job of a teacher. This study shows the motivations for men and women to choose for this job.

Other topics that were subject of research in the last years:

- The difference in study results between boys and girls (on gender issues in education and the role of the family, and the elimination of stereotypes, etc);
- 'New' families (one parent household or newly composed families) and the participation in education in Flanders (equal opportunities and chances for children who are not living in a traditional family, their school results, the way in which schools behave towards children from new families (in many cases there is only a mother, etc.).

5. Venus project

The main objective of the Venus project is to try to take advantage of the differences between girls and boys within the field of education. The main target is to give all pupils a maximum of opportunities for learning and developing themselves. The project identifies and emphasizes the variety of youngsters' interests and motivates them as much as possible. Through a large diversity of instructional methods all

pupils should have the same educational and developmental opportunities. A lifelong learning vision is fundamental to the project's aim. Venus supports teachers and guidance counsellors with an ICT tool and a complementary manual.

- There are two parts, a theoretical part with:
- Paying attention to the identity development of adolescents.
- Putting the focus on the differences in learning between girls and boys.
- Working with learning styles.
- Giving ideas and suggestions to the teachers as to how to work with the products.

A practical part with an ICT tool:

- To discover one's own learning style and one's favourite instruction style.
- To discover the learning style of all pupils.
- Through a personality test (who are you and what do you want to be) talk to adolescents about their personality.

6. Modification of the legislation on maternity leave and protection for education personnel

The Flemish Government took the formal decision to modify the legislation on maternity leave and maternity protection for education personnel in January 2005. Now a shift from pre- to postnatal leave is possible, the maternity leave can be prolonged by two weeks in case of multiple births, and the possibility for prolongation of the postnatal leave when the baby has to stay in hospital for more than seven days. In April 2006 another change was made: the circumstantial leave for education personnel was extended from 3 to 10 working days.

7. The commitment of having more women (and other underprivileged groups) in the highest scientific positions

The Flemish Minister of Education has committed himself to discuss the possibilities with institutions of higher education to facilitate more and better career opportunities to female scientists. The aim is to make sure that more women achieve the highest positions (professor) and to stop them from dropping out of university.

8. Revision of the minimum competences of teachers

The minimum competences for the teacher profession have been updated. The minimum competences of teachers are the whole of knowledge and skills that can be expected from a beginning teacher. 'Interculturality' was already implicitly included in the minimum competences, but it has now been explicitly incorporated. One example is the supporting knowledge and the teacher's skills to 'Stimulating pupil emancipation'. The teacher can recognise the individuality of learners and social groups, disclose it for discussion with the learners and use it to enhance the self-development and social integration of the youngster. Knowledge of diverse social and youth cultures and of cultural differences between social groups is required.

9. Thematic documents in Klasse for parents, Klasse for teachers, Yeti (for Third grade pupils in primary education) and Maks (for second and third stage students in secondary education)

Klasse is a communication project launched by the Department of Education and Training of the Flemish Community. It is aimed at all education actors in Flanders. In May 2002 the editors of Klasse made a comprehensive file on equal opportunities for boys and girls, men and women. Topics are cultural differences and different approaches and expectations towards both sexes.

10. Klasse for Teachers: the First Line file

Klasse produced a documentation map on different subjects like child abuse, homosexuality, boys and girls (gender), divorce/ newly composed families, etc. This map provides in background information, addresses, working methods...

11. 'Alternating learning and working' in higher education Project

This project aims at migrant and underprivileged women who want to obtain a higher education diploma but who are hindered by social conditions. These women took the courses, followed by an internship in the profit sector. This was an alternative trajectory that resulted in a degree in business administration (option marketing, accountancy, applied computer science).

12. Project 'Choose differently'

This project wants to sensitize boys and young men to choose a training and/or profession in the nursing and caring sector. The general purpose is to overcome the gender division in education, training and profession in the nursing sector. To underpin this different choice, educational materials like a quiz, a folder, a website, a video... have been developed.

13. Project 'PAK & GO'

This project aims at sensitizing and informing girls and young women about training or job opportunities in traditionally male sectors like e.g. the graphics industry. In addition, it intends to inform employers and employees about the added value of diversity on the work floor.

14. Explicit establishment of equal representation (of men and women) in the VLOR (Flemish Education Council)

The decree on participation in education (April 2004) stipulates that the Flemish Education Council has to be composed of at least 1/3 women.

B. French Community

In the area of education, the strategic objectives concerning equal opportunity for men and women affect, first, access to study — departments, options for secondary education, and various orientations in higher education — and then, success in it.

Various studies have shown that the choice of a path that is made in secondary education exercises a determining influence on the choice of higher education studies. Thus, this situation implies coordination among the different levels of education as well as a common, complementary, and coherent preoccupation among the relevant ministries. From this point of view, it is necessary to prevent

stereotypes associated with certain paths from being perpetuated, while sensitizing teachers to the non-egalitarian mechanisms discussed below.

In October 2002, the Administration launched an essay competition aimed at students in fifth and sixth grades of secondary school within the French Community (800 secondary schools of all levels) on the following topic: “Women in history, from the shadow to the light?” The objectives of this competition were:

- to sensitize the young to the role of women in the political, social, cultural, economic, and scientific history of Belgium and of Europe (generally omitted in textbooks);
- to encourage young people and their instructors to reflect on this theme and to look at the implications of the evolution of the place of women in society at the present day.

In January 2002, six associations launched an appeal for gender mainstreaming in the educational system, addressed to the ministries of education and equal opportunity.⁴¹

This appeal requested:

- the formation of a “Commission for the Equality of Girls and Boys in Education,” charged with rendering an opinion on reform projects, of making recommendations, and of evaluating the policies that are in place;
- the introduction in both the initial and the continuing training of teachers of the gender dimension, in theoretical courses and in practical professional preparation;
- the achievement of parity for all agencies and institutions involved in program planning, decision making, monitoring, and consulting, as well as equal access of girls to all positions of management and responsibility;
- studies, including statistical ones, with data broken down by sex, that are carried out to understand the situation of girls and boys in education, the evolution of schooling (choice of studies, options, type of higher education), the existence of sexist practices of violence, the social cost of discrimination, etc.)
- the establishment of a provision for prevention in the struggle against violence in the schools, which takes account of the sexual dimension.

The Minister President in charge of equal opportunity, the Ministry of Childhood in charge of primary education, the Ministry of Secondary Education and Special-Education, and the Ministry of Higher Education and of Adult Education have responded to the appeal of this group of associations desiring to draw their attention to the necessity of promoting equality of opportunity in education, and they have established an inter-cabinet group to study the problem.

It has since then been decided to initiate the debate with male and female teachers in order to provoke open discussion based on arguments regarding the equality of boys

⁴¹ Françoise Claude (Femmes Prevoyantes Socialistes); Fabienne Dorbolo (Vie Feminine); Françoise Hecq (Université des femmes); Roland Mayerl (Reseau des hommes pro feministes — Campagne du Ruban Blanc); Nadine Plateau (Sophia, Reseau belge d’etudes feministes); Anne Tonglet (Association 29, rue Blanche, Mouvements des femmes)

and girls in school. The various ministries have collaborated with the sector of signatory associations in the appeal for gender mainstreaming in the education system to produce a pedagogical informational brochure about a reality that is still too little recognized.

This campaign, consisting of 25,000 posters and 30,000 brochures aimed at male and female teachers as well as at future teachers in the French Community, seeks to work with the real male and female persons on the ground in order to arrive at an accurate measure of the sexual stereotypes that persist in schools, in relationships between pupils and teachers or those between pupils themselves.

In 2004, the Head Office for Equal Opportunity prepared and distributed a pedagogical manual entitled, "Women and Men in the World," which seeks to provide young people of 12/15 years of age and their relatives with a more accurate perception of the situation and the rights of women nationally and internationally.

Editing the contents of this manual was the object of a partnership between the French Community and the NGO, The World According to Women. The manual presents five themes, each focusing on a situation in the North and the South:

- Equality in the school and equality at work: progress and inequality in education, choice of studies, and choice of work;
- Solidarity of women!: the defense of women's common interests, feminism;
- No to violence!: violence in romantic relationships, honor crimes, female sexual mutilation;
- Advertising, tolerated or adored?: sexism in advertisements;
- The life of emotions and love; adolescents, homosexuality, relations between boys and girls, the prevention of STDs, and contraception.

The publication and the distribution of this manual were carried out during the month of March 2004, in the context of the activities relating to March 8 in the French Community, in all secondary educational institutions in the French Community. Twenty-five thousand pedagogical manuals and 10,000 posters were produced for this campaign, being distributed through the numerous channels of communication and in response to requests mainly from teachers and the related associations.

Finally, in October 2006, the Head Office of Equal Opportunity will launch in both paper and electronic versions an inventory of pedagogical resources that are available in the French Community on questions of gender equality, multiculturalism, and social inclusion.

Within higher education, the situation is satisfactory in quantitative terms (there are not fewer women than men engaged in higher education, and the number of graduates is generally higher among women than among men). However, it must be admitted that, in qualitative terms, there is a regrettably small proportion of women in scientific and technological areas of study, and the phenomenon of vertical segregation exists within university careers for women. In effect, the percentage of females can be seen to diminish as the level of studies rises and as a person rises in the hierarchy of the academic world.

One of the problems that arise when analysis is attempted in terms of gender equality is the lack of data that is broken down according to sex. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research nevertheless desires to make progress in this area, finding support in the other area within its competence, namely, research. Its contribution towards developing a tool that will make it possible to analyze the French-speaking student population of Belgium from both descriptive and predictive points of view constitutes a major advance. In addition, the financing of research that deals with this problem directly or indirectly reflects the desire to know the factors that result in inequality between women and men in this area. By understanding these factors, it will be possible to take action on the causes of discrimination and to attempt to counteract them. From this point of view, the Ministry has decided to integrate the dimension of gender within the projects that it finances. Those currently conducting research are henceforth encouraged to have their work take account of this dimension.

In addition, grants for the organization of seminars, workshops, and colloquia, which have fostered a public discussion on the place of women in society, also demonstrate the interest that is brought to bear by the French Community with respect to this problem.

All of the regulatory language, prepared since December 2002 and accompanying the reform of arts education, also reflect the dimension of gender. When the titles and lists of positions in a text cannot be reformulated in both masculine and feminine (for the sake of clarity), the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has undertaken to systematically insert a sentence similar to the one cited above, namely, "All titles and positions mentioned in the present text are to be read as reflecting both masculine and feminine." In addition, texts that describe the implementation of the three evaluative groups for arts education (Commission on Relevant Experience, Commission on Evaluating Credentials, and Commission for Assessing Reputation) also take account of the gender allocations required by the decree of 17 July 2002.

The decree of the Parliament of the French Community of 20 July 2005 amending the decree of 12 December 2000 regarding the initial training of school teachers and managers, which entered into force on 15 September 2005, in article 3, paragraph 1, clause 2, provides for an education activity of 30 hours on "A theoretical and practical approach to cultural diversity; and the gender dimension."

Measures on the evolution of the problem of gender in higher education outside of universities, permitting the evaluation of policies that are carried out in this area

For about a dozen years, several studies have been financed by the Community and conducted jointly by the Council of French-Speaking Rectors and a research team combining two university-level groups and the Administration. These studies have made it possible to develop a tool to analyze the student population in French-speaking Belgium from descriptive and predictive points of view. Studies conducted in recent years have been co-financed by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and resulted in the appearance in 2001 of a publication entitled "The Student Population: Description, Evolution, Perspectives."

The study devoted a part of its analysis to questions regarding university entrants considered by sex, age, and secondary school track, as well as a discussion of the percentage of graduates who were women. But it is above all a reference document

for all who are interested in the evolution of the student population. The database contains information on those that are studying in our educational system according to different variables, and therefore makes it possible to provide data broken down by sex, particularly in the context of other research projects.

Since 2002, the Administration of Databases and Documentation (DBDD) has been directed by the Ministry to pursue the work of the inter-university team. Since 2003, the same Administration and the Statistics Service of the ETNIC jointly manage the database of students in higher education outside of university (SATURN). The data that have been collected are published in annual reports, designed partly to provide a descriptive analysis of the student populations and the holders of diplomas, and partly to study the percentage of successful outcomes, cases of intensification of studies, and terminations. Among the variables investigated is that of sex. The 2002, 2003, and 2004 reports are available on the website www.enseignement.be/infosup under the heading of SATURN.

Measures taken to study the problem of gender and to promote sensitization to this problem

Financing research:

The French Community has financed a number of research studies with the purpose of illuminating the phenomena that give rise to inequalities between men and women in higher education. In particular, with regard to the place of women in academic positions or access of young women to university education, these studies indicate, or have indicated:

- “The representation of women in research within university institutions of the French community”
- “Analysis of the professional situation of PhDs in the French Community of Belgium”
- “Newtonia — Access of young women to scientific and technical university studies” and “Newtonia 2 — promotion of access of young women to university studies in science and applied science”
- “The trajectory towards entering higher education. An analysis of a cohort with emphasis on social determinants and constraints”
- “Success or failure of students who are registered in a first course of graduate study in university institutions and who are receiving a scholarship from the French Community”.

Partnerships:

A round table entitled, “Educating students towards a nonsexist education,”⁴² was organized on 20 June 2005 by the Head Office of Equal Opportunity and various partners of the project, “Prevention of violence directed at women: educating future students in a nonsexist education,” conducted by the staff of the European program DAPHNE.⁴³

⁴² See program in Annex 3.

⁴³ See the Report on Activities 2004 by the Head Office of Equal Opportunity, pages 20-21, which can be ordered from the site, <http://www.egalite.cfwb.be> under the heading of Activities and Reports.

This project, carried out from 2002 to 2005 by the asbl Women's Solidarity in the French Community, the Fundacion Mujeres in Spain, and the IUFM (University Institute for Master Degree Education) in Lille, France, aims at the construction by the different project partners of a tool and common methods of experimentation and evaluation for collecting experiences and analyzing the existing tools. The work is supported by the local pedagogical committees that are led by each partner.

The final results of this project in the French Community are as follows:

- completion of a training module for a nonsexist education for future teachers;
- trial use of this module in a pilot school;
- evaluation of the module;
- training guide and website (<http://www.educ-egal.org>);
- communication of the results to relevant public authorities.

In this context, a training day aimed at teachers and future teachers was organized on Friday 27 January 2005 around the theme, "How can discussion about gender contribute to the quality of education?" in collaboration with the Haute Ecole Provinciale de Mons-Borinage-Center.⁴⁴ This day was devoted to male and female educators of future teachers, both male and female. The objective was to show them the importance of introducing a gender perspective in the different disciplines in education. The project was concluded by an evaluation that was conducted by an outside expert.

The French Community has also made a number of grants for organizing seminars, workshops, or colloquia, to present in one way or the other interesting results in the area of gender equality.

In addition, the service of inter-level, outside evaluations has since its origin reported the pupils' results as a function of sex in the different disciplines that have been tested, as international evaluations have done generally. The website www.enseignement.be devotes several pages to the problem of male/female discrimination, inter alia, through the online pedagogical resources that it has developed (for example, "Objective Venus" conducted by Amnesty International). The site also devotes several spaces to pages developed by other sites on this topic (for example, the site of the Head Office of Equal Opportunity).

In sports, women's athletic awards have been devised and given out during Trophy Day for sports achievement in the French Community. A grant has also been awarded towards the creation of a commission for the promotion of women's sports within the recognized federations and sports associations.

The majority of women's associations that are supported within permanent education raise questions either at the center or at the periphery, regarding the non-formal education, literacy programs.

Permanent education has developed a program that is important in the struggle against illiteracy. In a fairly broad-scale manner, this program deals with teaching women to read (including immigrants). Regarding future plans, the recent inter-ministerial accord between the French Community, the Walloon Region, and the

⁴⁴ In collaboration with the Education Commission of the CFFB.

French Community Commission, or Cocof, promises to give this program new momentum. However, statistical data by sex on women's literacy are not currently available.

In the area of health, the French Community under its own auspices has issued the publication, "Adolescents: Sexuality and Reproductive Health. The State of Affairs in Wallonia and in Brussels", which concludes with specific recommendations in terms of access to information about sex and emotions for adolescents.⁴⁵

C. Brussels-Capital Region

Wearing the Islamic kerchief in school

With respect to the very specific question of wearing the veil in school, the question of whether or not to prohibit it has been debated in the Brussels schools as in those of other Regions of the country. These are academic institutions which, by their internal regulations, authorize or don't authorize the wearing of the veil.⁴⁶ The veil is prohibited in 70% of the 130 establishments within the French Community (although in 2000, nearly 41% of these schools prohibited it), and in 80% of Catholic schools. In Brussels, eight academic institutions within the French Community out of a total of 111 accepted veiled young women.⁴⁷ At the level of the French Community Commission of the Brussels-Capital Region, the recent decree regarding social cohesion (2004) explicitly provides for actions promoting gender equality, diversity, and the struggle against all forms of discrimination. In the context of this decree, the French Community Commission supports many non-school institutions that provide care. This support constitutes one of the principal sources of financing for these institutions in Brussels. The principles that underlie the support of these institutions, just as in the case of other subsidized associations, are upheld in the name of social cohesion, the fight against discrimination, equality, and diversity.

In addition, family planning centers pay special attention to women, especially regarding sexual and emotional life. Sexual and emotional education, access to contraception, weight control, sensitization of young people to adopting attitudes based on mutual respect between partners, have become a part of the mission of these family planning centers.

D. German-Speaking Community

The German-speaking Community finances the asbl Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Suchtvorbeugung und Lebensbewältigung (Working Group for Preventing Addiction and Mastering Life) which provides training to parents and to single-parent families in order to improve educational competence without aggression and violence, and to learn and apply techniques for resolving everyday problems.

⁴⁵ See Douchan Beghin, Claudine Cueppens, Catherine Lucet, Samuel Ndamé, Godelieve Masuy-Stroobant, André Sasse, Danielle Piette, February 2006, available online for a charge: <http://www.ulb.ac.be/esp/promes/>.

⁴⁶ The 2005 report on the situation of fundamental rights in Belgium prepared by a group of experts at the European level approaches the question from the perspective of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, as well as from the perspective of public security. The report does not speak of gender discrimination and the question is hardly analyzed in these terms, but more often from the point of view of ethnic or religious discrimination.

⁴⁷ Isabelle Lemal, "The School Takes off the Veil" in Swardado, 13 September 2005.

The most frequently encountered questions concern the values and the goals of education, the ways to reinforce the self-confidence of children, the ways to assist and sustain children during difficult periods, and how to explain one's needs and find solutions to family problems. The philosophy of this work is based on the slogan, "Starke Eltern — Starke Kinder" or "Strong Parents — Strong Children."

Article 11

I. Federal level

1. Employment

1.1. The OIT Convention No. 156 regarding equality of opportunity and of treatment for workers of both sexes: workers with family responsibilities, 1981

The process of ratifying the OIT Convention No. 156 is underway, all levels of Belgian authority having ratified or being on the verge of ratifying the text.

1.2. Legislative measures and collective bargaining agreements

An inventory of federal measures designed to guarantee equality of opportunity in the area of employment and work is available in the third Belgian report on application of the international agreement on economic, social, and cultural rights (see article 6), as are all measures on the implementation of just and favorable working conditions (see article 7).

1.2.1. The law of 11 June 2002 regarding protection against violence and psychological or sexual harassment at work (Belgian Monitor of 22 June 2002) contains many measures designed to prevent sexual-harassment and to protect victims thereof. The provisions of this law have been further developed in the royal decree of 11 July 2002 relating to protection against violence and psychological or sexual harassment at work as well as in the circular of 11 July 2002 relating to the protection of workers against violence and psychological or sexual harassment at work.

The law of 11 June 2002 is integrated into the law of 4 August 1996 regarding the well-being of workers apart from the performance of their work. Protection against violence and psychological or sexual harassment is henceforth a part of the notion of well-being, just as the protection of health, safety at work,... Similarly, any employer whether in the private or public sector must take measures within the enterprise itself to foster this protection.

These measures are therefore integrated into the policy of protection of the enterprise and have the objective:

- (1) of preventing all acts of violence and harassment. This will require an analysis of the factors behind it;
- (2) of preventing harm in the event that acts do occur. The law provides for an internal procedure that the company is obligated to apply, and it has the fundamental objective of seeking an internal solution within the company on the basis of a settlement or as a consequence of examining a motivated complaint filed by the worker. Every employer must assist in the process of elaborating and implementing these measures by a prevention adviser, who specializes in the psychosocial aspects of work, violence, and psychological or sexual harassment at work. This prevention adviser will belong to the internal service of prevention and protection at the

workplace or to an external service. The Belgian legislature has also provided specific protection against “reprisal lay-offs” for persons who initiate the internal procedure (in the formal phase), intervene as witnesses, or initiate a judicial proceeding.

(a) Activities of sensitization, information, and research:

The federal public service of Employment, Work, and Social Dialogue, with the support of the European Social Fund, has organized many informational sessions on the subject. It has also established networks of reliable persons and specialized prevention advisors and has carried out many university studies with the objective of discerning the characteristics, risk factors, and consequences of violence at work and to provide concrete tools to persons who are led to intervene (beyond a manual for the intervener, who is confronted with conflict situations, harassment, and loss of work).

(b) Jurisprudence:

The jurisprudence of the courts and labor tribunals with regard to the application of the provisions of the law of 4 August 1996 regarding protection against violence and harassment at work can also be accessed at the site of SPF Employment, Work, and Social Dialogue (<http://www.emploi.belgique.be>).

(c) Evaluation:

This legislation was subjected to an evaluation during 2004. The evaluation report may be accessed at the website of SPF Employment. This evaluation was the occasion for a discussion on amendments to be proposed regarding this legislation. The latter are to enter into force during the current year, 2007.

1.2.2. The program law of 9 July 2004 has stipulated amendments to the regulation concerning female salaried workers with respect to the duration of pre- and post-natal leave and adoption leave. Nevertheless, the Royal decree of 13 January 2003 amended the same durations for independent female workers (see the third Belgian report on application of the international agreement on economic, social, and cultural rights — article 10: protection of maternity).

1.2.3. A royal decree of 15 July 2005 (Belgian Monitor of 28 July 2005) stipulated several important amendments to the regulation regarding parental leave for workers and employers in the private sector (Royal decree of 29 October 1997 regarding the introduction of a right to parental leave in the context of an interruption of a career). The amendments concern the age of the child, the modalities of the taking of leave, the notification of the employer, and the benefits. The duration of leave has not been modified.

The stipulated amendments have the purpose of expanding the right of parental leave and of making it even more accessible, while permitting, for example, combinations of different formulas for parental leave. This should permit workers to have at their disposal a much larger spectrum of choices in combining family and professional life. The stipulated amendments also have the objective of making parental leave more attractive for male workers, since they are taking upon themselves a part of the family responsibility.

(a) Age of the child:

Whereas the age limit was four years, it is now six years. The age limit of eight years in the case of an adopted child or a child who has been officially deemed disabled is maintained.

(b) The modalities of parental leave:

There are four innovations concerning the modalities of parental leave.

- first, in the case of benefit reduction to half-time, the obligation to take parental leave for an uninterrupted period of six months is eliminated; beginning 28 July 2005, this period of six months may be divided into periods of a duration of a minimum of two months.
- a second modification concerns the reduction of benefits for work by a fifth, where the minimum duration of three months is expanded to five months.
- a third modification concerns the possibility of transferring one form of parental leave to another. Although formally the worker could only opt for one single form of parental leave (either complete interruption, or a reduction of benefits to half time, or a reduction of benefits by one fifth), such is not the case currently. Starting now, it is possible to combine different forms of parental leave, with respect, however, to the maximum duration of leave.
- heretofore, with reference to providing notification of parental leave to the employer, a period of notification of three months had to be respected (with the possibility, for both employer and worker, of agreeing on a shorter period). Beginning 28 July 2005, a more flexible procedure is in place: the worker is obliged to notify his employer at least two months and at most three months in advance (the possibility of departing from this regulation by common consent is maintained). Upon notification, a single, uninterrupted period of parental leave may be requested.

(c) Interruption allowances in case of parental leave:

With regard to interruption allowances, three increases have been applied: an increase of €100 for a complete interruption, an increase of €50 for the reduction of benefits to half time by workers less than 50 years of age, and an increase of €38.5 for a reduction of benefits by 1/5 by single workers (single is understood to apply to a worker who lives alone, or with one or more children under his or her responsibility) of less than 50 years of age.

1.2.4. A royal decree of 15 July 2005 (Belgian Monitor of 20 July 2005) has stipulated several modifications to the regulation regarding the interruption of career in order to assist or care for a member of the household or family who is seriously ill, for workers and employers in the private sector (Royal decree of 10 August 1998 establishing a right to interrupt a career to assist or provide care to a member of a household or a family who is seriously ill).

These modifications are to permit workers to temporarily interrupt their careers more easily when a member of the household or family is seriously ill.

A first modification concerns single workers (single-parent families); in question are workers who live exclusively and in fact with one or more of their children. A doubling of the leave credit is granted to them in the event of a serious illness of a

child aged 16 years or less. Whereas this leave normally results in a credit of 12 months for a complete interruption, or 24 months for a reduction of salary by 1/5 or of half-time for taking care of a member of the household or the family who is seriously ill, these periods are modified for single workers in the above-mentioned case to 24 months for complete interruption and 48 months for a reduction of salary by 1/5 or half-time. The single worker who wishes to make use of this doubling option must supply to the employer, in addition to a medical certificate from the physician in charge, proof of the makeup of his household by means of an affidavit authorized by the municipal authority, which demonstrates that the worker at the moment of the request lives exclusively and in fact with one or more of his or her own children.

A second modification relates to allowances for interruption and relates to all workers who take this type of leave. More concretely, three increases have been applied: an increase of €100 for complete interruption, an increase of €50 for the reduction of salary to half-time by workers of less than 50 years of age, and an increase of €38.5 for the reduction of salary by 1/5 for single workers (by single is meant a worker who lives alone or with several children for which he has responsibility) of less than 50 years of age.

1.2.5. In addition to the contents of the various anti-discrimination laws mentioned in article 2 (Law of 25 February 2003, Law of 5 March 2002, and Law of 5 June 2002) and the legislative acts mentioned above, advances regarding equality of opportunity in the area of employment have been realized through collective bargaining agreements (CCT).

Collective bargaining agreements are agreements concluded between one or more organizations of workers and one or more organizations of employers or one or more employers, by which the individual and collective relations between employers and workers within companies or within a branch of activity are fixed and the rights and responsibilities of the contracting parties are regulated.

A collective bargaining agreement constitutes an important source of the right to work. Although the contents of these agreements are subject to the contractual freedom of the social partners, provisions that are contrary to the sources of superior rights (international agreements, laws, decrees...) are considered null and void.

Collective bargaining agreement No. 25 of 15 October 1975 on equality of remuneration between male and female workers, which has the object of realizing the principle of equality of remuneration between male and female workers, which figures in article 119 (currently 141) of the treaty establishing the European Community, has been modified by collective bargaining agreement No. 25 of 19 December 2001.

Article 3 of the agreement indicates that equality of remuneration between male and female workers must be guaranteed in all the elements and conditions of remuneration, including in systems of evaluation of functions, when they are used. In no case may the systems for evaluating positions result in discrimination, either in the choice of criteria, or in their balance, or in the system for interpreting values of evaluation in establishing remuneration. Equality of remuneration implies the elimination of all discrimination based on sex for an identical job or for a job of equal value. For the purpose of public information, it should be mentioned that the

text of this collective bargaining agreement must be attached to the working rules of the company.

1.2.6. Collective bargaining agreement No. 38 of 6 December 1983 regarding the recruitment and selection of workers (modified by collective bargaining agreements No. 38 bis of 20 in October 1991, No. 38 ter of 17 July 1998, No. 38 quater of 14 July 1999, and No. 38 quinquies of 21 December 2004) has the objective of stipulating the norms concerning the recruitment and selection of workers. It also defines the responsibilities of the signatories with respect to certain rules of conduct.

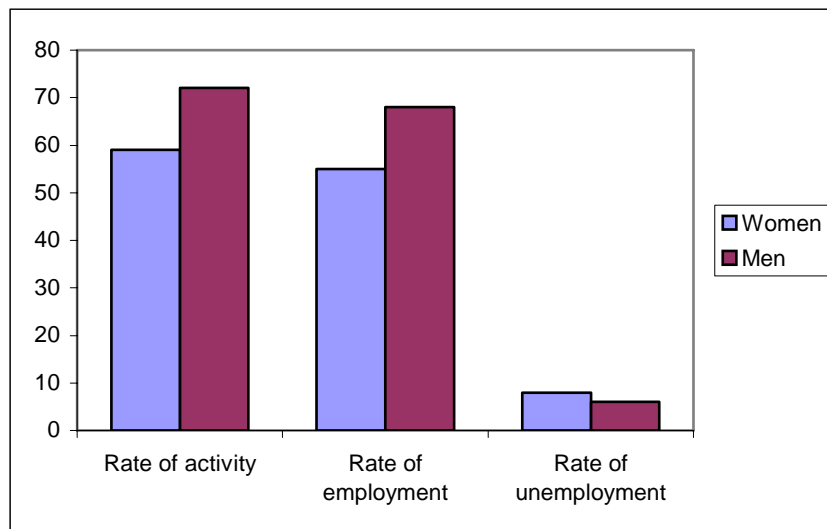
This agreement asserts the principle according to which an employer who is recruiting cannot treat candidates in a discriminatory manner. During the procedure, the employer must treat all candidates in the same manner. He may not make distinction on the basis of personal elements when the latter have no relation to the position or the nature of the company, unless legal provisions so authorize or so constrain. Thus the employer may not make a distinction in principle on the basis of age, sex, civil status, medical past, race, color, descent, national or ethnic origin, political convictions or philosophical beliefs, affiliation with a trade union organization or another organization, sexual orientation, or disability.

1.2.7. The Institute for Equal Opportunity has also currently established a database of practices designed to promote male-female equality in the area of employment. The objective consists of identifying those innovative practices within companies (management of work time, articulation between professional and private life, measures fostering mobility, training, or women's access to management positions or to "male" professions), collecting them, and putting them at the disposal of the public via the Internet.

The Institute is also present in nine committees accompanying projects of the European Social Fund for the purpose of humanizing work of the federal public service of Employment, Work, and Social Solidarity. The following projects are ongoing: Proxima (nearby jobs), CAPA (jobs for persons older than 50), telecommuting, stress, harassment, prevent agri, lumbago, Tox trainer (hazardous products), and Sobane (psychosocial risks).

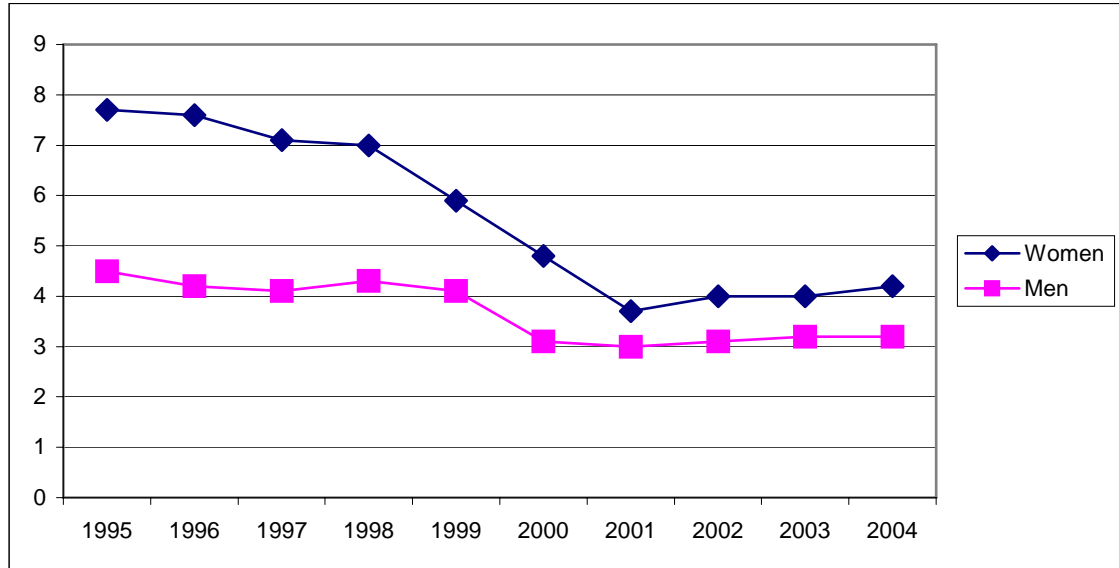
1.3. Statistics and commentary regarding the situation of women and men in the area of employment in Belgium

Rates of activity, employment, and unemployment by sex, 2004⁴⁸



The rate of activity measures the degree of activity in the population of 15 to 64 years of age on the labor market, in other words, those who are looking for employment. The rate of employment indicates the portion of the population of working age that effectively has employment. The rate of unemployment indicates the number of persons on the labor market who are not finding or have not found employment. For each of these three parameters, there are great differences between men and women. Despite the participation that women enjoy in employment, the rate of activity of women was 15.2 points less than that of men in 2004.

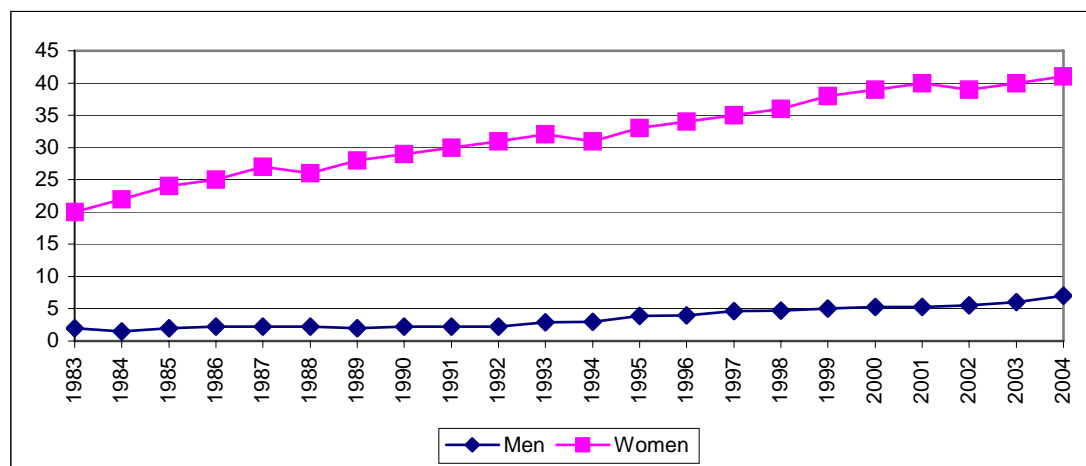
⁴⁸ Source: SPF Economy, DGSIE, EFT (compilation SEIN), graphic published in brochure, "Women and Men in Belgium. Statistics and Indicators on Gender," 2006 edition, published by the Institute for Equal Opportunity, page 32.

Evolution of the rate of long-term unemployment, by sex, 1995-2004⁴⁹

In 1995, 7.7% of active women in Belgium were without employment for more than 12 months, as opposed to 4.5% of men who were professionally active. Between 1995 and 2002, the rate of long-term unemployment decreased to 4.3% among active women and to 3.4% among active men. In 2001, long-term unemployment was the lowest, both for men and women. The difference between the rate of long-term unemployment for men and women was systematically reduced between 1995 and 2001. After that, the difference seems to stabilize.

⁴⁹ Source: Social Inclusion National Action Plan, Indicators Annex 2005, graphic published in the brochure, "Women and Men in Belgium. Statistics and Indicators of Gender," 2006 edition, published by the Institute for Equal Opportunity, page 74.

Evolution of the rate of part-time work by sex, 1983-2004⁵⁰



The rate of part-time work has considerably increased for both sexes over the years. However, an important difference does remain between men and women. Furthermore, women and men work part-time for different reasons.

Average monthly gross salaries in euros, 2005⁵¹

Status	Men	Women	Difference in salary (%)
Employees	3 483.8	2 454.7	30
Workers	2 119.6	1 670.4	21
Officials	2 976.1	2 833.0	5

Generally speaking, the salary differential is expressed as a function of the difference in average gross salaries of men and women. Net salaries reflect in part tax measures and social benefits. The difference between the average gross salary of men and of women is greater in the private sector than in the public sector. Of importance is the fact that the proportion of female employees in the public sector has an effect on the calculation of the salary gap. In the private sector, a large difference in salaries between workers and employees remains. The numbers cited above are calculated on the basis of ONSS data. No correction has been made for part-time work.

2. Social Security

The Belgian system of Social Security seeks to guarantee social protection to the entire population. Only important modifications occurring after 2002 are summarized below.

⁵⁰ 1983-2002: SPF Employment, Work, and Social Solidarity (calculated on the basis of the EFT); 2003-2004: EFT, SPF Economy, General Administration of Statistics (compilation SEIN), graphic published in the brochure, "Women and Men in Belgium. Statistics and Indicators on Gender," 2006 edition, published by the Institute for Equal Opportunity, page 46.

⁵¹ Source: ONSS, calculation Meulders, D. and S. O'Dorchai (2006). "Gender Pay Gap in Belgium," unpublished report (compilation IEFH), table published in the brochure, "Women and Men in Belgium. Statistics and Indicators on Gender," 2006 edition, published by the Institute for Equal Opportunity, page 66.

2.1. Retirement and survivorship pensions

Since 1 July 1997, a reform of the system of salaried workers' pensions has entered into force with the goal of achieving equalization of treatment between men and women. The standard age for a pension for women was 62 years from January 2000 to 31 December 2002, 63 years from January 2003 to December 2005, and 64 years from January 2006 to December 2008. Beginning 1 January 2009, the standard age for a pension will be 65 years for men and for women. In parallel fashion, a complete career for a woman was 42 years until 31 December 2002, 43 years from January 2003 to December 2005, and 44 years from January 2006 to December 2008. It will be 45 years beginning 1 January 2009.

However, men and for women will continue to be eligible for pensions at 60 years of age, provided a career of a specific duration can be proved, i.e., 30 years in 2002, 32 years in 2003, 34 years in 2004, and 35 years beginning in 2005. In addition, with respect to female beneficiaries, the age limit for obtaining salaries relating to unemployment and handicapped status is being progressively increased up to the uniform age of 65 years at the same speed as the increase in the age of retirement described above. As for the age of access to guaranteed income for the elderly, this has also been equalized for men and women at 65 years.

The age limit for women with a right thereto has moved step-by-step from 61 years (beginning 1 July 1997), to 62 years after January 2000, 63 years from January 2003 to December 2005, 64 years from January 2006 to December 2008), to 65 years from 1 January 2009), according to a transitional system determined by analogy to the system for pensions, while maintaining the established rights.

The reform establishes compensatory measures with a view to suppressing de facto inequalities that exist with respect to women in employment and remuneration, such as:

- the guarantee of a minimum pension entitlement per year of work, granted under certain conditions;
- taking into consideration periods of career interruption for purposes of raising a child less than six years of age (to a maximum of 36 complete months) in calculating the conditions of a career that are necessary to fulfill for an anticipated pension.

In addition, in carrying out the law of 23 December 2005 with respect to the solidarity agreement between the generations, two royal decrees of 28 September 2006 (applicable to pensions that are begun earlier than 1 October 2006) have been issued in the area of minimal pensions.

The first measure raises by 17% the minimum entitlement per year of career (i.e., the minimum annual remuneration which under certain conditions is taken into account for calculating the pension). The second measure provides flexible access to the minimum pension, taking into account half-time work in satisfying the required career conditions, whereas previously only full-time work had been considered. In this case, the minimum pension is calculated at a pro rata for the entire duration of the career.

These measures follow a series of four conferences on the specific theme, "Women and Pensions," organized since 14 December 2005 by the Ministry of Pensions, which have examined the situation of women with respect to pensions. These

conferences have demonstrated that women's pensions are generally inferior to those of men, especially due to the lower rate of employment, the frequent recourse to part-time work, lower income, and more frequent career interruptions. Furthermore, the careers of women are often atypical; they often do not have the right to a minimum pension. The two aforementioned measures, which have been adopted, are designed to increase the number of female beneficiaries of minimum pensions and therefore to reduce the de facto inequality that exists with respect to women.

It is also appropriate to indicate that the accumulation rules for a survivorship pension with authorized professional activity will be modified, taking into account the total income of the pensioner. By abandoning fixed limits of authorized activity, it will be possible for a person who was the beneficiary of a small survivorship pension to earn more than a person receiving a survivorship pension, which is socially more justified. Therefore, in the event that the total amount is exceeded, the pension will not be suspended but will be diminished proportionately in accordance with the excess, after removing from consideration 50% of the excess. In this way, it is guaranteed that the person can always retire at a net gain with his or her professional activities.

However, one exception will be introduced in the principle of prohibiting the concurrent drawing of a survivorship pension along with a replacement income: in the event of illness or unemployment for which benefits are paid out, the beneficiary will be able to concurrently draw a survivorship pension, to be limited to €447.09 per month (base rate GRAPA), along with his or her replacement income, and this may extend for a total duration of 12 months.

Finally, the Ministry of Pensions has decided to inform young women of the effects that certain choices of careers can have on their future pension. In 2006, an Internet site and an informational brochure specially aimed at women were created; see <http://www.femmeetpension.be>.

2.2. Protection of maternity

To repeat, the program law of 22 December 1989 introduced a new maternity insurance that takes its rightful place in indemnity insurance, in addition to the benefits that are associated with an inability to work and allowances for funeral expenses. The objectives in the context of instituting maternity insurance revolve around the three following axes:

- (1) the necessary including in the employer's responsibility the obligation to pay a guaranteed salary (for a period of two weeks or one month) in cases of pregnancy or birth;
- (2) the realization of a better equality of treatment of women workers who are belong to the group of active women (workers, employees);
- (3) the concern to establish a truly specific benefit, taking into account the nature of the matters to be covered, integrating maternity insurance into the existing institutional structures.

By means of this program law, the period of guaranteed salary is replaced by reimbursement by insurance. Provision of benefits for the first 30 days is granted in accordance with 82% of a salary that has not reached its maximum limit. Beginning on the 31st day, the benefits rise to 75% of the maximum salary. The date that is

taken into account by the insurance system is the presumed date of childbirth and no longer the actual date of same. The result could be a modification in the calculation of prenatal leave.

2.2.1. Duration of maternity leave

The total duration of maternity leave is 15 weeks (17 weeks in cases of multiple births). It is divided into a prenatal leave of six weeks (seven weeks, before 1 July 2004) and a postnatal leave of nine weeks (eight weeks, before 1 July 2004).⁵² Prenatal leave amounts to five optional weeks (six weeks, before 1 July 2004) that may be reported (entirely or partially) after delivery and one obligatory week that cannot be reported if the leave is not taken. If the childbirth takes place after the date predicted by the physician, the prenatal rest is extended until the actual date of childbirth. Postnatal leave amounts to nine mandatory weeks after the birth, to which a report of five prenatal weeks may be added.

2.2.2. Prolongation of postnatal leave

Since 1 July 2004, postnatal leave, which can already be extended by the amount of prenatal leave not taken, may be extended for a maximum period of two weeks in case of multiple births. Maternity leave may be up to a maximum of 19 weeks in cases of multiple births.

Since 1 July 2004, in cases when the newborn is required to remain in the hospital, postnatal leave may be extended after the first seven days dating from birth up to a maximum of 24 weeks.

Beginning 1 September 2006 and for childbirths occurring after this date, the period of postnatal rest of nine weeks may be prolonged at the request of the holder by one week if the holder has been incapable of working during the entire period of six weeks preceding the actual date of childbirth (or eight weeks, if a multiple birth is foreseen).

2.2.3. Maternity benefits

During the first 30 days, a benefit is paid by the mutual insurance system, it increases to 82% of the gross daily salary (not at maximum). Beginning on the 31st day in the event of an extension, it increases to 75% of the gross daily salary at its maximum.⁵³ Female persons who are entirely unemployed obtain 60% of their lost salary (although the amount can not be greater than the unemployment benefits outlined there).⁵⁴ The 60% of salary is completed, from a percentage of the maximum remuneration to 19.5% during the first 30 days, and then it is set at 15%.

2.2.4. Conversion of maternity leave into paternity leave⁵⁵

In the event that the mother is hospitalized, the father of the child may receive a paternity leave benefit to begin no sooner than the eighth day after the birth of the child, provided that the hospitalization of the mother lasts more than seven days and

⁵² The program law of 9 July 2004 (Belgian Monitor of 15 July 2004, edition 2).

⁵³ The royal decree of 13 March 2001 (Belgian Monitor of 10 April 2001) abrogated article 218 of the royal decree of 3 July 1996, which fixed the rate of benefits permitted during the extension of maternity rest at 60% of the gross remuneration at its maximum.

⁵⁴ Royal decree of 19 February 2003 (Belgian Monitor of 18 March 2003).

⁵⁵ Program law of 27 December 2004 (Belgian Monitor of 31 December 2004, second edition) — Royal decree of 4 May 2005 (Belgian Monitor of 26 May 2005).

the newborn has left the hospital. The leave shall expire upon the end of the hospitalization of the mother and extend no longer than the period corresponding to the unexhausted maternity rest due the mother at the time of her hospitalization. The father during this leave receives an allowance at the rate of 60% of the lost remuneration. In the event of the decease of the mother, the father of the child may receive a paternity leave benefit whose duration may not exceed the amount of postnatal rest not taken by the mother at the moment of her death. The father receives an allowance during this leave.

2.2.5. Paternity leave and adoption leave

After the birth of his child, the father has the right to 10 days of leave to be selected within the 30 days from the period of confinement.⁵⁶ These 10 days may be taken together or separately. During this leave, in the first three days of absence, the father receives the benefit of a continuation of salary. During the following seven days, he receives an allowance benefit (paternity allowance), paid out in the context of illness-disability insurance by analogy to the allowance granted to the mother in the context of maternity insurance. The paternity leave allowance is 82% of the lost salary (maximum amount).

Every worker (male or female) has the right to an adoption leave for receiving an adopted child into his or her family.⁵⁷ This leave, which must be taken without interruption within two months from the date of registration of the child in the municipality, amounts to six months at a maximum (provided the child is less than three years old) and to four weeks maximum (if the child is at least three years old). The worker maintains his or her total salary during the first three days. For the following days, he or she is supported by his or her mutual insurance system.

2.2.6. Nursing breaks⁵⁸

Since 1 July 2002, female workers who have given birth may under certain conditions take nursing breaks. The hours of the nursing breaks are paid by the mutual insurance system at 82% of the gross amount of the lost salary which would have been earned during the hours or half hours of the nursing breaks. The female worker may suspend her work to nurse her child or to draw out her milk. A nursing break is one half hour. The female worker who works at least 7 1/2 hours in one day has the right to two breaks, to be taken together or separately. In principle, the total period during which the female worker may take nursing breaks is seven months from the date of the birth.

2.3. Social status of the assisting partner

The protection of partners assisting an independent worker is the same for men and women. In reality, it is generally women that benefit from this status.

A new regulation entered into force on 1 January 2003 regarding the social status (as well as fiscal status) of assisting partners. One is presumed to be an assisting partner who is married to an independent worker; who does not draw his or her own benefits from Social Security, at least at the level of those of independent workers;

⁵⁶ Royal decree of 11 June 2002 (Belgian Monitor of 29 June 2002, edition one).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ The law of 2 August 2002 (Belgian Monitor of 29 August 2002, edition two), Royal decree of 5 November 2002 (Belgian Monitor of 30 November 2002, edition two) — Collective bargaining agreement No. 80 of 27 November 2001.

who is the partner (of an independent worker) and in fact assists him or her regularly in the company.

The new regulation has been introduced in two stages:

- beginning January 2003, the assisting partners must be covered by worker's compensation of the independent workers (the "mini-status"). The assisting partners otherwise have the option of adopting the entire social status of the independent workers, excluding insurance in the case of disability (the "maxi-status").
- beginning 1 July 2005, the assisting partners are in principle covered at the entire social status of independent workers. Assisting partners born before 1 January 1956 may after 1 July 2005 remain covered solely under the "mini-status."

The maxi-status offers a more extensive protection than the mini-status: pension, health care, worker's compensation, illness, and maternity (with the exception of bankruptcy insurance). An assisting partner born before 1956 must join at minimum protection with the office of social insurance of his or her partner. Therefore, he or she is insured against incapacitation (including maternity) and disability. In effect, for these risks, he does not have rights that are derived from those of his or her partner. If he becomes sick, he may be considered a person dependent on his partner for purposes of health care insurance. From 31 December 2002, 4,801 assisting partners have been registered with this voluntary insurance program against incapacitation. By 31 December 2005, they numbered 48,676.

II. Federated entities

A. Flemish community

As already stated in the introduction, the Flemish Minister for Equal Opportunities gives priority to the theme of career development for which an action plan is set up.

1. Gender pay gap/career gap action plan

Anyone who thinks that the gender pay difference is a thing of the past is quite mistaken. The pay of women is on average 12% lower than that of men. Moreover, immigrant women earn even 10% less than 'Western' women. Closing the pay/career gap is the central gender theme — under the direction of the Flemish equal opportunities policy — which will be worked on through the open coordination method during this term of office. In addition, a number of specific initiatives are also taken by the Flemish equal opportunities policy within this context.

1.1. Research

In the autumn of 2005 a study contract was awarded to the Steunpunt Werk, Arbeid en Vorming (Research Center for Work, Labour and Education) and the Vlerick Hogeschool under the title 'Verkenning van een specifiek loopbaanpatroon en formulering van aanbevelingen met het oog op remediëring en verbeterde statistische registratie' (Exploration of a specific career pattern and formulation of recommendations with a view to remediation and improved statistical registration). This study contract was based on the conclusion that many careers show a proportional upward trend for men and women, as long as they use their chances of promotion and are prepared to mainly invest in the development of their careers.

However, when for some years they opt for a 'linear career' and thus continue to perform their current job, but do not compete for promotion, it is very difficult for them to 'jump back on the bandwagon' and start developing a growing career again. This also goes for those who decide to work part-time for a while. This problem is due to a 'cultural fact' (the idea that a good manager has to put the work environment central in his or her entire career). It is a problem which affects both men and women. And yet there is a gender difference: the desire or 'choice' not to go for a promotion is common, especially among women who are having children.

This research will be completed in December 2006. The following steps will be defined on the basis of these results.

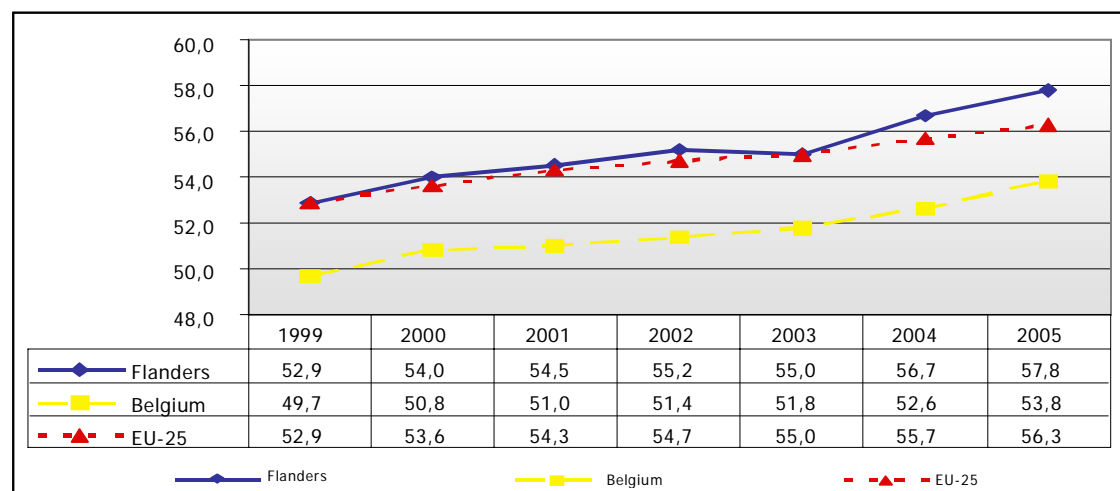
2. Flemish Department of Work

2.1. Situation of women on the Flemish labour market (2002-2005)

In Flanders, the employment rate of women has increased from 52,9% (in 1999) to 57,8% (in 2005), which is above the European average (EU-25: 56,3%). The employment rate of men is stable over the last few years (2002-2005: +0,2 percentage points), which indicates that the growing female labour market participation is the main driving factor in the overall increasing employment rate in Flanders. The European target of 60% by 2010 is within reach for Flanders. From 1999 till 2005, the gender gap in employment has declined with 4,1 percentage points and measures 14% in 2005.

An important observation concerning the employment rate of women are the major distinctions between the different age groups. The employment rate of women between the age of 55-64 is only 20,1% (in 2005), while the employment rate of women between 25-49 is 79,4% (in 2005). This shows that the socio-demographic trends play an important role (higher educational attainment of woman + 'cohort'-effect of woman entering and staying in the labour market).

The employment rate of women in Flanders (1999-2005)



Source: NIS EAK (European Labour Force Survey).

The evolution of the employment rate in Flanders (2002-2005)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	Evolution 2004-2005*	Evolution 2002-2005*
15-64 years	63.5%	62.9%	64.3%	64.9%	+0.6	+1.4
Men	71.6%	70.7%	71.6%	71.8%	+0.2	+0.2
Women	55.2%	55.0%	56.7%	57.8%	+1.1	+2.6
15-24 years	34.4%	32.6%	32.8%	31.8%	-1.0	-2.6
Men	37.0%	35.0%	35.1%	33.8%	-1.3	-3.2
Women	31.6%	30.0%	30.4%	29.7%	-0.7	-1.9
15-24 years (without students)	81.9%	78.0%	79.6%	78.9%	-0.7	-3.0
Men	83.6%	80.2%	82.3%	80.7%	-1.6	-2.9
Women	79.9%	75.3%	76.6%	77.0%	+0.4	-2.9
25-49 years	84.2%	83.2%	84.9%	85.6%	+0.7	+1.4
Men	91.9%	90.4%	92.0%	91.6%	-0.4	-0.3
Women	76.3%	75.8%	77.5%	79.4%	+1.9	+3.1
50-64 years	40.6%	42.1%	43.8%	45.9%	+2.1	+5.3
Men	53.3%	54.2%	55.0%	57.6%	+2.6	+4.3
Women	27.7%	29.8%	32.4%	34.1%	+1.7	+6.4
55-64 years	25.4%	26.5%	29.5%	30.7%	+1.2	+5.3
Men	35.5%	36.7%	39.3%	41.2%	+1.9	+5.7
Women	15.8%	16.4%	19.6%	20.1%	+0.5	+4.3

* Expressed in percentage points. Source: NIS EAK (European Labour Force Survey).

In comparison with other target groups, the labour market position of woman is more solid. The main priority for the Flemish government is to increase the employment rate for the elderly, minority groups, low qualified and the disabled, because their employment rate is much lower than the overall employment rate of men and women.

2.2. *New legislative acts on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (2002-2006)*

The Flemish Government's decree on employment equity in the labour market of May 8th 2002 provides a strong legal basis for the policy of employment equity and diversity, and assigns the Flemish departments and intermediaries in the employment market an active role in achieving these aims. This decree converted the European directives on non-discrimination into Flemish regulations and aimed to guarantee equal treatment, preventing any form of discrimination on grounds of gender, so-called race, ethnicity, nationality, etc., in the fields of career guidance, vocational training, career supervision, and employment mediation, and also in the field of working conditions for government and teaching staff. Confirming the aim of employment equity in the Flemish labour market, and thereby moving beyond what is required by the European directives, the decree encourages companies to

adopt a policy of employment equity and diversity. It moreover fixes the monitoring and independent evaluation of the decree, as well as the procedures for dealing with complaints and the possibility of sanctions.

2.3. Policy initiatives towards women (2002-2006)

2.3.1. Employment equity policy

At the end of 2004, Flanders' employment equity policy has a sound legal basis and broad stakeholder support, a clear objective and a defined growth scenario to achieve that objective. Also, important steps have been taken towards mainstreaming policy and rendering it structural.

A balanced mix of instruments was set up at different levels in order to implement an active policy of employment equity. At the Flemish macro-level, long-term projects were initiated with the social partners and the organisations of minority groups, aiming to improve the match between supply and demand, access to work and training, and diversity support for SMEs and employees' representatives. The exchanges of experience between and with companies are promoted through various diversity projects. At the meso- level, agreements were made with the different sectors: diversity consultants are made available to draw up a sectoral diversity working plan. The regional social partners have a network of project developers who support organisations (companies, institutions and local government) in implementing their diversity policy. And last but not least, at the company micro-level, the Flemish Government subsidises diversity plans and best practices in organisations and supports them through a network of consultants.

The main three target groups for the employment equity policy are the elderly (+50 years), ethnic minority groups and the disabled. Although women are not one of the main target groups, the gender theme is present in a transversal way within the main target groups. In some actions the main focus can be the position of women on the labour market, for example specific gender diversity plans or projects targeted on migrant women.

2.3.2. Combination work and family life

In order to promote the labour market participation of men and women, the Flemish government has extended childcare facilities. With 34,4% Flanders already exceeds in 2005 the European benchmark for 2010: childcare facilities for 33% of children aged under 3. The following years, Flanders will further invest in childcare facilities for children aged under 3 with 6.000 extra places by the end of 2008.

The Flemish encouragement premiums are an addition to the federal system of time credit/career interruption. In 2005, 43.000 employees made use of the Flemish encouragement premiums. In practice, mainly women (82% in 2005) make use of this system to take care for young children or a member of the family who is ill, in combination with work.

B. French Community

To allow men and women to balance family and professional responsibilities, the Office of Birth and of Childhood (ONE) has developed several initiatives.

1. Care for very young children

In February 2003, Stork Plan I was launched with the following objectives: to open 10,000 childcare facilities for children from 0-3 years by 2010, to offer diversity, to maintain quality, and to make the offerings geographically convenient. Three public appeals for projects were carried out in 2003, 2004, and 2005. Thanks to the “interlocking policies” between the Region, which has responsibility for employment, and the French Community, which has responsibility for quality childcare centers, the results have been the opening of 913 new units within collective childcare centers and 1,045 new home-based childcare centers in the French Community.

Beginning 2006, on the basis of the same synergies, Stork Plan II was launched to pursue the objectives of developing childcare centers for children of 0-3 years of age. The appeal for the project 2006-2007 will make it possible to open 1,648 new units within collective childcare centers and 572 new home-based childcare centers. For 2008 and 2009, synergies with the policies on infrastructure will also be initiated.

2. Extracurricular Childcare

A new decree on extracurricular childcare (ATL) was passed in 2003 and entered into force in 2004.

Many municipalities have taken part in the application of the ATL decree implementing local coordination of childcare and presenting to ONE a program of local coordination for childhood (CLE), developed as a program of childcare coordinated by the parties concerned. In 2005, ONE granted a large number of approvals for CLE programs and for providers of childcare facilities, as well as granting a grant to these municipalities, training associations, and providers of childcare facilities. One hundred ninety-six municipalities benefited from an operating grant in 2005.

The decree regarding the recognition and support of “homework schools” was passed and entered into force in 2004. In 2004, 302 sites of homework schools were recognized and 292 sites were subsidized.

Regarding “vacation centers,” the increase in the number of approved vacation centers is constant. Particular attention has been paid to the quality of care proposed and above all to the qualifications of the personnel.

3. Specialized care for early infancy

ONE is seeking to adapt the regulations regarding specialized childcare services permitting parents who are temporarily incapacitated to guarantee effective care for their child, to participate in personal processes, or to follow family guidance.

4. Prolonging the terms of research workers taking maternity or paternity leave

Doctoral research work constitutes the period preceding the submission and defense of a public dissertation with a view to obtaining the academic degree of doctor. The ideal duration for this period of research is four years. In order not to disadvantage research workers wishing to take maternity or paternity leave, the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research has seen fit to “immunize” the above-mentioned period of leave and to extend by an equivalent amount the duration of

their term, or contract, or exchange that is subject to Social Security. The objective is that the effective duration of the work of these young researchers not be affected by the fact of their taking maternity or paternity leave. The decree of 17 December 2003 regarding the automatic extension of the term of researchers taking pre-and postnatal rest (Belgian Monitor of 31 December 2003) automatically extends the duration of the term of research when a researcher takes maternity or paternity leave.

C. Walloon Region

Among the measures taken to eliminate discrimination against women in the area of employment, one of the first to be cited is the adoption by the Walloon Region on 27 May 2004 of the decree on equality of treatment in employment and professional training.

The following measures also deserve consideration, especially the Walloon Public Service of Professional Training and Employment, or FOREM.

1. Provisions that entered into force on 1 April 2003 with regard to the composition of the various agencies of FOREM

The Managing Board of FOREM, the Executive Board of FOREM, as well as advisory agencies within FOREM are required to be made up of a maximum of two-thirds members of the same sex.

2. Decree of the Walloon Government of 8 February 2002 regarding the granting of certain allowances to trainees who are receiving professional training

Certain trainees engaged in professional training and having dependent children may receive a supplemental allowance to cover the costs of the childcare facilities, babysitters, daycare, or kindergarten. The allowance for the costs of childcare facilities, babysitters, and daycare is four euros per day, per child. The allowance for the cost of kindergarten is two euros per day, per child.

3. Management contract 2006-2010 of FOREM

In article 8, "Relationships with clients," the management contract states that "FOREM will base all of its provision of services on the principle of equality of opportunity and of gender. It will reflect regional and federal policies in this area in an overarching manner or, if appropriate, in the specific activities in question."

4. Establishment of an office of ethics and diversity

In the context of the internal reorganization of FOREM, in 2003, within three complementary entities, FOREM Council, FOREM Training, and FOREM Support, an office of ethics and diversity has been established within the services of FOREM Support. Within this office, a full-time position of project manager for gender equality and gender mainstreaming has been created.

5. Establishment of a priority objective in ethics and diversity including the dimension of gender in the PASINTEX (internal and external strategic action plan) of FOREM

The internal and external strategic action plan of FOREM clarifies its strategy for the next 3-5 years, as well as having both external and internal targets. It formalizes the strategic axes, the priority objectives, and the priority actions to undertake over

the long term on the basis of annual and semester planning. Each year it is updated to take account of developments in the external and internal environments.

Since March 2006, the PASINTEX of FOREM has included in its strategic axis 1, “Positioning FOREM as an actor in the socioeconomic development of the Walloon Region,” a priority objective regarding the integration of the dimension of ethics and diversity, including the dimension of gender is “deploying internally and externally a strategy of ethics and diversity in conjunction with the strategy of FOREM.”

6. Establishing the steering committee of an ethics and diversity network including the gender approach and gender mainstreaming to be implemented within FOREM

In May 2006, FOREM created a steering committee charged with establishing the network of expertise and diversity engineering described in the PASINTEX of FOREM and with leading and coordinating its actions, in line with the strategy of FOREM. This steering committee is to be composed so that it is avoided that a maximum of its members are of the same sex.

7. Actions regarding training and sensitization to the dimension of gender

Establishing a module of sensitization to the dimension of gender within the basic training of new male and female trainers in FOREM Training;

Establishing a three-day module in the catalog of continuing training programs in FOREM Training, on the following themes:

- stereotypes;
- argumentation;
- communication that is respectful of gender and of differences in general.

Publication on the intranet of FOREM of:

- a journal on the topic of domestic violence aimed at sensitizing all personnel to the problems of its victims,
- an installment on caring for populations that have been impacted by their social situation, in which the problems of “re-entry women” and of single-parent families are discussed — debates are organized in the various regional administrations of FOREM, which debate the various recommendations set forth in the installment and, through exchanging experiences or through expert interventions, provide a framework for operationalizing them;
- various articles on the topic of gender equality (legislation, announcements of seminars, colloquia, or conferences, etc.)

8. Analysis of the feasibility and the conception of a Walloon “childcare” portal

In the context of an EQUAL project, Muqarnas, the ethics and diversity office, and the Children’s House of FOREM, in partnership with the Coordinated Center of Childhood of Châtelet, the city of Châtelet and the municipality of Gerpinnes, have analyzed the feasibility of a Walloon “childcare” portal. This portal, to be functioning after the beginning of 2006, should make it possible to achieve a double objective:

- providing information for parents looking for employment and looking for a childcare institution for their children, such that this information may be conveyed by the social rehabilitation workers;
- managing the supply and demand of emergency childcare centers, regular childcare facilities, and extracurricular childcare facilities for the municipalities of the Walloon Region that are participating in the portal.

This tool will make it possible throughout the territory of the Walloon Region and in the municipalities to demonstrate the provision of childcare for children from zero to 12 years and to analyze the needs of the population. From then on, it will be possible over time to implement daycare policies that respond to identified needs.

9. Actions regarding professional desegregation

- FOREM Training has participated as a partner with two EQUAL projects (“Observatory of Alternation” in EQUAL I and “Diversity Construction” in EQUAL II) with the goal of including women in the construction trades.

Currently, within EQUAL II, the three entities of FOREM are engaged through actions undertaken by the platforms, “Women in the construction trades” of Charleroi and Liège.

Each service of FOREM dealing with information, orientation, training, and integration of women in three construction trades (tiling, estimating, and painting), actively participates in the platforms and in different working groups set up within the project, included in the services of FOREM Council and of FOREM Training in relation with the companies.

This project is led in partnership with IFAPME, the Confederation of the Walloon Construction, and the Foundation for Construction Training, which will be joined in the platforms by the professional associations, the trade unions, and the local employment counselors.

- FOREM Training is also registered in a European partnership in EQUAL I to improve the representation of women in the area of goods and passenger transportation, and of logistics. This partnership, which includes AFT-IFTIM in France and ANTRAM in Portugal, began its work in preparing a motion to include within the directive 96/26/CE a modification of the contents of the examination which is required for men and women who wish to take management positions in companies in the sectors of goods and passenger transportation. This motion requests that the conceptual contents regarding the principles and norms of municipal law regarding equality of opportunity among men and women be included in the examination.
- All the training programs of FOREM Training will refer to “M/W,” and if possible the name of the trade will be referred to equally as feminine and as masculine.
- Informational campaigns of FOREM Training from 2002 to 2006, in the form of brochures (one general brochure and 12 thematic leaflets), presenting the totality of the training programs of the centers of FOREM Training, since 2000 have systematically included the sentence, “All of our training programs are available to men and women.”

10. Gender equality and communication

- In the institutional newsletter, “View of employment and professional training,” published since December 2003, the Communication & Marketing Department of FOREM has included articles on gender equality, discussing the internal policies and actions conducted in partnership with outside organizations.
- The Communications Administration, in partnership with the Ethics and Diversity Office of FOREM, the FOREM Council of Mons, and the local platform implemented by the Equal Opportunity Coordination Agency of the Province of Hainaut, has participated each year since 2004 in organizing an event around International Women’s Day.

The FOREM takes part in the event highlighting its various actions regarding gender equality. The men and women agents of FOREM Council and of FOREM Training during this event supply all of the necessary expertise to anyone seeking employment or training — especially, in view of the event itself, to women.

11. Mainstreaming gender equality in the human resources management of FOREM

In the straight line of the projects, Gender Equality Mainstreaming (1999-2000) and Demeter (2001), led by FOREM in the context of the IVth Municipal Action Program for the medium term to promote equality of opportunity among men and women, a steering committee, “Gender Equality Mainstreaming and GRH,” has been established to promote the creation of a plan for professional equality within FOREM.

As the first stage of the work, a survey has been conducted with all of the personnel of the Office, focusing on gender equality and more specifically on working conditions, the working environment, the ability to balance professional and private life, security, horizontal and vertical segregation, gender equality, access to information, continuing training, childcare, division of managerial tasks, the exercise of hierarchical functions, etc., in accordance with the structure of the “affirmative action” questionnaire that exists in the Head Office of Equal Opportunity of the Ministry of Employment and Work, which was a partner in this action.

One analysis of the results has been prepared and the results have been published in the intranet of FOREM. Actions integrating the dimensions of gender and diversity in the Department of Human Resources of FOREM will soon be put on the agenda for the steering committee of the Ethics and Diversity network, recently implemented (see points 5-6).

D. Brussels-Capital Region

Several initiatives have been adopted at the Brussels level to counteract the insufficient participation of women in the labor market and the discriminations that they encounter. These are generally non-obligatory instruments and, in the case of diversity, tools in which the situation of women is analyzed as a specific group rather than a universal category.

The 2005 report on fundamental rights analyzes the insufficient participation of women in the labor market and the discriminations that they encounter:⁵⁹ within ORBEM, an informational office on discrimination in hiring has been set up. It is addressed to employers as well as to those looking for employment. In cases where the latter have been victims of discrimination during recruitment, they may request support to analyze the situation of discrimination and perhaps seek redress.⁶⁰

A draft of the resolution has been adopted regarding equality of treatment between men and women with respect to working conditions, access to employment, the opportunities for promotion, as well as access to an independent profession on the labor market in the Brussels region.⁶¹ It extols a series of measures to improve the situation regarding information, awareness of discrimination that specifically affects immigrant women, etc....

In the context of the Social Pact for Employment of Brussels Residents, the social partners have committed themselves to promoting the employment of Brussels residents in opposition to all forms of discrimination, specifically promoting equal opportunity among men and women. It is in this context that the Economic and Social Council of the Brussels-Capital Region (CESRBC) has requested that the Brussels Observation Post of the Labor Market and of Qualifications examine the situation of women on the Brussels labor market. A first study has sketched the broad features of women's conditions on the labor market in Brussels. An analysis of the participation of men and women in actions regarding employment, professional training, as well as measures to assist those searching for employment, have been treated in the second publication. The results of these two studies will permit the CESRBC to implement an action plan designed to encourage equal opportunity among the sexes.

In December 2005, a charter for diversity within the company was proposed by the Brussels Ministry of Employment. The ORBEM will assist companies in respecting this charter through the aid of diversity consultants.

Article 12

I. Federal level

1. Measures favorable to women regarding health care during the period 2002-2006:

- March 2002: a reimbursement was put in place by the health insurance system for special pharmaceuticals, Menopur and Metrodin, aimed at treating the problems of fertility.
- Since June 2002, the national program for diagnosing breast cancer has permitted women aged 50 to 69 to benefit from a free diagnostic mammo-test, once every two years. This program was launched by the Federal Government, in collaboration with the municipalities.

⁵⁹ Network U.E. of independent experts regarding fundamental rights; "Report on the situation of fundamental rights in Belgium in 2005," presented by Olivier De Schulter, CFR-CDFRepBEL2005; <http://:cridho.cpdr.ucl.ac.be>.

⁶⁰ For more information, see the contribution to the Brussels-Capital Region, regarding article 2 of the Convention.

⁶¹ Doc.A-179/1-04/05.

- July 2002: female workers who have given birth under certain conditions may take nursing breaks. The hours of the nursing breaks are paid by the insuring agency.
- November 2002: breast exams carried out through a mammotome needle are reimbursed by health insurance. Using a mammotome needle, tissue may be removed from a breast so that a more invasive operation is not needed for this purpose. Thus women may avoid hospitalization, and the scar remaining from the intervention is much smaller. By reimbursing for the needles through mandatory health insurance, all women now have access to this treatment.
- March 2003 to January 2005: an health care insurance coverage is provided for capillary prosthetics in the case of patients having chemotherapy treatments and/or radiotherapy (mandatory insurance reimburses €120 every two years), and of patients that are victims of a alopecia on more than 30% of the skin (following an illness of hair follicles) and/or receiving a alopecia scar of a physical-chemical, traumatic, or inflammatory origin covering more than 30% of the skin (the reimbursement is €180). The renewal of the coverage may be granted after a period of 24 months counting the date of the preceding coverage.
- July 2003: women who have recourse to in vitro fertilization (FIV) may be reimbursed for laboratory fees. The laboratory fees are assumed by the health insurance system up to €1,182 per assay. The co-pay (consultation fees) remains the responsibility of the patients.

To receive this reimbursement for in vitro fertilization of €1,182 per assay, the women requesting this must meet several conditions: their age must be no greater than 42 years; only a limited number of embryos may be implanted depending on the age of the patient and the order of the cycle; a maximum of six assays are reimbursed per patient; and one of 18 recognized specialized centers must be used.

- April 2004: the National Institute for Health and Disability Insurance (INAMI) now has the authority to conclude agreements with the insuring agencies with regard to financing the cost of buying certain contraceptive means on the part of women aged less than 21 years. The goal is to fight against unwanted pregnancies. These measures are accompanied by informational and sensitization campaigns.
- January 2006: in the context of the federal campaign against smoking, the health care insurance provided for an allowance and pharmaceutical benefits supplied by specific centers to keep tobacco from pregnant women and their partners.
- February 2000: two new benefits are provided by health care insurance, which make it possible during the first trimester of pregnancy to determine the risk factors for Down's Syndrome.
- June 2006: an agreement may be concluded under certain conditions between the Committee of Insurance of the health care service of INAMI and specialized facilities, according to the terms of which mandatory healthcare insurance will cover adjuvant and/or neo-adjuvant treatment with Herceptin for beneficiaries that have contracted breast cancer.

- July 2006: to implement the decision regarding the prolongation of maternity leave taken by the Extraordinary Council of Ministers on 20 March 2004, the postnatal period of maternity leave is prolonged by one week when the female worker has been unable to work due to an illness or accident during the entire period from the sixth week prior to the date of childbirth, or the eighth week in the event of multiple births. The extension must be requested by the female worker.

2. Studies on health, conducted by the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men

The Institute for Equality of Women and Men has prepared a report on sexual and reproductive rights in the context of a request by the Council of Europe addressed to the Federal Ministry of Health regarding ways of integrating “gender mainstreaming” in healthcare policies.

The health survey conducted by the Scientific Institute of Public Health was organized in 1997, 2001, and 2004. This survey was carried out with more than 10,000 persons, categorized by region, province, and municipality. It contained questions regarding health status, lifestyle, prevention, utilization of healthcare services, and of health and society. The health survey was made up of three pages of questions: the first page dealt with general information regarding the household, the second page was aimed at members of the household older than 15 years, who were required to respond to the questions themselves, and finally, the questions of the third page were aimed at all the members of the household (and thus also at those under 15 years of age).

3. Figures and statistics regarding the health of Belgian women

3.1. Percentage of sexually active women who have used a method of contraception (themselves or their partners) in the course of the past year, by age group, 2004⁶²

<i>Age</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
15-19 years	83.5	16.5
20-24 years	86.4	13.6
25-29 years	82.9	17.1
30-34 years	71.9	28.1
35-39 years	74.0	26.0
40-44 years	69.1	30.9
45-49 years	63.4	36.6

The percentage of women using a contraceptive decreases with age. 83.9% of sexually active girls from 15 to 24 have used a contraceptive means in the course of the past year. The percentage sinks to 63.4% in the age group 45 to 49 years. The difference between the younger age group and the older age group is significant. The differences in utilizing contraceptive means among women with different levels of education are not significant after being corrected for age.

⁶² Table issued by the brochure, “Women and Men in Belgian. Statistics and Indicators of Gender,” edition 2006, published by the Institute for Equality of Women and Men, page 136.

3.2. Number and proportion of abortions by age, number of abortions and rate of abortions by age — 2003⁶³

Categories of age	Number of abortions	% of abortions	Number of abortions (per 1000 women)	Rate of abortions (per 1000 pregnancies)
10-14	65	0.4	-	73.01
15-19	2 097	13.5	7.31	39.08
20-24	4 032	25.9	12.61	16.2
25-29	3 411	21.9	10.52	7
30-34	3 001	19.3	8.2	7.8
35-39	2 107	13.5	5.33	14.67
40-44	810	5.2	2.21	27.78
>45	68	0.4	-	-
Total	15 591	100.0	7.9	12.92

In 2003, a total of 15,595 abortions were carried out in Belgium. The average age of the patients having an abortion was 27 years. The majority of women opting for abortion are between 20 and 30 years of age (47.5%).

3.3. Number and proportion of Belgians with HIV, by sex and age group (31 December 2004)⁶⁴

Age	Number			%		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
15-24	170	378	548	31.0	69.0	100.0
25-34	357	1 537	1 894	18.8	81.2	100.0
35-49	293	1 651	1 944	15.1	84.9	100.0
50+	135	654	789	17.1	82.9	100.0
Total	955	4 220	5 175	18.5	81.5	100.0

There are four times more men infected with HIV than women. By the end of December 2004, 4,220 men and 955 women were infected with HIV. Among the men, the age group the most affected was that of 30-34 years and among women that of 25-29 years. More carriers with HIV are young, and the percentage of women is large.

⁶³ Source: CRZ, 2004 (compilation SEIN,IEFH), table issued by the brochure, "Women and Men in Belgium. Statistics and Indicators of Gender," edition 2006, published by the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men, page 141.

⁶⁴ Table issued by the brochure, "Women and Men in Belgium. Statistics and Indicators of Gender," edition 2006, published by the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men, page 142.

II. Federal entities

A. Flemish Region and Community

1. Flemish Department of Welfare, Healthcare and Family Affairs - Flemish Agency for Care and Health

1.1. *Composition of advisory bodies*

A balanced representation of the sexes has been statutorily laid down in the Act of 20 July 1990 promoting the balanced presence of men and women in bodies with an advisory competence. The Acts of Establishment of the Flemish Advisory Council and the Flemish Health Council once again explicitly stipulate that at most 2/3 of the members can be of the same sex and that the vice-chairpersons must be of a different sex.

1.2. *Breast cancer screening*

In June 2001, an organised breast cancer screening programme was initiated, inviting all women aged between 50 and 69 every two years for free mammographic breast screening. These women have either been referred by their general practitioner or gynaecologist or they present themselves after having received a written invitation. In order to encourage the target group to take up these screening invitations, local health networks are called in. Apart from the stationary mammographic units with accredited radiologists (initially 44, currently 168) Flanders has 2 so-called “mammobielen”. These are mobile screening units that can be called in in areas which have too few mammographic units at their disposal. The rate of participation is about 35% of all women from the target group.

1.3. *Sexual and reproductive health*

In order to implement its policy regarding sexual and reproductive health, the Flemish government works together with a number of expert organisations with which long-term (5 years) covenants are concluded.

The most important one is *vzw Sensoa*, active in the field of sexual health and welfare, and a center of expertise with regard to HIV/AIDS and STDs. Among the different specific target groups which Sensoa focuses on (youth, gays, lesbians and bisexuals, immigrants, people with HIV), women naturally receive special attention. For instance, brochures particularly focus on birth control, some sections on the web site are specifically for women, etc. In co-operation with the ‘Support Center for Immigrant Girls and Women’ a website is currently being developed for Muslim youth.

The *vzw Pasop* (for East and West Flanders) and *GH@pro* (for Antwerp) have created themselves a distinct profile as organisations performing field actions with regard to prevention and counselling, specifically targeted towards sex workers. Here we find almost exclusively women. These organisations receive subsidies to promote sexual health in sex workers. Both Pasop and Gh@pro have consultation times at which sex workers can receive information or report for medical examination. The Hepatitis B vaccine is administered to each of the sex workers and followed up. In 2005, they were visited by 1725 female sex workers in Flanders.

1.4. Pre and postnatal support

This is given by Child and Family, a Flemish public institution which provides assistance and advice with regard to the welfare and care of children. Its task is to take measures to prevent perinatal mortality and prematurity, to foster the child's development within the family and society, and to support parents, in particular the health of mothers during the pregnancy and after the delivery. In the context of this task attention is devoted to the provision of both prenatal and postnatal preventive care.

In prenatal context, information evenings are organised for future parents where attention is paid, among other things, to a healthy life style. Subsidies are also granted to prenatal consultation bureaus which provide pregnancy assistance, especially in areas with high concentrations of underprivileged families.

In postnatal context, a nurse of Child and Family visits women who have recently given birth at the maternity clinic. Also, all newborns are visited at home by a regional nurse, in principle 4 (in case of firstborns) or 3 (in case of next child) times during the first three months after the delivery. This covers nearly all (parents of) newborns. In addition they organise preventative/medical and psychosocial consultations for the young child to measure and weigh young children until the age of three at regular intervals (in principle ten times in total, 7 times during the first year) and to have their progress followed by a nurse and doctor. They also make sure that young children are vaccinated (see below). All these services are free for parents. The Flemish Community also recognises, through Child and Family, centers for *maternity care* which were integrated into family care organisations. The related costs depend on the parents' income. Child and Family also recognises *child day care* centers that are subsidised by the Flemish government. Again, the costs depend on the parents' income.

B. French Community

The dimension of male/female equality is present in all policies that are implemented under the decree of the Government of the French Community of 30 April 2004 regarding the five-year plan for promoting health 2004-2008 and the decree of 20 October 2005, determining the Community operating program.

In the French Community, six priority themes have been defined and organized within the Community operating program (PCO): prevention of cardiovascular illness, the prevention of cancer, the prevention of AIDS and STDs, the prevention of tuberculosis, vaccination, and the prevention of domestic accidents. These programs are aimed at the population at large, but certain priorities such as the prevention of specific cancers are more the concern of women's health. (See the new campaign "Prevention of Breast Cancer," launched in the Government decree of 20 October 2005 by the French Community, setting out the protocol for the program of breast cancer screening in the French Community).

In addition, the development of strategies in the fight against all forms of discrimination is embedded in the criteria for awarding grants to projects for the promotion of health.

1. Projects of sexual and emotional education

The French Community beginning with primary school seeks to foster an emotional and sexual education that places the individual and the human relationship in the

center of attention and that sensitizes people to the importance of love as well as the emotional and sexual unfolding of the individual and other, with special attention paid to respect for women.

In the context of action research that was earlier initiated in the education of emotional and sexual life (EVAS) in the school, a result was that this program should be gradually implanted in all the schools of the French Community (primary/secondary levels and specialized education). The training of the educators in EVAS is basically left up to the federations of family planning centers. A training module will be designed that is more specifically aimed at problems relating to gender.

2. Action research on the awareness of gender in the prevention of sexually transmittable diseases

The French Community is financing a project of action research over three years focusing on the approach of gender and of differences in sexual orientation in the context of the work of prophylaxis (especially of STDs) conducted by workers on the ground. This project undertakes to sensitize educators to the questions so that they may integrate them in their lessons in EVAS.

3. Editions of specific informational brochures

In the context of the preceding actions, it is proposed to (re)print informational files on contraception; the genders (“Masculine, Feminine, that’s not about Grammar!”); pregnancy; the health of homosexual women.

Finally, with the goal of guaranteeing to women access to medical services (including those concerning family planning) and of offering to women the appropriate services (free of charge, if necessary) during pregnancy, during confinement, and after childbirth, ONE has launched several initiatives.

- Pre-conception consultations

In 2005 ONE initiated a campaign designed to promote pre-conception visits. A pilot project offers pre-conception consultations without charge within the prenatal consultations provided by ONE.

- Prenatal consultations

ONE is organizing prenatal consultations free of charge for the entire territory of the French Community. This policy of health prophylaxis is aimed, on a voluntary basis, at all future mothers. In the context of the prenatal visit, ONE also reimburses for medical examinations for mothers in precarious situations.

- Liaison service

Medical and social workers of ONE visit all new mothers during confinement. One or more visits to the home are equally proposed. These visits have the purpose of providing information, support, and follow-up on the health of the mother and of the infant.

C. Brussels-Capital Region

1. The state of women’s health

The Observation Post of Social Health, an institution associated with the Joint Municipal Commission, which aims at collecting, analyzing, and publicizing

information that is vital for achieving coordinated policies in the area of public health and the struggle against poverty on the territory of the Brussels-Capital Region, has published a table of indicators of health in 2004. A large amount of data broken down by sex is found, specifically, on the causes of death, chronic illnesses, infections, addictions, etc... This publication also pays attention to the “multicultural” factor and thus provides certain figures regarding the health of women of foreign origin.

2. Poverty

The annual reports on the state of poverty in Brussels conducted by the Observation Post of Social Health demonstrate a considerable increase in the percentage of homeless women in Brussels (10 to 50). The Brussels Parliament is studying the conclusions and recommendations of the report on the state of poverty and the synthesis put forward by the round table of 12 October 2004, which was organized with all the relevant persons and agencies in order to formulate a series of recommendations. These recommendations have been addressed to different levels of authority for eventual implementation.

3. Cancer

Cancers constitute the primary cause of premature death among women, even higher than among men (a rate 1.8 times greater). The most deadly cancer for women remains breast cancer, with an average of 237 deaths annually in Brussels. The mortality rate for this cancer has declined slightly over the last 10 years (55/100,000 in 1992 as opposed to 49/100,000 in 2002). In any case, this only represents 18.7% of women’s mortality from cancer. “Unfortunately, at the present time, there is no functioning cancer registry in Belgium which would record the data for the Brussels-Capital Region.”⁶⁵

Boezemvriendin is an initiative of the Brussels Gezondheitsoverleg. Various cultural activities (including non-medical ones) regarding breast cancer have been organized: theater, exhibitions, school activities, etc. The object of these activities has been to inform and sensitize women and those close to them regarding this illness and regarding the necessity of screenings, so that they become “boezemvriendinnen” (friends of their breasts).

4. Sensitization and screening campaigns

In recent years many efforts have been made to improve the screening for breast cancers in Brussels. A program of systematic and free screenings, coordinated by asbl Brumammo, began in June 2002. It provides mammothests to be taken every two years by women aged 50 to 69. The results from this program will not be apparent for about a dozen years after it begins, provided the rate of coverage exceeds 70%. The 2001 health survey and a report from the inter-insurance agency both confirm that the rate of coverage in the Brussels-Capital Region surpassed that of other regions.⁶⁶ However, it is the women who have the highest level of education who participate most often in these programs (86% of 50-69 years of age having had higher education as opposed to 59% for those having had primary education). The challenge will be to persuade a disadvantaged population to participate at equal

⁶⁵ Table from the Board of Health. Brussels-Capital Region 2004, page 43.

⁶⁶ Breast cancer screening program. Periods 2000-2001 and 2002-2003, Brussels: Inter-insurance Agency, 2005, p. 101.

levels. In addition, screening and prevention for other cancers also concern women since they represent more than 80% of the cases of cancer mortality.

A draft agreement exists of collaboration among the Communities regarding breast cancer screening by mammography.

5. Voluntary interruption of pregnancy⁶⁷

23.28% of the voluntary interruptions of pregnancy (VIP) are practiced in the Brussels-Capital Region, i.e., 3,628 interventions for 2003 (as against 43.23% in Flanders and 31.05% in Wallonia). 32.27% of the VIPs in Brussels occur for social reasons, and 22.38% of the VIPs for personal reasons. The majority of women undergoing a VIP have not used any contraception or have used condoms or the pill incorrectly. In Brussels, 81% of the abortions occur in non-hospital centers.

Article 13

I Federal level

1. Social integration

Statistical analysis of the data communicated by the public centers for social assistance (CPAS) reveals that women remain the majority among the recipients of assistance granted by the CPAS (nearly 60% of the recipients of social assistance are women).

This situation is the result of disparities between men and women in education and employment. In underprivileged areas, many women are under the care of their partner, or they have jobs that do not provide them with Social Security and unemployment insurance. In the event they lose their job, they often find themselves without income.

1.1. Social integration income (SIR)

Three important advances have been recorded since 2002 regarding social integration income.

- The right to social integration income has been individualized. The payment of SIR goes half to the man and half to the woman.
- The category “head of household” brings the same allowance to single-parent families as to couples.
- Pregnant minors are today grouped with adult women.

1.2. National action plan for inclusion

The public service of social integration programming (PSSIP) since 2001 has been charged with coordinating, monitoring, and globally evaluating the National Action Plan for Inclusion, through its program of the Struggle against Poverty. This action plan includes numerous measures that have been planned both by the Federal Government as well as by the Communities and Regions for coming together for the objective of social integration. One of the tasks of the PSSIP lies in the coherence of the plan and the relevance of its actions that are conducted with respect to a whole

⁶⁷ Report submitted to Parliament from the National Commission to evaluate the law of 3 April 1990 regarding the interruption of pregnancy (1 January 2002 — 31 December 2003), Brussels: Chamber of Representatives, 2004 (DOC 51-1234), page 65.

series of sub-objectives that are determined in cooperation with various partner agencies on the basis of a socioeconomic analysis of the existing situation. At the request of the European Commission, but also on the basis of certified reports which have been delivered at various moments during the evaluation of the first two action plans, it has been decided to increase the emphasis on women within the context of the action plan for inclusion.

The office Struggle against Poverty of the above service beginning in 2006 should make available online a catalogue in which the various administrations are invited to regularly contribute a progress report on their actions, as well as quantitative and qualitative data regarding the impact of these actions in terms of gender.

2. Policy within the large cities

Since 2000, federal policy for large cities has been financing a program of grants for 15 Belgian cities. The grants support projects of long-term development in underprivileged urban neighborhoods, in the form of signed contracts between the cities and the Federal Government. These city contracts are composed of five categories (or strategic objectives): integrated development of the neighborhoods in the city; the economy and local employment; social cohesion; health and the environment; and housing. The local authorities also pledge to integrate the five following general priorities: long-term development, diversity and multiculturalism, the participation of residents, socio-professional integration, and male-female equality. Since 2005, these contracts have been signed for a period of three years. The actions in 2006-2007 principally consist of financing studies or colloquia regarding the dimension of gender or in financing associations that are active in the area of gender equality.

2.1. Programming 2005-2007: Projects promoting gender equality

In Brussels, the municipality of Schaerbeek intends to establish a meeting space to allow women (especially women in underprivileged situations) to exchange experiences. The Woman's House will be constructed on ground belonging to the municipality, located in the same neighborhood as other associations that already work for the socio-professional integration of women and for the promotion of equal opportunity. The services that have been proposed will provide psychological support towards professional integration, including advice on health and the education of children.

In Anvers, federal support permits the asbl Ghapro to provide prostitutes with care that is free, anonymous, and specialized, placing at their disposal a consultation facility that is located in the heart of their neighborhood and a team of three persons (a physician and two nurses) who go to bars and clubs.

In the center of Liège, a daycare center has been opened that is targeted specially at the children of unemployed women for during their training sessions or interviews. Between April 2004 and April 2005, Liège organized 25 exploratory walks in eight priority neighborhoods that were registered in the Large Cities Policy program. These walks have made it possible for nearly 100 women to express themselves on their perceptions of the urban environment in many dimensions: security, mobility, conviviality, and temporality.

2.2. Conference “Women and the City” and action research

This program was presented, in April 2005, during a roundtable organized by the Ministry on the topic “Women and Cities.” The conference brought together about a hundred persons (leaders of associations, local officials, researchers, and coordinators and agents in city contracts) regarding three themes (mobility, security, and participation).

The synthesis of the ideas and experiences that were shared resulted in better targeted support of the Ministry for “good practices” or “good projects”. An action research plan has therefore been requested from a team at the Free University of Brussels. It intends to implement and monitor exploratory walks in six Belgian villages and to develop a methodological tool which will permit them to reproduce these experiences. The results are expected in December 2006.

2.3. Perspectives — projected actions in 2006-2007

In March 2006, during a conference devoted to general topics, a workshop on gender equality already was able to present certain “good practices” within the city contracts and the housing contracts.

Finally, an appeal has been launched regarding projects “Between women in the city.” It was made available to all associations and all groups of residents situated in any of the 17 cities and municipalities participating in the program, all of the municipalities of the Brussels Region, and all of the other Belgian cities having at least 60,000 residents. Ten grants of €7,000 have been awarded to innovative projects promoting the participation of women though responding to their needs regarding the disposition of public space and the management of the rhythms of life.

3. Programming 2000-2006 of the European Social Fund (ESF)

The current programming of the European Social Fund envisages an annual budget of €4.5 million for all projects. The dimension of gender equality is encouraged therein. It is recommended to CPAS, which is resuming the projects, to propose affirmative action plans in favor of women. If there is no project that targets women explicitly, the three priority groups are young people, persons from outside the municipality, and heads of single-parent families. It is clear even without precise figures that women are clearly the majority within this third group.

4. Access to and provision of goods and services

To repeat, the law of 25 February 2003, aimed at fighting discrimination, guarantees equality of treatment among men and women and prohibits discrimination based on sex with regard to access to goods and services, including insurance and banking services.

II. Federated entities

A. Flemish Region and Community

1. Flemish Department of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media

Flanders pursues an active ‘Sports for All’ policy that aims at promoting sports participation in Flanders for men, women, children and seniors. Women’s sports participation has passed the problematic stage, partly due to large-scale campaigns organised in the seventies and eighties, which encouraged many women to practise sports. Since 2002, no additional measures have been taken specifically for women,

as the Sports for All policy also caters for their needs. Women have the same opportunities as men to participate in sports, and especially at local level, the sports sector provides measures and actions, designed to create conditions, in order to make the practical threshold for women to practise sports (e.g. daytime sports practice, ...) as low as possible.

As women's participation in culture and youth work is no problem, no specific measures have been taken in that respect.

With regard to cultural participation, men are 1.4 times less likely to participate than women. This is not the case for all art forms. For incidental participation, we observe a statistically significantly lower chance of participation among men in the case of non-classical concerts/festivals, theatre or dance performances and literary events. For frequent participation, a lower chance of participation among men is only recorded in the case of theatre or dance performances. These findings are in agreement with women's overrepresentation at theatre and dance performances that is often stated by audience surveys.

2. In general about children's rights and link to women discrimination

In June 2002, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child discussed the Belgian report and formulated recommendations. Article 2 of the ICRC contains the basic principle of non discrimination. The fact that this is a basic principle implies that it has to be observed in the application of all ICRC individual provisions, such as the right to education and the right to culture and leisure.

During the period about which reporting is requested, the Flemish Government annually reported to the Flemish Parliament and the Children's Rights Commissioner on the application of the non discrimination principle in its policy. The report was then discussed within the competent parliamentary committee of the Flemish Parliament, together with the Flemish Minister responsible for the co-ordination of the Flemish children's rights policy and the Flemish Children's Rights Commissioner who supervises the observance of the ICRC in Flanders.

In implementation of the obligation to draw up a child impact report for draft Flemish Parliament Acts that are evidently directly linked to the child's interest, a methodology was developed on the basis of which the competent civil servant will test the preliminary draft act against the observance of the rights of the child and its impact on children's situation. The application of the non discrimination principle is also requested for in this test.

The subsidies to initiatives 'Encouraging, organising and developing activities with regard to children's rights' are meant to create a broad support for the ICRC by subsidising the "Kinderrechtencoalitie Vlaanderen" (Children's rights coalition), the "Centrum voor de Rechten van het Kind" (Center for the Rights of the Child) at Ghent University.

The 7 February 2003 Flemish Parliament Act approving the Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, drawn up in New York on 25 May 2000, can be mentioned in that respect.

Flanders also collaborates in the realisation of the world action plan for children 'A world fit for children' which pays a lot of attention to the girl-child. Flanders implements this plan by means of the Flemish Action Plan on Children's Rights,

approved by the Flemish Government on 2 April 2004 and further concretised in the second Flemish youth policy plan 2006-2009 of 16 December 2005.

B. French Community

In the French Community, access to cultural life is promoted by the decree of 17 July 2003, and by the Ministerial Circular of 15 May 2001 regarding grants to targeted projects for permanent education and for creativity, and also for financing the Center for Expression and Creativity. Direct support to the Association (Article 27) promotes access to cultural events for populations in a socio-economically disadvantaged situation.

In addition, financial assistance may be granted to promote the inclusion of girls in sports in the French Community. Such grants are aimed at associations for the promotion of women's sports, whether within so-called underdeveloped neighborhoods, or within rural zones lacking sports activities.

Article 14

Women who live in rural areas enjoy the same rights, services, and benefits as all citizens residing in Belgium.

Federated entities

A. French Community

The Office of Permanent Education, as well as the Office for Equal Opportunity, support several associations which work with women in rural areas, whether from the center or from the periphery.

B. Walloon Region

In the context of measures for dealing with the specific problems of rural women, the draft decree of the Walloon Region may be cited, which is currently under consideration by the Council of State, regarding the joint entitlement to rights and quotas for assisting partners.

C. German-Speaking Community

In the German-speaking Community, rural women and especially those working in agriculture have their own organization, namely AGRA women, which is engaged in the training of women.

Article 15

No discrimination exists in this regard in Belgium.

Article 16

I. Federal level

1. Marriage

1.1. *The law of 3 December 2005* (which entered into force on 1 February 2006) has amended article 64 of the Civil Code so as to simplify the requirements for a marriage declaration and for legal cohabitation (for greater detail, see the circular of 16 January 2006 on the law of 15 December 2005).

The new law also henceforth offers to the Civil Registrar a legal basis for refusing to conclude a marriage (article 167 of the Civil Code) when it appears that the

qualities and conditions prescribed for marriage have not been satisfied, or the officer is of the opinion that to conclude marriage would be to violate principles of public order. The refusal to conclude the marriage may be subject to recourse before a court of the first instance by the interested parties during a period of one month.

The law also prescribes the specific case of marriage contracted with the goal of obtaining residence permits. No marriage exists when, even though the formal agreements have been given, circumstances combine to show that the intention of at least one of the partners was evidently not the creation of a lasting, joint life, but solely to obtain a residence permit in connection with the status of spouse (article 146 bis of the Civil Code). This type of marriage may be challenged either by the spouses themselves or by any who have an interest in it, including the public Ministry (article 184 of the Civil Code).

In addition, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice have signed a joint circular which sets out a system for information exchange between the officer of the Civil Registry and the Office of Foreigners. This circular of 13 September 2005, on the one hand, prescribes an exchange of information on the occasion of a declaration of marriage involving an alien residing illegally in the kingdom, and on the other hand, an exchange of information regarding the refusal of the officer of the Civil Registry to conclude a marriage involving an alien. These measures do not challenge the right to marry an illegal alien but rather have the intent to prevent marriages of convenience.

Finally, the law of 12 January 2006 (Belgian Monitor of 21 February 2006) has amended the law of 15 December 1980 regarding access to the territory, right to residence, and the establishment and deportation of aliens, while inserting an article 79bis (paragraph 1) according to which, "whoever concludes a marriage with the aim of obtaining a residence permit, associated with the status of spouse (article 146 bis of the Civil Code), shall be punished by imprisonment of three to eight months or a fine of €2,600. Whoever receives a sum of money as reimbursement for the conclusion of a marriage of this type will be punished by imprisonment of 15 days to one year or by a fine of €2,600. Whoever has recourse to violence or threats with regard to a person for purposes of intimidating that person into concluding a marriage of this type shall be punished by imprisonment of one month to two years or a fine of €100 to €500."

1.2. *The law of 13 February 2003*, which entered into force on 1 June 2003, made marriage available to persons of the same sex in order to assure equality of treatment for homosexual and heterosexual couples. Thus, regulations with respect to concluding, dissolving, and distributing the effects of a marriage are henceforth applicable equally to homosexual couples. However, differences remain with regard to filiation. With regard to homosexual couples of which at least one of the partners is not Belgian, article 46, paragraph 2 of the law of 16 July 2004 with regard to the Code of International Private Law asserts the same right to marriage when one of the persons concerned has the nationality of a state or has his habitual residence on the territory of a state whose domestic law permits a marriage of this type. This provision must be applied in conjunction with article 44 of the above-mentioned law, which affirms that marriage may be contracted in Belgium when one of the future spouses is Belgian, has a domicile in Belgium at the time of the marriage, or has had his or her habitual residence in Belgium for more than three months. Certain partnerships that are registered abroad will be able to be assimilated to a marriage in

accordance with certain conditions established by law. In Belgium, marriages of persons of the same sex, between aliens, or between Belgians and aliens of whatever nationality will be authorized.

1.3. In order to be able to file charges for forced marriages, the Council of Ministers has approved a draft law of 10 March 2006, which will make it possible to punish persons who by threats or violence coerce someone into contracting a marriage. The draft law provides that any person who by threats or violence coerces someone to contract a marriage will be punishable by imprisonment of one month to two years or a fine of €100 to €500 (to be multiplied by five to €500 to €2500). The attempt to bring about a forced marriage is also punishable by imprisonment of 15 days to one year or a fine of €50 to €250 (multiplied by five, to €250 to €1250).

Since a forced marriage constitutes a violation of human rights that is prohibited by several international standards, the draft law aims at protecting the victim in his or her right to conclude a marriage of his or her own free will, and to protect his or her liberty, dignity, and physical integrity. In addition, it grants to the public ministry the power of acting through the judicial system to annul a forced marriage. In effect, the public ministry is currently unable to take this initiative; it can only intervene when an annulment procedure has been introduced by one of the spouses.

2. Non-recognition of the dissolution of marriage by repudiation

2.1. With respect to the dissolution of marriage, it is appropriate to state the position of the Belgian state regarding the principle of non-recognition of repudiation.

Article 57 of the Code of International Private Law (which entered into force on 1 October 2004) sets forth the principle of non-recognition. This text, applicable to all forms of repudiation, requires an application restricted to this institution, which is considered by the Belgian state as foreign to its conception of law and to the principle of equality between men and women (see the Circular of 23 September 2004 regarding aspects of the law of 16 July 2004 on the Code of International Private Law regarding personal status, Belgian Monitor of 28 September 2004).

The principle enunciated by article 57 is therefore that of non-recognition without exception. Repudiation may in exceptional cases be recognized if it satisfies certain conditions which are applied cumulatively and which must be verified by the authority before which recognition is invoked.

These five cumulative conditions are as follows:

- (1) The certificate was officially recognized by a jurisdiction of the state where it was asserted;
- (2) At the time of the official recognition, neither spouse had the nationality of a state whose law does not recognize this form of dissolution of marriage. Consequently, repudiation will not be recognized when undertaken between spouses of whom at least one is Belgian or comes from a state that does not recognize this institution. If this spouse has a double nationality, for example Belgian and Moroccan, then article 3 of the same Code applies: the Belgian nationality will be retained if it is among the person's nationalities (the principle conforms to article 3 of the Hague Convention of 12 April 1930). In this case, the repudiation will not be recognized in Belgium;

(3) At the time of the official recognition, neither spouse may have permanent residence in a state whose law does not recognize this form of dissolution of marriage. As a result, a repudiation will not be recognized which relates to a couple of which one of the spouses resides in Belgium or in another state (for example, France) which does not recognize this institution. It is irrelevant whether this state recognizes this repudiation or not;

(4) The woman has accepted with certainty and without constraint the dissolution of the marriage. This condition is easy to verify when it is the woman who is invoking repudiation. When it is the husband who is invoking recognition of the repudiation, which may be undertaken many years later and may involve a spouse who is not residing in Belgium, proof may be difficult to furnish. The husband in any case is invited to submit any sort of admissible proof and, if possible, the place of residence of the spouse in question.

(5) No reason for refusing as provided for in article 25 of the Code of International Private Law opposes recognition. Among such reasons for refusal are a manifest incompatibility with public order.

3. Protection of family life

3.1. Parental authority

The law of 18 July 2006, seeking to give greater importance to equal housing for a child whose parents are separated and regulating forced execution regarding housing for a child (Belgian Monitor of September 2006), which entered into force on 15 September 2006, provides that the judge ordering a separation of the couple must henceforth give priority to co-parenthood. A child of separated parents may now live as much with his father as with his mother.

3.2. Adoption

Regarding adoption, important changes in the law were made on 24 April 2003 (law reforming adoption, Belgian Monitor of 16 May 2003) and 13 March 2003 (law reforming the judicial code with respect to adoption). These laws entered into force on 1 September 2005. Two essential objectives have been established by these legislative modifications. On the one hand, they provide Belgian law with the necessary modifications for implementing the Hague Convention of 29 May 1993 regarding the protection of children and cooperation with respect to international adoption. Every adoption must be based on just motives and may only take place in the best interests of the child and with respect to fundamental rights that are recognized in his or her regard within international law. The ratification of the Convention constitutes an important stage on the road towards this respect and this prevention. The ratification instrument of the Convention was submitted in May 2005, with the consequence that the Convention entered into force with respect to Belgium on 1 September. It must in any case be noted that it applies to relations with other contracting states only for new proceedings (adoptions whose process began after 1 September 2005). After this date, all adoptions must be handled by an agency agreed to by the Communities, or if necessary, by the central authority of the Community. No procedure of free adoption may therefore be initiated after 1 September 2005.

On the other hand, the objective of the reform is to remedy certain gaps in the previous legislation, to modernize the law of adoption, and to introduce a certain

number of innovations (for example, opening full adoption to unmarried persons of different sexes, to un related persons who are emotionally united in a permanent manner and have resided together for at least three years prior to the moment of initiating the judicial procedure of adoption; the fact that the adoption of a child is based on his or her own best interests, evaluated with regard to fundamental rights that are established in international law; etc...).

In addition, the program law of 27 December 2004, in its article devoted to justice, the law of 20 July 2005 having various provisions, and the law of 6 December 2005 modifying certain provisions regarding adoption, aim at effecting certain modifications in the law of the 24 April 2003. These laws in effect insert transitional provisions that determine the modalities of recourse against the decisions of the central federal authority with respect to the recognition of adoptions carried out abroad, amend the mode of submission for the request for adoption (unilateral request), and finally organize the recognition of procedures that permit the transfer of a child in Belgium with a view to his or her adoption, which are carried out in a country of origin that does not recognize adoption.

The law of 18 May 2006 amending certain provisions of the Civil Code with respect to permitting adoption by couples of the same sex (Belgian Monitor of 20 June 2006, edition two) entered into force on 3 June 2006. The reference to adopters of different sexes has been suppressed by the Civil Code, and specific provisions regarding the name of the adopted person have been established both for simple as well as for plenary adoption.

The principle is that the spouses or the cohabitants of the same sex, in adopting a child, must decide which of them will pass on his or her name to the adopted person. This name will be given to children that they will adopt together in the future.

4. Name of the child

Notwithstanding the absence of the draft law set forth by the Federal Government, several provisions of law have been laid down under current legislation with the aim of introducing equality between parents regarding the attribution of the name to the child, namely:

- (1) Draft law amending article 335 of the Civil Code regarding the attribution of the name to the child, Doc. Parl., Ch. repr., sess. ord. 2300 2004, 089/001;
- (2) Draft law amending the Civil Code regarding the patronymic, Doc. Parl., Ch. repr., sess. ord. 2003-2004, 0248/001;
- (3) Draft law abrogating article 335, paragraph 3, clause 2 of the Civil Code, Doc. Parl., Ch. repr., sess. ord., 2003-2004, 0338/001;
- (4) Draft law amending the Civil Code regarding the effects of filiation and adoption on the name of the child, Doc. Parl., Ch. repr., sess. ord. 2004-2005, 0724/001;
- (5) Draft law amending the Civil Code regarding the attribution of the surname so as to guarantee transmission of the family identity by means of double name, Doc. Parl., Ch. repr., sess. ord. 2005-2006, 2037/001;
- (6) Draft law amending the Civil Code regarding the attribution of the surname so as to clearly establish filiation with the mother while preserving the historicity of paternal filiation, Doc. Parl., Ch. repr., sess. ord. 2005-2006, 2507/001.

II. Federated entities

A. French Community

1. Support for parenthood

In order to support families and their role, the Office of Birth and Infancy (ONE) has implemented a support module for parenthood that is specifically designed to be used at meeting places of parents and children.

The book, "Becoming parents," a new support tool for parenthood, was prepared in 2005 by ONE. It is distributed to all new parents and provides relevant information:

- on preventive monitoring for the well-being of the child;
- on information regarding health education;
- on parental responsibility and the rights of the child;
- on various measures and initiatives regarding birth.

The information of the parents has been pursued by the implementation of micro-programs (television spots). These micro-programs, "family air," lasting two minutes, are co-produced by ONE and RTBF. Aimed at parents, they are designed to support parenthood, which is the mission of the Office. The primary intention of these daily micro-programs is to make families more aware of the many free services that ONE puts at their disposal but also to inform them with regard to the health and education of children from zero to 12 years.

Large-scale annual thematic campaigns that are conducted by ONE are also part of support for parenthood. Initiated in 2004, the campaign "Being there on the first day of school," was pursued in 2005. The objective of this campaign was to sensitize the general public and early childhood professionals to the importance of accompanying the child — and his or her parents — at the moment of the child's going to school for the first time.

2. Forced marriages

In 2003, the Ministry of Secondary Education, questioned by several institutional heads, requested the Office of Equal Opportunity to take stock of the problem of "forced marriages" in the French Community with a view toward preparing a report and to imagine different possibilities with a view to coming to the assistance of the young women involved.

The report of the Administration raised the lack of quantitative and qualitative information in the area in the French Community and set forth exploratory research on the question with the following objectives:

- to study the values and aspirations around marriage and life as a couple in young people from 15 to 18 years of age;
- to study their knowledge of forced marriages, the nature of the situations where these marriages are entered into under coercion, and the consequences that emerge;
- based on these observations, to analyze the factors that intervene and mark the development of this type of behavior;

- to propose markers for preventing the occurrence of the phenomenon and to assist young women and men, both minors as well as adults, who are victims of this type of phenomenon.

Preliminary results of the study were communicated to the press in 2004. With the goal of distributing the results of this exploratory study, No. 15 of “Facts and Gestures” in December 2004 presented the principal results under the title, “Marriage chosen, Marriage submitted to; What are the challenges for young people?”

On the other hand, with a view to strengthening the ties between the different persons and to set out a coordinated and universal approach to the problem, this publication was accompanied in January 2005 by a “Colloquium on the problem of forced marriages” with the goal of:

- distributing the results and recommendations of the study;
- proposing reflection markers and coordinated actions with respect to both young people and adults in order to predict the occurrence of a forced marriage;
- bringing out the important needs in a way that might assist young people faced with this type of phenomenon.

This meeting was held on 21 January 2005 in the premises of the Ministry of the French Community and was organized for the local agents: the associations, administrators, researchers, teachers, etc.... roughly 100 participants took part. The events of the colloquium as well as the recommendations emerging from the workshops were made the object of a publication and of a broadcast.

Presenting the results of the research clearly and in summary form, and including the “Facts and Gestures” as well as the coordinates of the relevant agencies and the description of their fields of activity, this publication was able (and is still able) to distribute over a wide area the results of the research and constitutes a veritable informational tool with regard to professionals and local agents concerned with this problem.

The problem of forced marriages was not made an integral part of the “Governmental action plan for promoting male-female equality, multiculturalism, and social inclusion.” Nevertheless, the French Community continues to contribute to the prevention of this phenomenon, especially in supporting the initiatives of the associations and other authorities in this regard.

Therefore, the results of the study have been presented in different forums (City of Brussels, etc.), and the “Group of St. Josaphat” (a family planning center active in the French Community) during the 2005 budgetary year was awarded a grant of €31,830 by the Office of Equal Opportunity for its project, “Marriage: There and Back.”

The St. Josaphat Group is a family planning center that has been active for more than 25 years in Schaerbeek. Challenged by the problem of forced or arranged marriages, it wanted, especially following on the colloquium that was organized by the Office, to develop a preventive tool in this area, entitled, “Marriage: There and Back.” This is an audiovisual document, made up of testimony of men and women of foreign origin, who were married in the context of family resettlement.

B. Brussels-Capital Region

Beginning in 2006, the Ministry of the Brussels-Capital Region has organized a training session in the Moroccan family code for officials of the civil service, the Population Office, and the Office for Foreigners of the Brussels municipalities, so as to inform them on the evolution of this law that affects a great many in the capital, who are Moroccans and Belgians of Moroccan origin.

Annexes

I. Federal level

Publications of the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men (2002-2006)

- Annie Cornet, Isabelle Cecchini et Nathalie Holvoet (2003). *Analyse budgétaire en terme de genre et d'égalité homme-femmes - Rapport de synthèse du projet 'Gender budgeting'*, Brussels: Head Office for Equal Opportunity — Federal Ministry for Employment and Work.

(Also available in Dutch)

- Nicolas Bailly (éd.) (2004). *La participation politique des femmes à l'issue des élections du 18 mai 2003*, Brussels: Institute for the Equality of Women and Men.

(Also available in Dutch)

- Tom Kuppens, Nico Steegmans, Marjan Van Aerschot, Stephanie Poot et Mieke Van Haegendoren (2006). *Femmes et hommes en Belgique. Statistiques et indicateurs de genre — édition 2006*, Brussels: Institute for the Equality of Women and Men.

(Also available in Dutch)

- Homa Dean (2006). *Les femmes dans les syndicats. Méthodes et bonnes pratiques pour l'intégration de la dimension de genre*, Brussels: European Trade Union Institute for Research, Education and Health and Safety/ Institute for the Equality of Women and Men.

(Also available in Dutch and in English)

- Institute for the Equality of Women and Men (2006). *Classification de fonctions sexuellement neutre. Mode d'emploi*, Brussels: Institute for the Equality of Women and Men.

(Also available in Dutch)

- Stefaan Fiers, Elly Sevrancx et Jean-Benoit Pilet (2006). *La participation des hommes et des femmes à la politique belge*, Brussels: Institute for the Equality of Women and Men.

(Also available in Dutch)

- Stefaan Fiers, Sarah Scheepers, Sandrine Debunne et Annemie Van Uytven (2006). *Les trajectoires des femmes dans la politique belge*, Brussels: Institute for the Equality of Women and Men.

(Also available in Dutch)

- Petra Meier, Benoît Eihoux, Silvia Erzeel, Anouk Lloren et Virginie Van Ingelgom (2006). *Partis belges et égalité de sexe: une évolution lente mais sûre? Analyse de l'intégration de la dimension de genre au sein des partis politiques belges*, Brussels: Institute for the Equality of Women and Men.

(Also available in Dutch)

II. Entites federees

2.1. Publications of the Flemish Region and Community

<i>Title</i>	<i>Author</i>
Jaarboek I (Yearbook I)	
Jaarboek 2 (yearbook II)	
Jaarboek 3 (Yearbook 3)	
Gelijkekansen Indicatoren in Vlaanderen <i>Equal Opportunities indicators in Flanders</i>	Nico Steegmans en Marjan Van Aerschot
Vrouw-zijn in de digitale samenleving <i>Being a women in digital society</i>	Laurence Claeys
Hoe elkaar de hand reiken? (<i>How to reach out?</i>)	Astrid Janssens
Gezocht: ingenieur (m/v): (<i>Wanted!: engineers M/W</i>)	Marjan Van Aerschot
Structurele en culturele belemmeringen en succesfactoren in het leven van holebi's (<i>Structural and Cultural barriers and successfactors in the life of gays and lesbians</i>)	Alexis Dewaele
Allochtonen en nieuwsgaring (<i>Migrants and gathering the news</i>)	Noël Clycq
Segregatie in het Vlaamse hoger onderwijs (<i>Seggregation in Flemish Higher Education</i>)	Nico Steegmans
Gender Mainstreaming: kritische analyse van gender mainstreaming als theoretisch concept en als beleidsinstrument (<i>GM: critical analysis of gm as a theoretical concept and as a policy tool</i>)	Sonja Spee & Bloeme Van Roemburg
De combinatie van levenssferen doorheen de levensloop (<i>The combination of lifespheres throughout life</i>)	Marjan Van Aerschot
Huwelijksdynamiek in allochtone gemeenschappen in relatie tot faciliterende factoren met betrekking tot intra-familiaal geweld (<i>Marriage dynamics in migrant societies in relation to facilitating factors for intra-family violence</i>)	Noël Clycq
Senioren onder de loep: in hun hemd gezet of naar waarde geschat? (<i>Focus on Seniors: valuated or not?</i>)	David Schoenmaekers
Geen roos zonder doornen: oudere holebi's, hun sociale omgeving en specifieke behoeften (<i>No rose without thorns: older gays and lesbians, their social environment and specific needs</i>)	Jozefien Godemont

Title	Author
Beschikbaarheid en gebruik van traditionele en nieuwe media bij allochtone jongeren in Vlaanderen (<i>Accessibility and use of new media with migrant youngsters in Flanders</i>)	Ilse Devroe, Dieter Driesen en Frieda Saeys
Ouderen & Politiek (<i>Older people and politics</i>)	Els De bruyn
Beleving van gelijke kansen in de levensloop: een kwalitatieve analyse (<i>Experiencing EO in life: a quantitative analysis</i>)	Steven Lenaers
Islambeleving bij hoogopgeleide moslimjongeren in Vlaanderen (<i>Experiencing Islam by Higher Education muslimyoungsters in Flanders</i>)	Katrien Van der Heyden
School leadership and equity: the case of Antwerp	Noël Clycq, Paul Mahieu en Ina Lodewyckx
Allochtone en autochtone jongeren met psychische problemen en gedragsproblemen (<i>Migrant and Flemish youngsters with psychological and attitude-problems</i>)	Lodewyckx, Ina, Janssens, Astrid, Ysabie, Peter, Timmerman, Christiane
Een virtuele illusie of reële kansen? Gender in de netwerkmaatschappij (<i>A Virtual Illusion or Real Opportunities: Gender in a networkingsociety</i>)	Claeys, Laurence, Spee, Sonja
Beschikbaarheid en gebruik van traditionele en nieuwe media bij allochtone jongeren in Vlaanderen	Devroe, Ilse, Driesen, Dieter, Saeys, Frieda
De vergrijzing verzilverd? Een verkennend onderzoek naar ouderen in het Vlaamse vrijwilligerswerk (<i>A survey of elderly in Flemish Voluntary work</i>)	Godemont, Jozefien, Goyvaerts, Karin, Marynissen, Rudy
De fluwelen driehoek nader bekeken (<i>Focus on the Velvet Triangle</i>)	Godemont, Jozefien, Motmans, Joz
Roze wolk en zwarte sneeuw. Moederschapsrust bij zelfstandigen (<i>Pink Clouds...</i>)	Van Aerschot, Marjan
Waar zijn al die kapsters naar toe? Positie van laaggeschoolde vrouwen op de arbeidsmarkt (<i>Where have all the hairdressers gone ...</i>)	Mertens, Tiinne, Steegmans, Nico
Onderzoeksproject '(inter)nationale netwerkontwikkeling in samenwerking met vrouwenorganisaties' (<i>(Inter)national network development with women's organisations</i>)	Wiercx, Joke, Woodward, Alison

2.2. Publications in the French Community (2002-2006)

- *Les filles face aux études scientifiques, réussite scolaire et inégalités d'orientation*, Matéo Alaluf, Najat Imatouchan, Pierre Marage, Serge Pahaut, Robertine Sanvura, Ann Valkeneers, Adinda Vanheerswyngheles, Editions de l'Université Libre de Bruxelles, 2002.
- *Alma mater, Homo sapiens ? Quel genre pour la recherche universitaire ?*, Danièle Meulders et Jérôme de Henau, Editions du DULBEA asbl, Brussels, 2003.
- *Quel genre pour l'égalité ?* Cahiers de l'Education permanente, 2003.
- *Les femmes et les professions scientifiques, Diplômes universitaires et accès à l'emploi*, Matéo Alaluf, Najat Imatouchan, Pierre Marage, Serge Pahaut, Robertine Sanvura, Ann Valkeneers, Editions de l'Université Libre de Bruxelles, 2004.
- *Daphne Toolkit, Resources for combating violence against children, young people an women*, City and Shelter, 2004.
- *L'impact des mécanismes de transmission des normes sur l'égalité des chances : le point de vue des enfants de 8 à 12 ans*, Fondation Françoise Dolto, 2005.
- *Familles ...attachantes?*, Hedwige Peemans-Poullet, 2005
- *Les différentes formes de violences envers les femmes*, Amnesty International, 2005.
- *Droits de l'homme, droits des femmes ?*, Ligue des Droits de l'homme, 2006.
- *Femmes monoparentales en Belgique: conditions d'existence, précarisation, santé*, Marie-Thérèse Casman, Marjorie Nibona et Hedwige Peemans-Poullet, 2006.
- *Savoirs de genre: quel genre de savoir ?*, Sophia, 2006.
- *Le Monde de William* (questions de l'identité sexuelle), Ex Aequo, 2005.
- *Joli ciel, vous avez dit Logiciel ?*, SOFFT, 2006.
- *Le long chemin des femmes*, Center Laïque de l'Audiovisuel, 2006.
- *Le voile, etcetera*, Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, 2006.
- *Les femmes choisissent la démocratie*, FPS Liège, 2006.
- *Guide du respect*, Ni putes ni Soumises, 2007.
- *Femmes et Pouvoirs*, Sous la direction de Sophie Stoffel. Supervision: Sophie Pereira, 2007.