



MSU - WP7-Europe

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN METAL INDUSTRY SECTOR UNIONS

N.B. Provisional version to be added to by each partner

1. General information on the metal industry and appraisal of gender inequalities in this sector (elements of analysis and statistical data)

1.1. Summary presentation of the area of economic activity, enterprises and technical and economic development of the sector

In the six countries studied, the metal industry is the biggest industrial sector. It is marked by a great variety of activities: production of metal, mechanical equipment and machine tools, as well as electronics, the car industry and activities linked to new technology (such as communications, IT and the media etc.).

The sector has undergone much restructuring and job losses. For example, in **Italy**, the crisis at Fiat – **Italy's** biggest multinational (and 11th. biggest in the world) had serious consequences for the whole of the sector (according to the employers' association, half of the 2 million jobs involved are threatened).

Concentration of companies differs from country to country. For example, in **Austria**, the sector comprises 18,175 companies, of which the majority (87.5%) are small companies in metalworking crafts. Likewise, in **Denmark**, the majority are SMEs. In **France** - on the contrary – only 7% of employees are in companies of less than 10 employees.

Table I. Data on companies and employment in the metal industry

	Number of companies	Emploment	
		Total employment	Proportion of women
Austria	18,175	355,000 (?)	23.9%
Belgium	7,150	265,423	13.4% (10.4% women manual workers)
Denmark	20,000	400,000	
France	55,000	1,801,625	21.2%
Italy	100,000	2,079,000 (2002)	20.9%
Netherlands		405,000 (2001)	8.8%

Sources: national reports

1.2. Appraisal of gender inequality in the metal industry

In all the countries involved in the study, men predominate in this sector. As the above data show, the proportion of women's employment ranges between 8% (the **Netherlands**) and 23% (**Austria**). Restructuring seems to affect women more. Thus, domestic electrical equipment, which is the sector where there are the most women, is undergoing a big crisis (**France** and **Belgium**) – the same goes for electronics (**Denmark**).

Modes of managing employment: temporary and part-time employment

The development of subcontracting and insecure jobs (especially temporary ones) is becoming widespread in all the countries covered by the study. In **Italy**, subcontracting has led to major upheavals – including in industrial relations, because of the explosion of individual labour contracts within the same company. Unions denounced these policies, which have very negative consequences for employees by introducing new forms of rigidity and blocking horizontal mobility, as well as removing the possibility of trade union unity.

In **Belgium**, temporary agency work has developed in the metal industry, where it now represents 24.07% of employment, making this sector the biggest user of such employment. Fixed-term contracts are also frequent (6.3% in 2000), especially in the car industry. 45% of new recruits have fixed-term contracts. This form of employment seems to be used more often for men, but company reports do not provide gendered data. Part-time work is not used a lot, but mainly concerns women: 7% throughout manufacturing and 5% in the metal industry and is used a little more in electronics and IT, where more women work.

In **France**, the use of temporary agency employees and fixed-term contracts is also a form of management that is often used in the metal industry. According to statistics provided by the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity, the average rate of use of temporary agency employment was 7.6% in 2001 compared with 8.0% in 2000. The car industry has higher rates: 11.4% in 2001, compared with 11.9% in 2000. This form of employment, which is more often male, is not without specific consequences for women. For example, at Renault,

fixed-term contracts occupied by women are prolonged with trial periods, which are not turned into permanent recruitment. Part-time work is not used much in the metal industry, although in some sectors, such as electronics and IT, women are asked to work part-time hours, which they do not choose.

In **Italy**, even though permanent full-time contracts are predominant, proportionately more women have atypical (non standard) contracts than men. 82.9% of women have a full-time permanent contract compared with 92.8% of men. More women have fixed-term contracts than men (5.2% compared with 2.3%). But the share of training contracts is the same (4%). The same goes for part-time work where women are over-represented (7.7% compared with 0.5%). Increases in the number of atypical jobs have made it possible to alert trade unions about the risks of discrimination against women and increasing job insecurity. Even part-time work which is permanent and voluntary presents some negative aspects. Amongst them should be noted slow and late careers as a result of not being able to have training if one is working part-time or shorter hours. The right to training is a central issue of current negotiations for women, in order to avoid worsening of their work situation, even if it is also an issue for companies' need to adapt to competitiveness and the market.

In **Austria**, however, in the area of metal production, there is hardly any part-time work. According to the union officer, this is because of the rigid organisation of production in 2 or 3 shifts, which makes part-time work difficult. Moreover, unions have difficulty in defending part-time work because of pay and the importance of defending "breadwinner's" income. This approach is beginning to be challenged since guarantees for part-timers are defended. Atypical work is also practically non-existent in the metal industry. There is a little temporary work, but mainly for men.

???IN DENMARK???

Occupational segregation

(??? TO BE ADDED TO BY EACH COUNTRY, ESPECIALLY DENMARK)

In **France**, women's jobs in the metal industry are concentrated in a few sectors: women are present (+30%) in domestic electrical appliances, precision equipment (optical, clocks and photographic equipment), electronics, electrical equipment and IT. There are not many women (-15%) in shipbuilding and mechanics. There is also segregation regarding the types of jobs occupied: 1/3 of administrative and technical jobs (office employees and production workers) are occupied by women. Few women are in positions of responsibility (executives and foremen). Women account for only 7% of technicians. For example, in Usinor (steel industry) management, there is only one woman and, as the woman CGT metal workers union officer recalled: "*Where women have been able to access positions of responsibility, they have to work harder than their male counterparts*".

In **Belgium**, women's jobs are concentrated in few sectors (domestic electrical appliances, electronics, precision equipment and not in the car industry and production of industrial equipment).

In **Italy**, 48.8% of all women in the sector are blue collar workers and 47.9% are white collar employees. Only 2% of them are executives, whereas 5.6% of men are executives.

In the **Netherlands**, the great majority of women (???) **FIGURES TO FOLLOW**) work in low skilled jobs (production) and also in administrative jobs / secretaries. They are thus “cut off” from possibilities of promotion and career, as they do not have the skills and training for more skilled jobs or because there are no career possibilities for secretaries in the metal industry. Many women work part-time (???) **FIGURES TO FOLLOW**). This trend has been influenced by longer production hours per day. This has led to short “part-time” evening shifts. There are efforts to encourage women to take less traditional jobs by actively recruiting them and developing training for them. These efforts have produced few results. Segregation is still widespread in the industry and those few women who are in typically male jobs are “service women” (symbolic) ??? **EXPLAIN???**

In **Austria**, some parts of the metal industry are dominated by women (“other vehicle construction” and medical technology, where the proportion of women is 84.8% and 56% respectively). Unlike in the other countries, the decline of employment affects primarily weekly wage workers and less so monthly salaried employees.

1.3. Industrial relations

Unionisation and women

Metal industry unions function differently in each country and reflect the structures of their respective national trade union confederations (c.f. syntheses of WPs1, 2 and 3). Thus in the first group of “neo-corporatist” countries, metal industry unions are to be found in one or two structures, depending on the type of employees represented (blue collar/white collar), whereas in countries where “opposition” unions predominate, there are more sector unions.

In **Denmark**, skilled workers are unionised in the Danish Metal Workers’ Union, *Dansk Metal*, which covers the majority of activities in the sector. *Dansk Metal* had 135,043 members in January 2002, of whom only 2,367 were women (i.e. 1.7%!). This union is one of 12 sector unions that make up the industrial cartel, *CO-Industri*. In *CO-Industri*, the proportion of women is higher (30%).

In **Austria**, *GMT* (metal and textile workers union) unionises blue collar wage workers, while *GPA* unionises white collar monthly salaried employees. *GMT* is the biggest industrial union - 216,799 members, of whom about 19% are women. These data are for 2001 and comprise both textile and metal industry workers – there are no data just for the metal industry. *GMT* covers approximately 80-85% of companies. But *GMT* has few members in very small enterprises, especially those with less than 5 employees, where it is not compulsory to elect a staff representative, i.e., *GMT* has few members amongst artisans, of whom there are many in **Austria**.

In the **Netherlands** *FNV-Bondeggenoten* unionises the metal industry. It has a relatively high level of membership (40%) and includes union activists and very active works councils. However, women’s membership is still low, even though the union has been very active on equality issues.

In **Belgium**, **France** and **Italy** – along the lines of their respective national trade union confederations - the metal industry has pluralist union representation:

In **Belgium**, there are 3 sector unions:

- Belgian Christian union of metal industry workers (*CCMB*), which is affiliated to *CSC*;
- Belgian metal industry union (*CMB*), which is affiliated to *FGTB*;
- Liberal union branches, which are directed attached to *CGSLB/metal* (internal body).

CCMB is one of the *CSC*'s sector unions and unionises metal industry manual workers. It has 220,000 members. It has 55% of works' councils representatives and 55% of *CCPT* representatives (health and safety at work), thus showing that it is well established. 13% of *CCMB*'s membership are women (more than the proportion of women manual workers in the sector, which stands at 10.4%). *CMB-FGTB* also had 220,000 members in 2002, 18% of whom were women. It also unionises manual workers (*FGTB* non manual workers are unionised in *Secta*). *CSGLB* does not have sector unions, but sector committees. In the metal industry, the committee, which is responsible for *CSGLB* union activity, comprises 190 activists and officers, of whom 20% are women. The big participation of women in this group is partly due to workplace elections at Honda and Pioneer, where the *CGSLB* list of candidates was led by women.

In **Italy**, *FIOM* is *CGIL*'s metal industry union, *FIM* – *CISL*'s and *UILM* – *UIL*'s. These unions defend all employees, whether they are union members or not. Apart from recently (c.f. below), all 3 unions were united both in action and negotiations. 7 national collective agreements cover 1,800,000 employees. 659,000 metal industry employees are union members, i.e., a third of the sector. *FIOM* is in the lead (with 368,373 members, i.e. 20% unionisation rate. The number of members is increasing, which is the reversal of the situation that existed between 1995 and 2000. But there is great turnover of members, because of crises and restructuring in this sector. There is a process of creating a new balance between the regions: the North, where there is most of the metal industry, is losing employees to the advantage of the regions, that are less affected by crises (Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany, etc.). *FIM* had 190,479 members in 2002. *UILM* has 100,000 members and is satisfied, given restructuring.

In **France**, all 5 representative national trade union confederations have a sector union in the metal industry. For this study, we have focused on *CFDT* and *CGT*, who represent almost 70% of union members in the sector. In *CGT*, the metal workers union (*FTM*) is the biggest sector union and unionises has about 33,600 members, of whom 12% are women. *CFDT*'s metal industry and mine workers union (*FGMM*) gives its membership at 75,000, of whom 20 to 25% are women.

Collective bargaining in the sector

The metal industry plays a central role in collective bargaining for the whole economy in the countries studied (notably in **Denmark** and the **Netherlands**, but also in **France**).

In **Denmark**, the agreement for the metal industry, that was signed between the metal workers union and the employers does effectively encourage such agreements in other sectors. The agreement, which is valid for 4 years (the most recent one was negotiated in 2000) offers a minimum framework, notably for the minimum wage system, on the basis of which local and company agreements are drawn up. The most recent agreement deals with various points: pay is fixed each year at company level; 5 extra days' leave, which brings the total of paid leave to 6 weeks; increased retirement pension contributions; full pay for 14 months'

maternity leave and 5 weeks' sick leave, etc.; minimum pay is 12 Euros per hour from March 2003.

In **Austria**, collective bargaining is a key instrument, regardless of level: federal, state or branch. 95% of employees are covered by a collective agreement. This is explained by the fact that all employers must belong to the "chamber of business". Issues covered are wide-ranging: work-related bonuses, sick leave, 13th or 14th months, overtime pay, paid leave, working hours, redundancies, etc. There are 7 collective agreements in the "metal-mining-electric" sector. Contacts with the chamber of business are great and improve relations between social partners. The chamber settles many small disputes. But, overall, industrial relations have deteriorated recently, since the political change in 2000 – as recent strikes on plans for social reform, when unions were not listened to. Moreover, there is a tendency for the chamber of business to be represented by a new team of "negotiating bureaucrats", i.e. "technocrats". These people are more distant and render communication with unions difficult.

In the **Netherlands**, the collective agreement in the metal industry is one of the most important. It applies to almost 190,000 employees. This is less the case today, as small company agreements are appearing and also some bigger ones, such as at Philips (40,000 employees).

Metal industry agreements have played a dynamic role for the whole economy:

- the metal industry was the first male-dominated industry to have an agreement on childcare structures (first only for women and now for all employees);
- the job evaluation system was first developed in the metal industry (joint employer-union effort) and then used in other sectors;
- the issue of working time (linked to modernisation) was very sharp in this sector. The way it was handled in the metal industry had an impact on collective bargaining elsewhere.

In **Belgium**, several joint commissions have been created in the sector (at least 4), including separate ones for non manual employees. The one for manual workers in the metal industry is joint committee N^o. 111 for metal and electric constructions. It is composed of 34 full members (17 for employers and 17 for workers). Amongst the full members, there is not a single woman! There are two women substitute members. The role of the commissions is to draw up collective agreements and forestall or settle industrial conflicts. The national joint commission has ten regional sections. They can adapt decisions made by the national commission to the specific situation in a region. Thus, three levels of collective agreements exist: national sector collective agreements, regional sector agreements and company agreements.

In **Italy**, 7 national collective agreements cover 1,800,000 employees. The principle agreement (metal industry) concerns *Cofindustria* (900,000 employees). Since 1987, all 3 unions have made agreements for workplace elections by setting up works councils (*RSU*). In companies of more than 15 employees, employees elect an *RSU* for 3 years, which carries out collective bargaining in contact with local union branches and depending on the issues defined in national agreements. *RSUs* represent blue collar and white collar employees separately. Collective bargaining is based on consultations with all employees (including non union members) by a referendum, which fixes the content of collective bargaining carried out by the *RSU*. This system guarantees that all employees are well represented. But, recently, the 3 unions have had difficulty in remaining united and each negotiated the most recent agreement separately. For example, in 2001, *FIM* and *UILM* signed an agreement on pay with *Federmeccanica*, but *FIOM* did not do so. Thus, the new general collective agreement was

not signed by *FIOM* – the first time since 1948. Likewise, *FIOM* did not sign the most recent agreement, which covers the period 2003-2004, because of a conflict between unions on demands put forward by women trade unionists to promote their position in the labour market. The new agreements change aspects concerning pay, hours, training, union rights, atypical contracts, job classification and overtime, etc.

In **France**, the metal industry reveals the state of French industrial relations. On the employers' side, the whole of the metal industry are members of *UIMM*, which is one of the most important employers' organisations within the national employers' organisation, *Medef*. *UIMM* has ultra-liberal policy. For example, in 1998, an essential agreement on reducing working time was not signed by *CGT* and *CFDT*. *CFDT* – which is in favor of negotiations on working time – did not sign it for different reasons (issue of overtime, time-off for executives, payment), but above all, because the agreement anticipated a law, that was in the process of being adopted at national level. Since then, *FO*, *CGC* and *CFTC* carry out collective bargaining in the sector, although they are in a minority. *UIMM* does everything to try and change the law (e.g., concerning overtime and night work). Most of metal workers' rights and collective guarantees are contained in 18 national collective agreements and their codicils, which are then adapted in regions and locally, in sub-sector and company agreements. These agreements cover metal industry employees' rights since 1970: the first agreement was signed on 10/07/1970, which introduced monthly pay for manual workers and improvements in pay and grading. This agreement was signed by the *CGT* and introduced monthly pay, guaranteed monthly pay during sickness, accident and maternity, as well as length of service bonuses based on a guaranteed effective rate (*TEG*) for each grade and on the minimum wage (*SMIC*). As for conflicts and mobilisation in the sector, there has recently been increased action around demands, given the announcement of redundancies linked to the stock market, which are widespread in the metal industry: Moulinex, Valéo, Thalès and Renault, etc.

2. Position of sector union leaderships regarding the place of women and equality

Overall in the metal industry, there are few women union members and even fewer reach decision-making positions. As is the case for the general situation at national level, it is difficult to obtain precise statistical data. Amongst available data, the deficit of women in decision-making positions in this sector is evident in all of the countries studied. Efforts, that have been made in national trade union confederations (c.f. preceding syntheses), are not – or hardly - reflected in metal industry unions. One of the primary explanations is obviously related to the fact that there are few women in the sector. More generally, the various reports refer to the traditional way in which these unions function and the difficulty of implementing national confederation's decisions at sector union level.

**Table 2. Representation of women in metal industry sector unions
(??? PLEASE COMPLETE THE TABLE)**

	Number of union members	Proportion of women union members	Proportion of women employees in the metal industry	Proportion of women in sector union day-to-day leadership bodies	Proportion of women in executive committees	Other indicators
Austria <i>GMT</i>	216,799	19%	23.9%	19% of federal board		1 women out of 7 vice-directors No woman chief federal secretary or state secretary 19% of delegates to the convention
Belgium <i>CCMB</i>	220,000	13%	10.4% women manual workers	0 women out of 5 full-time officers (« executive committee »)	20% (out of 45)	10% of union delegates 3 women out of 50 officers
<i>CMB</i>	220,000	18%		0 women (out of 4)	9.3% (out of 18)	8.5% women in the national committee 9,5% of union delegates
<i>CGSLB</i>	190 activists	20%		0		6 women delegates at congress (out of 488) 8 women on regional committees (out of 615).
France <i>FTM (CGT)</i>	33,600 ?		21.2%	41% (out of 17)	25.2% (out of 99)	2 women out of 304 USTM general secretaries; 16.6% women out of 1800 branch secretaries
<i>FGMM (CFDT)</i>	75,000	20-25%		1 woman (out of 7)	26.5% (out of 34)	10 women out of 150 branch secretaries ; no women in negotiating delegations
Italy <i>FIOM</i>	659,000 368,373	Few women (no data available)	20.9%	40%???		
<i>FIM</i>	190,479	Idem		2 women officers		

<i>UILM</i>	100,000	Idem		2 women officers		
The Netherlands	40% (162,000)		8.8%			
Danemark <i>Dansk Metal</i>	135,043	1.7%				

Sources: national reports

Table 3. Internal metal industry sector union structures responsible for equality (???) PLEASE COMPLETE THE TABLE)

Austria <i>GMT (OeGB)</i>	Department of women's affairs created in 1947; women's bureaux in each union branch.
Belgium <i>CCMB (CSC)</i> <i>CMB (FGTB)</i>	? Women's commission
Denmark <i>Dansk Metal (LO)</i>	Officer responsible for equality; and equality commission for the whole of LO
France <i>FGMM (CFDT)</i> <i>FTM (CGT)</i>	Officer responsible for equality issues Women's-gender balance committee
Italy	? ? ?
The Netherlands	?

Sources: national reports

Denmark is a special case in this respect – under-representation of women as union members and leaders is enormous: they only account for 1.7% of *Dansk Metal's* 135,043 members. This union represents, in fact, skilled manual workers in the metal industry, amongst whom there are very few women. (???) **PROPORTION OF SKILLED WOMEN EMPLOYEES?**). There are, however, more women (30%) amongst union members of *CO-Industri* (Central Organisation of Industrial Employees, which groups together 12 industrial unions). No woman is in the national leadership of *Dansk Metal*, 8 women are members of local committees and, at company level, 74 out of 8,190 shop stewards are women (i.e., less than 1%). 3 out of 88 elected representatives of company union clubs are women, 8 out of 342 members of collaboration boards are women (2.3%) and 6 out of 408 members of company boards are women (1.5%). The issue of women's representation is debated (e.g., at LO's extraordinary congress in 2002). The women manual workers' union (*KAD*) proposed that targets be fixed. Discussions ended with a statement promoting mainstreaming.

In **Austria**, all key positions in *GMT* are held by men, for whom activist culture is essential. At company level, some women participate: only 19% of shop stewards and 11% of works councils chairpersons are women. There are more women lower down the ladder of responsibility. When women enter works councils, they rarely become presidents, but are rather vice-presidents. When they are actually presidents, it tends to be in SMEs. But comparisons with earlier data show that over the past five years, more women are becoming presidents - increase from 6% to 11% amongst presidents in the metal industry (mines and

energy) unions. Likewise, the proportion of women shop stewards has also increased from 10% to 19%. This is partly explained by the merger with the textile, clothing and leather unions, where there are traditionally more women. In 1947, the first trade union women's affairs department was created in *GMBE* (*GMT's* fore-runner). This department is one of the oldest and most advanced of all the unions. In 1988, it became an official, independent and fully fledged union department with its own rules. In 1990, it introduced the concept of "gender-neutral language", which is of particular importance in the German language. Current rules provide for women's affairs offices at all union levels, thus making it possible to promote the place of women and equality issues. Thanks to the involvement of *GMT's* general secretary, women's issues are really addressed and union work incorporates this dimension upstream, as soon as decisions are made in all areas. The women's department, however, has never really asked for a quota of women, especially as they know that they have little chance of succeeding. Even after the merger between *GPA* and *GMT*, *GMT* has not introduced this principle, which has existed in *GPA* (salaried employees) since 1997.

In the **Netherlands**, very few women are unionised in the metal industry (??? **STATISTICS TO FOLLOW**). However, in *FNV's* old "industrial union", there are important examples of women (especially amongst secretaries), who have played a key role in their plant and union, e.g., at Philips. There have been few developments recently, apart from an increase in the number of women full-time officers (paid union negotiators) than before. This is the result of positive action within the union, which changed from being a male-dominated union in the 1980s into a mixed union today. The union is, thus, now more open to women's participation.

In **Belgium**, quotas have not been officially introduced into *CCMB*, but in the report to congress in 2000, *CCMB* formulated its position as follows: "*This body should be composed in a representative way (...) which is proportional to its members*". The same goes for *CMB*, where no concrete measure has been introduced to rectify the lack of women's representation, but in 2001, the following resolutions were adopted at *CMB's* congress: "*Congress demands that the confederation and its affiliated sector unions take stock of the representation of women amongst members. We must look at whether women are sufficiently represented and, if necessary, develop an action plan to increase their presence*". *CMB* has a women's commission composed of 37 members, which helps the union to define its policy on equality. In order to stimulate the action of this commission, congress asked its members to develop initiatives in their branches and companies and the union leadership to make a special effort to promote the activity of the women's commission.

In **Italy**, women union members are active, but there do not seem to be enough of them to really influence strategic policy. Only *FIOM* implements anti-discrimination standards, but there is no precise data. (at least 40% of women ??? **PLEASE PROVIDE MORE INFORMATION**).

In **France**, there is also an absence of gender balance and even more so of parity in structures, despite the national confederation's targets. *CFDT* and *CGT* sector unions have opted for "fair representation of women" in their leadership bodies, reflecting the proportion of women in the metal industry. In *CFDT*, at the level of the secretariat (executive) there is at least 1 woman out of 7 (14%) or 2 out of 9 (22%). There is currently 1 out of 7. 9 out of 34 bureau members are women (26.5%) and a national officer is responsible for women's issues. The proportional rule is not respected for congresses, nor regarding positions of responsibility, such as branch secretaries: there are more than 150 union branches, but just 10 branch secretaries are women (6.6%). Likewise, there are no women in negotiating delegations as

“we never think about gender balance – it does not even come to mind” (CFDT woman national sector union officer). In the CFDT metal industry union, there is no “women’s” commission – nor is there a working group or network, as in the past: *“It no longer exists, because we wanted to have a transversal approach on all issues and systematically take into account occupational equality and gender equality, i.e., not deal with them separately and in a specific way. But the transversal approach to all issues has not functioned well”*. (CFDT woman national sector union officer). In CGT, there has always more or less been one member of the union’s bureau responsible for women’s issues. There is also a women’s/gender balance committee. 7 out of 17 members of the union’s bureau are women (41%). But only 2 or 3 really participate. *“We win women, but we also lose them – they do not stay – they realise the extent of responsibility required and that poses a whole series of problems”* (CGT woman national sector union officer). The union’s executive commission includes 25 women out of a total of 99 members (25%). Throughout **France**, there are only 2 women general secretaries of 304 USTMs (local CGT metal industry union structures). At the end of 2002, there were 33,600 known members of the union. 300 branch secretaries are women (16.6%) and 1,500 are men. At the 36th national congress of the metal industry union, there were fewer women delegates than at the previous one.

3. Analysis of union action, activities and agreements (where they exist) from a gender point of view in the metal industry

Besides the actual presence of women in leadership bodies of metal industry unions, it is very difficult to mobilise and negotiate on equality issues. Reasons given are often very similar in the various countries covered by this study: equality is not considered to be a priority, given the general deterioration of working conditions in the sector; equality issues are seen as being secondary, not directly economic and specific (family policy, problems of night work, etc.), whereas they are in fact much more wide-ranging and numerous: gender balance of jobs, improving working conditions, fight against unequal pay, work-life balance, etc. Only the presence of women in collective bargaining can guarantee that these issues are taken into account (and they are far from systematically included in negotiating teams).

In **Austria**, the collective bargaining process is still male-dominated. This can be explained by negotiating culture. It is not so much the result of women trade unionists’ lack of skills, but reflects rather the difficulty they have in having positions in the hierarchy. There are different levels of bargaining: during the initial phase, a team of 5 specialists, of whom 2 or 3 are full-time union officers, does not include any women; at the level of expanded negotiating groups, made up of 80 union members, women are involved, but are never part of the negotiations themselves; substantial negotiating takes place in sub-committees (made up of 8 trade unionists – 4 from GMT and 4 from GPA). GMT always nominates a woman (the officer, who is responsible for the women’s department) as a substitute member, who hardly ever participates in these meetings. So, in fact, real collective bargaining decisions are made by a small group without any women. The majority of negotiators doubt that the presence of women would change the nature of collective bargaining, which follows strict, pre-established guidelines and which it is difficult not to respect. One needs to have real influence to be able to challenge these principles (such as being the president of the works council of a major company). Women are rarely in such influential positions. In order to promote women’s place in collective bargaining, women need to participate more in the union and works councils. So long as they have not achieved power at these levels, their influence in collective bargaining will remain weak. Specific agreements on equality are rare throughout GMT and few agreements are negotiated by women. When it is the case, it concerns family policy, family

leave and women's night work. According to a sector union representative, "*Before collective bargaining begins, a long series of conflicts have already taken place in the workplace - the topic has to be prepared on the ground. When issues such as women's night work were being debated, of course a representative of the women's affairs department was involved at plant level. First we have to win a few battles on the shop floor, to set a precedent and then we could say we can win this during the collective bargaining process. But this was really the only real women's topic... When we are negotiating the "expanded bandwidth" or flexible hours, no one can see that this also has gendered aspects that affect women differently from men*". There are therefore no equality agreements in the metal industry, but a survey by GMT women's affair department of gender specific aspects in 23 collective agreements negotiated by the union could change things and lead to this dimension being anchored in agreements.

In **Italy**, it has always been difficult to develop equality policy in this sector - more than elsewhere, because of the predominance of men. In spite of the influence of the Beijing conference, in which Italian women trade union members took part, and in spite of the positive view of empowerment and mainstreaming, there are not specific actions concerning equality in the metal industry. Women trade unionists in the sector have always tried to promote this type of action, but they have indirectly come up against more general issues. In fact, women trade unionists themselves have always concentrated on issue of working time and flexibility, because of the generalised use of shift and night work... and because of continual organisational changes.

In the most recent national collective agreement, some paragraphs deal with the promotion of women's employment and the protection of their rights, but in practice, they have had little effect and have not been taken into account in the second level of collective bargaining:

- Paragraph 4: promoting training in favour of women and assisting women employees after maternity leave.
- Paragraph 5: on equal opportunities: "*partners entrust equality commissions with the task of finding initiatives to promote coherent behaviour with the principles of equality*".
- Paragraph 16: maintaining full pay (100%) during maternity leave (2 months before and 3 months after birth).

In **France**, the issues that CGT metal industry union considers important are job insecurity, pay levels and employment. "*Obtaining jobs for women in the metal industry is one of our major demands - our top demand. Women can work in the metal industry - everything is done digitally now. My concern is that women are recruited and that also workstations are improved for men as well, but, in fact, where women are recruited, no changes are made - not even regarding toilets - that's basic*". (CGT woman national sector union officer).

In company or sector agreements, occupational equality is hardly mentioned and is generally just a couple of lines at the end of the agreement. UIMM (the employers' organisation) refused any negotiations on occupational equality and real measures concerning jobs, pay or training. But on 29 November 2001, UIMM and CGT, FO, CGC and CFTC sector unions met to start collective bargaining in the framework of the 9 May 2001 law on occupational equality. The law takes up 4 major issues:

- removal of the ban on night work for women and the protection of pregnant women (transposition of European directives);
- obligation to negotiate at sector or company level on measures aiming at establishing equal opportunities for men and women regarding employment, pay, training and careers;
- sexual harassment;

- representation of women in workplace and employment tribunal (*prud'hommes*) elections.

UIMM negotiated only on night work with the proposal of a framework agreement that generalises night work, in order to ensure continued economic activity, maintain employment competitiveness and increase the use of equipment. The agreement was signed on 3 January 2002 by *FO*, *CFTC* and *CGC* unions. Both majority unions did not sign it. In compensation, the agreement provides for increased payment for night work, a 20 minute break for women who are still breastfeeding when they return to work, as well a suspension of night work for them (which concerns very few women).

3.1. Pay

Although the pay gap is estimated to be between 20% and 30% in the metal industry, few unions have developed demands on this issue. **Belgium**, the **Netherlands** and **Denmark** have drawn up union pay policy by introducing non-discriminatory job evaluation systems - a method which could be a model for all countries.

In **Belgium**, the agreement on equal pay for men and women covers:

- * all elements of calculating pay;
- * access to functions and levels;
- * system of classifying functions.

CCMB's president still recalls that there were agreements that set wages only for women. After the second world war, the unions cancelled these agreements. In 1977, the social partners signed a collective agreement on equal pay for men and women (14 February 1977) and since then, *CCMB* has not been up against the issue of unequal pay in the sector. In order to avoid unequal pay caused by occupational segregation the best solution is to work with an analytical classification of functions. The use of this methodology, which is neutral from a gender point of view, is voluntary for companies at national level. But in some regions, the unions have been able to negotiate an agreement that makes it compulsory for all companies. In 1996 - with the active participation of *CCMB* - the methodology was adapted to remove remaining latent discrimination. Criteria of "knowledge and physical effort", for example, could often be discriminatory for simple functions or for repetitive work - tasks that are often carried out by women. *CMB-FGTB* is also in favour of the principle of equal treatment. It attaches great importance to the permanent working group on women, provided for in point 10.2 of the 2001-2002 national collective agreement. This working group will draw up and formulate constructive proposals concerning possibilities for women in the sector (training and working conditions, etc.) for the joint commission.

In the **Netherlands**, two positive efforts should be mentioned in relation to equal pay:

- Discrimination regarding part-time pay has been removed.
- The longest-standing job evaluation system exists in this sector. Adjustments have been made to remove any sexist and discriminatory elements, which in any case did not seriously affect women's pay. The conclusion is that the problem of women's low pay results from the fact that women have a bad position in the metal industry's labour market (low skilled jobs and few careers possibilities).

In **Denmark** (??? TO BE ADDED TO). It is difficult to have an overview of equal pay, because *CO-Industri* does not provide gendered data. The pay gap is estimated to be 20%, but according to interviews carried out in companies, the pay gap is not so big, because of the job

evaluation system, bonuses and greater awareness of this issue. However, employers remark that women do not negotiate pay as well as men.

In **Austria**, there was major industrial action (2 days' strike action by women in 1962) in the metal industry against women's pay that was lower than men's for equivalent jobs. Since then, the issue of unequal pay has not been tackled much. Pay issues are still negotiated, but principally in relation to equality between manual wage workers and non manual salaried employees. Collective agreements are based on principles that discriminate against wage workers compared with salaried employees. Collective bargaining on this issue is complicated, because salaried employees refuse to give up their advantages. Moreover, the introduction of flexible working hours means that payment of overtime has become a problem.

In **Italy**, this theme is central to all collective bargaining in all sectors. The issue of pay flexibility is essential. In national collective agreements, besides the part of monthly pay, that is linked to pay scales, increases are linked to length of service, merit, performance and certain advantages (especially lunch bonuses). At company level, a variable part of pay is devoted to overtime, bonuses for flexible working hours and "production bonuses". This is an "extra-national contract quota", which is becoming an increasingly big proportion of pay. Half of pay increases are linked to this quota, which represents 0.5 average annual point. Moreover, annual production bonuses are essential, both at sector and local level, because they are calculated in relation to company results (productivity). Production bonuses are mainly to be found in big companies and there is a general shift towards performance bonuses (linked to profits and quality). It is difficult to assess the size of these bonuses - on average, they account for the equivalent of a month's pay per annum. Flexibility bonus are becoming widespread in the metal industry (for overtime, shifts, flexible hours, etc.). These bonuses are a source of discrimination, as women - especially those with family responsibilities - do not have access to them. The pay gap reveals gender inequality, but is difficult to measure. In 1997, it was estimated that women's pay in the metal industry represented 83.7% of men's pay (amongst manual workers: 87.8%; office workers: 72.1%; executives: 83.6%). The national metal industry agreement incorporates the law on equal treatment and respect for equal opportunities. But the pay gap is linked to multiple factors related to access to qualifications, working hours, etc., which make it even more difficult to establish the level and conditions of discrimination. At the same level of qualifications, other factors are involved, such as level of responsibility, definition of tasks, working hours, etc. - and, therefore, even amongst most feminised jobs (office employees), women are less well paid.

In **France**, *CGT* metal industry union proposes measures for catching up on pay, as it did for those union representatives, who were discriminated against. *CFDT* does not have the same approach, as, in its opinion, *"One cannot say that unequal pay in the metal industry is as evident and as flagrant as in other sectors. If, for example, one takes services - in catering there really is a big gap. In the metal industry, there are pay scales and pay that is negotiated at sector level is identical for men and women. Discrimination occurs at company-level. But women, who have low levels of qualifications, are at the bottom of pay scales. There is not gender discrimination even at the bottom of the scale - the grades are the same for everyone"*. (*CFDT* woman national sector union officer). But in the context of revising grades and pay in negotiations with *UIMM*, there can be converging approaches, as, in the *CFDT's* view: *"Occupational equality will be dealt with in these negotiations. When one talks about qualifications, if one looks at occupations: such and such an occupation needs dexterity,*

which should be recognised and paid. Thus, discrimination appears regarding grades and, therefore, also in sectors." (CFDT woman national sector union officer).

3.2. Working time and work-life balance

In all countries covered by the study, the metal industry has developed flexible working hours. Union reactions are divided. In some countries (**Denmark** and the **Netherlands**), unions see this as a new possibility for arranging working hours to employees' advantage. But, elsewhere (**Italy** and **France**), flexibility is denounced as a trap for employees, especially women. Moreover, shorter working hours have been at the centre of demands and major conflicts (**France, Italy** and **Belgium**). Finally, the lifting of the ban on women's night work has led to debates within unions (**France, Austria** and **Italy**).

Table 4. Data on working time in the metal industry (??? PLEASE FILL IN THE TABLE)

Austria	?
Belgium	?
Denmark	37 hours and possibility of flexible working hours
France	35 hours and annualisation
Italy	40 hours (38.4 hours if annualisation)
The Netherlands	?

Sources: national reports

In **Denmark**, possibilities of "flexi-time" can be negotiated at local level. Generally, flexibility is between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. Arrangements (weekly, monthly or annual average) can be made in local agreements for implementing the 37 hour week. Week-end work can be used by companies; as can part-time work (which is on the decline) between 15 and 30 hours per week. Social partners should assess any risk of deviation regarding working hours. In general, employees are satisfied with flexibility, which offers possibilities - notably in SMEs - for employees to make arrangements amongst themselves and gives them a sense of responsibility. But the way this flexibility is used differs according to gender: men take advantage of it in order to work more or have training, women in order to look after their family...

In the **Netherlands**, the issue of working hours and work-life balance is an important one for unions, including men. Thus, better childcare facilities are an important demand. Moreover, as already mentioned, longer working hours for part-timers is one of the results of reducing working hours and has made it possible to improve part-timers' pay.

In **Belgium**, metal industry unions have agreed to fight for typical work with a 35 hour week. *CCMB* considers that the crucial issue is how working hours, work regulation and flexibility can be used into improve quality of work. Following on from the desire to promote work/life balance (10 August 2001 law), new forms of shorter working hours are being introduced. At *CCMB's* congress, there was a wide-ranging debate on new forms of flexibility, such as time banks. *CCMB* launched a study and survey on this issue. At its extraordinary congress in 1998, *FGTB* metal industry union decided, in the short term, that employment is the absolute priority and made proposals concerning shorter working hours and redistribution of work: "The long-term objective is a 32 hour, four-day week with no loss of pay and union control of recruitment. The union will use all possible means to achieve this demand - both at the level of company agreements and in sector and inter-sector level agreements. In line with

initiatives taken in France and Italy, the union rallies to the demand for a law that immediately introduces the 35 hour week. The union will develop a campaign to raise awareness and mobilise on the basis of a medium and long term action plan".

In **Italy**, this issue is also one of the most important in the metal industry and has been the subject of conflicts between social partners. General outlines of working hours are defined at the level of the sector, but annual, weekly and daily hours are decided upon at the second collective bargaining level and is thus linked to company's organisational choices. The national sector agreement sets the length of the working week at 40 hours, except for plants that work non-stop, where the reference is an average over several weeks, with a maximum of 48 hours in any one week. Since 1999, an agreement makes it possible to annualise working time with maximum of 48 hours and a minimum of 32 hours per week. The use of overtime is, in theory, exceptional, but, in fact, it is often used, though less so than before (4.4% of employees do overtime compared with 5.6%, five years before) and is denounced by *FIOM*. It is a practice that aims at reducing labour costs. Overtime generally concerns men more than women, because of family constraints. It is a form of indirect discrimination, because pay is obviously higher when supplemented by overtime, which also opens the way to productivity bonuses and excludes women from this kind of recognition. There is a change regarding part-time work: in the previous agreement, 4% of full-time employees could ask for part-time work and 2% more for special reasons (family problems, children under 7, training, etc.). The new agreement increases this quota to 3% in companies of over 100 employees, but leaves it at 2% for smaller companies. In the new agreement, women union members introduced other demands on leave, chosen part-time work for women with children or parents in their care, possibilities for individual choices regarding time overtime and priority recruitment of those on fixed-term contracts. New legislation (especially the 53/2000 law) creates new standards for agreements that promote women and have been partially incorporated in the new agreement. However, *FIOM* demands that agreements be independent of the law and that they protect employees against the introduction of laws that are less favourable than certain measures contained in the agreements. Other measures have also been developed (time banks and parental leave, etc.). Unions consider that these measures are more favourable to companies than employees. They do not necessarily help women, because the way working hours are organised depends on companies. Unions are, therefore, reticent about negotiating such arrangements. The organisation of shifts in the metal industry is unpredictable - hours change all the time and are rarely compatible with family constraints. Even though unions have won some compensation for shift work, such as shorter working hours, the problem of the unpredictability of hours remains a problem for women, who want stability in order to be able to plan their own timing. During collective bargaining between 1999 and 2003, the national agreement included rights to enable employees to manage their time more effectively but, despite pressure from women trade unionists, this has not yet been translated into legal obligations for companies.

In **France**, debates on working hours were very heated in the metal industry, where *UIMM* has always shown its desire to anticipate legislation. Thus, agreements on shorter working hours have not been signed by *CGT* and not always by *CFDT*. The balance of forces is not favourable and negotiations take place rather in the context of redundancy plans or the 2nd Aubry law. Thus, there are no agreements on shorter working hours that promote equality: "*Women have had to reorganise both their hours at work and outside work*" (*CFDT* woman national sector union officer). In domestic electrical appliances, at Moulinex, working hours were reduced to under 35 (just over 33 hours) and work on Saturday mornings was completely reorganised. This led to many problems, as women wanted the same day off as

their husbands and children. At SNECMA (aviation), shorter working hours led to worsening working conditions and great pressure on women. Working time has been annualised and work is organised depending on work loads without taking into account family life (Wednesdays, when children do not have school, and school holidays, etc.). There are two negative aspects of agreements on the 35 hour week, namely annualisation of working hours and pay freeze. There is also the issue of night work for women - according to *CGT*, the lifting of the ban on night work represents a step backwards for employees. The sector union did not agree with the confederation's position, which accepted the principle of lifting the ban, provided there was sufficient compensation. Conversely, *CFDT* confederation was in favour of the law. The *CFDT* woman national sector officer has a divided opinion on night work "*as there is a non-discriminatory reality, but the situation of women, who work at night is different - they are mainly single mothers, who have to manage very difficult situations. So, it is true that it is not a good thing. There were very heated debates within the union, with some branches against night work for women and demanding that night work be banned for both men and women*".

In **Austria**, recent conflicts (e.g. on pensions reform) have shown a change in union culture from a consensus-oriented to a conflict-oriented one. Working hours are no longer on the bargaining agenda since 1997, when the "expanded bandwidth" concept (i.e., more flexible working hours) was negotiated (??? EXPLANATION). "*Working hours are normally seen as a pay issue, but in Austria the most important thing is considered to be the limit where normal working hours stop and pay for overtime begins*" (metal industry sector union officer). In this context, annualisation challenges traditional frontiers regarding weekly and daily references. Amendments to collective agreements regarding women's night work were made in 2002. Already in 1995, *OeGB* women's department and women officers of sector unions had taken up this issue. It was related to **Austria's** entry into the EU and the need to harmonise **Austrian** law and introduce collective bargaining at sector level. But, as in **France**, this issue was the subject of debate, because men trade unionists thought "*both good and bad*" should be accepted (including, therefore, night work for women). This was not the position of the women's department, which wanted to limit night work for both women and men. Generally speaking, as a trade union officer said: "*During each collective bargaining session in the autumn, it is only polite to ask the women's and youth departments what their demands are, but, in general, 80% of their demands are never implemented and women's demands are the last to be considered!*"

4. Obstacles and factors that promote gender mainstreaming

The situation is reminiscent of our survey of trade union confederations: economic and also cultural obstacles – the metal industry is one of the sectors *par excellence* where policies that are adopted at congresses are in reality particularly difficult to implement.

In **Denmark**, the vice-president of *Dansk Metal* considers that there are no barriers to equality either in agreements or in working conditions. But barriers do exist culturally both amongst employers and employees. Only the experience of mixed and diversified groups within companies can change things. That is why *Dansk Metal* defends the right of trade union men to be parents and use their right to parental leave. Flexibility, that has developed in the most modern companies, does make it possible to improve working conditions for everyone.

In **Austria**, it seems difficult to imagine that the share of women union members might increase, given the deterioration of working conditions and the drop in employment rates,

especially amongst wage workers. In *GMT* (wage workers), the fact relatively few women are members of company and union decision-making bodies means that a small number of women are responsible for a relatively large number of positions and functions. This leads to stress for them, especially at company level and, therefore, few women feel able to take on such responsibility as members of works councils. Moreover, the small number of women full-timers in these structures is an additional barrier to women's participation. Being elected to a works council is real social promotion, especially if it is a full-time paid post. There is, therefore, much competition to get such posts and women are excluded. **Austrian** companies have little experience of positive action and this does not encourage unions to transfer equal opportunities initiatives to works councils. When management has a positive approach to gender equality, this does, however, make it easier to overcome these difficulties. Male traditions are very much anchored in *GMT* – a blue collar union – whose priority is to defend the interests of core employees, i.e., male skilled manual workers. *GMT* has two target areas: i) skilled manual workers with officially recognised apprenticeships in industrial firms and ii) big companies in which works councils are made up mainly of men. These men negotiate at national level, because it is important that representatives have strong positions in their companies in order to be more influential in collective bargaining. So one of the proposed solutions is to concentrate on SMEs, where there are more likely to be women representatives on works councils. The dominant model in union organisation is still based on the concept of the “normal” (male) employee, who has no work-life balance problems and is always available. Despite various projects, which have attempted to introduce the concept of reconciling career and family needs, appreciation of this issue remains limited. There is still a big gap between theory and practice and it is also difficult to find women willing to participate in delegations.

In **Italy**, second level (company) collective bargaining is the only one that is really favourable for exercising gender mainstreaming, as it alone is capable of introducing positive action for women's employment. Approximately 30% of employees in the metal industry are covered by second level agreements. As already mentioned, women's presence in collective bargaining has had little effect on first level (sector) bargaining and, therefore, there is little hope that it will be different at second level unless there is a conspicuous number of women involved. In general, the reasons given for explaining these difficulties are linked to the way union activity is organised (union practices and traditions, timing of meetings, etc.). Gender issues are no longer a current, topical matter. Part of the responsibility – according to older women trade unionists – is theirs, as lack of time and opportunities hinder the transmission of their knowledge, acquired through years of collective bargaining, to younger women activists. Finally, a major obstacle to the development of this issue is the absence of gendered data regarding all areas of employment in the sector (qualifications, types of contracts, promotion, pay and training, etc.). The national sector agreement does actually make it compulsory for companies to supply gender-specific data, but they rarely do so.

In **Belgium**, the fact that there are few women in the metal industry and that they are in insecure jobs, explains why there is little interest in equality in this sector. Moreover, the absence of gendered data in company reports makes it very difficult to identify gender inequalities. The conclusion, that can be drawn, is that decisions made at congress are implemented very slowly. Neither assessments of workplace elections in 2000, nor preparations for elections in 2004 are made from the point of view of equal opportunities. When women are on the lists of candidates, it is due to chance or local or company-level initiatives. Even women's commissions meet rarely and, when they do so, it is to discuss very

specific topics. Responsibility for dealing with equal opportunities is completely relegated to the inter-sector structures and not taken on at sector level, such as the metal industry.

In **France**, according to the CFDT woman sector union officer: *“What women say should be taken into account – in the context of their working conditions – regarding new ways of organising and union practice and the way they see it. Trade union practice needs to be challenged. Union practice of new generations of union activists is different from what existed before. They use new tools – women communicate more by e-mails”*. But there is a lack of activists: *“There is a generational vacuum – the 30 to 50 year olds. The political will exists and is transversal concerning all issues (working conditions and pensions, etc.)”*. There is also a cultural barrier, especially in the metal industry, where the image of union members is still that of male manual workers. Various factors explain this situation: company facilities (toilets and changing rooms, etc.) and working conditions, that have not changed; according to the *CGT* woman sector union officer: *“Women are asked to work like men”*; participation in basic training is not mixed, *“because the image of the metal industry is still male-dominated, even though in reality the jobs are accessible to women”*; very little (if any) participation by men in domestic tasks and childcare. In *CGT*, general policy is to reduce full time-off for union work, in order to be less cut off from one’s workplace, but it is much more difficult to do, compared with a full-time union position. It also raises the issue of being permanently available. Men are also having difficulties with this: staying late, holding evening sessions, etc. are all constraints, that need to be taken into consideration. Finally, women are not used to being in leadership positions. They often delegate responsibility to others *“not because they do not want to get involved, but... 50 years ago they did not have the right to vote... So when we suggest they become members of the sector union leadership, it’s the same thing”*. (*CGT* woman sector union officer). Men do not systematically take up issues of occupational equality – women’s issues remain women’s issues.

5. Tools envisaged by each metal industry sector union to improve the situation.

Paradoxically, tools and experiments abound in this sector. **Austria** is perhaps the model:

In **Austria**, *GMT* women’s affairs department has developed new measures for introducing gender mainstreaming in union policy – mainly awareness and consciousness raising activities through conferences and workshops and participation in research projects, such as a European project on *“Reconciliation of Work and Family Life”*. The idea is to convince all (including male) union officers of the importance of integrating a gendered approach in their work as union representatives. In recent years, the women’s affairs department has placed emphasis on collecting gendered data concerning pay inequalities at company level. Since 1996, gender specific annual surveys have been carried out using questionnaires in all companies organised by *GMT* to gather systematic data on men’s and women’s income. Such data has become a key foundation for the collective bargaining process.

As already mentioned, *GMT* is in the process of merging (which will be completed by 2005). However, currently *GPA* is more advanced on gender mainstreaming, having introduced a gender quota and resolutions on gender mainstreaming (c.f. *WP7* report on commerce sector), which could influence *GMT*. In all, women’s affairs department initiatives have meant that *GMT* and *GPA* are the unions where mainstreaming has been most widely introduced in **Austria**:

- *GMT* carried out a survey of all collective agreements in the metal and textile sectors, in order to highlight examples of gender mainstreaming best practice with a view to drawing up a catalogue of criteria for gender mainstreaming collective bargaining in

Europe. An example of this ongoing process is the recently published handbook: “Leading the way with good practice. WE, women metal workers. Gender mainstreaming in the collective bargaining process: the example of collective agreements of the metal industry and textile union”¹. This handbook provides guidelines for the promotion of gendered collective agreements. (??? **GIVE CONCRETE EXAMPLES IN THE FORM OF INFORMATION BOXES?**)

- In the context of the “Gender Mainstreaming in *GMT*” project, the following concrete steps have been taken, in order to anchor gendered skills throughout the union by 2005: gender training for top union opinion leaders; the creation of gender mainstreaming teams (made up of a woman and a man) at national and state levels, whose members are represented within the highest decision-making bodies, including state union leadership and works council bodies; top-level leaders are appointed to positions within the gender mainstreaming teams.
- The gender mainstreaming teams have already carried out a series of awareness-raising workshops for the national union leadership – this is an ongoing process, which should lead to similar workshops for decision-makers at all leadership levels.

The gender mainstreaming approach has two main attributes: implementation is top-down and will not be carried out under the auspices of the women’s affairs department – although it played a key role in the whole process – but by the entire union, thus ensuring broad-based implementation. It is now necessary for gender mainstreaming to spread throughout all unions. Current mergers involving 5 unions – in which *GMT* and *GPA* are involved – should help to disseminate their approach in sector unions, which are more reticent. It remains to be seen whether, when activists are no longer involved, the gender mainstreaming process can run on “automatic pilot”. Three steps need to be taken to protect the gender equality agenda even when times are bad, in order to prevent gender mainstreaming from being sidelined by other “more urgent” issues: gender mainstreaming measures should be institutionally anchored; they should be accepted and supported by a significant number of man and women union officers; employers should also be involved in developing the process.

In **Denmark**, many equality campaigns have been launched by companies with active union participation – with a view to fighting against occupational segregation – over the past 15 to 20 years. For example, Danfoss (a major Danish company) promoted a programme for training unskilled women and then providing them with jobs. Likewise, the ministry of education campaigned for gender balanced training. *Dansk Metal* organised internal conferences for young people – notably apprentices and especially young women. Topics included sexual harassment, gendered language and cultural problems. Young union representatives are invited to summer camp with their families, in order to discuss their work in connection with their family needs.

In **Italy**, women’s needs are raised and discussed in union meetings and assemblies:

- in 1997, an assembly on women’s working conditions was organised, involving researchers and trade union women in three towns;
- in 1998, a seminar was held in Milan by women from *FIOM*’s central committee on the 35 hour week;

¹ Mit gutem Beispiel voran. WIR: Die MetallerInnen. Gender Mainstreaming in Kollektivverträgen am Beispiel des Kollektivverträge des Gewerkschaft Metall-Textil.

- in 2000, a national seminar was organised by women in the metal industry sector union in Modena where work-life balance and prospects 5 years after the Beijing conference were discussed.

In **France**, union education is an important tool and attention should be paid both to content: “with a gendered approach to training” (CFDT officer) and to participation: “ensure that a minimum number of women participates” (CFDT woman national sector union officer). In the latter’s opinion, “as far as course content is concerned, there is an effort to mention the issue of occupational equality and gender balance. In our union training we are thinking about finding new activists, so we do not only talk about occupational equality, but also gender balance of jobs and gender balance in the union”. At CFDT national sector union level, in 2001, there was training on the new law on equality – and there continues to be so in union training every year. But, it is not training that is highlighted and promoted, as at confederation level. The CFDT sector union has an equality charter (which should commit the union to taking care of equality), but it is obsolete. The charter should be implemented in branches, but the great majority of members are men and they do not promote the issue – it’s women themselves who do so. In the CGT metal industry union, national study days are organised on the issue of occupational equality (e.g. on 21 June 2002), “But it seems that the issue of occupational equality is not a priority of branch leaderships... nationally, it is taken into account, but it is necessary to have the same approach at grass roots”. (CGT woman national sector union officer). Questionnaires were organised to assess what exists and what needs are (Women’s group in Snecma moteurs) and equality reports are examined (in Thalès). Evaluation of the 9 May 2001 law is reserved. In CFDT’s view, “This law will change rationale if it is taken on board. The Génisson law opens up possibilities in companies and sectors. But it runs the risk of being short-lived: all laws on equality involve shaking up unions – they are asked to provide tools, training and information. They are ready to do so, but one or two years later, efforts slacken. The 1983 Roudy law led to a dozen or so agreements in the metal industry, but very little happened nationally. The Génisson law is compulsory – data has to be systematically submitted, but, for the time being, nothing is coming from companies. We have to go fishing for information. There is no systematic monitoring”. (CFDT woman national sector union officer). CGT identifies 3 cases (out of 80 branches), where the law has led to negotiations (DMS, Oxford and YKK), but such cases are rare. Thus, if equality is to be taken on board systematically and transversally and is not a separate issue, this is far from being the case at the level of union branches. According to the CFDT woman national sector union officer, it is a matter of “assessing repercussions of the feminisation of the workforce in line with the real situation, promoting discussion that can have an impact on occupational equality and defining demands to confirm the place of women in metal industry occupations... We must develop the ability to monitor and take action, in order to reduce persisting discrimination in our occupations (both at company and sector levels), systematically study company annual reports on the comparative situation of men and women, in order to rectify gaps by implementing action policies in companies”. In the opinion of the CGT woman national sector union officer, “The difficulty is that women’s issues come after jobs and pay issues. We keep trying to insist that this issue should be incorporated in all collective bargaining. This legal obligation is rarely respected...”

* * *

The metal industry is an interesting sector for our study – it is a male-dominated sector, *par excellence*, and we have been able to identify major obstacles to the development of gender mainstreaming. However, there are some changes: concern for more women to be present in

structures and the desire to take equality more effectively into account is evident in many bargaining topics, notably concerning working time. But balance of forces is not always in favour of unions and in many countries deteriorating employment and working conditions create strong tensions – and even conflicts – between unions and employers, in which equality is often relegated to the background.