



TRANSNACIONAL EQUAL PROJECT

“EU-RECONOCITY: European model of city that reconciles”

Activity 3.2

**“General conditions for reinsertion of women
in the labour market”**

Table of contents

ITALY	3
Analysis of territorial situation.....	3
Socio-economical context in Pisa province and women's social situation.....	3
Women and rights: laws, politics and equal opportunities.....	4
Normative supporting maternity.....	5
Other regulations supporting maternity and childhood.....	7
Analysis of supporting resources.....	8
Analysis of working typology and working conditions.....	11
POLAND	13
Analysis of territorial situation.....	13
An introduction to the situation of the labour market in the Malopolska region.	13
The legal situation of women in the workplace.....	14
Other rights of women in the workplace:.....	15
The social situation of women	16
Analysis of supporting resources.....	18
Institutional resources.....	18
Non-governmental Organization	22
Childcare institutions.....	23
Non – institutional supporting resources	24
Analysis of working typology and working conditions.....	25
Professions that favour the return of women to the labour market.....	25
Forms of employment that favour the return of women to the labour market.....	26
Additional factors connected with work and its organization which favour the return of women to the labour market.....	28
SPAIN	30
Analysis of territorial situation.....	30
Social situation of women in the Community of Madrid.....	30
The rights of the women in the Autonomous Community of Madrid	31
Analysis of supporting resources.....	35
Training.....	35
Resources in associational movement or other types of public or private bodies.....	38
Grants and subsidies.....	43
Legislative resources.....	44
Other resources. New technologies.....	45
Analysis of working typology and working conditions.....	45
A list of occupations and jobs that favour the return of women to the labour market	46
Employment conditions/options favouring the return of women to the labour market	48
Any additional conditions related to work and its organisation favouring a return to the labour market.....	51
Comments / Conclusion.....	52
GENERAL CONCLUSIONS	53
Analysis of the situation.....	53
Analysis of supporting resources.....	54
Analysis of working typology and working conditions.....	56

Analysis of territorial situation

Socio-economical context in Pisa province and women's social situation

The monitoring of Pisa territory socio-economical condition carried out by Employment Centres and a study upon labour market in Pisa province for 2005 represent the result of research aimed at underlining difficulties and opportunities in territories in order to improve and develop interventions and measures promoting higher job level and more effective training/formative paths.

Recent labour market dynamics have been strongly influenced by crisis processes of important productive areas, with negative consequences upon all provincial employment.

In the general framework of labour market tendencies women's working situation is the one that presents more difficulties and thus needs more attention from institutions and also of all component people in territorial socio-economical network.

Data regarding women working condition confirm the need of measures aimed at raising female occupational level. Reports underline that, among a number of unemployed persons of 25.452 the 67% (17.066) is composed of women and the 52.48% is composed of people from 30 to 49 years, which represent the more critical range and that coincide with the period of work-family conciliation.

Reflecting on data related to assumptions, also on our territory the national trend is confirmed: we can see the prevalence of temporary and part-time contracts (especially in the area of services).

In particular, the amount of communications gathered by Employment centre clarifies that among 60.000 start-up working paths 48.800 are linked to temporary contracts and that women are very often employed full-time with these contracts while they are abused by permanent contracts where part-time formulas still prevail.

As far as discharges are concerned, there is a general increase of registrations in mobility rankings, with a great prevalence of women.

The data related to education level is also worrying in that, both for women and men, consist of junior high school degree (about 40%), confirming the need of going on with the development of educational and training paths during the entire life.

Disabled people registered at Employment Centres are 12,86% of the total number, women are 1983 on 3274: the most critical range of age is from 41 and 55; the most prevalent education level is junior high school (70% of the total).

Assumptions that have been made underline a scarce capacity of labour market to absorb those workers: 110 contracts on 3274 persons available. It's thus essential to implement new strategies in relation to job politics and disabled working employment.

In order to favour professional choices and a more effective occupational system, 699 formative stages (26 years old was the average of beneficiaries) have been concluded,

with the involvement of 361 companies in public and private sectors: 40,2% of stages has been transformed in a working contract.

Finally a look at migrant population. Unemployed extra-communitarian people represent the 7,15% of the general total number, in particular in the area of Pisa and Valdera; the most represented age is from 30 to 49 years, women are about 45%.

Reports confirm the importance of going on with the improvement of job politics with a particular attention to women as the fundamental condition for a real social and economical development of our territory.

If we analyse the total number of unemployed women among the graphic list of unemployed people, we can see that the percentage of women is about 67% and the critical range is still the one 30-49 years.

Women and rights: laws, politics and equal opportunities

Many studies demonstrate that the absence of an equal balance between professional and family life can seriously discriminate against women in labour market, and also contributes to reducing birth-rate percentage.

If we have a quick look at Italian framework we realize that it's not so encouraging: Italian demographic figures, in fact, reflect a very low birth-rate (among the lowest in Europe) and the frequent postponement of maternity: those data are surely linked to women's low income and to the fact that women have a higher level of education and so more determined to enter labour market.

A recent report published by CNEL underlines that also conciliation politics strongly influence women life and professional choices; from other studies comes out clearly the enormous burden of domestic work of mothers and it's a fact that family duties' division is not equally balanced between mothers and fathers, even when mothers work. It's thus evident the difficult role situation, in which we have a double feminine presence, and the greater difficulties of women in entering or re-entering labour market in the period of marriage or of the birth of a child.

In order to improve women condition and favour work-family conciliation Italy has elaborated a very innovative law supporting maternity: Law 53/2000. It is a result of many years of women claims and its main aim is to promote the balance between times of work, family, training and personal life in general. It improves the past maternity law - L. 30/1971 – introducing innovative elements such as the extension of parental leave both for autonomous workers (3 months) and, above all, for fathers. This last element signifies an important cultural turning point, as parental leave represents an incentive for fathers to take care of their children creating the bases for a different culture in which women and men share family responsibilities.

Law 53/2000 is also innovative through a specific article, art. 9, which favour workers/parents conciliation path offering every year funding addressed to private companies that develop projects introducing conciliation measures.

Since January 2007, according to Government Economical Law 2007, also Hospital Districts and Local Sanitary Directions (and public bodies) can access this funding together with private companies through these projects typologies:

type a) flexibility measure (such as tele-working);

type b) training courses for workers re-entering job after a paternity leave;

type c) substitution of the company's owner;

typed) interventions aimed at favouring substitution, reinsertion, training of workers with children or with disabled children or adults.

Type d) has been introduced by Government Economical Law 2007; with the new Government the competence and managing of conciliation themes has been transferred from Ministry of Work to Ministry of Family. This fact is something surely significant as it shifts the reflection upon the role and the value of family. We can say that now it is clear also at a political level that it's not possible to think of promoting women participation in the labour market without revising the roles of men and women inside families, stimulating fathers to a more equal sharing of family responsibilities. Starting from this point, in fact, women could surely acquire more chances for a successful professional career.

Normative supporting maternity

Briefly the most important dispositions of L. 1204/71 and L. 53/2000:

Discharge prohibition

Discharge prohibition operates at the beginning of gestation period till the child is 1 year old (domestic helpers are excluded) except in case of discharge for a fair reason, end of company's activity, end of working contract.

Thanks to the new normative discharge prohibition is also addressed to fathers that use compulsory absence, from child's birth till 1 year old.

Prohibition of giving workers heavy and unhealthy jobs

Women workers during gestation period and till 7 months after child's birth are exempted from transports and lifting heavy weights and can be transferred to other types of job, keeping original wage and professional qualification if the new type of job is of an inferior level.

Medical examination

Women workers can use paid permits for:

- prenatal examinations;
- Specialist examinations during working timetables;
- medical check-ups.

In these cases workers have to ask the doctor for a certificate that mentions the day and the time of the examination.

Compulsory abstention

It is forbidden to make pregnant women work:

- 2 months before the supposed date of birth:
- 3 months after child's birth

This disposition involves also home workers and domestic helpers. Post-birth compulsory abstention has been extended also to father in case the mother can not assist the new born child for death or serious infirmity, also in case of exclusive fostering. The regulation can be applied also in case of autonomous workers, for whom can be organised the substitution with a temporary worker.

Premature birth

Law 53/2000, receiving a Constitutional Court sentence (n. 270/99), foresees that, if there is a premature birth, worker can add to the 3 months post-birth the compulsory abstention days that she didn't use before the birth, for a maximum period of 5 months, but only if there has been a real abstention. The woman has to present birth certification 30 days after birth date.

Compulsory abstention flexibility

Art. 12 of Law 53/2000 introduces the opportunity of continuing work until the 8th month of pregnancy using only a month of abstention before birth and then 4 months after. This opportunity can be exercised only if a doctor competent in health in work places confirms that this choice does not jeopardize mother's health.

Pregnancy interruption

Spontaneous or voluntary interruption of pregnancy is considered an illness, so women can take a leave from work according to a medical certification and taking an illness indemnity.

Daily rest

Employer must give to women/mothers workers during the first year of the baby 2 rest permits of an hour, also accumulable during one day. The rest consist of q hour only if daily working timetable is less than 6 hours; hours have to be granted and paid even if there is not breastfeeding. From this right can benefit also working fathers:

1. when father is the only foster parent;
2. alternatively to the working mother who does not benefit from it;;
3. if the mother is not a worker with a contract.

In case of multiple birth permits hours are doubled and father can benefit from the additive ones.

Permits for children sickness

The right of alternatively be absent from work during child's sickness is fixed for both parents till the child is 8 years old; until the 3rd year there are no temporal limits, while from 3 to 8 there is a limit of 5 days per year for each parent.

Permits for disabled children assistance

In order to assist a disabled child and also for serious family problems there are particular leaves. In case of serious disabilities there facilitations are linked to children age. In case of minors mother or father (only alternatively) have the right to a voluntary extension until 3 years of age with an indemnity of 30% of the wage; otherwise paid hour rests can be used. For children from 3 to 18 tears it is possible to use a total of 3 days per month paid permits distributed between parents according to their needs.

After 18 years if the child lives with parents or a constant assistance is requested, parents keep on having the opportunity of using 3 days per month which are paid days (L. 104/1992). The 3 days of paid permit can be used by other relatives (in the third degree of kindred when parents are not able to assist the disabled child.

To assist a seriously disabled child it is possible to use a paid leave of 2 years.

Other regulations supporting maternity and childhood

- A pregnant woman, Italian or not, has the right to sanitary/medical controls which are free in relation to pregnancy certain periods, according to D.M. 1998.
- Mothers have the right to free specialist examinations and laboratory analysis until child is 6 years.
- Unemployed women, housekeepers and women who don't have maternity indemnity – Italian or not Italian but with a residence permit – can have a maternity indemnity up to 258 euro per month for 5 months and within the first 6 months of the baby
- Single pregnant women with economical difficulties – Italian or not Italian but with a residence permit – can request to territorial social services: help in finding an

assistance structure for the period of pregnancy or an economical support for the period very after child's birth.

- Married women, pregnant and with economical difficulties, can ask municipal social services an economical support
- Illegal immigrant women can ask residence permit for health reasons for the pregnancy period and for the first 6 months of the baby
- If a woman finds difficulties to keep her baby, Italian normative (art. 30 D.P.R. 3.11.2000) allows not to identify him/her and leave the baby in the hospital; child's waiver can be done anonymously at the moment of birth or even when the woman is hospitalised.

Analysis of supporting resources

The instruments implemented upon Pisa territory in order to raise birth rate and also improve women employment and thus develop local economy are different: implementation of training/formative services, "gender oriented" working paths, development of integrated politics supporting conciliation between working needs and dependant people assistance, economical support to companies adopting conciliation measures.

Throughout these instruments there is the attempt to face socio-cultural stereotypes that cause vertical and horizontal segregation.

CENTRI PER L'IMPIEGO

A fundamental role in the promotion of job politics is represented by Employment Centres of Pisa province, that are located in 4 strategic areas: Pisa, Pontedera, Volterra e S.Croce.

Those Centres offer specific services addressed to people and companies, among which:

- registration in the unemployment rankings;
- counselling for companies and workers;
- information upon labour market opportunities;
- competences/curricula elaboration;
- training paths;
- stages.

As far as Professional Training System is concerned it is composed of organic vocational guidance and training aimed at favoring employment and territorial socio-economical development. Activities are addressed to all citizens, to whom it is offered the opportunity of acquiring knowledges and competences. Pisa Province work according to Regional Operative Program (P.O.R.) FSE Ob. 3 2000/2006: formative activities are implemented in agreement with private subjects (formative agencies, scholls, etc...) through a public

call for proposal. From a recent report made by Employment Centres it emerges that the number of stages in 2005 in Pisa provincial territory has been 699 and the companies involved 361 (332 private and 32 public bodies). Average age of beneficiaries was 26 (59% with a university degree and 38% with a high school degree) and the periods of stages consisted in 5 months: 304 stages have been completed and 122 have been transformed in contracts.

YOUTH INFORMATION CENTRE

It is a multifunctional service of Study Regional Agency, Pisa Town Hall and Pisa Province that has the objective of giving information upon young people matters.

In its headquarter there is the possibility of consulting material: brochures, books, papers, ministerial publications upon calls for proposals and job opportunities. In this space you can also find guides concerning university courses and training courses in general and you can have information upon university and masters, professional vocational guidance, youth associations and civil service.

PROJECT TRIO

TRIO is a Regione Toscana project (also in collaboration with Pisa University) aimed at giving people free instruments for training.

The main objective is to update everyone's knowledge (students, employed and unemployed people, local public bodies, schools, etc....) through e-learning activities. On TRIO web site you can find many different courses (language, informatics, economics, etc.....) that can be attended by people; the project also foresees the activation of many Internet point on Toscana territory in order to allow people that haven't computer or Internet connection to take advantage from this opportunity.

FRONT OFFICE - FINANCIAL INSTRUMENT

Pisa Province front office evaluates and diffuses a financial opportunities (normative opportunities, calls for proposals, etc....) given by European Community, Italian Government, Toscana Region and other Local Public Bodies to private citizens, private companies, students and also public subjects. It represents a point of reference at a provincial level upon economical support and opportunities and gives technical support to local public bodies in relation to local development plans.

A.S.SE.FI

A.S.SE.FI. is a Special Agency for financial services to companies of Pisa Commerce Chamber, created in 1993 by some minor entrepreneurs that had the need of finding solutions to their companies' financial problems taking advantages from the opportunities given by public bodies.

Main aims of the Agency are:

- help minor entrepreneurs to understand financial problems of their companies and assist them in the implementing of effective solutions related to existent financial opportunities;
- assist companies in the presentation of projects;
- support the development of a new kind of companies' development, promoted by women and young people in general through information, vocational trainings, counseling in general;
- promote the alternation of school and work favoring the exchange of experience between students and companies with stages, seminars, companies' activity simulations, etc...;
- diffuse business culture through the organization of seminars, formative paths and tutoring addressed to aspiring entrepreneurs.

EQUALITY COUNCILLOR

It is an institutional figure foreseen by L. 125/1991 and D. Lgs. 196/00; it has the duty of controlling the respect of antidiscriminatory normative and promotion of equal opportunity in labour market.

In particular:

- finds out gender discriminations and offers legal defence;
- promotes "positive actions" and verifies results;
- promotes the implementation of equal opportunity in labour market;
- collaborates with Work and Professional Formative Councillors and local public bodies' equal opportunity organisms.

WORK-FAMILY LIFE CONCILIATION AGENCY

Conciliation Agency is a service in favour of work-family-life times, promoted by EQUAL project "*A new service for work-life balance*" and to which workers can apply.

Agency's main activities are:

- front office/information service upon conciliation normative instruments and conciliation services on territory;
- promotion and counseling in order to encourage the implementation con conciliation politics in working contexts;
- point of reference and coordination of a network of public-private subjects/services.

In this analyze we give prominence to public services that, at a provincial level, are more used and appreciated by citizens and workers.

Analysis of working typology and working conditions

On February 2003 Italian Parliament has definitively approved the so-called Biagi Law (Law n. 30/2003), which has reformed labour market through the introduction of new contract typologies.

Biagi Law has been introduced in order to increase in short time the number of people regularly working. The assumption at the basis of this normative is that economical development must be matched on one hand with a higher capacity of producing employment, on the other with a decrease of irregular work ("black work").

Biagi Law, as it was thought by Legislator, aims in particular at promoting youth employment especially in poor areas as the ones in the south of Italy, and at encouraging women employment. This objective must be gained in a transparent labour market in which people's conditions have to be monitored in order to match labour market's requests with what potential workers can offer.

Despite the original aim of promoting regular employment and give effective defense, today Biagi Law has provoked a great abuse of those contracts that had been thought as something able to decrease irregular employment.

The will of make labour market more open and accessible to "vulnerable" people as for example women through the introduction of great flexibility, in fact has caused the increase of temporary and bad paid jobs.

We can make the example of contract of Coordinated and Continuative Collaboration (Co.Co.Co.), introduced Law n. 30.

It's a kind of contract where worker/collaborator gives his work to an employ in an autonomous way, he/she is not a traditional employee.

This contract, in many cases, has been substituted by the so called "Project Contract", created by D. Lgs. 276/03 in order to avoid or limit the use of those Co.Co.Co that in fact hide traditional subordinate work.

"Project Contracts" have to be related to a specific plan or result and activities have to be managed autonomously by workers; the important aspect is the result independently from how many working hours are necessary to reach it.

These contracts, for their flexible nature are very diffused when employers engage young people and women.

In truth this new contract typology, without an adequate trade unions-government intervention, allows to hide a traditional subordinate work.

After these preambles we can say that in the present Italian working and normative framework the typologies of contracts that favour conciliation and above all the participation and re-insertion of women into labour market are:

Part-time contract: this type of contract foresee a reduced working timetable in comparison with the ordinary one that according to D.lgs. 61/2000 consist of 40 hours per week.

Legislative regulations foresee 3 different types of part-time:

- horizontal (most typical, when there is a working timetable reduction from the ordinary 40 hours);
- vertical (when job activities are fully carried out but only few days a week or few days per month);
- mixed (when working relationship comes from the combination of the two types and worker carries on his/her activities in certain periods with full or reduced timetables).

Job sharing contract: it is disciplined by art. 41 of D. Lgs. 276/2003, we have this type of contract when two persons have the same kind of tasks and both of them commit themselves, in case of non-fulfillment, to substitute the other worker in the carrying out of the work.

Labour administering: Biagi Law has widely revisited the normative related to the so called temporary work. The new regulation also comes from the reform of employment services, characterized by the presence of private and public subjects. Administering aims at offering companies innovative instruments in order to find resources guaranteeing labour market transparency and new ways for unemployed people and “weak bands” to enter job market.

In addition to these working typologies, we have to mention the role of art. 9 Law 53/2000, that offer the possibility of requesting funding for projects introducing conciliation measures. Economical Government Law 2007 has introduced some novelties: in particular, it has widened the amount of funding and also the possible beneficiaries, as not only private workers, autonomous workers, “project contract” workers and companies’ owner will now be able to benefit from Law’s opportunities but also public workers from Sanitary Local Agencies and Hospital Directions.

In order to diffuse all these normative opportunities Pisa Province Equal Opportunity Councilor is working hard on territory; in particular all promotion activities are addressed to women.

It is a network type of work that has the aim of creating an integrated system in which all territorial components are committed, according to their specific competences and objectives, to the development of conciliation culture and of women employment in general. This synergy has been confirmed by the subscription of an Agreement for the implementation of conciliation politics, signed by trade unions, companies, local bodies, associations in general.

This Agreement creates a “pilot experimentation” and represents a point of reference for information and technical assistance for the elaboration of projects according to art. 9 of Law. 53/2000.

P O L A N D

Analysis of territorial situation

An introduction to the situation of the labour market in the Malopolska region.

Women constitute over half of the population of the cities in Malopolska (exactly 51.1% of all the inhabitants), but the level of their activity in the labour market is lower than that of men. In 2005 women (mostly between 25 and 34 years of age) constituted 54% of the unemployed in Krakow. Most of the unemployed are women who have been without a job for over 24 months. Just like in other regions of Poland, the women in Malopolska can boast a better education than men. They go to university more willingly than men (women's participation higher by 1%) and they also attend vocational colleges more often (women's participation higher by 3.4%). Women are also more willing to take part in various types of courses and trainings. The majority of women registered as unemployed are graduates from vocational secondary schools and vocational colleges. The major reason for the difficulties that women in Malopolska face in the labour market is the growing competitiveness in the market along with the insufficient access to competent and affordable childcare. Women go on maternity leave and take time off from work when their children fall ill. That leads to their being considered less efficient and less valuable employees. They are the ones who have to deal with long-term unemployment more often. An average woman in Malopolska earns 20% less than a man. Fees in Poland are still dependant on the employee's gender. Women are usually placed in low-paid posts and positions of a lower prestige. It is interesting that the highest disproportions between the fees of men and women can be observed among people with higher education.

The general characteristics of the situation in the Malopolska labour market:

- An increase in the number of inhabitants since the year 2000. Since 2002, Poland has observed a falling birth rate.
- The rate of people with university education is higher in Krakow than in the rest of Poland. Still, 25% of the inhabitants have no more than elementary education.
- The ageing of the region's society. Constant and systematic growth of the population at an economically productive age and beyond retirement age.
- A low number of enterprises and businesspeople (8th position among the provinces) despite their increase dynamics.
- An increase in the number of employed people (it has been observed in Poland only since 2002).
- An increasing employment rate (without change for the last few years), higher than the country's average.
- An increase in the number of people working in the service sector (as in all of Poland).

- The lowest unemployment rate in the whole country.
- An increasing figure of unemployed people motivated by employment offices.
- An increase of the Employment Fund resources for the mobilization of the unemployed, gained (among other sources) thanks to the county employment offices that worked on acquiring extra resources.
- A relatively low level of pay compared to other regions of the country.
- High unemployment figures among young people up to 25 years of age (4% higher than the country's average); Krakow has the lowest figures in the region.

In conclusion, the situation is relatively positive in comparison with the rest of the country.

The legal situation of women in the workplace

Pregnant women's rights

The employment code and executory provisions guarantee special rights to women who are pregnant or directly after pregnancy. They refer to women who have employment contracts. A certificate written out by a gynecologist entitles to 100% remuneration. The employer cannot cancel the contract or dismiss the employee in her period of pregnancy or during the maternity leave. This is relevant to all employment contracts except those for a probation period of less than one month.

The law allows for a pregnant woman to be dismissed or for her employment contract to be cancelled only in the following situations:

- the contract is for a probation period shorter than one month;
- the employee contravenes basic work regulations or commits a crime;
- the employer's enterprise goes bankrupt or is liquidated.

Pregnant women cannot be made to work on night shifts or overtime. If the nature of the woman's job prevents the employer from applying to these regulations, the employer must put the employee to a different job. If that also proves impossible, the employer can exempt the employee from her duties altogether, but must keep up paying her the same salary.

The rights of women directly after pregnancy:

- The **maternity leave**, which is dependent on several factors:
 - In case of the first child the leave is 18 weeks long;
 - In case of the second child and further children the leave is 20 weeks long;
 - If a woman gives multiple birth during one labour she is entitled to 28 weeks of leave;
 - If a woman adopts a child or takes a child (a foster family), then she is entitled to a 20-week leave also after her first childbirth.

Childcare leave

The childcare leave can be used by the employees who have an employment contract and who meet the following conditions:

- The leave is necessary in order to take direct care of a child up to 4 years of age;
- The other of the parents is not on a childcare leave at the time;
- The employee has served the enterprise for at least 6 months;
- The employee is taking care of a child whose health condition (the disability or level of disability certified by a medical doctor) requires the personal attendance of the employee. The leave may then be prolonged until the child has reached 18 years of age. The childcare leave may be divided into 4 parts.

The woman can take up a different job which could be reconciled with taking care of her child, i.e. she may sign a freelance agreement, a specific-task contract, or a contract for a part-time job in the same or other enterprise. The fact of taking up an additional job has to be reported to the employer. The employee also has the right to start studying or to participate in training during their childcare leave. A self – employed person who runs their own enterprise is not entitled to a childcare leave.

The law does not provide financial benefits for people who take care of their children. It is only when a parent meets particular criteria that he or she is entitled to an additional benefit to the family allowance.

As for the rules concerning the childcare leave (from the moment the application is submitted until the end of the leave), the time of the leave is a period when the employee cannot be dismissed nor their contracts cancelled. When the childcare leave is over, the employer is required to bring the employee back to their position, or a parallel position, or a position fitting the employee's qualifications and paid no less than their former position occupied before going on childcare leave.

Employers who are to give a job to a woman first go through all the potential financial and administrative consequences that the woman's rights might result in. That is why employers are reluctant to employ women of child-bearing age.

Other rights of women in the workplace:

Discrimination prohibited

The Polish constitution prohibits discrimination on any grounds and introduces the rule of treating men and women equally. These rules are referred to in more detail in the employment code which supports the equal treatment of employees regardless of such criteria as: gender, age, disability, race, religion, nationality, political beliefs, union membership, ethnic origin, faith, sexual orientation. Whether the contract is an open-ended one or not and if the job is full-time or part-time is also of no importance. The prohibition of discrimination also applies to the moment of employment itself, i.e. when the person is not yet an employee.

The prohibition of discrimination also includes harassment and sexual harassment as a specific form of discrimination on gender grounds. Encouraging employees to discriminate against others is also prohibited.

It often happens that the discrimination ban is broken because Polish culture and society is based on patriarchal relations. The woman's social position is weaker than that of the man and because of the way she is raised, the woman herself allows for this to take place. The weaker position of women is also confirmed by the Catholic Church and the authorities (represented mostly by men), who publicly mouth opinions that are sexist and discriminating against women.

The social situation of women

The reality that Polish women now live in and the current opinions that are presented by the authorities are discriminating. As a result of the present and former governments' policy Poland has the lowest women employment rate in Europe: 46.8%. The employment rate for men is 58.9%. In Poland being unemployed is directly related to the risk of poverty and it is often the cause of families' difficult financial situation. That, in consequence, may lead to marginalization and social exclusion.

The unemployment rate for women is up to 19.4%, which is the highest in the EU. Women's professional inactivity comes not only from the traditional assigning of roles, but also from the impossibility of finding a job. Employers prefer to hire men because they are not burdened with the responsibilities concerned with childcare.

Polish women want to work and they deal with the difficult market situation for example by establishing their own enterprises. We have one of the highest percentages of businesswomen in Europe. The reason for this, among other factors, is the Polish history, full of wars and uprisings. During these difficult periods in history women were often left alone and had to cope without the help of men, e.g. administering an estate.

Women use potential extra benefits (e.g. extra medical care, a company car, mobile phone, setting one's own work hours) less than men. The improvement in the labour market in Poland applies only to men.

Women's activity in the labour market decreases (in comparison to the activity of men) when they enter into the childbearing or pre-retirement age.

GUS (Central Statistics Office) distinguishes a group of 'partially employed' people who work less than 40 hours a week and would like to work more and take up additional work, but do not have the possibility of doing so. Women make up 61.4% of that group. Research on the reasons for professional passivity in Poland shows that these are mainly: retirement, sickness, disability, and (among women) also housework and other responsibilities at home.

This is most visible in the group of women between 25 and 35 years of age. They remain in the margins of social life. The fact of officially calling the women who devote themselves to house duties 'non-working' is already discriminating. Furthermore, women who work at home cannot count on receiving a pension or health benefit, or in fact any kind of state care except for some social benefits that are often discretionary and insufficient. Although these women are commonly referred to as 'non-working', their work consists in taking care of children and their houses. Economists estimate the worth of

unpaid housework to be around 30% of the gross national income and so it plays a significant role in the growth of the economy. For women who work at home the access to a number of services is made difficult or even impossible. Here are just some of them:

- It is impossible for them to open their own bank account (as they do not have a steady income);
- It is impossible to use a number of bank and financial services, such as taking out a loan (the lack of credit-rating is caused by the lack of earnings);
- No health benefit, leave, or any other benefits that working people enjoy;
- No seniority required to be given a pension and no pension fund contributions;
- No health insurance, unless a woman takes benefit from her husband's insurance;
- It is impossible to enroll a child in a kindergarten because in many places kindergartens accept the children of working mothers first.

Women who work at home have a lower social prestige. The media and the mass culture make a successful career woman serve as a model. A non-working woman is commonly considered to be a worse kind of person, called a 'house-wife'. What we have here is a vicious circle typical for the Polish mentality.

Poland has a negative birth rate. The average number of children is 1.2 child per woman (the number for a simple filling in of generations is 2.1 child). Although the politicians keep claiming their support for pro-family policies, the social and legal system causes the having of children to threaten the living standards of families and it significantly restricts the possibility for a woman's professional development. The research on home budgets proves that families with children are most threatened with poverty, and the more children there are, the higher the threat.

Young Polish women strive for independence. They are open-minded, open to new offers and they want to have control over their own lives. For contemporary Polish women their career is of great importance, as that is where they can prove their abilities that are no worse than those of men. Women are willing to improve their qualifications, which is not only caused by the employers' requirements, but also by the women's own need of self-development and achieving perfection in new, unknown fields. They feel they should have a career and be a success. The need to stay at home and be a housewife has become much less powerful. The metamorphosis in Polish women is the result of a general emancipation of women all over the world. The foundation of the activity of Polish women in the labour market often has another dimension: it is not only the desire to belong to the world of careers and enterprises. Poland is now facing new economic conditions where an average pay is enough for a person just to meet the basic needs. In this case, a family model where the man is the only one who works for money is tantamount to poverty. That leads the woman not only to taking care of the house and family, but also providing for them.

Analysis of supporting resources

Institutional resources

In order to improve the level of employment and to avoid and eliminate unemployment, the Regional Activities for Employment was established in Krakow and the other province capitals in Poland. It is the executory part of the Activities for Employment Program of the Malopolska Region which was passed with the Malopolska Regional Council Resolution nr XXX/399/2005 of 21 March 2005.

The program for the year 2006 (which is also being carried out presently, in 2007) includes objectives proposed by the Departments of the Marshal's Office (the Department of Regional Development and Spatial Planning, the Department of Structural Funds, the Department of Education and Sport), the Regional Center for Social Politics, the Malopolska Agency for Regional Development and the Regional Development Agency in Tarnów, the Malopolska Voluntary Workgroups Center) and the Regional Employment Office.

The particular institutions run many activities which are to improve the situation in the labour market in the whole province of Malopolska and the city of Krakow itself. The women who return to the labour market after a maternity leave may take benefit from these activities.

The Regional Employment Office in Kraków

Main objectives:

- organizing and coordinating the career counseling service and the job information service (helping teenagers and young adults who enter the labour market in making their search for employment competent; helping them in the job adaptation process and in the adaptation to the changes occurring in the labour market; helping them to write their CV; giving them access to the Internet: a special INTERjobNET room with databases that contain information about vacancies in the country and abroad; giving them access to a library with occupation files and information on the labour market);
- giving advice and support to people who come from the European Economy Area and who are looking for jobs in partner countries other than their own and also giving support to the employers who want to recruit people from other partner countries (EURES: the European Employment Service);
- collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information about the labour market;
- directing Polish citizens to work abroad within international contracts.

In WUP (The Regional Employment Office) there operates the Information and Professional Career Planning Center which works on collecting and disseminating information on jobs and the labour market, offers counseling service, supports the inhabitants of the region in making job decisions, planning their careers, and looking for a job in a competent way. Their help includes:

- choosing a profession or job;
- changing the profession or job;
- planning the professional future;
- perfecting professional skills and qualifications;
- constant planning of the development on various levels of professional life;
- competent search for employment;
- competent adaptation to the changes in the labour market and the employment environment also taking into consideration the employers who need help in the choice of suitable candidates for a particular job;
- the assistance of careers counselors who help to assess the candidate's job situation, prepare a suitable plan of activities and give the support necessary to carry it out.

County Employment Offices in the Malopolska region

Main objectives:

- helping people who are unemployed and looking for a job in finding employment, as well as helping employers in finding workers through employment agencies and career counseling; registering people who are unemployed and seeking employment;
- initiating and introducing labour market services and tools as well as supporting the establishment of labour groups;
- drawing up and carrying out the program of employment promotion and the mobilization of the local labour market;
- initiating, organizing, and financing local projects and other activities for the mobilization of the unemployed;
- initiating and carrying out ventures that are to solve or minimize the problems related to planned group layoffs brought about by enterprise reasons.

Services and tools arising from the law on the promotion of employment and the labour market institutions:

1. Labour market services;
2. Employment agencies;
3. EURES services;
4. Career counseling and career information;
5. Help in active employment seeking;
6. Organization of training;
7. Internships;
8. Job preparations in the workplace;
9. Scholarships to take up further education;
10. Refunds for the costs of childcare (relevant for children up to 7 years of age);
11. Refunds for the costs of taking care of a dependant person;
12. Funds for the costs of commuting (coming to the employer who is giving the job offer or to the workplace), serving the internship, job preparations in the

- workplace, training or classes taken within the career advisory plan and away from one's permanent area of residence;
13. Funds for the costs of accommodation in the area of the workplace for people who have taken up employment or another paid job, internship, or job preparations in a place other than their permanent place of residence;
 14. Subsidies for equipping the workplace, setting up an enterprise, paying the costs of legal help, counsel and advice;
 15. Refunds for the costs of social insurance fees paid in relation to the employment of a directed unemployed person;
 16. Funds for mobilization bonuses.

The Regional Center for Social Politics in Krakow

The main objectives in the context of the labour market:

– drawing up and introducing regional programs to solve problems connected with social help, the rehabilitation of disabled people, preventing social pathologies, and following a pro-family policy.

The currently realized programs and projects that support the return to work of people who had long been unemployed are the following:

1. The Malopolska Pro-family Policy Program for the years 2004 – 2007 (Małopolski Program Polityki Prorodzinnej na lata 2004 – 2007)
2. The Academy of Enterprise. The Development of Alternative Employment Forms Project (Akademia przedsiębiorczości. Rozwój alternatywnych form zatrudnienia) carried out within the joint initiative EQUAL. The aim of the project is to work out methods of professional and social mobilization of people who have long been unemployed through social employment (setting up social companies and Social Integration Centers) as well as supported employment (placements in the open labour market through coaching) based pursuant to the local labour markets. All the activities taken up during the realization of the project are supposed to lead to setting up Social Integration Centers within which there will be training and career counseling provided (depending on the needs), as well as social employment through establishing social companies.

The Malopolska Marshal's Office:

The Department of Economy and Infrastructure:

The main objectives in the context of the labour market:

- the realization of the activities aimed at economical development of the province in cooperation with the business environment, especially the economic self-government and the enterprises/businessmen themselves;
- collaboration in realizing the labour market programs;

– initiating and collaborating in the realization of programs that motivate the province economically, including those that stimulate enterprise development.

Currently realized programs and projects:

1. The Integrated Regional Development Operational Program

Activity 2.5: Promoting Enterprise

The aim of the Activity is an active support of employment through the stimulation of setting up new micro-enterprises and providing newly-registered micro-entrepreneurs with help in making good use of the available supporting tools.

Activity 3.4: Micro-enterprises

The aim of the Activity is to make micro-enterprises more competitive through facilitating the access to specialized consulting services and increasing the investment capacity in the initial stage of the functioning of the enterprises.

The Malopolska Agency of Regional Development in Kraków

The main objectives in the context of the labour market:

1. The Employment Consulting Center – the Employment Agency

The Center has the status of an employment agency which is entitled to recruit workers in all the market sectors based on an order from the employer. The people who seek employment and who have submitted application documents participate in workshops, courses and training that raise their professional qualifications.

2. Loans for Graduates and Employers. The aim of the Program is giving out loans for the purchase of technical equipment necessary for running the enterprise that is being set up or for establishing an additional workplace; adapting rooms for the planned enterprise; the purchase of necessary supplies and materials, etc. within the “Employment for the Young” program and the Malopolska Loan Fund (Małopolski Fundusz Pożyczkowy). The beneficiaries of the program are young people up to 27 years of age who are at the beginning of their business activity and are self-employed, as well as the owners of SME’s who are starting their business activity and are going to establish new workplaces.

The Regional Development Agency in Tarnów

The main objectives in the context of the labour market:

1. Running training and consulting activity, especially focused on newly-established enterprises

2. Providing economical counseling service;

3. Carrying out tasks to help the unemployed;

4. Running the Loan Guarantee Fund

Currently realized programs and projects:

1. The Tarnów Enterprise Incubator

The objective of the Incubator is to support newly set-up and already established enterprises through making office surface available for low prices and providing a business counseling package free of charge.

2. The INTER GET UP Project (realized in Krakow; workshops for future young entrepreneurs).

The main objective of the Project is to gather a number of model ideas for the "start-up" development in particular regions, as well as a base of good practices, especially in the range of objectives that refer to the start-up support. The Project also aims at facilitating the gaining of experience and sharing it among the high technology companies operating in the project partners' areas. The Project is realized within the joint initiative INTERREG IIIC. Within the Project, the Regional Development Agency in Tarnow will appoint a Business Counseling Center where businesspeople will have access to counseling service, offers of collaboration with both Polish and foreign companies, and offers of participation in fairs. Further undertakings within the Project include the starting of the web portal "A Window for the Enterprising" and organizing "Open Doors", that is a computer post for entrepreneurs who do not have computers or access to the Internet.

3. Educational University

The main objectives of the Program are: the social and economic development of the region, the preparation of the personnel for the economy and the development of the enterprise, and raising funds for the realization of regional educational and economic undertakings, which in effect is supposed to support the countering of unemployment. The objective of the Educational University as an institution of continual schooling is primarily:

- to give in-service training to personnel for the labour economy, thus enabling the raising of professional qualifications and retraining of the employees according to the needs of the labour market through the organization of courses, training, seminars, methodological conferences,
- the running of information and counseling service for groups of people that are in particular risk on the labour market,

the changing and raising of qualifications of adults.

Non-governmental Organization

A significant role in supporting women on the labour market is played by non-governmental organizations operating in this area. Their offers include various types of training and career, legal, and psychological counseling, as well as direct assistance in establishing own enterprises, both in the organizational and the financial field.

It is also very important for the increase of the number of women in the labour market to act in a consciousness-oriented way in order to make people deeply aware of the women's situation (their being limited on the one hand, and entitled to rights and opportunities on the other) and to teach people to make positive use of that awareness. Such actions (in the form of training, workshops, etc.) are also run by NGOs.

There are several dozen organizations acting for women and the labour market in the Malopolska region. It is fairly easy to find them and the information on their offers by using the typical NGO web portals.

The information on projects for women and the labour market started by the organizations can be found in the local press and thematically relevant web portals.

There is an interesting and useful initiative called "Time Banks" within which women (representing various age groups and professions) exchange services in a system that does not include money. The services include (among other things) childcare and training. There are two initiatives of that sort in Krakow: The Krakow Time Bank and The Krakow LETS. If we wish to assess the usefulness of the resources offered by the above institutions, we must state that it is very high. The training is run by highly qualified specialists and it is very efficient. It might be difficult, however, for some women to find these courses. If a woman is unemployed and stays at home without access to a computer and the Internet, or if she simply does not know how to use them, and she does not read the local informative press, she may find it difficult to take the opportunities.

Moreover, the number of places on particular courses and training sessions are limited.. It is often the case that the places on more attractive courses are taken by people who are in direct contact with the organizers.

There is also the problem of low activity in searching for resources on the part of people who remain unemployed. Unemployed women, especially those who had gone without a job for a long period of time (e.g. because of childcare leave) are frustrated and afraid because of their own lack of self-confidence and faith in doing things right in a new workplace and surviving the new and rapidly-changing conditions on the labour market.

They are the ones who are in the greatest need of the training programs which are aimed not only at raising professional qualifications (mainly through the use of technologies: the computer, the Internet), but most of all at psychological support and assistance in improving the social and communication competence.

Childcare institutions

The possibility of having cheap and well organized childcare is extremely important for women who are returning to work.

Unfortunately, the region does not generally have many childcare institutions available for families of limited means; there is no system of daycare centers or kindergartens that would be either free of charge . However public kindergardens are relatively cheap. The only possibility is to offer free childcare to the participants of training courses organized within various training projects.

However, new initiatives that expand the possibilities of childcare are raised more and more frequently at the grass-roots level. They include both institutions and initiatives that offer alternative and expanded forms of childcare (e.g. the Family Academy, Neighborhood Play Groups, The Mother and Child Garden) and private offers, which are often interesting and not expensive (e.g. E-Grandmas available on the Internet).

A significant number of women make use of the service of babysitters (the market is developing fast in that field). Information about babysitters is usually passed on through the grapevine, although one may also use the agencies available on the Internet (e.g. www.niania.krakow.pl, www.niania.pl). Women definitely prefer babysitters that are recommended by friends, as the main factor in choosing a nanny is confidence.

Mothers who return to work after a maternity leave usually name the issue of childcare as their most serious problem. If they cannot count on the help of their closest family, the problem is of two levels: the organizational one (the woman cannot leave the child alone, and so she cannot take up a job) and the psychological one (when the quality of the childcare is not sufficient according to the mother). Women also consider it illogical and harmful to their professional mobilization to close kindergartens at 5 p.m. and to keep them closed throughout the summer.

Non – institutional supporting resources

Except for the institutional resources available in the region and in Kraków itself, employment-seeking women also use their own, private resources: their family and friends. According to interviews conducted among women these two groups are where women turn to for information on employment options and for direct help, most often in the form of childcare, help with the housework and assistance in getting ready for employment seeking.

Friends and relatives are a great source of support and they provide important practical information on how to solve the problem of combining a career with family life.

It is an interesting fact that this role of friends or relatives has recently often been taken by Internet forums where women who do not know each other personally support each other and share valuable information on topics that interest them. In many cases, these forums are the only form of support that lonely and helpless mothers get.

Information on such specialized forums can be found on this website: www.pracujacyrodzice.pl. and on websites dedicated to the issue of combining the career and family life.

Relations with the employer

As the conducted interviews show, one of the most important elements that facilitates the return to the labour market are good relations with the former employer and earning the opinion of a good employee before going on childcare leave. Both the employer and the woman on her leave should take care to maintain the good relations. Even courtesy relations and contact based on exchanging small pieces of information are very helpful and they usually build the possibility of the woman's gradual and flexible return to work. According to what employers say, the crucial factor in this case is the efficiency of the woman before her leave: it is worth waiting for a good worker even if it means introducing some organizational modifications.

Analysis of working typology and working conditions

Some of the most important factors influencing the situation of women in the labour market are high labour costs and inflexible regulations ruling the labour market. The need for making the law more flexible has been discussed for many years now. However, demanding new regulations (e.g. ones that would lower labour costs) is not enough. It is important also to use the existing law to a fuller extent to support work humanization, make fuller use of the employees' work, etc., which will bring benefits to employees (a decrease of unemployment), employers (adjusting the work to the needs of the enterprise), and finally to all the economy (the growth of GDP) and society (less problems related to unemployment). Organizing the working time in a flexible way and uncommon forms of employment are the source of these possibilities. Such forms are acceptable in Polish labour regulations, but they are still rarely used.

The factors that facilitate women's return to work after a childcare leave are connected both with the specificity of the profession itself and the organization of the work.

Professions that favour the return of women to the labour market

- freelance occupations: occupations where
 - a person cannot render their services for subjects other than natural persons who do not run their own business activity and
 - where it is not allowed to employ anyone to share the activities connected with the nature of that particular job.

Women who work freelance are for example: journalists, artists, translators, instructors, coaches (fitness, yoga). In this case, women themselves decide on the time and intensity of the return to work after her leave;

- academic workers, teachers: a common practice when it comes to these professions is finding substitutes and doing part of the work already during the leave;
- jobs that require high qualifications and that are connected with large responsibility (e.g. managers, accountants, tax and finance counselors, computer specialists, computer system engineers): it is difficult to find a good worker for any of these positions so it is worth waiting for employees who are on a leave;
- jobs that can be performed from a distance, e.g. jobs connected with ICT (a computer graphic designer, designer, data analyst, insurance agent, commercial agent, pollster, the assistant of a disabled person, massage therapist, a caterer, an interior decorator, sales representative, a babysitter hired by the hour, a private cleaning lady, a text editor, a female taxi-driver, computer specialist, assistant: running an office from a distance, running agribusiness, etc.)
- work for an NGO: NGOs often give their employees flexible employment conditions (e.g. fee-for-task agreements, contracts for a specific task). Besides, being non-profit

institutions and working in the name of higher social goals, NGOs are more inclined to feel empathy for young mothers.

Forms of employment that favour the return of women to the labour market

The forms of employment that are most favorable for mothers are those that are flexible, most of all:

- part-time work , job sharing;
- telework;
- subsidized employment;
- other civil-law agreements (manager contacts, contracts for specific tasks, fee-for-task agreements, canvassing agreements, agency agreements, agreements for outwork, employee leasing).

Part-time work

Working part-time is a result of the work humanization and adjusting work to the workers' needs and it is a way of bringing professionally passive people back into the labour market. GUS (Main Statistical Office) data shows that 10.8% of all the workers in Poland work part-time (data for the third quarter of 2005). Women work in that system more frequently. Both the rates have been growing systematically. The work takes various forms: it usually means a lower number of daily work hours, but it also has a more flexible attitude towards the working time (e.g. less workdays a week, a varied working time, etc.) In 1/3 of the cases of people working part-time in Poland the work is imposed on the person by the difficult financial situation of the family: people have to work part-time because it is impossible for them to find a full-time job. A full-time job is of course the preferable solution.

Job-sharing

Job-sharing consists in two or more employees working part-time and sharing one post between them. Usually particular employees do the job on particular days of the week. The employees' salary and benefits are divided accordingly.

This manner of working is an opportunity for women who are raising children. In fact presently the majority of people employed in this system are women. However, the method of job sharing cannot be applied to all posts. Manager and specialized posts, which are connected with big responsibility, are usually excluded from the system. Job-sharing may be used according to the Polish labour law when the conditions of part-time employment are fulfilled. It must be remembered that the employees who share a post cannot together be held responsible for anything. Each of them is responsible for his/her job alone.

Telework

In Poland telework is not a common practice. In the future, though, as the information technology gets more popular, telework may become a way to improve the quality and efficiency of work, as well as be a means of lowering labour costs for many companies. Telework is not only a change of the workplace, but also a change of the manner of organization and way of carrying out the tasks that make the work process. It is a good solution for mothers who take care of their children because it allows the women to stay at home.

The Polish law lacks separate regulations for the employer-employee relationship where the employer does his job through the means of information technology. The relevant solutions, however, can be found in the employment code. According to act 128, art. 1 k.p., the employee who renders the service should remain in the workplace or other place appointed for them to do their job in. Therefore, the employee has the right to do their job in a place other than the workplace, and their dependence may be maintained by contact through new distance communication devices.

Self-employment

In Poland and, in fact, in all of Europe, employment on the basis of civil-law agreements is beginning to gain significance. Especially self-employment is gaining importance. Self-employment consists in the rendering of services by an independent subject who runs a business activity. A self-employed person is therefore an entrepreneur and is only subject to civil law, not the labour law. That is why employers often persuade their employees (or candidates for a job) to take up and register business activity. As a result, the minor entrepreneur renders services for their current/would-be employer.

Subsidized employment is a way of supporting employers: its main idea and advantage is the possibility of having an employee whose maintenance costs are not paid by the employer. This employment method also supports potential employees and is a great opportunity for unemployed people who want to return to work.

Research shows that the more flexible the form of employment, the more content the woman is of her job. The less immediate and unexpected availability the job requires, the better its influence on the woman's feeling of satisfaction and her private life. The more the job is about completing a task for a particular deadline (in rather further than nearer future), the bigger the satisfaction. The less moving away from home is required, the better.

Women pointed out their home responsibilities as the reason for their working part-time. It seems that this form of employment is underestimated in Poland as a good way of making women more active, which leads to a low employment rate of women in Poland. The low flexibility of the labour market in Poland is one of the most serious barriers that restrict women from entering the labour market and achieving financial independence. In the present situation, part-time jobs bring losses to women. To mention the most

significant ones, they are: lower salaries and (in the future) lower social benefits, lower prestige as an employee, limited possibilities of development and promotion. Such restrictions imposed by the employers should be consistently eliminated as labour market pathology. However, the system of part-time work is a good way of making women active even though they might be in a very difficult situation on the labour market. The solutions that would raise women's chances of employment are important not only to control poverty, but also because women without a job less frequently decide to have children. The government's policy to promote procreation should focus on enabling young people to find a job and earn more money. A higher employment rate for women might be a cure for the demographic crisis.

In order to achieve this, it is crucial to solve the parents' problem of childcare by developing more daycare centers, kindergartens, and after-school clubs and making them more accessible. It is important to let parent-workers choose their timetable, work part-time, work at home, or telework. That enables the parents to combine their professional and family responsibilities.

Paternity leaves should be used more often. That requires changes in the Polish mentality but it could be promoted by the government. Larger participation in the leave on the part of the father would change the employers' attitude towards genders in the context of the labour market. The woman would no longer be considered the one who disappears from work after the baby is born.

Additional factors connected with work and its organization which favour the return of women to the labour market

According to the conducted interviews, there are some additional, informal factors of a social nature that are extremely influential when it comes to the woman's return to work after childcare leave. They are the following:

On the part of the employee:

- Maintaining contact with the employer (in any form);
- Informal agreements with the employer and diligence in fulfilling them;
- An integrated, loyal work team, pleasant atmosphere at work;
- Social contacts with workmates also outside the workplace;
- Flexibility, readiness for changes and new challenges;
- Understanding the need for a constant improvement of skills, the willingness to make the effort;
- High work ethics;
- A good opinion in the eyes of the employer: diligence, peacefulness;
- Understanding the situation and the limitations an employer may be facing; a readiness for compromise, not taking too much for granted, no law abuse;

- Knowledge of the local labour market and the institutions and organizations that support it;
- Knowledge of the manners of support available locally and through the Internet;
- The skill of information seeking;
- Long work experience.

On the part of the employer:

- Clearly established ethical rules;
- A long-range company policy not aimed at immediate profit at all costs, a humanistic attitude towards business;
- A task-based work system, managing through a project;
- Team work;
- Efficient organization of work, a quality control system implemented (e.g. ISO);
- Flexibility in the organization of work and the attitude towards the employee;
- Giving employees a credit of confidence;
- Positive experience with employees-mothers;
- An understanding for the situation of women.

The above-mentioned factors refer more to the attitudes, characteristics and preferences of people concerned: both the employee and the employer. It turns out that even in the situation of formal difficulties a solution based on compromise and satisfying for both sides may be found thanks to goodwill and mutual understanding.

Analysis of territorial situation

Social situation of women in the Community of Madrid

Introduction.

The changes that western societies have experienced in the last decades have had an effect mainly on women.

The roles and stereotypes that the societies have assigned to women and men have determined women's life confining them to the private sphere; the public space has been traditionally reserved to men. The inequalities that women suffer at work, whether with the possibilities to assume a post, remaining on it, or the retribution or access to a post with certain responsibilities, are consequences of the roles and stereotypes that the society assign to each sex.

That is way we must make an analysis with the conception of genre, in other words, assuming that the characteristics of the person depending of the sex, have nothing to do to the biological differences, they are only social constructions that each society build and they are modifiable.

Work Market:

The rate of activities of women is clearly inferior to the men's one in all section of ages and formation. Women suffer the major rates of unemployment and the major temporality in the job in spite of the measures that are being placed to mitigate this inequality.

The Community of Madrid has one of the lower rates of unemployment, a 6.5 per cent against the 8.5 per cent of Spain and 7.6 of the European Union. The distance between the female and masculine rate of unemployment is the lower of all communities, the female rate is 7.29 per cent and the masculine is 4.82 per cent (2.5 points). The year 2006 has been closed with an activity rate of 77%, the higher of the country. The feminine employment increases more than the masculine, in fact, the feminine employment rate of the Community (61%) exceeds the objectives of Lisbon, fixed in 60% for 2010.

As a whole, it can be said that the situation of women in the Community is better than in the rest of Spain, which does not mean that we cannot considerate the equality as a fact, it is simply better than the rest of Spain.

Social Situation:

There are many indications that we can use to have an approximation of the situation of women in the Community. We will analyze the important ones.

According to the Statistics Institute of the Community of Madrid, in the survey about the Conditions of Life, in the Community of Madrid in 2005 in the homes with only one father, the 78.5% were one mother families, the 21.5% one father families. With regards to the

commitment to the home and family, the women dedicate 4.45 hours by day between Monday and Friday, the men 1.51 hours by day. The weekends 4.21 women, 2.17 men. Other important data is the number of people that use the new technologies; the percentage of women that use the computer is about 46.8% facing the 53.2 of men.

In 2005 the proportion of women in the autonomous parliament was 37.6%; the proportion of councilwoman was 35.5%. The mayor's Office the 17.9% were occupied by council women. In 2006 the percentage of council women in the autonomous Governments was 33.3%.

According to the study "**Diagnóstico sobre mujer y empleo cualificado en la CAM**" the growth of the women employment rate in the Community of Madrid between 1996 and 2006 is of 27%, the 58% of the persons who finished their university education in 2002 have been women. With regard to our salary, the annual average of women is placed in the 69% of the men (2002).

We see, then, that the situation of women in the Community that we are studying, is far away from the equality between women and men, although we can see the advances, the institutions must follow its work to achieve it. To sensitize the population is another objective that must be kept in mind, because the society as a whole must be conscious that the incorporation of women at work influences fundamental aspects of the organization of the families and that the legislation is not enough for the purpose of equality.

The rights of the women in the Autonomous Community of Madrid

Rules:

With the purpose of women gaining access to equality, the essential condition to the full development of a democratic country, it is necessary not only the adoption of normative measures, but also a modification of attitudes, behaviours and social structures that impede the free development of her personality and her participation in culture, work and politics.

According to this reality and to the established in the articles 9.2 and 14 of the Constitution, the public authorities are forced to promote the conditions for the liberty and equality of the individual and the effectiveness of the groups where they are integrated. Likewise, they are committed to eliminate the obstacles that impede or difficult the fullness of the attainment of this principle and to facilitate the participation of all the citizens in the political, economical, cultural and social life. This is, at the same time, ratified by the Statute of Autonomy of the Community of Madrid. Since that the "Dirección General de la Mujer" was created in 1989 with the purpose of promoting a full participation of all women of Madrid in all social life orders

To achieve these objectives the Community of Madrid has its own rules, apart from the state and community environment. It has set off Plans of Action, Programmes and

campaigns, as well as advice services and support to the women of the community, to favour its social and labour insertion.

Plan of Action:

Integral Plan of Action against the Gender Violence: This Plan attempts to answer the various manifestations of Gender Violence particularly against women. Violence within the domestic and/or family environment, sexual harassment in the workplace; human rights violation and sexual indemnity (aggression, abuse, traffic, etc.) and female genital mutilation.

Programme of the Plan:

Support Measures for women that are victims of Genre Violence: These measures consist of guidance and legal assistance, psychological attention, labour advice, the Net of institutions for women of the Community and the Municipal Points of the “Observatorio Regional” against the Genre Violence.

Awareness measures and prevention against Genre Violence: Measures that try to sensitizate and

Persuade the society and the professionals involved in the area of genre violence about the necessity of building a world in which the violence must disappear.

Plans of similarity of opportunities:

The IV Plan of Similarity of Opportunities between men and women of the Community of Madrid (2002-05), dedicates an area to the reconciliation of the family and labour life and has as a main target “to diminish the overloaded family responsibilities that women stand, favouring an equal distribution that facilitates the combination of family and personal life with professional development.

Plan Programme:

Work Area and labour insertion: It is pretended throughout the information, formation, and sensitization, support of the innovative proposals and professional plans of women, accelerating the labour insertion and improving the conditions from and for work.

Reconciliation of personal and labour life area: With the aim of diminishing the overload of the family responsibilities that women suffer and trying to benefit an equal distribution that facilitate the combination of family and personal life with professional development.

Educational, the media, cultural, leisure and sports Area: The aim is to promote values of equality that diminish the genre prejudices and stereotypes, proposing to fasten the teaching of values and educational practices.

Social Rights, urbanism, health and prosperity Area: The aim is to facilitate information about legislation and communitarian and national measures of promotion of

the equality, as well as the execution of campaigns to extent the consideration and comprehension of women's rights as a part of human rights.

Corporation area, decision making and social participation: The aim is to improve the levels of cooperation that allow a better representation and participation of women. The establishment of nets is essential for the exchange of good practices in the matter of equality, but also to motivate and encourage the said principle.

Campaigns:

Campaign for the equality and Reconciliation of Labour and Personal Life:

The Employment and Woman Department throws a Campaign to promote equality and the reconciliation of labour and professional life. Under the theme "**¿Verdad que no somos tan distintos? Entonces, ¿por qué no somos iguales?**"

Contra la Violencia de Género Vamos en Serio: hay salida, llama al 012 y pregunta por Mujer. Because violence affects us all, the community of Madrid acts: Social assistance, Psychological Orientation, Legal Orientation, Labour Orientation.

Programmes:

MIRA Programme: This is a programme of recuperation and psychological attention addressed to women who are victims of violence and for her sons and daughters, as well as people depending on them.

ATIENDE Programme: This is a welfare service that values and complies with problems of emotional damage that women with Protection Order and her sons/daughters suffer. It carries out a follow –up of the cases that require it and derivation to the adequate institution.

LÑIDERA Programme: This is a programme of orientation, formation and professional advice addressed to all women of the Community of Madrid.

Other measures:

The Community of Madrid has started up other measures, which affects directly the women of the community, although there are not specific rules for them. Being the women the main responsible of the care of

The Childs and older persons, it is expected for their labour and personal life to be easily reconciled. As the following case:

Law 13/2002 December, 20th, of fiscal and administrative measures, where different supposed economical and fiscal assistance for the cases of birth and adoption are regulated.

Order 762/2002, March, 7th, by which subsidies to Labour Nurseries of the Community of Madrid are summoned, it is about collaborating with the funding of educational centres for children and contributing to their adaptation to the organizations and requirements of LOGSE.

Order 326/2002, July, 5th, by which individual assistance for the education of children under 3 years old, in private centres authorized by the Community of Madrid, is summoned.

Order 1907/2002, December, 23rd, by which turns of stay in residences for old people, during the vacations from the persons who habitually look after them, are summoned.

State Regulation:

Apart from the specific regulation of the Community of Madrid we shall consider the State Regulation, because it is directed to all

Spanish Constitution (1978). Since the articles 9 and 14 of this Constitution, the elimination of all forms of discrimination existing in the valid legislation, and also the adaptation of the international commitments are preceded.

Since the Constitution a series of reforms of the civil, labour and penal legislation is succeeded by the judicial legislation, with the aim of eliminating the sex discrimination.

Integral law against genre violence. The **Basic Law 1/2004**, December, 28th, of measures of Integral Protection against Genre Violence, discusses the thematic of violence, understanding it as a manifestation of discrimination. It includes so many preventive, educative, social, welfare and later attention to the victim's aspects, as the civil rules in the family or co-existence environment, where the aggressions are mainly produced.

Law 33/99 of Reconciliation of the Family Life and Labour Life of the Working People: with this law the transposition of two communitarian directives is made: **Directive 92/85/CEE**, about the application of measures to promote the welfare of the pregnant women, and the women who are in the pre-weaning period. **Directive 96/34/CEE** relative to the Agreement about the parental authority.

The fact that the term "person" is used is significant, which implies that the concept of "worker" became known, fact that do not occur in other law, regulating the human, familiar, personal and social aspect.

The **Bill of Equality**, approved by the Convention of the members of the parliament on December, 29th o 2006. The new development of the law is based on the prevention of discriminatory behaviours and on the prediction of politics that activate the principle of equality. It pays special attention to the correction of inequality in the environment of the labour relationships and expects to promote the adoption of specific measures in favour of the equality in the companies, placing them in the background of the collective negotiation.

Basic instrument in the sphere of the General Administration of the State is a strategic plan of equality of opportunities and the creation of an Interministerial commission of equality with coordination responsibilities.

With the aim of reaching the real equality, the Law anticipates a general background for the adoption of positive actions. It addresses, to all the public authorities, a renovation of situations of contrastable factual inequality prescription. It considers that achieving the equality must be a priority objective for all the public administrations, directing, then, to all

the public authorities a prescription for the non correctable inequalities by formulating legal rules.

Specific Plans of equality:

In a state level there has been three **Plans of Equality of Opportunities** for the effective attainment of the Equality of Opportunities, and a forth, valid at the present.

I Plan of equality (1988-90). It is based on the setting of legislative reforms.

II Plan of equality (1997-2000). It is based on specific proceedings which benefit the participation in the economical and social life.

III Plan of equality (1997-2000). Although it is based specific actions, for the first time the mainstreaming strategy is introduced. This Plan is based on the commitment of the Platform of action of the IV world Conference of women of 1995 and on the communitarian Strategy about equality of opportunities between women 2001-2006, as well as the conclusions of the evaluation of the III Plan of Equality of Opportunities.

Analysis of supporting resources

The labour market in Spain is characterized, among other things, by its high degree of decimation against women. This discrimination emerges at the beginning of an analysis of the different sectors of the labour market. The best-paid jobs or above-average salaries are found in the male sectors in which a smaller number of women are found. This fact constitutes an impediment to the effective incorporation of women into the labour market. Moreover, in female professions, wage inequality goes beyond the limits of the home and spreads into the world of work.

So-called “occupational segregation,” which is both vertical and horizontal, is therefore one concept constituting a barrier to the entry of women in the labour market.

Moreover, one of the reasons women receive lower salaries, is that their qualifications are not valued, since the line between domestic/private life and public life is unclear. Thus, “male” professions are more highly valued socially than “female” ones and are therefore better paid. Instability in employment is another of the factors seen in feminized sectors, as well as part-time work, owing mainly to the belief that women must necessarily invest more of our time in the household. All this ultimately means that women cannot enter the labour market in a normal manner or that they cannot remain there for very long.

But what happens when women wish to re-enter the labour market after a period of medical leave, or after a long period of absence? What resources are available to them? What follows is a listing of these resources of different kinds open to women who wish to rejoin the workforce and an analysis of these resources.

Training

One resource which is indispensable for women who seek to rejoin the labour market is, without question, training and recycling. It is crucial to equip these women with practical

tools both to effectively join the labour market and to cope with the return after an absence – whether extended or not – and even more so in today’s labour market, which is ever more demanding and competitive.

In broad outline, the following training resources are available:

- *Vocational training courses* aimed at supporting job entry and re-entry for the job-seeking workforce. Vocational training is implemented through the so-called F.I.P plan (in Spanish), or the Professional Training and Integration Plan. This is a national program which channels the majority of training targeted at unemployed persons, providing the qualifications required by the labour market to achieve professional integration if these persons lack a specific professional background or their qualifications are insufficient or inappropriate.
- *Women’s training program for employment.* This program seeks to support the professional integration of young women by assisting in them in getting their first job, assisting unemployed women in joining the labour market, supporting participation in an active professional life of women who, for different reasons, have been absent from the job market and help them achieve better professional qualifications and promotions in their jobs. The Directorate-General of Women of the Autonomous Region of Madrid, working closely with city councils and council districts in the region, annually elaborates and develops training programs for women aimed at assisting them in entering the labour market, improve their position at work in terms of hierarchy and responsibility and to overcome obstacles of discrimination and professional segregation they have to face because of their sex.
- *Workshops and training centres.* This training is aimed at achieving professional integration of the unemployed youth up to the age of 25 and is imparted in alternation with employment. However, owing to their particular characteristics, this is not a useful resource for the case we are addressing herein, namely women on maternity leave or on leave to care for children, let along for women above the age of 40, for as we have seen, it is targeted at people up to the age of 25.
- *Employment workshops* This is a mixed program that combines training and employment aimed at unemployed men and women 25 years or older, in activities related to new job opportunities of general and social interest generated by non-profit public or private entities, thus facilitating their subsequent integration in the labour market, both in finding jobs and creating business projects. Its objective is for unemployed workers to participate in projects or services of public usefulness,

with an effective job, while they also receive professional vocational training related to their work, to achieve professional qualifications and labour market entry. Beneficiaries may be: unemployed persons with special difficulties to enter the labour market, such as disabled persons, long-term unemployed people, those above the age of 45 and women.

- *Ongoing professional training.* Ongoing professional training is understood as all the training conducted by companies, workers or their respective organizations aimed both at improving the skills and qualifications and to re-skill employed workers, to enable them to make compatible greater company competitiveness with an increase in adaptability, employability and professional advancement of workers. The program is managed by FORCEM, with the participation of the most representative business and trade union organizations.

Of all these educational resources, those which seem to best meet the needs of women who seek to rejoin the labour market after a period of absence are those which are specifically targeted at them, namely, the women's job training program.

Thus, the objectives of training for these women must be:

- To empower and enable women re-entering the workforce.
- To equip these women with the tools they need for this objective through training and information.
- To guarantee the employability of women above the age of 40, regardless of their background.
- To guarantee non-discrimination of women who, because they are caring for dependent persons, have been absent from the labour market.
- In accordance with the specific needs of this social group.

For training to be considered effective and valid, not must the above objectives be met, but training must be free of charge or nearly free of charge, if one takes into account the situation of these women, namely unemployment or maternity leave, or on a leave of absence.

In this regard, courses must be subsidized or financed by different public or private bodies, such as:

- Departments of autonomous regional governments (Department of Women and Employment of the Autonomous Government of Madrid)
- City councils.
- State bodies (Example: regional employment service, women's institute etc.).
- EU bodies (E.g. European Social Fund).
- NGOs, associations and foundations (e.g. Business Women's Association of Madrid, Fundación Mujeres)
- Trade unions (UGT,C.C.O.O)
- Private companies

As regards access to these resources, it can be said that it is relatively easy owing to the supply available and the amount of publicity they are given.

Resources in associational movement or other types of public or private bodies

Job orientation. Job search

Job orientation is becoming a basic tool, a resource that can be used by women who, for a number of reasons, have left the labour market. This resource is even more needed for women above the age of 40 who have been absent from the job market for a long period of time, for in these cases the return can prove to be frustrating, owing to their lack of knowledge of the labour market and of available resources.

Job orientation consists not only of providing a list of resources and places to find work, but also a long process of accompaniment consisting of a series of phases, from reception of the woman, follow-up of job market entry after she has achieved it. It must involve individualized attention, personal treatment that requires in-depth knowledge by the person conducting orientation of the woman seeking assistance; otherwise, this resource would not be useful to women.

For job orientation to be considered a useful and valid resource, it must seek the following objectives:

- Favour equality of opportunities between women and men.
- Achieve labour market entry for women who are especially disadvantaged owing to their long absence from the labour market.
- Facilitate a return to work for women on leave or maternity leave.

It is also important for it to include the following contents:

- Advice on resource in training, social, economic, assistance and subsidies and employment.
- Orientation in making a CV, cover letter, how to deal with a job interview, etc.
- Information on the rights of women in employment.

- Individualized support for itineraries of job market integration.
- Follow-up after job market entry is achieved.

The following entities offer women employment orientation:

- NGO's and women's associations.
- Public bodies, including state, regional and municipal institutions.

Access to these resources owing to the publicity and public education conducted, and to the fact that they are free of charge.

Psychological support.

Many labour market entry programs, whether organized by official institutions or by associations, include psychological and psycho-social support, which is highly needed in order to facilitate and build emotional bases for women who decide to re-enter the labour market.

Here, there are programs and **workshops and modules** that address issues of self-esteem, social skills, general communication and citizen participation, while they provide services of information, consulting and accompaniment for labour market entry. These programs usually include the opportunity to access other resources, so as to facilitate the development and implementation of the professional project of each woman.

These activities seek to faster processes of socialization among those assisted, strengthening their empathy and confidence while contributing to integration and providing tools to compete in the labour market and achieve professional entry.

Although it is true that support programs of this kind do exist, it is also true that public institutions and their programs for employment, support and other needs must fortify a broader vision that takes into account the full complexity of women's problems when they decide to join the labour market, because the burdens born by women (caring for dependent people, children, household and family chores, household management, etc.) entail specific problems that hinder their re-integration into public life. This requires a more systematic offer that takes into account psycho-social aspects of labour market entry, oriented towards strengthening self-esteem, social participation, self-determination, analysis of one's own needs and management of one's own public and private lives.

Support for dependent persons.

The gradual aging of the population is now a phenomenon seen in every European country. This situation is affecting Spain to an even greater extent, where the number of dependent people owing to mental or physical ailments or other social problems is increasing considerably. This fact is also coinciding with other social realities such as the reintegration of women into the labour market and the change in family models, and it implies a special situation to be taken into account when assessing whether institutional

arrangements and coverage are adapting to this new scenario. Thus, one of the key questions would be: Who is being affected by this situation and how?

Figures on people above the age of 65 show that 34% have problems of dependency, where the most elderly people – above the age of 80 – those who suffer from the highest degree of dependency. The vast majority of these people receive support outside formal or institutional assistance.

In the Madrid region, the following **resources** are available for the elderly:

- **Home assistance:** Support by specialized personnel, for personal activities such as hygiene, food, moving around and outside the home, supervision of medication and assistance in household chores.
- **Remote assistance:** Consists of a device – a bracelet or necklace – keeping them under constant monitoring at a help centre 24 hours a day, enabling assistance in the event of any eventuality.
- **Family support and counselling:** programs offered by associations consisting of information, psychological support, integration into groups with the same concerns, teaching of problem-solving skills and working with families in caring for the ill person in their own home.
- **Senior day centres:** Open, non-residential mainly to support relations of older persons in a specific territory and assist in integration by organization of activities to occupy their free time, entertainment and culture, and information on access to social services.
- **Residences for the elderly:** These provide permanent or temporary accommodation and ongoing, comprehensive care to the elderly who cannot remain in their homes. These also provide a wide range of services and activities.
- **Health care residences:** Specialized geriatric and social care, of a long-term or medium-term nature which may involve a residence or hospital, for elderly people with grave pathologies who cannot be cared for at home or who do not have other resources.
- **Day centres:** Specialized non-residential facilities, aimed at social rehabilitation, for elderly people with limited autonomy, whose main purpose is to contain functional losses, assist in maintaining their normal living conditions and to support their families. These provide geriatric care and rehabilitation, personal care, preventive medicine, occupational therapy, psycho-social care, physical and free-time activities and transport to the facility in an arrangement of half board.

Series gaps exist in terms of resources available to dependent persons, whether these are people above the age of 65 or persons suffering from another type of dependence. According to figures from IMSERSO of 2005, there is capacity for approximately 40,000 dependent seniors in day centres at a national level, and although the evaluation of these facilities in terms of quality is quite high, the fact is that most of the seniors who apply for this resource cannot enter owing to a lack of capacity; the problem is much more serious for dependent persons below the age of 65, as the resources available are much more limited.

The statistics, moreover, reveal clear figures and the waiting lists in this region are long. According to figures provided by the association Mensajeros de la Paz, more than half the capacity in residences in the Madrid region is in private or in public private partnerships, and some 15,000 people are on waiting lists for entry. This means that at a national level, Spain has yet to reach the European average in terms of capacity of these facilities for people older than 65. In Spain, capacity falls short of 5 per 100 inhabitants.

This grave lack of resources means a greater household burden, and women are those who mainly provide care and attention, often on a continuous basis without rest. For many of these care providers, there are no “weekends,” or “holidays,” when it comes to caring for their elderly or dependent family members. And this situation amounts either to an extra working day after the regular working day or a decision to provide exclusive dedication, which removes many women from remunerated work outside the home. It is known that the average profile of the care-provider in Spain is as follows: a woman between the ages of 45 and 69, and, in half of the cases, unemployed.

This absence of comprehensive, diversified and effective support affects not only dependent persons, who have no access to these resources, but it has also impacted indirectly on care-providing women who need effective institutional to be able to continue performing this role without damaging their quality of life, not only economically, but also emotionally.

Child care services

In child care as it affects employment, the problems are diverse and wide-ranging. Conciliation often depends on the availability of child care services. First, there is the problem of a lack of resources in care of young children. At present, the rate of coverage of services for children younger than 3 in the Madrid region is still limited. But there are also other problems even after children are in school. The main problems in child care are as follows: taking children to school and collecting them afterwards, after-school care when parents cannot be at home or when they have to stay at work, when there is a school yet not a work holiday, school holidays for Christmas and Holy Week, as well as summer holidays or when they are ill and cannot go to school.

As in care and services for dependent persons, women are the ones who bear the burden of caring for children and who are most affected when there is no adequate compatibility between these tasks and professional life. Women are often forced to work out individual strategies based on an extensive family network, usually grandmothers, who end up with a large share of these responsibilities with a deterioration of their quality of life.

- Here, **public day-care centres**, kindergartens and schools should be one of the main resources for helping to make family and work compatible, and although there are a large number of working mothers using these services, some 25,000 applications went unmet. Public kindergartens are not free to all families, but are paid, depending mainly on income, up to 200 euros a month. Plus, autonomous regions, with full powers in this field, are not now required to offer public facilities for these ages.

According to the figures of the Education department, in 2004-2005, some 42.5% of children are in the public institutions. But if we compare that to the total population of children younger than 3, even taking into account the fact that not all parents wish to send their children to school (it is not compulsory at this age), we find that public capacity covers only 7.2% of children.

- **Private day care centres** are the main choice in a community with a high and growing percentage of working mothers and fathers, which makes the first stage of children's education – for those younger than three- an unavoidable social need, but a private centre, on average costs nearly have the minimum wage: prices range from 117 to 390 euros a month, for an eight-hour day with lunch and a snack. An extra hour per day costs an average of 26 euros a month.
- **Day care vouchers:** more than half the capacity funded by the Department of Education are in private schools. Some 23,000 children are in public schools, nearly 6,000 in private schools with public financing, and another 25,000 receive a subsidy (day care voucher) so that parents can pay for a private centre. But the fact remains that the public availability cannot cover all the demand; more than half of the applications are turned down because of lack of capacity. The department insists that schooling at this age is not compulsory and not free. The rate of schooling stands at roughly 26%.
- **Workplace day care centres:** there is also the possibility of obtaining subsidies through assistance vouchers in day care centres or in day care centres at workplaces (such as the Hospital Clínico of Madrid or in the offices of the Ministry of Interior), although these options are still quite limited. Private companies are beginning to imitate these remedies for conciliation, with the example of day care centres at the workplace. But only large companies can afford to offer these services, and it is not yet seen as a need for workers but rather as some sort of perquisite.

To enable adequate professional integration of women and a real possibility of staying at a job that allows them to develop a professional career, care of young children must be seen as a decisive factor. As shown by the figures, there is a great need in the Madrid region to increase these services and to expand public infrastructures for conciliation and gradually extend the availability of public capacity for children younger than the age of three until the demand is met.

Support for women entrepreneurs.

The Spanish labour market, as noted above, is ever more competitive. Unemployment rates are still quite high, and Spain is still far from attaining the objectives of EU and national policies in terms of employment levels. Among women, the problem is more acute for several reasons, but the one addressed in this report is one of the most important. Maternity in some cases, and long absences from the labour market in others, lead to rates of female unemployment that are higher than male rates. Thus, work as a self-employed person is often a viable alternative for these women, who, of course, need specific and very qualified counselling. Support for self-employment must include a series of contents, in addition to those intrinsic to the sector in question, that is, women above the age of 40 after a long absence from the labour market and women who seek to rejoin the labour market after a period of leave or maternity.

These contents are:

- Individualized technical counselling on starting a business (business plan, marketing plan, financial and technical viability of project, etc).
- Assistance and subsidies specifically targeted at women.
- Micro-credits available.
- Listing of resources and places.
- Legal advice.
- Follow-up of a business after start-up.

These resources can be found at

- NGOs and women's associations.
- Entrepreneurial associations.
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
- Public institutions.
- Financial institutions.

Grants and subsidies

For women.

Although it cannot be considered, strictly speaking, a resource assisting re-entry in the labour market, it is a form of assistance that should be mentioned. We are referring to assistance available during maternity and paternity leave.

Thus, for maternity leaves, the duration is 16 weeks – in multiple birth, 2 weeks are added for each child. A compulsory requirement is having paid into the social security system for 180 days in the 5 years prior to the birth. The amount paid is 100% of the base for payment, and if both mother and father are working, the mother can cede to the father a maximum of 10 weeks.

For paternity leave, it is 10 days (8 plus the two for the birth itself), and one must show 180 days of paying into the social security system in the 5 years prior to the birth; 100% of the regulatory base is paid, and if both mother and father are working, the mother can cede to the father a maximum of 10 weeks.

Moreover, it should be mentioned that the subsidy of 100 euros received by working mothers for each child under the age of three is not a resource for re-entering the labour market, for this resource does not include women who do not work.

For businesses.

Even more important are the assistance and credits received by companies for hiring women, as this does constitute an effective resource for rejoining the work world.

In addition to these credits, it must be remembered that incorporation to cooperatives or worker partnerships which is permanent and in the scheme of employment of the social security system until 31 December 2005, will also entitle companies to a large share of these credits.

Separate treatment will be given to credits for hiring disabled workers.

Pre-requisites of beneficiaries: Being up to date in tax and social security payments, both at the time of concession of credits and during the reception of the same; not having previously been excluded from employment program benefits.

For other public and private entities.

Here we refer to subsidies received by public and private entities to carry out projects to support women in re-entering the labour market.

Legislative resources.

Women's rights are theoretically and formally protected by the laws of Spain and international treaties. In recent years, we have seen international bodies recognize, at least from a legal perspective, the rights and commitments governments must implement as regards equal opportunity policies between men and women and the gender perspective as a transversal focus.

International meetings and conferences have also reinforced these commitments, particularly the Fourth International Women's Conference in Beijing, in 1995.

From a legal perspective, significant progress has been made. Equality between men and women has now become an objective of employment policy, both at EU and national levels.

Thus, there are recent laws that address the problem of discrimination towards women and provide remedies to remove, or at least alleviate, possible inequalities. Out of all these laws, and in the subject we are concerned with herein, namely resources available for women's re-entry to the labour market, the following should be noted.

- a. Basic law for effective equality between men and women.
- b. Dependency law.
- c. Conciliation law.
- d. Equality plans at a state, regional and local level.

Other resources. New technologies.

The so-called digital gap particularly affects women. Finally, therefore, it would be of interest to address the new technologies as a resource and tool for women, as digital literacy and the use of the tools of technology is of great assistance when seeking work. Besides being easily accessible and low in cost, they have become indispensable.

Analysis of working typology and working conditions

Spanish society has undergone profound economic and social changes. Among them, the incorporation of women to the paid labour market is one of the most important social processes to occur in the last century. This process has a great deal to do with many of the economic, social and cultural transformations which have defined our recent history.

The differences that nevertheless exist between men and women in terms of participation in the paid labour market are a result of the gender-based inequality of employment opportunities. Among the factors explaining the absence or limited presence of women in the labour market are the segregation and job discrimination which women have to face once they find a job.

The demands of the labour market are raising skills and training requirements all the time, and the form in which work processes are organised requires increasingly greater flexibility.

Against this background, there is no doubt that Spanish women have adapted to the new requirements of the productive system, and they are quickly overcoming the main factors which cause gender inequality in employment. Thus:

- a. Women's rates of employment are increasing.

- b. The rates are increasingly independent of marital status, fertility and child-rearing responsibilities.
- c. They are converging with the characteristics and levels of men.
- d. Young women are investing in the acquisition of education more than their male peers.
- e. Women are specialising in those kinds of jobs which are increasingly emerging in sectors where most jobs are created.
- f. Women are the main beneficiaries of the new forms of contracts and definitions of working time, which are the main sources of employment flexibility.

Thus women are rapidly transforming their approach work to reflect the transformations taking place in the labour market. There are increasingly fewer theoretical arguments able to justify continued employment differences based on gender.

A list of occupations and jobs that favour the return of women to the labour market

When the data related to the situation of Spanish women and men is analysed in terms of economic activity, a very different image of women emerges, not only from the point of view of the activity rate, but also with respect to employment and unemployment. These differences are related both to the personal characteristics of women (*age, studies, marital status*) and to the characteristics of the productive structure of the country, its levels of economic growth and the most important sectors of economic activity, all of which determine employment opportunities for women. At the same time, employment policies also have an influence on the employment situation of women.

Among the most important ***characteristics*** in terms of the employment participation of women are:

- a) Those in the 25-54 age group have higher activity rates.
- b) University studies: women with higher educational levels also have higher activity rates.
- c) Single women have higher activity rates.

If we look at a breakdown of female employment , we can see the following four main areas of activity: the primary sector, industry, construction and services.

Female employment is closely linked to the service sector, with a distribution favourable to women (i.e. if there were the same number of men and women in overall employment, there would be a greater percentage of women than men in the service sector).

It is also a growth sector in terms of female employment, mainly to the detriment of the primary sector. Industry has slightly reduced its overall weight in female employment, and in the construction sector female employment is marginal.

Given that female employment is concentrated massively in the service sector, it is worth analysing this sector in greater detail. To do so, we will use the classification of types of services which divides them according to the position they occupy in the chain running from producer to final consumer. We can thus distinguish between services for the distribution sector (low technological and skills level), services for the production sector (which require greater technology and more skilled workers), social services (also with high skills levels) and personal services (the lowest skills levels).

Women are increasingly represented throughout the length of this chain, in services for distribution, services for production, social services and personal services. The greatest proportion of women are in personal and social services. This suggests that the closer to the producing company along the chain, the lower the presence of women, and the closer to the consumer the greater proportion of female employment.

Looking at the ***type of occupation*** in female employment we can distinguish nine job categories: directors, professionals, support technicians, administrative staff, skilled service workers, skilled secondary sector workers, skilled primary sector workers, operators and unskilled workers.

There are two jobs among them which are typically female: administrative staff and skilled workers. Two other jobs are occupied equally by men and women: professionals and unskilled workers. The jobs of expert support technicians are more commonly filled by men, although there is also a significant number of women carrying out these tasks. The rest of the jobs are typically male: directors, skilled workers in the primary sector, operators and skilled workers in industry and construction.

It is also important to analyse in detail the category of directors, as we should distinguish those companies which have male and female employees and those in which the director is the only person who works.

What we see in this case is that women directors work mainly in companies without employees, while in the case of men this is not so.

In addition, there are significant differences in terms of **background profiles of men and women** entering employment.

When entering the labour market, women have better educational qualifications than men, but this does not mean that they get better jobs. Quite the reverse: new female jobs are mainly concentrated in low-skilled occupations, both manual and white-collar. New male jobs are concentrated in manual jobs, whether skilled or unskilled. Despite this, it is also true that more women than men are entering the jobs requiring the highest qualifications (white-collar highly skilled jobs, such as directors, professionals and technicians).

The male and female distribution by sectors is completely different. Women tend to enter the service sector, whereas men enter the remaining sectors. However, in the case of women the service sector is actually increasing in importance for new jobs, whereas in the case of men the new jobs tend to be more evenly divided between the sectors.

An increasing number of new jobs requiring higher skills levels are destined for women, much more so than new jobs for men.

To sum up, it is women graduates in the 25-45 age range, with work experience in the service sector and in skilled white-collar jobs who are reducing their rates of unemployment most. These are the characteristics doing most to combat the fact that the result of greater employment participation of women is unemployment.

Employment conditions/options favouring the return of women to the labour market

The working conditions of women can be analysed using three variables referring exclusively to working women: the rate of temporary employment; the rate of part-time work; and the rate of self-employment.

In Spain, the average rate of **temporary employment** is 34%, very high and double the European average. This rate of temporary employment could be related to the characteristics of the productive structures themselves, particularly given the high number

of activities displaying a cyclical behaviour (such as tourism and agriculture) or others requiring low-skilled labour which is easily interchangeable (personal services).

The rate of temporary female employment depends on the personal characteristics of the workers (age, education, marital status), in addition to the activities and occupations in which they find a job. These characteristics are:

- a) *Age*: the rate of temporary employment is always higher among the youngest women (16-24 years) who are entering the labour market for the first time. The central age group (25-50) also has high rates of temporary employment, but in this case the high employment turnover of women cannot be explained by problems related to initial entry into the labour market. Instead, it is related to the need to combine domestic responsibilities and care of dependents with job responsibilities. The oldest age group (50-65) shows the lowest levels of temporary employment.

Thus we can say that temporary employment is related to age and affects youngest women most.

- b) *Education*: the rate of temporary employment is always lower for female graduates. Women in employment with average levels of education (secondary or vocational training) have reduced their rates of temporary employment, while those with the lowest levels of education (no education or with only primary education) have seen it increase.

However, we can see that there is a convergence between the rates of temporary employment for women with higher education, where it is increasing, and those with middle levels of education, where it is falling. So we can see that the highest and lowest educational levels are coming together in terms of the rate of temporary employment.

- c) *Marital status*: the rate of temporary employment is 20 points higher for single women than for married women.
- d) *By sector*: temporary employment among women continues to be high, but there are slight differences between services and the other sectors. Variation in rates of temporary employment among women is much lower in the service sector than in other sectors.
- e) *By occupation*: the rate of temporary employment is higher among women with manual jobs than among those with white-collar jobs, and it is particularly high in the case of low-skilled manual jobs. However, whereas the rate of temporary employment among women has fallen for white-collar jobs, the fall has been much steeper in low-skilled manual jobs, while it has increased for skilled manual jobs.

Thus temporary contracts affect the following groups of women most:

- The youngest (16-24 years old)
- Those with the lowest educational levels (no education or primary education)
- Single women
- Those employed in sectors other than services
- Low-skilled manual jobs

The rate of **part-time work** as a proportion of all female employment is another indicator allowing us to analyse the differences in working conditions for women entering the labour market.

Part-time work particularly affects young women and those with low skills levels who are entering the labour market for the first time. It is also significant for women at an age (25-50) when domestic and family responsibilities are more important. These circumstances force many women, particularly those with the lowest skills levels, to take up sporadic and precarious jobs. However, there is no clear indicator of the effect of marital status: although married women appear to be more liable to take up part-time work than single women, these differences are small. In terms of sectors, the service sector has a higher rate of part-time work than others. In terms of occupations, the rate is higher among those with lowest skills levels and unskilled manual workers, and lowest among those with the highest skills levels.

The rate of part-time work is thus low among Spanish women, and it is progressing slowly, probably because it affects jobs which could be considered marginal.

It is also important to deal with the changes affecting **women's self-employment** when analysing women's conditions of employment. Self-employment among women in Spain is becoming less of a factor and its rate has fallen considerably.

It is more common among women with lower educational levels. By age group, adult women aged 35-50 are the most likely to be self-employed, though for women forming cooperatives the most common age group is under 35. If we take into account marital status, self-employment is twice as frequent among married women than single women, although the number of separated or divorced women and/or widows who carry on with their husband's business is also increasing. By sector, self-employment is more frequently above the national average in the service sector than in the rest of the sectors as a whole, particularly in the sector of care for the elderly, but also in retail trade and hotel and catering. Finally, the size of companies plays an important role, since there are

not only fewer female company owners than male, but they head companies which are smaller and with lower turnover.

The average time for which women who are self-employed have been engaged in their business activity 11 years, although in most cases the figure is under 5 years. Among the kinds of enterprises, the most common are private limited liability companies and cooperatives, rather than public limited companies. Women with low educational levels are more likely to be self-employed as sole traders, whilst those with higher educational levels are more likely to set up companies. Among the typical problems women have with companies are those related to excessive work and insufficient levels of business. Initially, the main difficulty is related to the lack of funds; later, the main problem mentioned is competition.

Women entrepreneurs claim that institutional support is scarce, and particularly at the beginning, women tend to receive support from their families. In addition, self-employed women have a low level of awareness of professional or employers' associations. Among the advantages for women in creating associations are that they provide useful information, promote networking, organise training courses and act as pressure groups to lobby government authorities.

Any additional conditions related to work and its organisation favouring a return to the labour market

Sharing domestic tasks and the care of dependents and accepting that the provision of income for the home is the responsibility of both men and women would encourage the elimination of the double working day suffered by women who have one job in the public sphere and another in private. Financial status and conditions are also key. Graduates and company owners with more than 10 employees are those who are least involved in domestic chores.

In addition, positive discrimination for women in the fields of employment, in other words applying measures affecting only women, are also valued extremely positively in terms of facilitating entry into the labour market, given the inequality of opportunities faced by women.

With regard to self-employed women and members of cooperatives, most public support helping these initiatives to be maintained involves subsidies, although there are also training courses and loans available. However, many women find it difficult to get their claims for this form of assistance processed.

There are other areas of government intervention which women find insufficient. Among the most important of these are services related to the care of the elderly and/or people

with disabilities, home help, vocational training, crèches, extra-curricular activities and school meal facilities.

Among the demands made to the government are tax credits and financial assistance for housing, training, childcare, home help, care of the elderly, and even a wage for domestic work.

Differences in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) may aggravate existing occupational gender inequalities and their consequences in terms of wages, employment stability, chances of promotion and equal opportunities for access.

However, the ICT are an important ally for working women, since they promote the reconciling of work and family life (teleworking) and make it easier to carry out everyday activities (online shopping, online banking, e-government), resulting in an increase in free time and quality of life. The internet is also an inexhaustible source of information on subjects of interest for women with a family (the health and education of their children, nutrition, culture and leisure activities), and a way of acquiring new knowledge (online training) or communicating with family and friends (e-mail, instant messaging).

Comments / Conclusion

By way of conclusion, we can state that despite the fact that the employment situation of women in Spain is moving towards greater equality, it is not doing so at a rate and intensity that is desirable. The problems can be summed up as follows:

- a. There are still economic activities in which women are in a minority, with a clear gender division in productive branches of industry between men and women.
- b. In terms of vertical segregation, in those sectors in which women are entering in large numbers they are often engaged in subordinate tasks. Segregation between the sexes according to the type of work has increased considerably.
- c. In addition, the rate of female activity in Spain is still lower than male, with significant differences with respect to other European Union countries.

To conclude, the newly emerging information society, the new service economy, and new forms of organising work all offer new opportunities for the goal of integrating women into the labour market on equal conditions to men. However, these factors are still a long way from being taken advantage of fully. This failure could become a major

obstacle to reaching the goal of integration, which in turn would prevent us from achieving the levels of competitiveness that the global economy demands.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of the situation

The regions considered in the analysis: Madrid and Malopolska, are in a good economical condition, which is indicated by the low unemployment rate as compared with the rest of the country. Province of Pisa is the only region that shows slight signs of crisis in some of the sectors of the local economy. The unemployment rates in the mentioned regions are: Italy (Province of Pisa) -, Poland (Malopolska Region) - 11.6%, Spain (Region of Madrid) - 6.5%.

As far as gender equality is concerned, the legal situation is analogous in the three partner countries. Legal articles guarantee equality in all the aspects of social life for both men and women, especially in the labour market. They also prohibit all forms of gender discrimination. Moreover, all the partner countries have legal articles that touch upon the issue of protection during the period of pregnancy and maternity.

Unfortunately, cases of women discrimination occur frequently in the labour market, be it the access to jobs, the salaries, or the chance of promotion. This is the situation in all the partner countries and it basically comes from the existing stereotypes regarding the social roles and positions of women. The strongest support of the authorities for the patriarchal model of society is found in Poland, where unfortunately the concept of pro-family policy is still associated with limiting the women's opportunities for professional development and even driving them out of the labour market.

The situation in the labour market is very similar in all the partner countries: the percentage rate of women in the general number of the unemployed is higher than that of men (in Italy: 67%, in Poland: 60%, in Spain: 61%), even though women are generally better educated than men. Women, as compared to men, are in greater risk of losing their jobs and it is also more difficult for them to find a job. This is especially relevant for women up to the age of 40.

The gender division of the labour market can be noted everywhere: more prestigious and better-paid positions are awarded to men; professions and qualifications considered as "feminine" are less valued, and even a job performed at home is assessed differently depending on whether it is done by a man or a woman : a man "works" at home, a woman "stays" at home.

Although all the countries define the situation of women in the labour market as difficult and admit that some measures must be taken to improve it, not all the local authorities treat the problem with equal seriousness. As seen in the analyses, the regional authorities of Madrid are involved in a number of pro-equality activities that support women in various aspects of social life, such as countering violence against women, making the labour market rights equal, promoting co-responsibility in family and home duties , education, psychological assistance, etc. Italy presents a similar way of treating the problem. Poland is the only one where there are no pro-equality programs initiated or implemented by the authorities that would strongly influence situation or have any practical impact. The situation is especially drastic on the regional and local level, where we not only face a lack of activity but also a weak awareness among authorities that the problem exists at all.

Analysis of supporting resources

According to the analyses, all the partner countries have access to abundant resources for supporting women's return to the labour market. There are differences, however, in the structure concerning the typology of the resources, the enterprises/people who organize them, and the way they are used by women.

Generally, the resources can be divided into four groups, based on the enterprises/people that organize them. And so we distinguish resources:

1. organized by the local administration agencies and similar bodies;
2. organized by NGOs;
3. organized by private companies;
4. informal ones, organized by the women themselves.

Supporting resources can also be divided depending on the kind of support they provide.

We can distinguish resources concerned with:

1. upgrading /changing qualifications;
2. developing skills of active employment-seeking;
3. assistance and counselling (psychological, career, legal);
4. assistance in helping dependent persons (including children);
5. financial support, both in the case of self-employment and organizing jobs.

The supporting resources organized by the local administration agencies and similar institutions are the most numerous ones in all the countries. They usually result from the realization of regional plans of action concerning the prevention of unemployment. This

support is mainly in the form of various trainings; psychological, career and legal counselling; providing information on the labour market and current employment opportunities; assistance in active employment-seeking. It is also possible to receive a refund for the costs of childcare or the care for a dependent person, as well as scholarships for training.

These institutions also provide support that does not reach the women directly, but is addressed to their current/potential employers helping them in the development of the enterprise and thus raising the number of jobs. The support can be carried through with the introduction of specialist projects (e.g. ones concerned with upgrading qualification) and establishing permanent institutions that focus on providing particular services (e.g. information centers). An important role in helping women is also played by specialized administration bodies such as a plenipotentiary for an equal gender status, or a work-family conciliation agency. Unfortunately, these two do not exist in Poland.

The most popular activities supporting women in the labour market are the ones organized by the local authorities and similar institutions (especially in Italy) and they are highly valued by the beneficiaries.

Their disadvantage (mainly in terms of Poland) is their limited range, which means that they do not cover the demand.

The solutions these institutions offer and their development point to the directions of the social policy towards the employment of women in a given region/country.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are extremely important providers of resources supporting women in the labour market. Their offer complements the activity of the local public administration agencies in the amount and range of activities. In places where the support from the local authorities is well organized and meets the social needs, the role of the NGOs is less significant: it is clearly visible on the example of Italy and Spain. In places where the offer on the part of the authorities is insufficient or does not meet the social expectations the role of the NGOs gains significance, which can be seen on the example of Poland. In this case the NGOs are not only the source of required services but also a significant force in introducing social changes which are necessary but are being overlooked by the government.

NGOs are also indispensable in activities that require a close and individualized contact with the women who are in need of help, which is why they are often the organizers of such undertakings as support groups, microgrants, loans, and assistance in building individual professional paths. NGOs are also better informed as to the real needs

of women than the local public administration agencies which above all focus on carrying out the government policy.

The work of the NGOs and the authorities is complemented considerably by the offer of private companies in the field of training and childcare, even though usually private companies do not play an important role in providing support for women in the labour market because of the focus placed on profit and not on solving social ills. Moreover, thanks to the opportunity of taking benefit from EU funds and entering into partnership with NGOs and local authorities, private companies more and more often participate in activities that lie in the competence of their partners.

An important spot on the map of resources supporting women in the labour market is taken by the so-called informal resources, such as: the help of family and friends, informal contacts with the employer and workmates, Internet forums, time banks, alternative forms of childcare. It is also worth mentioning that women also turn to newspaper or Internet ads when they are looking for a job. These informal resources play a major role in Poland, where women often point to them as the factors that facilitate their integration in the labour market.

Analysis of working typology and working conditions

It can be noted on the basis of the analyses that flexible forms of employment were considered especially favourable for the return of women to the labour market in all the partner countries. Among the most favourable were:

1. self-employment;
2. part-time employment;
3. job sharing;
4. temporary employment;
5. telework.

Additionally in Poland freelance work, work at schools, and academic work were considered as jobs that facilitate the return to work after a maternity or childcare leave. These jobs, even though they do not fit into the categories of the flexible work options mentioned above, are in their character more or less similar to the forms of work considered as flexible.

All the analyses also emphasize the usefulness or, at times, even the indispensability of modern ICT when applying the flexible forms of employment.

The flexible forms of employment are strongly promoted by the Spanish and especially the Italian authorities through numerous legislative and organizational initiatives. Unfortunately, the results of the undertaken initiatives do not always coincide with the determined aims. It also often occurs that the opportunities gained through the initiatives are not fully taken advantage of because of the existing stereotypes concerning the gender roles. In Poland, unfortunately, the involvement of the government in promoting the flexible forms of employment is minimal and is basically limited to taking up work on legislation that would regulate applying them legally.

Although the benefits that come from applying the flexible forms of employment by women who wish to be reintegrated to the labour market can by no means be denied, there are some risks that cannot be ignored.

Some of the flexible forms of employment mentioned above are connected with lower salaries, which results in a lower level of social benefits, such as for example pensions.

Such forms of employment are also connected with lower prestige, limited employment stability and a lower chance of an employee's promotion. Moreover, a job done by a woman at home is often treated as sub-standard and it does not enjoy such prestige as a job done by a man. This is based on the stereotypical way of perceiving the home as the woman's territory where she does not 'work', but 'stays': unfortunately, work done by a woman at home still remains underestimated.

Another negative factor of flexible forms of employment is that the woman taking up work in such a form while she is in the period of maternity supports the attitude that it is she who should be concerned with and responsible for reconciliation the career and the family life. The fact must be faced that the solutions thought up to support the reconciliation of career and family life will not be fully effective as long as the problem of gender equality in home responsibilities is not solved. According to the analyses, good solutions (apart from promoting co-responsibility at home and in family) would include: decreasing the costs of hiring parents and forming local coalitions made up of the representatives of employers, trade unions, authorities, and NGOs that would all act together in order to work out efficient solutions.