

Mainstreaming gender in the European Union

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ABSTRACT This article examines and explains the adoption of gender mainstreaming by the European Union (EU), and traces its implementation in five issue-areas of EU policy: Structural Funds, employment, development, competition, and science, research and development. The EU decision to adopt gender mainstreaming, as well as its variable implementation across issue-areas, can be explained in terms of three factors derived from social movement theory: the political opportunities offered by EU institutions in various issue-areas; the mobilizing structures, or European networks, established among the advocates of gender equality; and the efforts of such advocates to strategically frame the gender-mainstreaming mandate so as to ensure its acceptance by EU policy-makers.

KEY WORDS Framing; gender; mainstreaming; political opportunities; social movement theory.

INTRODUCTION

In the past decade, the European Union (EU) has embraced a new and broader agenda for equal opportunities between women and men. By contrast with the Union's traditional focus on equal pay and equal treatment in the workplace, this new agenda also includes specific positive actions on behalf of women, as well as a new commitment to 'mainstream' gender throughout the policy process. In this article, we examine and explain this expansion of the EU equal opportunities agenda, focusing primarily on the potentially revolutionary, yet little studied, principle of gender mainstreaming. The article is organized into four parts. In Part I, we introduce Teresa Rees's three categories of equal treatment, positive action, and gender mainstreaming, arguing that the EU has in recent years adopted all three approaches in its equal opportunities policy. This expansion of the EU equal opportunities agenda, we argue, can be explained by the core concepts of social movement theory – political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and strategic framing – which we introduce briefly. In Part II, we turn to the official adoption of a gender-mainstreaming approach by the European Commission in 1996, arguing that the adoption of the new policy frame can be explained in terms of the increased

political opportunities presented by the Maastricht Treaty and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, the supranational network of women advocates at the EU level, and the resonance or fit of mainstreaming with the EU's institutional structure. In Part III, we move beyond the adoption of mainstreaming to examine its *implementation* across five issue-areas, arguing once again that the cross-sectoral variation we observe can be explained in terms of the categories of social movement theory. In Part IV, we conclude with a mixed assessment of both the promise and the dangers of the EU's new gender-mainstreaming approach.

I. FROM EQUAL TREATMENT TO POSITIVE ACTION AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Rees (1998) distinguishes between three ideal-typical approaches to gender issues: equal treatment, positive action, and mainstreaming. *Equal treatment*, in Rees's words, 'implies that no individual should have fewer human rights or opportunities than any other', and its application in the European Community (EC) context has taken the form of the adoption of Article 119 on equal pay for men and women, and the subsequent adoption of a series of Directives on equal pay and equal treatment in the workplace. It is these Directives which have been activated by women litigants in the member states, and enforced by the European Court of Justice in the many equal pay and equal treatment cases since *Defrenne* (Rees 1998: 29). Such an equal treatment approach is an essential element in any equal opportunities policy, Rees argues, but the approach is nevertheless flawed in focusing exclusively on the formal rights of women as workers, and therefore failing to address the fundamental causes of sexual inequality in the informal 'gender contracts' among women and men (1998: 32).

In contrast to the equal treatment approach, Rees posits a second approach, called *positive action*, in which 'the emphasis shifts from equality of access to creating conditions more likely to result in equality of outcome' (1998: 34). More concretely, positive action involves the adoption of specific actions on behalf of women, in order to overcome their unequal starting positions in a patriarchal society. At the extreme, positive action may also take the form of *positive discrimination*, which seeks to increase the participation of women (or other under-represented groups) through the use of affirmative-action preferences or quotas (1998: 37). Rees detects a gradual move in the EU since the 1980s away from a narrow equal treatment perspective toward the adoption of specific, positive-action measures on behalf of women. During the 1990s, this gradual trend has continued, and indeed accelerated, as a result of three major policy initiatives. First, the European Commission has in recent years adopted a series of Action Programmes, which have fostered pilot projects and the exchange of best practices in areas such as child care and the political representation of women, as well as the creation of networks of experts and advocates in women's rights issues (Mazey 1995). Second, the EU has recently witnessed a lively debate over positive discrimination, stimulated by the European Court's decisions in the *Kalanke* and *Marschall* cases, and culminating in the reaffirmation of the member states' right to adopt positive discrimination schemes under EU law (Ellis 1998). Third, the

adoption of the Maastricht Treaty, with its pillar devoted to Justice and Home Affairs issues, has created the political space for a new and vigorous EU policy on violence against women, an area previously off-limits to the economically oriented EC. Taken together, these initiatives have allowed the EU to undertake concrete action in areas beyond the narrow equal treatment approach.

The third and most promising approach identified by Rees is *gender mainstreaming*. The concept of gender mainstreaming calls for the systematic incorporation of gender issues throughout *all* governmental institutions and policies. As defined by the Commission, which adopted a formal commitment to gender mainstreaming in 1996, the term involves:

The systematic integration of the respective situations, priorities and needs of women and men in all policies and with a view to promoting equality between women and men and mobilizing all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality by actively and openly taking into account, at the planning stage, their effects on the respective situation of women and men in implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

(Commission of the European Communities 1996: 2)

Thus defined, gender mainstreaming is a potentially revolutionary concept, which promises to bring a gender dimension into all EU policies. Yet, gender mainstreaming is also an extraordinarily demanding concept, which requires the adoption of a gender perspective by all the central actors in the policy process – some of whom may have little experience or interest in gender issues. This raises two central questions: why, and how, did the EU adopt a policy of gender mainstreaming in the first place, and how has it been implemented in practice?

The answer to both of these questions can be found in the literature on social movements, which emphasizes a combination of political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and strategic framing in order to explain the rise of social movements and their impact on policy (cf. McAdam *et al.* 1996; McAdam *et al.* 1998; Tarrow 1998). In terms of *political opportunities*, the institutions of the EU offer women's advocates a wide range of access points and elite allies within the policy process (Pollack 1997). Furthermore, we argue below that the political opportunity structure of the EU became systematically *more* favourable in the 1990s, as a result of the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty on European Union in 1993, and the subsequent accession in 1995 of three new member states with a long-standing commitment to sexual equality. These changes explain much of the recent broadening of the EU women's rights agenda.

However, the ability of social movements to organize and to influence policy is dependent in part upon *mobilizing structures*, defined as 'those collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action' (McAdam *et al.* 1996: 3). In the case of the EU, specific supranational actors – including most notably the Equal Opportunities Unit of the Commission and the Women's Rights Committee of the European Parliament – form the heart of a transnational network of experts and activists in the area of equal opportunities

which has succeeded in placing on the agenda a wide range of issues previously beyond the scope of EU policy-making.

Finally, in addition to political opportunities and mobilizing structures, social movement theorists have focused increasingly on the importance of *framing processes*, understood as ‘the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action’ (McAdam *et al.* 1996: 6). The concept of strategic framing was first applied to the study of social movements by Snow and his colleagues, who argued that social movement organizations may *strategically* frame issues in order to resonate or ‘fit’ with the existing dominant frames held by various actors, who are more likely to adopt new frames that are resonant, rather than in conflict, with their existing ‘dominant’ frames (Snow and Benford 1992: 137). Following Sonia Mazey (1998), we argue that gender mainstreaming emerged during the 1990s as the dominant policy frame for equal opportunities policy in the EU. The acceptance and implementation of gender mainstreaming, however, depends on the resonance between the proposed policy frame and the dominant frame(s) of the EU institutions, which we suggest can be placed along a continuum in terms of their support for either a neo-liberal frame, emphasizing individualism and free markets, or a more interventionist frame, which endorses intervention of states and international organizations in the market-place in pursuit of social goals such as sexual equality (cf. Runyan 1999). As we shall see, the Directorates-General (DGs) of the European Commission vary considerably in their placement along this continuum, and this variation in turn explains much of the variance in their responses to the Commission’s gender-mainstreaming mandate of the late 1990s.

II. THE ORIGINS OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE EU

The concept of gender mainstreaming effectively entered the mainstream of international public policy in September 1995, when it featured in the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, which defined the term broadly and committed the institutions of the UN system to the systematic incorporation of a gender perspective into policy-making (Hafner-Burton and Pollack, forthcoming). The term gender mainstreaming first entered EC parlance in 1991, when it appeared as a relatively small but innovative element in the Third Action Programme on Equal Opportunities, though the concept remained unrealized during the Third Programme itself (1991–6). During this period, the Commission undertook specific sectoral initiatives on behalf of women, and participated actively in the preparation for the Beijing Conference, where it endorsed the principle of gender mainstreaming on behalf of the EU (Commission of the European Communities 1995). However, no attempt was made during the Third Action Programme to create a bureaucratic structure across the Commission capable of introducing a gender perspective into all EU policies.

The key year for the adoption of gender mainstreaming, rather, was 1995, when the political opportunity structure of the Union, which had always been relatively open to women’s groups, became even more so, as a result of several events. First,

the new Santer Commission was appointed from an expanded pool of member states, including three new members (Sweden, Austria and Finland) with a strong, existing commitment to equal opportunities, and with considerable experience in mainstreaming gender in their own public policies. Furthermore, the Commission nominees from the new member states – and in particular Commissioner Erkki Liikanen of Finland and Anita Gradin of Sweden – demonstrated keen interest in the equal opportunities portfolio. As a result of these changes, and of the nomination choices of existing member governments, the incoming Santer Commission contained a record five women, and an increased commitment to equal opportunities. At the insistence of the new Scandinavian and women Commissioners, Santer agreed to establish a new high-level ‘Commissioners’ Group’ on equal opportunities (Palmer 1994).

A second change in the political opportunity structure took place in November 1993 with the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty. Although the Treaty did not expand EU competence for equal opportunities policy, it did provide for a major expansion of the power of the European Parliament, which had long acted as one of the primary advocates of a more forceful EU policy on women’s issues. In addition to creating a new co-decision procedure for certain areas of legislation, the Treaty also granted the Parliament the right to vote on the nomination of the incoming Santer Commission. Significantly, the Women’s Rights Committee of the Parliament sharply criticized the returning Social Affairs Commissioner, Padraig Flynn, for his alleged lack of progress on women’s issues in the Delors Commission and demanded that Santer take the equal opportunities portfolio away from Flynn. Santer refused to take the portfolio away from Flynn, but in a gesture to the Parliament announced that his Commission would devote significant attention to equal opportunities, and that Santer himself would chair the proposed Commissioners’ Group.²

Thus, the new Santer Commission came into office in 1995 with a new Commissioners’ Group on equal opportunities, and a clear mandate for a major initiative in the equal opportunities area. The *substance* of the Commission’s initiative was provided by the ‘policy frame’ of gender mainstreaming – which was already familiar to the Equal Opportunities Unit of the Commission, and which was given a major boost by the public adoption of mainstreaming as a key element of the Beijing Platform of Action. This mainstreaming frame, moreover, ‘resonated’ within the Commission as a whole, which also possessed prior experience of the integration of another consideration – the environment – across all issue-areas. In late 1995, therefore, the Commission proposed, and the Council adopted, the Fourth Action Programme (1996–2000) on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, which featured mainstreaming as the single most important element, alongside existing specific actions (Council of Ministers 1995). In February 1996, the Commission officially declared its commitment to mainstreaming with a new Communication entitled ‘Incorporating Equal Opportunities for Women and Men into All Community Policies and Activities’, which committed the Commission to the mobilization of all Community policies for the purpose of promoting gender equality (Commission of the European Communities 1996).

Finally, the Union's new approach to equal opportunities was both reflected and strengthened by the terms of the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam, which includes multiple new provisions strengthening EU competence in the area of equal opportunities. In place of the original, one-paragraph Article 119 on equal pay, the member states agreed to a new Article 119 (now renumbered Article 141), which strengthens the original language on equal pay; provides for qualified majority voting in the Council, and co-decision with the European Parliament for future equal opportunities legislation; and contains a specific clause permitting states to maintain positive discrimination policies in light of the *Kalanke* and *Marschall* rulings. The most far-reaching provisions in the new Treaty, however, may be the revisions to Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty, which make equal opportunities for women and men – and not simply equal pay or equal treatment in the workplace – a central objective of the Union, which it will henceforth strive to incorporate into all EU policies. These articles are not directly effective, and do not create legally enforceable rights for European women, but they do represent a Treaty-based political commitment to gender mainstreaming which the Commission has cited as both legal authority and 'political cover' for its subsequent proposals. In order to secure the adoption and implementation of specific policies, however, the EU will have to mobilize, not merely the traditional network of women's advocates surrounding the Commission's Equal Opportunities Unit, but the entire policy-making machinery of the Union. It is to this challenge that we now turn.

III. IMPLEMENTING MAINSTREAMING: PIERCING THE NEEDLES' EYES

In their critical review of EU equal opportunities policy, Ilona Ostner and Jane Lewis (1995) argue persuasively that any gender-related policies at the EU level must pass through two 'needles' eyes' in order to be implemented: a first needle's eye at the level of the Union, with its narrow conception of equal opportunities in terms of equal treatment and its stringent requirement of consensus in the Council; and a second needle's eye in the variable implementation of EU legislation in the 'gender order' of each individual member state (Ostner and Lewis 1995: 161). Ostner and Lewis are surely correct in pointing to the institutional and ideological obstacles in the path of a successful mainstreaming policy. Indeed, we suggest that there are not two, but three institutional needles' eyes through which gender mainstreaming must pass: (1) the supranational level of the Commission bureaucracy, in which the majority of DGs have little or no experience in adopting a gender perspective; (2) the intergovernmental level of the Council, where any proposed policies must garner a qualified majority, or even a unanimous vote among the member governments; and (3) the member state level, at which both binding and non-binding EU provisions are implemented according to the 'gender order' of each respective member state. To what extent has the Union been able to overcome these three hurdles and institute a real policy of gender mainstreaming in the four years since the Commission's 1996 Communication?

It is, of course, early days for gender mainstreaming in the EU, and so any

assessment we might offer in this context must necessarily be tentative and limited primarily to an analysis of procedural changes within the Commission, rather than on the substance of policies which have only begun to emerge, and least of all on the record of national implementation, where little or no data is yet available. Nevertheless, on the basis of an exhaustive review of primary documents and interviews with Commission, Parliament, and member state officials as well as non-governmental organization (NGO) representatives, it is possible to review (a) the Commission-wide procedures put in place thus far to ensure that a gender perspective is considered in the planning and implementation of all EU policies; and (b) the preliminary record of EU successes and failures in mainstreaming gender into both procedures and policies across five specific issue-areas.

Commission procedures for gender mainstreaming

In order to succeed, the policy of gender mainstreaming must reach out beyond the core of equal opportunities advocates in and around the Equal Opportunities Unit, incorporating in the first instance officials from other policy areas and other DGs. The methodological requirements for gender mainstreaming are demanding, including the appointment of key officials responsible for the overall mainstreaming strategy; the provision of training in gender issues for other officials whose substantive expertise lies elsewhere; the collection of statistics and other data disaggregated by sex, to be used in planning, monitoring and evaluating the effects of policy on gender inequality; and other specialized techniques such as 'gender proofing' and 'gender impact assessment' (Nelen 1997: 43–8; see also Council of Europe 1998; Rees 1998; Hafner-Burton and Pollack, forthcoming). Recognizing these demands, the Commission endeavoured during the late 1990s to establish centralized co-ordination, a network of gender advocates and experts across the various DGs, and explicit methods to guide officials in the implementation of gender mainstreaming across all policy areas.

First, at the highest level, the Santer Commission established the aforementioned 'Equality Group of Commissioners' chaired by Santer and featuring Commissioners Gradin, Wulf-Mathies, Liikanen and Flynn as regular members (with other members in attendance depending on the subject matter under discussion). The Commissioners' Group met only three times a year during the Santer years, and its actual impact on policy-making is the subject of debate among Commission participants, but in principle it provides both a high-level commitment to the principle of mainstreaming and centralized co-ordination of gender in all EU policies.

Below the Commissioners' Group, two inter-service groups were established in 1996, the first devoted to equal opportunities in general, and the second concerned with equal opportunities and the Structural Funds (which were selected as a test case for the new mainstreaming approach). At a lower level, a group of 'gender-mainstreaming officials' were appointed within each of the Commission's DGs and Services: these officials serve both to represent a gender perspective in their respective DGs, and to co-ordinate policy with the other mainstreaming officials in

the group (Commission of the European Communities 1998a, 1998b, 1999a). In addition, many DGs have appointed a number of gender 'focal points' to provide decentralized gender expertise at the level of the unit, although the training of these officials varies considerably both within and across DGs. Finally, in a preliminary effort to provide specific instruction regarding the procedures for integrating gender into EU policy-making, the Equal Opportunities Unit prepared 'A Guide to Gender Impact Assessment', providing officials with a basic checklist for the inclusion of gender issues in policy proposals (Commission of the European Communities 1997b).

Thus, by the end of 1999, the Commission had established a multi-tiered system of mainstreaming officials and a preliminary set of general procedures designed to ensure that gender issues are considered throughout the policy process, and across the various issue-areas and DGs of the Commission. Moreover, the Commission has made clear that the mainstreaming of gender issues throughout the Commission should supplement, and not replace, existing, specific actions, which continue under the Commission's so-called 'dual-track strategy'. However, the extent to which these new procedures actually become part of the day-to-day policy-making of individual DGs – and the extent to which gender issues actually pierce the various needles' eyes of the Commission, Council, Parliament, and member state implementation – is less clear. It is to this more difficult question that we turn in the next section.

Mainstreaming EU policies: five case studies

Thus far, we have dealt with the European Commission as a unitary actor, and we have characterized the Commission or even the Union as a whole in terms of its political opportunities, mobilizing structures and dominant frames. In order to explain the considerable variation in the implementation of gender mainstreaming across issue-areas, however, we need to disaggregate the Commission into its constituent DGs and Services, which are responsible for the formulation of policy in various issue-areas. These units differ considerably in the political opportunities they offer to women's advocates, the networks that mobilize to take advantage of those opportunities, and the dominant frames that characterize and define their respective missions. In terms of the social movement model specified above, we predict that the implementation of gender mainstreaming should be most advanced, in terms of both procedures and policy, where the political opportunity structure is the most open, where the networks of gender experts and advocates are most developed, and where the policy frame of mainstreaming resonates with the organizational culture of individual DGs. All of these factors vary between the different issue-areas and DGs of the Commission.

Below we review the evidence of gender mainstreaming in procedure and in policy across five issue-areas and five Commission DGs: Structural Funds (led by Regional Policy and Cohesion, the former DG XVI); Employment and Social Affairs (formerly DG V); Development (DGs VIII and IB); Competition (DG IV); and Science, Research and Development (DG XII). In terms of dominant frames,

the first three of these DGs have historically been interventionist in character, and relatively open to consideration of social justice issues, including gender. By contrast, the remaining two DGs, Competition and Research, are oriented primarily toward market or technical criteria, and have considerably less experience of dealing with gender issues; and we would therefore expect these two DGs to be less receptive to the gender-mainstreaming frame. However, as highlighted below, advocates of gender mainstreaming have proven adept in strategically framing the issue in order to fit with the dominant frame of a given DG, most often by emphasizing the gains in *efficiency* (as opposed to equality) that are likely to be realized if and when gender is taken into account across the policy process. The five issue-areas examined below also differ significantly in terms of mobilizing structures of gender advocates outside the organization, and perhaps more importantly in the presence or absence of elite allies *within* the relevant DGs, who have in each case played a central role in framing the gender-mainstreaming mandate and carrying out its implementation.

Structural Funds

The EU's Structural Funds – composed of the European Social Fund, the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF), and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) – were introduced separately and incrementally after 1958, and were managed by three distinct DGs (Employment and Social Affairs, Agriculture, and Regional Policy and Cohesion, respectively). In 1988 the member states adopted a major reform of the Structural Funds, which provided for a doubling of their overall budgets in real terms between 1988 and 1993, while at the same time bringing the three existing funds under a common set of Regulations, and creating a new set of Community Initiatives to address specific European priorities (Yuill *et al.* 1998: 90–5). These 1988 Regulations have since been revised twice: in 1993, when the budget was once again doubled in real terms, and the terms of the Regulations were adjusted somewhat to increase the influence of the member governments *vis-à-vis* the Commission; and in February 1999, when the European Council adopted the so-called Agenda 2000 package, which stabilized Structural Fund budgets roughly at existing levels, while introducing additional administrative reforms to the Fund Regulations.

In terms of the three criteria identified by social movement theory, the Structural Funds might be expected to be particularly receptive to the Commission's new gender-mainstreaming mandate. First, with regard to political opportunities, the Structural Funds afforded women's advocates multiple points of access and elite allies among the three DGs, including the presence of two members of the Commissioners' Group, Pdraig Flynn and Monika Wulf-Mathies, who were strong champions of the Commission's mainstreaming mandate. Furthermore, surrounding these DGs there already existed a well-developed network of women activists across the EU's member states, many of whom had already begun to participate in EU structural policy through the partnership provisions of the 1988 reforms (Braithwaite 1999). Finally, in terms of their dominant policy frames, all three DGs involved in the

implementation of the Funds can be placed toward the interventionist end of the continuum discussed above.

For these reasons – and because the Regulations governing the administration of the Structural Funds were scheduled for renewal in 1999, providing a timely window of opportunity – the Commission decided to make the Structural Funds a test case for its new gender-mainstreaming mandate. In March 1998, after a major Commission effort involving officials from multiple DGs and gender experts brought in as outside consultants, the Commission produced a draft set of Regulations for the period from 2000 to 2006, which effectively mainstreamed gender considerations across every aspect of the EU's structural operations. The proposed Framework Regulation contained ten substantive articles laying down specific requirements for the integration of a gender perspective at every major stage in the policy process, including: the general objectives of the Funds; *ex ante* evaluation of the situation in a given region in terms of equality between women and men; an assessment of the likely impact of proposed programmes on women and men in a variety of areas; the provision of statistics broken down by sex wherever possible; the 'balanced participation' of women and men on all monitoring committees; and a requirement for the Commission to refer specifically to gender issues in its triennial reports on the implementation of the Funds. In addition to these far-reaching provisions, the specific proposals for the ERDF, Social Fund and EAGGF Regulations included specific wording making the removal of gender-based inequalities a core objective of each respective fund (Commission of the European Communities 1998e: 14–15; Braithwaite 1999).

The Commission's proposals were supported by extensive technical documentation, and were preceded by widespread consultation of numerous Commission DGs and member state representatives. Throughout the drafting and negotiation of the new Regulations, moreover, the Commission consistently framed the question of gender mainstreaming as a question of *efficiency* as well as social justice. This framing is perhaps best summarized in a January 1999 report produced for the Commission by Mary Braithwaite. In the report, Braithwaite writes that:

The integration of equal opportunities into the Structural Funds is not only for reasons of social justice and democracy. The main aim of the Structural Funds – to reduce economic and social disparities and to establish the conditions which will assure the long-term development of the regions – depends upon the fullest participation of the active population in economic and social life. Failure to overcome the constraints to the equal and full participation of women and men means that the development objectives of growth, competitiveness and employment cannot be fully achieved, and also that the investments made in human resources (e.g. in raising education and qualification levels) are not exploited efficiently.

(Braithwaite 1999: 5)

Here we see the Commission's effort to frame its gender-mainstreaming proposals strategically, to appeal to officials and political representatives concerned with

economic efficiency rather than, or in addition to, social justice and gender equality. This strategy, which has also been identified in several, previous studies of gender mainstreaming at the World Bank and other international development organizations, was consciously designed to enhance the resonance of the gender-mainstreaming frame with the existing policy frames of a wide range of supranational and national officials, and would be adopted again by the Commission in other issue-areas (see e.g. Kardam 1991; Hafner-Burton and Pollack, forthcoming).

Largely as a result of this careful preparation and strategic framing on the part of the Commission, the gender provisions of the new Regulations provoked little negative reaction or debate within the Council of Ministers, which adopted the new Regulations in June 1999, with only marginal changes.³ At the level of policy, therefore, the 1999 Structural Fund Regulations represent the first major breakthrough for the Commission's mainstreaming mandate. The extent to which individual member states and regions implement these provisions in their programming documents, and in individual development projects, remains to be seen as the new Fund Regulations are put into effect over the period 2000–2006.

Employment policy

The issue of employment has traditionally been the primary responsibility of member states, with only a modest and indirect supporting role for the EU. By the mid-1990s, however, member governments, faced with double-digit unemployment rates, agreed to co-ordinate their employment policies, and in 1997 they inserted a new Employment Title into the Treaty of Amsterdam. According to the new title, employment would remain the primary responsibility of member governments, but a 'high level of employment' was recognized as a Community objective, and a new procedure was established for the annual adoption of a series of Employment Guidelines by the Council, followed by the submission of National Action Plans (NAPs) by the member states, which would then be analysed by the Commission and the Council in their annual *Joint Employment Report*. Although non-binding, this annual exercise of setting joint guidelines and analysing national reports was seen as a sort of 'peer-pressure' exercise, in which member states were encouraged to formulate their national employment policies in response to common EU priorities and the views of other member states.

The adoption of the new Employment Title and its implementation in late 1997 created an unexpected window of opportunity for the Commission's gender-mainstreaming mandate. Under the new provisions, the key role in preparing the new Employment Guidelines, analysing the NAPs, and issuing recommendations would be played by the DG for Employment and Social Policy, whose Commissioner Padraig Flynn and Director-General Alan Larsson were deeply involved in, and supportive of, the Commission's gender-mainstreaming policy. In addition, the DG was home to the Equal Opportunities Unit, and therefore had access to the Unit's extensive gender expertise and advocacy. The dominant frame of the DG, finally, was clearly oriented toward social issues in general, and toward gender

issues in particular, making the new Employment Title a particularly likely candidate for mainstreaming within the Commission.

In this context, the Commission came forward in October 1997 with a draft *Proposal for Guidelines for Member States' Employment Policies*, which established four lines of action or 'pillars' to guide member state policies on employment: entrepreneurship, employability, adaptability, and equal opportunities for women and men. Under each pillar, the Communication provided a brief introduction justifying the importance of the objective, followed by specific actions to be taken by member governments in the NAPs, and quantitative targets and indicators to measure member state performance. In the section on equal opportunities, the Commission justified its proposals, not only in terms of social justice, but also, or primarily, in terms of efficiency:

There are sound economic and social reasons [it argued] for reinforcement of efforts of Member States to promote equal opportunities in the labour market. While the employment situation of women has improved over recent decades, unemployment is higher for women than for men (12.6% as against 9.7%) and their rate of participation in work is lower (50.2% as against 70.4%). Within work, women are over-represented in some sectors and professions and under-represented in others. These labour-market rigidities, which impede Europe's capacity for growth and job creation, must be tackled.

(Commission of the European Communities 1997a: 16)

Once again, the Commission's language was clearly framed to ensure member states' acceptance of its proposals, which called for positive action in three areas: tackling gender gaps (through active state support for increased employment of women); reconciling work and family life (most notably by raising levels of child-care provision); and facilitating return to work by women after extended absence (by improving women's access to vocational training). Finally, the Communication proposed a weakly worded call for the mainstreaming of gender (or rather of women) across all of the guidelines (Commission of the European Communities 1997a: 16). Adoption of the Employment Guidelines, however, fell to the Council of Ministers, which retained the three specific equal opportunities actions called for by the Commission, but weakened the wording of several provisions, and eliminated entirely the Commission's proposed paragraph on the mainstreaming of gender in the other three pillars (Council of Ministers 1997).

Despite this setback, the Commission continued in its efforts to encourage the effective implementation of the equal opportunities guidelines by member states, which submitted their first NAPs in April 1998. The DG for Employment and Social Affairs undertook an extensive study of the NAPs, especially of their gender aspects. Overall, the Commission's initial response to the NAPs was positive but it stated bluntly in its initial assessment that the equal opportunities pillar was the least well developed of the four pillars in most reports, with very few concrete measures proposed (Commission of the European Communities 1998c). In addition, a detailed internal Commission study concluded that while many of the NAPs

demonstrated a rhetorical commitment to the principle of equal opportunities, they varied in terms of the pervasiveness of a gender perspective, as well as concrete policy proposals and indicators for monitoring implementation (Commission of the European Communities 1998d).

Responding to these results, the Commission in September 1998 issued new proposals to the Council for the 1999 version of the Employment Guidelines. The Commission proposed to leave the guidelines largely unchanged, with only minimal changes to the wording of the individual guidelines. Notable among these proposed changes, however, was a long and detailed reference to the principle of mainstreaming, to be added as a fourth priority under the equal opportunities pillar. Although the member states had rejected a considerably weaker draft provision the previous year, in 1998 the Commission enjoyed decisive support from the British and Austrian Presidencies of the Council. During the first half of the year, the British Presidency had explicitly endorsed the principle of mainstreaming, which was inserted for the first time into the Presidency Conclusions of the June 1998 Cardiff European Council.⁴ The Austrian Presidency during the last half of the year was an equally strong supporter, and chaired the negotiation of the 1999 Employment Guidelines, the final version of which retained, unchanged, the commitment to gender mainstreaming (Council of the European Union 1999b). Finally, the Vienna European Council called on each of the member states to draft new NAPs by June 1999, for examination and peer review by the Commission and the Council.

The Commission's review of the 1999 NAPs was much more thorough, and its report more specific and more critical, than the previous year's review. The Commission systematically analysed each member state's NAP, noting strengths and weaknesses in specific proposals, and commenting explicitly on the presence or absence of a gender-mainstreaming perspective. This perspective ranged from a detailed and comprehensive approach by Sweden, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and France – which was singled out for praise after developing specific, quantitative indicators for gender issues in response to previous Commission criticisms – to a less detailed approach by countries such as Italy, Ireland and Greece, which proposed specific actions in some areas, but failed to mainstream gender throughout their employment plans (Commission of the European Communities 1999c).

In addition, at the urging of Commissioner Flynn, the outgoing Santer Commission also issued a total of fifty-six recommendations to the fifteen member states, including a number of gender-specific recommendations to countries as diverse as Greece, Italy and Ireland (all of which were urged to strengthen the gender-mainstreaming approach in their NAPs), and Finland and Sweden (which were praised for their gender-mainstreaming approaches, but urged to reduce the segregation of women workers in traditional sectors of the labour market) (Commission of the European Communities 1999d). Although several member governments challenged the Commission's criticisms, and insisted that Flynn's successor, Anna Diamantopoulou, engage in more extensive consultation prior to publishing recommendations in the future, the Council nevertheless accepted

fifty-three of the Commission's fifty-six recommendations, and ratified the Commission's general call for greater mainstreaming of gender issues across all four pillars of the Employment Guidelines (Smith 1999a; 1999b).

Finally, in December 1999, the Council agreed yet another set of Employment Guidelines for 2000, with equal opportunities provisions almost identical to those of the previous year. Once again, member states will be called upon during 2000 to draft new NAPs, which will be expected to address the gender-mainstreaming provisions of the new guidelines. Whether this exercise will *matter* – whether it will actually influence policy outcomes in the member states – remains to be seen in the coming years. Nevertheless, it is striking that several member states (most notably France) have already made a deliberate effort to integrate gender issues more clearly into their NAPs in response to Commission and Council criticism.

Development

The EU is one of the world's largest providers of official development aid, with a traditional focus on the group of former colonial countries known collectively as the African, Caribbean and Pacific (or ACP) countries, as well as a growing commitment to the former Soviet bloc, the Mediterranean and other developing regions (Development Assistance Committee 1998). The planning and implementation of EU development policy is concentrated primarily in the DGs for Development and External Relations, which offer a mixed picture from the perspective of social movement theory. In terms of dominant frame, we might expect the DG for Development to be a prime candidate for mainstreaming, thanks to its prolonged exposure to women-in-development (WID) issues in the international development community. During the 1980s, the Commission participated in various United Nations and World Bank meetings on WID, established its first part-time WID desk (in 1982), issued its first WID communication (1985), and incorporated WID paragraphs in the third and fourth Lomé Conventions (1984 and 1989). A decade later, however, the political opportunities for mainstreaming in EU development policy still seemed unfavourable, for three reasons. First, despite repeated pleas from the European Parliament, which created a dedicated budget line for WID in 1990 and increased its allocation in subsequent years, the Commission was slow to develop gender expertise. Its two WID desks (in Development and External Relations) remained understaffed and underfunded, receiving little support from Development Commissioner Joao de Deus Pinheiro, who failed to make gender issues a priority during his tenure. Second, such gender expertise as did exist was concentrated largely in the WID desks and did not extend to the general operations of the European Development Fund (EDF), which undertook no systematic gender evaluation of its lending prior to 1995 (Development Assistance Committee 1996: 44). Third, the actual operations of the EDF are highly decentralized. Mainstreaming EU development policy would therefore require an extensive effort to develop procedures and training and disseminate these not only throughout the relevant DGs in Brussels, but also to EU delegations and recipient governments over the world.

Despite these obstacles, the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995 provided fresh impetus for the mainstreaming of gender issues in EU development policy. In 1995, the Commission proposed, and the Council adopted, a non-binding Resolution on the 'Integration of Gender Issues in Development Co-operation', which called for the training of Commission officials and the creation of new tools and procedures for integrating gender into EU development activities. Significantly, the Resolution adopted the language of efficiency, pointing out that the EU would not achieve its development objectives for the APC countries unless it made full use of the economic potential of women as well as men in those countries. Then, in May 1998, the Development Council adopted a binding Regulation on the same subject, providing a clear legal mandate for Commission activities in this area, funded by a WID budget line that grew to 5 million euros in 1997, divided evenly between the Development and External Relations DGs (Council of Ministers 1998b).

Since 1995, both DGs have increased the number of personnel assigned to gender issues, and have established networks of gender focal points in twenty-six units of the Development DG, and three units of External Relations, supplemented by the use of external gender consultants both in Brussels and in the various EU delegations throughout the world. In addition, both DGs have gradually begun the process of developing specialized tools and instruments for gender issues, including a Gender Impact Assessment form in External Relations, and the creation of a Quality Support Group in Development to review all financial proposals over 2 million euros for attention to gender issues (Development Assistance Committee 1998: 34–6). In 1999, the DG for Development drafted a detailed and comprehensive action plan for the mainstreaming of gender issues in development policy, including extensive training of Brussels and field-based officials; increased support and training to the gender focal points; establishment of a 'gender help desk'; creation of new guidelines and checklists; revision of the EU product cycle management manual; and establishment of specific indicators for the future monitoring of the gender aspects of EU development programmes and projects.⁵ Finally, in February 2000, the Commission and the representatives of the APC countries concluded a new, twenty-year co-operation agreement, which includes specific language on gender and development issues (Singh and Sarno 1999; Buckley and James 2000).

Despite these considerable strides in the last five years, both internal and external reviews of Commission development policy point to continuing obstacles in the way of a successful mainstreaming policy. These include the lack of gender awareness and expertise among EU officials in Brussels and in the field delegations; insufficient funding for gender training; the overwhelming dominance of male officials at the highest levels of the EU development bureaucracy; the need to develop new instruments and procedures; and the challenge of securing the co-operation of recipient countries (Development Assistance Committee 1998; European Parliament 1997a; Council of Ministers 1998a).

Competition policy

The DG for Competition does not, a priori, appear to be particularly fertile ground for the adoption of the Commission's gender-mainstreaming mandate. By contrast with more socially oriented DGs, Competition is characterized by a relatively closed policy process, in which private firms play a key role and few provisions are made for participation by consumer groups or other NGOs. Perhaps for this reason, and because of the lack of any obvious implications of competition policy for women, European women's groups have seldom mobilized around the issue of competition policy. In terms of its dominant policy frame, the DG for Competition is among the most strongly neo-liberal DGs within the Commission. Dominated by lawyers and economists, the Competition DG enjoys exceptional autonomy from the political pressures of member state governments, and sees its mission as the creation and maintenance of a competitive European market-place. For this reason, EU competition officials resist any suggestion from other DGs or from the member states that they take into account non-market factors such as employment, industrial or social policies in their decisions (Cini and McGowan 1998).

Not surprisingly, therefore, the DG for Competition is mentioned frequently by Commission officials as the most resistant of the Commission services to the gender-mainstreaming mandate. By contrast with the DGs examined above – where resistance to mainstreaming is relatively rare, and typically takes the form of under-staffing, under-budgeting, or insufficient training rather than active opposition – the DG for Competition has taken a principled stance against the integration of gender into its decision-making processes. Specifically, in response to a survey by the Equal Opportunities Unit, the DG argued that the Treaties provide no legal basis for it to take gender issues directly into account in its decisions. However, it acknowledged that there was some legal scope for the *indirect* incorporation of gender issues, in so far as the Commission's state aids policy takes a favourable approach to national policies designed to help disadvantaged groups, including women, in the labour market. In addition, the DG noted that state aids must not breach any articles of the Treaty, including those on equal opportunities. Overall, however – and despite the views of the Equal Opportunities Unit, which specifically mentioned the Amsterdam Treaty as the legal basis for mainstreaming gender across all issue-areas – the Competition DG has resisted suggestions that gender be systematically incorporated into its state-aids, cartel and merger decisions.⁶

Science, research and development

Since the early 1980s, the EU has pursued an active policy to promote scientific research and development, most notably through a series of Framework Programmes which sponsor collaborative research and technological development across a range of sectors. In the context of the current study, the DG for Science, Research and Development would not have appeared in the early 1990s as a particularly promising arena for gender mainstreaming. In terms of political opportunities, the DG for Research had the smallest percentage of women among

its senior or A-grade officials (7.6 per cent) of any of the Commission services, providing few elite allies for advocates of gender mainstreaming. Similarly, the two primary advisory committees of scientists established under the Fourth Framework Programme (1994–8) possessed a female membership of 6.7 per cent and 0 per cent respectively (Osborn 1998: 87). Outside these official committees, there were several European-level organizations of women scientists, and many national-level networks, but these groups had little access to EU decision-makers prior to 1995. In terms of its dominant frame, finally, the DG for Science, Research and Development, although not strictly oriented toward a neo-liberal conception of the single European market, awarded EU research grants strictly according to scientific and technical criteria. Thus, the dominant frame prior to the late 1990s encouraged a consistent and deliberate policy of gender-blindness in EU research and development policy.

This gender-blindness meant that the overwhelming dominance of men within the scientific community was reproduced in EU research policy, in which Commission officials, advisory committee members, and recipients of EU research grants were overwhelmingly male.⁷ During the early 1990s, the Commission took a few initial steps toward addressing the dearth of women scientists in EU programmes, including a small 1993 conference on women in science, which put forward recommendations designed to improve the collection of statistics on the participation of women scientists in EU research programmes, and to encourage women scientists to apply for EU funding. Furthermore, the Fourth Framework Programme placed a strong emphasis on socio-economic research into quality-of-life issues, which might have been used to support gender-specific studies. Nevertheless, as Hilary Rose (1999) points out, these early efforts had little if any impact on policy during the Fourth Framework Programme, which made no reference to gender issues, and which failed even to collect any European-level statistics on the participation of women scientists in EU research programmes.

Despite this apparently unpromising fit between the Research DG and the proposed policy frame of gender mainstreaming, the political opportunity structure of research policy became markedly more favourable for advocates of gender issues during the mid-1990s, for several reasons. First, Edith Cresson, then the Commissioner in charge of Research and Development as well as a member of the Commissioners' Group, provided encouragement and support to advocates within her *cabinet* and in the services of the DG for Science, Research and Development, where a working group on women and science was created in late 1997, with four full-time officials by 1999.

Second, the EU's research and development mandate came up for renewal in 1998, providing new opportunities for women's advocates to influence the content of the Fifth Framework Programme, which would be adopted by co-decision between the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers. The Parliament had been an early advocate of integrating women in EU research programmes, and it criticized the Commission's initial proposal for the Fifth Framework Programme for its failure to include any significant language on women in science. Although the Parliament was unable to secure the adoption of significant changes in the final text

of the Framework Programme (see Commission of the European Communities 1999b), its lobbying – together with that of NGOs like Women’s International Studies Europe (WISE) and the European Women’s Lobby – created additional pressure on the Commission, and provided support for advocates of gender issues inside the Commission.

Together, these developments created another window of opportunity for the advocates of the Women and Science programme, which was inaugurated with a major conference in April 1998, followed by a formal Commission Communication in February 1999.⁸ The Commission’s Communication, entitled ‘Women and Science: Mobilizing Women to Enrich European Research’, began with a detailed analysis of the systematic under-representation of women in science, and the gender-based obstacles that women scientists encounter on the job market, in the peer-review system, and in being appointed to positions of responsibility and power within the scientific community. Given these systematic biases against women in science, the paper argued, the aim of the programme was not to *compromise* excellence in the pursuit of social justice, but rather to *enhance* the excellence of European science by removing barriers to participation by qualified women scientists – an efficiency-based argument which once again echoes the arguments made by women’s advocates in the structural policy, employment and development sectors above (Commission of the European Communities 1999b).

Against this background, the Commission proposed two key objectives for the new programme. The first objective was to stimulate European-level discussion and exchanges of experience among the member states regarding equal opportunities for women in science, in three stages. First, in November 1998, the Commission established a group of experts, the European Technology Assessment Network, comprising twelve women scientists, to study the challenges and prospects for women’s participation in European research policy. Second, the Commission then convened a standing group of national civil servants, to exchange experiences and best practice in the development of indicators, assessment and monitoring of women’s participation in national and European research policy. Third, and finally, the Commission hosted a meeting in Brussels in July 1999 entitled ‘Women in Science: Networking the Networks’, that sought to build transnational links among women scientists and increase their participation in the Fifth Framework Programme (Commission of the European Communities 1999b: 9–10).

The second objective of the programme was to develop a coherent approach to women and science within the Fifth Framework Programme, in order to promote research *by, for, and about* women. The first of these criteria, research *by* women, featured the most ambitious proposals, designed to increase the number of women scientists participating in research sponsored by the Fifth Framework Programme. As a first step, the Communication proposed the creation of a new system of indicators to measure women’s participation in EU research projects. In addition, the Commission was to encourage applications from women scientists, and to encourage project co-ordinators to put together research teams that are balanced as regards gender (although the proposal stopped short of suggesting positive discrimination on behalf of women in the awarding of EU grants). Perhaps most

remarkably, the document proposed a target of 40 per cent participation by women at all levels in the previously male-dominated advisory committees. The Commission would report progress on this score in its annual review of EU research policy (Commission of the European Communities 1999b: 11–14).

Endorsed by the Council of Ministers in June 1999, the Commission's Women and Science programme is one of the most ambitious, and best supported in terms of staff and budget, of any Commission initiative under the gender-mainstreaming mandate (Council of the European Union 1999a). Although the programme looks at first glance like the kind of women-only, stand-alone programme that gender mainstreaming was designed to supersede, its essential goals – such as developing indicators of women's participation in science, improving the gender balance of women and men in all EU research programmes, and carrying out gender impact assessments of those same programmes – are all compatible with the aims and procedures of gender mainstreaming.

In sum, these five case studies, the results of which are summarized in Table 1, support two general conclusions. First, the progress of gender mainstreaming has been variable across issue-areas, reflecting the considerable variation in political opportunities, mobilizing structures and dominant frames characterizing each issue-area. Second, however, advocates of gender mainstreaming have been sophisticated and strategic in their efforts to frame gender mainstreaming as an efficient means whereby officials in a broad range of issue-areas could achieve their goals. The categories of social movement theory, therefore, provide us with a useful set of hypotheses about the *structural* conditions under which general mainstreaming is likely to succeed; but it also points our attention to the key role of *agency*, and the ability of strategic actors to overcome structural obstacles through a skilful process of strategic framing. We shall return to this point in our concluding comments below.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

During the past five years, the EU's approach to equal opportunities has been transformed, from a narrow focus on equal treatment in the workplace, to a gradual acceptance of specific, positive actions, and, since 1996, an institutional commitment to mainstreaming gender across the policy process. Gender mainstreaming is a demanding strategy, which requires policy-makers to adopt new perspectives, acquire new expertise and change their established operating procedures. Thus, it is not surprising that we find variation across issue-areas in acceptance and implementation of the EU's gender-mainstreaming mandate, reflecting the different political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and dominant frames that characterize each of the issue-areas examined above. What *is* surprising, however, is the speed and efficiency with which the Commission has succeeded in introducing a gender perspective across a broad range of issue-areas, including four of the five cases studied here, and others (such as education and agriculture) beyond the scope of this article. Indeed, we would go so far as to suggest that, in terms of its

Table 1 Mainstreaming across five issue-areas

<i>Issue-area</i>	<i>Political opportunities</i>	<i>Mobilizing structures/ networks</i>	<i>Dominant frame/ Resonance of gender issue</i>	<i>Mainstreaming outcome</i>
Structural Funds	Open (multiple access points; elite allies)	Well developed	Interventionist frame; experience with gender issues	Successful adoption of new Regulation, yet to be implemented
Employment	Open (multiple access points; elite allies)	Well developed (large group of women's networks around Equal Opportunities Unit)	Interventionist frame; Employment DG with primary responsibility for gender issues	Mainstreaming in 1999 Employment Guidelines
Development	Moderate (multiple access points, but few elite allies in key positions; implementation highly decentralized)	Moderate	Interventionist frame; previous involvement in WID/gender and development debate	1998 Council Regulation; increased training, new procedures. Action plan in progress
Competition	Closed (minimal participation by non-firm actors, few elite allies within DG)	Minimal (women's NGOs inattentive to competition issues)	Neo-liberal frame; deliberate effort to ignore social/industrial policy considerations	None
Research	Open (multiple access points; elite allies)	Moderate (a few European-level groups, many national networks)	Dominant frame emphasizes technical efficiency, excellence	Women and Science Programme

procedures for gender mainstreaming as well as the development of gender-sensitive policies, the EU is rapidly emerging as one of the most progressive polities on earth in terms of its promotion of equal opportunities for women and men.

Nevertheless, the gender-mainstreaming approach is not without its critics, and we therefore end on a cautionary note, with three critical observations. The first of these criticisms concerns the fear that a policy of gender mainstreaming will lead to the abandonment of specific, positive actions on behalf of women. In the words of a tentative supporter of the new approach, 'If gender is everybody's responsibility in general, then it's nobody's responsibility in particular.'⁹ Specifically, critics of mainstreaming fear that either specific policies on behalf of women will be discontinued, or that the Equal Opportunities Unit, which has played a key entrepreneurial role in the development and management of the new mainstreaming approach, will itself be weakened in the name of mainstreaming. Such a development would represent a significant setback to the promotion of equal opportunities in the EU, and women's advocates may therefore be expected to campaign for the retention of the Commission's dual-track approach, and the maintenance of a central role for the Equal Opportunities Unit.

A second criticism of the EU's mainstreaming approach is that, thus far, many of the initiatives undertaken under its mandate fail to create legally enforceable rights, such as the equal pay guarantee of Article 119, relying instead on untested administrative procedures and 'soft law' proclamations that are likely to be felt unevenly, if at all, by women in the various EU member states. This is a serious concern, and it is for this reason that the Commission has consistently proposed a mainstreaming approach, not as a substitute for equal treatment guarantees or positive actions, but as a supplement to them. More generally, we would argue that the greatest promise of the mainstreaming approach lies not in the creation of legally enforceable rights, but in the long-term transformation of the EU policy process to serve the goal of equal opportunity between woman and men.

This brings us to a third and final criticism, raised by Rounaq Jahan, Teresa Rees and others, concerning the nature of a mainstreaming process which, according to Jahan, can take either one of two forms. The first of these approaches, which Jahan labels 'integrationist', essentially introduces a gender perspective into existing policy processes, but does not challenge existing policy paradigms. By contrast, a second and more radical approach, which Jahan calls 'agenda-setting', involves a fundamental rethinking, not simply of the means or procedures of policy-making, but of the ends or goals of policy from a gender perspective. In this approach, 'Women not only become part of the mainstream, they also reorient the nature of the mainstream' (Jahan 1995: 13). We would agree with Rees (1998) that the EU has generally adopted an integrationist approach to gender mainstreaming, integrating women and gender issues into specific policies rather than rethinking the fundamental aims of the EU from a gender perspective (on the latter, see Shaw in this volume). Indeed, we would argue that the Commission's integrationist approach is the direct result of the strategic choices of mainstreaming advocates, who have consistently framed, and 'sold', gender mainstreaming as an effective means to the ends pursued by policy-makers, rather than an overt challenge to those

ends, which would in all likelihood have been rejected by 'mainstream' EU policy-makers. The EU agenda will, therefore, not be transformed overnight from a gender perspective, as feminists (including ourselves) might prefer. Nevertheless, the preliminary evidence of mainstreaming in the EU suggests that, within individual issue-areas, the gradual introduction of a gender perspective into existing policies has the potential to transform the discourse, procedures and participants of EU and, ultimately, national policies, to the mutual benefit of the women and men of Europe.

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NOTES

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- 2 On the European Parliament hearings and the establishment of the Commissioners' Group, see Brennock and Smyth 1995; Smyth 1995; Carvel 1995; and the articles in *European Report*, 14 January 1995; 21 January 1995; 28 January 1995; and 10 March 1995.
- 3 Interviews, Frédérique Lorenzi (June 1999); and Steve Effingham and Anne-Marie Lawlor (June 1998). Texts of the new Regulations can be found on-line on the Commission's Inforegio web site at http://www.inforegio.cec.eu.int/wbdoc/docoffic/sf20002006/regul_en.htm.
- 4 United Kingdom Presidency 1998. In addition, the British Presidency also convened the first-ever Council of Equal Opportunities Ministers, which met in Belfast in May, with a focus on employment and reconciling work and family life. Interview, Steve Effingham (June 1998); see also Walker 1998. Subsequent meetings of the equal opportunities ministers have been held by the Austrian, German and Finnish Presidencies.
- 5 Interview, Arne Ström (June 1999); internal Commission documents.
- 6 Interviews with two Commission officials in the DGs for Social Affairs and Employment, and Competition, June 1998, July and December 1999.
- 7 Rose (1999); and interviews, Barbara Helfferich and Nicole Dewandre, June 1999.
- 8 Interview, Nicole Dewandre (June 1999).
- 9 Interview, Commission official, June 1999.

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