

**National:**

**Gender equality** is a constitutional right in Germany. In 2000, the Federal Government committed to mainstreaming gender equality as laid down in its dedicated strategy.

Effective **equality policy** aims to afford both women and men equal opportunities for self-realisation in the world of work. This is not just a matter of equity, but downright vital to make society fit for the future amid the emerging skills shortage. The Federal Government has embraced targeted measures to encourage gender equality in the labour market.

Some **figures**: The number of employees subject to statutory welfare contributions has increased in the past ten years. Profit of women has in fact been above average: The female employment rate is now at above 73% in 2015. This increase compared to around 70 per cent in 2010 is largely a result of more woman working in jobs subject to statutory welfare contributions. Almost 47% of all employed workers in Germany are women at this point.

For all of the foregoing, the need for action in this field persists. For instance, women continue to be **underrepresented in executive positions**. Analyses of the figures on hand show that qualified women aspiring to top positions in companies or organisations tend to come up against a glass ceiling. Unfortunately, even the voluntary corporate commitments of recent years, usually made in response to political action, have not made much of a difference here.

The **Act on the Equal Participation of Women and Men in Leadership Positions in the Private and the Public Sector** that became effective on May 1, 2015 addresses this situation. The Act is devised to significantly improve the number of women in leadership positions over the medium term and marks a major milestone in promoting the equal opportunities of women and men in the world of work. Businesses that are either listed, or are subject to co-determination, were obliged to establish targets for increasing the proportion of women on their supervisory board, management board and the two management levels below the management board by September 30, 2015. This affects at least 3,500 enterprises. Since January 1, 2016 a **gender quota of 30%** has been in place for the **supervisory boards of businesses that are listed and are subject to parity-based co-determination**. Elections that are contrary to the quota regulation will be null and void. The German Government has designed a monitoring system and is collecting the data for the monitoring process. First reliable results will be published in 2017. Since the quota entered into force on January 1, 2016 not a single violation of the rule to successively increase the proportion of women in the case of new elections and delegations to the supervisory board has been observed.

In addition, several **sub-statutory measures** are also in place to help raise the number of women in executive positions. In 2016, specifically, a Federal Government initiative which translates as “more women in leadership positions – regional alliances for equal opportunities“ (“*Mehr Frauen in Führungspositionen – Regionale Bündnisse für Chancengleichheit*“) has proved to be a success story. Important synergies between politics and business have been established in the ten participating regions, and the companies involved have been actively pursuing their goal of filling more executive positions with women. The networking meetings planned will help, going forward, to strengthen and enhance cross-regional networking and exchange including the exchange with the political community that is highly appreciated by all of those involved.

Another item on the agenda is raising **women’s labour participation rates**. After all, the large number of women who, due to family responsibilities, work far fewer hours than they would like are a vast workforce potential. The expansion of quality child day-care with needs-based opening times is critical in raising women’s labour participation rate. Since 2013 every child in Germany, from its first birthday on, has a legal entitlement to a place in an Early childhood education and care (ECEC)

centre or in family day-care. The Germany scholastic system is based on part time schools. Establishing more all-day schools is currently an ongoing process in the Länder.

**Parental allowance** ("Elterngeld") is an important support for families after the birth of a child. Introduced in 2007, it compensates the loss of income after the birth of a child at a rate of 65% to make it easier for mothers and fathers to temporarily go without gainful employment completely or partly and thus to have more time to look after their child. The parental allowance is paid to fathers and mothers for a maximum of 14 months; they can divide this period of time up between themselves as they choose. Paternal involvement in some regions as high as 45 %, the federal average amounts to 34%. With **Parental Allowance Plus** ("ElterngeldPlus"), introduced in 2015, parents can extend the entitlement period: one Elterngeld month becomes two ElterngeldPlus months during which at maximum half of the monthly Elterngeld sum to which parents without part-time income would be entitled, is granted. ElterngeldPlus makes it more attractive for mothers and fathers to combine a parental allowance and part-time work. Also it promotes shared responsibility in managing family and work life, not the least due to its partnership bonus that grants four more ElterngeldPlus months for each parent, if both decide to work part-time for these months simultaneously - between 25 to 30 hours per week. The current demand for the new ElterngeldPlus is 17,4%, in some regions more than 28%.

In 2015, the Federal Government introduced new regulations in the Family Caregiver Leave Act and the Caregiver Leave Act that facilitate reconciling family, care and work obligations.

Currently, the provisions of the **Maternity Protection Act** are under revision. The aim of the law is to ensure a good balance between the health of a pregnant or nursing woman and her (unborn) child on the one hand and the self-determined decision of the women about her employment on the other. To improve the effectiveness of the Maternity Protection Act in this sense, it aims at defining further the hazards of a modern working environment for pregnant women and nursing mothers, as well as, the obligations of the maternity protection law for employers, now. This improves the opportunities for women and strengthens their rights to pursue their occupation during pregnancy and nursing without compromising their health and their child's health. The reform should ensure a uniform health protection during pregnancy, after childbirth and during nursing for all women regardless of their occupational group.

To improve the **reconciliation of work and family life** by promoting working conditions that are more family-friendly the Federal Government supports the creation of more family-aware working environments for fathers and mothers. There are several measures in place:

- Follow-on process to the "Family and Working World" Memorandum: events/projects based on the 10 guiding principles with partners from the business world (BDA, ZDH, DIHK) and the trade unions (DGB)
- The "Families for Success 2016" corporate competition rewards the most family-friendly employers in Germany: over 400 entries received, awards were presented in June 2016
- The national "Families for Success" company network with over 6,000 members is going to be further expanded (network office at DIHK)
- annual "Families for Success" corporate day with the Federal Minister for Families and the DIHK President
- Further strategic cooperations with partners: Business and industry associations (Federal Association of Personnel Managers, German Society for Personnel Management), individual trades unions

The Federal Government is also committed to strengthen **female entrepreneurs and business women** in Germany. The Government has improved the conditions for the reconciliation of self-employment and their families to support women in running successful companies. Summer schools are part of the programme to provide professional guidance for budding entrepreneurs.

Another field of action is **equal pay**. An important measure was the introduction of a general statutory minimum wage (as of 1 January 2015). Before the introduction of the minimum wage women constituted around two thirds of the 3,7 million employees whose remuneration was below 8,50 €. In Germany, the statistical gender pay gap in 2015 was 21 per cent of the average hourly pay (East: eight per cent/ West: 23 per cent, source: Destatis 2016). This is due to a set of interrelated structural causes, such as differences in career choices, (longer) career breaks due to family responsibilities and the eventual re-entrance to the labour market via part-time work and small-time jobs, poorer career prospects for women and role stereotypes that may be seen as degrading.

The multi-causal nature of this issue implies that only concerted, appropriate action in the context of a **wider strategy** will be able to eliminate the gender pay gap for the long term. Therefore, measures such as the following rely on raising attention and awareness, open up new priorities for action and activate the critical players:

- To raise the profile of the “equal pay for equal work“ principle, the Federal Government plans to enact a **law on pay equity** which, by enhancing the transparency of gender-specific pay structures, will help remove pay discrimination:
  - Staff are to be given an individual right to request pay calculation and structure details,
  - Companies with 500 and more staff are to be required to also report on their compliance with statutory criteria for the advancement of women and equal pay.
  - Companies that are shown to practise pay discrimination are to be requested to take charge of eliminating it themselves by means of mandatory procedures together with staff and their in-house representatives.
- In this context, the Federal Government also intends to **launch an initiative** together with the social partners to help identify and overcome **structural patterns of pay inequality**. To help the businesses minimise the bureaucratic burden involved and set up quality standards, a new developed exemplary model procedure will provide guidance on how to apply and implement the new law.
- Launched in 2008, the action programme “**vocational re-integration as a perspective**” (*Aktionsprogramm Perspektive Wiedereinstieg*) is targeted at women who wish to return to work after periods of child and/or elder care responsibilities.
- First held in 2008, the **Equal Pay Day** (EPD) aims to give public visibility to the debate over the reasons for the gender pay gap, raise awareness of and sensitivity to this issue and mobilise the decision-makers in an effort to eliminate this mismatch.
- Thanks to the EVA list (*Evaluierung von Arbeitsbewertungsverfahren – evaluation of job rating methods*), these methods can be checked for gender neutrality by means of specific questions. The list evaluates job ratings in collective agreements and is a low-threshold instrument that is straightforward to use by social partners for bargaining purposes.
- Additional projects are being implemented with the German rural women's association “*Deutscher LandFrauenverband*”, the International Labour Organization – ILO and the Federal Board of the German Trade Union Federation (*Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund - DGB*) to create awareness of this issue, identify approaches to overcoming the pay gap and sharing concrete experience. Specifically, a project which roughly translates as “**What is women’s work worth? Economic independence!**“ (“*Was verdient die Frau? Wirtschaftliche Unabhängigkeit!*“) launched by the DGB’s Federal Board aims to push ahead with the debate over women’s economic independence. Pay equity is a central issue here. The project is addressed to policy-makers, trade unions, the shop floor and young women. The latter can, for instance, take the

online quiz "[www.die-generalprobe.de](http://www.die-generalprobe.de)" (*Generalprobe* is German for dress rehearsal) to simulate the impact of various life decisions on their economic independence over the life course.

The Federal Government is taking targeted measures -- also in response to corresponding recommendations from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women -- to broaden boys' and girls' spectrum of career choices and to **shatter traditional role models**. In addition to the Girls' Day that has been held every year since 2001, mainly to give girls a glimpse into fields where they tend to be underrepresented, such as mathematics, informatics, science and technology, a Boys' Day has also been held since 2011. It seeks to attract boys into careers that have been traditionally female. The project "*mein Testgelände 2.0*" ("my testing ground 2.0") has developed a web portal on gender-democratic topics including communication formats for and by boys and girls to encourage in order to encourage role diversity. Additionally, the government intends to further upgrade occupations related to caring and early childhood education. Together with the social partners it aims at promoting the valuation of occupational areas and jobs, as well as, the assessment of skills, expertise and experience.

### **Development/International**

Gender Equality with a special focus on the work place was also a focus under the German Presidency of the **G7** in 2016. On 9 November 2015, the constituent meeting of the new **G7 working group on women's issues** took place in the run-up to the International Conference "Economic Empowerment of Women – Unlock the Potential". The aim is to work towards promoting the role of girls and women, equal rights and access to economic participation, also to becoming independent and to overcoming violence and discrimination. Germany has urgently called on the private sector to sign the UN principles for the empowerment of women in companies. Major German companies such as the Deutsche Bahn and the KfW bank responded to this call, as well as companies in developing countries, such as Jetwing (Sri Lanka). As the first bilateral donor, Germany also financially supports the WEP Secretariat within the global pact of the UN with 275,000 euros. The quantitative commitment of the G7 to enable one third more women in developing countries to receive a vocational education and training will affect the programming of development measures. These should focus more on the promotion of girls and women.

The Federal Government has firmly mainstreamed gender aspects in all development cooperation strategies, for example in the area of private sector promotion, economic policy, education and vocational training, as well as information and communication technologies. Furthermore, German development cooperation pursues a **human rights-based approach (HRBA)**. This entails the right to work as well as the human rights of women. For example, Germany promotes legal reforms in its partner countries in order to eliminate gender-based discrimination in the economic sector. In order to make it easier for women to become self-employed, Germany promotes, for example, their access to financial products and markets. German development cooperation is also heavily involved in establishing social security systems for women and improving their working conditions.

Women's right to work and their economic empowerment are among the focus areas of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) cross-sectoral gender strategy, published in 2014, the new BMZ Gender Action Plan (2016 – 2020) and the accompanying Road Map 2016.

### **Relevant promising practices in German development cooperation**

#### 1. Regional programme "Economic Integration of Women in the MENA Region"

In order to improve the conditions for **women's economic empowerment in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia**, the regional programme, commissioned by BMZ, raises awareness on existing gender inequalities in the working world, and influences attitudes toward working women through a media campaign. It further supports the implementation of economic and employment

policies and legislation that consider gender and empower women in collaboration with the private sector. Further activities focus on women's economic empowerment through **Gender-Sensitive Value Chain analyses** of certain subsectors in economically disadvantaged rural and urban areas. As part of these analyses, concrete measures that upgrade the value chain and that help women to adopt new and improved roles – whether as business owners, farmers or workers – are identified, and implemented thereafter. Moreover, German development cooperation has initiated mentoring programmes for students and young female graduates in order to promote the professional orientation of women.

## 2. Bilateral project “Integration of the gender approach in Moroccan economic and social policy”

Women in Morocco are frequently prevented from exercising their rights to education, employment, property and the right to a life free of violence and coercion. Until recently, women were also largely excluded from political decision-making processes. This project, commissioned by BMZ, supports the **social modernisation process in Morocco** which, since 1999, has triggered important gender equality reforms. The project's activities cover all levels – from policy and institutional advice to supporting civil society and the private sector (e.g. on organisational development) to advocate for **gender-sensitive economic and social policies**, as well as capacity-building and supporting local civil society structures. This project draws special attention to the situation of women living in poverty. Since June 2003, the project has supported the Government in drafting the **National Gender Strategy**. Gender equality initiatives now take place within a coordinated strategic framework. The Agency for Social Development, supported by the project, recruited additional staff to deal with gender issues and now systematically pursues a gender-sensitive approach. To date, 45 of the NGOs supported by the project have introduced gender indicators in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of their activities. 11 large firms and 20 small and medium-sized enterprises fulfil the criteria of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) label for gender equality at work, which endorses socially responsible management.

## 3. Regional Capacity Development (RCD) Fund, Afghanistan

The **Regional Capacity Development programme** supports the capacity-building of women and girls in various ways:

- 1) by business-related trainings and the facilitation of business plans in the newly established Women Training Centers to enhance their economic empowerment;
- 2) by improving their access to educational and health services, and the construction of girls' schools and hospitals with maternity units across northern Afghanistan.

In addition to that, campaigns raise awareness on the importance of literacy and human rights, for example by means of activities on International Women's Day. High-level guests from both provincial and national level regularly visit the training and project sites, and the Afghan media frequently report on gender-related RCD measures. RCD is also a member of **the provincial Gender Working Groups**. Feedback by women and girls benefiting from the measures has been very positive, stating that RCD is among the very few programmes implementing gender-related projects on provincial and district levels, while at the same time facilitating exchange with the national level. RCD has become the first point of contact for provincial governments in regard to gender projects. To date, thousands of Afghan women have been trained in English, IT, management, business planning and other fields. **Women Training Centers** built in three provinces are connected to the local markets through business-related events and near-by women markets. The project's most important impact is the changing mindset of an increasing part of the local population regarding the human rights of women, which in the long run will help to achieve de facto gender equality in Afghanistan.