



Contribution of the Four Motors for Europe to the Public Consultation launched by the European Commission on the topic “Gender equality in the EU”

The Four Motors for Europe (Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Baden-Württemberg, Catalunya, Lombardia) share the goal of reinforcing policies for equal opportunities and non-discrimination within the European context in order to contribute to the building of an economy that is more equitable, socially sustainable, efficient and competitive.¹ In particular, an **increased participation of women** in decision-making processes, the **inclusion of women in the labour market at the same contract and remuneration levels as men** and the **fight against any form of violence against women** are some of the goals that the Four Motors for Europe have been pursuing through a plethora of actions and interventions, some of which have proved particularly effective. In order to enhance these virtuous experiences and make them applicable in other contexts, the Four Motors for Europe consider as essential **the strengthening of the role of Regions, both within the Committee of the Regions and at a macro-regional level, and advocate the definition of forms of reinforced inter-institutional consultation aimed at spreading, within the European debate, the virtuous experiences that have already been experimented with at a regional level.**

The four regions – gathered in a 30-year old partnership and standing out for their leadership in the respective countries in terms of both economic strengths and innovation capacity – do believe crucial **to focus efforts on training, thereby improving the collaboration with businesses in order to enhance scientific vocations among women, fight discrimination and promote the integration of women into the professional sectors in which they are still underrepresented, first and foremost technical and scientific ones, which offer better employment opportunities.**² Given that the educational and training choices of girls are still heavily influenced by gender stereotypes, targeted guidance actions followed by multiple-level training programmes designed in collaboration with the entrepreneurial fabric as well as schools and university institutions and other actors would be advisable.

Acting as the current presidency of the Four Motors for Europe, the Lombardy Region suggests that the four regions initiate the process of request of **specific funds** in order to **develop actions aimed at increasing and improving the training opportunities of territories – from vocational training to university courses – with a specific focus on the employment and career prospects of girls and women.**

The Four Motors for Europe deem it important to share the virtuous experiences implying the striking of a balance between work and personal life and the fight against gender-based violence. The Four Motors for Europe believe the **development of territorial networks** and the **involvement of multi-actor cooperation platforms are qualifying factors for the implementation of effective policies** that are also applicable and repeatable in different contexts. In this perspective, the four regions point out selected policy experiences that have proved to be effective in their territories.

¹ The 2017 study by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) on the “economic benefits of gender equality” shows that improved gender equality would lead to: - Between 6.3 million and 10.5 million additional jobs in 2050 with about 70% of these jobs taken by women; - Positive GDP impacts that grow over time; - An increase in GDP per capita of up to nearly 10% in 2050. <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9838baf1-78c3-11e7-b2f2-01aa75ed71a1/language-it/format-PDF>

² The mentioned study also shows that, in spite of the good employment opportunities and the high productivity of jobs in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) sector, only a small percentage of women have a degree or a job in these fields. Moreover, it shows that favouring gender equality as far as the teaching of STEM subjects is concerned promotes economic growth <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f3bebda3-78bf-11e7-b2f2-01aa75ed71a1/language-it/format-PDF>

In AUVERGNE-RHÔNE-ALPES

In the digital education action plan adopted by the European Commission to support technology-use and digital competence development in education, one of the 11 initiatives is to promote digital and entrepreneurial skills of women and girls. The Region is fully in line with this objective: an axis of the regional digital roadmap 2017-2021 is focused on digital skills.

In the region Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, the lack of women in the digital sector is one of the concerns and the Region is committed to train and educate them in order to encourage young girls and women to embark on digital careers. Recently the Region adopted an action plan for gender equality in the digital field to initiate and reinforce some actions already launched. Below three actions are mentioned:

- The Region signed on 14th March a **charter commitment with several partners**, the Prefecture of Region, the Education Authority of the Region ("rectorat"), Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Employment Agency ("pôle emploi") and all stakeholders committed to gender diversity. This charter defines the objectives, commitments and actions to be carried out (2019-2021). It aims to give better guidance to girls and women at work or in a process of retraining. The objective is also to train women in order to acquire skills adapted to current and future needs of companies. And finally there is a strong commitment to communicate efficiently on the digital professions.
- Already launched since 2018, an **exhibition entitled «Digital skills, business of tomorrow »** which is organised by an association of general interest which promotes the place of women in digital, « Fréquences écoles » with the support of the regional Council and circulates in the secondary schools of the region. This exhibition is dedicated to the digital professions, the skills of the 21st century and the construction of a strategic digital identity. The objective is to make young people especially girls aware of the digital professions. More than 10 000 students of secondary schools have been made aware in the region.
- Another action has been developed to enable better access to digital professions by women: the **creation of content**, like for example free training for women, on the site of the Region "**ma-solution-numerique.fr**" which is dedicated to the digital transformation of companies. Finally it has to be mentioned that the Digital Campus launched in September 2017 by Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes has the following objectives: increase the number of trained employees, better job-skills matching, participate in creating 10,000 jobs in the digital sector and in halving the number of companies with posts not filled. Promoting the participation of young women to the trainings is part of essence of the campus.

In BADEN WÜRTTEMBERG

- With the aim of attracting more women in the fields of STEM and to increase the attractiveness of STEM professions for women, the state government launched in March 2010 the state initiative "**Women in STEM (Science, technology, engineering, mathematics) professions**". In July 2011, the alliance "Women in STEM professions" was signed, in which 54 partner organizations from four ministries, employers, industry and professional associations, trade unions, chambers of commerce, Employment Agencies, women's networks, universities and foundations work together in annual action programs, implemented along the entire STEM education chain. In order to develop and continuously promote the technical talent of girls and women, a life phase-oriented strategy and action program has been launched to support girls and women at every career level. An annual joint action program brings together a large number of individual measures, thus laying the foundation for a concerted action promoting women in STEM. The Alliance has achieved a political agreement and the coordination and cooperation of the

relevant STEM actors in the state along a common strategy, jointly promoting the topic of "women in STEM professions" in concerted action. The statewide alliance is unique in Germany: As an umbrella function and coordination platform for the many actors in the field of STEM, the state initiative and the Alliance have been anchored since 2015 as a permanent task in the Ministry of Economics, Labor and Housing Baden-Württemberg and is jointly implemented with the Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts Baden-Württemberg.

- The project "**Fabe 3.0 Counseling Center for Women and Employment**" is about sustained integration of unemployed women into the first labor market. The project advises women on their (re-)entry into the working life. The aim is to offer individual and women specific counseling. The counseling modules build on each other and thus show the professional perspective in manageable steps. This includes information about opportunities for further qualification and about child care, support for application writing, practicing of job interviews and support with the recognition of professional qualifications acquired abroad. The target group consists of girls and women that want to start working after their maternal leave, that seek support in choosing a career, wish to further qualify for a job or graduate, want a change in their career or are looking for new perspectives out of unemployment. The project is co-financed by the European Social Fund.
- The project "**Part-time training for single parents and careers**" supports women in a part-time vocational training. It is especially aimed for single parents and working family careers-mainly women-that cannot complete a full-time vocational training because of their family responsibilities. The main tasks of the project partners are the education, the counseling and the support of companies on the implementation and use of the part-time vocational training models. The women participating also receive education, counseling and support with the start of the part-time vocational training. Furthermore the project partners are active in public relations in order to make this family friendly training method more popular to companies. The project is co-financed by the European Social Fund.
- Baden-Württemberg supports women in the field of agriculture and in rural areas with the program "**Innovative Measures for Women in Rural Areas (IMF)**". The programme enables women to participate equally in the European 2020 strategy for "A smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" within the framework of Article 5, thematic objective 6, of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013. A study on the life and work situation of women in agriculture in Baden-Wuerttemberg (<https://freidok.uni-freiburg.de/data/16804/>) commissioned by the Ministry of Rural Affairs and Consumer Protection and carried out by the University of Freiburg in 2018 shows that a programme for the promotion of gender equality is necessary. According to the study, women make a significant contribution to growth, innovation and employment in farms and rural areas. However, lack of courage, of specific knowledge and capital, as well as a lack of work – family balance are inhibiting factors for implementing new business ideas and setting up a company. The IMF program addresses these issues (start-up support for businesses and promotion of cooperation in newly founded net-work organizations).

In CATALUNYA

In order to tackle the issue of gender equality in a holistic and horizontal approach, the Government of Catalonia has developed a Strategic Plan on Gender Equality Policies 2019-2022, divided in six lines of action:

1. **Education and promotion of egalitarian values**: educating the whole of society, of all ages, to reach gender equality between men and women.
2. Promotion of **equality in the workplace** and of **shared responsibility in time usage**: advocating for

gender equity in the distribution of domestic labour and care work, and an equal treatment of women and men in the workplace.

3. **Prevention and eradication of violence against women.** The programme of integrated action against gender-based violence.
4. **Political and social participation & individual and community empowerment of women:** strengthening the autonomy, personal freedom and ability to exercise the right to citizenship in a democracy with equal representation of women and men (parity democracy).
5. **Visibility of women and non-sexist communication:** making visible the contributions of women in all areas of society as well as raising awareness, preventing and fighting against gender-based violence in the media and in consumption.
6. **Gender mainstreaming in all public policies:** prioritizing equality among men and women in any public policy aimed towards progress and social welfare, to build an advanced society in regards to its civic values.

Already before the approval of this Plan, the Catalan Government had been promoting, among others, the following projects:

- Specific plan (2017-2020) for training in gender equality, with the aim of coordinating the tasks at different levels of public administration, and which has already resulted in a postgraduate studies Gender Equality Policies in Public Administration.
- The **donatIC.cat** plan, created to address the problem where only 30% of the people employed in the ICT sector in Europe are women, and, among those who choose higher education in the ICT field, **only 33% are women**. The plan consists of three axis: creation of **role models**, promotion of **education and vocations** in the sector among girls, and promotion of **gender-equality policies in businesses**.
- More than ten years ago (2008) the Catalan Parliament approved a law on the right of women to eradicate gender violence, and in 2017 a law on effective equality between women and men. A lot of work is still needed in this regard, particularly for new forms of cyber violence with a specific gender component.

In LOMBARDIA

- The so-called “**Territorial Networks for Conciliation**” involve businesses, local bodies, employers’ associations, trade unions and third-sector bodies, which are asked to work together in order to promote and carry out projects catering to the need to strike a balance between work and personal life. The networks – which are coordinated by the Agenzie di Tutela della Salute (*Health Promotion Agencies – ATSS*) – develop a Territorial Action Plan that gathers actions ranging from assistance and childcare services targeted towards minors to support activities aimed at helping companies build business flexibility plans. The experience focuses on the relational, reciprocity and enhancement dimension of multidisciplinary approaches with the goal of implementing actions that are as close as possible to the needs of families and businesses (in particular MSMEs and the social cooperation system).
- The so-called “**Interinstitutional Territorial Anti-violence Networks**” are led by a Municipality and involve anti-violence centres, shelter homes, hospitality structures, social and healthcare bodies, representatives of law enforcement and other territorial entities. The networks facilitate the coordination and collaboration of all the services that operate in the field of prevention, protection and fight against violence, thereby enabling the protection of women victims of violence and their underage children. The action of Territorial Networks falls within the framework of the “Regional four-year plan for equality policies

and policies for the prevention of and fight against violence against women”³, namely the regional planning instrument for the development of policies and actions for the prevention and fight against the violence perpetrated by men against women.

³ *Implementing Lombardy Regional Law 11/2012 “Interventi di prevenzione, contrasto e sostegno a favore di donne vittime di violenza”*