

Coordinated Careers: gender equality at work

True gender equality at work has the potential to further expand the careers of both women and men. It is also a key requirement in the Turkish accession process. Yet according to a 2012 World Economic Forum report, Turkey ranks 124 out of 135 countries in ensuring this basic principle.

In 2011, the employment rate of women in the European Union was 62.3%. In Turkey however, only 29.7% of women had jobs. Therefore there is a definite need for policies that will accelerate their participation in employment across the country.

FUTURE REFORMS ON THE TABLE

The European Union's "Promoting Gender Equality in Working Life" project saw legal experts from Turkey, Germany and Austria developing 16 proposals to bring Turkish labour and social security legislation up to speed with EU standards.

The experts' analyses have resulted in legislative proposals that form a solid base for future reforms of the administration in the field of equality in working life. In fact, the proposals were presented to the Turkish Parliament in February 2012 and were warmly welcomed by MPs from all political parties.

Government staff were provided training on gender equality and equal opportunities. As a result, knowledge and awareness of gender and equality issues has increased by at least 25% in most cases. In addition, staff are now more proficient in areas such as case law, EU

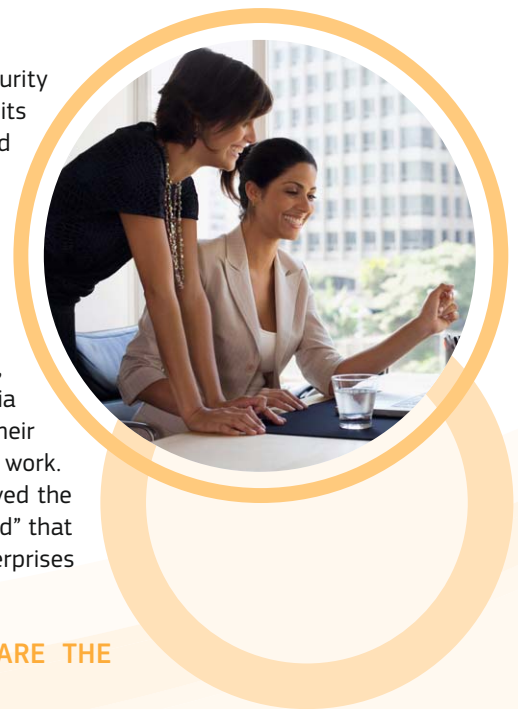
Directives and the gender aspects of project management.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Security has itself integrated this training into its own development programmes and has shared this new knowledge with other units. It is also now mandatory for all new hires to follow a similar training.

The project also raised awareness of the issues amongst public institutions, social partners, NGOs and the media with the aim of also increasing their sensitivity to equal opportunities at work. Part of this awareness raising involved the launch of the "Gender Equality Award" that honoured the efforts of Turkish enterprises in promoting gender equality.

"MOST IMPORTANT ASSETS ARE THE INDIVIDUALS"

One of the 2012 winning companies is Turkish textile company Suteks Tekstil. Its founder and CEO Nur Ger is adamant that the Turkish workplace must support women by offering flexible work schedules, child care and teleworking.



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“For me, the most important assets of my business are the individuals who work there. Women need to feel secure and supported in the work environment because they have not been supported by society. When a married woman wants to work, her family and husband usually don't support the idea. If she wants to work after having a child, forget it. This is how it works in the traditional value system of Turkish society.”

“I also help men in that regard,” she adds. “One male employee has three children and I know that he needs to be supported.”

As a direct result of this project, the Turkish authorities now have the necessary legislative and practical knowledge to make gender equality and mainstreaming a reality. Crucially, policy makers are now communicating better than ever before to make this change happen.

PROJECT DETAILS – Promoting Gender Equality in Working Life Partners

Partners:

Ministry of Labour and Social Security (Turkey)
Social Security Institution (Turkey)
State Personnel Presidency, Prime Ministry (Turkey)
Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Germany)
Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights (Austria)

Total cost in €: 0.95 million

EU Contribution in €: 0.95 million (100%)

Start date: September 2010

End date: March 2012

Results: Draft bill on aligning national with EU legislation on working life, new skills, dialogue among ministries

Techniques: Legislative proposals, training, awareness-raising

