Gender equality policies: motives and assumptions in education policy of the European Union
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Preface

Every individual will have to think about the meaning of gender inequality in some manner, since it affects the life of many individuals. Challenging gender inequality is also on the international agenda, resulting in gender equality being one of the Global Goals of the United Nations (United Nations Development Programme, n.d.).

In 1975, International Women’s Year, the first United Nations conference on the status of women took place. Its purpose was to start a worldwide dialogue on gender equality and ignite a global effort to advance the position of women. The European Community’s\(^1\) (EC) reaction to the context of international consensus was a widening of their gender equality policy. Whereas until then the only equal rights policy was based on article 119 equal pay for equal work (now article 141 Treaty establishing the European Community), in 1974 the equal rights policy was expanded toward more social based policies. Equality of men and women was incorporated in the Social Action Programme of 1974 and three new directives on equal opportunities policy were implemented in 1975, 1976, and 1978. Joint action of member states in the field of equal opportunities was born.

This thesis examines the development of the notion of gender equality in education policies of the European Union (EU) from 1976 until now. By identifying trends and underlying assumptions in the notion of gender (in)equality, the outcome of the research might help contemporary policy makers and other actors involved in policy making, with incorporating a gender perspective in the policy process.

At first, this research is placed in the existing literature on gender equality policies, beginning with the underpinnings of the subject; feminist theory and perspectives on gender equality policy. Furthermore, literature specifically both on the policy of gender mainstreaming and on education policy will be reviewed, from which a gap in the literature can be identified. Namely, research into gender equality in education policies specifically.

To address this gap, this thesis tries to answer the following research question: “What effect did the introduction of mainstreaming policy have on the notion of gender equality in education policy of the European Union?”. The theoretical expectations, conceptualisation, method, data selection, and operationalisation are discussed in the methodology chapter to present a complete image of the research. The analysis chapter includes tendencies identified throughout time in the policy documents and, subsequently, the discussion chapter displays a

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\(^1\) In 1993 with the Maastricht Treaty the European Union succeeded the European Community. This thesis will use the term European Community (EC) for the period before 1993 and the term European Union (EU) for the period following 1993.
thematical discussion of cross-cutting issues throughout all the documents. The thesis will end with a brief conclusion of the research question and the implications and suggestions this brings for policy makers and following research.
Literature review
The literature review will first set out the two schools of theory which most influence gender equality policies: feminist theory and perspectives on gender equality policy making. To start with, feminist theory will shortly be highlighted to introduce the ideological underpinnings of gender equality policies and after this more practical, descriptive perspectives on possible configurations of gender equality policies are discussed. The multiple roles of gender mainstreaming specifically are elaborated on. Following, perspectives on gender policy in the EU are reviewed and the documented practical outcomes of gender mainstreaming in the EU. The review then moves away from gender equality policy in general, towards gender equality in education policy specifically, and identifies the scholarly debate on the role education policy can employ.

Feminist theory
Feminist theory provides most of the ideological underpinnings of gender equality policies, whereas the different perspectives on gender equality policies start from a more practical standpoint.

Within feminist theory, gender is seen as a culturally constructed concept (Barker, 2012; Butler, 1999; Millett, 2000), which means that it is a dynamic concept that can be adapted to a specific context. This perspective includes the notion that gender contracts determine what the expectations, norms, and values for certain gender types are (men and women, but also gender types outside this dichotomy), and subsequently what social attributes, opportunities, and relations people have (Duncan, 1995). The context in which these social rules are constructed is not an objective, neutral space. The ability to define concepts is highly powerful and within feminist theory it is the conviction that men are the actors who own this power (male privilege), resulting in inequality between the genders. Following from this, one of the main feminist issues is to change this framework and influence cultural representations and norms to adapt them also to interests of women, which is a site of much political struggle (Barker, 2012).

Types of gender equality policies
Many authors on gender equality policies (e.g. Kantola, 2010; Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2000; Stratigaki, 2005) follow Rees’ (1998) three approaches of gender equality policies: equal treatment, positive action, and gender mainstreaming. Equal treatment policies are directed on achieving equal access and aim at challenging discrimination. Positive action focusses not only
on equal access but also on equal outcomes. Hence, it tries to adjust unequal starting positions. Mainstreaming is an integrated policy process in which gender equality is an objective in all policies. Within these approaches, positive action and mainstreaming are nowadays the most common within gender equality policy, moving toward wider perspective on gender equality. They do, however, often conflict with each other. Depending on how the policies are designed, they can either reinforce or side-line each other (Stratigaki, 2005).

A debate about gender mainstreaming policy is about the role it employs, transformative or integrationist. Walby (2005) proclaims gender mainstreaming (GM) to be a contested concept, with gender equality on one hand and mainstream on the other hand. This contestation is identifiable in the transformative vs integrationist debate. GM is supposed to transform power relations in a policy paradigm by prioritizing issues of gender equality (transformative/agenda-setting approach). However, in practice it mostly offers a gendered perspective within the existing paradigm, not being prioritized to existing policy goals (integrationist approach). The mainstreaming effect is that gender equality is framed as a way of achieving existing policy goals in a more effective manner, following the integrationist approach (Walby, 2005). These two policy frames of GM are the centre of debate on gender equality, one focused on GM’s transformative role in public policies, the other on GM as an instrument to achieve other policy goals (Stratigaki, 2005).

**European Union gender policy**

The EU positions itself as one of the main actors within the global discourse of gender inequality. Where it began in the 1950s with a narrow equal treatment approach on gender equality with equal pay and equal treatment in the workplace as only gender equality policies (paying attention only to women as participants on the labour market), the EC slowly expanded its equal opportunities approach in the 1970s (Kantola, 2010; Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2000).

During the 1980s, the EC moved towards positive action on behalf of women due to the institutionalization of women’s policy in the 1970s (see Appendix II for further details). The installed transnational alliances paved the way for more attention to gender inequalities. Since 1996, the EU has taken on gender mainstreaming as its main policy to achieve gender equality. GM in the EU follows a dual-track approach, on one hand GM is incorporated in all policies and on the other hand it calls for specific measures for equality for women and men (EC, 1996). Therefore, mainstreaming and positive action are both integrated in EU equal opportunities policy.
The introduction of GM was a policy reform which led to a new gender policy regime. With adopting GM, the EU took on an integrated policy on fighting gender inequalities. Integrated policy focusses on cross-cutting issues which transcends from existing policy sectors. One new joint policy is introduced for all sectors to tackle large-scale problems, known as cross-cutting issues (Meijers & Stead, 2004). Integrated policies are meant to ensure that instruments support each other instead of undermine each other (Rayner & Howlett, 2009). GM does not replace positive action in EU policies since a dual-track approach is taken on in which GM complements positive action. This results in an adaptation instead of a transformation of the policy regime (Rayner & Howlett, 2009).

**European Union gender mainstreaming debates**

Despite the strong discourse of GM in the EU, the practical outcomes have not been as transformative as predicted (European Commission, 2011; Kantola 2010; Stratigaki 2005). Large differences between men and women remain and the Commission stresses that legal matters alone will not solve these inequalities. The underlying causes of inequalities continue to be existing and complex (European Commission, 2011).

The constitutional inclusion of GM in the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) was considered a victory for feminists since it brought new opportunities and new political strategies for introducing a gender perspective. The EU as ‘policy entrepreneur’ is often leading in introducing best practices, models, and solutions (Mazey, 2002). This leading role could bring gender equality high on the international agenda with GM. But there are factors at play that limit the effects of GM in the EU (Mazey, 2002). The following authors show the variety of perspectives on GM and the disputed effect and outcomes of the policy. At first, it is weakly institutionalised since not all actors involved in the policy process of the EU have actively taken on mainstreaming. Secondly, policy actors and member states themselves need to implement policies and hence much variety occurs within the process. The third factor is that with incorporating gender equality in all policies, it becomes everybody’s responsibility. This has the unwanted effect that it is also nobody’s responsibility, resulting in an empty rhetoric (Mazey, 2002). Other mentioned downsides of GM are a decrease in specific measures, an increase in technocratic solutions, and an exclusion of feminist and gender equality experts (Stratigaki, 2005).

Also, the existing male-dominated paradigm interferes with the transformative role of GM, which leads to an integrationist role in which gender equality policies are only pursued if they coincide with other policy priorities (Stratigaki, 2005). Gender equality is not a main policy
goal but subsumed under other policies since the gendered perspective is taken in with all policies in the existing framework (Stratigaki, 2005; Kantola, 2010). Although the rhetoric prescribes a transformative approach, in practice an integrationist approach is seen. And where GM is described to incorporate positive action and mainstreaming policy (dual-track approach), positive action is often side-lined due to the mainstreaming function (Stratigaki, 2005).

Rees (2007) critiqued the GM policy in higher education of the EU. She found that on the one hand, GM challenges the gender neutrality within excellence and merit, and engages with a gendered dimension within projects, pedagogy and curriculum. But on the other hand, while merit is deemed as a gender-neutral measurement of value, it is often influenced by male networks and personal sponsorships that advantage men. Rees stresses that the organizational culture needs to be adapted to make GM successful.

**Debates on gender equality within education**

Aside from debates on gender equality and policy in general, there are also debates on the influence that education policy specifically can have. Bush and Saltarelli (2000) described this debate as the ‘two faces of education’, a negative face in which hostilities and inequalities are reproduced and created, and a positive face in which inequalities are challenged. Kane (1995) describes two existing views on the relationship between education and gender inequalities specifically. The education as enlightenment perspective believes that education can change the structure of social inequalities, including gender inequalities. Education would foster tolerance, reduce prejudices, and stress democratic values and thereby increase recognition of social inequalities and efforts to achieve equality (Kane, 1995). The reproduction approach, to the contrary, believes that education has a limited impact and only reproduces inequalities (Kane, 1995). Due to its individualistic outlook, education benefits dominant members of society and therefore reproduces inequality. Kane concludes that education can indeed have different effects, challenging or reproducing social inequalities, and therefore gender inequalities, just as Bush and Saltarelli (2000) concluded.

Besides from literature on the possible effects of education, there are multiple approaches to be identified of gender equality in education policies in practice. Unterhalter (2005) distinguishes three approaches on gender equality and education in practice which frame the nature of the problem (and solutions) in their own way, leading to different policies. Women in development (WID) (1970s-present) focusses on equal access and completion of schooling for men and women and employing more female teachers. Women were supposed to move away from the margin and into the mainstream policies within the existing framework (Tiessen,
Parpant & Marchand, 2017). WID sees equality as equality of resources. Gender and development (GAD) (1980s-present) focusses on unequal power structures within education. To achieve equality a redistribution of power is needed. Post-structuralism (1990s-present) emphasizes the dynamic dimension of gender, its fluidity, and the complexity of social identities. It questions policies which use a static dimension of gender. These three approaches show the variety within education and gender equality policies. They are, however, not mutually exclusive. In practice, a combination of multiple approaches is often seen (Unterhalter, 2005).

Research
As shown in this literature review, much literature on the GM policy of the EU and its effects exists. With the introduction of GM, the EU made a step towards changing the policy framework and tackling structural gender inequality (Mazey, 2002) and the EU has successfully introduced a gendered perspective in many policy domains (Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2000; Rees, 2005). On the contrary, many other authors state that GM policy is not as transformative as it seems to be and that the underlying causes of gender inequalities are not sufficiently addressed (e.g., European Commission, 2011; Kantola, 2010; Mazey, 2002; Stratigaki, 2005).

With the exception of Rees’ (2007) research on higher education and gender equality policy, no literature exists on the effect the policy reform of implementing GM has had on gender equality within education policy specifically. Given the influence that education can have on structural inequalities, it is relevant to research gender equality specifically within all education policies of the EU. To address this gap in the literature, this thesis examines whether the implementation of gender mainstreaming policy has led to a change in the notion of gender equality in education policy documents. Therefore, this thesis will examine the research question: “What effect did the introduction of mainstreaming policy have on the notion of gender equality in education policy of the European Union?” The outcomes of the research are of importance for policy actors responsible for gender equality policies in general, but mainly for policy actors in education policies. The suggestions in the conclusion will hopefully shed some light on potential insights for policy makers to adopt a critical gendered perspective in policy making.
Methodology

Theoretical expectations

The EU changed the structure of the gender equality policy regime with adopting a mainstreaming approach to achieve gender equality. Mainstreaming is a systemic approach aimed at integrating a gender sensitive approach within the analysis, procedures, and policies of the EU (Woodward, 2003). It is a transformative policy which has its ‘promises and pitfalls’ (Woodward, 2003). To examine what effect this policy change has had on the notion of gender equality in policies, it is of importance to understand how values and assumptions underlying the policy documents are constructed.

Neo-institutionalism sees institutions as political actors ‘in their own right’ (March and Olsen, 1984). Institutions are more broadly interpreted than just formal organizations, they include a set of rules (formal and informal) that guide and constrain individual behaviour (Marsh and Stoker, 2010). The EU has official treaties but also norms existing within the bureaucracy and its personnel. All different aspects together, formal and informal, form the institute of the EU. Normative institutionalists argue that institutions have seemingly neutral rules and structures but that these hold norms, values, and power relationships, which determine what is seen as appropriate in these institutions (March & Olsen, 1989). These values are embedded in temporal and cultural contexts, creating logics of appropriateness and a normative and dynamic conception of institutions (Chappell, 2006). Feminist institutionalism specifically theorizes how gender norms and gender power relationships are embedded in these institutional values, leading to a gendered logic of appropriateness (Chappell, 2006; Marsh and Stoker, 2010). Institutions produce gender norms and these shape outcomes of institutions (policy, legislations, rulings) while upholding to be neutral. This bureaucratic neutrality, however, embodies traditional masculine traits (Chappell, 2006; Mazey, 2015). Feminist advocates try to challenge the neutrality because it has the effect that everything that deviates from the norm, is seen as ‘biased’. However, since institutions are dynamic according to feminist institutionalism, the gendered logic of appropriateness can be altered by gender equity entrepreneurs (Chappell, 2006; Mintrom and Norman, 2009). These changes can only be successful when aligned with political opportunities (Meyer, 2004; Pollack and Hafner-Burton, 2000), otherwise there is little possibility to adapt the logic of appropriateness (Chappell, 2006).

With the strategy of GM, the EU tries to challenge the gendered logic of appropriateness. The expectation of this thesis, however, is that, in line with feminist institutionalism, solely the
introduction of a mainstreaming strategy is not enough. The implementation of gender mainstreaming in education policy is not performed by gender equity entrepreneurs but is shaped by goals other than gender equality policy goals, resulting in an integrationist approach. An alternative expectation about the transformative role of GM policy is that the introduction of GM was within a political opportunity and that it did take ground. However, the expectation is that the transformative impact of the GM policy declined throughout the years due to only a temporary change in the logic of appropriateness. Gender equality goals were on the foreground but over time other goals regained priority, thus where a transformative approach was the goal, it subsided into an integrationist approach. With both expectations, the implementation of GM has not led to an adaptation of the long-term gendered logic of appropriateness, which is a possible outcome that Chappell (2006) describes.

A parallel expectation, in line with Stratigaki’s (2005) and Kantola’s (2010) reasoning, is that the affirmative solutions (equal treatment and positive action) declined because of GM. Since this thesis researches the conception of gender equality and not the outcomes of policy, this expectation includes solely the way the use of the policies is framed. By replacing all gender equality policies (instead combining them as suggested in a three-legged equality stool approach) with solely mainstreaming policy, the EU introduced a policy regime which should be paramount of all policies (thus also including positive action and equal treatment). The expectation, however, is that the use of specific measures (positive action) and equal treatment policies declined

**Conceptualisation**

Several concepts need to be elaborated on: gender equality, policy, and different gender equality policies.

*Gender equality* is a contested concept. Since gender is a socially constructed concept according to feminist theory, its meaning can be constructed in many configurations (Butler, 1999). The notion of gender equality, therefore, can also differ (MacKinnon, 1987). The conceptualisation of gender equality in policies is always framed within certain aspirations (Verloo & Lombardo, 2007). Within the gender equality discourse, three possible conceptualisations of gender equality with each their own policy type can be distinguished: equal sameness (strategy is equal treatment), affirm difference from male norm (strategy for example positive actions and the recognition of the non-hegemonic genders), and transforming the whole system (strategy is mainstreaming) (Rees, 1998; Walby, 2005).
Within literature on discourse analysis, *policies* are seen as discursive practices which (re)produce certain social categories and patterns. They give a specific meaning to the problem they seek to address; therefore, policy is inherently subjective. These representations of policy, however, are implicit, deriving from certain assumptions (Bacchi and Eveline, 2005). For this thesis, researching the underlying assumptions and motives of policies, this is the conceptualisation of policy that is best fitting.

Each *gender equality policy* has its own policy frame with a specific diagnosis, prognosis, and conception of gender (Verloo, 2007). Subsequently, any policy frame is linked with a different conception of gender inequality, leading to a certain representation (Bacchi and Eveline, 2005). The problem which equal treatment challenges, is the exclusion of women which hinders equal access. In the policy frame of equal treatment, equality of the genders is equal access (Verloo, 2007). Equal treatment policies are often criticised for benefiting only certain women and not considering inequalities in the private sphere which disadvantage other women. Positive action (creating awareness, gender monitoring, training etc.) aims at assisting equal treatment to gain equality of outcome by levelling the playing field (Rees, 1998). The problem is the male norm and the assumption of gender-neutrality is perceived as the male norm (Verloo, 2007). These policies offer more than equal treatment policies but are still about changing the outcomes of a system instead of the causes of inequalities. The third policy option, mainstreaming, is based on politics of diversity. It not only recognises differences but also gives diversity a place within the system. This is a long-term tactic aimed at respecting diversity instead of disadvantaging people by forcing them to fit to the norm of institutions (Rees, 1998). This policy revolves about changing the causes of inequality instead of only the outcomes, with defining the gendered world itself as the problem (Verloo, 2007). Gender is an imposed fixed dichotomy and it should not be about equality or difference but about diversity (Cornwall and Rivas, 2005; Verloo, 2007). The starting point of ‘Gender Mainstreaming’ is the acknowledgement of the influence of gender differences on policy outcomes (True, 2003) and the institutionalisation of equality within public policy by incorporating gender-sensitive norms and practices (Daly, 2005).

These three policy approaches are not static, one-fits-all policies. Walby (2005), for instance, emphasizes on the differences between all policy domains and subsequently the need for different approaches in different domains. Bennett and Booth (2002) call for a *three-legged equality stool* approach, in which gender equality is achieved by combining all policy approaches to become gender sensitive. With this approach they focus not only on subordination of women, but by combining the three perspectives, the authors aim at
restructuring social arrangements to empower all genders who are disadvantaged by existing frameworks.

This thesis will use the framework of the three policy approaches to analyse the gender equality policies in education policy of the EU. The critique of Cornwall and Rivas (2005) that we need to move away from the dichotomy in which men are powerful and women powerless is considered of great importance, therefore the gender sensitive aspect of the approach of Bennett and Booth (2002) instead of a narrow women’s perspective is considered a highly beneficial contribution. These critical perspectives are considered in the conclusive part of the thesis.

Method
The adoption of a mainstreaming policy should have introduced a transformative discourse, but many critics have argued that this is not the case in practice (Kantola, 2010; Mazey, 2002; Rees, 2007 Stratigaki, 2005). Subsequently, this study researches what conception of gender equality is used within education policy of the EU and whether the introduction of gender mainstreaming policy has had influence on this conception. A discourse analysis will be used to research the influence of GM on the process of gender equality throughout time, since this is a study of the use of language. Discourse analysis can be applied to research framings and representations, which are meanings that are socially constructed (Dunn & Neumann, 2016). A content analysis would overlook nuances and assumptions in the documents. By applying a discourse analysis, these assumptions will be uncovered. An elastic approach to discourse analysis is applied, which means that changes and transformations in a discourse over time are to be identified (Dunn & Neumann, 2016).

Data selection
This thesis analyses policy documents which are of importance for the equal opportunities principle of the EU within education. Documents throughout the years 1976-2015 are analysed to be able to identify a change in conception. This period is chosen since it covers all the data on gender equality and education, therefore, the documents reflect all the objectives of the EU regarding gender equality in education. Both education policy documents as policy documents on gender equality with objectives regarding education are researched. Subsequently, this thesis
includes all the available data to be able to reflect an as complete picture as possible of the policy development over time\(^2\), an inventory of representation (Dunn & Neumann, 2016).

**Operationalisation**

For this research it is the representation of a conception of gender inequality that matters, urging for more interpretative manner of working. The interpretation of the discourse will be administered through presupposition. Presupposition is a textual mechanism that involves a naturalization of background knowledge. Subjects, objects and the relation between them are taken as given (Dunn & Neumann, 2016). In this research ‘natural facts’ will be analysed and questioned. To execute this discourse analysis in an as structural way as possible, the interpretations of policy texts are shown in appendix I. A chronological rendition of content and found representations of the policy documents is included in appendix II.

To search through the documents, apart from scanning through the documents, indicators were used to find relevant text fragments. The indicators that were used are displayed in table 1. All text fragments that were found with the indicators, are submitted in appendix I. The indicators administered to identify the used model of gender equality, are displayed in table 2. The list of indicators is not extensive, sometimes texts were interpreted to identify a model of gender equality.

**Table 1. Indicators for relevant text fragments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Equal opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Equal treatment</td>
<td>Equal access</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2. Models of gender equality**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equal sameness</th>
<th>Affirm difference from male norm</th>
<th>Transforming</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equal access</td>
<td>Levelling playing field</td>
<td>Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal treatment</td>
<td>Specific measures</td>
<td>Gender roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>Positive action</td>
<td>Mainstreaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusion of women</td>
<td>discrimination</td>
<td>Gendered world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equal choices</td>
<td>Structural inequalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender roles</td>
<td>Challenging causes of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Challenging outcome</td>
<td>inequality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^2\) See bibliography for the list of policy documents included in this study
Analysis

In this chapter, an analysis of links and connections between the documents is presented. Four periods are displayed according to the dominant model of gender equality identified in the given period.

1976 - 1982

The only objective regarding equal opportunities in this period is free access to education and a hesitance toward positive action is identified. The documents only prescribe the ‘permitting’ of appropriate measures, giving member states no obligation to act (European Council, 1976, p. 2). The model of gender equality that is pursued, is equal sameness. If exclusion of women is solved by ensuring equal access, they would have equal opportunities as men.

1982 – 1995

Positive action gains a more central position in the documents. Equal opportunities entail not only equal access but also special rights to ensure equal opportunities in practice (Council, 1982, p.1). This is a move toward the affirm difference from the male norm model, in which women are acknowledged as actors who are different from men but deserve equal opportunities. To achieve this, specific measures are to be adopted to level the playing field. The structure of society is identified as a disadvantaging factor for women (Council, 1985, p.1). Much attention is given to the necessary challenging of gender roles to achieve equal opportunities in practice. This can also be attributed to the affirm difference model, since the focus is mainly on challenging the stereotypical role of women to give them equal educational choices as men, that is, educational choices without gendered restrictions.

However, aspects of the equal sameness model are also identified. Especially regarding ‘sectors of the future’ and non-traditional careers, women are encouraged to become more represented and to participate ‘as much as boys’ (Council, 1984, p.1; Council, 1985, p. 2-3; Commission, 1987, p.1). In this aspect, equal access remains the goal. The male norm is reproduced in the Commission Recommendation (1987), where the underrepresentation of women is to be challenged with adapting courses to the ‘specific problems of women’ (p. 2) This solution makes it appear that women must be handled in a special manner to give them equal opportunities with men. Thus, whereas positive action is encouraged, it remains focussed on the male norm. In the Commission Communication (1989) and the Council Resolution (1991), the solution is also framed in such a manner. Women are encouraged to attend more
non-traditional and technically oriented trainings to gain a gender balance and the quality of women’s employment must be improved. The problem in these documents is represented to be the women who need to adapt to become equal with men.

All the specific measures are to bring women in an equal position with men, the norm still male.

In the period 1982-1995 there seems to be a change in conceptualisation apparent. However, where positive action is placed in the centre of policies, it is not used to challenge the male norm. The underlying assumption is still that women must catch up with men.

1995 – 2006

With the implementation of GM policy, the EU appears to change the conceptualisation of their equal opportunities policy. Positive action is supported by the EU alongside GM, following a dual-track approach. Moving away from solely positive measures for women, the organisation of society is included as a target of positive measures (Commission, 1996, p.5). Mentalities and social and cultural models/ stereotypes are to be challenged, indicating that a move away from the male norm may be happening. However, the choice of women for traditional career paths is subscribed to ‘inclination, low self-esteem or inadequate information’ (Commission, 1996, p.9). The male norm in the underlying assumptions of the documents appears to last.

Gender focal points are assigned to each unit of the Directorate General for education, training, and youth and equality is to be a dimension in every level. In all programmes in the field of education, training, and youth, therefore, equal opportunities policies are incorporated (Commission, 1998). However, this is only for tender, guidelines issues, and application forms, resulting in a focus on equal access. In the SOCRATES II programme, however, positive action ‘may’ be taken ‘when appropriate’ (EP & Council, 2000, p.6). Once again, a very hesitant position upon positive action is adopted.

In this period, a contrast is identified. Much attention goes to the organisation of society, stereotypes, and gender roles which disadvantage women and a transforming model of gender equality is subscribed (Commission, 1995; Council, 1995; Commission, 1996; Commission 2001). But the responsibility for the solution is, again, placed on women. (Commission, 1995; Council, 1995; Commission, 2000; Commission, 2002). Thus, where discursive it seems to be following the affirming difference model, the underlying notion is still one of equal sameness in which women are to catch up with men.
The Roadmap for equality 2006-2010 (Commission, 2006) appears to introduce a new period. Starting with this document, attention is no longer only on women but also includes men. To begin with, both men and women are encouraged to take non-traditional educational career paths. But, this is more often said in documents, followed by text fragments which imply that mainly women are encouraged (Council, 1991; Commission, 1995; Council, 1995; Commission, 1996; Commission, 2000). The Roadmap, however, emphasizes for instance the unequal share of family responsibilities and highlights the structural inequalities and discriminations that women face (Commission, 2006, p.2-3). Instead of giving women the responsibility to choose non-traditional career paths, the focus is put on the lesser value and remuneration of occupations which women are often placed in (Commission, 2006; Commission, 2010). This contains aspects of the transforming model of gender equality, in which the system is to be adapted to give diversity a place. It tries to challenge causes of inequalities such as ‘segregation in sectors, occupations, and work patterns, access to education and training, biased evaluation and pay systems, and stereotypes’ with a multifaceted approach (Commission, 2006, p.3). Social perceptions, representations of the genders, and traditional gender roles are to be challenged to achieve gender equality (EP, 2006; Commission, 2010; Council & Commission, 2015). Another structural aspect that influences gender inequality is the discrepancy between the educational attainment and professional careers of women (Commission, 2006; Commission, 2010; Commission, 2015).

This period is dominated with a mixture between the model of affirming difference from the male norm and the transforming model (these models are not mutually exclusive. As shown here, they can overlap). The combination of these models can also be identified in the multifaceted/dual-approach that is called for in the documents. A transforming approach is needed to change the gendered social roles, but positive action is used to specifically be attentive to the existing male norm and the need to move away from this, resulting in an affirming difference model.
Discussion

A few cross-cutting subjects can be identified throughout the documents. The first theme that came up in many documents is what ‘equal’ contains, whether this is quantitative or qualitative. The second theme is which actors (women/men) are included in gender equality and which are held responsible. The final trend that is identified, is the instrumental use of gender equality goals. These themes together shape the notion of gender equality in the education discourse.

Development of gender equality policy

The gender equality discourse in education started as equal opportunities for all, with no further specifications. The discourse then quickly extended to equal treatment, which meant that there was to be no discrimination on the grounds of sex. The emphasis was on the equality of access and prevention of discrimination based on sex. Although the ETD (Council, 1976) includes positive action, it is still mainly about equality of access. Positive action was something the member states found too far-reaching and men and women therefore were to be treated the same regarding their conditions for access. In the 80s the policies widened, positive action became more accepted and whereas in the very beginning of equal opportunities policy in education the focus mainly lay on equality of access and the prevention of discrimination, it quickly transcended this narrow view. Both boys and girls were encouraged to take non-traditional educational and career choices (although girls were mainly encouraged to take on new technologies) and the unequal social roles of men and women were acknowledged. Equal opportunities policy moved from only equal access, a quantitative view to equality, to also the challenging of social roles and stereotypes, a more qualitative approach. This qualitative approach became more prominent and equality increasingly became about equal positions and opportunities in life instead of only equal access.

Female responsibility

Starting in 1985, it was recognized that there were other factors in play than solely individual behaviour. Organisation of society and the social roles attributed to men and women were attracting interest and began to be introduced in documents on equality for men and women in education. Much attention arose towards the influence on girls and boys of social structure of society and stereotypes found in teachers, material, textbooks, assessment, and guidance material. The impact of social roles of women and men is a recurring subject in almost all the documents after 1985.
The final responsibility for these social roles, however, is put on women. Mostly girls must adapt to choosing non-traditional choices and professions. This is in line with the approach in which women must comply with the male norm to become equal in society. Thus, where a unequal organisation of society is recognised, the responsibility to catch up remains with women. This becomes clear by the way that policies and measures are framed. Trainings need to be adapted to ‘the problems of women’, the ‘quality’ of women’s employment should be maximized, the gender imbalance in non-traditional female occupations is appointed to ‘low self-esteem, inclination or inadequate information’, and lack of women in scientific and technical careers is due to ‘lower motivation’. These are examples from policy documents from 1985 until 2002 which illustrate the notion of gender equality that is employed. This can be assigned to the approach of equal sameness in which women are to catch up with the position of males. Although positive action is often the adopted measure, it is not applied to affirm difference from the male norm, but to get women up to the male norm.

A decrease of these framings of women as responsible is witnessed in the researched policy documents after 2002. Gender equality policies seems to be increasingly directed at both men and women and issues that pertain boys and men are also included in the documents.

A related trend to the representation of female responsibility is on the discrepancy of women’s educational attainment and professional development. Women are in majority amongst the graduates, but when higher up the career ladder, the number of women decreases. This discrepancy is first identified in 2006 and another time in 2010 (EP, 2006; Commission, 2010). Females are gaining more access to education and research, but this majority disappears on the level of PhD’s and number of professors. Women seem to be still disadvantaged by social roles (structure). Yet, in the documents the influence of the system is not particularly accentuated. Instead of paying attention to factors that could influence this discrepancy, the solution is solely on mentoring women to gain access to professional careers, again placing responsibility on women. The discrepancy shows the shortcoming of the equal sameness approach. Subsequently, a transforming approach seems better fitting to challenge unequal positions of women and men in education.

In 2006 and 2010 attention is given to problems that mostly boys experience: early school leaving and literacy rates (Commission, 2006; Commission, 2010). This is the first moment when awareness is specifically raised toward the male side of gender inequality. It is noteworthy that problems that affect more boys occur in early education while problems that affect mostly
girls are in higher education (segregation in courses) and in employment. Although stereotypes and gender roles affect all genders at all time, the contrast of gendered problems in education is important to highlight. Just as the organisation of society seems designed to reward male values, it could be that in early education female values are more rewarded. If this is indeed the case, both unequal value systems should be adapted.

**Instrumentality for economic goals**

Gender imbalances in sectors are only challenged when there is an economical need. This instrumental use of gender equality policies is shown by the repeated focus on sectors of the future and technology, mathematics, biotechnology, and natural sciences. This trend is existent in almost all the documents. The wish of the EU to maximize the potential of its working force is often highlighted. Gender equality in education is mainly emphasized to be important by the increase in workforce this will portend.

A trend related to this, is that revaluing of female dominated professions is only deemed of importance when a shortage of staff occurs. Whereas first typical female occupations are represented as overcrowded (Commission, 1987), later the revaluing of female dominated professions is of importance for the future labour market and society’s ability to face future problems (Council, 1995; Commission, 1996; Commission, 2006). This phenomenon can be placed in the tendency to use gender equality policy instrumental. It is not the revaluing of the teacher profession that is the goal but a solution to problems the EU experiences.

Within the text fragments on sectors of the future and the found gender imbalances, the representation of the problem remains one of female responsibility. The emphasis is mostly on lack of women in these sectors and how to get women to choose for these careers. The underlying assumptions seems to be that women are just not interested, and their attitude must be adjusted to regain a gender balance.
Conclusion

Throughout the years a trend towards a more transformative model of gender equality is apparent in the policy documents. Besides the growing acknowledgement of the role that organisation of society plays in disadvantaging women, the documents increasingly include measures to adapt the unequal system. With the adoption of GM, the Community appeared to take a progressive stance on gender equality policy. With the dual-track approach of mainstreaming and positive action, it seemed that structural disadvantages would be counteracted but also transformed. However, in the decennia following the implementation of GM, it appears it continued to be mostly the responsibility of women to become equal to the male norm. Whereas the introduction of GM was meant to introduce a transforming notion of gender equality, the policies are more in line with the affirm difference from male norm approach. The disadvantages that women experience, are identified and to create a level-playing field, the existing male norm is challenged. Nonetheless, the perceived underlying assumptions of the documents are often still in compliance with equal sameness notion of gender equality. Instead of challenging the male norm, women are often held to it. The equal treatment policies that go together with the equal sameness notion seem to be falling short at assuring equal positions. Gender equality policies in the field of education remain shaped by economic goals and women continue to be framed as the sex that lags behind. If the perceived trend towards the inclusion of men in gender inequality is pursued, this might mean a change in perception regarding responsibility in achieving gender equality. It could indicate a move towards a mainstreaming policy which is aimed at all genders in gender inequality.

Expectations

The first expectation was that an integrationist approach could be identified in the policy documents. Whereas the expectation encompassed two alternative outcomes, the first sub-expectation seems to be confirmed. Solely the introduction of the mainstreaming policy was not enough to transform the underlying assumptions of policies. Gender equality in policy documents is persistently framed by economic goals of the EU, in line with the integrationist approach that Walby (2005) described. The gendered logic of appropriateness does not seem to be adapted. Gender equality must be prioritised in the sectors in which the EU wants to join the global competition. Women continue to be represented as workers. It is not the case that the transforming effect of GM policy decreased over time, it seems that it has never been the ultimate objective. The purpose of gender equality policies is never solely to achieve a
redistribution of power. Although the mind-set of the policies includes equality of access and moves toward adapting the content of education and achieving equality of outcome, the economic framework distorts these goals by always prioritising certain sectors and goals over others.

However, the institute of the EU is framed by economic objectives since its origin in 1957 as the European Economic Community. Member states established the European integration for economic purposes and this remained the mind-set for further integration. Social policy thus has a weaker position than economic policies (Kantola, 2010). Even the first social policy on equal opportunities (art. 119 of the EC treaty on equal pay, now art. 141 EC treaty) was adopted because of fear of unequal competition rather than social justice (Kantola, 2010). Whereas this economic outlook was the reason of the creation of the Community, it remains the primary goal. Even in the latest strategic framework for gender equality, it is emphasised that inequality remains “in particular in areas such as participation in the labour market, economic independence, pay and pensions, equality in leadership positions, fighting gender-based violence, and gender equality in our external action.” (Commission, 2015, p.5). In a Union where integration and cooperation happen mostly due to economic priorities, it is unclear whether gender equality could ever be a goal in itself.

The second expectation was that positive action and equal treatment policies declined due to the adoption of GM policy. Although some specific measures were indeed deleted because of mainstreaming, it cannot be stated that a decline is witnessed. In many documents following 1995 the accentuation is put on a multifaceted/dual-track approach of both mainstreaming and positive action. Likewise, many specific measures are called for to challenge social roles and stereotypes. It seems that the three-legged equality stool of Bennett and Booth (2002) can indeed be identified in gender equality policies. However, it must be emphasized that this thesis has only researched the discourse and not the practical outcomes of the policies. To examine whether positive action and equal treatment policies did decline in practice, the practical outcomes and follow-up projects must be researched.

**Policy implications**

The contemporary relevance that this thesis carries with it for society, is that with increasing attention to gender issues, it remains of importance to critically examine what the underlying assumptions and motives of policies are. Policy framing can greatly influence the impact and outcomes of policies. Since policies are one of the main instruments to challenge gender
inequality, it is always of great importance to remain critical of the proposed solutions and responsibilities and how these are framed.

The main suggestion this research introduces for policy makers in the field of gender equality policy, is to critically examine the underlying assumptions made in policies. Extra efforts must be made to not solely include women as the actors to change imbalances, but also to include men (and all genders). Also, awareness and recognition of the existing social and professional organisation of society must be increased. Otherwise the gender equality that is pursued will stay one of women catching up to the male norm instead of transforming a system with a male norm. When women are continuously framed as low motivated, having problems, not being inclined, and only of importance when they are necessary as instruments to achieve other goals, this indicates something about the gender equality that is aspired to. It is not gender equality in the meaning of participating in society as peers without a gendered norm, but it is gender equality in which the norm is male, and women remain to be pushed to comply with this norm. This suggestion adds to the critique of Cornwall and Rivas (2005) that we need to move away from the dichotomy of powerful men and powerless women. When gender equality policies only include the restructuring of female subordination, this is a (too) narrow perspective.

Another suggestion for actors involved in the policy process is to be aware when something is framed as a problem. When an issue is labelled as a problem, there is always a group that is held responsible for this problem (explicitly or implicitly). This often happens without awareness, and that can lead to unintended outcomes.

**Research suggestions**

Further research can be conducted on the value systems in place in early education, higher education, and employment after education. The tendency that is identified in this research, is that gender imbalances regarding males in education are mostly in early education, while gender imbalances regarding females are mostly in later stages of education and in professional life. It seems unlikely that such discrepancies are solely produced by sex differences, subsequently it would be relevant to research what the effect of social organisation and current value systems are. For instance, gendered patterns of academic choice are researched by Yazilitas, Svensson, de Vries and Saharso (2013). They have performed a literature review and describe how there is little empirical support for the claim that women have a ‘lesser aptitude’ for mathematics, science, and technology in the current literature. The authors assign micro-level, macro-level, and institutional explanations for the discrepancy. Mostly the macro-level theories are of
importance here, since they attribute gendered patterns to socialization and societal determinants, leading to gender roles influencing academic choices. This is a field of study in which further investigation would be of great importance for the content of education policies. Causes of gender imbalances are vital to understand, if efficient and effective policies are to be drawn up.

Another suggestion for further research is to examine which factors lead to the gendered logic of appropriateness. It would be relevant to find out what the causes are, so that they can be successfully challenged. In this way, not only the practical outcomes of gender inequality are rectified but also the organisation of society.
Reflection

Since this thesis is based on the research of representations and assumptions, the conclusions that are derived from the research, are also constructed within the framework of my own assumptions. Discourse analysis is an interpretative manner of working and my own personal convictions on gender equality and policies will have had influence during the process. To conduct the research as objectively as possible, I have tried to account for every step I made throughout the process. Every step taken is as much as possible documented and can be retraced.

Despite this limitation, the conclusions drawn in this thesis are deemed to be valid and of importance. The conclusions are not based on isolated text fragments but on tendencies that are identified in multiple documents throughout the period. Since all documents available on gender equality in education policies in the EU are researched, the findings and implications are considered valuable for future researchers and policy actors.
Bibliography

Primary sources: European Union policy documents

All the researched policy documents are presented in chronological order. The documents are sorted per period used in the analysis, to gain overview.

1976-1982


1982-1994


1995-2005


**2006-2019**


**In-text abbreviations**

Council of the European Union = Council
European Commission = Commission
European Parliament = EP
Academic literature


European Commission. (1996). *Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities.* (Communication (96) 67).


Appendix I

Periods were assigned before the analysis, resulting in a grouping per decennium. The division between decennia is made to gain overview.

1975-1984

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Council and the Ministers of Education, (1976).</td>
<td>Achievement of equal opportunity for free access to all forms of education 20. The achievement of equal opportunity for free access to all forms of education is an essential aim of the education policies of all the Member States and its importance must be stressed in conjunction with other economic and social policies, in order to achieve equality of opportunity in society.</td>
<td>No mention of women or girls. Equal opportunity for all is the aim. Treatment. Equal sameness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Council, (1976).</td>
<td>For the purposes of the following provisions, the principle of equal treatment shall mean that there shall be no discrimination whatsoever on grounds of sex either directly or indirectly by reference in particular to marital or family status. This Directive shall be without prejudice to measures to promote equal opportunity for men and women, in particular by removing existing inequalities which affect women's opportunities in the areas referred to in Article 1 (1).</td>
<td>Definition of equal treatment. Direct or indirect. Equal sameness. Positive action is permitted within this paragraph, but not recommended per se. Equality of access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Article 3 1. Application of the principle of equal treatment means that there shall be no discrimination whatsoever on grounds of sex in the conditions, including selection criteria, for access to all jobs or posts, whatever the sector or branch of activity, and to all levels of the occupational hierarchy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council, (1982).</td>
<td>Whereas, in a period of economic crisis, the action undertaken at Community and national level should be not only continued but also intensified, in particular in order to promote the achievement of equal opportunities in practice through the implementation of inter alia positive measures. Notes the Commission communication concerning a new Community Action Programme on the promotion of equal opportunities for women (1982 to 1985), which covers the achievement of equal treatment by strengthening individual rights.</td>
<td>Positive measures even in the middle of an economic crisis Affirm difference Combination of equal rights and special rights to achieve equal treatment.</td>
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</table>
and the 'achievement of equal opportunities in practice, particularly by means of positive action programmes'; Approves the general objectives of this communication, namely the stepping up of action to ensure observance of the principle of equal treatment for men and women and the promotion of equal opportunities in practice by positive measures; Expresses the will to implement appropriate measures to achieve them; The dual approach. Positive action is seen to complement equal treatment. Goal is equal participation, but underlying goal is within sectors of the future to make better use of all human resources.


[...] to encourage the participation of women in various occupations in those sectors of working life where they are at present under-represented, particularly in the sectors of the future, and at higher levels of responsibility in order to achieve better use of all human resources.

1985-1994
Bearing in mind that educational establishments are a particularly suitable forum for effective action to achieve equal opportunities for girls and boys, whereas education and vocational training are among the prerequisites for achieving equal opportunities for men and women in working life and whereas education should therefore contribute to eradicating stereotypes, encourage acceptance of the principles of fair sharing of family and occupational responsibilities and prepare young people adequately for working life, bearing in mind the importance of involving all participants in the educational process in implementation of any policy to foster equal opportunities in order to achieve the necessary change in mentalities and attitudes. Where the decisive influence of parents is widely recognized in connection with stereotype formation, the perception of social roles of men and women and also as regards the duration of schooling and educational and career choices, whereas, in addition to policies concerning equal access for girls and boys to all forms and levels of education, positive action is necessary to bring about equality in practice; the measures envisaged under this programme are necessary in order to:

— ensure equal opportunities for girls and boys for access to all forms of education and all types of training in order to enable each individual to develop his or her own aptitudes to the full;

— enable girls and boys to make educational and career choices, in full knowledge of the facts and in good time, affording them the same possibilities as regards employment and economic independence;

— motivate girls and boys to make non-traditional choices and to follow courses leading to qualifications so that they may have access to a far more diversified range of jobs;

— encourage girls to participate as much as boys in new and expanding sectors, within both education and vocational training, such as the new information technologies and biotechnology.

The Council and the Ministers for Education, meeting within the Council, accordingly agree that these objectives can be attained if the educational and career choices of girls and boys are made without any restriction as to sex.

2. Educational and vocational guidance as a service to all pupils to encourage girls and boys to diversify their career choices (a) Ensuring that information is given as early as possible on working life and delay the introduction of options, since premature...
specialization leads to a preference for traditional course options and maintains segregation; ensuring that information, counselling and guidance services are available to all pupils throughout their school career and in particular at all the key points at which course options are decided; making it possible to switch courses during the school career, e.g. by means of bridging classes;

(b) encouraging diversification of girls’ and boys’ educational and career choices, particularly by:
— introducing both girls and boys to new technology from the end of primary school in all educational establishments,
— training guidance officers in the specific aspects of educational and career guidance relating to girls (encouraging diversity of choice, in particular new careers connected with new technologies, and providing follow-up and support for girls who take non-traditional options, etc.),
— ensuring effective cooperation between school guidance services and parents and teachers as well as between school and vocational guidance, training and job vacancy services.

3. Opening up schools to working life and the outside world, in particular by organizing, at all levels, pupil contact with working life, especially where non-traditional work for women is being promoted, and with the outside world in general (associations of young people, occupational bodies, etc.)

4. Extending the possibilities for effective access by both girls and boys to all vocational training options and supporting, through suitable measures, girls and boys who have chosen non-traditional openings.

5. Including the question and pedagogics of equal opportunity in teachers’ initial and in-service training. Teachers’ courses could for instance include the components needed to encourage girls to take up the natural sciences and mathematics, and information on the vocational opportunities offered by these disciplines

6. Reinforcing co-educational practices in mixed educational establishments
In mixed educational establishments encouraging all pupils to participate in school and extra-mural activities, including activities traditionally considered as being either for the male or female sex
and stimulate in particular equal participation by girls and boys in technical and scientific options.

7. Developing a balance between men and women holding positions of responsibility in education

Encouraging children to develop a positive perception of equality of the sexes by promoting a balanced distribution of men and women working in the educational sector; to this end, encourage action aimed at improving the balance in terms of postings, promotion and training. This improved balance should cover both the subjects taught and the levels of the posts occupied.

8. Eradicating persistent stereotypes from school textbooks, teaching material in general, assessment materials and guidance material

(a) Creating structures or using existing structures for equal opportunities for girls and boys with a view to establishing criteria and drawing up recommendations aimed at eliminating stereotypes from school books and all other teaching and educational material, with involvement of all the parties concerned (publishers, teachers, public authorities, parents' associations);

The Commission of the European Communities will take the necessary measures to:

— promote the principle of equality between girls and boys in all Community action and policies connected with education, training and employment policy, and in particular promote a spirit of enterprise among girls as well as boys in order to facilitate their transition from school to working life.

**Council, (1986)**

Calls on the Member States to take appropriate action on the basis of, inter alia, the elements of the Commission communication referred to in point 4 of this resolution and in particular to: [...] develop comprehensive and coordinated action in the fields of education and training in order to create a better balance between men and women in the various types of teaching establishment and to widen career choices to include sectors and trades of the future, in particular those concerned with new technologies, enterprise creation and self-employed occupations,' in accordance with the resolution of 3 June 1985.

**Commission, (1987)**

Article 1

It is recommended that the Member States should adopt a policy designed to encourage the participation of young and adult women in training schemes, especially those relevant to occupations of the

**Could have been something on less male teachers in early education?**

**Attention on inequal social roles reproduced by education material. Structural.**

**Better balance men and women. Focus on both genders. Career choices widened to include sectors and trades of the future (economical gains for the EU).**

**Instrumental use of improving women’s position**
future, and should develop specific measures, particularly as regards training, for occupations where women are underrepresented.

[...] develop awareness and information measures so as to offer women and those around them images of women engaged in non-traditional activities, particularly those related to occupations of the future.

[...] encourage the participation of girls in higher education, particularly in technical and technological fields. [...] encourage greater participation by girls in the various initial vocational training systems outside the education system, especially apprenticeships, other than those teaching certain *female* occupations and adapt or, where appropriate, abolish types of training for women which do not provide *real* occupational skills or lead girls into overcrowded occupations;

[...] develop measures designed to promote the participation of women in continuous training entailing:
— campaigns to provide information and promote awareness of the potential offered by such training,
— measures to encourage women to follow such training courses, for example by adapting the conditions of training courses (e.g. timetables, duration and forms of training) to the *specific problems of women* and, where appropriate, by setting target figures, to be reviewed, particularly for sectors and occupations where women are underrepresented;
recognize skills acquired in running a household and looking after a family (exemption for certain course elements, etc);

*Women* will also need to be encouraged much more to participate in non-traditional and more technically orientated training and retraining.

The results of the Community action programme (1984-1988) (42) in this field indicate quite clearly that in order to develop a balanced approach it is essential to introduce the *new technologies* across the school curriculum as a whole, and not exclusively linked with science and mathematics. This aim is important if the greatest number possible are to master technological change for the future, rather than simply a limited elite. It is vital too to ensure that *girls* as well as *boys* acquire the necessary skills.
Council, (1991)  
'Equal treatment for men and women must be assured. Equal opportunities for men and women must be developed.'  
To this end, action should be intensified to ensure the implementation of the principle of equality between men and women as regards in particular access to employment, remuneration, working conditions, social protection, education, vocational training and career development. 

Improve the quality of women's employment by maximizing their potential, particularly through stepping up action relating to education, vocational training, better staff management and the use of positive action in enterprises, 
Whereas an overall, integrated approach is necessary in order to implement an effective policy of equal opportunities for women and men;

First community action programme on equal opportunities for women and men instead of only women.

Quality of women improving by maximizing their potential. 
Male norm 
Unclear how far this integrated approach reaches.

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<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In allocating grants, the principle of equality of opportunity between men and women must be taken into consideration. The specific needs of disabled students should be taken into consideration when the amount of grant is determined.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community funds are awarded according to the principle of equality of opportunities, particularly between men and women, [..].</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community aid will be awarded according to the principle of equality of opportunities, particularly between men and women.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The promotion of equality between women and men, therefore, does not simply require the implementation of positive measures targeted at women, e.g. to promote their access to education, training or employment. It also requires measures aimed at adapting the organisation of society to a fairer distribution of men's and women's roles: e.g. by adapting the organisation of work to help women as well as men reconcile family and working life; or by encouraging the development of a multitude of activities at local level to provide more flexible employment solutions, again for both men and women's roles are included. Not only positive measures but also an adaption of the organisation of society</td>
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men and women; or by guaranteeing the rights of fathers as much as those of mothers so that both can be expected to carry out their responsibilities and duties to the full; or by adapting social protection to incorporate the trend towards the individualisation of rights into collective responsibility, etc.

By paving the way towards a change in mentalities, education and training may also have a significant influence on social and professional relationships between women and men, making it possible for each to develop their respective roles, thus promoting the reconciliation of family and working life for both men and women.

Moreover, the persistence of social and cultural models or stereotypes inherited from the past has led to an insufficient diversification of the choice of school subjects and occupations made by women and also given them less access to decision-making posts. Thus, in most cases, they abandon scientific and technical subjects, new technologies and management and give preference to traditionally female occupations (either through inclination, low self-esteem or inadequate information); sometimes these make it easier to reconcile family and working life, but render more difficult certain choices of career, access to decision-making posts or the status of entrepreneur, etc. In this context, education and training can contribute to equal opportunities by making those concerned aware of the importance of this diversification of choice, by supporting women who choose less popular career paths and those who need another chance or assistance to transform an unstable job into the first stage of an integration process and, more generally, by encouraging changes in attitudes and mentalities with regard to trades and occupations.

One of the specific tasks will also be to enhance the value of occupations taken up predominantly by women, in this case the teaching profession, given its important role in determining the future capacity for adaptation to the labour market and dealing with the key issues facing society (the environment, for example).

Community action in the field of education has supported the development of transnational projects which have sought either to raise the awareness of or train all the players involved in education (teachers, pupils or students, parents, staff involved in education) or to develop suitable educational material on equal opportunities needed to change gender roles.

Education to change mentalities on relationships men and women.

Affirm difference

Where at first the social and cultural models are mentioned, later traditional career choices of women are appointed to inclination, low self-esteem and inadequate information.

Male norm

Attention to female dominated professions and their revaluing.
in order to help change mentalities at an early stage, prior to entry into the labour market.

The SOCRATES (education), LEONARDO (training) and Youth for Europe programmes, which were devised to consolidate and rationalise external measures in the field of exchanges and pilot projects, incorporate equal opportunities either as a specific objective (LEONARDO) or as a supplementary priority for inclusion in all programme measures (SOCRATES, Youth for Europe).

At the same time, the Community is supporting large-scale positive action programmes with a view to eliminating the major disparities between women and men in developing countries, particularly in the fields of health and education. Awareness-raising activities should help to challenge certain discriminatory prejudices and stereotypes. They must be directed at both men and women, and particular attention might be focused on young people, for whom information and awareness-raising activities would consolidate or supplement educational measures.

Within Socrates, little attention to equal opportunities.

Dual-track. Particularly in education, positive action programmes.

Prejudices and stereotypes of men and women must be challenged, by educational measures and awareness-raising activities.

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**EP, (1997)**

Women

14. Regards it as essential to create conditions which enable women to access education and training, taking into account the fact that they often still have to bear a double burden.

15. Believes that in a strategy to combat unemployment amongst women positive action must be taken to encourage girls and women to take up education and training, particularly in scientific and technical subjects, which leads to a broader range of occupations, including traditionally male-dominated areas;

Seems to consider structural burdens on women.

Calls for positive action. EU focusses solely on scientific and technical subjects. Within texts you see that this is because EU wants this to become stronger globally.

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**Commission, (1998)**

Education, training and youth policies

DG XXII has made an organisational effort involving the nomination of "gender focal points" in each unit and involving both management and executive staff. The idea is to make the equality dimension an issue of strategic policy planning and co-ordination.

DG XXII = European Commission Directorate General for education, training and youth.
In each unit an officer has been nominated to be in charge of gender mainstreaming. A network of these gender focal points further reinforces the organisational structure. Equal opportunities are well incorporated into programmes in the fields of education, training and youth policies (SOCRATES and LEONARDO DA VINCI, YOUTH FOR EUROPE and EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE). The equality dimension is incorporated into the calls for tender, the guidelines issued and the application forms, and finally among the selection criteria.

The LEONARDO DA VINCI programme merits particular mention, as the equality dimension is visibly integrated at all levels of the programme objectives, as defined in the Council Resolution 12 in the horizontal regulations, as well as among the specific (vertical) objectives of the programme.

In the field of higher education, the commitment to gender mainstreaming existed on the one hand in the framework of the SOCRATES programme and on the other hand in a target allocation under a special budget line. Until 1996 this budget line gave the possibility for specific equality-oriented projects, such as gender sensitisation in the field of education, addressing the gender stereotypes of school materials and promoting non-typical educational choices of girls and boys/women and men. In the wake of the new emphasis on a mainstreaming approach, the specific allocation in favour of equal opportunities in this budget line was deleted.

In order to contribute to the development of quality education and encourage lifelong learning, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States, the objectives of the programme should be given to persons with special needs;

Positive action deleted due to mainstreaming approach in SOCRATES.

Equal opportunities as main objective in all fields of education.

Incorporating an equality dimension within strategic policy planning.

The Commission shall, in cooperation with the Member States, ensure overall consistency and complementarity with other relevant Community policies, instruments and actions. The programme shall contribute to achieving the aims of Community policy in the areas of equality, equal opportunities for women and men and promotion of social inclusion. Supporting measures may be taken to promote access and participation by persons with special educational needs. Where appropriate, positive actions may be taken in order to promote equal opportunities for women and men.

Mainstreaming

Supporting measures may be taken to promote access and participation by persons with special educational needs. Where appropriate, positive actions may be taken in order to promote equal opportunities for women and men.

Positive action

Commission, (2000)

The framework strategy is based on a dual-track approach. On the one hand, it aims for gender mainstreaming in all Community policies having a direct or indirect impact on the gender equality objective (proactive intervention). Alongside this overall approach, the framework strategy proposes, on the other hand, the introduction of special measures for women; these are still needed to remove persistent gender inequalities. This mainstreaming approach marks a major change compared to past Community action in this area which was based mainly on separate activities and programmes.

Responsibility with women to remove gender inequalities.

improving the gender balance in economic and social decision-making. To this end, the Commission recommends monitoring and evaluating the transition from education and training to working life as well as recruitment and career development for potential female top managers. It also proposes to establish and maintain a full set of regularly updated statistics on women in decision-making positions.

Proposes measures to challenge gender discrimination through education (and materials).

This area of action aims to address the need to change behaviour, attitudes, norms and values which define and influence gender roles in society through education, the media, arts, culture and science in particular. Eliminating prejudices and stereotypes is paramount for the establishment of gender equality. The Commission accordingly proposes to undertake the following measures with the aim of:

raising awareness about gender equality. It is proposed in particular to boost efforts to eradicate stereotypical gender discrimination in education, for example in education and materials, and to develop good practices in this field;
"the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion”

Overall, the Member States reflect view that education must contribute to three main goals: the development of the individual, who can thus realise his or her full potential and lead a happy and fruitful life; the development of society, in particular by reducing the disparities and inequities as between individuals or groups; and the development of the economy, by ensuring that the skills available on the labour market match the needs of businesses and employers.

Education and social cohesion

Finally, if education is to fulfil its role of providing all individuals with an equitable entry point into society, it needs to do more than just attract and retain the interest of people from all backgrounds (and increasingly at all ages) to the learning process. It needs first to ensure that its content is adapted to the needs of the various groups involved; and secondly, that the picture of society which it conveys, through its curricula, through its teaching materials, is that which society itself would wish – for example, in areas such as equal opportunities, or the fight against racism or discrimination.

Ministerial discussions have confirmed a current shortage of young people taking the maths and natural science pathways through school and into university. In particular, the numbers of girls and women taking these subjects are lower than their proportion of the population would suggest. Given the importance of these subject areas for the economy in the future, it is essential to understand the causes of such trends, and to take action to encourage greater take-up in these areas. "The Commission communication "Towards a European Research Area” (COM (2000) confirmed the disaffection for scientific study and a loss of interest among the young in careers in research.

Scientific and technological development is fundamental for a competitive knowledge society. General and specialised scientific or technological knowledge is increasingly called upon, professional and daily life, in public debates, decision making and legislation. All citizens need a basic understanding of mathematics, not only providing equal access but structural changes within the system to create a new picture of society.

The goal set by the member states within the Lisbon meetings (for the Lisbon treaty).

One of the goals is reducing inequalities within education.

Gender balance to achieve knowledge society with a good position in the world.
science and technology. If Europe is to maintain, let alone to improve, its position in the world, and to meet the Lisbon targets, it must do more to encourage children and young people to take a greater interest in science and mathematics; and to ensure that those already in scientific and satisfactory to keep them there. In this context, gender balance must be encouraged.

Education and training systems have an important role in helping to sustain democratic societies in Europe. **All citizens should have equal access to education and training.** Member States need to take care of the needs of vulnerable groups, particularly people with disabilities and people with learning difficulties as well as those living in rural/remote areas or having problems in reconciling their work and family commitments. It cannot be accepted that substantial proportions of people drop out of learning prematurely and miss essential basic skills and qualifications to participate actively in society, without accepting also the loss to society and the economy as a whole which their unfulfilled potential represents. Other aspects related to citizenship, equal opportunities and social cohesion are essential dimensions of education and training in their own right.

Integrating fully equal opportunity considerations in the objectives and functioning of education and training.

c) Themes for exchanging experience, good practice and, as appropriate, peer review (Indicative list):

[...] gender equality in tertiary education and continuous training

One particularly important way of answering the challenges of increasing the number of graduates in these fields is, as many Member States have done during recent years, to address the question of the lower motivation of female teenagers in maths, science and technology studies and careers. Gender balance is an especially important challenge in this area. Relatively fewer women than men choose to pursue degrees in mathematics, science and technology and even fewer women choose careers in research. It is however clear that the greater part of the overall increase in the number of graduates in the areas is in several countries a consequence of an increase in the number of female graduates. [...]
Many women have attained the highest levels of education, entered the labour market and become important players in public life. Nevertheless, inequalities remain and may widen, as increased global economic competition requires a more flexible and mobile labour force. This can impact more on women, who are often obliged to choose between having children or a career, due to the lack of flexible working arrangements and care services, the persistence of gender stereotypes, and an unequal share of family responsibilities with men. Progress made by women, including in key areas for the Lisbon Strategy such as education and research, are not fully reflected in women's position on the labour market. This is a waste of human capital that the EU cannot afford. At the same time, low birth rates and a shrinking workforce threaten the EU’s political and economic role.

Despite EU legislation on equal pay, women earn 15% less than men and this gap is decreasing at a much slower pace than the gender employment gap. Its persistence results from direct discrimination against women and structural inequalities, such as segregation in sectors, occupations and work patterns, access to education and training, biased evaluation and pay systems, and stereotypes. Tackling these issues requires a multifaceted approach and the mobilisation of all parties.

The EU is committed to the elimination of all discrimination and the creation of an inclusive society for all. Women members of disadvantaged groups are often worse off than their male counterparts. The situation of ethnic minority and immigrant women is emblematic. They often suffer from double discrimination. This requires the promotion of gender equality in migration and integration policies in order to ensure women's rights and civic participation, to fully use their employment potential and to improve their access to education and lifelong learning.

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<th>Document</th>
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The Commission will monitor and promote gender mainstreaming in particular in: [...] the Education and Training 2010 Programme by promoting women’s access to **scientific and technical careers** in line with the European objective of redressing the gender imbalance in this field; develop in 2007 a European Guide of Best Practices on ICT Gender Issues

Elimination of gender stereotypes in education, training and culture

Education, training and culture **continue to transmit gender stereotypes**. Women and men often follow traditional education and training paths, which often place **women in occupations that are less valued and remunerated**. Policy should focus on combating gender stereotypes from an early age, providing awareness training to teachers and students, and encouraging **young women and men** to explore non-traditional educational paths. The education system should provide young people with adequate qualification. Therefore, it is also important to tackle the phenomenon of early school leaving, which affects **more boys than girls**.

The Commission will support actions to eliminate gender stereotypes in education, culture and on the labour market by promoting **gender mainstreaming and specific actions** in the ESF, ICT programmes and in EU education and culture programmes, including EU Lifelong Learning strategy and the future Integrated Lifelong Learning programme

In all its activities, the Community is to aim to eliminate inequalities and promote equality between men and women, as provided for in Article 3(2) of the Treaty.

**Horizontal policies**

In implementing the Lifelong Learning Programme, due regard shall be paid to ensuring that it contributes fully to furthering the horizontal policies of the Community, in particular by:

[...] (c) promoting **equality** between men and women and contributing to combating all forms of discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

3. The Lifelong Learning Programme shall have the following specific objectives:

[...] (d) to reinforce the contribution of lifelong learning to social cohesion, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, **gender equality** and personal fulfilment;

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No longer equal access only, but ‘equality’.

Use of gender instead of men and women.
whereas household and family tasks are still performed largely by women, and consequently the time available to them for further training and lifelong learning is limited,

whereas access to education, and in particular higher education, is especially difficult for young people from low-income families, which leads to a reinforcement of the traditional preference for education for boys,

whereas the significant progress made as regards gender equality in education mainly relates to positive quantitative developments, i.e. an increase in the numbers of women gaining access to all levels of education, without a corresponding qualitative development as regards the selection of courses of study and specialities, which results from social perceptions and the traditional roles of the sexes,

whereas many Member States lack adequately funded education budgets and at the same time most of the teaching is done by women,

Points out that in education and research, women outnumber men as graduates (59%), yet their presence decreases consistently as they progress up the career ladder, from 43% of PhDs down to only 15% of full professors

Calls on the Member States to facilitate access to education for women and men who are looking after children and for parents who have interrupted the process of obtaining a qualification in order to have children;

Calls on the Commission and the Member States to use all available means to eliminate common stereotypes that discriminate against women in the workplace, something which is particularly in evidence in the field of science and technology, where women are very poorly represented, to pay particular attention to gender issues and to monitor and evaluate data regularly;

Urges the Member States to strengthen the position of female teachers at higher levels of the education system and centres of decision-making on educational issues, where their male colleagues are still in the majority;

Stresses the need to reform the syllabus at all levels of education and the content of school textbooks; recommends that the training of teachers and of other educational workers be directed towards fulfilling the requirements of a balanced gender policy and that structural divide private/public.

Position of boys within family.

Equal access is increasing but equal treatment further along not. Structural disadvantages.

Too little funds for education.

Structural disadvantages.

Women and men as parents.

Representation of women.

Position of female teachers at high education levels and decision-making.

Change structure.
gender policy issues form part of the training of teachers at teacher training and other faculties;

Recommends that the Commission and the Member States implement a policy for national, ethnic and cultural minorities, and not forgetting the Roma minority, which allows access to quality education and equal conditions in education for boys and girls, including preschool and zero grade programmes, paying particular attention to a multicultural approach that facilitates the integration of young women and girls from minorities and immigrant groups into the regular education system, with a view to combating double discrimination;

Recommends that the Member States support awareness-raising of equal access to education at all levels, particularly among vulnerable communities, with the objective of eliminating all forms of prejudice affecting girls' and young women's access to education;

Proposes that the Member States make use of the gender budgeting instrument in their budget and thereby compensate gender-specific injustices, which will benefit the field of education above all;

Points out the need to adapt new technologies in the area of training to women's educational needs, for example distance learning using computer technology;

Calls on the Member States and the Commission to take steps to put an end to the digital divide between men and women as part of the Lisbon strategy, with the aim of extending the information society through measures to promote equality between men and women and actions to provide easier access for women, by boosting the acquisition of e-capacities, by carrying out programmes that provide for specific actions to include women from vulnerable groups and compensate for imbalances between urban and rural areas;

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**Council, (2009)**

— Strategic objective 3: Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship

Education and training policy should enable all citizens, irrespective of their personal, social or economic circumstances, to acquire, update and develop over a lifetime both job-specific skills and the key competences needed for their employability and to foster further learning, active citizenship and intercultural dialogue. Educational disadvantage should be addressed by providing high quality early childhood education and targeted

Double discrimination

Equal access with regard to communities with little access (double discrimination).

Budget for compensating. Positive action

See below

Women disadvantaged because of lack of access to information society.

In the objective on equity no mention of gender.
support, and by promoting inclusive education. Education and training systems should aim to ensure that all learners — including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, those with special needs and migrants — complete their education, including, where appropriate, through second-chance education and the provision of more personalised learning. Education should promote intercultural competences, democratic values and respect for fundamental rights and the environment, as well as combat all forms of discrimination, equipping all young people to interact positively with their peers from diverse backgrounds.

Some encouraging recent trends include the increased number of women on the labour market and their progress in securing better education and training. However, gender gaps remain in many areas and in the labour market women are still overrepresented in lower paid sectors and under-represented in decision-making positions. Parenthood keeps female employment rates down, and women continue to work more unpaid hours than men at home.

Gender roles continue to influence crucial individual decisions: on education, on career paths, on working arrangements, on family and on fertility. These decisions in turn have an impact on the economy and society. It is therefore in everyone’s interest to offer genuine choices equally for women and men throughout the different stages of their lives.

The root causes of the gender pay gap extend well beyond the question of equal pay for equal work. There is a gap between women’s educational attainment and professional development, thus special attention should be paid to the transition between education and the labour market. The causes of the pay gap also derive from segregation in the labour market as women and men still tend to work in different sectors/jobs. On the one hand, women and men are often over-represented in certain sectors, with ‘female’ jobs (mostly in health care, education and public administration) being in general less valued than typically male professions. On the other hand, within the same sector or company the jobs done by women tend to be of lower value and less well paid.

Rigid gender roles can hamper individual choices and restrict the potential of both women and men. Promoting non-discriminatory gender roles in all areas of life such as education, career choices, employment and sport is thus an essential contribution towards gender equality. Gender equality needs the active contribution,
support and participation of men and policies should also address gender-related inequalities that affect boys/men such as literacy rates, early school-leaving and occupational health.

The Commission will:

Address the role of men in gender equality; promote good practice on gender roles in youth, education, culture and sport.

Pursuant to Articles 8 and 10 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), as well as Articles 21 and 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the Programme promotes inter alia equality between men and women and measures to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. There is a need to widen access for members of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and actively to address the special learning needs of people with disabilities in the implementation of the Programme.

Article 16 Specific objectives

1. In line with the general objective of the Programme, as specified in Article 4, and with the Union work plan for sport, the Programme shall focus in particular on grassroots sport and shall pursue the following specific objectives:

(c) to promote voluntary activities in sport, together with social inclusion, equal opportunities and awareness of the importance of health-enhancing physical activity through increased participation in, and equal access to, sport for all.

Erasmus+ is a programme within education and training.

Within sports, equal opportunities and access. The need to enhance these is only mentioned within the Sports paragraph.

Gender gaps in education and training, which are also based on the continuation of gender stereotypes, must be tackled and gender differences in educational choices addressed. Bullying, harassment and violence in the learning environment, including gender-related, cannot be tolerated. Learning institutions and teachers, trainers, school leaders and other educational staff must be equipped and supported for learners to experience inclusion, equality, equity, non-discrimination and democratic citizenship in their learning environments. Open learning environments, such as public libraries, Stereotypes must be challenged, and the solution is placed with the institutions and educational staff (teachers, trainers, leaders et cetera).

Transforming
open adult education centres and open universities, should be empowered as a means of promoting social inclusion.
Staff shortages increasingly hinder quality instruction in many countries, while interest in teaching careers is largely in decline. Therefore, Member States should take measures to increase the attractiveness and status of the teaching profession (12).
Comprehensive long-term policies are required to make sure that the most suitable candidates are selected, with diverse backgrounds and experience, and that teachers have attractive opportunities for career development, also with a view to offsetting the existing strong gender bias.

Commission, (2015) Attitudes towards equality are evolving, but today’s younger generation is not immune to gender stereotypes and disparities. Gender inequalities in education persist – in terms of study subject preferences, performance and patterns of participation. Boys, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds, drop out of school more than girls and encounter many more difficulties in reading. Women are more likely to have a higher education degree but remain overrepresented in fields of study that are linked to traditional female roles such as care-related fields and are under-represented in science, mathematics, IT, engineering and related careers. As a result, inequality in occupations is taking new forms rather than diminishing and, despite their investment in education, young women are still twice as likely as young men to be economically inactive. Women also represent the biggest untapped source of entrepreneurial potential, representing only 29 % of entrepreneurs.
Consider introducing further measures to improve the gender balance in economic sectors and occupations; use the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs to support measures enhancing women’s and girls’ digital skills and promoting female employment in the ICT sector and awareness-raising on educational and vocational training choices promoting gender equality in all levels and types of education, including in relation to gendered study subject choices and careers, using existing policy cooperation tools and funding instruments as appropriate, in line with the priorities set out in the “Education and Training 2020” framework (2016-2019)

Only now is the problem of a female-dominated profession (teaching) problematic, when there is a lack of teachers.

Male problems in early education, female problems after higher education.
Discrepancy educational vs. professional
Women are biggest untapped source of entrepreneurial potential.

All types of education, not only higher.
Appendix II

An intensification of gender policy can be identified in the 70s in the EC. This was due to two main factors, first the context of the first Social Action Programme, in which one of the objectives became equality of women and men. The Social Action Programme was the first agreement of the member states on cooperation on social policy on European level. The second inducement was pressure from the women’s movement (Kantola, 2010). With 1975 being the International Women’s Year, there was much international pressure but also consensus within the member states about the need to adopt equal rights policy.

The Community however had no competence in the field of education until 1993 the Maastricht Treaty (article 126) came into force. The competence after 1993, however, remained one of proposing common objectives, while the legislative competence remained with the member states. The only documents on education policy within the Community until 1993 are Resolutions and Conclusions of the Council, leaving the competence with the member states. In 1975, however, the European Parliament stressed the importance of Community action in the field of education and subsequently the action programme on education (Council & Ministers of Education, 1976) was implemented. In this document the only objective regarding gender was equal opportunity for free access to education. No other mention of women or girls or gender inequalities. The Equal Treatment Directive (ETD) of 1976 is less abstract in its language on equal opportunities (Council, 1976). The ETD was the first Directive to prohibit discrimination based on gender beyond the equal pay principle (art. 119 of the EC Treaty). It was possible to draw up a Directive (a legal act which requires the member states to achieve the proposed result) since its subjects are employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions. At first there was a reference to ‘general education’ within the Directive but this was deleted since the Community had no competence in the education field (Hoskyns, 1996). Consequently, only vocational training was included, and the Directive was adopted.

The composing of the Directive appeared difficult. Within the draft version of the ETD the definition of equal treatment included positive action (‘appropriate measures’). When presented at the social affairs working group of the Council, which exists of delegates from member states (all men), the notion of positive action within the definition was removed from the Directive since this has legal, financial and political implications for member states (Hoskyns, 1996). Positive action was then repositioned towards another paragraph (article 2(4)), ‘permitting’ appropriate measures instead of proscribing them.
Within the Resolution of 1982 however, the Council called for intensifying specific measures to complement the ETD (Council, 1982). Whereas until then the focus was mainly on equal access, the Council declared that specific measures were to look after equal opportunities in practice. While the ETD provided equal rights, the specific measures were to provide special rights to ensure equal opportunities.

Margaret Thatcher and her administration in the UK and the political ideologies of the centre-right governments in Germany and the Netherlands stagnated social policy in the EC in the 80s (Kantola, 2010). Despite 1985 being the year of the UN’s World Conference of Women in Nairobi, the 1980s were called the ‘hard times’ of social policy of the EC, since the ideological climate opposed equal opportunities legislation/action (Hoskyns, 1996; Stratigaki, 2000). Since the Council of Ministers had unanimous voting system, each member state had veto power. This resulted in no new legislation (hard law).

The president of the European Commission from 1985, Jacques Delors, however, set an activist agenda on equality between men and women (Rossilli, 1999). The legal frameworks were available due to the institutionalization of women’s policy in the 1970s and the installation of the Women’s Bureau (from 1994 the Equal Opportunities Unit), the Committee on Women’s Rights and the women’s European policy network, which were important for internal pressure (Hoskyns, 1996). Because of these transnational women’s networks, the European gender policy took a turn toward soft law (Kantola, 2010). This turn to soft law meant that instead of directives, only non-binding resolutions and recommendations were enacted. Included were the Action Programmes of the Council of Ministers. Action Programmes are developed within a division of the Commission and then the Council gives approval. The policy documents on education are such non-binding documents which prescribe standard EU practice.

However, unlike the 1970s where positive action was avoided, in the 1980s positive action gains a central position within equality policies. Despite the turn to soft law, the content of the Resolutions appears to be more far-reaching than the preceding documents. In the 1986 Action Programme the first acknowledgement of society’s organisation which disadvantages women is made (Council, 1986). It states that equality of boys and girls must be promoted in all Community action connected with education, training and employment. The action programme discusses stereotypes and social gender roles which can be challenged using education. It calls on the role of teachers, teaching material, textbooks, assessment materials and guidance materials to change the mentalities and attitudes within societies. Additionally, this is the first moment where non-traditional choices and careers are mentioned. Girls and boys
are to be encouraged to take non-traditional paths to achieve equal access and opportunities in employment and economic independence. However, the pursued equality is framed within the goals of the Community to become stronger within global competition, considering that the emphasis is mostly put on girls to take on non-traditional careers within information technologies, biotechnology, natural sciences and mathematics. This economic outlook started in 1984 when equal participation within sectors of working life must particularly be achieved within ‘sectors of the future’ (Council, 1984, p.1).

The 1987 Recommendation likewise highlights women’s participation within occupations of the future (Commission, 1987). Specific measures should be implemented to train women for occupations in which they are underrepresented instead for typical female occupations (unclear what these occupations are). Trainings which do not lead to real occupational skills or that lead girls to overcrowded occupations should be abolished or adapted. It is unclear however what ‘real’ occupational skills are, but the framing of the text makes it appear that ‘female’ occupations are overcrowded and require no real occupational skills and that these occupations are to be avoided. In the document, it is also states that measures should be developed to adapt training courses to the ‘specific problems of women’ (Commission, 1987, p.2). This implies that the lack of women in training courses is due to women themselves and their problems. This assumption neglects other structural and societal factors that lead to the shortage of women within these courses. On the other hand, the Recommendation does underline the importance of the recognition of skills acquired in running a household and looking after a family. However, it does not stress the recognition of these activities as valuable activities but solely emphasizes the skills acquired by these activities. Hence, the ‘female’ occupations are not deemed of importance, but only the role they play in the preparation for occupations which are valuable and need real occupational skills.

This tendency to focus on women is also recognisable in the education and training guidelines of 1989-1992, which encourage women to attend more non-traditional and technically oriented trainings (Commission, 1989). Although of course it is of importance to gain a gender balance within technical trainings and careers, the framing of the document makes it appear that the cause for this imbalance is that women are just not in for it and should just attend more trainings. This ignores the underlying restraints of a male dominated sector.

The 1991 Action Programme on equal opportunities for men and women appears to distinguish the restraints of the organisation of society by encouraging to present a ‘full, realistic picture of women in society’ (Council, 1991, p.2). Yet, another objective is to improve the quality of women’s employment to maximize their potential through education, vocational
training, better staff management and positive action within enterprises. This implies that the quality of women’s employment thus far does not suffice and that this is the cause of the gender imbalance. Once more, it is women that must adapt to the organisation of society instead of an observation of a system designed for rewarding male traits.

Gender mainstreaming was introduced in the international debate with the UN Beijing Platform for Action 1995. The Commission used the international pressure of the World Conference on Women to introduce GM in the EU, in the Commission Communication of 1996. This is the first time that ‘gender’ is introduced within the researched documents. In 1999 the mainstreaming obligation was reinforced in the form of hard law with the Amsterdam Treaty article 3(2) EC.

The Gender Mainstreaming policy is adopted in the 4th Action Programme on equal opportunities for women and men. According to the Action Programme, it is a measure to adapt the organisation of society instead of only having positive measures targeting women. In the documents it is identified that social and cultural models and stereotypes form society and education is appointed as an important tool to change mentalities, social and professional relationships. Nonetheless the outcome of women choosing traditional occupations is appointed to ‘inclination, low self-esteem or inadequate information’ (Commission, 1996, p.9). Thus, where on the one hand the disadvantaged position of women is acknowledged by adopting a policy that has the possibility of transforming the organisation of society, on the other hand the responsibility is once again put on the agency of women which leads to traditional choices. The Action Programme also calls for a revaluing of female dominated professions, in specific the teaching profession. This is necessary due to the importance of adapting the labour market and dealing with key issues facing society. This is in line with the already mentioned tendency of framing the importance of gender equality measures not by their own importance but by the instrumental role they play in strengthening the economic position of the EU. In the 1995 White Paper on Education and Training, though the structural burden on women is acknowledged, the positive action to combat unemployment amongst women must particularly be aimed at scientific and technical subjects of education and training (EP, 1995). Thus, despite the World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 which led to great international pressure on women’s rights, women within Union policy are still of instrumental use for economic goals.

According to the 1998 Commission report on the measures to mainstream gender policy, gender focal points are introduced within each unit of the DG XII (then the Directorate General for education, training and youth policies). Equal opportunities policy is incorporated into
tender, guidelines and application forms for education and training. It also reports the fact that a specific budget line for equality-oriented projects is deleted since this is incorporated within SOCRATES. In the SOCRATES document, aside from the equality of opportunity principle as one of the main objectives, the principle is mentioned in relation with financial allocations for Erasmus grants, Comenius funds, and aid for European education projects which promote equality of opportunity for boys and girls in education and training (EP & Council, 1995). Due to GM, the former positive action budget line is mainstreamed within the broader policy document on education.

In 2000, SOCRATES II is adopted in which the equality of opportunity principle remains a main objective. It states that ‘when appropriate, positive action may be taken to ensure equal opportunities’ (EP & Council, 2000, p.6). It is striking that both ‘may’ and ‘when appropriate’ are used. This shows the carefulness with which the European Parliament and the Council take on positive action for equal opportunities. The term gender mainstreaming is not mentioned, only the fact that the programme shall contribute to equal opportunities for men and women.

The dual-track approach of mainstreaming and positive action was maintained in the community framework of 2001-2005 on gender equality (Commission, 2000). The special measures to challenge gender inequalities are solely directed to women. Again, it seems that women are the actors who bear the responsibility to achieve gender equality.

Within the 2001 concrete future objectives of education and training, it is stated that to provide all individuals with an equitable entry into society, attracting people from all backgrounds does not suffice. The content must be adapted to the various groups and furthermore, the picture of society that is shown through curricula and teaching materials must be ‘that what society itself would wish’ (Commission, 2001, p.8). This also touches upon the principle of equal opportunities. It is recognized that not only equal access is important but also the content and representations of education and training matter for equal opportunities.

The objectives and benchmarks of education and training in 2001 and 2002 emphasise on mathematics, (natural) science and technical careers again (Commission, 2001; Commission, 2002). In the 2002 benchmarks, the gender imbalance is linked to a lower motivation of women within these sectors (Commission, 2002, p.13). The discursive use of ‘lower motivation’ frames the cause of the gender imbalance as a lacking in the agency of women and their motivation to choose certain sectors.

Direct discrimination and structural inequalities are both within the scope of the roadmap for equality of 2006-2010 (Commission, 2006). Attention is given to the revaluing of
traditional female occupations and both women and men are encouraged to take non-traditional educational paths. This seems to show a change in the notion of gender equality from solely centred on the catching up of women toward a notion which includes the disadvantages of both men and women and the mainly male value system. The roadmap also states that early school leaving should be challenged, which affects more boys than girls. However, it does not state anything on potential structural causes of this phenomenon. This document is the first to acknowledge double discrimination some women experience, when gender disadvantages combined with other disadvantages lead to double discrimination. The importance of double discrimination is reinforced in the 2006 resolution on educational discrimination (EP, 2006).

Besides this, the resolution places much emphasis on the difference between positive quantitative developments (access) on one side but less qualitative development on the other side (courses of study and specialities). It appoints this difference to social perceptions and the traditional roles of the sexes. Another contradiction it found is the fact that within education and research there are more females but less females in the level of PhD’s and professors. The higher you go up the ‘career ladder’, the less women you find. Due to these discrepancies, it places much emphasis on the need to challenge the common stereotypes and representations of women to change their structural disadvantage. It proposes the implementation of a budget (positive action) to compensate gender specific injustices.

In 2009 the new framework for education and training is adopted, in which the third strategic objective is to promote equity, social cohesion and active citizenship (Council, 2009). Gender however is not mentioned. The strategy for equality between women and men (back to women and men instead of gender) of 2010 once more underlines the gap between women’s educational attainment and their professional development (Commission, 2010). It highlights the devaluation of female work, the influence of parenthood and housework on women and the impact of gender roles on choices (for example within education) and the need to challenge these influences and assumptions.

The new priorities for the strategic engagement on education and training 2016-2019 are more attentive to gender issues than the original framework (Commission, 2015). Gender stereotypes are to be challenged and learning institutions and teachers, trainers, school leaders and educational staff are the responsible actors. Amongst the priorities is the offsetting of the strong gender bias within the teaching profession. The ‘status and attractiveness’ must be improved to challenge staff shortages. It is interesting that the revaluing of a female dominated profession is introduced only when a staff shortage is present.