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REPORT

on gender budgeting - building public budgets from a gender perspective
(2002/2198(INI))

Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities

Rapporteur: Fiorella Ghilardotti

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PROCEDURAL PAGE

At the sitting of 10 October 2002, the President of Parliament announced that the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities had been authorised to draw up an own-initiative report, pursuant to Rule 163 of the Rules of Procedure, on gender budgeting - building public budgets from a gender perspective .

The Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities had appointed Fiorella Ghilardotti rapporteur at its meeting of 18 June 2002.

It considered the draft report at its meetings of 17 March, 20 May and 10 June 2003.

At the last meeting it adopted the motion for a resolution unanimously.

The following were present for the vote: Anna Karamanou (chairman); Marianne Eriksson and Jillian Evans (vice-chairmen); Fiorella Ghilardotti, rapporteur; Regina Bastos, Johanna L.A. Boogerd-Quaak, Ilda Figueiredo (for Geneviève Fraisse), Lissy Gröner, Mary Honeyball, Astrid Lulling, Thomas Mann, Emilia Franziska Müller and Miet Smet.

The report was tabled on 16 June 2003.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

European Parliament resolution on gender budgeting - building public budgets from a gender perspective (2002/2198(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the EC Treaty, in particular to Articles 2, 3(2), 13 and 141(4) thereof,
- having regard to Article 23(1) of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights¹,
- having regard to the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)²,
- having regard to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, as adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993³,
- having regard to the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in 1994,
- having regard to the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development and its 2000-2005 update⁴,
- having regard to the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing on 15 September 1995⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 May 2000 on the follow-up to the Beijing Action Platform⁶,
- having regard to the Commission's communication of 7 June 2000 entitled 'Towards a Community framework strategy on gender equality (2001-2005)' (COM(2000)335) and to its resolution of 3 July 2001⁷ on the work programme for 2001,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 April 2003 containing the comments accompanying the decision concerning discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the year 2001, in particular paragraphs 1 and 5 thereof⁸,
- having regard to the hearing on gender budgeting in the European Parliament held by the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities on 23 January 2003 in Brussels,
- having regard to Rule 163 of its Rules of Procedure,

¹ OJ C 364, 18.2.2000, p. 1.

² <http://www.unifem.org>

³ <http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf>

⁴ <http://www.thecommonwealth.org/gender>

⁵ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch>

⁶ OJ C 59, 23.2.2001, p. 258.

⁷ OJ C 65, 14.3.2002, p. 22.

⁸ P5_TA-PROV(2003) 0150.

- having regard to the report of the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities (A5-0214/2003),
- A. whereas equality of men and women is a fundamental principle of Community law according to Article 2 of the Treaty and thus part of the Community *acquis*; whereas equality between women and men is established by Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights,
- B. whereas Article 3(2) of the Treaty stipulates that equality between men and women must be promoted in all EU activities and that the Community shall aim to eliminate inequalities,
- C. whereas the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights clearly imposes the obligation to promote the full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life, at the national, regional and international levels, and declares the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex as a priority objective of the international community (Article 18),
- D. whereas the Beijing Platform for Action endorsed gender mainstreaming as an effective strategy to promote gender equality and stated that governments and other players 'should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes, so that before decisions are taken an analysis is made of the effects on women and men respectively',
- E. whereas gender mainstreaming means incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities and has thus been implemented in the work of the Commission, including the European Employment Strategy, the European Strategy for Social Inclusion, the research policy, the European Structural Funds, the policy for cooperation and development, the external relations,
- F. whereas since 1996 the European Commission has adopted a policy of gender mainstreaming and incorporation of equal opportunities for women and men in all Community activities and policies,
- G. whereas gender budgeting can be identified as the application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process and, as such, places emphasis on the analysis of the impact of public policies on women and men, incorporates the gender perspective at all levels of the process of building public budgets and aims at restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality,
- H. whereas the Commission has signalled its commitment in this respect by the decision to set up a working group within the framework of its Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men to carry out a survey inside the EU Member States and to promote the implementation of gender budgeting in the EU and national budgets;
- I. whereas the Commission has signalled its commitment in this respect through Commissioner Schreyer's statement to the Women's Right and Equal Opportunities Committee during its public hearing on gender budgeting,

- J. whereas a working group of experts on gender budgeting has also been created in the Council of Europe and has produced a preliminary background paper,
- K. whereas the Belgian Presidency of the Council, together with the OECD, UNIFEM, the Commonwealth and the Nordic Council of Ministers, held a seminar on this issue in October 2001,
- L. whereas gender budgeting initiatives are already being taken in a number of EU countries, both at national and regional level, e.g. in Ireland, England, Scotland and Spain, and at local level, e.g. in some communes in Italy, and have already long existed in other parts of the world, e.g. in Australia, Canada and South Africa; recalling also that, in a number of countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, gender budgeting initiatives are being tried out in specific sectoral policies,

Definition, aims and scope of gender budgeting

1. Endorses the definition of gender budgeting, as the application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process – proposed by the informal network on gender budgeting organised by the Council of Europe; this entails a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality;
2. Emphasises that gender budgeting does not aim to produce separate budgets for women, but rather to influence public budgets, since they are not gender-neutral, as they have a different impact on women and men both from the revenue and from the expenditure perspective; with this in mind gender budgeting implies that in all budget programmes, measures and policies, revenue or expenditure in all programmes and actions should be assessed and restructured in order to ensure that women's priorities and needs are taken into account on an equal basis to those of men, the final aim being to achieve equality between men and women;
3. Highlights that, by defining and implementing budgetary policies, public authorities take specific political decisions affecting society and the economy; public budgets are not mere financial and economic tools, but are the basic framework within which the model of socio-economic development is shaped, criteria of income re-distribution are set and political aims are prioritised;
4. Recalls that gender budget strategies must be implemented in a broader macro-economic context which bolsters the development of human resources and human capital; according to the principles and objectives set at the Lisbon European Council, social development and human empowerment should be promoted as long-term investments in the framework of the European policies for employment and economic growth in order to create a competitive European economy based on knowledge;
5. Emphasises that successful implementation of gender budgeting requires a political commitment to achieving equality between women and men; this means that all institutions defining public policies must promote political and institutional representation of women at all levels, support a wider presence of women in all decision-making

processes both in public and private sectors and develop public sensitivity and concern for equal opportunities and human capital development;

6. Stresses the fact that macro-economic policy can contribute to narrowing or widening gender gaps in terms of economic resources and power, education and training and health; by promoting gender equality and by implementing policies in the framework of gender budgeting, public budgets also achieve major political objectives such as:
 - equality, fair and balanced budgetary policies aimed at reducing inequalities and promoting equal opportunities according to the different roles of women and men in the economy and society,
 - efficiency, more efficient use of resources, higher quality and effectiveness of public services according to the different needs of female or male citizens,
 - transparency, a better understanding of public revenue and expenditure among citizens and thus greater transparency and accountability of national and local governments;

Tools and methods of gender budgeting

7. Reiterates its support for greater efficiency in public spending, both at EU and Member State level, and an improvement in the functioning of the internal market; reaffirms the need to promote employment, as stipulated in the Lisbon summit, to enhance gender perspective in all policies, and to promote women's participation in the decision-making process; in this respect, gender budgeting can serve to improve the achievement of these aims while promoting a more equal distribution of financial burdens and benefits among citizens;
8. Specifies that building a public budget from a gender perspective means:
 - identifying how different citizens benefit from public expenditure and contribute to public revenue, highlighting the difference between women and men by using qualitative and quantitative data and benchmarking,
 - evaluating the different impact on women and men of budgetary policies and redistribution of resources in terms of money, services, time and work of social and family care/social reproduction,
 - analysing gender impact in all sectors of public intervention and incrementally introducing gender budgeting in all policies, including education, welfare and social services, health assistance, actions and measures for employment, transport, housing, etc.,
 - developing a bottom-up budgetary process and promoting the involvement and participation of all citizens - men and women - and actors concerned (associations and NGOs) with the aim of identifying different specific needs and appropriate policies and measures to respond to them,
 - verifying that the allocation of resources corresponds in an appropriate and equal manner to the different needs and demands of women and men,
 - ensuring that gender analyses and impact are thoroughly taken into consideration in all phases of the budgetary process, including project, definition, implementation, monitoring and evaluation,
 - using public budgets to define meaningful political priorities and identify specific tools, mechanisms and actions in order to achieve equality between women and men through public policies,

- redefining priorities and reallocating public expenditure without necessarily increasing the total amount of a public budget,
 - verifying/accounting for the efficacy and efficiency of public expenditures in respect of established priorities and commitments, in general terms, and, specifically, with regard to respect for equal opportunities between women and men in the re-distribution of public resources and services;
9. Points out that gender budgeting strategies require interministerial coordination linking ministries for the budget, economic affairs and finance with the ministry and/or departments and organisations responsible for equal opportunities, involving all the departmental heads and sectoral officials taking part in drawing up the public budget, in order to ensure that the gender perspective is incorporated in the definition of revenue and expenditure in all budget policies;
 10. Emphasises that gender budget strategies are based on complex and diversified methodologies which encompass aims, tools, actions and measures specific to gender and to the context of implementation; this means that gender budgeting methodology must tackle socio-economic inequalities between women and men according to the different realities at local, regional, national and European level, in order to be appropriate and successful in achieving gender quality;
 11. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to draw up and maintain gender-specific data for all policy areas;

Objectives of the report on Gender Budgeting

12. Calls on the Member States to monitor and analyse the impacts of macroeconomic and economic reform policies on women and men, and the development of strategies, mechanisms and corrective measures to address gender imbalances in key areas, with the aim of creating a broader economic and social framework in which gender budgeting could be positively implemented;
13. Calls on the Commission to promote the creation of a European network of entities carrying out gender budgeting and experts/managers dealing with the subject, in particular women, to be linked to the network of parliamentary committees for equal opportunities; this network may contribute to developing and disseminating knowledge of the methods, processes and mechanisms of gender budgeting, to promoting the exchange of best practice and positive experience, and to providing governments, parliaments and budgetary authorities with a framework for action and strategies of reproducible experience, in order to help them incorporate the objective of equality between men and women in all budget policies, programmes and measures;
14. Calls on the Commission, the Member States, and local and regional governments to carry out gender budgeting and stresses that the gender budgeting strategy should become a 'parliamentarised procedure' within the European Parliament and national, regional and local parliaments, with particular reference to the countries about to join the EU; to this end stresses that the parliamentary committees for women's rights must play a key role;

15. Calls on the Commission to apply the findings and principles of the opinion from the European Commission's Advisory Committee Working Group to the EU budget;
16. Asks the Commission, with a view to spreading knowledge of strategies and methodologies of gender budgeting through all institutions at European, national, regional and local level, to produce and distribute extensively a brochure explaining instruments and methods for incorporating gender budgeting and making available to all actors potentially concerned with budgetary processes and policies - i.e. institutions, governments, public authorities and administrations, associations and NGOs – a guide providing information on aims, strategies, mechanisms and tools of gender budgeting;
17. Calls on the Member States to use and promote the application of gender budgeting instruments and methods (accompanied by specific statistics broken down by gender, and indicators and benchmarks on equality between the sexes) so that budgetary revenue and expenditure policies may be structured and carried out with the aim of promoting equality between women and men;
18. Calls on the Commission to initiate a wide-ranging information campaign on the subject of gender budgeting, targeting the general public and national and regional governments and parliaments, distribute the brochure on gender budgeting and disseminate the experience acquired in developing and carrying out gender budgeting according to the results of the inquiry carried out by the working group on gender budgeting set up by the Commission;
19. Requests the Commission to produce within two years a communication on gender budgeting and draw up indicators or benchmarks, taking into consideration the results of the work of the Expert Group on GB, in order to provide an overview of the process and to shape a strategy for action for the EU and the Member States; calls also for the inclusion, in the implementation of the second part of the Fifth Programme for Equal Opportunities, of gender budget policy within the objectives, tools and mechanism of the Framework Strategy for Equality, following the mid-term review scheduled for December 2003;
20. Asks the European Parliament, in particular the committee on budgetary affairs, to implement gender budgeting in the process of EU budget definition in order to develop a gender-responsive budgetary policy in the EU; charges its committee responsible with promoting and monitoring the implementation of gender budgeting in the EU budget with respect to definition, construction, implementation and evaluation of all EU budgetary policies;
21. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The concept and method of *gender budgeting* became known and established through the *Beijing Platform for Action*, which was drawn up at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995. The platform specifically refers to '*gender sensitive budgets*' and stresses the need for an active policy of gender mainstreaming in all policies as a means of promoting equality between men and women, and lists a number of strategic objectives for governments, including:

- restructuring and redefining public expenditure to promote economic opportunities for women and their access to productive resources and recognising their basic social, training and health needs,
- promoting more transparent and adequate budgetary procedures at various levels to integrate the gender perspective in budgetary programming and policies, as well as the funding of programmes for equal opportunities between men and women.

Various agreements on gender equality have been signed at international level, including:

- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979),
- the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights (1993),
- the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994),
- the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development (1995),
- the Beijing Platform for Action and Regional Platform for Action (1995).

Australia and South Africa were pioneers in introducing *Gender Budget Auditing* and *gender budgets*, the former as early as 1984 and the latter in 1994. From that point on, *gender budgeting* initiatives spread around the world, both at central and at local government levels and in economically developed countries (in particular Canada, the UK, France, Sweden, Italy and Switzerland) as well as many developing countries.

Within the Council of Europe's Directorate-General for Human Rights, the Committee for Equality between Women and Men set up an experts' working group on *gender budgeting* which has conducted a survey and produced a background paper¹.

The European Union has set itself the target of achieving equality between men and women (Article 2 of the Treaty) and has included among the objectives of its activities the elimination of inequalities and the promotion of equality between men and women (Article 3(2) of the Treaty). The European Commission has been implementing - inter alia through the Community strategy on gender equality and the corresponding framework programme - a *gender mainstreaming* strategy which has yielded positive results in various sectoral policies, including the European Employment Strategy, the Strategy for Social Inclusion, the use of

¹ Document by K. Bellamy, 'Gender Budgeting. A Background Paper for the Council of Europe's Informal Network of Experts on Gender Budgeting', November 2002, Council of Europe.

policy, the social integration policy, the use of the Structural Funds and, as far as external relations are concerned, in the context of development cooperation policy.

At the Commission the issue of *gender sensitive budgets* was first raised at a seminar on *gender mainstreaming* as part of the macroeconomic guidelines in October 2001. The Belgian Presidency, in particular, organised a conference on '*Gender responsive budgeting: a global vision to strengthen economic and financial governance*' in cooperation with the OECD, UNIFEM and the Nordic Council of Ministers, which opened the debate at EU level on public finances and the gender perspective. More specifically, as regards *gender budgeting*, the European Commission set up a working group made up of national experts on *gender budgeting* within the Consultative Committee on Equal Opportunities, whose aim was to draw up a document containing the most significant experiences in the area, providing methodological guidelines and identifying the necessary institutional requirements for implementation at Community level and within the Member States. This working group of national experts on *gender budgeting* should publish an analysis and policy paper shortly.

DEFINITION AND OBJECTIVES

According to a definition commonly used within international organisations such as the Council of Europe and the Commonwealth, *gender budgeting means the application of the principle of gender mainstreaming¹ in the budgetary process. This involves carrying out a gender impact assessment of budgetary policies, incorporating the gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary procedure and reorganising revenue and expenditure with a view to promoting gender equality.*

The need to analyse and draw up public budgets through a gender perspective - with the ultimate aim of achieving actual equality between women and men - is based on the fact that budgets are not gender-neutral, but reflect the way in which power is distributed within society. Whenever they define revenue and expenditure policies, public budgetary authorities at all levels are taking policy decisions. Budgets are not merely economic tools but in fact key instruments with which political authorities shape a society's model of socio-economic development and criteria for internal redistribution, and prioritise the measures to be taken in respect of policies and the needs of their own citizens. The impact this has is not the same on men and women.

The responsibility of public authorities - which includes budgetary authorities - consists precisely in laying down general guidelines and making clear choices in terms of public policies rather than in the management of such policies. In making such decisions, public authorities are responsible for promoting the well-being of their own community and citizens who, as men and women, have specific needs depending on the part they play in political, economic, social, community and family life.

The way in which public budgets are normally drawn up tends to ignore the differences - in terms of roles, responsibilities and capabilities - between men and women, and in most cases the indicators and data used fail to make any gender distinction. Although they are presented

¹ *Gender mainstreaming* consists in reorganising, developing, implementing and evaluating political processes (and policy-making processes) with a view to ensuring that all those involved in decision-making processes incorporate the gender equality perspective into all phases and at all levels of public policies.

as neutral economic instruments, public budgets in actual fact reflect and thus reproduce the socio-economic disparities already present in the Community. Analysing budgetary policies on the basis of the different impacts they have on men and women helps to demystify the 'neutrality' of public budgets and, above all, to ensure that they meet appropriate criteria in terms of fairness and cost-effectiveness. In order to be not merely fair but also efficient, public spending must help to promote the development and exploit the potential of all sections of society.

It is therefore a matter of adopting an economic and social approach based on the principle that - even in an open and globalised market economy - economic and social development are considered inseparable and interconnected. An economy cannot be competitive, dynamic and healthy in the long term unless the productive, commercial and financial processes are backed up by a stable, cohesive and fair society in which human rights, resources and capacities are properly developed. The strengthening, modernisation and reorganisation of public intervention (and hence budgetary policies) with a view to social development are in fact an absolutely essential intangible investment - in capacities, empowerment, and new resources and opportunities - for economies wishing to be dynamic and competitive by being based on knowledge (in accordance with the objective set by the European Council in Lisbon).

Gender mainstreaming and *gender budgeting* are strategies aimed at introducing greater fairness, efficiency and transparency into public policies. To pursue the aim of fairness, governments and public administrations must deal with gender issues and reduced inequality between men and women, taking due account of the fact that men and women play different roles in society and the economy and, as a result, that economic policies have a different impact on them. To pursue the aim of efficiency with regard to the functioning of the economy and society, budgetary authorities must, in defining overall revenue and expenditure, also take account of the unpaid economy (i.e. domestic and care work) and, therefore, of the impact of public and budgetary policies on the different functions and responsibilities, as well as time constraints, of women and men.

Making ordinary citizens aware of the results of the implementation of budgetary policies (what are the effects of budgetary policies? what sections of the population benefit? what are the alternatives to the allocation of specific resources? how are the costs of specific decisions justified?) also means pursuing the aim of transparency and making democracy tangible at every level (central or local) of government.

In order to introduce gender budgeting, broader gender mainstreaming measures must also be taken, based on various complementary steps:

- promoting the political will at all levels to achieve equality between men and women, increasing the number of women in decision-making posts at all levels, in the public and private sectors,
- incorporating the gender perspective in the definition of the public policies, programmes and actions of governments and local authorities at the planning, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages,
- compiling gender-based data and statistics, so as to be able to identify operational indicators with which to measure the impact and effectiveness of public and budgetary policies.

As regards the European Union, no gender budgeting strategy has yet been introduced, despite the fact that the Fifth Framework Programme on equal opportunities for men and women devotes a significant part of the gender equality strategy to the objective of equality in economic and social life. In the part on implementing mechanisms and instruments, no specific mention is made of the instrument of building public budgets - at European, national and local level - from a gender perspective. In this connection, it is worth recalling that the European Union budget, contrary to the Member States' national and local budgets, is based solely on expenditure policies, given that revenue is fixed and unmodifiable unless interinstitutional agreements are signed. Any gender budgeting policy would therefore focus solely on expenditure, i.e. on the distribution of resources based on sectoral budgetary policies.

It should nevertheless be mentioned that, despite the absence of any genuine gender budgeting policy, the European Union applies a gender mainstreaming approach in a number of its policy sectors with regard to programmes and funding operations for the Member States and the Community as a whole. The most interesting and significant examples of horizontal integration of equal opportunities policy in the use of resources made available by the EU are to be found in Structural Fund programmes and resources¹, the European Employment Strategy (in particular through the fourth pillar, the annual guidelines and the MAP) and, in the external actions sector, the MEDA programme within the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. As regards, in particular, the European Union budget, the gender perspective has so far been integrated through measures affecting specific budgetary lines and the inclusion of the objective of gender equality in the various remarks relating to the budgetary lines.

As regards the specific objectives of this report on gender budgeting - the building of public budgets from a gender perspective - the rapporteur considers it essential that the adoption in plenary of this report of the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities be aimed at:

- creating and building up the necessary political will among the public political and institutional bodies responsible for defining public budgets at every level - territorial, European, national, regional and local,
- raising awareness among the general public and political and economic actors at European, national and local level of the issue of gender equality and the aim of incorporating equal opportunities in all public decisions and policies,
- disseminating information on the gender budgeting strategy and method among the institutions of the European Union and Member States and at every level of national, regional and local administrations,
- calling for the Commission² to produce and distribute as widely as possible an information brochure on gender budgeting which will serve as a guide for all those involved in the definition of budgetary policies in the European Union and the Member States and provide them with instruments for action,
- calling for the Commission and the Member States - both at central government and at

¹ At its sitting of 13 March 2003 the European Parliament adopted the Aviles Perea report on the objectives of equality of opportunities between women and men in the use of the Structural Funds.

² In accordance with the statements made by the commissioner on the EU budget, Mrs Schreyer, at the hearing on gender budgeting held by the EP's Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities on 23 January 2003.

regional and local government levels - to introduce the gender budgeting strategy in their respective public and budgetary policies;

- calling on the Commission to ensure - at the time of the mid-term evaluation of the Fifth Framework Programme on Equal Opportunities scheduled for December 2003 - that the second part of the implementation of the Framework Strategy for Equality specifically introduces the gender budgeting policy within both the objectives and the tools and mechanisms;
- calling on the Commission to draw up a communication within two years on gender budgeting, taking account of the conclusions of the experts' working group and containing an assessment of gender budgeting within the various bodies of the European Union and the Member States, as well as an action strategy for the future,
- calling on the Commission and the Member States to endeavour to set up a network for the dissemination and implementation of best practice in the field of gender budgeting which can collect and share existing experiences in this field, giving special consideration to the local level,
- calling on the European Parliament to act coherently in defining the European Union budget so that the European Community's budgetary policy is gender responsive and to charge the EP Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities with the task of monitoring the implementation of gender budgeting in the EU budget at the planning and implementation stages,
- providing actors and decision-makers involved in budgetary policies at all levels with detailed instruments, guidelines and suggestions regarding the method and measures to be adopted in defining, implementing and assessing gender budgeting policies, giving special attention to the specific nature and diversity of the various territorial and socio-economic entities in which EU citizens live,
- indicating an action framework for the implementation of gender budgeting, providing for bottom-up democratic participation and the involvement of organised individuals, NGOs and women's associations operating in the Community.

METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

Every method of assessing public policies should include systematic consideration of socio-economic inequalities between men and women and disparities in the management and distribution of public funds. The gender issue must form part of the general concept of people's living conditions in any definition of the economic system as a whole. An approach centred on the quality of life makes it possible to view the assessment of public budgets in a wider and more general context in which women's experience and contribution play a key role.

Hence, in analysing the impact of economic and budgetary policies on gender, i.e. on the lives of men and women, it is useful to consider the economic context not just in monetary terms but also in terms of the people's quality of life¹, the role and contribution of unpaid work in the field of social reproduction (domestic and care work) should be incorporated into that of paid work in any economic analysis of political options and decisions in the overall context of the public responsibilities taken on by governments and local authorities.

¹ Reference is made to a social and economic evaluation approach which takes account of human and social development, as in the case of the HDI (Human Development Index) composite indicator used by the United Nations and the OECD/OSCE to list countries on the basis of a development ranking.

Any gender budgeting measures, i.e. measures taken to build a public budget from a gender perspective, must include a number of essential steps, such as:

- identifying those who benefit from expenditure and those who contribute to revenue;
- understanding how revenue and expenditure are broken down among men and women;
- assessing the different impact which budgetary policies and the distribution of resources have on men and women in economic terms and in terms of time as well as with regard to unpaid work;
- checking that the allocation of resources appropriately/adequately meets the different needs of men and women;
- ascertaining that gender differences are duly taken into consideration at the various stages of budgetary planning, definition and implementation;
- defining priorities and specific measures to reduce inequalities between men and women through the budget.

In substance, gender budgeting means being in a position to check the efficiency and effectiveness of budgetary spending with regard to objectives and, in particular, with regard to the distribution of resources and services for men and women. It is necessary to check that women's needs are taken into account and met by public spending measures, that the services provided are adequate and that gender disparities are tackled in a positive manner.

All this should make it perfectly clear that gender budgeting and gender auditing should not consist in drawing up a separate budget on which to base measures aimed at one gender. It is not a matter of calling for separate budgets to be drawn up for men and women.

The aim of gender budgeting, which is to reduce social economic inequalities between women and men, can be achieved through a diversified and complex method providing for specific methods, actions and measures. This method should lead to an assessment of gender aspects (and the gender impact) of all public policies and, in particular, all budgetary policies. It calls for constant monitoring of the effects of public policies from a gender perspective. It implies the involvement and active participation of women in identifying their needs and defining specific measures. It should result in more effective, efficient and transparent use of public funds. It calls for the definition of clear priorities (policy decisions and public responsibilities of political authorities) rather than an increase in expenditure under the various budgetary items. It highlights the need to restructure and redefine public expenditure rather than to change the overall amount of the budget. Moreover, the implementation of gender budgeting requires the participation and involvement of women, women's organisations and NGOs on the basis of a bottom-up approach.

As regards the method and instruments to be used, it is worth pointing out that various gender budgeting studies and practices suggest analysing the expenditure side of public budgets, dividing it up initially according to a number of basic categories:

- expenditure not directly connected to gender,
- differentiated expenditure intended for men and women
- expenditure specifically linked to equal opportunities programmes and measures.

Clearly, most budgetary expenditure forms part of the first category and the work of analysing the budget from a gender perspective should focus principally on that category.

Very specific instruments need to be adopted to implement a gender budgeting policy on the basis of recent studies and practices rooted in the experiences of countries which are already active in this field. A number of measures could be useful in this respect:

- a gender-based assessment of budgetary priorities and allocation of public services (this ensures that expenditure meets the main needs of citizens, by collecting data and analysing public opinion using survey methods which take account of quantitative and qualitative objectives in areas such as transport and education);
- a gender-based analysis of the distribution of the benefits of expenditure (to show who is the main beneficiary of public expenditure, to ascertain whether public expenditure is fair and transparent, by calculating, for example, the unit cost of providing a service and making a gender-based assessment of its use);
- a gender-based assessment of the expenditure on the various sectoral policies within the budget (analysis of sectors such as transport, education, public health, social measures and employment, looking at the impact on men and women, and opening of a process of assessment which should involve the various ministries, departments, expenditure authorities and research bodies, NGOs and organised territorial entities);
- an overall assessment of the budget from a gender perspective, assessing to what extent overall and sectoral public expenditure meets the need to reduce inequalities between men and women (this could in fact consist in a general document putting forward a possible alternative to the official budget and providing an overall assessment from the point of view of women over a significant period, e.g. three-five years);
- the incorporation of a gender perspective into the definition of medium- and long-term economic and employment policies (with a policy mix approach), (budgetary policies form part of wider economic policies and it is therefore essential to carry out a gender-based analysis of macroeconomic variables such as growth, employment levels, the unemployment rate, public investment, inflation, and budgetary deficits, taking due account of the paid and unpaid economy);
- an analysis of the impact of public expenditure measures on time use (the aim is to consider the implications of budgetary policies for unpaid work, social reproduction activities, domestic work, family and community care, etc., in respect of which 'time budgets' must be drawn up making it possible to assess the real living conditions of individuals and families in order to determine adequate measures in terms of resources and services to be made available through budgetary policies).

CONCLUSIONS

The above considerations form the conceptual and methodological basis for, and indicate the fundamental objectives of, the own-initiative report on gender budgeting which the rapporteur is submitting to the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities. The ultimate objective of this document is to stimulate discussion of the issue of gender budgeting with a view to gathering views and suggestions which will help compile the final report and the relevant explanatory statement.