

# Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

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## Lecture 7

**The ‘gender dimension’ and  
E.U. social policy**

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## Lecture 8

Additional sources:

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Stratigaki, M. (2005) ‘Gender Mainstreaming vs Positive Action. An Ongoing Conflict in EU Gender Equality Policy’, in *European Journal of Women’s Studies*, Vol.12 (2), pp.165-186.

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1. Gender policy and E.U. social policy
  - historical development
  - endogenous and exogenous circumstances and factors
2. Gender policy – harmonisation and convergence or ‘mutual recognition’?

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1. Gender policy and E.U. social policy
  - invades and interacts with many other areas of social policy
  - Article 119, Treaty of Rome 1957, referred explicitly to the right of women to equal pay with men

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- Articles 100 and 235, Treaty of Rome 1957, enabled European Commission to prepare directives on equal pay AND equal treatment of citizens

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- Treaty of Rome, 1957, established a framework for promoting the harmonisation of national legislation to the social and economic advantage of women in paid work

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- the impact of factors external (exogenous factors) to the EEC in 1960s
- social, cultural and economic factors in wider Europe
  - economic reconstruction and boom
  - greater employment opportunities
  - expanding education opportunities
  - changes in family structure

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1974 - EEC Social Action Programme

- implementation of equal pay principle one of priority actions

1981 - European Commission set up  
Advisory Committee on Equal  
Opportunities

1983 – European Network of Women  
established – forum for women’s NGOs



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1981 - European Parliament created Standing  
Committee on Women's rights

1989 - Community Charter of the Fundamental  
Social Rights of Workers

“Equal treatment for men and women must  
be assured. Equal opportunities for men and  
women must be developed.”

(Social Charter, incorporated into Maastricht  
Treaty 1992)

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1989 - Community Charter of the  
Fundamental Social Rights of Workers  
referred to the need for measures  
“enabling men and women to reconcile  
their occupational and family obligations  
with a view to achieving greater equality  
of opportunity.”

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1990 – European Women’s Lobby  
formed

- by end of 1990s this group represented around 2,700 women’s organisations (including European Network of Women)

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1990s – 2 important developments for  
E.U. gender policy;

1. adoption of measures at E.U. level  
to help parents reconcile  
occupational and family life;
2. The ‘mainstreaming of gender’

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### 2. Gender policy – harmonisation and convergence or ‘mutual recognition’?

- initial primary concern of EEC on gender policy was economic and ‘fair competition’ – in that respect, was attempt at convergence and degree of harmonisation of principles

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- where E.U. gender policy has been extended beyond the workplace there has been more flexible implementation and ‘mutual recognition’ of differing approaches (i.e. through cultural differences)

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March 2010 E.U. Commission launched its 'Women's Charter'

- "This Charter represents the commitment of the Commission to making gender equality a reality in the EU. Women and men still face widespread inequalities, with serious repercussions for economic and social cohesion, sustainable growth and competitiveness, and the ageing of Europe's population. It is therefore important to include a strong gender dimension in the future Europe 2020 strategy that the Commission will develop in the next five years. Especially in times of crisis, we need to incorporate the gender dimension in all of our policies, for the benefit of both women and men," (President José Manuel Barroso, 05.03.2010).

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The Charter presents a series of commitments based on agreed principles of equality between women and men. It aims to promote:

- equality in the labour market and equal economic independence for women and men, namely through the Europe 2020 strategy;
- equal pay for equal work and work of equal value by working with Member States to reduce significantly the gender pay gap over the next five years;
- equality in decision-making through EU incentive measures;
- dignity, integrity and an end to gender-based violence through a comprehensive policy framework;
- gender equality beyond the EU by pursuing the issue in external relations and with international organisations.