



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY LEARNING IN THE EUROPEAN STEEL INDUSTRY

A Report for *LEONARDO DA VINCI*

Community Vocational Training Action Programme

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BRIC	Brazil, Russia, India, China
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CERD	International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
ECHR	Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms
EES	European Employment Strategy
ETD	European Union Equal Treatment Directive
EU	European Union
EU-27	Membership as of 2007
EU-25	Membership as of 2004
EU-15	Membership as of 1995
EU-12	Membership as of 1986
EU-10	Membership as of 1981
NAPs	National Action Plans (NAPs)
OECD	Organisation of Economic Co-Operation and Development
RED	Race Equality Directives (RED)
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Equality and Diversity Learning in the European Steel Industry: Executive Summary and Recommendations

The Equality and Diversity Learning in the European Steel Industry (EDLESI) project addresses real and anticipated changes in the composition of the European steel industry workforce. It aims to promote an awareness of equality and diversity at work, and establish better equal opportunities policies and practices in the steel sector. To address these themes the partnership undertook path breaking research into the European steel industry, considering the dimensions of equality and diversity.

The Research

The Research Report traces out relevant legislation and directives that apply, and the ways that steel companies address equality and diversity themes in relation to these developments. Statistical evidence is provided of EU patterns of work and employment, which are complemented by the core of the project – case study work focusing on the experiences of management and workers in the industry. The result is a grounded account of equality and diversity in the European steel industry.

The Findings

The principal finding of the research is that, despite islands of good practice, equality and diversity in the European steel industry is an issue largely ignored. In places, the industry has introduced measures and practices relating to equal treatment, but the support is very uneven. Diversity is often totally unrecognised by the industry. Where policy is introduced the aim is to avoid discrimination at the workplace, although the focus is much more on gender, than migration/ethnicity and even less so on age and disability.

Themes

1. **Mature Workers:** The current age profile of the industry is rather mature. This feature presents the industry with specific challenges, not least in replacing members of the workforce skilled by experience and deciding to retire, but also in updating and ‘modernising’ workforce skills and qualifications.
2. **Young Workers:** Overall, companies view the changing demands on the industry as requiring the introduction of a more highly qualified workforce. ‘New’ workers tend to be in their twenties and thirties and possess quite different and more rounded experiences of education than many of the more mature and time-served members of the workforce, which has implications for training methods and strategies.
3. **Women:** Whilst populating administrative and domestic occupations within the industry, women have traditionally been absent from production occupations (typically comprising between 3 and 7 per cent of the production workforce). Increasingly, women are being recruited to positions on the shop-floor as well as to management and staff related positions. The situation in Eastern European countries is very different, where there has been a relatively high level of female employment in the industry, around 30 per cent. However, this is now declining.
4. **Migrant/Ethnic Minority Workers:** It is notable that in some countries, for example Germany, France and the Netherlands, migrant workers in the steel industry have traditionally populated

low-skilled occupations within the industry. In other countries, the UK for example, ethnic minority and migrant workers in this industry have been notable by their absence.

5. **Disabled Workers:** Many countries operate a quota policy with regard to employment of the disabled (variously defined); whereby national legislation requires that company workforces comprise a percentage of disabled people. Some companies observe this legislation more closely than others do.

Equality and Diversity Issues

The following equality and diversity issues are evident:

1. **Awareness:** There is a poor awareness of equality and diversity issues among management and across the steel industry workforce, including those representing workers.
2. **Occupational Segregation:** Women and migrant workers working within the industry have usually been restricted to occupations outside the production process or within particular parts of the production process. Their progression through the occupational hierarchy has also been limited.
3. **Bullying/Mobbing and Harassment:** One very difficult issue involves bullying or mobbing and harassment. Evidence was found of:
 - a. *Sexual Harassment*
 - b. *Racism*
 - c. *(Direct and In-direct) Discrimination*
 - d. *Bullying/Mobbing*

There is little evidence that these issues are being confronted within the industry.

4. **Work/Life Balance:** Questions relating to work/life balance are complex and differentiated in terms of position within the industry. For production workers the nature of steelwork and the way it is organised makes it difficult to introduce flexible working arrangements. For administrative staff this option is possible, but evidence of this type of arrangement was limited.
5. **Corporate Policies and Rules:** At a national level, EU member states are at various stages with regard to adopting EU directives, with more recent member states some way behind more established members.
6. **Training:** There are specific equality and diversity dimensions to training needs. Training programmes should be grounded on the assumption that the steel workforce is not homogenous, but is diverse and differentiated in a number of critical ways.

The message from practitioners is clear – Diversity and Equal Opportunity needs to be viewed and treated as a mainstream issue and not marginalised as something that only affects minority groups. This is vital when undertaking ‘awareness’ raising events or initiatives. It is important to make diversity and equality issues relevant to all sections of the workforce.

THE RESEARCH REPORT

Summary and Recommendations

The Equality and Diversity Learning in the European Steel Industry (EDLESI) Report presents the research data that informed the development of the awareness materials that are the product of the project. It reports three related sets of materials, legislation and policies relevant for an understanding of equality and diversity in the European steel industry; a profile of key dimensions of the European steel industry; and field research data.

Equality and Diversity Policies in Europe

Approaches to achieving equality in the workplace have evolved significantly in recent times. Equality of opportunity and diversity measures have been the focus of extensive political debate and the subject of legislation and policy initiatives, at supra-state and member state levels throughout the European Union. One outcome of these debates and the associated policy initiatives is that there is considerable variation between the countries that make up the European Union. These variations have implications for companies, operating within countries and between them.

Whilst certain enterprises and industries have been at the forefront of these developments, Europe's steel industry has only recently begun to concern itself with issues of equality. Nonetheless, there are a number of approaches that steel companies might adopt:

- *Equal Treatment* is a legislative approach which underpins anti-discrimination legislation and enjoins employers to treat everyone 'the same'.
- *Positive Action* recognises that certain social groups may need support measures which compensate for inequalities in access to different spheres of social life.
- *Positive Discrimination* involves reserving jobs or privileges exclusively for people from certain disadvantaged social groups.
- *Mainstreaming* is concerned with the integration of equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices into all aspects of the everyday work of an organisation.
- *Diversity* is a voluntary approach to human resource management. It is not a legal term and has no legal force behind it. Promoting diversity is often presented merely as a more positive attitude to non-discrimination.

The EU Steel Industry

The European steel industry has been transformed in the last fifty years. It was a founding reference point for the modern EU, but is now moving from a state-based industry to one which increasingly is shaped by an international agenda, reflected in mergers and acquisitions, and changing trade relations. It is in this context that steel workforces across Europe are beginning to shift from being predominantly male, mature, local and largely uncredentialed (but skilled), to something more highly qualified and diverse. It remains the case however, that the bulk of the workforce is aged, vulnerable and facing an uncertain future. The questions are what are the implications of these developments for workforce recomposition and what is the role of the

EU and national governments in this process? Before answering them we consider the range of EU-based policies that set the scene for these developments.

These developments will have implications for the workforce and the way steel is produced. In particular, it is likely that a safer, cleaner and more technologically developed steel industry working environment, which requires more highly skilled workers, will result in a more diverse steel industry workforce. The current mature and predominantly male and unqualified sections of the workforce are likely to leave in the near future, opening up space for the recruitment of more highly qualified men *and* women of different and diverse backgrounds. Such developments will give rise to numerous questions on: training and learning, gender, ethnicity, disability, generation, as well as occupational and qualification profiles.

The socio-demographic profile of the steel industry workforce is developing in parallel with other industry developments. The employment data presents a complex and uneven picture across the European steel industry. With the moves towards restructuring, technological innovation and the process of cross border mergers and acquisitions, overall staff levels were reduced, usually directly via retirement and redundancy.

In the context of restructuring, the socio-demographic composition of the workforce is likely to shift in marked ways over the next few years. There are two dimensions to this profile: an age or generational dimension and an uneven pattern of female employment, both within companies and between the EU countries. Of note, there is markedly less female employment in the EU-15 when compared with the Central and Eastern European countries.

Employment and Training

The European steel industry has long been both a reference point for EU (and its predecessors) policy; it is an industry that has shaped work and employment policies within the EU. Until relatively recently, much policy was developed in relation to steel and coal as core industries in the EU – and the development of post-war production and consumption policies (Mioche, 1998). These policies have taken on a renewed force with the goals for employment restructuring set at the Lisbon European Summit in March 2000, and elaborated subsequently. One decisive aspect of this process is that global processes increasingly shape the ways that social and economic development takes place, but that policy implementation remains focused at a national level.

The Lisbon process is aimed at laying the foundation for a dynamic, flexible and inclusive European Union (EU) economy. It is within this context, amid wider processes of restructuring and 'modernisation', that traditional industries, such as steel, are engaged in transforming their skill base and creating a more diverse workforce. In this process, corporate management has a decisive role in reshaping the steel workforce, exploiting the intersections between different aspects of policy. Before exploring how these policies are worked out in practice, it is necessary to examine the way in which these policies intersect with equality and diversity policies.

Themes and Issues

Equal opportunities and diversity questions are key concerns of the European steel industry. The broad context for this engagement is the developments within the European Union in relation to these themes. Obviously, this engagement has a broader background in the political changes that have taken place in Europe, particularly over the last three decades. It is in this respect, that the developments within the European Union, in relation to policy, and the associated requirements placed on governments and companies should be assessed.

The starting point for considering equality approaches in the companies is a consideration of actual experiences that employees have during their working lives. The industry is one where there is a tradition of pursuing a career, often involving training and staff development. Nonetheless, in relation to the restructuring of the industry that is taking place it is also likely that different patterns of career development are likely to emerge. These varied staff profiles provide both a mode for analysing the ways in which different sets of employees pursue their careers as well as a benchmark for assessing these profiles.

The evaluation of equality and diversity within the European steel industry focuses particularly with regard to women, black and minority ethnic and migrant workers, disabled workers and different generations of workers. The findings are:

1. **Mature Workers:** The current age profile of the industry is rather mature. This feature presents the industry with specific challenges, not least in replacing members of the workforce skilled by experience and deciding to retire, but also in updating and 'modernising' workforce skills and qualifications.
2. **Young Workers:** Overall, companies view the changing demands on the industry as requiring the introduction of a more highly qualified workforce. 'New' workers tend to be in their twenties and thirties and possess quite different and more rounded experiences of education than many of the more mature and time-served members of the workforce, which has implications for training methods and strategies.
3. **Women:** Whilst populating administrative and domestic occupations within the industry, women have traditionally been absent from production occupations (typically comprising between 3 and 7 per cent of the production workforce). Increasingly, women are being recruited to positions on the shop-floor as well as to management and staff related positions. The situation in Eastern European countries is very different, where there has been a relatively high level of female employment in the industry, around 30 per cent. However, this is now declining.
4. **Migrant/Ethnic Minority Workers:** It is notable that in some countries, for example Germany, France and the Netherlands, migrant workers in the steel industry have traditionally populated low-skilled occupations within the industry. In other countries, the UK for example, ethnic minority and migrant workers in this industry have been notable by their absence.

5. **Disabled Workers:** Many countries operate a quota policy with regard to employment of the disabled (variously defined); whereby national legislation requires that company workforces comprise a percentage of disabled people. Some companies observe this legislation more closely than others do.

The broader context is that:

1. **Industry Awareness:** There is a poor awareness of equality and diversity issues among management and across the steel industry workforce, including those institutions representing workers.
2. **Corporate Policies and Rules:** EU directives on equality and diversity are being transposed in uneven ways, across member states, with implications for equal opportunities policies and practices at country and company level. As a result, discriminatory practices and harassment within the industry is exacerbated by the absence of policy within the industry to protect and ensure equal opportunities.
3. **Occupational Segregation:** Some groups (for example, women and migrant workers) experience occupational (horizontal and vertical) segregation within the industry.
4. **Bullying/Mobbing and Harassment:** From company to company, and more generally, from country to country, there are very different assessments and definitions of bullying/mobbing and harassment. It is, nonetheless the case that such behaviours are evident in the industry.
5. **Work/Life Balance (WLB):** The steel industry faces a set of internal and external pressures for the introduction of WLB arrangements. First, there are demands related to the application of European laws on employment equality. Second, there is a pressure for such arrangements to be introduced as the composition of the workforce develops beyond its traditional profile.
6. **Training:** There are specific equality and diversity dimensions to training needs, particularly with regard to uneven access to learning opportunities across the industry.

Recognising and Promoting Equality and Diversity in Practice

A central challenge for the industry is to address questions relating to Equal Opportunity and Diversity. Legislation provides a foundation for good practice, but it is only a starting point. The message from practitioners is clear – Diversity and Equal Opportunity needs to be viewed and treated as a mainstream issue and not marginalised as something that only affects minority groups. Training and learning is an effective way of communicating the Diversity and Equal Opportunity message. However, it is important to be aware of the particular learning needs of those undertaking training and learning. Recognising and promoting Diversity and Equal Opportunity has to be firmly embedded within a 'company culture' for it to thrive.

The Report

1 Equality and Diversity Learning in the European Steel Industry

The project is funded under the European Union's Leonardo da Vinci Community Vocational Training Action Programme, Second phase: 2000-2006, (UK/04/B/F/pp-162 166). The *Equality and Diversity Learning in the European Steel Industry* (EDLESI) project is a response to changes in the composition of the European steel industry workforce. This report presents the research and related findings of the project. The background to the project is twofold. First, the European steel industry has and is continuing to undergo a major restructuring, with dramatic implications for the composition and organisation of the workforce. Second, the European Union has issued a number of directives and promoted policies relating to equality and diversity. These initiatives have direct and indirect effects on the European Steel industry.

The focus of the project is on raising equality and diversity awareness and establishing equal opportunities policy and practice in the steel sector, particularly with regard to teaching and learning. Based on the findings of a rigorous and comprehensive programme of primary and secondary research, the project partnership has produced equality and diversity learning materials and briefing papers that target different groups within the industry. The project is relevant to the steel and metals sectors and to other sectors and industries with a 'nationalised' history, such as energy production and distribution. It comprises six Work Packages, of which the first two develop the research base for the project. The project began on 1 October 2004 and finished on 30 September 2007.

The EDLESI project is led by the Regeneration Institute, Cardiff University and brings together 10 organisations from 9 European countries to help meet the challenges faced by the European steel industry in managing the transformation of its workforce. These partners each come to the project with different capacities:

- Corus plc is a major Anglo-Dutch steel producer (<http://www.corusgroup.com/en/>).
- European Metalworkers Federation (EMF) - a key sector organization with over 20 million members and based in Belgium (<http://www.emf-fem.org/>)
- Groupe ESC Toulouse Centre for European Research in Employment and Human Resources (CREER) is expert in management studies, based in France (<http://www.esc-toulouse.fr/>)
- IDEC is a well established Greek based company working in the field of telecommunications (<http://idec.gr/>).
- IG Metall is Germany's main metalworkers' trade union (<http://www.igmetall.de/>).

- Secretariat Metalonców NSZZ, SOLIDARNOŚĆ is one of the main trade union confederations in Poland and one of the largest trade union organizations in the world (<http://www.solidarnosc.org.pl/index.htm>).
- Istituto per la Cultura e la Storia d'Impresa (ICSIM) is a non-profit making association that promotes cultural and educational programmes in the field of management and business history. It is based in Terni, Italy (<http://www.icsim.it/>).
- OS KOVO is the main Czech Metalworkers Union and has 250,000 members (<http://www.oskovo.cz/>)
- Sozialforschungsstelle Dortmund (sfs) is one of Germany's largest institutes of labour research (<http://www.sfs-dortmund.de>)
- The Regeneration Institute, Cardiff University, based in Wales, is a joint initiative by the School of City and Regional Planning and the School of Social Sciences for academic and policy based research in regeneration activities (<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/regenerationinstitute/index.html>)

The project develops the findings from a previous one, titled 'Future Skill Needs in the European Steel Sector' (Fairbrother *et al.*, 2003). This earlier project sought to identify skills and qualification gaps in the sector. An outcome of this research was the observation that the industry workforce was being recomposed with implications for companies, governments, and the industry as a whole. With this earlier project as reference point, the current report addresses the complex question of equal opportunities and diversity in a workforce that has been predominantly male, aged and characterised increasingly by a generational polarisation, and where complex issues arise in relation to migration and the inclusion of ethnic minorities. Thus, the EDLESI project focused on issues experienced by particular groups working in the industry: women, migrant and ethnic minority workers, workers of different age groups and disabled workers:

1.1 Aims and Objectives

The European steel industry is undergoing change, following deregulation and with the beginnings of a recomposition of the workforce. At the same time the elaboration and implementation of equal opportunities policies is a feature of the European Union policies and directives. The subject of the study is equal opportunities and diversity in the European steel industry, focusing on groups of workers who are potentially marginalised within the industry. These include women, ethnic minority/migrant worker groups, older workers and young people new to the industry (or generations of worker). The distinctiveness of this project is to consider equal opportunities and diversity as a main focus.

The project has the following specific aims:

1. To undertake a comprehensive mapping exercise, resulting in a socio-demographic profile statement of the European steel industry workforce. This will particularly address the composition of the workforce in terms of gender, age, ethnicity and migration, and disability. Significant patterns and trends will be identified, and contextualized in terms of the restructuring of the industry.
2. To map equal opportunities policy at national and company level, including the analysis of national and supra-national directives and policies. This will set the context for understanding equal opportunities practice.
3. To produce a set of educational materials, that will be of value to the steel industry.
4. To produce a set of briefings that identify and detail target groups needs, with regard to equality and diversity within the sector. These will be used to inform social partners, and provide an evidence base for policymaking and the development of learning strategies.

The focus of the research is the companies and countries that make up the European Union. In the context of restructuring, both within countries and between countries, questions arise about equal opportunities and the implications of increasingly diverse workforces. To begin to explore these questions, the project considers the focus and detail of the EU Directives and policies, government compliance with these requirements, the patterns of restructuring that are taking place within the industry, the ways in which companies are addressing these requirements and the actual experiences of workforces.

The recent history of company restructuring is an appropriate starting point to examine the changing and evolving composition of these workforces. Ownership has shifted from a complex of private and public forms of ownership, arrangements that involved national and local public ownership as well as major private owners in some cases. By the 2000s, these arrangements had changed, with universal private ownership, often involving cross-border ownership arrangements, some of which have resulted in the largest steel companies in the world.

While changes of ownership are the most obvious sign of the change that the steel is undergoing, other explanatory factors (restructuring, competition, the regulatory regime, and the environmental question) are also part of the transformation that the industry is undergoing. For example, the recent expansion of the EU from fifteen members to twenty-five, and with other additions being considered, it can also be assumed that the steel industry in these countries will continue to undergo change, as the economies and practices within these countries are brought into line with each other.

Of more pertinence are the specific requirements in relation to equality and diversity. The EU has taken a number of steps in recent years to focus explicitly and directly on equality. In 1997, for example, the EU provided a legal basis for positive action and gender mainstreaming via the Treaty of Amsterdam. In 2000, the EU issued two directives, the Equal Treatment Directive and the Race Equality Directive. Such focused measures built on a wider framework of concern

and engagement with equality questions. The European Union is bound by a number of overarching treaties, which guarantee fundamental rights and freedoms: European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR); the right of all persons to equality before the law and protection from discrimination is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). Member States are also signatories to the United Nations Covenants on Civil and Political Rights.

For the first time in many Member States, there is anti-discrimination legislation covering training and employment on the basis of age, disability, race and ethnicity, religion and belief, sexual orientation and gender. These regulations and requirements directly relate to the policies, organisation and practice on measures relating to equality and diversity in the European steel industry.

These factors are the starting point for analysis. The key reference points are the requirements imposed on companies and workforces and the rights enshrined under law and regulation. Within the context of on-going change and restructuring this is an industry that faces a specific set of challenges in relation to equality and diversity within the industry.

1.2 Analytic Framework

The research draws on an established approach to comparative investigation and analysis. The explanatory framework is based on a consideration of analytic approaches to comparative societal research (e.g. Maurice, Sellier and Silvestre 1986). This framework guides the exploration and consideration of equality and diversity in the modern European steel industry. For the purpose of analysis, equality measures are encapsulated in an approach that:

1. Incorporates the cumulative aspects of different approaches such as Equal Treatment, Positive Action, and Gender Mainstreaming, which in turn is based on different sets of assumptions.
2. Has a multi-faceted reference, which in this case includes age, gender, disability, race and ethnicity, religion and belief, and sexual orientation.

In addition, diversity is:

1. Predicated on a view that difference is a feature of social life
2. Assumes that difference should be valued.

These principles point to a set of distinctions between legislation, policies, practices and outcomes. They provide a framework for identifying and explaining the patterns of organisation and operation within companies, as well as the processes of change. The test is to consider policies and practices in relation to equality and diversity between companies/countries and the

workforce concerns that may be emerging. This framework organises the discussion of the case studies and related data.

1.3 Research Team

The research team comprised:

Peter Fairbrother (Cardiff University)
Wilfred Kruse (sfs)
Emma Stringfellow (CREER)
Dean Stroud (Cardiff University)
Daniel Tech (sfs)
Jonathon Winterton (CREER)

Where appropriate other partners supported and facilitated the research programme.

1.4 Research Strategy and Approach

The approach followed in the research was to review previous studies, develop an analysis of the quantitative data where appropriate, and conduct original research of selected companies, using established qualitative methods (for an approach addressing some of these themes, see Spencer *et al.*, 2003). The principle method used was case study based interviews, with key informants, complemented by analysis of primary documentary records (e.g. company reports).

This approach to research is well founded. The strength of interview based case study research is that it relies on four related elements:

1. Study of social questions in context (the examination of equal opportunity and diversity strategies and practice)
2. An agreed definition of the case (in this instance steel companies)
3. Multiple sources of data (interviews, submissions, documents, statistical sources, reports, previous studies)
4. A variety of methods (interviews, informal comment, observation, documentary analysis, statistical analysis) (see Burgess, 2000)

Interviews were used to provide a data source that otherwise is unavailable. Additionally, the 'interview' is an exchange out of which it is possible to develop understandings. Thus:

An adequate understanding of interviews depends on recognizing how interviewers reformulate questions and how respondents frame answers in terms of their reciprocal understanding as meanings emerge during the course of the interview. (Mishler, 1986: 52)

Two types of interview were used. First, all respondents were asked the same pre-established questions. However, rather than seek fixed answers, the interviews provided the opportunity to explore questions about the current situation in the steel industry as well as the possible developments that may be underway in relation to skills needs. Second, to give voice to staff and to generate a distinctive view of training and learning needs and requirements, a series of panel interviews were held with selected staff (Fontana and Frey, 2000). In this case, the distinctions were as follows:

1. Management with responsibility for Human Resources, including equal opportunities
2. Trade union officials
3. Panel interviews, comprising:
 - a. Older workers: over 45 years of age
 - b. Younger workers: under 35 years of age
 - c. Female workers
 - d. Ethnic/migrant workers
 - e. Disabled workers

Such an approach is well suited to explore emerging issues and links in depth. Across the European Union countries there is considerable variation in relation to the recruitment and presence of different sets of workers, according to the above criteria. In addition, company policies have evolved in strikingly varied contexts. These range from the varied ways in which directives have been transposed into domestic legislation; the varied political histories of these countries; the variations between public and private companies, between companies that only operate in a single state and those that operate across state borders, and the variations in socio-demographic composition of different workforces. These features mean that equality and diversity questions are crucially shaped by both specific national contexts and the intersection with different forms and patterns of ownership. It thus is appropriate to explore these themes in their respective contexts. This approach has successfully been used in a series of international comparative research projects (see e.g. Winterton, 1998).

The Partnership for the project provided guidance and advice at critical stages of the project. A core part of the project rests on a set of case studies, examining the themes related to equality and diversity. The selection of companies in the study was made by the Partnership. In turn, the companies identified staff for interview and the recognised unions did the same with their membership.

The eight participating companies covered seven countries, comprising five from the EU-15 and two from the New Member States. The details are provided below:

Table 1.1: Countries and Responses

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF COMPANIES	RESPONSE
Czech Republic	2	3 x Mgt, 3 x TU, 8 Panels
France	1	1 x Mgt, 1 x TU, 1 x Trainer, 5 Panels
Germany	2	1 x Mgt, 2 x TU, 1 x Trainer, 5 Panels
Italy	1	1 x Mgt, 1 x TU, 1 x Trainer, 5 Panels
Poland	3	1 x Mgt, 3 x TU, 3 Panels
Spain	1	3 x Mgt, 1 x TU, 3 Panels
United Kingdom	1	3 x Mgt, 2 x TU

The detailed studies comprised the following:

1. Collection of documentary material
2. Collection of statistical data
3. Interviews with key respondents, drawn from management and trade unions
4. Four panel interviews, covering age, gender and ethnicity/migrant workers.

1.5 Timetable

The timetable for the research and analysis is set out below:

October/December 2004	Analysis of literature, identifying issues and policies
January – December 2005	Interviews/fieldwork/Transcription
January – December 2006	Analysis, Preliminary Reports
January – September 2007	Finalisation of the WP1/2 Report

1.6 Structure

The structure of the report is as follows:

Report (Volume One)

Section Two presents the legal and institutional view of equality and diversity in Europe.

Section Three provides an overview of employment in the European steel industry.

Section Four develops an analysis of the current state of the European steel industry.

Section Five deals with employment and training policies in relation to the European steel industry.

Section Six identifies themes and issues that face the industry in relation to equality and diversity.

Section Seven addresses the question as to whether equality and diversity is an issue for the European steel industry.

Section Eight identifies the implications this research has for an understanding of equality and diversity in the European steel industry and provides the platform for Workpackages Three and Four.

Annexes

Volume Two

- One: Equality and Diversity in the European Union: A Legal and Institutional View
- Two: Vocational Education and Training in the European Steel Industry
- Three: Equal Opportunities and the European Steel Industry

Volume Three

- Five: Country Reports
- Six: Case Studies
- Seven: Recommendations Report
- Eight: Interview Schedules

2 Equality and Diversity in Europe – A Legal and Institutional View

(Prepared by Alison Parken, PurpleandGreen Equalities research, training, and consultancy, June 2007)

Equality of opportunity and diversity has been the focus of extensive political debate and subject of legislation and policy initiatives, at supra-state and member-state levels throughout the European Union. The debates have their origins in the successive waves of feminist debate as well as other political dialogues over the last century. One result is a variety of approaches to the ways in which these core ideas are captured in legislation and related policies. Another outcome is that the European Union countries are not all of a piece, with some countries developing publicly recognised comprehensive approaches to equality questions, while others are at a beginning. These variations have implications for companies, operating within countries and between them.

Equality measures can be instigated through legislative reform (hard measures) or policy (soft measures). The adoption in 2000, of the European Union Equal Treatment (ETD) and Race Equality Directives (RED), are an example of 'hard' or mandatory measures. Positive Action and Gender Mainstreaming, although given a legal basis in the Directives, are voluntary measures. Over the last two decades, there has been a move from soft initiatives to formal legal initiatives.

At a general level, the European Union is bound by a number of overarching treaties, which guarantee fundamental rights and freedoms: European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR); the right of all persons to equality before the law and protection from discrimination is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). Member States are also signatories to the United Nations Covenants on Civil and Political Rights. Article 14 of the ECHR protects against discrimination in relation to the fundamental rights and freedoms, and Protocol 12 provides for a non exhaustive list of grounds upon which citizens can be protected against discrimination in, and beyond employment. This has been ratified only by a handful of Member States.

More pertinently, since the introduction of the ETD (2000/78/EC) and RED (2000/43/EC), a 'six strand' approach to equality has emerged within the EU, so that there is anti-discrimination legislation covering training and employment on the basis of age, disability, race and ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation and gender. These initiatives provide a key foundation for a consideration of equality measures and diversity management by companies, trade unions and workforces.

2.1 Approaches

While the debates about equal opportunities and diversity recognition are complex and often contested, it is possible to identify five core approaches to equality questions. They are:

- Equal Treatment (ET)
- Positive Action (PA)
- Mainstreaming (especially Gender Mainstreaming – GM)
- Diversity Management (DM)
- Legal Duties to Promote Equality (LDPE)

These approaches rest on distinct and occasionally opposing philosophies. In addition, it is only recently that questions relating to diversity have emerged in a specific form as part of the more general debates about equality in contemporary society. The following approaches to equality inform the implementation of hard or soft measures.

Equal Treatment: Often referred to as anti-discrimination. Here, the aim is to create a situation whereby individuals and social groups are not treated unfairly in relation to each other.

Legislation that furthers this approach supports a basic principle of equal access and opportunity to education, training and labour markets. It attempts to remove formal barriers to labour market participation. To illustrate, the principle of Equal Treatment has been called upon to remove 'marriage bars', which required women to resign from their jobs upon marriage. Such a policy operated until 1972 within the Diplomatic Service of the UK Government and the Irish Civil Service. However, such policies leave a lasting legacy; the idea that women's priority should be their role in the home still underpins the terms on which they participate in labour markets.

Equal Treatment is also the principle called upon to prevent different groups of people from being treated unfairly in relation to each other in respect of access to occupations, pay and progression. This approach underpins anti-discriminatory legislation and in practice it enjoins employers to treat everyone 'the same'. However, it is clear that this is insufficient to produce equality of outcome.

What is missing is an understanding that to treat people equally one may have to treat them differently. Older workers, for example, have been particularly vulnerable to redundancy and subsequent long-term unemployment, and have been retiring early to such an extent since labour market restructuring in the 1980s that policy intervention will be needed to reverse this trend. Another example, would be the recent European Parliament Resolution on the Situation of People with Disabilities in the enlarged EU (2006/2105(INI)), which calls upon Member States 'to explore more intensively ways of offering jobs to people with disabilities' (measure 53). This recognises that protected or assisted employment places or Positive Action measures, may be needed to create an equitable situation. To produce equality of outcome, which is more meaningful than formal equality of access, certain workers, in relation to particular circumstances, may need to be treated differently to other workers.

Positive Action: This approach is premised on the assumption that in order to address the inequalities associated with 'difference' in the prevailing social order, it may be necessary to provide specific sets of support to achieve equality.

The approach recognises the significance of the effects of ascriptions applied to group membership (older, younger, disabled, ethnic minority, women) on the allocation of positions in the labour market. It is an approach that seeks to provide mechanisms and measures that compensate for inequalities in different spheres of economic life.

The EU has recognised the potential for Positive Action measures by including them within the remit of the Equal Treatment Directive (2000/78/EC) and the Race Equality Directive (2000/43/EC). It is lawful for Member States and employers therein to apply Positive Action initiatives on grounds of race or ethnicity, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief. Such an approach, for example, can mean the provision of women-only training programmes, interview training for under-represented groups at senior levels in organisations, or measures specific to the development of disadvantaged groups as entrepreneurs.

The assumptions underpinning this approach can be contested. Too often, missing the potential for creativity, the content of programmes is to enable women (or members of other groups) to mirror men's workplace behaviours or working practices, which are viewed as the 'norm' (for example, providing women with assertiveness training). These measures treat 'difference' to this norm' as a 'deficit', and consequently do not address the structural advantages afforded to the 'norm' of the able bodied, white, male full-time employee in labour market systems. More generally, these approaches rest on an implication that 'difference' implies an assumption of 'less than' in relation to comparator social groups.

Mainstreaming: Mainstreaming equality does not rely on discrete equalities legislation but rather seeks to amend ALL policy which can create disadvantage and based on evidence of inequality, encourage new policy that will promote equality between individuals and groups.

Mainstreaming approaches have been developed in relation to gender inequalities specifically. Gender mainstreaming attempts to redress the balance of the, in effect, positive discrimination that operates when the systems and structures of labour markets are (often unconsciously) based upon the working patterns of the traditionally 'ideal' worker, who has historically been the white, heterosexual, able-bodied man.

This approach positively embraces difference and amends systems and practices to account for the reality of different working lives, rather than try to model all workers on the subjectivity of a mostly non-existent 'ideal worker'. Mainstreaming treats the difference of individual lives to a structural 'norm' as requiring systems change, not individual denial of difference.

Diversity Management: Diversity Management is an approach that aims to value difference and promote diversity as a beneficial feature of organisational life.

This approach is driven not by public policy but by Human Resource Management (HRM) practices. The rationale is 'the business case' for equality. In this conception, 'difference' is valued because it is claimed it will enrich the workplace, better reflect the wider society, produce better team working, innovative ideas and insights into niche markets.

Recent studies have shown that this approach is valued by workers and research has revealed innovative workplace practices in 'exemplar companies' such as social labour programmes for youth offenders; programmes to address the gender concentration of women in administrative roles by moving them into technical and stock market dealing roles; a business and government diversity coalition working to change societal attitudes toward ethnic groups by beginning with organisational life, and 'time-hours cheque books' for flexible working. However, in practice these measures have usually been in companies that are either start-ups, newly formed from restructuring of industry or 'family' owned.

In contrast to mainstreaming, difference is treated as an individual characteristic. There is no desire to tackle group disadvantage or change systems and structures. However, public policy informed by equality mainstreaming can assist by creating conditions favourable to fostering in-company diversity practices. In addition, there is already some evidence that the inclusion of the 'new strands' of equality in the ETD has boosted interest in Diversity Management practices.

Legal Duties: Referred to as 'Fourth Generation Equality law', this approach involves legislating to require institutions to promote equality.

This is an emerging approach, driving equality thinking forward. Duties to promote equality have entered into law in UK through the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, and the Disability Discrimination Amendment Act 2004/5, the Gender Equality Duty (Equality Act 2006), the duty to promote equality for all people in the carrying out of the duties and functions of the devolved Welsh Assembly Government, and on nine equality grounds in Northern Ireland. The Scottish Parliament has chosen to use enabling powers to impose equality duties on all public institutions on eight equality grounds. Recent guidelines from the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), note that some other Member States have adopted this approach on some grounds, and call for a duty on all public authorities not to discriminate and to promote equality, to be at the heart of policy-making (Guideline 7, see EC 2007). These legal duties to promote equality far exceed the negative right not to be discriminated against (ET). They amount to a positive right to equality.

A review of the impact of the Welsh Assembly Government's statutory duty to have 'due regard to the promotion of equality for all in all the duties and functions of the Welsh Assembly' (s.120 Government of Wales Act 1998/ s77 Government of Wales Act 2006), found that together with the gender mainstreaming approach to policy-making, the duty was having positive affects in relation to contract compliance, and capacity building within disadvantaged groups to enable them to voice their needs. This example shows active engagement with gender mainstreaming policy in internal labour markets as well as in the delivery of goods and services.

Summary: It is important to note that all the approaches to equality outlined work best contemporaneously; no approach is likely to succeed on its own. The operation of ET, PA and DM could make enormous difference to the inclusion of under-represented groups within workplaces. The test will be how much their 'different' life and perspectives will be allowed to transform the operation of their workplaces. This is where GM and legal duties to promote equality (positive duties) could transform the equalities landscape and give in-company approaches such as DM enhanced impetus.

2.2 Directives: Content and Transposition

The Equal Treatment and Race Equality Directives provide the contemporary basis for equality recognition and policy development in the EU. Today EU citizens are protected from discrimination in training and employment including self-employment, on grounds of age, disability, religion and belief, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender. Protection extends from recruitment and selection, throughout employment and post-employment. An equal right of access to employment conditions covers type of contract, rewards and progression. Protections cover direct and indirect discrimination, instruction to discriminate, and victimisation (where an employee has made a complaint). Harassment is defined as a form of direct discrimination. Significantly the Directives mean that the burden of proof is shared between employer and employee.

Member States were required to transpose the Directives into domestic law during 2003, although there was an option to delay implementation until 2006. All candidate countries must enact the ET Directives, and the existing Community Law on equal treatment between men and women (Council Directive 76/207/EC, of 9 February 1976) prior to accession.

As discussed, the Directives provide for Positive Action measures on all six grounds. The Directives were supported by a Community Action Programme, designed to establish baseline data to enable policy-making, share best practice, monitor discrimination throughout the EU, build equality knowledge capacity and provide training (CAP 2001- 2006).

The EC (2005) review of progress towards transposition tentatively suggests that all Member States have now completed the process in relation to the Race Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) and Equal Treatment Directive (2000/78/EC) or would have done so by the end of 2006. This would include those States who had applied to delay transposition until 2006 (Sweden - age and disability, France - disability and the UK, Belgium, the Netherlands – age). It also includes Belgium, Germany and Luxembourg, where draft legislation to transpose was pending in 2006.

However, the Commission has taken action against UK, Finland, Germany, Austria and Luxembourg for failing to transpose the ETD (2000/78/EC) in all of their territories. It has also issued 'reasoned opinions' in respect of the Race Equality Directive, requiring the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom to fully transpose. Areas of concern include

transposition that limits the Directive to employment (thus the goods and services anti-discrimination element is omitted or insufficiently transposed), and 'definitions which diverge from the Directive and inconsistencies with regard to protection against victimisation or the burden of proof' (EC 2007: 48)

Equal treatment legislation for sexual orientation appears to have been the most problematic addition but is now present in most Member States. Additionally, the adoption of 'reasonable accommodation' legislation in respect of disability legislation is still outstanding in many Member States. For example, the EC (2005) report suggests there is no proper transposition in Hungary, that there is no general duty on employers in Italy and no direct provision in Lithuania.

Where Member States have adopted a non - exhaustive list of grounds, this can be interpreted as exceeding the 'six strand' approach. This is the case in Austria, Belgium, Finland, Ireland, Hungary, the Netherlands and Slovenia. However, the phrase 'any other circumstances' can also indicate that some grounds do not have specific anti-discrimination legislation, as is the case in Latvia where sexual orientation is not specifically mentioned but assumed to be included under 'any other circumstances'

This approach can become problematic where Member States have chosen not to provide a definition of what constitutes 'a ground' and have not used discrete anti-discrimination legislation to implement the Directives (using a mixture of labour and penal codes and Portugal). Questions remain, then, about the rigour of implementation and methods for legal remedy particularly for disability, sexual orientation, religion, age (Lithuania retains restrictions on age), and ethnicity throughout the EU.

Member States have discretion as to how they interpret indirect and direct discrimination, harassment, victimisation and the burden of proof in the process of transposition. Many States have chosen to incorporate the definitions provided in the Directives whilst others have not. There are also gaps in material scope between States, where the law may apply only to either the public or private sector.

Only Ireland, the UK and Germany appear to have Positive Action provisions for all grounds. The remaining countries appear to have Positive Action measures in place only for disability and not all have complied with this requirement in respect of race (excepting that gender equality and legislation is in place). Where Member States have not enacted discrete anti-discrimination legislation, it appears that they have relied upon existing provisions in other law to allow for PA measures.

The Directives also provide for social partners, Trade Unions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working on equality issues, to take cases or intervene on behalf of individuals. The lack of clarity on this point in the EC review (2005) suggests the difficulty of obtaining this information. However, it would be fair to say that the social partners do not have the legal standing required to bring hypothetical cases or group actions on behalf of others in most Member States.

There are also considerable gaps in provisions relating to 'instruction not to discriminate' and the collection and analysis of monitoring data, both of which are required under the Equal Treatment Directive. Many states have stringent rules about the collection of personal data which appear to forestall employee monitoring processes for the purpose of understanding which groups are underrepresented within organisations, and for identifying the over concentration of some workers in 'occupational ghettos'.

Bulgaria and Romania who joined the EU in 2007 have yet to supply country reports on progress towards transposing the Directives, although draft laws are in evidence in 2005 and 2006 respectively. There is currently no information regarding the candidate countries: Croatia, Macedonia and Turkey.

In summary, many Member States have exceeded the requirements of the Equal Treatment Directive (2000), either on grounds or scope or in the competencies of the designated equality body, but significant gaps remain in some Member States (EC 2005: 3). However, where previously there was provision only in constitutional agreements or collective bargaining arrangements, the majority of Member States now have discrete anti-discrimination legislation.

The uneven and partial transposition within legislation, the variability of meanings and definitions, the spread of laws and administrative measures used to implement the Directives and the disparities, particularly perhaps in relation to Positive Action measures, will lead to difficulty in evaluating effectiveness across the EU. The EC review (2005) identifies that few Member States have met the requirements to disseminate information, promote social dialogue and encourage debate with non- governmental organisations (EC 2005: 27-29).

A significant failing, given the importance to the EU in terms of growth and jobs through the practices of mainstreaming equality, where ALL policy is seen as a vehicle for promoting equality, is the finding that Member States have not systematically reviewed and repealed all discriminatory laws. Member States are relying upon individuals to bring cases in order to set precedents which amend the law. This attitude falls far short of the requirements, and spirit, of the equality directives.

Finally, looking to future development in equality law, 'legal duties to promote equality' are now in place in a number of countries. These require public bodies to go beyond Equal Treatment to the promotion of equality in employment and in the provision of goods, facilities and services. For gender, such duties are recognised in Denmark, Norway, Sweden and in the Netherlands and the UK. These duties are also recognised for 'race' and disability in the UK. In Wales, such duties are recognised for 'all people' (Government of Wales Act, 2006), while in Northern Ireland 'duties' are recognised for nine specific grounds (Northern Ireland Act, 1998, section 75). Both the UK and Finland are undertaking extensive consultation exercises to assess equality law overall, as it has become complex and there is increasing hierarchy between 'strands' - some only have equal treatment laws whilst others have the benefit of public/positive duties. It is likely that such reviews and subsequent amendment or

supplementation of equality laws may be the next stage of equality provision in all Member States.

2.3 Gender Equality and Mainstreaming

The Community Framework Strategy on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2001 adopted a 'dual approach' to gender equality comprising gender mainstreaming, combined with specific actions (legislation and financial programmes). This initiative foregrounds the centrality of mainstreaming in the EU approach to equality policies and practice, at a country level and at sector levels.

The policy of Gender Mainstreaming was originally given impetus in the EU by the adoption of the Declaration at the UN Fourth Conference on Women, Beijing 1995, and the resulting Platform for Action. As an example of actions required, Member States must show how equality and women's advancement are addressed in the national budget. Several have highlighted difficulties with identifying funding for women's issues in the general budget for healthcare or education.

There is widespread coverage of ET legislation on gender and measures being undertaken to put in place the institutional arrangements necessary to fulfil Member States' commitment to gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Overall, good progress has been made in transposing the nine Directives dealing with gender and equality in Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary Slovakia, and Slovenia in 2002 (EC 2002:3).

There is much more variability amongst Member States on 'soft' gender equality measures. In particular, many recent members lack the structures of governance necessary to implement mainstreaming (i.e. Ministry for Women, gender balance quotas on public committees), and although several report the development of gender equality indicators, this often refers to targets rather than the indicators of gender equality arrived at through comprehensive collection and analysis of gender disaggregated data, which most lack. There is good provision of gender disaggregated data, a basic tool necessary to 'vision' change, and thus creation of gender equality indicators throughout Member States. It is too early to report on progress towards implementing the Gender Directive (2004/113/EC) in respect of the provision of goods and services or the renewed call by the EC to ensure that gender is mainstreamed into the structural funds in the 2007 – 2013 programme, and in PROGRESS the community action plan that consolidates all equality initiatives.

Further work is underway in many Member States' to gender mainstream the tax, national insurance and benefit system, which being on the basis of men's full time working over the lifetime acts as a disincentive to women's participation. Budget issues are another example of how achieving gender mainstreaming means changing institutional structures. Member States are required annually to identify how national budgets have promoted equality between women and men but government consistently report difficulty in identifying activities. National budgets

are concerned with surpluses, inputs and outputs, productivity, that is, measurements of 'productivity' in the public domain to which value has been attributed. Accounting for the difference that gender makes to the lives of men and women, and the different inputs achieved by them (for example unpaid caring and educating work) will require institutional shifts and different ways of conceptualising value, in terms of inputs and outputs to the economy.

Addressing the structural underpinnings of the gender pay gap and implementing the Barcelona child-care strategy (90% coverage for pre-school children over 3 years old, and 33% coverage of those under 3 by 2010), remain key EU objectives. However, the extension of parental leave arrangements is one area where those involved in gender mainstreaming note how new policy to create gender equity can be subverted. When it is generally only women who will take extended leave (as they are still often viewed as secondary earners within the household), gender inequality can be reinforced by a negative impact on career progression and gender pay differentials.

As noted, the dual approach to gender equality involves specific initiatives but also a process of embedding gender equality in all programmes. In this regard, education, labour market and social policies under the European Employment Strategy are key sites for changes in gender and the other grounds of inequality to be combated.

2.4 European Employment Strategy and the National Reform Programmes

In March 2000, the EU at the Lisbon European Summit agreed a new European Employment Strategy (EES), with the aim of 'becoming 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' (EC 16/012004). One notable feature was that gender mainstreaming was to be integral to all policy.

The overall employment targets of the EES are 70% employment in the EU, including a 60% employment rate for women, by 2010. The Lisbon Strategy has been evolving. Intermediate targets for overall employment (67%) and women (57%) by 2005 were added at the Stockholm Council (March 2001), and an additional target for older workers (55-64) was set: 50% by 2010. Full employment and social cohesion underpin the set of guidelines produced by Council (2003/578/EC).

The mid-term review (2004) of the Lisbon Strategy has seen the guidelines change again. The review found that Europe was recovering slower from the global downturn in the economy than expected, that the gap between European partners in growth and productivity was widening and that the ageing population presented an enormous challenge. It was concluded that there were too many actions and priorities and insufficient prioritisation. A new set of integrated guidelines were established covering macro and micro economic policy and employment. Member States have common objectives and targets for employment, and must report annually on progress of their National Reform Programmes (NRPs).

Objectives

New priority actions are focused upon growth and jobs, and in particular actions to tackle the problems of an ageing workforce, which has led to anxiety about covering pension provisions.

Of greatest significance to this review is Priority Action 3: *Getting people into work*:

- (1) To help increase employment rates and to finance pensions and health care for an ageing population, Member States should adopt a lifecycle approach to employment, with people of all ages offered the support they need.
- (2) Every young person who has left school or university should be offered a job, apprenticeship or additional training within six months of becoming unemployed by the end of 2007, and within 100 days by 2010.
- (3) There should be stronger efforts to meet national targets for the provision of affordable high-quality childcare and measures to achieve greater gender equality at work and to promote a work-life balance.
- (4) "Active ageing" should be implemented, with more training for those over 45, financial incentives for prolonging working lives and use of part-time work.

The Commission intends to organise an extraordinary social summit and present a report by the end of 2007 on the balance between flexibility and employment security ("flexicurity").

Guidelines

The new Employment guidelines relating to Priority Action 3 are:

- (1) Implement employment policies aiming at achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion.
- (2) Promote a life-cycle approach to work.
- (3) Ensure inclusive labour markets, enhance work attractiveness, and make work pay for job-seekers, including disadvantaged people, and the inactive.
- (4) Improve matching of labour market needs.
- (5) Promote flexibility combined with employment security and reduce labour market segmentation, having due regard to the role of the social partners.
- (6) Ensure employment-friendly labour cost developments and wage-setting mechanisms.
- (7) Expand and improve investment in human capital.

(8) Adapt education and training systems in response to new competence requirements.

At first glance, the difference between these guidelines and the 2002 guidelines is the loss of specific guidelines relating to gender equality and combating disadvantage faced by groups discriminated against in the labour market. This prompts concern about the demotion of the centrality of equality, although it would be argued that these provisions are present but subsumed, within the 8 new guidelines.

Younger and older workers in the EU

The NRPs submitted to the EU in 2006, fully reflect the 4 new priority action areas. The key focus has become maintaining the attachment of older workers to the labour market through fiscal changes to make early retirement less attractive. Indeed, a key target is to increase the average age of retirement in the EU from 59.9 to 65 years. Early retirement has become entrenched in many cultures. By 1997, three out of five economically active 55-60 year olds had left the labour market in the EU. Unable to find work, many took early retirement or applied for disability or sickness related benefits.

In general the newer members of the EU25 have the lowest employment rates for workers 55-64, with Poland at the bottom of the table at just 28.1%, Malta at 30%, Slovenia 32.1%. However, both Italy and Belgium are in the bottom ten at 32.5% and 32% respectively. Denmark, Sweden, and the UK, top the league at 60.7%, 59.6% and 57.4% respectively.

The situation for older workers is complex. Older workers benefit from greater social and employment protection. Length of service can convey seniority and higher related pay levels (EIRO 2000). Conversely, older workers who become redundant can find it especially difficult to find new work, and they can suffer from upper age limits at work in internal labour markets, as well as employer perceptions that may stereotype them as less productive and illness prone. In addition, older workers can be more vulnerable to redundancy, in part because they are viewed as expensive (the down side of seniority pay rates), and men are viewed as only interested in full time working. Hence the NRPs reveal a renewed emphasis on flexible working arrangements for all.

Older workers are the target of 'active-ageing' policies by the Member States and the social partners including the new emphasis on a life cycle approach to working and ageing. They are the target for life-long learning strategies and increasingly flexible working arrangements to enable older workers to stay in work longer. It is estimated that older workers might benefit particularly from new laws in the UK that give employees the 'right to request' flexible working, in order to care for a family member (Work and Families Act 2007).

Some employers are beginning to address labour market shortages by actively targeting older workers. Policies aimed at retention include the operation of flexible working hours, or reduced working hours in combination with partial draw down of pension funds, and pension top-up rewards for remaining economically active (the Netherlands, Sweden, UK, Germany). In

Denmark, employment amongst the 50-59 age group is growing at three times the rate of overall employment. This may be partially due to the affect of a subsidy for recruitment of long-term unemployed people 48+, into the public sector.

In a previous review of NAPS in 2004, some fiscal measures to encourage workers to stay in the labour market were evident to restrict access to early retirement (Germany), provide those working beyond 65 with greater tax exemptions (note this is the retirement age for men), (Ireland), reward with substantially higher state pension contributions/top ups (Sweden, Demark, Finland) Such actions have now become the norm throughout Europe with fiscal measures and pension reform the central mechanism for retaining older workers.

Less used are the penalties/bonuses, for making older workers disproportionately redundant/hiring respectively. Such measures are present in Austria, Czech Republic, Portugal, Spain, and Greece. In Austria, the AVRAG (workers code) governs the terms of severance payments and offers access to partial pensions. In the Netherlands, employers who lay off workers over the age of 57 must contribute to their social security benefits payments. Other labour market measures such as those to promote adaptability/flexibility under will impact directly upon older workers. For example, the length of the 'working week', which is 35 hours in France, has now been reduced from 48 to 43 hours in Greece.

Increasingly, labour market support programmes are intended to provide older and younger workers with job seeking advice and retraining within 6 or even 3 months of becoming unemployed. These, and the pension reform measures, appear to be having an impact with most Member States reporting increases in employment rates. However, the EC review of the 2005-6 NRPs enjoins some countries, notably Austria and Malta to do more.

Member States have also focused upon young people in their measures to prevent unemployment. Initiatives include integration/ reintegration through advice and support to find work, restricting access to unemployment benefit unless there is substantive evidence of job seeking, and measures under the heading of 'making work pay' to reduce the tax burden for those employed in low wage sectors (Tax Credits in the UK) and wage subsidies (Austria).

Other labour market measures such as those to promote adaptability/flexibility will impact directly upon older workers. For example, the length of the 'working week', which is 35 hours in France, has been reduced from 48 to 43 hours in Greece.

Migrant and Ethnic Minority Workers

As discussed, actions to promote social cohesion and inclusion focus upon the integration of immigrants and ethnic minority groups into labour markets. The ET Directive and the Race Equality Directive are a vital part of the strategy to combat discrimination.

In the 2004 review, it was possible to identify a number of specific Member State actions related to Guideline 7, '*Promoting the integration of and combat the discrimination against*

people at a disadvantage in the labour market. There now appear to be considerably fewer measures specifically addressing the disadvantaged position of some people from ethnic minority groups, suggesting that the removal of a specific guideline may have had a deleterious effect.

Measures under new Guideline (1) *Implement employment policies aiming at achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion*, are overwhelmingly targeted at 'young' and 'older' workers without discussing the specificity of the position of ethnic minority 'young' and 'older' populations, despite their higher unemployment rate compared to indigenous populations throughout Member States. There is also little mention of ethnic minority issues under the gender equality plans.

Measures in the current NRPs mostly concern provisions for language training for job seekers, including technical languages, policies to up-skill immigrants to higher technical positions (and in some cases allow them to use the already higher qualification that they have but that have been gained elsewhere). Regional policies aimed at deprived areas show some acknowledgement that client groups must include some ethnic minority groups and economic migrants.

The UK is working on a public procurement policy to promote race equality, and demonstrates something akin to a 'mainstreaming' approach by operating a cross-government task force for ethnic minority policy; aiming to produce 'joined-up' policy in each area. However, this latter example is not mainstreaming in the intended sense of producing policy to 'promote equality' but rather an example where the term has been subverted to mean *including* all policies/departments.

The EES is a vital tool for social integration of ethnic minorities. The EQUAL programme is designed to support this and ran until the end of 2006. Seven hundred transnational projects were financed by the European Commission. The new Lisbon Strategy calls for EES targets to be supported by projects within the new ESF and ERDF structural programmes (2007- 2013) to support. PROGRESS, the integrated programme for EU anti-discrimination will be vital for ethnic minority groups, disabled people and women who are disadvantaged by current labour market practices.

Disabled Workers

The European Commission set out its vision for improving the participation of people with disabilities in working life in the *Communication on Equality of Opportunity for people with Disabilities* in 1996. Here, and in the ET Directive (2000), the emphasis is on social inclusion with employers required to make 'reasonable accommodation' to facilitate workers with disabilities into employment, unless to do so would represent a disproportionate burden.¹ The involvement of the social partners is vital to the success of the strategy.

¹ See also the Commission documents: *Raising employment levels of people with disabilities – the common challenge* (1998) and *Mainstreaming disability within EU employment and social policy* (1998).

An EIRO study (2004) found that despite the lack of reliable data and the difficulty of comparison across Member States, approximately 12% of EU citizens could be classified as disabled. There is a low rate of employment for people with disabilities throughout the EU. The employment rate is some 20%-30% below non-disabled people (EIRO 2004: 3) The employment rate is 46.1% in the UK, 60.1% in Sweden, 43% in Portugal (these figures are not directly comparable). Seventy six per cent of people with a mental illness in the UK are unemployed. The employment rate is slightly higher for men than for women, for young than for older workers, and varies within and amongst countries by type of disability.

Many disabled people have lower educational attainments and thus earn less than their non-disabled counterparts. When qualified, disabled people often do not have jobs that reflect their skills levels and as a group appear more vulnerable to dismissal (DRC 2006).

In the current review of NRPs, several states make no mention of disabled workers at all. This is contrast to the 2004 review, where Sweden identified disabled workers as a priority group in all labour market policies. In most Member States, the emphasis is now upon enforcing the new protections for disabled workers under the ETD (2000). However, Spain, Finland and Greece offer subsidies to employers of disabled groups, whilst the Netherlands and France have extensive sheltered employment schemes.

The UK introduced a Disability Discrimination Act 1995, which was enhanced by provisions in the ETD 2000. The Act was amended in 2004 to include a legal duty to promote equality, placed upon all UK government bodies, including devolved and local government, and public service providers. It was further amended in 2005 to require that all employers, both public and private sector, and including companies with less than 15 employees, to make 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure that disabled people could be employed. This includes adjustments to duties and working hours in some circumstances. This is closer to the principles of mainstreaming; rigid policies or practices must not remain where they effectively disbar disabled people. This approach to law is 'cutting edge' but we should recall that most Member States have not transposed even the ETD requirement for 'reasonable accommodation'. Member States show increasing divergence in this regard.

Other measures aimed at disabled workers in the current NRPs, again reveal the increasing use of fiscal policy. Jobcentres in the UK have specialist Disability Employment Advisors, and a 'New Deal for Disabled People' is targeted at those on incapacity benefit to bring them into employment. The trend across all Member States is to reform welfare benefit provision for those economically inactive for reasons of being long term sick or disabled. Since May 2006, reform of Incapacity Benefit brought 227,450 participants to the New Deal for Disabled People in the UK, with 121,490 being 'helped into work'. To reach its stated aspiration of 80% employment rate, the UK government intends to reduce the current 2.7 million Incapacity Benefit claimants by 1 million.

Gender

Member States' NRPs show a concentration of efforts to promote flexible working and increase child care provision. As discussed, the danger in these policies is that they may be only seen to apply to women, and have the effect of keeping them out of the labour market for longer. Sustained efforts are needed to ensure that these programmes relate to the gendering of work, and thus focus upon men taking up flexible and work/life balance policies. Member States estimate they will meet or exceed the childcare provision targets in the EES.

Employment rates for women range from just over 70% in Sweden to below 35% in Malta. Particular attention is given to addressing the gender pay gap, standing at 27.3% in Austria between men and women in full time work. Change measures include addressing gender segregation and the provision of 'equal pay for equal work' job evaluation kits.

In the UK, employers subject to a pay discrimination claim must complete an Equal Pay Questionnaire for the tribunal to consider. In Denmark, the social partners and private companies have agreed an analytical framework for assessing pay and grading systems. The importance of the social partners and collective agreements cannot be under-estimated in this area.

France, Portugal, Greece, Sweden and Ireland note the disproportionate number of women amongst the lowest paid workers. In France, over 80% of those earning less than the monthly minimum wage are women. Finland is introducing new incomes agreements to allow for pay rises in female dominated sectors but is still suffering from having a very high number of women on fixed term contracts. Ireland notes that the low pay of women has been substantially reduced by the introduction of the minimum wage. This is true across Europe; women benefit disproportionately precisely because they are the majority of the working poor.

In this regard, amendments under the guide regarding *Making Work Pay*, involving changes to the minimum National Insurance contribution levels may have significant impact on women. NI contributions are often set at a level that reflects a pattern of full time continuous working over the lifetime (male norm). This creates a disincentive to participation in the formal economy for women.

Member States emphasise the strengthening of Gender Mainstreaming measures in the public service, at all levels of governance. However, the EC review of progress (2006), admonishes several Member States and requires renewed efforts to tackle gender segregation, the gender pay gap and for those lagging behind, to have much more ambitious plans for an increase in childcare places.

2.5 Conclusions

The European Union has taken significant steps toward producing a value-added knowledge economy, whilst recognising that the same groups that are disadvantaged now in the labour market, may also lose out in new sectors and ways of working.

Two sides of debate are evident:

- Exponents of the 'status-quo', often oppose transformative equality measures by suggesting it is 'social engineering'. There needs to be clearer recognition that the current situation of 'winners' and 'losers' is itself 'socially engineered' by policy being made on the situation of the current winners. This reinforces inequality and is underpinned by the assumption of meritocracy, whereas social mobility is limited throughout the EU by uneven starting places, defined by class, gender, ethnicity, access to education and health services, disability, age and sexual orientation.
- The 'business case' for diversity is currently ascendant and with the backing of the new ET Directives, social partners could embrace the diversity model but underpin it with rationales for social justice, and the gender mainstreaming approach to using *all economic and social policy* to promote equality between and amongst citizens.

These initiatives provide an opportunity for the social partners to address questions relating to employment in a positive and forward looking way. The social partners could lead the way in these developments by adopting a best practice approach; by getting involved on the newly established equality bodies to ensure full and effective transposition of the ET Directives; by lobbying for their enforcement.

3 European Steel Industry Employment in Context – A Statistical Overview²

In light of the programme developed for employment in the EU, and the commitment to gender mainstreaming as a core component of this programme, it is necessary to consider the pattern and scale of employment in the European steel sector. In setting the parameters of the EES, attention has been given to the socio-demographic composition of waged workforces in each country of the EU-27. The EU has established a series of targets whereby the workforce profile of each country will develop and evolve, according to a projected timescale.

The 2001 European Council of Stockholm, for example set the objective of reaching an employment rate in the EU of 70% for the whole population of working age, and of 60% for women. A 2003 review of all indicators defined 40 key indicators and 26 context indicators in line with the new employment guidelines (see Employment Committee 2002, European Commission 2003).

Whilst, this programme is focused on economies as a whole, each sector comprises a part of this whole. In this respect, it is incumbent on the steel sector to address the ways in which the industry can play a leading part in this process. By exploring these dimensions, by both sector and country, it is possible to present a picture of the current situation, on the basis of which it may be possible to infer the ways in which work and employment patterns may begin to change over time. Equally important, such a picture allows a consideration about the possible inequalities and negative features of the current arrangements.

The starting point for this analysis is to profile each dimension of the steel sector, to ascertain the current profile and to then consider the steps that could be taken to further develop the profile in line with the targets set by the EU for economies as a whole. The principle data that is used to develop this picture is derived from the datasets provided by the European Labour Force Surveys. Whilst, this only gives a broadly-based aggregate profile, it nevertheless provides an indication of the current situation.

3.1 Employment

The profile of employment across Europe is complex. The focus for European Union employment has gone through a set of recent shifts, with the expansion of the European Union. These patterns are shown in Table 3.1.

² Based on initial work done by Nikolas Hammer (Centre for Labour market Studies, University of Leicester) and Peter Fairbrother.

Table 3.1: Employment Rates in Europe, 1995 – 2006

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
EU (27 countries)	:	:	60.7	61.2	61.8	62.2	62.5	62.3	62.5	62.9	63.4 (p)	64.4 (p)
EU (25 countries)	:	:	60.6	61.2	61.9	62.4	62.8	62.8	62.9	63.3	63.9 (p)	64.7 (p)
EU (15 countries)	60.1	60.3	60.7	61.4	62.5	63.4	64.0	64.2	64.3	64.7	65.3 (p)	66.0 (p)
European Union	60.1	60.3	60.7	61.4	62.5	63.4	64.0	64.2	64.3	64.7	63.9 (p)	64.7 (p)

Notes: (p): provisional

Source: Eurostat, 2007

There has been steady increase in employment levels over the last ten years. These patterns contrast sharply with the European steel industry.

Whilst the overall pattern of employment in the European steel sector has been one of decline, this pattern of decline was by no means uniform, with variations in the scale of decline and the areas of employment. In the longer term, there was a massive decline in the United Kingdom and Portugal. These patterns are further complicated with the entry of the New Member States into the EU in May 2004, as well as the patterns of employment that have emerged across the EU following the restructuring and reorganisation of the last two decades.

Against this background, the data presents a complex and uneven picture across the European steel industry.

Table 3.2: Employment ('000s) in the EU (15) Steel Industry, 1980 - 2003

Country	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	<i>2003 as % of 1980</i>
Austria	39	34	21	13	12	12	12	12	30.7
Belgium	45	35	26	24	20	21	19	18	40.0
Denmark	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	50.0
Finland	15	10	10	9	9	9	9	9	60.0
France	105	76	46	39	37	37	37	37	35.2
FR Germany*	197	151	125	93	77	76	74	72	36.5
Greece	4	4	3	3	2	2	2	2	50.0
Ireland	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Italy	100	67	56	42	39	38	37	39	39.0
Luxembourg	15	13	9	6	4	4	4	4	26.7
Netherlands	21	19	17	13	12	11	11	11	52.3
Portugal	7	6	4	3	2	1	1	1	14.2
Spain	81	54	36	25	22	22	23	23	28.3
Sweden	48	31	26	21	20	19	19	19	39.5
United Kingdom	112	59	51	38	27	26	21	22	19.6
EU 15	792	561	434	330	284	280	270	269	33.9

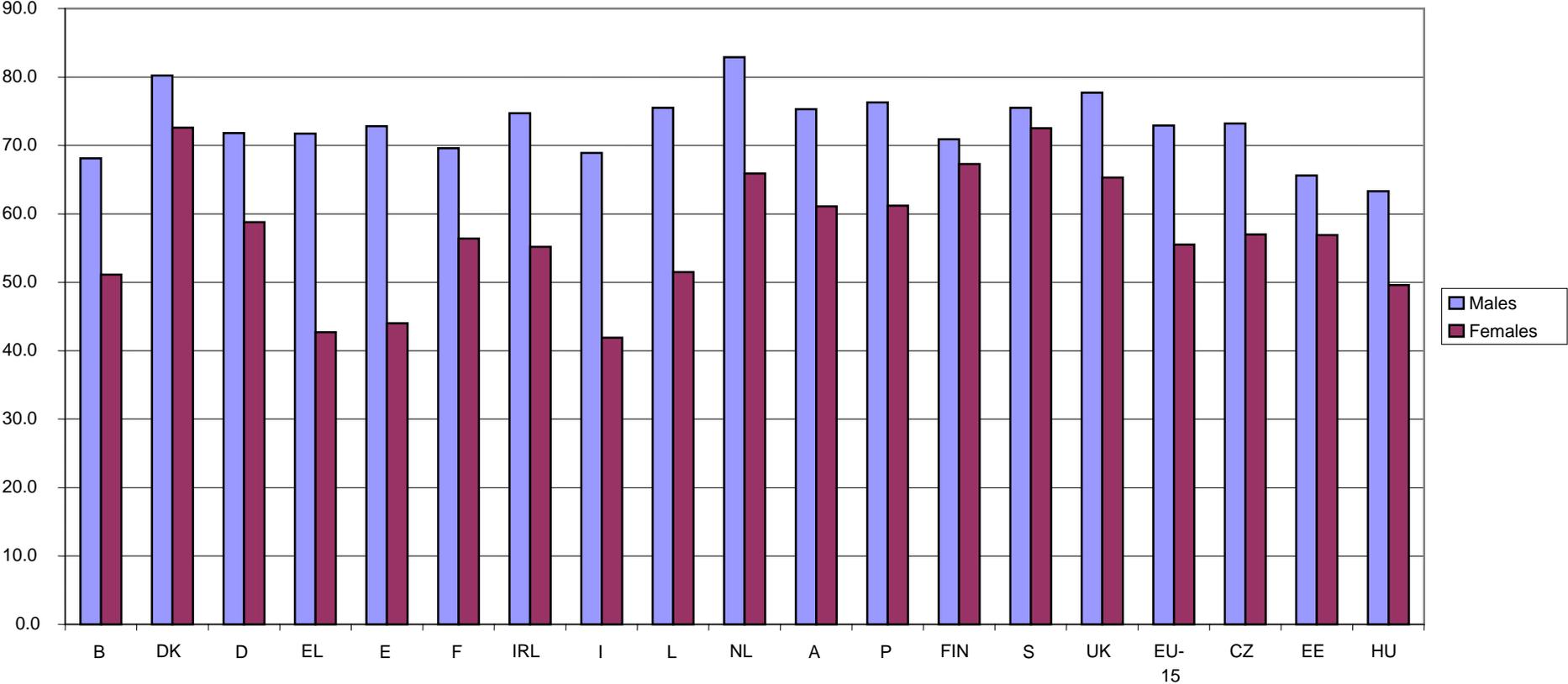
Source: IISI 2004

The EU experienced particularly large cuts in its steel workforce between 1980 and 1990, with numbers dropping from 637,000 in 1980 to 386,000 in 1990, or by more than 39 per cent. Similar reductions in employment in the steel industry have occurred world-wide; Eastern Europe, the USA and Latin America have all experienced cuts in their workforces. Nonetheless, over the last couple of years, at least, the numbers in employ in the European steel industry have begun to stabilise but it too soon to say that the decline of numbers has ended – the workforce now is just 33% of what it was in 1980 and the restructuring process is likely to continue.

3.2 Employment by Gender

The European steel industry has long been characterised by male employment. It would seem that women constitute between 5 and 7 per cent of the EU-15 workforce, with higher levels in Finland (around 15 per cent) and around 25 per cent in the New Member States (Beguin, 2005). These patterns contrast sharply with the overall patterns in the European workforce as a whole, where the employment rate for the EU-15 is nearly 60%. This pattern is presented in Figure 3.1 (Employment Rates by Gender, 15-64 years (2002)).

Figure 3.1: Employment Rates by Gender, 15-64 years (2002)



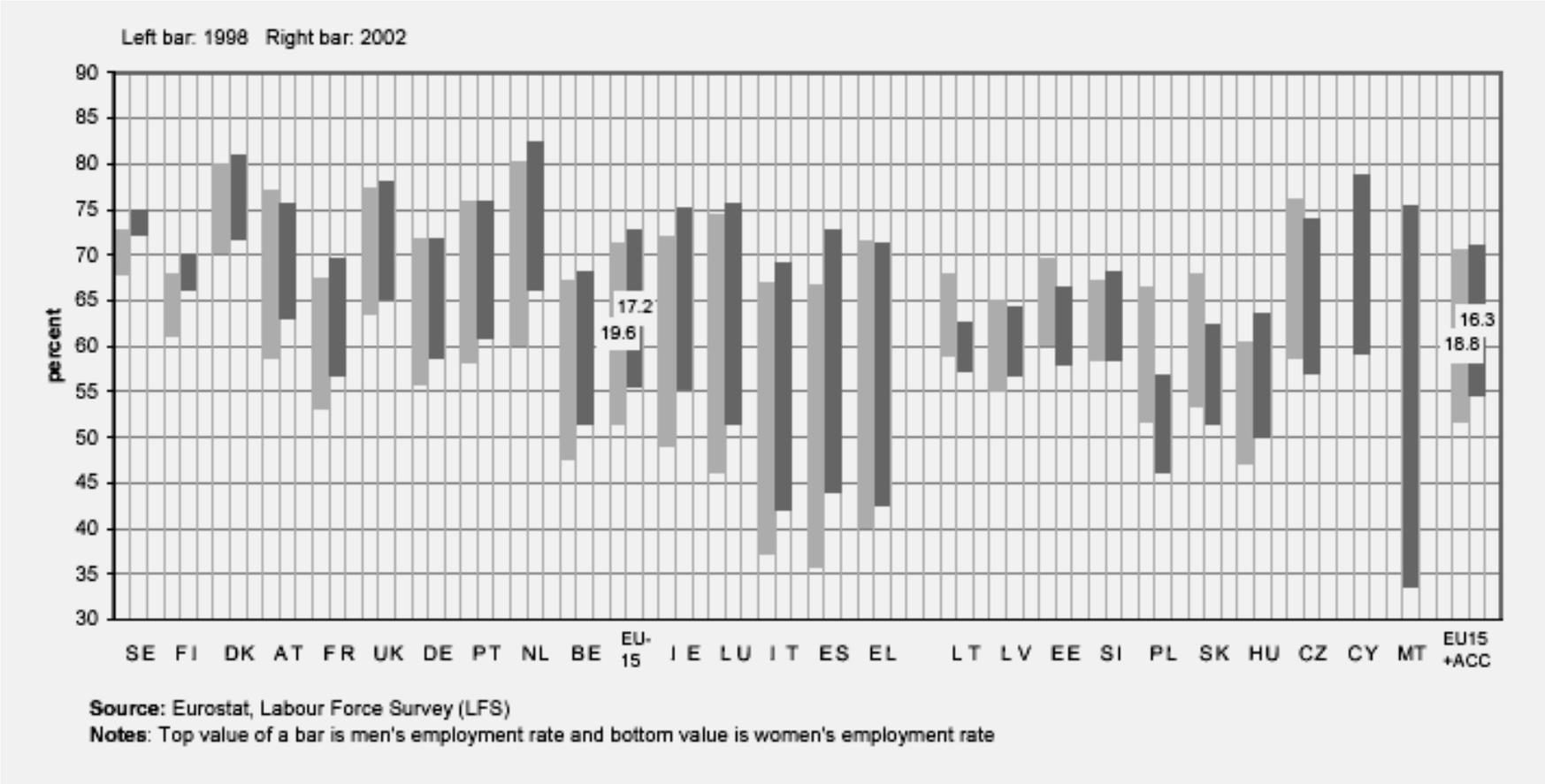
Note: Data for CZ, EE, HU are 2001 data

Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey Results, 2002; Eurostat Employment and Labour Market in CECs.

At a national level, the economic activity of men is clearly higher than that of women. This difference was especially marked in Greece, Spain, and Italy, where the differential in each case was around 30 per cent. In contrast, in Denmark, Sweden and Estonia, the differential was less than 10 per cent. Considered in another way, the employment rates by gender show Greece, Spain, Italy and Hungary with rates below 50 per cent. Only Denmark and Sweden have employment rates for males and females above 70 cent. These differences indicate the continued dominance of traditional gender divisions of labour as well as a continued segregation in employment patterns in the first set of countries and the progressive impact of ideas relating to social participation irrespective of gender in the latter set.

This impression is corroborated by a comparison of the absolute gender gap in employment rates in 1998 and 2002 (see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: Absolute Gender Gap in Employment Rates (Women and Men Aged 15-64) in EU Member States and Acceding Countries – 1998 and 2002



Source: European Commission 2004, 6

The gender gap in employment rates narrowed to some extent, the EU-15 average shrinking from 19.6% in 1998 to 17.2 in 2002. Two interesting aspects relate to the New Member States. First, the gender gap in employment rates is below the EU-15 average as it brings the EU-25 average down to 18.8% in 1998 and 16.3 in 2002 (and this despite the large gaps for Cyprus and Malta). Second, even though the gender gap decreased in this period, only Hungary and Latvia saw an increase in female employment rates.

The reasons for this variation are not clear. There are no consistent patterns in relation to political regime, size of economy, religious history. Rather it is likely that these patterns have emerged in the context of a complex of factors, covering national history, employment patterns, economic factors and political development

3.3 Age

The steel industry workforce is not only predominantly male but it is also aged.

Table 3.3: Age Profile of the EU Steel Workforce, 1993-1999

<i>Age Bands</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>1999</i>
<i><=19</i>	<i>4,758</i>	<i>4,099</i>	<i>4,238</i>	<i>3,747</i>	<i>3,502</i>	<i>1,024</i>	<i>1,082</i>
<i>20-24</i>	<i>15,855</i>	<i>13,976</i>	<i>14,878</i>	<i>12,931</i>	<i>12,483</i>	<i>6,924</i>	<i>7,226</i>
<i>25-29</i>	<i>29,756</i>	<i>26,239</i>	<i>27,210</i>	<i>24,549</i>	<i>23,496</i>	<i>12,343</i>	<i>13,196</i>
<i>30-34</i>	<i>36,782</i>	<i>34,564</i>	<i>37,273</i>	<i>34,740</i>	<i>32,890</i>	<i>15,672</i>	<i>15,987</i>
<i>35-39</i>	<i>43,408</i>	<i>40,400</i>	<i>42,378</i>	<i>40,601</i>	<i>38,948</i>	<i>19,202</i>	<i>20,997</i>
<i>40-44</i>	<i>58,257</i>	<i>53,203</i>	<i>54,076</i>	<i>49,676</i>	<i>46,280</i>	<i>23,327</i>	<i>25,653</i>
<i>45-49</i>	<i>65,672</i> <i>(38%)</i>	<i>62,861</i> <i>(40%)</i>	<i>67,479</i> <i>(40%)</i>	<i>64,809</i> <i>(39%)</i>	<i>61,158</i> <i>(38%)</i>	<i>32,516</i> <i>(37%)</i>	<i>37,265</i> <i>(37%)</i>
<i>50-54</i>	<i>47,881</i>	<i>43,054</i>	<i>43,969</i>	<i>44,676</i>	<i>48,258</i>	<i>29,362</i>	<i>38,208</i>
<i>55-59</i>	<i>14,502</i>	<i>11,882</i>	<i>12,830</i>	<i>13,633</i>	<i>15,353</i>	<i>9,100</i>	<i>12,881</i>
<i>>=60</i>	<i>2,055</i>	<i>1,740</i>	<i>2,095</i>	<i>2,502</i>	<i>2,198</i>	<i>1,879</i>	<i>1,878</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>318,926</i>	<i>292,018</i>	<i>306,426</i>	<i>291,864</i>	<i>284,566</i>	<i>151,349</i>	<i>174,373</i>

Notes; Iron and Steel (ECSC) Workforce

Source: Eurostat, 2002

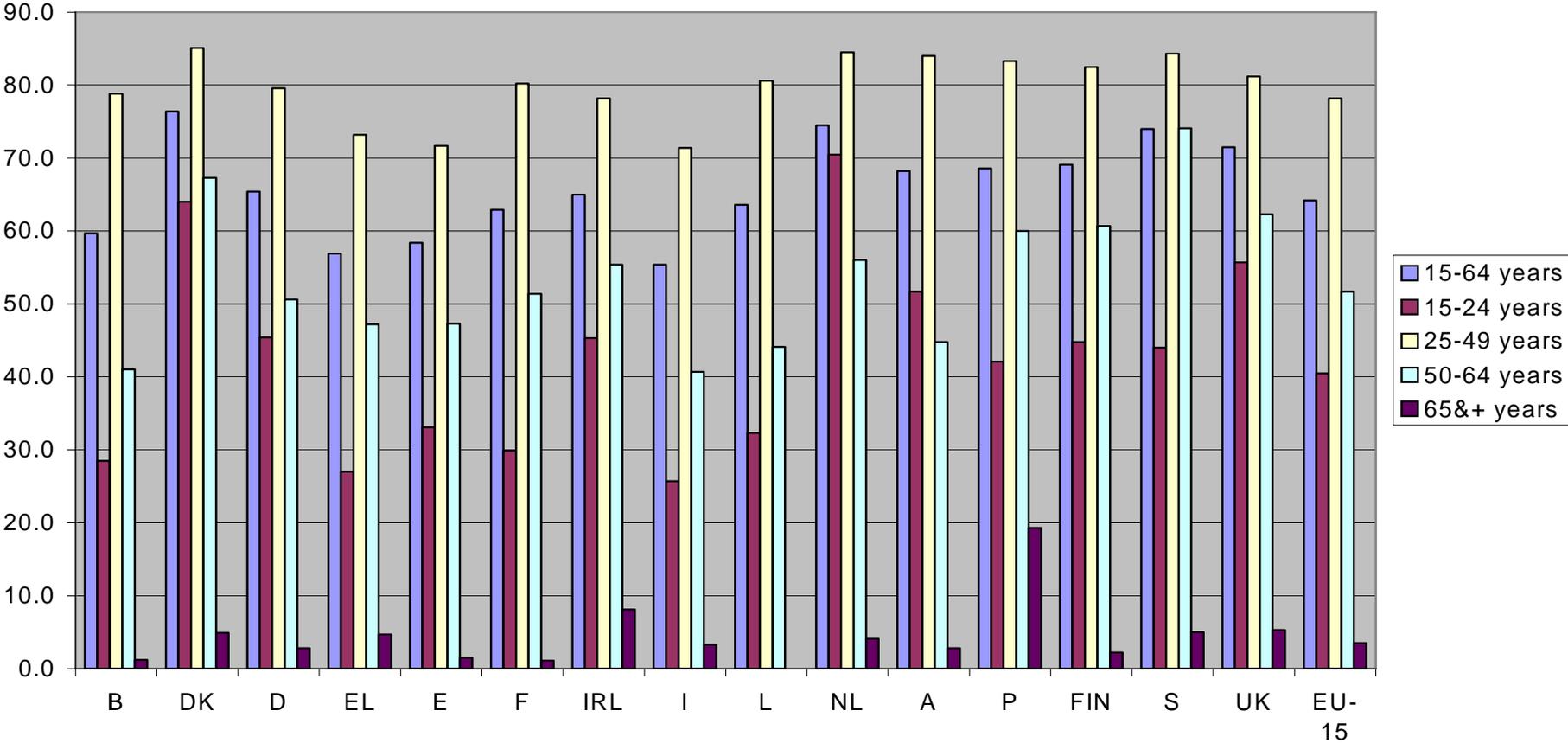
The largest concentration of the iron and steel workforce is in the 45-49 year age bracket. More broadly most workers are in the age band 40 – 54 years of age, a relatively old and it can be assumed stable workforce. If the figures are grouped according to ten-year age bands, then it is apparent that there is a shift away from a more evenly distributed workforce, according to age, towards one where the age weighting is towards the higher age brackets.

These patterns contrast with the overall age profile of the workforce. Here there are sharp distinctions from country to country. The employment rates by age group are very diverse. Unsurprisingly, countries with overall high employment rates (Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden, UK) show high employment across all age groups. However, as labour markets are segmented along complex lines, a more meaningful picture can only be gained by taking into account employment by age group and gender as well as ethnicity.

The employment rates by Age Group are presented in Figure 3.3 (Employment Rates by Age Group, Male and Female 2002).

Figure 3.3: Employment Rates by Age Group, Male and Female 2002

Employment Rates by Age Group, Males and Females (2002)



Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey Results (2002)

A substantial number of countries have employment rates for the 25–49 year age group in excess of 80 per cent (Denmark, France, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom). Further, in some cases there are substantial numbers of the 65 plus age group still in employment. These patterns indicate key reference points for the EU policies towards age employment.

The profile for age and gender is presented in Table 3.4 (Employment Rates by Gender and Age Group 2002).

Table 3.4: Employment Rates by Gender and Age Group (2002)

Employment Rates by Gender and Age Group (2002)																			
	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	EU-15	CZ	EE	HU
15-64 years																			
Males	68.1	80.2	71.8	71.7	72.8	69.6	74.7	68.9	75.5	82.9	75.3	76.3	70.9	75.5	77.7	72.9	73.2	65.6	63.3
Females	51.1	72.6	58.8	42.7	44.0	56.4	55.2	41.9	51.5	65.9	61.1	61.2	67.3	72.5	65.3	55.5	57.0	56.9	49.6
15-24 years																			
Males	31.3	64.4	46.9	32.0	39.1	33.9	48.5	30.2	36.1	71.8	55.9	47.6	45.4	43.7	57.4	43.7	37.4	32.4	35.6
Females	25.7	63.5	43.8	22.0	26.9	25.9	41.9	21.1	28.4	69.2	47.6	36.4	44.1	44.3	53.8	37.2	31.5	21.3	27.1
25-49 years																			
Males	87.6	89.2	86.3	89.9	86.5	88.2	88.4	86.5	94.1	92.7	90.4	90.6	85.3	86.2	88.1	87.6	89.6	79.5	79.4
Females	69.8	81.0	72.8	57.2	56.6	72.4	68.1	56.1	66.9	76.0	77.5	76.2	79.6	82.4	74.1	68.7	74.3	72.2	67.0
50-64 years																			
Males	52.5	72.6	58.9	65.2	67.5	57.8	71.9	56.0	57.9	69.2	54.8	70.8	60.8	76.0	69.8	62.2	52.4	57.1	35.0
Females	29.8	61.6	42.3	30.2	28.0	45.4	38.6	26.1	30.0	42.5	35.1	50.4	60.5	72.3	54.9	41.4	23.0	41.9	14.6
65 & + years																			
Males	2.0	8.2	4.3	7.6	2.3	1.6	14.8	6.1	[2.4]	7.3	4.2	26.2	3.9	8.3	7.6	5.5	6.5	14.5	1.9
Females	0.6	2.5	1.8	2.4	0.9	0.7	3.0	1.3	.	1.7	1.8	14.3	1.1	2.5	3.6	2.1	2.2	5.7	0.8

Note: Data for CZ, EE, HU are 2001 Data; Age Groups 25-49 and 50-64 refer to 25-54 and 55-64 respectively.

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey Results 2002; Eurostat, Employment and Labour Market in CECs

The majority of workforces are in the age range 25–49 years. What is of significance is that a substantial proportion of the employed workforce, male and female, are in the age bracket, 50–64 years. In view of the emergent EU policies toward the equal opportunity for the aged, these patterns are of interest. Overall, as observed elsewhere the employment rates for women workers at all age levels are lower than males, and in some cases over 30 per cent (in the 50–64 age group: Spain Greece Ireland). In contrast, the differential is minimal in the case of Finland and Sweden for the same age group.

These are very important figures for future employment policies at overall economic as well as sectoral levels. At the 2001 European Council of Stockholm a target rate of 50% in employment for workers between 55 and 64 years of age has been set for 2010. In parallel with this, the Barcelona European Council agreed in 2002 on gradually increasing average retirement by five years until 2010.

Between 1998 and 2002 female employment has grown faster than male employment - by 4.2% compared to 2.8% and an EU-15 average of 3.5% (see Table 3.5).

Table 3.5: Total Employment Rate (Age Group 55-64) by Gender

Total	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
AT	28,4	29,7	28,8	28,9	30,0
BE	22,9	24,6	26,3	25,1	26,7
DE	37,7	37,8	37,6	37,9	38,4
DK	52,0	54,5	55,7	58,0	57,8
ES	35,1	35,0	37,0	39,2	39,7
EU15	36,8	37,1	37,8	38,8	40,1
FI	36,2	39,0	41,6	45,7	47,8
FR	28,3	28,8	29,9	31,9	34,8
GR	39,0	39,1	38,6	38,0	39,7
IE	41,7	43,7	45,3	46,8	48,1
IT	27,7	27,6	27,7	28,0	28,9
LU	25,1	26,4	26,7	25,6	28,3
NL	33,9	36,4	38,2	39,6	42,3
PT	50,0	50,3	50,7	50,1	50,9
SE	63,0	63,9	64,9	66,7	68,0
UK	49,0	49,6	50,8	52,3	53,5

Men	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
AT	40,5	42,6	41,2	40,1	39,8
BE	32,1	33,8	36,4	35,1	36,1
DE	47,2	46,8	46,4	46,5	47,1
DK	61,3	62,6	64,1	65,5	64,5
ES	52,6	52,3	55,2	57,9	58,6
EU15	47,3	47,5	48,0	48,9	50,1
FI	38,4	40,1	42,9	46,6	48,5
FR	32,5	32,3	33,6	36,2	39,3
GR	55,8	55,4	54,9	55,0	56,0
IE	60,1	61,7	63,3	64,7	65,1
IT	41,4	41,2	40,9	40,4	41,3
LU	35,2	35,8	37,2	35,9	37,9
NL	47,5	49,6	50,2	51,1	54,6
PT	63,4	61,3	62,1	61,3	61,2
SE	66,1	67,3	67,8	69,4	70,4
UK	59,1	59,7	60,1	61,7	62,6

Women	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
AT	17,1	17,6	17,2	18,4	20,9
BE	14,0	15,7	16,6	15,5	17,6
DE	28,3	28,8	29,0	29,5	29,9
DK	42,0	45,8	46,6	49,7	50,4
ES	18,8	18,8	20,1	21,8	22,0
EU15	26,3	27,1	28,0	28,1	30,5
FI	34,1	38,0	40,4	45,0	47,2
FR	24,4	25,4	26,3	27,8	30,6
GR	23,4	24,0	23,9	22,5	24,4
IE	23,1	25,5	27,2	28,8	30,8
IT	15,0	15,0	15,3	16,2	17,3
LU	15,5	17,2	16,4	15,2	18,6
NL	20,3	23,1	26,1	28,0	29,9
PT	38,3	40,6	40,7	40,2	41,9
SE	60,0	60,7	62,1	64,0	65,6
UK	39,2	39,9	41,7	43,1	44,7

Source: Quarterly Labour Force Data (QLFD), Eurostat

Age Group:55-64

Source: European Commission 2003, 9

In 2002 the Eurostat employment rate for employees aged 55-64 was at 40.1%, far from the 50% objective for 2010. Furthermore, the challenges at both, overall economic as well as sectoral levels, will be different as employment rates vary across countries. Peulet (2004, 2) characterises the current situation as follows:

In Sweden and Denmark, traditionally, there has been a high employment rate among older people. Finland, the Netherlands and Spain had far lower employment rates among this age group but improvements in this situation mean that they can now look towards the Stockholm objective. Germany and France have made little progress over the past seven years. Reforms came late and were not well accepted. The labour market was not favourable for anyone, and even less for older workers.

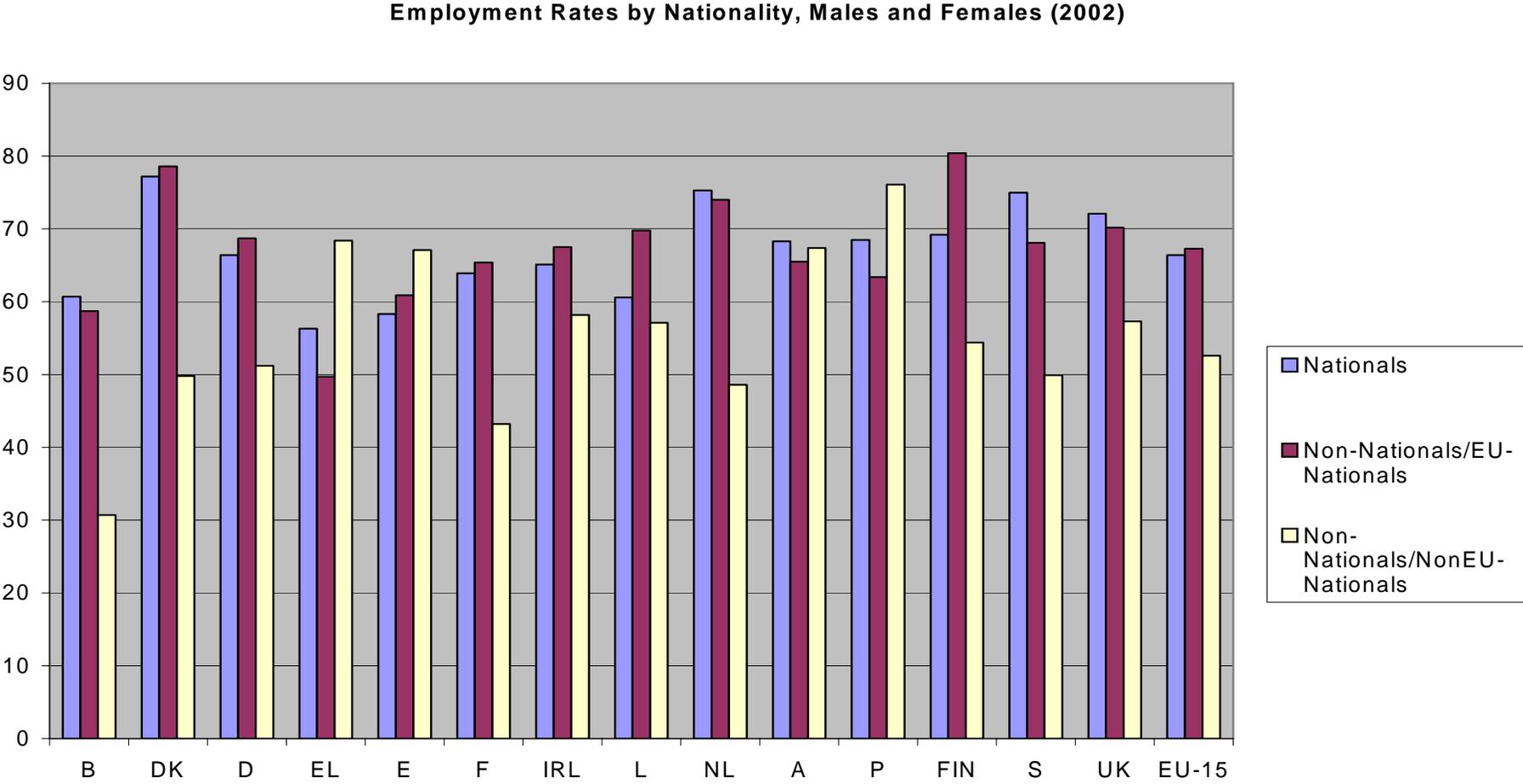
It is within this context, that an assessment of the European steel industry can be made. It would appear that there is a growing problem with the age distribution of the workforce. In every case there has been a major decline in absolute numbers employed in the steel industry, but in each case there has been a marked ageing of the populations as an increasing proportion of the workforce enters the 50-54 age bracket. Towards the mid to end 1990s, there has been increased recruitment of workers in the age bracket 20 – 30 age bracket, suggesting that there is a polarisation of the workforce. As time goes by this is likely to become acute, and raises very sharp questions about the replacement of older workers over the next five years and the training of younger workers to take on the jobs currently done. In some instances this may also provide the occasion for employers to seek to reshape the work organisation in steel plants, for example in Germany promoting team working which at present is relatively under-developed. Such developments raise important questions for trade unions, in promoting a worker friendly transformation in work patterns and work organisation.

3.4 Nationality

Increasingly the populations of many EU countries have diverse workforces, comprising nationals, Non-Nationals but EU citizens, and those who are neither (see Figure 3.4). The employment rates are varied but it is the case in some countries that the employment rate of Non-Nationals/Non-EU is higher than the other two categories (Spain, Greece, Portugal). In six cases the reverse applies (Belgium, Denmark, France, Netherlands, Finland, Sweden). Presumably, such variation reflects employment law and the circumstances in which Non-nationals/Non-EU peoples enter these countries.

These patterns in relation to age categories are presented in Table 3.6 (Employment Rates by Age Group and nationality (Males and Females)). As with other classifications of the employment rates, the most economically active groups are in the age bracket 25–49 years. Of more significance is that fact that there is a complex distribution in the age bracket 50–64 years. This profile is presented below.

Figure 3.4: Employment Rates by Nationality, Males and Females (2002)



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey Results 2002

Table 3.6: Employment Rates by Age Group and Nationality (Males and Females (2002))

Employment Rates by Age Group and Nationality (Males and Females)																
	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	EU-15
15-64 years	59.7	76.4	65.4	56.9	58.4	62.9	65.0	55.4	63.6	74.5	68.2	68.6	69.1	74.0	71.5	64.2
Nationals	60.7	77.2	66.4	56.3	58.3	63.9	65.1	.	60.6	75.3	68.3	68.5	69.2	75.0	72.1	66.4
Non-Nationals/EU-Nationals	58.7	78.6	68.7	49.7	60.9	65.4	67.5	.	69.8	74.0	65.5	[63.4]	80.4	68.1	70.2	67.3
Non-Nationals/NonEU-Nationals	30.7	49.8	51.2	68.4	67.1	43.2	58.2	.	57.1	48.6	67.4	76.1	54.4	49.9	57.3	52.6
15-24 years	28.5	64.0	45.4	27.0	33.1	29.9	45.3	25.7	32.3	70.5	51.7	42.1	44.8	44.0	55.7	40.5
Nationals	29.0	64.3	46.0	26.0	32.8	30.3	45.0	.	28.2	71.9	51.9	41.8	45.0	44.6	56.2	43.2
Non-Nationals/EU-Nationals	29.8	.	48.0	.	[31.5]	38.2	55.3	.	40.8	58.6	33.7	.	.	43.8	57.2	46.6
Non-Nationals/NonEU-Nationals	14.6	49.3	38.0	44.8	51.3	17.6	45.3	.	[30.4]	42.0	52.9	55.8	.	25.5	40.4	36.9
25-49 years	78.8	85.1	79.6	73.2	71.7	80.2	78.2	71.4	80.6	84.5	84.0	83.3	82.5	84.3	81.2	78.2
Nationals	81.1	86.3	81.4	73.0	71.7	81.9	78.8	.	80.3	85.7	85.0	83.3	82.8	85.8	82.2	80.6
Non-Nationals/EU-Nationals	72.2	83.5	80.6	[68.1]	72.1	79.8	76.7	.	83.3	83.8	74.6	.	86.1	76.2	80.0	79.0
Non-Nationals/NonEU-Nationals	36.5	50.6	59.5	76.5	73.6	50.4	63.0	.	66.3	53.1	73.7	83.0	58.8	57.1	62.3	59.9
50-64 years	41.0	67.3	50.6	47.2	47.3	51.4	55.4	40.7	44.1	56.0	44.8	60.0	60.7	74.1	62.3	51.7
Nationals	41.6	67.6	51.0	47.0	47.3	52.0	55.5	.	41.8	56.2	44.0	60.1	60.6	74.9	62.5	54.0
Non-Nationals/EU-Nationals	37.4	[65.5]	55.3	.	39.4	50.6	49.3	.	49.0	58.1	54.9	.	.	62.1	56.3	52.4
Non-Nationals/NonEU-Nationals	23.8	47.2	39.9	66.8	49.8	40.5	.	.	[50.2]	33.0	56.9	.	65.8	46.4	54.6	42.9
65 & + years	1.2	4.9	2.8	4.7	1.5	1.1	8.1	3.3	[1.3]	4.1	2.8	19.3	2.2	5.0	5.3	3.5
Nationals	1.2	4.9	2.8	4.8	1.5	1.1	8.1	.	[1.0]	4.1	2.7	19.3	2.2	5.0	5.3	3.5
Non-Nationals/EU-Nationals	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	7.8	.
Non-Nationals/NonEU-Nationals	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey Results 2002

These patterns suggest that for many countries the implications of these patterns is unlikely to be straightforward. More specifically, it should be noted that there is little comparative evidence on patterns of migration and ethnicity across Europe. Nonetheless, there is a body of evidence about ethnicity and migration for specific European countries and for clusters of countries (especially on migration) that suggests complex practices are at work in different countries. Questions relating to racism, ethnic discrimination, the location of migrant workers in low paid and unskilled jobs, as well as associated problems relating to citizenship rights, housing and related social benefits, have been raised (Vertovec and Cohen 1999).

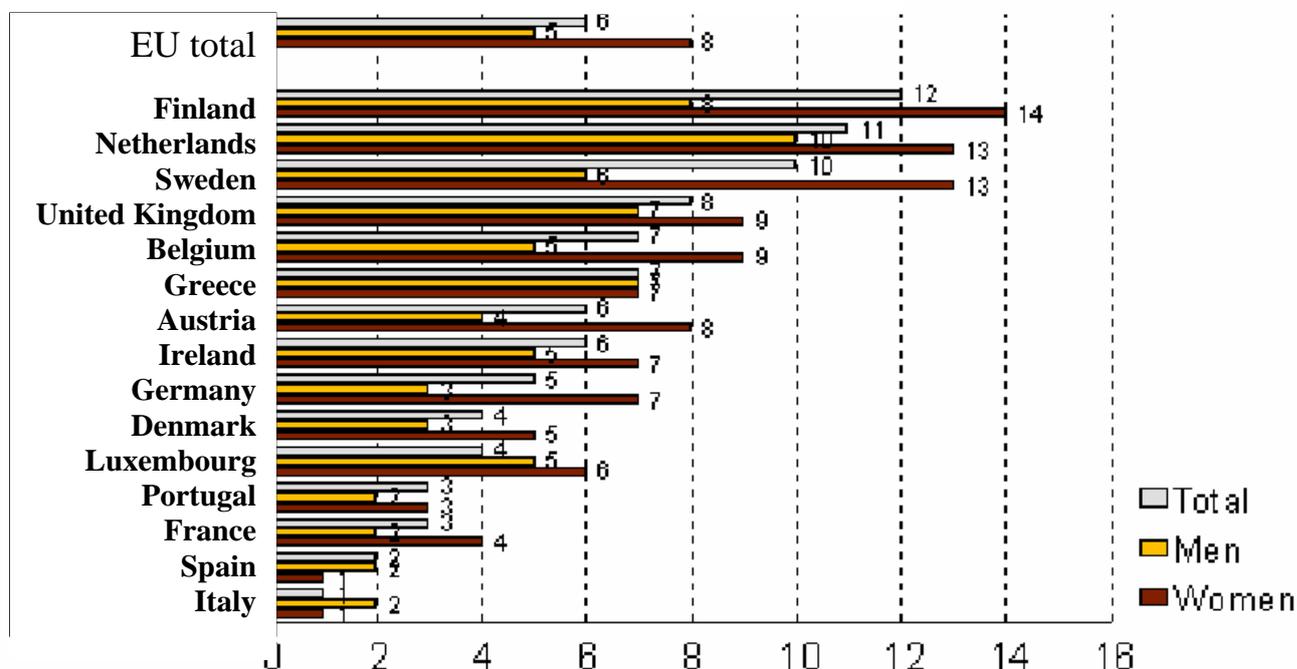
3.5 Quality of Work and Employment

European Union policies subsume a range of diverse issues such as career and employment security, health and well-being, skills development. In addition the reconciliation of working and non-working life is placed under the broader heading of quality of work and employment. While an in-depth treatment of these issues is beyond the scope of this report, attention should be drawn to experiences and awareness of intimidation and sexual harassment on the one hand, the impact of children on women's working lives on the other.

On the first issue, the awareness of sexual harassment at the workplace clearly varies across countries (see Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5: Awareness of Sexual Harassment at Workplace by Country

European Working Conditions Survey 2000, employees



Source: Lehto and Pärnänen 2003, 7

Whereas men's awareness is consistently, and often significantly, below that of women, the interpretation of country differences must take into account the effect of policies in recent years aimed at raising awareness and combating sexual harassment at work. The higher levels of awareness in Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK seem to reflect such policies. In contrast, the lower levels of awareness of sexual harassment in countries such as Italy and Spain would appear to be associated with the absence of such policies.

The institutional context supporting child care is another key factor determining women's employment rates. Table 3.7 compares employment rates between women with and without a child.

Table 3.7: Employment Rates for Women 20-49 by Education, and Age of Youngest Child in 2000

(a) Low education qualification level

Country	No child	0-6 yrs	0-2yrs	3-6yrs	Relative motherhood gap - child 0-6 yrs	Relative motherhood gap - child 0-2 yrs	Relative motherhood gap - child 3 -6 yrs
Austria	68.7%	57.9%	62.5%	54.7%	84.2%	91.0%	79.6%
Belgium	62.6%	41.7%	40.3%	43.1%	66.6%	64.4%	68.8%
Germany	67.7%	33.8%	27.1%	41.4%	50.0%	40.0%	61.1%
Spain	44.8%	29.8%	26.6%	32.1%	66.5%	59.4%	71.8%
France	66.0%	37.2%	26.0%	48.0%	56.3%	39.3%	72.7%
Greece	45.1%	34.1%	29.4%	37.1%	75.6%	65.2%	82.4%
Italy	43.1%	28.4%	29.3%	27.7%	65.9%	67.9%	64.2%
Luxembourg	65.9%	49.5%	:	:	75.1%	:	:
Netherlands	65.7%	43.8%	38.6%	49.0%	66.7%	58.8%	74.6%
Portugal	72.8%	69.7%	65.1%	73.5%	95.7%	89.4%	100.9%
UK	62.0%	25.9%	19.6%	31.4%	41.8%	31.6%	50.7%
EU	57.1%	35.4%	30.5%	39.7%	62.0%	53.5%	69.5%

(b) Medium education qualification level

Country	No child	0-6 yrs	0-2yrs	3-6yrs	Relative motherhood gap - child 0-6 yrs	Relative motherhood gap - child 0-2 yrs	Relative motherhood gap - child 3 -6 yrs
Austria	81.4%	69.7%	73.2%	66.7%	85.6%	89.9%	81.9%
Belgium	76.0%	68.0%	66.0%	70.1%	89.5%	86.8%	92.2%
Germany	81.8%	57.2%	52.6%	61.9%	69.9%	64.3%	75.6%
Spain	64.8%	51.2%	52.4%	50.0%	79.0%	80.8%	77.2%
France	76.9%	62.0%	53.6%	71.4%	80.7%	69.7%	92.9%
Greece	52.4%	45.7%	41.1%	50.5%	87.2%	78.3%	96.3%
Italy	72.5%	58.5%	57.3%	59.7%	80.7%	79.0%	82.3%
Luxembourg	77.5%	55.6%	:	:	71.7%	:	:
Netherlands	86.0%	69.7%	68.8%	70.7%	81.0%	80.0%	82.2%
Portugal	86.0%	88.0%	86.0%	90.0%	102.3%	100.1%	104.7%
UK	85.2%	58.0%	53.1%	62.9%	68.0%	62.3%	73.9%
EU	79.4%	59.5%	55.5%	63.7%	74.9%	69.8%	80.2%

(c) High education qualification level

Country	No child	0-6 yrs	0-2yrs	3-6yrs	Relative motherhood gap - child 0-6 yrs	Relative motherhood gap - child 0-2 yrs	Relative motherhood gap - child 3 -6 yrs
Austria	92.2%	79.2%	80.0%	76.9%	85.9%	86.8%	83.4%
Belgium	91.6%	88.3%	87.1%	89.7%	96.4%	95.1%	97.9%
Germany	89.9%	70.2%	66.9%	73.9%	78.1%	74.4%	82.2%
Spain	81.6%	70.4%	68.9%	72.2%	86.3%	84.4%	88.5%
France	81.7%	79.1%	77.0%	81.8%	96.8%	94.3%	100.2%
Greece	82.1%	76.1%	74.0%	79.2%	92.7%	90.1%	96.5%
Italy	87.1%	79.0%	76.7%	81.7%	90.7%	88.0%	93.8%
Luxembourg	87.7%	71.3%	:	:	81.3%	:	:
Netherlands	92.2%	81.7%	80.3%	82.9%	88.6%	87.1%	89.9%
Portugal	95.0%	98.6%	96.8%	100.0%	103.8%	101.9%	105.3%
UK	92.1%	77.7%	74.7%	81.7%	84.4%	81.1%	88.7%
EU	87.8%	76.9%	74.7%	79.6%	87.6%	85.1%	90.6%

UK 99; EU includes UK 99; data not shown for Luxembourg due to reliability problems.

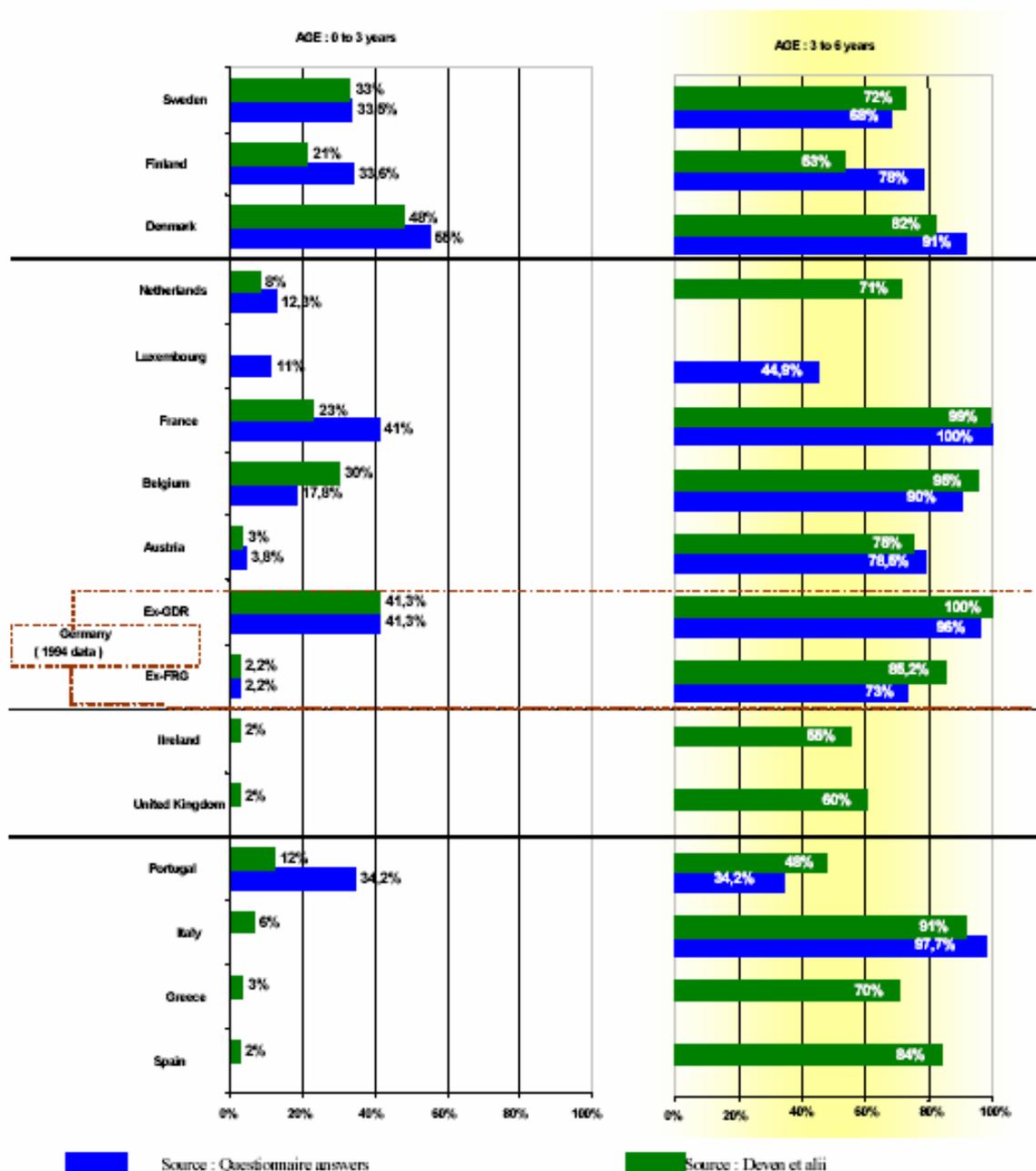
Note: Data are not available for Denmark, Sweden and Finland. Data only includes Household Head and Spouse. Ascendant relatives or other relatives excluded.

Source: ELFS (own calculations).

The table shows that across all education levels women with a child are less likely to be in employment, with specifically low participation rates in Germany. The impact of motherhood on employment is much less pronounced at the higher education level across all countries. In fact, mothers with the highest education levels have higher employment rates than less educated women without young children in most countries. Indeed, the relative impact of motherhood is negligible for mothers with higher education in Belgium, France, Italy, Greece, and Portugal, indicated by the motherhood ratios of 90% or over. (Rubery *et al.*, 2002, 115).

The availability of childcare facilities are important in assessing the patterns of women's participation in the labour force. Figure 3.8 highlights the fact that relates mainly to children aged 3 years and over (based on two different data sources).

Figure 3.8: Distribution of Childcare for Children Aged 0 to 3 and for Children from 3 Years until Entry into Compulsory School in 1998 (Regular and Main Forms of Care)



Source: Rubery et al 2002, 120

While some countries such as Sweden, Finland, Denmark and France have collective childcare services for young children, others such as Austria and Germany provide for young child care via extended parental leave arrangements (explaining at least for Germany much of the large 'relative motherhood gap' of Table 3.5). Given that state policies often aim to shift responsibilities in this area to the private sector and given that opening hours of child care institutions constitute a longstanding problem for parents, employers clearly might be able to attract and retain a skilled and experienced workforce by arranging or supporting child care arrangements.

3.6 Summary

The steel industry is markedly distinct in its pattern of employment. It is an aged industry, predominantly male and with a varied pattern in terms of the employment of migrant/ethnic minority workers. Whilst, there are few discernable patterns in relation to specific features of governance, economic organisation, political history, and social arrangements, there are seemingly distinct patterns involving the EU-15 when compared with the New Member States. Another common feature is that the economic activity of males within the industry is higher than that of females, reflecting, in varied ways, the continued salience of traditional ideas about the role and place of women in the public domain in some countries and the progressive impact of ideas relating to social participation, irrespective of gender in others.

When considering the quality of work and employment quite complex patterns between countries become evident. First, there is an uneven pattern of awareness of sexual harassment across different countries. Second, there is also marked variation in the institutional provision of childcare facilities. Such factors are likely to have a bearing on career trajectories and work experiences for women in relation to men.

These patterns raise important questions in relation to the targets set under the EES procedures. Equally, the age profile in the industry displays a weighting towards higher age bands, which also raises questions about EES targets. Whilst, there is little evidence on patterns of migration and ethnicity across Europe, evidence elsewhere suggests that complex practices are at work in different countries.

4 The European Steel Industry: Challenges and Prospects

At a worldwide level, the steel industry is organised into sets of regional blocks, particularly for production, but also for key aspects of trade. The modern European steel industry is one of the best examples of this type of clustering, where companies are organised principally in relation to Europe and where trade outside the bloc is limited. The historical basis of the European clustering of iron and steel lies in the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), under the Treaty of Paris, signed on 18 April 1951 by Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands (Mioche, 1998). Historically, whilst there is debate about the origins and driving force of the ECSC (Duchene, 1995), it was the practical follow-up to the Schumann Declaration of 9 May 1950, which proposed placing Franco-German production of coal and steel under a common High Authority. The Treaty expired on 23 July 2002, having a fifty year life span following the establishment of the ECSC on 23 July 1952. The ECSC laid the foundations for a common market for coal and steel, and began the process of distinctive inter-governmental processes, which eventually resulted in the modern EU. Not all ECSC activity ceased after July 2002. Research funding from the Research Fund for Coal and Steel (RFCS) continued. Further, a Steel Sector Social Dialogue Committee was also established (in 2006); in line with other such sector committees.

As part of a broader set of developments, the EU industry is experiencing massive upheaval and change. In particular, the massive expansion of the steel industry in the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) countries and the occurrence of supra-European steel companies present real challenges for European institutions and social partners. The EU steel industry is undergoing a transition from nationally-based companies operating within a region (a legacy of the ECSC) to a more outward looking and sectorally focused global industry. Indeed, recent mergers and acquisitions set the context for the global consolidation of the industry. Whilst, these developments were foreshadowed by advances in technology, work organisation, commercial activity, customer demands/product development and production processes, the emergence of European sectorally-based corporations only occurred in the last two decades. This wider restructuring and merger activity was paralleled by a diversification of the activities of steel companies and a shift towards the production of higher value added steel products. To facilitate this new responsiveness to customer demand, steel companies increasingly looked to decentralise their operations and organise production more flexibly. Such diverse developments have impacted on the steel industry workforce in a number of different ways.

4.1 The Shape of the EU Steel Industry

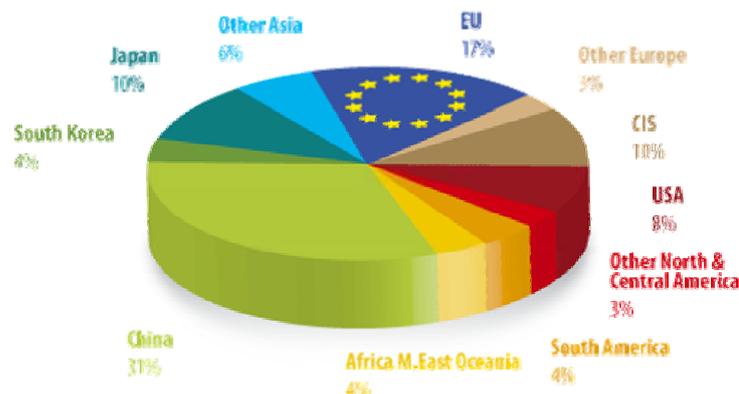
Steel is a worldwide commodity and world crude steel production exceeded 1 billion tonnes for the first time in 2004 (1,132 billion tons in 2005 and the latest forecast for 2006 is an increase on this of about 9%). The EU is the leading manufacturer of iron and steel products in the developed world, with production in 2005 of crude steel of 186.8mt, far ahead of Japan and the USA (112.5mt and 94.9mt respectively)³. The region was the largest steel producer worldwide until this position was taken by China in 2000. The EU remains however – in terms of volume – the second largest steel industry in the world, and arguably remains the world leader in steel quality, technology and innovation. Chinese production remains focused on high volume low quality products. More particularly, the level of production technology in China is, at best, variable.

Steel is a key sector for Europe's economy and competitiveness. It provides direct employment for approximately 350,000 people, and employs several times this number indirectly (for example, in the processing and recycling industries). The steel industry is an indirect source of employment for millions of

³ mt is million metric tonnes.

others too. Steel is a key material for many industrial activities (e.g. road, rail, maritime and air transportation, construction, energy, chemical industry, household appliances, etc.). Indeed, the European construction steel industry and the automotive sectors account for more than 1.3 million jobs within the EU-15.

Figure 4.1: World Crude Steel Production - Geographical Breakdown 2005



Source: Eurofer, 2007

It is vital for the future of Europe and its citizens to maintain an active and competitive steel industry. At present, the European Steel industry is characterised by a number of distinctive features:

- Changes in ownership, merger and acquisition.
- Globalisation and ownership beyond Europe.
- Growing impact of the environmental aspects, particularly those related to CO₂ emissions and greenhouse effect, plus emission trading.
- Rising prices for raw materials and energy.
- Research and development (R&D) policies in the steel sector (RFCS, ESTEP, FP7).
- Technological changes.
- The cyclical pattern of the steel market.
- Ongoing discussion in the international bodies (WTO, OECD) on trade regulation and overcapacity.
- Organisational developments in the workplace and changes to the socio-demographic composition of the workforce

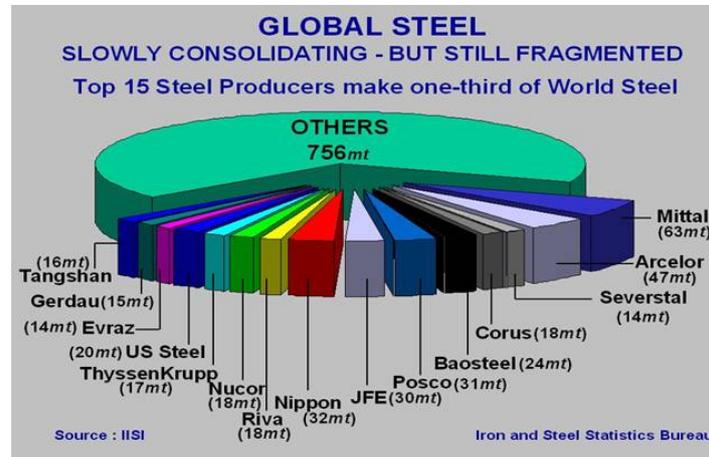
4.2 EU Steel Industry Challenges

The European steel industry is undergoing continuous structural changes, and more recently this process has gathered pace. Both the massive expansion of the steel industry in the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) countries and the occurrence of supra-European steel companies, represent real challenges for the 'European Institution' and its social partners.

The steel industry remains much less concentrated than its major supplier or client industries. Thus it is hard pressed to accelerate its concentration and rationalisation on a global scale, which would allow increased negotiating power with its main clients and suppliers. This, in turn, would boost its capacity to serve its customers worldwide with the same quality of products and services enjoyed locally. More particularly, the trend towards further liberalisation of international steel trade, and thus increased international competition,

has manifested itself clearly. It is the case that the steel industry is faced with the growing impact of globalisation, and the need to respond to the pressures on its markets. Moreover, such developments require that the rules of fair trade be applied and respected worldwide.

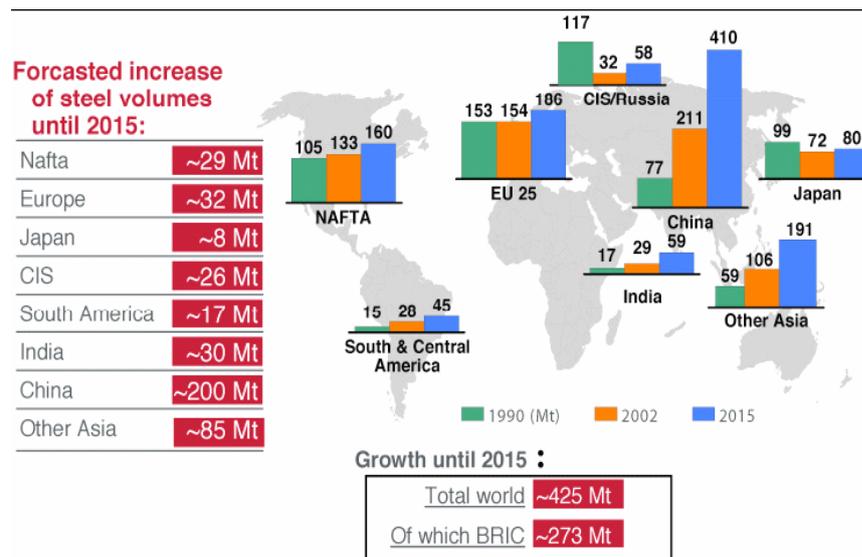
Figure 4.2: Global Steel by Steel Producers



Source: Eurofer, 2007

However, a European industrial policy in a sector where the main strategic choices are decided elsewhere might be difficult to obtain. Indeed, to maintain the European Social Model, a new strategy for trade unions might be required; to date European trade unions have dealt predominantly with Europe based steel companies, but this is changing. These broader adjustments in the steel sector necessitate the need for change too, in the various bodies dedicated to social dialogue, at the company, national and European (and International) levels.

Figure 4.3: Steel Volume Forecasts

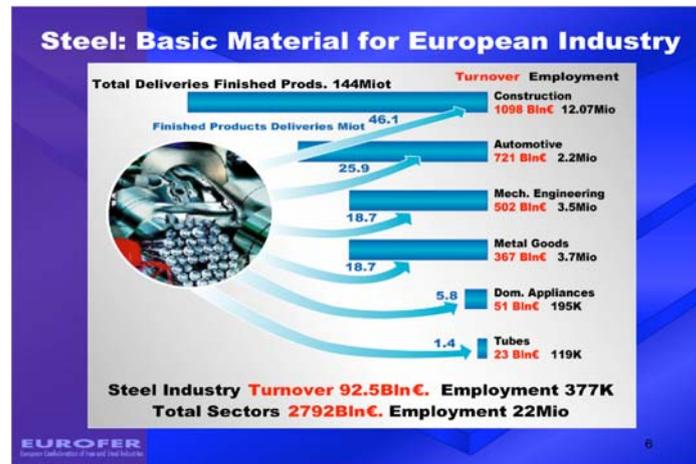


Source: Eurofer, 2007

Past experience shows that crises in the steel industry most often have their roots in imbalances caused by rapid fluctuations in demand combined with somewhat rigid supply structures and global overcapacity. Fluctuations in demand are related to business cycles, but also have structural contexts. Economic cycles influence steel demand to a large extent, bearing in mind that steel is used for both consumer and capital goods. In terms of volume, global steel demand is expected to increase more in the future than it did in the past, owing to the increased growth of countries such as China and India. Accordingly, the stronger market growth has taken place outside mature steel markets such as the EU, Japan and the US, and instead involving a number of Asian and Latin American countries.

The European steel industry will nonetheless continue to evolve: new processes and new products are likely to be developed to strengthen its competitiveness, answer evolving customer demands and preserve the environment. Other changes will come from the increasing globalisation of the world economy and the world steel market, which in turn is likely to mean continuing rationalisation and concentration in the steel industry.

Figure 4.4: Steel Use



Source: Eurofer, 2007

The European Steel Technology Platform (ESTEP) is a cooperative effort (of the European steel industry) to bring about sustainable steel production technologies and products. The inclusion in the 7th European R&D Framework Programme – of the priorities indicated in the ESTEP’s Strategic Research Agenda – is the first step towards fundamental change in the sector (compared to the past where the word “sector” was not eligible in this context).

4.3 The EU Steel Industry Workforce – Meeting Challenges and Working with Change

It is people working in the steel industry, and perhaps those in society more generally, who will be the drivers for industry change. They will, moreover, also be those who will have to live through the changes, and may in some instances question them. This illustrates the key role of people in the success of a changing steel industry, as well as the need to prepare people to address change constructively – change must be managed in a socially acceptable manner.

Traditionally, steel workforces have been recruited locally and from generations of family – son following father. The majority of workers came straight from school, often without the most basic qualifications. They were skilled by experience and climbed the occupational hierarchy according to years served (see, for example, Beynon *et al.* 1991). The work they engaged in was hot, noisy, dirty, dangerous and heavy, reliant more on brute-force and hard manual labour than the carefully honed skills of the artisan. However, this depiction of steel work and steelworkers is becoming anachronistic and in many ways inaccurate and misleading. Indeed, as organisations look to become more flexible and responsive, steel producers adopt new working practices and technologies, resulting in a much reduced, more highly skilled and differently configured workforce.

As part of wider processes of industry restructuring and rationalisation during the 1980s and 1990s, workforce numbers across Europe fell drastically. The EU15 experienced particularly large cuts in its steel workforce between 1980 and 1990, with numbers dropping from 637,000 in 1980 to 386,000 in 1990, or by more than 39

per cent (International Labour Organisation - ILO, 1992). The restructuring process continues and the large-scale redundancy programmes put in place by Corus plc in 2001 and 2003 serve as evidence of an industry in the process of continued and significant consolidation and transformation (Fairbrother *et al.* 2005). Alongside these shifts, new recruitment strategies and skills and training needs have emerged. Thus, an overall reduction in the international steel workforce has coincided with the demand for a more highly qualified, multi-skilled, flexible and differently organised workforce (see, for example, Fevre 1989, Moinov 1990, ILO 1992, Fairbrother *et al.* 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, Stroud and Fairbrother 2006). Massive investment in training and retraining has moreover, become a necessary feature of the European steel industry's continuing process of change and restructuring, as it struggles to meet its skill needs (Hertog and Mari, 2000).

Such developments, when considered in parallel with corporate restructuring and technological innovation, offer the possibility of change in the composition of the steel industry workforce. It is still the case that middle-aged poorly qualified men continue to comprise a significant number (if not the majority) of the steel industry workforce. Recruitment was largely frozen during the 1980s and 1990s, with the result that the industry became dependent on an aging workforce skilled by experience. Whilst this workforce is highly skilled in aspects of steelwork, it is often ill-placed to respond to new industry developments. Hence, the industry has focused in more recent times on recruiting a more youthful, diversely comprised and highly qualified workforce, one outcome of which is a workforce polarised by age.

These changes and the outcomes of the long-term restructuring in process have been the focus of much trade union activity. From the initial founding of the EU, steel unions have played a part in the way the industry has been shaped, at a policy level (e.g. ECSC), as well as dealing with the outcomes of the changes that have taken place. These unions face two contradictory developments, one concerned with the internationalisation of steel corporations and the other located in the increasing political and economic integration of the EU, with its associated political fora. Clearly, the way in which the EU has evolved over its fifty-year history set the scene for trade union activity and concern. Of note, the 1993 Maastricht Treaty transformed the European Community into the 'European Union'. This event included an increased emphasis on 'Social Dialogue' with its emphasis on European 'collective agreements', although national unions were unevenly involved in these processes. Part of the reason for this is that they are nationally 'embedded' and the tension for unions is how to extend their national interests in ways that create synergies with trade unions elsewhere, as well as in relation to the sector as a whole. Most recently, with the end of the ECSC, a steel sector social dialogue committee has been established, providing a platform for dialogue at the European level, and involving the major European-based steel companies and the trade unions, including the European Metalworkers' Federation. Such forum provide European steel unions with the opportunity to address the implication and outcomes of the changes that have taken place in the European steel industry over the last few years.

Soon, the European steel industry will be faced with unprecedented and demanding pressures. The age structure in most steel producing companies is such that more than 20% of its workforce will retire (or be made redundant) over the next ten years, and close to 30% will leave over the following ten years. Needless to say, this huge transformation will not only be quantitative, but will also have a crucial qualitative dimension. It represents, at the same time, a daunting challenge and a welcome opportunity.

One key challenge is for the industry to engage fully with training and learning, and, in particular, formal Vocational Education and Training (VET) structures. VET structures differ from country to country, from the more voluntarist system of the UK to the more corporate dual system of Germany. However, a concern for the industry is that as key workers retire from the industry and other developments create new skills needs, the industry must develop the capacity to meet emerging skill needs and shortages. Formal VET structures and the training strategies pursued by companies become critical in this respect. At the same time, the steel industry must also develop its capacity to attract relatively highly skilled people in a competitive labour market.

Both the old and new parts of the workforce will need to invest in life-long learning to cope with new technologies and processes, acquire new competencies, and secure the positive development of their careers. As such, new approaches should be devised to ensure that appropriate training is available and that its quality is sufficient to maintain the excellence of the workforce. On the one hand, life-long learning should be part of the proactive process of developing positive attitudes towards change. On the other hand, in a world where people begin to anticipate that their career will cover various functions, potentially in several companies from different sectors, the quality and flexibility of the life-long learning schemes offered by the steel industry might become a differentiating element in the competition for contracting highly skilled people.

The continuously improving record of the steel industry in the field of health and safety should contribute to the attractiveness of the sector. The high priority given by the industry to its “zero accident” objective and the elimination of fatalities is a guarantee of further progress. Further, reaching these objectives implies significant behavioural changes, improving health and safety at work. They also may come to be potent agents of change management.

The further consequence of a safer, cleaner and more technologically developed working environment, which requires more high skilled workers, is a more diverse steel industry workforce. As mature and predominantly male and unqualified sections of the workforce gradually exit the industry, space may be opened up for the recruitment of more highly qualified men *and* women of different and diverse backgrounds. Such developments are likely to shape the industry in distinctive ways in the twenty-first century. Questions will be asked in relation to gender, ethnicity, disability, generation and occupational and qualification profiles.

All these trends converge on and represent different facets of human resources management. During the last thirty years, the importance of human resources management has increased in steel companies’ competitive strategies. While there is debate about the precise value of human resource management, it is one of the main sources of competitive advantage in the modern steel industry. The emergent question is how to engage and involve labour, a concern of all social partners.

Thus, it comes as no surprise that most steel companies, in one way or another, have been pursuing new organizational configurations. One objective has been to attempt to transform steel enterprises into “knowledge organisations”. Human resources management and social partners more generally, play a key role in change management. As such, the social partners are instrumental in developing an industrial relations system supportive of innovation, improvement of job quality, and competitiveness, thanks to a constructive social dialogue. In the end, effective human resources management, in conjunction with trade unions and others, is essential to the successful implementation of the steel sector’s long term vision regarding profit, partners, the planet, and people.

4.4 Summary

The European steel industry has been transformed in the last fifty years. It was a founding reference point for the modern EU, but is now moving from a state-based industry to one which increasingly is shaped by an international agenda, reflected in mergers and acquisitions, and changing trade relations. It is in this context that steel workforces across Europe are beginning to shift from being predominantly male, mature, local and largely uncredentialised (but skilled), to something more highly qualified and diverse. It remains the case however, that the bulk of the workforce is aged, vulnerable and facing an uncertain future. The questions are what are the implications of these developments for workforce recomposition and what is the role of the EU and national governments in this process? Before answering them we consider the range of EU-based policies that set the scene for these developments.

5. Employment and Training Policies for the European Steel Industry

The European steel industry has long been both a reference point for EU (and its predecessors) policy; it is an industry that has shaped work and employment policies within the EU. Until relatively recently, much policy was developed in relation to steel and coal as core industries in the EU – and the development of post-war production and consumption policies (Mioche, 1998). These policies have taken on a renewed force with the goals for employment restructuring set at the Lisbon European Summit in March 2000, and elaborated subsequently (European Council, 2000; European Commission, 2004). One decisive aspect of this process is that global processes increasingly shape the ways that social and economic development takes place, but that policy implementation remains focused at a national level (Room, 2005: 127 – 128)

5.1 Employment Policies

Over time, more generally, and particularly in the context of neo-liberal politics, employment has become a core focus of EU policy. A longstanding feature of the EU project has been the promotion of industrial policies that promote competitiveness, enterprise, innovation and rapid structural adjustment, from the Treaty of Rome (Article 130) onwards. These themes were revisited in the early 1990s with the 1993 White Paper, 'Growth, Competitiveness and Employment' (CEC, 1993), published in the context of difficulties around the Maastricht Treaty, and threats to the prospects of European integration. At a time when there was rapid rise in unemployment in member states, one aim was to reassert the importance of social solidarity to the European project. Through a combination of social dialogue and the promotion of local employment the problem of unemployment would be addressed, in environmentally sustainable ways (Jones, 1999: 371). This was part of an attempt to revitalise the European economy and lay the foundations for seeing off the threats of Japanese and US economic domination (see Baker, 2007 for a fuller account).

In March 2000, as part of a much wider ranging dialogue and set of agreements, the EU at the Lisbon European Summit agreed a new European Employment Strategy (EES), with the aim:

...to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustaining economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion' (European Council, 2000: para. 5).

The overall employment targets of the EES are 70% employment in the EU, including a 60% employment rate for women, by 2010. Intermediate targets for overall employment (67%) and women (57%) by 2005 were added at the Stockholm Council (March 2001), and an additional target for older workers was set: 50% by 2010. The Barcelona Council (March 2002) confirmed that full employment was the overarching goal of the EU and called for a reinforced Employment Strategy to underpin the Lisbon strategy in an enlarged EU (see also European Council, 2003). Member States have now set common objectives and targets for employment in the Joint Assessment Priorities (to ensure candidate countries adhere to common principles and definitions) and annual National Action Plans (NAPs, now National Reform Programme Reports).

Three 'overarching objectives' inform EES. These are full employment, quality and productivity at work, and social cohesion and inclusion. It is the latter objective and the way labour market inequalities – particularly with regard to training and learning, but also in relation to the way 'modernisation' strategies are implemented – become subsumed beneath other competing agendas that are at centre of this paper's broader concerns (on training, see Heyes, 2007: 244 - 245). Ten guidelines provide the framework for addressing inequality in labour markets, with gender mainstreaming integral to all policy. Other guidelines address questions relating to age, migration, and disability and together constitute a comprehensive and linked approach to employment policy, one that should be reflected in the annual NAPs. The 'active' processes of addressing labour market

inequalities, should now in theory, be the province of government, the social partners and business working in partnership. We suggest that such developments raise critical questions about the processes for recomposing workforces generally, and, in particular, for (male dominated) 'traditional' industries such as steel.

5.2 Vocational Education and Training

Further questions on workforce re-composition are raised in relation to vocational education and training (VET) policy (as well as broader EES imperatives on social cohesion and encouraging social dialogue on training and qualifications – see Heyes, 2007), particularly for industries that have typically relied on poorly educated and specifically skilled workforces. Here, attention is drawn to the form of VET in each member state, where different sets of relationships and approaches are worked out in practice. (Article 150 of the European treaty enshrines member states' rights to responsibility for education and training systems.) These systems have implications for skills profiles of the European steel workforce. Overall, there was a marked increase in education and training in the 1990s, across all sectors. Of note, participation rates in vocational education and training are higher in the Accession countries compared to the EU-15. Although VET participation rates in the Accession countries are declining slowly towards the EU-15 average, these countries still have a stronger emphasis on VET for people younger than 17 year of age, whereas the focus in the EU-15 is on general education for the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) (European Training Foundation, 2003).

The capacity to deal with impending skills needs, as well as the way new skills are integrated into existing VET programmes, varies markedly across Europe (Winterton 1998: 10). National VET systems are shaped by specific histories that reflect both established social partner co-operation and distinct forms of work organisation. Winterton (1998) argues that the French dirigiste system results in an education process whereby managers 'whether from business school or engineering graduates' are 'divorced from production' and where technicians, prepared for production jobs find it very difficult to become managers (Winterton, 1998: 5). In contrast, the social partnership arrangements and approaches in Germany involve discussion between partners at the sector level, at enterprise level and Works Councils, although trade union involvement in discussion about continuing education is less common (p. 5). The German dual system and the key position of the *Meister* (first line supervision) in terms of hierarchical as well as craft-based authority exemplify this relation very well. An important implication of these national VET specificities is that it is not possible to make direct comparisons as the relation between management styles, hierarchical structures, distribution of authority and skill spans. In addition, work organisation has a different logic in every case (Bosch and Charest, in press). Some comparisons are possible - as long as they are made within their respective context (see Maurice *et al.*, 1986).

The restructuring of work and employment relations provides an added dimension to the discussions about VET, and is often associated with contradictory trends and debate over what is really happening. Nevertheless, vocational education and training is an 'important policy tool' in the relationship between highly qualified/skilled workers, economic competitiveness and social cohesion (CEDEFOP 2000). Indeed, in this respect 'high expectations have... been invested in education in general and vocational education and training in particular' (Crouch, 1999: 368). What is missing in these accounts about VET programmes in the EU is that two sets of relations are at work. On the one hand, VET arrangements are nationally specific. On the other hand, as steel corporations develop as multinationals, rather than as nationally-based bodies, they end up dealing with different sets of VET arrangements. It is the intersection between national and sector arrangements that enables corporations to reshape and train their workforces, more or less as they see fit. Thus, we argue, companies, are in a position to exploit the intersections and spaces between policies to give themselves maximum scope for action.

The capacity that corporate managements have to shape learning agenda in pro-active ways is determinate. They can place a premium on regressive learning strategies for some sections of the workforce, providing limited opportunities to acquire qualifications and skills enhancement rather than progressive strategies, defined by multiple opportunities to achieve credentials, enhance skills levels and facilitate career opportunities within organisations (Stroud and Fairbrother, 2006; see also Fuller and Unwin, 2004 on restrictive and expansive learning environments). Such practices may co-exist within the one organisation. While clearly there are variations between state systems and outcomes at the national level (see Fuller and Unwin 1999), we argue, there are also evident commonalities in the case of steel worker experiences at the sector level (Stroud and Fairbrother, 2006).

5.3 Summary

The Lisbon process is aimed at laying the foundation for a dynamic, flexible and inclusive European Union (EU) economy. It is within this context, amid wider processes of restructuring and 'modernisation', that traditional industries, such as steel, are engaged in transforming their skill base and creating a more diverse workforce. In this process, corporate management has a decisive role in reshaping the steel workforce, exploiting the intersections between different aspects of policy. Before exploring how these policies are worked out in practice, it is necessary to examine the way in which these policies intersect with equality and diversity policies.

6. Equality and Diversity in European Steel Companies – Themes and Issues

Equal opportunities and diversity questions are key concerns of the European steel industry. The broad context for this engagement is the developments within the European Union in relation to these themes. Obviously, this engagement has a broader background in the political changes that have taken place in Europe, particularly over the last three decades. It is in this respect, that the developments within the European Union, in relation to policy, and the associated requirements placed on governments and companies should be assessed.

The aggregate data analysis sets the scene for the consideration and evaluation of equal opportunities and diversity questions in the European steel industry. As noted elsewhere, the industry has undergone major changes during the last few years, with the result that the industry can be characterized as facing:

The restructuring process involves changes in patterns of ownership; the reorganisation of managerial hierarchies; the introduction of new technologies; significant developments in production techniques and business strategies; and, transformations in recruitment strategy and work organisation, including out-sourcing, team working and related developments. These changes have implications for the composition of the steel industry workforce and raise important questions about workforce skill profiles at national and European levels. As a result of these developments, it is not clear what skills employers seek or what the conditions might be for the recruitment, retention and upskilling of the workforce. (Fairbrother *et al.*, 2003, p. 1)

These developments provide the context for the introduction of equality measures in the industry.

To assess and evaluate the actual practice within the industry, it is necessary to go back to the broad approaches that have been identified as informing equal opportunity and diversity measures. These are: 'equal treatment', 'positive action', mainstreaming, and legal duties. It has already been noted that there is a complex relation between mainstreaming (gender or otherwise) and diversity recognition.

The starting point for considering equality approaches in the companies is a consideration of actual experiences that employees have during their working lives. The industry is one where there is a tradition of pursuing a career, often involving training and staff development. Nonetheless, in relation to the restructuring of the industry that is taking place it is also likely that different patterns of career development are likely to emerge. These varied staff profiles provide both a mode for analysing the ways in which different sets of employees pursue their careers as well as a benchmark for assessing these profiles.

Each broad target group is dealt with in turn:

1. Generations
2. Gender
3. Migrant/Ethnicity
4. Disability

The detail is then disaggregated in the following themes:

1. Industry Awareness
2. Corporate Policies and Rules
3. Occupational Segregation
4. Bullying/Mobbing and Harassment
5. Work/Life Balance
6. Training

The broad finding is that the prevailing approach to equality and diversity in the European steel industry is to introduce measures and practices relating to equal treatment. While this is an important ambition, it is a limited one. In addition, there is considerable variation in practice.

6.1 Generations of Workers' Experiences of Diversity and Equal Opportunities

The roots of the current generational composition of the European steel industry lie in a set of redundancies in the early 1980s, when the European steel industry shed large number so steel workers, in a relatively planned and orderly way (Beguin, 2005). One aim of the restructuring and rationalisation of the industry during the 1980s and 1990s was to drastically reduce the steel workforce. Alongside programmes of redundancy, part of the process of reducing employment was a block on recruitment. A major consequence of this strategy was to produce a workforce populated predominantly by men aged 40 years and over. Nonetheless, steel companies have begun again to recruit workers, with the result that workforces across much of Europe are being polarised by age. Thus, the steel industry has undergone much transformation over recent decades, and one outcome is a workforce polarised by age. For the steel industry, meeting the needs of different generations of worker can be problematic – particularly with regard to organising training to meet different learning needs, but also with regard to the transfer of knowledge and skills between generations of worker.

The most evident development in the transformation of steel workforces is in terms of its changing age profile. At present, the industry workforce remains relatively mature, with the majority of production workers in the 40-45, 45-49 and 50-54 age cohorts. However, the average age of the workforce is gradually reducing as the industry focuses on the recruitment of more highly qualified people. Indeed, the workforce is becoming polarised by age (closely linked with developments in the industry's skills and qualifications profiles). Most workforces comprise a significant minority of intermediate to highly skilled workers aged in their twenties and early thirties and a majority of workers skilled by experience in their late forties and early fifties. These features are captured in the following observation:

Italian plant: average age of the workforce is 37.9 years. The reason for the dramatic drop in the average age of the workforce is that the law relating to asbestos has provided many older workers with the opportunity to leave employment and take up retirement.

The workforce is very young, with a turnover of nearly 700 staff. The bulk of the recruits are young. The process of replacement is to seek to fill the position of the retired person. The staff largely are recruited after 8 years at school - this is the minimum qualification. A percentage of new recruits will have a high school diploma, intermediate level. There is little need to advertise since many people (40 each month) apply for work in the plant. Some of the new staff will have focused schooling, where they will study metallurgy related subjects in the local schools. In general the company recruits based on minimum qualifications. Nonetheless, a few blue-collar workers will be employed, holding a degree. The usual qualification is a high school diploma. Craft workers are recruited directly from the 'professional' training schools in the area. They generally have an intermediate qualification, obtained

between 15 and 17 years of age. They go on and do 2-32 years further training at the 'professional' training schools. (Fieldnote, Italian plant, 2005)

One HR manager at a steel plant in the Czech Republic stated in relation to the recruitment of young workers:

They [young workers] represent the category of workers up to 25 years of age. They are our future in the blue-collar generation. We are glad to have them here, they are helping to lower the relatively high age average ... our average age here in the plant is about 48 years, so ... (HR Manager, Czech Republic, 2005)

Elsewhere, after non-recruitment for as long as fifteen years, younger workers were once again recruited:

No young people were hired for 20 years. 15 years, 15-20 years. Young people were not recruited. Whereas now we have a large influx of young workers. There are about 120 or 130 people a year who come in, young people who join the company you know. (Mature Workers, French Plant, 2005)

In addition, increased emphasis was given to the recruitment of female workers.

There also seems to be an intention to recruit more women. We have female trainees in our workshop all the time and apparently it is a very good thing. (Mature Workers, French Plant, 2005)

This situation presents the industry with specific challenges, not least in replacing skills, as sections of the latter move towards retirement, but also with regard to updating and 'modernising' the skills and qualifications of time-served workers to meet immediate skill needs and close skill gaps and deficiencies. For established and mature sections of the workforce the concern is that they might struggle to engage with new learning opportunities – especially in relation to more formal and class-room based programmes.

Interviewee 1: Mm, there are training courses which I think might be good for the mature workers. Especially anything about the new technologies, the new approaches, the new technologies, the new management methods, systems for managing things which sometimes require suitable training modules which...suitable. Because people are not always at a level where they can integrate into the new technology. - Interviewee 2: For the same level of integration and training, it has to be slower for the mature workers! - Interviewee 3: In view of their age, less concentrated! (Three Mature Workers, French Plant, 2005)

Whilst workers voice concerns about employability and complain about restricted opportunities, evidence suggests that they are at the same time reluctant to engage with new learning opportunities when they arise (Stroud and Fairbrother, 2006).

The industry stands to lose up to 50% of its workforce through retirement and redundancy over the next twenty years. The majority of these workers will be mature workers often taking early retirement or voluntary redundancy options (in parts of Italy the latter is occurring in relation to regulations relating to the exposure to asbestos), which represents a major loss of experienced workers. One implication of these developments is that the steel industry requires a more highly trained and qualified workforce than previously. Involvement in a

range of training and learning opportunities may be necessary for continued employment within an industry that is always looking to introduce new technologies, develop new ways of organising steel production and constantly subject to restructuring activity. It is important for workers to build their employability profiles, whether seeking to stay in or leave the industry (taking with them essential knowledge and skills).

The industry has begun to replace those workers nearing retirement, in recent years focusing on the recruitment of a more highly qualified workforce. In the past, recruitment often took place via family connections, whereas now the emphasis is on qualifications. As stated in one German plant:

Nowadays it doesn't matter whether your father is an employee here; if you have a profession you will be employed, if you don't have one, there's nothing. (Second Generation Migrant Worker, Works Councillor, 2006)

Family connections still count in some countries. As one young man from the Czech Republic stated:

.....my dad works here. I have first trained as a plumber and a heating engineer, and I have been working in this job for a year, and what I found was that if a private company takes on a young man like me, they never let him earn more than 8,000 CZK per month. This was quite a problem for me, so then I approached my dad and asked him whether I could get a job [here]. He told me that it was a bit different here. And now I have been here for over a year and... I am satisfied here, I like it here. (young worker, 24 age, Czech Republic, 2005)

However, in general, 'new' workers are likely to be in their twenties and thirties and possess quite different and more rounded experiences of education than many of the more mature and time-served workers. Such changes suggest that the organisation and content of learning programmes should be recast to meet the requirements of a younger and more highly qualified workforce.

These trends are evident in one steel plant, where a large proportion of the workforce have been of Turkish origin. Here qualifications are part of a filtering mechanism:

At present, nobody's being employed without professional training or up to three or four years without a profession. The Turkish youths must somehow make sure that they get a profession. Here we have kept an eye on there being a few youths, Turkish youths taking part in the training. We don't have a quota but we still keep an eye on there being certain ... that eight or ten people out of 65 are youths from a foreign background. But nowadays, there are other foreigners, too, apart from the Turks. If there are some, then OK, then there don't *have* to be Turkish youths among the trainees. Despite all that, we have, how can I put that, 300 to 350 youths, aged, well, between 20 and 40. (HR staff, German plant, 2006)

There is also a range of complications with regard to the (career) expectations and aspirations of new sections of the workforce, particularly in terms of training and learning:

And the other very important point is that they say that today, a young person entering a company will not spend the rest of his life in the same profession. Well let's say all his life; within 10 years he'll certainly have to change profession. If you say changing profession, you mean a change of training volume too, automatically. (Training Organiser, France, 2005)

These are questions that the European steel industry is only beginning to address.

One other feature is that critical to learning steelwork is acquiring knowledge from more experienced workers. However, evidence suggests there are problems related to the transfer of knowledge between generations (for example, in relation to different cultures of learning and working).

A further complication occurs in relation to generation and work-life balance issues. At an Italian plant, these themes were brought into sharp focus, with the age profile of the workforce being turned on its head within a few short years. Regulations on working with asbestos had allowed many of the mature sections of the workforce to retire early, and this has created a number of concerns for management. In particular, the loss of so many experienced workers creates a knowledge gap that is difficult to fill, particularly in the absence of fully developed methods of knowledge transfer and inadequate training provision. At the same time, the company is experiencing problems with regard to absences from the shop-floor, as young workers struggle to match the demands of shift-work with an active social-life and the demands of young families. Indeed, the pressure for better work-life balance arrangements is likely to come to the fore as the composition of the workforce develops beyond its traditional profile. More highly educated, younger (and increasingly female) workers are likely to carry different expectations of work-life boundaries, and thus press for change (see Huldi, 2002). Such pressures will at first, we contend, be individually rather than collectively expressed and addressed – underlining the instrumentality of corporate approaches, rather than the effectiveness of European ‘law’ (Room, 2005: 118) and union passivity on these matters.

The industry faces a set of external pressures for the introduction of such arrangements, in particular those related to the application of European laws on employment equality. Further, the industry faces a series of internal pressures to adopt Work Life Balance arrangements. The pressure for such arrangements to be introduced is likely to come to the fore as the composition of the workforce develops beyond its traditional profile. The precise emphasis for the introduction of such arrangements will be shaped by the way in which the workforce reconfigures. The perceived stability of the workforce as an aged and overwhelmingly male workforce is shifting. The industry is recruiting young and more highly qualified individuals and there are some indications that women’s employment in production areas is becoming increasingly likely. These workers are likely to carry different expectations of work-life boundaries, and thus pressurise for change. At present however, the industry fails to engage fully with the Work Life Balance agenda.

To meet these generational demands, companies are exploring a number of strategies, often somewhat limited in scope.

Meeting Skill and Learning Needs: Quite clearly the industry needs to cater for the different learning needs of workers and ensure equality of access to learning opportunities. However, with some exceptions, evidence suggests that at present this is not always the case, with more highly qualified workers accessing a greater range of learning opportunities than the less well qualified. Further, whilst some plants make efforts to up-skill the current workforce, or skill them in ways that enhances their employability profiles, there is often a reliance on recruiting skills, which undermines the capacity of companies to respond to both short and long-term skill needs and shortages.

Mentoring and Knowledge Transfer: The transfer of knowledge between generations of worker is an important aspect of learning steel work. In some plants, formal mentoring is often an important part of this process. At the very least, the majority of companies rely on experienced workers to pass on knowledge to new workers informally on-the-job. For the most part new (often younger) workers and experienced (often mature) workers work and co-operate well with each other in this process.

However, there are issues concerned with how experienced and new workers relate to each other. This has implications for the transfer of knowledge and skills from one generation to the next if relations are not good.

Evidence indicates that mature workers often expressed some concern with a lack of respect from younger workers.

These young workers however, occasionally complained of bullying/mobbing from mature workers. The recommendation from workers is for more formalised systems of mentoring, complete with training and qualifications in mentoring skills, to facilitate the important process of knowledge transfer. More flexible approaches to retirement and the gradual easing out of mature and experienced workers with invaluable skills, including the option to transfer from full to part-time employment or job-share with co-retirees, might also facilitate processes of knowledge transfer and mitigate the impact of losing experienced workers.

6.2 Women's Experiences of Diversity and Equal Opportunities

The European steel industry workforce has always comprised a significant minority of women. However, the employment of women within the industry has traditionally been confined to occupations outside the production process or within particular parts of the production process. More particularly, the progression of women through the occupational hierarchy has been limited. Whilst, in many ways, this remains the case, there is the clear potential for women to become a more significant part of the European steel industry production workforce. There are however, a number of gender equality issues that require addressing by the industry.

Whilst women have generally been absent from production employment, they have routinely been employed in laboratory, clerical and administrative positions, and in the domestic services attached to the industry. In eastern and central Europe the position is different and the employment of women on the shop-floor is more common. For example, in Poland and the Czech Republic, women comprise between 17 and 30 per cent of the production workforce. However, these workers are mainly confined to warehouse and crane-operator occupations. More particularly, as part of restructuring programmes in central and eastern Europe, women are exiting the industry in greater numbers than men. In Western Europe the converse is true, female production employment is low (between 3 and 7 per cent), but the potential for women's future employment in production is likely to increase.

Often, the stereotypical image of steelwork as heavy, dirty and dangerous is cited as a reason for the absence of women from the production process. However, the steel industry is changing. Technological developments have radically changed the way steel is produced. There is moreover, a greater emphasis on downstream and commercial activity. Further, the industry's increasing demand for highly skilled recruits has forced the industry to re-evaluate its recruitment and retention strategies. These changes have been paralleled by societal developments, involving national government and European Union (EU) equality initiatives, which add to the potential for increased gender diversity in the composition of what is traditionally regarded as a male dominated industry.

Patterns of transformation with regard to gender composition are uneven, thus we are talking more about the potential for change than actual occurrences. As stated on a previous project:

...once upon a time women were ruled out because of the physical effort of the work ...that is no longer relevant....except for some small areas of the works.....generally the old reasons are not there....in the future....lets put it this way....if there are not more women around in a few years time someone will say that we are discriminating because there is no reason not...(Personnel Manager, male, UK 2001)

But, this is still a sentiment:

Interviewer: For the operations-mechanic project you said you had 40 applicants and that there is only one woman.

A: Yes, that's right. Only one woman applied.

Interviewer: Only one woman applied?

A: Yes, these are tough jobs for machine operators, in the production and on the furnaces; it's rare to find a woman there. There are a few; we also have some in management, so it happens. But as far as the operation-mechanic project is concerned there is only one. (Trainer, male, Germany 2006)

Nonetheless, despite the increased employment of women in the industry, albeit in relatively small numbers, male workers can be sceptical of these developments, if not hostile. In one German plant, where an increasing number of women are being employed in production areas, a trainer observed:

There might be the odd old furnace worker who thinks it's odd for a woman to work in the steelworks on the furnaces and there might be some problems and you might need to change their shifts. That can happen. It's not always easy but it's rare. (Trainer, xx age, male, 2006)

There are a number of interesting developments to note. The European steel industry workforce has always comprised a significant minority of women. The employment of women within the industry has traditionally been confined to occupations outside the production process or within particular parts of the production process and their progression through the occupational hierarchy has been limited – that is, women experience vertical and horizontal segregation in their employment within the industry (see Crompton and Sanderson 1990). The picture with regard to women's production employment in Europe can be disaggregated by region. In Western Europe, women have generally been absent from production employment, but routinely employed in laboratory, clerical and administrative positions, and in the domestic services attached to the industry. In Central and Eastern Europe women's employment in production is much greater. Indeed, whilst there are still signs of gender segmentation in Poland and the Czech Republic, there is also evidence of a more broad based employment of women. There now seems to be a reversal in these prevailing trends.

It is increasingly likely that women will be recruited to steel production employment and there is some evidence that such developments are beginning to occur. For example, recruitment difficulties experienced by one company in the Netherlands led it to reserve 10 per cent of apprenticeship places for women. (The company wanted to recruit good quality apprentices, but not enough male candidates could be recruited of the desired standard.) Research also indicates that as part of a shift toward increased graduate recruitment, women graduates are being increasingly employed to trainee technical and scientific positions.

Technological developments are changing the nature of steelwork and it has become less reliant on workers performing hard, heavy and intensive manual labour and more focused on the recruitment of graduates and the technically highly qualified to meet increasingly sophisticated customer demands and facilitate new ways of working (ILO 1992, Fairbrother *et al.* 2004a, 2004b). These developments have been paralleled by changes in the expectations and aspirations of women, and policies and directives at national and supra-national level to support gender equality (the EES for example). The outcome is the greater potential for the employment of women to production employment. Indeed, there are clear examples of efforts by the industry to meet skill needs by recruiting women. In the Netherlands, for example, the steel plant Training Centre aimed to recruit

100 apprentices per year, and had links with local schools and colleges. However, recruitment has proved increasingly difficult and in 2001 only 52 new apprentices started, 10 per cent of whom were female (Fairbrother *et al.* 2004c). This company increasingly looked to female apprentices, in a rather instrumental way, to make up the shortfalls that the company was experiencing with male only recruitment.

However, such sentiments were not confined to the Western European countries. In Central and Eastern Europe, women comprise a significant minority of the production workforce. For example, upwards of thirty per cent of the Polish case study company workforce were women, and while the majority worked in administrative and service jobs substantial numbers were employed in operator positions throughout the plant – albeit confined mainly to crane and warehouse work. Here women either structurally or institutionally are being encouraged to leave in disproportionate numbers. As noted in relation to the Polish steel industry:

Interviewer: Do they [women workers] leave voluntarily, or are they being coerced somehow, a bit, to leave?

[Interviewee 1] Well, the way it is, it is not any direct coercion. There are two explanations to be made here: the employers are interested in people leaving, whether it is a man or a woman, the point is, the employment should be reduced. The easiest way of reducing employment was among women in the pre-retirement group, especially those women who were entitled to the early retirement benefit payments. These women... would retire as not very old, they would be aged 50+, and they became very useful for their families.

[Interviewer] To care for the grandchildren?

[Interviewee 1] Yes, to do housework or to care for their grandchildren. Yes. And even those who didn't have big qualifications, they still could ... earn a bit extra.. .for example as babysitters, as cleaners... These women left their jobs easily.
....But it was not the same among men.

[Interviewer] But at the moment... you mentioned... that they are forcing them to go, a little bit, nevertheless.

[Interviewee 1] The way this is done is that certain advantageous redundancy packages are being presented for those who have worked here for a certain number of years. And often, these signals are being sent towards departments where the majority of employees are women. Women have less years worked, and so...

[Interviewee 2] I spoke with many women before what we have now... what I mean is that we offer redundancy payments of tens of thousands of zlotys for those who worked here for 25, 30 or 35 years. This is called voluntary redundancy programme. The women counted on this sort of redundancy payment... but this was not available earlier. Now it is available and wonder how many women, but also men, will apply when they are offered these enticements. I talked to women a lot and they told me that should there be, let us call it, interesting offers in terms of redundancy packages, they would take them up because they have grandchildren and enough work at home. Even though they still have a few years before retirement, this sort of package is interesting for them. But there is no formal stimuli... the stimuli is in the form of a general announcement on the size of the redundancy package.

...

[Interviewee 3] You could mention one more motivational factor for women: the organisational changes in the companies here. The investors, the owners, invest in new management tools, e.g. new IT software. And as a result, a large proportion of work today is independent on a human being. One person can suddenly carry out the work of five people, because the computer does the rest. We are talking here about accounting, about administrative tasks. This is where we have most women. And many of them think like that: I would have to learn all these new things today, and a younger female who knows languages, who knows computer work, she will be competitive, she will cost less as she will have worked less years and as a young person, she will be more flexible. And so the elderly women often think that and often take up the employers' offers. (Three Interviewees, male, Employers Association, Poland, 2006)

As noted by these interviewees, there is a sharp decline in the number of women employed in the steel industry from over 24% of the workforce at the beginning of the restructuring period to 18.2% in 2005.

In the Czech Republic, the decline in steel employment has been massive. At one plant the employment fell from over 20,000 to just 2,000 in less than ten years. In one sub-company of 329 employees, 22/23% were women (Director of Human Resources, 2005). Most of these workers were employed in administrative and domestic services, although in this small plant over half the crane drivers were women. This remained a relatively well paid plant, with the average salary at 21,000 CZK per month compared with the average of salary of 18,000 CZK. However, while the pay is formally equal, irrespective of gender, in practice the men are allocated more responsibility and hence receive more for essentially the same job, such as crane driving (Four female workers, Steel Plant, Czech Republic 2005).

The position of women within the industry is also being consolidated along more traditional routes. Increasing emphasis is being given to marketing, customer service and commercial sales within the industry bringing with it an increase in female employment. In German plants, for example, a majority of marketing and sales apprentices are women and these are translated into real posts. Even without these developments, the accession to the EU of countries where female production employment is comparatively high (for example, Poland and the Czech Republic) has led to an aggregate increase in the number of women working in steel production within the EU as a whole.

However, women employed in steel industry production areas often experience a number of problems. These experiences often begin at the point of recruitment. In one case in a French steel plant a qualified woman was made to feel secondary by the manager when she was recruited. As she noted:

in the recruitment process there was no discrimination but, when I was transferred here with my husband, the Human Resources manager made it very clear to me that it was me accompanying my husband [who also works in the steel industry], although we had attended comparable schools, done the same thing, etc. (Engineer, France, 2006)

These sentiments seemed to be evident in other areas of the recruitment process. Another woman stated:

. I do remember one part of the interview with the psychologist who – and I was married at the time, newly married – asked me if my husband wouldn't be worried about me working with men. At the time I was exceptionally polite but I think that today I would be much less so. (France, 2006)

Complementing these sentiments, it is also important to consider the barriers to the employment of women once they are recruited. These include the absence of family friendly policies and prohibitive labour codes and employment regulations – not to mention evidence of bullying and harassment (sexual and otherwise).

There seemed to be a general view amongst management that women were not 'real' employees, in the sense that childcare and responsibilities meant that they were less committed to work. One stark view of this was evident at the French steel plant. As stated by one woman worker:

My husband is self employed so he has more flexibility than me in terms of hours so it was him who took responsibility for mornings, evenings and illnesses. And in my case, ... I had a lot of trouble explaining to them [managers] that my brain hadn't washed away when my waters broke and that I was still the same, no more stupid than before and that I wasn't 50% but still full time, yes, even with children and so they could again give me the same missions that had been taken away from me during my pregnancy. (France, 2006)

In another plant, this time in Germany, a woman noted what had happened to her colleague when she had a third child:

...one colleague who has just had her third child, who wanted, who would have liked to have come as a part-time employee. And she applied here again. She said OK, before the end of maternity leave, I think that's three years or so, she would have liked to come back and... she ... wasn't allowed to come back, you know. Or rather she *was* allowed to come back but at a lower pay rate and, yes, well, she didn't do it, of course, because it wasn't worth it, you know. But it was almost made impossible for her. (Chemist, Germany, 2006)

These practices, while within the law of these particular countries, nonetheless indicate the absence of robust work life balance policies. Nonetheless, in almost all cases provision is made for maternity leave, the implications of taking such leave can create major personal difficulties for women staff in the steel industry.

These developments raise questions about work life balance and the relations between men and women, at work and at home. There was a general view that while the companies may promote family-friendly policies, the practice is rather different. The irony, for example, of managerial advocacy of flexible work arrangements, and the implications for family life, was noted by one person in Germany:

... here at our company they would like to introduce flexible work time but in this case it's only employer-friendly, well, not very employee-friendly. (Material Tester, Germany, 2006)

This same person went on to describe how these managerial approaches play out in practice:

[Her manager] tells us when we have to come and when we have to leave...And then at short notice, they'll say 'You'll have to stay an hour longer today' and you can't decide for yourself. Well, that's not the purpose, I don't think, of flexible work time. (Material Tester, Germany 2006)

For workers this creates a situation of feeling inadequate:

And the fact that you can't occasionally determine things yourself. You can see that the decision is somehow, well, taken for you, you know. Somehow, you're made to seem stupid as if you didn't (...) yourself 'Well, today I'm going to do an hour or two more', well, the fact that it's also determined for you, I don't think is very good. Because in a way that shows you, well, somehow you feel like a child or can't organise... yourself... (Material Tester, Germany, 2006)

While it can be argued that the nature of steel production is what makes it seemingly resistant to the introduction of work-life balance arrangements, the experiences just recounted were repeated in the majority

of plants visited. One stark exception was in another German plant, where the workforce had campaigned for and had a child care centre located on site. Here there seemed to be a more positive view to some of these themes.

In addition to the 'discriminatory' practices indicated above, women also often face harassment from (male) colleagues. A number of the respondents noted examples of harassment:

I've experienced one in my time in office – the supervisor is no longer here. (Works Councillor, German plant, 2006)

He then went on to describe how the incident involving a male head and a female worker was dealt with:

[The first step was to] Separate them, the victim works now in another department, and, the... perpetrator. ...was the chief of this department, yes, was made to leave, he wasn't dismissed but...[he had to leave] three months later. (Works Councillor, German plant, 2006)

In two other plants:

In one case, a female engineer made two complaints to the Human Resources Department. The first complaint was with reference to inappropriate remarks and the second was with reference to inappropriate physical contact. In another case, a female worker complained to the trade union that one of its officials had made inappropriate advances. In this particular case, the partner of the offended party became involved and 'legal action' was threatened. Both cases were however, dealt with internally to the satisfaction of the offended parties. (Fieldnotes, 2005)

Further, at a number of plants it seemed that some sexual banter occurred. It was not clear that this intimidated workers in any way, but there was limited awareness on the part of male workers that there was some possibility of offence being taken. There was awareness among women of the sexual banter, but they seemed confident that they could handle such situations.

It is clearly the case that instances of sexual harassment occur in the steel industry workplace. It is relatively common for steel industry employees to relate examples of inappropriate remarks and behaviour, involving colleagues and in some instances more senior staff. Female production workers experience other types of harassment and bullying/mobbing, too. A programme of restructuring and rationalisation at one plant caused male workers to express open resentment at the presence of women on the shop-floor, because they are taking "men's jobs". Further, in another case, a female team-leader was accused by a team-member of achieving the position by offering sexual favours to management. (Fieldnotes, 2005 and 2006)

Other evidence suggests that the terms and conditions of women's employment is often less favourable than men's – even for like-for-like employment. For example, women in steel employment experienced:

- unequal pay for the same job tasks as men;
- problems returning to their job following maternity leave;
- poor encouragement for career advancement (particularly related to interrupted careers for maternity leave);
- unfavourable terms when requesting flexible working arrangements.

But, discrimination, takes a number of forms. It was evident at a number of plants that workers – particularly by gender – were discriminated against in the workplace. For example, in the Czech Republic and Polish plants,

women comprise up to a third of the production (or manual worker) workforce, mostly within the warehouse or operating cranes. However, the terms and conditions of women's employment was often less favourable than for men's – even for like-for-like employment. Elsewhere, there is clear evidence of vertical and horizontal discrimination, with women mainly confined to administrative and domestic occupations and much less likely to work in production. Where women do work in production there is often resentment. In Germany, for example, the programme of restructuring and rationalisation at Arcelor Stahlwerke Bremen has caused male workers to resent the presence of women on the shop-floor, because they are taking "men's jobs". Further, a highly qualified female engineer negotiated individually a pay deal, but knows she is being paid less than male colleagues. However, her contract stated that she was not allowed to talk to anyone about her pay deal. In France, a female team-leader was accused by a team-member of achieving the position by offering sexual favours. In the Czech Republic, a young female administrator was told by her manager that she would have difficulty operating a computer because she was a woman.

Discriminatory practices and harassment within the industry is exacerbated by the absence of policy to protect and ensure equal opportunities for women.

6.3 Black and Minority Ethnic and Migrant Workers' Experiences of Diversity and Equal Opportunities

In some European countries, there is a clear record of reliance by the steel industry on migrant workers. Evidence suggests however, that migrant workers employed to the industry often experience occupational segregation and other types of discrimination and harassment. Black and minority ethnic workers experience similar mistreatment, too. Elsewhere in Europe, these workers appear to be excluded almost entirely from the industry. There are then, a range of issues with regard to the treatment of migrant and black and minority ethnic workers, with which the steel industry must deal.

For the purposes of the discussion it is necessary to distinguish between migrant workers, who have moved from one country to another to find work, and black and minority ethnic (BME) workers, who are part of the indigenous population (often second or third generation migrants). Germany, France and the Netherlands are three examples of countries that have relied heavily on migrant labour (from Turkey, North Africa and Spain respectively) to work in the steel industry. Such workers have traditionally populated low-skilled occupations within the industry and filled the jobs that the indigenous population did not take up. However, from this entry point, migrant and BME workers have struggled to advance through the occupational hierarchy and there is an absence of opportunities for alternative career development paths for these workers. This suggests discrimination through occupational (vertical and horizontal) segregation.

A further significant development is in the way migrant labour is used within the steel industry. Such workers have long formed a significant part of the steel workforce in some countries, particularly the Netherlands, France and Germany. Elsewhere, a migrant workforce or workforce that comprises black and minority ethnic groups is conspicuous mainly by its absence (for example, the Czech Republic, UK, Spain, Italy and Poland):

...the steel works basically reflects the community ...and not being too disparaging there are few ethnic minorities in [the] area... but we do have a very small number (Production Manager, UK 2001).

The ethnic composition of the European steel industry workforce, can be set within a more general context of mid-twentieth century migratory trends (Cohen 1995). With the extensive migration in the 1950s and 1960s within and into parts of Europe, the composition of steel workforces, particularly in the Netherlands and Germany, changed dramatically. At the main steel plant in the Netherlands, for example, there was significant migration of Spanish nationals into steelwork during this period. These workers came with few skills and found work at the lower skill levels, particularly in the foundry and coking areas of the steel plant. They settled in the

residential areas directly adjacent to the plant and developed into Spanish speaking communities that remain in place to this day (Field Research 2002). Similar patterns of migration and employment are evidenced in Germany (with Turkish migrants) and parts of France (North African).

Where migrant workers are to be found in numbers in production employment, it is often at the lower end of the occupational hierarchy and engaged in particular parts of the production process (Field Research 2001 to 2006). Hence, migrant workers experience vertical segregation, with informal and possibly formal barriers to employment in managerial positions, and horizontal segregation, reflected in the concentration of migrant workers in particular sections of (and occupations in) the production process. The emerging issue is, however, that the place of migrant labour in this industry is no longer secure:

Spanish, Italian and people from Turkey, Morocco. And now we have a language problem that we didn't have ten years ago. It's a problem. More strict rules for environmental safety, it's becoming a problem because people don't speak Dutch fluently. And ...ten years ago we didn't mind ...but nowadays it's not good anymore. So nowadays we ask for level 2, and level 2 so you can be sure they speak Dutch in the right way (Production Manager, Netherlands, 2002)

There is, however, evidence that migrant workers were discriminated against in relation to opportunities for staff development. In one plant, a migrant worker observed:

They say, but we don't want you to make a career for yourself, or we don't want you to lose working time or we don't want you to stop work, it could be anything, and what can you do? (Migrant worker, 30 years of age, Italian plant, 2005)

Moreover, this worker had been employed on site with a contractor for ten years prior to his direct employment by the company.

The steel industry thus has provided a source of stable employment for generations of migrant worker. As a corollary, migrant communities are often well established and located in close proximity to steel plants. This situation is however, beginning to change. Typically, poorly qualified young people from migrant and BME communities situated around steel plants graduate into low-skilled occupations offered by the company. However, as steel companies increasingly focus on recruitment of the more highly qualified, the employment opportunities for people from these communities are threatened.

The increasing emphasis placed by steel companies on the recruitment of more highly qualified workers has implications for the future recruitment of generations of migrant worker to the industry. Thus, in short, existing patterns of access to steel employment for second and third generation migrants become disrupted. Further, there are a number of developments in work organisation that have implications for migrant workers currently employed by steel companies. Essentially, the migrant workforce lacks the skills commensurate with the new forms of work organisation being introduced (such as language skills), leading to increased vulnerability to processes of rationalisation and restructuring.

The phasing out too, of low-skilled occupations by the industry also means that employees with few meaningful qualifications are vulnerable to redundancy. This situation is often exacerbated by language difficulties, which limit the learning opportunities available to such workers to increase their skill profiles and maintain their employment within (or outside) the industry. Indeed, the industry is in many ways failing to serve the training needs of generations of migrant workers, including for employment outside the industry. Further, where BME and migrant workers are employed in the industry, there is evidence of racial abuse, bullying and intolerance. In some cases such behaviour is explicit, whereas in others it is an implicit part of behaviour and policy.

A number of instances of racial abuse were reported during the course of the research. At one plant a migrant worker from North Africa was racially abused by a colleague. Racist remarks were made and racist material was left on the worker's desk and computer. The offending worker was dismissed, but it was clear that migrant workers from white racial groups at the plant viewed racism as being a lesser problem than was the case by the black workers who experienced forms of on-going racism at the plant. Indeed, there is evidence of a dismissive attitude to migrant workers and BMEs from the majority indigenous worker population, based on skin colour and race.

In one plant, a migrant worker spoke of the way there was a culture of harassment in the plant:

Yes, this happens...someone has a go at someone, they are given a hard time until they are worn out, they drive them out. (Migrant worker, Italy, 2005)

Intolerant behaviour also mars relations within the industry. At one plant, a trainer from a migrant community was forbidden by the company from communicating with workers of the same minority origins in their first language, when attending training courses. Training was only permitted in the national language, and even informal comment was discouraged. This decision led to ostracism of the trainer by his own migrant community, at work and outside. There were moreover, several instances of migrant workers suggesting that they had been refused training because of their migrant status. There were also reports of workers of second or third generation migrant origin making racist remarks to black workers.

In some countries, BME and migrant workers in the industry are notable by their absence. This is despite significant numbers of BMEs in the wider population and the employment of BME workers in similar industries. This might indicate the use of discriminatory practices in recruitment, but perhaps more benignly reflects wider geographical patterns of migration, the particularities of occupational recruitment (e.g. by word of mouth) and composition, and the implications of industry recruitment freezes. However, there was some evidence of discrimination in recruitment practices, particularly with regard to quotas on apprenticeship intake, often in places with high levels of BME recruitment in production areas.

There is evidence of little cross-cultural empathy across steel workforces, and thus a need for cultural awareness training. A relatively new issue for the industry arises out of the globalisation of the steel industry and the increasing levels of merger and acquisition activity. Steel companies have been making in-roads into new markets by means of such activity for some years now. Many companies offer 'cultural' training for management relocated to new countries and regions. However, as the intensity of internationalising operations grows, so does the possibility of cultural misunderstandings – some examples of which were evident at steel plants at the centre of recent merger and acquisition activity. Whilst racism and bullying might not be tolerated formally by steel companies, the absence of an equal opportunities policy at most plants often undermines anti-discriminatory messages and reinforces discriminatory practices.

6.4 Disabled Workers' Experiences of Diversity and Equal Opportunities

The steel industry employs a minority of disabled workers, including workers with learning difficulties and/or a physical disability. Evidence suggests that disabled workers are vulnerable to discrimination and bullying. More particularly, some companies pursue recruitment policies that militate against the employment of disabled people.

The level and conditions of employment of disabled workers in the steel industry varies from country to country and from company to company. Many countries operate a quota policy with regard to employment of the

disabled (variously defined); whereby national legislation requires that company workforces comprise a percentage of disabled people. Some companies observe this legislation more closely than others. In some cases, companies prefer to incur a fine than recruit disabled workers; thus: "This Company has a policy of not recruiting disabled people" (EDLESI Project).

There is moreover, a difference between the recruitment of disabled people and the employment of workers who become disabled whilst employed to the company. Most companies make efforts to find alternative employment for the latter, but direct recruitment of disabled persons is less evident. It is also important to note, that disability encapsulates more than physical impairment and long term chronic conditions. Disability covers mental impairment too – including stress, depression, psychiatric complaints and learning disabilities. Indeed, the debates about what is recognised as a disability and employment as a disabled person are complex.

Disabled workers' needs and experiences of employment differ according to the nature of their disability, but it is worth noting that disability puts particular obligations on employers. The absence of an equal opportunities policy at many companies meant that those with disability might not receive the protection they need or indeed to which they have a right.

Legislation in many countries requires that employers employ a certain percentage of the people with disabilities. However, some companies, for example, Sollac Méditerranée, would rather incur a fine than recruit disabled workers. As stated: 'This company has a policy of not recruiting disabled people' (Trainer Interview, French Plant, 2006). Elsewhere, at Stahlwerke Bremen, an intensive restructuring programme, 'FIT', ran between 2002 and 2005. The aim of the programme was to reduce costs by 40 per cent, which involved cutting 1,618 jobs via early retirement schemes, voluntary redundancy and reductions in working time. This was achieved without a single forced redundancy, but has had particular implications for disabled workers. Disabled workers now find themselves in more vulnerable situations as a result of the FIT programme. They have often been relocated as part of the programme's broader strategy to areas of the plant that do not make allowances for their disability.

Disabled workers complained that they felt insecure about their future and said nothing when the workload was too much for them (resulting in accident or illness) or did not go to the doctor when the need arose. Indeed, one worker who became disabled through work and received a certificate from a doctor outlining what he could and could not do, was told by the supervisor:

What am I supposed to do with him? A one-year apprentice can do more than him" (Disabled Worker Interview, French plant, 2006).

In a further case, there was clear evidence of bullying of disabled and vulnerable workers. Production workers with learning and physical disabilities at one plant were bullied and verbally abused by a team manager. These experiences were spoken of in the following terms:

[Interviewer]: Do you have someone around you, maybe in a job a bit higher up than you, to whom you can talk...?

[Interviewee]: Ah, well, they've asked me this...You can't do that because it's dangerous, so do something else. Then you can't do that because ...

[Interviewer]: So there are people who help you more and people who help you less?

[Interviewee]: Yes. (Disabled worker, Italian plant, 2005)

The vulnerable position of these workers meant that whilst being perfectly aware that they were being bullied/mobbed, they were too afraid to complain and said they were simply thankful for their jobs.

New health risks in the steel industry: A further concern for the industry is to recognise the different ways in which the nature of work is changing and the need to be aware of emerging health and safety issues. Clearly, in most companies the rate of fatal or disabling accidents has fallen dramatically. Health and safety training and practice has improved markedly, with fatalities and physically disabling injuries much reduced in the majority of plants.

However, whilst the practice of making steel has become safer, other developments in the industry have created new concerns. Cuts to workforce numbers and increasing levels of productivity mean that more steel is being created by fewer workers. Changes in work organisation, particularly towards multi-skilling and flexibility create new stresses and strains. It is important that the industry recognises issues of work related stress and depression – an example of which was clearly evidenced in one case by a team manager who suffered a heart attack as a direct result of work related stress.

The representation of disabled workers' interests by trade union and works councils is uneven across Europe. In Germany and France, for example, there are formal structures for the representation of disabled workers. At a German plant an elected disabled workers' representative who spoke on behalf of disabled worker interests had recently benefited from greater statutory powers. In France the role of representing disabled workers is the responsibility of trade unions (for example, through the works council).

In a number of other plants however, trade unions were largely absent in their support of the needs of disabled workers, beyond securing for workers disabled in service new employment within the company or facilitating compensation and severance packages. Employers co-operated in finding new work for employees disabled in service, but the positive moves to recruit disabled workers were mixed.

Most problematic for disabled workers employed within the industry, is the absence of equal opportunities policy to secure for disabled workers protection from discrimination and bullying/mobbing and ensure fair and equal treatment.

6.5 Training

With the liberalisation of the industry and the accompanying restructuring of companies, there is an uncertainty where training fits into these new structures. Indeed, as the previous study showed, there is a question as to how the training provision necessary for the industry should be maintained and focused. This context raises particular questions about equal opportunity and diversity and the training programmes on offer. Is there focused training on equal opportunities and diversity in the steel companies? Should the core themes of equal opportunities and diversity be included in the established programmes?

On the first question, there was almost no evidence of specifically focused training sessions on equal opportunities and diversity management. More frequently, there are occasions where specific sets of employees are brought together for training purposes and, in these cases, equal opportunity and diversity issues may emerge as second order concerns. The clearest example of such occurrences came with the attention that many companies give to young graduate recruits. With the increasing recognition of the importance of these employees, coupled with their different experiences and qualifications (especially when compared with older technically trained workers), functional training sessions provide an opportunity to reflect

on common experiences and concerns, as young graduate employees. However, such possibilities are a by-product and not the result of any conscious worked out approach by these companies.

On the second question - the inclusion of equal opportunity and diversity themes in established training programmes – there are a number of twists to consider. In one company, the human resource management section developed specific sessions on questions relating to equal opportunities and diversity. The issues covered included bullying, sexual harassment, diversity themes and disability. However, this is unusual. More generally, the focus of training programmes is defined by the relationship with work routines and experience. Trainees are often expected to learn from work experience, implying that there is a capacity within these companies to provide mentoring support. Alternatively, training focused on specific job related requirements, such as information technology software programmes. In either instance, discussion, education and reflection on equal opportunity and diversity management is absent.

It can be argued that there is a profound mismatch in the industry between training and the awareness of procedures, practices, understandings and the appreciation of equal opportunity and diversity questions in the industry. In the absence of such a focus, employees inadvertently drift into procedures and practices that rest on implicit discrimination and inequality of opportunity. Overall, questions relating to equality and diversity do not receive systematic and sustained attention in training and related education programmes. Even in situations where new staff underwent induction programmes, and the lengthier trainee and apprentice programmes, these subjects are not dealt with in any regular or routine way.

6.6 An Assessment

The European steel industry is predominantly characterised by a mature, male, local and often unqualified workforce. However, retirement, redundancy and wider industry developments mean that such workers will increasingly begin to exit the industry, and space will be opened up for the recruitment of more highly qualified men *and* women of different and diverse backgrounds. This set of developments raises questions for the industry in relation to gender, ethnicity, disability, generation and occupational and qualification profiles. In particular, it brings into view a number of issues the industry faces with regard to diversity and equal opportunity. These include:

Industry Awareness: There is a poor awareness of equality and diversity issues among management and across the steel industry workforce, including those organisations that represent workers.

- With few exceptions there is an absence of equal opportunities policy across the industry.
- Management and worker knowledge of equality issues, such as equal treatment and discriminatory practice, is limited.
- Steel workforces tend to receive no training on equality and diversity issues, from either the company or trade unions.
- Information or training on equality issues is often no more than an implicit part of company or trade union training programme that deals with other separate issues. Equality and diversity is not dealt with as a topic in itself. This feature was evident, for example, in company disciplinary procedures, as well as on how to deal with complaints from workers.

- Management and trade unions collect little data that is relevant to equal opportunities issues or at least do not consider the data they do collect in ways that promote reflection on such issues.
- There is little debate between workers, unions and management on equal opportunities policy, and where there is debate, it reveals a limited awareness of initiatives and policies, such as gender mainstreaming, equal treatment, positive action or the various EU equality directives

Corporate Policies and Rules: EU directives on equality and diversity are being transposed in uneven ways, across member states, with implications for equal opportunities policies and practices at country and company level.

- At a national level, EU member states are at various stages with regard to adopting EU directives, with more recent member states some way behind more established members. The uneven way in which EU directives are transposed and enforced has implications for how equal opportunities are addressed within the industry from company to company and from country to country.
- In a number of countries there are regulations (labour codes) that prevent, for example, the engagement of women in some tasks or bar their employment in some posts, with obvious implications for equal opportunities and equal treatment. It is in this context that there is an almost entire absence of company policy or regulation in relation to equal opportunities across the European steel industry, beyond that provided by national legislation (which varies from country to country).
- While trade unions across Europe have developed comprehensive equal opportunity policies, at a company level there is often a failure to contribute to such issues. For trade unions, the traditional composition of steel workforces, at least in terms of being predominantly male, has meant that such issues have not been addressed in a vigorous way.

Occupational Segregation: Evidence suggests that some groups experience occupational (horizontal and vertical) segregation within the industry.

- Women and migrant workers working within the steel industry are often restricted to occupations outside the production process or within particular parts of the production process. Progression through the occupational hierarchy for these groups also tends to be limited.
- Mature workers might experience occupational segregation. For example, progression through the industry has traditionally been based on experience, but it is increasingly becoming based on merit and qualifications. Mature workers often lack qualifications, which may result in them being marginalised from such opportunities.

Bullying/Mobbing and Harassment: One very difficult issue involves bullying or mobbing and harassment. The first point to note is that from company to company, and more generally, from country to country, there are very different assessments and definitions of bullying/mobbing and harassment.

- On occasion, such behaviour is not publicly recognised, while in other cases there is no more than a formal acknowledgement that such behaviour could and does occur.

- There is evidence that suggests that whilst bullying or mobbing and harassment (sexual or otherwise) is not endemic within the industry, there are occurrences of this type of behaviour.
- Bullying or mobbing and harassment are experienced by members of the steel workforce, but both management and victims of this behaviour seem, in most cases, reluctant to acknowledge its existence.
- Whilst many – but not all – companies possess a code of conduct for employees (whether explicit or implicit within, for example, the contract of employment), bullying and harassment issues seem to be almost systematically ignored

Work/Life Balance (WLB): The steel industry faces a set of external pressures for the introduction of WLB arrangements, in particular those related to the application of European laws on employment equality; pressures to which the industry largely fails to respond. The industry also faces a series of internal pressures to adopt WLB arrangements, which it responds to in uneven ways. The pressure for such arrangements to be introduced is likely to come to the fore as the composition of the workforce develops beyond its traditional profile.

- Questions relating to work/life balance are complex and differentiated in terms of position within the industry.
- For production workers the nature of steel work and the way it is organised makes it difficult to introduce flexible working arrangements. Shift systems, twenty-four hour/seven day week production runs and the very nature of the work itself, which requires workers to be at their work station, precludes or makes difficult the introduction of some flexible working practices. However, practices that might be considered for production workers, such as part-time working and job-shares, have not yet been properly considered by employers.
- For administrative staff WLB arrangements are more of a possibility, but evidence of this type of arrangement is limited. The scope for home-working, part-time work and job-sharing is limited within the industry, even where these arrangements have been made for some managerial and administrative staff.
- There is a more general absence of different types of flexible working arrangements. Further, parental leave and care arrangements seemed to favour women employees, as mothers. Fathers' rights in this respect are much more circumscribed.
- The broad assessment is that work/life balance issues have yet to be fully or adequately acknowledged by the industry.

Training: There are specific equality and diversity dimensions to training needs.

- In some instances, it is evident that training is organised to take place after shifts, thus favouring those with few responsibilities outside work, such as the care of children or adult dependents.
- Training does not always relate to the learning experiences of workers or cater for different learning needs. For example, the difference in learning needs between younger more formally qualified workers and mature workers skilled by experience.

Training programmes need to be grounded on the assumption that the steel workforce is not homogenous, but is diverse and differentiated in a number of critical ways. Equal access to training programmes, skills upgrading and formal qualifications should be re-evaluated within the context of existing inequalities and future diversity.

7 Equality and Diversity in the European Steel Industry – Overview

The European steel industry provides an important forum against which to benchmark the recognition of diversity issues and the promotion of equal opportunity among its workforce. The industry is characterised by a predominantly male and ageing workforce. Addressing the issues of diversity and equal opportunity against such a background is a challenge, but one that needs to be addressed as steel workforces of the future are likely to be more diverse and varied. For the industry and Social Partners to meet that challenge, lessons can be drawn from practitioners who have sought to implement policies and training/learning programmes within the industry (plus benchmarking with practitioners outside of the industry). These experiences provide a picture of what 'good practice' could look like.

7.1 Legislation

Legislation provides a foundation for best practice, but it is only a starting point. To illustrate the point, consider one of the most critical issues to steelworkers: health and safety at work. It is clear that safe working practices do not derive from legislation alone. Legislation plays an important role in embedding a 'safety culture' in the workplace. The personal prosecution of managers is however, a remote deterrent and the fear of discipline or dismissal seldom occurs; the risk to personal safety remains where serious injury to the point of fatality is present. If a 'safety culture' cannot be achieved through threats of the consequences, then there is little chance that the recognition of diversity and the promotion of equal opportunity will be achieved simply by recourse to the legal consequences. As safety professionals fully understand the problems are primarily 'behavioural' and, similarly, it is 'behaviour' which lays at the heart of both the problems and the solutions to implementing Diversity and Equal Opportunity policies in the workplace.

7.2 Management

While there is a commitment by the EU to mainstreaming, reflected in the directives and associated arrangements, at a company level mainstreaming on all dimensions of equal opportunity and diversity was absent. Nonetheless, at least two companies had taken the steps to embrace forms of gender mainstreaming, although these initiatives were tentative and at an early stage. In one company, there was concern that some of the earlier positive practices were no longer supported within the company. One consequence is that the recognition of equal opportunities and diversity measures depended upon an overworked and under-resourced senior management team and line management deciding these questions on a case-by-case basis. The outcome in all companies is either the non-recognition of key aspects of an adequate mainstreaming programme or a tendency towards a degree of partiality and the *ad hoc* introduction of specific measures.

More generally, where companies had staff in post who are responsible for equal opportunity policies and who have a commitment to these programmes, the main impediment to an adequate set of measures is seen to be line management. Often they are seen as a problem by other managers, employees and unions. As noted, these staff often find themselves in situations where their primary responsibility is for operational output, and as a result, dealing with questions relating to equal opportunities is seen as a second order responsibility. The broad view is that equal opportunities, in whatever form, is not seen as a prime or direct responsibility of the line management.

7.3 Work Organisation

The way in which work is organised in these companies and the relation between work organisation and employment relations is a crucial dimension in any assessment of equal opportunity policies and practices. In all companies, there is evidence of a tension between work structure and the ability to benefit from flexible work arrangements. In effect, there is evidence that inequalities are built into critical aspects of the employment structure.

The idea that inequalities are part of the very structure of work organisation and associated employment relations means that strategies to address these themes should be far more wide-ranging than has often been assumed. To illustrate, there is a general view, across all companies, that the structure of employment relations and practice had the effect that there are impediments to the possibilities of promotion/progression of young workers, and in particular the progression of women. In a number of cases respondents drew attention to the ways in which two people (a male and a female) may commence their employment at the same time at the same level with broadly similar qualifications and experience, but that over time the male would progress more quickly than his female counterpart. For most respondents (male and female) these patterns of difference are seen as part of a 'built in bias' in practice against female careers.

The tension between work structure and the ability to benefit from flexible work arrangements showed up in a number of ways. The paradox is that some of these initiatives, to promote work/life balance for example, appeared to have a negative impact on the careers of employees. For example, if somebody took a job share then it became a tacit recognition that this person was not ambitious and was not really seeking a career in the industry. The general view is that given the structure, organisation of work and employment relations in the industry is that for women, migrant workers, and others to succeed, then some aspects of people's personal lives have to be sacrificed if a career is to be pursued in the industry.

With regard to age, a paradoxical situation is in the process of emerging. On the one hand, it is acknowledged generally that older workers have an important on-going contribution to make to these companies. At times younger people spoke of such a contribution but also noted the ways in which older people also tended to become fixed in their approaches, in ways that often did not allow younger workers to express their potentials in the company. On the other hand, there is an emphasis in many companies on integrating younger people, particularly those with qualifications, and often working in the 'newer' employment areas, into the employment structure in advantaged ways. They should receive special support and attention. However, it is also the case with the advent of call centres, and the routinisation of much operational work, that young recruits not only felt themselves to have a temporary and limited future in the company but that others also thought this to be the case.

7.4 Trade Unions

A critical partner in this process of addressing equal opportunities is the trade union. It is the case that where trade unions are well organised and positively engaged with management, that they become an important vehicle for highlighting and defining such policies and practices for the workforce. Trade unions have a long history in addressing equal opportunity questions, and indeed in some countries have taken a leading part in defining equal opportunities as a trade union concerns and issues. The consequence is that in countries such

as the United Kingdom, the trade unions have played an important part in defining the national agenda on these questions.

However, the picture is more complex at a local level. It is the case that in many companies, trade unions tend not to take up equal opportunity questions at a workplace level. One aspect that has not been explored by the social partners within companies to any extent is that equal opportunity policy is often developed via consultative arrangements that do not always involve trade unions. In this respect, the trade unions may become sidelined in relation to the development of policy and practice. Nonetheless, this broad observation must be qualified in that trade unions in most but not all companies do take up both individual and collective grievances, a number of which had their roots in policies and practices relating to equal opportunities.

7.5 Developing a business case: The Paradox

But, in the absence of a focused and comprehensive engagement on diversity and equal opportunities at an EU level, social partners could begin to open up these themes via the development of a business case. Experts often recommend the development of a business case to gain board level support for developing such policies. It is important that such policies are relevant to the current organisational culture, the organisation's progress to date on equal opportunities or diversity, as well as the challenges anticipated for the future. For example, it may be relevant in the steel industry (where a previous Equal Opportunities policy may not exist and the workforce may be predominantly male and close to retirement) to focus on future recruitment. The development of a Diversity or Equal Opportunities policy and the awareness training to accompany it, could then be focussed on the practicalities of ensuring equal opportunities for all job applicants and the promotion of diversity in all aspects of the recruitment and induction processes.

Other business case arguments include:

- Improving cross-cultural awareness as a response to increasing globalisation
- Addressing specific organisational problems e.g. labour turnover, absenteeism, employee flexibility, motivation, and skill shortages
- Enhanced customer awareness and improving image and reputation in the market
- Improving customer service by better understanding the needs of an increasingly diverse customer base.

Policy development

An Equal Opportunities or Diversity policy should be a relatively succinct document that states the commitment of the organisation's board to the process. Standards of behaviour can help to explain the expected conduct of each and every employee. Policies should include bullying, ill-treatment and intimidation. In addition, policies should refer to internal complaints processes such as counselling, mediation and the established formal grievance and disciplinary procedures.

Policy implementation

Almost by definition the fact of 'recognition' and 'promotion' requires some sort of launch or high-profile initiative backed up by communication, training, images and materials. Inevitably there is an element of a 'one-off' to this approach. However, accepting that there will be the elements of a publicity campaign followed by a lull, it is important that the initial momentum is not lost entirely.

An example of 'good practice' studied by the EDLESI project team is development of a comprehensive Diversity awareness programme by Corus plc in the UK. The literature and posters produced by Corus deliberately chose images of 'children at play' (see picture opposite) for its booklets and posters. The context was changed from the 'workforce at work' (often used to reflect Diversity but open to the charge of being 'atypical' or, worse, favouring specific groups/individuals largely perceived to be atypical of the workforce as a whole) to 'children at play' (symbolising health, family, fun and friendship). The idea is that this is what everyone wishes for children (or loved ones).

Corus issued its posters on a staggered basis over a two-year period following an initial launch, and sent a booklet to all UK employees at the same time. This was to keep the issue alive whilst training was rolled-out on a business-by-business basis. These training and materials will need to be regularly refreshed and thought will have to be given as to how the process can be revived at periodic intervals to maintain momentum.

Training delivery

A number of studies have demonstrated low levels of literacy and numeracy among significant sections of the industry's workforce. In addition, in some countries there may be language issues that need to be addressed. Thus, the value of densely worded Powerpoint slides and detailed hand-outs for training delivery is highly questionable. Other techniques, such as the use of visual images and experiential (activity-based) learning techniques may work better. Fun and competition is one other way to deliver a message – the Corus materials, for example, contained a quiz that most people would be able to engage with (covering sport politics, entertainment; steel facts and figures) and gave a prize for the group with the most correct answers.

Group needs

Just as learning styles vary from group to group, so it is important that 'group needs' are clearly identified before engaging in awareness development. The steel industry, for example, comprises a number of diverse groups – apprentices/trainees, graduate intake, older shop-floor workers, trade union representatives, office workers, technicians, supervisors, managers, senior executives, contractors – all of whom, for practical purposes, it might be considered appropriate to train or communicate with separately. Whilst the virtues of an 'integrated' approach are strongly recommended, there are practical considerations to be taken into account when delivering programmes or events tackling diversity and equal opportunity issues. The training materials used need to be sufficiently flexible to address the needs of these and other groups, if relevance is to be demonstrated. Facilitators of such learning events also need to be flexible so that the 'concerns' of different groups are adequately addressed at the time. It is also useful to organise a means through which issues can be addressed subsequently outside the programme (a feedback loop).

The programme should meet the concerns of different groups and, where possible, be steel industry relevant. One way of ensuring this is using a catalogue of case studies, vignettes or scenarios, which are relevant to the organisation and to the industry. Corus, for example, employ in their training 9 such 'scenarios' all based on real life cases that had been encountered within the company over the previous decade. Training facilitators are asked to select 5 scenarios that they consider the most relevant/appropriate for the group(s) undergoing training. A number of facilitators write their own cases reflecting local situations/problem areas.

Another tool that can help address 'group concerns' and ensure relevance is to identify via group discussion the local benefits and concerns relating to Equal Opportunities and Diversity policy. Whilst, there is no formal outcome to such awareness session, it nonetheless allows personal input into a group process, airing both positives and negatives. It also allows the group as a whole to focus on the key diversity issues facing them in the locality and culture in which they work.

Integration into company culture

Recognising Diversity and promoting Equal Opportunity practice should be firmly embedded within a 'company culture' for it to thrive. As with health and safety, it might be a 'culture' that is desired rather than achieved. In certain cases it may mean breaking down an existing culture that is unsupportive. However it is done, it has to be clearly aligned with stated company values. Finding the right vehicle is critical and will vary significantly between organisations.

To ensure that any diversity approach is fully integrated into the company culture, other existing policies and practices may need to be reviewed. Recruitment activity is a prime example of this practice, though equally important are the mechanisms by which employees engage in training, promotions and succession planning activities.

Organisations who have well established Equal Opportunities cultures may well have moved on to talk about Diversity. Other signs of progress towards an appropriate awareness of Diversity are other company policies that support the concept of respecting different employees' needs. Examples include: the adoption of work-life balance initiatives, such as subsidised workplace nurseries or childcare voucher schemes; flexible working practices (such as term time contracts, job sharing and part-time work); and, the adoption of family friendly policies.

Mediation

'Good practice' includes the adoption of internal processes of confidential mediation using trained counsellors (usually Human Resource practitioners familiar with the law). In this case, the issue/complaint is treated as confidential up to the point at which the complainant wishes to place it into a more public process such as the grievance procedure. The complainant may not wish it to go that far and the matter may be resolved via a confidential process involving both complainant and the person against whom the complaint is made – separate meetings leading to a joint meeting as with other forms of mediating disputes. At all times the complainant is in control of how far they wish to take the complaint/issue/problem and, until such time as it may proceed into a more public process, it is treated in a non-adversarial manner.

Measuring success

Measuring the success of cultural change on such matters can be particularly difficult. Whilst standard employment statistics can be collated for gender and in some countries race and ethnicity, these should not be regarded as the sole or key performance indicators by which change can be measured. Cultural and associated behavioural changes can be manifest through a variety of mechanisms, including employee attitude surveys. If existing survey mechanisms are in place, additional questions can be added to address diversity issues.

Organisations embarking on the implementation of a new Diversity strategy should be prepared for the possibility that there may be an increase in the number of grievance issues raised by the workforce. In the same way that 'near miss' reporting can be seen as a positive when promoting a safety culture, increased grievances or matters raised with confidential mediators should be seen as a positive indicator that individual values and expectations have started to change.

7.8 Conclusion

The baseline for equal opportunities policies and practice, as well as the recognition of diversity, within the industry is the European Union directives and policies. In some cases the principles of equal opportunity are recognised in national Labour Codes and related decrees. In other instances, governments have set up statutory bodies and publicly recognised a range of principles relation to equal opportunity and diversity.

At a company level, there have been a range of responses to these broad initiatives as well as attempts to establish the principles of good employment practice in its own right. Overall, these practices range from the comprehensive and multi-faceted to the non-existent and non-recognition of anything specific in relation to equal opportunities. In almost all cases, equal opportunities are not defined as a right, but as a set of practices subject to discretionary concern within the companies.

It is also the case that even where comprehensive policies have been developed and elaborated, that staff are unaware of the detail. In some cases, staffs were not aware of where to look to learn of policy, although this was unusual. In this respect, it is also the case that trade unions have an important part to play in both focusing policy and drawing the attention of members to different aspects of these broad policy initiatives, at both a company level and more generally

Overall, there is no evidence of mainstreaming equal opportunities policies and practice at a company level, or elsewhere in the company organisation and operation, for all but two companies. Even in these latter two companies the practice was uneven, and at an early stage of implementation. In this respect, the companies, and the trade unions are at a beginning in attempting to address these questions.

8 Implications

The world steel industry has undergone significant change over the last two decades. Steel companies are becoming internationalised and in part as a result they are operating in more competitive contexts. Worldwide, the industry operates in sets of regional blocks or clusters, particularly for production, but also for trade. More specifically, the European steel industry is on a cusp, moving from a largely nationally-based industry to one where the major companies are in the process of transforming into major steel multinationals, with a strong regional focus. A second and related set of developments focuses on technological developments and the reorganisation of work (for example, an uneven process of introducing team working and moves toward high-performance working), paralleled by the need to meet increasingly sophisticated customer demands. While there is variation in this process across Europe, for many of the large companies these types of reorganisation is well developed. The implication for labour in many companies is the intensification of work for a much reduced but more highly qualified and diverse workforce.

The European steel industry has been undergoing a significant transformation over recent years. Changes to steel production technology have been accompanied by changes to the organisation of the industry – including deregulation, privatisation and an on-going realignment of steel producers within a global market. Additionally, there have been a further and related set of developments with regard to work organisation and work intensification, and an emphasis from management on increasing the skill and qualification profiles of the European workforce. These developments have a number of implications for the way the European steel industry production workforce is currently configured, taking into account the likely re-composition of this workforce over the next few years. Of importance is the capacity of the industry to manage and respond to transformations in workforce composition, particularly with regard to equal opportunities. Indeed, as the industry attempts to move away from traditional patterns of recruitment and retention, it may go through a period of uncertainty and division about the direction of change.

With a few notable exceptions however, little consideration thus far has been given to issues of equality and diversity by steel companies. In fact, it is often the case that diversity is not recognised, and certainly not over a range of dimensions that include generation, gender, disability, sexual orientation and ethnicity/immigration. There is little in the way of discernible debate on matters of equality and diversity taking place within the industry. Moreover, little attention is paid to the different employment experiences of women, ethnic minorities, the disabled or generations of worker. Underlining this lack of attention from within the industry, there is a widespread absence of corporate equal opportunities and anti-discrimination policies, beyond that required by national legislation (incorporating European Commission directives).

Target Group Issues

It is clear that the prevailing feature of the European steel workforce is that it is aged and largely manual and male. However, the changes in process are likely to create the conditions for a recomposed steel workforce. If this is so then questions will be raised for the industry in relation to gender, ethnicity, disability, generation and occupational and qualification profiles. In sum, there is evidence of the beginnings of a generational polarisation in this industry, with the possibility of a feminisation of sections of the workforce over the next two decades – although this latter process is more likely in some countries than others. Accompanying these changes there is likely to be an increased emphasis on high skills and formal qualifications, and the development of training programmes to meet perceived skill needs. In view of these prospects, there are a number of equality and diversity challenges that face the industry, with regard to the workforce profile and the way it is currently configured and in the way it is likely to be reconfigured:

1. **Mature Workers:** The current age profile of the industry is rather mature, which presents the industry with specific challenges, not least in replacing deficient skills, but also in updating and 'modernising' workforce skills and qualifications. The industry is predominantly populated by men in their forties and fifties, often recruited from stable, working class communities in close geographical proximity to the plant. A mature and relatively unqualified workforce that is time-served and skilled via actual work experience often will bring with it a particular set of attitudes to learning. Further, this is a workforce that might struggle to engage with new learning opportunities – particularly in relation to more formal and class-room based programmes. However, such an educational and learning involvement may be necessary for continued employment within the industry and the building of employability profiles, should they exit the industry.
2. **Young Workers:** Overall, management view the changing demands on the industry as requiring the introduction of a more highly qualified workforce. 'New' workers are likely to be in their twenties and thirties and possess quite different and more rounded experiences of education than many of the more mature and time-served members of the workforce. Such a change suggests that the organisation and content of learning programmes should change and develop to meet the requirements of a younger and more highly qualified workforce. However, one often unrecognised feature of the steel industry is that critical to learning steelwork is acquiring knowledge from more experienced workers, which requires a means of transferring knowledge that suits both parties and avoids 'culture clashes'. Such a complication raises questions about how the transfer of such knowledge can be achieved.
3. **Women:** Whilst populating administrative and domestic occupations within the industry, women have traditionally been absent from production occupations (typically comprising between 3 and 7 per cent of the production workforce). Increasingly women are being recruited to positions on the shop-floor as well as to management and staff related positions. These changes are associated with the introduction of new technologies, new ways of working, more sophisticated customer demands and commercially focused operations, which have been paralleled by societal developments, involving government and European Union (EU) equality initiatives. The patterns are varied. For example, in part because of problems recruiting suitably qualified male school-leavers to the industry, women now comprise ten per-cent of Corus's apprentice in-take in the Netherlands. In Eastern Europe, the recruitment of women is more common place (typically comprising between 15 and 30 per cent of the workforce), and the accession of many of these countries to the EU means that the overall number of women employed to the EU steel industry has increased very quickly. There is, however, across Europe a more general absence of policy within the industry to ensure equal opportunities for women across the industry.
4. **Migrant/Ethnic Minority Workers:** It is notable that in some countries, for example Germany, France and the Netherlands, migrant workers in the steel industry have traditionally populated low-skilled occupations within the industry. In other countries, the UK for example, ethnic minority and migrant workers in this industry have been notable by their absence. There is scope for the increased recruitment of ethnic minorities and migrant workers to highly qualified posts in the industry, notwithstanding the educational disadvantages often experienced by these groups. The socio demographics of many steel communities in Europe mean that poorly qualified young people from the migrant communities situated around steel plants would normally expect to graduate into low-skilled occupations offered by the company. It may be the case that with steel companies increasingly focusing on recruitment of the more highly qualified, the employment opportunities for people from migrant communities are reduced. The phasing out too, of low-skilled occupations by the industry also means that employees with few meaningful qualifications might find themselves surplus to requirements. This situation is exacerbated by language difficulties, which might limit the learning opportunities available to ethnic minority workers. Whilst racism might not be tolerated formally, the

absence of an equal opportunities policy at most companies often undermines anti-discriminatory messages and practices.

5. **Disabled Workers:** Many countries operate a quota policy with regard to employment of the disabled (variously defined); whereby national legislation requires that company workforces comprise a percentage of disabled people. Some companies observe this legislation more closely than others do. There is a difference between the recruitment of disabled people and the employment of workers who become disabled whilst employed to the company. Most companies make efforts to find alternative employment for the latter, but recruitment of the disabled is less evident. Disabled workers' needs and experiences of employment differ according to the nature of their disability, but it is worth noting that disability puts particular obligations on employers. The absence of an equal opportunities policy at many companies means that those with disability might not receive the protection they need.

The following equality and diversity issues are evident:

1. **Awareness:** There is a poor awareness of equality and diversity issues among management and across the steel industry workforce, including those representing workers. With notable exceptions (for example, Corus UK) there is an absence of equal opportunities policy (see point 4), and workforce knowledge of the issues with regard to, for example, equal treatment and discriminatory practices, is limited. It is most often the case that workforces received no training on such issues (from the company or trade unions), and management and union training on equal opportunities was no more than an implicit part of company or trade union training more generally. This feature was evident, for example, on company disciplinary procedures (for example, on unacceptable behaviour) as well as on how to deal with complaints from workers (for example, on equal pay). Management and trade unions collect little data that is relevant to equal opportunities issues or at least do not consider the data they do collect in ways that would reflect positively on such issues. There is little debate between workers, unions and management on equal opportunities policy, and where there is debate, it reveals a limited awareness of initiatives and policies, such as gender mainstreaming, equal treatment, positive action or the various EU directives.
2. **Bullying/Mobbing and Harassment:** One very difficult issue involves bullying or mobbing and harassment. The first point to note is that there are very different assessments and definitions of bullying/mobbing and harassment, from company to company, but more generally from country to country. On occasion, such behaviour is not publicly recognised, while in other cases there is no more than a formal acknowledgement that such behaviour could occur. There is evidence that suggests that whilst bullying or mobbing and harassment (sexual or otherwise) is not endemic within the industry, there are occurrences of this type of behaviour. Bullying or mobbing and harassment are experienced by members of the steel workforce, but both management and victims of this behaviour are, in most cases, reluctant to acknowledge its existence. Whilst many – but not all – companies possess a code of conduct for employees (whether explicit or implicit within, for example, the contract of employment or in less formal ways), bullying and harassment issues seem to be almost systematically ignored.
3. **Occupational Segregation:** Women and migrant workers working within the industry have usually been restricted to occupations outside the production process or within particular parts of the production process. Their progression through the occupational hierarchy has also been limited. Women and migrant workers experience, albeit in different ways, vertical and horizontal segregation in their employment within the industry. It is possible that mature workers will be negatively effected by this kind of occupational segregation, too. For example, progression through the industry has traditionally been based on experience, but it is increasingly becoming based on merit and

qualifications. Mature workers often lack qualifications, which may result in them being marginalised from such opportunities.

4. *Work/Life Balance*: Questions relating to work/life balance are complex and differentiated in terms of position within the industry. For production workers the nature of steel work and the way it is organised makes it difficult to introduce flexible working arrangements. Shift systems, twenty-four hour/seven day week production runs and the very nature of the work itself, which requires workers to be at their work station, precludes or makes difficult the introduction of particular flexible working practices, such as working from home. For administrative staff this option is possible, but evidence of this type of arrangement was limited. The scope for part-time work and job-sharing was also limited within the industry, even where these arrangements may be made, such as for administrative staff. There was a more general absence of different types of flexible working arrangements. Further, parental leave and care arrangements seemed to favour women employees, as mothers. Fathers' rights in this respect were generally much more circumscribed. A broader assessment is that work/life balance issues have yet to be fully or adequately acknowledged by the industry.
5. *Corporate Policies and Rules*: At a national level, EU member states are at various stages with regard to adopting EU directives, with more recent member states some way behind more established members. In a number of countries there are regulations (labour codes) that prevent the engagement of women in some tasks or the employment of women to some posts, with obvious implications for equal opportunities and equal treatment. It is in this context that there is an almost entire absence of company policy or regulation with regard to equal opportunities across the European steel industry, beyond that provided by national legislation (which varies from country to country). The contrast between companies is stark. On the one hand, Arcelor, the largest European steel company, only in 2005 began to implement such policies. On the other, Corus in the UK operates an equal opportunities policy and has an extensive programme of training, which has recently been updated. More generally, for the European steel industry the former is the more common situation. In Eastern Europe particularly, the residue of previous socio-political arrangements mean that 'equal opportunities' is viewed as part of the fabric of society, rendering the need for explicit equal opportunities policies in companies obsolete (or at least this is what is claimed by many in the industry). While trade unions across Europe have developed comprehensive equal opportunity policies, at a company level there is often a failure to develop a position or policy on such issues. For trade unions, the traditional composition of steel workforces, at least in terms of being predominantly male, has meant that such issues have not been addressed in a vigorous way.
6. *Training*: There are specific equality and diversity dimensions to training needs. Training programmes should be grounded on the assumption that the steel workforce is not homogenous, but is diverse and differentiated in a number of critical ways. Equal access to training programmes, skills upgrading and formal qualifications should be located within the context of existing inequalities and future diversity. In some instances, it was evident that training was organised to take place after shifts, thus favouring those with few responsibilities outside work, such as the care of children or adult dependents. Further, training does not always relate to the learning experiences of workers or cater for different learning needs.

The products that are developed for work packages three and four should be set within the broader context of the industry and the experiences of the workers employed to the industry. It is clear that the process of restructuring that the industry has experienced in recent times has equal opportunities and equality and diversity implications for the industry. The EDLESI products must be placed fully within this context, which is the same for the majority of companies across Europe, particularly when considered within the more general

processes of internationalisation and globalisation affecting the industry. Further, it is clear that the project target groups are subject to policies and practices that impact negatively on their working lives. In order for the products to be engaged with and for the products to be as fully pan-European as possible, it is necessary for a generic programme to be produced. However, it is also important that the specific experiences of those interviewed as part of the case studies, such as those outlined above, be reflected in the products.

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