



Green Jobs also for women!

Transformation to a sustainable economy brings new jobs in new sectors, offers new job opportunities in traditional sectors and helps sustaining jobs in endangered sectors. Even though the definition of green jobs mostly used now is that of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which states that nearly all jobs are potentially green jobs, if they reduce the carbon footprint and strive towards sustainability¹, it is nevertheless clear that the potential for job opportunities is biggest in traditionally male dominated sectors, such as the building sectors and engineering. In the production of solar- and windenergyplants, as well as in the development of energy efficient technologies women are underrepresented. We need political commitment to ensure that soon there will be more women in laboratories and cutting-edge research. In order to guarantee that women equally profit from the job potential of a ecological economy, we need more political measures and stronger instruments for gender balance in male dominated sectors.

First projects with the objective of promoting women in nearly exclusively male sectors² have shown, that it is not enough to promote the recruitment and training of women. Prejudices of employers and colleagues are too severe, and it is too hard for women to hold their ground in an environment that is dominated by male language and masochist jokes. Initiatives against all forms of discrimination at the workplace are crucial for the success of women in a green economy. Male dominated sectors need to be opened up to women and should create equal working environments and conditions that make joining the work force attractive for women. This includes targeted advice services, a gender balanced recruitment policy and a new internal and external image for the sectors. If we do not ensure a holistic concept of gender balance also for these sectors, the danger is that women will miss out in the "energy revolution".

It is often stated, that the social services sector represents the social dimension of the Green New Deal. We would not undermine the importance of the social service sector for a sustainable und social Europe. But these are already existing sectors, in which women - paid and mostly unpaid - work since centuries. These are not new jobs. Real progress would be if we could achieve adequate recognition for care work, including fair working conditions and a pay level living up to the hard working conditions. And true gender balance also in the social and health care sector.

The fight against gender discrimination in the workplace and against the gender pay gap is high on the political agenda of the Greens. The promotion of women in the framework of the Green New Deal can therefore not afford to step into usual trap of gender segregation between sectors, but must ensure that thanks to targeted measures women have chances to equally profit from all new sectors in the green economy.

¹ ILO-Background Note „Global Challenges for Sustainable Development Strategy for Green Jobs“ G8 Labour and Employment Ministers Conference 2008 Niigata, Japan

² EQUAL gefördertes Projekt LIBRA Development Partnership Sweden. http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/practical-examples/opport-diversity-demographic_en.cfm



The decision of the European Parliament on "developing the job potential of a new sustainable economy"³ therefore, thanks also to the very engaged Women's Rights Committee, devotes a whole chapter to gender equality in the framework of an ecological transformation, and calls for an EU Initiative to raise awareness amongst employers for the need of a more diverse workforce and to establish measure to promote gender balance in male-dominated sectors; calls upon member states and social partners to combat discrimination of women in a sustainable economy; develop targeted training and recruitment initiatives accompanied by awareness-raising; to launch a initiative targeted especially on young women to promote their participation in the so-called STEM professions (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). The resolution furthermore calls for a strong recognition of the objective of promoting women in green jobs in the ESF and recalls the EU obligation of gender budgeting in all Funds.

The Employment and Social Policy Council on the 6th and 7th of December supported the EP resolution by adopting conclusions regarding "strengthening the commitment and stepping up action to close the gender pay gap"⁴ as well as including a paragraph on the importance of the promotion the acquisition of skills required for jobs linked to the greening of the economy amongst young women in its conclusions "Employment policies for a competitive, low-carbon, resource-efficient and green economy"⁵. It is now up to the European Commission to propose a truly gender balance green strategy. It is up to the Member States to implement the measures the European Parliament and the Council have called for. And it is up to women in trade unions and other organisation to demand that their governments live up to these commitments.

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³ A7-0234/2010; adopted in September 2010, on the basis of an own-initiative report by myself.

⁴ 16082/10SOC747

⁵ 16422/10SOC766ENV779ECOFIN733EDUC204