



**PART TWO:
“INFORMATION ON METHODOLOGY”**

INTRODUCTION

At the initiative of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), **initial research was carried out in 1993** by Mary Braithwaite and Catherine Byrne. The aim of this research was to study participation by women in decision-making processes in ETUC member trade union organisations.

In 1998, the Walloon Sociology Group (Catholic University of Louvain - Belgium) was commissioned by the ETUC to carry out new research. The main objectives were to ascertain the representation of women in the various levels of trade union organisations affiliated to the ETUC and to study changes thereto between 1993 and 1999. The aim of this research was to provide the ETUC with a tool for reflection in developing its equality policy.

Four years after these two surveys, the ETUC wanted to assess the situation. In addition to assessing the implementation of the ETUC's equality plan by affiliated National Trade Union Confederations and European Industry Federations, the aim of this new research was to compare the progress achieved since 1993. As with the research carried out in 1999, the Walloon Sociology Group (Catholic University of Louvain - Belgium) was given the task of carrying out this research.

This research hopes to provide the ETUC with a tool for developing its new equality policy. Nevertheless, it should be said that any research has its limits. In this case, we are referring to human and financial resources, the scale of the field of survey, associated linguistic problems and time constraints.

1. SURVEY OF NATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATIONS

Currently, over 60 National Trade Union Confederations are affiliated to the ETUC. In contrast with previous surveys, it should be pointed out that **National Trade Union Confederations affiliated to the ETUC from Accession Countries were not surveyed**. However, this research could not ignore this fundamental challenge. It is covered in a separate chapter in part one of this report.

The survey is based on a questionnaire which has been brought up to date compared with the questionnaires used in 1993 and in 1999. Improving the readability of the questionnaire and promoting its comparability were the concerns that guided us in drafting this questionnaire.

On 25 and 26 March 2002, researchers from the Walloon Sociology Group had the opportunity to attend the *“Implementation of the ETUC equality plan”* seminar attended by the National Trade Union Confederations affiliated to the ETUC. This seminar was a valuable tool in updating the questionnaire. During it, some Confederations listed a few examples of “Good Practices” used. In smaller working groups, the participants were given the opportunity to discuss the following themes: trade union membership, Women’s Committees, Gender Mainstreaming, Women’s Conferences, collective bargaining and trade union culture.

The questionnaire sent out to the National Trade Union Confederations related to the following themes in particular:

- ▶ Women joining trade unions,
- ▶ Women in decision-making bodies,
- ▶ Policy and action in the field of equal opportunities,
- ▶ The role of the trade unions as employers.

Moreover, compared with the previous research, special attention was paid in drafting questions on the themes of atypical work, collective bargaining and the Gender Mainstreaming process.

Finally, this questionnaire included examples of “Good Practices”.

This questionnaire was translated by the ETUC. It was sent to the 36 affiliated National Trade Union Confederations. They had one month to answer it. A total of 31 questionnaires were returned. The response rate was high. The results were analysed using SPSS computer software.

2. INTERVIEWS WITH EUROPEAN INDUSTRY FEDERATIONS

Currently, 11 European Industry Federations are affiliated to the ETUC.

The low number of responses to the 1999 survey lead to the interview technique being favoured (in contrast with the previous research).

Although using the interview technique limited the degree of comparability with the results of the previous research, this technique did enable the researchers to **see what really goes on** in these Federations and to get a better appreciation of their degree of interest in favour of equality.

Researchers had the opportunity to attend two seminars organised by the ETUC on 16 and 17 May 2002. At these seminars, the issue of equality in European Works Councils was tackled and some Federations listed examples of “Good Practices”. These meetings enabled researchers to improve the interview questionnaire.

The questions asked during the interview related to the following aspects:

- ▶ Women joining trade unions,
- ▶ Women in decision-making bodies,
- ▶ Trade union structures relating to equality,
- ▶ Policy and action in the field of equal opportunities.

Moreover, during the interview, particular attention was paid in particular to the theme of atypical work, Gender Mainstreaming, European Works Councils and Co-ordination of Collective Bargaining.

Except for the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE), which replied in writing, the other 10 Federations were interviewed thoroughly. These interviews were carried out from 13 June 2002 to 15 July 2002. The interviews were recorded. It was possible to conduct some of them in English thanks to the valuable help given by Sinead Tiernan.

On average, the interviews lasted 60 minutes. Moreover, as some questions were very specific, it was often necessary to contact some European Industry Federations again for more information. Their assistance was helpful to the research team.