# Equal opportunities between women and men: employment, vocational training, working conditions

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In September 2002, the European Parliament and the Council adopted Directive 2002/73/EC amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions. It entered into force on 5 October 2002 and its provisions were to be transposed by the Member States by 5 October 2005.

In accordance with Directive 2002/73/EC, the Member States were to communicate to the Commission all the information necessary for it to draw up a report on the application of the Directive. This report is based on information received from the Member States, in particular in response to a questionnaire on the Directive's application prepared by the Commission departments and sent to all Member States in January 2009. A European Parliament resolution constituted another source of information as well as the information gathered by the Commission when monitoring the Directive's implementation. The European social partners and the European Women's Lobby have also been consulted on the issues arising from the Directive.

The aim of this report is to flag up certain aspects that are particularly important or problematic and to identify good practice. It concentrates on transposition-related problems, the impact of the Directive, the enforcement of rights, and the role of equality bodies, the social partners and NGOs.

The report concludes that, considering the far-reaching changes to legislation required in a number of Member States and the substantial progress most Member States have made in implementing its provisions, the **transposition of Directive 2002/73/EC can generally be regarded as satisfactory**. However, an effort is still needed in a number of Member States to achieve full and correct transposition.

**Main conclusions**: this Directive is an important **milestone in the development of EC gender equality law** in so far as it has modernised the rules on equal treatment of men and women in employment and related areas. Nonetheless, given the persistence of inequality and discrimination, it is important that EC and national gender-equality legislation be **implemented and enforced carefully**.

The **role of the equality bodies**, which not only monitor developments at national level and assist the victims of discrimination but also contribute to furthering equality in the long run through their many other activities, is particularly important here.

The **involvement of all actors** (the authorities, the social partners, NGOs, the equality bodies and society at large) is essential if awareness is to be raised and effective use made of the tools to eradicate discrimination that are provided for in the Directive.