

## WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND THIRD SECTOR



Welfare Systems and Social Enterprises in European Union,  
in Italy and in some countries of Central and Eastern Europe

AN ENGLISH SHORT VERSION (SYNTHESIS) OF THE REPORT:  
"Imprenditorialità femminile e Terzo Settore"

**WEFneT**  
**Women**  
**Engendering**  
**the Finance**  
**Network**



INTERREG III B CADSES

## **WEFNET (Project No 38080)** **(Women Engendering the Finance Network)**

### **PROJECT PARTENRS**

---

Regione Puglia

BIC Puglia Sprind Srl

Consorzio ETIMOS

CDIE - Centro di Iniziativa Europea

Today Europe

Università degli Studi di Bari

CODESS SOCIALE

Società Cooperativa sociale Onlus

Municipality of Skidra (Grecia)

TISE (Polonia)

ADAF (Romania)

CCIR (Romania)

LOWTEC (Germania)

IFAW (Albania)

Comune di Tricase

Provincia di Lecce

Comune di Molfetta

---

*research project by:*  
Codess Sociale in range of WEFneT project  
(Interreg III B CADSES)



Area Progettazione  
CODESS SOCIALE

*Research by:*  
Alessandra Chiocca, Erika Doardo, Pier Paolo Pentucci

*Italian text drafting by:*  
Pier Paolo Pentucci

Translation and Synthesis (English version) by:  
Matteo De Marchi

*Graphic by:*  
GIPSI - Cooperativa sociale Onlus

*Printed by:*  
(Comunicare&Stampa)

Issued December 2006



## **Women Entrepreneurship and Third Sector**

Welfare Systems and Social Enterprises  
in European Union, in Italy  
and in some countries  
of Central and Eastern Europe

---

An English Short Version (Synthesis)  
of the Report  
"Imprenditorialità femminile  
e Terzo Settore"



	pagina
<b>Introduction</b>	8
<b>What is it WEFneT Project?</b>	10
<b>First part: WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP</b>	12
Analysis of the phenomenon in welfare system, labour market and Third sector	
1. The European Union: equal opportunities in the economy. From the World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) to the European Institute for Gender Equality (2005) and to the roadmap 2006-2010 on gender equality	14
1.1 Gender budgeting and gender audit: public budgets in a gender perspective. Positive consequences in labour market and in gender enterprises development	18
1.2 An overview on the present and expectations for the future. Women entrepreneurship growth is an important objective for the European Union	19
1.3 Third sector as an opportunity for woman gender enterprises	21
1.4 Gender incidence in the Italian social co-operatives	22
<b>Second part: WELFARE SYSTEMS AND WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP</b>	24
2. The European welfare models	26
3. Italy: an integrated welfare system	26
4. Development of women entrepreneurship in Italy	28
5. Social enterprise as a Gender enterprise?	28
<b>Third part: WELFARE AND WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN POLAND, ROMANIA AND ALBANIA</b>	30
6. Welfare and women entrepreneurship in Poland	32
7. Welfare and women entrepreneurship in Romania	32
8. Welfare and women entrepreneurship in Albania	34

## INTRODUCTION

---



On the occasion of the WEFneT Project (Women Engendering The Financial Network – Inter-reg IIIB CADSES), CODESS SOCIALE realized a report on women entrepreneurship welfare systems and third sector, an interesting study about some of the important development registered by the gender entrepreneurship in last years. The aim of this report, that here it can be read in a brief English version – a choice owed to publishing reasons –, is to describe the european situation on equal opportunities in the economic framework, with a special focus on the italian context. The report also focused on certain features of gender entrepreneurship: relations between women enterprises, welfare systems and Third sector. Especially about the Third sector, here it is regarded as a particular “business space” that it could be agreeable and with a lot of opportunities for women interested in enterprise.

The geographic area that this work analyzed is composed by Italy and three Countries involved in WEFneT Project: Poland, Romania and Albania.

Finally, the main steps of this report are:

- 1) European Union, Equal Opportunities and Gender Enterprises development;
  - 2) Welfare system, Women Condition and Social Enterprise in Italy;
  - 3) Overview about Women and Society in the Central-Eastern Europe (Poland, Romania and Albania).
-

## What is it WEFneT Project ?

---

*“The project is based on the Women Resource Centres as an instrument of local development with a gender perspective. The main objective of the Women Resource Centres is represented by the attainment of the local development through an increased participation of women - both under the quantity and quality point of view - in the economic, political and social life. The Women Resource Centres consist of a co-ordination service of all the territorial actions and actors engaged in those issues; it also offer counselling services and territorial sensitisation. WEFneT trans-national co-operation is particularly focused on: - Enlargement of the Women Resource Centre Network in the CADSES area - in order to intensify the co-operation between business and social infrastructure for regional innovation; - Identification of a common model to favour the access to credit for women entrepreneurs in co-operation in the regional government, financial institution, public and private organisations; - Setting up and management of a e-community in the territorial area involved in the project of women entrepreneurs, women association and all those structures that promote the women role in the local development process. The envisaged results will be the creating of Resource Centres for Women and the Network of Resource Centres for Women in Central Europe, Adriatic Europe, Danube Europe and South Eastern Europe created, able to offer psychological, managerial and financial support, information, consultancy and technical assistance to women of the involved countries. Also it is concerned to train and assist about 200 local administrators in order to develop new competencies as far as local development with a gender approach”.*<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Brief description elicited by: <http://www.cadses.net/en/projects/apprpro.html?projectId=1350&topic=projects/apprpro>.



## FIRST PART

---



## **THE WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

---

Analysis of the phenomenon  
in welfare systems,  
labour market and Third sector

## 1. The European Union: equal opportunities in the economy. From the World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) to the European Institute for Gender Equality (2005) and to the roadmap 2006-2010 on gender equality.

During the IV<sup>o</sup> World Conference on Women organized in Beijing in 1995, the delegates underlined the strategic importance of improving the access and the intervention possibility for the women in the economy, concretise gender process of equal opportunities in the society. The entrepreneurship is a crucial dimension because it contains social and economic issues. When we talk about the gender entrepreneurship, we're referring to the progress of the equal policies and the equal possibilities for the women to start-up a company. Externally, the entrepreneurship of women needs of a guarantee system of rights; internally, it needs of an economic and social empowerment. These two fundamental elements would involve concrete benefits to the economic and political development in the European Union. The current EU law system provides – since the TCE – the ban of any form of discrimination. Recently, this topic was confirm in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union given off in Nice in 2000 and put in act by the Decision<sup>2</sup> of the European Council with a *Community Action* for the promotion of the equality. So, in the period 2001-2005 the EU realized transnational activities – including the South-East Europe Countries – in the field of the *Equality in the economic life*. The objective was to fight the disparities on the labour market through the growth of the women employment rate and with a better articulation between job and family for women and men. The Decision also referred to the vertical discrimination in the labour market and to the “*glass ceiling*” problem. In last years, the institutions of the European Union worked in a specific way toward these aims, arranging homogeneous policies to support social system and improve it.

The Council of the European Union, taken place in Lisbon in March 2000, scheduled a specific *ten years strategy* to put in act a process of economic and social reforms. In doing this, the Council did not cover up some structural weakness as the inadequate participation of the women to the labour market. In the economic sector, the Lisbon Strategy aimed attention to reduce the costs of start-up and development for innovative companies and SMEs. Considering that almost all the enterprises women consists in SMEs, this kind of supporting instruments is strictly linked to the gender issue. In this direction, the Report 2003 on the implementation of the European Chart for the SMEs – published by the Council of the European Union – describes:

- a) some projects of training for start-up was put in act in Greece, Ireland, Wales (UK) and Germany, where the entrepreneurship of women raised from 25% to 40%;
- b) in 2001 it was launched a project promoting the women, entrepreneurship of with

---

<sup>2</sup> Decision of European Council, 20.12.2000 (2001/51/CE).

regard to the consulting, financing, training and tutoring activities;

- c) some Countries elaborated micro-credit actions. For example, Spain and Sweden instituted micro-credit actions for women entrepreneurs, with the co-financing of the European Social Fund.

In the social sector, the Lisbon Strategy aims to the adaptation of the social system to the standards of sustainability, especially promoting the social inclusion and the gender equality. The Council of European Union taken place in Göteborg in 2001 presented the results obtained in the process of enlargement<sup>3</sup> and confirmed that the Candidate Countries would improve the reception in and the application of the *community acquis*. In particular, the European Union asked for particular efforts by Bulgaria and Romania (Member Countries from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2007). The final document of the Council invited the Member States to offer to the women all the opportunities to enter in the labour market. With regard to the Countries involved by the WEFneT project, the first objective of the European process of integration is the Western Balkans area (included Albania<sup>4</sup>).

In a juridical level, the European Parliament and the Council issued the Directive n. 73 (23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2002) on the access to the labour market and the promotion of the employment conditions.

In Directive n. 73, Article n. 3 specifies the ban to direct or indirect gender discrimination in public and private sector. Other Articles head on a strategy of collaboration between Member States and agencies, no-governmental organizations and competent organisms on the analysis and the support to an equal job treatment.

The Council of the European Union taken place in Copenhagen in December 2002 referred to the enlargement process. With regard to WEFneT Project partners, the representatives of European Union included Poland in the Candidate Countries, while Romania was inserted in a process of integration to become a Member Country in 2007. In supporting this process, the European Council called for the growth of the pre-adhesion assistance for these Countries. Moreover, the Council announced in a remark the perspective of implementing a process of stabilization and association for the Western Balkans, in which Albania was included. After-

---

<sup>3</sup> This theme is specific for our job: in WEFneT project are involved Countries as Poland, Romania and Albania.

<sup>4</sup> Brief resume of the relations between EU and Albania: in 1992, Albania signed an agreement of trade and cooperation with EU and it was authorized to participate to PHARE programme. In 1997, the Council of the EU established some economic and political *conditionality clauses*. In 1999, EU accorded to Albania a trade preference in change of its commitment to continue the process of stabilization and association. In 2000, Albanian goods was exempt from the EU import duties. During the Summit of Zagreb (November 2000), the EU decided to start-up the process to sign an agreement of stabilization and association (ASA) with Albania. In June 2001, in Göteborg, the European Council invited the European Commission to present a project on the directives for a negotiation in prevision of the ASA signature, while programme CARDS allotted € 37,5 million to the priorities indicated in the process of stabilization and association (justice and internal affairs, local development and institutional strengthening). In January 2003, the European Council started the negotiation with Albania with these directives. The process is in progress. Since March 2004, the EU has put in act an European partnership with Albania described by the Decision of the Council 2004/519/CE.

wards, the Council of the European Union dedicated to the economic, social and environmental state of the Union took place in Brussels in March 2003. The European Council called for deep structural reforms to reduce the gender differences in the European labour market. The Member States were invited to co-operate with institutions of research for facilitating the access in the labour market, looking up the know-how and reducing the administrative costs. In respect of women entrepreneurship and social companies (co-operatives, mutual companies, associations and foundations), the European Council in Brussels called for the promotion of an *entrepreneurial culture* and invited the European Commission to propose an action-plan on European entrepreneurship. The plan would give back simpler and faster the start-up of enterprise and the access to cheap financing, in particular the risk capital and the micro-credit.

The Green Book published by European Commission in 2003 confirmed the commitment on promoting entrepreneurial spirit, innovation and creativity. In this way, women entrepreneurship can contribute positively to the economic and social cohesion. Also, it furthers the creation of job and the job inclusion of marginalized persons, mainly in low-developed regions. Moreover, the women entrepreneurship could carry out an important role in the field of health, education and welfare. The Social enterprises encourage the participation of stakeholders in managing and supplying the welfare services and promoting innovation and customer service culture. Green Book 2003 indicated that the self-employed women rate was less than men: the percentage varied from the 16% in Ireland to the 40% in Portugal. Thinking to constitute and start-up an enterprise, the major problems for women are lack of information, discrimination, absence of networks and familiar duties. The European Commission facilitated the exchange of best practices related to the promotion of a women entrepreneurial spirit through the WES, an European network instituted by EC in June 2000. WES promoted the implementation of gender projects for enterprises, as a women consulting service opened in Sweden. In addition, the Council of the European Union occurred in Brussels in March 2004 solicited a modernizing reform of European welfare models, including preventive measures for unemployed and actions for developing human capital and gender equality.

In January 2004 The European Parliament approved a Resolution on equal opportunities putting in act a new European strategy to rationalize resources and maximize initiatives for women.

The main objective was the achievement of concrete and clear results in specific five sectors:

- I) economic life;
- II) equal participation;
- III) social rights;
- IV) civil life;
- V) roles and stereotypes.

The new European strategy incorporated an important element for the main goals of WEFneT Project: new Member Countries – as Poland –, the Candidate Countries – as Romania – and the Countries involved by ASA – as Albania – had to consider current benchmarks on equal opportunities as binding to be a partner of European Union, as a strategy built into the promotion

of women equality in the economic life. With regard to it, the main financial instrument is the European Structural Fund (ESF), while operative and specific objectives are the following:

- A. Strengthening the dimension of equal opportunities in the European strategy for the employment, through a regime of tax break and co-ordinated actions promoting job inclusion in IT sector.
- B. Providing incentives to use structural funds dedicated to gender equality, encouraging the exchange of best practices and putting the gender equality dimension into Communitarian Initiatives (EQUAL, INTERREG, URBAN and LEADER)<sup>5</sup>;
- C. Elaborating strategies to insert the gender equality dimension in all Communitarian policies impacting on women social condition (fiscal, educational and financial policies).

---

<sup>5</sup> The structural funds are community funds useful to financing the structural actions of the European Union. These actions would reduce the development gap between the European areas. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is the principal financial instrument of the regional programmes. ERDF's funds are completed by the funds of the European Social Fund (ESF), for the actions of training and fight to unemployment, and the funds of the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF), for the actions of rural development. Moreover, from 1994 the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) rounds up the financial instruments for the fishing. EQUAL is the Community Initiative co-financed by the ESF for the period 2000-2006. In the frame of the European Strategy for the Employment, EQUAL aims to innovate the approaches and the policies finalized to contrast the discrimination and the inequality in the job market, as a laboratory for transnational experiments. The EQUAL First Phase referred to the period 2001-2003, while the Second Phase, relative to 2004-2006, started in April 2004 and it will conclude itself at the end of 2008. INTERREG is a Community Initiative of the ERDF adopted in 1990. First Phase covered the period 1990-1994, the Second Phase covered the period 1995-1999. The Third Phase of INTERREG for the period 2000-2006 is divided in 3 sections (Section A cross-border cooperation, Section B transnational cooperation, Section C interregional cooperation). Its main objective is to strengthen the economic and social cohesion in the European Union, promoting the cooperation between different Member States and a balanced local development. A particular attention is reserved to the interest of the ultra peripheral regions or regions situated in the external borders of the European Union toward the Candidate Countries. LEADER is a Community Initiative launched in 1991 for sustaining innovative actions of rural development in disadvantaged regions of the European Union, during the period 1994-1999. LEADER+ is the new programme's name for the period 2000-2006; LEADER+ is active in all rural regions of EU. URBAN is the Community Initiative of the ERDF active for the period 2000-2006, in favour of the sustainable development of EU municipalities and areas in crisis. The URBAN I covered the period 1994-1999, the URBAN II is more specified on the promotion of the elaboration and the implementation of innovative development models. The main objective of the programme is the social and economic comeback of the urban areas in crisis.

### 1.1 Gender budgeting and gender auditing: public budgets in a gender perspective. Positive consequences on women job and gender enterprise development.

An European Parliament Resolution defined the *gender budgeting* as the application of gender mainstreaming in the budgeting procedures. Considering the importance of the economic and financial gender planning in the structure of equal opportunities, European Union promotes its actuation in all national and European public and private budgets. In some Member States, the gender budgeting is yet implemented both at national and regional level, as in Ireland, United Kingdom and Spain. Italy is experimenting it at local level, with the involvement of Provinces and Municipalities. In other some areas abroad – Australia, Canada and South Africa –, this type of budgeting is usually executed or it is implemented in specific sectors, as in various examples in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Indeed, a gender policy is particularly important because the women's conditions development is considered as an element improving the national economy. So that, the strategic implementation of a gender budgeting by Public Administration doesn't entail an increase of the total expenditure nor a sort of mono-directional system toward women. On the contrary, it follows a finality of equity, efficiency and transparency. National resources are destined on the base of a new scale of needs, optimising the economic results.

*The Gender auditing* is an instrument to achieve the budget certification in a gender prospective. Its objective is to promote skills – in our case, women's skills – for reading balance in a way that it considers current relations between women and men and the equivalent gender value. Analysing the national expenditure allotment, the gender auditing could find out that Government invest more resources in sectors with a strong men's presence.

Regarding to the development of the women entrepreneurship skills, we try to see some concrete examples, imagining potential scenarios with adequate national economic policies. In doing this, we take all the expenditures (incentives, benefits...) destined to women, namely areas directly inherent to women. We have to consider services to childhood and adolescents, because women have in charge almost totally the familiar duties. In our analysis, we see the gender "environmental areas", as transport expenditures, urban viability and quality of green areas. An interesting study-case is gender budgeting and gender auditing put in act by the Province of Modena (Italy). This is an area with a strong rate of women entrepreneurship. The Provincial Administration of Modena aimed to sectors of training, job and benefits, using also European Structural Funds of Objective n. 2. It involved in the process Regional Administration and other Provincial Administrations of the Emilia-Romagna Region. This example shows the value of a good planning at economic and financial levels implemented by the Public Institutions and the development of women entrepreneurship as integrant part of the regional system. An efficient local system always involves women wish of self-employment, women creativity and a particular attention to the new technologies and the innovation. With these elements, the equal gender opportunities areal and concrete result for the local communities.

## 1.2 An overview on the present and expectations for the future. Women entrepreneurship growth is an important objective for the European Union.

The Report on Gender Equality made by the European Commission in 2004 shows some positive tendencies: gaps between women and men are decreased in sectors of employment, education and research. Women managers are increasing. Differently, the Report indicates that in the ten new Member States the unemployment rates are double compared with the other European Countries. However, the gender gap has a reducing tendency. European Commission said the gender gap is a multi-dimensional phenomenon and European Union has to face it through a system of strategic measures. The main problem consists in implementing measures to promote equal gender opportunities in job career, salary and decisional process into the families.

A successive Communication made by European Commission called for a conjugation between growth and solidarity, to give back effective the integration of the new Member States. Similarly, the new enlarged structure of European Union needs to complete its internal market in a way of sustainable development. Therefore, the next objectives indicated by the Communication are: growth of entrepreneurial competition, increase of the women entrepreneurial spirit and development of the SMEs. European Commission aimed the attention to innovation, implying technological transfers, adequate and specific laws and creation of European networks.

In the *Agenda for Social Policy 2006-2010*, published in 2005, European Commission referred to ESF and the new PROGRESS (Programme for the Employment and the Social Solidarity). In PROGRESS planning, the section *Equality between women and men* incorporated benefits destined to:

- a) the improvement of analysing activities in the gender integration dimension;
- b) the support to European Union law application;
- c) the making aware on gender equality values;
- d) the skill development of European networks.

Expenditure initially scheduled for the gender equality was halved by European Commission to finance the European Institution for the Gender Equality. This Institution – proposed by EC – should be the *core* of the European fight to the gender discrimination. Its opening is listed in 2007. Its activities should be the research, the analysis and the propagation of information related to the gender parity at a Communitarian level.

About women entrepreneurship, the Report on Gender Equality 2006 permits us to examine the current situation of the equal gender opportunities in European Union. In 2004, employment rate of women increased to the 55,7% (+ 0,7% in respect of 2003). More closely, employment rate of women with more than 55 raised to the 31,7%. The gap between employment rates of women and of men decreased to the 15,2%. However, the sectors increasing the women employment rate continue to be traditional women activities. In this way, the women segregation in fixed sectors in EU job market is still increasing (25,4% in 2004). In the companies of

European Union, only 32% of women is manager, 10% is part of Council of Administration and 3% is general manager of big enterprises. Also, in the education and research sectors the gender gap is still remaining: the 59% of women employees is graduate, but women are only the 43% of post-graduate student and the 15% of University lecturers. The salary gap keeps featuring the European Union: on average, women bear 15% less than men each job hour.

The most recent document taken in this paper is the Communication wrote by the European Commission in March 2006. It outlined a *roadmap* to the gender equality for period 2006-2010. The roadmap included six priority areas: i) equal economic independence; ii) conciliation between private and job life; iii) equal participation to decisional processes; iv) elimination of any form of violence against women; v) elimination of gender stereotypes; vi) promotion of gender equality in the external policies and in the development policies. Each area contains objectives and actions. This document directly referred to the women entrepreneurship: it planned a more efficient system of access to financing and a special for training the start-up phase. The report on Gender Equality 2006 invites the Member States and the European Union to implement actions developing women participation to the decisional processes in policy, technology and - above of all - economy. The roadmap included also a range of indicators to monitoring obtained results. Considering the commitment of the European Institutions, on gender equality we have to remember that European Commission named 2007 as “European Year of Equal Opportunities”.

The general obstacles to start-up an entrepreneurial activity are the access to financing (public, banking or private), the market analysis, the management skills and the administrative benchmarks. In addition, women have specific obstacles, as the lack of plausibility in business market. Some years ago to support the women entrepreneurship, the European Commission launched the project BEST 2001-2005, specifically aimed to identify best practices at national level and to promote women entrepreneurship. An important instrument implemented by BEST was the *mentoring*. “Mentoring” involves women experts to plan tutoring services dedicated to the enterprises managed by women. Second innovation promoted by BEST was the creation of a networks of women entrepreneurs, in order to eliminate their isolation. Beyond the named WES, we consider in this paper the *ProWomEn* (Promotion of Women Entrepreneurship), a network constituted by a German consortium in 2001. This network – financed by European Commission with a biennial plan – involves sixteen European regions and encourages the comparison and the exchange of best practices in women entrepreneurship sector. Another experience concerns on *Women Mobility Information Campaign*<sup>6</sup>, an informative campaign operative in South Europe to spread the key-aspects of job mobility in Mediterranean market. This network is on line, on the website: [Webmobility.org](http://Webmobility.org). Moreover, in European Union there is a range of agencies and women associations as Euro Chambers

---

<sup>6</sup> [www.womenmobility.org](http://www.womenmobility.org).

(European Association of the Chambers of Commerce), FEM and FCEM (organizations of women entrepreneurs). Therefore, the topic of women entrepreneurship is gaining space in European Union as a social and economic European issue.

### 1.3 Third sector as an opportunity for gender enterprises.

Regarding to the European social co-operatives, we consider a recent Communication<sup>7</sup> made by the European Commission. The Interest by EU in the co-operative sector evolved in July 2003 when the Council of the EU adopted a Regulation on the statute of the European Co-operative Society<sup>8</sup>. The entrepreneurial co-operative form has a strategic role, because it is on important economic subject to realise some of Communitarian objectives in the sector of employment policies, social integration and regional development. In this way, it is possible to connect the promotion of co-operatives and the development of an equal gender culture.

The communication focused on three principal issues: a) promotion of the co-operative sector in European Union; b) improvement of the co-operative law system; c) maintenance and enhancement of the role of the co-operatives in achieving the Communitarian objectives. With Regarding to the women enterprises – above all included in SMEs – the co-operative form could offer some advantages, especially in the start-up phase. European Commission affirmed that the co-operative society is an important instrument to realize high quality services. The development of the co-operatives could encourage the women entrepreneurial spirit to invest in the Third sector. The Communication named directly the making - aware of the co-operatives role in new Member States. In these Countries the European Institutions should explain to the small entrepreneurs the good governance advantages of a co-operative society. Clearly, in the Centre-East Europe the co-operative form is still suffering of a cultural identification with the old national systems, but the social co-operatives have all the requirements to become an instrument of economic development, in particular in supplying the social services – with a reduction of the public expenditure – and in supporting social and gender cohesion. The Communication introduced the issue of the co-operative contribute to achieve the Communitarian objectives included in the Lisbon Strategy. In a general overview, the social enterprises are born in all Member States with the aim to give an answer to the problems of the national welfare systems on national welfare systems. Some Member States applied a specific normative to regulate social enterprises and their commercial activities. Some examples are the social co-operatives in Italy, the societies with social purpose in Belgium, the responsibility social co-operatives in Greece and Portugal and the social co-operatives with collective interest in UK.

---

<sup>7</sup> European Commission, Communication, Brussels, 23.2.2004 COM(2004)18.

<sup>8</sup> Regulation (CE) n. 1435/2003 of the Council, 22.07.2003.

#### 1.4 Gender incidence in the Italian social co-operatives.

A chapter of the first Report on the co-operatives, edited in November 2004 by the Italian agency Unioncamere, examined the gender issue in the scenario of co-operative enterprises. Its benchmarks concerned the Law n. 215/1992 on the positive actions for women entrepreneurship. The report showed that the co-operatives managed by women are only the 1% of Italian co-operatives. By analysing the different sectors, it revealed that the percentage raised to the 24% in health care and education sectors. The gender incidence in the co-operative sector and, mostly, in the social activities, are confirmed by the last study on the Italian social co-operatives. The study – published in 2006 by the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) and concerning on dates of 2003 – revealed that women are the 70% of about 160.000 workers in the Italian social co-operatives.



## SECOND PART

---



# WELFARE SYSTEMS AND WOMEN ENTREPREUNERSHIP

---

## 2. The European welfare models.

The modern Social State – born on the concept of a precautionary risk insurance – is a system based on essential conditions of life “guaranteed” by a planned salary deduction against the unemployment and the diseases condition social. The Welfare State was originally considered “from the cradle to the grave”<sup>9</sup>, in which citizens had a social right (claim) recognized by the State.

In Europe there are several welfare models:

### a. The Scandinavian Model

The strong social assistance is managed by the public sector and financed through an high tax level. The social services organizations are directed by Government and the while employers are paid with public funds. The Scandinavian model schedules a range of different “planning tables” for monitoring the qualitative level of the welfare services.

### b. The British Model

The possibility of social services is regulated by the market and services are offered by the private sector, in a way of liberalism. The Public welfare is very reduced, and also the taxation for social services. The privatisations cover almost all the welfare system.

### c. The Renanian model

There is a sort of welfare mix, with public funds and private services. The public administration negotiate special agreements with the companies working in Third sector. Especially in Germany, it is fundamental the contribute coming from associations and foundations of charity, mainly linked to the different Churches.

### d. The Mediterranean model

In the Mediterranean system the worker is warrant by particular laws, while the social investment is public, financed by taxes and direct to cover above all health and pension, less unemployment.

In the last twenty years, in the European Countries of Mediterranean area the social services had been transferred from the public institutions to the private companies and the cooperatives.

## 3. Italy: an integrated welfare system.

*“The Republic guarantees people and families with an integrated system of interventions and social services, promotes interventions to guarantee the quality life, equal opportunities, against discrimination and for citizen rights, (the Republic) prevents, removes and reduces impairment, need and social disease, from a low income, social problems and addictions, coherently with articles number 2, 3 and 38 of Constitution. (...) Local Institutions, Regions and National Government, recognize and make easier the function of no profit organizations,*

---

<sup>9</sup> The Beveridge Plan (England, 1942).

*religious associations of charity, voluntary association, in planning, organization and management of an integrated system of social services*”<sup>10</sup>. This is Article n. 1 of the new Italian law for an integrated system of social services approved in 2000. The law is a fundamental instrument for structuring a new welfare system more equal, efficient and organized according to European standards. It gave, at least, an official recognition in the welfare system, for the private subjects of the Third Sector; it’s the new philosophy of welfare mix, in which the public institution is the financial subject and social co-operatives and organizations are subjects supplying and managing the social services.

The law is realizing a concrete revolution in Italy, because it includes another innovative mechanism: the “*Zone-Plan*”. The *Zone-Plan* is useful to consider the specific needs of different territories with specific problems and priorities. A setting out of this type comported the beginning and the development of a local welfare in Italy, more careful to the specific citizens conditions. In the course of history, the Italian welfare system was structured as the Mediterranean model, with a strong role carried out by the family. Woman was considered like the subject who thought to the health and care services for the rest of family. Similarly, the National State thought the family as the subject who “cover” the part of social needs where it was not be able to arrive with its services.

In 2003 the Italian Government published a new document called “White Book – Suggestions for a dynamic and supportive society”, in which it outcropped a new perspective of social system. Firstly, a radical policy of privatisation was the new “password”; secondly, a conservative and very traditional vision of family comes again in the centre of welfare conception. This welfare conception needs a “strong model” or maybe an “old model” of family in the centre of society, and it guess to invert the birth rate: family is the main *caregiver* for the social system. Beyond this two different conceptions (Law of 2000 versus Book of 2003,) in the Italian welfare system there is anyway a significant change of roles from the past. Thanks to the new *integrated* system, the regional and local welfare dimension has a better organization. The National State and the Regions manage the government function, while the Municipalities and other Local bodies organize, plan and direct the system of social services. They also commit to non-profit organizations and social co-operatives the managing of those services. In this way, the public and private actors can operating in the welfare system into a governance design. However, the instruments for a real integrated system are not yet all applied and the welfare mix is in a transition phase in Italy. Especially, we could signal a central priority to satisfy: the exact regulation of the connections between Institutional bodies and Third sector, in order to improve the service quality and organization. For this reason it is essential to implement a fast and diffuse application of Regional and Zone Plans scheduled by the Law n. 328/2000.

---

<sup>10</sup>

Law 8th November 2000, number 328.

#### 4. Development of women entrepreneurship in Italy.

The Italian Law n. 215/1992 – called “Positive actions for Women entrepreneurship” – is the base of gender enterprises development and an important step for a general design of gender equality. In addition, the law schedules a Committee for women entrepreneurship in the body of Ministry of Industry. The Committee aimed to develop all the entrepreneurship process, to implement specific measures as special possibility to financing for women or funds dedicated to the enterprise start-up. Moreover, the Regions had the assignment to create and improve for communication and information plans about gender enterprises and to realize consulting and technical assistance services.

An historical main feature of women entrepreneurship in Italy is a constant but *informal* presence of women in Italian enterprises. Indeed, although the women have key and decision-making roles into the enterprises, the ownership was always in chief of men, especially in family enterprises. The Administrator of a family enterprise is another typical women role, because of the tradition of domestic gender duties.

#### 5. Social enterprise as a Gender enterprise?

The expansion of a productive role of Third sector in Italy inserts itself in the gap between growing social needs and public supply. In this way, many voluntary organizations turn into social services producers. In this reference frame it started a general trend: the diffusion in all national areas of the social co-operatives and the non-profit organizations. Since the ‘80s, it became a decisive function for the welfare system development. Anyway, a specific legislation for social enterprise (SE) was promulgated just in March 2006. But, in general, which are the main features of this type of enterprise?

Firstly, it has a *private* nature, even if public institutions could be associate (without a pre-eminent position). Secondly, the social enterprise should have an high grade of managerial autonomy. The services managed by SE must be considering of general (collective) interest. They include social, health care and educational services, environmental services and social tourism. There are not included the organizations with advocacy functions, grant giving foundations and the associations of consumers. SE could undertake every legal forms, but they have to own the social characteristics called by the Italian law, as the non-profit distribution constraint, the users and workers participation in the social enterprise management and the democratic governance. The SE incomes can result both from public and private funding, but they have to be at least in part commensurated to the services supplied. Main differences between social enterprises and the traditional non-profit organizations are the three main distinctive characters of social enterprises:

- vocation to sell services and product goods;
- high grade of autonomy;

- product innovation.

On the subject of innovation, as we saw, the Italian welfare situation has recently changed and at the moment there are more private operators in a renovated welfare mix. The actuation of Law 118/2005 approved in 2006 specifies: “Social Enterprises are private non-profit organizations that practise – in a permanent and primary way – business activity for producing and trading of social utility’s assets and services (...)”. The law is directed to the social co-operatives, associations, foundations and ecclesiastic bodies. In this context, there are some possible “compatibility” between SE and gender enterprises, even if we have to mind at the opposite and discriminatory perspective that it considers the women only for social assistance jobs. The best way to understand the argument is talking about a sort of gender know-how, a better appeasement with the time-life and a personal preference to work in the Third sector demonstrated by the statistics. Especially on the question of the “women quality life”, the social enterprises created and managed by women are a chance to enhance the gender employment and to improve the social services supply.

**THIRD PART**

---



**WELFARE AND WOMEN  
ENTREPREUNERSHIP IN  
POLAND, ROMANIA AND ALBANIA**

---

## 6. Welfare and women entrepreneurship in Poland.

Since the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2004, Poland is a Member State of the European Union. Its process of adhesion started at the beginning of '90s, with a strong engagement to recover the development gap and enter in a free market. After an hard economic crisis in 1990-1992, the *shock therapy* created by the Minister of Finance Balcerowicz raised the Polish GDP and it increased the private sector height. The inflation rate decreased considerably till the 1.9% in 2002. Nowadays, Poland is considered by the analysts of the European Union as the best example of overtaking on the previous planned economy. In this way, the Polish idea about the European Union is made better because of the economic growth and some concrete signals, as the European benefits reserved to the rural areas. In 1998 the gender gap related to the job in Poland was the 14.8%, while in 2003 it was decreasing to 10.5%. In this lessening, most of Polish women passed from the agricultural and industrial activities to the sectors of the public administration, health service and school. In despite of it, the job conditions of women are again characterized by low salaries, in particular in the rural areas. In Poland the gender pay gap is about the 15% of the salary; the highest percentages pertain on the sectors with deep skills. Moreover, the unemployment rate of women is the highest of the ten new Member States: 20% in 2003. Polish expenditure for welfare was the 25% of GDP in 1995-2001, that is only 2% less than the average of the European Union (and 1% less than Italy). Although this percentage, the life conditions of women represent one of the crisis points in Poland. Frequently, women do not deal its job place after the first motherhood, the nursery school are low-dimensioned and the welfare services linked to the women are clearly inadequate.

After its entry in the European Union, Poland kept engaging in the development of the SMEs. The main Governmental instrument, that it is the Strategy for SMEs 2003-2006, scheduled actions to diffuse the concept of entrepreneurship in women, young, graduates, unemployed and disabled persons.

## 7. Welfare and women entrepreneurship in Romania.

The formal adhesion of Romania to the European Union will happen in the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2007. With regard to the economic development, Romania is running with different changes. In some Western areas the rate is high and headed for the free market; instead, in other rural areas of the country the European benchmarks are very far. In particular, the social structure is suffering in the health supply because of the lack of financing. The non-profit sector – NGOs, associations and foundations – is proposing itself as a concrete medicine. In May 2000, the Government approved a new law on the NGOs in order to simplify the administrative burdens and promote the co-operation between NGOs and public/local institutions. The law would address the non-profit sector to focus on the different local peculiarities. In April 2005, the Parliamentary Commission between Romania and European Union adopted some positive measures on the

Romanian welfare policies. In respect of the social rights, today the first objective of the Romanian Government is to ban the gender job distinctions. Some measures - as informative plans and training courses - have been implemented to facilitate the equal access in all sectors. In this way, the last National Operative Plan scheduled the improvement of monitoring control in job places. The second objective is to include the gender equality into the familiar benefits. The National Operative Plan – published in 2000 – included the actions following:

- a plan to achieve the gender equality in the education, medical assistance, childhood and old ages services and to guarantee the motherhood rights;
- the improvement of the economic role carried out by women;
- the increase of the measures on social and economic protection for new family models;
- the strengthening of the fight to the familiar violence;
- the diversification of the assistance measures for the women victims of violence;
- the introduction of gender benchmarks in the National analysis of the job activities;
- the development of the co-operation between different economic stakeholders, as private or public agencies and no profit organizations;
- the achievement of adequate skills of public and private managers to execute effectively the gender equality principle.

Nowadays Romania needs of implementing these actions, in the light of the problematic current situation. In 2001 the European Commission yet blamed the Government for missing application of measures and actions inserted in the Plan.

In order to verify the effective life condition of the women and the implementation of a equal gender policy in all sector of the Romanian society, we take account of the Report 2005 published by the Open Society Institute of Bucharest (OSI). The Report minded by the European Plan on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (EOWN), which it belongs to the project “Bringing the EU home” 2004-2006. Through it, OSI pointed out that best results was achieved in favour of the pregnant women and the women with a little child, thanks to a range of duties for the employer (the modification of National Job Code was implemented in 2003). The report contains a section dedicated to the self-employment that it underlines the legal improvement achieved with the new law in 2004. The national policy is not yet promoting the women participation to the labour market, the appeasement between job and familiar duties and the re-integration of women after the childhood. In 2002 women was only the 32% of the self-employed workers. Moreover, the lack of measures against the gender pay gap is causing a job segregation of the women in the public sector. Women are trying to go over the political

inefficiency and the unemployment by founding micro-enterprises without legal registration. So that, it is expected that these women micro-enterprises would be the 95% of SMEs. General corruption is an obstacle to the registration and the measures implemented by the Government caused often a raise of administrative duties that they are not useful to reduce the corruption.

## 8. Welfare and women entrepreneurship in Albania.

In 1991-92 Albania went off the international isolation, beginning its transition to democracy. The process was hardly disturbed by an inflation crisis in 1996, when the inflation rate was 18%. At the same time, the instability of the national policy and a spread corruption added themselves to the strong activities of criminal organizations. In March 2005 delegates of European Union attended in Tirana the loyalty oath of all political parties leaders. The next national elections registered a woman to the Parliament Presidency, but women was only 10 of 140 elected parliamentarians. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is still worn toward the performances of Albania. The country is deeply divided in urban areas more advanced – above all in the South – and Northern rural areas extremely poor and less regarded by the National Institutions, where the tribal social code (*Kanun*) is still applied. Moreover, the national systems of production are not adequate: the energetic supply is not continuous, the import rate is constantly raising and the social and economic gaps are increasing. Recently, the foreign direct investments (FDI) and the bank transfer from abroad are sustaining the GDP growth (+6% in 2004), but unemployment rate is still 14%. Considering the current difficulties of Albanian economy, the lack of trust is a spread incubator of economic inefficiency and social lockout. As a consequence, the process of economic development does not achieve scheduled results. It causes some individual successes, but the general progress of society is not favourite. Market cannot be the only instrument of development. Therefore, the co-operative structure could help to realize a productive system which it involves individual interests and social well-being.

During the Hoxha regime, women was lacking of substantial social freedoms. Afterwards, in first transition phase women totally depended by the men (heads of household). The dissolution of the rural co-operatives worsened the women unemployment; women was the 57% of new unemployed in Tirana in 1993 - and the 62% in Valona. The last report of the Ministry of Employment and Social Policies counted more than 75.000 women unemployed in 2004. Only the 2% of them had a university degree. Women under 24 had more difficult to find a job. Obstacles was increasing because of the lack of professional skills and the low schooling abilities. A working paper published by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2001<sup>11</sup> illustrated that women enterprises went down from 21% of total in 1994 to 17.5% in 1998.

---

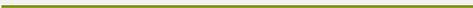
<sup>11</sup> Bezhani M., *Women Entrepreneurs in Albania*, SEED Working Paper No.21, ILO – International Training Centre, Turin, Italy, 2001.

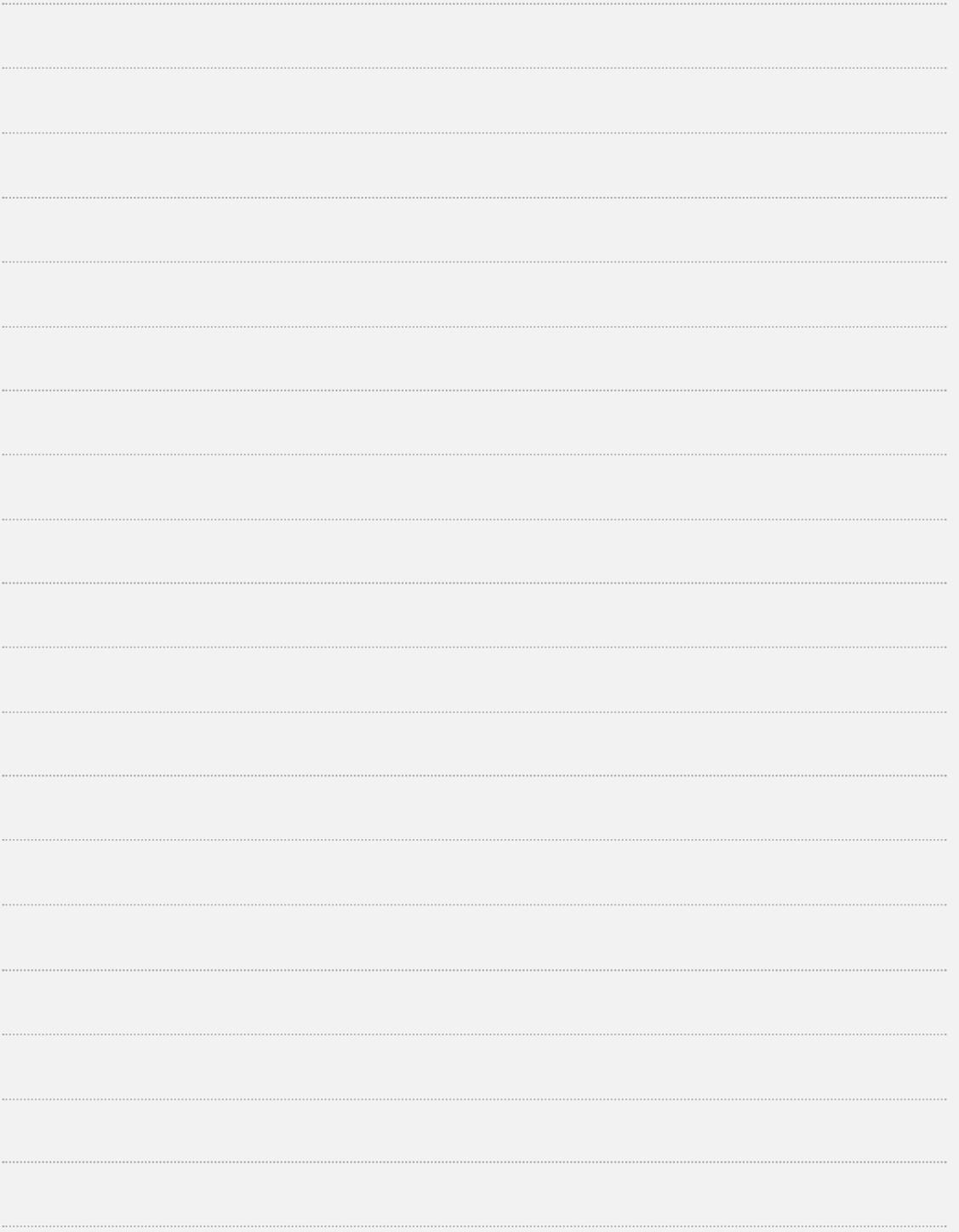
Women enterprises was concentrated in services supply (35.6%) and trade (28.8%). The 84% of women enterprises employed only the founder and only the 8% received a bank credit line. The lack of time – caused by the familiar duties – and the scarce access to financing were the most problematic issues for the women enterprises. A fundamental role was carried out – and it is even now – by the NGOs and international aid. At the moment, Albania does not achieved an economic efficiency so as to convince the European Union to promote a more inclusive plan of pre-adhesion.

Lined writing area with horizontal dotted lines.



**NOTES**





Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines on a light green background.



**NOTES**

