

## Dörthe Domzig, Head of Office of Equal Opportunities, Introduction

The first Heidelberg Equality Action Plan with its 47 measures shows a good picture of the political engagement of the city of Heidelberg towards equality of women and men in the years of the biannual budget of 2007/2008. Each of the four Civic Departments is involved. Altogether, 14 Offices of the city administration are engaged in it. Many of them cooperate with groups, associations and private clubs outside the city administration.

The measures deal with three community action perspectives.

- I. Gender-specific products
- II. Gender-specific personnel and organisational development within the city administration
- III. Regulation of gender equality as a common task of the city

In the field of the services provided by the city, 39 measures were pursued:

- four measures refer to a citizen-friendly city administration
- ten measures to education
- seven measures to employment
- three measures refer to city planning
- three measures to political participation
- ten measures refer to prevention and fighting violence and
- two measures refer to health

With respect to personnel development within the city administration, four measures were regulated. With respect to the general regulatory framework for the regulation of the common task of gender equality, four aims were pursued.

We are now very glad to submit the first report (nationwide) on the enforcement of the Equality Action Plan of the city of Heidelberg and are proud of the impressive results.

## The results of the first implementation report at one glance:

41 measures were implemented at a rate of 100 per cent, two at a rate of 50 per cent respectively, and two at 33 per cent each (this equals 42.66 measures or 91 per cent); two measures could not be implemented. Thus, 20 of 30 Articles of the Charta are considered (67 per cent) even with multiple references (there are 58 possible references to the individual Articles).

More than 150 members of staff\* of 14 administrative Offices and one firm owned by the city were involved in preparing and implementing the Equality Action Plan. The funds provided for this come up to about 4.9 m euros (sponsoring included).

Information on the concrete implementation of the individual measures can be found on the following pages. There you will find information on

- number, name and short description of the measure
- target group and aims of the measure
- activity area as well as political field or specific topic the measure refers to
- kind of implementation and results in short
- start and completion of the measure
- bodies or persons who are responsible for the implementation
- extent of resources spending

## What point have we reached in the implementation of the EU-Charta?

The measures realised so far cannot indicate the point we have reached in the implementation of the EU-Charta. Firstly, they only represent part of the standard of equality policies in Heidelberg (detailed information on the state of affairs can be found on [www.heidelberg.de/chancengleichheit](http://www.heidelberg.de/chancengleichheit)). Secondly, we must be enabled to show the extent to which we comply with the procedure required by the Charta.

Most of all, however, we must put ourselves in a position to indicate, based on verified data, to what extent our engagement has resulted in verifiable positive changes in gender relations in accordance with the aims of the Charta (see below). In the field of personnel and organisation development within the city administration, this approach has successfully been put into practice for a long time already (Women and Job within the City Administration).

<http://www.heidelberg.de/servlet/PB/menu/1125834/index.html>

In the field of Products and Services provided by the City, we already committed ourselves to working out comparable data in 2006 and submitted a Data Report on the life situation of Women and Men in Heidelberg.

[http://www.heidelberg.de/servlet/PB/show/1159948/16\\_pdf\\_heidelberger-datenreport-chancengleichheit2006.pdf](http://www.heidelberg.de/servlet/PB/show/1159948/16_pdf_heidelberger-datenreport-chancengleichheit2006.pdf)

The extent to which those data comply with the requirements of the EU-Charter and to which they are updated makes it possible to indicate how successful we are in realising our self-commitment. Precondition for practising this procedure is the compilation of a qualified set of standards, the verifiable development of which is submitted to regular monitoring.

### **What exactly have we committed ourselves to by accepting the Charter?**

A quick orientation concerning the consequences of the Charter for everyday life is given in the following summary:

#### **Equality is systematically implemented on all levels:**

- Equality of women and men is an indivisible basic right, which is successfully practised as a diagonal task as well as a common one. This is done for all roles (activity areas) within a community:
  - the political role
  - the role of an employer
  - the role of a service provider
  - the role of a customer
- Equality is professionally regulated in top-down and bottom-up processes and integrated into all practised regulatory instruments.

#### **Regular monitoring of equality:**

What is meant by equality? Fighting discrimination/ multiple discrimination and being disadvantaged – or to give it a more positive wording

- securing barrier-free access to opportunities, services and products provided by the city as well as securing equal participation in them through
- systematic target group sensitivity in the designing process of products and services.

#### **Gender-related consideration of target groups at all times:**

- children and adults
- senior citizens and elderly people
- persons suffering from handicaps and varied health-related restrictions
- persons with a migration background
- persons with varied sexual identity
- persons of varied social origin and kind of involvement in job activities as well as varied levels of personal income

- persons with varied life situation such as: singles, couples, single parents, couples/persons living with children or with
- senior citizens

### **What is to be considered in particular?**

- balanced participation of women and men in decision-making
- overcoming gender stereotypes
- improved work-life-balance including child-raising and nursing for women and men
- improved equal participation of women in working life:
  - with regard to income participation, i.e. overcoming over-representation in part-time jobs and discontinuous job careers
  - with regard to dismantling the gender-related sliding pay scale, the under-representation of women in leading positions and their over-representation in few, mostly less well-paid jobs
- dismantling the under-representation of men in jobs involving nursing, raising and educating children, especially small children
- improved balancing of sharing household chores and taking care of children and elderly people between women and men as well as public and private funding
- fighting gender-specific violence

### **Designing Equality Action Plans on a regular basis:**

- Working out, agreeing and implementing an Equality Action Plan within two years after signing
  - Explaining aims, measures, implementation schedules, priorities, identifying and providing the necessary resources
- Regular controlling and development of current results and designing new Equality Action Plans
- Obtaining opinions from experts in the process of designing the Plan
- It is necessary to invite a broad participation of locally active people and to secure a comprehensive involvement of women
- Making sure that, step by step, all relevant topics according to the Charta are covered
  - Submitting proposals for Equality Action Plans to the Heidelberg City Council through the Office of Equal Opportunities in cooperation with the relevant specific Offices and respective Civic Departments
  - Integration of the measures worked out into the aims agreements of all specific Departments and community-owned firms involved and into the respective budgets

- Regular publishing and reporting in biannual intervals to the Heidelberg City Council as well as to the Council of the Communities and Regions of Europe (RGRE) about the implementation of agreed Plans through the Office of Equal Opportunities
  - All specific Offices and community-owned firms contribute to this process by submitting all necessary current information on the state of affairs
  - If necessary the aims agreements are controlled in cooperation with the Office of Personnel and Organisation and with the Treasurer
- Participation in a Europe-wide evaluation process in order to assess the progress made and to learn from each other

### Committed to working for a sustained perspective of living together – or: how to go on?

When signing the Charta, putting up the first Equality Action Plan und submitting the first implementation report, we managed to start a process in our city, which is carried forward by the top executives of the city administration, the City Council as a whole and numerous citizens working for equality. Before and after passing the first Equality Action Plan, there was a series of political discussions, consulting debates and sessions to agree on process-related motions concerning the programme of the Charta. Within and outside the city administration, there were many fundamental discussions on individual aspects, specific queries and inputs. There were lectures and workshops in Heidelberg and beyond.

As early as in the process of working out the second Equality Action Plan we intend to make good use of this new sensitivity in order to increase the readiness to participate in the implementation of the aims of the Charta. In order to get closer to the aims of the EU-Charta, planning the next budget for the city of Heidelberg not only will have to consider a higher number of products which are clearly defined by their qualities related to equality policies but will also have to ensure an increased involvement of the Offices of the Heidelberg city administration. It is equally important that this spark of enthusiasm for this Charta also spreads to other institutions, firms and companies, associations and initiatives in our city. We will be very glad to accompany this entire process with our expert competence.