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of the Beijing Platform for Action**
- **Indicators in respect of the Girl Child**
= **Draft Council Conclusions**

Delegations will find in the Annex a report concerning indicators in respect of "the Girl Child" prepared by the Slovenian Presidency. Minor editorial changes have been introduced into the text following the meeting of Coreper on 20 May 2008.

**Review of the implementation by the Member States and the EU Institutions of the Beijing
Platform for Action**

THE GIRL CHILD

Report by the Slovenian Presidency

**I. GENERAL ISSUES ON THE STATUS AND SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES OF THE
GIRL CHILD**

1. Basic international documents

1.1. The girl child's rights, the rights of the child and women's rights

The girl child is one of the twelve areas of concern specified in the follow-up to the *Beijing Platform for Action* (hereinafter: *Beijing PfA*); because of this, the matter of the girl child has become widely recognized as a subject of socio-political interest and a promoted research subject in its own right¹. The notion of improving the socio-cultural opportunities of the girl child was formulated in the development goals/strategic objectives of the Beijing PfA, which are: to eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child; to eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls; to promote and protect the rights of the girl child and increase awareness of her needs and potential; to eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training; to eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition; to eliminate the economic exploitation of child labour and to protect young girls at work; to eradicate violence against the girl child; to promote the girl child's awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life; to strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl child².

¹ The issue of the girl child was first raised in the Declaration of the World Summit for Children in 1990.

² *Action for Equality, Development and Peace. Platform for Action*, Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China - September 1995,
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/index.html>.

The acceleration of the development of social opportunities and options for the girl child is contingent upon the status of women³; it is also a factor which will determine the status of women in the future. The status of the girl child is interrelated with the status of children. Consequently, her status and roles are still affected both by the norms applied to the social development of children and by those related to the status of women. As girl children are reckoned to be the most vulnerable social group in the literature to which this report relates, there is strong social pressure to regard them as an autonomous yet diversified social group that needs to be treated with great care and in a positive manner. It is important to distinguish between the status and opportunities of girl children and that of women and children in general, because girls are subject to social repression on two fronts: as children and as females.

Issues explicitly and implicitly connected with the status and opportunities of the girl child are addressed in two basic international documents on women and children: the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (hereinafter: CRC) and the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (hereinafter: CEDAW)⁴. They are divided into the following fields: personal safety and integrity; health (with an emphasis on sexual and reproductive health); equal access to education and vocational training; the problem of early school leavers; conditions, norms and accessibility of the labour market; the right to be informed and to be treated fairly in the media bearing in mind considerations such as social advancement and protection against all forms of physical, mental and sexual violence; protection in armed conflicts; human trafficking, sexual exploitation and abuse; equal social opportunities for persons with disabilities and social minorities; the need to reduce infant and child mortality; and deconstruction of traditional gender roles and practices.

³ This was stated at the 27th Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Children in 2002.

⁴ *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* are two references pinpointed in relation to the girl child in the *Agreed Conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on the Critical Areas of Concern of the Beijing Platform for Action 1996-2005*, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for the Advancement of Women, ST/ESA/304, and in the *Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child*.

The platform for the UN strategy and vision focuses on the dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, from which children are not exempt. One of its further goals is the reduction of child mortality. In the *Millennium Development Declaration*⁵ the goals are more clearly stated in regard to children. It makes special mention of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS and of the protection of children who disproportionately suffer the consequences of natural disasters, genocide, armed conflicts and other humanitarian emergencies.

1.2. EU strategic issues on the status of the child and the girl child

The EU strategy draws upon the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In 2006 the European Commission identified children's rights as one of its main priorities in its *Communication on Strategic Objectives 2005-2009*⁶. Priority was given to the children's rights-and-needs perspective and the economic exploitation of children was stressed. The Commission emphasised that an enormous gap exists between the interpretations and goals of international treaties and the real-life conditions of poverty, neglect and other violations of the rights of children, which had already been highlighted by the UN Special Session on Children held in 2002. The Commission pointed out the critical areas with regard to the special needs of children of different ages. In the first five years of life, children are in great need of protection and health care. From the age of five to twelve years, in addition to personal needs, the right to education becomes essential. Needs are accompanied by new responsibilities and in adolescence the need for social involvement arises with great force. Furthermore, the Communication listed the most critical social conditions, noted the steps already taken and announced the EU's future priorities.

⁵ UN General Assembly, United Nations Millennium Declaration, Fifty-fifth session, 18 September 2000, < <http://www.scribd.com/doc/209731/2000-UN-United-Nations-Millennium-Declaration>.

⁶ Commission of the European Communities, *Communication from the Commission towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child*, Brussels, 4 July 2006. COM(2006) 367 final.

The EU strategy refers to socio-economic and environmental changes and stresses the high risk of poverty faced by children. According to the document, relative poverty is the unjust life option for 20 percent of children aged 0-15 and for 21 percent of those aged 16-24, as against 16 percent in the case of adults who are exposed to poverty. In particular, children who cannot live with their parents and children from ethnic communities run the risk of poverty. Bad socio-economic conditions influence negatively children's perception of their identity. Their adverse influence on self-image and future life opportunities is further multiplied by racism, hostility toward refugees and immigrants as well as other violent and discriminatory attitudes and deeds, including every kind of sexual exploitation⁷.

The broad spectrum of issues, described in the Commission Communication "*Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child*",⁸ fall into the following categories: child trafficking and prostitution; violence against children; discrimination child poverty; social exclusion; child labour; and health and education. Future strategic orientation turns towards the rights of girls, children belonging to minorities and children in armed conflicts⁹. In the Commission's Communication, issues concerning the socio-political status of children and girls are structured around specific objectives, each supported by a series of actions. In addition, this document also refers to the priority areas defined in the Millennium Development Goals¹⁰.

The European Union identified children in poverty as a target group in the *Common Outlines and Common Objectives of the National Action Plans for Social Inclusion*¹¹. Preventing and combating child poverty and social exclusion is therefore essential for stronger social cohesion and sustainable development. While most EU Member States recognise these facts

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ *Millennium Development Goals*, <<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>>.

¹¹ http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/child_poverty_en.htm

and are launching or already have in place policies to address child poverty and social exclusion, these policies are still at very different stages of implementation and considerable differences in outcomes remain a fact. In 2008, the Social Protection Committee (SPC) endorsed the report entitled *Child poverty and child well-being in the EU*¹², which consists of three parts:

- I. An evaluative review of child poverty and social exclusion in the EU;
- II. Policy monitoring and assessment of child poverty and child well-being in EU Member States;
- III. Conclusions and ISG proposal for a set of SPC recommendations aimed at better monitoring and assessing child poverty and well-being at EU and country levels.

The aim of the report is to illustrate how the current commonly agreed EU indicators and related statistics can be used to explore an issue and contribute to the mutual learning process. Unfortunately, the report does not tackle the problem of girl child poverty separately from the poverty of children in general.

In general, a review of text on the girl child in the EU shows few documents that are exclusively devoted to the problem and the situation of the girl child in the EU. Most documents adopted at EU level concern the status and the situation of children in general. More focus should be placed in future on the status of the girl child, and documents that deal with the girl child as a separate issue should be prepared and adopted.

¹² Indicators Sub-Group (ISG) of the Social Protection Committee, *Child poverty and child well-being in the EU*, 17 January 2008.

2. Elaboration of the concepts of the girl child

2.1. Historical perspective in the discussion of the status and the rights of the girl child

At its 42nd Session in 1998, the Commission on the Status of Women reaffirmed the chapter IV.L The Girl-Child of the Beijing PfA¹³ and made proposals for accelerating the implementation of its strategic objectives¹⁴ in accordance with other international normative documents¹⁵. The suggested guiding principles were outlined in the document entitled “*Agreed Conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on the Critical Areas of Concern of the Beijing Platform for Action 1996-2005*”¹⁶. The promotion and the protection of the human rights of the girl child were considered in the following order:

- Preventing and eradicating the sale of children, child prostitution and pornography,
- focusing on the situation of adolescent girls and young mothers,
- monitoring changes in cultural attitudes,
- awareness-raising campaigns and gender training targeted at law enforcement and justice system officials with regard to the rights of children, giving special attention to the girl child,

¹³ Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995, United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13, chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

¹⁴ Cf. part 1.1. of this study: The girl child’s rights, the rights of the child and women’s rights.

¹⁵ I.e. the *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action* adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

¹⁶ Agreed Conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on the Critical Areas of Concern of the Beijing Platform for Action 1996-2005, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for the Advancement of Women, pp. 67-75. ST/ESA/304.

- recognising and promoting the contribution of girls and boys to development,
- ensuring equal access by girls and boys to food, education and health.

Proposals for improving the status of the girl child are related to the following areas of social life: education and empowerment of the girl child; health needs of girls; girls in armed conflicts; trafficking, which includes prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation; labour and the girl child. It should also be remembered that the “*Agreed Conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on the Critical Areas of Concern*” in the chapter on education identify groups of girls with special needs: girls from migrant families, refugee and displaced girls, girls from ethnic minorities, indigenous girls, orphaned girls and girls with disabilities. One of the conclusions refers to the importance of the holistic and comprehensive approach to the status and social development of the girl child. Special stress is laid upon challenging persisting gender stereotypes.

In the EU the area of armed conflicts in regard to the status of children and the girl child is covered by the *EU Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict*. The document was presented at the December 2003 meeting of the Council and prepared by the Council Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM)¹⁷. The Guidelines propose that the particular vulnerability of the girl child should be recognised in conflict and post-conflict situations, specifically in monitoring sexual and gender-based violence against children, which constitutes a crime specific to armed conflicts¹⁸. The prevailing motive of this commitment regarding girls in armed conflicts is connected to multilateral politics outside the EU.

¹⁷ 15634/03. http://www.essex.ac.uk/armedcon/story_id/000165.pdf.

¹⁸ Apart from girls attention is placed on: refugees, displaced, separated, abducted, affected by HIV/AIDS, disabled, subject to sexual exploitation and those in detention.

Recent UN documents relating to the status of the girl child and social development derive from the Expert Group Meeting held in September 2006 and from the 51st session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The report entitled “*Elimination of all Forms of discrimination and violence against girl child*”¹⁹ of the Expert Group Meeting of the Division for the Advancement of Women identified some very bad conditions that constituted the reality faced by the girl child.

Harmful traditional practices, sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation were defined as serious acts of violence. In connection with the Beijing PfA it was stated that girls are subjected to discrimination and violence from the earliest stage of their life and that they have less access to social assets than boys. Reference was made to the Secretary General’s report on the ten-year review of the Beijing PfA and the following topics were highlighted: access to secondary education and job opportunities, eradication of sex work by children and improved collection of data on the situation of the girl child. In the *2005 World Summit Resolution 60/141 on the girl child*, health and sexual health were mentioned along with access to education. To ensure that girls acquire the education, knowledge, skills and opportunities they need in order to live up to their full potential, the human rights approach should be applied as the framework for all interventions.

The girl child as a social group is declared to be the most invisible entity in society and as such is left behind in human development. The two most important international instruments for girls’ rights, CRC and CEDAW, are not being implemented adequately. The issue of the girl child is regionally and locally conditioned and it is therefore insufficient to address it at the level of the state. One of the most important statements in the aforementioned document²⁰ relates to age segmentation, since it confirms that many interventions target young children

¹⁹ EGM/Girl Child/2006/REPORT.

www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/elim-disc-viol-girlchild/EGM%20Report_FINAL.pdf

²⁰ Ibid.

(for early intervention) or older adolescents (for catch-up interventions). As a result, many at-risk girls between the age of 6 and 14 years are left out. The report looks at domestic work and the HIV/AIDS pandemic as aspects which affect the well-being of the girl child and stresses the wider spectrum of globalisation with its adverse effects on the status of girls. Unequal trade and economic policies worsen poverty and income inequalities worldwide while global advertising campaigns frequently commercialise women and thus negatively influence the self-esteem of girls. The document “*Elimination of all Forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child*” includes marginalized groups of girls and stresses that the risk of severe and multiple forms of discrimination and violence should be reflected in policies, legislation and programming. Among the sub-groups mention is also made of lesbian girls, which is quite remarkable compared to the other references analysed.

Another issue addressed in the report²¹ is the comment on the existing determinants of the status of the girl child. As stated, data should be collected, compiled, analysed and disseminated at national and sub-national levels, addressing specific challenges and particular groups of girls. Data should be systematically disaggregated not only by sex, but by age as well. The segmentation should be as follows:

• < 1 year	- infancy
• 1-4 years	- early childhood
• 5-9 years	- middle childhood
• 10-14 years	- early adolescence
• 15-18 years	- late adolescence

In its Report on the 51st Session, the Commission on the Status of Women presented the “*Agreed conclusions on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child*”²² and initiated action by the Economic and Social Council. Among other

²¹ Ibid.

²² Economic and Social Council Official Records, 2007 Supplement No. 7 (E/2007/27-E/CN.6/2007/9).

topics, those of poverty, education, gender stereotypes, health, child labour, armed conflicts, humanitarian assistance to girls, violence and discrimination and girls in high-risk situations are tackled. The document includes ideas on how to improve the discriminatory social conditions which affect the status of the girl child, among them:

- conducting research on the causes, including root causes, of the discontinuation of education by girls,
- role of formal and non-formal education in poverty eradication, particularly for those who are dropouts and live in poverty,
- increased access of girls to information and communications technology (ICT),
- cooperation and dialogue between Governments and all relevant actors,
- the media portrayal of gender stereotypes, prejudices and violence, based on the equality principle,
- paying special attention to adequate food and nutrition,
- paying attention to the special needs of adolescents, including raising awareness about eating disorders, and campaigns on sexual and reproductive health,
- counselling for girls and boys on interpersonal relationships, sexual and reproductive health and sexually transmitted infections (STI), including HIV/AIDS,
- prevention of early pregnancy and emphasizing the equal rights and responsibilities of both girls and boys,
- advocacy and rights-based awareness-raising programmes directed at eliminating all forms of violence and discrimination against girls,

- access to decent work, equal payment and protection from economic exploitation, discrimination, sexual harassment, violence and abuse in the workplace, including national action plans to eliminate the worst forms of child labour (commercial sexual exploitation, slave-like practices, forced and bonded labour, trafficking, and hazardous forms of child labour),
- promoting the right of girls to express themselves freely and stimulating them to become involved in decision-making processes.

In the *Statement of the European Union* for the General Debate at the 51st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the EU highlighted the difference between declared and legal gender equality and social realities²³. Discrimination in Europe is specific as girls attain an even higher level of formal education than boys, which is not reflected in adequate positioning of females in vocational training and on the labour market. Some areas of concern are adequately covered by policies and programmes, e.g. the Daphne programme to combat violence against children is mentioned. In conclusion, a reference to the Commission's programme *Investing in People 2007 – 2013*²⁴ is made, but the highlight of EU intervention in discussing the girl child's status and social development is the accentuation of the cross-sectoral dimensions of the issue and the importance of sexual and reproductive health in confronting the feminisation of poverty.

3. Guidelines for structuring and interpreting the indicators in respect of the status of the girl child

3.1. Reaffirming and structuring the quantitative databases

In reaffirming and structuring the existing quantitative databases (Eurostat, WHO, HBSC, OECD PISA) these specified criteria are used:

²³ *Statement of the European Union* for the general Debate at the 51st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. New York. February 2007.

²⁴ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament - Investing in people - Communication on the thematic programme for human and social development and the financial perspectives for 2007-2013 - COM/2006/0018 final.

- availability and comparability of the data presentation,
- content relevance in relation to the areas of concern,
- age segmentation in relation to the definition of the child in the CRC (up to 18 years),
- age segmentation in relation to the expert proposal²⁵ (10 to 15 years of age, 16 to 24 years of age),
- topicality of the collected data.

It should be mentioned that some areas of the lives of girls are not easily defined either in quantitative or in qualitative terms as there are no scientifically unified and accepted methodological tools for doing so. Gender stereotyping in the media and in school books is a known subject of sociological research, but there are no defined standards. The same is true for potentially harmful media and new ICT content, which could seriously impair the physical, mental or moral development of minors since the notion of what is potentially harmful differs from state to state.

Other areas considered to be very problematic and relating to the violation of girls' rights have not been the subject of consistent data-collection, e.g. violence against girls.

3.2. Selection of the areas of concern

The areas of concern have been selected from the viewpoint of the girl child's rights. The topics and areas covered by the indicators are those which are most often emphasised in the documents (see chapter II.1.1.). As to the ideas and arguments of the normative documents analysed, a few inherent criteria for the formulation of indicators are considered: social inclusion, social exclusion, social image vs. self-image, social competence vs. traditional role.

²⁵ Cf. report *Elimination of all Forms of discrimination and violence against girl child*. EGM/Girl Child/2006/REPORT.

www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/elim-disc-viol-girlchild/EGM%20Report_FINAL.pdf

3.3. The context

The indicators have been formulated based on an analysis of the various national and EU policies and socio-cultural norms and development strategies concerning the status and social opportunities of the girl child. As the status and the social opportunities of the girl child do not feature much in EU documents and strategic orientations at present, it is very important to formulate indicators in this area. The lack of representation of the girl child in the socio-political sphere in the EU has to be overcome.

II. INDICATORS OF THE STATUS AND SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES OF THE GIRL CHILD

1. Formulating the indicators

1.1 Subject, topics and method

Considering the strategic objectives²⁶ declared in the Platform for Action formulated at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the *Agreed Conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on the Critical Areas of Concern of the Beijing Platform for Action* and the *Agreed conclusions on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child*, and also bearing in mind the other indirectly analysed materials, the priority topics concerning the girl child are health, reproductive and sexual health; education; cultural attitudes and practices (discriminatory and non-discriminatory discourses and behaviour); violence, sexual violence and sexual exploitation; trafficking; labour; girls in armed conflicts; active participation in political and social life; minorities, with an emphasis on the poor.

²⁶ Cf. part 1.1.

In the EU²⁷, the potential for the social development of discourse on the girl child lies in several areas: reproductive and sexual health; education; cultural attitudes and practices; trafficking, violence and sexual exploitation; girls in armed conflicts.

The first three topics are ultimately the most important. Selection is based on two considerations: the availability of reliable statistics and the possibility of integrating the pertinent issues, such as poverty, violence and the presence of cultural minorities, into the interpretation of the selected areas. In addition, labour determinants and social participation of the girl child are implicitly tackled.

The indicators are based on the related socio-cultural platform. Their analysis and interpretation were developed from obtainable databases, relevant expert studies and the answers to the questionnaire prepared for the purposes of this study.

The indicators consist of both quantitative and qualitative information. The main idea is to combine various statistics so as to provide a qualitative analysis and interpretation of the status of the girl child. The reasoning behind this approach is based on two facts, one empirical and one scientific. The indicators regarding the status of the girl child should be of a much more complex nature than those on the status of women. Various aspects of the girl child's life and opportunities have to be explained through a very limited number of indicators, while the status of women is surveyed from several different perspectives each of which is analysed separately. In addition, the quantitative data provides insights into certain specific aspects of the issue, but ignores other layers of the same reality. By structuring the insight into a certain area of the girl child's life and opportunities through combining two different data series, we obtain a more complex assessment of the situation as a whole and thus provide guidelines for further policy.

²⁷ The following two sources related to the Beijing PfA serve as a reference: *Statement of the European Union* for the general Debate at the 51st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. New York. February 2007; and the European Parliament Resolution on the follow-up to the Beijing Action Platform, (2000/2020(INI).

1.2. Definition and aim of the indicators

The 1st indicator:

Sex and relationship education: parameters of sexuality-related education in schooling (primary and secondary)

Improvement of sexual and reproductive health plays a major role in the social development of the girl child's status and options. It may be achieved by ensuring equal access to sexual and reproductive health, providing information on different aspects of sexuality, and through contemporary population policies. The sexual and reproductive health measures include protection against sexually transmitted infections, unwanted or unplanned pregnancies, infant and maternal mortality. Prevention, however, also has a much wider and subtler impact on the rights of the girl child. Informed, self-aware and empowered girls are more likely to confront sexual abusers and are more capable of recognising the dangers of sexual exploitation and crimes²⁸. Another inherent characteristic of informed and empowered girls in regard to their sexual and reproductive health is a positive body self-image devoid of self-objectification.

Nevertheless, sexual reproductive health also affects the way girls' self-esteem, self-perception and actual identity are built. Sexuality education can affect the way girls and boys relate in terms of respect, recognition and power and therefore can be determinant in the degree of girls' inclusion and participation in their peer group, at school and in society at large.

²⁸ As stated in the report of the Expert Group Meeting of the Division for the Advancement of Women in the collaboration of UNICEF entitled *Elimination of all Forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child*, the socialization of boys and men frequently focuses on controlling the sexuality and reproductive and productive labour of women and girls. The repression of female sexuality, including an over-emphasis on female virginity and fertility, is a driving force behind much of the discrimination and subjugation of girls.

The socio-economic degradation and poverty determinant is also seen in the status of poor girls in regard to their reproductive and sexual health²⁹. As poor girls or girls from poor families are less informed and have inferior access to health services and programmes, they more often become very young mothers. As a result, their families become even poorer and the unwanted, unplanned or very early pregnancies become an important element in the vicious circle of poverty. The problem is even more persistent because early pregnancy and motherhood is in many cases the cause for quitting school. This perspective on the feminisation of poverty is another important argument in favour of highlighting the preventive function of sexual and reproductive health. Apart from poor girls, the most vulnerable group in the segment of early pregnancies and motherhood are adolescents. It was confirmed that girls between the age of 15 and 19 years often take great sexual and reproductive risks. The Population Action International (PAI) report confirmed that pregnancy in this period of life can be a cause of death both for the young mother and for the child³⁰.

The 1st indicator consists of parameters (status, school subjects, themes, standards, responsible institutions, target groups, religious and ideological impact, monitoring, perception by girls/boys) for assessing the sexuality education applied in schools in the EU Member States and provides the determinants of its quality. This indicator aims to improve sexuality education as such and/or further develop the tools for surveying sexuality education at schools in the EU Member States.

The indicator is based upon the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and World Health Organization's (WHO) research and study, *Sexuality education in Europe - A reference guide to policies and practices*³¹, and on the integrated comparable data from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) source³².

²⁹ Population Action International, *A Measure of Survival: Calculating Women's Sexual and Reproductive Risk*,
<http://www.populationaction.org/Publications/Reports/Measure_of_Survival/Summary.shtml>.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ <http://www.epha.org/>

³² <http://www.hbsc.org/>

The 2nd indicator:

Body self-image: dissatisfaction of girls and boys with their bodies

Girls internalise socio-cultural attitudes, norms and precepts towards the body and sexuality and treat them as self-imposed imperatives on their own bodies and sexuality.

Girls often regard their own bodies merely as a sexually interesting and exciting object to be invested in personal relations. As a study on the weight issue among young people puts it:

“Girls tend to view their bodies primarily as a means of attracting others...”³³

Body self-image can play a crucial role for another aspect of the girl child's health, i.e. in relation to eating disorders. The idea of body image in relation to weight therefore needs to be explained. Eating disorders are frequently connected to bulimia and anorexia, although the issue of overweight, which has mostly psychological and psychosocial roots as well, is becoming increasingly important. Overweight is often the consequence of unhealthy eating habits, which are also connected to socioeconomic status. Young people troubled by overweight to the extent that they cannot even talk about it are “*less likely to come from higher socio-economic groups*”.³⁴

The 2nd indicator on body self-image comprises data on dissatisfaction with their bodies among girls and boys aged 15. Although the indicator overall tackles the problem of bad self-image among girls and boys, its aim is also to point out that there is a connection between the area of health care and that of self-image, health being defined as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing³⁵. The comparison of data on dissatisfaction with body weight and with the body mass index of girls and boys aged 15 reveals the fact that the self-image can be negative whether girls or boys are overweight, normal or too thin.

³³ Mulvihill, C. Németh, A. and Vereecken, C. “Body image, weight control and body weight”, in *Young people's health in context*, HBSC 2001/2002, <<http://www.hbsc.org/publications/reports.html>>.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ *Agreed Conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on the Critical Areas of Concern of the Beijing Platform for Action*, session on Women and health.

Analysis of this correlation is important because it can serve as an argument against culturally imposed images of girls and young women, which are very destructive as they can lead to eating disorders and worsen the self-perceived body image, sexual attraction and vitality; these all have important roles in the sexual health of the girl child.

The indicator is structured with reference to the HBSC databases, *Body image, weight control and body weight*: Young people who are overweight according to BMI by sex, by age (13 and 15 years), and Young people dissatisfied with their body weight by sex, by age (11, 13, 15 years)³⁶.

The 3rd indicator:

Educational accomplishments: comparison of 15-year-old students' performance in mathematics and science and the proportion of girl students in tertiary education in the field of science, mathematics and computing and in the field of teacher training and education science

Although girls on average perform better in education than boys, sex segregation by field of education is very persistent. Gender roles are reinforced by traditional beliefs and practices in schooling, studying and making job and career choices. The persistent prejudice of sex-differentiated talents and capabilities are already reflected at a very early age and could seriously influence the life choices of many girls. In the document *Agreed conclusions on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child*, the fragment on education and training offers some proposals, among them encouragement and support for "girls' and boys' interest and involvement in the non-traditional fields and occupations"³⁷.

³⁶ <http://www.hbsc.org/>

³⁷ *Agreed Conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on the Critical Areas of Concern of the Beijing Platform for Action*, session on Women and Health.

The indicator includes two series of data and the comparison between them. The latter consists of confronting the mean score girls–boys difference in performance in scientific and mathematical literacy, and the girls–boys difference in the related educational field, expressed by the percentage of female students at tertiary educational level. The two series of data in the existing mode cannot be compared by means of numerical evaluation because of the different nature of the data and the different years from which (for reasons of availability) it stems. However, the comparative interpretation is still relevant as it is based on numerically expressed values of performances and school accomplishments. The indicator on education accomplishments shows that the involvement of girls in the area of tertiary educational level (ISCED 5-6) is relatively low if compared to their scientific and mathematical talents. Girls are under-represented in the related educational field to a much greater degree than one would expect given their scientific and mathematical literacy performance. This discrepancy between girls' talents and the number of girls who actually study in the related fields continues later on in girls' lives. It affects the choices of profession of girls and young women. The aim of the indicator is to help diminish the under-representation of girls in certain educational fields. The comparison between girls' performances and the choices they either make or are forced into can be used as an argument for promoting non-traditional choices of studying/professional disciplines.

The indicator is structured with reference to two databases. The performance of girls in mathematical and scientific literacy is presented by the 2006 OECD PISA research study³⁸. The proportion of girls on the ISCED 5-6 is obtained by Eurostat research, valid for 2005³⁹.

³⁸ <http://www.pisa.oecd.org/>

³⁹ <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/>

2. Application of indicators in the survey of the girl child's status and progress

2.1. The 1st indicator - sex and relationship education: parameters of sexuality-related education in schooling (primary and secondary)

Parameters of sex and relationship education provision⁴⁰

<i>Status</i>	mandatory			non-mandatory							
<i>National agency</i>	Ministry for Education			Ministry for Health		other:					
<i>Involvement of NGO</i>	IPPF			other:							
<i>Implementation</i>	cross curricular			autonomous subject							
<i>Cross-curricular</i>	biology	ethics	philosophy	sociology	society	other(s):					
<i>Autonomous subject</i> (term)											
<i>Impact of national ideology/epistemological perspective*</i>	no			yes which:							
<i>Religious impact</i>	no			yes which:							
<i>Methods</i>	formal	interactive	peer education	role play	video	other:					
<i>Adequacy</i>	evaluation/monitoring			minimum standards							
<i>Providers</i>	teachers	doctors	nurses	NGO activists/ professionals	clerics	others:					
<i>Providers' competences</i>	education non-mandatory			education mandatory which:							
<i>Needs addressed</i>	local		cultural diversity		gender						
<i>Minorities addressed</i>	economically excluded	refugee	migrants	ethnicity	disabled						
<i>Quotas of school hours</i>	primary education:			secondary education:							
<i>Age at which sexuality education begins:</i>											
<i>Issues</i>	human anatomy/ physiology, sexual development interpersonal relationship, affection, intimacy, sexual expression/activity conception, pregnancy, birth contraception (incl. use of condom), abortion safe sexuality/ risks, sexually transmitted diseases gender roles and sexual equality sexual abuse and violence, dating violence, sexual harassment sexual orientation body image										
<i>Segmentation of issues as regards primary-secondary education/age/class:</i>											
<i>Research on effectiveness</i>	no			yes which:							

⁴⁰ The parameters are based on the descriptive indicators of sexuality education in Europe, structured in the referential IPPF and WHO study in the framework of SAFE (Sexual Awareness for Europe) project, supported by the European Commission Directorate General for Health and Consumer Protection.

<i>Age at which children receive sexuality education (children's perception) – gender-disaggregated data:</i>		
<i>Perception of children (boys, girls) whether the sexuality education meets their needs (primary and secondary level)</i>	no	yes

* As stated in the IPPF and WHO study sexuality education provision may reflect dominant national ideological concepts, e.g. family life, or certain scientific perspective, e.g. gender.

The indicator on sexuality education provision consists of parameters for the complex and effective implementation of the subject in the school curriculum and its survey. Adequate sexuality education plays a dominant part in the development of the girl child's sexual and reproductive health. The scientific research, published in the IPPF and WHO study, pointed to a certain trend of correlation between sexuality education (the age at which children receive factual sexuality education) and use of contraception (use of contraception at the last intercourse in the group of 15-year-olds). Although the relation between the abortion rate and the use of contraception was not established because of lack of adequate data on abortion, contraception use is the dominant factor in the prevention of unwanted or unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. The focus of this study is the girl child, so it should be stressed that sexuality education provision should respect the gender differences in physiology. However, it is equally important to provide boys with adequate knowledge, awareness and responsibility in regard to all sexuality issues. Parameters of sexuality education provision will help to obtain comparable data in this field from the EU Member States.

According to IPPF and WHO sources, sexuality education at schools is mandatory in most EU Member States. The age at which sexuality education officially begins varies considerably. In some countries children become involved with the subject as early as 5 or 6, while in other countries this does not happen before the age of 14. Sexuality education provision is a subject in the school curriculum or special programmes also carried out by non-governmental organisations and health institutions (Annex, Table 1)⁴¹.

⁴¹ In this chapter, the IPPF and WHO data, published in 2006, is supplemented by the answers to the 2007 Slovenian Presidency questionnaire.

The subject of sexuality education, also known within Europe as “family life education”, “life skills education” and “sex and relationships education”⁴², is presented within traditional school subjects, mainly biology, ethics, philosophy or religion. In recent years it has been integrated into subjects such as “human health”, “human studies”, “social science”, “citizenship”, “society”, “personal, social and health education”, to name a few. In some countries, sexuality education constitutes a school subject of its own (e.g. “sexuality education and interpersonal relationships” in Cyprus, “relations among members of different sexes” in Greece, “education for family life” in Poland; since 2005 it has also been possible to provide sexuality education as a separate subject in Spain).

In every case it is taught by teachers, medical staff or trained sex educators and in some cases members of the clergy may also be involved. In most countries, sexuality education is standardized either by ministries of education and/or health or by local communities and schools. Sometimes even teachers themselves are responsible for organising sexuality education provision by choosing perspectives, selecting topics and methods, and time-scheduling. Non-governmental organisations often cooperate with schools or take care of out-of-school sexuality education programmes. In most countries the leading national non-governmental agency is an associate member of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). The non-governmental mode of informing the children on sexuality matters usually comprises peer education.

Sexuality education differs thematically. It either includes exclusively biological and/or physiological facts on the one hand and religious beliefs on the other, or it is very complex, sometimes also integrating the issues of gender equality, self-image, and sexual orientation. The practice of the majority of countries lies between these two extremes, integrating relationships, health and safety aspects in addition to physiological basics.

⁴² IPPF (International Planned Parenthood Federation) and WHO, Sexuality Education in Europe - A reference guide to policies and practices,
<http://www.euro.who.int/Document/RHP/SexEd_in_Europe.pdf, p. 9.

The IPPF and WHO reference publication offers some best practice examples of sexuality education policies. Denmark has found a solution for the greatest common disadvantage of the subject, i.e. non-competence of teachers regarding sexuality education knowledge and skills. Since the beginning of 2007 it has been mandatory for all colleges of education to offer courses in sexuality education. The school subject is also monitored. Luxembourg's report emphasises inventive teaching methods: students' presentations, role-plays and workshops. In its report for the IPPF and WHO study, Finland stressed that sexuality education begins in kindergartens. This has to be considered an adequate solution, especially as a counterpart to intrusive pornography or erotic images in the urban environment, on mobile phones, in TV, on the internet and in the printed media. As a consequence, Finnish teenagers are informed and aware of the potential risks of commercialised sexual images and services. In some other countries sexuality education officially begins at a very early age (5-, 6- or 7-year-old children). However, these age standards have to be treated with some caution. In the IPPF and WHO study, the data on the age when sexuality education officially begins and the age when sexuality education is actually received shows an obvious discrepancy (Annex, Table 1). This discrepancy might suggest that sexuality education is so ambiguous and/or inadequate that it is incomprehensible for children of such a young age.

The sexual habits of children should be surveyed with reference to the selected and obtainable sexuality education parameters. If we correlate the data provided by the IPPF and WHO study on contraception usage (percentage of 15-year-old girls/boys using contraception at last intercourse) and the age at which girls/boys begin to practice intercourse, in the context of individual Member States, a certain trend may be observed. Countries with low contraception usage in the group of girls, with the exception of Denmark, also have low proportions of girls in the group of 15-year-olds who have experienced intercourse.

The use of contraception at the last intercourse by boys is low in Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Portugal and the United Kingdom. The low usage of contraception in the group of boys is correlated to a "late" beginning of sexual intercourse (exceptions are Denmark and the UK), while this is not as clear in the group of girls. In all countries enumerated in the context of low contraception usage (with the exception of Denmark and the UK) sexuality education is actually received at a comparatively late age (Annex, Table 2).

According to the WHO data, the abortion rates for girls aged under 20 have been constantly growing in the period from 2000 to 2005 in some of the EU Member States (Annex, Table 4). The reasons underlying abortions are often unwanted or unplanned pregnancies. The provision of sexuality education may play an important role in reducing sexual risk behaviour and in preventing unwanted or unplanned pregnancies. In Member States with restrictive abortion policies, sexuality education can play an important role in preventing illegal and unsafe abortions.

Information from the IPPF and WHO databases indicates a relation between high abortion/birth rate and the use of contraception/sexuality education in the group of 15 year old girls (and boys). In general, there is no clear correlation between the status of sexual education and the use of contraception on the one hand and the abortion/birth rate on the other. There is also no evident correspondence between the abortion/birth rate and the average age of children's theoretical and practical initiation into sexual life. The norms, habits and facts relating to girls' sexuality and reproductive potential depend on various complex and extremely profound socio-cultural conditions and they differ greatly among the different EU Member States. In addition to socio-demographic factors, a determining factor in early birth and abortion rates might also be the information and awareness level concerning sexual health, the use of contraception and sexual norms and habits in the specific socio-cultural environment. Even though many of these factors cannot be wholly subjected to quantitative research methods, the relation between the use of contraception and the characteristics of sexuality education might be articulated in scientific terms.

Although the survey of early birth/abortion rates in the EU Member States presented a lack of any clear cause–effect relation between sexuality education/use of contraception and the birth/abortion rate, it must be emphasised that sexual education, access to contraception and related promotion activities remain a necessity. “*The socialization of boys and men frequently focuses on controlling the sexuality and reproductive and productive labour of women and girls. The repression of female sexuality, including an over-emphasis on female virginity and fertility, is a driving force behind much of the discrimination and subjugation of girls.*”⁴³ Therefore, sexuality education, especially in its preventive function, remains one of the most important issues of girls' sexual health because it ensures the empowerment of girls in regard to their own bodies and reproductive capabilities.

⁴³ Document of the Expert Group Meeting of the Division for the Advancement of Women in collaboration with UNICEF entitled *Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against girl child*.

2.2. The 2nd indicator: Body self-image: dissatisfaction of girls and boys with their bodies

Countries	15-year-olds, year 2001/2002							
	% of young people who are overweight according to BMI				% of young people dissatisfied with their body weight		% of young people engaged in dieting and weight control behaviour	
	Pre-obese	Obese	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Austria	7,5	10,3	0,7	3,3	44,9	25,9	21,2	7,9
Belgium (French)*	7,9	10,3	1,6	1,3	54,1	28,6	24,7	8,2
Belgium (Flemish)*	7,2	10,7	1,9	3,3	54,8	25,3	17,5	4,7
Bulgaria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cyprus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Czech Republic	5,0	11,5	0,5	1,6	39,0	16,3	28,7	9,2
Denmark	8,6	12,8	0,9	1,4	48,2	22,8	35,8	10,9
Estonia	3,8	8,1	0,8	1,2	34,9	9,4	16,4	4,4
Finland	7,9	14,3	1,4	2,8	43,3	19,8	15,5	3,7
France	7,6	10,3	2,4	1,8	41,8	20,6	20,5	6,0
Germany	5,5	13,7	1,1	2,1	51,9	32,2	19,3	5,6
Greece	7,5	20,3	1,1	2,7	33,2	24,0	25,4	10,3
Hungary	7,5	11,7	1,8	3,7	41,2	21,1	36,2	11,2
Ireland	10,8	9,6	1,8	1,4	48,3	21,4	23,5	5,5
Italy	6,6	17,1	1,1	2,5	37,1	18,9	27,3	6,9
Latvia	3,5	7,9	0,7	0,7	38,8	10,6	16,3	2,5
Lithuania	3,0	4,4	0,3	0,6	42,5	9,0	21,2	4,4
Luxembourg	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Malta	11,9	18,6	4,8	9,3	31,7	22,7	23,5	9,6
Netherlands	7,1	8,8	0,8	1,0	50,6	23,7	12,7	4,1
Poland	4,2	7,0	1,1	0,8	56,5	19,3	25,4	6,7
Portugal	6,4	15,1	0,8	1,7	48,0	24,1	13,8	2,4
Romania	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Slovakia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Slovenia	6,2	16,6	0,8	1,9	59,9	24,4	27,7	8,1
Spain	10,0	17,7	0,7	2,9	49,0	27,8	18,8	5,4
Sweden	6,0	12,7	1,1	1,9	41,9	18,0	15,2	4,9
UK (England)*	10,1	11,8	2,8	4,5	46,4	24,4	25,0	9,3
UK (Scotland)*	8,1	12,6	2,3	1,7	52,3	20,6	29,3	7,8
UK (Wales)*	4,4	16,6	3,0	5,6	52,0	26,5	30,4	9,7

Source: HBSC 2001/2002, <http://www.hbsc.org/publications/reports.html>.

*Data exists only for England, Scotland and Wales separately; Data exists only for Belgium (French) and Belgium (Flemish) separately.

Dissatisfaction with body image constitutes a negative psychological force in girls, which presents a great obstacle in their social options. The problem is that, unlike boys, girls perceive the dissatisfaction with weight as a personal problem and are not able to grasp it from the social perspective. This inner subjection is caused by the images and status of girls and young women present in the media. The culturally prescribed image of the thin, anorexic and sexually precocious girl functions as the norm and girls are led to believe that they will be accepted if they submit to it. They suppress their own well-being and are not able to understand that the culturally imposed norms are *a priori* unattainable because they are detached from the realities of the girls' bodies.

The indicator shows that the dissatisfaction of girls with their body image regarding weight is not correlated to their actual body mass. The discrepancy between body weight and girls' perception of their bodies grows with age and is the biggest when puberty culminates. It is important to state that the weight-related body self-image has no grounds in reality. The socio-cultural environment with the prevailing eating habits, i.e. overeating and the consequent overweight problem, is not a phenomenon which would lead to large-scale dissatisfaction with body self-image by girls in the EU. It is clear that personal discontent with their looks is the result of repressive cultural image norms. This important idea should be promoted in the context of intimate relations, girls' sexual and body self-awareness and eating disorders (bulimia, anorexia, overweight).

The indicator proves that the poor self-perceived body image of girls worsens in late adolescence (Annex, Table 5). The research found that the assimilation of normative cultural repressions relating to body image is much stronger in girls than in boys. The gender difference in relation to dissatisfaction with body weight is characteristic for the age groups of 15-year-olds and 13-year-olds; the difference increases with age, so that in the group of 11-year-olds it is less pronounced⁴⁴. The researchers have confirmed that there is no clear correlation in girls between dissatisfaction with body weight, dieting and weight control behaviour. However, they emphasized the phenomenon of problem concealment in girls and boys, and the connection between weight control and delayed sexual maturation⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ Mulvihill, C. Németh, A. and Vereecken, C., *ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Despite the fact that there is no scientific evidence regarding dissatisfaction with weight leading to dieting, the core problem is the poor self-image of girls. Psychologically it is defined as the element that induces eating disorders, and it was stated by the cited researchers that it has a negative influence on girls' potential as sexual beings. This is most important in the period of adolescence, when, of course, sexuality becomes an integral part of our personality.

2.3. The 3rd indicator: educational accomplishments - comparison of 15-year-old students' performance in mathematics and science and the proportion of girl students in tertiary education in the field of science, mathematics and computing and in the field of teacher training and education science

**negative figures mean that girls perform better*

2006	Science	Mathematic	Science, mathematics and computing (2005)*	Teacher training and education science (2005)
	boys rel girls	boys rel girls	% Girls (ISCED level 5)	% Girls (ISCED level 5)
Austria	8	23	33,86%	74,80%
Belgium	1	7	33,60%	70,18%
Bulgaria	-17	-4	48,91%	66,20%
Cyprus	:	:	34,83%	90,85%
Czech Republic	5	11	35,99%	74,31%
Denmark	9	10	31,68%	70,71%
Estonia	-4	1	38,76%	89,28%
Finland	-3	12	40,62%	80,47%
France	3	6	:	:
Germany	7	20	34,43%	68,60%
Greece	-11	5	38,56%	70,12%
Hungary	6	10	32,50%	72,80%
Ireland	0	11	40,95%	78,87%
Italy	3	17	48,91%	86,72%
Latvia	-7	5	30,03%	85,85%
Lithuania	-9	2	34,86%	77,62%
Luxembourg	9	17	:	:
Malta	:	:	34,76%	72,08%
Netherlands	7	13	19,86%	73,48%
Poland	3	9	32,68%	71,80%
Portugal	5	15	48,85%	84,00%
Romania	-2	7	56,19%	77,44%
Slovakia	6	14	33,43%	74,12%
Slovenia	-8	5	31,93%	80,39%
Spain	4	9	34,52%	78,32%
Sweden	1	5	42,01%	76,64%
United Kingdom	10	17	36,21%	73,96%

Source: OECD, PISA Database, 2006, <http://www.pisa.oecd.org/document/2/0,3343,en_32252351_32236191_39718850_1_1_1_1,00.html

Source: Eurostat

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1996,45323734&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&screen=welcomeref&open=/edtr/educ/edu_isced97&language=en&product=EU_MASTER_education_training&root=EU_MASTER_education_training&scrollto=0.

*The field of Science, mathematics and computing includes life science, physical science, mathematics and statistics, computing.

The indicator addresses the discrepancy between the performance/talents of girls in mathematical and scientific literacy (which do not significantly differ from those of boys), and the choices of girls' and boys' further educational fields at tertiary level, still following the traditional educational paths.

The low rate of girls in science, mathematics and computing and the high rate of girls in teacher training and education science on the educational level ISCED 5-6 show that many girls may be strongly influenced by prejudice about male and female "natural" talents and traditional vocational roles into the corresponding field of education, probably even against their wishes and interests. On the socio-cultural level, the traditional gender roles in schooling and vocation repress the diversity of prospects, which could arise from a gender point of view. Consequently, this also causes an immense lack in sustainable socio-economic development.

It has been shown, by a comparison of the performance in scientific and mathematical literacy of boys and girls aged 15 and girls' enrolment in the educational field of science, mathematics and computing, that girls' talents are not adequately reflected in the choice of educational field. As the comparison confirms, the gap between girls' talents and the educational field is very wide. This is the most critical factor, because the schools that the great majority of girls choose cover the fields which are socially considered to be "feminine" and of lesser social value.

The activities taken forward to encourage girls to enrol in gender non-typical education should be based on the fact that girls have a much higher reading performance than boys in all EU countries (Annex, Table 6), simultaneously accompanied by activities to ensure that boys read more and thus improve their reading capabilities. It is important to convey the notion of the existing discriminatory prejudices and practices regarding schooling to children of both sexes and thus help them to deconstruct such ideas.

In structuring the indicator, performance in scientific and mathematical literacy of 15-year-old boys and girls is compared to the girls' enrolment rate in the educational fields of science, mathematics and computing and in teacher training and education science. The gender difference in scientific and mathematical literacy is presented by the difference in mean score points, so that the boys' mean score is related to that of girls. The positive numbers reveal boys' plus points, while the negative numbers represent the girls' plus points. In education scores only girls are explicitly represented in the table.

Taking into consideration 2005, the ISCED level 5-6 girls have better representational scores in science, mathematics and computing only in Romania. The EU average is low regarding the girl representatives in this educational field: 36, 92%. The 2006 OECD PISA research reveals that girls aged 15 have much better results in performance in the scientific literacy in Bulgaria, the Baltic States, Finland, Greece, Romania and Slovenia. The performance of girls in mathematics is worse than that of boys, the exception being Bulgaria. In Estonia the boys have better results for only one mean score point and in Lithuania for two mean score points. The difference is moderate in Greece, Latvia, Slovenia and Sweden. The fallback of girls in mathematical performance is much lower than that of boys in reading performance (Annex, Table 6).

In all traditionally male fields boys predominate with some exceptions. In engineering, manufacturing and construction, boys predominate by far in all countries without exception. In agriculture and veterinary science there are ten countries with a higher proportion of females than males in this field: Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Males are differently represented in the fields which in some social environments are supposed to be more "female". Cyprus has the lowest rate of males in teacher training and education science, and Bulgaria the highest. Under-representation of males is typical for the humanities and arts as well as health and welfare. The inclination of boys to avoid these fields of education corresponds to boys' performance in reading. Girls have a much higher reading performance than boys in all EU countries, with the greatest gender difference being recorded in Bulgaria, Greece and Slovenia (Annex, Table 6).

In most EU countries men predominate over women in mathematics, science, computing and technical disciplines while women predominate over men in educational and teaching disciplines. Just as the inclusion of female skills and talents into the area of science is important, male skills should be equally present in the field of education and training. In future, the EU Member States should devote special attention to improving the gender balance in the two broad fields of science, mathematics and computing and teacher training and education science.

3. Issues for further consideration

Use of Information and Communication Technologies and protection of girls and boys from illegal and harmful content on the internet and in the ICT media

Despite extensive research done in recent years on the use of the internet and other ICT media, including surveys directed towards children and young people, there is a general lack of data disaggregated by sex. Besides the opportunities that the internet and other online technologies offer, there is also an increasingly important issue regarding the risks involved and the promotion of safer use. Girls/young women and boys/young men are exposed to different risks and illegal and harmful content.

Knowledge and empowerment of girls and young women, as well as of boys and young men, in regard to ethical use and illegal and harmful content on the Internet and in other ICT media should form an integral part of learning ICT skills. This approach should be endorsed and applied by formal educational institutions.

Monitoring the regulation of illegal and harmful content on the internet and the promotion of gender-sensitive programmes and projects, in particular those integrated into school curricula from the early stages of children's education, should be further considered as an issue for the development of an indicator in the area of empowerment of the girl child.

The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has become an essential feature of both economic and social activity across Europe. In nearly all European countries and in all age groups, however, boys/men are more regular users of both computers and the internet than girls/women (Annex, Table 8) and a significantly greater number of men than women are employed in computing throughout the EU.

Knowledge, routines and skills, relating to computers and the internet form the personal resource for all kinds of social and cultural involvements – thus they are most indicative for girls' social prosperity. The use of computers and skills relating to the internet are much more unified as a criterion of the children's socio-cultural potential than other indicators, such as membership of various organisations, these being rooted in local and national cultural traditions⁴⁶.

Discussing the importance of e-skills also introduces the “dark” sides of the thriving virtual world which connects, informs and develops. One relates to content, which may endanger children's – and especially girls' – integrity and life. Another problem is the financial incapacity of the lower classes, resulting in a lack of knowledge about the use of ICT. Girls from disadvantaged families may thus have little or no access to electronic equipment and so may also have less-developed media skills, which makes them more vulnerable to internet criminality and non-legitimate content. However, these problems have still not been successfully resolved in contemporary ICT.

⁴⁶ The results of the research on young people's (age15-30) membership of organisations (EU 15) show great difference among Member States as to the most popular organisations (sports clubs excluded). Source: Young Europeans, <http://ec.europa.eu/public-opinion/flash/fl_202_en.pdf>.

The major interconnected problems are sexual violence against children, violence and pornography. The last-mentioned could be harmful in many ways, one of which is direct: intrusive (“spam”) pornography pages on the internet promote traditional gender roles, promote unsafe sex habits and invite discriminatory, sexist and violent sexual responses in boys and men. The situation is worsened by mobile phone services, which make these contents available at any time. As much as it is important to involve children with ICT and equip them with adequate knowledge and the skills to use it, it is also important to protect them from internet abusers and empower them – especially girls – with an understanding of the issue. As the document *Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child* advises: “States should adopt stricter policies that contribute to the marginalization of the pornography industry, in particular monitoring and hindering the abuse of children, including girls, at pornographic websites (...), adopting regulations on sexually offensive advertising (...) in electronic media, which can lead to the exploitation of girls”⁴⁷.

In recent years, the awareness and knowledge of potentially harmful content has expanded and additional topics have been covered in the regulatory framework: violations of equality on the grounds of gender, race and ethnicity, inappropriate language, use/abuse of drugs, narcotics and tobacco, terror, dangerous situations and objects. Regarding the status of the girl child, priority is given to content which most severely endangers girls on a gender basis. In the discussion on ICT-related skills, two perspectives should be considered: the technological perspective and that of social awareness.

Knowledge and empowerment of girls and young women, as well as of boys and young men, in regard to ethical use and illegal and harmful content on the internet and in other ICT media should form an integral part of learning ICT skills, which should be endorsed through formal educational institutions.

⁴⁷ Cf. report *Elimination of all Forms of discrimination and violence against girl child*. EGM/Girl Child/2006/REPORT. www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/elim-disc-viol-girlchild/EGM%20Report_FINAL.pdf

The pressure of the industry which produces potentially harmful contents is so great that it cannot be confronted solely by awareness-raising and information campaigns and programmes, whether they are implemented in the school curriculum or not. The intervention of regulatory or co-regulatory mechanisms is called for⁴⁸. Besides criminalising and punishing certain types of content and their dissemination, these regulatory mechanisms also impose social norms of what is considered appropriate from the human rights perspective. Overall, the internet is becoming better regulated, where states apply regulatory systems and use co-regulation as well. However, there is a lack of regulatory authorities in the area of mobile phones. Given the nature of mobile phones, the easy availability of potentially harmful content at any time and their widespread use among children, mobile phones should be treated with the same level of seriousness as the internet.

Programmes and campaigns on the safe use of the internet and mobile phones at EU level are not provided systematically⁴⁹. In this context, special concern for girls as a group endangered by the potentially illegal and harmful contents is shown only in some Member States.

It is worth comparing girls'/boys' safety and capabilities relating to computer and internet with the means of obtaining computer knowledge and e-skills. Generally, boys more often obtain e-skills through self-study and informal assistance from colleagues, relatives and friends. On the other side, slightly more girls than boys obtain e-skills through formalised educational institutions (school, college, university, etc.).

⁴⁸ Self-regulation mechanisms were not included as they are mostly not very effective or are actually functioning as co-regulation (e.g. in Netherlands). Cf. *Kijkwijzer: The Dutch Rating System for Audiovisual Productions*, NICAM (the Netherlands Institute for the Classification of Audiovisual Media), <www.kijkwijzer.nl/engels/ekijkwijzer.htm>, and Directorate Information Society and Media, Unit A1 Audiovisual and Media Policies, *Final Report. Study on Co-Regulation Measures in the Media Sector. Study for the European Commission*, Tender DG EAC 3/4, 2006,

⁴⁹ <http://ec.europa.eu/comm/avpolicy/info_centre/library/studies/corequal-final-report.pdf>. The best-practice example could be Denmark. It is stated that the teaching of the safe use of the internet is integrated into various school subjects. The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Cultural Affairs have made a web portal, www.emu.dk/webetik, with information materials on the topic.

There are also significant differences between Member States in the percentage of males and females aged 16-24 involved in obtaining e-skills. For instance, in Romania less than 50 % of young people are involved in obtaining e-skills regardless of how they acquire knowledge on the use of computers and internet.

Although it is important to include ICT studies in schools, we must not forget that the first place where children are confronted with the internet and computer use is usually their home. Since parents are the first contact persons for children when they are faced with using computers and the internet they carry the responsibility for the computer and internet education of their children. That is why parents must be informed about the dangers and risks that children encounter on-line and must pay attention to activities that children actually perform when on-line, what sites they visit, and what they like and are fascinated by.

The ICT sector is a key contributor to EU growth and is the EU's most innovative and research-intensive sector. Without the necessary number of highly skilled employees the sector will not remain competitive. It is therefore important to encourage boys and girls to take up an ICT-related career. Although the data show that the problem of inadequate computer knowledge is not gender-specific and that many girls are as skilled as boys in ICTs, women are still under-represented in the ICT sector. By motivating and encouraging more young women to take up a career in ICT while they are still young and before they make the final choice of subjects for study, the European Commission aims to overcome the negative image and stereotype that ICT is a field *for boys only*. In order to do so, the Commission calls for the cooperation of the Member States, academia and industry. Such cooperation would ensure that the necessary action could be carried out at many different levels in the education system and at the workplace⁵⁰.

⁵⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/itgirls/index_en.htm.

Ways of obtaining e-skills: percentage of males and females aged 16-24 obtaining IT skills through formalised education, self-study or informal assistances from colleagues, relatives and friends, 2007

	Obtaining IT skills through formalised educational institution (school, college, university, etc.)			Obtaining IT skills through self-study (learning by doing)			Obtaining IT skills through informal assistance from colleagues, relatives, friends and some other ways		
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
EU27	65	63	68	72	74	69	65	64	65
Belgium	59	55	64	62	62	61	48	44	52
Bulgaria	52	49	54	41	42	41	37	37	37
Czech Republic	84	82	85	47	52	42	59	61	57
Denmark	59	53	65	95	95	95	84	84	85
Germany	69	66	72	87	87	86	91	90	92
Estonia	87	86	89	92	91	93	80	81	79
Ireland	54	48	60	29	28	30	19	18	20
Greece	64	62	67	63	67	59	47	49	45
Spain	62	61	64	84	85	83	72	70	74
France	62	57	66	90	93	87	86	87	86
Italy	53	52	54	65	66	64	60	61	59
Cyprus	73	71	76	61	61	61	56	55	58
Latvia	91	90	91	56	57	54	44	43	44
Lithuania	90	89	92	42	46	37	68	69	67
Luxembourg	75	71	79	73	73	73	71	64	77
Hungary	79	80	78	62	65	60	46	51	41
Malta	68	:	:	63	:	:	47	:	:
Netherlands	46	44	47	81	84	77	71	66	76
Austria	72	70	75	77	82	71	64	65	64
Poland	81	79	82	66	69	63	58	58	58
Portugal	74	72	77	89	89	88	87	87	88
Romania	42	40	43	39	42	36	31	33	30
Slovenia	77	75	80	84	85	83	78	74	81
Slovakia	78	78	79	81	86	75	78	78	77
Finland	66	62	70	73	74	72	60	56	64
Sweden	79	77	81	94	96	92	87	88	85
United Kingdom	68	64	72	58	64	52	34	33	34

Source: Eurostat,

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1996,45323734&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&screen=welcomeref&open=/popul/isoc/isoc_sk&language=en&product=EU_MAIN_TREE&root=EU_MAIN_TREE&scrollto=255

IV. CONCLUSIONS IN REGARD TO THE STATUS AND SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES OF THE GIRL CHILD

1. ON COLLECTING STATISTICAL/QUANTITATIVE DATA

The demand for gender- and age-disaggregated data collecting has difficulties in passing the reality check. The problem is a logistical one, so the only solution is the integration of evidence of the groups of girls in the phase of policy-making in the fields of education, health and ICT literacy. There are no defined parameters for collecting data on the status and opportunities of the girl child. Even the age groups are not identical in different areas of research. In the various official discussions in the EU context, marginalised groups are not unified as identical categories (e.g. refugee/migrant girls, poor girls, girls from poor families).

2. ON THE INDICATORS OF THE GIRL CHILD

It is important to keep in mind the whole picture of the realities of the girl child's life. The different areas of concern are interrelated. The indicators that have been drawn up reflect the socio-cultural platform which could not be subdivided without seriously impairing our understanding of the issue. If we look at the example of sexual health of the girl child, consideration should also be given to the mechanisms for construing cultural norms on sexuality in education as well as in the media.

The indicator on sex and relationship education provision in the EU Member States and the indicator on dissatisfaction of girls and boys with their bodies describe two differentiated topics. Common to both is their connection with the girl child's sexuality, which is the focal point of many different and disharmonious social forces and opposing discourses. Thus, on the one hand, the girls are the specially-favoured objects of affection, while on the other hand they are subjected to everyday emotional and physical exploitation and to acts of violence.

We are inclined to ignore the social mechanisms which discriminate against and reproduce the traditional gender roles of girls at home, in school, in the media and in the streets on everyday basis. Financial profit and financial relationships in commercial businesses such as advertising have played a major part in promoting girls' and women's sexuality. The media promotes an image of submissive female sexuality which cannot be countered strongly enough just by education, training and informing.

High scores by girls in scientific and mathematical literacy conceal the realities of the girl child's orientation towards a vocation that does not match her talents because of the persistent prejudices regarding femininity in the educational and labour sphere. Another disadvantage of the educational systems is the poor integration of marginalised groups, which is typical of many EU Member States. It is not enough to stipulate equal access to schooling if the status of many members of marginalised groups is that of non-citizenship (Roma, refugees, migrants). What is more, in marginalised groups, cultural norms and customs thoroughly suppress girls' talents, wishes and ambitions regarding educational goals. The problem which deserves our utmost attention is poverty. The poverty rate is rising and the gap between girls for whom full education is a priority and those who are obliged to earn money is hidden behind the general statistics at national and EU level. Poor girls who succeed in continuing their education after primary school usually experience more pressure from the traditional female role since poverty is correlated with lower education levels and stronger stereotyping.

Indicators for the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action in the EU Member States

Since 1999 the Council has adopted the following indicators on gender equality:

- Women and power and decision-making, Finnish Presidency, 1999
- Women in the economy (reconciliation of work and family life), French Presidency, 2000
- Women in the economy (equal pay), Belgian Presidency, 2001
- Violence against women, Danish Presidency; based on a study and a conference by the Spanish Presidency, 2002
- Women and men in economic decision-making, Italian Presidency; based on a study carried out by the Greek Presidency, 2003
- Sexual harassment at the workplace, Netherlands Presidency; based on a study carried out by the Irish Presidency, 2004
- Women and health, Austrian Presidency, 2006
- Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, Finnish Presidency, 2006
- Education and training of women, German Presidency, 2007
- Women and poverty, Portuguese Presidency, 2007

Table 1: Sexuality education - status, age of formal/actual participation

	Sexuality education mandatory	Age at which sexuality education officially begins	Age when first received sexuality education
Austria	Yes	10	11,6
Belgium	Yes	6	12,5
Bulgaria	No	11	13,3
Cyprus	No	14	:
Czech Republic	Yes	7	13,7
Denmark	Yes	12	12,2
Estonia	Yes	10	:
Finland	Yes	7	11,8
France	Yes	6	13,1
Germany	Yes	9	11,3
Greece	Yes	6	13,3
Hungary	Yes	10	12,8
Ireland	Yes	6	12,5
Italy	No	14	12,6
Latvia	Yes	11	:
Lithuania	:	:	:
Luxembourg	Yes	6	:
Malta	✓	:	:
Netherlands	Yes	13	12,1
Poland	Yes	11	11,0
Portugal	Yes	5	:
Romania	:	:	:
Slovakia	Yes	12	12,5
Slovenia	:	:	:
Spain	No	14	12,8
Sweden	Yes	6	12,1
United Kingdom	No	5/7	12,1

Source: IPPF and WHO, *Sexuality education in Europe - A reference guide to policies and practices*, http://www.euro.who.int/Document/RHP/SexEd_in_Europe.pdf.

✓ for Malta: according to information gathered by the Office for Equal Opportunities Slovenia (report The status of the girl child, EU survey) Malta incorporates sexuality education in the curriculum at the basic educational level.

Table 2: Sexual life and contraception – girls/boys, age 15

	% 15 year old girls who have had sexual intercourse	% 15 year old boys who have had sexual intercourse	% 15 year old girls using contraception at last sexual intercourse	% 15 year old boys using contraception at last sexual intercourse	Contraceptive provision for < 16s mandatory
Austria	19,1	22,1	93	90,2	Yes
Belgium	23,7	26,3	89,6	90,5	Yes
Bulgaria	:	:	:	:	Yes
Cyprus	(2,5)	(13,0)	:	:	Yes
Czech Republic	17,2	19,4	:	:	Yes
Denmark	(37,0)	(33,0)	(79,0)	(84,0)	Yes
Estonia	15,8	20,1	77,3	79,3	Yes
Finland	33,1	23	86	88,2	Yes
France	18,3	26,1	92,5	92,1	Yes
Germany	33,5	22,5	94,9	87,7	Yes
Greece	9,6	33,6	82,5	91,2	Yes
Hungary	16,4	25,5	72,5	84,5	Yes
Ireland	:	:	:	:	No*
Italy	20,5	27,2	:	:	Yes
Latvia	14,1	21,8	84	86,9	Yes
Lithuania	10,8	26,4	81,6	88,1	Yes
Luxembourg	(42,0)	(50,0)	:	:	Yes
Malta	:	:	:	:	:
Netherlands	21,6	24,2	97	92,4	Yes
Poland	9,2	20,9	72,5	73,4	Yes
Portugal	20,3	30,2	82,7	74,8	Yes
Romania	:	:	:	:	:
Slovakia	:	:	:	:	Yes
Slovenia	(21,6)	(30,8)	*	*	
Spain	14,8	18	90,6	89,8	Yes
Sweden	30,9	25,3	90,5	92,2	Yes
United Kingdom	40,4	35,7	87,5	80,4	Yes

Source: IPPF and WHO, *Sexuality education in Europe - A reference guide to policies and practices*,

http://www.euro.who.int/Document/RHP/SexEd_in_Europe.pdf, p. 22.

*Providers can prescribe contraceptives but are not obliged to

Figures in brackets: the data was independently produced by each country and is therefore not necessarily comparable.

Sexual intercourse: Figures for UK are England figures (Northern Ireland – data not available, Scotland – 34,6 (girls), 32,9 (boys), Wales 40,1 (girls), 28,7 (boys)). Figures for Belgium are for Flemish region, Belgium (French) – 23,2 (girls), 34,4 (boys).

Using contraception: Figures for UK are England figures (Northern Ireland – data not available, Scotland – 73,8 (girls), 81,2 (boys), Wales 84,8 (girls), 82,4 (boys)). Figures for Belgium are for Flemish region, Belgium (French) – 81,5 (girls), 82,2 (boys).

*Slovenia: Use of condom (girls 67,7%; boys 80,4%); at least one form of contraception (girls 83,8%; boys 89,2%), source: HBSC 2001/2002

Table 3: Status of abortion, birth rate, legal abortion rate, 2003

	Abortion legal on request	Abortion legal on social/ economic grounds	Birth rate among 15-19 year olds (per 1000 population)	Rate of legal abortion among 15-19 year olds (per 1000 population)
Austria	Yes	No	13,2	:
Belgium	Yes	Yes	(10,0)	7,1
Bulgaria	Yes	Yes	39	18,2
Cyprus	No	Yes	5,7	:
Czech Republic	Yes	Yes	11,4	8,1
Denmark	Yes	Yes	6,1	13,8
Estonia	Yes	Yes	22	27,9
Finland	No	Yes	18,4	14,8
France	Yes	Yes	11	14,2
Germany	Yes	Yes	11,7	7
Greece	Yes	Yes	10,9	:
Hungary	Yes	Yes	20,5	19,4
Ireland	No	No	19,3	(6,5)
Italy	Yes	Yes	7,1	7,2
Latvia	Yes	Yes	22,1	16,6
Lithuania	Yes	Yes	20,4	6,4
Luxembourg	No	No	11,2	:
Malta	:	:	:	:
Netherlands	Yes	Yes	7,1	(8,8)
Poland	No	No	14,2	:
Portugal	No	No	19,5	(2,1)
Romania	:	:	:	:
Slovakia	Yes	Yes	20,3	7,4
Slovenia	Yes	Yes	(5,8)	(8,7)
Spain	No	No	9,7	7,8
Sweden	Yes	Yes	6,1	24,4
United Kingdom	No	Yes*	27,8	22,5

Source (if not specifically referred): IPPF and WHO, *Sexuality education in Europe - A reference guide to policies and practices*, http://www.euro.who.int/Document/RHP/SexEd_in_Europe.pdf.

* Not Northern Ireland

Figures in brackets: the data was independently produced by each country and is therefore not necessarily comparable

Birth rate: UK figure is based on an estimated population figure. Austrian figure is based on a provisional population figure. Rates based on 2003 data apart from: Estonia, Spain, France, Ireland – 2002; Italy – 2000; UK – 2001. Slovenia – data from Statistical office of the Republic of Slovenia.

Legal abortion rate: UK figure is based on an estimated population figure. Denmark, France and Italy, Slovakia – 2002; Spain, France, UK – 2001. Figure for Ireland is in brackets because the data is reliant on figures from UK and does not include data for women who travel elsewhere for abortion. Slovenia – 2004, http://www.ivz.si/javne_datoteke/datoteke/26-fetalne_2004.pdf.

Table 4: Abortions/1000 live births, girls, age under 20 years

Abortions/1000 live births, age under 20 years						
Countries	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Austria	...	...	...	...	...	...
Belgium	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bulgaria	477.2	400.89	461.95	466.36	402.82	385.99
Cyprus	...	...	...	...	...	...
Czech Republic	658.91	718.32	715.68	694.86	668.76	699.6
Denmark	1835.53	1864.34	2163.84	2481.57	2785.19	2833.93
Estonia	1260.31	1286.41	1257.24	1351.87	1289.52	1215.95
Finland	1473.36	1444.57	1447.24	1470.37	1475.96	1444.65
France	1705.02	1741.21	1819.61	1883.26	...	...
Germany	683.96	748.02	761.2	793.78	876.63	...
Greece	...	...	...	...	...	...
Hungary	938.97	913.42	939.92	958.64	942.23	919.98
Ireland	...	...	...	...	...	...
Italy	...	...	...	...	...	...
Latvia	690.82	775.86	1050.96	762	795.78	766.93
Lithuania	366.44	362.53	309.1	312.39	346.7	332
Luxembourg	...	...	...	...	...	...
Malta	...	...	...	...	...	...
Netherlands	1295.8	1314.09	1407.85	1371.26	...	...
Poland	...	...	...	...	...	...
Portugal	...	...	...	...	...	...
Romania	623.26	731.38	744.33	721.27	687.08	661.28
Slovakia	446.38	472.86	448.25	440.19	419.48	399.51
Slovenia	1625.98	1571.11	1518.13	1533.33	1577.16	1278.24
Spain	808.36	828.64	898.28	876.14	...	...
Sweden	2994.83	3420.29	3769.86	4157.73	4165.21	...

Source: WHO, <http://data.euro.who.int/hfadb/>.

Table 5: Overweight, dissatisfaction with weight, dieting, 13-year-olds, 2001/2002**Dissatisfaction with weight, dieting, 11-year-olds, 2001/2002**

Countries	13-year-olds, year 2001/2002							
	% of young people who are overweight according to BMI				% of young people dissatisfied with their body weight		% of young people engaged in dieting and weight control behaviour	
	Pre-obese		Obese					
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Austria	10,1	13,3	0,9	1,7	42,7	33,7	16,0	12,8
Belgium (French)*	9,7	11,2	1,1	1,9	44,1	28,5	16,9	7,5
Belgium (Flemish)*	7,0	10,2	1,1	1,5	47,4	29,6	11,3	7,3
Bulgaria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cyprus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Czech Republic	6,4	10,3	0,7	1,4	36,3	20,6	23,0	9,4
Denmark	8,3	7,5	0,9	0,9	45,6	25,9	31,8	12,7
Estonia	4,1	9,0	0,3	1,1	28,3	16,1	8,6	5,2
Finland	9,8	12,8	1,2	3,1	42,3	26,2	12,3	5,2
France	7,9	11,8	0,8	2,0	36,5	24,4	15,1	8,6
Germany	7,2	11,9	1,1	2,6	48,0	36,0	20,0	10,2
Greece	10,4	17,5	1,7	2,8	32,5	20,9	19,7	10,0
Hungary	9,5	13,0	1,4	2,5	39,4	24,9	34,4	17,6
Ireland	8,4	10,5	2,1	3,9	39,2	23,1	17,6	7,2
Italy	10,9	17,9	1,5	3,1	30,2	20,2	19,0	8,0
Latvia	3,0	6,9	0,6	0,6	28,5	12,1	7,9	4,1
Lithuania	3,6	5,3	0,1	0,4	32,4	12,1	13,1	5,4
Luxembourg	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Malta	18,1	24,7	5,4	9,1	30,7	16,3	27,1	8,9
Netherlands	4,2	7,4	0,3	0,7	44,4	27,5	8,5	4,9
Poland	3,9	9,7	0,4	1,3	47,6	23,7	21,6	8,3
Portugal	11,6	16,1	1,3	4,3	38,3	25,3	9,5	4,2
Romania	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Slovakia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Slovenia	11,0	12,4	1,4	3,3	52,6	29,5	22,0	7,5
Spain	11,1	21,5	0,6	3,2	41,2	32,1	14,0	8,7
Sweden	7,0	10,5	1,5	0,7	35,8	19,8	14,8	6,2
UK (England)*	12,9	13,4	3,1	4,4	43,2	26,9	21,8	10,6
UK (Scotland)*	10,6	13,4	2,4	3,4	45,9	26,4	24,6	9,1
UK (Wales)*	15,1	17,8	1,7	4,4	42,8	31,2	22,8	12,5

Source: HBSC 2001/2002 , <http://www.hbsc.org/publications/reports.html>.

*Data exists only for England, Scotland and Wales separately; data exists only for Belgium (French) and Belgium (Flemish) separately.

Countries	11-year-olds, year 2001/2002			
	% of young people dissatisfied with their body weight		% of young people engaged in dieting and weight control behaviour	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Austria	28,8	24,1	10,5	8,0
Belgium (French)*	38,1	29,2	16,6	12,1
Belgium (Flemish)*	37,1	25,9	9,6	7,0
Bulgaria	-	-	-	-
Cyprus	-	-	-	-
Czech Republic	25,6	21,2	12,8	10,8
Denmark	33,4	25,3	23,9	16,8
Estonia	17,0	13,9	5,2	4,1
Finland	30,7	23,2	8,0	6,9
France	29,8	21,6	13,2	7,1
Germany	35,9	30,8	13,6	11,8
Greece	27,6	20,6	15,0	9,1
Hungary	34,0	26,4	28,6	18,9
Ireland	20,6	19,7	8,8	6,4
Italy	24,1	24,8	10,6	12,9
Latvia	23,3	11,0	6,6	4,7
Lithuania	23,3	12,5	7,5	6,0
Luxembourg	-	-	-	-
Malta	17,9	25,3	11,9	13,8
Netherlands	34,6	24,6	5,6	4,4
Poland	34,1	26,6	12,1	11,6
Portugal	35,5	23,4	7,6	4,4
Romania	-	-	-	-
Slovakia	-	-	-	-
Slovenia	45,3	25,8	13,7	7,7
Spain	30,9	26,3	8,6	12,2
Sweden	20,6	16,6	5,4	4,0
UK (England)*	29,6	24,6	11,0	8,3
UK (Scotland)*	34,0	22,5	13,7	11,2
UK (Wales)*	32,9	23,4	16,4	10,1

Source: HBSC 2001/2002 , <http://www.hbsc.org/publications/reports.html>.

*Data exists only for England, Scotland and Wales separately; data exists only for Belgium (French) and Belgium (Flemish) separately.

Table 6: 15-year-old students' performance on the reading scale (*Difference in mean score of boys/girls – Negative figures mean that girls perform better*)

2006	Reading
	boys rel girls
Austria	-45
Belgium	-40
Bulgaria	-58
Cyprus	:
Czech Republic	-46
Denmark	-30
Estonia	-46
Finland	-51
France	-35
Germany	-42
Greece	-57
Hungary	-40
Ireland	-34
Italy	-41
Latvia	-50
Lithuania	-51
Luxembourg	-32
Malta	:
Netherlands	-24
Poland	-40
Portugal	-33
Romania	-44
Slovakia	-42
Slovenia	-54
Spain	-35
Sweden	-40
United Kingdom	-29

Source: OECD, PISA Database, 2006;

http://www.pisa.oecd.org/document/2/0,3343,en_32252351_32236191_39718850_1_1_1,00.html.

Table 7: The proportion of girls – in ISCED 5-6 in the fields of Engineering, manufacturing and construction, Agriculture and veterinary, Humanities and arts, Health and Welfare, 2005

	Engineering, manufacturing and construction	Agriculture and veterinary	Humanities and arts	Health and Welfare
	% Girls (ISCED level 5)	% Girls (ISCED level 5)	% Girls (ISCED level 5)	% Girls (ISCED level 5)
Austria	20,72%	62,99%	65,68%	67,80%
Belgium	21,01%	49,40%	57,77%	72,86%
Bulgaria	32,02%	43,36%	60,46%	64,80%
Cyprus	12,88%	0,00%	75,55%	70,86%
Czech Republic	21,22%	54,15%	63,01%	74,86%
Denmark	33,12%	52,37%	62,74%	81,06%
Estonia	27,45%	51,59%	76,09%	88,66%
Finland	18,66%	51,11%	71,28%	84,23%
France	:	:	:	:
Germany	18,45%	46,82%	66,24%	73,55%
Greece	27,74%	44,13%	73,44%	74,48%
Hungary	19,06%	45,96%	65,78%	76,55%
Ireland	16,34%	43,34%	63,75%	78,85%
Italy	27,72%	43,81%	72,39%	65,11%
Latvia	21,44%	46,03%	78,27%	86,65%
Lithuania	25,97%	46,87%	73,48%	83,98%
Luxembourg	:	:	:	:
Malta	28,36%	30,56%	56,77%	66,79%
Netherlands	13,47%	45,86%	54,96%	74,09%
Poland	25,64%	54,80%	69,46%	75,61%
Portugal	26,00%	54,67%	62,00%	76,89%
Romania	29,30%	34,99%	67,19%	64,91%
Slovakia	27,98%	37,79%	56,03%	80,69%
Slovenia	24,15%	54,92%	73,41%	79,64%
Spain	27,81%	45,66%	61,07%	75,03%
Sweden	27,98%	57,64%	62,53%	81,00%
United Kingdom	19,13%	62,32%	61,82%	78,76%

Source:

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1996,45323734&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&screen=welcome&ref=open=/e/dtr/educ/educ_isced97&language=en&product=EU_MASTER_education_training&root=EU_MASTER_education_training&scrollto=0

Table 8: Proportion of young women and men aged 16-24 who used a computer and the Internet on average once a day or at least once a week in the last 3 months, 2006

	EU-25	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	
Use of a computer																													
on average daily	Women	62	68	38	44	76	68	75	43	43	52	:	64	62	66	59	67	61	:	81	72	56	60	:	68	50	78	77	61
or almost	Men	67	71	38	51	85	76	74	42	43	56	:	67	37	66	62	77	66	:	89	72	64	64	:	72	69	81	80	63
on average at least once a week	Women	81	86	59	75	91	91	92	72	65	76	:	67	82	83	83	92	84	:	96	89	82	78	:	87	80	93	95	77
on average at least once a week	Men	83	84	57	77	100	93	90	65	69	78	:	69	66	89	84	95	87	:	97	87	83	79	:	87	87	93	95	77
Use of the internet																													
on average daily	Women	48	66	27	28	71	53	74	33	22	41	41	49	34	61	46	58	45	:	76	58	40	47	:	65	33	78	77	50
or almost	Men	53	67	31	38	82	65	72	32	19	44	42	54	22	59	48	68	46	:	88	61	47	50	:	68	47	80	77	50
on average at least once a week	Women	73	83	45	64	92	82	91	61	44	68	73	54	63	85	75	87	74	:	94	80	69	68	:	79	65	94	94	72
on average at least once a week	Men	73	81	48	66	95	85	89	57	49	71	69	57	47	88	78	91	74	:	98	80	72	69	:	83	78	93	94	71

Source: Eurostat, Community survey on ICT usage in households and by individuals