Gender Stereotypes - How can we move Beyond stereotyping?

Recommendations for the Private Sector

- Audit workplace human resource policies and practice for gender stereotyping, and in particular gender stereotypes relating to women's skills, leadership potential, motivation, mobility, and child care responsibilities. In any audit, review for potential impacts such as: vertical and horizontal occupational segregation; a gender pay gap; different training and promotion opportunities for women and men; lack of women managers and leaders; discrimination in recruitment processes; and difficulties for men with primary caring responsibilities for children.

- Take action to challenge such stereotyping and initiate human resource policies to counteract their impact such as leadership training for women in order to ensure increased participation of women in management and decision-making; introduction of a gender equality policy that highlights the negative impacts of gender stereotyping and priority actions; gender-awareness training for managers to stop gender stereotyping including in relation to motherhood, fatherhood and child care responsibilities; and introduce 'family-friendly' or 'work-life' balance policies that benefit both women and men – this includes enhanced maternity and paternity benefits, and provision of childcare.

- Audit the business of the organisation to assess the extent to which it is promulgating gender stereotypes – this is particularly needed with companies working in the media, advertising, beauty, diet and fashion industries.

- Develop non-stereotypical portrayals of women and men in the course of the organisation's business. Guidance from professional or regulatory bodies should be sought - codes of conduct on stereotyping in messages and images (or 'gender portrayal guidelines') may be available.

- Get involved with government, school and civil society initiatives that: encourage recruitment of women and men into non-traditional careers, including women into leadership positions; development of codes of conduct relating to stereotypical portrayals of body image.

- Develop a community of practice of human resource practitioners and small business advisors seeking to address gender stereotypes in the workplace through human resource policies. In Europe this could draw on those involved in the 'Break gender stereotypes: Give talent a chance' initiative.