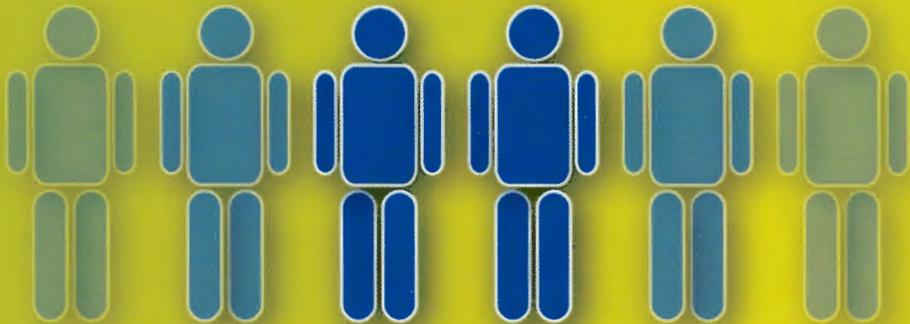


EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN SLOVENIAN DIPLOMACY



Edited by Milan Jazbec, Marina Lukšič Hacin, Žiga Pirnat and Milena Stefanović Kajzer

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Introduction to the Second Edition

Dragoljuba Benčina
State Secretary and Chair of the Permanent
Working Group for Equal Opportunities

In January 2010, a major step was taken towards promoting equality in the Slovenian diplomatic service. When the *Equal Opportunities in Slovenian Diplomacy* research was presented, a clear and decisive message was delivered. It could no longer be denied that there were several issues in the human resources management of the Slovenian diplomatic service calling for immediate action. What had previously been the subject of rumours, speculation, hearsay – even myths – was now theoretically proven and evident. The Ministry's policy of equal opportunities needed serious review.

Through an in-depth study on equal opportunities, we addressed an issue which had previously not been given sufficient attention. According to the results of the research undertaken, the situation of equal opportunities at the Ministry was not encouraging; what is more, the results gave serious cause for concern in certain areas. These edifying findings indicated that the majority of respondents have experienced various forms of discrimination throughout their career at the Ministry. This served as both a clear warning and a defining moment, which triggered intensive debate and initiated some significant and encouraging developments.

After the publication of the results, Minister Žbogar appointed an equal opportunities working group under my leadership. The group comprised nine members, representing a range of age groups, both genders, and different positions. The group began by thoroughly examining the results of the survey. Then, we invited all the employees in the internal and foreign services to participate in a broader discussion. We welcomed anonymous suggestions and comments and held open consultations. In addition to the issue of gender, we dealt with equal opportunities in a broader sense – the factors of age, nationality, political affiliation, beliefs, views and other potential types of discrimination were also taken into consideration. On the basis of the information collected, and after due reflection, a report outlining a list of suggestions and recommendations was drawn up for the Minister.

Our basic objectives were aimed at achieving the equal treatment of all employees, respect for the rules, cordial interpersonal relations, equal working conditions, as well as fairness in career and personal development. According to the general consensus, attaining these goals would also result in improvements to the efficiency of the Slovenian diplomatic service.

According to the group, the Ministry's primary goal should be to strive for detailed, consistent and clearly defined rules. We must implement an institutional culture and mindset which insist on these rules being applied equally to all. It should be made clear that these rules must be adhered to and that every violation must result in a sanction being imposed.

We are committed to taking a decisive approach in the implementation of the proposed measures, working closely with all the relevant departments and services at the Ministry. Even excellent proposals and solutions are pointless, if not respected in practice.

The latest recommendation to have been implemented is the new Permanent Working Group on Equal Opportunities, recently established by Minister Žbogar and chaired by myself. The Group's main objective is to continue the work of its predecessor, to monitor the progress made in implementing the recommendations contained in the report and to propose any additional measures necessary to contribute to the equal opportunities effort within the Ministry.

In essence, we are trying to establish a durable and robust arrangement in the field of equal opportunities, which will take root and begin an irreversible process in improving equality and interpersonal relations in the Slovenian diplomatic service. This will be a process that is not subject to the will and interests of those leading the Ministry, but independent of political momentum, any personal (dis) inclination towards the issue, or the current government. Clearly, this process is not just about setting formal rules and introducing new organisational solutions. It is primarily about establishing a common institutional culture among the employees which fosters the understanding that equal opportunities and mutual respect are natural and indispensable qualities for a Slovenian diplomat to abide by.

Constant open discussion and self-analysis are vital in enhancing equal opportunities in any society. Therefore, it is with great pleasure that I am able to present the English language edition of the book, including all the articles published in the original research and an additional chapter containing the report presented to the Minister by the Working Group for Equal Opportunities, four months after the publication of the research results.

The interest in an English translation of the book has been enormous. To my delight, we can now finally share our research with the general public outside Slovenia. Due to the nature of the results gleaned from the research undertaken,

this might seem surprising to some. However, the courage to commence with the research in the first place, the developments made after the original release and the committed work carried out by those involved in the project prove that this is the right thing to do. Hopefully, many more books on the subject of progress in the field of equal opportunities in diplomatic services across the world will follow suit.

Introduction: (Self-)Critical Overview

Samuel Žbogar

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia

The coming of age of Slovenian diplomacy is a welcome opportunity to carefully consider and critically assess the road travelled thus far. Having achieved all of Slovenia's key foreign policy objectives, it is our great pleasure to present to the Slovenian and international public a monograph on issues, which, at a first glance, might seem irrelevant to the world of diplomacy. Nevertheless, the subject matter addressed by the present publication, and the progress we seek to achieve as a result, will greatly impact the form, efficiency, success and reputation of the Slovenian diplomatic service in the future.

Equal opportunities have long been the subject of discussion at various forums and levels in governmental and non-governmental circles. The concept has a wide range of meanings, but generally implies the provision of a social environment where individuals are not placed at a disadvantage due to their gender, age, race, nationality, political affiliation, religion, beliefs, views and other factors. In a narrower sense, equal opportunities refers mainly to gender equality. At an organisational level, equal opportunities means equal treatment and respect for all employees, irrespective of their gender or other factors, and fairness at all levels of the organisation – from the recruitment of new employees, the appointment of employees to different posts, and the assignment of tasks, communication and employee relationships.

The authors of *Equal Opportunities in Slovenian Diplomacy* have approached the topic in a holistic manner. The monograph was initiated by the Government Office for Equal Opportunities, and the majority of contributions deal specifically with the issue of gender equality, whilst, at the same time, analysing other aspects of discrimination. It offers a theoretical and empirical review of the concept of equality in Slovenian diplomacy and encourages our foreign-policy makers to reflect on the issues raised. This, in turn, will be of great value in discussions to be held in order to determine how best to proceed.

The authors have played an invaluable role in the monograph, through the provision of a comprehensive and methodologically complete survey, which was completed in 2009. It provides an objective, impartial assessment of the equal opportunities situation in Slovenian diplomacy. The survey is of special significance, as it integrates the views of diplomats working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – who understand and are familiar with Slovenian diplomacy from an internal perspective – with an objective, scientific external perspective provided by representatives from academia. It is this collaboration with colleagues from the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts and the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana that gives the monograph particular significance. The Slovenian academic and political communities are richer for a new scientific monograph, which, through its use of appropriate methodology, correctly and comprehensively addresses a pressing issue in the Slovenian diplomatic service, public administration and society in general.

Let us not fool ourselves – many of the findings are not something to be proud of. There are far too many worrying factors; some data show a step backwards, while some a small step forward. Some of the conclusions reached may be relevant to similar situations in other public administration bodies; nevertheless, many are unique to the field of diplomacy. We cannot be satisfied with the publication's findings. They require serious consideration and decisive, carefully planned measures. However, we should be encouraged by the strong support that is expressed for the provision of equal opportunities in the monograph and the changes recommended for the better. In light of this, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must strive to become a more employee- and family-friendly organisation.

The findings should contribute to a better understanding of where we are currently failing, so that we can help create a better future. Although it is up to those responsible to adopt the appropriate institutional and other measures, individuals can significantly contribute to equal opportunities at a personal level themselves. This can be achieved through questioning whether seemingly innocent remarks are appropriate and through the nurturing of trust, positive interpersonal relationships, collegiality, solidarity and respect for others.

The majority of work organisations in Slovenia, either in the public or private sector, would probably be reluctant to undertake a similar project and, if they did, their findings would probably remain internal and hidden from the public eye. Perhaps this is why it is surprising that a survey on equal opportunities in such a format and scope is being first published by diplomats. This is precisely the reason why we will ensure this project will not end up locked away in some drawer, since there is a sincere wish for a concrete definition of the problems raised and proposals to improve the situation for the better. It is our firm belief that the Ministry and representatives from academia have prepared an authoritative

monograph, which should prove helpful in the improvement of the equal opportunities situation in Slovenian diplomacy and public administration in general.

I am confident that the survey, which has, in many ways, been the first of its kind in the diplomatic sphere, will not be a one-time project, but a turning point that, decades from now, will be considered as one of the first steps towards a new reality for Slovenian and European diplomacy.

Foreword

Zdenka Čebašek Travnik
Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Slovenia

The invitation to write an article for a monograph on equal opportunities in Slovenian diplomacy came as a welcome surprise, especially since it was submitted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, upon examination of the preliminary results gleaned from the empirical part of the monograph, I better understood the invitation. I realised that the subject matter of both the survey and monograph were closely related to my activities as Human Rights Ombudsman. As well as this, the monograph echoed the experiences I have amassed in my previous career in psychiatry, and the research I have undertaken concerning burn-out in the workplace, where, for many years, I dealt with those in need.

Having reviewed the first draft, I concluded that this was an extremely interesting – not to mention courageous – survey conducted within a specific work environment. Before embarking on writing this foreword, I wanted to discover what the driving forces behind this project were. According to the explanation I received, the survey was launched on the initiative of the Personnel Service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the context of a wider Government project on equal opportunities. It was conducted with the help of three employees of the Ministry: Dr Milan Jazbec, Milena Stefanović Kajzer and Žiga Pirnat. The survey was undertaken as an academic project by the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts and the Policy Planning and Research Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

When writing a foreword, one must know the target audience, so as to engage with and entice them to read the entire work. The survey observed a population which is, in many ways, unique and has no direct comparison in Slovenia – this led me to consider the evidence obtained from two separate perspectives; firstly, those conclusions which are characteristic of this specific group and, secondly, those conclusions which are more representative of and relevant to the public sector as a whole. Naturally, the first perspective is of particular use to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while the reader would probably be more interested in

discovering what a similar survey would demonstrate in their own work environment. Nevertheless, the monograph raises the question of whether such a survey could improve working conditions, regardless of the characteristics of the work environment concerned.

First, let us take a look at the more specific findings that go straight to the heart of the issue of equal opportunities in Slovenian diplomacy. It could be said that the role and significance of human rights in diplomacy is analogous to the role of mental health in medicine or psychiatry. Therefore, one might wonder what a diplomat's reaction would be to a violation of their human rights, or what the reaction would be from those committing such an infringement. Would a diplomat be able to acknowledge and respect the personal dignity of other employees in a relatively small work environment such as a diplomatic mission or consular post or, indeed, the personal dignity of the population of the receiving state? How could a diplomat's personal distress and dissatisfaction affect the mission's efficiency and, as a consequence, Slovenia's reputation? These issues are of particular concern, since the majority of respondents to the questionnaire claimed that they had experienced extreme material and/or psychological distress as a result of discrimination. The average grade allocated to the question of "damages inflicted by discrimination" was 6.9 on a scale of 1 to 10, giving the issue particular weight.

In diplomacy, where the number of senior positions is, for obvious reasons, relatively small or limited, opportunities for promotion are also quite specific. As a result, the relationship between ambition, competence and actual opportunities for promotion is frequently disproportional, resulting in difficulties for an individual's career planning. I offer the following question as an illustration: "*What do I have to achieve in order to become an ambassador in Beijing?*"

Another issue is the implementation of the human rights of diplomats, their partners and children. Diplomats are protected by national legislation and various international agreements; nevertheless, many issues remain unresolved. The issues that the respondents raised as being problematic ranged from the right of the diplomat's partner to work, the right for appropriate education for their children, to the right of the family to live together. Further questions could also be posed: What are the employment opportunities available abroad to diplomats (and their families) with special needs or disabilities, or those with personal problems, such as mental disorders? What are the employment opportunities available to those in same-sex relationships, and is the assignment to individual posts undertaken in accordance with the principle of non-discrimination in mind or do the above-mentioned candidates not even apply for such positions?

The survey also deals with the personal traits that are expected and required of a diplomat, from a diplomat's personal perspective, i.e. what personal characteristics does he or she consider to be vital in order to be a "successful diplomat". The

purpose of this question was not to create a comprehensive image of what the ideal diplomat should be like, but to identify and reveal possible tendencies amongst diplomats towards gender dichotomy. The results are nevertheless significant. The respondents could choose answers from several categories or pairs of words, and the answers provide a narrow insight in what the ideal image of a “successful diplomat” is perceived to be. Among said pairs, on average the “successful diplomat” is older and married with children, more often “male” than “female”, strict, but at the same time open and innovative. At this point, the survey provides an interesting starting point for a deeper consideration of what the characteristics of a successful diplomat are, since these attributes were described by people who actually work in the diplomatic service and are familiar with the advantages and disadvantages of individual personal traits. With regard to the image of a successful diplomat, I would like to point out two dilemmas: Firstly, what does a diplomat need more – common sense or sensitivity to people’s problems? Secondly, how does the difference between a diplomat’s personal views and the government’s position affect their work, taking into account changes of government and changes in internal policy? Perhaps this would be an appropriate opportunity to ask female diplomats how they would resolve the border issue with Croatia.

Further findings of the survey are also applicable to other work environments: interpersonal relations in the workplace, employees’ relations with superiors, the dignity and respect of other employees, work atmosphere, possible maltreatment, sexual abuse and/or harassment. A revealing finding indicates that 28% of all respondents reported having noted different forms of sexual harassment. As expected, the percentage amongst women is higher with 35%. Perhaps this issue deserves a separate survey or, even better, decisive measures to be taken in each and every case of sexual harassment.

Building a personal career and achieving success on the basis of colleagues’ work (their overtime work and additional efforts) would appear from the survey to be typical of the work environment at diplomatic missions, consular posts and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, this is not true; it is perhaps only more evident in this environment. The same applies to overtime work, which puts particular pressure on the employees, and burnout in the workplace, which occurs in every environment where employees receive insufficient feedback and have a lower degree of autonomy, considering the complexity of their work.

The authors endeavoured to identify the types of discrimination prevalent at the Ministry. In particular, their aim was to discover in which areas the respondents experienced discrimination. The following statement points to the fundamental issue in interpersonal relations besides discrimination: “*The main problem at the Ministry is not gender discrimination but personal discrimination.*” I am sure that every reader can relate to this statement. If considered together with opinions on

values that are fostered at the Ministry (successful career, promotion and climbing the career ladder at any cost), the statement becomes even more relevant. It is therefore vital to set out and observe clear rules and a system applicable to all, without exception.

The role of the family – as seen through the prism of the diplomatic service – deserves special attention. The monograph thoroughly presents the potential pitfalls of working and living abroad. It is important to stress the conclusions reached in relation to family, which should be a safe and stable living environment for all diplomats, regardless of where they reside. If the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is to be considered a “family-friendly company”, a notion supported by 96.5% of respondents, more should be invested in this area. This should not only take the form of additional funding, which would facilitate the improvement of working conditions abroad, more leave of absence, resulting in a reduction of the risk of family disintegration, but also a different kind of help from the Personnel Service. The Personnel Service should be more aware of the various reservations different employees have in venturing abroad, more knowledgeable about foreign service generally and improve the quality of advisers and their efficiency in solving employees’ problems. Perhaps the quote “*behind a successful diplomat, there is always someone else*” could be interpreted in this context.

Undoubtedly, working abroad has many benefits and it is interesting to note that the answers provided to this question do not differ substantially among men and women. However, working abroad does require additional effort, such as adapting to life abroad and then re-establishing oneself upon return to the sending state. Having experience in returning from abroad myself, I can agree with the view that: “*there is no return; the past situation has gone forever. One always meets new people and builds new relationships back home. The expected feeling of ease evaporates, leaving behind an unrealised longing, even homesickness. The person returning is different than that known and expected by those in the previous environment. The disappointment is mutual.*” Therefore, it might be easier for someone leaving a post abroad to be assigned directly to another post abroad and so avoid the unpleasantness of adapting to circumstances in the sending state. The same could be said to apply to a diplomat’s family members. The proposed measures in the field of family policy and assignment abroad are listed in the end of the empirical part of the survey, representing its practical value.

As a psychiatrist, I am concerned about the high percentage of dissatisfied employees and, especially, the high levels of distrust. The need for clear and unambiguous criteria regarding promotion and selection procedures for posts abroad is clearly indicated by the results of the survey. There is an almost unanimous consensus that certain quality standards need to be met, especially that of becoming a “family-friendly company”. The survey also demonstrates that working

conditions differ greatly when working abroad. For example, workloads are often heavier and there are also differences in working relationships between ambassadors and other staff of the diplomatic mission or consular post. An example of this would be the insufficient means of complaint available to staff regarding instances of inappropriate behaviour from an ambassador.

To conclude, let us take this opportunity to look at the most fundamental question raised: How could the findings of a survey on equal opportunities in diplomacy be transposed to other leading positions in the public sector? Chart 28 in the monograph offers fairly simple answers: the reduction of an individual's influence in the selection process and the implementation of automated procedures defined by law. As well as this, organised afternoon care for children of employees, a change in mentality (values), the elimination of stereotypes, and positive discrimination for women are all issues that need close examination. In fact, these findings are nothing new, but serve as an instruction to decision-makers to ensure that what is already widely accepted should become a reality; otherwise, should the survey be repeated, there is a risk of ending up with similar results.

Diplomats as Migrant Workers in the Grip of Gender Dichotomy

Marina Lukšič Hacin

1. Historical correlation between patriarchal relations and gender dichotomy

We live in a time when the understanding of diplomacy, genders, gender differences and their sociocultural evolution form part of a mental² tradition strongly influenced by patriarchal power relations (Barrett, 1983). These serve to actively create male-centric relationships (Jogan, 1990). The classic nation-state and the attitude to nationality we see today both emerged during the French Revolution and the French state. During the time of the nation-state, important changes were introduced in the understanding of the human body and sociocultural perceptions, which are inevitably linked with the understanding of gender differences and gender dichotomy.³ Patriarchal relations between genders and the patriarchal conceptualisation of sexuality itself slowly became the keynotes of nationalist ideology.⁴

¹ The contribution is a result of research carried out within the programme group National and Cultural Identity of Slovenian Expatriate Communities.

² Mentality as a term is related to traditional perceptions. In some ways, the two correlate and intertwine, but there are also key differences. While tradition is based on the past, mentality is a construct of the present which is conditioned by the past. Both notions denote processes (and not states of being), which are constitutive aspects of practices inherent in cultural processes. It might be said that culture, as a process, is an amalgamation of both dynamic and stable forms. Combined with other processes, these constitute the long-term axes of culture.

³ Gender-related differences in both an anatomical and physiological sense, as well as physical features denoting differences between the two genders are referred to in anthropological terminology as sexual dimorphism. The realisation, understanding and evaluation of such differences in a sociocultural context have been included in the term “gender dichotomy” (Južnič, 1993, p. 34).

⁴ The decisive ideological dimension, which was at the forefront in “rebirth” projects, is the negative evaluation of sex and sexuality. It became an area where nations and nation-states started to control an individual in a repressive manner – or, more precisely: an area in which an individual declares him/herself through his/her attitude “for” a nation or “for” a state (Jurić Pahor, 2000, p. 19).

Negative gender stereotypes such as sensuality and emotionality were interpreted as the antitheses of reason and were ascribed to women. The above patriarchal perceptions of reality permeated the entire sociocultural sphere, including the philosophical ideas of that time.

It remains thought-provoking and instructive even today to read how the relationship between genders was understood by the great philosopher, G. W. F. Hegel (1986, p. 257), a prominent thinker on sociocultural relationships and dimensions. The author states his position on the differences between genders or, more precisely, explains how the existing, patriarchal gender dichotomy came about in his work *Phenomenology of Spirit*, when speaking of human⁵ nationalist ideology.⁶ Both human and divine laws share common concepts and also sometimes intertwine. These two laws are inherent in one another, but they are defined by a chasm in meaning between them as this delineation enables each one's existence.⁷ The husband-wife relationship implies direct recognition of one within the other and mutual acknowledgement. However, according to Hegel, this recognition of self is natural but unrelated to morality – it is only a representation of the spirit,⁸ and not the spirit itself. The reality of the husband-wife relationship lies not in the relationship itself but in the husband and wife's offspring and ensuing generations. The difference between the morality of a female and a male is that a female makes decisions on specific issues while retaining a general perspective; a focus on the details is foreign to her. By contrast, a male has wide ranging powers which he is very aware of, and has the freedom to exercise them.

During the first decades of the 20th century, the above hypotheses were taken to theoretical extremes by Weininger, who was a long-time compatriot of the Carniolan people. What does it mean to be a female according to Weininger? Women have no being and no essence; they do not exist, they are nothing. If you are

⁵ Human law is the spirit of the community; it is a given, present morality on which the government (power) is based, as well as a social reality which has been created for a functioning individual. Human law inherently includes the male principle of functioning and the male is the one to step out of the family circle and become a part of social life, overcome family boundaries and experience self-awareness in society. Here, an individual consciousness is at work (not an individual, singular, coincidental consciousness, but the general individual consciousness) and an individual in general.

⁶ The divine law governs the area of the individual, encompassing substance in its directness. It is predominant in families with the female principle of action. The morality of the family is fictitious. A family should not be based on emotion, but on general principles. A family's main concern is the care for the dead – and this is also the point through which the family is integrated into the community.

⁷ Both laws carry the outer contradiction, according to Hegel's principle, in which the smallest particle carries the contradiction of the whole.

⁸ The most moral relationship within the family is that between a brother and a sister. Only in this relationship is there peace and balance – a balance of blood. Both genders are mutually independent individualities. A woman, as a sister, has the highest sense of moral values. To a sister, a brother is an equal creature, and her relationship with him is pure, not mixed with natural relationship.

something, then you are male; if you are nothing, then you are female. A female plays no part in ontological reality, and therefore has no relationship to things as they are. Man, in its highest form – the genius – does have such a relationship and, for him, the absolute is either conceiving the most worthy reason for existence – in which case he is a philosopher – or musing on the wonderful fairytales of dreams, the kingdom of absolute beauty, and then he is an artist. Both mean the same. A female has no relationship to the concept of the absolute, neither affirming nor denying it; she has no moral standpoint; mathematically speaking, she has no sign; she has no purpose, is neither good nor bad, neither angelic nor devilish and is never selfish (therefore, she has often been said to be altruistic); she is as amoral as she is alogical. However, since all existence is based on morality and logic, a female therefore has no being (Weininger, 1936, p. 281). “Reality” is the key component of the above thought process and is conceptualised by the author through his own philosophical, (i.e. idealistic) view of the world.⁹ In the spirit of philosophical dualism, Weininger illustrates these concepts through the use of ideal-type gender dyads. He states that the female is defined by feelings, and the male is defined by inventiveness. The female lives unconsciously, and the male lives consciously. The female is the object, and the male is the subject. The female’s nature is passive, and the male’s nature is active. The female is matter, the male is structure and an idea. The male is permanent, worthy, perfect, an idea, consciousness, the subject, the activity and the structure. On the other hand, the female is unworthy, sinful, transient, sensual, unconscious, an object and is passive.

In Slovenia, in keeping with the spirit of the times, Bleiweis advocated similar views; as stated by Vodopivec (1994, p. 35): The husband is the head of the family, the wife the heart; he has the mind, she has the emotion [...] The man is active in the outside world [...] She, as the saying goes, does the lion’s share of the work in the household. According to Vodopivec, in 1866, a lecture held in a hall in Graz on a gender-related topic was attended in great numbers, and its main message was that nature is a female’s domain and the spirit is a male’s. The lecturer stated that men sacrifice themselves for an idea, leaving women to care for the well-being of the family and loved ones. It was finally established that humour, in particular, was not considered to be a strong point with women, as it requires clarity of thought and research – both being qualities that women were thought to lack, meaning they were incapable of extensive literary and cultural-historical studies (ibid, p. 36). Mahnič defended similar views. Vodopivec (ibid, p.

⁹ An object becomes a reality only insofar as it is perceived by the mind. The notion is the “transcendental object” in Kant’s *The Critique of Pure Reason* and corresponds only to a certain transcendental subject. The subject is the only source of the mysterious objectivising function, from which Kant’s object x is derived, on which all knowledge is based – a function which proved to be identical with logical axioms and which, again, only reflects the existence of a subject (Weininger, 1936, p. 175).

41) states: Mahnič, who addressed this issue in order to “restrain sharp-tongued women”, based women’s subordination on two decisive pieces of evidence. Firstly: The Maker himself wanted the wife to be subordinate to her husband, which he demonstrated by the manner in which he created her. Secondly, such subordination should also be regarded as punishment for a female bringing sin into the world. Otherwise, Mahnič insisted on the traditional notion that: God distinguished between males and females through males possessing reason and females possessing heart. Among the six characteristic features of male and female dispositions, Mahnič places greatest importance on reason and least importance on passion for men, with the opposite being the case with women.

All the above positions argue that reason is a male’s domain and that, in contrast, sexuality is a female’s domain – but that sexuality combined with sensuality is sinful. The only kind of sexuality that is accepted and tolerated is related to reason, with it being essential to separate sexuality from emotion and sensuality – the domain of the female. This discourse is also related to care and concern for the motherland, which can be seen from, for example, the focus on birth rates. Birth rates become a female’s duty, or even her sacred mission, which is evident from the glorification of motherhood.¹⁰ The issue of birth rates, as an area of concern, then¹¹ moves from the individual to the state. In such contexts, the discourse on a citizen’s duty starts to take shape. The focus is on the duty of a citizen to provide for the state and not vice-versa. This duty is not shared equally among men and women, as the female, naturally, has greater responsibility and is more committed to bearing and rearing upstanding citizens.

2. The suppression of reports written by women and on the subject of women in the development of the national memory

During the epoch of nationalistic discourse, the female was excluded from public life and her role was limited to motherhood – a position deprived of all sensuality. She was pushed out of public life and this was achieved in several different ways. The patriarchal construction of relations and reality barred – or at least obstructed – the access of women to the public sphere. There was no mention of those who succeeded in breaking through. They were not talked about and so, in the long run,

¹⁰ According to Jurić Pahor, such an attitude is based on puritanical morality and the ideology of a “virtuous (desexualised) motherhood” of Slovenians is one of the most vital issues in national policies, since motherhood is the female’s sacred and most elevated duty. God bless the woman who is privileged to be a mother and who fulfils her selfless task as dictated by her conscience and science. She will be rewarded by the immeasurable love of her children and gratitude of the nation (Jurić Pahor, 2000, p. 42).

¹¹ The shift occurs both in terms of the concern for birth rates and, in light of an individual’s commitment, to the care for the state and its identity (Jurić Pahor, 2000, p. 22).

for all intents and purposes, they did not exist¹² or their work was appropriated, through the masculine tendencies of language, to be “men’s work”.¹³

The Slovenia of the 19th and 20th centuries is characterised by the stereotype of a bored woman, sitting by the window, waiting for her husband’s return; without him, she does not know what to do with herself (Hladnik in Lukšič Hacin, 2002, p. 164). Žnidaršič analysed Austrian archival and statistical sources and found instances of disregarded and erased data in relation to the role played by women. This was clearly the case, since females have always worked in this region.¹⁴ The same position is advocated by Kalc in his debates on the role of females in Slovenia, pointing out that they played a key role in the monetarisation of rural society until the end of the 19th century. This is also evident from research conducted in the Trieste area, amongst others.¹⁵ Bread sellers and dairy maids played a vital role in Trieste’s rural areas (Kalc in Lukšič Hacin, 2002, p. 165). Even the wet nurses, housekeepers, chestnut sellers, smugglers, etc., who left home for daily or temporary work abroad, played an important role in social and cultural life, let alone the key roles played by female intellectuals.

To this day, human and social sciences in Slovenia still create an awareness mainly based on male names.¹⁶ This awareness is passed on through existing ideological state apparatuses (Althusser). Furthermore, there are no historical accounts of women’s stories, despite playing an active and prominent role in public life; their works were appropriated and attributed to the male gender through the grammatical rules of the Slovene language.

¹² However, I do know that [...] up to a degree, women were actually disregarded and forgotten in the general history of the Slovenian nation [...] Women have been excluded from the history of Slovenians, in a manner of speaking (Brezigar Miklavčič in Lukšič Hacin, 2002, p. 149). A similar position applied in addition to the expatriate situation is quoted by Drnovšek in Lukšič Hacin (2002, p. 174): From history and historiography, little is known of women’s issues during the period of the 19th and 20th centuries; the role of women was almost completely disregarded in Slovenian society – the role of expatriate women even more so [...] The expatriates themselves are very rarely mentioned, with expatriate women even less so. This also applies to both older literature (e.g. the *History of Slovenes*, 1979) and more recent school textbooks published after 1991.

¹³ Let me refer again to the phenomenon of masculinisation marking historic and ethnologic texts until the present day. At the end of the 19th century, when describing the Brda region and its population, and that the local population travelled all the way to Germany to sell fruit, historian Štefan Kocjančič fails to mention that this work was done mostly by women (Brezigar Miklavčič in Lukšič Hacin, 2002, p. 150).

¹⁴ The results were published in a book entitled *Ora et Labora* (Žnidaršič Žagar, 2000).

¹⁵ This is mentioned by Marta Verginella in her book entitled *Ekonomija odrešenja in preživetja* (1996) (Economy of Deliverance and Survival), which points out the economic significance of female professions such as bread sellers and dairy maids in the rural areas of Trieste.

¹⁶ The history of Slovenians is the history of men. In an extensive *History of Slovenes*, which was published as a work by collective authors in 1979 dealing with the entire period of Slovenian history – from the first traces of prehistoric man in this area up to the 1970s – only three women were mentioned by name (Vodopivec, 1994, p. 30).

Recently, more information has come to light, which dismantles the patriarchal construction of the national memory. The information is based on oral testimony, archival resources and, according to Jurič Pahor in Lukšič Hacin (2002, p. 147), contests the image of a weak, devoted, almost “saintly woman”, which was spread throughout the Slovenian nation by the ideological hegemony based on Krek’s teachings, but also the secular asceticism of Slovenian liberalism, later also socialism, which constructed an entirely new male or “brotherly world”, in which the polarisation of ideas between genders goes to the extreme of silencing the “woman’s voice”. This information also opposes the view of the past as being a time characterised by either a multitude of sexless creatures or active men with some passive women in the background, performing limited types of stereotypical and repetitive actions.

A characteristic male-centric stance which had – and largely still has – political support (at the subconscious level of constructing relationships) failed to allow ideal-type stereotypical women in the “real world”. At a sociocultural level, women managed to disengage themselves, in different ways, from the grip of relationships and also participated more in public life. However, the male-centric construction of the memory for their descendants has erased the female contribution, even attributing it to men. Although not in such a profound and obvious manner, this is still happening today – gradually and in a more subtle and systematic way.¹⁷

3. Examples of patriarchal gender dichotomy in Slovenia

The learning of social roles starts with primary socialisation, and becoming aware of the traditional roles of men and women. The process of “training” starts in the intimate setting of family and peer groups, and continues in different educational institutions – from kindergartens (primary socialisation) to elementary and secondary schools and then to universities;¹⁸ this “training” then manifests

¹⁷ Experience gained in kindergarten and school is an important factor in the preservation or change of gender relations. As regards gender differences, the focus should be shifted from formal rights of non-discrimination to substantial rights and the guaranteeing of equal opportunities at all levels of the education system. Therefore, when talking about children’s rights, we must also talk about the rights of girls. In an unequal system of education, the idea of equal opportunities in such a system – in one way or another – still favours members of one gender over those of another. The introduction of co-education for girls and boys eliminated overt discrimination at a “school system” level, while more subtle power mechanisms are preserved in the form of a “covert curriculum” characteristic of school as a modern day institution (for example, the organisation of daily life at school, its specific practices and teaching methods, the communication between pupils and teachers, etc.) that teaches girls “how to lose” (White Paper, 1995).

¹⁸ Pre-school teachers and teachers shape the future identities of women and men, and play an important role in developing gender roles and overcoming stereotypes.

itself in sociocultural relationships, as well as in the spheres of work and politics. The role of the media (i.e. children's books, radio, television and printed formats) is important, as it strongly affects our opinions and views on society.¹⁹ *The Draft Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men* (2004) underlines that, in Slovenia, the roles of women and men in society are classified on the basis of stereotype and tradition. In addition to undertaking paid work, women also take on responsibility for the household and children, while men are the "breadwinners" (as per the male breadwinner family model). In addition to learning behavioural patterns, the gender roles of children are also developed through encouraging them to pursue different activities or types of behaviour which are more "female" than "male" or vice-versa. For example, girls are encouraged to take dancing lessons, play with dolls, and are taught to be polite, whereas boys are encouraged to play football, play with toy cars, and their competitiveness is cultivated. That which is taught in schools and the manner in which it is presented may either consolidate prevailing stereotypes about gender roles or be a starting point for rising above them and progressing. However, according to research undertaken, education programmes and textbooks mostly present gender roles as being very rigid and conforming to stereotype. Women are usually depicted as mothers, housewives, carers, and possessing characteristics such as emotionality and beauty while, on the other hand, can also be seen as passive, wicked and spiteful. Men are distinguished by traits such as power, stature and intellect; they are also depicted as heroes, kings and rulers, whereas negative characteristics include cursing, fighting, drinking, etc.²⁰ (ibid, p. 17).

There is no significant difference in the education levels of women and men in Slovenia. On average, the level of education of women is slightly higher than that of men.²¹ Females represent almost one half of the working population (Resolution, 2005, p. 24). Analyses demonstrate vertical and horizontal gender segregation in

¹⁹ Through the development of information and communication technologies, the flow of information and know-how has been further accelerated; it is therefore essential to disassociate such knowledge from prejudice and stereotypes concerning the roles of women and men in modern society and to foster equal opportunities for both genders (Draft Resolution, 2004, p. 16).

²⁰ Different analyses were made as part of the research project: *Jezik in spolna razlika I.: Podoba ženske v učbenikih in literaturi* (Differences in Language and Gender, Part I: The Image of Women in Textbooks and Literature): *Pedagoški inštitut* (Slovenian National Education Institute) and *ISH - Fakulteta za podiplomski humanistični študij* (ISH - Ljubljana Graduate School of the Humanities), 1996–1998. See also *Women in Transition. The MONEE Project CEE/CIS/Baltics Regional Monitoring Report*, Vol. 6, UNICEF, 1999.

²¹ The data obtained by the Slovenian Statistical Office for 2002 and 2003, through an opinion poll on the labour force, shows that women – despite being better educated than men and having higher educational qualifications – occupy less than one third (29.1%) of top-level and highly-paid jobs (such as senior officials, managers, legislators, etc.). Female representation in administrative professions (65%), services and sales (64%), professional services (57.7%) is above average, while females are least represented in jobs involving non-industrial work methods (9%). They prevail in service jobs, particularly in health and social insurance, hospitality, tourism, education, science, culture, information and trade. In non-agricultural

the Slovenian labour market.²² Vertical gender segregation denotes a concentration of people belonging to a certain gender who hold individual functions, levels of responsibility and rank. Vertical segregation in Slovenia is characterised by the fact that women occupy lower, less responsible and lower paid posts. Horizontal gender segregation denotes a concentration of people belonging to a certain gender in separate industries, sectors and professions. In Slovenia, horizontal segregation is characterised by the fact that women carry out different professions and have different career opportunities to men and are predominantly engaged in female occupations (Draft Resolution, 2004, p. 7). Direct indicators of such segregation are the lack of representation of women in the above posts and the statistically proven female-male income disparity for undertaking the same work or work of equivalent value.²³

The share of women holding senior and leading posts is much lower than that of men, both in companies, social partnerships, organisations and other associations (Resolution, 2005, p. 24). From a formal and legal perspective, women and men have equal political rights in Slovenia. However, the equal status of women and men does not guarantee their equal status in political decision-making in practice. Taking into account their share of the country's population, women are inadequately represented at all levels of political decision-making – in both elected and appointed political bodies, at both national and local levels. A better representation of women in politics primarily requires the establishment of mechanisms – from legislation to special measures within political parties – which facilitate women's entry into and participation in the political sphere. In addition, when deciding whether to play a role in politics, female politicians must also feel that they can count on the support of wider social and political settings. In es-

activity, women represent one third of the working population, while their share is lowest in construction (Draft Resolution, 2004, pp. 1–2; Analysis, 2005, pp. 5–6).

²² See Kanjuo Mrčela, Aleksandra and Nevenka Černigoj Sadar: *Gender, Work and Employment in Ten Candidate Countries of Central and Eastern Europe, 2004. Final Report, Country: Slovenia. European Foundation.*

²³ The analysis of data collected by the Statistical Office of Slovenia on monthly gross earnings shows that women's earnings are 10% lower than men's for the same work or work of equivalent value (data for 2002). The greatest disparity between the earnings of women and men is that between qualified male and female workers. It is surprising that the disparity between the earnings of women and men with higher education qualifications is the greatest, with women earning almost 20% less than men, on average. Compared to 2001, the disparity in earnings has been reduced mostly among those employed possessing a doctor's degree (from 18% in 2001 to 7.8% in 2002) (Analysis, 2005, p. 6).

According to the study paper *Prejemki iz delovnega razmerja* (Earnings from Employment Relationships), it is interesting to note that the biggest difference in the structure of earnings between genders lies in performance allowances or perks, since those paid to men exceed those paid to women by 46.9% (data for 1996). The female-male income disparity may be explained by the fact that women largely occupy posts that are evaluated as lower and that also earnings in industries with prevailing female employees are less valued (Draft Resolution, 2004, p. 2).

sence, this requires the presence of a suitable political culture within political parties and bodies at local, national and supranational levels (ibid, p. 22).

In comparison to gender representation in the political sphere, the representation of women and men in government bodies and public administration is more balanced. When identifying patriarchal gender dichotomies, the biggest differences between genders may be found in those bodies that hold great political power (i.e. the working bodies of the government); here, the percentage of women represented is the lowest. On the other hand, in bodies dealing with social issues, the percentage of women greatly exceeds that of men. In courts and prosecutors' offices, there are also more women than men; however, in terms of hierarchy, men mostly occupy posts vested with greater competence at courts or the prosecutors' offices (ibid, p. 23).

According to the above data, sociopolitical posts involving decision-making are still mostly "out of reach" for women. These are the positions of power that engender and create important conditions for social relations. *The Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men* (2005) clearly defines the term "decision-making": Decision-making implies the implementation of economic and political power and the influence in leadership and management at all levels. It is implemented through mechanisms, processes and institutions through which decisions are negotiated, adopted and implemented. A balanced representation of genders in decision-making processes means that women and men are equally represented in all areas and at all levels. Only through a numerically balanced representation and mutual respect for different opinions can women and men equally affect development processes in society. At the same time, a balanced distribution of power and influence improves and expands the content that provides the basis for decision-making on different public issues (ibid, p. 22).

4. Complexity of the situation of women diplomats in the grip of gender dichotomy and resocialisation

Let us now look at the various ways in which gender dichotomy impacts the field of foreign policy and diplomatic and consular activity. Data indicate that today's politics is the field which most clearly demonstrates male-centric relationships and the resulting disregard for women. In addition, diplomacy has always been explicitly a man's domain. Owing to traditional norms, the active aristocratic population was dominated by men, which was explicit and unequivocal, particularly in the fields of diplomacy and the military. Although they occasionally held the positions of state sovereigns, women were excluded from career diplomacy and the army. In this light, diplomacy has remained true to its historic traditions

for centuries (Jazbec, 2002, p. 169). This has been preserved until the present day, although the percentage of women employed in this sphere has increased, particularly after Slovenia gained independence. However, a higher percentage of women does not necessarily imply a greater intensity in their involvement in the shaping of foreign policy; this is because they mostly occupy the posts of officials, which are often distant from the centres of decision-making. In the case of Slovenia, it may be established that, despite the significant number and percentage of women in the diplomatic service (approximately one half are women, two thirds of whom are employed in the internal service and one third in foreign service), they occupy very few leading posts (Jazbec, 2002, p. 170).

The number of women in the diplomatic service and the posts they are assigned to – which are devoid of any social power – are not the only issues faced by women. Even today, those who have chosen a career in diplomacy must consider the fact that their environment is dominated by patriarchal gender dichotomy, which has a strong impact not only on their professional work but also on private life, leisure time and family relationships. In addition, the locations to which they are posted are also (more or less) patriarchal, as diplomatic careers entail work which is mostly undertaken outside the native country. Those dedicated to this profession therefore undertake their tasks abroad as “permanent temporary workers”. This is a result of the principle of rotation between the native country and foreign countries; nevertheless, the active part of employees’ work is conducted abroad. As a result, diplomats are subjected to the recurring processes of re-socialisation when abroad and reintegration upon their return. Career rotation therefore creates conditions and settings which cause recurring re-socialisation effects, so much so that such persons might even be classified into a special group of trans-migrants.²⁴

When leaving for a foreign country, a diplomat becomes involved in the processes of re-socialisation or acculturation,²⁵ which are typical of any change in cultural and social environments. These processes are well known from the analyses of life stories of Slovenians who have lived abroad. When working in a new, different environment, a person’s understanding of this environment only really starts upon arrival. This, in turn, initiates the processes of re-socialisation, starting with “culture shock”. Its intensity depends on the cultural discrepancy between the two environments and on the personality of the individual concerned.

When entering a new environment, a person first comes into contact with and

²⁴ The notion of “transmigration” is understood as that defined by Vertovec, 1999.

²⁵ The notions “acculturation” and “re-socialisation” are very different in terms of content; however, their definitions overlap in the case of first-generation migrants (at an individual level), when both denote the processes of partial or full reconstruction of the personality and identification as a result of the change in the cultural and social environments. For more information, see Lukšič Hacin, 1995.

gains the first impression of the geographical location. First impressions are based on strong emotions, which provide a basis and a filter for the perception of all that is new. Thus, the importance of territorial identity is highlighted, which is not merely the bond a person has to a place, but also an emotional link with a defined place, which stays with a person for their entire life.²⁶ This is followed by a flood of new impressions, triggering the phenomenon known in anthropological theory as “culture shock”. This is a state of hopeless perplexity, consternation, confusion and bewilderment, which often leads to apathy and withdrawal into isolation. During the relinquishment of old norms and the adjustment to new norms, a “cultural void”²⁷ is often experienced, which may lead to social pathology.²⁸ Most are usually successful in re-socialisation, whereas reticence becomes a permanent feature with some people, leading to isolation.

Different people, relationships, values and norms pervade; a new status in social stratification is thrust upon the individual. The different relationships between genders in the division of power and specific gender dichotomies translate into different channels through specifically encoded relations into cultural, social and political dynamics. Relativisation and a devaluation of previous habits and customs starts to occur. For example, there is a tendency to feel that most of the life skills accumulated thus far are now useless, and there are issues associated with learning how to evaluate and understand new situations. As well as this, there is a feeling that old bonds with close relatives and friends have been severed. After the first impressions, acquiring new experience, culture shock and its different outcomes, people gradually become integrated into the new life and its new social, cultural and linguistic environments. They are faced with situations and dilemmas arising from internalized complex or limiting language codes. At a symbolic level, the latter is indicative of the intensity in which a stigma is attached to a newcomer by the new environment and the intensity of the feeling of “otherness”.²⁹

A foreign land [...] this, this accursed, thousand times cursed foreign land [...] it would like to suck out my heart and my soul, my whole self, so very shuddering and terrible, that I do not know what helps and what will – if ever – save me [...] A

²⁶ It should be pointed out that we are not speaking of merely one aspect of territorial identity at an individual level. The territory’s importance for identity and its role in it are much larger than the above, which is only one of individual aspects. Another factor here is the specific relation of an individual to the environment where they live. In addition, the territorial factor depends on “group identity” as the basis for its creation in the sense of Anderson’s imagined communities.

²⁷ A cultural void is a result of stable old patterns and norms which have lost all value in the new environment and must make room for new ones. Accepting new norms, values, and the processes of re-shaping identity and re-socialisation are hindered (Južnič, 1977, p. 524).

²⁸ Types of social pathology listed by Zalokar (1991, pp. 81-93): marginal identity, nostalgia as a disease, excessive consumption of food, alcoholism, workaholism, excessive socialising, excessive talking, tradition as a refuge and its idolisation.

²⁹ For more information, see Lukšič Hacin, 1995.

foreign land is a curse and a bliss, a bliss and a curse, drawing nearer and rejecting [...] Everywhere, I am alone – a foreigner in a foreign land [...] From a foreign country, but – in this world – a native of my own country, despite being in a foreign country [...] One becomes aware of this foreignness, this mental and spiritual otherness, the imported characteristics into a heart which was once one's own and is in such a state, when one is a stranger to oneself, when and because one is always on the move and on the run, because one has lost one's time, because it has slipped away, as one has fallen out of it, fallen out of the game, so to speak. This usually happens, and in such a way, when time seems to be passing by, slipping by; that one is merely an impartial and chance observer making these things such as they are, since they would be different without one. Impersonal, bodiless, and yet one is there, but as if one were out of time, at that time, in the right time. One is plagued by such inner distress, by the diaspora of which one is a member, which is not a physical, but rather a psychological displacement (Jazbec, 2006, p. 107).

Upon returning to their native country, the processes of resocialisation are initiated, and so are those of reintegration, which are similar to the reintegration of other Slovenian emigrants who have returned to the home country. Individuals and families face similar processes and difficulties. What can we learn from the statements of those who have left and later returned, about themselves and the difficulties of return? First and foremost is the fact that reintegration into the native environment is a more difficult experience than resocialisation in a foreign environment. Another important fact is that there is no "return" in the broadest sense of the word. We can only talk about the return home if it is conceptualised in a one-dimensional manner, like physical movement of people in a room. In all other aspects that take into account more complex sociocultural dimensions, there can be no mention of any "return" in the real sense of the word. Resocialisation changes people and for them, there is no way back. Therefore, there is no simple reintegration that could restore the previous condition. Migrants are not the only ones to change. During their residence abroad, people and the environments from which they came were changing. With their departure, migrants severed old social networks which, despite expecting them to be, were no longer the same upon their return to Slovenia. Returned emigrants remember their original environments – from the moment of their departure – and expect them to be the same upon their return which, however, is not the case. In addition, people in the environment to which emigrants return also expect that an individual or a family will be the same when they return as they were before, but people change as well. Interrupted "communication" alienates people. A migrant becomes a stranger to their native environment, which becomes obvious upon their return.³⁰ Such apparent domesticity on one hand and the actual difference,

³⁰ The deliberations of other respondents on their own feelings of "otherness" are confirmed by the experience of migrants living all over the world who think about returning home or come

as a process of reconstruction of identities during one's absence is perhaps even more complex than the situation facing immigrants (i.e. foreigners on their first visit to our country). These are important circumstances, which cause additional emotional complications in the reintegration processes.

Female diplomats are subject to the same processes of re-socialisation and reintegration; however, patriarchal power relations make their situation even more problematic. Their burden is far greater due to their deep-seated sociocultural responsibilities. Their status and career success also depends on the difference between the intensity of patriarchal relations in their original environment and those of their new posting (immigration). Is the environment in the country in which they have been posted more or less patriarchal, and to what extent does such a power relationship structure affect political culture – applied either consciously or unconsciously in political relations in countries in which women have been posted? This has a decisive influence both on the possibilities for and professional success of women posted abroad and also on the situations and dilemmas they will face in going through reintegration processes upon their return.³¹

In addition to the above differences affecting their professional career, women are frequently involved in complex relationships and have responsibilities outside their professional life, particularly if they have a family. Family values which, despite recent progress, are still male-centric in Slovenia “move abroad”, along with the family. Women are expected to shoulder most of the family-related duties and tasks.³² However, the complexity of such a burden does not necessarily depend on a direct, visible division of work and care for the family. There are an increasing number of cases in which such roles are also assumed by men; in these instances, women are part of indirect social networks, and their work and relationships are restructured and re-evaluated, which exerts silent but effective pressure on the consciences of women through the implication that they are less than ideal mothers and wives.

The status of “otherness” is a central topic of this monograph. The remainder of the monograph presents analyses of an individual's perceptions of positions within power relations in the examined professional population. My deliberations are

back only to visit, and those who returned to Slovenia after gaining its independence – as demonstrated by the research undertaken. Apart from formal obstacles, they also needed to endure the processes of reintegration and resocialisation. They begin to notice that they are different (Lukšič Hacin, 2006).

³¹ Such dilemmas are quite obvious if a woman returns from an environment that is more democratic than that in Slovenia, in which the political culture is permeated by the principles of equal opportunities in both political and everyday life.

³² In addition to paid work, people carry out unpaid work on a daily basis, including the care of the household and family. Such work is unpaid, socially undervalued and financially undefined. Most women in Slovenia work full-time and also carry out most of the domestic chores. The reason for this double burden lies mostly in the uneven distribution of domestic chores among partners or parents (Analysis, 2005, p. 9).

intended to contextualise the experience of such individuals “here and now”, and to outline the historical premises underlying the social construction of relationships in the sense of gender dichotomy as we see them today. All this might help achieve a more subtle understanding of the complexity of relationships dealt with by this monograph.

Analysis of Equal Opportunities in Slovenian Diplomacy

Žiga Pirnat

The central part of the research project on Equal Opportunities in Slovenian Diplomacy is an empirical survey conducted by the Policy Planning and Research Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia between November 2008 and February 2009. The research project and publication were prepared in partnership with the Slovenian Institute of Migration at the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

Both qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches were adopted to ensure the reliability of the research findings. According to the basic concept and guidelines of the research project, in-depth interviews were carried out in the first phase with eleven diplomats employed at the Ministry. Interviewees were selected in order to best represent both genders, different age groups, all three diplomatic ranks, employees with and without children, and employees with and without partners (married or not). The interviews were conducted between 3 November 2008 and 19 December 2008.

Each interviewee was asked firstly about their personal experiences of equal opportunities in Slovenian diplomacy, secondly to provide a subjective assessment of the state of affairs in the field of equal opportunities at the Ministry and, finally, to provide suggestions for improvement.³³

On the basis of data gleaned from the interviews and the authors' own assumptions and findings, a questionnaire was drafted in the second phase of the survey and sent to all employees in the internal and foreign services – to both diplomats and administrative and technical staff.

The questions were divided into three segments. In the first segment, the general state of affairs in the field of equal opportunities for employees of the Ministry (both at home and abroad) was assessed. In the second segment, the focus was

³³ Interviews were performed anonymously. Therefore, the survey does not mention any names or other information that could disclose the identities of interviewees.

placed on a specific perspective of a diplomat's work – going abroad and the inequalities stemming from this. A series of suggestions for improvement were presented to the employees, requiring their evaluation. Additional suggestions were also encouraged. In the last segment, the employees were asked to provide basic demographic information, on the basis of which the differences in answers according to gender, age group and other factors were examined.

The questionnaires were submitted in either written or digital form and, in both cases, anonymity was guaranteed. The information was gathered from 14 January to 20 February 2009.

1. Interviews findings

In-depth interviews were conducted with eleven diplomats – five male and six female. The selection of interviewees was somewhat hindered by ranking imbalances – it transpired that there are far fewer diplomats in the second and third ranks than those in the first rank.³⁴ Only two diplomats in the second and two diplomats in the third rank agreed to an interview. Along with five diplomats in the first rank, two senior officials (one male and one female) were interviewed.

The interviews were conducted by Milena Stefanović Kajzer and Žiga Pirnat from the Policy Planning and Research Department, and normally took approximately one hour. Those interviewed provided the interviewers with a great deal of information, personal experiences, opinions and suggestions for improvements that are summarised in the following sections. Several interviewees mentioned the same or similar elements in their interviews.

1.1 Gender as a discriminating factor

Female interviewees³⁵ mostly emphasised that they were either seldom or never discriminated against on the basis of gender during their employment at

³⁴ Work posts in Slovenian diplomacy are categorised into three career classes or ranks, according to the demands of their work duties. Within these ranks, different titles may be achieved. On the basis of the Decree on Internal Organisation, Posts Classification, Posts and Titles in the Bodies of Public Administration and Justice (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 58/2003 of 18 June 2003) and its later amendments (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia Nos. 81/2003, 109/2003, 22/2004, 43/2004, (58/2004 – corr.), 138/2004, 35/2005, 60/2005, 72/2005, 112/2005, 49/2006, 140/2006, 9/2007, 33/2008, 66/2008, 88/2008, 8/2009, 63/2009, and 73/2009), official titles are defined and classified in its Annex I. As official post in titles of the salary subgroup “C7 – Diplomats”, the following work posts are listed: *diplomat of the third rank* (with title of Attaché, Third Secretary or Second Secretary), *diplomat of the second rank* (with title of First Secretary, Counsellor or First Counsellor), *diplomat of the first rank* (with title of Minister Counsellor or Minister Plenipotentiary) and *Ambassador* (with title of Ambassador or Ambassador I). In the original Decree of 2003, there are no ambassadorial posts, while the work post of a diplomat of the first rank includes the title of Ambassador. On the other hand, for the foreign service, Article 55a of the aforementioned Decree is in force and defines the work posts of diplomats of the third rank (with title of Attaché, Consular Agent, Third Secretary, Vice-Consul, Second Secretary or Consul), diplomat of the second rank (with title of First Secretary, Consul, Counsellor, Consul First Class and First Counsellor) and diplomat of the first rank (with title of Minister Counsellor, Consul General, Minister Plenipotentiary or Ambassador). The Article sets out in detail which title a diplomat must achieve in the internal service in order to compete for individual work posts and titles in the foreign service. Titles used in the foreign service are provisional and “do not affect the acquired diplomatic or official title.”

³⁵ Hereinafter, the denominations “interviewee”, “respondent”, “diplomat” and “partner” are used generically and denote men and women, unless stated otherwise.

the Ministry, but almost all of them mentioned “mild”, more subtle cases of discrimination.

Male interviewees mostly said that gender is not a vital discriminating factor.

- Several interviewees said that the entrenched mindset is a much bigger problem for equal opportunities between genders than institutional mechanisms, which are mostly appropriate and non-discriminatory in Slovenian diplomacy.
- Reportedly, it is easier for a woman to follow her spouse abroad on a diplomatic mission than vice-versa.
- This is allegedly a consequence of traditional male and female roles, according to which it is deemed socially less acceptable for a man to renounce his career, education and social status in his homeland because of his spouse’s assignment abroad.

“Unfortunately, it still holds true that, in diplomacy, women need to be very good to be promoted, while men need only be average.”

- According to interviewees, some work environments in Slovenian diplomacy are bound by stereotypes – security policy is believed to be a male domain, while human rights are believed to be a “female” domain.
- In interviews, latent sexual harassment was mentioned several times, which is present in subtle, yet problematic forms such as “innocent” jokes.
- Female diplomats are reportedly most disadvantaged because of the challenge in coordinating their professional and private lives, which is linked to the aforementioned traditional role of women in the family.
- A female diplomat with children can face many difficulties in the internal service, especially in senior posts – these require much overtime, effort and energy, which is often incompatible with the traditional perception of a woman’s role in the family.
- Mothers face even greater difficulties in the foreign service, where both family life and work commitments demand much additional time and energy.
- One of the interviewees emphasised that Slovenian diplomacy has never been chauvinistic; however, at the same time, it cannot compare itself with more established diplomatic services.

“At my very first meeting, my new boss wanted to discuss the issue of addressing employees. He said that he usually addresses women by their name, men by their surname, and that we were to address him as Ambassador.”

In choosing candidates for senior posts in the Ministry’s hierarchy, males allegedly still hold the advantage; according to the interviewees, this is due to stereotypes and mentality; as a result, most decision makers (both males and females) tend to choose male candidates.

The views of males and females are believed to differ and the Ministry should take this into account. In Slovenian diplomacy, the male view of the world, male discourse and the male communication style are predominant, while both views are necessary for optimum efficiency and synergy.

According to one of the female interviewees, there is still a subconscious stereotype of a successful diplomat among the employees of the Ministry and in Slovenian politics in general, and this image is based largely on male principles.

- Several of the interviewees, both male and female, mentioned that they would support positive discrimination (i.e. the principle of compensating the minority group endangered by discrimination – in this case, females – with the rights that others do not have).

“We often hear that, in Scandinavia, where there are high standards as far as gender equality in social, political, professional and private life is concerned, there are no quotas for women, as they are considered undemocratic. However, even there they originally implemented positive discrimination – quotas that don’t necessarily represent something negative. It’s true they don’t have them anymore, but that’s because they no longer need them.”

1.2 Other discriminating factors

Interviewees emphasised several times that equal opportunities must not only be studied on the basis of gender, but also based on other factors that are often more problematic.

- Reportedly, equal opportunities for employees in Slovenian diplomacy are especially hampered by personal grudges, personal preferences and acquaintances, and political affiliation.

One of the key points of the interviews was the excessively high rate of “procedure personification” (i.e. cases where personal preferences or grudges affect decisions that are meant to be made on a purely technical basis).

Discrimination on the basis of political affiliation was mentioned less frequently than other factors, such as personal grudges and preferences.

Several interviewees pointed out that many employees promoted to senior and/or leadership posts become obsessed with their newly-gained authority, which they later abuse at formal and interpersonal levels.

“I was very much hurt when I was treated like a second- or third-class employee by some of my colleagues and superiors in the first years of my career. For instance, I was told that the opinion of ‘some third secretary’ was worth less than nothing. Such manifestations of pride, arrogance, conceit and disrespect

for colleagues have caused considerable damage to the Ministry – both as a team and as an institution.”

Several interviewees also mentioned age discrimination as a very important factor.

According to interviewees, several age groups were formed at the Ministry, among which there was excessive segregation, structuring, categorising and grouping “noticeable in the corridors”. This reportedly hampered the equal opportunities of one group in instances where a certain issue was decided upon by members of other groups.

There is supposedly too much excessive loyalty to people or ideas, political affiliation not being the only factor by far.

“To avoid discrimination, a set of rules for everyone needs to be enforced at the Ministry. Every exception can cause discrimination.”

Discrimination on the basis of racial, national, religious or other grounds was only mentioned by few interviewees, while all believed that they do not present a problem in the Slovenian diplomatic service.

1.3 Assessment and employment policy

Interviewees often mentioned employee assessments as being problematic. This is due to a lack of tangible criteria at hand; for example, some superiors at the Ministry allegedly assigned the highest grades to all their employees without exception or consideration, while others only rarely assigned the highest grades.

“There are superiors who assign grades according to the Gaussian function, and believe that only a limited number of employees can receive very good or excellent grades. Some, on the other hand, assign excellent grades without exception. My superior was once unable to explain why I hadn’t received a higher grade, but did say that only a certain number of employees may receive a certain grade. You can also receive a low grade if your superior doesn’t like you personally, irrespective of your work results.”

A common criterion in assessing the efficiency and significance of an employee at the Ministry is the amount of overtime performed or the time they normally leave work.

Several interviewees believe that working long hours is sometimes exaggerated and that a lot of people perform more work in six hours than others do in ten.

“Because I have a small child, I simply can’t stay at work late into the evening. Because of that, I’m instantly labelled as ‘lazy’ and not part of the ‘diligent and successful’ group.”

According to the interviewees, selection procedures of diplomatic personnel are vague; decision-making mechanisms guaranteeing accountability should be introduced and candidates endorsed by either one person or a comprehensive employment policy system.

Reportedly, the present system is a poor combination of the two – personnel committees draft recommendations and then the Minister decides; the procedures are unclear and the decision makers shift responsibility from one to another.

“I still don’t understand what these committees actually do. Formally, they draft reports for the Minister, who ultimately selects the chosen candidate anyway. At more developed ministries, the Minister doesn’t select candidates for lower-ranking positions – there’s no real need for that.”

1.4 Going abroad

Several interviewees emphasised that working abroad is an indispensable part of a diplomat’s career, and that someone who has never worked abroad is *de facto* not a diplomat.

As almost all interviewees emphasised, the categorisation of diplomatic missions and consular posts is very problematic. Funding and salaries for missions in different countries are determined arbitrarily, the categorisation being determined by individuals, often based on personal and other factors which bear no relation to the needs of diplomats.

The consequences of unsuitable categorisation are also revealed in unsuccessful competitions for working posts abroad which attract no applicants.

“Working at embassies in certain countries should not be construed as a punishment.”

Several interviewees believe that automatic categorisation should be implemented, which would decrease the threat of manipulation.

One of the interviewees warned that there is not enough informal communication between the internal service and missions abroad, which is an additional problem of working abroad, since diplomats return to an unfamiliar and changed working environment.

Several interviewees believed that employees abroad should be entitled to more annual leave, because many non-working days are used for travel, errands and tasks in Slovenia.

“Employees at diplomatic missions and consular posts have the same quantity of annual leave as those employed in the internal service, which I don’t think is

fair. In American diplomacy, for instance, employees abroad have more annual leave. It is understood that there is more stress involved in working abroad.”

- Several interviewees warned about the Ministry’s unreasonable practice of subtracting diplomats’ proportional share of annual leave upon going abroad, while two interviewees considered this as toying with human rights.³⁶
- Several interviewees who had already worked abroad complained about the performance of the Personnel Service.
- Reportedly, information received before going abroad is scarce and insufficient; procedures are carried out too slowly or not at all, while employees are informed upon their arrival that various formalities should have been taken care of prior to their arrival.
- One of the interviewees also pointed out that there are employees within the Personnel Service who have already worked abroad, which is a major improvement.

1.5 Families of diplomats abroad

- Interviewees agreed that a well-organised family life and social status are very important factors for a diplomat’s successful career.

“The diplomatic profession is extremely stressful. Even if everything is fine and everybody is well back home, things abroad can go wrong quickly, which presents a huge burden. Therefore, diplomats need to be psychologically stable,

³⁶ During the survey, the Act on Internal Organisation and Systematisation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 14 September 2007 was in force. Article 117 stipulates that persons with whom the Ministry concludes an employment relationship for a definite period of time due to work at a mission of the Republic of Slovenia abroad or who are reassigned within the Ministry to work at a mission abroad, may transfer the proportional part of their annual leave to the Ministry if they enter into an employment relationship by 30 June. If they are employed or reassigned later, it is not possible to transfer the annual leave. If the employment relationship of such persons is terminated or they are reassigned back by 30 June, they may use up the proportional part of their annual leave at the Ministry to the maximum allotted. If their employment relationship is terminated or they are reassigned back after that date, they are entitled to a salary in tolar for the part of annual leave exceeding the proportional part, according to the duration of their employment relationship or reassignment. According to Article 117 of the Act on Internal Organisation and Systematisation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 8 September 2009, which was in force during the editing of this publication, a civil servant assigned to a mission abroad must use up at least the proportional part of their annual leave prior to going abroad for the current year. If the civil servant, in exceptional cases, was unable to use the rest of annual leave for the past year and at least the proportional part of the annual leave for the current year, despite requesting permission to use the leave allotted, they may use it abroad, in whole or in part, on the basis of a certification from the Ministry or other authority where the employee was employed prior to being reassigned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stating that they were unable to use their annual leave due to work-related duties. In such cases, civil servants are entitled to their salary for work in Slovenia for this part of the leave.

physically strong and experts in their field, while the Ministry must strive to reduce their personal concerns to the lowest extent possible”.

In the modern world, there is not just one type of family, as one interviewee emphasised, but there are many that need to be taken into consideration, from cohabiting to same-sex partnerships.

Interviewees believe that the standard of living in Slovenia is a crucial factor in making the decision whether to go work abroad.

Those with a job in Slovenia, sufficient education, strong family ties and suitable accommodation are less likely to decide to work abroad.

“For Slovenians, a house, garden, car and the close proximity of relatives, friends and acquaintances are the criteria that define a good quality of life, meaning there is simply no need to go abroad.”

The supposed advantages of foreign service quickly fade – according to the interviewees, colleagues back home travel more, their children speak foreign languages to the same level or even better, while the difference in salary is minimal or even negative when all the factors and stress upon moving abroad are taken into account.

“When you take away all the expenses of moving and living abroad from the higher salary, those additional thousand euros simply do not make up for all the trauma, shock and difficulties experienced by you and your family when moving abroad.”

Two interviewees with small children clearly emphasised that, at this time, they would not be prepared to work abroad, as private nursery schools, in particular those offering education in foreign languages, are very expensive.

Most of the other interviewees also emphasised that it does not pay to work abroad from a financial perspective. On the other hand, several interviewees agreed that working abroad enriches a person in other ways, developing their diplomatic career and personality; the financial criterion is not the only relevant factor to be taken into consideration, but it does provide the basis for living a normal life.

However, one of the interviewees emphasised that finances are frequently downplayed – the financial criterion is still a powerful stimulus for working abroad, since the coefficient is two times higher, while costs are supposedly lower.

Interviewees believe that living apart is a big test for diplomats and their families, which, at present, is not adequately compensated for, either financially or in any other way.

Co-financing a greater number of plane tickets per year could represent a

solution to the strengthening of ties between a diplomat and his/her family when living apart.

Several interviewees praised the regulations for maternity leave for those working abroad, which were, until recently, inappropriate, while others believe that three months of maternity leave is still not enough.

“Three months is nothing – at the age of three months, the baby needs to be fed every two or three hours. Paediatricians don’t recommend supplements, and I find it hard to imagine that someone would be allowed to bring a baby to its mother at the embassy several times a day.”

- An equally long maternity leave should be a matter of discussion, along with the implementation of substitution, as is the case in the internal service; according to interviewees, many employees would like to go abroad for a year, but not for a full four-year term.
- Several interviewees mentioned healthcare abroad as problematic, as diplomats and their families have to arrange everything themselves.
- Interviewees with children pointed to the high share of self-financing of primary education, which is free in Slovenia, and particularly that of pre-school education abroad.³⁷

³⁷ During the interviews, the Decree on Salaries and other Remunerations of Public Servants working Abroad was in force (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 69/2008 of 8 July 2008). Article 25 stipulates that “a civil servant working abroad is entitled to reimbursement of tuition and enrolment fees for children in elementary and secondary education in a suitable private school, with an international programme when free public education is not possible due to justifiable reasons. Such reasons include: unsuitable educational, security or sanitary conditions, classes in a difficult foreign language and instances where the receiving country does not allow the children of diplomats to enter public education institutions.

⁽²⁾A civil servant whose children are enrolled in pre-school education in the year prior to compulsory full-time schooling is entitled to reimbursement of tuition and enrolment fees.

⁽³⁾The reimbursement as set out in paragraph 1 of this Article amounts to 80% of enrolment and tuition fees, with the highest amount covered by the Ministry being EUR 16,000, except for children with special needs.

⁽⁴⁾The reimbursement as set out in paragraph 2 of this Article amounts to 50% of enrolment and tuition fees.

⁽⁵⁾The reimbursement as set out in this Article does not apply to civil servants working in peace operations and/or international civil missions.”

The above Article remains unchanged by the Decree on Salaries and other Remunerations of Public Servants working Abroad (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 14/2009 of 20 February 2009). However, it was amended by the Decree amending the Decree on Salaries and other Remunerations of Public Servants working Abroad (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 23/2009 of 27 March 2009). Paragraph 2 was amended to include younger children; thus, enrolment and tuition fees are partly reimbursed for children who attend kindergarten in the receiving country and not only children attending the last year of pre-school education prior to compulsory full-time schooling. The reimbursed share of enrolment and tuition fees is higher, since the amount covered by the State for pre-school education amounts to a maximum of EUR 4,000, and to a maximum of EUR 18,000 for compulsory education.

In line with the Agreement on the Enrolment of Children of Slovenian Diplomats in

“It should be possible for a diplomat’s family to live under the same conditions as they would back home. If they pay 100 euros for nursery schools in Slovenia, the same should apply abroad. If they only pay for teaching aids in elementary school, the same should apply abroad.”

According to interviewees, schooling costs for a four-year term can be very steep, despite being partially co-financed, whereas social security for the schooling of diplomats’ children is generally very poorly organised.

The participation in paying tuition fees may be an issue insofar as the number of children is concerned. Diplomats with more children are financially worse off than those with one child or without children.

“Why should I, as a diplomat, be thinking that I can’t have a lot of children because my profession doesn’t allow that? Because living abroad with more children is too expensive? This is the very essence of unequal opportunities!”

The Slovenian educational system is also considered to be too rigid – several interviewees reported difficulties in getting their children’s school certificates acknowledged for education in foreign secondary and elementary schools.

Several interviewees said that their children had experienced personal issues due to living abroad, the migration itself, the change in environment and stress; they had fewer friends and acquaintances after returning to Slovenia and it was harder for them to make friends; there was a higher incidence of psychological and socialisation issues, such as depression, etc.

According to one of the interviewees, it seems that the present system encourages parents abroad to keep the youngest members of their families at home, which is considered detrimental to a child’s development; pre-school children must not be isolated from the social environment. In addition, home schooling shackles partners of diplomats to the home and burdens family life even more.

Several interviewees also mentioned inappropriate working hours of nursery schools, which have not adapted to modern lifestyle, where most parents start work at 9.00 am and stay at the office late into the afternoon and evening.

One of the interviewees suggested that the Ministry should open its own nursery school, or afternoon and evening care.

“Scandinavians, for instance, encounter far fewer difficulties – the children of diplomats even have babysitters who speak the same language as their parents, which is financed by the state.”

International School Programmes and Lower Tuition Fees signed between the Ministry of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, which entered into force in the 1997/98 academic year, the Ministries each reimburse 25% of tuition fees for children of Slovenian diplomats who have spent at least four years abroad and enrol in an international school upon returning to Slovenia, while the remaining 50% of the costs incurred is covered by the parents (source: Personnel Service).

- Diplomats with families are reportedly in an unequal position compared to single colleagues in many other situations, including those that are entirely technical; for example, a five-member family is entitled to relocate the same amount of freight as a diplomat without a partner and/or children.³⁸
- Many foreign ministries have a special department for family policy, an arrangement worth considering for Slovenia.
- The department for family policy should function primarily as a service for providing information that individuals are unaware of and are currently required to find for themselves, which may cause many inconveniences.
- The department should employ people who are familiar with the issues experienced by diplomats' families when going abroad; one of the interviewees suggested that diplomats' partners who had already been abroad would be appropriate for this role.
- According to one interviewee, all of the negative elements that make going abroad so unattractive for diplomats with families will never be completely eradicated but, with gradual improvement, working abroad could be made more appealing.

“Going abroad in the current system simply isn’t appealing and is biased towards diplomats such as men, those without families, single persons and those living apart.”

- Several interviewees pointed out that there are many suggestions and possibilities for improving family policy in Slovenian diplomacy, but everything starts and ends with funding, which is, in their opinion, always insufficient for these purposes.
- On the other hand, several interviewees believed that additional nursery school remunerations would be petty in comparison to entertaining expenses at certain diplomatic missions and consular posts.

³⁸ On the basis of Article 26 of the Decree on Salaries and other Remunerations of Public Servants working Abroad (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 69/2008 of 8 July 2008), which was in force during the interview period, civil servants with families, as well as those without them, were entitled to a reimbursement of freight fare of up to 30 cubic metres of cargo volume. The Decree also acknowledged ship transport as freight fare (a 40-foot container) and air transport, which has a more limited freight volume for civil servants without family or family members (up to 300 kg) than that of civil servants with family (up to 450 kg). The Decree also differentiates between civil servants in the reimbursement of packaging costs: up to EUR 150 in costs is covered for civil servants without families, while up to EUR 300 in costs are covered for those with families. The present regulation (Decree on Salaries and other Remunerations of Public Servants Working Abroad), Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 14/2009 of 20 February 2009) permits an additional 50 kg of freight per person as freight fare by air transport.

1.6 Partners of diplomats abroad

Partners of diplomats abroad face specific difficulties, since going abroad often means leaving their job, breaking up their career, experiencing isolation in a foreign environment and suffering severe psychological burden.

“At our embassy, for instance, working hours ranged from 8.00 or 9.00 am to 8.00 or 9.00 pm, which is detrimental to family life.”

According to the interviewees, the option of part-time employment of diplomats' partners abroad is very welcome, while there are also many other options to explore in order to prevent stress, idleness, even family troubles, and assist with the personal growth of individuals.

As several interviewees suggested in this respect, it would be wise to encourage employment and subsidies for the education of diplomats' partners abroad.

Artistic, academic and other activities undertaken by diplomats' partners should be helped to be put into practice so that they could, for instance, perform tasks on the Ministry's behalf while living abroad and upon their return home; it is also in the interest of the Republic of Slovenia that diplomats' partners do not stagnate while living abroad but return home with new experience and knowledge.

According to the interviewees, diplomatic missions and consular posts often deal with work that cannot be performed by employees; they either have no time to do it or the work is purely manual (lawn-mowing, for instance); many diplomats' partners would gladly perform these tasks and the need to hire local employees would be eliminated.

The Ministry should intensify the process of concluding bilateral agreements on the employment of diplomats' partners.

Interviewees assessed the subsidising of English and French courses for diplomats' partners as positive; the selection of courses should also include other languages, and the children of diplomats should also be offered the option to learn foreign languages.

Several interviewees mentioned difficulties encountered by diplomats with partners of other nationalities.

Due to going abroad, in spite of legal provisions, many diplomats' partners lose their jobs, and several interviewees reported cases where partners were forced by employers to resign themselves before going abroad.

Several interviewees expressed reservations in employing diplomats and their partners at the same diplomatic mission or consular post.

Nevertheless, interviewees emphasised that, with some restrictions, it is

possible to employ both partners in the foreign service at large embassies and in cities where there are several Slovenian missions; this proved useful especially during the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The stereotype that defines males in Slovenia as the “head of the family” presents a major issue for male partners of diplomats that decide to go abroad. Three of the interviewees said that both they and their husbands encountered prejudice and comments from their colleagues on account of the husband requesting a sabbatical from their position at work and accompanying their wives abroad.

Such remarks and seemingly harmless jokes offend the female diplomat and/or her partner and are indicative of a general machismo culture.

“I’ve heard numerous remarks and jokes; my husband will follow me abroad – is he a man or is he henpecked?”

According to most of the interviewees, allowances for partners are minimal and do not represent sufficient financial stimulation.

The problem with allowances is also that they are determined by ambassadors, which means that some partners automatically get a full allowance, while others have to work hard to get even half or three-quarters of the sum available for this purpose; it all depends on the ambassador and his personal characteristics, preferences, etc.

1.7 Interpersonal relations

Several interviewees highlighted poor interpersonal relations and profound distrust between employees of the Ministry, with a successful career, promotion and climbing the hierarchical scale being the main values aspired to.

“The main problem at the Ministry is not gender-based discrimination but personal discrimination.”

The situation at the Ministry regarding human culture and personal well-being has reportedly deteriorated significantly during the last ten or fifteen years.

2. Drafting the questionnaire

On the basis of hypotheses and information obtained during the interviews, a questionnaire was then drafted for all the employees at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia to complete.

The main goals of the questionnaire were to:

- Determine the **level of (in)equality** experienced among Slovenian diplomats;
- Determine the **main discriminating factors as perceived by employees**;
- Focus on the **perceived level of gender inequality**;
- Determine the **situations** in which employees are most often discriminated against;
- Determine the **main reasons for unequal opportunities** for employees; and
- Indicate possible measures for improvement**, based on suggestions and comments provided by employees.

In the drafting of the questions and possible answers, most of the information obtained from the interviews had been taken into account. The “half-open question” was typically used. This allowed respondents the option to provide their own answers in addition to those already provided (for instance, to determine the most problematic discriminating factors or situations in which the employees of the Ministry are most often discriminated against).

The employees were able to answer several questions using scales of 1–10 or 1–5 (i.e. from “never” to “very often” or from “not problematic” to “very problematic”). Structurally, the questionnaire was divided into three segments – in the first segment, the respondents were questioned on general aspects of equal opportunities for employees; in the second, the focus was on working abroad where, according to the interviewees, the rights of employees are most impaired; in the third part, the respondents were asked to provide demographic information.

In the first segment, a basic inquiry on discriminating factors and situations was followed by questions on gender equality. A further question was also included in order to determine the characteristics of a successful diplomat. In the second segment, the respondents were asked about the benefits and disadvantages of working abroad and their experience in this field. A question on cooperation with the Personnel Service and an extended list of suggestions for improvements in working abroad were also included, which were then assessed by employees. A special question on the department for family policies within the Ministry was added, as this was mentioned several times during the interviews.

After the preliminary analysis of collected information, the interviewees were divided into several groups according to:

- **Gender**
- **Age**³⁹
- **Position** (diplomats or administrative/technical staff)
- **Years of service**⁴⁰
- **Experience of working abroad**
- **Marital status** (married/extramarital union/single and with/without children)

Then, efforts were made to determine whether – based on these criteria – there are statistically significant differences to the answers provided to questions on equal opportunities in Slovenian diplomacy.

³⁹ On the basis of data from the interviews and the structure of employees at the Ministry, the respondents were divided into five age groups. Those younger than 30 were put into the first group and those aged 60 or more into the last group. The remaining three groups included respondents aged from 30–40, from 40–50 and from 50–60 years, respectively. Each of the groups included the lower and excluded the upper age limit.

⁴⁰ On the basis of data from the interviews and the structure of employees at the Ministry, the respondents were divided into four groups according to years of service. “Novices” who had worked at the Ministry for less than five years were put in the first group. The second group consisted of employees who had joined the Ministry at the beginning of the present or at the end of the previous decade and had 5–10 years of service. The third group comprised employees with a relatively longer period of service (10–15 years of service in Slovenian diplomacy), while the fourth group consisted of employees with 15 or more years of service – those who had been at the Ministry virtually since it was established.

3. Survey findings

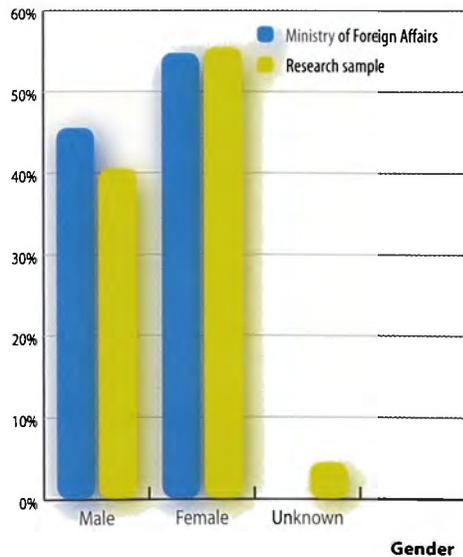
Of all employees in the internal and foreign services of the Ministry, 235 employees (37.3%) provided us with completed questionnaires (according to the Personnel Service,⁴¹ 630 persons were employed at the Ministry as of 1 January 2009). Data on gender, age structure and other characteristics of the sample were compared to information for all employees, which was provided by the Personnel Service at the Ministry.

3.1 Survey sample

Respondents in the survey were made up from 55.3% females and 40.4% males (4.3% of respondents refused to disclose their gender). Of the respondents, 12.3% were younger than 30 years; 33.2% were 30–40 years old, 21.7% were 40–50 years old, 16.6% were 50–60 years old and 3.4% were 60 or older. Thirty respondents (12.8%) refused to disclose their age. During the same period, 54.6% of those employed at the Ministry were females and 45.4% were males, with the following age structure: 13.2% of employees were younger than 30, 41.7% of employees were aged 30–40, 22.7% were aged 40–50, 18.7% were aged 50–60 and 3.7% were aged 60 or more (Charts 1 and 2).

In total, 52.3% of respondents were married, 22.6% had a cohabiting partner, 20.4% were single; 57.0% were parents, 38.7% responded that they had no children. 4.7% of employees who took part in the survey refused to disclose their marital status and 4.3% refused to disclose whether they had children.⁴²

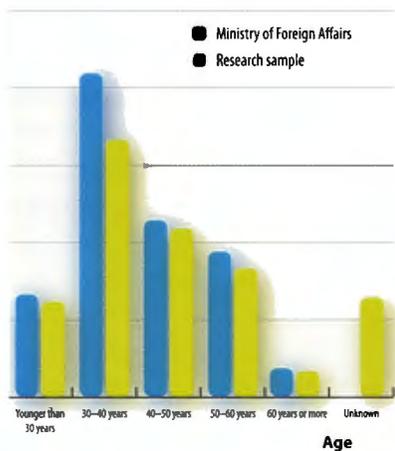
Chart 1: Comparison of shares of males and females among employees of the Ministry and among respondents



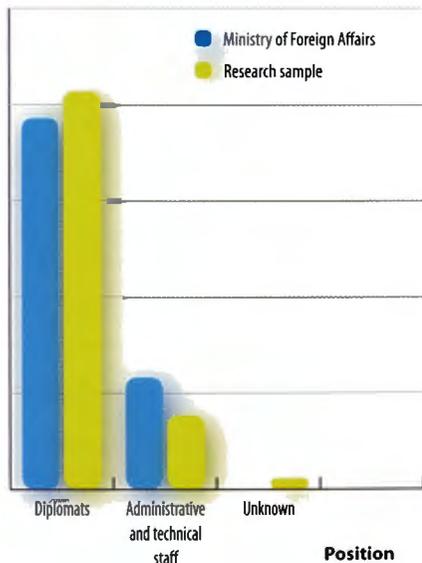
⁴¹ The data provided by the Personnel Service for all employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia is accurate as of 1 January 2009 throughout the survey, unless stated otherwise.

⁴² The data regarding marital status and children in the survey sample and the data for the entire

art 2: Comparison of shares of age groups of employees at the Ministry and respondents



t 3: Comparison of shares of diplomats and administrative and technical among employees at the Ministry respondents



Among respondents, 82.6% had a diplomatic title and 15.3% were administrative and technical staff (with 2.1% of respondents with non-disclosed status). Of the total employees at the Ministry, on the other hand, 77% were diplomats and 23% were members of administrative and technical staff (Chart 3).

26% of respondents had less than five years of service, 24.3% had from five to ten, 20.4% had 10 to 15 and 25.5% had 15 or more years of service at the Ministry. The question on years of service was left unanswered by 3.8% of respondents. According to the statistics, 32.7% of employees at the Ministry had less than five years of service, 25.3% had from 5–10, 18.5% had 10–15 and 23.5% had 15 or more years of service⁴³ (Chart 4).

Of the respondents, 68.9% had already worked in the foreign service, 72% of them were accompanied by their families and 28% went abroad alone. Of the respondents, 29.4% had never served in the foreign service, while 1.7% did not answer this question. At the Ministry, almost two thirds (66.3%) of employees had already worked abroad at least once, while 33.7% of employees had worked only in the internal service (Chart 5).

On the basis of value comparisons of the above-mentioned variables on the levels of the sample and population, it was assumed that the sample, with

nistry were not comparable – the Personnel Service only stores information on employees who registered their partners (26.3% of employees) or children (14.8% of employees), and it is assumed that many employees did not forward their data to the Personnel Service. of 29 July 2009.

minor discrepancies, is representative. Nevertheless, several specific significances of the sample relating to the entire population should be determined and taken into account in the interpretation of the findings.

The comparisons in Charts 1 and 2 show that the questionnaire was completed more often by female employees (the percentage of males who completed the questionnaires was lower than that of males among the employed), with 4.3% of employees who chose not to disclose their gender. Among those who disclosed their age, the age groups of employees younger than 30, those between 40–50, 50–60, and 60 or more, are slightly overrepresented according to the comparable percentage share of all Ministry employees. Significantly lower than the corresponding percentage at the Ministry was the percentage of respondents who disclosed their age in the 30–40 years age group; they completed the questionnaire relatively more rarely or decided to disclose their age relatively less often than their colleagues.

More diplomats completed the questionnaire than members of administrative and technical staff (Chart 3). According to some feedback information, it could be construed that this is also a result of the title of the survey “*Equal Opportunities in Slovenian Diplomacy*” and the structure of the questionnaire, although its purpose, as presented in the accompanying letter to employees, was to study the situation of equal opportunities for all employees of the Ministry, not just diplomats.

Chart 4: Comparison of employee structure according to years of service at the Ministry among all employees and among respondents

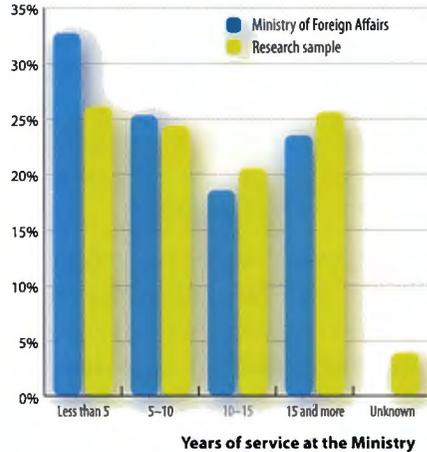


Chart 5: Comparison of shares of employees of the Ministry who had already worked abroad and respondents

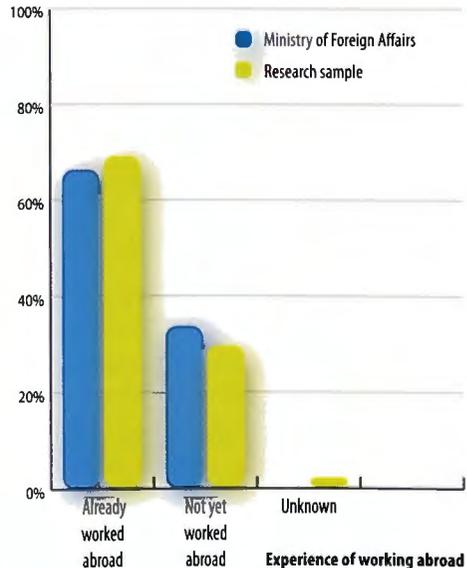


Chart 4 shows that responses to the questionnaire positively correlated with the years of service that employees had spent at the Ministry. The questionnaire was completed relatively least often by those with less than five years of service, whose percentage share was substantially lower than their percentage share of all employees at the Ministry. The percentage shares of employees with 5–10 years of service at the population and sample levels were approximately the same, while the shares of those with 10–15 and 15 or more years of service at the Ministry were higher than the comparable percentage shares at the level of the Ministry. Thus, employees with ten or more years of service at the Ministry responded to the questionnaire or the question on years of service more often than co-workers with fewer years of service.

Among respondents, the percentage share of those who had already worked abroad was higher than the comparable percentage share among all employees (Chart 5) or there were relatively fewer employees among respondents who had not yet worked abroad in comparison to the entire Ministry. This is probably due to the problems arising from staying abroad and its influence on equal opportunities. Living abroad represented a major part of the questionnaire and was presumably felt as being most significant to employees who had already experienced it directly.

During the data collection process, it was possible to notice the considerable concern of employees taking part in the survey to ensure anonymity, and the relatively frequent non-disclosure of demographic information. Some employees even approached the Department for Policy Planning and Research and enquired about the purpose of the survey and whether it is mandatory to submit answers to the questionnaire. During their interviews, several interviewees confirmed that many employees viewed the survey as a way of “snitching” on colleagues and obtaining “sensitive information” under the pretence of an equal opportunities survey, regardless of the clearly defined goals, methodology and process of the survey set out in the accompanying letter, and a relatively “straightforward” topic.

Excessive fear of the survey’s purpose and maintaining the identity of individual employees, which, according to some of the responses received, sometimes even resembles paranoia, has, according to the opinions of the interviewees, deeper roots in interpersonal relations and various factors related to the functioning of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ever since it was founded. This demonstrates deep distrust among employees and, most probably, also explains the large percentage share of non-disclosed information, especially in the demographic sections of the questionnaire (12.8% of employees did not disclose their birth year) and the postscripts to the questionnaire, in the sense “*Why don’t I just write my name down?!*” or “*No thanks, in the interest of the anonymity of the survey!*” According to the comparisons above, it could be concluded that males were more cautious than females, while those aged 30–40 (early career

period) and those with less than five years of service at the Ministry were the most frequent to evade the questionnaire or indicate their year of birth. It can be assumed that there are many employees who did not take part in the survey because of the above-mentioned distrust.

3.2 General findings

On the basis of a statistical analysis of the questionnaire results, the status of equal opportunities at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was initially assessed; the main factors creating unequal opportunities and the circumstances in which employees most often feel discriminated against were identified.

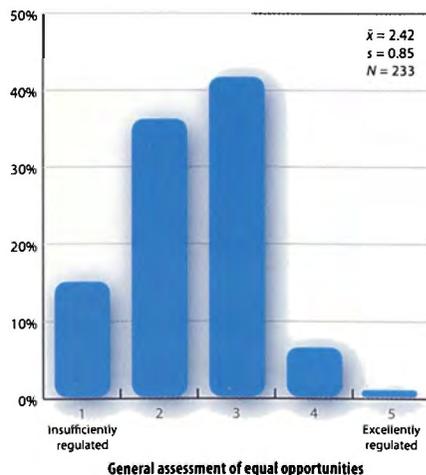
3.2.1 Assessment of the situation

The situation of equal opportunities for employees at the Ministry was mostly assessed by respondents as being average (Chart 6). On a scale of 1–5, where 1 means “insufficiently regulated” and 5 “excellently regulated”, only 0.9% of respondents assessed equal opportunities at the Ministry as being excellently regulated, 6.4% assessed them with a grade of 4, 41.6% with a grade of 3, 36.1% with a grade of 2, while 15% of employees believed that equal opportunities at the Ministry were insufficiently regulated.⁴⁴ The average grade was 2.42.

As to the question of whether they had ever felt discriminated against during their career at the Ministry on the basis of gender or any other factors, 57.8% of employees responded in the affirmative, while 42.2% responded in the negative (Chart 7).

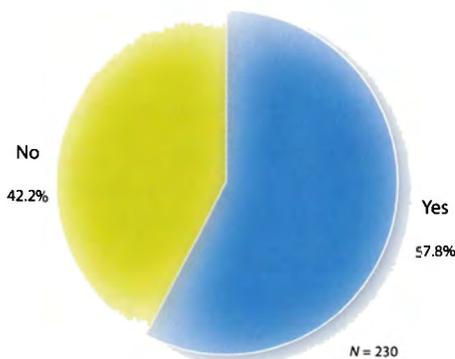
This question was answered in the affirmative by 61.9% of females and 50.5%

Chart 6: Numerical grade of equal opportunities situation at the Ministry



⁴⁴ In the calculations of percentages in the survey, missing values were not taken into account unless stated otherwise. Percentages thus reflect the share of all valid values (the percentage share among those respondents who answered a question). In such cases, the information on the number of valid values for an individual variable (N) was always provided in charts, while the number of missing values may be calculated from the discrepancy between the number of units in the sample (235) and N . The mean value of an individual variable is marked with “ \bar{x} ” and standard deviation with “ s ”.

Chart 7: Feeling discriminated against among employees



During your career at the Ministry, have you ever felt discriminated against on the basis of your gender or any other factor?

share of those who had already felt discriminated against in the group of employees aged 30–40 was the lowest (46.2%).

of males; however the difference between genders bears no statistical significance⁴⁵ ($\chi^2 = 2.86$, $df = 1$, $sig. = 0.091$). There are also no statistically significant differences between the different age groups and between diplomats and administrative and technical staff. The latter felt discriminated against more rarely (51.5% of members of administrative and technical staff and 59.1% of diplomats had already felt discriminated against). Among age groups (Table 1), the percentage share of those who had already felt discriminated against was, unsurprisingly, highest in the oldest employee group (aged 60 or more) – 75% of them responded positively to this question – while the percentage

Table 1: Feeling of being discriminated against and age

Age (years)	During your service at the Ministry, have you ever felt discriminated against because of your gender and/or any other factor?	
	YES	NO
Less than 30	50.0%	50.0%
From 30–40	46.2%	53.8%
From 40–50	66.0%	34.0%
From 50–60	60.5%	39.5%
60 or more	75.0%	25.0%

The respondents who provided affirmative answers to this question were asked to assess the damage suffered on a scale of 1–10, where 1 means “no consequences” and 10 “grave material damage and/or psychological burden”. The average grade

⁴⁵ In determining statistical significance in the survey, information is provided on the value of χ^2 , t or F according to the type of variable for which the correlation is determined. Each time, information is provided on the number of degrees of freedom (df) and level of significance ($sig.$). In the survey, correlation between two variables is treated as statistically significant if the level of significance (the risk of zero assumption recovery) is lower than 5% ($sig. < 0.050$).

was 6.93. As Chart 8 demonstrates, the majority of employees assessed the damage rate with a grade of 8 (20.6%), 10 (18.3%), 9 (13.7%), and 7 (11.5%). Fewer employees assessed the damage rate with a grade of 6 (5.3%), 5 (9.9%), 4 (6.9%), 3 (6.1%), 2 (6.1%) or 1 (1.5%).

On average, males assessed damage sustained with higher grades than females (7.48 vs. 6.61) and diplomats with higher grades than administrative and technical staff (7.07 vs. 5.71). According to the findings from the previous question, the oldest age group of employees (aged 60 or more) assigned the highest assessment grades (8.33) and those younger than 30 assigned the lowest grades (5.71), followed by employees aged 30–40 (6.08), employees aged 40–50 (7.45) and those aged 50–60 (7.70). The differences between genders are not statistically

Chart 8: Rate of discrimination experienced among employees who had already experienced discrimination during their employment at the Ministry

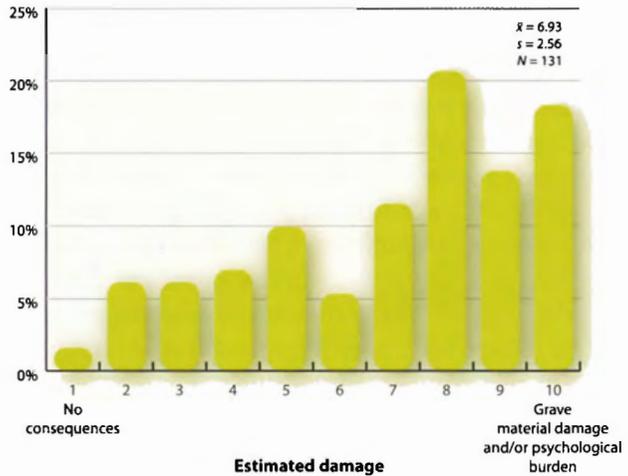
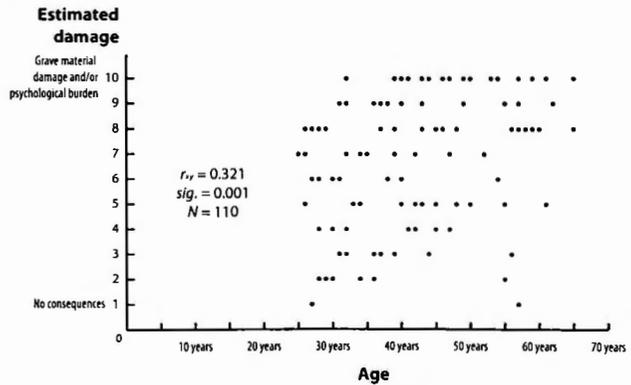


Chart 9: Correlation between the estimated damage and age



significant ($t = 1.86$; $df = 122$; $sig. = 0.066$), while the differences between age groups, and between diplomats and administrative and technical staff are ($F = 3.14$; $df = 4$; $sig. = 0.018$ and $t = 2.07$; $df = 127$; $sig. = 0.040$). The correlation between the age of employees who had already been discriminated against and their assessments of sustained damages is also statistically significant ($sig. = 0.001$). The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient ($r_{xy} = 0.321$) displays a weak to average positive correlation. In general, for employees who feel they have been discriminated

against, it holds true that the higher the age of an employee, the higher their damage assessment grade (Chart 9).

3.2.2 Main discriminating factors

According to employees, the most problematic types of discrimination occurring at the Ministry are based on political affiliation, personal preference and personal grudges. When respondents were assessing different discriminating factors with grades from 1–5, where 1 meant “not problematic” and 5 meant “very problematic”, political affiliation received an average grade of 3.99, personal grudges 3.96 and personal preference 3.94. Discrimination on the basis of age/generation grouping followed with an average grade of 3.20, and, only then, gender with an average grade of 2.33. National and religious affiliation received an average grade of 1.72 (Chart 10). Under the option “Other”, employees specified temporary/permanent employment relationship, “supposed” political affiliation, education level, (in)significance of a department, place of residence, the readiness to stay at work late into the afternoon, the relationship between diplomats and administrative and technical staff, family ties, general leadership relations/distrust in co-workers, etc. Answers in this category received an average grade of 4.12.

The comparison of problem assessment grades for individual discriminating factors (Chart 11) shows that 40.5% of employees viewed personal grudges as a highly problematic discriminating factor. Among employees, 39.4% believed the same for political affiliation and 36.1% for personal preference. Only 1.8% of

Chart 10: Problem rate of various discriminating factors – average grade comparison

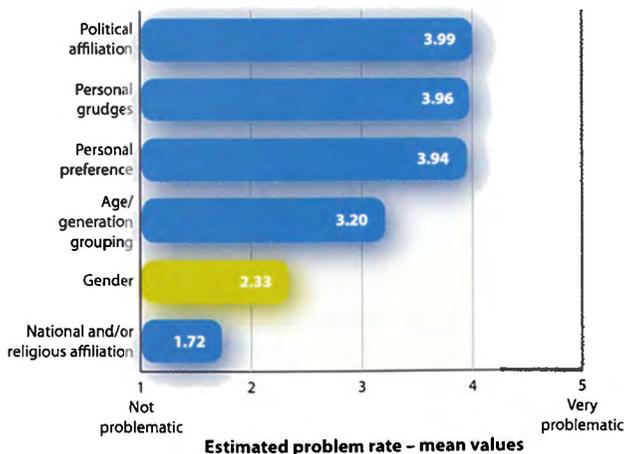
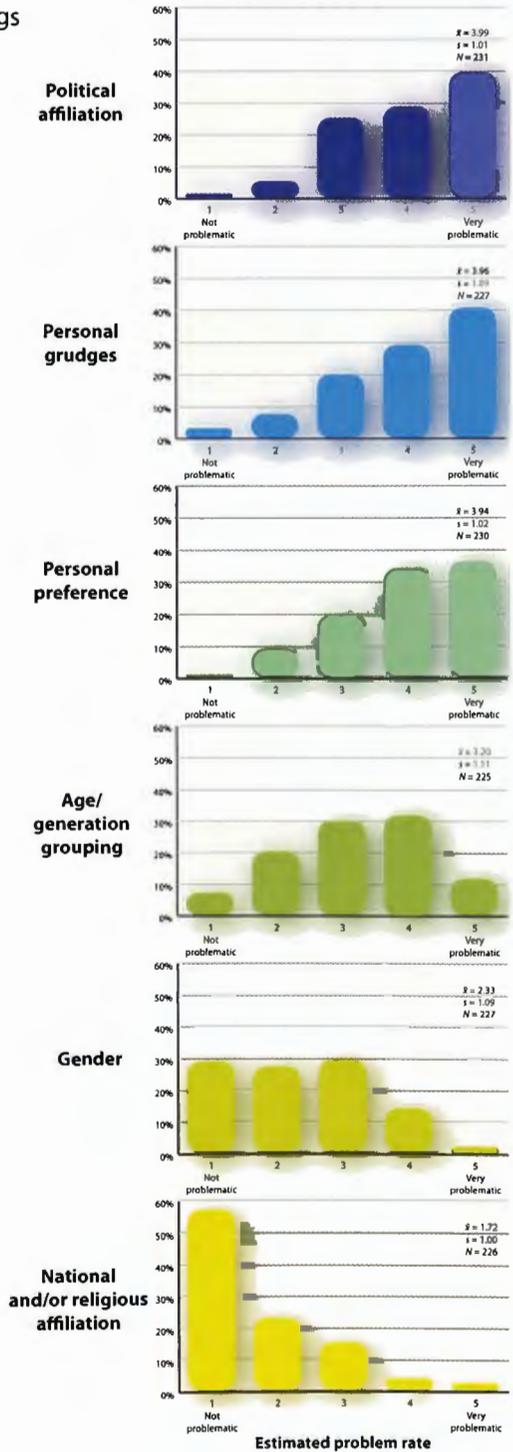


Chart 11: Comparison of problem gradings for various discriminating factors



employees assessed gender as a highly problematic factor in Slovenian diplomacy, while 11.6% believed the same for generational grouping and 2.1% for national or religious affiliation.

The difference between males and females was only statically significant ($t = -7.95$; $df = 215$; $sig. = 0.000$) in one type of discrimination – that by gender. Males assigned an average grade of 1.69, and females 2.72. The difference between age groups was only statistically significant ($F = 5.25$; $df = 4$; $sig. = 0.000$) in the assessment of problems arising from nationality or religious affiliation. These were assessed by those aged 60 or more as being significantly higher (2.71) than assessments made by their colleagues. Diplomats and members of administrative and technical staff provided similar grades in their assessments.

Table 2 shows that, among respondents of different gender, age groups, job title and years of service, there are no significant differences in the perception of the three most problematic discriminating factors.

Table 2: Most problematic discriminating factors according to gender, age, working post and years of service

	Three most problematic discriminating factors according to respondents
Males	1. Political affiliation (3.97) 2. Personal preference (3.88) 3. Personal grudges (3.82)
Females	1. Personal grudges (4.06) 2. Political affiliation (4.01) 3. Personal preference (3.96)
Younger than 30 years	1. Personal preference (3.79) 2. Personal grudges (3.79) 3. Political affiliation (3.52)
From 30 to 40 years	1. Personal grudges (3.92) 2. Political affiliation (3.91) 3. Personal preference (3.81)
From 40 to 50 years	1. Personal grudges (4.08) 2. Political affiliation (4.06) 3. Personal preference (4.02)
From 50 to 60 years	1. Political affiliation (4.13) 2. Personal preference (3.92) 3. Personal grudges (3.81)

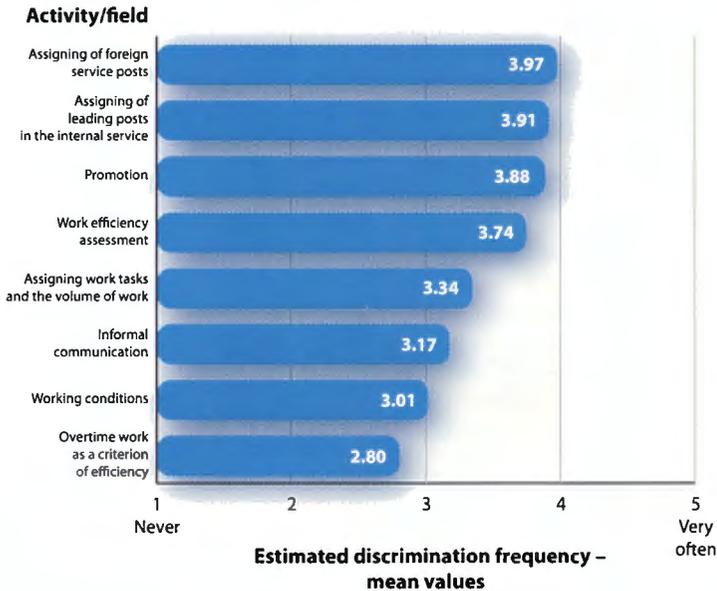
60 years or more	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal preference (4.00) 2. Political affiliation (3.88) 3. Age/Generational grouping (3.50)
Diplomats	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Political affiliation (4.00) 2. Personal preference (3.93) 3. Personal grudges (3.91)
Administrative and technical staff:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal grudges (4.26) 2. Personal preference (4.00) 3. Political affiliation (3.97)
Less than 5 years of service	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal preference (3.77) 2. Personal grudges (3.77) 3. Political affiliation (3.75)
5–10 years of service	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal preference (4.11) 2. Political affiliation (3.98) 3. Personal grudges (3.92)
10–15 years of service	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal grudges (4.21) 2. Political affiliation (4.04) 3. Personal preference (4.00)
15 or more years of service	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Political affiliation (4.19) 2. Personal grudges (3.95) 3. Personal preference (3.88)

3.2.3 Circumstances of discrimination

According to the employees who took part in the assessment, the equal opportunities are neglected in the selection of posts in the foreign service, in the assignment of leading posts in the internal service, promotions and work efficiency assessments (Chart 12). On a scale of 1–5, with 1 meaning “never” and 5 “very often”, respondents assessed the frequency of discrimination in different circumstances. The assignment of employees to the foreign service was assessed with an average grade of 3.97, the assignment of leading posts in the internal service with an average grade of 3.91, appointments to title with an average grade of 3.88 and work efficiency assessments with an average grade of 3.74. Discrimination in assigning work tasks and the volume of work were subject to moderately frequent discrimination (3.34), informal communication (3.17) and working conditions (3.01), while overtime work as the sole or the most important criterion of efficiency was seen as a somewhat less frequent factor of discrimination (2.80).

Results are similar when the discrimination frequency assessments for each of the circumstances (Chart 13) are further analysed. Respondents were most

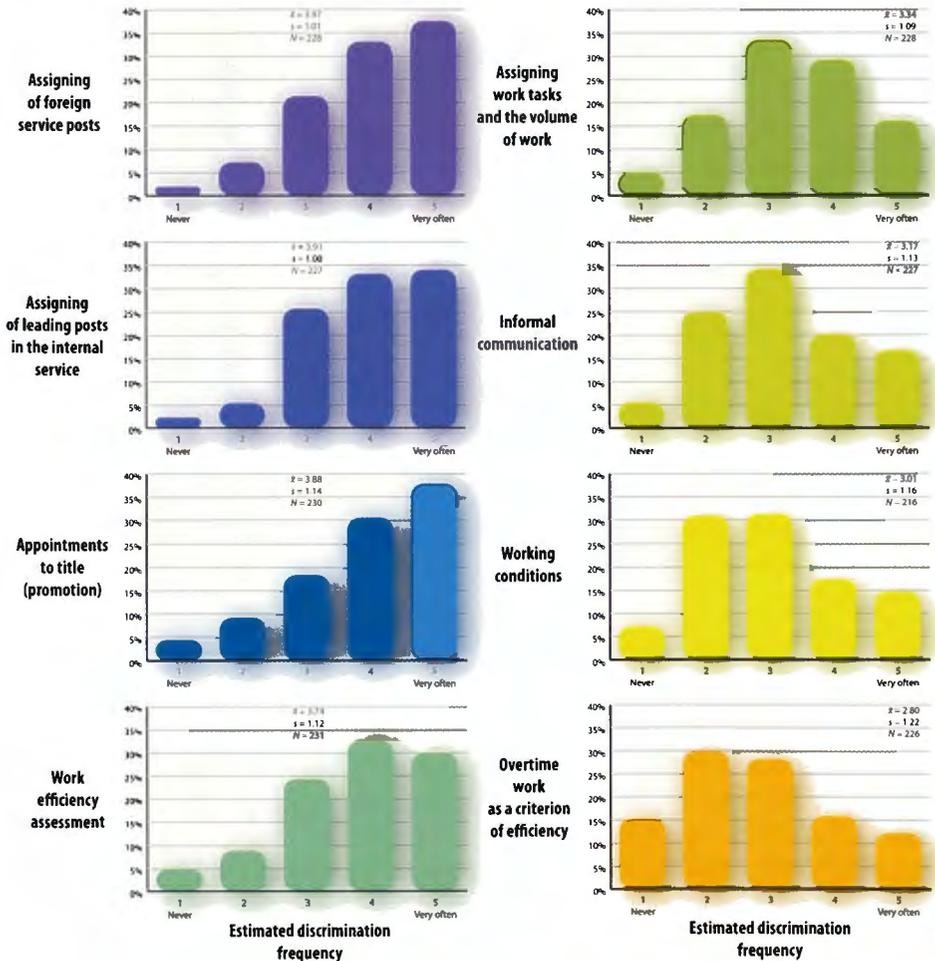
Chart 12: Frequency of discrimination experienced in various circumstances – average grade comparison



unified in their assessments of discrimination frequency in assigning work posts in the internal and foreign services (with the standard deviation being 1.01 and 1.00); 37.3% believed that discrimination occurs very frequently in the assignment of work posts abroad, whereas 33.9% of employees believed the same holds true for leading posts in the internal service and 37.8% for appointments to title. In their assessment of discrimination in relation to work efficiency, the majority of respondents (32.5%) assigned a grade of four; with other factors, as shown in Chart 13, the grade modus tends to the left and discrimination frequency grades are therefore lower.

Males and females were relatively unified in their discrimination frequency assessments. Discrimination frequency assessments provided by members of different age groups for individual circumstances were statistically significant only in the assessments of informal communication ($F = 3.26$; $df = 4$; $sig. = 0.013$) and working conditions ($F = 2.98$; $df = 4$; $sig. = 0.021$). In informal communication, discrimination was experienced relatively more often by employees aged between 40–50 (3.45) and those aged 60 or more (4.00). Discriminating working conditions were more often experienced by employees aged between 40–50 (3.25), 50–60 (3.31) and those aged 60 or more (3.13). Administrative and technical staff experience discrimination in assigning leading posts in the internal service relatively less frequently than diplomat colleagues (3.56 and 3.98, $t = 2.34$; $df = 220$;

Chart 13: Comparison of assessments as to how often discrimination occurs in specific circumstances



sig. = 0.020), and more frequently as regards working conditions (3.41 and 2.94, $t = -2.091$; $df = 209$; sig. = 0.038).

As employees provided considerably differing answers on how often they feel discriminated against in various situations, an effort was made to classify them into different groups with similar viewpoints on the frequency of discrimination experienced in various circumstances, so that employees within individual groups would have opinions as similar as possible, and that the opinions of employees in different groups would differ to the largest possible extent.

According to the requirements above, the respondents were divided into three⁴⁶ groups based on cluster analysis – A, B and C (Table 3). Group A accounts for 12.9% of respondents, Group B for 67.2% and Group C for 19.9% ($N = 201$). Members of Group A typically assess the discrimination frequency as being relatively rare (the mean values of the eight variables marking the assessed discrimination frequency are less than 3). Group B, with most members, is relatively neutral in assessing the discrimination rate, while Group C is the most sensitive (seven of the eight variables have a mean value of greater than 4).

Table 3: Groups with similar viewpoints on circumstances of discrimination

	Average discrimination frequency grade (1 – never, 5 – very often)			
	Group A	Group B	Group C	A+B+C
Assigning and volume of work tasks	2.31	3.27	4.35	3.36
Work efficiency assessment	2.08	3.88	4.58	3.79
Appointment to title (promotion)	2.50	3.96	4.82	3.94
Assigning leading posts in the internal service	2.81	3.82	4.88	3.90
Assignment to posts in the foreign service	2.35	4.07	4.85	4.00
Overtime as efficiency criterion	1.92	2.77	3.62	2.83
Informal communication	2.12	3.08	4.25	3.19
Working conditions	2.19	2.74	4.48	3.01

There are also demographic differences between the three groups (Table 4). In Group A, males form the majority (53.8%), whereas the percentage share of males in the other two groups is lower than the percentage share at the entire sample level. Group C has the highest average age (43.0 years), and Group B the lowest (38.7 years). The percentage shares of diplomats and administrative and technical staff as well as the years of service completed at the Ministry are very similar between the groups. In comparison to Groups B and C, Group A has a substantially higher percentage share of employees who were already posted in a mission abroad (80.8%) as well as the highest percentage share (30.8%) of singles. However, in terms of these demographic variables, none of the differences between the groups is statistically significant.

⁴⁶ This number is selected using a computer algorithm to automatically select the number of groups on the basis of the Schwarz-Bayesian criterion. Using the leaders algorithm (KMEANS; in which the number of leaders is set in advance as $k = 3$), three groups of similar size are obtained, while the average variable values that measure discrimination frequency grades only differ slightly from group to group compared to those gained using the first method.

Table 4: Groups with similar viewpoints on circumstances of discrimination and their demographic composition

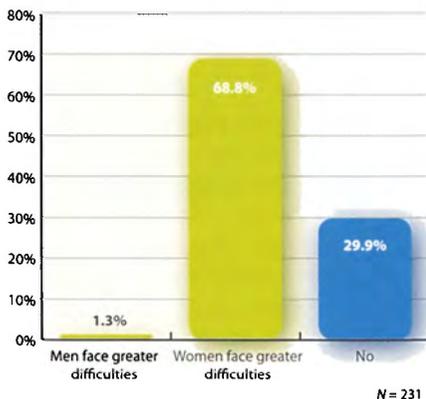
	Group A	Group B	Group C
Males	53.8%	38.6%	34.2%
Females	46.2%	61.4%	65.8%
Average age	40.9 yrs	38.7 yrs	43.0 yrs
Years of service at the Ministry (average)	8.8 yrs	9.3 yrs	9.3 yrs
Diplomats	84.6%	84.0%	82.1%
Administrative and technical staff	15.4%	16.0%	17.9%
Already posted abroad	80.8%	67.4%	66.7%
Have children	61.5%	53.9%	65.8%
Single	30.8%	20.5%	26.3%

Employees can be divided into three groups according to the similarity of their viewpoints on the discrimination frequency in various circumstances. Members of Group A assess cases of discrimination under different circumstances as being relatively rare. In this group, males are predominant, the portion of single members is above average, and a great majority of members had already worked abroad.

Group B consists of members who assessed cases of discrimination as being relatively frequent. Most of them are female; on average the members are younger than 40, and the percentage share of single persons is the lowest in this group. Members of Group C notice cases of discrimination relatively more often than colleagues. On average, this is the oldest group with the lowest percentage share of diplomats and employees who have already worked abroad.

Chart 14: Gender and combining professional and private lives

Are employees at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs facing more difficulties in combining their professional and private lives due to their gender?



3.3 Equal opportunities and gender

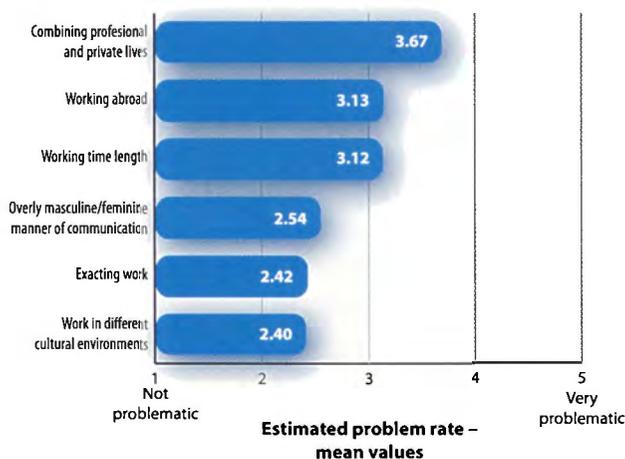
Over two thirds of respondents (68.8%) believe that females at the Ministry face more difficulties in combining their professional and private lives due to their gender (Chart 14). Only 1.3% of respondents believe that males face greater difficulties, whereas 29.9% believe that gender does not affect the harmonisation of professional and private lives.

The answers provided by males and females to the question vary, as expected, and with statistical significance ($\chi^2 = 45.46$; $df = 2$; $sig. = 0.000$). Among respondents, 55.4% of males and only 13.2% of females believe that gender does not cause major or minor difficulties in the combining of professional and private lives in diplomacy. On the other hand, 86.0% of females and 43.5% of males believe that females in diplomacy face greater difficulties in combining domestic and professional duties.

3.3.1 Limiting factors

Combining professional and private lives is, according to respondents, also the most problematic factor limiting employees on the basis of their gender (Chart 15). On a scale of 1–5, with 1 meaning “not problematic” and 5 “very problematic”, it received an average grade of 3.67. This was followed by assignment abroad with an average grade of 3.13 and working time length (3.12). Taking into account the findings that the majority of employees see females at the

Chart 15: Problem rate of various factors according to their negative effect on equal opportunities of both genders in Slovenian diplomacy – average grade comparison



Ministry as being in an unequal position when it comes to combining domestic and professional duties, this means that equal opportunities for females in diplomacy are hampered the most by working abroad, working time length and the separation of professional and private lives in general. The overly masculine/feminine manner of communication is reportedly also relatively problematic (2.54), whereas exacting work (2.42) and work in different cultural environments (2.40) – a common practice in diplomacy – are believed to hamper gender equality to a lesser extent.

It is interesting that the opinions of male and female respondents did not differ strongly in their assessments of these categories. Only the differences in the assessments of working time length ($t = -3.07$; $df = 205$; $sig. = 0.002$) and an overly masculine/feminine manner of communication ($t = -2.69$; $df = 202$; $sig. = 0.008$)

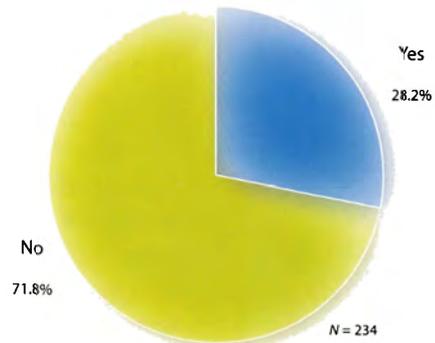
are statistically significant, since males ascribed lower importance to them than females (average grades of 2.75 and 3.28 respectively for working time length, and 2.25 and 2.69 respectively for the manner of communication).

3.3.2 Sexual harassment

Since male and especially female interviewees mentioned cases of verbal sexual harassment on several occasions, the respondents were asked whether they had ever noticed sexual harassment in any form during their years of service at the Ministry. Among respondents, 28.2% answered the question in the affirmative, and 71.8% in the negative (Chart 16).

There are substantial differences between employees of different age and gender. The percentage share of respondents who had already either experienced or witnessed any form of sexual harassment is approximately two times higher among females (35.4%) than among males (17%; $\chi^2 = 9.19$; $df = 1$; $sig. = 0.002$). Older employees either noticed or experienced sexual harassment more rarely than younger colleagues (not a single employee aged 60 or more answered this question in the affirmative, whereas the percentage share of affirmative answers among employees aged between 50–60 accounted for 12.8%; $\chi^2 = 10.96$; $df = 4$; $sig. = 0.027$). Employees aged between 40–50 either experienced or witnessed sexual harassment most frequently (39.2%). There are no major differences between the answers provided by diplomats and administrative and technical staff.

Chart 16: Various forms of sexual harassment witnessed by employees



During your career at the Ministry, have you ever noticed sexual harassment in any form (including concealed forms, such as inappropriate jokes, etc.)?

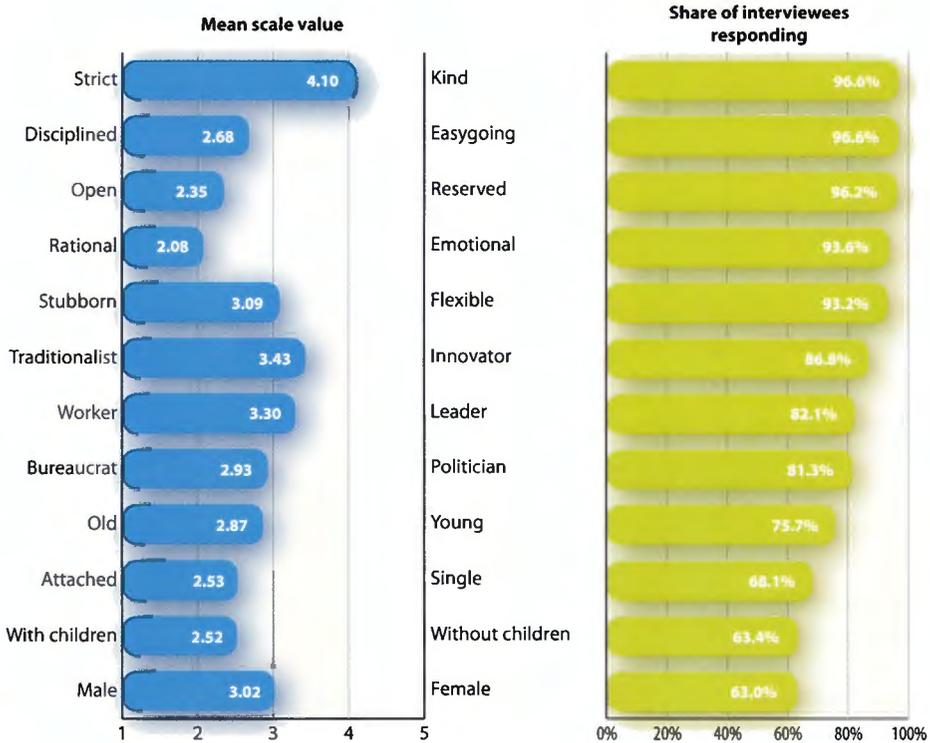
3.3.3 Stereotypes

With the aim of discerning the stereotypical image of a successful diplomat and its impact on the equal opportunities of all employees, the participants in the survey were asked about the qualities of a “good diplomat”.

A total of 12 categories were offered to them which took the form of word pairs⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Since the question was intended to seek gender dichotomies in the image of an ideal diplomat, the selection of traits does not include many others that, according to the interviewees, should

Chart 17: Traits of a successful diplomat according to employees at the Ministry



on a continuum (in the form of a scale of 1–5). On the scale, employees assessed which of both poles better defines a successful diplomat. In each pair, employees could express the opinion that a certain trait does not affect the diplomatic profession by circling neither.

Chart 17 shows mean values of a numbered continuum for each pair. On the right side of the graph, the percentage share of respondents who decided to choose among different traits is displayed. Grade 3, as the middle value of the scale for each pair, indicates that a respondent believes that more or less of an individual trait does not contribute to the success of a diplomat, and that the diplomat is supposed to possess the right balance between the two.

For the survey, clearly the most important pair is that of male vs. female, i.e. the assessment of the stereotype that males are better diplomats. The mean scale

be included in the model in order to design a comprehensive and precise image of an “ideal diplomat” (such as intelligence, spirit of enterprise, bravery, discretion, patience, reliability, responsibility, sociability, fairness, etc.). Such a comprehensive model would, indeed, extend beyond the limits of this survey.

value of this pair was 3.02, and this pair was also the one that most employees left unattended (63.0%). Employees who did not circle any value believed that gender does not affect the success of a diplomat. Among those who did choose a value on the scale, the vast majority (91.2%) chose the value of 3, which is to be interpreted similarly. As it is equally distant from both poles, according to the respondents, gender does not affect the success of a diplomat.

According to numerous studies, several traits included among the pairs are typically associated with common views through the prism of binary oppositions between the stereotypical images of males and females.⁴⁸ Through conscious and subconscious patterns of patriarchal sexual dichotomy, the opposition male vs. female thus symbolises other differences that relate to any of the two poles. The opposition male vs. female is therefore of ideal-type⁴⁹ equivalence to the oppositions of active vs. passive, subject vs. object, strict vs. kind, hard vs. soft, work vs. home, master/leader/ruler vs. housewife/mother, rational vs. emotional, conscious vs. subconscious, sun vs. moon, etc. From this aspect, the findings show that the image of a successful diplomat, as seen by the employees who participated in the survey, has more traditionally “male” traits.

A good diplomat is supposed to be rational (with an average grade of 2.08, this is the most convincing tendency towards one of the traits among all pairs), disciplined (2.68) and a leader (3.30), not a worker. Although, on the surface, employees do not exhibit any stereotypical male images of a successful diplomat, on a deeper level, they evidently do share certain convictions which, if associated with the aforementioned stereotyped binary oppositions, imply that successful diplomats, according to their traits, are closer to that what is understood as “male” than “female”.

In addition to gender, respondents less frequently opined on the age of a successful diplomat, their marital status or the fact that they have children or not. Among the above-mentioned pairs, mean values tended towards older and married diplomats with children. Respondents were most decided with the pair strict vs. kind (value of 4.10), while a successful diplomat is also supposed to be open and innovative. On the issue as to whether a successful diplomat must be stubborn or flexible, a bureaucrat or a politician, respondents remained relatively neutral.

The only statistically significant difference ($t = -2.32$; $df = 111.06$; $sig. = 0.022$) between males and females occurred with the mean value of the continuum male vs. female. The difference between male and female respondents was relatively

⁴⁸ See e.g. Avsec, A., 2002. Stereotipi o moških in ženskih osebnostnih lastnostih. *Psihološka obzorja*, 11(2), 23–35; Eagly, A. and A. B. Dielman, 1997. The accuracy of gender stereotypes: A dilemma for feminism. *International Review of Social Psychology*, 2, 11–30; Rinc Urošević, A., 2006. Pojavnost spolnih stereotipov med odraslimi. *Pedagoška obzorja*, 21(2), 120–136.

⁴⁹ See also Weininger, O., 1903. *Sex and Character: An Investigation of Fundamental Principles*.

small, whereas males, on average, leaned towards males as being better diplomats (2.95) and females towards females as being better diplomats (3.11).

Substantial differences in the image of a successful diplomat occurred between different age groups that differ with statistical significance in five trait pairs, as shown in Table 5. Younger generations, and the oldest one (those aged 60 or more), were more in favour of an open diplomat, but at the same time the youngest two groups are the most inclined towards the trait "strict" of the pair strict vs. kind. The youngest generation (younger than 30), probably in accordance with the traditional image of a diplomat as being a tough negotiator, apparently believe that a successful diplomat is more stubborn than flexible.

The opinions on whether a successful diplomat is young or old are directly proportional to the age of respondents. Whereas younger respondents were in favour of a younger diplomat, the older believed that an older diplomat is more successful. It is interesting that the youngest and the oldest age groups had the highest and the lowest average grades for continuums old vs. young and attached vs. single. The oldest age group had the continuum grade closer to an older (2.00) attached (2.13) diplomat, whereas younger employees are more in favour of a younger and less in favour of an attached diplomat (3.05 and 2.83).

Table 5: Age and stereotypical image of a diplomat

Continuum	Mean scale value per age group					F	sig.	df	
	1 2 3 4 5	Up to 30 years	30-40 years	40-50 years	50-60 years				60 or more years
Open vs. reserved		2.00	2.12	2.35	2.86	2.38	4.20*	0.003	4
Strict vs. kind		3.69	3.97	4.29	4.21	4.13	2.65*	0.035	4
Stubborn vs. flexible		2.79	3.16	3.08	3.14	3.63	3.57*	0.008	4
Old vs. young		3.05	2.92	2.95	2.67	2.00	5.21*	0.001	4
Disciplined vs. easygoing		2.68	2.62	2.88	2.57	2.13	1.23	0.300	4
Attached vs. single		2.83	2.70	2.32	2.26	2.13	2.81*	0.028	4
Bureaucrat vs. politician		3.00	2.85	2.98	3.06	3.13	0.49	0.743	4
Male vs. female		3.13	3.00	3.06	3.11	2.75	1.38	0.246	4
Rational vs. emotional		2.07	1.94	2.26	2.17	2.00	1.30	0.271	4
Traditionalist vs. innovator		3.59	2.72	3.53	3.44	3.13	1.07	0.374	4
With children vs. without children		2.76	2.73	2.21	2.48	2.13	1.89	0.116	4
Worker vs. leader		3.29	3.17	3.22	3.39	4.00	2.19	0.073	4

* Level of significance lower than 5%

3.4 Going abroad

As already learned in the interviews, the assignment to missions abroad is one of the most problematic fields in Slovenian diplomacy as regards equal opportunities. Current conditions are particularly unfavourable to females and diplomats with families, while repeated open competitions for some working posts abroad for which employees do not apply are indicative of flaws in the current regulations.

A special set of questions was used to ascertain the main advantages and disadvantages taken into account when deciding whether to go work abroad. Respondents were asked to assess the current assignment regulations and all employees who had already worked abroad were asked to elucidate on their experience in the specific fields deemed problematic by interviewees.

According to the results, the issue of assignment abroad is linked primarily with the difficulties experienced by the diplomat's family. As already learned in the interviews, diplomats with families are worse off abroad compared to their single colleagues. Nevertheless, the majority of respondents believe that it is very important for a diplomat to be accompanied by their family. On a scale of 1–5, with 1 meaning “irrelevant” and 5 “extremely relevant”, 70.4% of respondents assigned great importance to being accompanied by the family (Chart 18). The average grade was 4.52, and employees were relatively united on this issue (with a standard deviation of 0.88).

These findings confirm those gleaned from the interviews that being accompanied by family is very important for the successful work of diplomats abroad. This increases the need to improve family policy, which is evident from the following results.

The work load of employees often conflicts with the interests of their families. While 51.5% of respondents believed that the amount of spare time available is very important for the successful and quality discharge of a diplomat's work duties, and employees assessed its significance with an average grade of 4.33 (with 1 meaning “irrelevant” and 5 meaning “extremely relevant”), 73.1% of

Chart 18: Presence of diplomats' families abroad

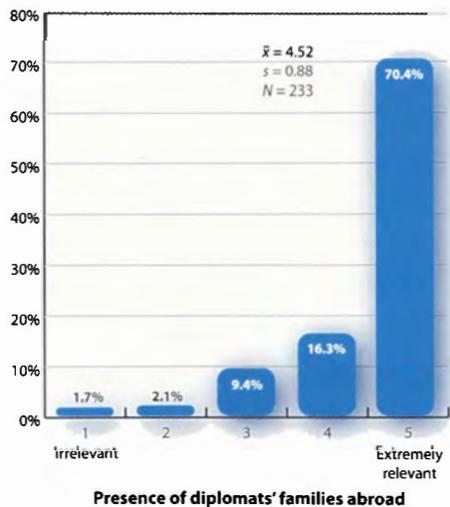


Chart 19: The significance of spare time for the successful and quality discharge of the duties of a diplomat at home and abroad

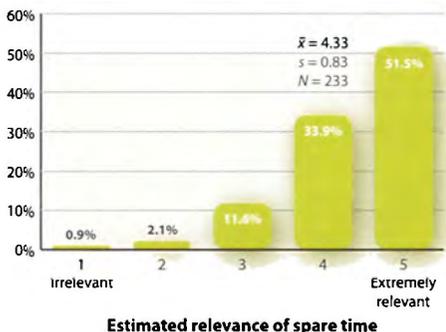
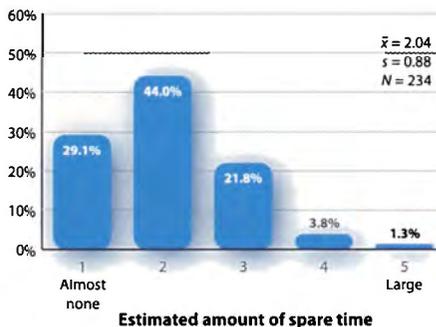


Chart 20: Employees' spare time assessment



respondents believed that they have little or no spare time after their working day at the Ministry (in both the foreign or internal services). On a scale of 1–5 with 1 meaning “almost none” and 5 “large”, respondents graded the amount of spare time available to them with an average grade of 2.04 (Charts 19 and 20).

3.4.1 Advantages of working abroad

Chart 21 shows that new experience and knowledge (with an average grade of 4.65 on a scale of 1–5 with 1 meaning “irrelevant” and 5 meaning “extremely relevant”), personal growth and development (4.46), learning about new cultures (4.37) and improved foreign language skills (4.37) are among the advantages of working abroad and should also be viewed as motivating factors for such a career move. These are followed by financial reasons (3.76), a change of environment (3.35), travelling (2.90) and social reputation (2.63). It seems that respondents often answered this question as they “were expected to”, so the results may be somewhat misleading. For example, the interviews had shown that financial and family reasons are usually the key factor in making the decision whether to go abroad, whereas financial benefits were only placed fifth according to the relevance assessments in answers to the question above.

Under the option “Other”, which received an average grade of 4.47, employees provided answers such as: new contacts and acquaintances, promotion of the interests of the Republic of Slovenia, better knowledge of a diplomat’s work (“*Back home, we’re merely bureaucrats*”), promotion, understanding the difference in cultures, “better understanding of domestic politics”, self-confidence, tolerance, quality of life, education of children, etc.

Chart 21: Significance of various advantages of working abroad – average grade comparison

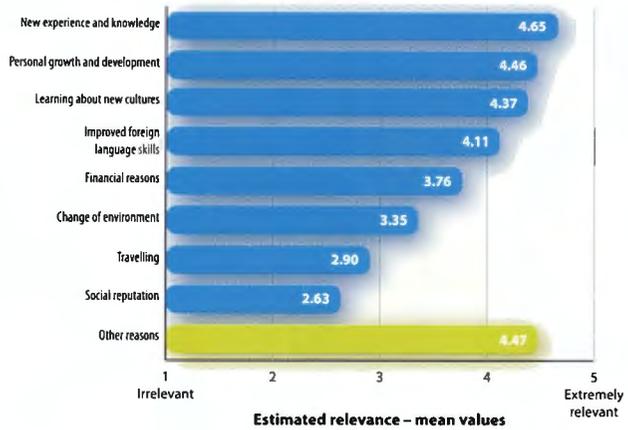
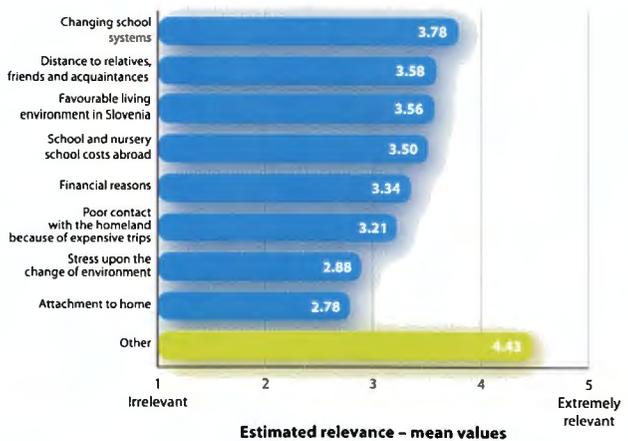


Chart 22: Significance of various reservations on working abroad – average grade comparison



There are no differences of statistical significance between both genders in the assessments of the advantages of working abroad. Somewhat surprisingly, the difference in answers provided by respondents with children and those without bears no statistical significance.

3.4.2 Reservations about working abroad

Respondents highlighted difficulties with changing school systems (with an average grade of 3.78 on a scale of 1–5, with 1 meaning “irrelevant” and 5 “extremely relevant”), distance to relatives, friends and acquaintances (3.58) and a favourable living environment in Slovenia (3.56) as the main reservations in making the decision to work abroad (Chart 22). These are followed by school and nursery

school costs abroad (3.50), financial reasons (3.34), poor contact with the homeland because of expensive trips (3.21), stress upon the change of environment (2.88) and attachment to home (2.78).

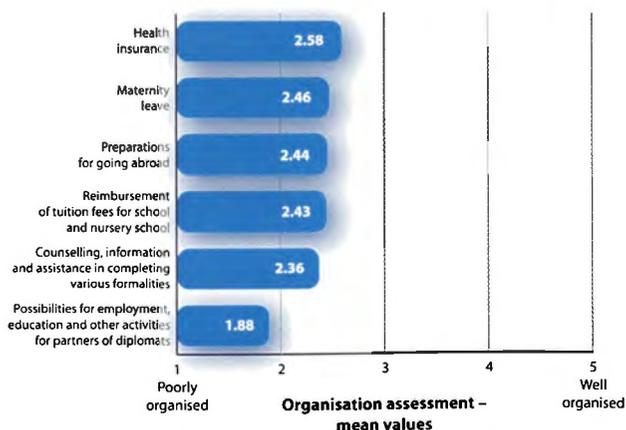
Under the option “Other”, with an average grade of 4.43, respondents shared several other reservations: who are the co-workers abroad, especially who is the head of mission, their partner’s employment, medical reasons, the well-being of families, stress for children, family planning, parents of old age, “no support from the Ministry in completing formalities, you are on your own”, the employment policy at the Ministry, problems with health insurance, poorly esteemed work abroad, the situation in the receiving country, etc.

While there are no major differences between males and females and different age groups in the assessment of reservations about working abroad, there are statistically significant differences between employees with children and those without. The first group thus ascribes greater importance to the stress in changing environment (3.05 vs. 2.59; $t = 2.67$; $df = 217$; $sig. = 0.008$), difficulties in changing school systems (3.98 vs. 3.42; $t = 3.20$; $df = 211$; $sig. = 0.002$), and fees for schools and nursery schools (3.74 vs. 3.11; $t = 3.41$; $df = 202$; $sig. = 0.001$).

3.4.3 Role of the Ministry

The institutional structure of working abroad was assessed with relatively low grades (Chart 23). Although health insurance abroad was deemed relatively problematic in the interviews and some postscripts, it still proved to be the most suitably

Chart 23: Organisation and suitability of institutional mechanisms upon going abroad – average grade comparison



organised of all categories; however, the grade was still below the medium value. On a scale of 1–5, with 1 meaning “poorly organised” and 5 “well organised”, health insurance received an average grade of 2.58. All other categories – maternity leave (2.46), preparations for going abroad (2.44), reimbursement of tuition fees for school and nursery school (2.43), counselling, information and assistance

in completing various formalities (2.36) and possibilities for employment, education and other activities for partners of diplomats (1.88 – the lowest average grade) – were assessed with lower grades. Assessments of the organisation did not differ with statistical significance according to the years of service at the Ministry.

Since several interviewees highlighted poor cooperation with the Personnel Service before going abroad, the respondents who had already worked

Chart 24: Various aspects of cooperation with the Personnel Service – average grade comparison

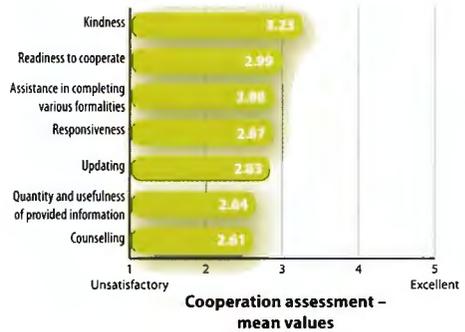
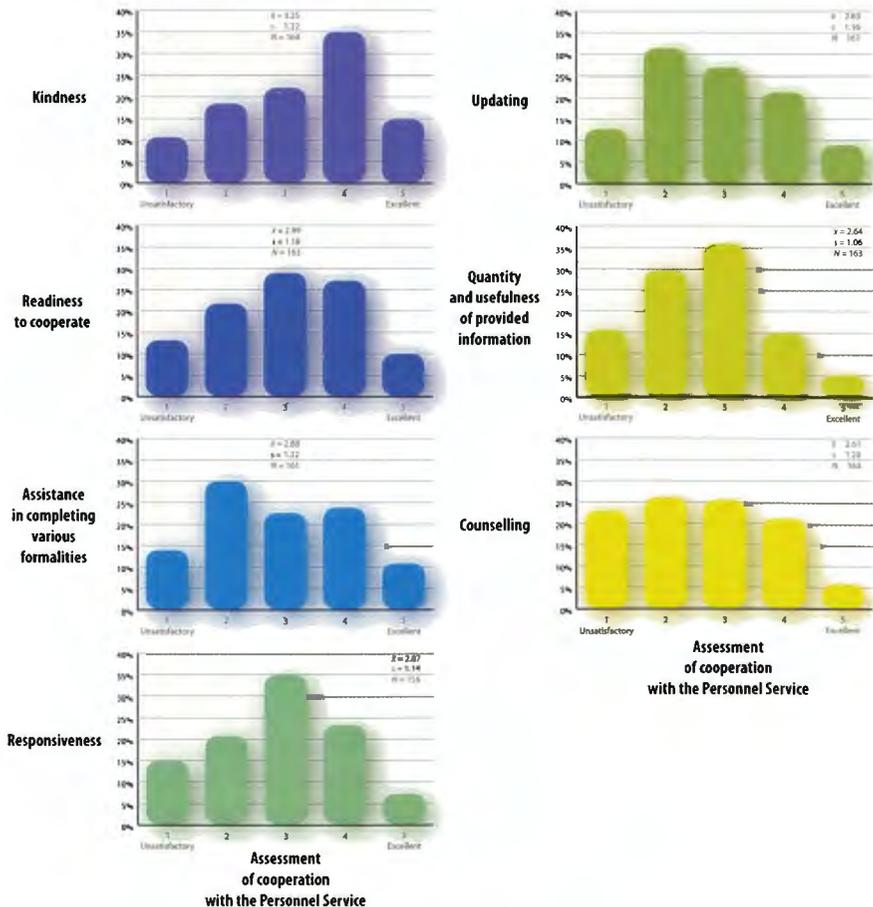


Chart 25: Comparison of grades for various aspects of cooperation with the Personnel Service

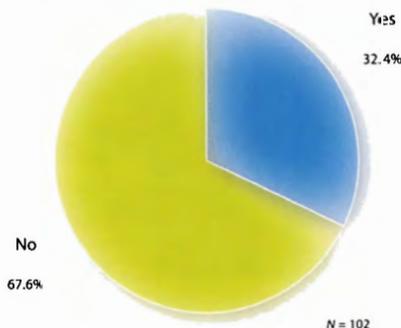


abroad were asked to assess their experiences with the Personnel Service when leaving to go abroad, upon entering the foreign service and upon their return to Slovenia (Chart 24). On a scale of 1–5, with 1 meaning “unsatisfactory” and 5 “excellent”, respondents assessed the various aspects of cooperation with the Personnel Service which were deemed problematic by interviewees. The majority of grades and the average grade (2.87) were below the medium grade of 3, so, generally, cooperation may be assessed as fair to poor. Employees assigned the highest grades to the kindness of the Personnel Service staff (3.25). The following aspects received somewhat lower grades: readiness to cooperate (2.99), assistance in completing various formalities before and after departure and upon return to Slovenia (2.88), responsiveness (2.87), updating (2.83), while the worst grades were assigned to the quantity and usefulness of provided information (2.64) and counselling (2.61).

An overview of the percentage shares of different grades for each individual aspect of cooperation with the Personnel Service (Chart 25) shows that respondents are relatively split in regard to grades, which is also evident from the standard deviation values. Among those who responded to the question, 49.4% graded the aspect of kindness as being either 4 or 5 (good to very good cooperation). Readiness to cooperate received the same grades by 36.8%, assistance in completing formalities by 34.2%, responsiveness by 30.2%, updating by 29.8%, counselling by 26.4% and the amount and usefulness of information by 19.6%. On the other hand, of those who provided an answer to the question, 48.5% assigned

grades of 1 or 2 (very poor and poor) to the aspects of counselling, 44.7% believed the same for the amount and usefulness of information, 43.5% for completing formalities and updating, 35.2% for responsiveness, 34.4% for readiness to cooperate, and 28.7% for kindness, which are substantial percentage shares for employees who have already worked abroad.

Chart 26: Share of responses to the question on account of a passive lifestyle of partners abroad among those who responded to this question



Have you or your partner ever experienced insults, prejudice, remarks, etc. on account of “passive” accompaniment of the partner working abroad?

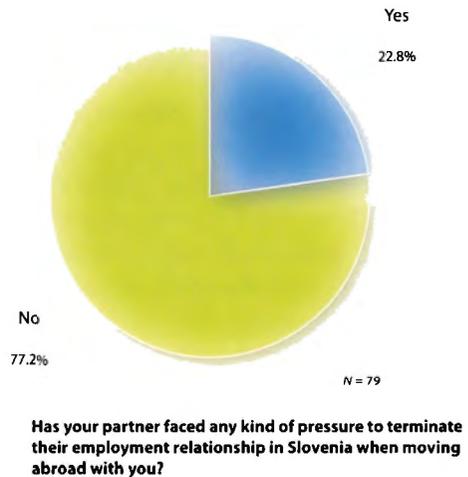
3.4.4 Difficulties experienced by partners

In addition to changing environments, the break-up of careers and uncertain futures, the partners of diplomats also face other difficulties when moving abroad.

Among respondents, a relatively high percentage share of 32.4% (14% of all respondents) of employees who were accompanied by their partners abroad said that they or their partners experienced insults, prejudice, remarks, etc. on account of their passive accompaniment of their partner working abroad (Chart 26). Males and females have different experience of such insults. A total of 18.8% of male employees responded in the affirmative to this question, while more than half of females had already faced such insults (54.3%; $\chi^2 = 13.28$; $df = 1$; $sig. = 0.000$).

Among the partners of employees who had already worked abroad, 61.1% had to (temporarily) terminate their working relationship in Slovenia. Among them, a startlingly high percentage of 22.8% (7.7% of all employees) responded that their partners faced pressure to completely terminate their employment relationship in Slovenia (Chart 27).

Chart 27: Share of responses to the question on pressure to terminate the employment relationship among those who responded to this question



3.4.5 Living in separation

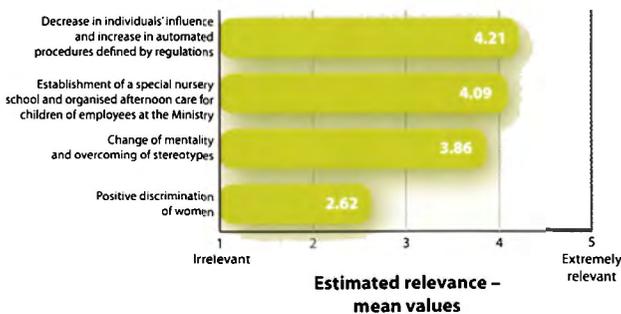
It can only be guessed how often Slovenian diplomats decide to lead lives in separation because of the problems associated with relocating the entire family abroad (and, as a result, leave to work abroad without their partner or children). This can be assumed by comparing information with the marital and family status during the survey and their answer to the question as to whether the employee was accompanied by their partner and/or children during their stay abroad. Among respondents who had already worked abroad and had children at the time of the survey, 13.2% were not accompanied by their families while working abroad. Of those who had already worked abroad and had a spouse or cohabiting partner at the time of the survey, 17.3% went abroad without their partners. This information is not a reliable indicator of the frequency of living apart among Slovenian diplomatic families, due to the unsteadiness of marital and family statuses. However, it does indicate that the percentage of diplomats choosing to live in separation is relatively higher than expected, due to the unpopularity of the separation of the diplomat and his family expressed during the interviews and in the survey.

Several interviewees highlighted cases of abuse. Although registered as living with their family, diplomats often live abroad alone, while their partners and children receive bonuses for living abroad, despite spending most of their time in Slovenia. This is reportedly common when working in nearby European countries.

3.5 Suggestions for improvement

Among the proposed measures for enhancing equal opportunities between both genders, respondents found the decrease in individuals' influence and the increase in automated procedures defined by regulations as being the most important. It received an average grade of 4.21 (Chart 28) on a scale of 1–5, with 1 meaning “irrelevant” and 5 “extremely relevant”. The proposal to establish a special nursery school and organised afternoon care for children of employees at the

Chart 28: Relevance of various measures for the improvement of equal opportunities of both genders – average grade comparison

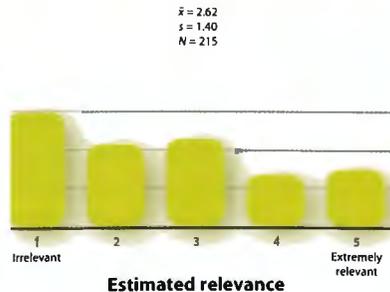
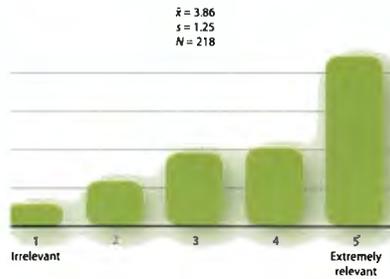
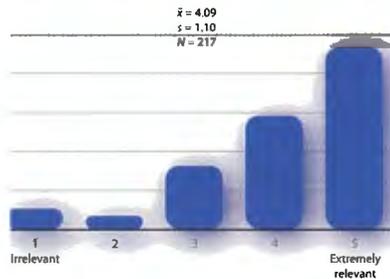
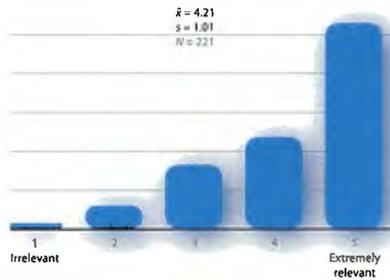


Ministry received a similarly high average grade (4.09). These are followed by the change of mentality and the overcoming of stereotypes (3.86), while additional rights for females (positive discrimination) was assessed as a measure of average to low relevance (2.62).

The assessed relevance of reducing individuals' influence in the decision-making processes was the most unified (standard deviation of 1.01): of those who responded to the question, 52.9% assessed it as an extremely relevant measure (Chart 29). Of those who provided answers to the question, 46.5% believed the same about the organised afternoon care of children and 44.0% about challenging stereotypes. The respondents' assessments of positive discrimination for females differed the most (standard deviation of 1.40), as more than half (50.2%) of those who provided an answer to this question believed that this measure was irrelevant (a grade of 1) or less relevant (a grade of 2).

In some questionnaires, the respondents provided their personal opinions on a nursery school or organised afternoon care for children of the Ministry's employees. Postscripts indicate that many do not approve of such a proposal,

Comparison of grades of various measures
Equal opportunities of both genders



statements on a scale of 1–5, with 1 meaning “completely irrelevant”, including the option “1 completely”, including the option “1

As Table 6 shows, every suggestion received an average grade higher than 3. On average, employees more or less agreed with all of the proposed measures. They expressed the greatest support for encouraging bilateral agreements with recipient countries on the employment of diplomats' partners (average grade of 4.48) the co-financing world language courses for children (4.44) and partners (4.34) encouraging the employment of diplomats' partners abroad (4.40), the financing of the recipient country language acquisition for the partner (4.39) and for the children (4.36), better healthcare (4.36) and taking into account the family status in technical details, such as moving abroad, etc. (4.34).

Table 6: Assessment of measures proposed in the field of family policy and assignment abroad

Proposal	Average grade	Standard deviation	Percentage of non-response
Encouraging bilateral agreements with recipient countries on employing diplomats' partners	4.48	0.86	5.1%
Financing world language acquisition for diplomats' children	4.44	1.02	3.8%
Encouraging employment of diplomats' partners abroad	4.40	0.96	3.4%
Financing recipient country language acquisition for diplomats' partners	4.39	0.96	3.4%
Financing recipient country language acquisition for diplomats' children	4.36	0.95	4.3%
Better healthcare	4.36	0.87	12.8%
Financing world language acquisition for diplomats' partners	4.34	1.08	4.7%
Taking family status into consideration in technical details	4.34	0.95	8.1%
Co-financing pre-school education abroad for diplomats' children below 5 years of age	4.27	1.04	11.1%
Higher share of co-financing for pre-school education of diplomats' children the year before enrolling in compulsory education	4.22	1.09	11.1%
Slovene language classes for diplomats' children abroad	4.22	1.10	6.4%
More appropriate financial categorisation of diplomatic missions and consular posts	4.21	0.96	9.4%
Replacing employees at diplomatic missions and consular posts during maternity leave as in the internal service	4.20	1.01	10.2%
Better communication between diplomatic missions and consular posts and the internal service	4.17	0.97	5.1%

The possibility of part-time or any other form of employment for diplomats' partners at diplomatic missions and consular posts	4.15	1.22	3.4%
More information on the conditions and specifics of living in the recipient country before and during the stay abroad	4.15	1.05	6.4%
More co-funded plane tickets for the diplomat and his family	4.14	1.06	4.3%
Higher salaries for working abroad	4.12	1.00	3.8%
Higher share of the Ministry's co-funding of elementary education for diplomats' children abroad	4.11	1.20	9.4%
Higher partner bonuses	4.10	1.07	8.1%
Better cooperation with the Personnel Service	4.09	1.05	5.1%
More automated decision-making processes on assigning bonuses, evaluations, etc.	4.08	1.08	9.4%
Longer maternity leave while working abroad	3.88	1.37	18.3%
Financial compensation for living apart from the family	3.88	1.28	7.7%
More annual leave while working abroad	3.88	1.25	5.5%
Higher share of the Ministry's co-funding of international schools for diplomats' children upon return to Slovenia	3.81	1.30	11.1%
Co-funded education for diplomats' partners during their stay abroad	3.70	1.32	6.8%
Establishment of a special family policy department within the Ministry	3.65	1.34	9.4%
More consideration for diplomats' partners who are not Slovenian citizens	3.64	1.23	20.9%

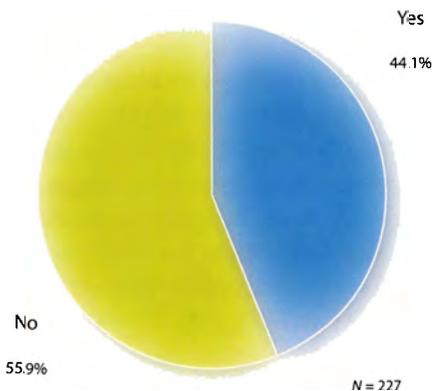
Employees expressed the least agreement with the suggestion to show more consideration for diplomats' partners who are foreign citizens (3.64), the establishment of a special family policy department within the Ministry (3.65), the co-funding of the education of diplomats' partners while staying abroad (3.70), a higher percentage to be paid by the Ministry in co-funding of international schools for diplomats' children upon returning home (3.81), more annual leave while working abroad (3.88), financial compensation for living apart from the family (3.88), and longer maternity leave while working abroad (3.88). At the same time, these suggestions were still assessed as being positive and above the medium grade of 3.

Most respondents (over 95%) responded to the questions on the possibility of part-time or any other form of employment for diplomats' partners at diplomatic missions and consular posts, co-funding world language or recipient country language acquisition for diplomats' children and partners, more co-funded plane tickets, higher salaries in the foreign service and encouraging the employment

of diplomats' partners abroad. The fewest employees responded to the proposition regarding greater consideration to be shown for diplomats' partners who are foreign citizens (the answer was given by 79.1% respondents), longer maternity leave while working abroad (81.7%), better healthcare (87.2%), co-funded pre-school education for children, both younger and older than 5 years of age (88.9%), the co-funding of education at international schools upon returning to Slovenia (88.9%) and the replacement of employees working in diplomatic missions and consular posts during their maternity leave (89.8%).

The disparity was greatest in assessing the proposal on longer maternity leave while staying abroad (standard deviation of 1.37), the establishment of a specialised family policy department (1.34), the co-funding of education for diplomats' partners (1.32) and a higher co-funding percentage by the Ministry for international schools attended by diplomats' children upon returning to Slovenia (1.30). Respondents were most unified in their stance on encouraging bilateral agreements on the employment of diplomats' partners (0.86), better healthcare (0.87), taking family status into account in technical details (0.95), co-funding recipient country language acquisition for diplomats' children (0.95), more appropriate categorisation of diplomatic missions and consular posts (0.96), encouraging the employment of diplomats' partners abroad (0.96), co-funding recipient country language acquisition

Chart 30: Opinions of respondents on paying 20% share of tuition fees for diplomats' children abroad



Do you think that the 20% share of tuition and enrolment fees which must be paid by diplomats abroad for their children is discriminatory to diplomats with children as compared to those without?

for diplomats' partners (0.96) and better communication between the foreign and internal services of the Ministry (0.97).

The respondents also differed on the question of the 20% share of tuition and enrolment fees that must be paid by diplomats abroad for their children.⁵⁰ Among respondents, 44.1% believed that such co-funding means differentiating between colleagues with children and those without (in Slovenia,

⁵⁰ According to the Decree amending the Decree on Salaries and Other Remunerations of Public Servants Working Abroad (published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 23/2009, 27 March 2009), this share has been reduced to 10%.

compulsory education is free of charge, whereas the education of diplomats' children abroad represents significant additional costs); 55.9% believed the opposite (Chart 30). As expected, opinions on the reimbursement of costs among employees with children and those without differ greatly ($\chi^2 = 13.75$; $df = 1$; $sig. = 0.000$). Among respondents, more than half of parents (55.0%) believed that the 20% reimbursement figure is discriminatory, while 45.0% believed the contrary to be the case. Among respondents without children, only 29.5% believed that the 20% confounding share is discriminatory, while 70.5% of respondents believed the opposite.

The assessment of suggestions has shown the scepticism of respondents about the possible establishment of a family policy department. Judging by postscripts, this is probably due to the lack of trust towards complicated and ineffective institutional mechanisms or negative experience with the vast and ineffective administration. Nevertheless, respondents were quite united in their opinion on the possible tasks to be undertaken by such a department.

The estimated relevance values of proposed tasks to be undertaken by a family policy department (Chart 31) show that employees would benefit most from counselling prior to going abroad with an average grade of 4.66 (on a scale of 1–5, where 1 means “irrelevant” and 5 “extremely relevant”) and the provision of suitable information (4.53). Counselling during the stay abroad (4.41), completing formalities in changing schools (4.29), completing formalities after the return home (4.28) and when moving abroad (4.27), and collecting and organising information and experience on living in receiving countries (4.12). Substantially less relevant, and yet above the middle value, respondents assessed the question regarding the temporary employment of partners of diplomats who had already worked abroad with an average grade of 3.39, and professional assistance for those going abroad through the employment of professionals with an average grade of 3.28.

Chart 31: Tasks of a family policy department – comparison of average grades of proposals

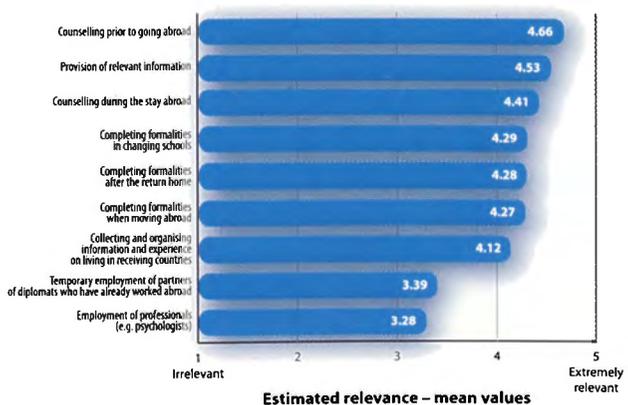
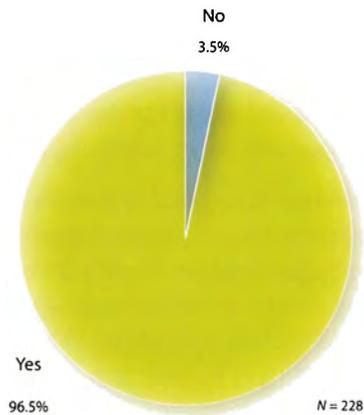


Chart 32: Opinions of respondents on achieving standards for a family-friendly company certificate



Do you agree that the Ministry should adapt its activities in order to achieve the standard for obtaining a family-friendly company certificate?

Positively received suggestions of measures intended to solve the present issues should be a qualitative step towards a greater transparency of procedures and decisions, better interpersonal relations and family-friendly forms of operation. The latter is mostly confirmed by respondents, as 96.5% agreed that the Ministry should adapt its activities in order to achieve the standard for obtaining a family-friendly company certificate (Chart 32). There were no major differences in the answers provided to this question between male and female respondents and those of different age groups and family statuses.

Equal opportunities in Slovenian diplomacy, as perceived by employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, are hindered and hampered by numerous factors, while employees assessed the situation in this field as poor. In the empirical survey, in-depth interviews were first carried out with individual diplomats and then, on the basis of hypotheses and the findings gleaned from the interviews, a comprehensive and structured questionnaire was drafted for all employees, using qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches to depict the situation as perceived by the employees of the Ministry.

On the basis of the survey, it was possible to identify the sources of unequal opportunities in Slovenian diplomacy. Thereby, the focus rested mostly on the feelings, opinions and experiences of employees. These are vital in dealing with the subject of equal opportunities if the subjective nature of the topic and the fact that the well-being of employees and employee relations affect the work efficiency and productivity of the Ministry are taken into account. Below, the main findings are summarised and a reflection of the situation in Slovenian diplomacy is viewed through the prism of equal opportunities with several suggestions provided for improvement.

4.1 Overview of the findings

Among the employed in the internal and foreign services of the Ministry, 37.3% responded to the questionnaire. During the survey, there was substantial distrust, anxiety and even fear about the “true” intentions of the questionnaire. This was probably the reason for the lack of response among employees and for missing values in numerous fields for demographic data. Such caution in responding to the questionnaire is, at the same time, a significant indicator of the **sensitive areas in interpersonal relations** and state of mind at the Ministry. A demographic analysis of the sample shows that the response was lower among males and rose commensurate with years of service. The percentage share of respondents aged 30–40 stands out as being substantially lower than their percentage share in the total number of employees. Therefore, it is assumed that males with fewer years of service at the Ministry and those aged 30–40 were relatively more cautious than colleagues in providing their demographic data or responding to the questionnaire.

According to the survey, the state of **equal opportunities in Slovenian diplomacy**, as experienced by employees, is average to poor (on a scale of 1–5, where 1 means

“insufficiently regulated” and 5 “excellently regulated”), with an overall grade of 2.42. It is of great concern that 57.8% of respondents at the Ministry had already felt discriminated against. When assessing the damage inflicted due to discrimination on a scale of 1–10 (with 1 meaning “no consequences” and 10 “grave material damage and or/psychological burden”), the majority of respondents (52.6%) assessed it with a grade of 8 or more (with an average grade of 6.93). On average, males assigned higher grades than females and diplomats assigned higher grades than administrative and technical staff. In terms of age groups, the lowest level of damage was experienced by those younger than 30 years, while the highest was experienced by those aged 60 or more.

According to the questionnaire, employees at the Ministry most frequently experience discrimination due to **political affiliation, personal preference and/or personal grudges**. Age or generation affiliation is assessed as medium-problematic to problematic while respondents, on average, assessed gender as a non-problematic to medium-problematic factor (on a scale of 1–5 with 1 meaning “not problematic” and 5 “very problematic”, the average grade was 2.33). Males (with an average grade of 1.69) attributed a lower grade to gender as an issue than females (with an average grade of 2.72). In interviews, female interviewees believed that they were not severely deprived on the basis of gender, while males were certain that gender had virtually no impact on equal opportunities at the Ministry; stereotypes on the traditional roles of females and males were believed to be a graver issue.

According to the interviewees, equal opportunities are most frequently impaired in the **assignment of foreign service posts, leading posts in the internal service, promotions and the employees’ performance assessments**. Equal opportunities are impaired somewhat less often in the assignment of working tasks and their volume, informal communication and working conditions. Administrative and technical staff experience discrimination in working conditions more often than diplomats and more rarely in assigning to leading posts in the internal service.

Based on the findings of the survey, employees can be divided into **three groups as regards noticing and experiencing discrimination**. In the most populated group (representing 67.2% of respondents), the mean values of estimated discrimination frequency in various situations are relatively close to the mean values in the entire sample. The two other groups with more polarised discrimination frequency assessment grades are more interesting. The employees belonging to the first group (12.9% of respondents) are mostly of the view that they seldom or never experience discrimination in individual situations. However, members of the second group comprising 19.9% of respondents experience discrimination very often. On the basis of these results, it can be assumed that there are two statistically significant groups at the Ministry, which differ greatly in their experience of discrimination and comprise approximately one third of all employees. Members

of the first group are poorly acquainted with discrimination and perceive it very rarely. Employees in this group are mostly males, aged around 40, and have already worked abroad. Compared to other groups, the percentage share of single persons is relatively higher. Members of the second group experience discrimination and limitations in opportunities very frequently. In this group, females constitute a majority (which is interesting, since males, on average, assigned higher grades to damage inflicted on them through discrimination), the average age is approximately 43 years, and there is a higher percentage share of administrative and technical staff compared to other groups.

Although respondents ranked gender as only the fifth most significant discriminating factor at the Ministry, they nevertheless agreed that **females in Slovenian diplomacy often face more difficulties than male colleagues**, especially when assigned to the foreign service and when reconciling private life and work-related duties. In their responses to the question concerning which of the genders has more difficulties in combining professional and private life, males and females differ; among respondents, 55.4% of males and 13.2% of females believe that gender does not affect equal opportunities in this regard, while 86.0% of females and 43.5% of males believe that females have greater difficulties in combining private and work-related duties.

As already mentioned, respondents believe that the most problematic factors hindering employees based on their gender include **combining professional and private life, working abroad and time spent working** (73.1% of respondents believed they had little or no spare time after finishing work at the Ministry – both in the internal and foreign services). The lower percentage share of females in the upper reaches of the Ministry's hierarchy may also indicate inequality of female diplomats, compared to their male colleagues.

Several female interviewees emphasised that there is a great deal of **covert, latent and verbal sexual harassment at the Ministry**. The results of the survey confirm this as 28.2% of respondents answered they had already noticed or experienced some kind of sexual harassment. This percentage share was approximately two times higher among females than males.

Most difficulties for females in diplomacy arise from **stereotypes of the traditional role of females**, as well as social expectations on the differences between males and females that reflect several clichéd ideal-type doubles and, according to interviewees, are also present in the diplomatic service. According to respondents, the ideal diplomat is rational, disciplined and a "leader". At a sub-conscious level, based on the images concerning the differences between males and females that are accepted from primary socialisation onwards and based on patriarchal sexual dichotomy, a diplomat is more male than female. This could be the reason why, when making decisions and selecting candidates for some diplomatic posts,

those deciding on these matters either consciously or subconsciously prefer to choose males (who are supposedly better diplomats than females, i.e. “emotional” persons, “housewives”, “(future) mothers”). At the same time, this is a reflection of deep-rooted conceptions that females need to take care of children, the home and – in contrast to males – cannot afford to work long hours, move and work abroad, take on bigger workloads, etc. in the diplomatic service.

According to the findings of the survey, working abroad is the second field in Slovenian diplomacy with the most hampered equal opportunities for both males and females. Therefore, a major part of the questionnaire is devoted to questions regarding the difficulties faced by employees when leaving to work abroad, upon arrival and when living abroad. Several interviewees highlighted that working abroad is an indispensable part of a diplomat’s career and that an employee who has never worked in the foreign service of the Ministry is hardly an effective and experienced diplomat. In the vast majority of cases, the assignment to a working post abroad means moving the diplomat and their family to an entirely new environment and places great stress on the entire family. Being accompanied by the family abroad was assessed as being very important by 70.4% of respondents, and a further 25.7% of respondents assessed it as being important or of medium importance. Evidently, living apart from one’s family is not a popular solution in the Slovenian diplomatic service, although the survey shows that a certain percentage share of employees does choose this option.

They apply for posts abroad to **acquire new experience and knowledge, contribute to personal development and growth, to learn about new cultures, improve their foreign language skills and for financial reasons or a change of environment.** Several respondents assessed getting new contacts, promoting the interests of the Republic of Slovenia, getting a better knowledge of a diplomat’s work, self-confidence, tolerance, quality of life in the recipient country and the education of children as being either important or very important.

The main drawbacks deterring employees from applying for working posts abroad are the **difficulties with changing their children’s schools, the distance from their relatives, friends and acquaintances, the quality of life in Slovenia, school/child care fees abroad and other financial burdens, insufficient contacts with their homeland, stress due to adjusting to a new environment and attachment to their home.** Several respondents also indicated the personnel roster at a particular diplomatic mission or consular post, poor employment opportunities for spouses, health, poorly organised health insurance, the situation in the recipient country and insufficient support in completing formalities as being other drawbacks.

The institutional organisation of assignment abroad was given relatively low grades by respondents. According to the results of the questionnaire, health

insurance is the field with the best organisation (but still assessed as poor to medium poor). Maternity leave, preparations for going abroad, defraying school/care-related costs for children, counselling, information and assistance in completing formalities, and the possibility of employment, education and other activities for partners were assessed as either poorly or very poorly organised aspects.

Several interviewees pointed to problems in **cooperation with the Personnel Service prior to and after going abroad**. Interviewees mostly highlighted the lack of information, slow response, uncooperativeness and denying assistance in completing formalities, including those that the Ministry, as an institution, should complete. The results of the questionnaire mostly match the statements of interviewees. Respondents assessed various aspects of cooperation with the Personnel Service as either unsatisfactory or medium-satisfactory. The kindness of Personnel Service employees was given the highest average grade, while readiness to cooperate, assistance in completing formalities, responsiveness and updating were assessed with lower grades. According to respondents, the Personnel Service received the lowest grades as regards the amount and usefulness of provided information and counselling to employees assigned abroad.

In addition to the difficulty in and cost of changing schools and other aspects of lifestyle, the **status of the diplomat's spouse** is considered as one of the greatest burdens in going abroad. Diplomats face difficulties regarding this issue at home, before they even depart. Some 32.4% of respondents who had already worked abroad heard remarks from co-workers and acquaintances that their spouses were "henpecked" and passive while staying abroad. The opinions of males and females differed considerably on this issue. This confirms and reflects one of the key factors that hamper females in diplomacy. Males who are posted abroad endure such remarks substantially less often than female diplomats, reflecting the stereotypes of the traditional role of females in patriarchal society. Of female respondents who had already worked abroad, 54.3% had been subject to remarks that they were "dragging their husbands along" prior to assignment to the foreign service. Out of the male respondents who had already worked abroad, 18.8% had been subjected to similar comments.

Partners of diplomats, particularly those who work in the private sector, face difficulties at work before going abroad. A significant percentage of respondents (22.8%) stated that their partners felt **pressure to terminate their employment relationship in Slovenia** in order to accompany their partners abroad. According to most of the interviewees, the main concern for partners of diplomats is that of their employment abroad and what activities they could engage in, in order to combat feelings of loneliness, isolation, idleness, depression and similar burdens that can become stressful on family life.

4.2 Policy suggestions for guaranteeing equal opportunities in the future

The greatest hindrances to equal opportunities in Slovenian diplomacy can be summarised at two different levels. The first comprises **poor interpersonal relations and work practices, personnel policies and social interaction, taking into account personal grudges, personal preference and political affiliation**. These factors manifest themselves in distrust, exaggerated grouping and a general bad atmosphere among employees. This was mentioned by the vast majority of interviewees and supported statistically by the results of the survey.

The second level is **applicable family policy**, which makes the decision of diplomats to work abroad increasingly difficult and which, in combination with deep-rooted patriarchal stereotypes, particularly affects the equal opportunities of females and diplomats with families.

Every attempt to change policies with the aim of improving equal opportunities in the Slovenian diplomatic service should take both levels into account. Measures should be compatible since, according to the findings of the survey, the problems existing at each level intertwine on a day-to-day basis. The most difficult and significant measures are at an interpersonal level. However, they can be implemented – and should thus be drafted – as a comprehensive and long-term strategy of the Ministry. There are several opportunities for improvement. On the basis of this analysis, the following should be emphasised:

- **Building trust** among employees through good practices at the Ministry and implementing standards of a socially responsible organisation in the broadest sense – combining various team building strategies, the strengthening of team work and ties between employees with better companionship, social activities, joint initiatives, etc.
- **Preventing conflicting situations and unequal opportunities** on the grounds of “personal grudges, personal preference, political affiliation” and other factors through the implementation of better defined and detailed procedures. Attention should also be paid to decision-making at lower and medium levels, where employees are often exposed to minor or major abuse and feelings of discrimination; formal, clearly defined conditions, norms and criteria for decision-making and evaluation can also substantially limit opportunities for abuse.

There are many examples of how to put the above guidelines into practice. The Ministry can build on the experience of the private sector where, long ago, international companies realised that maximising profit is not necessarily the single most significant business goal. The model of a successful company is based on a socially responsible business that takes into account that business entities are also social entities. As such, it is the duty of a successful company to uphold socially acceptable methods of conducting business if they wish to curry favour with the

modern consumer. Therefore, the satisfaction level of employees, environmentally friendly and sustainable development, and other aspects of positive reinforcement on the employees and society in general are of great significance. Through the organisation of lectures on team work, more frequent social meetings, new facilities for socialising at the Ministry, the organisation of events for employees and socialising through internet social networks, it is in the best interest of the Ministry to enhance team spirit, loyalty to a united “diplomatic team”, and an optimal working environment in order to bring forth greater effectiveness in Slovenian diplomacy.

Another set of measures at the first level consists of **automated institutional mechanisms** that would prevent or greatly limit the arbitration of decisions that may seem insignificant, but have a major impact on the life and work of employees of the Ministry. Interviewees often complained about the differing criteria in assessing work efficiency or in awarding bonuses to diplomats’ partners. These procedures are reportedly too often left to the personal preference of the decision maker and too frequently depend on interpersonal relations. With more elaborate criteria, which would have to be accounted for by the decision maker, injustice and arbitrary decisions according to the rule “only a certain number of employees may receive a certain grade” could be limited to a certain extent. As a possible solution at an institutional level, it is worth mentioning **anonymous mutual assessment among employees** within organisational units, which could serve as a criterion in deciding on promotions, annual reviews, etc. A similar system is present in the Slovenian higher education system, in which student representative organisations may prevent the promotion of professors as a result of negative grades from questionnaires completed by students. This type of assessment is, of course, only reasonable if the mechanism ensures anonymity, reliability, validity and the prevention of abuse. The latter can be achieved by introducing suitable and appropriately diversified grading criteria (such as expertise, collegiality, readiness to cooperate, attitude towards co-workers, etc.), guaranteeing a sufficient number of assessors and by including the assessment among the criteria for promotion and assigning to various work posts. This method would help to combat the influence of “personal grudges and (dis)inclination”, while indicating a realistic image of individuals in the eyes of their peers and a general view of one’s personal interrelations in the working environment. Interpersonal relationships and relationships with people in the *entire* group of staff thereby become important criteria in decision-making processes.

The **spatial dispersion of the Ministry**, which currently operates in five buildings in three different locations, adds to weaker bonds and poor relationships between employees. This dispersion and lack of common lounges for informal socialising for all employees greatly increases the possibility of communication “noise” and poor relations with “those belonging to a different division, department, directorate or service”. As one of the interviewees said, when the Ministry was

headquartered in *Gregorčičeva ulica*, there was a common eating room for socialising, strengthening ties, “morning coffee”. Relationships between employees engendering a sense of belonging to the “united MFA team” were substantially better, since “you cannot treat someone you meet informally during coffee breaks or lunches entirely differently to how you would treat them in the office.”

At first glance, the second level seems more difficult and complex; however it is more tangible and therefore also more feasible within institutional mechanisms. The findings of the survey show that the existing working conditions in the Slovenian diplomatic service are less favourable to females and diplomats with families. In combination with deep-rooted stereotypes on the role of females in society, females are in a worse position than their male colleagues. Stereotypes can be detected at several levels, from the barely noticeable to very obvious, such as frequent addressing of the type “Mojca Novak, *Spokesman*”. Eliminating stereotypes is a long-term process at a societal level. At the Ministry in particular, it would include heightened awareness and detailed consideration of the views of employees. Therefore, only institutional mechanisms are dealt with below, with an emphasis on family policy and working abroad, where there are many ways for Slovenian diplomacy to improve equal opportunities.

Although respondents assessed **positive discrimination** as a relatively less significant measure among the many measures for increasing equal opportunities in diplomacy, it is worth stressing that measures such as quotas in choosing (leadership) positions in the internal and foreign services may, in the long run, greatly contribute to the improvement of equal opportunities for both genders – as the experiences of older diplomatic services demonstrate. It is therefore worth considering different ways to institutionally limit the decrease in the percentage share of females in senior hierarchical levels at the Ministry and in the foreign service. As the interviewees pointed out, a man’s and a woman’s view of the world differs. They are two different perceptions, discourses and interpretations of international relations. In combining both, a wider representation of the various operation alternatives and diversity of instruments is achieved, thereby allowing modern foreign policy challenges to be tackled more effectively.

In the improvement of family policy, the establishment of a **new family policy department** is the primary possible solution. However, opinions on this differ. Many employees are doubtful of such a department, which is a consequence of displeasure with the existing structures and the belief that a new department would only bring forth additional unnecessary paperwork. It is therefore worth stressing that the most critical points of the present organisation can be tackled through existing institutional mechanisms and reorganisation.⁵¹ Many employees find

⁵¹ During the editing of the present survey, the Section for Education, Family Policy and Career Development had already been formed within the Personnel Service.

working abroad unattractive and stressful, and females and families decide to work abroad relatively less often due to various obstacles. However, it is possible to gradually eliminate these obstacles and make working abroad more attractive by removing and improving negative aspects.

Among suggestions for the improvement of family policy, respondents indicated that the support for bilateral agreements on employing diplomats' partners, the financing of foreign language acquisition for partners and children of diplomats, assisting with the employment of diplomats' partners, better health insurance and taking family status into account in completing technicalities are the most significant measures.

For those elements that have proven the most problematic in hampering equal opportunities and family policies, this publication proposes several measures to eradicate the experienced system anomaly:

Increased **flexibility of guaranteed benefits** in line with family circumstances (diplomats with families now have the right to seek reimbursement of costs for relocation of the same volume of cargo as those without families; they are also entitled to the same annual leave for relocation, etc.) and the economic-political circumstances of the recipient country (conditions for diversified allocation of funds to employees in different countries must be defined more clearly).

Establishing a **counselling, information and assistance mechanism** upon assignment to a working post abroad; it does not matter whether this would take the form of a new family policy department, which, according to the survey, is not very popular among employees – it would be enough to appoint a coordinator whose primary task would be to monitor the experience of diplomats upon assignment to working posts abroad and to provide assistance in the form of useful information, advice, assistance in completing formalities, etc. The Personnel Service currently has too few staff at its disposal for this purpose, leading to low to average grades for cooperation with the Personnel Service upon going abroad.

Preparation of a **special publication** containing information for every country and city in which Slovenia has a diplomatic mission or consular post. This information should include all the basic and most important data required by diplomats and their families in adapting to their new environment. In this respect, the UN staff manual could be taken as an example. The publication should be based on the experience and advice of diplomats/families who have already been assigned to the country, and should be updated regularly.

Since respondents found getting to know new cultures and foreign language acquisition, in addition to gaining new experience and knowledge, and personal development and growth to be motivating factors, it would be wise to

encourage and prolong the language courses to which diplomats are entitled when going abroad. This entitlement should be expanded to other family members. For financial reasons, it should be clearly defined in which institutions and under which conditions such courses can be attended, while it would perhaps also be wise to organise seminars on the history, culture and geography of a receiving country.

Effort and work loads abroad are, on average, substantially higher than at home if the stress and difficulties encountered by diplomats when moving abroad and changing the lifestyle of the entire family are taken into account. Therefore, a **longer annual leave** should be taken into consideration when drafting regulations for civil servants working abroad.

Schooling and childcare abroad, despite being partially co-funded, represent a great burden for the family budget. They should therefore be organised in a way that the diplomat's family would bear approximately the same schooling costs as they would back home. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Sport, it would be wise to consider **drafting a registry of suitable schools** in foreign cities where Slovenian civil servants work. Better cost, programme and quality overview of approved educational institutions brought forth by such a registry would eliminate all difficulties associated with changing schools and comparability of school programmes as it would be validated by the Ministry of Education and Sport, and could be the basis for a possible full reimbursement of tuition fees.

Schooling conditions that were given special importance by respondents in working abroad could be reflected in **more flexible regulations for the extension of the term**. If, for instance, a diplomat's children require less than a year (or other default period) to finish an academic year or schooling at an educational institution, the diplomat's term could be prolonged for this period. Indeed, such a regulation is already in place; however, in practice, there are still problems with criteria for extension, which is currently only possible if the joint length of terms abroad is less than eight years.

Better opportunities for partners, especially with further bilateral agreements on the employment of spouses of diplomats – partners who are diplomats themselves could be offered the opportunity to perform special tasks for the Ministry, scholarships, and contracts on co-funding intensive foreign language courses and work in a bilateral department after return.

Reproaches on “henpecked” partners and passive staying abroad can only be avoided through good practices relating to all indicated factors and through highlighting the issue.

Since distance from relatives, friends and acquaintances and poor connections to their homeland are the main reservations of employees when deciding

whether to go work abroad, **better contact to the home country** should be enabled, providing more funding for travelling home and more days of leave at remote locations.

Several of these measures could be implemented only through the amendment of legislation and, above all, through the allocation of more funds. In the time of financial crisis, this seems like a major obstacle. However, as mentioned on several occasions, it is worth considering that the feasibility of many projects can be ensured by an efficient reallocation of means, while many measures would entail relatively low sums compared to several other costs currently incurred by the Ministry. If the Ministry manages to curb difficulties, establish suitable relations in the work environment, alleviate conditions for schooling/childcare and enable opportunities for a partner's active participation abroad with several "minor" measures, this would already substantially ease the woes of diplomats and improve equal opportunities. Such a positive development would have to be accompanied by employee responsibility, the increased allocation of public funds and the understanding that relinquishment in several domains is necessary for the establishment of equal opportunities. Effective operation and the accomplishment of foreign policy objectives as the primary tasks of the Ministry must not be hampered by the improvement in equal opportunities – rather, the Ministry must be inspired by them and make progress.

By changing the institutional factors and behaviour patterns that represent the sources of unequal opportunities in Slovenian diplomacy, it is hoped that those with *better* opportunities would not prevail in leadership, decision-making and policy making positions; rather, *equal* opportunities would offer an opportunity to those who can professionally, creatively, personally and diligently contribute to the success of Slovenian diplomacy, but are perhaps unable to because of their gender, personal grudges/preferences, political affiliation or other factors. The Slovenian diplomatic service must realise that equal opportunities of Slovenian diplomats can be a comparative and strategic advantage and can prevent the waste of the intellectual and human potential at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

When Equality Translates into Equal Value – Reflections of a Female Diplomat

Milena Stefanović Kajzer

“Behind every successful diplomat, there is always someone else.” This was said by a colleague diplomat in one of the interviews and represents a key message of the survey.⁵² It is intended for all those who wish to see a more effective Slovenian diplomatic service and, of course, for the Slovenian general public – *a good diplomat is not only an individual, but a combination of exceptionally important factors that have considerable impact on the success of his/her mission*. As the diplomatic profession is more complex in nature than many other professions, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has decided, in view of the current state of affairs at the Ministry, to carry out a survey on equal opportunities in Slovenian diplomacy.⁵³

The Ministry has been facing the fact that interest among employees in working in foreign service (i.e. Slovenian diplomatic missions and consular posts) has recently declined. Gender imbalances are all the more striking in the Ministry’s hierarchy, i.e. in leading positions, as well as in day-to-day work in the internal and foreign services. Gender segregation is particularly evident in ambassadorial posts, since the number of women ambassadors can be counted on the fingers of one hand. The main purpose of the survey on “Equal Opportunities in Slovenian Diplomacy” was to examine the situation regarding gender equality in the Slovenian diplomatic service, and to make proposals for the reconciliation between the professional and private lives and family obligations of working women and men.

This is the first methodologically-based survey of this type, dealing with equal opportunities in Slovenian diplomacy and conditions for its functioning over the last 18 years, (i.e. from its inception to the present day). The empirical part of the survey comprises an evaluation of the issue of equal opportunities, as perceived

⁵² This article presents the view of a diplomat on the survey’s results in her roles as a female diplomat, diplomat’s spouse and a mother.

⁵³ The initiative and financial support provided by the Office for Equal Opportunities of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, as well as the active role of the coordinator for equal opportunities at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ms Jana Kvaternik, were more than welcome in these endeavours.

by diplomats of different categories. More experienced diplomats were able to more easily assess the developments in Slovenian diplomacy from its beginnings to the present day, while younger diplomats drew attention to the discrepancies between modern lifestyle and the traditional understanding of diplomacy.

1. Properly conceived family policy as a key element of equal opportunities in Slovenian diplomacy

Most employees believe that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has failed to formulate a family policy which would encourage the development of a more effective, pragmatic and rational Slovenian diplomatic service. A large majority of those involved in the survey believe that, in the future, the Ministry should adapt its activities in order to meet standards aimed at obtaining the certificate of a *family-friendly company*.

The awareness that a career is, among other things, a spiritual and intellectual test is not sufficient. This requires correct decisions to be made in order to help employees realise their “*higher aspirations*”. It is essential to determine the concept of “*higher aspirations*” when attempting to promote equal opportunities, but this notion is difficult to grasp. “*Higher aspirations*” should mean, above all, the wish to experience a better quality of life. Therefore, free time is all the more important as are those activities that fill up one’s life and boost energy, which, in turn, brings success and personal satisfaction. After the interviews had been conducted, some fundamental messages were selected that may help strike a balance between professional and family life, thus creating harmony between the employer, diplomats and their families. Therefore, “*higher aspirations*” could be achieved by all parties involved and conditions created that would facilitate the provision of equal opportunities in Slovenian diplomacy.

2. Main traits of the Slovenian diplomatic service through the prism of equal opportunities

2.1 There is a widespread belief that macho tendencies have never prevailed in Slovenian diplomacy; nevertheless, in terms of equal opportunities, it has not yet attained the level expected of a developed diplomatic service. In general, it holds true that “to be promoted, women must be outstanding, while men can be average”.

The interviews revealed that, in the Slovenian diplomatic service, the position of female diplomats is somewhat inferior, due to difficulties encountered in reconciling their professional and private lives. Female diplomats working in foreign service are, to a large extent, single, without children, while male diplomats

usually have children and partners. In contrast, women with families prevail in the internal service. On the other hand, there are many women at the Ministry who are capable of shouldering responsibility and are better suited than certain male colleagues to senior positions, but they show fear or uncertainty in making decisions. The majority of interviewees believe that the conditions offering equal opportunities to both genders should be systemically regulated. One of the methods to achieve this objective is *to follow examples of good practice in developed diplomatic services that have used the system of positive discrimination.*

2.2 Slovenian diplomacy should become more open and practical since traditional, closed-door diplomacy is losing importance.

The interviewees highlighted that “unfortunately, everything ends with money and this creates unequal opportunities”. Inequality is created through economising. In the functioning of Slovenian diplomacy, the interests of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs take precedence over the aim of creating equal opportunities for all, regardless of gender. The fact that men and women often have different views on reality has been disregarded although this should be considered an advantage and not a shortcoming.

2.3 Generational stratification

If we take a broader perspective on the issue of equal opportunities and define other potentially problematic categories – in addition to gender – the category that catches the eye is *generational stratification*. The diplomats at the Ministry may be divided into the following groups: (i) ambassadors approaching retirement; (ii) diplomats who embarked on their career at the time of independence; (iii) a group of younger diplomats; and (iv) those who have no direct contact with Yugoslavia, the process of gaining independence and, consequently, the emergence of Slovenian diplomacy (i.e. they entered the already established institution).

The boundaries between these groups are too strict – there is too much structuring, categorising and classifying. What is lacking is a more productive “*mixing*”. The sense of *affiliation* with certain groups – not always political – is too strong.

2.4 Stereotypes about the roles of men and women in Slovenian diplomacy are covert and constitute an integral part of decision-making.

Females are not limited by rights, but by stereotypes. They have their children’s best interests at heart and, as a result, choose not to work at diplomatic missions and consular posts abroad. Women do not make this move, as this would mean

that the whole family would be faced with an unfamiliar environment and unexpected situations. This is a subjective issue which may also be evident in other fields; for example, a mother cannot realistically afford to return home at 10.00 pm (the limitations imposed by working hours at diplomatic missions and consular posts will be addressed later).

Irrespective of the fact that laws and executive regulations provide for gender equality and other forms of equality among employees, men are given priority in certain selection procedures as the stereotype prevails that men are more suitable for certain posts than women. The opinion expressed in the interviews was that “male heads are generally supported by competent women who usually head individual sections”, which is also confirmed by statistics on the managerial and employment structure of the Ministry. Interviewees stated their belief that it was not necessary to introduce major changes; however, efforts should be made to eliminate stereotypes relating to the role of men and women in the Slovenian diplomatic service. Above all, this means that the equal treatment of men and women should be ensured through the implementation of stimulative measures and statutory amendments. According to the interviews, this objective would be best attained through the adoption of an appropriate and comprehensive family policy at the Ministry.

In this context, the proposal for *the establishment of a family policy section* should be mentioned. It would serve as a communication point or a body to which employees and their family members can turn for assistance in the basic legal and other questions essential when deciding to work abroad. At the same time, there were certain doubts as to the tasks of such a section. The lack of coordination within the Ministry and the frequent failure of relevant officials to cooperate, represent an exceptional burden on employees who are often not acquainted with their rights. In addition, certain services are mostly staffed with employees who have never been posted abroad. Therefore, they often do not understand the needs of diplomats assigned to diplomatic missions and consular posts. The scepticism expressed about both the family policy section’s role and organisation of work is justified due to negative experience of the operation of the Ministry’s support services.

There is not enough communication between the embassies and the Ministry. The Ministry responds either slowly or not at all, and informal communication within the Ministry is lacking. All this impacts the decision of employees to work abroad.

Another fact was highlighted in relation to family policy: there is not just one type of family; today, other types of family should be taken into account, such as extramarital unions,⁵⁴ single-parent families, same-sex relationships, and oth-

⁵⁴ Note by the author: extramarital unions are well regulated in Slovenian legislation.

ers. The most important question remains: why do diplomats with traditional core families prefer not to work in foreign service? In the interviewees' opinion, Slovenia offers a considerable quality of life to those with a job, sufficient qualifications, a family-friendly environment and proper housing. A house, garden, car and relatives nearby offer a certain standard of living and "under such conditions, there is no need to go abroad to earn money".

2.5 Diplomats and their families should not be left alone in making arrangements for moving and living abroad.

In regulating fundamental social rights, an *automatic system* needs to be introduced since responsibility for the education of children, health care, housing, etc. *cannot and must not rest solely with the individual concerned*. The problem with the Slovenian diplomatic service is also the *arbitrary application of universal rights*, which is evident in the different approaches to individuals – regardless of the fact that statutory measures apply equally to all.

The family is an integral part of the diplomat's activity abroad, since the partner takes part in activities that go beyond personal interest. Many remarks were made on this topic in the interviews. Most interviewees believe that diplomats are deterred from choosing to work in the foreign service due to the inflexibility of the Ministry's support services. In addition, they feel that insufficient consideration is given to living and working conditions in a specific country.

2.6 A more flexible system and statutory regulation need to be introduced to adapt to specific conditions in individual countries.

Traffic conditions or public transport in individual countries cannot be dealt with in a standardised way since there are great differences between them. In the words of one of the interviewees, the assignment to a less desirable diplomatic mission or consular post should not be construed as punishment.

The door is thus wide open to negative selection. It was underlined that one of the Ministry's weak points is human resource management. In the interviews, it was assessed that so far, the Ministry's personnel service has not been up to the task, and has not had a clear plan as to how this matter should be tackled. At all times, there has been a short-term recruitment policy. Cases need to be individualised – if there are no candidates to fill a vacant diplomatic post, positive measures must be taken. The situation is the same as in business – if there is insufficient demand, business policy needs to be changed.

2.7 Diplomats with families and children are not motivated to go abroad.

Excessive tuition fees⁵⁵ and the generalisation of conditions in arranging the stay of children and family are often behind a diplomat's decision to remain working only in Slovenia. There is much dissatisfaction regarding the treatment of children younger than school age. It is discouraging that legislation does not provide for the socialisation of children in the same way as in Slovenia. Most remarks were related to preschool child care, although the situation has somewhat – but by no means sufficiently – improved by an amendment to the decree. The opinion prevails that children should have the right to learn a foreign language prior to going abroad. The stereotype that children can easily learn a foreign language is not necessarily true. However, it is true that the Slovenian school system ensures that children are well prepared to cope with this challenge.

More difficulties are encountered upon the child's return to the homeland since, according to the present system, the state only co-finances half of an international school's tuition fees. Part of the tuition fee paid by the Ministry is considered to be a taxable fringe benefit. Some proposed the establishment of a nursery school for children of employees of the Ministry; others fear abuse and the negative consequences of such a decision in the form of further and more frequent indefinite extensions of the working day.

In view of the above, the saying that: “in the Slovenian diplomatic service, least attention is paid to employees' children”, is entirely justified. Causing even more concern is the fact that diplomacy is increasingly becoming a profession in which an individual “cannot or is not supposed to have many children”. One of the interviewees illustrated this sentiment with the following words: “This is the very essence of unequal opportunities!”

In the past, insufficient attention has been paid to social components. As a result, the Slovenian diplomatic service developed into a non-family-friendly challenge, and the Foreign Ministry into a non-family-friendly employer.

2.8 If families of diplomats decide to live apart, this is a severe test for them and is not appropriately regulated in the current system.

There is no separate maintenance allowance, financial incentive, facilitation of contacts, or similar provisions. This is particularly problematic when difficult circumstances prevail in a particular country, or when there are certain reasons

⁵⁵ By amending the Decree on salaries and other remunerations of public servants working abroad (published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 23/2009 of 27 March 2009), the conditions for the schooling of diplomats' children abroad improved. This does not mean that conditions for a more individualised approach have been created, since children need to be considered on the basis of their individual ability, taking into account the circumstances in the receiving state.

behind the decision that a diplomat's family makes to remain in Slovenia (such as the schooling of children, state of health, and similar). In such cases, a diplomat maintains two households and high costs are incurred by family visits. A diplomat – a father or a mother – who is posted abroad without the family should be able to see their children at least once a month. If families decide to live separately, this should be evaluated in an appropriate manner. A financial stimulus is not absolutely necessary; however, compensation should be granted.

2.9 The low percentage of female diplomats in the external service, especially those living with the family, is also a result of poor motivation among partners.

The interviewees believe that the partner's role in the Slovenian diplomatic service is very limited. They advocate the employment of partners and/or the conclusion of bilateral agreements regarding the latter's employment. This is possible in certain professions, but not all. A belief prevails *that the Ministry should be more proactive in concluding bilateral agreements on the employment of family members.*

An increasing number of partners have well-paid and eminent jobs in Slovenia. Those working in the private sector are additionally hampered due to a lack of understanding on the employer's part. Legislative solutions should be sought that would enable partners to be educated abroad, to perform (temporary) part-time work for the embassy (meaning reduced costs for the state), enable them to learn the language of the environment (taking into account cultural and linguistic differences), and, above all, to encourage the partner to find a job and receive further education. A partner acquiring a higher level of education and additional skills abroad will be able to obtain a better job at home, which is of vital importance for the success of the Slovenian diplomatic service. Therefore, as a consequence, the conditions necessary for reconciling family and professional life would be created. Such solutions engender optimism and goodwill and may, to a great extent, augment the work undertaken within a diplomatic mission or consular post, and/or enable diplomats to successfully discharge their professional duties.

Some interviewees believe that the duties of partners should be defined in greater detail since this would facilitate an assessment of their activity and effectiveness. A distinction could then be made between those who are active and available 24 hours a day, and those who are passive and are not interested in representing their country. This would facilitate a more equitable allocation of the partner's activity allowance.

More attention should be devoted to spouses who are foreign nationals; for example, legislative solutions should be introduced, granting them more rights – both in Slovenia and during their stay abroad. As the percentage of such spouses is increasing, it would be advisable that the Ministry examines and abolishes

potential legislative solutions that prevent the foreign national from enjoying the same rights as spouses with Slovenian citizenship. At the same time, it should be borne in mind that this type of family encounters more difficulties in the receiving state than a family whose members are all Slovenian citizens, particularly outside the European Union.

It was stressed in the interviews that it is very difficult for a spouse who is a foreign national to obtain Slovenian citizenship. Namely, during their stay in a third country (to which the diplomat is posted), foreign nationals do not have the opportunity to learn Slovene. This is one of the requirements that need to be met in order to obtain citizenship. It would therefore be most welcome if the Ministry assisted in obtaining extraordinary naturalisation for the spouse.

The interviewees who are married to another diplomat stressed that a special policy should be formulated within the Ministry which would maximise the benefits in instances where one of the spouses is assigned to work abroad. In such cases flexibility and rationality are required. When it is not possible to employ the spouse who is a diplomat, they should be able to receive further education in the receiving state in the areas of particular interest to the Slovenian diplomatic service. Thus, during the spouse's term of office, an unemployed diplomat may acquire the necessary skills to assume more demanding tasks after returning to their post at the Ministry. If there is interest on both sides, for example, in learning a foreign language of limited diffusion throughout the spouse's term of office, the Ministry should support such projects and consider them as an investment in its human resources and in its future.

Partners should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and should be made to feel useful, so that the country may benefit from their knowledge. Above all, positive experiences gained during Slovenia's EU Council Presidency should be examined and incorporated into the present system. In doing this, Slovenian diplomacy's approach should be rational and pragmatic.

2.10 The diplomat's salary abroad is not a sufficient stimulus.

If a partner earns approximately the same salary in Slovenia as a diplomat in the internal service, the difference between the net incomes of the households at home and abroad, including all costs and allowances, is minimal. Families with more children often have greater expenses (tuition fees, higher costs for tuition fees in music schools, various activities, airline tickets, etc). Many remarks were made on the health care system which is not in line with local standards or even standards within European Union Member States. For example, equivalent medicinal products are not used for the treatment of the same illnesses, which is of paramount importance when seeking reimbursement.

Many comments were made on the right to maternity leave, child care leave and appropriate compensation. This is an area that deserves special treatment and alignment with existing legislation. The opinion prevails that the current provision of three-months' leave for child care while working abroad is discriminatory.

As those employed at diplomatic missions and consular posts have no fixed working hours (working twelve hours a day and on weekends has been known), it is usually the partner's responsibility to take care of the children. During social events, it is necessary to organise childcare, which is often very expensive since there is no allowance provided for these purposes to families with children. This means additional costs which are either negligible or non-existent in Slovenia. In the interviews, younger diplomats with families stated that being posted abroad with a family – when the spouse is unemployed – is tantamount to incurring a financial loss.

Financial considerations are therefore not one of the motives for deciding to work abroad. Taking into account the responsibilities involved, such as the protection of confidential information, dressing in accordance with protocol, working hours etc., employment within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is not suitably evaluated in financial terms either. Despite these additional responsibilities, salaries are either equal to, or lower than, those at other ministries. At Slovenian diplomatic missions and consular posts, the levels of work and responsibilities undertaken (understaffed embassies) are not commensurate with the salary provided. Many remarks were also made on the system used to evaluate a diplomat's work. Notwithstanding legal provisions in force, evaluation is mostly carried out on a personal level.

2.11 The issue of free time is an important factor in deciding whether to work abroad.

On one hand, small embassies with small teams are a positive challenge and, on the other hand, a burden as they require the renouncement of family life. The interviewees assessed that diplomats posted abroad should be granted additional annual leave, since this would compensate for being subjected to the considerable stress and excessive workloads that result from working extra hours. The requirement that a proportionate part of annual leave must be taken prior to going abroad was considered troublesome, since, unless this is taken, the right to leave expires.⁵⁶ As such, the issue of free time then becomes a problem of social culture.

The organisation of the work of the Ministry and its foreign service is relevant in this respect. It is obvious that an analysis of the (excessive) workload of individual

⁵⁶ As already mentioned in the previous contribution (subsection 1.4 Going abroad), the Act Regulating the Internal Organisation and Classification of Posts at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 14 September 2007 was applicable during the survey. However, certain changes in this area were introduced by the Act of 8 September 2009.

departments (including individuals), of diplomatic missions and consular posts, as well as the levels of work performance, should be undertaken. A redistribution of workloads would be welcome with a view to creating a better working environment, both at the Ministry and in its foreign service.

The arrangements currently in place for a diplomat's relocation abroad are also considered discriminatory. A five-member family needs more freight space than a three-member family. *Any uniformity of this kind should be avoided.* Family relocation is a stress that cannot be compensated for. Nevertheless, *uniformity does not improve the quality of Slovenian diplomatic service; on the contrary, it is a step in the wrong direction.*

3. Food for thought

The survey showed that many questions of importance to an individual are decided solely at a personal level, which is a cause for concern. Legislation is applied selectively or in accordance with the principle that "some people are entitled to certain benefits while others are not". In many cases, such action is to the detriment of the individual. In particular, it was highlighted that difficulties can arise in the implementation of legislation. Those responsible for carrying out appropriate reform in the field of equal opportunities at the Ministry lack the knowledge, experience and, above all, the enthusiasm to regulate certain issues. Contradictory solutions are often found that prevent equal opportunities from being applied to all individuals. Therefore, the dilemma remains as to what objectives the Ministry is actually pursuing.

Therefore, the provisions of a new draft law on foreign affairs should include, *inter alia*, a female quota for top positions at the Ministry (i.e. ambassadors, directors general, heads of department and service, heads of section, etc.), instead of taking a step backwards and reintroducing quotas for non-career diplomats such as contractual ambassadors. Both women and men at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have successfully accomplished some important projects for the country, demonstrating their ability to head diplomatic missions and consular posts. As a representative of the country in international institutions and organisations, the Foreign Ministry has great leverage at hand in improving the human rights situation. Therefore, the introduction of a female quota would be a step forward in eliminating unequal opportunities based on gender at the Ministry itself.

Undoubtedly, the well-being of employees is a high priority of the Personnel Service, the Secretary General, the Minister's Office and the Minister. This aim may only be achieved by creating working conditions that are conducive to the development of a quality working and social environment which is a prerequisite for ensuring equal opportunities for employees and becoming *a family-friendly enterprise.*

Equal Opportunities – Illusion or Reality

Milan Jazbec

In essence, the concept of equal opportunities is straightforward: each social structure must be organised in such a way that it allows individuals participating and contributing to its development to have their status determined by ability, performance and how well they abide by the rules. In the context of an organisation, this should be in the interest of both the management and employees, but, in practice, the issue is not so clear-cut. Regardless of where we work or live, a quick glance around reveals many other factors which often have a greater impact on an individual's status and promotion prospects.

Evidence diverging from the general consensus is usually disregarded; however, such generalisation is necessary to highlight discrepancies and ensure greater consistency in their elimination.

Taking a diplomatic organisation as an example, it could be perceived that Slovenian diplomacy is a microcosm of the situation in Slovenian society in general. This is an acceptable clarification, which, at the same time, provides a very persuasive reason for change. At first sight, it may appear that gender disparity is the watershed of equal opportunities in the Slovenian diplomatic service – despite employing more women than men, only a small minority of female diplomats serve in a senior post. However, according to the findings of the comprehensive empirical survey presented in this monograph, inequality in Slovenian diplomacy stems from at least three decisive and closely interconnected factors. The criteria influencing unequal opportunities for promotion include: personal connections and preferences, political affiliation and gender. Those party to these three factors are politicians (or other influential individuals with political connections) on one hand and diplomats on the other. Relationships between these two groups are fluid and dynamic; despite the fact that politicians and diplomats come and go, these tendencies persist.

The underlying motive for the disregard of equal opportunities in Slovenian diplomacy is fast promotion, regardless of one's ability and performance. In organisations such as the diplomatic service, it is difficult to immediately evaluate

performance, as results often only become evident in the long term; still, this does not mean that it is not known who is a good or bad employee. In the short term, it is, undeniably, much easier to perceive work results as being positive and an individual's performance as being good – even when this is far from the truth – and make decisions regarding promotion on this supposition at the expense of another candidate. Conversely, in the long term, it is much more difficult to present an individual's work as having been a success, since negative results are obvious; however, this does not necessarily mean that unsuccessful individuals cannot be promoted. If, at a later stage, it became evident that the promotion was not merited, the decision would unlikely be modified retrospectively.

When equal opportunities are overlooked in decisions involving a male and a female, gender does not generally play a decisive role. Promotion is more often granted to the candidate with better personal connections and/or other “means of leverage”. However, when the two candidates enjoy additional support, the male is more likely to be promoted than the female.

Vertical promotion in the diplomatic service is different to other organisations, due to its operation in an international environment (Jazbec, 2001, pp. 130–137). As already mentioned, apart from the above “additional” criteria, which are – besides equal opportunities – crucial for vertical promotion, it can be influenced by both politicians and diplomats.

The first group, i.e. politicians, tend to support individuals that they favour, at the expense of those with whom they do not identify or do not know. When a diplomat belongs to the same political party as a politician, there is a greater likelihood of the politician knowing them personally. However, this is not always the case, as sometimes support is granted on the basis of recommendations requested by others. This criterion for selection and support is therefore clear, understandable, and may even seem acceptable – until it is discovered that the politician's acquaintance does not meet the necessary requirements to do the job, or performs considerably worse than other candidates lacking political support. Had the individual favoured been considerably better, they would not normally need additional support and would not meet with disapproval from colleagues.

The second group, i.e. diplomats, seek political support for themselves, often at the expense of their peers. Such behaviour is also clear and understandable, and may appear acceptable at first glance. However, this is not the case: as a rule, an individual with ability who excels at work should not need additional support, especially not from politicians. After all, this concept is alien to hierarchical professional structures such as the diplomatic service, the military or the police, to name the most obvious examples. In most cases, capable individuals do not tend to seek political support, but they have to work harder to get promoted than those receiving backing, whether deservedly or not.

Both utilise additional ways and means to achieve promotion, since otherwise they would have less possibility of succeeding when compared to better colleagues. Evidently, unlike in the sporting arena, short-cuts are quite possible in the diplomatic profession. If such a situation involves a straight choice between a male and a female, gender does not play a decisive role in the selection process. However, if female diplomats find themselves discriminated against more frequently than their male colleagues, this is a reflection of unequal opportunities, representing a “glass ceiling” for females on their path to promotion or success. Indeed, this does not indicate the lack of equal opportunities only in diplomacy, but also in state administration and society as a whole. If, under such conditions, male candidates are repeatedly selected over female candidates, this is indicative of gender inequality in the organisation. Experience from several diplomatic services, especially those from small or new small countries, where the percentage of women working in diplomacy exceeds that of women in the population, shows that fewer women occupy senior diplomatic posts than men (Jazbec, 2001, pp. 121–126).

Diplomacy should not be confused with politics; nevertheless, diplomacy must comply with and reflect political decisions, as this is one of its roles in the international arena. As regards unequal opportunities, the connection between the two has a devilish side, which is recognised by both politicians and diplomats alike. Since politicians are the dominant partner in the relationship, it is therefore easier for them to choose not to interfere with a diplomatic organisation’s human resources policy if the aim is to establish and maintain a professional diplomatic service (Jazbec, 2001, pp. 137–142; Kosin, 1997; Petrič, 1996). Politicians may contribute to this end by ensuring that those they endorse, usually for senior, especially ambassadorial posts, fulfil all professional requirements, which is currently not the case. Herein lies an opportunity for politicians to enhance their reputation among diplomats and the public alike.

There will always be diplomats who seek political support for promotion, as their chances of success would be otherwise limited. This offers another chance for politicians to demonstrate through their actions – or, rather, lack of involvement in these instances – what kind of a professional diplomatic organisation they desire and how this would be achieved.

Although it might be perceived from the above that political preferences are the only factor responsible for the disregard of equal opportunities in professional organisations in general, including the Slovenian diplomatic service, things are not so simple. It is true that political parties possess the means with which they can sever support for individuals who do not fulfil the aforementioned basic conditions for promotion. Experience shows that when a competent candidate receives political support, this is not considered an issue. However, when a candidate does not fulfil the basic criteria for a post and still receives political support,

this is viewed as problematic. Perhaps political parties fail to distinguish between competent and incompetent candidates; therefore they should, before intervening, ascertain this fact. It could be said that their sin lies in this act, or, rather, inactivity. In politics, success is measured by public support, the most obvious examples of which would be elections and the endless permutations they create until an acceptable result is attained. However, in the diplomatic service (and other professional organisations), abiding by the rules matters and such permutations should be avoided. Even if diplomats continue to seek political support, politicians can waive such methods of intervention. In this case, it might be possible to start seeing equal opportunities being implemented in practice, rather than just as a theoretical possibility or an illusion.

Through an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the results of the comprehensive empirical survey, combined with some existing knowledge, the true image of equal opportunities in Slovenian diplomacy is quickly unveiled. As diplomats, we can only estimate whether this is sufficient motivation for politicians to refrain from intervention and recruitment short-cuts. On the other hand, as long as this remains possible, undoubtedly, some of our colleagues will not cease lobbying in various political spheres. Although this closing remark is not intended as an assessment, the following can nevertheless be said: On multiple occasions, politicians have shown that, within the realms of possibility, they are able to adopt relevant and well-considered decisions for a professional organisation like the diplomatic service. If the number of such decisions increases, the issue of equal opportunities will become much less problematic than it is today, be it for males, females, and those denied promotion regardless of gender. At the same time, this will be the best we can do for the young diplomats treading the path of their older colleagues.

As the Slovenian state, politics and diplomacy are about to reach adulthood, a new phase of development is being entered into, which will provide an opportunity to prove that they are able to listen and do all they can to enhance their credibility in the international and political communities. In line with this ambition, furthering equal opportunities in the Slovenian diplomatic service seems an attainable and not an overly-demanding manifestation of its development aspirations.

To conclude, it could be said that, despite everything, the issue of equal opportunities might indeed be straightforward, not only within the diplomatic service. The promotion of an individual should depend on the three defined criteria mentioned in the introduction, and should not be subject to any discrimination by superiors on the grounds of gender, national or religious affiliation, race, etc., and irrespective of political, ideological and/or other beliefs. The published survey demonstrates the perceptions held on these issues among members of the Slovenian diplomatic service at a time when it was about to attain maturity, and indicates a sensible way forward in the next stage of its development.

Aftermath: Report of the Working Group for Equal Opportunities

After the results of the research project had been published, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, Samuel Žbogar, appointed a Working Group chaired by the State Secretary, Dragoljuba Benčina, to deal with equal opportunities in Slovenian diplomacy. In May 2010, the Group completed its work and presented the following report to the Minister:

Ljubljana, 21 May 2010

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES WORKING GROUP Problems identified and measures proposed

After the presentation of the study on *Equal Opportunities in Slovenian Diplomacy*, the Minister of Foreign Affairs appointed an Equal Opportunities Working Group in order to analyse the results of the study, identify key problems and unsolved issues pertaining to equal opportunities, and relationships within the Ministry, as well as to find adequate solutions to related issues. After three months of work, the Group drafted a report on the current state of affairs and proposed measures.

“Equal opportunities” were defined as the provision of a social environment where individuals are not placed at a disadvantage as a result of their gender, age, race, nationality, political affiliation, religion, beliefs, views or other factors. At an organisational level, equal opportunities means a consistent regard for the Civil Servant Code and fairness at all levels of the organisation – from the recruitment of new employees, the appointment of employees to different posts to the assignment of tasks, communication and employee relationships.

In order to improve equal opportunities and equal treatment, the Ministry must establish a consistent and clearly-defined system of formal internal rules. This

must be accompanied by an implemented institutional culture and mindset stipulating that these rules must apply equally to all, must be obeyed and that every violation must result in a sanction being imposed. Only within such a system will the Ministry attain the **basic goals** pertaining to equal opportunities – the equal treatment of all employees, respect for the rules, cordial interpersonal relations and equal working conditions, career and personal development, regardless of gender, age, position or other factors. Prudent, employee-friendly and family-friendly human resources management should become the key activity of the equal opportunities strategy. Such long-term outlook is the best way to increase the efficiency of the Slovenian diplomatic service.

In order to attain these goals more easily, solutions to the problems were categorised in four main fields:

1. **Implementing and following equal treatment criteria**
2. **Interpersonal relations**
3. **Status of women in diplomacy**
4. **Family policies**

Firstly, all employees were invited to take part in the broader discussion. Everybody was given the opportunity to anonymously send in their proposals and comments and participate in an open discussion addressing equal opportunities after the data had been collected. On the basis of in-depth discussions within the working group, written and verbal contributions of the employees of the Ministry, and the results of the study on Equal Opportunities in Slovenian Diplomacy, after due reflection, a list of proposed measures was produced. According to the working group, the measures presented are the best way in which to ensure that equal opportunities become one of the dominant values of the Ministry.

The implementation of the measures must be decisive and consistent and include all relevant bodies of the Ministry. Good ideas, supported by a wide range of employees and the leadership, are meaningless unless they are respected and realised in practice.

Accordingly, we propose that the Ministry establishes a special **permanent working body** charged with monitoring the implementation of the proposals from the present report and addressing the issue of equal opportunities in general.

Recommendations and measures, categorised according to the areas listed above, are presented in the following pages.

1. Implementing and following equal treatment criteria

Unclear, imprecise, lacking and inadequate formally codified norms, the dis-

regard for them and insufficient sanction mechanisms have proven to be the greatest impediment to equal opportunities, and a source of unjust decisions.

Seemingly neutral rules, regulations, criteria and practices put some employees in a more favourable position than others in equivalent situations. Vague formal criteria regarding decision-making in the recruitment of new employees, the organisation of work, the assignment of tasks, promotion, assessment, etc. allows for inconsistency in the application of criteria, as well as manipulation and unequal opportunities.

Unequal work distribution and the related uneven workload, a disregard for the specific circumstances of employees in their career-planning, double standards, opacity and inconsistency in personnel decisions as well as several other cases of unequal treatment create a tense atmosphere and mistrust among employees, which causes great damage to the working environment and the efficiency of the Ministry.

We propose several measures and recommendations. The implementation process should include the relevant internal organisational units (i.e. the Secretariat, the Personnel Service, the Legal Service, the Diplomatic Supervisor, the Human Rights Department, the Policy Planning and Research Department), a representative of the permanent equal opportunities working body and a representative of the Trade Union of Slovenian Diplomats. If necessary, the Office for Equal Opportunities will present its opinion.

Measures and recommendations

1.1 **The review and analysis of all internal rules** relating to the status and work of employees of the Ministry and diplomatic missions or consular posts from an equal treatment perspective: assessing the actual state of affairs, establishing reasons for errors made in the past and studying ways to eliminate systemic errors. The situation with regard to employment, work organisation and career planning must be assessed and analysed in detail.

Deadline: 31 December 2010.

1.2 According to the findings from the previous point, **internal rules should be amended or new rules adopted**. The aim is to codify more clear-cut, tangible and unambiguous criteria in all areas of work that would contribute to the depersonalisation of the decision-making process at the Ministry. If necessary, the Ministry may propose amendments to the relevant legislation. All proposals to modify regulations must be approved by the permanent equal opportunities working body.

Deadline: 31 December 2010.

1.3 Alongside diplomatic work posts, the revision of internal regulations must take into consideration the **specifics of administrative and technical work posts**, including local staff employed at diplomatic missions and consular posts. The existing Rules include a number of cases of discrimination – for example, the employees for whom the Secretary-General may approve a clothing allowance do not include department secretaries, employees of the Section for Ceremonial, Organisation of Visits and Logistics of the Diplomatic Protocol, etc. Administrative and technical staff without a trade union representation is another issue.

Deadline: 31 December 2010.

1.4 **Consistent respect for internal rules** should be ensured as well as for the **ensuing formal procedures and criteria**. Only in this way will it be possible to establish objectivity in all fields – from assessing success, paying regard to work experience and the length of time employed to assessing the knowledge of foreign languages, etc. Formal, precisely defined criteria, as stated in the two previous points, are required to achieve this.

Deadline: immediately.

1.5 The leadership must strive for **the appropriate organisation of work and employment policy planning** in line with current needs and foreign policy priorities. Practices such as double standards, clientelism, nepotism, politically-motivated employment and the privileged treatment of certain employees must cease.

Deadline: immediately.

1.6 **Diplomatic and administrative posts must be occupied by full-time employees** and not by students or, in excessive numbers, trainees as a more affordable option. A more comprehensive, diverse and better quality training programme would be facilitated by reinstating the rotational system and substitution in which trainees can assist administrative and technical staff (e.g. in the Administration).

Deadline: immediately.

1.7 Internal calls for applications should become more transparent – the opportunity to apply must be open to everybody, **all applicants must be informed of their results in written form** rather than only by telephone.

Deadline: immediately.

1.8 The decision-making processes, the work organisation and the implementation of tasks must include **those competent for individual areas**.

Deadline: immediately.

1.9 **The Civil Servant Code of Ethics must be respected consistently**. Furthermore,

a suitable **code of ethics for diplomatic and administrative and technical staff should be drafted.**

Deadline: immediately.

- 1.10 Mechanisms must be put in place to monitor the situation in the area of equal opportunities and to eliminate the errors and damage** that arise from unequal treatment.

Deadline: 31 December 2010.

- 1.11 An analysis of personnel selections in recent years** should be conducted to establish the number of employees who applied to a post in the internal and/or external service three or more times in the period studied, but were not selected despite having met the conditions. This analysis should reflect the make-up and characteristics of these employees – their gender and organisational unit. The results of the analysis should identify any potential discrimination of individuals and/or areas of work. The findings should be incorporated in the future selection of candidates for the foreign service.

Deadline: 1 July 2010.

- 1.12 Regular employee training sessions on equality** and additional training sessions for heads of working units (a precondition for assuming a leading position) should be organised. Training on the issue of respect for human rights and dignity, focusing on equality, must become an **integral part of preparations for the foreign service.**

Deadline: 31 October 2010.

- 1.13 Work in individual organisational units at the Ministry, diplomatic missions and consular posts must be equally distributed among all employees at equal work posts, regardless of gender, age or rank.** Lack of motivation should not justify a lighter workload or result in a heavier workload for other employees in the organisational unit.

Deadline: immediately.

2. Interpersonal relations

Poor interpersonal relations are prevalent at the Ministry, as well as deep mistrust and numerous cases of disregard for basic rules of respect towards colleagues. This sours the working atmosphere, resulting in poor performance and the diminished efficiency of the Slovenian diplomatic service. Poor interpersonal relations are also exacerbated by working practices, personnel policies and social interaction that take personal grudges, preferences, political affiliation and other factors into account.

Over the course of the years, the Ministry's staff have developed a value system of

personal interaction that is based on promotion at any cost and pressuring colleagues, especially those occupying lower positions in the hierarchy. Shouting, tantrums, humiliation, arrogance, manipulation, lies and other forms of mobbing have either knowingly or unknowingly become acceptable behavioural patterns, as there are no appropriate sanctions to address them.

Adherence to the basic tenets of good manners, respect of the dignity of individuals regardless of their position and/or hierarchy rank and improving interpersonal communication at all levels must become basic guiding principles in the management of human resources at the Ministry.

Measures and recommendations

2.1 Respect for the dignity of colleagues, good manners, the ability to interact well and have appropriate relationships with colleagues must become the dominant values that define the work of the Ministry's personnel. A **zero-tolerance system for unacceptable behavioural patterns** must be decisively and clearly established. A shift in mentality must be founded on a declarative stance as well as direct encouragement and sanctions whereby cordial relations become a criterion in the decision-making process (i.e. assessment, promotion, appointment to posts, etc.).

Deadline: immediately.

2.2 The Ministry must establish a creative and relaxed working environment in which **individuals will be able to share their opinions** and report on irregularities and mobbing without fear of negative consequences.

Deadline: immediately.

2.3 A standardised, **methodologically perfected system of the mutual collective assessment of employees** based on their interactions with colleagues should be implemented as soon as possible; this will serve as an objective indicator of the social competences of employees and communicate how individual behaviour is seen in a team (and point out ways in which this can be improved). This will also be an important criterion in the decision-making processes, such as appointment to (non) leading positions in the internal and external services, assessment, promotion, etc. A system of this kind could serve as a preventive mechanism to detect sociopathological behavioural patterns in a team, thereby enabling prompt action and damage limitation.

Deadline: 31 September 2010.

2.4 In cooperation with the Trade Union of Slovenian Diplomats, the Ministry shall order **an estimate of the exposure of employees to mobbing** at the work place which will form the basis of further measures to combat this phenomenon.

Deadline: 31 December 2010.

- 2.5 The Ministry shall adopt **Rules on Mobbing at the Work Place** in order to clearly define all forms of this phenomenon, how to recognise it, as well as a strategy of preventive measures and mechanisms to curb its ramifications and provide warnings or impose sanctions.

Deadline: 31 October 2010.

- 2.6 In cooperation with the Trade Union of Slovenian Diplomats, the Ministry shall **organise training to prevent mobbing in the workplace** and all other forms of psychological violence and pressures in the working environment. Attendance at training sessions must be mandatory for all those occupying leading positions at the very least and a mandatory part of the preparations for diplomats and administrative and technical staff leaving for a post abroad. Acquiring knowledge on the manifestations of mobbing in the work place and the mechanism for its elimination contributes to raising awareness and, as a result, to establishing individual and collective safety at the Ministry.

Deadline: 31 October 2010.

- 2.7 Prior to going abroad, heads of diplomatic missions should undergo **additional training focusing on diplomatic behaviour and the basis of good relations and communication** with colleagues. Importance should be attached to the behavioural practices that are in no way acceptable from the viewpoint of preserving the reputation of the Republic of Slovenia for heads of missions, diplomats and administrative and technical staff (i.e. *the red line*).

Deadline: 31 October 2010.

- 2.8 **Psychological tests** conducted prior to recruitment should be carried out also during employment at the Ministry so that every employee has been assessed at least once every five years. Alongside team assessment, work experience, the knowledge of foreign languages and other relevant factors, psychological assessment should be a point-based criterion for the internal selection, assessment, promotion, etc. An adequate psychological assessment (which must not be older than five years) should be a condition for appointment to any of the leading positions in the internal or external services.

Deadline: 31 December 2010.

- 2.9 We propose the **establishment of a six-member consultative commission of the Minister**, comprising two external experts (i.e. a psychologist who is a specialist on mobbing at the work place, and a retired diplomat), the head diplomatic supervisor, the head of the Personnel Service and a representative of the administrative and technical staff. Mandated by the Minister, the commission would study cases in depth where there exists a suspicion of violation of the Civil Servant Code (the diplomatic and administrative and technical staff code of ethics) and/or mobbing, followed by a presentation of

an opinion on the matter and recommendations to the Minister. The commission would function as a consultative mechanism that would assist in the elimination of issues as soon as they occur prior to disciplinary procedures or lawsuits. The commission would be a reliable body charged with studying actual cases of wrongful and unethical treatment seen by the Ministry's leadership as pointing to violations on the basis of written complaints of individuals or the findings of relevant authorities. In certain cases, the Minister may authorise the formulation of a written message, following the example of Nordic mediators, as a warning to the offender, pointing out inappropriate actions or summoning the offender for a conversation, with a report of the conversation being included in the offender's personal file.

Deadline: 31 March 2011.

- 2.10 The Ministry should organise a **team-building workshop** at least once per year; it should convene social get-togethers more frequently, encourage sport and other employee teams, online social networking, etc. with a view to strengthening team spirit, feeling part of a unified team of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, engendering well-being and optimising the working environment.

Deadline: 31 March 2011.

- 2.11 The Ministry is **scattered across several locations**. Any long-term **solution** should address this issue as well as the absence of a larger office break room and cafeteria, which significantly contributes to alienation and poor interpersonal relations. The long-term possibility of moving the Ministry to one single location and more appropriate premises should be taken into consideration.

Deadline: by 2015.

- 2.12 Under the leadership of the State Secretary, a **(permanent) working group should be formed** in order to monitor the implementation of equal opportunities measures and recommendations, meeting either *ad hoc* or at regular intervals. The implementation of equal opportunities is a long-term project and should not be shelved after the submission of the present report to the Minister. Some measures will require a longer timeline, while others, despite having been realised, will only produce tangible results in time. Such a body should meet as required, but no less than twice a year. We propose that this body should comprise six persons who are held in high regard and have the trust of their colleagues – at least two representatives from each gender and at least one representative from technical and administrative personnel.

Deadline: immediately.

- 2.13 The state of affairs regarding equal opportunities as well as the implementation and efficiency of the measures presented in this report should be monitored on a regular basis. No later than two years after the submission of the

report, a study should be conducted **to allow for a comparison of the results gleaned from the survey on equal opportunities in Slovenian diplomacy from early 2009**; this will serve as a clear indicator of trends in the field of equal opportunities in recent years.

Deadline: March 2012.

3. The situation of women in Slovenian diplomacy

Open dialogue, as opposed to a gender struggle, should be the starting point for achieving equal opportunities for women and men in the Slovenian diplomatic service; in order to attain social progress generally and create a professional Slovenian diplomatic service, hard-working women with creative and decision-making capacities are of paramount importance. The concept of an original and authentic democracy starts with the family; however, it is also founded on equal rights, duties and opportunities for men and women in the work place. The equality of women is not just a gender issue, but rather the natural position in the struggle for democracy. In its final meaning, democracy is legitimised by the respect for the equality of all – male and female – rendering equality between men and women is the vital component in a mature democracy of the broader society as well as hierarchically organised state institutions, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Until recently, women have not been given the opportunity to assume positions of power and influence. There are at least two reasons for this: the first lies in the prejudicial male view that women (presumably due to their responsibilities at home) do not seek promotion – women claim the contrary to be the case, namely that the possibility of promotion is not offered to them in the first place; the other is the reasonable demand that men should share the burden and responsibility in attending to their household and children – a fairer distribution of household chores is the prerequisite for equality. Alongside a family policy that would enable the possibility for such a situation to develop, it is worth highlighting the creation of a personnel policy that would actively increase the number of women in leading positions.

Measures and recommendations

3.1 Balancing the structure of the leadership: women should hold at least 40% of the leading positions in the Ministry or, in practice, the gender ratio of 5:4 (the leading positions in the Ministry include the Minister, the State Secretary, four Directors-General, the Political Director, the Head of the Minister's Office, and the Secretary-General).

Deadline: December 2012.

3.2 Under-representation of women in ambassadorial posts: the personnel policy measures should guarantee that women hold at least 40% of the total

ambassadorial posts in the Slovenian network of diplomatic missions and consular posts and other leading positions over the next three years.

Deadline: July 2013.

- 3.3 The gender balance of the Ministry's mid-ranking hierarchical levels must be maintained. The personnel policy should devote special attention to **further employment in diplomacy and lower diplomatic posts** undergoing complete feminisation of the diplomatic profession: we propose a gender-balanced recruitment into the diplomatic service, namely a minimum of 40% participation of both genders among individuals entering the Slovenian diplomatic service.

Deadline: immediately.

- 3.4 A gender-balanced personnel policy must be reflected in all the committees (e.g. personnel, financial) of the Ministry: a gender-balanced personnel structure must be guaranteed at all levels.

Deadline: immediately.

- 3.5 We propose that the Ministry organises a series of mandatory lectures, training courses and interactive workshops on the issues of gender and equality.

Deadline: 31 September 2010.

4. Family policies

A working environment should allow employees to reconcile their professional and family lives, facilitate an orderly and quality family life and form the basis for a high-quality, committed and efficient standard of work. In recent years, numerous organisations and companies have achieved this goal and are increasingly devoting attention and funds to this end. The specific nature of the work at the Ministry and the transition from one post to another in both the internal and external services further justify the need for a family policy that strikes an optimal balance between the employee's professional and family lives by taking all factors into consideration.

Measures and recommendations

- 4.1 **Working hours at the Ministry and family commitments:** we recommend that the practice of convening meetings in the internal service before an agreed time (e.g. before 15.00h) is introduced, following the example of the European Commission.

Deadline: immediately.

With regard to the preparations of employees and their families in moving abroad, we propose the following measures:

- 4.2 Establishing a **counselling, information and assistance mechanism upon assignment to a working post abroad**, monitoring, in particular, the experience of those who have previously worked abroad, providing assistance in the form of useful information, advice, help with formal arrangements, etc.

Deadline: ongoing, requiring continuous effort.

- 4.3 We propose the establishment of a **database on the Intranet** which would contain details of every city and country in which Slovenia has a diplomatic mission or consular post; it would include essential information for employees and their families in order to move and live in a new environment (e.g. information regarding the environment, culture, specific details, schools, kindergartens, health services, insurance, accommodation). The main source of information should be the experience and advice of employees and their family members who have already lived abroad.

Deadline: ongoing, requiring continuous work and updates.

We propose that the following measures be taken with regard to care for the children of employees working in foreign countries and after returning home:

- 4.4 **Learning Slovenian:** we propose that the organisation of Slovenian language classes for diplomats' children abroad is improved:

Providing better-quality information regarding existing long-distance learning projects.

Expanding long-distance learning to students at secondary-school level (long-distance learning is currently only provided at elementary-school level).

Studying the possibilities of cooperation with Slovenian societies (the possibility of co-financing a Slovenian language school for children from the age of three years and upwards organised by a Slovenian society, in collaboration with the Government Office for Slovenians Abroad).

Inquiring with the Ministry of Education and Sport and looking into the possibility of engaging university teachers.

Potentially employing the partners of employees if they have adequate education.

Deadline: 31 December 2010.

- 4.5 **Opportunities for children to learn foreign languages:** Instructions for the preparation for External Service, in force since April 2010, introduced the possibility of reimbursing *50% of a 90-hour language course for school-age*

children of civil servants attending a foreign-language school in the receiving country.

Deadline: December 2012.

- 4.6 Financing an international school for children of employees after returning to Slovenia:** the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Sport reached an agreement for this academic year on the co-financing of 80% of tuition and enrolment fees (previously, this was 50%), if diplomat's children, upon returning to Slovenia, continue schooling in an elementary or secondary school with an international programme, co-financed by the Ministry of Education and Sport. The end goal is to ensure 100% financing. We propose to amend Article 25 of the Decree on Salaries and other Remunerations of Public Servants Working Abroad.

Deadline: December 2012.

- 4.7 Broadening the offer of international schools in Slovenia:** at present, only the international programmes of Danila Kumar Elementary School and Gimnazija Bežigrad grammar school are co-financed and recognised by the Ministry of Education and Sport. We propose to consider the option of broadening the circle of international schools and programmes in Slovenia (i.e. the British School, the French School and QSI – Quality School International) which would be recognised and co-financed by the Ministry of Education and Sport in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Deadline: the issue will be raised at the meeting with the Ministry of Education and Sport scheduled for May.

- 4.8 Continuing education in Slovenian schools:** if children would like to continue schooling in a Slovenian programme rather than an international school, they may not be able to enrol in an adequate secondary school programme. Some sources allude to an informal arrangement between Ljubljana's secondary schools to reserve slots for such cases. We propose that the Ministry of Education and Sport looks at the possibility of reserving free slots in these cases or establishes a system at a national level to guarantee the opportunity to enrol in desired programmes.

Deadline: June 2010.

- 4.9 Translation and authentication of school certificates:** we propose the following:

- Going abroad: the translation of certificates (in particular for the first educational period of elementary school with descriptive certificates) could be prepared by the Ministry's Translation Service. A review of translations by the Ministry of Education and Sport is being discussed in order to ensure the adequacy of basic terminology. Information in English

would also be provided on the criteria of descriptive assessment in the first educational period of elementary school.

- Returning to Slovenia: the Translation Service may assist in the translation of certificates, whereas the Consular Department of the relevant diplomatic mission or consular post would authenticate the translation.

Deadline: June 2010.

- 4.10 Consequences of relocation abroad and the return home faced by children of employees:** a study of the consequence of frequent relocations, different environments, schools and friends could generate additional ideas regarding the regulation of the status of children of employees. We propose that such a study be conducted.

Deadline: 1 June 2011.

With a view to improving the situation of diplomats' partners during their stay abroad, we propose the following measures:

- 4.11 Employment of partners:** We propose the adoption of bilateral agreements on the employment of partners or family members with all countries that would be interested in such an agreement.

Deadline: March 2012.

- 4.12 We propose to amend the Rules on employing local staff and diplomats' partners and other public servants at diplomatic missions and consular posts:** on the basis that they have attained an adequate standard of education and meet the conditions necessary to perform the job, partners may perform certain expert tasks at diplomatic missions and consular posts (in the field of the economy, culture and public relations) alongside administrative and technical posts. Partners may be employed as local staff (under equal conditions and with due consideration for labour and fiscal legislation) or under a contract for services (time-constrained and project-oriented work). The existing Rules on employing local staff also allows for the conclusion of a contract for work or services for expert work in the field of foreign affairs (this opportunity is primarily afforded to partners who, themselves, are diplomats).

Deadline: 1 September 2010.

- 4.13 Language courses:** the Instructions for the Preparation for External Service, in force since April, increased the number of hours of English and French lessons (from 60 to 90 hours) and introduced 100% financing. The Instructions also introduced the option to learn the local language (90 hours) and the possibility of co-financing up to 50% of the costs incurred. In the future, we propose that the following additional improvements be reviewed and implemented:

an increase in the number of hours (e.g. to 180 hours); the option to take individual lessons; and 100% financing of local language lessons.

Deadline: December 2012.

With regard to single-parent families and employees staying abroad without their partner or family, we propose the following measures:

4.14 Single-parent families: Civil servants with children (especially young children), are often faced with problems as, whilst abroad, they do not have the social network that supports them at home, which proves particularly difficult in the case of diplomatic activities undertaken after working hours or on week-ends. The optimum solution for all diplomats would be to cover the costs of a nanny whilst diplomatic activities are undertaken; however, a preliminary solution should be introduced at least for those diplomats staying abroad without partners. We propose to amend Article 42b of the Decree on Salaries and other Remunerations of Public Servants Working Abroad: *remuneration may be paid to a public servant living in a single-parent family engaged in diplomatic activities, which they would otherwise have received for the partner's diplomatic activity in order to ensure child care for children under the age of ten where there is no institutional care available.*

Deadline: 31 June 2011.

With regard to **leave of absence during the foreign service**, we propose the following:

4.15 Transfer of a relative portion of leave of absence upon going abroad: presently, a portion of leave of absence that cannot be taken in the internal service may be used abroad; however, the payment for this leave is equal to payment for leave taken in Slovenia. We propose that Article 117 of the Act on Internal Organisation and Posts Classification at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is amended: *if, due to justifiable reasons, a civil servant was not able to take a relative portion of leave in the internal service prior to going abroad (authorisation from a superior), they may take leave abroad and are entitled to their salary for work abroad for this part of their leave.*

Deadline: 31 December 2010.

In the area of family policy, we propose the following measures:

4.16 Relocation: presently, an employee without a family is entitled to an insurance basis of EUR 15,000, whereas an employee with a family is entitled to an insurance basis of EUR 20,000. It is stipulated that a public servant

is entitled to 30 m³ of cargo volume in railway or road traffic, regardless of whether they are alone or with family members. We propose to amend Article 26 of the Decree on Salaries and other Remunerations of Public Servants Working Abroad (the introduction of a flexible formula of insurance costs and cargo volume which takes the number of family members into account).

Deadline: 31 March 2011.

- 4.17 Improving health care:** several issues occur in the field of health care. Due to significant differences between health care systems in different countries, requests for the reimbursement of medication and treatment costs have been denied by the Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia. In some cases, the time taken to obtain reimbursement is extremely lengthy (several years in duration). The most recent instruction regarding financial policy (in force since 1 April 2010) introduced a new rule that allows for the reimbursement of medical care costs only after the claim has been approved by the Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia. As a result, the situation of employees with families is further aggravated (in particular those with small children) as well as employees with chronic diseases and those in countries in which there is inadequate health care, forcing them to use costly private health care institutions. We propose that the Ministry works with the Institute to create a new system which will address the specifics of the Ministry's employees in the foreign service (e.g. drafting a catalogue of treatment procedures and types of medication that are entirely covered in Slovenia as well as the diagnostics and medications that require additional payment, expediting the procedures in place for the reimbursement of funds spent on health services, examining the possibility of taking out insurance with private insurance companies (at least for countries outside the EU), the issue of reimbursing dental service fees, etc.).

Deadline: 31 December 2010.

- 4.18 The importance and role of administrative and technical staff:** recently, due to cutbacks, many diplomatic missions and consular posts have trimmed the number of administrative and technical posts, thereby reducing the prospects of this category of employee to gain further experience. We propose that an analysis be conducted in order to assess which diplomatic missions and consular posts would, due to the workload and/or foreign policy significance of the receiving country, be appropriate for the employment of administrative and technical employees from the internal service rather than local staff. The type of training undertaken by administrative and technical employees should be based on the list of missions and posts (e.g. languages).

Deadline: by the end of 2010.

4.19 Acquiring the Family-Friendly Company certificate: the Equal Opportunities in Slovenian Diplomacy study revealed that the majority of interviewees believed it would be beneficial if the Ministry acquired the Family-Friendly Company certificate. We support the participation in the Family-Friendly Company project in 2010. The project will be carried out as part of the Periodic Plan for the Implementation of the Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2010–2011. Within this project, some of the measures proposed in this programme will be implemented.

Deadline: participation in 2010, acquisition of the full certificate in 2013.

Chair:

Dragoljuba Benčina, State Secretary

Working Group Members:

Dr Milan Balažic

Blanka Jamnišek

Gregor Jovan

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- *Analiza stanja. Podlaga za Resolucijo o nacionalnem programu za enake možnosti žensk in moških (2005–2013)*, 2004. Ljubljana: Government of the Republic of Slovenia, Office for Equal Opportunities.
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Dr Milan Jazbec, Associate Professor of Diplomacy, graduated in 1981 in Journalism from the Faculty of Sociology, Political Sciences and Journalism (now known as the Faculty of Social Sciences) of the University of Ljubljana. Two years later, he graduated in Defence Sciences from the same faculty. In 2000, he successfully defended his doctoral thesis on the sociology of diplomacy at the University of Klagenfurt. Before pursuing a career in diplomacy, he worked in the fields of politics, the economy and journalism. From 2000 to 2004, he was State Secretary at the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia. He has published fifteen books, nine of which are on the subject of diplomacy, and over fifty articles on international relations, security and diplomacy. From 2006 to 2010, he held the position of Head of the Policy Planning and Research Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia. Recently, he has been appointed to the post of Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to the Republic of Turkey.

Dr Marina Lukšič Hacin, Senior Research Fellow and Associate Professor of Sociology, graduated in 1989 in Sociology from the Faculty of Sociology, Political Sciences and Journalism at the University of Ljubljana. In 1994, she received her Master's Degree for her thesis on "Resocialisation and National Identity – Analysis of Emigration Situations" and, in 1998, a PhD in Sociology for the doctoral thesis entitled "Multiculturalism in Migration Situations. Case study: Swedish Multiculturalism and Slovenian Emigrants." Since 1989, she has worked at the Slovenian Institute of Migration at the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SIM SRC SASA) and, since 1999, has headed the Institute. She has been a member of the SRC SASA Board of Directors since 2004. She is a member of consortium and lecturer on the international post-graduate study programme MA in Migration and Intercultural Relations at the School of Humanities, University of Nova Gorica.

Žiga Pirnat graduated in 2008 in International Relations from the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana. He then began working at the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs, first in the Policy Planning and Research Department and now in the Department for International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance. His research work is focused on an interdisciplinary study of issues pertaining to international relations, the economy, linguistics and music. He is enrolled in a parallel study programme in Comparative Indo-European Linguistics and Comparative Slavic Linguistics at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana, and in the second year of the postgraduate programme in International Economics at the Faculty of Economics of the University of Ljubljana.

Milena Stefanović Kajzer graduated in 1993 in International Relations and Domestic Policy from the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana. In 1994, she began working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia. From 2006 to 2009, she held the posts of Deputy Head of the Policy Planning and Research Department and Head of the Policy Planning Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Apart from analytical work, she has devoted a great deal of attention to the issue of equal opportunities, receiving an award from the United Nations Association of Slovenia in 1993. She is enrolled in the postgraduate programme in International Relations at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana. She is married to Slovenia's Ambassador to Finland.

The monograph *Equal Opportunities in Slovenian Diplomacy* was drafted on the basis of a research project carried out by the Policy Planning and Research Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia and the Slovenian Institute of Migration at the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SRC SASA). The authors have theoretically and empirically examined the situation of equal opportunities in the Slovenian diplomatic service with regard to gender and other factors.

In her contribution entitled *Diplomats as Migrant Workers in the Grip of Gender Dichotomy*, Marina Lukšič Hacin explores the historical correlation between patriarchal relations and gender dichotomy, the specific features of "diplomatic migrations" and, finally, applies her findings to the situation of women in diplomacy.

The central part of the research, entitled *Analysis of Equal Opportunities in Slovenian Diplomacy*, presents the results of the empirical research. The author, Žiga Pirnat, carries out a statistical analysis of data, interprets the results and, on the basis of these findings, concludes by proposing some potential measures to improve equal opportunities in Slovenian diplomacy. The research combines both qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches, and is based on data collected with in-depth interviews and a survey conducted among Slovenian diplomats.

In her role as a diplomat, a diplomat's wife, a mother, and a woman, Milena Stefanović Kajzer comments on the results of the survey in her contribution entitled *When Equality Translates into Equal Value – Reflections of a Female Diplomat*. The contribution *Equal Opportunities – Illusion or Reality* by Milan Jazbec concludes by examining the relationship between politics and diplomacy, both of which play a key role in the provision of equal opportunities.

The additional chapter *Aftermath: Report of the Working Group for Equal Opportunities* contains the problems identified and measures proposed by the working group appointed after the publication of the research.



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Ministry of Foreign Affairs