



AGE, GENDER AND PERFORMER EMPLOYMENT IN EUROPE

REPORT ON RESEARCH FOR THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ACTOR'S (FIA) PROJECT
'CHANGING GENDER PORTRAYAL:
PROMOTING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN THE PERFORMING ARTS'

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Executive Summary

1. Unlike most occupations in society, professional performing has been a gender-integrated occupation for several hundred years. Therefore it is a particularly interesting and useful area of employment to consider in relation to the effects of gender and age. This is within a context of increasing involvement with understanding of these issues in a wider European context, where demographic changes have implications for labour market and social policy. The International Federation of Actors (FIA) identified longstanding issues of employment disadvantage for older women performers and a project was developed, the central aims of which were to consider the effects of gender stereotypes and portrayal of women on employment opportunities for performers and on images of women in society in general. The project also aimed to raise awareness of these issues amongst performers, performers' unions, employers and decision-makers at national and European level and facilitate joint action in this area.
2. The central theme of the project was: from the perspective of those most directly involved, does ageing affect access to jobs, content of jobs, pay and career longevity differently, depending on a performer's gender?
3. An online questionnaire was developed to survey performers on their perceptions of the effects of social identities (principally gender and age) on a range of areas including access to work, pay, content of work and career longevity. Data on ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation were also collected and noted as relevant more broadly and for future research, but were not explored in depth for the purposes of this report.
4. The European affiliates of FIA (EuroFIA unions) emailed their members asking them to participate in the survey, which was available in four languages. This was the principal research method. Members of some EuroFIA unions undertook a limited number of interviews with employers/gatekeepers. Together, the data from the survey and the interviews provide the first Europe-wide picture of key aspects of the working realities of performers' lives. The findings are organised thematically rather than geographically, but the qualitative questionnaire comments indicate remarkable similarities in the concerns of women and men across the different regions of Europe.
5. There were 2174 usable responses to the survey, from performers resident in 21 European countries (there were no responses from 7 countries). This gave a small but satisfactory sample to benchmark the contextual and substantive data.
6. The concentration of genders in particular age groups and length of time as professional performer categories indicates that in general men have longer careers as performers than women. Men as a group are spread more evenly than women as a group across ages, career categories, length of time as a professional performer and income categories. Women are more concentrated in the younger age groups, over a fifth more indicate that they work infrequently with little choice of employment opportunities, and there is a



greater proportion of them in the lower categories of length of time as a professional performer.

7. Most performers earn very little from their work (and 5% of both genders earned nothing from performing in 2006-7), but there is a greater proportion of women in the lowest income group and a smaller proportion in the highest income group. Interview data from industry gatekeepers suggested that, in line with previous research, this over-representation in both groups is largely (but certainly not exclusively) attributable to differences in regularity of access to work and size of roles.
8. Ethnicity and gender are interrelated in affecting both advantage and disadvantage in employment as a performer. Principally, minority ethnic women performers perceive a triple burden (ethnicity, gender, ageing) in relation to employment issues. Their perceptions on key issues are closer to majority ethnic women than to minority ethnic men, indicating that they experience both multiple and intersectional disadvantage (perceptions of ethnicity compounded by 'aged' perceptions of gender).
9. One of the clearest findings was that women saw their gender as disadvantageous to them along every dimension (number and variety of roles, pay, ageing, 'type' most often cast as). In contrast, men performers saw their gender either clearly as an advantage or else as not either an advantage or disadvantage. Similarly, there was a large difference in perception of lack of employment opportunity as mainly due to gender: women 57%; men 6%.
10. Both women and men saw age as disadvantageous to them in getting work. Asked to rank categories in terms of disadvantageousness, approximately equal numbers of women saw gender and age as most disadvantageous. Almost half of men saw age as most disadvantageous but only 4% saw gender as most disadvantageous.
11. Age and gender is relevant to the young performer as well – gatekeepers noted the huge amount of competition for women in their 20s and felt the situation was similar but not as extreme, for men in their 20s. These opinions can be linked to the survey's findings of greater concentration of women in the younger age categories.
12. Do performers see their gender and age regularly represented realistically across film, theatre, television, radio and commercials? Men and women have notably different perceptions of the way their gender and age are represented in performing work. Men are overwhelmingly positive about what they see, whereas women are far more negative. This in turn has implications for different opportunities for access to work and career longevity.
13. In terms of both number and type of opportunities in employment as well as representation of women's gender and age, radio and theatre come out most positively/least negatively (in particular radio in many categories). Considered in light of previous research, it is arguable



that this is linked to the lesser emphasis on physical appearance in these media than in film, television and commercials. In turn, this implies differential physical requirements for women and men performers, requirements grounded in gatekeeper/societal views of gender and age.

14. Interview data from gatekeepers/employers echoed many of the survey findings in relation to different judgments applied to women and men. Whereas performers (in their qualitative comments) largely saw responsibility for choices in casting as that of industry gatekeepers (CDs, directors, producers), the gatekeepers saw themselves as constrained by industry commercial pressures, public expectations and the requirements of performance products (e.g. number of male roles).
14. Conclusions. Performing is an occupation where (unlike many other occupations) the highest levels of success of women workers is accepted and expected. However, although the report indicates that men and women operate within similar tacit 'rules' relating to age and appearance, it seems these rules are experienced differently, based on our broader perceptions of gender and age and how these conceptions are translated into what is written, produced and cast. This results in systematically dissimilar employment experiences in an occupation that nominally requires the same skills in the same workplaces at the same times.



1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The International Federation of Actors (FIA) is an international non-governmental organisation representing performers' trade unions, guilds and associations around the world. EuroFIA is the European group of the International Federation of Actors. It has in affiliation performers' unions, guilds and associations in all of the European Union member States (apart from Lithuania and Malta), the European Economic Area and Switzerland. In 2007 a proposal developed by FIA and an activist gender equality group within FIA was awarded a grant by the European Commission, to establish a Europe-wide picture of what previous national-level research has indicated is systemic disadvantage for older women performers in relation to their male peers.

This project was funded as part of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All 2007 and reflects ongoing engagement within the European Commission with issues of gender equality and discrimination on the basis of social identities, centrally of course in the form of the Framework Directive for Equal Treatment in Employment and Occupation¹. In particular, the 'Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010' highlighted six priority areas for EU action on gender equality, one of which was 'Elimination of gender stereotypes'. Gender stereotypes are seen as centrally implicated in the existence and persistence of unequal outcomes in terms of employment and pay and the elimination of these stereotypes in education, training and culture is seen as a key factor in achieving other aims such as equal economic independence for women and men².

Further, the declining birthrate and shrinking workforce in Europe has contributed to a focus on age-related discrimination in employment.³ Perceptions of age are bound up with gender and research shows that women suffer more as a group from negative perceptions of ageing, in particular regarding rates of employment and pay⁴. As Itzin and Phillipson argued in their study of gendered ageism in the workplace: 'There is always a sex stereotype for the age a woman is.'⁵

Women workers are usually the most disadvantaged group in any sector and one of the principal causes of this disadvantage has been identified as horizontal occupational segregation (the fact that women and men tend to be concentrated in different jobs)⁶. For example, engineering remains dominated by men, nursing by women. This makes it potentially revealing to examine an area where systemic disadvantage has been identified several hundred years after women first joined men as professional actors in most parts of Europe.

Performing is a formally unsegregated occupation of longstanding, where the achievement of status by its women workers is accepted and expected. However, a growing body of international research

¹ Council Directive 2000/78/EC

² European Commission Communication COM 2006 92 Final

³ Eurostat 2008: The life of women and men in Europe: A statistical portrait. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

⁴ AGE - the European Older People's Platform 2007: Promoting Gender Equality for Older People in the EU. Brussels.

⁵ Itzin, C. and Newman, J. (eds.) 1995: Gender, Culture and Organisational Change. London: Routledge.

⁶ Anker, R. 1997: Theories of occupational segregation by sex: An overview, *International Labour Review*, 136 (3), 315-339; Hakim, C. 1979: *Occupational Segregation: A comparative study of the degree and pattern of the differentiation between men and women's work in Britain, the United States and other countries*, Department of Employment Research Paper No.9. London: Department of Employment; Women and Work Commission 2006: *Shaping a Fairer Future*. London: Department of Trade and Industry; see also Franco, A. 2007: *The concentration of men and women in sectors of activity*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.



indicates that gendered disparities in access to work, pay and career longevity persist. Use of the phrase 'unsegregated occupation' refers to the fact that although women and men performers are largely (though not at all exclusively) only considered for sex-specific roles, the actual *job* itself is the same in essential dimensions. The skill requirements and physical locations are identical and it is seen by both employers and workers as the same (non-ideologically sex-typed) work. Thus there is no apparent horizontal occupational segregation, i.e. over-representation in different forms of work, on the basis of gendered perceptions of skills or suitability. Further, participation in the current project situates performing as an 'integrated' occupation within Hakim's definition of 25% to 55% women workers⁷.

However, progression as a performer (in an occupation with few formal career paths or qualification requirements), is a phenomenon with specific characteristics. As the survey data below indicate, market- and experience-based career progression is usually dependent on the creation, choice and casting of performance product (play, film, TV programme, and so on). Given the realities of social history, these processes have led to over-representation of men performers, both in number of roles and in leading roles. Given societal development of gendered ideas on age and appearance, these processes have also led to over-representation of younger women performers. Thus there is usually effective *intra*-occupational segregation.

Performing work, being both publicly visible and one of the most longstanding of gender-integrated jobs, is an important and useful site for the study of social inequalities and employment. Performers' work represents us to ourselves through a variety of media and therefore their working realities (how, why and when they get jobs) represent more than their own experiences as workers. Occupational segregation in the wider world is important to note for its effect on the parts available to women performers and Anker (among others), in a worldwide study of occupational segregation, argued that gender stereotypes and prejudices comprise part of the explanation for labour market inequalities⁸.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This survey forms a key part of the broader FIA project of raising awareness of the impact of gender and age stereotypes, both on employment opportunities for Europe's women performers and on the position of women in wider society. These phenomena are seen as interconnected along two dimensions: the position of women in wider society frames most of what is written and produced in performing work; and cultural stereotypes and media images affect the social and employment experiences of women in general.

The survey was an ambitious attempt to form a picture of the realities of working as a performer in Europe and in particular to collect data on the perceived effects of a performer's age, gender and other social identities on their access to employment. Centrally, does ageing affect access to jobs, content of jobs, pay and career longevity differently depending on a performer's gender?

Data on ethnicity, sexual orientation and impairments were also collected. However, as noted above, the focus in this report is largely on the central project themes of gender and age and the information on other

⁷ Hakim, C. 1993: Segregated and Integrated Occupations: A New Approach to Analysing Social Change, *European Sociological Review*, 9 [3], 289-314.

⁸ Anker *ibid.*, p.337.



aspects of social identity is a resource to be drawn upon in the future. Similarly, although the report indicates region-specific data, the issues are approached thematically rather than by geographic category, noting regional similarities and differences where relevant.

3. RESEARCH METHODS AND OVERVIEW

This is a benchmark study of unionized professional performers (principally actors) working in Europe: namely 25 of the 27 EU Member States and Norway, Iceland and Switzerland.

The central method was an online questionnaire which performers were invited to complete by their national union and FIA. A questionnaire was developed by a group of people, including Dr. Deborah Dean of University of Warwick; Dominick Luquer (General Secretary) and Dearbhal Murphy (Deputy General Secretary) of FIA; members of the FIA Gender Project Steering Group (Agnete Haaland, Jean Rogers, Anna Carlson, Ira Ratej, Nina Stone, Caroline Van Gastel, Susan McGoun, Max Beckmann, the then Deputy General Secretary of FIA, Bianca Busuioc). It was developed in English and translated by FIA and individual unions into French, German and Spanish (thus four versions of the questionnaire were accessible).

Given the often different structures of national entertainment, creative and cultural sectors, framing questions to incorporate the experiences of performers across Europe was challenging, and inevitably there is an absence of country-specific contextual factors that would help in-depth description and analysis. However, the qualitative responses to the two open-ended survey questions ('What would improve employment opportunities for you?' and 'Please add any further comments here') showed striking similarities across regions. The same issues and themes were raised by individual performers from across Europe, irrespective of their national institutional and cultural contexts. A selection of these comments is included below (p.35).

The questionnaire was formatted and hosted online by QUADresearch, University of Warwick, on a secure server to which performers were individually directed through invitation email (see below) and initial frequency data were generated by QUADresearch. Further cross-tabulation and analysis of data was carried out by Deborah Dean, using the statistical software system SPSS and with input from Dr. Joseph Coughlan of Dublin Institute of Technology. Data from the survey were analysed on an aggregate basis; anonymity was guaranteed for all participants, although respondents were offered the option to give their contact details if they were willing to participate further in the research (a large number did so).

Members of individual EuroFIA unions were sent an email jointly from the President of FIA, Tomas Bolme and the President or General Secretary of each national union. The emails introduced the project and explained the potential uses of findings in terms of improving employment opportunities. A link to the online questionnaire in the relevant language was included in the email and the option of using the local union office to complete the questionnaire was offered to those with access difficulties. For similar reasons, a number of people (who made the request) were given the option of completing the questionnaire in paper format. These data were then input online by FIA or national union officers or, in a small number of cases received after the questionnaire was taken offline, input directly into the quantitative analysis software. The questionnaire was launched 31st March 2008 and was available for completion until 30th May 2008.



3.1 Response rates and representativeness

The overall response rate was low, at 3% (average response rate of countries responding 5%), and no claims to statistical representativeness of all performers in Europe are made in this report. However, this overall response rate must be considered in the light of certain contextual factors.

The response rates to the online questionnaire are not consistent across countries and so the results can be considered to be representative of certain areas and not others. Some countries did not respond at all, while the highest response rate was a very large 59%. The largest individual union in EuroFIA is Equity in the UK (36,000 members) and Equity members comprised 48% of total number of responses. As the current membership estimate of unions affiliated to EuroFIA is 79,499, the UK response does not skew the results, as UK members comprise 47% of the target population.⁹ Further, it has been a long-term trend, in common with many other entertainment industry unions, that no more than 10% of Equity members vote in postal elections to the governing Council and representative committees or in the election for General Secretary. Therefore, a response rate of 3% for the UK is, in its own terms, significant.

The responses are skewed in the sense that, in terms of numbers rather than individual country percentages, the majority of responses are from the UK, Norway, Sweden and Denmark. Nevertheless, these countries are closely followed by Belgium and France and proportionally, there are high response rates from countries with fewer members (such as Slovakia, Slovenia and Switzerland). Details are given below in Table 1.

Representativeness is also related to the similarities between the sample of responses and the original population. For example, if 50% of performers working in Europe are male (and we know that membership of the largest EuroFIA union, Equity, is 50:50 male:female), then the 46% male response rate to this survey indicates a significant level of benchmarking representativeness. This is considered further in the section Gender and Age Profiles and Findings (p.18). Monitoring data on performers are uneven between countries (and within countries according to dimension monitored) and, given their nonstandard labour market characteristics (geographically dispersed, wide variation in the incidence of fixed workplaces and length of employment contract, often simultaneously employees and self-employed), it is difficult to present a complete and reliable picture of the original population itself. Given this, it is possible that the findings might be generalisable to the wider performer population. Further information on key characteristics of union members for each country would be needed to establish whether or not this was the case.

There were 2,187 respondents to the online survey in total. 2,174 were included for the purposes of the principal analysis, as we could not be certain from the information given whether or not 13 of the respondents worked in Europe. There were no responses from Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Luxembourg or Poland. It is possible that the study was not publicised to the same degree by all EuroFIA affiliates. Further, subsequent discussion with EuroFIA activists from Central European countries suggests that differing political-economic conditions are influential in willingness to participate. However, without further information it is not possible to explain variation in response from individual countries. Here, it should be noted that the questionnaire asked both nationality and country of residence, and

⁹ Further, UK membership is split 50:50 women:men, similar to overall responses to the survey; BME respondents accounted for 11% of UKI responses, approximately equivalent to the BME proportion of the general UK population; 5% of respondents indicated they had an impairment, close to the 7% of the general UK population.



regional analysis is based on responses to the country of residence question. Thus some individual performers might not be included as part of their national union's overall response rate. It should also be noted that a number of Hungarian and Latvian performers did in fact complete questionnaires. Unfortunately, these were responses to an early, paper version, sufficiently different from the final questionnaire as to be unable to include these performers' responses.

3.2 Gatekeeper interviews

'Gatekeepers' refers to those who stand in the position of managers to performers in that they have power of recruitment, direction and control of aspects of the performer's labour process, without necessarily being the direct employer. They include casting directors, agents, producers, commissioning executives and directors. Members of EuroFIA unions in the UK, Belgium, Spain and Norway undertook a limited number of interviews (20) with gatekeepers, based on a semi-structured interview schedule developed by Deborah Dean. They were carried out by phone, by email and in person, transcribed (and translated where appropriate) by the interviewer or sent by the interviewee as an email response. Given the small number of interviews and variation in issues addressed, these data were not analysed in parallel with the questionnaire data. The key themes are presented directly (p.34), highlighting areas to be addressed in future research.

4. THE SURVEY: CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW

The questionnaire was based around categories and factors, several of which previous research (in various countries and over an extended period of time), had indicated are interrelated in shaping employment opportunities.¹⁰

Categories: Gender, Age, Ethnicity, Country of residence, Sexual Orientation, Disability.

Factors: 'Types', Caring responsibilities.

Types = hero/heroine; best friend; mother; and so on. Previous research with performers and employers/gatekeepers in the UK suggested that both groups regularly use informal types in terms of casting and that performers will often regard themselves as being in competition with a narrowly defined group, i.e. people of the same gender, age, perceived level of physical attractiveness¹¹.

The questionnaire asked about disability and sexual orientation as well. We know that impairment affects the course of a performer's career and these survey findings suggest that there are issues to be explored around the effects of sexual orientation on career paths as well. However, the focus of the current project is gender and age. Although we know that social identities are intertwined, the ways and extent to which they are interrelated in employment is complex, with interrelation possibly producing different questions and issues to be addressed.

¹⁰ See for example: Thomas, H. (1995), *Unequal Pay for Equal Parts: a survey of performers in the theatre and the electronic media*. London, Equity; Cliche, D., Mitchell, R. and Wiesand, A.J. (eds.), 2000: *Pyramids or Pillars, Unveiling the Status of Women in Arts and Media Professions in Europe*. Bonn: ARcult Media; EuroFIA affiliates in Denmark, Sweden and Norway have also produced research on these issues (details available through FIA <http://www.fia-actors.com/>).

¹¹ Dean, D. 2005: *Recruiting a Self: Women Performers and Aesthetic Labour, Work, Employment and Society*, 19 (4), 763-766; Dean, D. 2004: *Women Performers as Workers: Gender in Relation to Aspects of Industrial Relations in Theatre and Television*, unpublished PhD thesis, Warwick Business School: University of Warwick;



4.1 Key to regions

BEN: Benelux countries (Belgium, Netherlands);

CE: Central Europe (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, including Balkan countries of Romania, Bulgaria);

SB: Scandinavia (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland) and Baltic states (Estonia);

SE: Southern Europe (Spain, Italy, Portugal);

WE: Western Europe (France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria);

UKI: United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland) and Republic of Ireland

Responses by Country of Residence (Regional Codes)

BEN 6% CE 4% SB 29% SE 5% WE 8% UKI 48%

As noted above, the UK performers' union Equity is by some distance the largest of the EuroFIA affiliated unions (see Table 1), comprising almost half total membership.

20 respondents included their nationality (all European) but not their country of residence and are therefore not included in Table 1, which indicates proportion of an individual country's union membership response. Those indicating their nationality as non-European, but omitting country of residence, were not included as usable responses. As noted above, a number of responses from Latvian and Hungarian performers were unfortunately not able to be included, as they were in response to an earlier, different version of the questionnaire.



Table 1: Response rates by national union membership¹²

[Note that not all respondents are represented in this table]

COUNTRY	EUROFIA UNIONS: NUMBER OF MEMBERS	NUMBER OF RESPONSES: BY COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE	PERCENTAGE OF UNION MEMBERS RESPONDING
Austria	1500	3	0.20%
Belgium	1390	100	7.19%
Cyprus	188	0	0.00%
Czech Republic	550	10	1.82%
Denmark	3431	149	4.34%
Estonia	413	5	1.21%
Finland	1767	73	4.13%
France	2600	88	3.38%
Germany	4400	2	0.05%
Greece	814	0	0.00%
Hungary	1252	0	0.00%
Iceland	392	0	0.00%
Ireland	800	25	3.13%
Italy	1073	22	2.05%
Latvia	236	0	0.00%
Luxembourg	90	0	0.00%
Netherlands	3251	34	1.05%
Norway	1798	198	11.01%
Poland	4126	0	0.00%
Portugal	362	1	0.28%
Romania	750	1	0.13%
Slovakia	62	13	20.97%
Slovenia	86	51	59.30%
Spain	2469	75	3.04%
Sweden	4000	193	4.8%
Switzerland	1431	80	5.59%
UK	35942	1031	2.87%
Totals	79499	2154	2.71%
			Average response rate of countries responding: 4.97%

There were 72 questions in the survey, requiring analysis by different combinations of factors such as gender, age and ethnicity. Given the variation in response rates discussed above and the size of the datasets that would be generated through individual country analysis, for the purposes of this benchmarking report countries are grouped by (approximate geographical) region. The initials in the region key above are used through the report where relevant.

¹² These are the figures communicated to FIA by its European member unions and correspond to the total number of performers represented by the union.



As well as gender and age, performers were asked to indicate what they considered to be their ethnicity, their sexual orientation and whether or not they had an impairment/disability. Responses to specific questions on ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability are not included systematically in the current report, as the focus is on gender and age. However contextual data is given below to contribute to this first demographic picture of European performers.

4.2 SEXUAL ORIENTATION

12% of the overall sample described themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual (GLB). No respondents described themselves as transsexual. 6% of women described themselves as GLB; 19% of men described themselves as gay or bisexual. There were inter-group differences. In response to the central question 'What advantages/disadvantages do you have as a lesbian/gay/bisexual/transsexual performer?' African-Caribbean respondents who identified as GLB saw no advantage in any category (only disadvantage or neither advantage/disadvantage) and 100% saw disadvantage in 'Employer perceptions of sexual orientation'. This contrasts with White/Caucasian responses, where advantages were perceived to some degree in every category (e.g. 'Ageing' 9%, 'Type most often cast as' 8%, 'Employer perceptions of sexual orientation' 6%) and only 28% saw employer perceptions as a disadvantage (in contrast with A-C responses). Asian respondents, as with A-C respondents, also saw no advantages, but the split on disadvantage/neither was 33:66 to every question. It is arguable that these data indicate perceptions of intersectional disadvantage, i.e. ethnicity compounded by sexual orientation. Further research would be needed to explore these issues.

4.3 DISABILITY/IMPAIRMENT

4% of the sample overall (4% of women and 3% of men) indicate that they have an impairment/disability¹³. In response to the central question 'What advantages/disadvantages do you have as a disabled performer?', small numbers of White/Caucasian performers saw advantages ranging from 3% in 'Number of roles', 6% in 'Ageing' and 'Employer perception of people with impairments', and 14% in 'Type most often cast as'. No disabled African-Caribbean performers saw any advantage in any category and disabled Asian performers saw 100% disadvantage in 'Type most often cast as' and 'Employer perceptions of people with impairments'. As with the observations on sexual orientation issues, this raises questions around intersectional disadvantage and would require further, targeted research.

4.4 ETHNICITY

Respondents were asked to indicate what they considered to be their ethnic group¹⁴ and again, owing to number of responses and variation between countries, some of these groups have been amalgamated for the purposes of a baseline report.

The questionnaire categories were: White /Caucasian; African -Caribbean; South Asian; East Asian; Mixed Heritage; Other. For this report, the unitary category of 'Asian' is used for both South and East Asian ethnicities. In any future research exploring performing and ethnicity per se, disaggregation of these categories is recommended, as previous research indicates significant employment differences

¹³ 1% of respondents did not answer this question.

¹⁴ Note that not all survey respondents indicated ethnicity.



between performers of South and East Asian ethnicities.¹⁵

The majority of respondents working as performers in Europe define themselves as of White/Caucasian ethnicity (90%). 10% of respondents identified themselves as of other ethnicities. The two highest concentrations of W/C performers are in CE and SE (96% and 95% respectively). The two lowest are BEN and UKI (both 90%). The greatest concentration of BME performers are in UKI (11%) and BEN (13%).

White /Caucasian (W/C) n= 1,941; African –Caribbean (AC) n= 35; Asian (A) n= 22;

Mixed Heritage (MH) n= 82; Other n= 55.

Black and Minority Ethnicity (BME) respondents 194 total.

Table 2: Ethnic groups by gender:

W/C M 46% W 53%;	AC M 34% W 66%;	Asian M 50% W 50%;
MH M 34% W 66%;	Other M 45% W 55%	

4.5 GENDER AND AGE

Respondents were asked to indicate their gender. 54% of respondents were women, 46% men. 10 people (0.5%) indicated that they were transgender; however, their responses have not been included in this report. It is considered unethical to report findings from such a small sample as there is an increased risk of identification of individuals. There is no significant difference for gender between country of residence or ethnic group, producing a statistically significant sample. Data on the gender breakdown of membership of every EuroFIA union were not available, but of those that were (principal performer unions in UK, Finland, Italy, Portugal, Norway, Latvia, xCzech Republic, Sweden, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Ireland) the range of gender division in membership is within satisfactorily similar parameters.¹⁶

There were only 5 respondents in the 'Under 20' age category and, in line with the ethical guidelines prohibiting reporting of small samples noted in the Gender category, their responses are not reported. Note that 5% of survey respondents did not indicate their age.

Table 3: Distribution of ages

20 – 29:	30 – 35:	36 – 40:	41 – 50:	51 – 60:	61 – 70:	71 - 80+:
23%	19%	14%	21%	16%	7%	1%

¹⁵ Cottle, S. 1998: Making ethnic minority programmes inside the BBC: professional pragmatics and cultural containment, *Media, Culture & Society*, 20, 295-317.

¹⁶ UK 50: 50; Finland SNL 50:50; Italy SAI women 42% men 58%; Portugal STE women 36% men 64%; Latvia LKDF women 44 % men 56%; Czech Republic women 52% men 48%; Sweden Teaterförbundet women 53% men 47%; Germany GDBA 52% women 48% men; Belgium ACOD CULTUUR 43% women 57% men; Switzerland SSRS 55%women 45% men; France 47% women 53% men; Austria KMSFB 33% women 66% men; Ireland 50% women 50% men; Norway Norsk Skuespillerforbund 56% women 44 % men.



Table 4: Respondents by Gender and Age Category

Key: [] = percentage within Age Band [] = percentage within Gender

	20-29	30-35	36-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80+	Total
Men	154	150	132	212	199	80	20	950
	[33%]	[39%]	[47%]	[49%]	[60%]	[58%]	[71%]	
	[16%]	[16%]	[14%]	[22%]	[21%]	[8%]	[2%]	
Women	311	231	146	216	133	58	8	1105
	[67%]	[61%]	[52%]	[50%]	[40%]	[42%]	[29%]	
	[28%]	[21%]	[13%]	[20%]	[12%]	[5%]	[.7%]	
Total	465	381	278	428	332	138	28	2055

As noted above (p.11), representativeness is related to the similarities between the sample of responses and the original population. Monitoring data on performers are uneven between national affiliates and it is difficult to present a complete and reliable picture of the original population (all performer members of EuroFIA unions). Therefore, it is possible that the findings might be generalisable to the wider performer population. For example, if 50% of performers working in Europe are male - and we know that membership of the largest EuroFIA union, Equity, is 50:50 male: female (see footnote p.18 for further data) - then the 46% male response rate to this survey indicates a significant level of representativeness. Further information on key characteristics of union members for each country would be needed to establish whether or not this was the case. Having noted this potential limitation, we can see that, of questionnaire respondents, women clearly form the largest proportion of performers between the ages of 20 and 35 and men clearly form the largest proportion of performers from approximately 50 onwards. The sharp decline in the percentage of women between the categories 41-50 and 51-60, as compared with the percentage of women in the 36-40 and 41-50 categories, indicates that women are clustered towards the lower end of the 41-50 category.



5. GENDER AND AGE: FINDINGS

5.1 Career category

Performers were asked to indicate to which career category they considered themselves to belong. Performing is a singularly unstructured skilled occupation, in that there are few of the recognized paths to work progression such as acquisition of qualifications or age-related promotion. As a large majority of professional performers will be unemployed at any given time, career category was expressed in terms of current opportunity for employment. The choices given were:

- 'I work regularly with a lot of choice of employment opportunities';
- 'I work relatively regularly with some choice of employment opportunities';
- 'I work infrequently with little choice of employment opportunities'.

The responses set out in Table 2 below indicate gendered disparity in career patterns. More men than women consider that they work regularly with a lot of choice of employment opportunities (22% difference) and fewer men than women consider that they work infrequently with little choice of employment opportunities (22% difference). Given that fewer men than women responded to the survey and that there is a relatively even spread of ages of respondents and length of time as a performer across respondents as a whole, this is a notable finding. The 'within gender' proportions are also interesting: 21% of all men responding work regularly with a lot of choice, whereas roughly half that number (11%) of the women responding is in that category. The 'work infrequently' category is closer, with 11% difference in the proportions of each gender in that category.

Most respondents work mainly in theatre (74%), followed by television (14%), film (7%), commercials (3%) and radio (2%). These patterns are very similar for women and men, with the largest difference being that 3% more women than men work in theatre.

Table 5: Career category by gender

		Work regularly with a lot of choice	Work relatively regularly with some choice	Work infrequently with little choice	Total
Male	Count	204	427	350	981
	% within Gender	20.8%	43.5%	35.7%	100.0%
	% within Career Category	61.4%	46.6%	39.0%	45.7%
	% of Total	9.5%	19.9%	16.3%	45.7%
Female	Count	128	485	543	1156
	% within Gender	11.1%	42.0%	47.0%	100.0%
	% within Career Category	38.6%	52.9%	60.5%	53.9%
	% of Total	6.0%	22.6%	25.3%	53.9%
Total	Count	332	914	896	2142
	% within Gender	15.5%	42.7%	41.8%	100.0%
	% within Career Category	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	15.5%	42.7%	41.8%	100.0%



Table 6: WOMEN: LENGTH OF TIME AS A PROFESSIONAL PERFORMER

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1-3 years	169	14.6	14.6
	4-6 years	186	16.1	30.7
	7-10 years	229	19.8	50.5
	11-15 years	154	13.3	63.8
	16-20 years	122	10.5	74.3
	21-25 years	97	8.4	82.7
	26-30 years	67	5.8	88.5
	30+ years	133	11.5	100.0
	Total	1157	100.0	
Missing	System	8		
Total		1165		

Table 7: MEN: LENGTH OF TIME AS A PROFESSIONAL PERFORMER

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1-3 years	112	11.4	11.4
	4-6 years	101	10.3	21.8
	7-10 years	153	15.6	37.4
	11-15 years	135	13.8	51.2
	16-20 years	88	9.0	60.2
	21-25 years	107	10.9	71.1
	26-30 years	92	9.4	80.5
	30+ years	191	19.5	100.0
	Total	979	100.0	
Missing	System	5		
Total		984		



There is significant difference between women and men in career length. The largest percentage in any length of time performing category is 20% for both women and men. However, that 20% of women is in the 7-10 years category and the 20% of men is in the 30 years+ category. The average for women is closest to the category 11-15 years and the average for men is closest to the category 16-20 years. We can say confidently that men in the sample are working for longer than women; this is because we know that the results are not biased by having a larger number of older men responding to the survey than older women, as the average age for men in the sample was 43 years and that for women was 38 years.

The greatest concentrations of men performers are in the 41-50 and 51-50 age groups, although men as a group are also more evenly spread across both the age and length of time performing categories than women, who are concentrated in the 20-29 and 30-35 age groups (see Table 4).

5.2 Income

Income is a key indicator of gender equality and respondents were asked to indicate their financial income from performing (before tax) for the last financial year (2006 - 2007). In all of the European regions apart from SB (where the largest percentage of performers is in the £20,000-£29,000/€26,000-37,999 income category), the largest percentage of performers is either in the Under £6,000/€7,499 income category or the £6,000-£11,999/€7,500-15,499 category. This confirms previous research on the generally low levels of income from performing. As the International Labour Organisation noted 16 years ago:

'In few occupations is the dispersion of earnings so great as in the performing arts...It is clear that performers' incomes are lower than those of comparable occupational groups and indeed lower than full-time employees in general.'¹⁷ A decade later, highlighting the simultaneously shared and disparate impact of disadvantage, a survey of Europe-wide studies on cultural labour markets found the consensus was that 'artists are highly qualified but on average their income is very low and the situation of women artists is even worse than that of their male counterparts.'¹⁸

The results set out below¹⁹ show that many performers of both genders received no income at all from performing work. The largest percentage of both genders is in the second lowest income category (Under £6,000/ €7,499). However, 38% of women were in this category, as against 24% of men. The next two highest income categories show almost identical proportions of women and men and the next five highest show men earning more. Women were under-represented in the top income category: 0.1% of women earned more than £60,000/€75,000, compared with 4% of men. As we have seen, women were over-represented in the largest, lowest income category.

¹⁷ International Labour Organisation 1992: *Tripartite Meeting on Conditions of Employment and Work of Performers, Final Report*, p.45. Geneva: International Labour Organisation.

¹⁸ See also Employment and European Social Fund 2001: *Exploitation and development of the job potential in the cultural sector: Final Report*. Luxembourg: European Commission.

¹⁹ 99 respondents (4.6%) did not complete the question on income.



Table 8: Income by gender

		No Income	Under £6,000	£6,000 - £11,999	£12,000 - £19,999	£20,000 - £29,999	£30,000 - £39,999	£40,000 - £49,999	£50,000 - £59,999	Over £60,000	Total
Male	Count	47	226	206	156	155	75	29	17	38	949
	% within Gender	5.0%	23.8%	21.7%	16.4%	16.3%	7.9%	3.1%	1.8%	4.0%	100.0%
	% within Financial Income (Performing)	46.5%	34.8%	46.6%	46.6%	54.4%	56.4%	51.8%	68.0%	88.4%	45.8%
	% of Total	2.3%	10.9%	10.0%	7.5%	7.5%	3.6%	1.4%	.8%	1.8%	45.8%
Female	Count	54	420	235	176	130	58	27	8	5	1113
	% within Gender	4.9%	37.7%	21.1%	15.8%	11.7%	5.2%	2.4%	.7%	.4%	100.0%
	% within Financial Income (Performing)	53.5%	64.6%	53.2%	52.5%	45.6%	43.6%	48.2%	32.0%	11.6%	53.8%
	% of Total	2.6%	20.3%	11.4%	8.5%	6.3%	2.8%	1.3%	.4%	.2%	53.8%
Total	Count	101	646	441	332	285	133	56	25	43	2070
	% within Gender	4.9%	31.4%	21.4%	16.2%	13.8%	6.4%	2.7%	1.2%	2.1%	100.0%
	% within Financial Income (Performing)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	4.9%	31.4%	21.4%	16.2%	13.8%	6.4%	2.7%	1.2%	2.1%	100.0%

Table 9: Income (Men)

No income	5%	[same as women]
Under £6,000 (€7,499)	24%	[14%age points less than women]
£6,000 - £11,999 (€7,500-15,499)	22%	[almost identical to women]
£12,000 - £19,999 (€15,500-25,999)	16%	[identical to women]
£20,000 - £29,000 (€26,000-37,999)	16%	[4%age points more than women]
£30,000 - £39,000 (€38,000-50,999)	8%	[3%age points more than women]
£40,000 - £49,000 (€51,000-63,999)	3%	[1% more than women]
£50,000 - £59,000 (€64,000-74,999)	2%	[1% more than women]
Over £60,000 (€75,000)	4%	[4%age points more than women]

Table 10: Income (Women)

No income	5%	[same as men]
Under £6,000 (€7,499)	38%	[14%age points more than men]
£6,000 - £11,999 (€7,500-15,499)	21%	[almost identical to men]
£12,000 - £19,999 (€15,500-25,999)	16%	[identical to men]
£20,000 - £29,000 (€26,000-37,999)	12%	[4%age points less than men]
£30,000 - £39,000 (€38,000-50,999)	5%	[3%age points less than men]
£40,000 - £49,000 (€51,000-63,999)	2%	[1%age point less than men]
£50,000 - £59,000 (€64,000-74,999)	0.7%	[1%age point less than men]
Over £60,000 (€75,000)	0.4%	[4%age points less than men]

For women, the spread of ages across income categories was most evenly divided (i.e. smallest differences between percentages in age categories) in the age group 30-35, followed by 36-40. For men the spread was most even within two age categories: 36-40 and 51-60, closely followed by 41-50. Generally, men of different ages were distributed more evenly across the income categories. There were more intra-group variations and more empty income categories amongst women performers.

In terms of performers' own perceptions of income, there is a large disparity between genders in relation to ageing. 26% of men see ageing as an *advantage* in relation to pay, 9% of men see it as a *disadvantage*. In contrast, 3% of women see ageing as an *advantage* in relation to pay, 49% of women see it as a *disadvantage*.

In terms of 'Lack of opportunity mainly because of 'Caring responsibilities', those in the No Income category had the highest agreement responses (22%) of all the income categories and the lowest



disagreement responses (32%). The lowest agreement response was, again arguably unsurprisingly, in the highest (Over £60,000/€75,000) income group at 7%.

What emerges from the data on income is a feeling among no and lower income categories that employers (previous work with and perceptions of) and professional experience are the most powerful factor in whether or not they work (as opposed to gender, age, talent). Once earning, performers appear to believe that talent is most important in employment opportunity (minimum 20 percentage points difference between the No income category and those having earned from performing work in last year). The more that is earned, the more important talent is considered as a factor in employment opportunity: 44% No income to 95% in the £50,000-£59,000/€64,000-74,999 group. Potentially related to this is the finding that the lowest percentage agreeing that lack of opportunity was attributable to gender was (possibly unsurprisingly) in the highest, Over £60,000/€75,000 category (14%).

5.3 Opportunity in employment: Gender, Age

Performers were asked whether they considered their current **employment opportunities and lack of opportunities** to be mainly due to:

'Your gender; Your age; The roles that writers create; What is commissioned / produced; Perceived level of attractiveness; Employer perceptions of your 'type' (age, appearance)'].

Opportunity

While 68% of both women and men saw 'Talent' as important in employment opportunity, most performers see their opportunity as mainly due to 'Previous work with employers' (women 80%, men 79%) and 'Professional experience' (women 76%, men 79%). More women than men saw 'Roles writers create' as important for their opportunity to work (46%: 39%), with a similar gap in results for 'What is commissioned' (56%: 50%). Almost half of women (48%) saw 'Attractiveness' as important in employment opportunity, compared with just over one-third (35%) of men.

Significantly more women than men had strong opinions about the effects their gender and age have on their employment (i.e. more men selected the 'No opinion' box: one-third of men as opposed to one-fifth of women). The disparity was particularly clear in active *disagreement* about opportunity. 30% of women *disagreed* that their gender gave them opportunity in employment and 27% *disagreed* that their age gave them opportunity in employment. Whereas 18% of men *disagreed* that their gender gave them opportunity in employment and 17% of men *disagreed* that their age gave them opportunity in employment.

Lack of opportunity

These trends became starker when performers were asked to what their lack of employment opportunity was mainly due.

- Perception of lack of employment opportunity as because of **gender**:
Women 57%; Men 6%
- Perception of lack of employment opportunity as because of **age**:
Women 56%; Men 28%

Lack of opportunity as because of 'Caring responsibilities': women 21%, men 15%. Lack of opportunity



as mainly due to 'Roles writers create': women 57%, men 33%. Given the trends in responses, this finding can be linked to the perceptions around gender. For example, 66% of women think that 'Employer perceptions of women' is important in lack of employment opportunity.

5.4 Performers were asked to rank categories (Age, Gender, Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Parental/Caring Responsibilities) in order of disadvantageousness for access to work:

Women: Most disadvantageous: gender 37%; Second most disadvantageous: age 30%

Men: Most disadvantageous: age 47%; Second most disadvantageous: gender 4%

So, women see gender and age as similarly disadvantageous, whereas men (again, operating within the same tacit rules but apparently experienced differently) see age as clearly most disadvantageous, whereas gender hardly figures in their perceptions of disadvantage in access to employment.

Women and men in all minority ethnic groups saw Ethnicity both as 'Most advantageous' and as 'Most disadvantageous', although the percentages were lower for 'Most advantageous' (in one group by as much as 50%). However, BME women performers saw gender and age as much more disadvantageous than BME men performers. Both BME women and men had age and gender as respectively second and third most disadvantageous (the exception being AC women, who saw gender as second most disadvantageous, possibly owing to the larger concentration of AC women in the 20-29 group). However, the percentage gaps reveal that BME women see gender and age as almost as relevant as ethnicity (and as each other) in terms of disadvantage (a gap of 8% between ethnicity and age and 6% between age and gender). Whereas age appears to be relevant but not as important as ethnicity to BME men and gender comes a distant third (a gap of 21% between age and gender and 12% between ethnicity and age). There are interesting variations between and within ethnic groups that warrant further attention, but are not relevant for present purposes. Overall, however, we can see perceptions of a triple obstacle for BME women to address in pursuing a career as a performer.

The ranking for 'Most Disadvantageous' factor in access to employment is the same across Europe – first Age, then Gender, then Ethnicity. However, the percentage of performers in CE, SE and WE that thought gender was most disadvantageous was noticeably lower than for SB, BEN and UKI.

The importance of national institutional context in facilitating equality was indicated by the results for the Parental/Caring Responsibilities category. Only 9% of BEN performers thought that being a parent was disadvantageous, whereas in every other region the response was at least twice as high, and in CE it was 34%. No reasons for responses could be given on the questionnaire and therefore further research would be required to examine explanations for these disparities.

5.5 Performers were asked: In terms of the *content of the roles* you have been offered, in what way has *ageing* affected your employment opportunities in Film, TV, Theatre, Radio, Commercials? Has the content become More Interesting (MI) Less Interesting (LI) or has there been No Effect (NE)?

The nature of performing work is varied and one of the longstanding observations of women performers has been that roles are commonly narrower than for their male colleagues and that the roles become narrower as women age. Hence this question attempted to capture performers' sense of the range/content/quality of what they are potentially able to do.

- All the 'More Interesting' percentages in each sector are greater for men and smaller for women.



- All the 'Less Interesting' percentages are greater for women and smaller for men.

All the 'No Effect' responses are smaller for women than men apart from Radio, which is the same for both women and men, at 78%. This finding suggests the importance of effects of physical appearance in our constructions of age, a suggestion repeated explicitly in comments from performers who work in voiceover (see performer comments below p.33). Further, it suggests that this importance is construed by gatekeepers not in relation to the performer as an individual worker, but in relation to the assumed perceptions and reactions of a potential audience.

These findings link with the repeated comments from performers that older women are portrayed in one-dimensional, often stereotypical ways and also to comments that the smaller number of roles for older actresses is further restricted by gatekeeper preference for casting already well-known actresses.

5.6 Performers were asked what advantages and disadvantages they had as male or female performers

In relation to: Number of roles available; Variety of roles available; Pay; Ageing; Parenting; 'Type' (most often cast as). Possible responses were: Advantage; Disadvantage; Neither.

Women performers clearly and definitively perceive their gender as disadvantageous to them along every dimension. 'Disadvantage' was the largest percentage response from women in every category.

In contrast, men performers see their gender either clearly as an advantage (most dimensions) or else as not either an advantage or disadvantage.

In particular note the very large differences in perception of number and variety of roles available (note also the categories of 'type most often cast as' and 'employer perceptions of women'). The results in relation to ageing are equally telling: almost 70% of women see ageing as a disadvantage, in contrast to only 15% of men. Half of men see ageing as an advantage, whereas only 11% of women think the same. These results can be linked to the findings for advantage/disadvantage in relation to employer perceptions of gender, in that over half of women see employer perceptions of 'women' as a disadvantage and only 6% see it as an advantage. Again in contrast, 14% of men see employer perceptions of 'men' as a disadvantage, whereas one quarter sees these perceptions as an advantage.



Table 11 WOMEN: Types of advantage / disadvantage perceived as relevant if you are a *female performer*

NUMBER OF ROLES	VARIETY OF ROLES	PAY	AGEING	PARENTING	TYPE MOST OFTEN CAST AS	EMPLOYER PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN
Advantage 6%	A 9%	A 3%	A 11%	A 4%,	A 15%	A 6%
Disadvantage 79%	D 73%	D 49%	D 68%	D 56%	D 49%	D 52%
Neither 15%	N 18%	N 48%	N 21%	N 41%	N 37%	N 43%

Table 12: MEN: Types of advantage / disadvantage perceived as relevant if you are a *male performer*

NUMBER OF ROLES	VARIETY OF ROLES	PAY	AGEING	PARENTING	TYPE	EMPLOYER PERCEPTIONS OF MEN
Advantage 74%	A 70%	A 26%	A 50%	A 17%	A 33%	A 25%
Disadvantage 5%	D 7%	D 9%	D 15%	D 15%	D 16%,	D 14%
Neither 21%	N 23%	N 65%	N 35%	N 68%	N 50%	N 62%

Generally, both women and men minority ethnic performers saw more disadvantage than majority ethnic performers across all of these categories. The clearest example of this disparity was in the responses of African-Caribbean performers to the question *'What advantages/ disadvantages do you have as a MINORITY ETHNIC performer?'*

Table 13: Types of advantage / disadvantage perceived as relevant if you are a *minority ethnic performer*

NUMBER OF ROLES	VARIETY OF ROLES	TYPE (most often cast as)
Advantage 0%	A 0%	A 10%
Disadvantage 100%	D 100%	D 84%
Neither 0%	N 0%	N 7%
EMPLOYER PERCEPTIONS OF ETHNIC MINORITIES		
A 0%		
D 100%,		
N 0%		

There were generally closer results for BME and W/C women than BME and W/C men, indicating the influence of women's gender as an influence on employment experiences. However in both the 'Type most often cast as' and 'Employer Perceptions of Men/Women', there are large



differences *between* women by ethnic group. Nevertheless, these differences are generally smaller than between men by ethnic group – suggesting both additive and intersectional disadvantage for BME women performers; i.e. BME actresses are at times both more disadvantaged by being a woman who is not white and sometimes principally for being a woman and not a man.

5.7 What performers think about the ways their gender/age represented in performing work

Men and women have notably different perceptions of the way their gender and age are represented in performing work. Men are overwhelmingly positive about what they see, whereas women are far more negative.

Table 14: Is your *gender* regularly represented in what you see as a realistically varied way?

Film	TV	Theatre
MEN Yes 77% No 24%	MEN Yes 74% No 26%	MEN Yes 85% No 15%,
WOMEN Yes 37% No 63%	WOMEN Yes 40% No 60%	WOMEN Yes 57% No 43%
Radio	Commercials	
MEN Yes 81% No 19%,	MEN Yes 61% No 39%,	
WOMEN Yes 58% No 42%	WOMEN Yes 29% No 71%	

Table 15: Is your *age* regularly represented in what you see as a realistically varied way?

Film	TV	Theatre
MEN Yes 68% No 32%	MEN Yes 66% No 34%	MEN Yes 75% No 25%
WOMEN Yes 40% No 60%	WOMEN Yes 40% No 60%	WOMEN Yes 51% No 49%
Radio	Commercials	
MEN Yes 74% No 26%	MEN Yes 58% No 42%	
WOMEN Yes 54% No 46%	WOMEN Yes 32% No 68%	

In relation to representations of their gender and age, both women and men are most positive/ least negative, about theatre and radio (between 20% and 24% difference in women and men’s ‘Yes’ responses). In the other media (film, television, commercials), the difference between women and men’s ‘Yes’ responses ranges from 26% to 40%. Consistently, therefore, the women and men who work across performing arts media see themselves as represented in very different ways in those media. The inference from the women’s results is that women performers do not see their gender and age represented in realistically varied ways in the sectors in which they work, whereas their male colleagues do. There are circular implications in these findings for performer labour markets and potential access to work in both quantitative and qualitative terms – i.e. number of roles potentially available and content of those roles. This in turn can be seen to have effects on potential income from performing work and therefore ability to sustain a career over time.



6. GATEKEEPER INTERVIEW DATA

As noted above, 'gatekeepers' refers to employers/employer-proxies including, directors, producers, casting directors, agents and television executives. Their perceptions are important in understanding what influences decisions about access to work (who gets what job and why) and in starting to establish connections with the survey findings - how and why do the statistics exist and persist?

The number of interviews it was possible to obtain in a short space of time was small (20 in four countries). Therefore the data have not been integrated into the overall analysis, but key themes that emerged are presented here to indicate future routes for research and development of policy.

'I do not believe that actresses above 40 years start having problems for work.'

Belgian casting director, Male

'For women appearance is more important than for men because of the viewing numbers. For instance we are working on a new soap, a telenovela in which the main part is a beautiful young woman. So it has to be that. Beautiful. For men it's less important.'

Belgian TV casting director, Female

'Type-casting is the rule in the business, looks come first. Talent and experience will help, but will not get you the job. This doesn't mean that you need to be good looking; you just need to look the part... Men can have more character; women almost every time need to be good looking. Luckily there are exceptions.'

Belgian casting director, Male

'I had selected a young Moroccan-Belgian actress in the institute that works to promote young actors that have just entered the business... The director [*of the institute*] said to me

"But why did you choose the Moroccan - do you need some exoticism?"

On another occasion, the same director told me that, as far as the girls were concerned, their selection criteria came down to cup size.'

Belgian theatre writer/director, Female

[Q: What would make a difference to access to work for performers, especially regarding age?]

'Attitude. Not from within [television] but from the public. People are taking more notice because of the ageism legislation, but it takes a while for changes to settle and become part of the 'norm.'"

British casting director, Female

'Women are busiest and have more varied roles between age 20 and 35. After that they're usually "the mother" (in films and TV). Men continue to get varied role opportunities all their professional life. Caucasians are more likely to get role opportunities in Norway. Caucasian males are most likely to get leading role opportunities.'

Norwegian agent, Female



7. PERFORMER COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION Q71 'WHAT WOULD IMPROVE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU?' AND Q72 'ANY OTHER COMMENTS'

These final two questions generated an unusually large number of individual comments from performers. Several themes emerged, echoed by people across the range of countries. However, the importance of national context also comes out, in the great number of comments from Denmark, Slovakia, Sweden, Italy and Norway about the need for more auditions (the predominant UK path) rather than the apparent current dominant practice of invitation from gatekeepers who know the performer/performer's work/ or who go direct to particular training institutions.

The most common response can be summarised as 'more, and a broader range of, roles for women/older women'. There was repeated emphasis on the importance of connections and networking. This could be explored in future in relation to the greater percentage of women who attributed lack of employment opportunity to caring responsibilities, as well as the greater concentration of women in the younger age categories. From this one could infer that it is proportionately more difficult for younger women to get jobs to establish a career path, connecting with the survey findings on the importance of 'previous work with employer'. There were repeated comments from women about a need to lose weight, as well as many about the disappearance of women/roles 'between young thing and granny'. Presented below is a selection of these voices (inevitably limited for space reasons), speaking to their own experiences of working as a performer in Europe.

Q71: What would improve employment opportunities for you?

- an increase in the number of roles for women over 35. I am a working actress, but only because I now work mainly in voiceovers - and vocally I still play teens and early twenties.
- More plays and screenplays that focus on female characters. Raising the awareness amongst writers/directors/producers to go beyond female stereotypes and to let female roles be as common, complex and real as the male ones. Force them to employ more women and minorities so that the audience get used to seeing reality and not a fake world with only young beautiful people.
- If good looks didn't mean so much in casting. and the age-thing that I am starting to notice. I still look young but if they know how old I am it is a different story.
- to quit the obligation to be "young and beautiful" for actresses and the male characters played by aging actors always having much younger wives/lovers
- More openness from casting directors, directors and producers towards me being able to comprehend and convey a three-dimensional character in spite of young age and attractive looks.
- i look young for my age, but most of the time not young enough, or sometimes i'm just too much of a stereotype (i'm pale, blond, got blue eyes and i'm 'petite'). mostly television work contains characters for me that are 'sweet', 'pretty callgirl', etc. but i'm gonna get braindead from it, there's almost never a deeper meaning to a role like that, it's never a 'she' that has 'lived'..
- registered childcare providers usually work an 8-6pm day which does not cover an actors working hours.
- That roles written for men were re-written for women!
- I believe as I age and gain more professional experience my opportunities will increase, particularly as a male



- More realistic roles for women over 40 years old. Most roles I go for are written for ELDERLY women (bent backs, infirm, grey hair) even though the age range specified is 40-50. Why do so few writers know nothing about women over 40? Don't they know any? And why do so many writers seem to think if you're an over-40 female you must be a mum, you must be a victim, you must be unintelligent, you must be a housewife or in a mundane manual job? The few roles I am offered are written by women writers who understand what real women are like.
- In TV and Film, because I am young, blonde and attractive, almost EVERY role I am seen for requires nudity or scenes of a sexual nature. THIS MUST STOP.
- Miraculous removal of age stereotyping for women. I am a grandmother, but I don't wear cardigans and carpet slippers - and I still have sex!!!!
- Physical 'ugliness' is absolutely NOT permitted amongst the casting fraternity in relation to women. I once read a casting brief that stipulated[with reference to the women]' No dogs please'. To me that says it all.
- More interesting roles for older women. Far too many roles relating to men i.e soldier, police. Women play an integral part of society but this is not reflected in the roles written for women, particularly older women...I do believe writers are out there producing good pieces of work, but the commissioning editors and producers are too limited and predictable in their choices.
- A greater variety of parts for gay men - not just the stereotypical extremely camp gay characters portrayed in modern entertainment. It is very frustrating as I feel it doesn't represent a true cross section of the gay community and gives us not only an unfair and untrue portrayal to the general public, but also limits our employment opportunities.
- Shift in gender perception: that professional leaders should not always be played by men. E.g judges, business leaders, consultants, professors.
- Not being a black female but just an 30 years old actress
- being a man

Q72: ANY OTHER COMMENTS

- We often only see one Black or ethnic minority family in a soap - and rarely families of mixed races living together...As a co-op member and speaking to other black actresses a lot of them feel held back due to the colour and tone of their skin. I often feel that if i was a few shades lighter my screen career would be much stronger...and as an actor and not say a producer etc I feel completely unable to do anything about it apart from not to give up.
- I do not get the same possibility to complex roles as my fellow male actors [*female respondent*].
- And I must say that I am amazed at how young I was asked to play the part of mother. It seems women are asked to play mothers sooner than men dad's. I think women need to be easy on the eye as long as possible, even if it is not realistic.
- It's heartbreaking to have to work so hard to justify one's existence, simply because you weren't born male. There is no question: there is just not as much demand out there for women in any of the arts, and when there are roles, we get paid less for them. Very frustrating. The main reason I left the business. Couldn't survive any more as an actor.



- I find gender and age discrimination not only limiting as a professional performer, but infuriating as a woman who sees a very limited number of portrayals of people like myself. Women seem to disappear after forty to reappear as Grandmothers at about sixty five. All parts played by Judi Dench and Helen Mirren excepted.
- I am working increasingly in voiceovers and new media, such as computer games, where many of the same problems exist. In the games industry, there are still too few women's roles, and the ones that are there tend to fulfill male fantasies (my favorite joke is that I can voice any cup size). However, at least there are opportunities in the voiceover world, as age and nationality can be disguised vocally.
- Why is a woman always "a woman" when a man is "a human being", a person to tell your story through. We need to get beyond that to truly be equal.
- It's very disheartening that men in their 40s often get juicy supporting roles and women become almost invisible except as mums and occasionally doctors and teachers...women are doing a wider variety of jobs and at higher levels than ever before. Why isn't this represented on the big and small screen?
- The main problem, in my opinion, the arts is a business - despite funding. No-one wants to risk revenue on minorities, women, the impaired, older actors. It is very frustrating.
- Theatre and radio seem to me to be the refuge of the complex female: one because human frailty seems more allowable 'in the flesh', as it were; and because the focus is more plot-focussed rather than punctuated with close-ups of 'impressions', be they of beauty, frailty, sexuality etc. In radio, of course, this focus is heightened thanks to the absence of 'picture messages', and is many women's only chance to play a complex and rounded female, where what is said and implied and played is all-important, and where her face is not the blazon of who she is... Until the audience's values change, we cannot expect the industry's to.
- When the power will be shared between women and men in our society, the dramas tell about the life and dreams of men and also of women

8. CONCLUSIONS

This is the first time that there has been a reliable picture of what performers across Europe experience as central working realities. It is important of course to remember the caveats on sampling and representativeness noted above. This is a benchmarking study and further work is necessary to obtain comprehensive representation of performers in every European country in which there is a EuroFIA affiliate. Further, as the gatekeeper interviews and performer comments above indicate, qualitative research into the situations represented quantitatively would offer insights into how and why these statistics exist and persist. Nevertheless, the quantitative data presented in this report alert us to the pervasive nature of issues that previous national-level research has shown exists. In response to the key project question 'Does ageing affect access to jobs, content of jobs, pay and career longevity differently depending on a performer's gender?', the simple answer is '*In general, yes*'.

Overall one can summarise this snapshot of performers in Europe along the following lines:

- most performers work principally in theatre;



- most earn very little from performing;
- women are more concentrated in the younger age categories, men are spread more evenly across age categories;
- women's careers do not on average last as long as men's;
- a greater proportion of women is concentrated in the lower income categories and a smaller proportion in the highest income categories;
- women as a group do not earn as much or as consistently as men across age categories;
- in relation to pay: 26% of men see ageing as an *advantage*, 9% of men see it as a *disadvantage*. In contrast, only 3% of women see ageing as an *advantage* in relation to pay, 49% of women see it as a *disadvantage*.
- women see their gender as a disadvantage across all relevant dimensions of employment opportunity (including access to number and variety of roles);
- men do not see their gender as a disadvantage across all relevant dimensions of employment opportunity;
- an overwhelming majority of women see ageing as a disadvantage across all relevant dimensions of employment opportunity (including access to number and variety of roles);
- men are more evenly split on ageing as a disadvantage and half see it as an advantage;
- women do not see their gender and age represented realistically, although this varies by medium: theatre and radio seen most positively, with film, TV and commercials seen most negatively;
- a large majority of men see their gender and age represented realistically;
- differences in perception of disadvantage between women of different ethnic groups are smaller than for differences between men of different ethnic groups;
- being a minority ethnic woman is seen as compounding disadvantage in employment opportunity, further negatively affected by ageing;
- women attribute much of their disadvantage to employer/gatekeeper perceptions of gender, age and ethnicity, both when directly asked and indirectly in perceptions of their own casting 'type'.

A recurring theme emerged. Performers work within the same broad 'rules' of perceptions of age, appearance, type and talent. They *matter for all performers* in terms of employment opportunity. However, the way these rules are understood and applied is broadly different according to gender and ethnicity. This results in different labour market outcomes. Therefore, this report prompts a central question in relation to performing work: 'what are the factors involved in creating particular types of demand?' The report cannot answer this question. However, it points to the unoriginal but compelling conclusion that gender and age are not necessarily objective facts, but often subjective creations.

Despite its traditionally marginalized position as an occupation, study of performing employment realities throws light on the gendered, aged, and racialized realities of employment in general society. Performers are paid to represent us to ourselves; and it is why and for what they are paid as well as how much, that gives us insight both into performing careers and into the position of women and men more widely.

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