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on women's economic empowerment in the private and public sectors in the
EU
(2017/2008(INI))

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Rapporteur: Anna Hedh

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on women's economic empowerment in the private and public sectors in the EU (2017/2008(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 2 and 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union,
- having regard to Articles 8, 10, 153(1), 153(2) and 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to Articles 23 and 33 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast)¹,
- having regard to Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and repealing Council Directive 86/613/EEC²,
- having regard to Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding (Maternity Leave Directive)³,
- having regard to the Commission proposal of 3 October 2008 for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending the Maternity Leave Directive (COM(2008)0637),
- having regard to its position adopted at first reading on 20 October 2010 with a view to the adoption of Directive 2011/.../EU of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 92/85/EEC on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding and on the introduction of measures to support workers in balancing work and family life⁴,
- having regard to Council Directive 2013/62/EU of 17 December 2013 amending Directive 2010/18/EU implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by BUSINESSSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC, following the amendment of the status of Mayotte with regard to the European Union⁵,

¹ OJ L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 23.

² OJ L 180, 15.7.2010, p. 1.

³ OJ L 348, 28.11.1992, p. 1.

⁴ OJ C 70 E, 8.3.2012, p. 163.

⁵ OJ L 353, 28.12.2013, p. 7.

- having regard to the Commission proposal of 14 March 2012 for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges and related measures (Women on boards directive) (COM(2012)0614),
- having regard to its position adopted at first reading on 20 October 2010 with a view to the adoption of a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges and related measures,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 March 2013 on eliminating gender stereotypes in the EU¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 September 2013 on the application of the principle of equal pay for male and female workers for equal work or work of equal value²,
- having regard to its resolution of 20 May 2015 on maternity leave³,
- having regard to its resolution of 28 April 2016 on women domestic workers and carers in the EU⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 May 2016 on the application of Council Directive 2010/18/EU of 8 March 2010 implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC and repealing Directive 96/34/EC⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 26 May 2016 on ‘Poverty: a gender perspective’⁶,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 September 2016 on creating labour market conditions favourable for work-life balance⁷,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 September 2016 on application of Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation (‘Employment Equality Directive’)⁸,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 October 2015 on the application of Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation⁹,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 March 2017 on equality between women and men

¹ OJ C 36, 29.1.2016, p. 18.

² OJ C 93, 9.3.2016, p. 110.

³ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0207.

⁴ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0203.

⁵ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0226.

⁶ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0235.

⁷ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0338.

⁸ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0360.

⁹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0351.

in the European Union in 2014-2015¹ ,

- having regard to the Council conclusions of 19 June 2015 on ‘Equal income opportunities for women and men: Closing the gender gap in pensions’,
- having regard to the European Pact for gender equality for the period 2011-2020 adopted in the Council conclusions of 7 March 2011² ,
- having regard to the Commission recommendation of 7 March 2014 on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through transparency (2014/124/EU)³ ,
- having regard to the Commission’s initiative of December 2015, ‘Roadmap: A new start to address the challenges of work-life balance faced by working families’, as well as to the public and stakeholder consultations thereon,
- having regard to the Commission’s staff working document of 3 December 2015 on ‘The Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019’ (SWD(2015)0278), in particular its Chapter 3.1, ‘Increasing female labour-market participation and the equal economic independence of women and men’,
- having regard to the Commission’s 2017 report on equality between women and men in the European Union, in particular to its chapter 1 on increasing female labour market participation and equal economic independence and chapter 2 on reducing gender pay, earnings and pension gaps,
- having regard to the reports of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) entitled ‘The gender employment gap: challenges and solutions’ (2016), ‘Social partners and gender equality in Europe’ (2014), and ‘Developments in working life in Europe: EurWORK annual review’ (2014 and 2015), and to the Sixth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) (2016),
- having regard to the ILO Equal Remuneration Convention of 1951, the ILO Part-Time Work Convention of 1994, the ILO Home Work Convention of 1996, the ILO Maternity Protection Convention of 2000 and the ILO Domestic Workers Convention of 2011,
- having regard to the Agreed Conclusions of 24 March 2017 of the 61st session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, entitled ‘Women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work’,
- having regard to the report of the UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment of September 2016 entitled ‘Leave no one behind: A call to action for gender equality and economic women’s empowerment’,
- having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0073.

² 3073rd Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council meeting, Brussels, 7 March 2011.

³ OJ L 69, 8.3.2014, p. 112.

- having regard to the report of the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality and the opinion of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (A8-0000/2017),
- A. whereas women’s equal participation in the labour market and in economic decision-making are both preconditions for women’s empowerment and consequences of it;
- B. whereas primary barriers to women’s economic empowerment include adverse social norms, discriminatory laws or lack of legal protection, failure to equally share unpaid household work and care between men and women, and lack of access to financial, digital and property assets, and can additionally be exacerbated by intersecting discrimination¹;
- C. whereas economic empowerment of women is ‘right and smart’ at the same time, equality being a human right and the higher participation of women in the labour market having a positive impact on GDP growth and the economic success of companies;
- D. whereas effective work-life balance has positive health aspects and promotes economic growth, competitiveness, overall labour market participation, gender equality, reduction of the risk of poverty, and intergenerational solidarity, and also helps address the challenges of an aging society and positively influences birth rates in the EU;
- E. whereas a public system of wage mapping including data collection has the potential to put pressure on both private and public sectors to assess their payment structures and redress any gender-based differences that are found;
- F. whereas quotas have been found to improve the performance of private companies and boost wider economic growth, in addition to bringing about better use of the talent pool in the labour force;
- G. whereas typically female-dominated sectors or roles are generally characterised by lower wages than comparable sectors or roles which are male-dominated, constituting a component of the gender pay and pension gaps, which currently stand at 16 % and 40 % respectively;
- H. whereas the ILO has developed a framework wherein jobs are assessed on the basis of four factors: qualifications, effort, responsibility and working conditions, and are weighted according to their importance for the company or organisation in question;
- I. whereas trade unions have the potential to strengthen women’s economic empowerment through promoting equal pay and investing in work-life balance in their sector;
- J. whereas evidence attests that wage inequalities are smaller where collective bargaining is strong²;

I. General considerations

¹ UN High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment: ‘Leave no one behind: A call to action for gender equality and economic women’s empowerment’ (September 2016).

² <https://www.etuc.org/documents/collective-bargaining-our-powerful-tool-close-gender-pay-gap#.WHUSo0VCUk>

1. Considers that women's economic participation and empowerment are key for strengthening their fundamental rights, enabling them to reach economic independence, to exert influence in society and to have control over their lives;
2. Points out that the yearly cost of the lower female employment rate corresponded to 2.8 % of the EU's GDP¹, while the cost of a woman's exclusion from employment is estimated at between EUR 1.2 and 2 million, depending on her educational level;

II. Actions and tools for improving the economic empowerment of women

Improved work-life balance

3. Insists that achieving the Barcelona targets, including accessible, affordable and quality childcare, facilities and services is indispensable for Member States to be able to reach the Europe 2020 targets;
4. Is convinced that the engagement of men in caring responsibilities is a precondition for changing the traditional stereotypes related to gender roles; further believes that both genders and the whole society will benefit from a fairer distribution of unpaid work and from more equal take-up of leave related to care;

Equal pay for equal work of equal value and wage mapping

5. Insists that the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value is enshrined in the EU Treaty; highlights, in this context, the Commission's recommendation on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through transparency;
6. Urges Member States and companies to introduce pay transparency in order to create methods for companies to tackle the issue of the gender pay gap, including through pay audits and the inclusion of equal pay measures in collective bargaining;
7. Underlines the need to recognise and re-evaluate typically female-dominated work, such as that in the health, social and teaching sector, as compared to typically male-dominated work;
8. Expresses its conviction that achieving equal pay for equal work of equal value requires a clear framework of specific job evaluation tools with comparable indicators to assess 'value' in jobs or sectors; invites the Commission, therefore, to deliver such a framework and to assist the Member States in implementing it;
9. Recalls that in line with the jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice, the value of work should be assessed and compared on the basis of objective criteria, such as educational, professional and training requirements, skills, efforts and responsibility, work undertaken and the nature of the tasks involved;

Gender quotas

10. Considers that quotas in the public sector may be necessary where the public institutions do not fulfil their responsibility of fair representation, and could thus improve the

¹ In 2013 - see 'The gender employment gap: Challenges and solutions'.

democratic legitimacy of decision-making institutions;

11. Reiterates its call on the Council for a swift adoption of the directive on gender balance among non-executive directors of listed companies, as an important first step towards equal representation in the public and private sectors;

Gender equality plans

12. Acknowledges that the Commission supports the adoption of gender equality plans by research performing organisations and research funding organisations;
13. Notes that gender equality plans on a company or sectorial level may contain multiple human resource measures addressing recruitment, pay, promotion, training and work-life balance; that they often include concrete measures such as gender-neutral language, prevention of sexual harassment, appointment of the under-represented gender to top positions, part-time work and fathers participating in childcare, and that a variety of approaches exist in Member States regarding mandatory introduction of such measures;

Collective agreements and social partners

14. Emphasises that ensuring gender balance in collective bargaining teams is crucial to ensuring a balanced representation of women and men, and therefore considers that trade unions should strengthen the positions of women within the social partnership structure, in particular in decision-making roles, and should negotiate gender equality plans at company and sectorial level;
15. Calls on the Commission to work closely with social partners in order to strengthen them in their key role of detecting invisible gender bias in the setting of pay scales and in providing job evaluations which are free of gender bias;

III. Recommendations on enhancing economic empowerment of women

16. Maintains that current economic models and practices do not take account of gender-based differences and are not responsive to the issue of closing gender gaps; believes in this context that tax policies and spending priorities during crises must be rethought in order to take women into account as economic actors;
17. Asks for a reconsideration of macroeconomic focuses in which public spending priorities are reassessed and both women and men can benefit from investment in social infrastructure;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Europe is indisputably one of the world leaders when it comes to women's rights and gender equality. However, a precondition for excelling in equality and women's empowerment is women's equal participation in the labour market and in economic decision-making. The latest statistics shows that the EU remains only halfway towards achieving gender equality. The EIGE Gender Equality Index from 2015 presented almost no progress for the EU with a non-significant increase.

In many countries the primary barriers to the women's economic empowerment are several social norms or discriminatory laws. Despite that women on average hold a higher education level than men the gender pay gap is still very prevalent at 16.1% and the pension gap as well, at an alarming 40.2% though the difference between member states is significant. A more even distribution of unpaid work in the household is also necessary for women to be able to be present on the labour market to the same extent as men. When the unpaid household work is simultaneously performed and it becomes an evenly shared burden, as well as when the goals set up by the Barcelona targets are achieved, there will be a better foundation for a well-improved work-life balance that will allow women to compete on an equal playing field.

To be able to compete on the same terms is not only a human right and should not face any resistance since everybody regardless of who they are or what their biological gender is, have the same rights and should not face discrimination. Besides it being a human right, there are benefits from a more equal labour market. Women work part-time jobs to a higher extent than men do, involuntarily and combined with the difference in wages that is a huge loss in tax-income for the member states. According to Eurofound, the total yearly cost of the lower female employment rate corresponded to 2.8% of the EU's GDP,¹ while the cost of a woman's exclusion from employment throughout her working life is estimated at between €1.2 million and €2 million, depending on her educational level.

There are different tools that are useful in reaching the goal of women's economic empowerment. The existence of the pay gap creates a fundamental problem of equal pay for equal work and work of value. In order to reach equal pay for equal work there needs to be a systematic mapping in order to make sure that both public and private sector lives up to the principle.

In order to confront the insufficient level of women's economic empowerment within the EU, it is a necessity that the traditional female jobs are valued equally as typical male jobs. This will demand that the sectors that are affected, that are female dominated, better remunerate their employees.

As mentioned above, increasing women's presence on the labour market will only lead to positive effects. When it comes to corporate boards and in the public sector where high level decision-making is done, the experience of including women have proven the positive outcomes. We call on the Council for a swift adaptation of the directive on gender balance among non-executive directors of listed companies (women on boards' directive). There has been progress in this area, but it is advancing too slow. The most progress has been present in

¹ in 2013, The gender employment gap: Challenges and solutions

countries that have adopted a binding legislation on quotas. An important factor is also to lead by example. The EU currently has very few women on high level/senior positions within its institutions and there needs to be a drastic change.

Gender equality plans are a tool that tackles inequality in the workplace through many various ways, addressing recruitment, pay, promotion, training and work-life balance. Moreover, a gender equality plan can work towards the prevention of sexual harassments as well. 32 % of the sexual harassment cases in the EU were experienced by women at their workplace and due to experiencing such violence, a large number of women alters their behaviours by avoiding being alone with a colleague or a boss. We need to have zero tolerance against harassment and everybody including women needs to be able to feel safe in their work environment.

We are only three years away from 2020, and we have very high goals which were set-up by ourselves, that we have to reach. We cannot accept a failure and have to keep working towards reaching these goals regarding women's empowerment and presence in the labour market. We have to show leadership with a firm stance that we do not tolerate inequality and that we expect both the public and private sectors to take responsibility for the inequality that they are reproducing through the problems presented in this report.