

How to close the gender pay gap in the EU



Find out how the European Parliament is working to reduce the gender pay gap.

Although gender equality is one of the EU's founding principles and the equal pay for equal work principle was introduced more than 60 years ago, [women in the EU are still paid 13% less on average per hour than men](#). The European Parliament wants to change that.

Equal pay is regulated by an [EU directive](#), but the Parliament has repeatedly asked for its [revision](#) and for further measures.

Read more on [the European Parliament's actions for gender equality](#)

Pay transparency measures

In March 2023 Parliament adopted [new rules on binding pay-transparency measures](#) to make it easier for employees to compare salaries and to expose existing gender pay gaps. If pay reporting shows a gender pay gap of at least 5%, employers will have to conduct a joint pay assessment in cooperation with workers' representatives. EU countries will have to impose penalties, such as fines, for employers that infringe the rules. Vacancy notices and job titles will have to be gender neutral.

The Council still has to formally approve the agreement for the rules to come into effect.

Addressing the root causes of unequal pay

In 2019, the Parliament adopted the Work-Life Balance Directive introducing [new paternity and parental leave rules](#) at EU level to increase women's employment rate, create incentives for fathers to take family-related leave and promote gender equality and equal opportunities.

In [a resolution on the EU Strategy for Gender Equality](#) adopted on 21 January 2021, MEPs called on the Commission to come up with an ambitious new gender pay gap action plan, which should set clear targets for EU countries to reduce the gender pay gap over the next five years.

In the resolution, MEPs call for an annual review by the Commission of the implementation of this directive. They call on EU countries to take measures that go beyond the directive, such as promoting flexible working time arrangements.

The Parliament is in favour of breaking down the traditional attribution of jobs and activities to a particular gender and adopting concrete measures to make it easier for [women and girls to enroll in male-dominated education and employment](#).

Find out more about the [definition of the gender pay gap and the reasons behind it](#)

Fighting poverty among women

MEPs demand measures to tackle poverty among women. They call for the improvement of working conditions in sectors with a high proportion of women and addressing the problem of [lower pensions for women than men](#).

Read more about women's rights

- How the EU is tackling gender-based violence
- Women in the European Parliament (infographics)
- Timeline: milestones in the EU's fight for women's rights (video)

Find out more

Women's rights: [MEPs call for action to fight backlash against gender equality](#)

[European Commission page on gender equality strategy: achievements and key areas for action](#)

[Study: equal pay for equal work](#)

[2021 report on gender equality in the EU](#)