

What can be done?

Following the example of different European countries, several positive measures could be taken, such as:

- Implement national action plans for gender equality in the labour market.
- Enact specific legislation aiming at reducing the gender pay gap.
- Ensure access to high-quality child and adult/elder care services for low-incomes adults and families.
- Raise the minimum wages.
- Enforce state-owned companies as well as private enterprises and organisations to publish regular reports on the salaries paid to women and men, including their plan to close the gap.
- Promote equal pay for work of equal value within trilateral dialogue (government, trade unions, and employers' organisations).
- Enact compulsory collective bargaining on gender equality and include detailed provisions for the implementation of equality principle in all collective agreements.
- Introduce a new pay system that would lead to a reduction of the gap in sectors which are characterised by gender-specific features, such as the health sector.
- Organise awareness-raising activities on national level such as the establishment of national equal pay days.



Equal Work Equal Pay



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Equal pay for equal work: a fundamental right

Equal pay for equal work is one of the European Union's founding principles, embedded in the Treaties since 1957. Article 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union provides that each Member State shall ensure that the principle of equal pay for work of equal value is applied. EU Gender Equality Recast Directive (2006/54/EC) on gender equality in the area of employment and occupation prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on the ground of sex in relation to pay. A Communication adopted by the European Commission in 2007 examines the causes of the gender pay gap and puts forward a series of actions to tackle the problem. Several actions have been implemented by the Commission, such as awareness-raising campaign on the GPG, European Equal Pay Day, and exchange of good practices.

Despite the legal recognition, there is still much work to be done in the field of equal pay for men and women.

The gender pay gap is the difference in average gross hourly wage between men and women across the economy.

The gender overall earnings gap is the difference between the average annual earnings between women and men. It takes into account three types of disadvantages women face: lower hourly earnings, working fewer hours in paid jobs, and lower employment rates.

Did you know that:

- The average gender pay gap in the EU is 16.1%.
- The gender pay gap in Cyprus is 15.4%, in Greece 15% and in Portugal 14.5%.
- The average gender overall earnings gap in the EU is 41.4%.
- The women to men ratio in senior management positions is less than 1 to 5. In 2013, only 18% of board members of the largest publicly listed companies in the EU were women.
- In 2010, only 20% of top-level academics were women and just one out of ten universities in the EU had a female rector.
- Although women are fully integrated into the labour market, the responsibility of handling household tasks remains a "women's affair". In 2013, female workers spent an average of 26 hours a week on care and household tasks while male workers spent 9 hours.
- Women are much more likely to break off their careers to take care of children and elderly persons, a fact that contributes to a gender gap in pensions.
- Older women are more at risk of poverty or social exclusion than older men.

What causes pay inequality between men and women?

Direct pay discrimination: Some women are paid less than men for doing the same job, although this is illegal under the European law.

Undervaluation of women's work: Very frequently, women earn less than men for doing jobs of equal value. Among other things, this is due to the fact that the qualifications and the contribution of women in the labour market are undervalued compared to those of men.

Segregation in the labour market: Women often work in lower paid sectors and occupations than those dominated by men. At the same time, women are under-represented in managerial and senior positions.

Family, care, and domestic responsibilities still not equally shared:

In an overwhelming disproportion compared to men, women undertake the handling of household tasks and the care of dependent family members, such as the children and the elderly. The fact that domestic work remains unpaid, together with the lack of free facilities for childcare and elderly care, means that women are often forced to exit the labour market. Only 65.8% of women with young children in the EU are working, compared to 89.1% of men. At the same time, the percentage of women who work part-time due to family obligations is much higher than men. Consequently, women have more career interruptions or work shorter hours than men. This has a negative impact on their career development and promotion prospects. This situation contributes to a Gap in pensions, in addition to the gap in wages.

