



Equal Pay Day: Joint Statement by Vice-President Jourová and Commissioners Schmit and Dalli

Brussels, 8 November 2021

Women in the European Union still earn less than men on average. For every 1 euro men earn, women earn 86 cents. European Equal Pay Day is a day marking the path left towards achieving pay equality between women and men in the EU. This year, European Equal Pay Day falls on 10 November.

Ahead of this symbolic day, Věra **Jourová**, Vice-President for Values and Transparency, Nicolas **Schmit**, Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, and Helena **Dalli**, Commissioner for Equality, said:

"Equality is one of the EU's fundamental values and it is the bedrock to people's independence and freedom. Women and men deserve equal pay, treatment and opportunities.

While equal pay between men and women has been enshrined in EU treaties for more than 60 years, it is not fully implemented. Despite improvements to women's positions in social and professional life, pay differences remain wide and entrenched.

The factors behind the gender pay gap are manifold: care responsibility falls predominantly on women who consequently more often work part-time. Women often work in lower paid sectors and lower paid jobs within sectors. They face the problem of the corporate glass ceiling, and are paid less than men for performing the same work or work of equal value. This has a knock-on effect on their pensions which are also lower. Progress on narrowing the gender pay gap has been, and continues to be, slow.

Disregard for the equal pay principle remains untraced and a lack of pay transparency consistently puts women and some men at a disadvantage.

Through the proposal towards a Pay Transparency Directive earlier this year, the Commission aims to empower workers with concrete tools to assert their rights, and most importantly to strengthen the application of equal pay in companies.

Organisations that take the time to develop standards around pay transparency and compensation, are better placed to attract top talent and become tomorrow's leaders. Today's employees and young generations as well as tomorrow's workforce expect more from employers in terms of inclusion and fairness.

On this symbolic day the Commission calls upon the co-legislators to adopt the Pay Transparency Directive without undue delay."

Background

[Nine out of ten Europeans](#) – women and men - think that it is unacceptable that women are paid less than men for the same work or work of equal value. European workers agree with pay transparency: 64% of them have said they are in favour of the publication of average wages by job type and gender at their company.

At the [Porto Social Summit](#) in May 2021, EU leaders, EU institutions, social partners and civil society reinforced their commitment to implement the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#). The Pillar sets out 20 key principles and rights essential for fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems in the 21st century, including principle 2 on gender equality. The [Pillar Action Plan](#) sets three new 2030 headline targets and calls on Member States to at least halve the gender employment gap.

The Commission's [proposal on pay transparency](#), adopted on 4 March 2021 focuses on strengthening the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women. It empowers workers to claim their rights and incentivises companies to review their pay structure.

In 2012, the Commission also [proposed to improve the gender balance on corporate boards](#), setting

the aim of a minimum of 40% of non-executive members of the under-represented sex on company boards.

The Commission's [proposal on adequate minimum wages for workers](#), adopted on 28 October 2020, supports gender equality by helping to close the gender pay gap and to lift women out of poverty, as more women than men earn minimum wages in Europe.

The Commission addresses women's underrepresentation in the labour market by improving the work-life balance of working parents and carers. In June 2019, the EU adopted the [Directive on work-life balance](#), which introduces minimum standards for rights to paternity and parental leave. The Directive also included rights to carer's leave and flexible working arrangements for workers. Member States have until 2 August 2022 to transpose the Directive into national legislation.

The Commission will also launch a campaign to challenge persisting stereotypes about women and men, boys and girls, in different areas of life, including work.

The [Commission Recommendation on standards for equality bodies](#), adopted in June 2018, paved the way for better support for victims of discrimination, including pay discrimination.

For More Information

Webpage on [Gender pay gap](#)

Webpage on [Equal Pay Day](#)

[Eurostat data on the Gender pay gap](#)

[Eurostat study on Gender pay gaps in the European Union](#)

[Latest Eurobarometer on Gender Equality \(2017\)](#)

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