



Working group Equality and Demographic Challenge

Work programme 2022 *Executive Summary*

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es Asamblea de Extremadura



Objectives and lines of action for 2022

Inequality is a multifaceted issue, and women suffer from it in its many forms. Gender-based violence is the highest expression of inequality; yet violence does not only have a physical element, but also a psychological, economic and symbolic one.

Many studies are identifying warning signs of a step backwards on the road to equality, also as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The CALRE Working Group on Equality and Demographic Challenge has emphasised the need to focus on specific measures, actions and decisions to prevent the pandemic from becoming an excuse to going backwards in this area. While in 2021 the Working Group's activity focused on how to tackle the demographic challenge from the public administrations—also from a gender perspective—, in 2022 it will concentrate its efforts on analysing the persistent gaps between women and men, which are true gulfs in economic terms, as European women work on average 51 days a year for free.

Thus, despite the existence of EU, state and regional regulations aimed at regulating equal pay for men and women, reality shows that there is still a long way to go to achieve it. The gender pay gap in the EU stands at 14.1%.

For its part, the European Commission issued recommendations and proposals on pay transparency in 2014 and 2021 as a tool to ensure that EU citizens receive equal pay for equal work. The European Parliament has also expressed its views on the matter, and on 15 December 2021 it approved a non-legislative report calling on the EU and its Member States to take concrete measures to uphold women's rights and reduce gender inequalities in the EU.

However, the regulatory and institutional efforts made have been and continue to be insufficient, as gaps are still persisting. Women earn lower wages, and they have been, for the most part, the so-called "frontline workers"—working in healthcare, care, cleaning and commerce—during the pandemic. Furthermore, they account for 76% of care workers in the EU, and perhaps even more if the figures for undeclared employment—especially in the area of domestic workers—are taken into account.

Another factor defining the pay gap between women and men has to do with home care. According to EIGE data, women spend 28 hours a week caring for their children, compared to the 18 hours a week spent by men. Furthermore, they spend 14 hours a week on household chores, compared to 11 hours in the case of men.



The greater number of hours that women spend on these tasks means that they are often the ones who are forced to work part-time or in sectors with lower wages.

Likewise, these invisible and unpaid jobs do not create the right to receive unemployment or retirement benefits, or, if any, they are precarious and result in a higher percentage of women at risk of poverty—15% of women compared to 11% of men—according to EIGE data.

This employment inequality also has an impact on access to positions of responsibility. Women account for only 26% of the total number of decision-making positions, compared to 73% of men who have access to these positions.

The lack of a salary or decent pay prevents women from acting independently and, consequently, perpetuates situations that prevent them from acting freely. It thus furthers the perpetuation of all kinds of violence against them. We are referring to many kinds of violence, as there are many of them and many ways of perpetrating it.

It seems appropriate to address this complex phenomenon that hinders women's development and condemns them to dependence and a lack of complete freedom.

In addition, a comparative study addressing the existing gender gaps and their differences between regions in the south or north-centre of the EU is needed.

In short, it is advisable to look at what is going wrong given that, despite the regulations approved, the gaps are persisting, if not expanding, preventing the achievement of real equality between women and men.

Blanca MARTÍN DELGADO
Coordinator of the Working group
“Equality and democratic challenge”



Agenda

Date	Subject	Place
February-May	Comparative study on gender gaps between regions of North-Central and Southern Europe	----
March	Real Equality between Women and Men Week	Assembly of Extremadura (Merida, Spain)
May	The EU in the Assembly of Extremadura	Assembly of Extremadura (Merida, Spain)
June-July	WG Meeting	<i>TBC</i>
November	Celebrating the European Equal Pay Day	---
	Presentation of the WG findings report at the CALRE Plenary Meeting	Parliament of Wallonia (Namur, Belgium)
	Submission and delivery of the WG findings report to European institutions	Brussels (Belgium)