

Meeting of the
Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities
for Women and Men
7 December 2017

Draft Minutes

Draft Minutes of the 50th Advisory Committee of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Meeting (7th December 2017)

Welcome and introduction

Welcome by Chair (Jacqueline Niavarani) from Austria who is chairing for the second time the meeting this year

The Chair presented usual housekeeping rules and reminded that documents to be discussed during the day were available in the compendium which was sent beforehand by e-mail.

1. Adoption of the draft agenda

The draft agenda was adopted with a switch in agenda item 6 – first presentation on the gender pay gap and second on gender balance in decision making.

2. Adoption of the draft minutes of the meeting on the 7th of June 2017

The minutes of the last meeting, which included comments received by members, were adopted.

3. Information from the Commission on recent developments in gender equality in the EU

a.) **Action plan on the gender pay gap (Agnieszka Bielska Decugniere)**

b.) **Presentation of state of play of the Communication and proposal for a Directive on Work-life balance for parents and carers (Greet Vermeylen and Fabian Lutz)**

Chair opening the floor for comments and questions:

France (Haut Conseil à l'Égalité): The adequate remuneration of parental leave gives incentives for both parents to take the leave – but there is a general concern on the amount that would apply and it would also mean a shift of the current policy in France.

ETUC: The payment and the non-transferability suggested in the Directive on Work-life balance for parents and carers are two main aspects that should not be watered down.

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The Gender pay gap action plan could be an important game changer by implementing pay transparency. In the UK employers have to publish reports on salary levels for men and women. Germany has even gone further in legislation, where employees may ask for pay information. Commission should encourage all EU MS to go in that direction.

European Women's Lobby (EWL): The Work-life balance package is an investment in the future and it will bring about a cultural and mind-set change. It ensures that men also have their rights to take on care responsibilities. In 18 months' time there will be European elections, therefore, the package should be adopted as soon as possible.

European Commission: EPSCO Council is to approve a progress report on the same day as AC meeting. The Work-life balance package should not lose the intended impact on the integration of women into the labour market.

Together with the gender action plan the EC also adopted the Implementation Report on the Commission Recommendation on Pay Transparency. In Europe serious problems in the implementation of the equal pay principle persist. The will have a closer look next year at the weak points of the Directive based on an evaluation.

c.) Presentation on Violence against Women (Halliki Voolma)

Comments

Council of Europe: Since June four countries ratified the Istanbul Convention. Norway in July, Estonia and Germany in October and the latest one Cyprus in November. The four first reports from review have already been published. They include two EU MS (Austria and Denmark) and two non-EU countries Albania and Monaco. Two will be published next year Montenegro and Turkey and 5 review visits in EU MS will take place in 2018 (Portugal, Sweden, Finland, France and Italy).

d.) Presentation on the EIGE Equality Index (Joanna Lindberg)

Comments

EIGE: aims at publishing more information on the country level to see what is driving the score up or down. The Index has a complicated methodology of combining gaps and levels of achievements. The report will be 5-6 pages long and launched in the Index interface. As regards the future, the Index will be annual and will focus in each year on a different domain. Work-life balance is an important aspect to be considered in more depth in 2019. The focus of the index in 2020 will be the new world of work looking at the changing conditions and circumstances in the labour market including digitalisation, the use of new skills. In 2021, the focus will be on violence against women if Eurostat releases data by then.

EWL: The Index is providing valuable data to shape future policies, also for the next strategy for equality between women and men post 2019.

EWL has recently done a study on cyber violence against women and the report is now available on the EWL website.

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Netherlands: In the context of a country visits, the Netherlands together with EIGE organised meeting, to present the Gender Equality Index in the Netherlands and also to show the work that EIGE is doing.

e.) Presentation on the Commission of the Status of Women (Karen Vandekerckhove)

COPA (Women farmers in Europe): is interested in contributing to documents and participating in the written statement.

UN WOMEN: The bureau is consulting with Member States on the proposed organisation of work for the session which was prepared on the basis of Commissions methods of work. The proposed organisation of work includes proposals for the general discussion, ministerial roundtables, and high level interactive dialogues and interactive expert's panels on the priority and review themes. The chair of CSW is to hold a briefing consultation with Member States to present the proposed organisation of work for preliminary endorsement. After preliminary endorsement by Member States the proposed organisation of work will be circulated to Member States and posted on the CSW62 website. UN Women is finalising the Secretary-General's reports and other documents for the session.

EWL: It is important that Member States include more representatives of women's organisations in their delegations.

f.) Presentation of Actions on Elections - Marie Helene Boulanger (Head of Unit, D3)

EWL: asked what the possibilities are for having transnational lists.

Council of Europe: The CoE has recently published a report on balanced participation of women and men in political decision-making with data from 46 Member States covering the legislative power, the executive power at the national, regional and local level, including diplomatic services, supreme courts, constitutional courts, and institutions. The report is available online.

ETUC: asked why there isn't a specific gender focus at the high-level event. The discussion should focus on democratic participation or democratic deficit rather than subsuming gender under underrepresented groups.

European Commission: Transnational lists are already part of the proposal from the EP. This has been added before the vote in plenary of the parliament. This has been discussed in the Council. France, Italy and Spain were expressing their support for transnational lists and president Juncker referred to it in the State of Union speech. Regarding the high-level event, it has a particular focus on encouraging best-practices to increase the participation of young people, vulnerable and other underrepresented groups.

g.) Presentation on Agenda 2030 (Karen Vandekerckhove)

h.) Presentation on the Mutual Learning Programme on Gender Equality (Karen Vandekerckhove)

i.) Presentation on the Annual Fundamental Rights Colloquium on 'Women's Rights in Turbulent Times' (Halliki Voolma)

Comments

ETUC: The colloquium enabled the audience to discuss the big social issues from various perspectives.

EWL: The outcomes of this colloquium could particularly feed into the post-2019 Strategy for equality between women and men.

Council of Europe: asked whether the two fiches mentioned will also feed into the post-2019 Framework on gender equality between women and men.

European Commission: The evaluation of the strategy will start at the end of next year. The suggestion to take the outcomes already in consideration for the next strategy is a very good idea.

EWL: asked to what extent the strategy will be a political document.

Chair and Spain: The Advisory Committee should reinforce its commitment for a political strategy.

j.) A Special Eurobarometer Survey on Gender Equality (Halliki Voolma)

k.) Presentation on the Calls for Proposals under the REC Programme, Veronique Pain

No comments or questions

4. Information from current and future presidencies

Estonia, Bulgaria, Austria

Estonian presidency

Regarding gender equality, Estonia organised an informal meeting of ministers for employment and social affairs in July. The focus of the meeting was on work-life balance in a changing world of work and families and the need for a more equal share of care responsibilities between women and men. On the meeting Estonia, Bulgaria and Austria signed the 8th Presidency Trio Declaration for equality between women and men, which is meant to connect the three presidencies. In September, a high-level group meeting on gender mainstreaming was hosted. The presidency proposed a new topic for discussion on women and the future of work. A ministerial level conference took place in September on the same topic. Presidency tabled the draft Council Conclusions on gender segregation in tertiary and vocational education, training and the labour market. The conclusions focused on the links between the gender pay gap and gender segregation and were largely inspired by the EIGE's Beijing follow-up report. The CC-s were adopted by the EPSCO Council in December 2017. In November, Estonia hosted the 8th Diversity Charter Annual Forum focusing on diversity management at the workplace. It was

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organised in cooperation with the European Commission and the Estonian Human Rights Centre. On the 5th of December, a discussion on fighting digital violence against women was held in the Permanent Representation in Brussels.

Bulgarian presidency

Could not take part at the meeting, but an information sheet highlighting all events was distributed to AC members.

Austrian presidency

Focus will be on youth and gender equality, addressing emerging topics such as potentials and risks of digitalisation. EIGE's report on digitalisation and gender equality will be published during the Austrian presidency. There will be also draft Council conclusions on youth and gender equality tabled for adoption at EPSCO in December 2018. Dates of events have been rescheduled. More information will be provided later.

5. Presentation of 'Women in Transport – EU Platform for Change' by the European Commission (DG MOVE)

Slovenia: asked whether only representatives of ministries or national bodies can become members of the expert group and if social partners, chambers of commerce can also become members.

European Commission: The expert group does not exist yet, so this is not yet decided.

EWL: enquired why it is only related to women's employment in the transport sector.

France (Haut Conseil à l'Égalité): questioned whether DG Move would also include other aspects, such as gender in transportation design and in transportation material design or the aspect of sexual harassment in transportation.

Spain: Gender equality in transport is a very sensitive area. Women are the main users of public transport in urban areas. Hence, the focus should be broadened.

European Commission: The members of the platform restricted the focus on women in employment. Sexual harassment is covered by the platform only in the work context, since women are harassed by male colleagues and managers. If new members voice different aspects of gender inequality in transport the platform could include them. The Commission cannot influence this.

Presentation of ETUC work on violence against women in the transport sector: The ETF covers 5 million transport workers and a wide range of sectors from railway, inland waterways to civil aviation. The sectors are very male dominated and there is strong gender segregation at vertical and horizontal level. A ground-breaking survey on violence against women in the transport sector was published by ETF in May 2017 and is available online.

Chair: The survey shows that the violence is also limiting women's career choices.

Iceland: A federation of general and special workers in Iceland that did a survey in the tourism and service industry. And there is a report on sexual harassment against people working in the service industry, specifically violence against women working in the tourism sector. Campaigns have started by the Nordic federation of special workers on sexual harassment called 'Sexual harassment is not on the menu'.

6. Presentation of the 2017 Advisory Committee Opinions

a) The Gender Pay Gap (GPG) – presented by France (Secrétariat d'Etat chargé de l'Egalité entre les femmes et les hommes)

Questions, Comments and Answers

EWL questioned the time of the Opinion which comes out almost a month after the Action Plan.

ETUC: A stronger language including paragraphs on legislation (as in France and Spain) would be better. It also should include that the higher the number of children a woman has, the higher the gender pay gap is.

Iceland: On the 1st of January 2018 a law on equal pay certification will enter into force. This law covers 80% of employees, covering also other forms of discrimination and the segregation in the labour market. The English version of the law is available.

Sweden: It is important to understand why the implementation of the law is not working. Do employers not understand that they discriminate? Different aspects need to be brought together to better understand the problem.

Spain: A specific reference on businesses that are crucial in closing the gender pay gap is needed - at the end of point 5 of the last paragraph on the strengthening coordination at national and local level and involving different stakeholders.

BusinessEurope: Regarding pay transparency there is a disproportionate attention put on employers. Overall, the Opinion is too biased and many recommendations are not backed by evidence. Therefore, BusinessEurope is not ready to support this Opinion as it stands.

EUAPME: The suggestions on quotas and on pay transparency legislation lack evidence; therefore EUAPME does not support the Opinion.

CEEP: CEEP does not support the Opinion on similar grounds as BusinessEurope and CEEP.

European Commission: The work on this Opinion started in June; and it also influenced the work on the adopted action plan. For the implementation of the action plan the Opinion will be useful. There will be consultations in the next years on several actions.

France (Secrétariat d'Etat): Ambitious and committed proposals are needed, especially in the framework of the AC. The Commission will realise impact assessments and public consultation processes with all of the stakeholders before they come forward with a legislative proposal. The lack of facts can only be overcome by creating transparency and by obtaining data.

Germany: The argument of pay transparency is a very clear and obvious one and the Opinion is very balanced in that regard.

b) Gender balance in decision-making in politics

The Working group on this was decided by the AC last year in December (2016)

No further questions or comments

7. Discussion and adoption of the 2018 Work Programme

The first proposed theme for an **Opinion** would be '**New challenges for gender equality in the light of new forms of work**' – a few number of research reports have come out on new forms of work. For instance the ILO is very active in this regard. What are the potentials and shortcomings for women regarding new forms of work? It is an important topic to tackle at this point, before the centenary declaration of the ILO where the future of work is very much discussed. It has not only to do with digitalisation, but also with the long-term consequences of the gender pay gap and the work-life balance.

BusinessEurope: The understating of 'new forms of work' needs to be concretised.

UN Women: The conclusions of CSW61 from this year on women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work could also be referenced.

ETUC: Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work also means that women have access to good quality jobs, be it STEM or research.

EWL: New forms of work have also led to precarious work, different forms of contract (zero hours), many jobs etc. This has a huge impact on social protection system and acquiring of social rights and it further impacts the gender pay gap and the pension gap.

CEC: The Opinion should consider that the way societies are organised is changing.

European Commission: In reply to BusinessEurope, the aim is to focus on both, the gig economy, the crowd economy, developments enabled by technology, but also the old forms of work that become new forms of work via technology, and flexible working arrangements, working from home, self-employment etc.

Title of the Opinion should be changed into 'Changing world of work' rather than 'The new forms of work'. Title suggested - 'New challenges for gender equality in the changing world of work'.

Opinion adopted as part of the 2018 Work programme

2nd Opinion is on the future gender equality policy after 2019 –new challenges and priorities

While preparing the last strategy, the framework conditions looked very different. Currently, the economic figures and the employment figures are increasing, but there are new challenges that need to be addressed, such as the development of employment strategies for people who migrated into the EU. There are also populist right wing movements on the rise, challenging women's and girls' rights. At the same time, the labour market is undergoing changes. The changing world of work is impacting women and men differently.

The programming of the next Multiannual Financial Framework will be further challenging since there won't be more money allocated. Further, the current Europe 2020 strategy is ending so the Commission will have to prepare a new strategy. So, there are many new issues that need to be addressed in addition to the gender pay gap and the work-life balance.

Slovenia, Finland, France (Haut Conseil à l'Égalité), and Spain: The Opinion should include the results of the fundamental rights colloquium. The rise of populist and radical movements should be addressed more and loud. A political strategy is crucial.

Council of Europe: The CoE will adopt its next gender equality strategy early 2018. It is important to make both complementary and ensure synergies in Europe.

EWL: suggested talking about gender budgeting through all budgetary processes, for MFF, for the annual planning and other funding. EWL asked whether there will be a public consultation on the future strategy.

European Commission: The legal form remains to be seen. A consultation of as many stakeholders as possible, but no public consultation as such is foreseen.

Chair: The work programme for 2018 is adopted. An e-mail will be sent to the members to formally confirm participation in the preparation of Opinions.

Adoption of the Opinion on decision-making

Comment from Latvia

Firstly, on education and school curricula it is important to have a look at the enabling environment and the participation and encouragement in school policies. Pre-schools, not only primary and secondary schools, should be also considered.

The EU Commission should also look into the options of promoting the equal participation of women in decision-making positions and integrate more women in EU conferences etc.

The Chair mentioned that an opportunity for comments was already given before the meeting, and that the opinion is deemed to be already adopted.

Chair on the gender pay gap: Please send comments on gender pay gap in writing until the end of next week.

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The document will be then sent for adoption in written procedure.

8. Any other Business (AOB)

Confirming nominations - colleague from Spain Mercedes Alicia Fernandez Perez becomes Chair of the Committee in 2018. Alexis Rinckenbach from France (Secrétariat d'Etat), who volunteered to be second chair for 2018, is elected.

Provisional dates for next meetings: 1 June 2018 and 4 December 2018

9. List of Participants

Family name	First name	Member State / Equality Body / Observer organisation
Allihs	Ingus	Ministry of Welfare - Latvia
Bouzar	Yannis	Secrétariat d'Etat chargé de l'Egalité entre les femmes et les hommes
Breidlid	Jacqueline	EFTA
Charalambous	Dora	Ministry of Justice and Public Order- Gender Equality Unit - Cyprus
Collins	Mary	EWL
Cravero	Guillaume	BusinessEurope
Dąbrowska	Magdalena	Poland, Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment, The Chancellery of the Prime Minister
De Vos	Dominique	Conseil de l'Egalité des Chances entre les Hommes et les Femmes - Belgique
Di Nardo	Marino	Department for Equal Opportunities-Presidency of Council of Ministers - Italy
Duarte	Carlos	Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality - Portugal
Dutta	Piyali	Bundesrat - Germany
Erlédsson	Hjalti Geir	EFTA
Fernández-Pérez	Mercedes Alicia	Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality - Spain
Folkesson	Ann Charlott	COPA Women's Committee

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Forest	Maxime		Haut Conseil à l'Egalité - France
Frisell Ellburg	Ann		Equality Ombudsman - Sweden
Gallagher	Ruth		Irish human Rights and Equality Commission
Gortnar	Maruša		Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities - Slovenia
Hautakorpi	Johanna		Ministry of Social Affairs and Health - Finland
Helfferich	Barbara		ETUC
Heraclides	Andreas		UK
Houlmann	Catherine		CEC European Managers
Hurley	John		Department of Justice and Equality - Ireland
Ielite	Inete		Latvia
Ivarsson	Kristin		CEEP
Joly	Carine		Belgium
Knight	Kaisa		Ministry of Social Affairs - Estonia
Laiviera	Nazzarena Renee	k/a	National Commission for the Promotion of Equality, Malta
Lasen Diaz	Carolina		Council of Europe
Lehto	Arja		The Equality Ombudsman - Sweden
Marinósdóttir	Magnea		Ministry of Welfare, Equality Unit - Iceland
Mills	Gloria		European Trades Union Confederation
Moldovan	Dan		The National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men - Romania
Mondekova	Anna		Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family - Slovakia
Muliulis	Vytis		Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson Office of the Republic of Lithuania
Niavarani	Jacqueline		Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs - Austria
Osterborg	Charlotta		Ministry of Health and Social Welfare - Sweden
Reingarde	Jolanta		European Institute for Gender Equality

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Ríkardsdóttir	Katrin Björg	Centre for Gender Equality - Iceland
Ringhofer	Karina	Provincial government Burgenland - Austria
Ruscito	Rosanna	ETUC
Schmid	Martin	UEAPME
Schumacher	Dagmar	UN Women
Sechi	Cinzia	ETUC
Sørlien	Petter	Ministry of Children and Equality - Norway
Steinfeld	Katrine	Equinet - European Network of Equality Bodies
Uzelac	Slavica	Eurocadres
Warmerdam	Sjoerd	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science - The Netherlands
Wickler	Isabelle	Ministry of Equal Opportunities - Luxemburg
Zemaityte-Tack	Rita	Ministry of Social Security and Labour - Lithuania

C. Mandate for an Opinion on
Future gender equality policy after 2019: old and new challenges
and priorities

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

FOR WOMEN AND MEN

MANDATE FOR THE WORKING GROUP ON

***FUTURE GENDER EQUALITY POLICY AFTER 2019: OLD AND NEW CHALLENGES AND
PRIORITIES***

The objective of this Opinion of the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men is to provide input on a first reflection on remaining medium and long term challenges towards gender equality in the European Union beyond 2019, possible policy priorities for further EU action and objectives to be achieved, as well as insights on the complementarity between EU level and Member State level actions for gender equality (keeping in mind subsidiarity and value-added of EU action).

Context

At the beginning of 2018, the EU member states are for the most part back on a positive trend, with robust economic activity, record high employment levels, unemployment rates declining towards pre-crisis levels. At the same time, however the EU is confronted with new challenges that are likely to prevail beyond 2019: Women's and girls' rights are being challenged in the EU and elsewhere. The labour market is undergoing a profound change with growing incidence of informal and non-standards forms of employment often affecting women more than men. These changes and developments take place in a context where the well-known challenges to gender equality remain as valid as ever.

Moreover, any discussions on a new perspective for Gender equality will take place simultaneously with preparations for the EU's next multiannual financial framework, the European Structural and Investment Funds, and the policy to follow the current Europe 2020 strategy. These preparations will play a significant role on the EU agenda as of 2018 and can present a challenge but also an opportunity for the discussions on gender equality.

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Mandate

In its meeting on 7 December 2017, the Advisory Committee decided to set up a working group to prepare an opinion on "Future Gender Equality Policy after 2019: Old and new challenges and priorities".

When preparing its opinion the working group should consider the following questions:

- *Main challenges in the area of equality between women and men, and how to tackle them*
- What are likely to be the main challenges in 2019 and beyond for equality between women and men in the EU?
- Which of these challenges should be addressed by the EU institutions and which by the Member States at national level?
- Taken these challenges, which priority actions at EU level does the Advisory Committee recommend the Commission to take?

- *Assessment of past and current commitments, action plans and programmes to promote GE at the European level*
- What have been the outcomes of past and current commitments at the UE level ?
- What is needed in the coming years ?

- *Content of a new gender perspective for renewed action at European level*
- Related to the challenges and priorities identified what priority areas would you recommend? Also related to the challenges and priorities, what are the key actions that should be announced in a potential new strategic framework?
- How to meaningfully address multiple discrimination, and the specific needs of vulnerable groups e.g. ethnic minority women, women with a migrant background, refugee and asylum-seeking women, women with disabilities, etc.?
- What should be our next objectives and targets? Should they be quantitative or qualitative?
- Is the dual approach (of specific gender equality actions on the one hand and gender mainstreaming on the other) still valid and sufficiently clear?
- What type of monitoring, reporting and evaluation should be carried out?

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Format and adoption of the opinion

The opinion should not exceed **6 pages** (without annexes) and should focus on concrete, concise and realistic recommendations.

The working group is invited to finalise its opinion in time for adoption in November 2018 and presentation in the December 2018 meeting of the Advisory Committee.

Expert groups shall adopt their opinions by consensus. In the event of a vote, the outcome of the vote shall be decided by simple majority of the members.¹

List of the working group member

2018 Advisory Committee opinion on Future gender equality policy after 2019: old and new challenges and priorities List of members of the Working Group		
Country/ Organisation	Name – Position	Contact details
BE	Ms. Carine JOLY Conseillère Institut pour l'égalité des femmes et des hommes	Carine.joly@iefh.belgique.be
DE	Ms. Martina FRITSCH Advisor Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth	Martina.Fritsch@bmfsfj.bund.de
DE	Ms. Piyali DUTTA Hessisches Ministerium für Soziales und Integration	piyali.dutta@hsm.hessen.de
ES	Ms. Lara Ferguson VÁZQUEZ DE PARGA Technical Adviser Support Unit Director Institute of Women and for Equal Opportunities Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality	lferguson@msssi.es
FI	Ms. Eeva RAEVAARA Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health	eeva.raevaara@stm.fi
FR	Mr. Alexis RINCKENBACH (Chair) Secrétariat d'Etat chargé de l'Égalité entre les	Alexis.RINCKENBACH@social.gouv.fr

¹ Commission Decision of 30.5.2016 establishing horizontal rules on the creation and operation of Commission expert groups (Article 13(8)).

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	femmes et les hommes	
SE	M. Bengt Nilsson Head of Section Division for Gender Equality Ministry of Health & Social Affairs	bengt.nilsson@regeringskansliet.se
CEEP	Ms. Kristin IVARSSON LANTZ Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (CEEP Sweden)	kristin.ivarsson@skl.se
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UN WOMEN	Ms. Lea PACCAUD Programme Analyst UN Women Brussels Office	lea.paccaud@unwomen.org

D. Mandate for an Opinion on
New challenges for gender equality in the changing world of work

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

FOR WOMEN AND MEN

MANDATE FOR THE WORKING GROUP ON

NEW CHALLENGES FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN THE CHANGING WORLD OF WORK

Objective

The purpose of this opinion of the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men is to provide input to a first reflection on remaining medium and long term challenges created by new forms of work structures or changes in the way work is organized, delivered and supported by technology, in particular those with implications on work-life balance and the gender pay/pensions gap, or on gender equality more generally. The opinion should shed light on future possible policy priorities for further EU action and objectives, building in particular on the Work-Life Balance initiative and the Gender Pay Gap Action Plan presented by the Commission in 2017.

The aim is to reflect on the changing working trends and possible positive and negative effects for women and men from a gender equality perspective, with a view to formulating some policy recommendations or orientations. Concrete existing and future challenges and opportunities for employers and employees alike shall be analysed with a policy focus on gender equality matters.

Background

Certain forms of more 'flexible' and individualised ways of working, some of them new or emerging, can create challenges for gender equality. Indeed, increasing digitalisation, crowd-work, the gig economy, platform work, etc. generally allow more flexible work organisation in terms of place and time of work. Their impact on employment and working conditions might be both a blessing and a curse for female employment. Numerous studies in this field as well as

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the Council conclusions prepared by Bulgarian Presidency on the future of work show the importance of the topic.¹

Possible challenges for gender equality include²:

- New individual and flexible work patterns may have an impact on the reconciliation of work and private life, both in positive and negative sense.
 - In a positive sense, new working patterns might offer more freedom for workers to adapt their working pattern to their private needs or preferences or allow workers to work from home in a flexible or ad hoc way suited to, for instance, care responsibilities. This might be a temporary or permanent solution.
 - In the negative sense, flexible ways of working may also blur the dividing line between work and private life, thus making it more difficult to ensure a healthy work-life balance. This may be particularly the case, when the duration and speed of work increases as is frequently the case in new forms of work (e.g. journalists pressurised to report in real time). In addition, changing work organisations, e.g. work distribution in cases of the gig economy where not one person decides on who does the job but where the distribution and division is conducted through algorithms, might impact more strongly on workers with care responsibilities (e.g. if the worker does not reply to a request within short deadlines, the algorithm might not take you into account with priority the next time a job/task is available).
- Compared to standard office “9 to 5 office jobs”, the future of work might bring about differences in the organisation which have concrete implications for men and women in terms of choosing those more flexible patterns due to personal and family reasons.
- The availability of new and more flexible work patterns which can be better adapted to personal needs and specific personal situations and Work-Life Balance needs could enhance the skills of the workers not available in traditional work places and patterns

¹ European Commission (2016), The Future of Work, Skills and Resilience for a World of Change, Issue 13 / 2016,; Eurofound (2017), Non-standard forms of employment: Recent trends and future prospects, Background paper for Estonian Presidency Conference ‘Future of Work: Making It e-Easy’; Flecker (ed) (2016), Space, Place and Global Digital Work; Frey & Osborne (2013), The Future of Employment, ; Fuchs and Fisher (eds) (2015), Reconsidering Value and Labour in the Digital Age; Huws, Spencer and Joyce (2017), work in the European Gig Economy; ILO (2018), World Employment Social Outlook 2018 Women: Global snapshot; ILO/Eurofound (2017), Working anytime, anywhere, effects on the world of work; ILO (2016), Non-standard employment over the world: understanding challenges and shaping prospects; ILO (2015), Report of the Director-General Report I, The future of work centenary initiative; ; ILO (2015) Labour market institutions in inequalities: building just societies in the 21st Centuries; McKinsey (2017), Technology, jobs, and the future of work; OECD Future of Work initiative; Webster and Randle (ed) (2016), Virtual Workers and the Global Labour Market; Webster (2016), Who are the virtual workers and where in the labour market are they to be found: gender division in virtual work;

² See for example, EIGE, Gender and digital agenda, <http://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/gender-and-digital-agenda> and a study from CNECT, <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/increase-gender-gap-digital-sector-study-women-digital-age>; http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-905_en.htm

(e.g. blogging and networking). However some potential problem is the recognition of these skills.

- In addition, these new forms of work such as in the gig economy might impact on the gender pay gap and pension gaps and might lead to patchy career paths. Indeed, some consequences in the short and long term for workers might be lower or less predictable earnings, potentially linked with gender earnings gaps, as well as the lack of building up of social protection rights over the life course, which in turn might increase the gender pension's gap and potentially, the risk of poverty at a later age. Hence, the importance of reflecting on the adaptation of our social models on new forms of work especially from the point of view of gender equality.³

Policy Context

The European Commission presented its Work-Life Balance initiative on 26 April 2017 which takes into account the developments in society over the past decade in order to enable parents and other people with caring responsibilities to better balance their work and family lives and to encourage a better sharing of caring responsibilities between women and men. The Commission also presented an Action Plan on the gender pay gap on 20 November 2017 with a view to take measures to deal with the gender pay gap through a comprehensive approach. The challenges identified in these initiatives merit further focus taking into account the changing world of work.

There already is a vast amount of literature⁴ and discussion papers dealing with the changing world of work. It has also been on the agenda of high level political events⁵, such as the High-Level Conference on the FUTURE OF WORK: A Lifecycle Approach in March 2018 in Sofia.

Mandate

In its meeting on 7 December 2017, the Advisory Committee decided to set up a working group to prepare an opinion on "New challenges for gender equality in the changing world of work".

It is proposed that, when preparing its opinion, the working group considers, inter-alia, the following questions:

A. Main challenges of the changing world of work for gender equality

- What are the main challenges for equality between women and men in the EU in light of the changing world of work, particularly (but not limited to) in the area of work/life balance, gender pay/pensions gap, employment status, social protection?

³ <http://friendsofeurope.org/publication/we-must-tackle-long-term-job-insecurity-not-just-excesses-gig-economy>

⁴ Sally Khallash/Martin Kruse, The future of work and work-life balance 2025, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016328712001085>

⁵ http://www.ilo.org/brussels/information-resources/news/WCMS_536583/lang--en/index.htm

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- What are the main opportunities for equality between women and men in the EU in light of the changing world of work, particularly (but not limited to) in the area of work/life balance and gender pay/pensions gap?
- Considering the opportunities and challenges associated with new forms of work and new types of more flexible contracts for both employers and employees, what are the potential impacts on gender equality in general and for parents with caring responsibilities in particular?

B. Content of potential new policy avenues at European level

- What steps could be useful to adapt to the potential development in the world of work? For instance, what safeguards could ensure that employers and employees profit from new forms of work arrangements or structures, whilst allowing employees to enjoy family leave entitlements?
- How should the challenges be analysed in order to meaningfully address multiple discrimination, and the specific needs of vulnerable groups e.g. women of colour, migrant women, women with disabilities, etc.?
- Which of the above challenges should be addressed at EU-level and which challenges may be better dealt with by Member States at national level, and why?
- Which priority actions would the Advisory Committee recommend the Commission to take at EU level?

Format and adoption of the opinion

The opinion should not exceed **6 pages** (without annexes) and should focus on concrete, concise and realistic recommendations.

The working group is invited to finalise its opinion by end October 2018 for adoption in November 2018 and presentation in the December 2018 meeting of the Advisory Committee. In principle, expert groups shall adopt their opinions by consensus. In the event of a vote, the outcome of the vote shall be decided by simple majority of the members.⁶

⁶ Commission Decision of 30.5.2016 establishing horizontal rules on the creation and operation of Commission expert groups (Article 13(8))

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List of the working group member

2018 Advisory Committee opinion on New challenges for gender equality in the changing world of work List of members of the Working Group		
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