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Advancing Gender Equality through EU Regulation: Work-Life Balance and Pay Transparency Directives

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1. Introduction – Why European Union’s (EU) legislation is needed?

The European Commission has recognized that women’s disproportionate caregiving responsibilities significantly hinder their representation and advancement in the labour market. Beyond the cases of discrimination and injustice women face in the labour market (and at home), these inequalities have substantial economic costs: the Commission estimates that the economic loss due to the gender employment gap amounts to €370 billion per year.¹ Despite often being more qualified than men, women frequently withdraw from the labour market due to inadequate caregiving support and enduring gender norms that designate caregiving as women’s responsibility. This perception, combined with career breaks to take care of children (and other family members) contributes to persistent gender pay gap and the widening pension gap. This, in turn often results in a heightened risk of poverty and social exclusion. To address these challenges, the European Commission has introduced initiatives under the European Pillar of Social Rights,² including the **Work-Life Balance Directive (2019/1158)** and **Pay Transparency Directive (2023/970)** to promote gender equality through new regulation. These directives set minimum policy standards and regulatory frameworks to be transposed into national law by EU Member States.

The Work-Life balance Directive (WLBD), adopted in 2019, seeks to improve gender equality, specifically the unequal sharing of caring responsibilities between women and men, which is one of the root problems behind various gender inequalities in the labour market. WLBD aims to advance these goals by setting baseline policy entitlements at the EU level for paternity leave, parental leave, carers’ leave and flexible working arrangements. The Pay Transparency Directive, adopted in 2023, aims to strengthen the principle of equal pay for equal work and combat pay discrimination, ultimately contributing to closing the gender pay gap in the EU. This brief summarizes the key provisions of these two directives, providing recommendations for their effective implementation to achieve the equality goals they promote. This often means that the Member States are encouraged to go beyond the minimum requirements stipulated by both Directives.

2. Work-Life Balance Directive

The WLBD marks a milestone in European policy-making by creating new regulations to promote gender equality (see Box 1). A key provision of the WLBD is the allocation of two months of individual and non-transferable parental leave to each parent, an improvement as compared to the 2010 Parental Leave Directive³, which earmarked only one month per parent, and required no payment element. What sets the 2019 directive apart from previous directives is the combination of this two-month requirement with the stipulation of payment. Although Member States have the power to determine the payment level, the

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2017:252:FIN>

² <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1226&langId=en>

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32010L0018>

Commission encourages it to be sufficient to encourage *both* parents to take parental leave. Importantly, these are only the minimum standards and the EU Member States can be more ambitious, by offering even more equalizing policies, if they wish so. The parental leave, together with other policies, such as paternity leave and flexible working arrangements, have significant potential to incentivize leave-taking by fathers, and in so doing, contribute to equalizing work and caregiving responsibilities by women and men.

The deadline for Member States to transpose WLBD into law was in August 2022. However, for the payment of parental leave, Member States had until August 2024 (Article 20.2) to transpose the last two weeks of the non-transferable parental leave as provided for in Article 5(2) and Article 8(3) into their national law. As of June 2024, Belgium, Ireland, and Spain have not fully implemented WLBD. The European Commission has taken these countries to the European Court of Justice for failing to notify national measures to fully transpose these regulations into national law.

Box 1. Main policy stipulations of the WLBD for parents and carers

Paternity leave

- Fathers/ second parents have the right to take at least 10 working days of paternity leave around the time of birth of the child.
- Paternity leave is compensated at least at the national sick pay level. The WLBD also encourages Member States to ensure that paternity leave is compensated at a rate similar to maternity leave.
- To receive paternity allowance Member States can require a history of employment, but no more than six months before the anticipated birth date of the child.

Parental leave

- Each parent should have a minimum of **four months** of parental leave.
- At least **two months** are individual and **non-transferable** from one parent to another to encourage take-up of leave among fathers.
- These two non-transferable months should be adequately compensated at a level to be decided in each EU country. While remuneration is mandatory, it is left for Member States to decide what adequate pay means.
- Parents have the right to request taking the leave flexibly (part-time and piecemeal) before the child reaches a particular age, up to a maximum of eight years old, as determined by each country or by a collective agreement. The employer should be able to accept or refuse such a request for parental leave in ways other than on a full-time basis.
- To be eligible and receive parental leave allowance Member States can require a specific period of employment, but not longer than one year.

Carers' leave

- Carers, who are workers providing personal care or support to a relative or person living in the same household, are entitled to carers' leave of **five working days** per year.
- Relatives who can receive care include a worker's son, daughter, mother, father, spouse, or partner in a civil partnership, where such partnerships are envisaged by national law.
- Member states can decide whether they offer payment for carers' leave.

Flexible working arrangements

- All working parents of children up to at least eight years and all carers have a right to request flexible working arrangements. These include reduced working hours, flexible working hours, and flexibility in place of work.

2.1. WLBD Implementation to Date

There are very few comparative analyses of how Member States have changed their policies to comply with the WLBD (note that the deadline for transposition of pay passed only in 2023) (e.g., De La Porte et al. 2023; de la Porte et al. 2022; de La Porte, Larsen, and Szelewa 2020). Our research on seven European countries (Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Spain, Slovakia, Netherlands and, the UK), reveals that the policy change and compliance with the directive is uneven (Zumbyte and Szelewa 2024). The non-compliance results from policies failing to meet *all* required stipulations of the directive. To examine compliance with the WLBD, we looked at policies before and after WLBD and categorized countries into compliant and non-compliant groups for each of the four policies: a) paternity leave, b) parental leave, c) carers' leave, and d) flexible work arrangements.⁴ Among four policies, countries exhibit higher compliance with carers' leave and flexible work arrangements compared to paternity or parental leave policies.

All countries comply with the carers' leave, likely due to pre-existing national provisions and the absence of a mandatory pay requirement for five days. Compliance with flexible work arrangements is lower compared to carers' leave, with only four out of seven countries adhering to WLBD stipulations.⁵ The main reason for non-compliance is that the flexible work policies do not allow flexibility when workers need to care for relatives. While flexible working policies are available to parents, the exclusion of relatives restricts the rights of carers who may not be parents.

Paternity and parental leave present more contentious policy areas, as they involve more dimensions for compliance. Especially earmarking a part of parental leave for the father (the second parent) has been contested, because it is often perceived as conflicting with the family's right to choose which parent is taking the leave (De La Porte et al. 2020). Almost all countries in the study implemented changes in their paternity and parental leave, but certain aspects remained unchanged, resulting in non-compliance with paternity leave among three countries: Belgium, Ireland, Slovakia. For example, Ireland and Slovakia require fathers to be employed for longer than the Directive's stipulated duration (six months) to avail of paternity leave benefits. Ireland also offers a flat-rate compensation for paternity leave which is below the sick pay level required by the WLBD.⁶ By not meeting the requirements in these eligibility criteria, even though the policy duration is satisfactory (10 days), Ireland is non-compliant with the paternity leave policy.

Regarding the non-transferable portion of parental leave (two months), only three countries are fully compliant.⁷ For others, non-compliance stems largely from partial or no remuneration of parental leave, and other issues, such as discrepancies in leave duration and the age of the child at which parental leave can be taken. Thus, these findings suggest that while countries may have reformed leave duration and pay, many have still only implemented some elements of the Directive, neglecting such important policy dimensions as eligibility or adequate leave duration, making work-family policies less supportive of working parents and carers than required by the WLBD. This, in turn, can limit policy effectiveness in promoting gender equality.

⁴ See [database](#) for analysis of compliance (the database was completed in December 2023).

⁵ Ireland became the fifth country to be compliant in March 2024, which was after the WLBD transposition deadline.

⁶ In Ireland, sick pay is currently paid at 70% of a normal pay up to a maximum of €110 a day: <https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/employment-rights-and-conditions/leave-and-holidays/sick-leave-and-sick-pay/>. Meanwhile, the statutory paternity benefit is paid at the level of €274 euro per week: <https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social-welfare/families-and-children/paternity-benefit/>.

⁷ Ireland became the fourth country that is compliant with non-transferable parental leave stipulation from August 1, 2024.

2.2. Policy Recommendations

To achieve the Directives' goals of promoting gender equality by incentivizing equal sharing of care responsibilities, we propose the following recommendations:

1. Compensation for paternity and parental leave should be sufficiently high to incentivize leave-taking among fathers.

Compensation, or wage replacement level, is one of the most critical dimensions of leave policy for promoting gender equality in the labour market and family. Because fathers' earnings are often higher than the mother's it often leads to lower take up among fathers compared to mothers if parental leave does not replace a substantial share of fathers' earnings. Even if a country offers extended parental leave, a low wage replacement level does little to counteract the effects of wage differences by gender, which push women to become the primary leave-takers and discourage fathers from participating in caregiving (Ray, Gornick, and Schmitt 2010). Providing a high level of compensation thus promotes gender equality in the labour market and family – it is found that women's participation in paid work intensifies, while men increase their participation in childcare and housework (Schober 2014; Patnaik 2019). High compensation also sends a strong message that parent care is socially valued (Haas and Rostgaard 2011).

Numerous research studies show that higher compensation levels are related to greater leave take-up among fathers around the world (Moss 2008; ILO 2014; Patnaik 2019; Geisler and Kreyenfeld 2018; Duvander et al. 2024; De La Porte et al. 2023). Similarly, when benefits are reduced fathers' participation in leave drops. For example, in Iceland following the 2008 financial crisis, the reduction in financial compensation for parental leave resulted in fathers taking parental leave less frequently and for shorter durations (Arnalds et al. 2021). When the 'daddy months' were reduced in Norway or abolished in Denmark, fathers' use of parental leave also decreased immediately (Borchorst 2006; Schou 2019 in Duvander et al. 2024).

While WLBD does not stipulate the level of pay required, it specifies that the level of compensation should be set at a relatively high level, to encourage take-up of leave (Art. 8.3). During earlier drafting of the directive, it was suggested that the leave should be set at least at a national sick pay level, which is what is currently required for paternity leave. Eventually, such requirement was not included in the final version of the WLBD. In comparative policy research, leave is considered 'well-paid' if it replaces at least 66% of wages (Blum et al. 2023). Yet, to achieve true financial viability for fathers and families, leave compensation should be close to 100% of their regular earnings (Javornik and Kurowska 2017). Several countries provide at least two months of father-only leave at 100% of wage replacement, including Croatia, Denmark, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, and Spain (Blum et al. 2023).⁸ The average replacement level for the EU stands at 82% of salary (Kakoulidou et al. 2022).

The responsibility to offer a well-paid leave should also rest largely with the state. In countries like Ireland, where statutory leave is low flat-rate payment and the government leaves it up to employers to decide whether to top up leave (Newman and Ryan 2020), such employer's discretion results in inequalities in access to well-paid leave. While better compensation for parental leave alone may be insufficient to

⁸ In some countries, a ceiling may be set on earnings-related payments, so that higher paid workers receive proportionately less of their earnings.

encourage most fathers to take leave, evidence is clear that it is one of the most critical policy incentives to encourage take-up.

2. Member States should adopt the most inclusive eligibility criteria, meeting at least the minimum WLBD standards, to ensure equitable access to parental leave.

For all four policies of the Work-Life Balance Directive (WLBD), countries must comply with multiple requirements including compensation, leave duration, coverage of dependents, requirements for employment contracts, and specified prior employment track. Each of these elements has significant implications for the policy, particularly in terms of the extent to which *all* fathers can access parental leave and other policies (Javornik 2014; Dobrotić and Blum 2019; Duvander et al. 2019). After emphasizing high compensation, we now focus on other eligibility criteria crucial for achieving gender equality for *all* societal groups. For instance, in the EU-28, 29% of women and 20% of men are ineligible for parental leave due to factors, such as unemployment, employment conditions (e.g., length of service), self-employment, or personal and household characteristics (EIGE 2020).

Labor Market Attachment: To promote gender equality across all socio-economic groups, parental leave and benefits should address the increasing prevalence of labour market precarity and should be designed to be as inclusive as possible (e.g., requiring an employment contract regardless of length, type, or history of employment). Currently, WLBD provisions favour parents who are active in the labour market. For instance, the WLBD suggests that Member States may require workers to have a history of employment to qualify for paternity benefits, but this period should not exceed six months. For parental leave, fathers may be required to meet a work qualification period not exceeding one year. However, some countries, such as Ireland and Slovakia, require longer employment periods for fathers to access paternity benefits. This non-compliance with eligibility criteria excludes individuals with shorter employment durations from receiving benefits. The longer the qualifying period, the less accessible employment-based benefits become, particularly for parents with less stable careers or those working on short-term or temporary contracts (Dobrotić and Blum 2019).

Coverage of Care Recipients: Work-family policies, such as carers' leave and flexible work arrangements, should include coverage for relatives, as stipulated by the WLBD. Carers' leave and flexible work arrangements should be accessible to all workers with caring responsibilities. The directive defines carers as workers providing personal care to a relative or a person living in the same household. 'Relative' includes a worker's son, daughter, mother, father, spouse, or partner in a civil partnership where recognized by national law. However, many countries have reformed flexible work arrangement policies without extending coverage to relatives. This exclusion is problematic because it limits the social rights of carers, the majority of whom are women (Eurocarers 2021), thereby hindering the Commission's goal of promoting gender equality. By extending flexible work arrangements to carers, Member States can facilitate greater gender equality.

3. Policy implementation should strengthen instrumental resources, such as clear information and accessible application procedures, to ensure the means to actually exercise these rights.

Research indicates that beyond offering high levels of compensation for non-transferable parental leave, increasing uptake among fathers and promoting gender equality also requires these instrumental resources to facilitate access to leave (De La Porte et al. 2023). Instrumental resources are also crucial because they provide the support and procedural channels necessary for claiming and receiving benefits (Ferrera, Corti,

and Keune 2023). This is important as social rights are vital for the legitimization of the welfare state by citizens (Rothstein and Stolle 2008).

First, instrumental resources should include clear and comprehensive information on new parental leave rights, covering terminology, details on rights, compensation for different schemes, and eligibility criteria (De La Porte et al. 2023). This information can be disseminated through various tools, such as pictograms and infographics, alongside formal application procedures. For example, Denmark uses gender-neutral terminology along with pictograms to indicate that the government offers equal leave to both parents. Information about new leave schemes or adjustments should also be widely communicated through workplace human resources departments to staff and through public agencies and unions to the wider public. Additionally, general information could be complemented by targeted information campaigns for highly gendered sectors with low take-up of father-specific leave, utilizing social media, advertisements, and pamphlets.

Second, administrative procedures, another key instrumental resource, should be clear and simple to facilitate access to parental leave. The application process should be streamlined so that individuals need to use only one user-friendly system to access parental leave rights and benefits. If the right to leave and access to compensation require separate applications, these should be simplified and integrated, or the system should automatically direct applicants to the relevant compensation application upon submitting a leave request. Formal application procedures should also help families plan their leave, allowing parents to structure leave-taking between them, including options for part-time leave, joint leave, or successive leave periods. These instruments should also provide information about remuneration during different leave periods. While leave policies may be complex, access to them should not be; the role of public administration is to simplify and facilitate access from the outset. Finally, national policymakers and bureaucrats, along with actors close to citizens, including municipalities, social insurance agencies, employer organizations, unions, and civil society organizations, must commit to supporting these instrumental resources (De la Porte et al. 2023).

4. Beyond gender-sensitive policy design and implementation, facilitating leave-taking among fathers requires a broader cultural shift that values caregiving as a shared responsibility between men and women.

Workplaces and other institutions should endorse this cultural shift. Workplace norms, such as masculine cultures that prioritize long hours and unwavering commitment to work and tie career advancement to these expectations, can discourage fathers from taking parental leave (Valarino and Gauthier 2016; Thébaud and Pedulla 2016). Men often encounter negative social stigma when they utilize leave policies or flexible work arrangements, stemming from the perception that they are violating traditional norms of masculinity (Berdahl and Moon 2013; Rudman and Mescher 2013; Vandello et al. 2013). Additionally, men are influenced by their beliefs about what other men desire, making them more likely to take leave if they observe their peers doing so (Dahl, Løken, and Mogstad 2014; Thébaud and Pedulla 2016). Therefore, employers, particularly top and middle-level managers, need to communicate and signal to their employees that taking parental leave is normal and acceptable. For example, in Denmark and the Netherlands, following the adoption of new earmarked parental leave after WLBD, many organizations, including unions and employers, launched information campaigns to promote cultural change, demonstrating that it is normal for men to take parental leave and participate more in the day-to-day care of their children (De La Porte et al. 2023). Government actors, civil society, and the media can also contribute to cultural change by proactively

discussing and debating the use and benefits of work-life balance policies in public forums, thereby encouraging fathers and other caregivers to take leave.

3. Pay Transparency Directive⁹

The gender pay gap persists in the EU despite longstanding legislation promoting equal pay. Currently, women in the EU-27 earn on average 13% less than men per hour. This disparity stems from such factors as the undervaluing of female-dominated professions, unconscious bias, and lack of pay transparency. For example, the absence of transparent wage data makes it challenging to discern instances of discrimination or undervaluation of women’s work (Arabadjieva 2021).

The new Pay Transparency Directive was adopted in 2023. One of its primary advantages is the enhancement of pay transparency by providing access to pay information via individual and collective measures, along with support for the enforcement of these rights (Benedí Lahuerta 2022). The Commission views transparency as a way to reveal and address gender biases in pay systems (Carlson 2022). By reducing information asymmetries, the Directive should diminish employers’ ability to unilaterally set wages and help workers identify and rectify pay discrimination (Benedí Lahuerta 2022). Thus, workers and jobseekers will better understand their position within a company’s pay structure, empowering them to demand equal pay. Currently, it’s challenging to determine underpayment and find a suitable comparator (OECD 2023). The Directive allows for hypothetical comparators when actual ones are unavailable, addressing this key obstacle (Pillinger 2023). Collectively, employers must disclose aggregated pay data by gender, both internally and publicly. These provisions are valuable across Member States, many of which lack legislation comparable to the Directive’s comprehensive approach (Benedí Lahuerta 2022). Member States have until June 7, 2026, to transpose this Directive into national law.

Building on Sara Benedí Lahuerta’s (2022) analysis, the Directive’s measures can be categorized based on their applicability at the individual or collective level (see Table 1). Individual measures serve as tools granting rights to individuals to assert equal pay. Collective measures aim to reduce information asymmetries in workplace pay by imposing proactive obligations on employers.

Table 1. Directive’s measures

	<i>For job applicants</i>	<i>For workers</i>
Individual-level measures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Employers are not allowed to inquire candidates about their salary history Job applicants have a right to be informed about pay from the employer 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Individual workers’ have a right to request and receive pay information Workers cannot be prevented from disclosing their pay for the enforcement of the principle of equal pay.

⁹ For a more comprehensive discussion of the Directive see our working paper here <https://transeuroworks.eu/working-papers/>.

<p>Collective-level measures</p>	<p><i>Employers:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employers need to ensure that job vacancy notices and job titles are gender-neutral and that recruitment processes are non-discriminatory 2. Employers need to perform gender neutral job evaluations (<i>equal work and work of equal value</i>) 3. Employers need to make easily accessible to their workers the criteria they use to determine workers’ pay, pay levels and pay progression. 4. Employers need to report on pay gap between female and male workers publicly and internally 5. Employers are required to conduct joint pay assessment with workers’ representatives to identify, remedy and prevent discriminatory pay differences when their pay reporting reveals a gender pay gap above 5% that cannot be justified by objective, gender-neutral criteria and was not tackled within 6 months. <p><i>Member States:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure the availability of analytical tools or methodologies to assess and compare the value of different jobs at the employer’s level; 2. Provide technical assistance and training to help employers with fewer than 250 staff comply with the requirements of the directive; 3. Take measures to ensure social partners are actively involved, without prejudice to the autonomy of the social partners and in accordance with national law and practice.
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Source: Adapted from Benedí Lahuerta (2022) and Directive.¹⁰

3.1. Policy Recommendations

To achieve the PTD’s objectives of reducing gender pay gaps and promoting equal pay, we propose the following recommendations for successful transposition of the Directive.

1. Member States should extend pay transparency reporting to include small and medium size employers.

To maximize the reach and impact of the Pay Transparency Directive, Member States should consider extending the reporting requirements to include more companies. The PTD currently mandates gender pay gap reporting only for companies with more than 100 employees, with phased reporting timelines: companies with over 250 employees will report annually starting in 2027, those with 150-249 employees every three years from 2027, and companies with 100-149 employees every three years beginning in 2031. There is no reporting mandate for companies with fewer than 100 employees, though Member States may choose to apply one. This employer-size threshold limits the Directive’s relevance and effectiveness because small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)—which employ 67% of EU workers (83.9 million)—are largely

¹⁰ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/equal-pay-for-equal-work-or-work-of-equal-value-between-men-and-women-rules-on-pay-transparency.html>

excluded.¹¹ Yet, several countries already set lower thresholds in their national transparency laws (e.g., 10 workers in Sweden, 25 in Iceland) (Benedí Lahuerta 2022). By adopting lower thresholds for reporting, Member States can significantly enhance the PTD's potential to reduce gender pay gaps across more workplaces, supporting more comprehensive pay equity.

2. Employers should be mandated to disclose salary information proactively.

To enhance the implementation of pay transparency measures, Member States should consider making the provision of salary information obligatory rather than “by request.” Article 5 stipulates that job applicants have the right to receive details about the initial pay or its range from prospective employers. However, if national laws only grant applicants the right to *request* this information, instead of mandating employers to provide it automatically, the responsibility shifts unfairly to the applicants. This creates an uneven playing field, as not all candidates may feel equally empowered to ask for such details. Employers may also respond inconsistently to these requests, further complicating transparency efforts. Evidence suggests that having to ask for information about pay at the workplace or a prospective employer may not have an effect on the gender pay gap because pay discussions may be perceived as taboo or induce fear that pay enquiries would hurt individual's career progression (Benedí Lahuerta, Miller, and Carlson 2024). To promote greater pay transparency, and address gender pay gaps, Member States should require employers to disclose salary information proactively, either in job advertisements or prior to interviews, without placing the onus on applicants. In addition, employers should report pay information that is as detailed and comprehensive as possible, which is also critical to identifying sources of gender bias and addressing pay inequities within organizations.

3. Member States must ensure sufficient resources for committed and adequate transposition, monitoring and enforcement of pay transparency laws.

To strengthen the implementation and enforcement of the PTD, Member States should allocate sufficient resources to make the legislation accessible and ensure that relevant institutions can uphold its mandates effectively. First, similar to the implementation of the Work-Life Balance Directive, Member States should strengthen instrumental resources. That is, provide clear, accessible information for both employers and employees on changes to national pay transparency laws. This is essential for increasing uptake of new rights among workers and their organizations. Instrumental resources could also include practical guidance for organizations on fulfilling PTD requirements, support for public administration, and access to legal advice. National bodies and employers must actively ensure that workers understand their rights and how to exercise them. This may require targeted campaigns and outreach efforts.

All right Second, the Directive mandates collaboration among Equality Bodies, workers' representatives, labour inspectorates, and a newly established monitoring body (which may operate within an existing national structure). The new monitoring body is tasked with collecting data on pay discrimination complaints, public metrics on the gender pay gap, and joint pay assessments; analysing gender pay disparities; and publishing employer-reported data. Additionally, the body must raise awareness on equal pay and transparency rights, including intersectional discrimination, and work closely with other equality bodies. Under the PTD, collaboration and consistent performance are now required across enforcement

¹¹ Eurostat, ‘Small and Medium-sized enterprises: An overview’ (14/05/2020): <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20200514-1>

bodies. For this to be effective, adequate resources are essential for both coordination and the operational capacity of the monitoring body. For instance, robust domestic oversight will be essential to ensure compliance in joint pay assessments required for companies with more than 100 employees and where a gender pay gap of over 5% within any worker category cannot be justified.

4. Embed PTD in national strategies in gender equality plans or strategies and in company-level policies.

The issue of pay gap should not be isolated from a broader context of policies and strategies aimed at enhancing gender equality and equal outcomes, in general. Although the pay transparency initiative is crucial for ensuring the necessary conditions for improving pay transparency and equality, it is insufficient to solve the persisting gender inequalities in the economic sphere. The gender pay gap, and consequently the gender pension gap, is not only the result of a lack of transparency, but is also the effect of persistent gender stereotypes and ideologies that prioritise women's primary role as mothers and carers, devalue caring occupations and public sector jobs, which are often occupied by women. Therefore, at the national level, the implementation of PTD should be intertwined with other policies addressing gender inequalities linked to women's caring responsibilities, anti-discrimination policies, career promotion, occupational segregation, or time poverty.

Additionally, communications about the PTD should emphasize its role within the broader context of gender equality. While addressing the gender pay gap is vital, other gender inequities in the workplace may persist or new challenges may arise, requiring a comprehensive approach to gender equality in employment. This may include integrating equal pay solutions stemming from the Directive in a general work-life balance policy at the workplace or diversity-oriented strategies and initiatives.

Emphasizing pay transparency as a cornerstone of broader gender equality efforts is essential to avoid misunderstandings or criticisms of the Directive as imposing isolated measures that might face resistance from some employers or employees. Framing pay transparency within a larger context—such as its contributions to fair work organization, the advantages of a diverse and inclusive work environment, and its role in ensuring equity for jobseekers and employees—can help garner greater acceptance. Equally important is fostering the positive engagement of all social partners, including employers, employees, and unions. Their collaboration is vital to successfully implementing the Directive and achieving its goals.

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