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**Women in precarious employment in Europe. Effective
strategies against discrimination, exploitation and
humiliation.**

**A multiplier curriculum
YOU DESERVE MORE!
as part of the Erasmus+ project**

Work at all Costs?

Project Management

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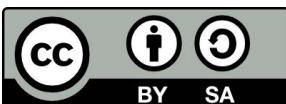
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Sigrid Schraml

Secretary general

European Centre for workers' questions (EZA)

On behalf of the European Centre for Workers' Questions (EZA) I would like to congratulate the five EZA members NBH, FNS-EDS, AFB, Podkrepa and Solidarumas to an extraordinary successful European project on precarious work of women! It was a huge privilege that EZA had been invited to give support to this important and ambitious project. As a network of 70 member organisations in 29 European countries EZA is a long-standing partner of the European Union in capacity building and involvement of trade unions and workers' organisations in EU policy making. We are dedicated to strengthening the social dimension of the EU and European social dialogue.

It is our endeavour to support the awareness rising for equality of chances and in particular for precarious work of women in Europe. Remarkable progress has been made in the past years to improve gender equality. And often enough we believe that the job is done. Though this is not the case! Everywhere in Europe it is still predominantly women who work in precarious conditions. Employment gap, pay gap, care gap, pension gap are female! And this is unacceptable in a European Union which has the principle of human dignity and therefore the equality of chances enshrined in its treaties and fundamental rights' charter.

It is our European duty to make sure that female work, that all jobs which are done by women are decent, that women can make a living of their work, that they receive the respect and the recognition they deserve. We need to act for the sake of all these vulnerable women. And we need to act also for the sake of European democracies. Because often enough those who are left behind, who are not heard and seen, loose trust in state institutions and turn towards anti-European and anti-democratic populist movement, in the hope of support from there. And they will definitely not get it from there, this is for sure!

I am glad that especially in the past 5 years the EU has restarted to live up to its responsibility and has put into practice a series of concrete measures to fight precarious work: among others the EU pushed its members to do more about pay transparency, more to improve work-life-balance; to implement the first European care strategy. The so-called European minimum wage directive has been a historic success and strives to lift collective bargaining coverage to 80% to make sure that decent wages are paid.

EZA's commitment to gender equality is not just a principle on paper; it's an action that we want to live every day. The European project of our 5 EZA members on precarious work and IPEO - our International Platform for equal opportunities - have pushed EZA to question ourselves and to give our network in a recently adopted Charter new standards for our educational work to contribute to the implementation of the right to equal opportunities.

The experience of Nathalie, Maria and all the other women mentioned in this publication underscore the urgency of our joint mission to reach gender equality. Each of their stories is unique and universal at the same time. Though each single story of these most vulnerable women is one story too much! Those women highlight the necessity for our ongoing fight for social justice and gender equality.

Our commitment at EZA is: to not only voice the challenges we face but to actively work towards a balanced and just society for all genders. Join us in this mission! For every step towards gender equality is a step towards a better society!



Heidi Rabensteiner

*Chair of IPEO, International Platform for Equal Opportunities,
part of EZA, the European Centre for Workers' Questions*

I am very glad to present to you the Work at All Costs? project of the Erasmus Program. Implemented with great commitment by the Nell-Breuning-Haus educational centre (Germany), the present project is an exceptional example of the cooperation and dedication of different organisations whose work promotes the rights and dignity of women in precarious employment.

The low-paid and precarious work of women is not a national phenomenon. Across Europe, the stories of many women overlap. This is why it was clear to us, as Europeans, that this project must cover the whole of Europe, so as to emphasise with solidarity the similarities, without, however, overlooking the differences, which also help to better evaluate the situation in each country.

In this spirit, the project was carried out by five European organisations cooperating with one another: the educational institutions Nell-Breuning-Haus (Germany), European Meeting Center - Nowy Staw Foundation (Poland), Arbeiter-, Freizeit- und Bildungsverein AFB (Italy), the trade union Solidarumas (Lithuania) and the Confederation of Labour Podkrepa (Bulgaria). We were also supported by the European Centre for Workers' Questions (EZA). As a platform of EZA, we from IPEO (International Platform for Equal Opportunities) are also happy to popularise and support the project.

This project is a firm response to the urgent challenges concerning the exploitation, discrimination and sexual harassment of precariously employed women in our societies. Together, we commit to combatting those forms of abuse and championing a fairer working life.

The products created as part of this project are various, and their aim is to reach all corresponding target groups and to support them. From interdisciplinary education for multipliers to programs and webinars specific to each country and intended for women in distant areas, the aim of the project is to include all women.

A full-scale marketing campaign and a film for raising awareness are intended to draw attention to the topic and stress the urgent need for change. In addition to that, the EZA Charter for the promotion of equality was adopted – a positive contribution, encouraging equal opportunities and social equity.

I would like to thank all participants for their commitment and dedication to this important project. Together, we can create a working life founded on respect, equality and dignity for all.

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Preface

The present publication focuses on women in precarious employment in Europe. The topic is about nothing less than the principles of liberal democracy, about defending the values of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union: dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity. Michael Walzer (1993, p. 173) once said that liberalism is not characterized by the freedom of people to enter into relationships, but rather by the freedom to leave relationships again. Freedom implies opportunities, while its main prerequisite is economic independence. On the other hand, it has been proven that economic dependence leads to sustaining abusive relationships (EPRS 2020, p. 2), because of which the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence considers encouraging economic independence in women a key means of applying the Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe Treaty Series 2010, p. 11).

The EU acceded in 2023. Combatting poverty among women is also a preferred method of combatting child poverty, which affects every fourth child in the EU. Additionally, 85% of single parents are European women (Nicholsonová 2022, p. 8). Those who care for their relatives are also primarily women. Care work is among the chief risks of poverty for women, while also being essential for the functioning of the economy. In this way, women become a means of achieving the goals of third parties. This contradicts the main values of all European societies, which defend the idea that each person must be viewed as an end in themselves, not as a means to an end.

This publication is aimed at two target groups: on the one hand, it has been written for those who work with affected women. Of course, all of them have their own expertise, but there are no two people with the same knowledge and points of view, which is why we hope the publication might contribute to knowledge and broaden perspectives. On the other hand, it has been written for people who advocate for the interests of affected women: trade unions, consultation centers, and other institutions able to stand up for their needs. For this purpose and concerning women's poverty resulting from employment, it is necessary to adopt the gender perspective equality. The career fields where women predominate are often of great economic significance, while at the same time receiving sub-par recognition and payment. There is not simply precarious work that needs to be abolished. There are different causes of poverty among working persons – gender-specific causes which must be eliminated. This is why the people who work with these women or lobby for them need, primarily, accurate information about the situation of women in Europe and a classification based on equity and justice theories. Concurrently, they need to be acquainted with potential political, legal and the company-internal demands. Like those who work directly with affected women, they have their own expertise, and we hope to successfully broaden their knowledge and perspectives. This is why the first part of the publication presents information about the situation of women in precarious employment in Europe and a classification based on equity and justice theories.

This part lays the foundation for the second part, which suggests approaches for those who work with affected women. In the third part, we let these women have the last word, presenting their biographies as they told them to us. Their examples show gaps in the field of protection, which must be addressed and eliminated urgently by governments, trade unions and companies.

Below we provide more detail on how the publication is structured:

Chapter 1

In order to classify women's precarious employment in Europe according to equity and justice theories, we begin by letting an affected woman, Nathalie, tell her story in 1.1. She works hard every day and her work is valuable. Using the examples she provides, we will show why it is primarily women who are affected by precarious working conditions, how these have a disciplinary influence, and why precariously employed women are to a great extent excluded from one important resource: having the time and opportunity to act in a politically committed manner. In 1.2 and 1.3, we will consider the question why hard work is often low-paid and assigned to disadvantaged groups, which leads to undermining the fundamental principle of fundamental principle of equal dignity? In 1.4 – „Moving Away from the Model of Paid Employment?“ – we will explore the question of whether unconditional basic income would be beneficial or harmful to a democratic society. In 1.5, different subjective methods of dealing with precarious employment are thematised, and we show why those affected rarely choose constructive political approaches to processing living circumstances. This is why trade unions encounter significant difficulties in their activity. Ultimately, precarisation leads to preserving and maintaining precarious living conditions.

Section 2 of Part 1 summarises and evaluates the most important data in the field of equality: gender pay gap (2.1), employment gap (2.2), pension gap (2.3), and care gap (2.4). This section ends by reviewing the economic effects of gender equality policies (2.5).

Section 3 reviews the legal framework in Europe, as well as current measures and strategies concerning gender equality and non-discrimination. Sub-section 3.1 shows which directives and plans are aimed at shaping Europe into a social Europe – which, in this context, means a Europe capable of ensuring gender equality – based on the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights. Section 3.2 looks at anti-discrimination directives, which have already been implemented by national legislatures, whereas section 3.2.1 summarises the minimum standards which European countries must comply with. In all European countries, those affected by discrimination are eligible not only for legal protection, but also for the support of associations which can take part in legal proceedings. Section 3.4 provides an overview of possible support units on a national level. These organisations offer comprehensive information regarding the national application of European directives for combatting discrimination. Section 4 summarises the conclusions of the previous chapters, refers to the European Union's own claims and – on this basis - points out political demands.

Chapter 2

Part 1 of the present publication lays the informational and political foundation – the macrolevel, so to speak – for the second part: the curriculum. This part provides information which helps form a qualified position on the topic of women in precarious employment. Before offering and describing a selection of methods, a question is posed: what is social discrimination and how does it function in detail (Section 1)? This encompasses the micro- and mesolevels, which are of equal importance to trainers when applying the methods. Also described here are the effects that social discrimination can have on health (Section 1.3.1) and personal behaviour (1.3.2), as well as ensuing consequences for employers (1.3.3).

Sections 2 and 2.1 begin with specific preparation for conducting seminars and courses, so that in 2.2 different methods for the different target groups in this thematic field can be presented.

The part about methodology consists of four sections: methods for greeting and getting to know each other (2.2.1), exercises from the method of political biographical work (2.2.2), sociometric exercises (2.2.3), and working with specific questions (2.2.4).

Chapter 3

In the third and last part, we once again let affected women tell their stories. Their stories reveal vulnerabilities – the so-called “protection gaps”. They show unmet needs, which become the foundation for formulating various political demands. They can be used in political discourse, as well as during seminars, to give low-threshold, very practical and short examples of what is wrong. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the women for trusting us to publish their stories. We also received many stories from our European partners, who offered their support. For us, it was very important to tell the stories of women from as many European countries as possible, because, in the course of the project and our numerous conversations with the women, we came across one and the same thing: their stories were European, we encountered them everywhere, again and again. “It’s the same here!” was a phrase we heard all the time. This has to change.



Chapter 1 Classification According to Equity and Justice Theories: Women in Precarious Employment in Europe

1.1 A Day in the Life of Nathalie

With our publication, we would like to advocate for income which ensures the existential minimum, physical and mental integrity at the work place, opportunity equity, as well as guaranteeing that the minimum standards of decent work are met. If these factors are not present, we are dealing with precarious employment. Women in precarious employment are often the invisible, highly productive pillars of our European societies. They work at places essential to all societies: they clean, they work as supermarket cashiers, at the conveyor belt as production workers, or as caregivers. Their lobby is small and not particularly powerful. In order to understand why this is so, we will let the life stories of these women speak for themselves. Their needs and difficulties must be at the heart of this publication, which is why we will begin with exactly such a story, describing the life and situation of Nathalie¹.

Nathalie is single and has a four-year-old son. They live together in a two-room apartment in Aachen, a town in Western Germany with a population of about 250 000 people. She found out about us from a poster, such as we had pasted on the walls of gynecologist offices. We advertise our anti-discrimination counselling there. At her work place, a drugstore chain, Nathalie is mistreated by her supervisor and co-workers, because she cannot be available during off-peak hours or on weekends. Her employer announced that her lack of flexibility will be included in her performance evaluation, partly because she showed little “readiness” to regularly work overtime. She says: “It’s just that I have to collect my child from kindergarten”. So, could we help her in this case? Not much. Her employer has the right to assess her “readiness”. Nathalie works part-time,

¹Note: By providing specific examples in this publication, we would like to reveal the truth about precarious employment in all its aspects. Because most affected women are afraid of repercussions if they reveal the working conditions they are forced to put up with, we have changed names and places in order to protect those affected. This also applies to the people around them.

and her employment is 85%. Gender discrimination would be present only if they forced her to work during weekends or overtime a disproportionate number of times, compared with her co-workers. If access to childcare facilities is insufficient or if there is a lack of flexibility in childcare, she is therefore depend on her employer's goodwill, and comparing this with the situation in other European countries makes it clear that, when it comes to women, living conditions are bound up with available public goods (see Nicholsonová 2022, p. 10).

It follows that her job rests upon a very fragile foundation. If her employer decides to "get rid of her", they can just summon her to work when there is no public childcare available. She cannot afford private childcare. However, it is not only the insecurity and low pay that make her workplace and her life as a whole precarious. To them we must add a distancing from the normality of other people and the ensuing feelings of shame, anger, doubt and resignation. Nathalie lives in a "nice neighbourhood". She faces a challenge every time her son is invited to another child's birthday party. If other parents can afford to part with 15,00 or 20,00 euro without even considering it, for Nathalie this is almost impossible. But she does not want anyone else to notice. Eating in restaurants, traveling, going to the cinema: this "normal" way of life, which many people perceive as desirable, is out of her reach. The freedom to pursue personal development, the shaping of a life according to her own notions, or, in other words, the promises of liberal democracy – all of them are but castles in the air to Nathalie.

For her, paid work is not a stable foundation on which to build a future. She works day and night. When she grows old, her income will not be enough to support her. Nathalie herself told us: "All this politicians' talk about freedom and equality has nothing to do with my experience! And then they claim that working is worth it. What else do I have to do? And what about them, what do they do?". Nathalie herself is a democrat and condemns the unfulfilled promises of democracy. Others respond to this discrepancy between the wonderful promises and their personal experience of marginalisation by developing antidemocratic attitudes or by joining antidemocratic movements (see Quent 2019, p. 85, Adorno and Weiß 2019, Heitmeyer 2018).

Looking at it objectively, people like Nathalie are a 'key performers' and a pillars of our societies. She represents not only herself, but also many women in Europe. In order to throw light on her daily routine, Nathalie sketches a typical day in her life:

- **6:00 a.m.:** I get up, get ready, wake up my four-year-old child (his name is Adrian). Today I must change the bedding because it is wet. I help Adrian get ready: we have breakfast together, I make up a lunch box for him containing sandwiches and sliced cucumbers (or something else that is healthy) and a drink. I brush Adrian's teeth and help him wash. If there is still time, I quickly put away the dishes and breakfast leftovers in the kitchen. I always plan for extra time for putting on jackets, shoes, scarves and hats.
- **7:20 a.m.:** I take him to kindergarten, then go to work.
- **7:55 a.m.:** I start work. I work at a drugstore. My tasks include stocking the shelves, working as a cashier and answering customers' questions.
- **12:30 p.m.:** Lunch break.
- **13:00 p.m.:** I continue work. Today I heard something which stays in my mind. Two women customers are discussing how horrible it is when mothers „send their cute little ones to kindergarten for the entire day“. Statements like this really make me angry.
- **15:30 p.m.:** "End" of my workday. I collect Adrian from kindergarten.
- **15:50 p.m.:** Today I must drop by the toy shop to buy a present for another child's birthday. My child has many friends in kindergarten. Naturally, this makes me very happy. At the shop, the child whose birthday it is has prepared a "gift bag", from which the children invited can choose what to buy. However, there is not a single present below 20,00 euro. This

month, it is impossible for me to set aside that much, and it upsets me. But we manage to buy a very nice present for 10,00 euro. I hope it won't stand out much among the other presents. Adrian begins to cry and becomes testy. He is getting hungry, but I can't afford to buy him pastries from the bakery every time! We are in a hurry to get home.

- **16:45 p.m.:** We arrive home, and I immediately put the clothes for the next day in the washing machine! Adrian receives toast with spread on it, so as not to get too hungry before dinner. Today, and every day in general, the whole apartment is covered in sand from the playground sandbox. It sticks to our clothes: shoes, socks, trousers, pockets. I must vacuum clean again, while Adrian is crying because it is too noisy and I haven't played with him yet. I completely understand! There is not enough time and there is no other way!
- **18:30 p.m.:** I have to prepare dinner. Today I will make pasta with tomato sauce and fried zucchini pieces inside. It is not that expensive, and it is good food; I can also easily "hide" the vegetables inside.
- **19:30 p.m.:** It is time for us to put on our pajamas and brush out teeth. I also have to change the bedsheets (remember, they were wet in the morning).
- **19:50 p.m.:** It got late again! I put Adrian to bed, I read him one more fairy tale. He falls asleep while I read.
- **20:15 p.m.:** I clear the table, put everything in the sink, wipe the table and all kitchen surfaces, hang the washing out to dry. There are, of course, toys scattered everywhere, which I quickly collect.
- **21:00 p.m.:** A quick shower follows. I like relaxing in the bathtub very much. But I must cut back on overhead expenses, which is why I more often use the shower. I put on my pajamas and brush my teeth.
- **21:30 p.m.:** I sit on the sofa and watch TV for a bit.
- **22:00 p.m.:** I go to bed.

Nathalie earns 1650,00 euro per month: her net pay is 1400,00 euro, and she receives child benefits – 250,00 euro. She pays rent – 650,00 euro, her insurances is 70,00 euro, food costs 350,00 euro, car leasing and gas cost 230,00 euro, drugstore items and clothes cost 100,00 euro, and she sets aside 150,00 euro for leisure activities. Additionally, she aims to set aside approximately 100,00 euro monthly for emergencies: a new washing machine, furniture, excursions, etc.

A quick glance at Nathalie's life is sufficient to help us understand one of the chief problems women in precarious employment face: to a large extent, they are deprived of self-defence resources and the means of defending themselves. They have no opportunities to get informed, to protest, organise, as well as to present and stand up for their interests and demands. As for those who are able to represent them, it is extraordinarily difficult for them to reach the women. As we have seen, the reasons for this have to do with the lack of time. Furthermore, many precarious positions are assigned to external workers (outsourcing): the external cleaning staff hired to clean the offices of employees in the metallurgical or chemical industry is not covered by the collective employment contracts in these industries. An additional difficulty can be found in the fact that "the most common female occupations" in the service sector (as compared with the industry sector) are often provided by smaller businesses, where opportunities for resolving conflicts and organising are even fewer.

Nathalie still belongs to the so-called privileged precariats. She is not being "outsourced", does not have many jobs, does not, for now, work overtime, and is financially independent, at least to the extent that she is able to afford the life described above. It would only take an accident, one wrong decision or step, however, for this entire structure to collapse. Therefore, precarious work never leaves those affected in peace. "They are the first to be threatened by dismissal in a time of crisis. They are the first to be assigned unpleasant tasks, they are there to fill the gaps: the extra

employees, the “errand girls”, whose resources continue to diminish in times of ongoing uncertainty” (Dörre 2006, p. 12).

But precarious working conditions are much more than individual destinies deserving our compassion. They affect all of us and have the potential to discipline entire societies. And those of us who are not putting in constant effort risk ending up in the realm of the socially excluded. “Because the precariously employed interact with those who are regularly employed, precariat workers become a constant warning. Employees who have signed a permanent employment contract and who initially perceive workers hired by temporary recruitment agencies as desirable “flexibility buffers” begin to experience the vague feeling that they are replaceable every time they consider the work capacity of the “outsiders”. They realise their work can be accomplished with the same quality by staff that accepts living and working conditions which would be unacceptable to the permanently employed” (Ibid.). Consequently, precarious employment is more than a marginalised phenomenon. It sends a signal to the core of society, the people enjoying the so-called “normal employment”; therefore, it influences the understanding of the self and has a disciplining effect. In the work environment organised along those lines, the “working sovereign” (Honneth, 2023) will consider very carefully whether they will exercise their rights (of joint determination) or whether it would be better to refrain.

Aside from cases like Nathalie’s, there are many hidden precariats. Those are the numerous part-time workers who have resigned from, or were forced to resign from, their full-time jobs following the birth of their first child. They are encountered mostly in Western Europe. In many countries in Eastern Europe, women with children have a very hard time getting back into work, because there are almost no part-time jobs available. This is why women in Eastern and Western Europe are mostly able to consistently plan their lives only when they are in a stable relationship.

1.2 What Is Women’s Work Worth?

Whoever works hard, should earn a lot of money. Consequently, a negative good – in this case, hard labour – must be offset by a positive good – sufficient payment. Even if this sounds obvious, however, the state of things is usually exactly the opposite. If we define hard work as not only exhausting, but also as something which people do reluctantly and which they wouldn’t do, had they not been forced to do it, then we see that this negative good leads to other negative goods, “like poverty, insecurity, illness, physical peril, shame and humiliation” (Walzer 2006, p. 244). But why is hard work usually precarious work? According to Walzer, this type of work is distributed following a logic which he describes as cruel and repellent: “the negative good corresponds to the negative status of those who are expected to provide it. Hard work is assigned precisely to those who have been socially degraded and humiliated, while regular citizens are exempt from it” (Ibid., p. 245).

Hard and precarious work is, therefore, preferably assigned to those who are not considered full-fledged members of society, as well as those who, in fact, are not such: for example, the guest workers as an out-group, as well as women as the largest and most important group of the so-called “internal outsiders” (Ibid., p. 245). Women have performed and still perform work “which men despise, therefore giving men the liberty not only to undertake work that is more lucrative, but also to engage in civic and political activity (Ibid., p. 245). The work that Walzer is talking about here is the work which allows men to participate in society and the economy as full-fledged citizens. “That which constitutes a private support system, enabling participation in social life for some – namely, men – is, for others, namely women, a private field of work which significantly limits their participation in social life” (Schweitzer 1991, p. 21). Three quarters of unpaid care work is still carried out by women, who have to pay the price for this mostly alone, while also receiving

approximately 30% lower pensions on average in the EU (eurostat 2021). As women's employment continues to rise, care work is commodified, creating jobs that are predominantly precarious and are mostly carried out by women.

“Official work” also owes its profitability to the cheap resources at the margins of the system – unpaid and commodified care work, for which foreigners and outsiders, who, again, are mostly women, are recruited. Work is what serves to maintain the economic life and public goods – roads, schools etc. – of the political community. But the market treats them as though they cost nothing. According to Böckenförde's theorem², this, in fact, means that it is the market that is a market founded on fundamental principles which it cannot reproduce by itself.

The status of care work in society is further highlighted when we consider the distribution of this work among working women in relationships. We find that higher employment among women does not result in a more equitable division of unpaired work. The overall workload of women increases when they are employed, whereas the workload of men who have working wives tends to decrease. Even if women work full-time, there is no noticeable increase in the time men spend on housework (KAB Impuls 2023, p. 7). Consequently, it is still true that, in a man's life, the family provides support, so he can dedicate himself to earning income. By contrast, in a woman's life, demands only multiply due to the continuity of her main responsibility – caregiving. This leads to discontinuities in working life, part-time work, unemployed periods, marginal employment and, subsequently, life-long economic dependence.

1.3 Dignity of work

„So often we overlook the work and the significance of those who are not in professional jobs, (Yeah) of those who are not in the so-called big jobs. But let me say to you tonight, that whenever you are engaged in work that serves humanity and is for the building of humanity, it has dignity, and it has worth. (Applause) One day our society must come to see this. One day our society will come to respect the sanitation worker if it is to survive, for the person who picks up our garbage, in the final analysis, is as significant as the physician, for if he doesn't do his job, diseases are rampant. (Applause). All labor (All labor) has dignity. (Yes!)“ – Martin Luther King 1968 in Memphis, TN (Raman 2017)

In our culture, it is a deeply rooted practice to equate a person's income with their contribution to society. According to Sandel (2021, p. 4), it is precisely this narrative that destroys the dignity of work. In addition to low pay, there is also the shame that you are not among the chief “contributors” to the political community. Roads, schools, public parks: the knowledge that they have contributed greatly to financing collective goods fosters high self-esteem in those who earn a lot of money. Market society will therefore always tend to determine a person's contribution to society based on their income. Naturally, this flatters the winners on the market, while those with low income are insulted and shamed. Only the unemployed fall beneath the low-paid workers. This is precisely why so many women and men work, although it makes no difference to them financially if they obtain their money from work or from welfare benefits.

In relation to this, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen makes a statement which explores the relationship between work and dignity: “But the truth is that for too many people, work no longer pays. Dumping wages destroy the dignity of work, penalises the entrepreneur who pays decent wages and distorts fair competition in the Single Market. This is why

² The central statement of this theorem or dictum of German constitutional and administrative law specialist and legal philosopher Böckenförde states: “The liberal, secularised state lives by prerequisites which it cannot guarantee itself.” (Böckenförde 1991, p. 112)

the Commission will put forward a legal proposal to support Member States to set up a framework for minimum wages. Everyone must have access to minimum wages either through collective agreements or through statutory minimum wages" (European Commission 2020, p. 1). In November 2022, this was followed by the corresponding directive regarding minimum wages criteria, which also provides for future collective bargaining coverage of 80% in each Member State. This represents a paradigm shift in the European Union. Viotto (2023) writes: „Whereas high social standards were previously seen as distorting the competition, this effect is now attributed to dumping wages, which marks a fundamental shift in perspective" (p. 21).

Poor or unpaid work always leads to a loss of recognition, and, we must add, it is this very work that is disproportionately being carried out by women. It is people of lower status who are expected to perform hard work (cf. Walzer 2006). Conversely, this work leads to a lower social status. It is necessary to add to this category the work that is not affected by dumping wages solely because it is not paid at all. Battles over parental and care leave are, ultimately, battles demanding a reassessment of reproductive work. In a market society, that which is valuable is that which is recognised as work. Only by defining a given activity as work is its social contribution recognised. This is why, for Fraser (2023), feminism is actually a labour dispute.

1.4. Moving Away from the Model of Paid Work?

Cashiers, Kindergarden teachers, nursing staff and warehouse workers at courier and logistics service providers: their work is essential for the functioning of society and the economic system; it is they who "run the show". At the same time, it is these jobs that are low-paid in most European countries and bring little recognition. Because the market is only partially capable of reflecting the value of work to the political community, the number of voices demanding unconditional basic income is on the rise. The proponents of this idea put forward two arguments in particular: firstly, it gives the recipients dignity and the freedom to choose their work according to their inclinations and interests, and secondly, it strengthens the negotiating power of individuals, who will no longer be forced to accept certain jobs at all costs.

Axel Honneth (2023, p. 294 f.) sees the model of unconditional basic income as potentially antagonistic to democratic society. According to him, basic income would only encourage people's tendency to spend even more time in their own private spheres, paying even less attention to the interests, needs and lives of others, associating only with those similar to themselves, as a result of which all differences would disappear from individual environments. Such political measures would accelerate an already dangerous "tendency": people would remain within their own "bubbles" according to their subjective preferences. Honneth defines the world of work as one of the last resources for reproducing democratic values, since people in it still need to meet, cooperate and make compromises, which they would most likely avoid if they could rely on basic income. This is one of the last places enabling the so-called intergroup contacts in the adult world. Making it possible for the working society to retreat as a result of basic income would undermine the guarantee of a communal sharing of the responsibilities and burdens of the community's economic maintenance. This is why, for now, only the labour market is able to carry out the function of the "great integrator" (grand intégrateur, cf. Barel, 1990).

If basic income had the sole function of strengthening the bargaining power of employees, then, according to Honneth, the project must therefore face the criticism of "whether, by strengthening individual bargaining power, it would not have the unintended result of undermining the collective power of trade unions and other interest groups of importance when negotiating employment contracts". This would "lead to more harm than good to the masses of employees" (Honneth 2023, p. 306). Consequently, how we organise employment and care work is fundamental to the

preservation of democratic values in our states as well as reflecting the state of our European democracies.

1.5 Degrading Practices on the Labour Market, Subjective and Collective Forms of Processing Precarious Employment

„In our perception of others – the external identification of the individual – the person and their job often merge into one, where the profession is seen as an indicator of who the person is. The job then becomes a filter through which a person is perceived, judged and valued. This leads to identity hypotheses, stereotypes and images. According to this perspective, the job forms an essential crystallisation point for social identity, and every act whereby a worker aims to define themselves must oppose the identity hypotheses relevant to their job.” (Gildemeister & Günther 1987, p. 73)

It is the image created by the job that ultimately determines whether a person will be classified as someone whom you should pay attention to, or someone you can safely disregard, as someone who should be respected, or someone who doesn't need to be. How could a person who is constantly confronted with the stereotype that her job requires hardly any intellectual ability perceive themselves as a person whose voice matters and who is able to give a qualified opinion? The disparaging gaze of the others is therefore a key means of power capable of maintaining hierarchies. (Taylor, 1993, p. 13 ff.) As a result of this, certain groups – whether based on their gender or their job – perceive the aforementioned gaze as a constitutive part of their identity and, consequently, are not able to exercise the rights and opportunities for protest which are guaranteed to them.

The paralysing fear of scorn and ridicule, of contempt and being belittled, keeps them away from the public arena, from the sovereign shaping of their personal living conditions, from positions of power.

This is a key impediment for people and their role as democratic citizens. It is also a central obstacle preventing women in precarious employment from becoming active in trade unions. Therefore, the precariat significantly restricts the ability of trade unions to take action. In her study of precariously employed women, Tumforde successfully shows that, for the aforementioned reasons, collective processing of personal living conditions in the form of union participation is usually an exception. Precarisation thus promotes the exploitation of workers. Rather than making a political attempt to denounce one's own working conditions, a much more common phenomenon is the "resigned withdrawal into private life" (Tumforde 2009, p. 4) or the acceptance of a precarious working situation. Tumforde is also able to define "the additional earner" as a type (Ibid. p. 30 f.). Conservative role models in particular encourage people to remain in precarious situations because they allow for a positive interpretation of minor employment in favour of time spent with the family. The precarious potential of one's employment is overlooked, with the argument that a woman can afford it as long as the man in her life has a solid situation. One's own precariat is reinterpreted as a privilege. That planning one's own life can only happen in this way as long as the relationship between partners is stable, is disregarded.

Overall, we can summarise that such resignation is perceived as fair if the self-concept is in agreement with the external identification. In this case, from a subjective point of view, it is not necessary to take any action. Trade union activity requires of women to sensitise and politicise themselves as a prerequisite. If a situation is perceived as unfair, self-esteem, time and the resources available determine which path will be chosen.

Whether individual or collective forms of processing are chosen, this is always a description of the state of democracy. On the one hand, there is certainly resignation and a positive reinterpretation of one's own precariat, as described above. On the other hand, social tendencies toward depoliticisation and individualisation always play a part in promoting passivity. Building on the Hegelian concept of cooperation (Hegel 1970, p. 250 f.), Honneth (2023) argues that the democratic politics of work has the task of maintaining the awareness of interdependence in the cooperative working society, if democracy doesn't wish to lose its existential foundation (p. 10, p. 66). Because, if the members of a society perceive themselves only as autonomous participants in the market, their logic will lead them to adopt a negative concept of freedom and to champion a depoliticised understanding of both market and society. Libertarian language is typical of such a policy – a policy which would have difficulty justifying anything more than a minimal state. It would, moreover, be incompatible with the values of the European Union, which firmly supports a positive concept of freedom. The working society's depoliticisation undermines collective forms of processing in favour of individual forms of processing; the normative vocabulary of collective protest is lacking. They actually stand in the way of the EU's goal to achieve a higher collective bargaining coverage.

Of course, trade union activities are not the only political and collective form of processing precarious employment. It should also be emphasised that not every type of political activity is desirable. Heitmeyer, for example, refers to the phenomenon of making politics serve the market: today, the market largely determines working conditions, production locations and wage levels. The feeling of losing control among individuals and in society makes them susceptible to "authoritarian temptations". Where the social protection of European countries is undermined, the rise of "rabid right-wing populism" is not far. But instead of revolting against real injustices, protest happens against groups which are generally considered weak; an individual thus disposed is battling imaginary enemies – unable to understand the real causes of their situation – with a strong need for power, authority and coherence (cf. Adorno 1981, p. 27).

Our opening example provided by Nathalie showed that, due to time constraints alone, many women are not able to stand up for their own interests. The indignities on the labour market described there lead to additional obstacles. When making suggestions, the lobbyists for these women always have to measure the effects of social misjudgement. There is a high degree of shame associated with precarious situations, and programs for informing, training and educating these women must take this into account. From a political perspective, it is crucial to use democratic language: based on the division of labour, democracy is a society whose members have cooperative relationships. The market is not a conglomeration of autonomous and self-responsible subjects; politically, it is shaped jointly, is socially embedded and represents a common bond between citizens. This is why, when discussing the democratic politics of work, it would be more accurate to use the larger-scope term "economic co-determination among citizens" instead of the shorter term "co-determination at work". Therefore, when envisioning a democratic Europe where labour markets are closely interwoven, we must firmly reject all who demand a purely economic Europe without common labour law directives and social coordination. The stability of Europe's individual democracies is based on the democratic and social coordination of European economies.

2. Status of Equality – Europe in Numbers

„There are villages in which men fish and women weave, and ones in which women fish and men weave. But in either village, the work done by men is valued higher than the work done by women.“ (Margaret Mead quoted in Pierson & Cohen 1995, p. 141)

When speaking of horizontal segregation on the labour market, we mean the division of the labour market into “men’s jobs” and “women’s jobs”. Studies in this field have been trying to analyse, among other things, the choice of job: why do men and women often choose different careers? To what an extent is this choice voluntary? Why are women often in social professions and retail, whereas men are disproportionately more in artisanal and technical professions? The choice of a career is frequently associated with discussions regarding men and women’s life chances – after all, the income in “men’s jobs” is usually significantly higher than in “women’s jobs”. Because of this, there are always efforts and initiatives aimed at motivating women to go into STEM careers in order to improve their prospects in life. As useful as these measures may be for women’s individual career choices, individual life chances and paths in life, they overlook an underlying social problem.

The question we ask should not be: “Why are women so few in powerful professions?”. Instead, the question should much more often be: “Why are so many male-dominated professions considered powerful?”. There is an important detail, which has been known and proven for decades, regarding what happens when the proportion of women in male-dominated professions increases: if the proportion of women increases, wages decrease, respect for the profession also diminishes, the risk of an academic profession becoming a training occupation, and the training occupation becoming semi-skilled work, rises.

Likewise, classifying professions as “social” and “technical” is often attended by stereotypes: the everyday work of a nurse in an intensive care unit requires social, as well as technical skills. In many countries the hard physical labour associated with the job of nurses is not taken into account in their remuneration classification. The hairdresser’s craft is not appreciated economically in the same way as male-dominated artisanal professions. Recommendations for greater equality on the labour market are therefore increasingly focused on ensuring that women’s work is fairly paid without, of course, rejecting initiatives aimed at attracting women to professions where payment is already fair.

In the report on women’s poverty in Europe delivered by the European Parliament’s Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality, Nicholsonová (2022) calls for new evaluation standards for women’s work and calls on Member States to act in this area: “although work in highly female-dominated sectors is essential and of high socioeconomic value, it is undervalued and lower paid than work in male-dominated sectors; whereas there is an urgent need to reassess the adequacy of wages in female-dominated sectors related to their social and economic value and to move forward on minimum wages, minimum income and pay transparency in EU regulations.” (p. 10). Consequently, there are “calls for typically female-dominated work to be reassessed and revaluated and for cross-sector gender-neutral job evaluation tools to be developed and applied in order to better assess and more frequently remunerate female-dominated work and ensure equal pay for equal work and work of equal value.” (p. 15).

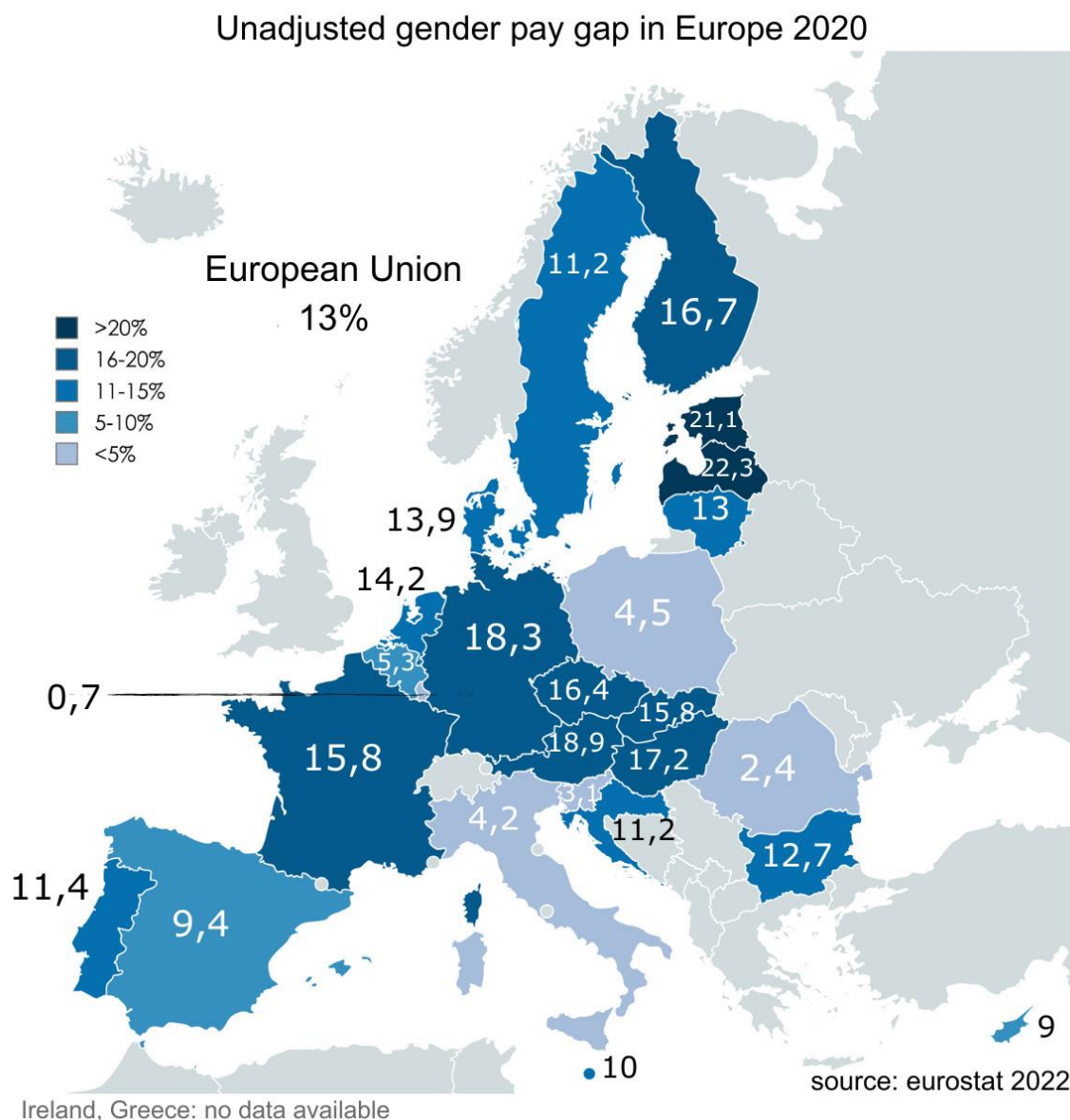
European Union law has enshrined the principle of equal pay for men and women (Article 157 of TFEU) at primary law level and has made it more concrete in Directive 2006/54/EC. The following tools have been established as instruments for checking equal pay:

- In English, French, Italian and German: <https://www.ebg.admin.ch/en/equal-pay-analysis-with-logib>
- In German: Logib-D Information and Excel Tables Available for Download: <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/themen/gleichstellung/frauen-und-arbeitswelt/lohngerechtigkeit/entgelttransparenzgesetz/instrumente-zur-pruefung-der-entgeltgleichheit-117950>

- In German: eg-check.de: The manuals and working materials can be found here: https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/DE/ueberdiskriminierung/lebensbereiche/arbeitsleben/gleichbehandlung-der-geschlechter/eg_check/eg-check-node.html

2.1 Gender Pay Gap

The gender pay gap describes the difference between the average gross hourly wages of men and women. In Europe, the average difference is about 13 % to the disadvantage of women, although in some cases it varies considerably. Latvia has the largest gap – 22,3 %, while Luxembourg (0,7%) and Romania (2,4 %) have the smallest.



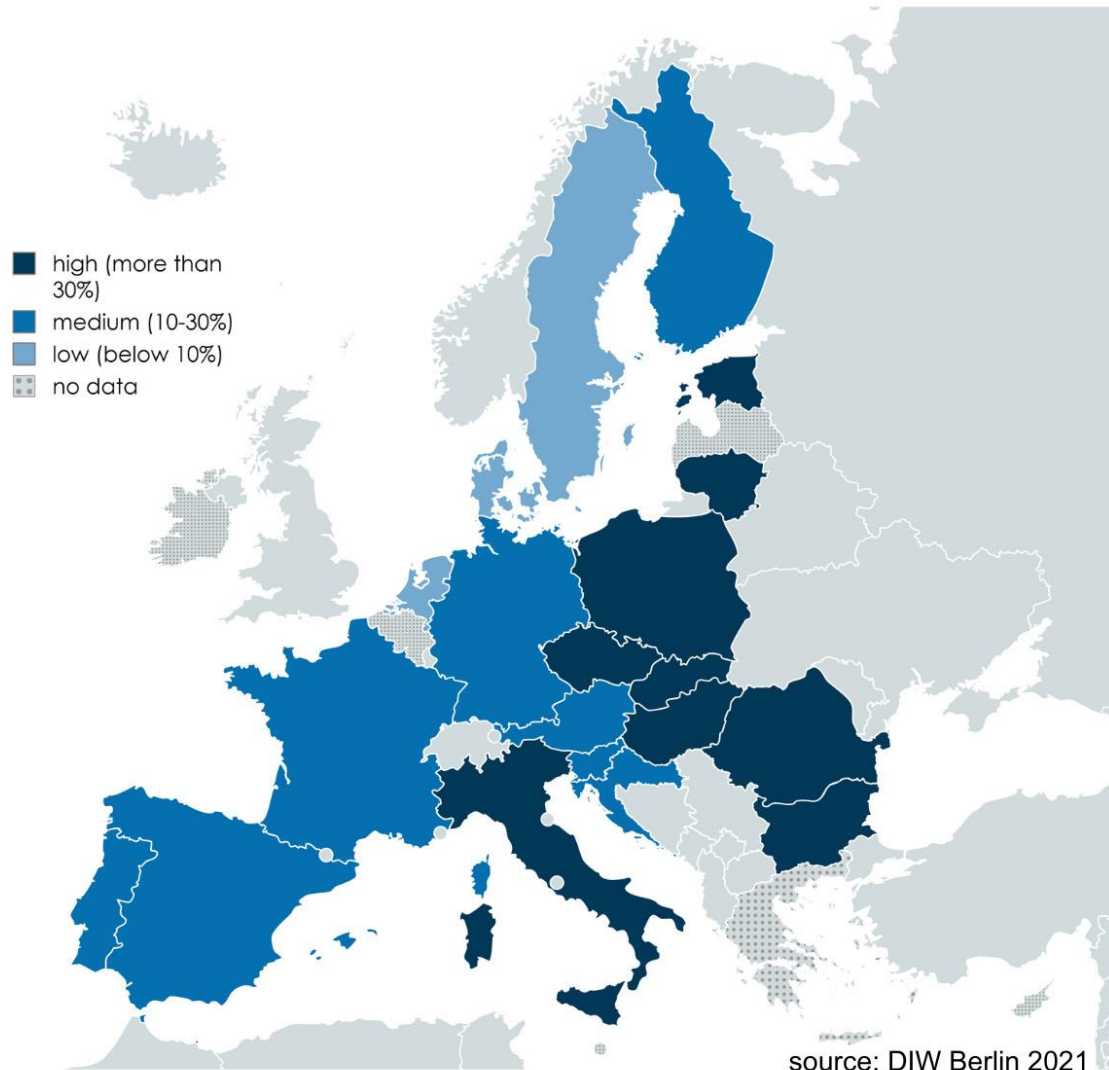
However, a small gender pay gap doesn't necessarily mean a fair distribution of wages between men and women. In states with high female participation in the labour market, the gender pay gap is usually larger than in states with low female participation in the labour market. A high employment rate affects women of all qualification levels equally. Women do not differ significantly from their male counterparts on the labour market, whose participation is high in all countries.

In countries with a low female employment rate, like Italy and Romania, women have a higher wage potential on the labour market. The comparably high wages of women there contribute to

diminishing the gender pay gap. Against this background, it is possible to understand why, in many of the countries with the lowest pay gaps, role models are very traditional.

In countries with particularly small gender pay gaps and, correspondingly, with low female employment rates, a disproportionate number of people agree with the statement: “The man’s job is to earn money, while the woman is responsible for the household and family”.

Proportion of the population with traditional gender roles in Europe 2021



Proportion of the population who agree with the statement “It is the man’s job to earn money, the woman is responsible for the household and family.”

Regarding the issue of women’s poverty, it is worth taking a closer look at the countries which have successfully established high female participation levels in the labour market, while simultaneously preserving a small gender pay gap. Based on Eurostat data, Schmieder & Wrohlich (2021) name Iceland and Sweden as good examples, whose positive gap is primarily explained by the tax and family policies in these countries. Structures shape cultures: egalitarian attitudes can explain structures to a certain extent, but the opposite is also always true – that which is on offer influences cultures.

The increase in female participation in the labour market in Germany is clearly due to the increased availability of childcare, and attitudes have adjusted to what is being offered (cf. DIE ZEIT, infas &

WZB 2023). Schmieder & Wrohlich identify as positive structures the individual tax assessment of married couples and partners, well-developed childcare for all age groups and with flexible working hours, high wage replacement benefits for family working hours, as well as the high number of months in which parental allowance is provided to both parents.

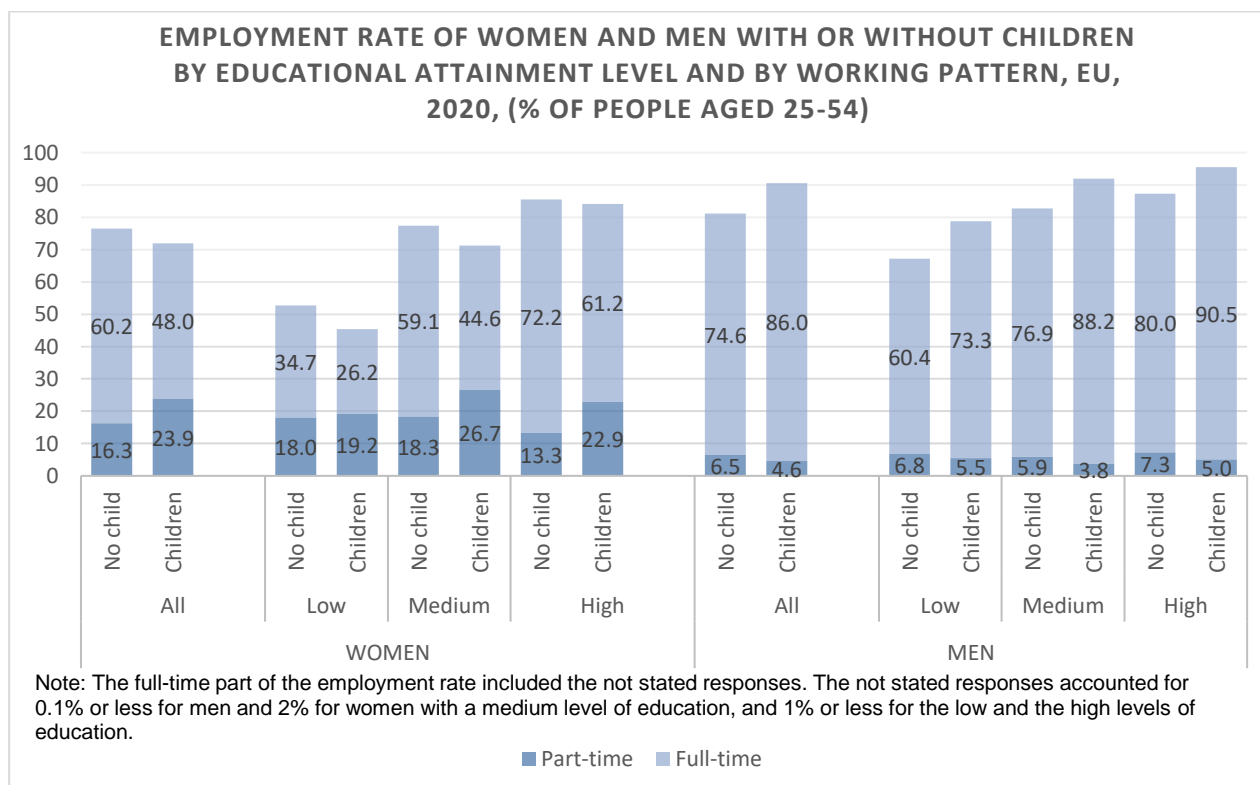
What the gender pay gap does not take into account is early discrimination when it comes to accessing work and training. Studies show that women face discrimination as early as the stage where training places are distributed, which is particularly the case in typical “male professions”. Even assuming identical qualifications, the documents supporting an application will receive a lower grade if the name on them is female. In male-dominated professions, women have to fill in three times as many applications just to be invited to an interview (cf. Montanari 2017, p. 11).

Additionally, the gender pay gap does not take into account the income development of mothers and fathers. Parenthood rewards fathers and strongly punishes mothers (Bohnet 2016, p. 127). German mothers earn 60% less 5-10 years after the birth of their child, compared with their prior earnings; Danish women earn 20% less after the same period (Kleven 2019, p. 1 ff.).

2.2 Employment Gap

The employment gap reflects the employment rate of men and women. As a whole, the employment rate of men is higher than that of women in all countries in the European Union. The gap is particularly large in Malta (24,1), Greece (19,8), Italy (19,7), and Romania (17,1), and smaller in Lithuania (1,0), Finland (3,5) and Sweden (4,0).

What is striking is that in the countries where the employment rate is low or unemployment rates are high, the gap between men and women is expanding. As a result of this, women are disproportionately affected in countries with high unemployment rates (eurostat 2019 r.). As regards the issue of women’s poverty, it is particularly noticeable that the lower the level of education of men and women, the larger the employment gap; consequently, women with low qualifications are most often not in gainful employment.



Part-time work has a negative impact on pensions not only because fewer contributions can be paid due to the fact of there being fewer working hours. It is also the case that women working part-time earn less than women working full-time – for the same job! The wage gap compared to men working full-time is even larger. This so-called part-time wage gap is a well-known and studied phenomenon in many countries (Bohnet 2016). However, there are no comparative figures at EU level, because of which we mention results from studies in Germany: women working part-time earn 17% less than women working full-time for carrying out the same or equivalent work. The gap between women working part-time and men working full-time is 32 % (Wrohlich 2019). This means they earn 7.33 euro less per hour. This is prohibited in all EU Member States. Financial consultant Dani Parthum (2023) expresses this in terms of pay: “The 7.33 wage deduction results in lost wages of about 590 euro gross for 80 working hours per month. If we extrapolate that over 30 years, the lost wages add up to 212, 400 euro. (...) Business, politics and society benefit from the motivated, focused, well-educated women and mothers who work part-time. This borders on cynicism”.

If you ask women why they work part-time, they usually mention family obligations, such as looking after the children and other care tasks (Germany: 46%). For men, on the other hand, family obligations usually play a minor role (11%), while personal development opportunities – for example, training and further education (25%) – are the main motivation for part-time work (Kümmerling & Schmieja 2021).

At the European level, the following is known from a comparative perspective (eurostat 2018): in all European countries, women work part-time more often than men. In spite of this, while part-time employment plays a comparatively large role in EU-15 countries, its proportion is rather low in Member States who have joined since 2004. In all countries, men’s participation in the labour market is higher than that of women – only in Lithuania the participation of men on the labour market is comparatively similar to that of women. In some countries, gender-specific differences in participation in the labour market are large: in Bulgaria, for example, the proportion of those employed full-time is, on the whole, low, but there are big differences in participation in the labour market between men and women (75,8% for men and 57,6% of women are employed). In this case, the lack of affordable childcare facilities combines with the lack of part-time jobs. The situation is similar in Poland. In Italy, the proportion of female part-time workers is high (31 % compared with 7 % for men), which is also the case with unemployed women (the employment rate for women is 57,1 %, compared with 74,7 % for men). In Germany, every second woman works part-time, while the overall rate of female participation in the labour market is high (75,4 %); in spite of this, it is still 8% behind that of men. Labour force participation has increased significantly owing to the fact that childcare options and opportunities for part-time employment are multiplying and are widely offered. The expanding scope of employment can be achieved only by making affordable and high-quality social services more flexible. If weekly working hours are reduced to 35 hours per week, a significant increase in the number of women employed full-time and a higher participation of men in unpaid work can be expected (Böhle 2023, p. 8). Regarding the employment gap, Nicholsonová (2022) mentions the need to take into account potential multiple discrimination: “the rate of trans people in paid employment is only 51%, compared with 69.3% of the general population. Only 20,7% of women with disabilities and 28,6% of men with disabilities are in full time employment.” (p. 10 f.)

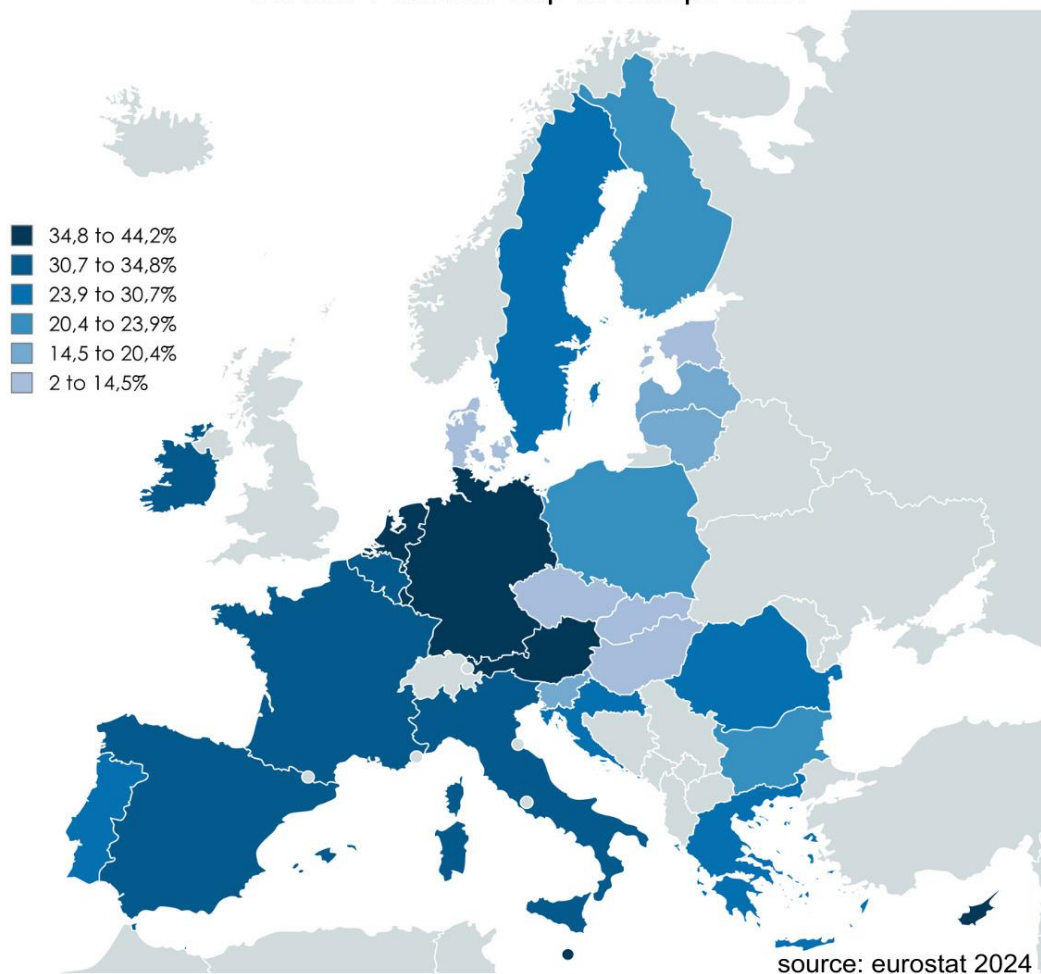
2.3 Pension Gap

A comparison between European countries with regard to the gender-specific pension gap shows that it is primarily the employment rate and extent of employment that explain any observable differences, not the respective pension systems. No matter how many advantages they can bring to the table, workplace pensions could even exacerbate the gap, because they are linked to labour

market participation ³. Differences are considerable within the European Union: they range from 0,5 % in Estonia to over 70% in Spain and Luxembourg. Figures show that, in countries where women have been rarely or marginally employed until the 1990s, the pension gap between men and women is considerable, whereas in countries with few opportunities for part-time work or a large number of part-time jobs and extensive childcare options, the gap is smaller. Hammerschmidt concludes: “In order to decrease pension gaps in the long term, political measures should aim above all to increase female employment – especially full-time employment.” By women here we mean primarily mothers: in many European countries, pension entitlement is close to equal before starting a family, although women’s access to jobs is already limited before the birth of their first child. (Kübler, Schmid & Stüber 2017, p. 2ff.).

The phenomenon of women being punished financially for having children and men being rewarded for it is known as “motherhood penalty“: they have a harder time finding a job compared to childless women, are offered lower wages and are perceived as less competent and less committed in the workplace. By contrast, men who have children do not experience additional difficulties when looking for a job. They are not perceived as less competent. They are offered higher wages (Bohnet 2016 , p. 41). Politicians must therefore take measures aimed primarily at removing barriers before compatibility and reducing the care gap. If, for example, women in Germany who work part-time increase their working hours only by 10%, this would yield 400 000 full-time jobs. In times of demographic change and a shortage of skilled workers, the backlog of reforms is difficult to understand.

Gender Pension Gap in Europe 2024



³ In Germany, for example, the pension gap relevant to statutory pension insurance was 46% in 2015, while that relevant to company pensions reached 56% - to the detriment of women in both cases (see ver.di 2022).

2.4 Care Gap

All national, European and international studies conclude that care work is still predominantly being carried out by women (e.g. EIGE 2023) – even if both partners in a heterosexual relationship work full-time. It has even been observed that women “compensate” for the higher income they earn by shouldering even more housework and responsibilities (Bohnet 2016, p. 88). Reproductive care work is primarily carried out outside value creation cycles and is not included in value chain calculations because of this, since it is the only way to keep wage costs low. The burden of care work is even individualised and must, therefore, be borne by the respective affected women. In many countries, the provision of public services for outsourcing care work is still not sufficient to provide women with comparable opportunities on the labour market and, correspondingly, with comparable pensions. Commodified care work is also often characterised by economic disdain.

“Today, care work, especially physically demanding care work, is increasingly being outsourced to other women, mostly from countries with low wages. This system of so-called “care chains” has long spread across all countries and continents, including Germany, and has, in its turn, caused a care gap in the countries of origin of the women providing care in Germany [...] The unequal distribution and systematic devaluation of care work results in inequality in the income, wealth, time and influence between men and women and exacerbates the existing global disparity between rich and poor” (Equal Care Initiative 2020). Among the consequences of care work is economic dependence.

2.5 Economic Effects of Gender Equality Policies

Gender equality policies influence women’s employment levels and productivity. Nicholsonová (2022) concludes that “increasing gender equality would lead to an increase in EU GDP per capita between 6,1 and 9,6% and an additional 10,5 million jobs, which would benefit both women and men, by 2050”. An improved employment policy with fair wages reduces the number of people who are dependent on welfare benefits due to insufficient pensions.

To the positive economic effects of gender equality policies listed above we must add costs, which could be reduced if the outdated and destructive role models and structures were dismantled.

For example, in his book *What Men Cost Us. The High Price of Patriarchy*, German economist Boris von Heesen calculates that the unhealthy behaviour of men costs German taxpayers (who, of course, include women) 63 billion euro more compared with the unhealthy behaviour of women. Men earn first place in several negative statistics: addictions of various kinds, crime and prison stays, domestic violence and unhealthy lifestyle are noticeably male-dominated and keep the police, judicial system and social services on their toes. The behaviour of addicted periods costs the state approximately 40 billion. What it costs the families of those addicted is impossible to “calculate”. This is why not only women would profit from gender equality work.

Society as a whole would profit from overcoming negative social constraints and unhealthy role stereotypes.

3. Legal Framework and Measures within the European Union (Selected Examples)

3.1 Overview of the Principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the European Union’s Gender Equality Measures

Principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights	Measures
<p>Principle 2: Gender Equality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality of treatment and opportunities between women and men must be ensured and fostered in all areas, including regarding participation in the labour market, terms and conditions of employment and career progression. • Women and men have the right to equal pay for equal work and work of equal value. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 (including reducing the gender employment gap, revising the Barcelona objectives for the expansion of early childcare facilities) • LGBTQ Equality Strategy 2020—2025 • Pay Transparency Directive 2023/970, must be implemented into national law by 7 July 2026 • Directive 2019/1158 on Work-Life Balance (see below)
<p>Principle 9: Work-Life Balance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and people with caring responsibilities have the right to suitable leave, flexible working arrangements and access to care services. Women and men shall have equal access to special leaves of absence to fulfil their caring responsibilities and be encouraged to use them in a balanced way. This is much more than I wrote, but fine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directive on Work-Life Balance 2019/1158, must be implemented into national law by August 2022: minimum 10 days paid leave the amount of sick pay for fathers as wage replacement around the time of birth of the child; four months parental leave for every parent, two of which paid and non-transferable; an annual five days for care; the right of parents and caregivers to apply for flexible working hours; improved protection against dismissal for parents/caregivers • Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 (see above) ➤ European Care Strategy (202): reducing the gender-specific employment gap, increasing social participation, promoting gender equality
<p>Principle 11: Childcare and Child Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the right to affordable early childhood education and good quality care. • Children have the right to protection from poverty. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds have the right to specific measures to promote equal opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy on the Rights of the Child (March 2021) and Council recommendations on the introduction of a European Child Guarantee. The guarantee's objective is to prevent social exclusion, as well as to ensure that vulnerable children have access to services such as early childcare, education, healthcare and healthy nutrition, as well as adequate housing. ➤ European Care Strategy: Care, upbringing and education for children, with a particular focus on children with disabilities or children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds

<p>Principle 18 Long-term Care:</p> <p>Everyone has the right to affordable and good quality long-term care services, in particular home-care and community-based services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Paper on Ageing to better respond to demographic changes and coordinate European policies • European Care Strategy: Long-term care initiative
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As regards precarious employment, which disproportionately affects women, it is worth mentioning Principle 6 in Chapter II, which grants workers the right to fair remuneration and an adequate standard of life. This non-binding principle does not give rise to any claims which go beyond national law, but this will change with the Minimum wages directive, passed in November 2022. It defines criteria for minimum wages that are binding for the nation-states (see Article 5). It also sets a goal of at least 80% collective bargaining coverage in the nation-states. Furthermore, as regards improving working conditions and creating more jobs, we should mention the Action plan to boost the social economy and create jobs (2021).

3.2 Anti-Discrimination Directives

The following EU directives aim to prevent discrimination in the work context and when citizens seek access to private goods and services. They determine the minimum standards which all Member States must implement into national law. It can therefore happen that national laws go beyond these minimum standards. In some cases, however, national laws do not comply with European law or have not been implemented at all. Then, the EU can initiate infringement proceedings, which have already been initiated against Germany, because the right to paid leave of at least 10 days for fathers, enshrined in Directive 2019/1158, has not yet been implemented. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs has announced the draft law for 2024.

Directive 2000/78/EC

establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation

Directive 2006/54/EC

on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast)

Directive 2010/41/EU

on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and repealing

Directive 2019/1158

on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU

Directive 2000/43/EC

Implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin

Directive 2004/113/EC (exclusively under civil law)

implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services

Some key statements from the directives are summarised below. I will limit myself to the part on labour law. One important point in the civil law area is the need to ensure non-discriminatory access to housing. You can find more detailed information on European anti-discrimination law here: https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr/handbook_non_discr_iaw_deu

3.2.1 Protected Characteristics, Scope and Forms of Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as unlawful disadvantage based on a **protected group characteristic**. According to the directives, protected characteristics include: **race or ethnic origins, religion or worldview, gender, age, disability or sexual identity**. It is therefore possible for discrimination to occur due to more than one group characteristic (the so-called **multiple discrimination**). Social origin is not a protected characteristic. Care activities are not subject to the same protection as the aforementioned characteristics. For women, indirect gender-specific discrimination occurs frequently, because they are disproportionately affected by disadvantages, for example due to motherhood. If men are discriminated against due to parenthood or caring for relatives, they will usually only be able to rely on the prohibition of retaliatory measures, which generally comes into effect only when exercising one's rights leads to discrimination. However, if their employer persuades them not to claim certain rights in the first place, there is usually no indirect gender-specific discrimination. Example: An expectant father would like to take paternal leave (instead of his wife), for a longer period of time, following which his employer announces that he will be excluded from future promotions in the company. If he then decides to forgo paternity leave, this would not harm him professionally. He can rely on the prohibition of disciplinary measures only if, after he had already taken parental leave, he really is excluded from future promotions. Here we must take into account differences between national legislations.

Labour law protected areas include access to self-employment and employment, access to career advice, vocational training⁴, further vocational training and retraining, career advancement opportunities, employment and working conditions, such as dismissal- and wages-related conditions. A positive measure that promotes equality is not discrimination and is explicitly permitted. In spite of this, it is important to carefully examine whether the measure in question is suitable, appropriate, as well as the mildest means available.

The directives define the following forms as discriminatory:

Forms of Discrimination	Examples and Explanations
Direct Discrimination	<p>Discrimination occurs, if it is possible to refer to one of the mentioned characteristics, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not being invited to a work interview • Not being hired or lack of promotion • Dismissal • Lower pay, fewer vacation days <p>Discrimination is possible if there are factual reasons</p> <p>Treatment that results in disadvantages is not always discrimination. In some cases, it is objectively justified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rejecting a male candidate who has applied for a position in a women's shelter - Rejecting a person with a physical disability who has applied for training as a roofer <p>Information</p> <p>Less favourable treatment due to pregnancy and maternity leave is considered direct (not indirect) gender-specific discrimination</p>

⁴ Not in Germany – Universities and schools: here regulations – if provided – are part of the Higher Education Laws. Students are not protected, but all university employees are.

<p>Indirect Discrimination</p>	<p>With indirect discrimination, unfavourable treatment resulting in disadvantages is based on regulations, criteria or procedures which are only ostensibly neutral.</p> <p>Examples of illegal disadvantages include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gender-specific: part-time work as a criterion for granting Christmas bonuses - due to religion or possibly race or ethnic origin: covering the head is prohibited without providing an objective reason for this - due to race and ethnic origins: language skills in the national language that are higher than required for the job in question. <p>Important: Advertising a work position only and exclusively as a full-time position (without objectively justifying this step) does not necessarily mean gender-specific discrimination. European law does not require that there be a general right to part-time work, only equal working conditions. In this case, German law goes beyond European requirements via the Part-time and Fixed-term Employment Act, which defines the right to this kind of employment.</p>
<p>Harrassment</p>	<p>Justification is not possible!</p> <p>Discrimination occurs under the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the behaviour is undesirable and relates to a protected characteristic - the aim was to violate the person's dignity - a hostile environment is created <p>This means</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - undesirable = it is not necessary for the behaviour to have been explicitly rejected - dignity = a defined threshold of relevance must have been crossed, no trivialities - aim = actually violating the dignity of the person is not a prerequisite, that is, it is not necessary for the behaviour to have been successful - The act itself, and not the person behind it, can have detrimental effects. This is important because, in this case, what matters is not the level of awareness or motives of the perpetrator, but only the undesirable consequences. The motives are significant when deciding which means are suitable, necessary and appropriate in order to remove the undesirable effect created (for example, warning, transfer or dismissal) - hostile environment – this usually, but not necessarily, requires repeated behaviour

<p>Sexual Harassment</p>	<p>Justification is not possible!</p> <p>Discrimination occurs under the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the behaviour is undesirable, sexually determined and relates to a protected characteristic. Sexual harassment is always gender-specific discrimination. Other protected characteristics may also be relevant (for example, racially motivated sexual harassment) - its aim is to at least violate the person's dignity <p>This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - undesirable = it is not necessary for the behaviour to have been rejected explicitly - a sentence is missing here: behaviour is sexually determined: the obstacle here is lower than in the case of the concept of sexual act - dignity = a defined threshold of relevance must have been crossed, no trivialities - aim = actually violating the dignity of the person is not a prerequisite, that is, it is not necessary for the behaviour to have been successful - The act itself, and not the person behind it, can have detrimental effects. This is important, because in this case, what matters is not the level of awareness or motives of the perpetrator, but only the undesirable consequences. The motives are significant when deciding which means are suitable, necessary and appropriate in order to remove the undesirable effect created (for example, warning, transfer or dismissal) - hostile environment – its presence is <u>not</u> a prerequisite, so that a single instance of the behaviour in question is usually sufficient
<p>Giving Discriminatory Orders</p>	<p>Justification is not possible!</p> <p>A conscious violation is not necessary in order for the criteria of a discriminatory order to be met. In labour law, it is unclear whether it is necessary to meet the requirement that the person giving the order be entitled to give such an instruction.</p>

The Disadvantageous Consequences for Those Affected Matter Most

The EU directives against discrimination in the workplace do not require the actions to be intentional, but are rather consequence-oriented: the disadvantageous effect matters most, rather than how the co-worker would like their actions to be interpreted. Consequently, „He/She did not mean it like that!“ is irrelevant. This is why the scope of the directive covers not only discriminatory actions – which include verbal statements – but also direct and indirect discriminatory structures.

Remuneration

The equal pay for equal work and work of equal value principle applies throughout the EU. Remuneration includes all payments provided by the employer: monthly wages, discounts for using public transport, compensation paid in the event a person is dismissed due to economic reasons etc.

Sanctions and Violations

The directives require effective, proportional and preventive sanctions in the case of a violation. They facilitate the provision of evidence by those affected. People who claim that they have been discriminated against must credibly present and prove the presumed discrimination (the occurrence of discrimination). In this case, the defendant must prove that the action in question is not discriminatory.

3.3 Further Assistance in Individual Member States

In each country, the EU relies not only on regulations for the legal defence of those affected, but also on the provision of support by organisations which are able to take part in the proceedings. National services offer detailed information and advice in accordance with national law. Here, you can find further information on the topics of employers' preventive and reactive obligations, the burden of proof in the case of discrimination, depending on its form as described above, etc.

You can find assistance here:

- Germany: Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency: www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de
- Italy : Anti-violence and anti- discrimination Center: [I_Centri_Antiviolenza_di_D.i.Re – D.i.Re - Donne in Rete Contro la Violenza \(direcontrolaviolenza.it\)](http://I_Centri_Antiviolenza_di_D.i.Re_-_D.i.Re_-_Donne_in_Rete_Contro_la_Violenza_(direcontrolaviolenza.it))
- Lithuania: Anti -discrimination agency in Lithuania: <https://lygybe.lt/en/>
- Bulgaria: Anti-Diskrimination Committion: <https://kzd-nondiscrimination.com/layout/>
- Poland: Polish Antidiscrimination office for legal assistance: <http://www.ptpa.org.pl/>

4. Summary, Conclusions and Necessary Improvements

Considering that,

- as a result of relational inequalities taking the form of constant gender pay gaps, employment gaps, care gaps and, ultimately, pension gaps, women's economic independence faces significant obstacles;
- the remuneration of women's work often does not correspond to its socio-economic value, and evaluation procedures by collective bargaining parties are often not carried out in a gender-equitable manner;
- precarious jobs are disproportionately often outsourced and assigned to women, thereby evading collective agreements and allowing for informal forms of employment;
- when it comes to women's work, the extent and continuity of employment depend chiefly on the supply of public goods;
- women are disproportionately affected by gaps in care, for example, by shortages of skilled workers in childcare, as shown by the COVID-19 pandemic, during which women's employment fell by 10%, while overall it fell only by 2,4% (cf. EIGE 2022);
- it is primarily women who reduce their scope of employment when there are gaps in care;
- increasing the employability of women would greatly benefit the economy and could increase GDP per capita in the EU by up to 9,6% (see Chapter 2.5);
- the extent and continuity of employment affect the entire career;
- any deregulation of working hours affects primarily women with care responsibilities;
- unpaid labour leads to financial and time poverty and is the greatest risk of poverty for women;
- financial and time poverty systematically prevent women from exercising their civil rights and thus from addressing and changing their situation;
- 85% of single parents in EU are women (EIGE 2016), and 42,1% of them are exposed to or affected by poverty (eurostat 2023);

- there is a high correlation between women's poverty and child poverty, which affects every fourth child in the EU (European Parliament, 2022);
- when determining poverty levels, household income is usually taken into account, thus considering the family as a harmonious unit, in which power imbalances do not influence access to financial resources;
- poverty exacerbates the situation of women affected by violence and results in their remaining in violent relationships (Gondolf & Fisher, 1998);
- victims of domestic violence remain in violent relationships primarily because of a lack of public resources – money, support etc. – and to a lesser extent due to internal obstacles such as damaged self-esteem etc. (Ibid.);
- domestic violence and violence at work can have health consequences, lead to marginalisation and, consequently, promote and generate poverty;
- „the current tax policy at the level of the EU and at a national level exacerbates existing gender gaps“, increases wage gaps to the detriment of people with lower income and thus systematically makes participation in working life less appealing;
- poverty among women increases the risk of those affected falling prey to human trafficking and forced prostitution (Nicholsonová 2022, p. 13);
- women usually do not defend themselves from discrimination, are not aware of their rights and are justifiably afraid of complaints (see Chapter 1.5);

and noting that

- equality is a fundamental value of the Treaty on European Union;
- equality is a fundamental value of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;
- the eradication of poverty is an objective set in Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union and Article 34 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;
- equality and the fight against poverty are among the action plans that implement the European Pillar of Social Rights;
- the Strategy on the rights of the child aims to prevent the social exclusion of children (that is, to provide a European guarantee of access to education, healthcare, healthy nutrition and appropriate living conditions);
- in 2023, the European Union acceded to the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, thus making it binding even for those European states, which have opposed the convention;
- in its *Report on the Regulation of Prostitution in the EU*, the EU Parliament calls on Member States to reduce the demand for prostitution and promote the social and professional reintegration of affected women;
- the aforementioned directives (see Chapter 3.2) prohibit discrimination against women based on their gender or other characteristics on the labour market and when accessing services and goods;
- the equal pay for equal work or work of equal value is among the fundamental principles of the European Union, enshrined in Article 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, and the Pay Transparency Directive facilitates the implementation of this fundamental right;
- the Directive on the Adequate Minimum Wages in the European Union calls on Member States to establish procedures for determining adequate minimum wages, while taking into account the criteria that could reduce the gender pay gap;
- the aforementioned directive provides for 80% collective bargaining coverage in the EU;
- the right to a fair trial is a fundamental principle of the EU Charter, while legal aid is enshrined in EU law

the following measures should be considered:

- The introduction of high standards across Europe for the provision of public goods in the areas of caregiving, education and medical care. These must be affordable to people of all incomes. Financial considerations must not provide an incentive not to use the services. This is the only way to ensure social, economic and political participation. The Work-Life Balance Directive, the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child and the European Care Strategy are steps in the right direction. At the moment, access to high-quality, affordable public childcare is, in many areas, insufficient in relation to an inclusive strategy for children, as well as in relation to gender equality aspects. From a gender equality perspective, models that aim to determine childcare costs based on the household's net income are particularly critical. Women with lower income have a negligible, almost nonexistent incentive to find work. These forced employment discontinuities have a negative impact on the entire career and increase economic dependence in the present and in old age. In Germany, Family Tax Splitting (Ehegattensplitting) multiplies this effect, providing for higher taxation of lower incomes.
- Measures ensuring access to the right to adequate minimum wages. The EU Minimum Wage Directive is a milestone on the road to a social Europe. However, effective tools are also needed to ensure that the issue of minimum wages is actually taken up. More specifically, progress is needed in the area of undeclared work. For example, it is necessary to prevent the possibility that, as a result of increased minimum wages, the employees are simply paid for fewer hours, while their actual working hours remain the same. In its ruling of 14 May 2019, the Court of Justice of the European Union decided that employers must document the working hours of employees. This decision notwithstanding, the possibility of recording fewer hours than those actually worked or of declaring overtime as not ordered shows a protection gap.
- As already mentioned in 1.4, reinforcing the collective, rather than the individual, bargaining power of employees is much more important for a democratic society. The Minimum Wage Directive, with its ambitious objective of at least 80% coverage of collective bargaining, is a step in the right direction and will lead to (mandatory) action plans for the nation-states to draft appropriate measures.
- In order to achieve progress on pay transparency, consideration should be given to whether the individual right to information should become a right of information for trade unions.
- As regards the criteria for reducing the “gender-specific pay gap” covered by the Minimum Wage Directive, it seems necessary to examine and further develop existing evaluation tools and procedures for verifying equal pay for equal work and work of equal value (for example, EC check/ EG-Check).
- The same applies also to collective agreements, whose collective bargaining autonomy as social partners is not affected by the aforementioned directive. Otherwise, in the case of discriminatory collective agreements, the individual is the one who must defend themselves against those agreements, which do not comply with the law. Jochmann-Döll and Tondorf (2009) draw attention to the following: „Many collective agreements – whether in relation to working hours, wages, qualification criteria or dismissal – contain considerable potential for discrimination. They do not comply with labour law requirements resulting from European law. It is therefore not sufficient for the regulations in collective agreements to be phrased in a gender-neutral manner; their effect must also be without any discrimination” (p. 5).⁵
- Income in systemically important professions must reflect the economic value of work. Higher wages in the sectors where women predominate also have the potential to counteract gender segregation on the labour market, which has increased in recent years: research by Eurofond

⁵ The authors provide guidelines for formulating gender-equitable collective agreements here: [p_edition_hbs_151.pdf \(boeckler.de\)](#) (31.01.2024)

shows that, despite reducing of the gender-specific employment gap, workplaces are not becoming more gender mixed, and „the proportion of female and male co-workers (where the proportion of each gender does not exceed 60%) at workplaces in the EU has decreased from 27% to 18% between 1998 and 2019“ (Nicholsonová 2022, p. 30).

- The socio-economic value of care work has to be duly taken into account. Children and relatives who need to be cared for must not pose a risk of poverty for women in the present or future. Parenting and care time must be taken into account in pensions according to their value.
- In order to obtain reliable figures regarding the issue of poverty among women, it is necessary to evaluate poverty not based on household income, but rather on the basis of individual income.
- When outsourcing work, it is necessary to consider to what an extent a subcontractor should take responsibility for violations of labour law by the outsourced workers, and how this can possibly be implemented.
- It is necessary to prevent the primary discrimination of women in relation to parenting – for example, via compulsory and longer parenting leave for fathers, which cannot be transferred to women, and by including caregiving as a personal characteristic in anti-discriminatory law, potentially reducing full-time employment to 35 hours, while simultaneously ensuring compliance with working time laws.
- EU-wide cooperation and action are needed to protect women from human trafficking.
- The tax policies of all EU Member States should not create any incentives for women not to work.
- One of the reasons why women do not defend themselves from discrimination in the professional sphere is the lack of sufficient information. Of potential use here would be to turn the employer’s publicity obligation into an obligation to inform. The publicity obligation is fulfilled when relevant laws are accessible to employees (the so-called „laws which must be posted“). The obligation to inform is much stricter and usually requires trainings.
- Other women do not defend themselves because they lack the courage to institute proceedings. Introducing a right of associations or trade unions to initiate proceedings would be one way to improve protection against discrimination. Women who cannot defend themselves alone because they lack the strength to do so could avail themselves of this opportunity. The burden of employment and caregiving deprives many women of the opportunity to rest.
- Other women do not defend themselves because they cannot afford it financially. In this case, it is important to consider whether the principle of procedural balance between the parties is truly met by the amount of legal aid provided. It must also be taken into account that „the one who loses must pay“ principle can be a significant obstacle for people in precarious employment. According to it, the side which has lost the trial has to reimburse their opponent’s costs, even if free legal aid has been granted. Of course, national laws can differ from one another on this point. These statements refer to minimum standards in the European Union.
- The company pension system must be revised, so as not to expand the gender-specific pension gap.

Chapter 2 Curriculum

Whereas the first part concerns the theoretical classification of equity and justice theories based on the status quo in Europe, the second part focuses on the micro- and meso-levels: it looks at the psychology of social discrimination and the basics of self-perception and the perception of others. The following section of the curriculum is placed at the start, because it covers the basics which allow workshop leaders to engage in self-reflection regarding gender roles with participating women – for example, through biographical or sociometric exercises.

1. What Is Social Discrimination?

The most significant and well-known definition of social discrimination belongs to US psychologist Gordon Allport (1954) and reads as follows: “Discrimination occurs when denying individuals or groups of people equality of treatment which they may wish. Discrimination includes any conduct based on a distinction made on grounds of natural or social categories, which have no relation either to individual capacities or merits, or to the concrete behavior of the individual person.” (pp. 51f.). Consequently, belonging to a social category or group and the associated unequal treatment, inasmuch as it seems illegitimate to the person concerned, are the key characteristics of discrimination. However, there is usually no consensus within a society on which unequal treatment is considered legitimate and which is considered illegitimate. For example, some men might well believe that a ban on accessing women’s shelters is unjust and illegitimate. It is also possible for some people to believe that unequal treatment under tax law to the detriment of same-sex families is legitimate. Allport’s definition, therefore, appears incomplete. According to Albert Sherr (2016): “discrimination (...) can be understood as the use of categorical, that is, ostensibly clear and precise distinctions to create, define and justify unequal treatment, thus giving rise to social disadvantages.” (p.3)

Consequently, discrimination is present only if unequal treatment results in social disadvantages. In reality, men are not socially disadvantaged by the ban on accessing women’s shelters, while the opposite is true: women’s shelters are part of the measures supported by the state, so that women can once again be brought back to a state of equality, even if this is not in itself sufficient because of a shortage of places in women’s shelters.⁶ Positive measures, therefore, do not aim to favour a person based on their belonging to a particular group, but to compensate some kind of social disadvantage. These measures, however, should always be seen as a whole. Programs for aspiring female managers, for example, if they are well-designed, are one possible way of compensating real social disadvantages. On the other hand, they increase the gap between these women and women from lower social backgrounds, if the latter are not taken into account in the respective measures.

1.1 Forms of Social Discrimination

Discrimination can take different forms: it can be individual, for example, when a woman is not offered a leadership position, because the HR manager or management think that women are not suited to leadership positions. It can also be structural – it is only since 1987 that women have been allowed to work in the police.

⁶ The continued insistence on the part of misogynistic milieus that equality means equal treatment without distinction, and that only this is in the spirit of democracy and the legislation, is as trivial as it is misguided. The requirement of differentiation applies, in one form or another, to all constitutions in Europe and states that what is equal should be treated equally, whereas what is unequal should be treated unequally in accordance with its inequality. It follows that positive measures are also in the spirit of democracy and legislation. For example, people must have not only a right to freedom of speech, but also the ability to make use of this right.

It can be institutional, too: furthermore, company procedures and processes are often structured in such a way as to be adapted to the life of a man who follows the “breadwinner model” in his personal life – and this is increasingly true for the higher positions in the company. For example, a spontaneous meeting at 18:00 or a sudden business trip are not at all problematic, as long as the wife is there to take care of the children at home and “watch the man’s back”. This concept is problematic and often times impossible for the families where both partners wish to work full-time. There is also structural discrimination regarding childcare options from 8:00 to 16:00. These structures are particularly discriminatory towards women, as they are usually those who focus more on work within the family at the expense of their pensions. In case they would like to start a career, they are expected to adhere to the norms of the privileged – while ignoring the power asymmetries caused by the de facto wage inequality and gender stereotypes.

1.2 Causes of Social Discrimination

1.2.1 Categorisation, Stereotypes and Transforming the Gender Gap

People categorise their environment in order to find their way around it. Such categories also include social categories, into which people place themselves and others in order to differentiate themselves – for example, the bipolar division into men and women that continues to be dominant. Categorisation into in-groups and out-groups is, therefore, an important starting point for developing a social identity: only by differentiating between yourself and “others” is it possible to define yourself. The beliefs about the members of a particular social category that are linked to a category and are socially shared, are called “stereotypes” and are also linked to behavioural expectations. Stereotypes, therefore, have a functional task, because they enable and facilitate interaction between ourselves and the other person, even if we have no additional information about them but the categories to which they apparently belong. Stereotypes are not necessarily wrong, but they result in exaggerating existing differences between categories and underestimating differences that exist within a single category.

Basically, studies conclude that the category of gender is not particularly significant when it comes to predicting personality traits: for example, “medical graduates are distinguished neither by typically male personality traits, such as independence and high self-esteem, nor by typically female personality traits, such as gentleness and empathy (...). In other words: if you know whether a person is self-employed, whether they belong to the medical profession or work in a kindergarten, you receive more information relevant to the work context, than if you know only whether they are male or female. Another example is their willingness to take risks. It differs more between Finnish and American self-employed persons, than between women and men in the respective countries (...). Therefore, in this case, it is more informative to know whether a person is Finnish (less willing to take risks) or American (more inclined to take risks), than to know their gender. However, there have been many attempts to research gender-specific differences when it comes to risk-taking and only several attempts to explain intercultural differences.” (Steffens & Ebert 2016, p. 7)

Stereotypes are also very resistant to change. For example, subtyping or substereotyping serve to interpret stereotype-inconsistent behaviour as an exception to the rule, so that the actual stereotype about women is even reinforced. Commonly encountered stereotypes include “the career woman” or “the emancipated woman”. The goal of dismantling prejudices through intergroup contact is a challenge precisely because of the aforementioned effect. To give an example, visiting a very liberal mosque with a female imam is not likely to enable this experience of an “emancipated” Muslim women to be generalised, so as to cover the group as a whole or at least larger parts of Muslim communities (“subgrouping”), but is more likely to reinforce the stereotype of the “oppressed”

Muslim woman, thereby perceiving the aforementioned woman as one that only reaffirms the existing rule.

Illusory correlation describes the phenomenon of false causal connections. Minorities are especially susceptible to it, because undesirable behaviour is easier to remember and transfer to the group as a whole. This also explains the frequent negative stereotyping of minorities. An example: if a student with a Turkish migration background comes late to class, it is easy to link their “tardiness” to their “Turkish migration background”. On the other hand, if a student with a Turkish migration background is always on time, this is easily ignored and does not result in a correlation between their “being on time” and their “Turkish migration background”. In the work context, this has direct consequences for performance reviews, because they require remembering the good and the not-so-good achievements. “There is a risk here of managers selectively remembering the poor performance of employees from the devalued group and the good performance of employees from the majority group” (Klocke 2019, p. 25).

In contrast with stereotypes, which can be viewed as false generalisations, prejudice is fraught with emotion and judgement. Discrimination always occurs when an attitude is linked to specific actions. The following sentence always applies: “Although most barking (antilocution) does not lead to biting, yet there is never a bite without previous barking” (Allport 1954, p. 57). Discriminatory actions are often – not always⁷ – based on prejudices, without the automatic assumption that hostile attitudes must result in social discrimination. The following graphic is intended to provide an overview of the relationship between stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination.

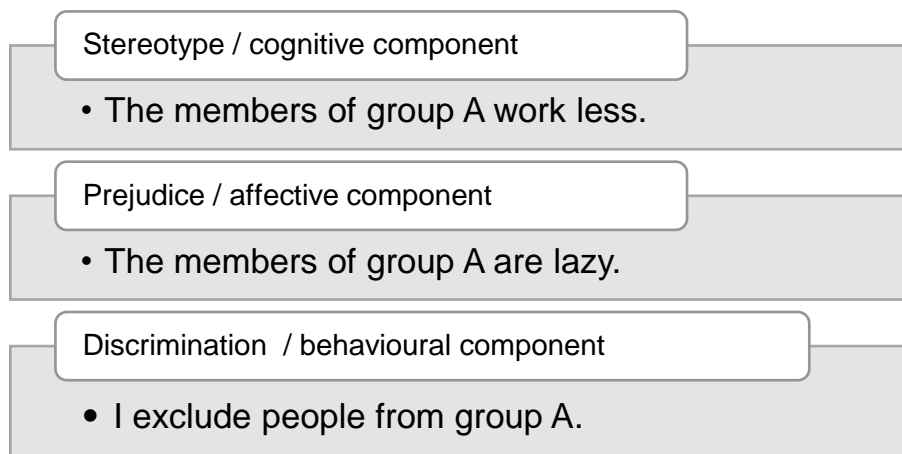


Illustration: Own Illustration Based on Zanna, M.P. & Rempel, J.K. (1988)

It is important to understand that, whereas stereotypes are fundamentally very resistant to change, they can also be context-dependent and variable. To give a historical example: the bipolar and equivalent idea of gender (rational – irrational/emotional, active – passive, strong – weak) is a result of the Enlightenment. Woman had long been perceived as more of an incomplete man – after all, she was created from a body part of Adam’s – than his opposite. In modern times, the individual was rediscovered as a rational being, giving birth to the idea of their freedom and equality. Only since that time have reason or rationality been considered male traits, whereas emotionality has been attributed to women.

⁷ Discrimination can also result from perceptual and personality trait distortion – as will be explained in this chapter. More specifically, each organisation must consider the so-called **useful illegality** as a possible cause that serves to give the organisation an advantage or, if based on individual interests, to provide a specific person with an advantage.

Accordingly, it is men who were considered to have freedom, equality and self-responsibility. This was practical, because the distinction, emerging at this time, between the private and public sphere also meant a distribution of work and household tasks, including taking care of the children. This certainly required emotionality and social skills.

At the same time, however, these abilities were transformed into something irrational – women lacked reason, as a result of which they were deprived of the right to equal education, the right to vote, the right to determine their place of residence, professional freedom, legal capacities etc. To add to this: social skills are based on cognitive abilities and are not, of course, the opposite of rationality. To this day, men and women expect women to be caring and socially competent. Female managers are considered good managers only if they are perceived as highly competent as well as sociable. Men, on the other hand, are considered good leaders even if they have social weaknesses. Although the behaviours associated with these weaknesses are not generally liked, men are forgiven (cf. Steffens & Ebert 2016 r., p. 43ff.). In both cases, stereotypes and the prejudices associated with them serve to defend traditional privileges.

1.2.2 Prejudices

While stereotypes are descriptive in nature and act as probabilistic assumptions, prejudice-based discrimination is a type of social expulsion, because there is a normative evaluation inherent in it. Interestingly, studies over the past several decades have shown a clear decline of sexist, homophobic and racist attitudes⁸, while sexist, homophobic and racist discrimination continues to exist. This is because studies are better at evaluating explicit (and not implicit) attitudes: participants give conscious replies to the questions asked. Unconscious attitudes are difficult to evaluate, and socially desirable responses also distort results. Because of this, scholars differentiate between different types of prejudices: apparent or hostile prejudices, on the one hand, and hidden, subtle or “unconscious” prejudices, on the other.

If we ask why discrimination continues, to a large extent, to shape society, we can see that, although the norm of expressing yourself in a sexist or homophobic manner has changed, individual convictions have remained more or less the same. Many people feel an incongruence, because many have already internalised the norm that they must express a positive opinion on minorities or women, but their implicit cognition tells them otherwise. Because of this, they exist in a state of dissonance, which can lead to discriminatory behaviour. But first, I would like to explain implicit cognition, which will be easier if I explain the Implicit Association Test (IAT).

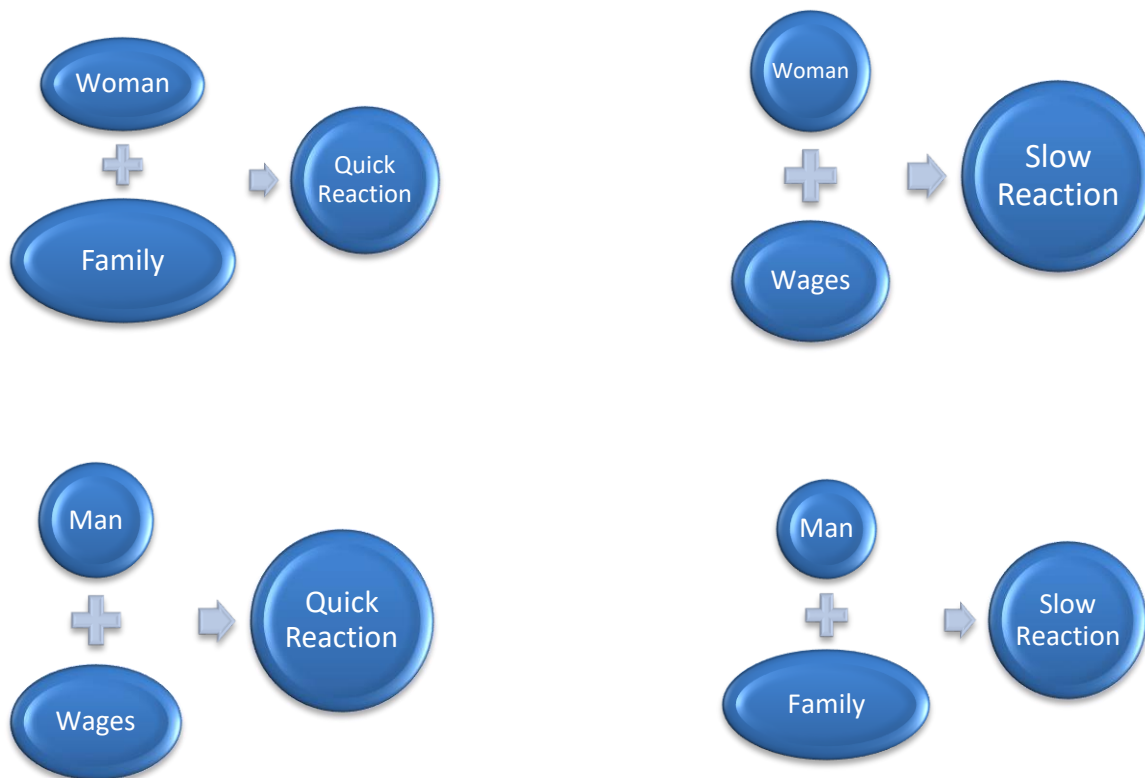
1.2.3 Implicit Cognitions

The IAT is a measuring method from social psychology. It measures the associations between elements of memory. This means that such a test is able to measure connections we do not even realise we are thinking about. These implicit cognitions can contradict explicit attitudes. It is not advisable to use such tests in seminars. The results might contradict the participant’s ideal self-concept, which may not always be constructive. If you would like to take such a test voluntarily, you can find it here: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/germany/>

It should be noted at this point that many people automatically prefer white faces to black ones, for example. The purpose of the IAT is for participants to become aware of this, because the unequal sympathies based on such irrationalities might have an impact on their behaviour at work – for example, when selecting employees.

⁸ Such as: “If jobs are scarce, men must have a greater right to work than women”; “Career-driven women are unappealing”; “Men and women have different responsibilities” etc.

The test procedures measure the reaction speed of the participant's associations of men and women with family and work. An example would look like this:



Most study participants have clear associations between women and family, on the one hand, and man and careers, on the other. If we ask ourselves who comes to mind first when HR managers are considering junior management programs, the answer should be obvious.

Implicit cognitions are not static, but can be influenced positively or negatively. For example, Arendt, Marquart and Matthes (2015) show in a study that stereotypical right-wing populist posters with images of “criminal foreigners”⁹ have a clear effect on implicit associations and, consequently, on explicit stereotypes, regardless of the previously measured explicit attitudes of the study participants and regardless of the posters’ credibility. The results can be applied to the positive and negative images of other groups, such as women, men, transsexual and homosexual people. Steffens & Ebert (2016), for example, refer to the results of studies carried out in women’s and mixed-sex colleges. “After one year, the implicit stereotypes for the students in the women’s college completely disappeared, whereas they remained the same for the students in the mixed-sex college. (...) The larger the proportion of female lecturers, the lower the implicit associations of women as “subordinate” and men as “leaders”. (p. 33)

Seeing is believing! If women and non-heterosexual people are visible in brochures, websites and in actual management positions, this has a positive effect on implicit associations and explicit stereotypes. In other words, this would improve the aforementioned groups’ promotion prospects. The token-effect effect must, however, be taken into account. “When there is but a small proportion of women at the top, women continue to be perceived as an “exception to the rule” and to be subtypified as a special group of women which is not representative of the general group of women.” (Ibid., p. 33)

⁹ The exclusively male form is used here in the German text because there were only men on all the posters displayed.

Whereas classic sexism, like classic homophobia and transphobia, often relies on biological and religious justifications, the subtler forms of group-based discrimination frequently make use of other arguments. Contemporary forms of sexism and homophobia are usually based on the so-called “allowance for incongruent beliefs”: people have internalised the norm that all individuals are equally valuable and they all must have equal rights. At the same time, they feel differently, which can be measured, for example, with the aforementioned tests. They consequently adapt their explanatory models for the unequal distribution of jobs, resources and privileges: success is always viewed as the result of hard work, whereas failure is interpreted as resulting from the lack of talent or from laziness, while the existence of discrimination is simultaneously denied. Interpreted this way, affirmative programs directly violate the egalitarian values of performance equity and equal opportunities.

These incongruences also cause a distancing from the respective group of people, such as the homosexuals and the career woman subtype. “The members of socially disadvantaged groups are treated non-verbally in a less friendly way, such as making less eye-contact during conversations, smiling less, maintaining more physical distance, or simply being asked less frequently whether they would like to participate in informal activities [...]. Sometimes, attempts are even made to exclude them” (Klocke 2019, p. 24). And it is precisely these informal networks that are so vital for increasing life chances.

Implicit and explicit reservations regarding women also lead to a reversal of the #metoo debate: instead of considering whether we can afford to employ certain men and to keep them in the company, people are convinced that certain groups of women should not be hired.

1.2.4 Perceptual Distortions

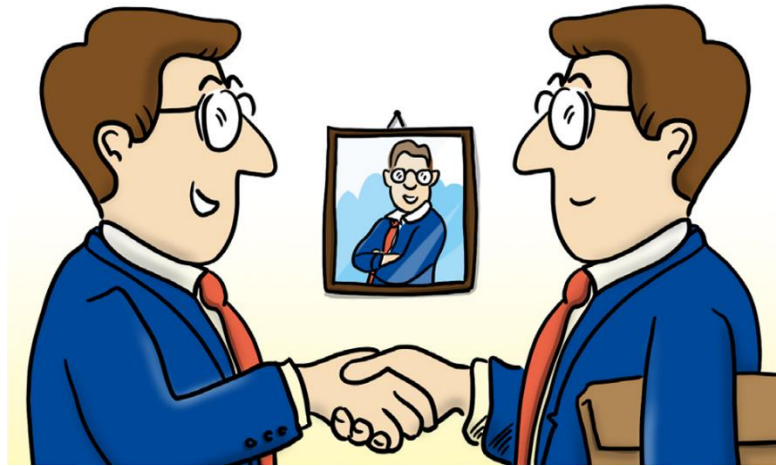
Stereotypes are false generalisations and result from the need to categorise. In contrast with prejudices, they are not based on motivational ambitions. If people reach incorrect conclusions as a result of stereotypes, this would be an attribution error. In addition to this, the so-called perceptual distortions could play a role in one’s assessment of others.

They include, among other things:

1. In-Group Advantage

The in-group tends to be evaluated more positively than the relevant out-group. Even the smallest differences – such as a preference for a certain artist or football club – could result in a higher evaluation of the in-group’s performance, compared with the performance of the group classified as the out-group.¹⁰

¹⁰ See also the theory of the minimal group according to Tajfel, Billig, Bundy & Flament (1971): an arbitrary and irrelevant distinguishing feature, such as a preference for the clover symbol over a Kandinsky picture, could now lead to discrimination. In this experiment, the participants (male) allocated less money to the other group, even when this was costly for them and was thus to the detriment of their own group. Instead of earning as much as possible for their own group, the majority of participants preferred to harm the other group, even when this means that they must also be harmed themselves. It follows that people do not act as homo oeconomicus.



You are exactly the right person for the job!

2. Pars Pro Toto Distortion

“While the devalued group is characterised by its anomic minority by those in power, the in-group – according to their self-portrayal – is represented by the best, most nomic subgroup (...): in this way, there is always plenty of proof that one’s own group is good, whereas the others’ group is bad” (Elias 1993, p. 35). Information is thus selected and interpreted in such a way as to reaffirm personal expectations. As a result of this, people find enough information to support their opinion, instead of forming it on the basis of existing information.

3. Out-group Homogeneity Effect

We perceive our own group as a collection of individuals, whereas the out-group is more often classified and homogenised. Individual members of the out-group are also more difficult to remember because of the classification. This applies above all to their positive achievements, which are more difficult to attribute to specific individuals. The illusory correlation is more likely to apply if the minority’s achievements are weak.

4. Primacy Effect

In this case, the famous first impression is crucial to the overall evaluation – even if the additional information obtained about the person suggests otherwise.

5. Contrast Effect

The contrast effect thrives on social comparison: for example, the shy work applicant is compared to her eloquent predecessor and is consequently assessed more poorly as whole, her other abilities notwithstanding. As a result of this, the applicant is no longer assessed solely based on the job’s criteria.

1.2.5 Discrimination Resulting from a Threat

Both the so-called realistic threat, which refers to a real or pre-conceived competitive situation for the material well-being of one’s own group (for example, economic or political power), and the symbolic threat, which affects the value system of the in-group, are considered threats to one’s own interests and objectives.

Material Threat

Leadership positions in companies are a sought-after and scarce commodity, which endows its owners with money, prestige and power. The stronger the impression men leave on women – or

vice versa – or the stronger the impression one social group leaves upon another, the more prejudices are reinforced (see Riek, & Gaertner 2006). The so-called women's quota thus constitutes compensation for actual discrimination in the workplace, but simultaneously poses a threat to male privileges, because it makes it difficult for comparably mediocre men to rise to higher positions.

Symbolic Threat

“In our society, femininity is perceived as something which is acquired biologically, whereas one must fight for masculinity and prove it again and again.” (Klocke 2014) Masculinity is therefore an uncertain concept, which makes it more susceptible to symbolic threats. This explains why homosexuality is devalued more among men: masculinity is something which can be lost and must be proven repeatedly. Distinguishing oneself from everything that is considered feminine is thus part of this concept. “Homophobic statements are an effective method of distancing oneself from “non-male-gay” people. For both men and women, the stricter the gender traditions, the stricter the ideas about what constitutes a real man or woman, the more homophobic the ideas. This applies even more so to people with a heterosexual self-concept, who experience erotic attraction to the same sex” (Adams, Wright & Lohr 1996).

The more fragile the self-concept, the greater the threat. Steffens and Ebert refer to numerous studies which are associated with the devaluation of all things feminine. “The studies show that men's self-esteem increases when they learn that they have performed poorly a task which women perform much better than men (e.g. Reinhard et al. 2009). The mechanism described goes so far that failure can evoke positive feelings.” (Steffens & Ebert 2016, p. 61)

1.3 Effects of Social Discrimination

1.3.1 Health Effects

„If you go into a restaurant and get a totally lousy service, you know it's for one reason. They do a totally lousy service. I go into a restaurant and I get totally lousy service, I don't know why ... Is it because I am black or is it because ... it's a bad service person?“ (quoted in Smith & Mackie 2007, p. 212)

Stigmatised groups and lower-status groups always face the problem of attributive ambiguity: did they fail to get the job because they are black, could get pregnant, because of a headscarf or a disability, which the employer thinks would not fit well in the work environment, or the reason is simply that the other applicant had better qualifications? Hansen and Sassenberg (2008) conclude that, because of such stress, “members of stigmatised groups are exposed to a greater risk of psychological as well as psychologically related physical illnesses, such as depression, high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke, compared to members of non-stigmatised groups” (p. 260). If the members of disadvantaged groups attribute their rejection to the prejudices of others, this initially brings relief to those affected – the miserable situation was not caused by them. At the same time, confronting rejection becomes an internalised part of the social identity. So there is always an element of pressure and relief. People who develop a fear of rejection deplete their self-regulatory capacities relatively quickly. As a result of this, their performance also decreases (Ibid., p. 262f.).

Below, I will give a short practical example on the topic of explanatory uncertainty. For the people belonging to disadvantaged groups, it is often not clear whether a particular action is linked to their group membership or not. This is the case with Melania, who will probably never be able to find out

whether the act was motivated by sexism or not. The only thing certain is that was that the members of disadvantaged groups are more often judged on the basis of non-professional arguments.

Since graduating a year ago, Melania has been working as an environmental engineer for a non-governmental organisation in Amsterdam. As part of a consulting assignment, she presented her suggestions to a council of 10 people. The presentation was carefully prepared and she had dedicated a lot of time to its preparation in order to be certain that all will go well for this important assignment. After the lunch break, the CEO intercepted her and asked whether he might give her some good advice about the presentation. Melania replied uncertainly: "Yes, I'd be happy to hear it". The CEO then explained: "The topic you presented was actually very interesting. But I would like to give you a tip, if I may: do you realise how often you used the words "well" and "okay" in your sentences? I was writing them down at first, but at some point I stopped, because I couldn't listen to you anymore. It really is a pity, but you have lost half of your audience because of this". At this point, it is sufficient to say, and no further explanation is required, that such experiences are detrimental to one's career in the long-term.

1.3.2 Stereotype Threat

This theory examines the effects stereotypes and prejudices have on the person concerned. It is based on the assumption that negative stereotypes are perceived as a threat, if the person affected fears to be judged on the basis of a negative stereotype and fears confirming the stereotype for their own group. How, then, do stereotypes and threats affect the people subject to them? Steele et al. were able to prove in US studies that African Americans really do produce significantly poorer language test results when confronted with the stereotype "Black people cannot express themselves so elaborately", compared to situations in which the stereotype was not relevant. Identifying at least slightly with the stereotype (as a woman, I am/can; as a black person, I am/can etc.) is the prerequisite for activating the stereotype threat. Its effects have been demonstrated in relation to "the mathematics test performance of girls and women (Keller & Dauenheimer, 2003), the verbal test performance of people with families from lower social backgrounds (Croizet & Claire, 1998), and the memory performance of elderly people (Rahhal, Hasher & Colcombe, 2001)". (Keller, 2008 r., p. 90f). The significance of the test results should by no means be underestimated, because they testify to the impact that an affirmative or a disparaging view can have on others. Self-perception, one's own social identity and self-regulation skills are key factors which influence the test results. Stereotype threats are also detrimental to employees' work achievements. In order to activate them, it is sufficient to subtly emphasise one's belonging to a particular group – for example, if noting one's gender, male or female, before a math test is an option. If the female gender stereotype is not salient, the groups taking the test produce the same results.

1.3.3 Consequences for the Company

The effect on the health of affected groups, of course, has consequences for the company as a whole (sick leave, reduced productivity etc.). Stereotype threats also affects the employees' performance. Additionally, there is increased employee turnover, general loss of cooperation in the company and, in particular circumstances, further costs due to legal proceedings in the event of proven discrimination. It is also the case that social discrimination prevents the selection of those employees who are the most well-suited to the company and its positions, which has a negative effect on the company's general competitiveness. Always selecting similar people for different positions within the company hinders creative potential, makes it difficult for the company to optimally adapt to market needs and results in a general – to put it colloquially – operational blindness.

2. Preparing and Conducting Seminars and Training Sessions

The following section provides the reader with information and methods for preparing and conducting seminars. Implementing these methods requires prior familiarity on the part of the workshop leader with the topic of gender equality and precarious employment, especially if the seminars' objective is the participants' empowerment and personal development, in which case they will respond spontaneously and freely to the questions. When they report what comes to mind, the seminar leader's role is to interpret and take into account this information. This requires extensive self-reflection and personal involvement in the topic. For example, working with biographies is essentially an attempt to uncover hidden (cultural) patterns of thinking, perceiving, feeling and wanting, in order to create a starting point, from which the participants can independently re-acquire their life practices and assume reflected political positions. This is empowerment.

The methods are aimed primarily at working with precariously employed women. The project suggestions are mostly aimed at groups, rather than individuals. In spite of this, the methods and questions supplied can also be used in personal training sessions. Due to the primary target group, some of the methods are certainly more personal – for example the aforementioned exercises based on biographies. If the context is more formal, however – for instance, if you for example receive a request to conduct training on preventing and intervening in harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace – you will need to adapt the methods and questions accordingly.

The following information is important at this point:

- Teaching anti-discriminatory law always requires a good grasp of the national law in the relevant area.
- It is possible that requested topics have not been covered in the previous chapters or have not been explored in depth. This publication is an introduction to the topic, and not a comprehensive or conclusive work. Despite this, it contains numerous links to additional information (for example, on the topic of equality in collective agreements). Appropriate addresses include relevant national contact points or, at the European level, EIGE (European Institute for Gender Equality: <https://eige.europa.eu/>).
- In our work seminars, we like to alternate between activating teaching methods and inputs. This is why we initially thought about making our PowerPoint presentations – that is, the inputs from our seminars – available for this curriculum. However, due to the highly personalised nature of the approaches, which are based on customer preferences, we decided not to do it. At this stage, we recommend combining activating teaching methods with inputs in a way that is suited to the target group.
- The methods listed below do not form a fixed sequence for a seminar, but are separate modules, which can be combined individually or supplemented with your own materials and methods.

We wish you many successful and inspiring events!

2.1 Seminar Preparation

Before holding a seminar, it is necessary to answer the following content-based and organisational questions:

Objectives and Target Group

- What are the seminar's objectives?
- What secondary objectives must be met?
- Who is the target group?
- How should the target group be addressed?
- Do the participants' objectives correspond to the customer's objectives? What should be taken into account, if this is not the case?

Content

- What should be conveyed?
- Which are the main points?
- What content and which methods are appropriate, given the objectives, the target group and the size of the group?
- What preparation needs to be made?

Space

- Determine the time and venue
- The classroom (its size, its equipment) must suit the methods; additional rooms might be required (e.g. for group work)
- Technical equipment, moderation materials, other equipment
- Type of catering

Use of Methods

The methods must be well-suited to the objective, target audience, venue and the trainer

- Do the seminar's content and methods meet its objectives?
- Do they correspond to the prior knowledge and experience of the participants?
- Do they enable participant-oriented learning and encourage communication?
- Do they allow the participants to alternate between phases of concentration and relaxation?

Seminar Planning

Before holding a seminar, you have to determine a schedule, which can have the following structure:

No	Duration	Content	Method	Materials
1	30 minutes	Getting to know each other, warm-up	Questions to help participants get to know each other	Flipchart, pens, pinboard, pinboard paper (for cases which you will work on later)
2	1 hour	Initial orientation, personal positioning on the topic	Sociometry	Sufficient space, possibly masking tape for marking spaces or lines in the room
3	Break			
4	30 minutes	Summary of what has happened so far, Inputs	PowerPoint	Screen or projector, laptop, connection cable
Etc. ...				

Trainers should view this plan as a **guide**. Spontaneous adjustments might be necessary.

Feedback Rules

Providing Feedback

- Speak in the first person; express your own perspective.
- Describe the behaviour instead of interpreting it; avoid moral judgments.
- Identify specific situations.
- Only address behaviour which can be influenced.
- Admit the possibility that you could have been wrong.
- Give feedback as soon as possible after the behaviour: the quicker, the more efficient.
- At the end of the feedback, ask participants how they are feeling.

Receiving Feedback

- Listen until the end.
- Ask questions to understand better.
- Do not argue or defend yourself.
- Treat feedback as an opportunity for development.

2.2 Methods

2.2.1 Arriving, Greeting and Getting to Know Each Other

Arriving

Description

Participants are offered drinks and snacks. They can stand around the tables and begin conversing.

Duration

- approximately 30 minutes

Materials

- Coffee, cookies, space

Objectives

- Creating a pleasant atmosphere for those arriving
- Providing initial contact and conversation opportunities
- Reducing inhibitions

Greeting and Getting to Know Each Other

Questions on Flipchart Paper

Description

A few easy-to-answer questions allow participants to get to know each other in a relaxed manner and give initial input on the topic. The seminar leader begins the seminar in such a way as to let all participants know who is standing before them and how they can put the method into practice. Inhibitions are reduced by discussing own personal „problems“ relevant to the topic. The questions below are examples taken from an intercultural course for careworkers and must be adapted by

trainers to suit the relevant situation and topic. Trainers must always decide which questions are appropriate.

Time approach

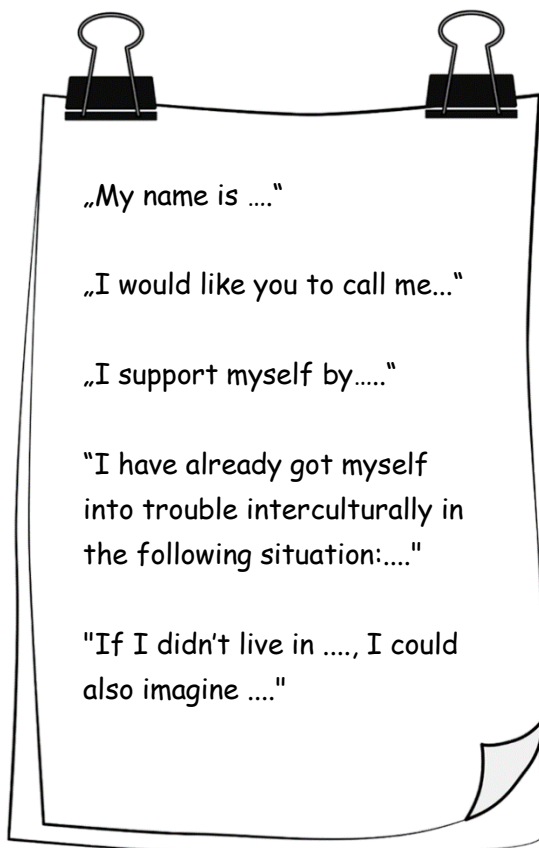
- 30 minutes

Materials

- Flipchart and pens
- Pinboard, pins and paper for writing down and organising cases, which you will work through later on

Objectives

- Getting to know each other in a relaxing atmosphere
- The personal question at the end is also a self-statement about the person.
- Based on the personal question, participants come to discover potential shared or opposite interests and new perspectives



Flipchart for Professional Development

First and family name.

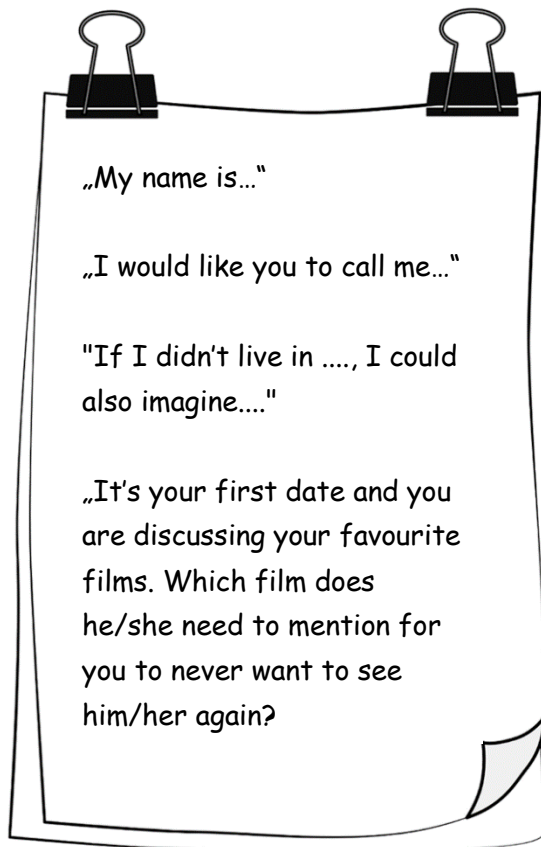
The trainer makes an initial assessment of the work context and scope for action, which they can later take into account when working on cases.

The trainer is already gathering relevant cases for the seminar and asks the questions: „For example, have you ever had an intercultural misunderstanding, have you ever felt discriminated against, or are there certain behaviours that you just don't respond to very well?“

The trainer gives the participants the opportunity to introduce themselves and share their personal interests and preferences.

If women meet outside of a professional context, the trainer must decide whether it is appropriate to ask questions about their professions.

As above, the last question aims to lighten the mood. Context determines how „intimate“ a question can be.



Flipchart for Non-Professional Empowerment Contexts

First and last name, nickname.

The objective of all questions is for the participants to get to know each other and be able to work in a relaxed atmosphere.

2.2.2 Exercises Based Around Introducing Biographies

Description

Reflecting on your own life is the basis of working with biographies. This approach is suited to all target groups, because we are all constantly concerned with ourselves and the course of our lives. The trainer's task is to help people become aware of the interweaving of self-perception and worldview, which usually happens unconsciously. The challenge and goal of empowerment processes is, therefore, to uncover hidden cultural patterns of thinking, perceiving, feeling and wanting, in order to create a starting point, from which the participants can independently re-acquire their life practices and assume reflected political positions. The creed of working with biographies is: "If you want to know who you are, you have to know where you come from, in order to see where you want to go!" (Jean Paul). Even our most private interpersonal relationships are political, because this personal life of ours is also regulated by fashion, customs, conventions and law, and thus reflects society's self-image. And these worldviews, molded into fashions, customs, conventions and law, influence and sometimes even determine our relationship with ourselves. All institutions we go through in life (for example, kindergarten, school, marriage), are also institutionalised mirrors of our worldviews and contain judgements, as it should be and as it is.

2.2.2.1 Exemplary Exercises

A. Exercises for Introducing Oneself "My Name"

Description

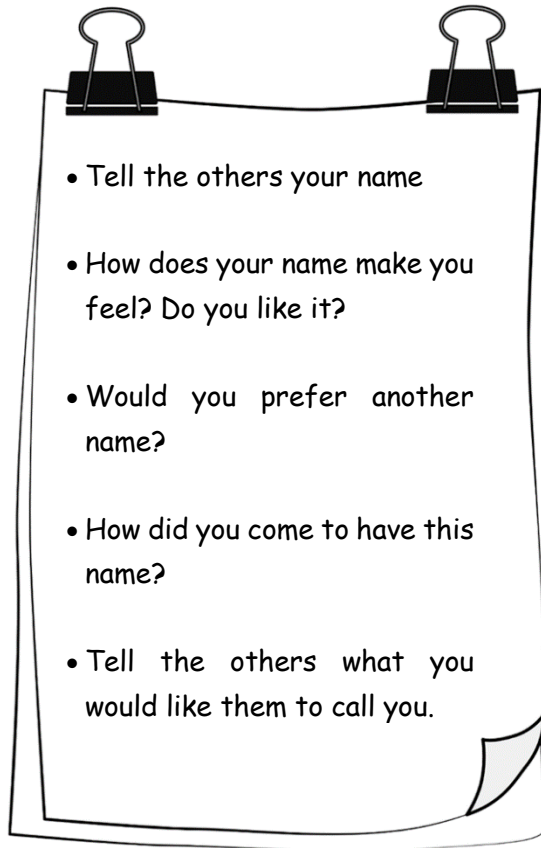
This is an alternative version of the aforementioned exercise for getting to know one another. Here, participants analyse their names by using the questions below:

Duration

- 30-45 minutes

Materials

- Flipchart with the following questions:



Objectives

- Helping the participants to get to know each other.
- Reflecting on the name's meaning for the participant himself/herself.
- Reflecting on the positive and negative associations linked to the name: they can tell the workshop leader a lot about the person's self-image

B. Exercise "My Last Photograph"

Description

The women are invited to show their neighbour the last photo they took with their mobile phone and to tell them something about it:

- Where was the photo taken?
- What situation does it show?
- What does it mean to the person who took it?

Duration

- 5-10 minutes

Materials

- Mobile phone

Objectives

- Helping the participants to get to know each other personally.
- We don't live in a gender-neutral environment. The life events described as part of this exercise will likely be typical of the women's biographies. As seminar leader, respond to them individually and, if possible, try to connect to the group as a whole.

C. Exercise "A Silent Conversation"

Description

Divide the group into pairs. Participants are forbidden to speak during the exercise, but they are permitted to use facial movements, as well as body language. The pair must decide who is A and who is B. A begins, then they switch places. The seminar leader determines the topics and gives the participants approximately 2 minutes per topic. At the end, the trainer asks evaluation questions.

Possible topics include:

- Tell the other person something about your life situation.
- Tell them about your favourite leisure activity.
- Describe what you like and, respectively, do not like about yourself.
- Tell the other person about your future goals.
- Explain why you are in this group.

Possible evaluation questions include:

- What did you learn about one another?
- How did that make you feel?
- Was it easy to handle the situation without speaking?
- How easy or difficult was it to communicate with your counterpart?

Duration

- 15-20 minutes

Objectives

- Our society is strongly focused on verbal communication. How easy is it for participants to communicate non-verbally and do they feel comfortable doing it?
- Depending on the question, it is possible to include topics which play an important role, especially in the women's biographies. Address them when it is appropriate to do so.

D. Exercise "The Wall of Triumph and the Wall of Tears"

Description

In version 1, the participants write down their achievements on a big paper star and attach it to a pinboard. In version 2, the participants write down on a „paper stone“ what they are dissatisfied with and how they would prefer the situation to develop. It is possible to combine the two exercises or to use them at different times.

Version 1: "The Wall of Triumph"

The star shows what is currently going very well. The workshop leader examines the star of each participant. The other participants listen. Possible evaluation questions include:

- Why are things going so well?
- Should this situation remain unchanged?

Version 2: „The Wall of Tears“

Each participant writes down on her „paper stone“ what she is dissatisfied with, what she would like or wouldn't like to happen. Possible evaluation questions include:

- Who do we blame for this?
- What might help improve things?

Duration

- 1 hour

Objectives

Version 1

- The participants receive encouragement.
- The participants reflect on their successes.
- The participants are encouraged to strengthen their self-affirmation.

Version 2

- The participants analyse which situations can be influenced and which cannot (internal control – external control).
- They define steps for exerting internal control during unpleasant situations.

E. Exercise "Daily Routine"

Description

From getting up in the morning, to going to bed in the evening, the participants record their daily routine in the table supplied below. They also record their mood – by using either a verb or an emoji (smiling – neutral – bad mood).

DAILY ROUTINE				
NAME				
TIME	WORKDAY	MOOD	WEEKEND	MOOD

Duration

- 1,5 hour

Materials

- The copy of the table for each participant (ideally print it out in A3 size)
- Pinboard for pinning notes following the exercise

Objectives

- Step-by-step, the participants work through stressful situations and empowering situations.
- Together with the seminar leader, they reflect on possible ways of expanding empowering situations, ways of coping with and changing stressful situations.
- Autonomy and self-determination are discussed at appropriate points during the exercise.
- Participants reflect on the role of women in everyday life and, in case of dissatisfaction, they analyse the potential for change, in order to make it possible to break free of imposed elements. The workshop leader supports them with questions (for example: Why is this your job? Was it agreed that you do this or that?)

2.2.3 Sociometry

Description

When conducting socioemetric exercises, participants are positioned in the room based on how they respond to the questions asked by the workshop leader. They can be positioned in a line, for example, if the participants are requested to line up according to their length of service. The room can be divided into two or more parts, if the leader asks the participants to line up as „still tired“ (left side) and „well rested“ (right side). The entire group is set in motion, and all participants can be included. This prevents extroverts from dominating the seminar. The exercise encourages internal flexibility by conveying the different attitudes, values and life situations of the participants.

Duration

45 minutes – 1,5 hour

Materials

Sufficient space is required for the exercise. If only one room is available, it would be a good idea to ask for a circle of chairs to be placed in it. The participants can only push their chairs back a little, and the exercise can be carried out in the middle of the room.

Objectives

- A relaxing and inclusive introduction to the topic
- Raising awareness about similarities and differences
- Encouraging respect for other opinions and experiences
- Differentiated opinion formation
- Developing and articulating positions
- Becoming aware of reference group affiliations
- External and internal activation
- A sense of personal belonging, marginalisation, adopting a position, dealing with ambivalence
- Introducing the seminar's topics: belonging, exclusion, conformity, discrimination

Methods used

- Positioning in the room in response to questions called out by the leader
- Reflection on/Discussion of results

Explanations for the Participants

I will now ask you a few questions, and I will ask you to comment on them. I will tell you in advance whether you need to line-up in two or more parts of the room, or in a single line. The following always applies to the setup:

- You decide where to position yourself.
- Even if I ask you why you have positioned yourself the way you have, you decide what to tell me.
- It is not necessary to commit to a single position. What happens if you like how one of the other participants has positioned themselves and would like to try a different position after you have heard about it? Do it, if you wish!

Questions for Positioning the Participants

A) Introductory/Practice Questions

Tired or Well-rested? If you are tired, please stand on the left-hand side, and if you are well-rested, please stand on the right-hand side?

Evaluation Questions:

- What would you recommend to those who are tired in order for them to be as well-rested as you are feeling today?
- How would you respond to the advice of the well-rested participants?
- Why are you so feeling so tired today?

How long have you been working in this company?

(if this is a training session for the employees of a company)

Ask the participants to position themselves in a line based on their length of service with the company.

Evaluation Questions:

- Based on your experience, what advice would you give the „newbies“?
- What would you like to see the „old hands“ do?

How long have you lived in this neighbourhood?

(If it is a neighbourhood project)

Ask the participants to position themselves based on how long they have lived in the neighbourhood.

Evaluation questions:

- To the long-time residents: Which is the best place here? What do the „newbies“ really need to see?
- To the new resident: What would you have taken with yourself from the old neighbourhood?
- As new residents, what do you particularly like here?

B) Questions about Belonging

Where were you born? A question in three stages

For this exercise, the room is divided into three. As a seminar leader, you determine the distances during the first stage. During the second stage, you ask about the participants' parents and their grandparents.

Example:

Step 1: Where were you born?

Field 1: In Lublin

Field 2: Within 100 km from Lublin

Field 3: Abroad

Step 2: Where were your parents born?

Field 1: In Lublin

Field 2: Within 100 km from Lublin

Field 3: Abroad

Step 3: Where were your grandparents born?

Field 1: In Lublin

Field 2: Within 100 km from Lublin

Field 3: Abroad

Evaluation

When the trainer asks these questions, it often becomes apparent that there have been "migrations" within the family systems and that some of them continue to exert an influence even today. In addition to the classic biographies, there are often involuntary migration movements – determined by escape and/or resettlement – in both families of German origin and families with a history of immigration. Migration, as well as escape and resettling, are experiences which a lot of families have gone through, and they continue to happen. The environment we live in has an influence on our worlds, paths and opportunities. Depending on the group, topics might include: urban or country life, life in a dictatorship or a democracy, in a specific region of the country etc.

Possible Questions

How have these particular experiences been described within the family?

Are there any stories/traditions which still have an impact today?

What does personal history mean in relation to the social events of today?

C) Personal Experiences with Discrimination

Introduction

The workshop leader gives an introduction of what discrimination is and explains the criteria based on which it can occur (gender, age etc.). Characteristics that are not protected by law – for example, social background – should also be taken into account. Then, the leader should explain that discrimination can be apparent (for example, touching a woman's rear without asking permission) and less obvious, in which case the people affected might be very uncertain as to how to explain the event. Examples: Was I not promoted because of my age or was it because of me personally? Why is my employer, neighbour etc. always so hostile to me? Is it because he/she is just rude, or because I am black/lesbian/something else?

- Question: How many of you have experienced discrimination?

Those who have experienced discrimination should stand on the left-hand side, while those who have not experienced it should stand on the right.

Evaluation

Attention! This question should be approached with great sensitivity. Hidden or repressed feelings might become active again. The answer to the question of why a particular participant is on the side of those discriminated against has to be given voluntarily and without encouragement by the workshop leader. If there are no participants who are able to answer this question during the training session, it is recommended that you provide examples taken from other people's experiences or from your own experience. It is also possible to ask whether anyone has been a witness to a discriminatory act. It is often the case that the inhibition threshold is lower, if you position other people, rather than yourself. Despite this, the trainer must be prepared for the eventuality that the observed discriminatory experience might be the participant's own.

- **Subsequent question:** Which one of you would like to (voluntarily) share why they are standing here?
- **Question for participants who have not experienced discrimination:** What do you think of this, now that you have heard? Do you know anyone who has experienced something similar?

If the mood and the group allows, you might ask the following position-related question:

- **Which one of you has discriminated against another person?**

The workshop leader proceeds in the same way as with the previous question: points out two areas in the room and names them. It is important to emphasise that participants' positioning should be voluntary, and no one is forced to talk about the discriminatory act.

Questions on the Topic „Is This Discrimination?“

The following questions do not relate directly to personal experiences, but have the following functions:

- The participants encounter how discrimination might look like. This also raises awareness among people who are less affected by discrimination.
- The participants familiarise themselves with different positions. Whether a particular action is viewed as discriminatory often, but not always, depends on the context in which the participants place the situation. This occurs much more often than personal-subjective differences, which, of course, can also exist.
- The questions make a particularly appropriate introduction, if the objective is to convey legal principles. The participants are made aware of legal terminology in a low-threshold manner. In any case, the workshop leader must acquire the terminology to the necessary extent before the seminar. The leader subsequently translates what the participants say into legal vocabulary, so that the participants know which (legal and non-legal) options for action are available and in which situations.
- After the sociometric exercises, the most important legal basics can be conveyed as classic input using a PowerPoint presentation.

- The participants position themselves on a line ranging from 0% (no discrimination) at one end to 100% (definitely discrimination) at the other.
The trainer must be able to react spontaneously to their answers.

The following answers are encountered frequently and can be translated as follows:

- "That depends on the context."
 - "So you mean this depends on all the circumstances of the individual case?"
- " This really isn't so bad."
 - "You mean that there is still no violation of dignity?"
- "As long as it's okay for both people."
 - " You mean, as long as the action is not undesirable".
 - "As long as it is possible to freely say "No!" at any time". At this point, it makes sense to address hierarchies in the company.
- "If this happens frequently, it will affect the atmosphere at work negatively as far as the person is concerned."
 - "You mean, in "legislative language", that a hostile environment is created?"
- "So, if they always call me that/treat me like that. Then I have no longer any chances in the company."
 - "You mean that this behaviour is disadvantageous for the person. If you are always treated as the cute bunny, you cannot become a leader."
- "You think that this behaviour is detrimental to the person. Then, of course, it doesn't matter whether the action was intended to be kind, funny or something else. What matters is the adverse effect."
- "Well, that is definitely a disadvantage because you are a woman."
 - "This means a gender-specific disadvantage. Are there other characteristics, apart from gender, that come into question when discussing discrimination?"

At this point, the participants familiarise themselves with the protected group characteristics, and the trainer could point out the differences between bullying and discrimination.

The following questions can be used, if the trainer himself/herself knows how to classify the cases. I have commented on individual statements:

- A man (romantically motivated) says to his female colleague: "I like you. Would you like to go out to dinner with me?"
 - Does this guarantee the possibility of freely saying "No!"?
- A man accompanies a woman on the way out of a room and touches her lower back.
 - Context and the exact position of his hand are crucial.
 - The threshold of relevance is probably not exceeded (it depends on the position and the context).
- A man says to his black female colleague: "I love women with chocolate skin!"
 - Affected characteristics include gender and "race".
 - Even if the threshold of relevance is not exceeded (key phrase: violation of dignity), when we take all the circumstances into consideration, this is, ultimately, problematic and discriminatory behaviour – while not necessarily classified as such in the legal sense.
- A woman refers condescendingly to her male colleague with impaired vision during a meeting: "Be brief, blindworm!"
 - Harassment: Violation of dignity, undesirable behaviour: the employer is obligated to take action.
- A manager during a work interview: "We would like to hire you as an accountant, if you can imagine taking off your headscarf at work. My colleagues just won't understand this".

- A female boss to her female employee: “I am sorry, but we only offer the position of cleaning staff manager to full-time employees.”
 - Check if this is indirect gender-specific discrimination in your country, if the position was generally suitable to part-time employees.
- You are not promoted, because you have a child with disabilities. There is a concern that you will spend a lot of time caring for the child at the expense of work.
- Two male colleagues meet over coffee: „Wow, if I had known you were a fag, I would never have met with you. Just keep your hands off me. You are disgusting.“
- You have a black colleague at work. Another colleague has recently started placing bananas on his desk. He doesn’t do that to his white colleagues.
- A man or woman to their female colleague at work: „Your tits show your three pregnancies.“
- A heterosexual man shows a homosexual colleague a photo with a naked man on it and says: „You are into that kind of thing, aren’t you?“.
- A man writes to his female colleague in the work-themed WhatsApp chat of colleagues: „Hey, Maria, if your promotion doesn’t work out, you can always sleep your way up!“ (emoji: winking smiley face).

2.2.4 Working with Questions

Description

As trainers, our task is to accompany people (and organisations) in situations of change. The question is an important tool here. Good questions are especially important when the training program reaches a sensitive stage. They are more distant than the sociometric invitation to position oneself. The person (people) asked – at least in the case of open questions – has/have more freedom to decide on their answers. At the same time, needless to say, the questions are always requests (Patrzek 2008): by asking a question the respondee is requested to reply.

A good question is:

- personal
- activating
- specific
- brief
- open

Exemplary question: „What is something that you definitely do not want to miss in your life?“

The questions can relate to the past, to both the past and the present, to current situations and the future.

Many recommended books have been written about how questions can be implemented in different settings. At this stage, it is not possible to offer an in-depth introduction on the topic. If you are interested, the book of Andreas Patrzek (2021) is certainly a good starting point: *Systemic Questions: Professional Questioning Skills for Managers, Consultants and Coaches*.

Below, we offer selected questions we have had good experience working with.

Self-assessment Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which quirks of yours make you smile at yourself? • What is one thing you definitely do not want to miss in your life? • Who, in your opinion, leads an interesting and good life? Why? How would you wish to live?
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role-models did you have as a teenager? What about now? • What is the best gift you have ever given? • When reflecting on personal stereotypes and prejudices, which is (also) among the topics covered in this publication, the following question is definitely appropriate: How often do you manage to observe people without judging them?
Questions About Wanting Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your most important goal at present? What would be the smallest step in that direction? • If you think about the stated goal which you haven't yet achieved: Who could you blame for not achieving it? • How could you successfully prevent your life or your current project from developing as you want it to? • If you could change one aspect of your personality overnight – which one would you choose?

It is important for people and groups to clearly define their goals following phases of reflection and to carefully research the actual potential for changing the goal by asking questions (What would be different then? How would you know that you have achieved your goal?). The next stage is to determine the necessary steps toward the goal (if the goal is achievable). It might be important to pose the question of whether one is willing to compromise: Would you also agree to? But? (for example, if the alternative provided is rejected). What could you do without?

The following table can help with implementation:

Vision(s)	Goal(s)	Challenges and Obstacles	Resources	Actions/Measures	Support

Duration

- Cannot be specified: Depends on the number of questions and the intensity of individual evaluations

Materials

- Flipchart
- Evaluation table, if necessary

Objectives

- Can be found in the description.

Chapter 3 Biographies of Precariously Employed Women in Europe

Just as we began with the biography of one affected woman – Nathalie – so the present publication ends with exemplary stories about women in similar situations. The *Work at All Costs?* project allowed us to enter into a productive and intensive exchange with our project partners in Poland, Lithuania, Italy and Bulgaria. All of us spoke with affected women locally, and we heard the same or similar stories. We have documented three stories in a film. It is available here:

<https://www.eza.org/en/topics/equal-opportunity/#c7486s>

In view of the biographies below, we will reiterate the meaning of the term „labour market integration“: income that provides livelihood long-term and is also secure in the event of temporary unemployment, long-term illness or retirement, the guarantee of psychological and physical integrity in the workplace, and a certain degree of social recognition.

At this point we would like to thank the women for the stories they told us, as well our project partners for sharing them with us, and other cooperation partners in the European Union, who helped us because the topic is important to them. Our project and cooperation partners provided examples of formal and legal work only. In the present publication we briefly examined undeclared work and other forms of illegal work: of course, caregivers and cleaners in private households, harvest workers etc. also play an important role in the area of precarious employment, but we would need a separate publication for them. However, we would like to add an example of illegal work to the examples below. It concerns human trafficking aimed at sexually exploiting girls and women. That case can be found in the publication *Human Trafficking: Slavery in the 21st Century* (Skinner 2008).

1. Tatjana, Amsterdam

Tatjana is studying at a university in Bucharest when she loses her part-time job in a phone shop. Her boyfriend of six months suggests that she work as an au pair in Amsterdam for a year. This would help her finance her future education. At the time, she doesn't realise his sole reason for remaining by her side was to eventually sell her. After taking her to Amsterdam, he hands her over to the pimps and disappears. The traffickers threaten her that, if she tries to escape, something bad will happen to her family. In the following years, she has to allow herself to be raped by up to 15 men every night. To quote her tormentors' words: „When a car comes, you say 25 euro. If someone asks you something personal, just say the price " (Skinner 2008).

According to the UN, 72% of the victims of human trafficking are girls and women (UN, 2023).

2. Maria, Gdansk

Maria lives and works in Gdansk, a large city in Poland situated on the Baltic coast. In her job as a cleaner, a position as a team leader will be made available next year. The position would be a good prospect for her: more working hours, more money per hour, more pleasant and family-friendly working hours and a broader and more exacting range of tasks. This is why she wants to apply for the job – her colleague Kristof wants the same. He begins to harass Maria: at first, with unpleasant sexual comments, and later – physically, by grabbing her between the legs and telling her what he would like to do to her, should the „opportunity“ present itself. This harassment happens without witnesses. Maria faces a choice: to report it or not? Could she trust the company she was working for or no? Would they believe her, if she made it public? Would they intervene and stop the harassment? Or would she be the one they would not believe – perhaps they might even fire her for it? Or maybe she would be the one who would, from now on, be branded as the one who was

sexually harassed, the one you had better be careful with, the one with whom it would be better not to be alone in the elevator? If she did not report the case and remained, she would continue to be harassed. And what if Kristof carried out his threats? Subsequently, Maria decides to choose another alternative: she leaves the company and starts work as a cleaner. Kristof is appointed as team leader.

3. Emma, Cologne

For a year now, Emma has been working for a personnel service provider in Cologne (Germany) as a specialist in finances and accounting. The job advertisement claimed: „Newcomers welcome!“. The job, for her, was an opportunity to once again work full-time. The fixed salary was not high, but there was a great commission model – so they claimed. She had trained in retail in a clothes shop, but after completing her education, there had only been part-time jobs and minijobs (a special form of employment in Germany) available. Now, her workday looks as follows: between 7:00 and 9:00 a.m. she makes lists of approximately 50 companies and people, whom she must then call between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. in order to talk to them. During that time, she has to make 25 „qualified“ calls in order to reach the set goals. It only counts as a call if she speaks to a „decision-maker“. If she doesn't succeed, she has to work longer, until she makes the necessary 25 calls. And this is the case every single time. It usually takes an hour to complete all calls for attracting personnel. These calls cost her a lot of effort, because many companies no longer wish to be disturbed over the phone. There are so many personnel service providers on the market, and they are constantly trying to call. „Don't bother me any more! I, too, have work to do!“ – so say potential customers. „I will call you if I need anything!“ is another frequent excuse.

But Emma is encouraged to call even if it is against the customer's wishes. If she doesn't, others would get the job when an order came up. The time for interviewing applicants begins after the lunch break. She has to conduct three interviews per day. Evaluations are then written, and positions are sought for the candidates, interviews and customer visits are appointed, application documents are verified and job advertisements are published. Each employee is expected to reach a monthly mediation sum of 30 000 euro. This is an incredibly high goal, which can only be achieved if one remains in the office from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and disregards one's guilty conscience. Just recently, she had to place a person in a company where the work environment is terrible – five people who want to quit have given her their documents so she can find them new jobs. In the open-plan office, those who don't produce the necessary numbers are easily noticed. Calls are made only while standing, so that the employees' voices can sound „more energetic“, according to the managers. That way, everyone knows who is currently on the „hit list“ and what would happen if their own month isn't so good. Emma works with 9 people initially. 7 of them are then dismissed during their probationary periods, and another employee is currently in the situation of leaving „voluntary“. Only 10% of employees benefit from the commission model. The employees are told that overtime can't be paid or reduced, because it is not ordered. They just have to work in a more motivated manner, and they could finish the workload. As a result of this, hourly pay barely reaches the minimum wage level. Everyone in the office knows that their job is always hanging by a thread. This is made clear every day. The managers use every available opportunity to point out that their business model is perfect. This is why criticism is not allowed. At every meeting, employees are expected to openly applaud the company.

Away from the managers' control, Emma describes her work as simultaneously pointless, stressful and humiliating. There are hardly any older people. The job is unbearable in the long-term. Younger women are preferred because they are, so it is claimed, better received by customers. Less attractive or older women are not hired. Soon after our conversation, Emma resigns in despair – without having found a new job. Because she is the one to resign, she will not receive

unemployment benefits for a full three months. A certificate from her doctor will not be accepted by the Federal Employment Agency, because it has been issued after that. Emma's caseworker from the agency tells her that would like to act differently, but cannot. She knows the company Emma has resigned from. A few months following this conversation, Emma tells me that an employee of her previous employers has attempted to set up a works council. Following this, he always has to sit next to his superior in the open-plan office of the company, and the superior comments on his every phone call. None of his colleagues speak with him anymore. After his plans for creating a works council become known, the managers call a staff meeting and announce: „None of us need a works council like that. We are the perfect company. If certain individuals are here only to drive a wedge between employees, this doesn't agree with the company's motto *the name of the company + spirit!

4. Daria, Sofia

Daria lives in the Bulgarian capital Sofia and works as a receptionist for a large road construction company. She is the first contact point for all visitors, processes incoming and outgoing mail, manages rooms planning and coordinates different services, such as maintenance and cleaning. She enjoys the job, and her colleagues are nice. However, they are actually not her colleagues. Daria is not employed by the road construction company, but works for an office services agency. Her company is not bound by collective agreements, and she receives 12% less than her predecessors, who was still employed directly by the road construction company.¹¹ She also receives no company pension, no vacation pay and her vacation is five days shorter. Her position is considered a project and is limited to two years. According to the client of the road construction company, her position is interchangeable, and after two years, they can determine what is needed at the reception. If things go like last time for Daria, the contract will not be renewed, and she will be offered a new contract when a new project becomes available. In her country, almost all front-office positions are now outsourced. Her „colleagues“ – they are generally not her colleagues, but people from the companies which cooperate – who provide cleaning and security services are in the same boat. This means that she has little chance of obtaining a permanent position in any company. She is married, has a child, and she will remain the one family member whose wages cannot be relied on.

5. Gabrielle, Paris

Gabrielle is from Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon. She has been washing dishes in a posh restaurant in Paris for 3 years now. The work is strenuous, there is great time pressure, the air is humid, and the late evening and night shifts hardly allow for a regular life. She works in the background, which is usually only noticed when things go wrong. She could never afford to eat at the restaurant where she works. She is not part of the society she is working for. She has a small one-room apartment on the outskirts of the city. She sends whatever she can spare to the families that remain in Yaoundé. Because she has been working in France for less than five years, she doesn't have the right to „active solidarity income“ (social assistance) and is completely dependent on the work, which has to be uninterrupted.

¹¹ According to Directive 2008/EC, companies are forbidden from paying temporary employees less than permanent employees. In the example above, however, this is not the case, because the receptionist job has been entirely outsourced. It is therefore legal for Daria to earn less than her predecessor. The regulations of her service agency apply, possibly the minimum wage of the service agency, not the company. The same applies to cleaning and security services.

6. Merle, Enschede

Merle lives in the Dutch city of Enschede and has been retired for two years now. Before retiring, she used to have a busy and eventful life. Her whole life she has been helping others: at 20, she worked as a kindergarten teacher, then, at 30, she started working as an assistant for people with disabilities. When she first became a mother at 35, she remained at home. She gave birth to her second child at 38. When Merle was 41, she wanted to go back into work – initially, she was employed 50% of the time, because childcare options did not allow for more. Since then and until her retirement, she has worked at a center for people in need: handing out food, giving advice related to drug abuse, helping people find a home and filling out applications for social assistance. Today, she often visits the center in order to eat – her pension is below the poverty threshold, because her work was interrupted several times and she has worked part-time; also, she has always performed work of little economic value. Her husband Michel has been unable to work since the age of 55 because of a kidney disease and recurrent bouts of depression. He used to work as school janitor. Since he became unfit for work, he performs voluntary work from time to time – whenever his illnesses permits. Michel's pension is also insufficient because of his early inability to work. Despite their big achievements in life, the two of them can hardly allow themselves to take advantage of their free time financially. Eating out or going to the cinema, traveling during the weekend – all of this is practically impossible. Most of their money is used to buy food and pay their rent.

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PART II

Know and defend your rights, because decent work means decent living

Support women in precarious employment in Europe means guarantee decent employment, real empowerment and active participation

The issues of equality, especially between man and woman is an integral part of the Acquis Communautaire¹². That is a topic, which the EU is pioneering, taking on board its main problematic in 1957. Then by Treaty of Rome, was established the principle of equal pay for equal work. Since that moment, the fight for equality goes basically throughout a continuous development of various legislative instruments and different non-binding measures, committed to close the gap between women and men, including to close the pay gap and to instore the principle of equal remuneration for same work or for work of equal value.

But although all efforts, and even today, more than 65 years after, the gender employment gap in the EU persist around 13 %. And it's is clear that working women are too far to achieve equality, for them equal pay and equal treatment are still a far distant reality. And that is not the whole picture, they still remain the care and employment gaps. For example in their lifetime, women in the EU earn 36.2% less money (OECD 2020) and receive about 30% less pension (eurostat 2024). In result, the majority of women are not able to take care of themselves or their relatives. Here to complement that even women workers account more than half of EU workforce they are still underrepresented in decision-making process and in the political elite. To add to that situation the circumstance that women have many additional private and care responsibilities, combined with the unpaid domestic work.

In short, except employment tasks, women are having too many additional duties on their backs. Although there is not a single argument why – for the very same type of work – a woman should receive less money, than a man. Or while only women should be responsible for domestic work. That is a paradox, just because women already have made significative progress in education and they almost have closed the education gap, but that trend is not translated into in their professional life, Practically, due to existing stereotypes, many women do not feel as free in their choice of jobs or do not get the same job opportunities as men. Certainly, while being challenged with more careers breaks and fewer professional promotions, women may not achieve adequate economic independence and to plan really their life. In such situation, women are more likely than men to accept to be employed on unfavourable conditions – for example in low paid or part-time jobs.

Logically, that story for women does not end here. While women accept more unfavourable employment conditions, they become highly vulnerable in economic aspect and easily to be subjected to sexual harassment or abuse. In short, all those circumstances are forming a long list starting with the existing prejudices and stereotypes, combined with the barrier to decent

¹² The full body of EU legislation (the so-called Acquis communautaire). It represents over 100,000 pages. The overall "acquis" is difficult to define. Around 17,000 different legal acts can be found in Celex (the CELEX number is the unique identifier of a document in EUR-Lex).

employment, the necessity to do additional homework or to provide cares, ending by the lack of adequate social services and supportive measures, all those factors are contributing to the feminization of poverty. In that context, to achieve gender equality in Europe is an overdue challenge for policy-makers, national governments and social partners, both at the national and at the European level.

Certainly, that's not an easy problematic also for trade unions, employers, non-governmental organizations. And, first there is a need to impose the principle that gender equality is everyone's responsibility, it is not simply a women's issue. Because existing and persisting gender stereotypes have negative effects on people of all genders and are affecting all parts of our life and our community. Gender equality has many faces – it prevents violence against women and girls, it's important for social cohesion and for the economic prosperity. Societies that value women and men as equal are safer and healthier. The fight for gender equality – for equal pay, equal treatment, against violence and harassment at work, at home, online- is an uphill battle. First of all, the achievement of genuine gender equality needs very strong commitment, involvement and targeted actions to change the way we make decisions and how we address discrimination. Therefore, effective inclusion of women at work requires a fundamental rethink of the way all involved actors work, their policies and practices. Only through changes we may guarantee real protection and assistance, to allow women to fully enjoy their rights and to succeed on the way of equality and inclusion.

Traditionally, trade union movement is the flagman of the social policy in Europe. In that respect, trade unions are among those social actors, which are directly involved within the fight against the different forms of discrimination and with protection of employment rights, no matter of the gender. A core trade union value is that to every worker, including to every woman worker must be given the opportunity to have well paid and decent jobs, appropriate training and opportunity for professional advancement. This is what equal treatment means for workers organizations. Being driver for changes, trade unions are the promoters of gender equality at work, acting actively to overcome problems, faced by women in precarious contracts and part-time employed.

At the same time, being aware that achievement of equality is a complex and difficult task, trade unions pursue gender equality as part of a broader agenda for social justice, social progress and sustainability, trying to implement women friendly policies by very concrete steps, based on the following guiding principles:

- gender equality is an essential element of democracy in the workplace and a prerequisite to a safe and equal society, as well to the economic prosperity;
- to achieve of strong rights at work are the basic target, because every worker deserves decent employment, equal pay, as well to be treated with dignity, respect and fairness;
- any policy measure, initiative or action on gender equality must comply with the in the things that really matter to women;

Those guiding principles are introduced in the everyday activities of trade unions throughout different policy measures and instruments – legislative initiatives, media publications, official interventions, raising awareness events, information and consultation, negotiation, data collection and analyses, individual advise.

In that respect, key areas of the trade unions' involvement to address the barriers that women face in the labour market and in employment are:

- **Advocate for women's economic, social and political rights**

Women's political participation is one of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of gender equality, especially for the equality at the workplace. The active political participation is a

relevant tool to increase women visibility in the society and to give the possibility to participate in the decision-making process. That basically means, that when women are present, all endorsed decisions will better account their interests. Second, as gender-based discrimination is reflecting the long-established unequal power relations, women's political participation is the mechanism to guarantee that decision-making process is participatory, responsive, equitable and inclusive. In that respect, the most effective manner to advocate for women rights is to speaking up on the problem, to spread awareness and to organize activities, aimed to influence the policies to achieve a sustainable social transformation.

A transformation for more and effective rights to all women, including women workers. In that respect, similar social transformation will mean that the gender equality perspective will be incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors involved in policy-making. In addition, women rights advocacy must have at its heart the expressed priorities of women themselves, particularly of those facing discrimination. In practice, giving a proper voice of women in politics and economics may secure the necessary transformative change on the part to the real advancement in women's rights.

- **Improve the economic status of women in precarious work**

The active participation and involvement of the employed women is the most important precondition to defend their interests in the world of work. Women's participation in social dialogue, in the collective bargaining, which is regulating the main conditions of employment, is very important factor to support the improvement of their economic status.

Having appropriate information on the existing labour right into force is a prerequisite to have the possibility to demand better employment condition. Here, trade unions have a key role to play in informing employees on their rights at work and on the possibility to be properly represented at the workspace. Those are the manner to challenge the status quo of gender roles in the workplace and to promote gender equality in the world of work. But information and support are not enough, trade unions are the organizations, which are most relevant to guarantee equal pay for work of equal value, non-discrimination in employment, work-life balance. Here, women in precarious employment situation should to be the proactive part and to contact trade union representatives, because staying silent and accepting low paid and unsecure jobs will only leave them in poverty, without any perspective for change.

- **Increase female labour-force participation**

Genuine integration of women at the work cannot be successful if we continue to divide workers to different categories. Similar practice acts only in favour of non-loyal employers, because it gives an opportunity to use one group of workers against another. For working people there is not reason for division - the only way employment precarity and low pay to be tackled is to act collectively, to joint forces, to be strong, represented and to demand for respect of the right at work. Here, the support of the female labour-force participation must be implemented throughout sustainable solutions from governments, trade unions and women organizations. In addition, any supportive policies must focus not only on women's employment, but on men's well, prioritising paternity leave legislation, tax wedges, and maternity protection.

At the same time, those policies must be complemented by measures aimed at fair scheduling and pay transparency to ensure women opportunities to join the labour market in a sustainable way. In result, the economy, the society, and women - all will benefit from the removal of existing barriers and from the use of women's full potential.

- **Oppose to stereotypes and address gender segregation**

Throughout their life course women very often face social pressure from parents, peers or teachers to conform to traditional gender expectations. Sometimes, similar pressure highly influences women educational and professional choice. In addition, existing social stereotypes are very often having a negative effect in discouraging women from choosing professions, atypical for their gender. For example, the well-known prejudices about men's inability to do domestic work or to work in the sector of personal care are largely responsible for the occupational gender segregation. Although legal barriers to women's have long been outlawed, perception on the equal participation of men and women in terms of employment, professional conditions and remuneration still persist. Indeed, reasons behind this segregation are complex, they include education level, differences in pay, unpaid domestic work, lack of adequate support. All those factors are reinforcing gender inequalities, going beyond the employment. Being complex, the problem must be addressed first by targeted raising awareness campaign, especially oriented to the most vulnerable women, and second by a collective push for adoption of pay transparency legislation. Those are the two main tools to address gender segregation and to encourage women to break barriers and to freely make their own choices.

- **Promote education as the basic prerequisite for more highly qualified and rewarded work**

In the 21st century, to have good education is not a luxury subject, it's a must. To be educated is the basic condition to have opportunities not only at work, but also in the life. No doubt, that the right of education is also a human right, the main mechanism to break the vicious cycle of poverty, to level inequalities and to ensure sustainable development. This important right is already firmly rooted in the EU legal instruments, but it cannot be taken for granted. Because, equality in education, as well gender equality in education is far more complex than simply providing guarantee for equal access to schools. Because, the still persisting stereotypes in our society, the existing regional disparity, the lack of enough financial resources are influencing women's educational choices.

The fact that women are more likely to choose fields such as education or the sector of services is well-known. That choke at a later stage leads to feminisation of certain professions, such as teachers, nurses, sectors with lower salary levels. In fact, gender disparities begin early and widen over the education trajectory - the relative underperformance of girls in mathematics is reflected later in their higher education. At a later stage this disproportion is reflected in the labour force and the professional opportunities on the labour market. It is time to ensure that this right of education is adequately upheld, as a prerequisite to boost women's participation in the workforce. Educating girls and women equips them with more skills and knowledge, first gives opportunity to have better employment conditions. And second, leads to the decrease of societal gender stereotypes, because act as an accelerator for acceptance of women in higher-earning and decision-making positions. In that respect, the fight for equal access to a freely choose educational path is a step forward provision of employment opportunities. Because, when a woman is educated, she is empowered and she is free. Free to make her own choices, to make her own decisions, to gain more money. In addition, to an increased possibility to participate more effectively in economic activities, education provide possibility to be more active in the political field.

Trade unions are recognising education as a great equalizer of chances, but for every working woman is very important to complement its academic knowledges by information on labour rights, on possibilities to acquire new knowledges, to increase skills and occupations. Looking at the education as a long-life process, trade unions are pointing- out the explicit necessity to, build closer links between schools and real-life experience in the workplace. Because only the link between the

fast-changing world of work and the educational programs could enable broader occupational choices for everybody, including girls and women.

- **Provide education and training on equality issues at the workplace**

It comes very often that women workers are not fully informed and familiar with their rights at work. The provision of specialized, women-targeted training is an instrument, which may not only to encourage them to join or take more active role in the trade unions, but also, to improve their pay level or to support their career advancement. The knowledge on the existing legal and practical provisions, which are guaranteeing the equal treatment at work equips women to better defend their interest at work. Here, the proper understanding of workplace rights is very important. This includes not only knowing rate of pay, working hours entitlements to breaks and leave, safe working environment and equipment, but also to have information with regard to unlawful bullying, harassment and discrimination which may arise. For many women dealing with all those workplace issues can be hard, especially in case of violence and discrimination. In practice, nobody can never fully prevent discrimination from happening in workplace. To add that most of working women are not fully aware about their rights. However, when equality and diversity training take place at work, it makes these issues visible to all employees and made clear how any instances of discrimination will be dealt with.

In that respect, to help women workers fight for fairness and equality in the workplace is vital and here trade union structures play a key role in ensuring that employment rights are respected and upheld by the way of collective bargaining, as well by raising awareness of rights amongst employees or assisting in resolution of disputes, providing support in pursuing claims to the employment tribunal.

- **Establish special women-only structures**

Many changes are undergoing in the world of work – globalization, green and digital transition. Platform work and AI technologies even started to change the perception of employed person, workplaces and occupation are becoming more and more fragmented. But, even in those *new* forms, the precarious employment, and gender segregation within the labour market remain pervasive. As a consequence, women are pushed to accept part-time position or different forms of precarious employment which are insecure, hazardous, and low-paid. To guarantee strong employment protection to those precarious women is quite challenging. Thus, it very important for workers' organizations to have separate structures for women, with regard to provide a platform from which they could share the difficulties/situations they encounter at work, develop their strengths, advance their concerns or simply express themselves. Here, the most important is to achieve a level of solidarity and democracy between the different groups of workers to ensure that differing perspectives can be heard. In addition, women's structures may support the raise female participation and activism. Examples of similar women's structures may include specially formed committees, working groups, commissions, advisory groups and departments. In addition, similar structures would help women to enjoy effective representation at work, to create wider awareness about women's issues.

- **Guarantee pay transparency for closing the gender pay gap**

As a tool to support equality and democracy at work, pay transparency should be enhanced by the EU, the national governments and social partners. Pay transparency has the potential tool guarantee independent monitoring of pay between genders and to demonstrate existing inequalities in the wage systems. While having such objective information it will be easier to address those gaps throughout collective negotiations. For example, wage indicators may support

pay comparison and detect possible discriminations. In addition, negotiating gender-neutral criteria for job evaluation with specific gender-neutral criteria in collective agreements trade unions are addressing the under-valuing of women's work.

- **Rebalance work**

Labour market strategies, similar to employment policies are still designed around the traditional family and societal models of male breadwinner. Following the changes of gender roles, in family models and the societal behaviours in general, those policies evolved, however they are still not able to establish a proper balance between work and family obligations. They are a number of practices, that may be negotiated to improve the work-life balance – maternity leave and pay, paternal leave, ability to change working hours, nursery linked to the workplace, financial help for child care, Such supportive measures policies are essential to implement change in the distribution of paid and unpaid work for women. The offering of similar opportunities would allow women to enjoy the employment condition as their male counterparts. However, having a good work-life balance is a tool to support better employment opportunities for women, but it does not mean there will eliminate all conflicts between working and private life.

- **Implement gender agenda in collective bargaining**

Social dialogue and collective bargaining are prime opportunity to support gender equality The collective negotiation is a process in which partners are more flexible and may provide quite targeted approach to all existing forms of discrimination at work – pay differences, different career and training perspectives, misconduct and negative behaviours, specific health and safety needs, violence and harassment, abuses. In that respect, especially with regard to the company level collective agreements are providing the overall important framework of on the equal treatment.

In that logic, and based on the common values of solidarity and democracy at work, the gender perspective is integrated in all negotiations and collective agreements with special consideration to:

- *Negotiate equal conditions and employment rights of part-time workers and women working in precarious jobs;*
- *Strong guarantee to the right for training to all workers, including part-time workers and workers with flexible working time arrangements;*
- *Provision to support the principle of equal pay for equal work, including support to low pay positions in female dominated sectors;*
- *Measures to implement women friendly work models and working environment;*
- *Guidance for employees facing violence and harassment at work place;*
- *Establish an independent workplace complaint mechanism or structure to deal with cases of violence and harassment at work.*

In addition, a specific item is to ensure the gender balance in collective bargaining teams. When bargaining teams include a balanced representation of women and men not only issues specifically addressing the gender pay gap are negotiated, but also measures that positively impact on women wage penalties, such as flexible working arrangements, childcare facilities, vouchers, paid family leaves. Here, special attention should be placed on minimum wages, because in low-income sectors this is one of the most important tools to close gender pay gap. In addition, more attention should be given on the impact of low wages on pension entitlements. In particular, this is relevant for women working part-time and atypical jobs, such as mini jobs or zero-hours contracts. In that respect, the trade union support must include also raising awareness campaign with clear information on the long-term negative effects to be paid on the minimal wage, to be employed part-time or to evade cutisations to the social security schemes.

- **Ensure a violence-free workplaces**

There is a clear lack of data and legal instruments regarding gender-based violence against women in the EU. Until this year, the violence against women in the EU was enjoying widespread impunity, largely due to the outdated legal order. Now, the first ever EU Directive to combat violence against women by focusing on prevention, protection, prosecution and access to justice is already on its way. With this new Directive, EU will have stronger legislation, even that it is not a completely robust legal instrument, because work-related violence and of rape based on lack of consent are not criminalized. Now, all social partners and national government must be proactive to close this obvious gap. It's time to show commitment to change the situation by improving the prevention and the protection of victims. In particular, precarious work impacts negatively women economic autonomy, making them more vulnerable to gender-based violence at work.

Here, workers' organizations play a major role in making work safe for women, and helping to eliminate harassment and violence against women, by:

- *demand from employers to ensure safe workplaces;*
- *negotiate clauses in the collective agreements for combatting violence against women, and underlines that the battle is far from won;*
- *promote policies and procedures at the workplace to eradicate harassment and violence against women;*
- *guarantee systematic sanctions in case of inappropriate conduct, including termination of employment;*
- *establishing clear procedures on reporting cases of violence at workplace;*
- *conduct awareness-raising actions on the topic at sectoral and company level;*
- *training workplace representatives to negotiate agreements and policies on sexual harassment and violence;*
- *ensuring health and safety and wellbeing initiatives include solutions to harassment and violence against women;*
- *providing information and support to women workers experiencing violence and harassment at work or at home.*

- **Request gender sensitive risk assessment at the workplace**

Trade unions and workers representatives should request from the employer to develop a procedure for regular gender sensitive risk assessments to account for the specific ways in which violence and harassment affects workers based on their gender. The risk assessment involves identifying, evaluating and addressing risks and hazards in a manner that takes into account the specific needs and vulnerabilities of different genders. In principle, that procedure may be included in the collective agreement, thus the involvement of trade unions will be guaranteed.

A gender-sensitive risk assessment should in particular include several steps:

- *identification of the specific risks. For example, women in isolated workstations or in customer-facing roles need to have a strengthened protection;*
- *assess to information on which extent psychosocial risks such as harassment, violence, discrimination, cyberviolence may disproportionately affect women;*
- *consider the unique risks and challenges faced by pregnant women, those with family-related responsibilities and ageing women*

As a result of gender sensitive risk assessments, employers should implement solutions to eliminate the risks at source. Furthermore, health and safety training should become gender-sensitive and take into account the different physical abilities and needs of workers.

In conclusion

Precarious work is a sad result from a whole range of wrong economic and social policies, poor employment practices and outdated labour legislation, The challenge, to achieve decent work for precarious workers is complex. At the same time, female precarious employment remains the crucial impediment to substantive equality. Regulating precarious work require interventions in economic and social policy, challenging culture and behaviours, changing stereotypes related to education and career paths, providing quality public services and invest in prevention mechanisms. In addition, all. policy measures, programs and actions to support women in precarious employment need to be coherent and transformative. Recognising the diverse needs and experiences of women in precarious work, they must inspire them to follow in the steps of decent employment and leadership, while breaking existing socio-cultural barriers and perception.

PART III

Realizing the right to equal opportunities

Erasmus+ project "Work at all costs?" for precariously employed women

As project partners, we have been campaigning for equal rights for men and women for many years, each with its own set of priorities. Some of us negotiate collective agreements, others give training courses for companies or works councils, and still others focus on public relations and thus show a large audience the existing, and sometimes serious, differences in the life chances of men and women. But within the group of women, there is a target group that is particularly difficult to reach and for which it is particularly hard to fight. They are women in precarious employment.

They often lack all the resources needed to improve their own situation: a secure job that makes it possible to stand up for their own interests without existential fears, time to get involved, money, to defend themselves and sometimes also the self-confidence in the face of a society that recognizes more those who earn more money. Yet it is precisely these women who are in jobs that no society can do without: cleaning, logistics, retail – to name just a few examples. We want to stand up for these pillars of society and at the same time motivate others to walk this path with us. For this reason, we have written the following publication.

In addition, we created other products that address women in precarious employment:

- In a **film**, affected women themselves have their say and tell us about their living conditions. In doing so, they themselves show us what is still missing in our European societies and what it takes to realise their right to a dignified life.
- In short **information clips**, we address typical and prohibited discrimination situations and show where you can get help if you are in such a situation yourself.
- We are particularly proud that we were able to adopt a **charter** within the project period, not only for our own work. Throughout the EZA network, which means 70 member organisations in 29 European countries, we have committed ourselves to adopting a gender perspective, attitude and action in all our educational activities - starting with the equal representation of the EZA committees, through a duty to inform our own employees with regard to rights and obligations in the area of non-discrimination, to the selection of topics for our seminars and workshops.

All our products can be found here:

<https://www.eza.org/en/topics/equal-opportunity/#c7486>

Project Partners & contact



The **Nell-Breuning-Haus**, close to the Belgian and Dutch borders, is a modern conference and competence center that sees itself as a hub in which social initiatives are developed, promoted, stabilized and networked. The conceptual and practical educational work is geared towards the participation of structurally disadvantaged people, young people in the transition from school to work as well as the further training of company employee interest groups. There are numerous cooperation links with adult and youth education institutions, with employers' organizations such as trade unions and with NGOs in various European countries.

For more information and contact:



www.nbh.de



0049 2406 9558 12



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The **Confederation of Labour PODKREPA** is a recognized at national level trade union umbrella organization, with structures both – at regional and branch level. Since its establishment, Podkrepa affirms as a genuine promoter and defender of decent employment, equal opportunities, quality jobs, and social inclusion. PODKREPA participate actively in social dialogue at all levels, voicing interests of working people in Bulgaria, particularly regarding their social, employment and economic rights.

For more information and contact:



www.podkrepa.org



00359 29 879 887



intdept@podkrepa.org



Lithuanian Trade Union "Solidarumas" is trade union organization, its aims and goals are to represent the members, to defend their vocational, economic and social rights and interests, their honor and dignity, to uphold democracy and to strengthen equal partnership, to protect employees' labour rights, to promote health and safety at work. The organizational structure of the Lithuanian Trade Union Solidarumas is based on professional, industrial and territorial principles.

For more information and contact:



www.lps.lt



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Project Partners & contact



AFB – Arbeiter-Freizeit- und Bildungsverein

The AFB provides comprehensive information on employee issues in lectures, courses and seminars and offers appropriate further training. The AFB supports prospective house builders through its annual housing fair. The association is also actively involved in promoting equal opportunities. Since 1994, the AFB has been intensively involved in the field of renewable energies by providing energy consultations, drawing up energy calculations and acting as an expert for climate-friendly community development. For more information and contact:



www.afb.bz



0039 0471 254199



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European Meeting Centre - Nowy Staw Foundation was established in 1993 and supports all social initiatives aimed at building civil society, cooperation and solidarity between nations. Among the activities are youth projects, seminars and international exchanges, as well as many labour market projects. The Foundation cooperates with a group of volunteers and staff as part of the Economic Forum of Young Leaders. EDS-FNS runs the International Meeting House in Nasutów. Its main objective is to promote the establishment of contacts between societies within and outside the European Union, to promote solidarity and intercultural understanding, to disseminate Poland's national heritage. For more information and contact:



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