

European Professionals call for true gender equality

Joint position Eurocadres and CEPLIS

28/11/2022

The European Council for Professionals and Managers (Eurocadres) and The European Council of the Liberal Professions (CEPLIS), have adopted a joint position on the advancement of gender equality throughout the European Union.

Gender equity has been a longstanding call of European Professionals, who have continuously called for European and national action to guarantee parity regardless of worker's gender.

Eurocadres and CEPLIS have been encouraged by the action from the European institutions over the past number of months, yet more must be done to improve the current gender pay gap of 14.1% (with women in the EU earn on average almost 15% less per hour than men) and the pension pay gap of 29%. Our move towards gender equality can be accelerated through the adoption of the following key strategies.

Delivering true pay transparency

The proposed directive to [strengthen the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work](#) is currently being discussed in trilogue negotiations, with a Parliamentary mandate to remove the secrecy that enables pay inequality. No matter the size, turnover or location of a company, pay transparency is essential to ensure fair and equal treatment of employees. The European Council and European Commission must respect the Parliament's mandate, on behalf of European voters, to allow pay transparency to become reality in all companies across the bloc.

Europe's professionals do not find reporting on pay burdensome. The burden being felt is the unethical division of income between genders. We call on the trilogue negotiators to guarantee pay transparency to truly deliver equal pay for equal work.

Combating gender-based violence

In March 2022, the European Commission proposed a Directive on [combating violence against women and domestic violence](#), a landmark text in our efforts to eradicate gender-based violence.

While both Eurocadres and CEPLIS welcome the draft Directive, the text does not go far enough to curb the issues faced by European professionals in the workplace. European professionals will push to secure a text that rightly recognises the link between domestic violence and work, while putting prevention at the forefront of legislation.

In fact, around a third of women who have faced sexual harassment, are experiencing it at work. To truly curb gender-based violence, we need legislation that puts the obligation on employers to guarantee workers safety, with training made available to European professionals in how to contribute to health workplaces.

Promoting the role of women in STEM/ STEAM

According to Eurostat, in 2020, only 41% of the EU's scientists and engineers were women, with only 5 EU Member States having more women scientists than men: Lithuania, Bulgaria, Latvia, Portugal, and Denmark.

Despite 60% of graduate in the European Union being female, we have not done enough to successfully promote representation of women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths (STEM). There is also low representation of women in tech-related professions and studies, with only 1 in 6 IT specialists and 1 in 3 STEM graduates being women.

The need for better advocacy also applies to the STEAMfield, which includes arts, social sciences and the humanities in STEM education or careers, as a transdisciplinary, inclusive, future-oriented approach to learning. The EU must continue to provide funding for educational and re/up-skilling opportunities in order to close the gap in STEM/STEAM and highlight the career opportunities available to young female graduates.

Closing the care gap

Within our labour market, the care burden is disproportionately skewed by gender. On average in the EU, almost all employed women (94 %) are involved in at least one unpaid care work activity at least several times a week, compared with 70 % of employed men. Housework tasks are the most unequally shared, with 93 % of women and 53 % of men regularly undertaking such work.

The [European Care Strategy](#) represents an opportunity for society to level the playing field, and provide an ethical work distribution, not containing a gender-based care burden.

Both Eurocadres and CEPLIS will look to improve the text of the strategy to ensure that female workers are not left shouldering the wheel in terms of care.

Women in leadership

The "Women on Boards" Directive is a positive step in the right direction. There is however an

urgent need for more for more women in leadership.

European professionals have an opportunity to advocate for greater gender initiatives in their companies, and must continue to promote female colleagues who meet the requirements to senior position, regardless of their gender. In fact, professional associations should be obliged to assure gender parity as it represents an ideal springboard for careers. Eurocadres and CEPLIS strongly call for the eradication of gender-based discrimination leading to disproportionate male-dominated leadership, which is unfortunately a framework we have seen for centuries.

Our organisations are certainly committed to promoting women in leadership by any means possible and ensuring that female voices are at the forefront of businesses in all Member States.

