



INFORMAL MEETING OF EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY MINISTERS
BUCHAREST, 10-11 APRIL, 2019

Background note

**Workshop 2: Combating the gender pay gap: Follow-up to the
EU Action Plan 2017-2019**

Closing the gender pay gap (difference in average gross hourly wage between men and women) remains a political priority at EU and national level. Figures show that in the EU, on average, women's gross hourly pay is 16% (2017) lower than that of men. (The gap has narrowed only very slightly since 2010, when it was 17.1%.)

The reasons behind the gender pay gap are multiple. They include, perhaps most obviously, gender segregation: both horizontal (women under-representation in well-paid industries) and vertical (women under-representation at the top-level positions). Other reasons include discrimination on the labour market and the impact of other forms of gender inequality, in particular when it comes to participation in unpaid work (e.g. child care, elderly care or domestic work).

Gender norms and stereotypes underpin gender inequalities in pay. The limited use of work-life balance arrangements (family leaves, flexible working) by men also exacerbates the problem. The gender pay gap is particularly wide in certain sectors and occupations.

The Commission's *Strategic Engagement for gender equality 2016-2019* notes that gender equality in terms of access to financial resources over the life course remains elusive and calls for further action in order to reduce the gender pay gap, as well as the earnings gap and pension gap and fight poverty among women.

The Commission's *EU Action Plan 2017-2019 - Tackling the gender pay gap* is a groundbreaking initiative that lists a broad set of measures to combat the gender pay gap, including measures to combat occupational gender segregation, to tackle the care penalty, to raise awareness of the gender pay gap and to unveil inequalities and stereotypes. Under the action plan, the Commission has launched a public consultation on the evaluation of the provisions in the Directive 2006/54/EC implementing the Treaty principle on 'equal pay'¹.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/initiatives/ares-2018-3415794/public-consultation_en

Questions for discussion:

What concrete measures are most efficient for tackling the gender pay gap at the national level?

Measurement of gender inequalities in pay must go beyond the gender pay gap. How do you tackle this at national level?