

From: 
Subject: EU Pay Transparency Directive - Gender Equality Strategy
Date: vendredi 22 mai 2020 16:31:08
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)

President von der Leyen
European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Dear President,

We are contacting you to raise with you the concern of the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation about the Commission work programme. We understand from the ETUC that the EU Commission is considering a plan is put the EU Pay Transparency Directive and the whole Gender Equality Strategy on hold at present.

We urge you to reconsider. In our assessment such an approach would be a mistake with far reaching consequences.

President, you made gender equality a cornerstone of your Presidency. Binding Pay Transparency was one of your first 100 days commitments. Action to secure gender equality cannot be called into question even in times of COVID-19 crisis. Equal pay is a requirement of the EU Treaty, it is not a fair weather option.

There is a strong interconnection between the EU path to recovery plan and establishing the new normal after Covid-19, this underscores the need for a Gender Equality Strategy. Throughout the EU, key workers, in sectors where the work is predominantly undertaken by women are underpaid and undervalued. This needs to be tackled as part of the recovery, working women should not be put to the back of the queue to be dealt with after the recovery.

The announced Pay Transparency Directive must go ahead and moreover must be reframed to tackle the root causes of inequality and undervaluing of work undertaken predominantly by women.

Nurses and midwives have been to the forefront of, and are bearing the brunt in terms of hardship, harm and most regrettably loss of life in, the fight against this pathogen for and with all of all of our communities. These are female dominated professions, and as concluded by the European Federation of Nursing Associations in its 2019 Statement on Nurses Salary the salary position of nurses, and indeed midwives, across Europe evidences unwelcome disparities and improper and inexplicable negative comparisons with other professions.

National governments should recognise the added value of the nursing and midwifery professions to the healthcare sector and improve their salaries and working conditions to ensure safe levels of staffing, delivering good quality care and patient safety. Covid-19 has spotlighted how the unfair often market-determined, and State enforced, salaries of workers in female dominated sectors of the economy and services have diverged from the real value that they provide to society and the economy. Additionally, when the total remunerative package is considered, which includes superannuation, there is ample

evidence of a significant negative disparity affecting female workers – which in turn leads to greater levels of poverty in older age for women. It is long past time that such workers secure a permanent income boost and earn a fair wage with adequate benefits.

The Pay Transparency Directive can do this by including provisions that assist workers and their unions to re-evaluate the pay and to secure increases that reflect the real value of the work to the organisations and society. Crucially it must empower unions to bargain to build a new normal where work that is done by women is properly valued and paid.

This crisis will mark a new beginning. We need to remember those who are working on the frontlines, in services, care, cleaning, we can't repeat what happened after the 2008 crisis when companies bounced back but working people and gender equality paid the price.

We look forward to your positive response and we remain available to assist you in your endeavours to secure an EU where Gender Equality is a reality for all women.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Edward Mathews

Director of Professional and Regulatory Services

Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation | The Whitworth Building | North Brunswick Street | Dublin 7

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