

Helsinki, 5 May 2020

Dear President,

We are contacting you to raise with you our concern 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 onto ice.

If accurate, **we urge you to reconsider**. In our assessment such an approach would be a mistake with far reaching consequences.

Action to secure equal pay cannot be called into question. Equal pay is a requirement of the EU Treaty, it is not a fair weather option. There is a strong interconnection between a need to create a new normal after Covid-19 and guaranteeing equal and fair pay. Throughout the EU key workers, in sectors where women predominantly work, are unfairly underpaid and undervalued.

Covid-19 has spotlighted how the unfair market-determined salaries of workers such as cleaners, retail, transport, care and healthcare workers have diverged from the real value that they provide to society and the economy. It is long past time that low-wage workers secure a permanent income boost and earn a fair wage with adequate benefits.

The announced Gender Pay Transparency Directive must go ahead and moreover must be re-framed to tackle the root causes of inequality and undervaluing of work. It can do this by including provisions that assist workers and their unions to re-evaluate their pay and to secure increases that reflect the real value of the work to the organisations and society. 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 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,

Services workers unions in Finland:

Jaana Ylitalo, Service Union United PAM

Minea Pyykönen, Trade Union Pro

Teemu Hankamäki, TEK

Liisa Halme, The Union of Insurance Employees in Finland VVL

Heidi Nieminen, The Finnish Post and Logistics Union PAU

Kari Ahola, Trade Union Unio