

SECRÉTARIAT EUROPÉEN COMMUN DE L'OGBL ET DU LCGB A.s.b.l.

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

Luxembourg, May 4th 2020

Dear President,

We are contacting you to raise with you the concerns of the Luxembourgish trade unions OGBL and the LCGB about the Commission's work program. We understand from the ETUC that the EU Commission is considering a plan to put the EU Pay Transparency Directive and the whole Gender Equality Strategy on ice.

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. Actions to secure gender equality cannot be called into question even in times of the 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's road to recovery plan and establishing a new normal after Covid-19, this emphasizes the need for a Gender Equality Strategy. Throughout the EU, key workers, in sectors where the work is predominantly done by women, are underpaid and undervalued. This needs to be tackled as part of the recovery plan, 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 undervalued work. Covid-19 has spotlighted how unfair, market-determined salaries of workers such as cleaners, retail, transport, care and healthcare workers differ from the real value that they provide to society and the economy. It is long past due that low-wage workers secure a permanent income boost and earn a fair wage with adequate benefits.

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The Pay Transparency Directive can achieve this by including provisions that assist workers and their unions in re-evaluating wages and to secure increases that reflect the real value of the work to businesses and society. Crucially, it must empower unions and collective bargaining in order 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, and 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 endeavors to secure an EU where Gender Equality is a reality for all women.

For the Joint European Secretariat of the OGBL and the LCGB,

Vanessa Correia,
President.

Véronique Eischen,
Vice President.



p.p.

Advisor