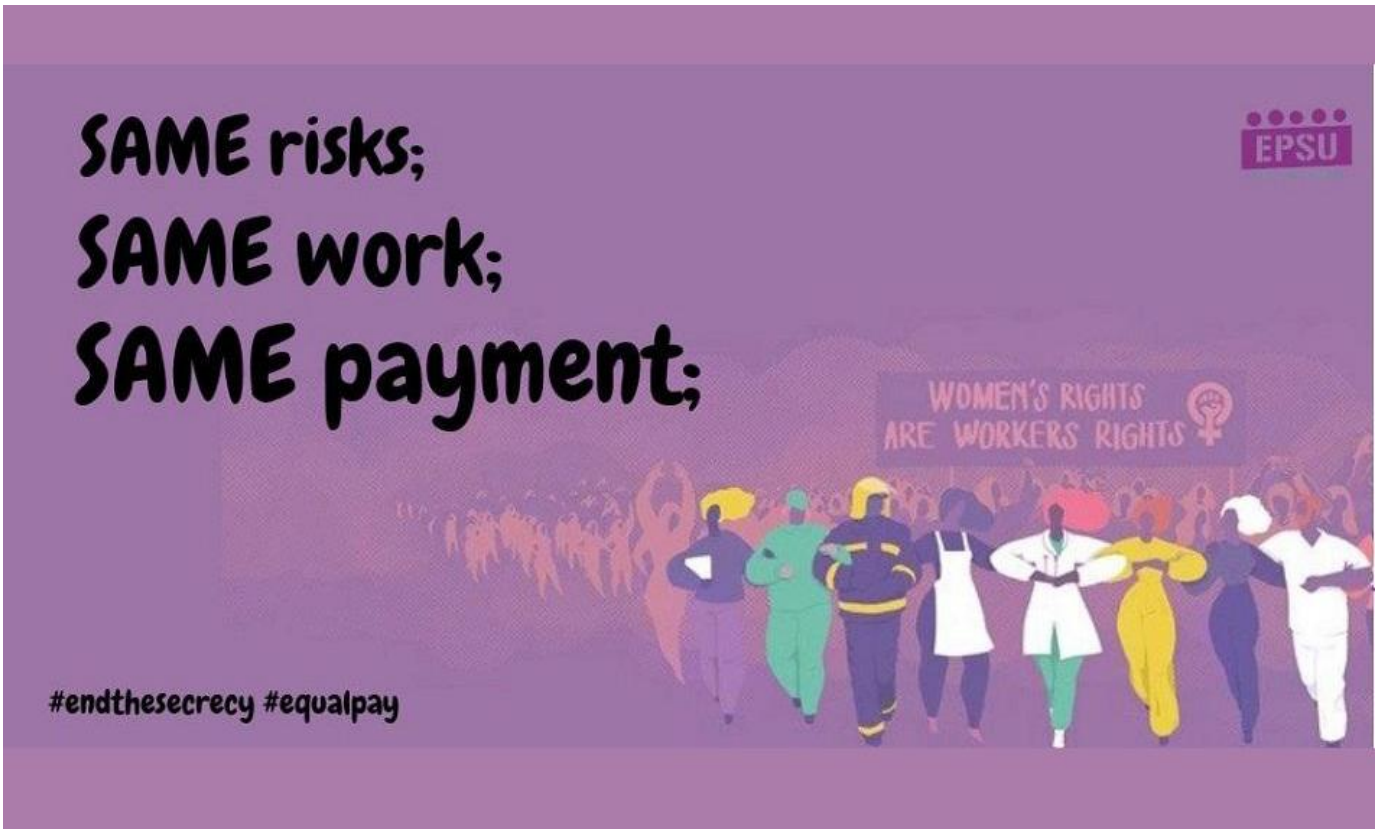
EPSU calls EU Commission not to betray frontline women workers: Pay Transparency Directive now!



Open letter on the Pay Transparency Directive

- Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission

Brussels, 4 May 2020

Gender Equality Strategy and Pay Transparency Directive

Dear President,

We are contacting you to raise with you the concern of the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU - representing 8 million workers) 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.

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 road 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 que 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. 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 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.

I 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,

Jan Willem Goudriaan,

EPSU General Secretary

- Log in to post comments

- Printer-friendly version

Policies
Equality
Gender pay gap
Networks
Women & Gender Equality