

Pay transparency and role of gender-neutral job evaluation and job classification in the public services



(10 June 2021) The gender pay gap (GPG) in the EU remains at 14.1 % based on unadjusted gross hourly earnings (Eurostat 2021). Limited progress has been made in narrowing the pay gap in recent years. One of the critical issues that needs to be tackled is the link between gender pay inequalities and the undervaluation of work in feminised jobs and sectors. Even with the same educational attainment, jobs with higher levels of feminization are systematically pay less.

This report has a specific focus on gender-neutral job evaluation and job classification schemes as tools to address the undervaluing of work predominantly carried out by women. It argues that gender-neutral job evaluation and classification are a critically important part of strong pay transparency measures in the forthcoming EU Directive on pay transparency for the application of equal pay for work of equal value. In building the case for a strong pay transparency Directive, the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) in collaboration with the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), decided to carry out this piece of research. It shows why gender-neutral job evaluation and classification schemes are an essential part of pay transparency in the public services. It also summarises evidence, good practices and learning from public service unions in Europe and internationally, with the aim to point to a new direction for achieving equal pay for work of equal value in the context of pay transparency.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women (European Commission 2021). The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in driving down wages has hit women the hardest, with risks that existing gender inequalities and the GPG will widen. **Without a gender-responsive recovery to the crisis, there is a danger that the gender care gap and the GPG will further widen, disadvantaging lower paid women in feminised sectors. This adds urgency to the need to plan for gender-responsive measures in the labour market, including the re-evaluation of jobs in female-dominated low-paid sectors.**

The European Commission's proposal for a Pay Transparency Directive addresses binding measures on pay transparency aimed at strengthening the application of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, including the introduction of gender pay reporting.

Collective bargaining should be strengthened in the Pay Transparency Directive so that it plays a role in uncovering and addressing some of the unexplained² or structural causes of women's unequal pay in the public services, including:

- Occupational segregation, resulting in women's work predominately in jobs and sectors where their work is lower paid and undervalued.
- Systemic and historical underevaluation of women's work.

- Traditional job evaluation methods and job classification systems designed on the basis of the requirements of male-dominated jobs and which ignore or undervalue skills associated with female-dominated jobs.
- Weaker bargaining power of women workers and the fact that women disproportionately hold part-time or precarious jobs.
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