

Pay in sectors dominated by women

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EPSU Report: Tackling low pay in sectors dominated by women

Key focus: Health and social care sector

1. Statistical data on **pay and employment**
2. **Reasons** behind low pay in these sectors
3. **Trade union strategies** to improve pay in these sectors?



Data Source

- **Statistical data** on employment and pay based on the European Labour Force Survey
- **Available data covers** two occupational groups: **skilled** (nurses and midwives) and **assistant occupations** (health and care assistants and personal care workers)



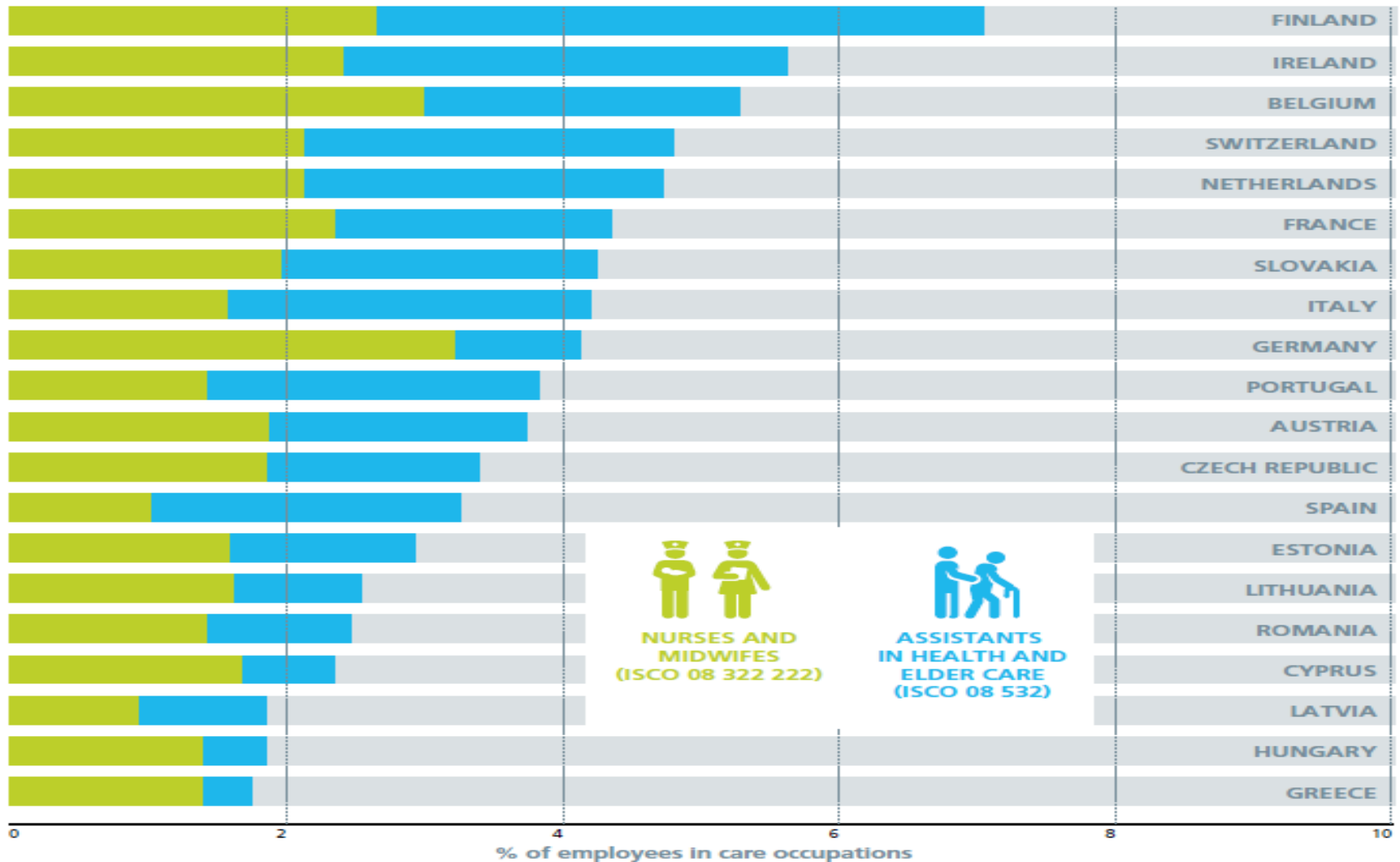
Occupations covered in the study

Table 1
Definition of health and social care professions

ISCO 08 – Code	Occupation	Examples	Range of tasks
222/322	Nursing and Midwifery (Associate) Professionals	Clinical nurse consultants, Head nurses, Professional nurses, Professional midwives	Planning, management and evaluation of the care of patients
532	Personal Care Workers in Health Services	Health Care Assistants, Birth assistants, Nursing aides, Patient care assistants, Home care aides	Provision of personal care and assistance with mobility and activities of daily living

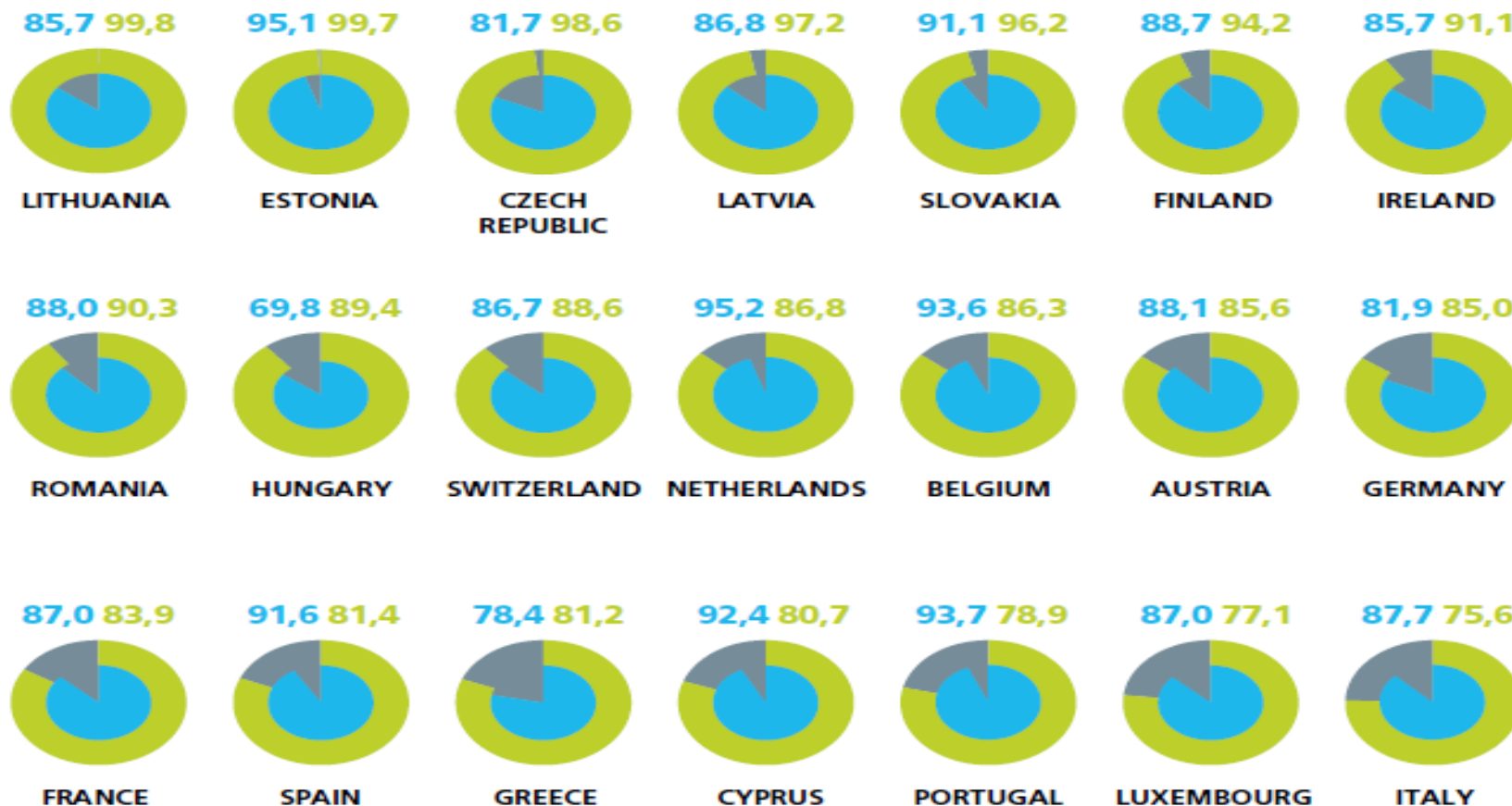
Source: Own compilation based on information from the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Proportion of workers in nursing and care occupations at total workforce (2016)

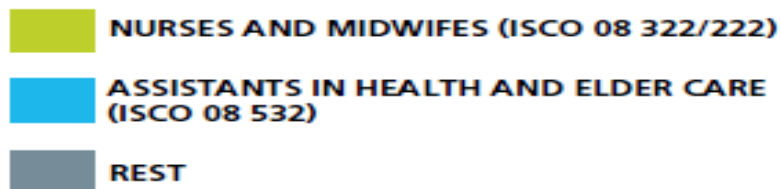


Source: EU LFS 2016, weighted averages, own calculations.

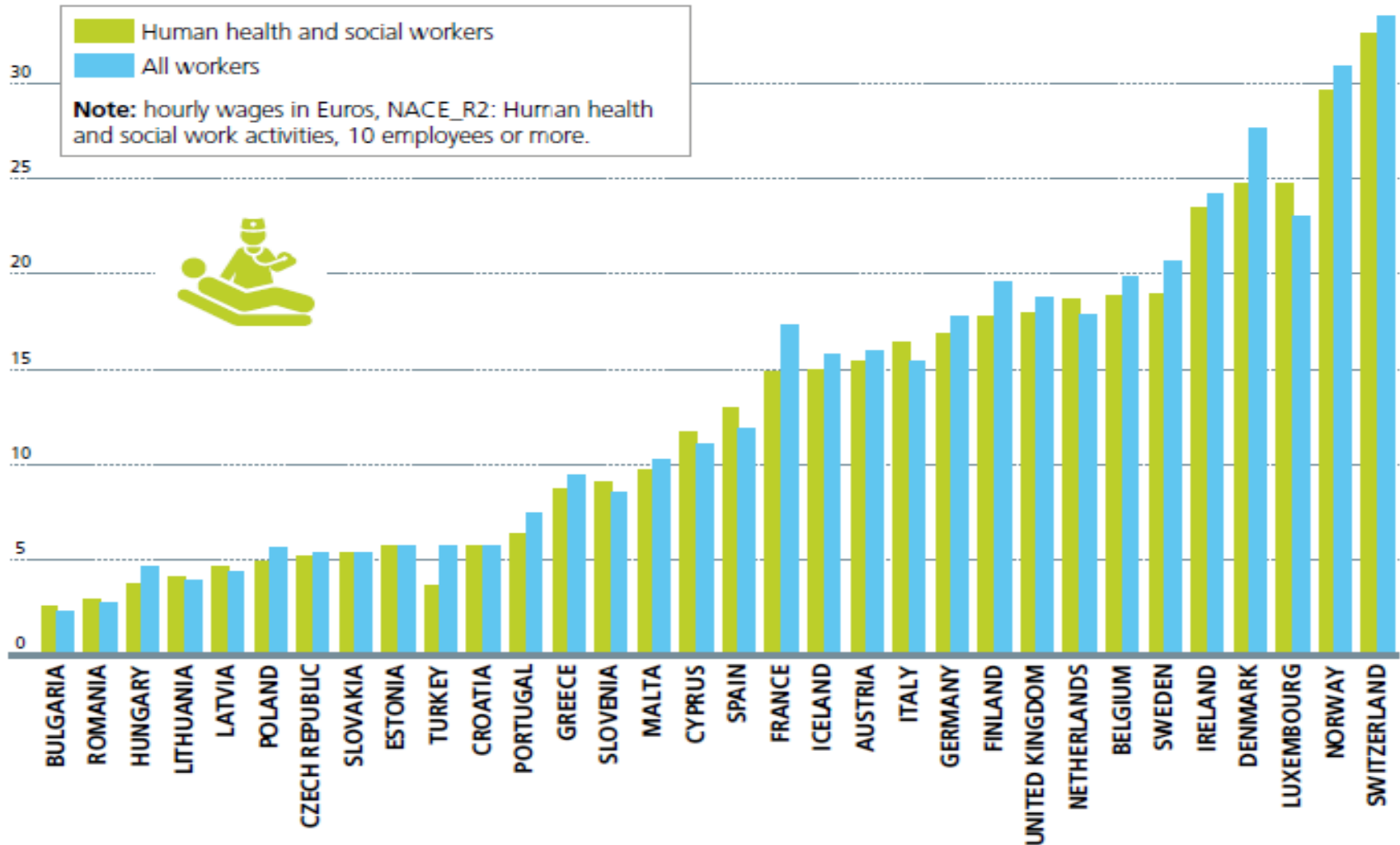
Proportion of women in health and social care



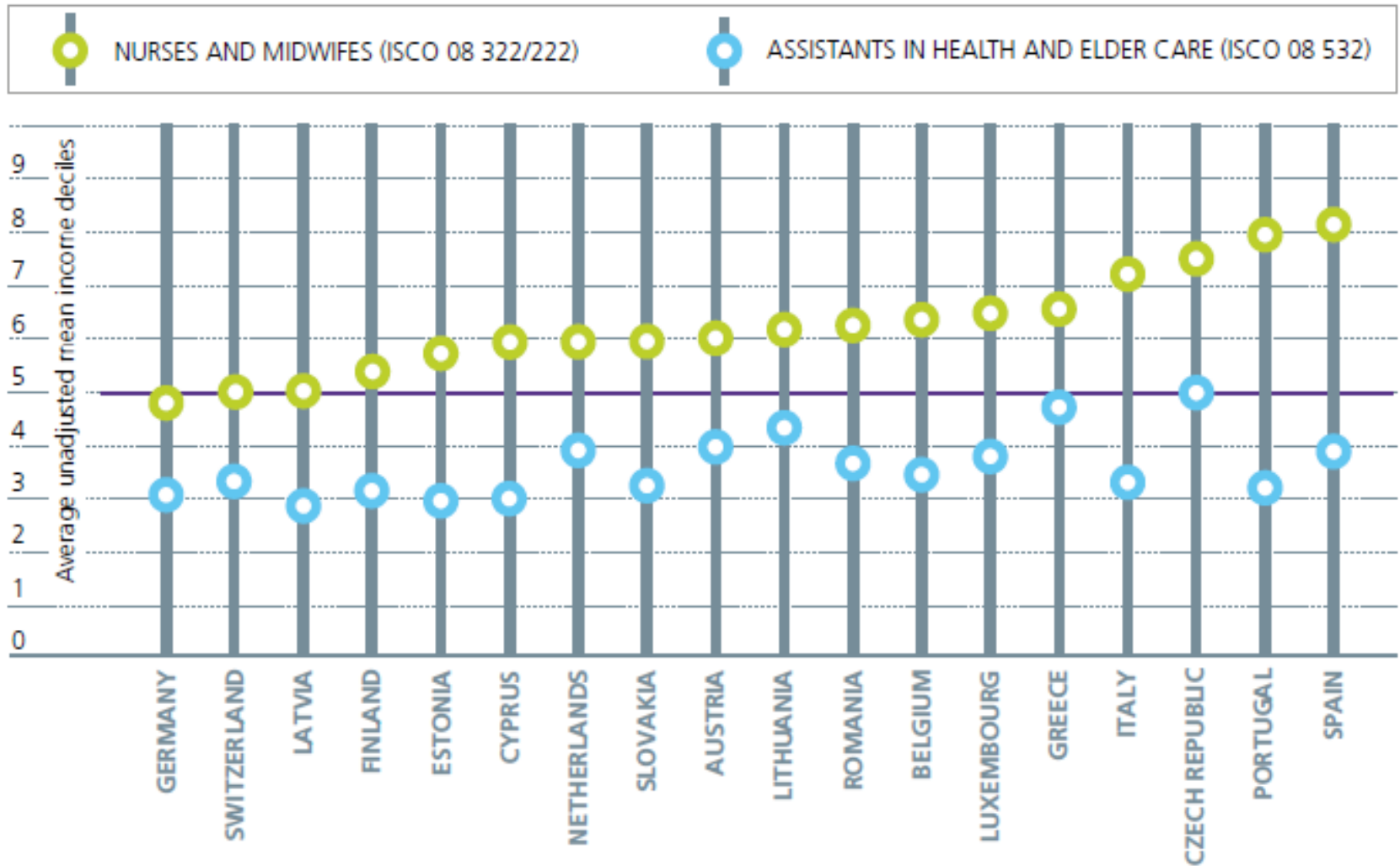
Source: EU-LFS 2016.



Average hourly wages of h & s workers compared to the economy as a whole

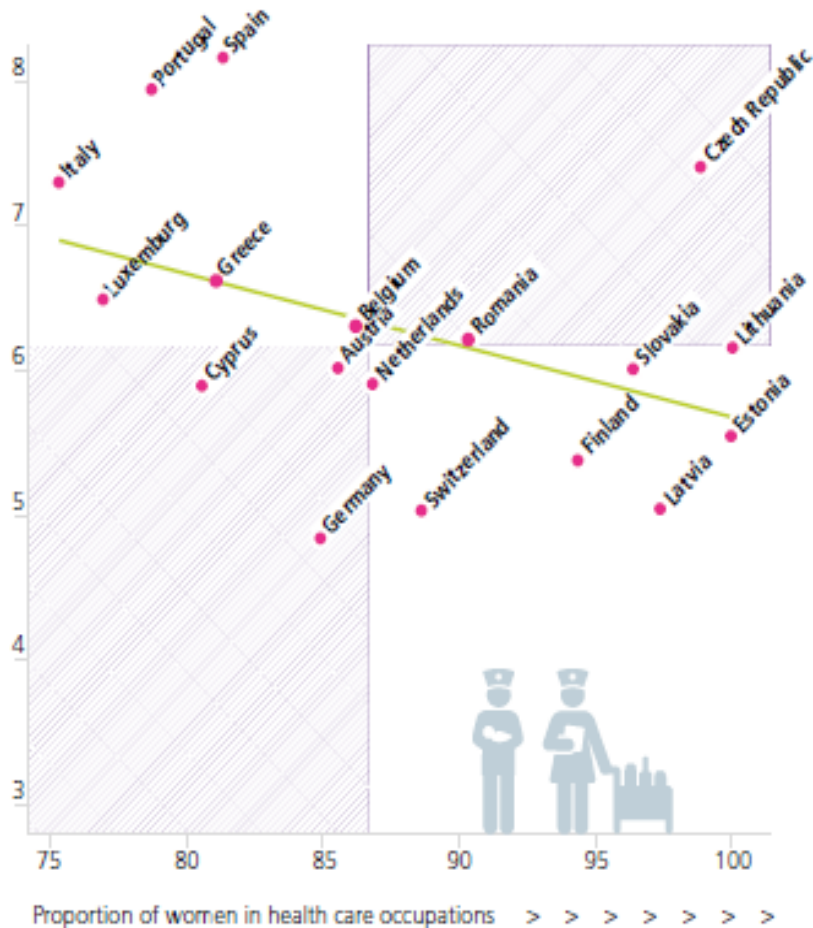


Relative income of nursing and care workers in the overall income distribution

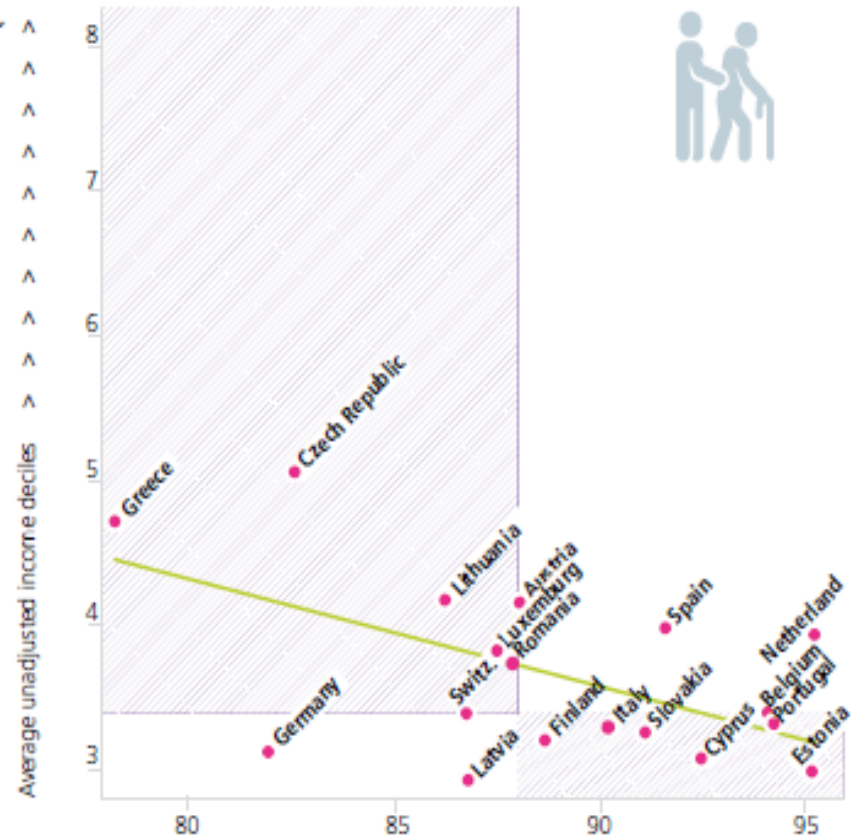


Relationship between proportion of women in health and care and their average relative income

NURSES AND MIDWIVES



LOW SKILLED HEALTH CARE WORKERS



Explaining low pay in health and social care

Three strands of explanation:

- **Economic:** structural **underfinancing** social work
- **Industrial Relations:** weaker **bargaining position** due to “prisoner of love dilemma” and low unionization rate
- **Sociological:** labour market discrimination based on **cultural devaluation** of female work



Economic explanation

Structural **underfinancing**
of social work

- Market-induced spending deficit due to increased **privatization** and **commodification** of provision of services
- **Austerity measures**: state no longer willing and able to step in – instead **consolidation of budgets** through: cuts in budget, wages and employment



Industrial Relations

Weak **bargaining position** due to “prisoner of love dilemma”

- **dependency** of care recipients
- **trust and empathy** as integral part of care work

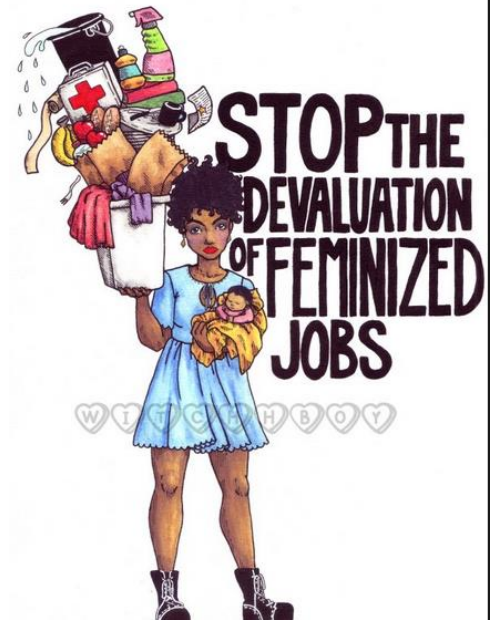


Result: **well-being of clients** more important than **collective pursuit** of their **own interests** in terms of higher wages and better working conditions

Sociological Explanation

Labour market discrimination based on **cultural devaluation** of female work

- **Perception** of jobs predominantly performed by women **as inferior** to ‘male-dominated’ jobs
- Gender-stereotypical perception of care work as “**typical female**”



Result: Devaluation gets entrenched in **evaluation schemes** informing pay structures

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Trade union action

Based on **questionnaire**:



- More **short-term measures** to raise wages within existing pay structure: CB strategy and legal measures
- More **long-term measures** to address how work is valued: changes to pay systems and fight undervaluation
- Measures **aimed at state**: minimum wage, wage transparency and reversal of austerity policy

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Short-term measures to raise wages within existing pay structure

CB strategy:

- Above-average pay increases for low-wage groups and areas in which women predominate
- Flat-rate wage increases in combination with percentage increases
- Comparing female and male dominated jobs / professions in other sectors



Legal measures:

- Equal pay claims in national and European courts

Long-term measures to address how work is valued

Changes to pay systems:

- Abolishing lowest pay grade
- Introduction of new pay systems placing more emphasis on prior experience and content of work
- Gender-neutral job classifications and evaluation systems: transparent evaluation criteria



Long-term measures to address how work is valued

Fight undervaluation through
broader campaigns

Important additional element:
change of public perception and
raising awareness of importance of care work

Examples: „Revaluation campaign“ by Ver.di in
Germany and „Equal pay project“ by FOA in
Denmark



Measures aimed at state

- Fight for **minimum wage** increases and **extension** of collective agreements
- Push governments to **end austerity policies**: „scrap the cap“ (UK)
- Legal framework to improve **pay transparency**: wage transparency laws



Key for success: Multi-dimensional approach

Short-term measures...

... to improve the position of low-paid workers in the currently existing wage structure

Collective bargaining strategies:

- Above-average pay increases for low-paid workers.
- Flat-rate pay increases in combination with percentage increases.
- Comparison of wages in female- and male-dominated sectors and occupations.

Training to improve women's career prospects and their chances to move up the pay scale.

Legal measures by bringing equal pay claims before court.

Long-term measures...

... to address how work in female-dominated sectors is valued

Changes to pay structure:

- Abolishing lowest pay grade.
- Changing the criteria on which pay is based by developing gender-neutral job evaluation schemes.

Addressing undervaluation of female work by specific revaluation campaigns which aim at changing the public perception of female work.

State-aimed measures...

... to support the unions' short-term and long-term measures

Pushing for increases in **statutory minimum wage**.

Pushing for **end of austerity-induced pay freezes**.

Pushing for more supportive regulation on the **extension of collective agreements**.

Pushing for stronger regulation and enforcement of **wage transparency** rules.

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Thank you very much for your attention!!!



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