



Cuts in public sector pay and employment: the impact on women in the public sector



Report commissioned by EPSU from Labour Research Department

May 2013 – Final report



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Introduction

Across Europe, governments have cut pay and jobs in the public sector in response to the financial crisis, which became evident in the autumn of 2008. Although the timing has varied – the Baltic states were among the first to reduce spending, while other countries like Spain and Portugal acted later – these cuts have damaged the living standards and future prospects of millions of public sector workers.

They have been particularly harmful to women, who in most countries make up the majority of those employed in the public sector.

Initially in many countries there was only a limited examination of the impact of these policies on the position of women. However, this is now changing and there have been a number of studies on the gender impact of austerity produced by the European Parliament and the European Commission.¹

This includes the work produced jointly by the Expert Group on Gender and Employment and the Expert Group on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, Health and Long-Term Care of the European Commission, which looked at the impact of the economic crisis on gender, and was published at the end of 2012.²

This EPSU report adds to the picture by examining what has happened in eight countries: the Czech Republic, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Portugal, Romania, Spain and the UK. It follows earlier EPSU research, which looked at the position in four states.³

The current report takes the 2011 research further. For each of the eight countries it:

- sets out government action in the areas of public sector pay and employment;
- examines whether the potential impact on women of government austerity measures has been assessed in advance;
- provides details of the impact on women's employment in the public sector;



- looks at how women's pay in the public sector has been affected; and
- analyses the consequences of public sector cuts on equality structures.

The report finds that all eight states have sought to reduce public spending by cutting public sector pay and employment substantially. All but the UK have cut pay in nominal terms – in the UK pay has been frozen at a time when prices were rising – and all of them have sharply reduced public sector employment.

However, as the report to the Commission from the networks of experts finds, this has a clear gender impact:

“Fiscal consolidation measures have primarily targeted expenditure on public employment (number of employees and wages), pensions and welfare benefits and services. All these are areas of employment where women tend to be in the majority.”

Despite this, none of the eight states appear to have undertaken an assessment of the specific impact of the measures on women before introducing them, although in Portugal the position is unclear. This was even the case in the UK, where there was a legal obligation on the government to do so – an obligation, which the government conceded in court it had failed to meet.

The report also shows the importance of public sector employment to women. Although comparable figures are not available for all countries, it finds that in all of the eight states with the exception of Greece, the public sector – or in some cases the key public sector industry groupings – public administration, education and health – employ more women than men.

However, it is not just the number of jobs that makes the public sector important to women. As the report from the Commission's network of experts points out,

“Gender equality policies often start in the public sector and are always implemented much more strictly in the public sphere due to visibility, employment stability, the strength of the unions and – very often in the past – soft budget constraints.”

It is therefore of concern when, as the available figures show, that in seven of the eight states the number of women employed in the public sector/key public sector groupings has gone down since the start of the crisis. The one exception appears to be the Czech



Republic, where growth in education and health more than made up for job losses in public administration. However, the Czech figures only go up to 2010, before public sector employment cuts really began to take effect.

Worse than this, in three countries, Latvia, Portugal and Romania overall women's employment in the public sector/key public sector groupings declined by more than men's. And in other countries this was the case in some areas. In the UK, for example, 10% of women's full-time jobs in the civil service – largely central government departments – went in a year, compared with 6.8% of men's.

Lack of data means it is more difficult to get a picture of women's pay and how it has changed relative to men's – the gender pay gap. In Greece and Portugal, there appears to be no information on men's and women's earnings in the public sector broken down by sex. In the Czech Republic, the latest data relates to 2010, but pay cuts only started in earnest in 2011. In Spain and Ireland too, the latest figures, for annual earnings, are for 2010, but as the pay cuts started at the start of 2010 in Ireland and in the second half of that year in Spain, some impact can be seen. In Ireland, pay for women in the public sector fell between 2009 and 2010, whether expressed as earnings per week or per hour, although by slightly less than men's. In Spain women's earnings in 2010 were slightly higher in most of the key public sector groupings than in 2009 but were growing less rapidly than men's.

Latvia, Romania and the UK are the only states where there is a longer run of figures and here the picture is mixed. In Latvia, women's pay fell in the public sector between 2008 and 2009 and it also fell more than men's. In Romania, women's pay was lower in 2011 than in 2008 for those employed in education and health, but higher for those in public administration. However, whether falling or rising, women's earnings performed better than men's. In the UK, women's pay in the public sector grew between 2010 and 2012 as well as growing more than men's, although these are increases in nominal pay. When inflation is taken into account real earnings fell.

However, if a lack of data means that the impact of public spending cuts on women's pay in the public sector is unclear, the same cannot be said for the impact of cuts on gender equality structures. In all the states but Portugal, the impact has been damaging, with observers referring to “a significant slow down” in progress in the Czech Republic, “no room for debate on gender equality” in Greece, “disproportionate cutbacks” in Ireland, the suspension of programmes in Latvia, and “drastic” reductions



in Romania. In Spain the separate Ministry for Equality has been abolished, and in the UK the main official body supporting gender equality – as well as other equality concerns – has seen its staff cut by more than three-quarters. Only in Portugal does it appear that the gender equality infrastructure has not been seriously affected.

In looking at the position of women in the public sector and the impact of public sector cuts, the lack of up-to-date information broken down by sex is very striking. This has consequences for decision making. As the Commission's network of experts points out, "one of the simplest gender mainstreaming tools is to present gender-disaggregated statistics, yet many analyses and documents have failed to do so". The experts also state that,

"In those countries where there is a lack of gendered data, or where gender sensitivity is at a relatively low level, gender-sensitive expenditure may be at greater risk."

In 2011, following its earlier report, EPSU expressed the fear that,

"The financial and economic crisis and the subsequent focus on slashing public spending could roll back the important gains that have been achieved after many years of hard work."

Now, two years later this very wording has been adopted by the Commission's own experts who after examining the fiscal consolidation undertaken so far conclude that,

"Measures assessed to bear with them the risk of rolling back progress in the full integration of women into the labour market are in the majority."

They also add that one of the

"unintended, but worrying consequence of fiscal consolidation [is] that existing disparities among European countries in terms of gender equality may be widening back again".



The Czech Republic

Government action

In the 2010 budget, government action to reduce expenditure on the pay and conditions of public sector employees was limited to a reduction in the number of posts. However, following elections a new government took office in July 2010, with a programme of further cuts in public spending, involving reductions in both the numbers employed and pay. It introduced a 10% cut in the public sector paybill for all but teachers from January 2011, although individual ministries were able to decide whether to achieve this through reductions in pay or jobs.⁴ The government also wanted to make major changes to pay systems, but union opposition forced them into a partial retreat. Public sector pay was to be frozen until 2014.

The 2012 budget, passed in September 2011, made no fundamental changes to the policy on public sector pay, although the government expected that there would be some increases in wage spending in the areas of education and health. In total these increases were expected to produce a 1.2% increase in the volume of public sector pay over the period 2012-14. However, the basic aim of government policy, that for most employees pay should remain frozen at the new reduced levels until 2014, remained unchanged.⁵

The most recent information is that, in practice, public sector pay grew by just 0.6% in 2012, with pay increases for employees in education being largely offset by decreases in pay in other areas at the local level. For 2013, further stagnation or what is described as “a slight autonomous increase” is expected for public sector earnings. In 2014 further savings worth 0.4% of GDP are expected through lower public sector employment – described as a “reduction of agendas and posts”.⁶

Prior assessment of the impact on women

There seems to have been no attempt to assess the gender impact of these policies. A report on the impact of the economic crisis on the position of women and men, produced jointly for the European Commission DG Justice by the Expert Group on Gender and Employment and the Expert Group on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, Health and Long-Term Care of the European Commission at the end of 2012, notes in reference to the Czech Republic that:

“Crisis-specific employment and social policies focus primarily on cuts in public spending, including support for families with small children. Policy plans announced by the new government go further in tightening support for the most vulnerable groups of the population. New policies are not gender mainstreamed, nor are they implemented with a clear conception or strategy.”⁷

The impact on women’s employment in the public sector

The Czech Statistical Office does not provide data for employment in the public sector as a whole, although there are figures on employment in public administration, education and health, which can broadly be seen as making up the bulk of the public sector. However the information only goes as far as 2010. At that time, 31.3% of



Czech women were employed in these public sectors – up slightly from 2008 when it was 29.7%.

In 2010 women made up 67.6% of the workforce across these three sectors – just marginally down on 2008 when they made up 67.9% of the workforce.

However their numbers had dropped in the area of public administration – falling by 888 between 2008 and 2010 (a 0.6% fall). In comparison the number of men in public administration increased by 3,391 between 2008 and 2010 (a 2.0% increase). In health, the number of women employed increased by 2.4% between 2008 and 2010, compared with a 9.3% increase for men, and in education the increase was 5.5% for women and 3.2% for men over the whole period. Across all three sectors, women's employment rose by 2.7% between 2008 and 2010, while men's increased by 3.8%

Numbers employed in the public sector

Sector	2008		2009		2010	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	157,300	169,537	153,540	167,718	156,412	172,928
Education	213,162	68,508	228,210	67,392	224,871	70,702
Human health and social work activities	264,778	62,847	265,820	60,488	271,237	68,680
Across all three public sectors	635,240	300,892	647,571	295,597	652,520	312,309
Across all industries	2,139,300	2,863,200	2,110,500	2,823,700	2,086,900	2,798,300
Public sector percentage as proportion of total	29.7	10.5	30.7	10.5	31.3	11.2

Source: The Czech Statistical Office

The downward trend for women's employment in public administration is confirmed by figures from Eurostat, which are more current. They show that between the third quarter of 2008 and the third quarter of 2012 women's employment in public administration went down by 2,700 (1.9%), while men lost 1,200 jobs (0.7%).⁸

The impact on women's pay in the public sector

The information on women's and men's pay in the public sector is limited. However, in 2011 men earned more than women across all three areas (public administration, education and health), which can broadly be seen as making up the public sector. The highest earnings are in the area of public administration but so is the gender pay gap at 16.8%.

Compared to 2009 – there appear to be no figures for 2010 – the gender pay gap has closed slightly in public administration and health, but opened up in education. In both public administration and health women's earnings are still one sixth less than men's.

Overall, between 2009 and 2011 women's earnings in public administration rose by 0.4%, while men's earnings fell by 0.9%. In education, women's earnings fell by 2.7%,



while men's fell by 1.5%. In health, there was a 0.7% increase in women's earnings, while men's earnings declined by 2.2%. All these figures represent a fall in real earnings, as price rose by 4.5% between the last quarter of 2009 and the last quarter of 2011.

Medians earnings in thousands CZK

Sector	2009			2011		
	Women	Men	Gender pay gap %	Women	Men	Gender pay gap %
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	23.96	29.16	17.8%	24.05	28.89	16.8%
Education	22.81	26.87	15.1%	22.19	26.48	16.2%
Human health and social work activities	21.54	24.64	12.6%	21.69	24.11	10.0%

Source: The Czech Statistical Office

Direct impact on equality structures

The report for DG Justice at the end of 2012 noted that the “government (which took office in August 2010) has implemented severe budget cuts for gender equality infrastructures.”

Another report produced for an EU conference on exchange of good practices at the end of 2011 was even more damning.⁹ It commented that following the change of government “there has been a significant slow down in development of activities towards gender equality in the Czech Republic in the last couple of years.” The report pointed out that the infrastructure for gender equality is very limited, that it has no decision-making power and exists only at national level. It also pointed out that staff of the government office for equality of women and men administering the work of the Council for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men had been cut to just two individuals and that it had been transferred from the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in December 2011. The Council for Equal Opportunities is a purely advisory body and for about a year it did not meet.



Greece

Government actions

The moves to cut the pay and conditions of those in public services began in November 2009, when the newly elected government, facing an unexpectedly large budget deficit of 12.7%, presented its first budget. Since then there has been an almost unremitting series of measures cutting the pay and jobs of those employed in the public sector. The main methods used until the end of 2010 were a cumulative 20% cut in additional allowances, as well as major reductions in or in some cases the complete abolition of the 14th and 13th month salaries that public sector employees had previously received. The government estimated that the 2010 reductions were equivalent to a 14% cut in pay in nominal terms.¹⁰

In addition, as part of the agreement with the IMF signed in May 2010, the government committed itself to the creation of a simplified remuneration system for public sector employees with a single wage grid, which would cover basic wages and allowances potentially payable to all public servants. This is being combined with the introduction of a single payment authority to pay and monitor all salaries in the public sector.

A report from the IMF published in December 2011, noted that this transformation of the pay system had been completed and that it was “embedding significantly more ambitious and upfront cuts than originally planned”. As a result, some individuals were, in the words of the IMF report “facing individual wage declines exceeding 25 per cent” and there is some phasing in for those affected in this way.¹¹ Employees on so-called special regimes, such as some hospital and university staff, also had their pay aligned with this wage grid in August 2012.¹²

As well as cutting public sector pay, the Greek government is also committed in the first Economic Adjustment Programme to reduce public employment by at least 150 000 in the period 2011-2015. In December 2012, a report by the European Commission estimated that there had been a decline of 79,923 public sector employees during the period 2011 to 2012 and that this was “largely explained by the application of the 1:5 attrition rule (by which only one in five employees exiting from the public sector should be replaced by a newly hired employee), combined with an increase in early retirements”.¹³ However, the report pointed out that further job losses were required to hit the target. These are likely to come from the transfer of staff to a new mobility scheme, where employees are paid reduced pay for 12 months prior to dismissal.¹⁴

Prior assessment of the impact on women

There appears to have been no consideration within the government of the particular impact that these and other austerity measures would have on women. The 2012 report to DG Justice on the impact of the crisis on women comments:

“The measures adopted or announced in Greece to counteract the effects of the economic crisis have been selected without a gender perspective in mind. They have been chosen with a view to ensuring fiscal consolidation in the first place, while the lessening of the impact of the crisis on specific groups was a secondary consideration.”



This is also the view of a report produced for the European Parliament in 2012.¹⁵ It noted that:

“Gender awareness is absent in the MoU [Memorandum of Understanding – the document stating what the Greek government will do]. The gender perspective is apparently not taken into account in the design and the implementation of policy.”

It also found that the lack of data made things worse:

“The (pre-existing) lack of gender-sensitive data and the low political visibility of gender issues increase the vulnerability of women as victims of gender-blind policies’ ‘unintentional effects’.”

The impact on women’s employment in the public sector

Women have been hit hard by the cuts in jobs in the public sector. The Greek government carried out a census of the number of public service employees as part of its response to the country’s financial crisis. Completed at the end of July 2010, it found that there were a total of 768,009 public service employees (excluding those in state-owned enterprises) of whom 46% (353,300) were women¹⁶. A second set of results, announced less than two years later in April 2012, found that the number of public servants had fallen to 712,076, of whom 331,100 were women.¹⁷ This is the same percentage (46%) as in 2010.

Since then the database has been regularly updated and the figures from 21 February 2013 show that there are 698,855 public servants of whom 324,724 (46.47%) are women.¹⁸

These figures mean that 69,200 public servants have lost their jobs since July 2010 – a fall of 9.0%. Of these 28,600 were women.

Eurostat figures are available over a longer period, going back to 2008.¹⁹ They show that between the third quarter of 2008 and the same period in 2012 a total of 47,000 jobs have been lost in public administration (a narrower definition than the public sector). However, over this period, women have been more severely affected than men, with 32,500 losing their jobs (a fall of 22.8%) compared with 14,500 men (a 6.3% drop).

The report to the European Parliament indicates what the potential consequences of this loss of jobs for women may be:

“Applying the hiring to attrition ratio [only one new employee for every five going – see above] will make it harder for well qualified women to find employment as they are mostly qualified for jobs in the public sector. Women’s employment prospects will consequently be determined by the job hiring potential of the private sector which hitherto lagged seriously behind regarding gender balance in application procedures.”

In other words, well-qualified women are not being taken on by the private sector and are unlikely to find jobs elsewhere.

The impact on women’s pay in the public sector

There are no figures on earnings in the public sector broken down by sex in Greece, although there is no reason to doubt that many women have been as severely affected



as men by pay reductions of around 40% since the start of the crisis. It is, however, possible, as the report to the European Parliament suggests, that aligning the special regimes, which are male dominated and better paid, with the standard public sector pay grid will reduce the public sector gender pay gap.

Direct impact on equality structures

The first few years of the new millennium saw significant progress in equality structures in Greece. A number of public agencies and committees were created in 2006, and in the same year the National Council for Equality between Women and Men was set up for the first time, within the General Secretariat for Equality. However, although a series of action plans were drawn up, in the view of report to a European Commission conference on good practice in gender mainstreaming, this progress is under threat. As the report notes:

“In such critical economic and political circumstances, there is no room for debate on gender equality issues and GM [gender mainstreaming]. The same circumstances are also menacing the success of the first all-embracing and well planned GM strategy to be implemented in Greece.”²⁰



Ireland

Government action

In February 2009, the first effective cuts in public sector pay were announced, with the imposition of an average 7.5% pensions levy on all public service employees. They were followed by cuts in pay rates, which came into effect in January 2010 and reduced the pay of all those employed in public services by at least 5% with higher earners losing more. These cuts were opposed by the unions but negotiations restarted and in March 2010 an agreement, known as the Croke Park agreement, was reached. This guaranteed that there would be no further reductions until the end of the agreement in 2014 and no compulsory redundancies, and in return the unions agreed to cooperate in a wide-ranging reorganisation of the public sector.²¹

However, by November 2010 the deepening crisis in Ireland's banking sector led to a bailout by the EU and the IMF. In the area of public sector pay and employment, the government introduced new measures aimed at cutting the public sector paybill by a further 8%. This was to be achieved through a further reduction in staff numbers – although still without compulsory redundancies – plus a 10% pay cut for any new recruits to the public service, with all new entrants starting on the minimum point of the pay scale. In addition, the measures agreed with the IMF included a less generous pension scheme for new public service recruits and an average 4% cut in pensions already being paid to retired public service employees.

The election of a new government in April 2011 resulted in some changes in other areas – a cut in the national minimum wage was restored – but the policy on public pay and employment remained the same. Pay is to be frozen until at least the end of 2014, while public sector employment is to be cut. The aim is to cut 37,500 staff, reducing the total to 282,500 by 2015, from a peak of 320,000 in 2008 – a reduction of 11.7%.²²

In 2013 the government began discussions on a new deal with the unions, a so-called Croke Park II. After difficult negotiations, the government and union negotiators reached agreement in principle on a deal that included pay cuts of between 5.5% and 10% for those earning more than €65,000, as well as delays in increments and increased hours for most staff. However, some unions withdrew from the negotiations and when the settlement was put to the union members in a ballot it was rejected in April 2013.

The Irish government expressed its disappointment at the outcome in a statement on 16 April and a week later it reaffirmed its requirement for savings in the public sector's pay and pension bill of €300 million in 2013 and €1 billion by 2015. It remains to be seen whether the government will attempt to impose these savings or whether a revised agreement will be negotiated.

Prior assessment of impact on women

There was no formal assessment of the impact of the cuts on women, despite the fact that in September 2009 – in other words relatively early in the process – the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI) specifically called for such an evaluation. The NWCI stated "the government must now, as a matter of urgency, assess the potential impact on women of the actions recommended in this report," which it said "would



completely abandon the government strategy for gender equality, would substantially increase women's poverty and would reverse the gains that have been made to increase women's participation in Irish society".²³

In the same document the NWC drew attention to the fact that five men and only one woman made up the group that produced the report which make proposals as to where cuts should fall (the McCarthy Report), despite the fact that the Irish government has a stated policy of ensuring that all boards are made up of at least 40% women (and at least 40% men).

However, despite these calls, there was no government assessment of the impact of the proposals on women. As the NWC noted in its submission to the 2011 budget, produced in September 2010:

*"A general cutback in public spending will disproportionately affect women. Firstly, women are the primary recipients of public spending such as care provision and services, education, training and health, including sexual and reproductive health. Secondly, women are the main providers of public services, making up to two thirds of the workforce in education, health and social care; cuts in public sector employment would disproportionately affect women. The National Women's Council last year produced a detailed analysis of the proposals and called for a gender impact assessment of all proposals in the [McCarthy] report. Regrettably, this has not been provided."*²⁴

The impact on women's employment in the public sector

Looking at employment, Ireland's Central Statistics Office (CSO) reported that for Q4 2012 the number of persons employed increased by 0.1% (+1,200) over the year to Q4 2012, however employment fell in eight of the fourteen economic sectors over the year. The greatest rates of decline were recorded in an area of the public sector: public administration and defence; compulsory social security where 6,400 jobs were lost (-6.2%).²⁵

The public sector is crucial to women's employment in Ireland as it employs over 40% of all women employees in Ireland.

The total number of employees in the public sector declined by 9,100 (-2.3%) in the year to Q4 2012, bringing the total number of employees in the public sector to 381,800. There was a 27,300 (-6.7%) reduction in employment in the public sector over the three years from Q4 2009, when it was 409,100, to Q4 2012, when it was 381,800.²⁶

These figures are not broken down by gender, but CSO publishes a gender breakdown of employment by industry, and it is possible to analyse the situation of women in the public sector by analysing the three industries that cover the bulk of the public sector (public administration and defence, education and health and social care).

The most recent figures from the final quarter of 2012 show that 40.8% of women in Ireland, some 351,300 employees, work in these three "public sector" industries. Women make up almost three quarters (72.1%) of those working across these three public sector industries compared to 37.3% in other industries.

Across all three public service industries, some 4,300 jobs have gone since 2009, with women losing 3,300. As a single industry, public administration and defence and compulsory security has been most affected and there are 10,800 fewer jobs compared



to 2009, a 10.1% fall. The fall has been even more dramatic for women, with 7,400 jobs going, a 14.1% reduction over three years. Education was hit hard in 2011 with women losing 5,300 jobs in one year although it has recovered slightly in 2012.

In the last two years the proportion of women working in the public sector has dropped slightly from 41.1% to 40.8%.

Area	Year	Female employment	Total employment	Women's share of total	Change in female employment on previous year	Change in male employment on previous year
All economy						
	2009Q4	887.2	1921.4	46.2%	-4.1%	-10.7%
	2010Q4	863.2	1857.3	46.5%	-2.7%	-3.9%
	2011Q4	860.4	1847.7	46.6%	-0.3%	-0.7%
	2012Q4	860.9	1848.9	46.6%	0.1%	0.1%
Public administration, defence and compulsory social security						
	2009Q4	52.5	106.8	49.2%	-2.8%	3.8%
	2010Q4	48.7	102.9	47.3%	-7.2%	-0.4%
	2011Q4	50.2	102.3	49.1%	3.1%	-3.9%
	2012Q4	45.1	96.0	47.0%	-10.2%	-2.3%
Education						
	2009Q4	109.2	148.4	73.6%	-3.1%	-6.2%
	2010Q4	111.7	152.2	73.4%	2.3%	3.3%
	2011Q4	106.4	144.5	73.6%	-4.7%	-6.2%
	2012Q4	108.4	145.3	74.6%	1.9%	-3.1%
Human health and social work						
	2009Q4	192.9	236.1	81.7%	1.5%	7.2%
	2010Q4	194.1	238.8	81.3%	0.6%	3.5%
	2011Q4	196.9	242.8	81.1%	1.4%	2.9%
	2012Q4	197.8	245.7	80.5%	0.5%	4.1%
All three public sector industries						
	2009Q4	354.6	491.3	72.2%	-0.6%	1.7%
	2010Q4	354.5	493.9	71.8%	0.0%	1.9%
	2011Q4	353.5	489.6	72.2%	-0.3%	-2.4%
	2012Q4	351.3	487.0	72.1%	-0.6%	-0.4%

Source: Central Statistics Office, Ireland. See StatBank Table QNQ03

Data from Eurostat shows that between the third quarter of 2008 and the third quarter of 2012 in the area of public administration women in Ireland lost 8,900 jobs (-16.3%) while in comparison men gained 600 jobs (1.1%).²⁷

The impact on women's pay in the public sector

The latest version of the National Employment Survey²⁸ (NES) published in 2012 only takes the picture up to 2010. However, the impact of the cuts in public sector pay is already clear.



In total public sector pay in 2010 was 1.3% lower in weekly terms than it had been in 2009 and 4.3% lower in hourly terms. Women suffered a larger fall in hourly earnings than men – women’s hourly pay fell by 4.9%, men’s by 4.0%. However, looking at weekly earnings there fall was almost the same for both sexes – down 1.1% for men and 0.9% for women.

The figures also make clear that the difference between the decline in pay in the public sector, for both women and men, and the increase in the private sector for both sexes.

Pay in the public and private sectors: 2009 and 2010

(Euros)	Male		Female		Total	
	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private
Earnings per wk 2009	932.03	640.00	736.00	443.75	809.25	539.25
Earnings per wk 2010	921.61	665.88	729.34	473.50	798.55	573.18
Change %	-1.1%	4.0%	-0.9%	6.7%	-1.3%	6.3%
Earnings per hr 2009	25.81	17.31	23.93	14.15	24.63	15.59
Earnings per hr 2010	24.78	17.39	22.76	14.17	23.56	15.82
Change %	-4.0%	0.5%	-4.9%	0.1%	-4.3%	1.5%

Source: NES 2009, 2010. Based on median values²⁹

The NES table above also shows that public sector pay remains higher than in the private sector, although the gap between the two has closed slightly. However, even in 2010 a woman in the private sector was still earning only 77.4% of the weekly salary of a woman in the public sector.

In part this is because the public sector has more highly paid jobs and therefore offers better opportunities for women. However, it is also true that workers at the bottom of the pay scale are better off in the public sector. In 2010, the 10% lowest paid earned €231.70 or less per week in the private sector compared to €425.89 or less per week in the public sector.

Direct impact on equality structures

The crisis has had a clear impact on gender equality structures. At an early stage, in 2009, the government substantially cut funding under the Equality for Women Measure.³⁰ Later the same year the McCarthy report on public spending recommended that,

“Given the significant resources that have been devoted to equality issues over recent years, and in light of the current budgetary difficulties, expenditure should be reduced to yield savings of €1m a year. Furthermore, the Group recommends that, as the Equality Proofing and Gender Mainstreaming and Positive Action for Women subheads are European Social Fund co-funded until 2013, funding be phased out by the end of 2013.”³¹



The Irish unions opposed these cuts with the ICTU writing to the minister for equality in August 2009 and giving its support to a complaint by the Equality and Rights Alliance to the European Commission in July 2009.

Cuts to gender equality structures have continued since then. The 2012 budget implemented a 35% cut in government funding for the National Women's Council of Ireland – a very small amount in the context of overall national expenditure (€187,000) but very substantial in terms of the resources allocated to gender equality.

Against this background, it is not surprising that the report by the European Commission's network of experts on the impact of the crisis on gender equality noted at the end of 2012:

“In practice, the resources allocated to gender equality generally, and to gender mainstreaming in particular, have been reduced substantially in the current economic crisis, and it is evident that even at a time of reduced public expenditure, the scale of cutbacks experienced by key elements of the equality infrastructure has been disproportionate.”



Latvia

Government action

Latvia was one of the earliest EU states to face the impact of the financial crisis and in 2008 the government was already starting to take steps to cut spending on public sector pay, having decided to cut the number of positions in public administration by 10%. Direct cuts in public sector wages followed in 2009, with the government cutting pay by 15% in 2009, although with protection for the lower paid.

A second round of cuts followed in June 2009, cutting pay by 20% for the higher paid and by 15% for the lower paid; many bonuses were abolished and there was widespread use of unpaid leave. In addition, the number of public sector employees was to be reduced.

Large numbers of jobs were lost, as the IMF noted in its January 2010 report. “The central government laid off almost 6,000 workers in the third quarter, and applied an 18 percent average wage cut to the remainder. The burden has fallen heavily on teachers, who now earn less than half the public-sector average.”³² Further changes, which came into effect in January 2010, reduced pay by an average of 5% compared to 2009.

The overall result of all these measures was that there were very sharp falls in both the number and earnings of public sector employees. On average in 2010, there were 62,900 employees in central government institutions compared to 78,900 in 2008 – a 20% drop. In local government institutions the fall in the same period was 16%, down from 122,900 to 103,100. In terms of pay, average monthly wages in central government fell by 22% between 2008 and 2010, and 20% in local government.³³

In 2011, pay for some in the public sector grew because of an 11% increase in the national minimum wage; there were also improvements in the pay of judges and prosecutors. However, the Latvian government was still intending to achieve “reduced personnel and remuneration expenditure in public administration” in 2011.³⁴

In 2012 total public sector wage expenditure continued to be frozen at the level of 2011, in particular through limiting holiday benefits for public employees at both state and municipal institutions.³⁵

The latest report from the IMF shows that public sector pay, while higher than in 2010, is still around 20% below the level of 2008.³⁶

Prior assessment of impact on women

In the report by the European Commission’s network of experts on the impact of the crisis on gender equality at the end of 2012 Latvia was one of six countries looked at in greater detail. The report makes clear that gender was not taken into account in designing fiscal consolidation policy. Indeed as it points out, women were particularly affected:

“The reforms implemented include cuts in teachers’ wages, the closure of a number of schools, and a number of (unpredictable) changes in taxation policy.



Since the education and health sectors are female-dominated, the reforms have affected women in the first place.”

The impact on women’s employment in the public sector

Looking at employment, figures from the UNECE statistical database for women’s employment in Latvia³⁷ show the continued importance of the public sector as an employer for women. In 2008 almost four out of ten women employed (38.9%) worked in the public sector, with the result that nearly two thirds (62.6%) of public sector employees were women, compared with well under half (42.3%) of those in the private sector.

The most recent data available from two years later shows that in 2010 women make up an even greater percentage of the public sector – up by 2.1 percentage points at 64.7%. However these figures are for a declining workforce so in reality there are fewer women employed in the public sector: Between 2008 and 2010, 51,000 jobs disappeared in the public sector with 25,700 women affected. At this stage slightly more women than men have lost their jobs (25,700 women compared to 25,300 men).

There is a similar pattern in the private sector. There are now more women in the private sector (up 3.5 percentage points to 45.8%) but 132,300 jobs have gone overall with 40,900 women affected.

Latvia: women employed in the public and private sectors: 2010

Sector	Number of women employed (000)	Total number employed (000)	Percentage of women
Public sector	189.1	292.1	64.7
Private sector	296.9	648.7	45.8
Total	486.1	940.9	51.7
Public sector as proportion of total	38.9	31.0	

Source: UNECE Statistical Division Database, compiled from national sources

Data from Eurostat, based on industry breakdown rather than the public sector, shows that employment in public administration has fallen by 31.1% in Latvia between the third quarter of 2008 and the third quarter of 2012. Over this period female employment fell by 15,200 (a 33.3% drop) compared with a fall of 11,400 for men (down by 28.9%).³⁸ Comparable data for education shows women’s employment fell by 800 (-1.2%) while men’s employment increased by 400 (2.4%). The same happened in human health, where women’s employment went down by 8,100 (-22.9%) while men’s employment went up by 200 (3.8%).

The impact on women’s pay in the public sector

Traditionally the public sector had paid women more than in the private sector. For 2008, figures from the Latvian national statistics office show that women’s average monthly earnings in the public sector were 472 LVL compared to 379 LVL in the private sector. This was still true in 2012 with women in the public sector earning 441 LVL compared to 412 LVL in the private sector.



Women in the public and private sectors both earn less than men although the gender pay gap has always been greater in the public sector and has been steadily increasing. In 2008 women in the public sector earned 78.8% of a man's salary. This improved in 2009 when they earned 80.7% but since then the gap has grown again and in 2012 they were earning just 76.7% of a man's salary in the public sector compared to a national average of 83.4%.

The tables below show that salaries in the public sector dropped to their lowest point in 2010, falling by 14.2% for women compared with 2008 and by 13.4% for men. They have recovered slightly in the last couple of years but are still down on 2008, by 6.6% for women and 4.1% for men. This means that, even though women's salaries in the public sector were lower to start with, they have been cut more than the pay of their male counterparts.

Latvia: Monthly gross wages and salaries by sex and sector (in 1st quarter in LVL)

Year	Total		Public sector		Private sector	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
2008	492	417	599	472	459	379
2009	515	432	590	476	483	395
2010	480	391	519	405	462	378
2011	494	412	552	430	470	395
2012	511	426	575	441	487	412

Source: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia:
Table DS03

Latvia: Monthly gross wages and salaries by sex and sector (in 1st quarter as percentage of 2008).

Year	Total		Public sector		Private sector	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
2008	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
2009	104.7%	103.6%	98.5%	100.8%	105.2%	104.2%
2010	97.6%	93.8%	86.6%	85.8%	100.7%	99.7%
2011	100.4%	98.8%	92.3%	91.1%	102.4%	104.2%
2012	103.9%	102.2%	95.9%	93.4%	106.1%	108.7%

Based on data from Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia: Table DS03

Direct impact on equality structures

Government austerity measures seem to have a damaging impact on measures to counteract gender inequality. As the report by the Commission's network of experts on the impact of the crisis on gender equality notes:

"Given the severity of the economic and financial crisis, the majority of the activities and measures included in the Programme for the Implementation of Gender Equality 2007-2010 have been suspended."



Portugal

Government action

The squeeze on the living standards of those in the public sector began in January 2010, when the Portuguese government announced its intention to freeze public sector wages for that year, as well as cutting public sector pensions. In September 2010, a further stage was reached, with the government cutting public sector pay by an average of 5% from 1 January 2011. These cuts protected the lowest paid, with the pay of those earning less than €1,500 a month not being cut at all, but all those earning more than this saw their pay reduced with the highest paid losing most.

Following further pressure from the financial markets, the government, which by then had lost a vote of confidence and was acting in a caretaker capacity, reached agreement with the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the IMF on a financial bailout. The terms, as set out in an attachment to Portugal's letter of intent to the IMF, included what would happen to public sector pay and employment in the next two and a half years.

“Following the 5 per cent average cut in public sector wages this year, wages ... will be frozen through 2013 ... Through a policy of only partly replacing separating staff, we will reduce the number of civil servants at the central government by 1 percent in both 2012 and 2013. The rationalisation of the public administration at local and regional governments will provide further reduction in costs, including a reduction in employment by 2 percent annually.”³⁹

However, this was not sufficient for the new government elected in June 2011. It proposed further cuts in public sector pay with the 13th and 14th month payments, each about one month's salary and paid at Christmas and in the summer, being abolished or reduced for a period of at least two years, starting in 2012. Following debate, the threshold for the complete loss of these payments was set at €1,100 a month.⁴⁰ There was also a target to reduce public sector employment by 2% in 2012.

These plans hit problems in July 2012 when the Constitutional Court ruled that the cuts to the 13th and 14th month salaries of government employees as well as beneficiaries of the public pension system disproportionately affected the incomes of public sector workers and were inconsistent with the equality of treatment provision under the Constitution. The Court said that this could not continue into 2013, and to compensate for it, the government introduced a range of other measures including increased taxation.⁴¹ The government also reintroduced its cut in public sector pay, although this time it only cut one of the two extra months' payments – a decision which the Constitutional Court also ruled as unacceptable in April 2013.

The government response to this decision of the Constitutional Court has been to announce a new plan to cut a further 30,000 public sector employees – around 5% of the total – as well as increasing their weekly working hours from 35 to 40 and imposing additional charges to cover their health insurance.

The overall impact of the changes by the autumn of 2012 was summed up as follows in a report by the European Commission.⁴²



“Personnel expenses have decreased for all subsectors of the general government. For the State and Social Autonomous Funds, the wage bill fell by 13.7 percent year-on-year up to October. This is the result of both cuts in salaries (particularly the suspension of the summer bonus) and a reduced headcount. Until September, the reduction of public employees was twice as high as foreseen in the Adjustment Programme, mainly due to the layoffs in the education sector (5.1 percent compared with a 2 percent Programme target for the year). On current trends, the authorities expect an overall reduction of public employees by more than 3 percent for the year as a whole.”

Prior assessment of impact on women

It is not clear whether or not the government at any point assessed the impact of its measures on women before introducing them.

The impact on women’s employment in the public sector

Figures on employment for men and women in the public sector in Portugal have only just begun to be published on a comparable basis. They run from 31 December 2011 to 31 December 2012 and show that public sector employment has fallen overall by 4.6%, down from 611,801 in December 2011 to 583,669 a year later – a loss of 28,132 jobs.

Women, who currently make up more than half of those employed in the public sector (56.4%), have been harder hit than men, both absolutely and relatively. Over the 12 month period 16,935 women’s jobs have been lost – 4.9% of all women’s jobs – while 11,197 men’s jobs have gone – 4.2% of the number of men employed in the public sector.

The largest single area of employment reduction was among school teachers where 13,603 jobs, 10,020 of them done by women, were cut over 12 months.⁴³

Eurostat provides a longer run of statistics, although these are for an industry breakdown rather than the public sector. These figures show that employment in public administration has fallen by 11.9% in Portugal between the third quarter of 2008 and the third quarter of 2012. Over this longer period, men were more heavily hit than women, with male employment falling by 32,700 (15.6%) compared with a fall of 5,700 for women (down by 5.0%).⁴⁴

The impact on women’s pay in the public sector

There are no up-to-date figures for earnings in Portugal which show the difference between men’s and women’s earnings. The latest figures relate to 2010 but do not cover public administration. The government has, however, started to produce detailed figures on earnings for all employees in the public sector and these are available on a three-monthly basis between October 2011 and October 2012. There is no male female breakdown but it is possible to provide figures for occupations with a majority of women. These are set out in the table.

Occupation	%age women	Number of women	Average monthly earnings	%age change October 2011
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		employed December 2012	October 2012	to 2012
Nurse	85.7%	7,792	€1,649.8	-0.5%
Higher health technician	84.9%	564	€1,918.4	0.6%
Registrar and notary	83.4%	559	€3,926.2	0.6%
Registry and notary official	83.3%	3,681	€2,015.3	0.1%
Diagnostic and therapeutic technician	80.0%	1,611	€1,465.6	-1.1%
School teacher	76.9%	105,588	€2,072.0	1.3%
Administrative assistant	72.3%	58,090	€1,062.4	-0.8%
Higher technician	66.0%	34,736	€1,760.7	-0.4%
Justice official	62.2%	4,893	€1,497.3	-8.7%
Doctor	62.2%	4,560	€3,762.0	-3.3%
Magistrate	57.5%	2,232	€4,808.0	0.2%
Tax and customs administrator	55.0%	5,367	€1,967.2	-3.1%
Intermediate director	53.5%	4,818	€2,881.4	-0.2%
Auxiliary	53.3%	71,127	€750.2%	-1.2%
Scientific investigations personnel	51.1%	875	€3,170.5	-0.9%
All occupations	56.4%	329,089	1,594.3	-0.3%

Sources: for earnings Síntese Estatística do Emprego Público- 4.º trimestre 2012; for proportion and number of women: Excel tables from <http://www.dgap.gov.pt/index.cfm?OBJID=da5b5dbb-6ace-4d45-9a10-315cedc919b8>

In two thirds of the occupations (10 out of 15) in which more women than men are employed, average earnings fell between October 2011 and October 2012 and in none of them did they keep up with prices, which went up by 2.1% over the same period.⁴⁵ Although the earnings of teachers, the largest group of female employees in the public sector, rose by 1.3%, the pay of the two next largest groups, auxiliaries and administrative assistances, fell by an above-average 1.2% and 0.8% respectively.

Direct impact on equality structures

The report by the Commission's network of experts on the impact of the crisis on gender equality suggests that equality structures in Portugal have escaped the damage that the crisis has inflicted on similar bodies elsewhere:

“The gender equality infrastructure has not been seriously affected by cuts in the public budget. The crisis did not induce cuts in the budget for gender equality policies, but has inhibited the launching of new measures.”

Portugal has a body responsible for promoting equality at work – Comissão para a Igualdade no Trabalho e no Emprego (CITE), which continues to be active.



Romania

Government action

Cuts to public sector pay and conditions in Romania began in April 2009, as part of a package agreed with the International Monetary Fund. The government agreed not to implement further pay increases in the public sector in 2009 (worth 5%) or make equivalent savings through job cuts. At the same time the government announced that it would only replace one in seven of all employees leaving public employment.

In August 2009 further cuts in additional payments and bonuses were announced and employees were compelled to take two weeks unpaid leave between October and December 2009. Legislation establishing a framework for the introduction of a uniform salary structure for public servants, which was expected to produce further savings, was also finally passed in November 2009.

However, in May 2010, before detailed legislation implementing this new framework could be introduced, the government introduced a temporary 25% cut in public sector pay to run from 1 July 2010 until the end of December 2010. The government also committed itself to cutting public sector employment by a further 70,000 by January 2011, down to a total of 1,290,000, on top of the 30,000 public employees lost since late 2009.⁴⁶

The new law on public sector pay was finally introduced at the end of 2010. It eliminated a wide range of bonuses and the 13th month pay, although it was also expected to increase pay over 2011, restoring part of the 25% cut imposed in July 2010. This combined with the retention of the rule under which only one in seven public sector employees is replaced would in the view of the government at the time “secure a decreasing trend of salary expenditures to GDP ratio in the medium term”.⁴⁷

Some progress was made in improving public sector pay in 2011, and the IMF indicated that further progress should be possible. In its report in October 2011 it stated: “During 2011, public employment has continued to decline—more rapidly than originally envisaged – leaving room to gradually reinstate the remainder of the wage cut by end-2012 – as mandated by the Constitutional Court.”⁴⁸ However, hopes that the 25% pay cut would be entirely restored by the end of 2012 were dashed when the parliament adopted an emergency ordinance in November 2011 freezing pay for 2012.

However, in May 2012, the government fell, in part because of the opposition to its austerity policies in the public sector and in July 2012 the pay of public sector employees was increased by 8%. Combined with the enforcement of other court rulings on salary entitlements this largely restored the 25% wage cut imposed in 2010.⁴⁹ In 2013 public sector pay is to be kept at the level of December 2012.

Prior assessment of impact on women

The report by the Commission’s network of experts at the end of 2012 makes it clear that the impact of the cuts on women was not considered before they were introduced: *“During the economic crisis priority was given to austerity measures without any consideration for their effects on the gender pay gap.”*⁵⁰



The impact on women's employment in the public sector

On employment, data from Romania shows that the public sector has traditionally been a significant employer of women. In 2008 just over a fifth (20.4%) of all female employment was in the public sector, with women making up just over half (52.2%) of all the employees in the public sector compared with well under half (44.2%) in the private sector.

Four years later overall employment has dropped and while the private sector shows some signs of recovery the public sector is continuing to shrink with 167,820 fewer jobs available. Less than a fifth (18.8%) of woman now work in the public sector – down 1.6% percentage points compared to 2008. They also make up a slightly smaller proportion of the workforce (51.7%, down 0.5 percentage points).

This reflects the fact that women have been more affected by the cuts in public sector employment than men. In four years 96,291 public sector jobs carried out by women have disappeared, equivalent to a 10.8% fall. The number of men employed in the public sector has fallen by 71,529 over the same period, a drop of 8.8%.

Sector	Sex	Quarter III 2008		Quarter III 2010		Quarter III 2012	
		Number of persons	%	Number of persons	%	Number of persons	%
Total	Total	9,627,229	100.0	9,482,680	100.0	9,456,920	100.0
	Male	5,256,811	54.6	5,215,442	55.0	5,222,456	55.2
	Female	4,370,419	45.4	4,267,238	45.0	4,234,464	44.8
Public sector	Total	1,704,674	100.0	1,675,680	100.0	1,536,854	100.0
	Male	814,381	47.8	788,929	47.1	742,852	48.3
	Female	890,293	52.2	886,751	52.9	794,002	51.7
Private sector	Total	7,701,025	100.0	7,636,847	100.0	7,777,894	100.0
	Male	4,295,836	55.8	4,317,413	56.5	4,388,216	56.4
	Female	3,405,189	44.2	3,319,433	43.5	3,389,678	43.6

Source: AMIGO Database Institutul National de Statistica

The impact on women's pay in the public sector

The table below shows how earnings have changed between October 2008 and October 2011, both for the economy as a whole and for the three main public sector areas of public administration, education and health and social care. The figures for 2011 show some signs of recovery after the 25% pay cut the year before. In public administration in 2011 it is the first time that earnings surpass the 2008 level with women receiving a sharp increase of 15.3% on 2008 and men 10.4% on 2008.



In education, 2011 shows an improvement on the previous year when pay crashed by a fifth but pay levels still fall well short of 2008 earnings with women earning 15.6% less and men 17.4% less. Health and social care follows a similar pattern in 2011 with pay improved on the previous year but still not catching up with 2008 levels – down 14.5% for women and 16.2% for men.

As a result pay in the public sector, which had been higher than average, for both men and women in 2008, has in the areas of education and health and social care fallen below the national average by 2011. In the area of public administration 2011 is the first year since 2008 that pay returns to being higher than for the total economy – women in public administration earned 13.4% more than the national average.

However in education women are now earning 8.91% below the national average (in 2008 they earned 19.5% above) and in health and social care women now earn 5.6% below (in 2008 they earned 22.2% above).

Romania: Average gross earnings of full-time employees in October (lei)

Year (October)	Total economy		Public administration		Education		Health and social care	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
2008	1,758	1,620	1,867	1,764	2,228	1,936	2,308	1,980
2009	1,865	1,709	1,789	1,663	2,268	2,004	2,279	1,998
2010	1,830	1,600	1,568	1,473	1,784	1,555	1,768	1,515
2011	2,033	1,794	2,062	2,034	1,841	1,634	1,934	1,693
Percentage change between 2008 and 2011	15.6	10.7	10.4	15.3	-17.4	-15.6	-16.2	-14.5

Salariile î luna Octombrie 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 Press releases no. 78/2009, No. 81/2010 No. 82/2011, 91/2012 Institutul Național de Statistică

Direct impact on equality structures

The government's austerity policy has clearly had a damaging impact on Romania's equality structures. The report on the impact of the crisis published at the end of 2012 referred to the reduction in resources:

“Gender equality bodies have been directly affected by the economic recession: the financial resources made available for their functioning as well as for their activities have been drastically reduced.”

Another, slightly earlier report explained that the framework for equality had also become more circumscribed:

“From 2005 to 2010, the main responsibility for designing and monitoring the policy of equal opportunities belonged to the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men. Under the austerity measures, the Agency was reduced to a directorate fully integrated in the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection.”⁵¹



Spain

Government action

The government's intention to cut the pay of those working in the public services became clear when the government announced a 5% reduction of pay in May 2010. This followed the earlier publication of the government's austerity plan in January 2010, which provided for a virtual freeze on public sector recruitment, with only one in ten employees leaving the public sector being replaced.

The initial intention was that the 5% cut would not be extended beyond the end of 2011. However, the new government of Mariano Rajoy, which was elected in November 2011, agreed on 30 December 2011 that public sector pay would continue to be frozen at this lower level for a further 12 months until the end of 2012. In addition, it stated that the working week for all public sector employees would be 37.5 hours, an unpaid increase for many workers. Finally the government announced a complete ban on recruitment in the public sector other than in a very few areas. These included some teachers and some health staff, the security forces and those responsible for tackling fraud, where a maximum of 10% of those leaving could be replaced.⁵²

Further measures followed in July 2012. They included removing the additional one month's pay that Spanish public sector workers, like all employees in Spain, receive at Christmas. This is equivalent to a cut in annual salary of between 5% and 7%, depending on individual circumstances. In addition, leave was reduced, with the number of additional days' leave public servants are entitled to being cut from six to three, while additional service-related leave was eliminated entirely. Finally, sick pay was cut, with public sector workers only receiving 50% of their pay for the first three days of sickness and 75% from the fourth to the 20th, rather than 100% from the first day, as had been the case up to that point.

In 2013 pay will continue to be frozen and the month's pay at Christmas will not be restored. The ban on all recruitment other than 10% in a few special areas is also maintained.

Prior assessment of impact on women

These policies appear to have been introduced without taking any account of their differential impact on women. As the report by the Commission's network of experts on the impact of the crisis on gender equality at the end of 2012 notes:

"The main policy initiatives for tackling the crisis are expected to affect women adversely. Most of these initiatives were implemented in 2010 in an attempt to further fiscal consolidation. Moreover, they have been accompanied by cutbacks in social spending at a local and regional level. The gender impact has not been measured yet, but it is expected to be enormous, especially in health, social policy, and education."

The impact on women's employment in the public sector

The government announced its intention to cut public sector employment in the austerity plan, published in January 2010. The national statistics office in Spain



publishes figures for public and private sector employment, broken down between women and men. These show that, for a period after the announcement, public sector employment continued to increase, although more slowly than in the past, reaching a peak of 3,220,600 in the third quarter of 2011. Since then, coinciding with the austerity policy of the current government (elected in November 2011) public sector employment has fallen in every quarter and by the fourth quarter of 2012 its had dropped to 2,917,200 (see table).

This is equivalent to a 9.4% fall in employment in 15 months and means that the Spanish public sector employed 303,400 fewer people in the fourth quarter of 2012 than it did in the third quarter of 2011.

Period	Both sexes (000)	Men (000)	Women (000)
2010QI	3,088.4	1,421.3	1,667.1
2010QII	3,085.6	1,426.3	1,659.2
2010QIII	3,175.9	1,464.0	1,711.9
2010QIV	3,168.5	1,432.7	1,735.7
2011QI	3,185.9	1,463.6	1,722.3
2011QII	3,217.5	1,477.5	1,740.0
2011QIII	3,220.6	1,489.3	1,731.3
2011QIV	3,136.1	1,422.6	1,713.6
2012QI	3,104.1	1,402.2	1,701.9
2012QII	3,041.1	1,355.1	1,686.0
2012QIII	2,991.7	1,331.6	1,660.2
2012QIV	2,917.2	1,319.8	1,597.4

Women have been severely affected by this, although less than men. Since the third quarter of 2011, women's employment in the public sector has fallen by 133,900 or 7.7%; men's has fallen by 169,500 or 11.4%.

However, these overall figures hide major variations between different levels of government. In central government women's employment has fallen by 10.5% from 184,100 to 164,700 between the third quarter of 2011 and the fourth quarter of 2012, while men's has fallen 2.5%, from 545,700 to 517,200. In regional government (Comunidad Autónoma), where the largest number of women are employed, the situation is reversed. Women's employment here has fallen by 7.5%, from 1,178,000 to 1,089,700, while men's has fallen by 15.5% from 629,500 to 531,700. In local government too, more men than women have lost their jobs. Female employment has fallen by 7.6% from 285,200 to 263,400, when male employment has declined by 16.2%, from 373,500 to 312,900 over the same period. In the other, smaller, parts of the public sector the situation is more mixed.

The impact on women's pay in the public sector

The latest figures, for annual earnings, are for 2010, but as the pay cuts started in the second half of that year, some impact can be seen. Compared with 2008, earnings were up across the key public sector groupings for both men and women.

However, compared with 2009, women's annual earnings were down in education and growing by only 1.5% in public administration and 1.4% in health. These are all worse performances than is the case for men. Their earnings were up by 1.7% in public administration, by 5.5% in education and 5.7% in health. (See table).



Spain: Average annual earnings 2008-2010

Area of employment	Average €	Women's €	Men's €	Women's as %age of men's
2008				
Public administration, defence and compulsory social security	26,927.57	24,860.38	29,023.9	85.7%
Education	20,883.28	20,591.85	21,489.54	95.8%
Health and social work	24,837.68	23,088.89	30,503.04	75.7%
2009				
Public administration, defence and compulsory social security	27,590.90	25,830.10	29,382.33	87.9%
Education	21,703.10	21,459.46	22,237.76	96.5%
Health and social work	25,622.97	23,850.50	31,757.12	75.1%
2010				
Public administration, defence and compulsory social security	28,001.68	26,224.16	29,872.45	87.8%
Education	21,751.87	20,872.37	23,453.74	89.0%
Health and social work	26,331.24	24,173.67	33,556.49	72.0%
Source: Encuesta anual de estructura salarial. Serie 2008-2010				

Direct impact on equality structures

In October 2010 the government abolished a separate Ministry for Equality, transferring its responsibilities to the Ministry of Health and Social Policy, although the previous minister for equality became a secretary of state in the new structure. The decision, which was justified as cutting expenditure in a time of austerity, was not supported by EPSU's Spanish affiliates.

In a statement agreed by its executive committee on 20 October 2010 the FSC-CCOO made clear its "absolute rejection" of the disappearance of the ministry, which it stated showed that "once again the government is relegating the objective of equality to the second or third level" and yielding to the "wishes of the most recalcitrant elements of the right".⁵³

The FSP-UGT was less damning. In a press release published on 22 October, it said that it "deeply regretted" the merger of the two ministries, as it considered that the Ministry of Equality had been very effective in its efforts to improve equality. However, it accepted that the merger did not mean "an abandoning of the issue by the government".⁵⁴



The UK

Government action

The election of a new government in May 2010 led to a sharp increase in public sector austerity, announced in an emergency budget in June 2010, with an impact on both public sector pay and employment. On pay, the budget document announced “a two-year pay freeze for public sector workforces, except for workers earning less than £21,000 a year who will receive an increase of at least £250 per year in these years”.⁵⁵ On public sector jobs, the budget did not set specific employment targets, although the announced of £30 billion current spending reductions per year by 2014-15 made it clear that many public sector jobs would be lost.

In practice, the two-year pay freeze, except for the lowest paid did not apply in the same way across the public sector. The majority of those employed in local government including those earning less than £21,000 had seen their pay frozen before the emergency budget and this continued for a total of three years. In parts of central government, long-term deals involved staged increases after the freeze came into effect and these were honoured with the pay freeze being imposed after that. In November 2012, the government announced that public sector pay increases would be limited to 1% for a further two years from 2012, once the freeze had ended, and in the budget in March 2013, it was announced that this cap would be extended for a further year until 2015-16.

On employment, the official Office for Budget Responsibility forecast job losses in the public sector would be just under 500,000 by 2014-15. In fact the latest figures on public sector employment for the last quarter of 2012, show that total public sector employment has already fallen by 461,000 from its peak of 5,169,000 in the last quarter of 2009, while in general government (excluding public corporations), the drop has been from 4,664,000 to 4,264,000 – a 400,000 reduction. These are full-time-equivalent figures. Using headcount figures the drop has been even greater – a fall of 640,000 for the whole public sector, down from 6,362,000 in the last quarter of 2009 to 5,722,000 in the last quarter of 2012, and of 569,000, from 5,812,000 to 5,243,000 in general government over the same period.⁵⁶

Prior assessment of impact on women

The UK government, like other public institutions, has a legal obligation to have ‘due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful gender discrimination and harassment’, and to ‘promote equality of opportunity between women and men’ when carrying out its functions. To meet these obligations, the government should ‘assess the impact of their current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality’ and produce what is commonly known as a ‘Gender Equality Impact Assessment’.

In preparing its 2010 emergency budget, the government appeared not to have done this and because of the budget’s impact on women the Fawcett Society, a body concerned with advancing the position of women, took the government to court. In the court case the government conceded that it had not met all the requirements of the Gender Equality Duty when drawing up the budget. It accepted that of over 100 budget measures they had only looked at the likely impact on women of two.⁵⁷



The court ruled that that the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), the official equality and human rights watchdog, who were separately examining the government's Comprehensive Spending Review, were best placed to undertake this review.

The review considered the extent to which the decision-making by ministers and Treasury officials complied with their legal obligations. The EHRC found that for three of the nine spending review policies, it was "unable to establish" whether the government had considered how its schemes would affect some of the most vulnerable sections of society.

However, the EHRC, which is facing its own cuts (see below), said it would be "disproportionate" to take any further formal action.

The government is currently reviewing the future of this Public Sector Equality Duty.

The impact on women's employment in the public sector

The public sector is a very important employer of women in the UK. Around 66% of employees in the public sector are female, compared with around 41 per cent of employees in the private sector.⁵⁸ In many sectors such as local government and education there is an even higher concentration of women.⁵⁹

At the beginning of the recession, a report carried out by the TUC in 2009 found that initially women were less vulnerable to job cuts, as public sector redundancy rates had not been increasing as in the private sector.⁶⁰

An update of this report carried out in 2010 reported that across the economy more men than women had lost their jobs during the recession and the rate of male unemployment had increased faster than the female rate.⁶¹ Again the reason for this is that more women work in the public sector where large scale redundancies had not yet taken place.

However, as cuts began to hit the public sector, the situation changed. The government's austerity programme has resulted in large cuts in public sector employment at both national and local level.

In its November 2011 Economic and Fiscal Outlook, the Office of Budgetary Responsibility (OBR) estimated that 710,000 jobs will be lost in the public sector between the beginning of 2011 and 2017.

In February 2013 the UK's Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) released figures showing that under the coalition's deficit reduction plan, Whitehall departments were cutting pay bills quicker than any other kind of spending. The IFS found that Whitehall departments were cutting jobs faster than the OBR expected. Between 2010 and 2012, the number of people employed in the public sector fell by 300,000, or 5% of the overall workforce. If jobs continued to be cut at this rate beyond 2014/15, public sector employment would be 1.2 million lower by March 2018, according to the IFS.

The cuts to public sector jobs are also bad news for the gender pay gap. As the Office for National Statistics (ONS) explains, female employees in the public sector earn considerably more, on average, than female employees in the private sector because



of the differing jobs that are typically carried out by women in the public and private sectors.⁶²

Data released by the ONS shows that at Q3 2012, the public sector accounted for 19.4% of total UK employment. This is the lowest proportion of people employed in the public sector in the entire Public Sector Employment Statistics series, which begins at Q1 1999, although it is worth noting that since 2009, some reclassifications of workers between the public and private sector have affected the figures. The main change is that several financial institutions are now counted in the public sector after they were taken into public ownership in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis.⁶³

Total UK public sector employment decreased for the twelfth consecutive quarter in Q4 2012 to 5.722 million (headcount). There are no figures broken down by sex for the whole of the public sector. However, there are figures for the three main public sector areas, public administration, education and health. These show clearly that a majority of those working in all three areas are women – 57% in public administration, 70% in education and 79% in health. Women’s employment has fallen by 10.3% in public administration since 2009, although not by as much as men’s, which fell by 13.6%. Women’s employment has risen very slightly in both education and health, while men’s has fallen slightly.

Employees in main public sector industries 2009-2012 (000s headcount)

Year	Public administration		Education		Health		Public sector (total of three industries)	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
2009	674	868	769	1,777	439	1,684	1,882	4,329
2010	642	846	749	1,767	445	1,676	1,836	4,289
2011	600	786	745	1,764	438	1,669	1,783	4,241
2012	582	779	757	1,783	437	1,694	1,776	4,256
Change 2009 to 2012	-13.6%	-10.3%	-1.6%	0.3%	-0.5%	0.6%	-5.6%	-1.7%

Source: Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey

There are also figures for the civil service (largely central government in the UK) and these show clearly that, in the most recent period at least, full-time women have been worst affected.

The table below shows that between Q3 2011 and Q3 2012 civil service headcount went down by 26,630 (-5.6%). Overall women’s employment was down by 13,240 (-5.3%) – while there was an increase in part-time positions, women working full-time were particularly hard hit with job losses numbering 16,410 (-10.0%).

Civil service employment: 2011 and 2012

	Male headcount			Female headcount			Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Total	
Q3 2012							
Central Government Departments Total	181,320	17,110	198,430	139,610	87,570	227,190	425,620
Scottish Government	8,170	460	8,630	5,510	1,900	7,410	16,040



Welsh Government	2,080	120	2,200	2,310	760	3,070	5,260
TOTAL	191,580	17,690	209,260	147,430	90,230	237,660	446,920
Q3 2011							
Central Government Departments Total	195,250	16,530	211,780	155,820	84,380	240,200	451,970
Scottish Government	8,270	460	8,730	5,770	1,980	7,750	16,480
Welsh Government	2,050	100	2,150	2,250	690	2,950	5,100
TOTAL	205,570	17,090	222,660	163,840	87,050	250,900	473,550
Percentage difference between 2012 and 2011	-6.8	3.5	-6.0	-10.0	3.7	-5.3	-5.6

Source ONS Public Sector Employment Q3 2011 and Q3 2012

This trend is confirmed by data from Eurostat, which is based on industry breakdown rather than the public sector. It shows that between the third quarter of 2008 and the third quarter of 2012 employment in public administration went down by 147,100 jobs (-14.4%) for women compared to 127,500 (-12.4%) for men. Comparable data for human health shows that while women lost 23,200 jobs (-1.4%) men lost considerably fewer jobs at 2,800 jobs (-0.6%).

The impact on women's pay in the public sector

The impact of the pay freeze policy, which in some areas allowed small increases for the lowest paid and in others did not come into effect immediately, can be seen in the official earnings figures (see table).

Annual earnings full-time employees

Type of employee	Median pay 2010	Median pay 2012	Increase	%age increase
Public sector: women	£26,113	£26,637	£524	2.0%
Public sector: men	£31,264	£31,829	£565	1.8%
Private sector: women	£19,532	£20,293	£761	3.9%
Private sector: men	£27,000	£27,704	£704	2.6%

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics: 2010 and 2012 Table 13.7a

This means that employees in the public sector clearly fell behind their colleagues in the private sector in terms of increases in earnings.

The increases were also less than the increase in prices which was 8.8% between April 2010 and April 2012, as measured by the Retail Prices Index (RPI). Both women and men in the public sector were more than 6% worse off in real terms in 2012 than they had been two years earlier.



Direct impact on gender equality structures

A combination of austerity and a change of government has led to dramatic cuts to the gender equality structure in the UK.

The main body supporting gender equality in the UK has, since 2007, been the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). This was formed through a merger of Equal Opportunities Commission (dealing with equality between women and men), the Commission for Racial Equality and the Disability Rights Commission. It is responsible for enforcing equality legislation in Britain and encouraging compliance with the Human Rights Act.

At its formation, it had a budget of £70 million. But after the election in 2010, the new coalition government immediately reduced this by 15%, with plans for a further cut of around 40%. By 2012-13 government had already cut the budget to £26 million this year and further cuts seemed possible. TUC senior equality policy officer Sally Brett told an equality and discrimination conference organised by the Institute of Employment Rights at the end of 2012: "The government has signalled that, if it is not happy with the EHRC's performance, there will be another review next autumn". This "threatens more drastic reform in 2013".

The 630 staff employed by the EHRC when it was formed in 2007 had been cut to 257 by mid-2012 and the number was expected to fall to 150 by March 2013, with offices closing around the country. Over time it expects to operate from a single location in England, most likely on the outskirts of London, as well as in Scotland and Wales. These cuts have partially been achieved by outsourcing its helpline service to a private company.

As well as the cuts in staff, the EHRC's £14 million grants programme has been ended. The programme funded 285 frontline organisations, such as citizen's advice bureaux (CABx), to provide specialist discrimination advice and advocacy at local level. By the start of 2013 the regional equality councils had already gone, and the special discrimination law advisors in the CABx had lost their jobs by the end of March 2013.



¹ See for example Gender aspects of the effects of the economic downturn and financial crisis on welfare systems, European Parliament 2013; Data for the evaluation of the European semester process from a gender equality perspective, European Parliament 2012; Analysis of five national reform programmes 2012 regarding the pursuit of the Union's gender equality objectives;

² The impact of the economic crisis on the situation of women and men and on gender equality policies, Synthesis Report, prepared by Francesca Bettio, Marcella Corsi, Carlo D'Ippoliti, Antigone Lyberaki, Manuela Samek Lodovici and Alina Verashchagina, December 2012 http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130410_crisis_report_en.pdf

³ See Time to speak out about the silent crisis - years of work on equal pay and gender equality under threat, EPSU press release May 2011 http://www.epsu.org/IMG/pdf/PR_2011_05_05_Years_of_work_on_Equal_pay_undone_by_the_crisis.pdf

⁴ Convergence Programme of the Czech Republic, January 2010

⁵ Convergence Programme of the Czech Republic, April 2011

⁶ Convergence Programme of the Czech Republic, April 2013

⁷ The impact of the economic crisis on the situation of women and men and on gender equality policies, Synthesis Report, prepared by Francesca Bettio, Marcella Corsi, Carlo D'Ippoliti, Antigone Lyberaki, Manuela Samek Lodovici and Alina Verashchagina, December 2012

⁸ Eurostat Labour Force Survey

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¹⁰ Hellenic Stability and Growth Programme Newsletter, 17 May 2010

¹¹ Greece: Fifth Review Under the Stand-By Arrangement, Rephasing and Request for Waivers of Nonobservance of Performance Criteria, November 2011

¹² IMF Country Report No. 13/20 January 2013

¹³ The Second Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece First Review December 2012, European Commission

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¹⁴ See IMF Country Report No. 13/20, January 2013

¹⁵ Analysis of five national reform programmes 2012 regarding the pursuit of the union's gender equality objectives: Study 2012, European Parliament http://www.irsocialresearch.at/files/pe462510_en_FINAL_REPORT.pdf

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¹⁷ "50,060 fewer employees in public sector" Kathimerini 11/04/12

http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/_w_articles_ell_2_11/04/2012_478746

¹⁸ See Greek government payroll register <http://apografi.yap.gov.gr/>

¹⁹ Eurostat Labour Force Survey

²⁰ Exchange of good practices on gender equality: Comments paper - Maria Karamessini, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, May 2011

²¹ Public Service Agreement 2010-2014

²² Public Service Reform Plan, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 17 November 2011

²³ The Impact on Women: The National Women's Council of Ireland responds to the Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes, September 2009

²⁴ Submission to Budget 2011, National Women's Council of Ireland, September 2010

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²⁶ Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs Survey, Central Statistics Office Ireland, 22 February 2013

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²⁷ Eurostat Labour Force Survey



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- ²⁹ <http://media.tcm.ie/media/documents/n/NationalEmploymentSurvey20092010Analysis.pdf> p18
- ³⁰ See: Pre-Budget 2010 Submission, National Women's Council of Ireland, September 2009
- ³¹ Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes Volume II: Detailed Papers, 2009
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W O M E N ' S A N D G E N D E R E Q U A L I T Y



EPSU is the European Federation of Public Service Unions. It is the largest federation of the ETUC and comprises 8 million public service workers from over 275 trade unions; EPSU organises workers in the energy, water and waste sectors, health and social services and local and national administration, in all European countries including in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood. EPSU is the recognized regional organization of Public Services International (PSI).

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