

EPSU Congress 2009

R.3. Equal Pay

A. The EPSU affiliates meeting at their 8th Congress in Brussels from 8-11 June 2009, Brussels recognise that:

1. It is unacceptable that more than fifty years following the establishment of the principle of equal pay for men and women in the Rome Treaty and 34 years after the equal pay directive, women earn on average 15% less than men in the EU¹. There are considerable country and sectoral differences with a larger average pay gap of 25% in private sector companies compared to 12% in the public sector;
2. Across Europe, a very large majority of low-wage earners are women. In general, the difference between women's and men's wages increases with the level of education obtained, the level of hierarchical responsibilities, age, years of service, migrant status and ethnic background;
3. It has detrimental effects on women's pension levels and increases the already higher poverty risks for women;
4. Since last Congress, whilst there have been both progress and regression in the public sector, there is nothing to indicate that the gap is narrowing in any significant way against a backdrop of falling wages in the GDP;
5. Main causes of the gender pay gap and low pay are the undervaluation of women's work, skills and competence, "motherhood penalty", and the disparities between full-time and part-time workers. This leads to gender segregation – in terms of occupation, sector and working patterns –, and reinforces unequal distribution of working and domestic time, gender stereotypical attitudes and expectations, and unequal distribution of wealth;
6. Migrant women face multiple discrimination, exacerbated by the vulnerability caused by governments and EU immigration policies and restrictive asylum policies;
7. Whilst collective bargaining is critical to reducing the gender pay gap, and indeed pay inequalities, the lack of political and financial investment coupled with the role of the market in setting wages limit its positive impact;
8. The public sector has a powerful equalizing role to play as a large employer of women, provider of care infrastructures, regulator of the labour market;
9. Public services can claim to have a better record on equal pay structures than those in the private sector. However, ongoing privatisation, contracting out, public underinvestment, and individualisation of wages, which is not part of a collective agreement, jeopardise earlier equality gains. In all wage systems, women's work, knowledge and experience must be valued;
10. The European Commission's commitment to closing the gender pay gap is undermined by its market-driven policy on public services and the European Central Bank's calls for wage moderation in the public sector;

¹ Eurostat, 2005, EU-27, based on gross hourly earnings of employees aged 16-64 working 15H+ per week

11. EPSU's dual strategy to achieve equal pay and improve women's wages, especially in women-dominated sectors, must be maintained. Improving women's wages in the public sector is crucial for women working in that sector but also to reduce the gender pay gap at national, EU and International levels;
12. The advances made in addressing equal pay in the European social dialogue both at cross-sectoral, through the Framework of Actions on gender equality (March 2005), and sectoral levels, through toolkits, guidelines on gender equality plans, and conferences are an important step forward.
13. Whilst the target of reducing the gender pay gap by between 2 and 5% in the EPSU equal pay resolution 2002-2007 did not produce miracles, only a small minority of reported unions having reached the target, its merit lies in reinforcing or introducing this issue on the trade union agenda and reviewing progress;
14. Whilst women's representation in EPSU's structures has a good record, more action is needed to reach gender parity in line with the Federation's constitution;
15. Success in closing the pay gap requires cooperation of all trade union organisations and public authorities and real commitment from the employers;

B. The 8th Congress calls on EPSU and affiliates to:

16. Campaigning and political lobbying

- Highlight the gender dimension in the EPSU demands for quality public services available to all in Europe, notably those relating to child and dependant care services;
17. Continue challenging privatisation and outsourcing and various forms of marketisation of the public sector which exacerbate the gender pay gap;
 18. Campaign for stronger EU legal equal pay enforcement mechanisms - including group and representative actions, effective sanctions, available and reliable gendered wage data at the workplace, support for gender-neutral pay systems-, for clear targets and timetable in the Lisbon strategy on employment and growth and limits on the market in setting wages;
 19. Campaign for an EU right to full-time work and to paid parental leave including paid and non-transferable paternity leave, via legislation and/or social dialogue, and for an improved directive on pregnant workers via legislation;
 20. Lobby national and local public authorities for enforcing an equality clause in public contracts, in line with EU legislation on public procurement, as an important tool to reduce risks of deterioration of women's wages in case of service outsourcing and/or public private partnerships. Good and bad practice examples will be compiled;
 21. Call upon the European commission to survey job classification in care services as is intended in the gender equality roadmap 2006-2010, in consultation of EPSU;

22. Negotiating and educating

Argue for stronger collective bargaining so as to put an end to the pay moderation strategies that risk setting European workers against one another and to achieve upwards real wage equality between women and men;

23. Recognising that the gender pay gap reflects the growing pay inequalities in Europe, urge employers and public authorities to set wage moderation for upper management as called for in the ETUC's fair wages campaign and monitor development of the highest salaries;
24. Monitor equal pay trends and payment systems in cooperation with the European Gender Equality Institute and Eurostat;
25. Strive to eliminate the gender pay gap and improve women's wages on the basis of the appended EPSU checklist "*negotiating equal pay*", and the target of reducing by, at least, 5% the gender pay gap by 2014;
26. Set up an equal pay and/or pay negotiators network drawn from the EPSUCOB@ network to follow-up implementation of the resolution and regularly report on developments to EPSU's Executive Committee;
27. Survey impact of public sector reforms and deregulated internal market on gender equality;
28. Facilitate training on equal pay, in cooperation with PSI and the ETUC's training institute, including holding a special session on tackling the gender pay gap at the Executive Committee level;
29. **EPSU structures**
Improve women's participation in the Executive Committee and standing committees and in all its activities to reach gender parity and/or proportional representation depending on the sector concerned and improve men's participation in the Gender Equality Committee;
30. Make equal pay a regular item on the agenda of the EPSU Executive and Standing Committees;
31. Use and promote the EPSU checklist to help pay negotiators implement EPSU policy on eliminating the gender pay gap and improving women's wages. EPSU urges its affiliates to set a target of reducing the pay gap by at least 5% by 2014. This checklist, as annexed, will be regularly reviewed and improved by the Gender Equality Committee.

Adopted 10 June 2009

EPSU Checklist “Negotiating Equal Pay”

This checklist is to help pay negotiators implement EPSU policy on eliminating the gender pay gap and improving women’s wages. EPSU urges its affiliates to set a target of reducing the pay gap by at least 5% by 2014. During negotiations at national, sectoral or local level, the following elements will be taken into account:

- ✓ Make sure pay negotiators, employers and governments understand what the gender pay gap means;
- ✓ Provide and/or facilitate training on pay equality for negotiating teams, using for instance the PSI pay equity toolkit;
- ✓ Promote gender equality plans at workplace level, using for instance the EPSU guidelines drawn by social partners in local and regional government (2008);
- ✓ Ensure that effective bargaining strategies give sufficient attention to employment conditions including health and safety in female-dominated jobs;
- ✓ Ensure proportional representation of women in collective bargaining committees and negotiating teams;
- ✓ Collect or urge employers to provide gendered statistics on wages - per hour, month, sector and/or occupation – and on employment – including full/part- time and type of contracts (the 2002 equal treatment directive encourages employers to provide gendered data in a planned way);
- ✓ Review job evaluation/ work value schemes to identify and eliminate discriminating grading schemes;
- ✓ Bargain for rises in minimum wages/ low paid grades and earmarked financial resources to redress the pay gap;
- ✓ Promote family-friendly working time policies and child care facilities;
- ✓ Ensure that part-time workers enjoy the same rights as full-time workers, and call for a right to return to full-time work;
- ✓ Review indirect discrimination due to in kind benefits, overtime benefits, bonuses, performance-related pay increases;
- ✓ Tackle vertical segregation by monitoring criteria for promotion and improving training opportunities;
- ✓ Lobby for increased funding for public services and survey impact of public sector reforms, including performance-related pay, and privatisation on women’s working conditions and call for a gender equality impact assessment of the proposed reforms;
- ✓ Promote and monitor compliance with the European cross-sectoral agreement on gender equality (2005), one of its four priorities areas being equal pay and EU equal pay legislation.

A first evaluation of this resolution will be made at the Collective Bargaining Conference in 2009/2010. In preparation for this evaluation at the Conference, each EPSU affiliate will be invited to submit intermediary reports on the targets set and the methods adopted to achieve them.