



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
LOBBY
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES



European Women's
Lobby



@EuropeanWomen
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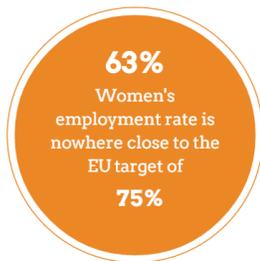
www.womenlobby.org

The European Women's Lobby explained to Members of the European Parliament

WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

Women's economic independence is of crucial importance to enable women to make real choices in their lives on an equal footing with men and in order to achieve effective gender equality.

In the European Union...



Austerity measures have also a huge effect on women, both as workers in the public sectors and users of public services. Therefore, reductions of care-related facilities and/or allowances, cuts in housing benefits or family benefits can disproportionately affect women. Moreover, women bear a disproportionate share of tax burdens, as they use larger portions of their income on food and basic goods for the household.

WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY & THE EUROPEAN UNION

Women's economic independence is one of the five priorities of the European Commission's Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015. The European Commission carried out a review of the 2006 Recast Directive (on equal treatment of women and men in employment and occupation), paying particular attention to equal pay, and following a number of consultations, issued a **Recommendation on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through increase wage transparency** (2014).

The Council of Ministers for Employment and Social Affairs (EPSCO) adopted conclusions in 2014 that call for indicators to measure: full-time equivalent employment rates; part-time employment as percentage of total employment; Self-employment as percentage of total employment; and also called **for a pillar on gender equality within the Europe 2020 governance framework**. However, the lack of EU dialogue with civil society organisations on the implementation of the EU 2020 Strategy shows that there is urgent need to address the current paradigm for the economy, putting equality and the environment before growth.

Contact at the European Women's Lobby for questions related to socio-economic issues:

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WOMEN'S ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE IS THE FOUNDATION OF ALL RIGHTS

The European Women's Lobby Manifesto for the 2014 EP elections **"Act now for her future, commit to gender equality!"** formulates concrete demands for the realisation of gender equality in Europe.

- ◆ **Promote women's employment by effectively enforcing and strengthening EU equality legislation**
For decades, the EU was at the forefront of ensuring women's equal access to employment, training and promotion, equal treatment to occupational social security, recourse to combat sexual harassment in the work place, and protection from dismissal while pregnant and on return to work. All of these Directives have been transposed at national level but they need to be closely monitored and effectively enforced to ensure that women can exercise their rights on the labour-market. **The EWL calls on the future European Parliament to pursue the adopted 2012 Resolution of calling for more stringent action to close the gender pay gap and the directly-linked gender pension gap.**
- ◆ **Protect all women workers, irrespective of their employment status, including pregnant workers**
Despite existing legislation on the protection of pregnant workers, women continue to be discriminated on the grounds of pregnancy/childbirth. **The EWL calls on the future European Parliament (EP) to maintain the position of the previous EP on the revision of the Pregnant Workers' Directive adopted in 2010** as this is a major step towards equality between women and men, social progress and economic sustainability. The EWL also calls on the European Parliament **to pursue negotiations with the Council in view of adopting the revised Directive which will subsequently send a strong message to all.**
- ◆ **Guarantee women's economic independence through individual rights to social protection and taxation**
The EU Member States are tackling the economic crisis with austerity measures and drastic cuts in public spending, affecting negatively gender equality since women rely more on the public sector as employees and beneficiaries of public services. **The EWL calls on EU decision-makers to guarantee women's economic independence through individual rights to social protection and taxation.** Furthermore, **the EWL calls to move beyond the household unit measure which not only assumes that gender equality is present within households but prevents decisive action on guaranteeing individual rights to women** to monitor and ensure progress towards women's economic independence.
- ◆ **Combat women's poverty, including in-work poverty, and put an end to the gender pay and pension gaps**
According to the Gender Equality Index published by the EIGE Network women on average are more likely than men to be at risk of poverty. Around 9% of people employed experience in-work poverty which shows that having any kind of job is not enough. Therefore it is vital **to make investments in quality and sustainable employment, a strategic plan to combat poverty and gender impact assessments to ascertain the impact of policies, including macro-economic policies, to make visible and address the feminisation of poverty in Europe.**
- ◆ **Democratise the EU semester process through the participation of the European Parliament and women's organisations**
The European Semester process which is the driving force for the achievement of the EU 2020 goals lacks transparency. Currently, the European Parliament is not part of the decision-making processes of the EU Semester and the lack of **stakeholder involvement in the process is a serious concern** about the democratic legitimacy of the European Semester itself. Civil society organisations including women's organisations are calling **for a partnership based on a meaningful dialogue to actively contribute to ensure that in the EU semester delivers the Europe 2020 goals.**

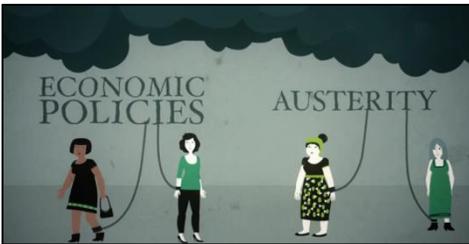
TAKE ACTION: add your footprint to European policies!

The European Parliament adopted a series of resolutions in the period 2009-2014 relating to women's economic independence, including: Equal treatment of **self-employed workers** (2010); the so-called **Maternity Directive**, adopted initially in 2010 but never reached the second reading phase due to reluctance of the Member States to accept the proposal of the Parliament; **Equal pay** and work of equal value (2012); Impact of the **economic crisis** on women's rights (2010 and 2013); **Precarious women workers** (2010); The role of women in the green **economy** (2012).

As Member of the European Parliament, **you have the power to make a women's economic independence a reality**. Your support in bringing our demands on the EP agenda is essential:

- Monitor the implementation of the EU directives and legislation on gender equality, in particular in employment and occupation, and including targets such as the Barcelona targets on childcare.
- Work with the Council and its member state to guarantee the adoption of the Maternity Leave Directive
- Provoke the debate on the impact of GDP on women, and on indicators on wellbeing and alternative accounting measures, including to ensure that women's unpaid care work is recognised in national accounts systems and a visible contribution to the economy
- Control that your Committees, the EP and the EU institutions use **Gender Budgeting** as a standard methodology of all public budget processes
- Work together **with civil society organisations and trade unions** to support/enforce gender equality

EWL TOOLS



EWL clip "A she-(re) session" - What does austerity mean for women in Europe?" (2013)



Report "Women's economic independence in times of austerity"
(European Women's Voice, 2015)



Report "Ticking Clocks - Alternative 2012 Country-Specific Recommendations to strengthen women's rights and gender equality in the Europe 2020 Strategy" (2012)



WEstart: mapping women's social entrepreneurship in Europe (2015)

