EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

Brussels, 20 November 2026

European Equal Pay Day 2026

EWL Statement

On European Equal Pay Day, the European Women's Lobby (EWL) calls for real commitment to close the gender pay gap. Last 18 September, the International Equal Pay Day served as a reminder of the persisting injustice women continue to face worldwide: being paid less than men for the same job. In the EU, women are on average paid 11% less per hour than men.[1]

EWL regrets that European Member States continue to delay their legal obligation to swiftly transpose the Pay Transparency Directive, almost 6 months since its transposition deadline. We recall that only 5 out of 27 Member States have transposed the directive so far, namely Italy, Slovakia, Lithuania, Malta and Greece. At national level, women's organisations have widely shared their concerns and disappointment with the lack of a stronger commitment of their governments in advancing with the transposition process. Countries such as Denmark has postponed the entry into force of their legislation from January to March, and others such as Hungary still do not have a draft legislation[2].

Women's organisations have also emphasised that the directive must be accompanied by stronger enforcement mechanisms, accessible remedies, and further encouraged Member States to go beyond the minimum requirements established by the directive.

Women are tired of empty words of support which are not followed by committed action. Equal pay for equal work is a simple demand. Women believed in the potential of the Pay Transparency Directive as a tool to advance gender equality and the EU countries are failing them.

Therefore, EWL also calls on the European Commission to open infringement procedures against non-compliant Member States. It is time for accountability and to ensure Member States comply with the EU law.

As always, EWL stands in solidarity with women workers and reiterates its call for the full transposition and implementation of the Pay Transparency Directive to all the non-compliant Member States: Belgium, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Ireland, Austria, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Slovenia, Luxembourg, Czechia and Croatia.

[1] Gender Equality Index | European Institute for Gender Equality
[2] EU Pay Transparency Directive Member State Tracker | Trusaic

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Today, we mark the day that women in the EU symbolically begin working for free until the end of the year.

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