



EQUAL PAY FOR WORK OF EQUAL VALUE IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

Photo: UN Women Europe and Central Asia/Rena Effendi

THE ISSUE: PAY INEQUALITY IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

The ILO-Gallup world survey *Towards a Better Future for Women and Work: Voices of Women and Men* shows that across the world, women want to be in paid jobs. It also shows that one of the main challenges for women at work is unequal pay.¹ Many countries in the Europe and Central Asia region (ECA) today experience gaps between men and women in labour force participation and pay. The participation gap is especially high in Turkey (42%) and in the Western Balkans (22%). Women make up slightly less than half the labour force in the region, and they earn on average 30% less than men.²

WOMEN MAKE UP SLIGHTLY LESS THAN HALF THE LABOUR FORCE IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA REGION BUT THEY EARN ON AVERAGE 30% LESS THAN MEN.

The extent of the gender wage gap varies greatly within the ECA region. The differences across countries are large. Some countries (the EU10, Moldova, Turkey, the Western Balkans) have a gender wage gap of about 20%. Other countries have gaps that are among the highest in the world (Tajikistan, with a gap of about 40%), while others, such as Albania, have gaps in an intermediate range, about 10-11%.³

GENDER PAY GAP IN THE AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Reducing inequality and promoting decent work for all women and men have been identified as key objectives in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8, specifically its target 8.5, aims to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value by 2030.

To achieve SDG 8, as well as all SDGs, we need to acknowledge the central role played by gender equality (SDG 5) in having a multiplier effect. In addition to SDGs 5 and 8, SDG 10 seeks to “reduce inequality within and among countries”, emphasizing income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population, the elimination of discrimination, and the adoption of policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieving greater equality.

Equal pay for women and men for work of equal value is central to realizing gender equality and women’s economic empowerment, reducing poverty and is beneficial to promote economic growth. Therefore, UN Women, ILO and OECD joined forces to accelerate progress towards SDG 8, specifically target 8.5, by leveraging expertise across a diverse range of stakeholders through concrete actions on the ground and in workplaces.



Photo: UN Women/Branko Starcevic

UNEQUAL PAY IS ONE OF THE MOST PERSISTENT BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S SUCCESS AT WORK AND TO ECONOMIC GROWTH, AND A CRITICAL PROBLEM THAT HAS BEEN PRIORITIZED IN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS), IN PARTICULAR SDG NUMBER 8.5 AND 5.

THE EPIC SOLUTION

Building on the recognition that no single actor can solve the challenge of achieving SDGs 8 and 5 alone and that efforts can be accelerated through leveraging expertise across a diverse range of stakeholders, ILO, UN Women and the OECD joined forces and initiated the **Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC)**.

EPIC is an inclusive initiative comprising government entities responsible for labour and employment as well as gender, national statistical offices, national and international employers' and workers' organizations, relevant UN agencies, development partners, the private sector, civil society organizations, and academia.

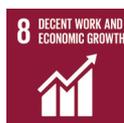
The members of **EPIC** will work together at the global, regional and national levels to support governments, employers and workers and their organizations, and other stakeholders, to make equal pay between women and men for work of equal value a reality, and reduce the gender pay gap. This will be supported through research and data collection, advocacy, knowledge sharing, capacity building, technical advisory services, data analysis and monitoring. Improving

the collection of sex-disaggregated data on earnings and clarifying the merits and demerits of different methods to measure the gender pay gap are key to informing policy action and assessing its effectiveness.

The innovative work of EPIC will contribute significantly to challenging some of the main assumptions reinforcing gender pay gaps, by strengthening the evidence base for policy action, sharing good practices and lessons learned, promoting the business case for change in favour of gender equality, and by investing in initiatives already proven to lead to positive results.

EPIC'S VISION IS OF AN EQUAL AND INCLUSIVE WORLD OF WORK, IN WHICH WOMEN AND MEN RECEIVE EQUAL PAY FOR WORK OF EQUAL VALUE ACROSS ALL COUNTRIES AND SECTORS.

1. ILO-Gallup, Towards a Better Future for Women and Work: Voices of Women and Men, 2017.
2. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/region/eca/brief/gender>.
3. UNECE Statistical Database



To learn more, contact EPIC at: epic@ilo.org
 To learn how you can become involved with EPIC:
<https://www.equalpayinternationalcoalition.org/members/>