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European Union

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GENDER 33
ANTIDISCRIM 30
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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
No. prev. doc.:	ST 7952/1/21 REV 1
Subject:	Draft Council Conclusions on the Socio-Economic Impact of Covid-19 on Gender Equality - Preparation for the approval

1. The Working Party on Social Questions has examined a set of draft Council Conclusions prepared by the Presidency on "the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality." Meetings took place on 31 March, 22 April and 10 May. Due to the exceptional circumstances arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the meetings were held in virtual form.
2. The Conclusions are based on a research note produced by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) on "Gender Equality and the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19," which is set out in Addendum 1 to this document.
3. Following the meeting on 10 May,¹ the Working Party has reached agreement on the Conclusions as set out in the Annex.

¹ See doc. 7952/1/21 REV 1. Minor editorial adjustments have been incorporated into the text set out in the Annex and some of the references in the footnotes have been completed.

4. The Committee is invited to:

- take note of EIGE's research note, as set out in Addendum 1 to this document; and
 - forward the draft Conclusions as set out in the Annex to the Council for approval.
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Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality**Draft Council Conclusions****ACKNOWLEDGING THAT**

1. Gender equality and human rights are at the core of European values. Equality between women and men is a fundamental principle of the European Union, enshrined in the Treaties and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which has led and should continue leading Member States to expend efforts on preventing, tackling and monitoring gender inequalities, including when it comes to the distribution of the risks and benefits that arise from broad social and economic developments.

TAKING NOTE OF

2. The Research note by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) entitled “Gender Equality and the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19.”²
3. The Opinion by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) on “Teleworking and gender equality – conditions so that teleworking does not exacerbate the unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work between women and men and for it to be an engine for promoting gender equality.”
4. The Resolution of the European Parliament entitled “The gender perspective in the COVID-19 crisis and post-crisis period”.

² 8878/21 ADD 1.

CONSIDERING THAT

5. The COVID-19 pandemic and the containment measures are having serious negative socio-economic effects on both women and men. However, women are affected disproportionately as a result of pre-existing structural gender inequalities in the labour market and in society as a whole.
6. Sexism and deep-rooted gender stereotypes, as well as related social norms and barriers at the institutional and structural levels, cause serious long-term disadvantages for women in the context of the labour market. These problems are exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis, endangering the advances in gender equality made so far, and have negative consequences for society as a whole, including hampering sustainable growth. On the other hand, by increasing awareness of structural problems, the crisis could also become an additional driver for necessary change.
7. While women and men have both been negatively affected by the crisis in different ways, persisting gender inequality in the form of horizontal segregation has meant that women are overrepresented in specific sectors, many of which, such as the health and care sectors, as well as retail and hospitality, have been heavily affected by the crisis.

8. During the COVID-19 outbreak, women employed in jobs categorized as essential have been on the frontline of the fight against the pandemic, with estimates pointing to women representing between 76% to 95% of healthcare workers, personal care workers in home-based settings or institutions, childcare workers and teachers, domestic cleaners and helpers, and carers working with older people and persons with disabilities.³ While situations vary between the Member States, in many cases, this has meant that women working in these occupations are at greater risk of contracting COVID-19, and have higher reported stress levels, a greater workload and long working hours, and related difficulties in reconciling work, family and private life. Meanwhile, many of these occupations continue to be underpaid compared with work of equal value in other sectors, and characterized by precarious employment conditions. The COVID-19 crisis has clearly illustrated the extent to which society and the economy depend on these sectors and that they have been undervalued. Evidence also shows that the pandemic has exacerbated violence and harassment against and the stigmatization of health and care workers.⁴
9. Moreover, women are overrepresented in economic sectors that were hit hard by lockdowns, and often work in temporary, part-time or precarious employment. Among the most negatively affected, the share of young women available to work but not seeking work increased strongly (+6 pp compared to 2019⁵) and the employment rate of migrant women born in a non-EU country fell to 50%.⁶ Women with lower educational attainment, in particular, were left behind in the labour market. Moreover, with the first wave of the pandemic, women registered an overall higher reduction in total actual hours worked in their main job⁷ and moved from unemployment to inactivity more often than men.⁸ However, situations and available data vary between the Member States, and there is still a need for further sex-disaggregated data in some cases.

³ <https://eige.europa.eu/covid-19-and-gender-equality/essential-workers>

⁴ See Research Note by EIGE (8878/21 ADD 1, p. 29).

⁵ See Research Note by EIGE (8878/21 ADD 1, p. 20).

⁶ See Research Note by EIGE (8878/21 ADD 1, p. 12).

⁷ See Research Note by EIGE (8878/21 ADD 1, p. 14).

⁸ See Research Note by EIGE (8878/21 ADD 1, p. 17).

10. Jobs lost in retail, accommodation, residential care, domestic work and clothing manufacturing accounted for 40% of all women's lost employment during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁹ Domestic and care services in households (with an 89% share of women) registered an 18% decline in employment.¹⁰ The initial pandemic and containment measures strongly impacted the self-employed, as well as temporary and part-time workers, among whom women bore significant job losses: women accounted for 69% of the losses registered among part-time workers, and for 48% of the losses in temporary work; on the other hand, although less represented in this group, women still accounted for 34% of the losses registered among the self-employed.¹¹ Moreover, the employment recovery in the summer of 2020 was stronger for men than for women.¹²
11. The digital gender gap risks limiting women's opportunities and individual capacity to respond to the demands emerging from the increased use of telework not only during the current crisis but also in the future. Women, on average, have less access, less exposure, and less experience with digital technologies than men. This is of particular concern for women aged over 54 years, who have persistent gaps in digital skills, including especially above-basic digital skills.¹³ Continued implementation of telework in the future world of work must ensure digital infrastructure and connections for all, and enhancement of digital skills, with special attention to women, so as to address any form of digital gender divide¹⁴.
12. There are faint signs of more women choosing male-dominated occupations, such as jobs in ICT—an area that showed significant employment increases in the year to the second quarter of 2020. However, women are still underrepresented in this field. For instance, women accounted for only 28% of the increase in employment in computer programming, consultancy and related activities.¹⁵

⁹ See Research Note by EIGE (8878/21 ADD 1, p. 23).

¹⁰ See Research Note by EIGE (8878/21 ADD 1, p. 21).

¹¹ See Research Note by EIGE (8878/21 ADD 1, p. 26).

¹² See Research Note by EIGE (8878/21 ADD 1, pp. 11, 16).

¹³ See Research Note by EIGE (8878/21 ADD 1, pp. 35-36).

¹⁴ See EESC Opinion, 1.6.

¹⁵ See Research Note by EIGE (8878/21 ADD 1, pp. 23-24).

13. In many Member States, women were more affected than men by decreasing salary levels in the first half of 2020,¹⁶ which risks widening the already significant gender imbalance in pension incomes and quality of life after retirement.¹⁷ More women than men are on paid sick or care leave or receiving assistance for living expenses or household needs, whereas more men than women are receiving -- usually higher -- unemployment benefits or wage support. During the crisis, more women, especially women of working age, reported financial difficulties, ranging in severity from inability to maintain their standard of living to inability to make ends meet.
14. Persisting gender inequality in the form of unequal sharing of domestic and care tasks within the household meant that women shouldered a disproportionate share of the unpaid work that increased during the COVID-19 crisis following the reduction in the supply of care services, school closures and the demands of online schooling, the increase in usual household tasks and the unavailability of external household services, and lack of access to informal help.¹⁸ Systemic wage inequality also generated gender disparities in some Member States in the use of family-related leaves during the pandemic, the take-up of such leaves being higher among women than it is among men. These imbalances have a potentially damaging impact on women's wellbeing and longer-term labour market prospects and career development and risk reinforcing stereotypical gender roles. Caring responsibilities more often fall to women, a fact that was already among the main reasons for women's inactivity even before the crisis.

¹⁶ ILO (2020), Global Wage Report 2020-2021.

¹⁷ Eurofound (2020), Women and labour market equality: Has COVID-19 rolled back recent gains?, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

¹⁸ See Research Note by EIGE (8878/21 ADD 1, p. 50).

15. During the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, although men increased their involvement in unpaid care work, women still spent more hours than men caring for and educating their own children/grandchildren (12.6 hours per week, against 7.8 for men) and caring for elderly relatives or relatives with disabilities (4.5 hours per week, against 2.8 for men), as well as cooking and doing housework (18.4 hours per week, against 12.1 for men).¹⁹ The temporary closure of schools and of childcare services during lockdowns has increased the time and effort spent on looking after children, especially for employed women with children under 12 who reported spending around 54 hours per week on childcare, compared to 32 hours for employed men (summer 2020).²⁰ Moreover, more women than men reported a general deterioration of work-life balance, including more difficulty in concentrating on the job because of family responsibilities as well as feeling prevented from giving time to their family and feeling more tired after work when performing household tasks. Mothers were more engaged in online schooling which meant added pressure. Particular pressures are felt by single parents, mostly women, who cannot share care demands and generally have lower financial resources, by women and men working in jobs categorized as essential and who cannot stay at home to care for children, as well as by teleworkers, especially those with small children, whose productivity is affected by increased multitasking and interruptions, an additional workload and a greater mental burden.²¹
16. In fact, evidence gathered during the pandemic shows that flexible working arrangements and telework, and in particular home-based work, can only facilitate work-life balance and contribute to greater gender equality in the labour market if they are accompanied by gender equality measures and family-friendly policies and organizational practices, and provided that the occupational health and safety of workers is protected.

¹⁹ See Research Note by EIGE (8878/21 ADD 1, p. 43).

²⁰ See Research Note by EIGE (8878/21 ADD 1, p. 45).

²¹ See Research Note by EIGE (8878/21 ADD 1, pp. 48-49).

17. A clear concern for the future of equality between women and men emerges in connection with the tendency to use telework as a tool to facilitate the reconciliation of work, family and private life (which might explain the higher share of women than men working from home on a regular basis) and the emerging estimation that 45% of women (as compared to 30% of men) are in teleworkable occupations.²² Thus there is a need to address certain risks associated with telework that were revealed by the COVID-19 crisis, including the risk of telework becoming a feminized alternative²³ to office-based work; the risk of an increase in the amount of unpaid work performed by women,²⁴ which could reinforce stereotypical gender roles, including housework and care; the risk of increasing work intensity and of a blurring of the boundaries between paid work and private life; the risk of reducing women's visibility in the work community and hindering women's career progression; and the risk of increasing online violence and harassment against women.
18. Meanwhile, the current crisis also offers an opportunity to reflect on the rules and practice in the area of telework, including in dialogue with the social partners and other stakeholders, with a view to designing and implementing flexible and healthy working arrangements that facilitate, *inter alia*, the reconciliation of work, family and private life.
19. Many of the factors that trigger or perpetuate violence against women and girls have been exacerbated by preventive confinement measures, deteriorating socio-economic circumstances, and job losses. Emerging data in many Member States indicate that gender-based violence, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, and other forms of violence and harassment have increased during the pandemic, both offline and online. This represents a serious violation of human rights and an obstacle to the full participation of women and girls in all areas of life. Coordinated action by all relevant actors to combat this problem is therefore required, including measures to promote and support the economic empowerment and independence of women, which can help them to escape situations of violence.

²² See Research Note by EIGE (8878/21 ADD 1, p. 32).

²³ See Research Note by EIGE (8878/21 ADD 1, pp. 48, 63) and EESC Opinion, 1.1.

²⁴ See EESC Opinion, 1.1.

20. A higher participation of men in unpaid care and domestic work has also been seen during the COVID-19 crisis – for example, where fathers were working from home or men contributed to care tasks because women were employed in jobs categorized as essential. However, lasting changes would require overcoming persisting attitudes towards stereotypical gender roles, sexism and earnings imbalances, as well as taking steps to encourage and facilitate an equal distribution of paid work and unpaid care work on an equal basis between women and men.²⁵
21. Finally, persisting gender inequality in the form of vertical segregation has meant that women continued to be underrepresented in decision-making during the crisis and when designing recovery measures.
22. Although in the EU women make up the majority of health professionals and are on the frontline of the battle against the pandemic, they are under-represented in leadership and decision-making processes in the health care sector.²⁶ Moreover, only 3.5% of 115 identified COVID-19 decision-making and expert task forces worldwide have gender parity in their membership, while in 85.2% of cases the majority are men.²⁷
23. There is a risk that women will not benefit equally from reconstruction measures in the aftermath of the crisis, for example, if those measures focus on male-dominated sectors of the economy, and do not contain specific provisions aiming to include women and girls, or if those measures focus only on workers that have lost their jobs during the crisis, neglecting those who were already excluded from the labour market before the crisis.

²⁵ See Research Note by EIGE (8878/21 ADD 1, pp. 43-44).

²⁶ OECD (2020), “Women at the core of the fight against Covid-19 crisis”, OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (Covid-19). Version 1st April 2020.

²⁷ Van Daalen, K.R., Bajnoczki, C., Chowdhury., M., et al. (2020), Symptoms of a broken system: the gender gaps in Covid-19 decisionmaking, BMJ Global Health.

24. In the light of the already identified and still emerging impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on women, there is now an urgent need to integrate a gender equality perspective in short-term emergency and long-term reconstruction measures as well as a need to ensure a balanced representation of women and men in COVID-19 crisis management, including in order to prevent further exacerbating pre-existing gender inequalities and to ensure that previously made gains are not lost.
25. This is a precondition for the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights proclaimed by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on 17 November 2017, in which gender equality and work-life balance are affirmed in Principles 2 and 9 respectively. The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan puts forward a number of initiatives to address gender inequalities and promote work-life balance, and proposes the goal of at least halving the gender employment gap by 2030.
26. The new European Skills Agenda announces a range of actions to ensure that girls and women are equally present in ICT studies alongside boys and men, and also participate equally in the development of entrepreneurial and digital skills.
27. Also, according to the European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, "increasing women's participation in the labour market has a strong, positive impact on the economy, notably in the context of a shrinking workforce and skills shortages. It also empowers women to shape their own lives, play a role in public life and be economically independent."
28. This set of Conclusions builds on previous work and political commitments voiced by the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and relevant stakeholders in this area, including in the documents listed in Annex.

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES, in accordance with their respective competences and taking into account national circumstances and respecting the role and autonomy of the social partners, to:

29. Ensure that the national Recovery and Resilience Plans²⁸ respect the commitment to mainstream gender equality and equal opportunities for all, in accordance with Principles 2 and 3 of the European Pillar of Social Rights, with the UN Sustainable Development Goal 5 and, where relevant, with the national gender equality strategy.
30. For this purpose, make use of gender analysis methods and tools (e.g. gender impact assessment, quality sex-disaggregated data and relevant qualitative and quantitative gender equality indicators) and intersectional analysis in all sectors, while avoiding any unnecessary administrative burden.
31. Mainstream gender equality in national regulations and instruments implementing the European structural funds, and monitor impacts on women and men as applicable.

²⁸ See Regulation (EU) 2021/241 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility, Article 18(4)(o).

32. Promote and mainstream gender equality and equal opportunities for all in the design and implementation of recovery measures, across all sectors and based on existing data on the gendered impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, taking into account intersectionality and multiple discrimination. Relevant national measures can include, for example:
- a) Measures in support of workers in hard-hit economic sectors such as retail, hospitality and tourism that address the particular needs of women, including women with lower educational attainment, women with reduced work hours, women moving into inactivity, and unemployed women, especially young unemployed women and unemployed migrant women, focusing on aspects such as changes in the labour market, reskilling and upskilling, active labour market policies, and entrepreneurship.
 - b) Measures that ensure equal access to support in finding employment or training for unemployed people who were already excluded from the labour market before the COVID-19 crisis.
 - c) Measures to enhance the status of essential workers, including workers in health and care-related occupations and sectors, who are often on low pay, and whose fundamental importance has become apparent during the COVID-19 crisis, paying particular attention to aspects such as fair wages, career development opportunities, access to social security, and decent working conditions.
 - d) Measures to tackle undeclared work and to improve the employment situation and social protection of domestic workers, paying particular attention to the working and living conditions of the many migrant women working in this sector.
 - e) Measures to promote a more gender-balanced uptake by women and men of crisis-related care support measures.

- f) Measures to improve public care infrastructure, facilities and services, including outsourced services.
 - g) Measures to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on gender-based violence, including intimate partner violence, domestic violence and online violence, including through support services provided for victims.
 - h) Measures to promote the inclusion of women and girls in opportunities for employment or training in traditionally male-dominated sectors, such as the STEM²⁹ fields, including especially ICT.
33. Actively address the reconciliation of work, family and private life for both women and men through measures such as the following:
- a) Measures to ensure that all workers, including teleworkers, have the same opportunities for career advancement, including equal access to management and decision-making positions.
 - b) Measures to promote the equal sharing of paid work and unpaid care work and domestic work between women and men, including incentives for men to get more involved in unpaid care work.
 - c) Measures to ensure the prompt and efficient implementation of the Work-Life Balance Directive, taking into account concerns arising from the COVID-19 crisis.
 - d) Investing in digital infrastructure and connections for all, including, where relevant, local shared spaces that facilitate teleworking outside the home, and enhancement of digital skills, paying special attention to women, while ensuring that the needs of SMEs are taken into account.

²⁹ Science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

- e) Promoting an organizational culture, policies and practices among employers that are conducive to well-being and productivity and that advance equality between women and men and combat gender stereotypes, including by promoting managerial training and encouraging managers to adopt a flexible approach and to consider, *inter alia*, the variety of working patterns and the different situations of workers, particularly family situations and the situations of single parents and women with disabilities; by improving health and safety at work; and through training and skills development in the context of teleworking.
34. Consider developing an integrated framework for the sharing of paid work and unpaid care work on an equal basis between women and men, which is a prerequisite for the labour market participation and career progression of women. Such a framework would include the availability of affordable and high-quality educational and care services for children and dependants, flexible, healthy and reasonable working arrangements and opportunities for workers to temporarily reduce or adapt their working hours, as well as a reduction of financial disincentives that encourage and perpetuate the unequal sharing of unpaid care work and paid work between women and men.
35. Continue implementing effective measures to address horizontal segregation in education, training and occupations at all levels by promoting equal access to all educational fields and the diversification of women and men's educational and career paths. In particular, actively promote girls and women's access to information and communication technology, and address any form of digital gender divide, including by improving the digital skills of girls and women and motivating girls to choose STEM study areas and especially ICT.

INVITES THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND THE MEMBER STATES, in accordance with their respective competences, taking into account Member States' national circumstances, and respecting the role and autonomy of the social partners, to:

36. Strengthen concrete action to combat structural inequalities between women and men, including vertical and horizontal segregation, and especially the digital gender gap, as well as the gender pay and pension gaps, and the unequal sharing of unpaid care and domestic tasks, including in the context of the reconciliation of work, family and private life.
37. Take steps to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women and girls, especially by protecting and empowering victims and survivors, including of intimate partner violence, domestic violence, online violence and harassment.
38. Step up gender equality policies and strengthen the empowerment of women and girls as a political priority, including especially in the context of policies responding to the COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath.
39. Develop and disseminate more data disaggregated by sex, information and research on the impact of COVID-19 on gender equality, including:
 - a) The implications of increased telework for gender equality including in the context of the reconciliation of work, family and private life, taking into account the relative prevalence of teleworking among women and men, and the impact of the temporary closure of schools and childcare facilities, as well as different household configurations and their work arrangements.
 - b) The extent of men's increased participation in domestic work and unpaid care work during the pandemic and its reasons and impact.
 - c) The impact of the crisis on working patterns, including working hours, inactivity and work interruption.
 - d) Take-up of parental, family and child-related leaves.

40. Undertake research on the value of unpaid care work, and where appropriate, include unpaid care work in macroeconomic and labour market analyses, as well as in the design of labour and employment policies, and develop additional indicators for measuring macro-economic performance including paid and unpaid care work, the care economy, and gender gaps in time use.
41. Collect and disseminate existing good practices for promoting gender equality in the context of telework.
42. Take steps to facilitate the reconciliation of work, family and private life for both women and men through measures such as the following:
 - a) Measures to promote the equal sharing of paid work and unpaid care work and domestic work between women and men, and to incentivize men to participate in available family-friendly policies, including by taking up family related leaves.
 - b) Measures to develop telework and to address changing working patterns, in ways that promote equality between women and men and the reconciliation of work, family and private life, including for example:
 - i. Reviewing the legal and regulatory framework or guidelines where deemed relevant, while ensuring that SMEs are not disproportionately affected and that their needs are taken into account. Relevant aspects could include more flexibility between office and home-based work; time flexibility, including healthy tailor-made working time arrangements; occupational health and safety, including psychosocial risks and ergonomic considerations; the right to disconnect; care leave; protection against dismissal; surveillance and monitoring practices; and social protection, particularly regarding compensation for withdrawals from the labour market in the case of eventualities linked to care.

- ii. Ensuring the availability of high quality, affordable, accessible and diverse care services, at home or outside the home (outsourcing of care tasks), including by improving supportive care infrastructures (e.g. child care services, in line with the Barcelona targets, and elderly care services), thereby responding to various demands and situations, so as to ensure that the challenge of reconciling work and care does not increase with telework to the disadvantage of women. Ensure that these services are available to all workers, including teleworkers.
43. Effectively combat bias in job evaluation systems and raise awareness of the value of unpaid and paid care work for the sustainability of our societies and economies.
 44. Design and implement targeted measures to combat sexism and gender stereotypes that restrict the choices of girls and boys and women and men in their educational and career paths, as well as undertake interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral research into the nature of gender stereotypes and their impact on gender equality, especially in terms of employment.
 45. In collaboration with organizations that fund and carry out research, analyse and take adequate measures to address the potential gendered effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on the working conditions, careers and career progression of researchers, with particular focus on women researchers, teachers and students, recognizing that early-career women researchers face additional barriers.
 46. Strengthen concrete actions to ensure the full and equal participation of women in the labour market and to promote women's entrepreneurship, which are both prerequisites for long-term inclusive economic growth, for gender equality and for women's economic independence.

47. Strengthen measures to increase the role and numbers of women in decision-making, including in the context of processes shaping the response to COVID-19, and promote the balanced representation of women and men in decision-making as a means to ensure gender-responsive policies, legislation and implementation. This will allow for adequately translating women' and girls' needs, perspectives, knowledge and skills into policies which will be conducive to more equality between women and men, thus contributing to a fair and sustainable recovery.
48. Jointly work towards implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights, including Principles 2 and 3.
49. Ensure that gender mainstreaming is taken into account and promoted throughout the implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of relevant EU funding programmes.

CALLS ON THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION to:

50. Present a revision of the Barcelona targets to enhance upward convergence in the provision of quality early childhood education and care among Member States.
51. Take gender equality into account when setting the methodology for reporting social expenditure under the Recovery and Resilience Facility, in accordance with the rules set out in that instrument, to be reflected in the review report on the implementation of the Facility.
52. Take stock of and support measures to tackle the gendered impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on care receivers, especially the elderly, and on care givers as well as on society and the economy at large, including the long-term care sector. Consider developing measures to support upward convergence in the provision of long term care.
53. Consider women's situation in the labour market, and follow a gender mainstreaming approach in all relevant aspects of the European Semester, in line with the 2020 Employment Guidelines where relevant.
54. Develop further research into the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on gender equality, including through EIGE.

CALLS ON THE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE AND THE SOCIAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE to:

55. Within their mandates, and in the context of the European Pillar of Social Rights action plan, continue incorporating a gender equality perspective into their analysis of the relevant policy fields, including when addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath.

While fully respecting their autonomy, INVITES THE SOCIAL PARTNERS to:

56. Actively pursue gender equality when addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath, and strengthen concrete action to combat structural inequalities between women and men, including vertical and horizontal segregation, and especially the digital gap, as well as the gender pay and pension gaps, and the unequal sharing of unpaid care and domestic tasks, including in the context of the reconciliation of work, family and private life.
57. Reshape teleworking practices, including especially with regard to home-based workers, and address changing working patterns such as combined office and home-based work, in ways that promote equality between women and men and the reconciliation of work, family and private life, in the context of sectoral or company-level social dialogue, or bilateral negotiations with the employer.
58. Promote, through collective bargaining, organisational practices and an organisational culture that combat sexism, gender-based violence, including domestic violence and workplace violence, and gender stereotypes. Seek to enhance well-being at work and productivity, including through equality-friendly policies and practices; through training and skills development in the context of teleworking; by ensuring that telework is a voluntary option; and by improving health and safety at work.
59. Encourage all managers to adopt a flexible approach to teleworking, considering, *inter alia*, the variety of working patterns and service needs, as well as the different situations of workers and their families, including single parents.

References

1. EU interinstitutional

European Pillar of Social Rights

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/social-summit-european-pillar-social-rights-booklet_en.pdf

2. EU legislation

Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services. (*OJ L 373, 21.12.2004, p. 37–43.*)

Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast) (*OJ L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 23–36.*)

Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU (*OJ L 188, 12.7.2019, p. 79–93.*)

Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Recovery and Resilience Facility. (*OJ L 57, 18.2.2021, p. 17–75.*)

3. Council

All Council Conclusions on gender equality and other relevant subjects, including especially those cited below:

- Council Conclusions on Women and the Economy: Reconciliation of work and family life as a precondition for equal participation in the labour market (17816/11)
- Council Conclusions on Moving towards more inclusive labour markets (7017/15)
- Council Conclusions on Enhancing the Skills of Women and Men in the EU Labour Market (6889/17)
- Council Conclusions on Enhanced measures to reduce horizontal gender segregation in education and employment (15468/17)
- Council Conclusions on Closing the Gender Pay Gap: Key Policies and Measures (10349/19)
- Council Conclusions on the Economy of Wellbeing (13432/19)
- Council Conclusions on Gender-Equal Economies in the EU: The Way Forward: Taking Stock of 25 Years of Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (14938/19)
- Council Conclusions on Enhancing Well-being at work (8688/20)
- Council Conclusions on Tackling the Gender Pay Gap: Valuation and Distribution of Paid Work and Unpaid Care Work (13584/20)

4. Trio Presidency

Trio Presidency Declaration on Gender Equality signed by Germany, Portugal and Slovenia (July 2020)

5. European Commission

Commission Recommendation 2014/124/EU of 7 March 2014 on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through transparency (OJ L 69, 8.3.2014, p. 112–116)

Communication from the Commission of 26 April 2017: "An initiative to support work-life balance for working parents and carers" (COM(2017) 252 final)

EU Action Plan 2017-2019: Tackling the gender pay gap (COM(2017) 678 final)

Commission Recommendation (EU) 2018/951 of 22 June 2018 on standards for equality bodies (OJ L 167, 4.7.2018, p. 28–35)

Challenges in long-term care in Europe - A study of national policies 2018. European Social Policy Network.

Report on the development of childcare facilities for young children with a view to increase female labour participation, strike a work-life balance for working parents and bring about sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe (the "Barcelona objectives") (COM(2018) 273 final)

Communication 'Digital Education Action Plan (2021 to 2027) Resetting Education for the Digital Age', COM(2020) 624 final

2021 Report on equality between women and men in the European Union (6774/21)

European Commission. Advisory Committee for Equal opportunities for women and men - *Opinion on challenges for gender equality in a rapidly ageing society*, October 2019.

Common European Guidelines on the Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care and Toolkit on the Use of European Union Funds for the Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care.

https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/themes/social-inclusion/desinstit/

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