



EUROPEAN WOMENS LOBBY RECOMENDATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN EMPLOYMENT PACKAGE

1. Re-value the care economy

ICT, green jobs and care, or 'white jobs' are the three sectors with highest job creation potential. 'White jobs' have until now received less political interest than 'green jobs' and the Employment Package is an opportunity to revalue the care economy and develop the concept of 'white jobs'. Investment in the three sectors should reflect the fact they are equally indispensable to European economies. Like green jobs, white jobs in the field of care are crucial for the sustainability of European societies. In addition, they contribute to growth, employment rates and by decreasing the need for unpaid care - of which women are the main providers- they also contribute to the equality between women and men.

The needs for care services are not being met and the potential to create quality jobs is missed. There is increasing demand for work carried out within private households and this work is often unregulated¹. It is estimated that on average 10% of foreign born women and 20% among most recent migrant women are employed in the sector of domestic work (including care functions). Tapping on the growth potential of white jobs requires addressing the low job quality characteristic for the health and care sector across the EU. Low pay, high levels of part-time work and poor working conditions do not reflect the social value of this sector and make it difficult to attract new pools of persons.

Monitoring and strengthening the Barcelona childcare targets is indispensable. However, the EU must go 'beyond Barcelona' and along with increasing the provision, the quality, affordability and accessibility of care services to include quality for elderly. In nineteen out of the 27 EU member states more than 50% of the elderly receive informal or no care². In Sweden, resources spent on publicly funded elderly care have declined significantly since 1980 although the number of elderly in need of care has increased. The proportion of elderly (aged 80 or older) receiving publicly funded care has fallen from 62 to 35 percent and the number of employees in geriatric care by 10 percent.³

Finally, one of the major problems on the labour-market is gender segregation where women and men are concentrated in particular sectors of the economy, and the three growth sectors are among the

¹ European Women's Lobby, European Network of Migrant Women, *Migrant women's integration in the labour market in six European cities : a comparative approach*, (forthcoming)

² EIGE *Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action: Women and the economy, Reconciliation of Work and Family Life as a Condition of Equal Participation in the Labour Market*, 2011

³ Lorentzi, Ulrika (2011)



most segregated ones. ICT and 'green jobs' tend to be highly masculinised while the 'white' (care) sector is highly feminised. Gender segregation has a huge impact on women's effective participation in the labour-market and their economic independence as the predominantly female sectors, such as the care sector, are undervalued and provide low job quality. The Employment Package must tackle gender segregation through specific measures regarding each of the three sectors. Developing the care sector must be done with an explicit aim to tackle gender segregation.

Recommendations

- Provide a definition of white jobs that recognises the particular importance of the care sector and which aspires to improving the quality of jobs.
- Strengthen the public care sector in Member States through EU funding and target-setting. Ensuring accessibility and quality of jobs requires a broad range of flexible care services, the core of which must be provided publicly.
- Establish an EU framework for the recognition of the different skills of unpaid care workers (leadership, management, negotiation, conflict resolution) to facilitate their transfer to the paid care sector as well as other sectors where their skills are relevant.
- Include developing the care sector and enhancing the growth potential in white jobs into the priorities of the CSF funds for the 2014-2020 period and the common strategic framework; ensure that the long-term sustainability of care services is addressed in the partnership contracts.
- Use European Globalisation Fund to retrain workers made redundant in predominantly male sectors for white jobs.
- Use European Globalisation Fund to retrain workers made redundant in predominantly female sectors for green and ICT jobs.
- In the context of efforts to tackle youth unemployment, present the care sector as a viable option for young people, both women and men, for example through training programmes that emphasise the multiplicity of skills required in the sector in the future (ICT, multicultural skills, social skills).
- Improve the training of care workers through tax benefits or additional state funding. Care workers with low salaries do not always have the means to invest in training.
- Follow up the country specific recommendations on care services given in 2011 and give new recommendations on the provision of elderly care services – ensure that Member States who have received recommendations will have to use Structural Funds to address the gaps.
- Ensure equal representation for women in the green job sector through positive action measures.
- Collect gender-specific data when policies, programmes and projects are planned, implemented and evaluated for the environment and climate and in the green job sector; the absence of such data and statistics make it difficult to address gaps and to implement appropriate measures to improve gender equality in the green economy.
- Actively seek to improve women's engagement in the ICT sector, by supporting for example the European Code of Best Practices for Women and ICT⁴.

⁴ European Commission, Information Society and Media Code of Best Practices for Women and ICT



2. Flexicurity policies will not work without sustainable care and reconciliation

The possibility to combine paid work with private and family responsibilities is a core element of both 'security' and 'flexibility.' Sustainable care regimes and reconciliation work and private life must therefore be at the forefront of flexicurity policies in Member States.⁵

Currently, it is estimated that only two fifths of flexicurity measures recently adopted in member states can be classified to foster equality⁶. In particular, there is strong evidence that flexicurity policies have failed to address the structural dimensions of women's unequal positioning on the labour market and women's over-representation in unpaid work.⁷

It is crucial that the forthcoming communication of flexicurity strengthens the gender equality element as flexicurity policies will not in practice lead to increased flexibility in employment unless they take into account the contributions and responsibilities of the majority of the population, namely women.

Addressing women's differentiated needs for social protection and the persistent gender gaps in employment are prerequisites for flexicurity. Increasing women's labour-market participation and addressing the pay gap will have a positive knock-on effect on the flexicurity model. Ensuring that women's take-home wage and spending power are at the level of men's will strengthen the funding base of social security systems, and will thus contribute to 'security'.

Finally, flexicurity policies need to be monitored as labour laws and collective bargaining mechanisms could potentially be dismantled in a shift towards individualisation of labour relations. This would be particularly damaging for women. The long term sustainability of Social Security schemes depends on everybody contributing to the system. Therefore, more emphasis must be placed on employers' responsibility to avoid undeclared work, which is a characteristic of the care sector.

Recommendations

- Reformulate the flexicurity principle to ensure equality between women and men and in order to make it more concrete and acknowledge the specific challenges that flexicurity policies impose on women and the individualisation of labour relations.
- Closely monitor the implementation of flexicurity policies in the Member States from a gender equality perspective through the annual Joint Employment Report, National Reform

⁵ Paola Villa and Mark Smith 2010. Gender Equality, Employment Policies and the Crisis in EU Member States. Expert report commissioned by and presented to the European Commission Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Unit G.1; Larsen, Trine P. 2010. Flexicurity from the Individual's Work-Life Balance Perspective: coping with the Flaws in European Child- and Eldercare Provision. Journal of Industrial Relations; Jane Lewis & Ania Plomien 2009.

⁶ Eurofound 2012: The Second phase of flexicurity: an analysis of practices and policies in the Member States

⁷ Jane Lewis & Ania Plomien 2009. Flexicurity as a policy strategy: the implications for gender equality. Economy and society, 38 (3). pp. 433-459.



Programmes and Country-Specific Recommendations; Commission an evaluation of flexicurity policies implemented in member states from a gender equality perspective.

- Ensure that public investment is strengthened for quality, accessible and affordable care services in Member States through Country Specific Recommendations; set European target on the care of dependent elderly.
- Support employment of young women by removing obstacles that consider them an at-risk category due to their potential maternity/child birth; pursue discussions with the aim of adopting a strong revised maternity leave directive to protect young women prior to, during and on return to work after pregnancy and child birth.
- Organise a peer review on flexicurity instruments that address women and/or those with care responsibilities; ensure the dissemination of good practice and encourage Member States, social partners and companies to mobilise flexicurity instruments for this purpose.
- Strengthen the policy coordination in the field of social protection with view of developing gender-sensitive European social protection standards (including access to good quality education and health care, and income security) as part of the 'security' component of flexicurity models.
- Ensure that Member States provide adequate income⁸ for periods out of or in between jobs, with particular attention to groups of women that have additional responsibilities; ensure Member States and companies provide workers with financial compensation for the income loss caused by reduced working hours due to caring/training/sickness.
- Assess and monitor the effect of the changing nature of employment conditions on women's vulnerability to poverty and social exclusion and develop gender-disaggregated data regarding:
 - Changes of contracts from long to short/fixed term;
 - changes of flexible working hours to part-time work, subcontracts, second jobs, and any other forms that undermine standard labour protection laws;
 - changes affected on return from statutory leave, especially maternity leave, according to different sectors of the economy (including in small and medium enterprises [SMEs]);
 - impact of changing working contracts and conditions on access to social protection (e.g. unemployment benefits, maternity pay, sickness benefits, disability benefits, pensions);
 - changes in access to rights due to social protection conditionality criteria;
 - Rise or fall in costs of childcare and in the care of dependent family members.

3. Create the conditions for women and men to become 'equal earners'

The concept of 'second earner' has been prominent in recent EU employment policy documents (ASG 2011 and ASG 2012 and their annexes). It is crucial to redress the obstacles that keep women who live in a couple from participating in labour market, such as family based taxation.

Women are not second earners out of choice: of the female population that has care responsibilities, 27.9% are 'inactive' or work part time due to care services to dependent persons.

⁸ Active Inclusion Strategy



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The focus on *incentives* for women to take up employment and to 'make work pay' for them, prominent in the ASG 2012, fails to address the structural dimension of women's unequal position on labour market and their shouldering of unpaid care and domestic work.

Recommendations

- Follow up the Country Specific Recommendations given for member states to move from family based taxation methods to individualised taxation, address other forms of unfair fiscal treatment of married and cohabitating women.
- Strongly discourage 'mini-jobs' which do not provide economic independence, sufficient social protection rights or occupational mobility, as a way to increase the employment rates of women returning to or entering the labour markets.
- Channel ESF funding for projects that aim to lengthen the working hours of women who work part time.
- Monitor the impact of the new parental leave directive on men's take up of parental leave and move forward with EU level provisions on paternity leave, either in the context of Maternity Leave Directive under revision or as an independent provision.
- Follow-up the public consultation⁹ on Carer's Leave and propose a Directive.

4. Address the diversity of barriers to women's participation on the labour-market

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The lack of adequate care structures for childcare and other dependent persons impact negatively on women's employment rate. Moreover, some groups of women face several acute structural obstacles that exclude them from contributing to economic growth which represents a waste of human resources and talent. The Employment Package must address the structural barriers facing groups of women such as women of the 55-65 years age category, single parents (of whom the majority are women), women with disabilities and women from ethnic minorities, including Roma women.

With regards to migrant women in particular, while gender disaggregated data on the occupational profile of migrant women is patchy, women's labour migration is concentrated in a few female dominated occupations associated with traditional gender roles, especially in the domestic and household care sector as indicated previously. The main barriers preventing migrant women from contributing to economic growth include, but are not limited to, the non-recognition of qualifications gained in their country of origin which in turn results in systematic de-skilling on the labour-market, lack of work experience in the host country and work related discrimination and racism.

⁹ Public consultation by the European Commission, *Public consultation on possible EU measures in the area of carers' leave or leave to care for dependent relatives*, July 2011



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Recommendations relating to migrant women's participation on the labour-market

- Recognise the diplomas and qualifications obtained in countries outside the EU and provide appropriate services for their validation.
- Employment agencies and services should recognise the diversity in the jobs proposed for migrant women, avoiding channelling them systematically into low level and precarious employment.
- Employment agencies, the Social Partners, NGOs should work together to facilitate work experience and placement.
- Address discrimination and racism in the workplace against migrant women, this could be done through a European-wide campaign.

5. Boost female entrepreneurship

Women's entrepreneurship has remained stagnant at around 30% in the EU for the past two decades. The EWL invites the Commission to take into consideration the recommendations made in the European Parliament's Resolution on women entrepreneurship in small and medium-sized enterprises¹⁰ in the context of the Employment Package, such recommendations include:

Recommendations

- Make better use of the funding opportunities that are available to female entrepreneurs through special grants, venture capital, social security provisions and interest rate rebates that will allow fair and equal access to finance, such as the European Progress Microfinance Facility, which provides micro-credits of up to EUR25 000 to micro-enterprises and to those who want to start their own small business without access to traditional banking services, such as those who are unemployed.
- Organise awareness raising campaigns, including workshops and seminars, to promote and inform women more effectively about the European Progress Microfinance Facility and about all the funding possibilities offered by this facility.
- Ensure that the current aid for female entrepreneurship in the Commission Regulation (EC) No 800/2008 continues to be provided for in a future Community support framework in order to help empower female entrepreneurs after the expiry of the Regulation.
- Encourage Member States to provide positive action measures to promote entrepreneurship among women in the context of the EU Directive¹¹ on equal treatment between women and men engaged in a self-employed activity which is due to be transposed by August 2012.

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¹⁰ European Parliament resolution of 13 September 2011 on *women entrepreneurship in small and medium-sized enterprises* ([2010/2275\(INI\)](#))

¹¹ Directive 2010/41/EU on the application of the principle of equal treatment between women and men engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and repealing Council Directive 86/613/EEC, 7 July 2010, Official Journal of the European Union, L 180/1, 15.7.2010,