



Ticking clocks -

Alternative 2012 Country-Specific Recommendations
to strengthen women's rights and gender equality in the
Europe 2020 Strategy



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
LOBBY
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

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Credits

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the introduction of the European Semester as a means to implement the Europe 2020 Strategy (2010), economic governance has taken a predominant place on the European stage, with the result that gender equality as a specific objective has slipped off the political agenda. This is also reflected in the Europe 2020 Strategy where there is no specific objective to achieve gender equality. Instead, there is an implicit assumption that women and men are at the same starting point on the labour market as one of the objectives aims to reach an employment target rate of 75% by 2020 for both women and men. While the Europe 2020 Strategy is the overarching signpost aiming to lead the EU towards a smart, competitive and inclusive economy, economic governance is blurring the way forward as economic policies and strategies are becoming more disconnected from the real lives of women and men throughout the EU.

The stakes are high as the economic and financial crisis and subsequent austerity measures are hitting women hard. The impact of the recession on women is likely to become more acute over time as the effects of labour-market shifts are increasingly felt within households, and cuts in public expenditure affect public services and the many women who work in them and use them. The recession is having a significant and damaging impact on specific groups of women who face multiple disadvantages: young and the elderly, migrants and ethnic minorities, the low-skilled, those with short-term contracts, single mothers, women in rural areas, those aged over 45, women with disabilities and women returning to work after childbirth.

There will be no recovery if public policies do not systematically address the gender dimension within the overall processes of the Europe 2020 Strategy since women make up more than half the population.

As part of the pathway towards achieving the Europe 2020 goals, a series of processes and actors are intertwined. These include, policy orientation in the form of an Annual Growth Survey (produced by the European Commission) highlighting political challenges that Member States are required to take into consideration when drafting their National Reform Programmes (NRP), National Stability and Convergence Programmes (NSCP) and more recently (since 2012) National Social Reports (NSR). These Programmes are drafted at national level and should be the result of a process of consultation with a broad spectrum of actors at national level, including women's organisations. However, there is evidence to suggest that the process of consultation is one of the weakest links. The compilation of national programmes and the European Commission's response thereto, in the form of Country-Specific Recommendations, all form part of the European Semester cycle, which runs every year from January to July.

The following report gives a voice to the European Women's Lobby (EWL) member organisations with regards to their analysis of and recommendations for a more gender sensitive Europe 2020 strategy. This is the first year that the EWL's members have engaged in this way and it can be expected that this will continue to be the case until meaningful consultation and structural changes are carried out which are fully inclusive of women.

The members of the European Women's Lobby (EWL) drafted 'alternative' country-specific recommendations, on the basis of an analysis of their NRPs. This is their response to bridging a democratic gap which is happening as tensions arise between, on the one hand, pressure on Member States to severely reduce public deficits and, on the other hand, the absence of a full gender equality analysis (as well as a social impact analysis) to ascertain the impact of public deficit reductions on (in)equality between women and men as well as the impact on increasing inequalities, poverty and social exclusion as a direct result of austerity. While it cannot be denied that the socio-economic impact is part of a global crisis, women's contribution to moving out of the crisis should not be underestimated. In fact, there will be no future vision if women continue to be on the margins of economic power and decision-making. This requires more stringent and coherent gender equality objectives, targets and strategies across the broad spectrum of macro and socio economic policies.

THE EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY - SUMMARY OF THE EWL'S OVERALL GENERAL REMARKS

1. Gender equality is not an explicit objective of the Europe 2020 Strategy; where it is addressed, it is done so in a piecemeal and inconsistent way.
2. Gender equality is framed in a narrow way; increasing the quantity of female labour-market participation alone undermines the opportunity to strive towards a gender equal society.
3. Women are often referred to as a group when in fact they represent the majority of the European population. This means that the absence of gender equality objectives represents a democratic deficit.
4. Women are not homogeneous. Specific categories of women need to be acknowledged and the barriers that prevent them from participating in all areas of life be addressed. Women form the majority of all groups at risk of poverty and social exclusion and can experience discrimination on a number of grounds that intersect with gender (multiple discrimination).
5. Many of the European Commission's country-specific recommendations are framed in a gender neutral way, using concepts such as "second earners", "single parent households" which hide the reality of gender inequality at the core of these concepts. This can have adverse effects by increasing rather than decreasing gender equality. For example, recommendations framed as gender 'equal', such as aligning the retirement ages of women and men, are not accompanied by measures to boost older women's employment rates.
6. Other country-specific recommendations, such as those relating to wage composition, fail to address the entrenched gender pay gap, which exists and persists in all EU Member States.

SUMMARY OF THE EWL MEMBERS' ANALYSIS AND ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Women and men as equal earners and equal carers

In order to ensure that women and men can become equal earners and equal carers, targets are urgently needed to reduce discrimination and gender gaps, in particular the links between pay, pensions and poverty.

Reforms that call for more 'flexibility' should be understood not as deregulatory mechanisms but as reforms that focus on modernising/revising the predominant male-breadwinner-model, which continues to define the rights of workers and shapes social security rights, including pensions.

Within reforms of the male-breadwinner model, the individualisation of taxation and social security rights should replace household unit models, which perpetuate gender entrenched roles and maintain women in a dependency status either through their partners or through the State.

Flexibility has led to increased precarious work as testified in work schemes, mini jobs, 'false' part-time jobs, difficulties for women returning to work after giving birth and in-work poverty traps.

The right to care and be cared for is a pre-requisite to women's economic independence and a pre-condition for career choices for both women and men throughout their lives. Care is a collective responsibility that requires targets to meet quality care needs across the life-cycle. Valuing the care sector boosting it as a quality job creation sector making it attractive to both women and men is a matter of urgency.

Public intervention in care services must be maintained. Individual tax incentives for care costs do not benefit society as a whole nor does it enable public investments in care provision.

Women's entrepreneurship, in comparison to men's has remained stagnant for many years; access to state-supported non-banking loans and support mechanisms for women entrepreneurs and women-owned businesses (SMEs) are urgently needed.

2. Parity Democracy

Legally binding parity measures and/or quotas are urgently needed to increase women in decision-making in all areas of economic, corporate decision-making Boards, science, research, politics and public administration.

3. Violence against women

Coherent strategies are urgently needed to address ALL forms of violence against women including in the labour-market, public spaces, public and private life. Violence against women remains a barrier to the full participation of women in all areas of life and to achieving gender equality.

4. Strengthen consultation with women's organisations and strengthen gender equality mechanisms

Women's organisations are key players at national and European level and their voices must be heard in the consultation process of the national programmes. It is also essential to maintain funds and link with existing gender equality bodies, policies and strategies at national and EU level. Gender mainstreaming must be strengthened in all macro-economic and socio-economic policies. To this end, systematic gender analysis assessments of the gender impact of cuts in social services and gender budgeting are crucial.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY

1. Make gender equality an explicit objective of the EU2020 process in general and the European semester as stipulated in the European Pact for Gender Equality 2011-2020

2. Member States should carry out systematic gender impact assessments of the National Reform Programme, National Stability and Convergence Programmes and all budgetary cuts highlighting policy changes made to mitigate the negative impacts on women and men.

3. Member States should carry out systematic gender impact assessments of taxation policies. This includes assessing the impact on "second earners", which predominately are women, and the need to move towards the individualisation of taxation. Other forms of tax include Value Added Tax (VAT), the indirect tax on consumption, which also affects women and men differently in accordance with their spending power.

4. Remove barriers to women's access to the labour-market and secure women's economic independence, in particular:

- Reduce the gender pay gap by 2020. Every Member State should set a 5 to 10 percentage point annual reduction target; this should be recommended in the country-specific recommendations and monitored over time.
- Facilitate the return to work of women who have spent time out of the labour-market to care for children and/or dependent and elderly family members by providing adequate care policies and measures and validating skills acquired in informal settings; target women in the 55-64 age category.
- Support longer working lives by ensuring that pension reforms do not increase gender inequality (gender pension gap) and recognise women's different working life patterns.
- Target women in entrepreneurial and self-employed policies: The EU Directive¹ on equal treatment between women and men engaged in a self-employed activity was due to be transposed by August 2012 and allows for positive action measures² to promote entrepreneurship initiatives among women.
- Invest in and develop high quality, accessible and affordable care services across the life-cycle, including reaching and reinforcing the Barcelona targets on child care and adopting new targets for elderly and dependent persons. Care is an increasing growth sector with high employment potential for both women and men.
- Adopt a strong revised maternity leave directive to ensure women's full pay during maternity leave and to protect women prior to, during and on return to work following pregnancy and childbirth.
- Ensure that the national targets on poverty and social exclusion are broken down by gender. Specific targets should address specific groups of women, such as lone parents, older women, and women with disabilities, women from ethnic and migrant origins. It is crucial that gender impact assessments are carried out systematically prior to adopting policies to curtail public spending (austerity measures) as the gender impact of the crisis has not

¹ 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

² Ibid, Article 5, Positive action

been systematically analysed, assessed or addressed.

- Address broader issues that impact on women’s full and equal participation in all areas of life which hamper their equal participation with men and compromise their economic independence, in particular women in decision-making, including on corporate boards, and violence against women.

EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY AND THE EUROPEAN SEMESTER: WHERE DO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION’S COUNTRY SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS COME FROM?

The Europe 2020 Strategy, so-called Strategy for growth, is guiding economic and social policies in all European countries. It sets five general objectives regarding employment, research and development, environment, education and poverty and social inclusion .

The Europe2020 Strategy is implemented through an annual process of economic policy coordination between the European Institutions and the Member States called the “European Semester” of economic governance. The purpose of this process is to allow the European Commission to provide more focused input in macro-economic and structural reforms that Member States are undertaking to reach the Europe2020 targets. This new coordinated process is dominated by macro-economic and fiscal concerns, and makes it difficult to raise issues related to gender equality and social inclusion in this process.

The European Semester comprises a complex web of processes that starts with the Annual Growth Survey (AGS) carried out by the European Commission on the basis of a set of indicators in order to assess the progress towards the Europe2020 objectives of the different Member States. The results of the AGS are debated by the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament and finally, a set of priorities for action at the EU and at national level are endorsed at the Spring Summit of the European Council.

On the basis of these priorities, the Member States design National Reform Programmes (NRP) taking into account the input of a broad partnership including regional/local authorities, social partners and other stakeholders. However, there is evidence to suggest that the process of consultation is one of the weakest links. National Reform Programmes and National Stability and Convergence Programmes (NSCP) are submitted (April) and assessed by the European Commission (May).

As a result of this assessment, in May-June the European Commission publishes Country Specific Recommendations (CSR) for each country. This CSR are discussed within the Council of the European Union . In late June/ beginning of July the European Council formally endorses the Country Specific Recommendations which provides guidance for the Members States when drafting the budget in autumn for following year.

	Preparation of the European Semester		European Semester						
	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July
European Commission	Preparation Annual Growth Survey		Presentation Annual Growth Survey				Assessment of NRP	Publication of CSR	
European Parliament				Debate and orientation					
Council of Ministers				Debate and orientation				Debate and endorsement of CSR	
European Council					Endorsement of Priorities				Adoption of CSR
Member States						Preparation / Submission NRP			

WHERE DO THE GENDER EQUALITY OBJECTIVES AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING FIT INTO THE WHOLE PROCESS?

Gender equality is not an explicit objective of the Europe2020 Strategy. This is problematic as the issue of gender equality could be sidetracked in the overall Strategy. Campaigners for women's rights, including the EWL, have from the start been vocal in highlighting how tackling gender inequalities on the labour market and in economic and social and macro-economic policies is crucial if the EU is to meet the 2020 objectives.

The gender equality objective can be found implicitly in some of the subsections of the Europe2020 Strategy, primarily with regards to employment (one of the objectives is to increase the employment rate to 75% of both women and men), references to equal pay, childcare provision, work-life balance and increasing employment in the care sector. However, women and men have been put on an equal footing with regards to employment, occulting women's unequal starting position on the labour-market in comparison to men and making invisible particular groups of women (heads of households, lone parents, women with disabilities, younger and older women, Roma, etc). In addition, the real structural obstacles to women's full participation in the labour-market are unacknowledged and cannot therefore be addressed, these include but are not limited to, reductions in child and elderly care measures and infrastructures, which transfer services back to 'families', i.e. women.

In the same vein, the Country Specific Recommendations to Member States lack a gender perspective. The use of gender blind terms such as "second earners", "low income earners", "low wage earners", "poverty rate", "vulnerable groups" are hiding gender inequalities that affects women disproportionately. When gender issues are addressed in the CSR, they tend to focus on issues that are seen to be a 'women's problem' such as increasing care services to facilitate women's participation in the labour-market and fail to be the driver of a societal change where women and men are equal earners and equal carers'.

Therefore, extensive pressure needs to be put on Member States as well as the European Commission to incorporate a gender equality dimension throughout the whole of the Europe2020 Strategy and corresponding processes, in line with EU treaty obligations on equality between women and men and gender mainstreaming.

Several commitments have been made on the need to strengthen the gender equality dimension in the Europe2020 Strategy but these will remain lip service if no firm action is taken.

The Europe2020 Guidelines for employment policies of the Member States, adopted in October 2010, state that "a visible gender equality perspective integrated into all relevant policy areas is crucial for the implementation of all aspects of the Guidelines in the Member States". Therefore, Member States must take these into account when they define and implement their NRP and provide a firm basis for the Commission's country-specific recommendations on gender equality issues. In terms of employment, Guideline 7 refers to "increased labour-market participation of women and men" and highlights issues relating to childcare provision, equal pay, work-life balance and developing employment within the care sector. In terms of poverty/social exclusion, Guideline 10 requests that all measures to tackle poverty should aim at promoting gender equality and focus on one-parent families.

The European Pact for Gender Equality 2011-2020, adopted in March 2011 makes specific reference to all the institutions involved, calling on them to take the gender equality perspective into account in the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy, states:

"When developing and implementing their National Reform Programmes, the Member States are encouraged to apply a gender equality perspective and to promote gender equality policies, especially concerning the Employment Guidelines, and invited to make appropriate use of agreed gender equality indicators developed within the Joint Assessment Framework and within the follow-up of the Beijing Platform for Action in all relevant policy areas and processes."

The Commission and the Council are also invited to incorporate a gender equality perspective into the Annual Growth Survey, the Country Opinions and the Country Specific Recommendations".

The Strategy for Equality between women and men 2010-2015, adopted by the European Commission in September 2010, requires the Commission to "support the promotion of gender equality in the implementation of all aspects and flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, especially as regards definition and implementation of relevant national measures."

It is necessary to monitor how Member States translate these commitments into concrete actions, and this requires the active involvement of women's organisations on the ground.

EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY – WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR GENDER EQUALITY?

While women are 59% of university graduates in Europe, women's employment rate lags men's across the EU³. Women represent two-thirds of the 63 million adults classified as 'inactive'. When employed, their hourly wages are on average 17% lower than men's. In addition, 32% of women work part-time, as compared to less than 8.7% of men⁴. Consequently, women's risk of poverty and social exclusion is substantially higher in every Member State. Only 3% of women chair and (as of January 2012) 13,7% have a seat on corporate boards of the largest publicly quoted companies on the stock exchange; women represent only one-third (and less in many countries) of leaders of EU businesses in terms of companies not listed on the stock market⁵. 35% of women (65% for men) are elected Members of the European Parliament. Clearly, the absence of a critical mass of women in decision-making shows that democracy itself is at stake.

Despite gender equality commitments, the whole series of budget cuts are disproportionately affecting women through job losses and reductions in public services. There is evidence of rising precarious working conditions; increasing discrimination in the labour market with a subsequent shift to informal work, rising levels of poverty, reduced access to services, and rising levels of domestic violence, accompanied by cuts in vital support services.⁶

Without a stringent gender equality framework, the Europe 2020 Strategy will not achieve its goals while women's rights and gender equality will experience a greater degree of backlash. Numerous studies point to the positive effect of gender equality policies not only on general well-being, but also on employment and people-centred sustainable growth.

EWL ADVOCACY FOR THE 2012 COUNTRY-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to advocate for gender equality towards the Member States as well as the European Commission and the Councils to incorporate a gender dimension, the EWL developed several lobbying actions throughout the whole 2012 European Semester Process.

In early February 2012, the EWL prepared a briefing note explaining the timeframe of the European Semester and including a model letter to National Governments in order to promote women's organisation involvement in the NRPs design.

As a part of the strategy to lobby the whole European semester, the national members of the European Women's Lobby were invited to submit 'alternative' country-specific recommendations on the basis of an analysis of their NRPs. Ten national member co-ordinations of the EWL provided their assessment and alternatives recommendations from the following countries: the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland and the UK.

In June 2012, the EWL joined a coalition of European NGO's and the European Greens⁷ which produced together a report "Towards a more Democratic and Balanced Economic Governance. Alternative and additional Country-Specific Recommendations". On the 28th of June, this Report and its main conclusions were presented to Olli Rehn, Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs, and Laszlo Andor, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion in an event at the European Parliament, as part of the European Green initiative.

³ In 2010, the Employment rate for women in EU-27 was 62.10%, while men's 75,10 %. The gap between both rates is 13 points. European Commission Progress Report on Equality between women and men in 2011.

⁴ European Commission Progress Report on Equality between women and men in 2011.

⁵ European Commission, Report on progress on equality between women and men in 2010, The gender balance in business leadership, Luxembourg, 2011

⁶ See joint EWL/Oxfam publication Women's poverty and social exclusion in the European Union at a time of recession – A Hidden Crisis?, 2010

⁷ Kickstart Social Europe Towards a more Democratic and Balanced Economic Governance. Alternative and additional Country-Specific Recommendations

EWL MEMBERS ALTERNATIVE COUNTRY SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

CZECH REPUBLIC

The situation of women and men

Gender Pay Gap	25.5	
Proportion of children under 3 not in formal care	97.0*	
	Women	Men
Employment Rates women and men aged 20-64	60.9	79.6
Share of part time workers in total employment	9.9	2.9
At risk of poverty rate	16.0	12.7
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers for older people over 65 years	10.3	2.1
Percentage of total board members of largest publicly quoted companies (2012)	15.4	84.5

Year of Reference: 2010.

Sources: Eurostat. EC Report 2011 "Progress on Equality between women and men"

* Source: Eurostat – Formal childcare by duration and age group – Less than 3 years – no formal childcare – year of reference: 2010



Czech Women's Lobby

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Assessment:

- At over 40%, the employment gap between women with child/ren under 6 years and women without children is the largest in the EU. Only 20 % of women with children under 6 years old are employed. Between 1994 and 2007 the level of their employment rate dropped by 18 percentage points.
- Decrease in access to affordable childcare facilities: in 2011 care was available for only 30.000 children.
- Government policies favour care within the family as opposed to collective care infrastructures, and a sufficient supply of childcare facilities is not guaranteed, which is contrary to the recommendations of the National Economic Council.
- 10 % of women are at risk of poverty, the most vulnerable groups being elderly women, Roma women and single mothers.

Recommendations:

- Establish a legislative framework for childcare facilities for children under 3 years of age
- Provide sufficient available and affordable care facilities for children and other dependent family members
- Facilitate the procedure of establishing company kindergartens and nurseries
- Supporting alternative forms of work (flexible, part-time, home-work, co-work etc.) for example, through tax benefits for employers who provide these opportunities.
- Implement binding quotas for women on corporate boards (30 % in 2016, 40 % in 2020)
- Adopt legislation that ensures the recuperation of alimony payment for child maintenance by the state
- Decrease the gender pay gap and the gender pension gap and eliminate vertical and horizontal segregation of the labour market.

DENMARK

The situation of women and men

Gender Pay Gap	16	
Proportion of children under 3 not in formal care	23*	
	Women	Men
Employment Rates women and men aged 20-64	73.1	79
Share of part time workers in total employment	39.0	15.2
At-risk- of poverty rate	19.0	17.7
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers for older people over 65 years	18.5	16.8
Percentage of total board members of largest publicly quoted companies (2012)	16.1	83.9

Year of Reference: 2010.

Sources: Eurostat. EC Report 2011 "Progress on Equality between women and men"

* Source: Eurostat – Formal childcare by duration and age group – Less than 3 years – no formal childcare – year of reference: 2010



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Assessment:

- The lack of gender equality and gender perspectives can be noted in the Danish National Reform Programme. A more concise gender perspective would contribute positively to the solution of several of the challenges Denmark is facing - partly through better utilisation of Denmark's full work force and knowledge potential by enabling both women and men to fully exploit their potential, and partly through greater flexibility in the workforce by breaking down stereotypes the relationship between gender and professional occupations.
- The action plan for women entrepreneurs is welcomed. Experience from other countries has shown that initiatives in this direction can be good catalysts for growth.

Recommendations:

- Full gender equality should be taken into account. It would make a significant contribution to solving the key economic challenges Denmark is facing by enhancing growth prospects and public finances⁸. On the whole, the inclusion and a further concretization of several of the government's 2015 targets for gender equality in the reform programme could help solve many of Denmark's future challenges.
- The government should use the National Reform Programme to promote Denmark's compliance with EU Treaty provisions on equality between women and men and non-discrimination (article 3 and 5). This could be done amidst the following actions:
 - Monitor and intervene in case of a gender bias in long-term unemployment.
 - Improve quality employment to meet the needs of women and men equally.
 - Apply gender budgeting in the design and implementation of the so-called fiscal consolidation measures to ensure that vital services such as childcare for female and male workers are safeguarded and that they meet the different needs of female and male citizens. At the same time, recent public spending cuts should not limit the opportunities of families with children to be fully active in the labour market.
 - Increase the wage for women to a greater extent than for men – this will reduce the gap in women's and men's lifetime earnings, while competitiveness against other countries can be sustained.
 - Strengthen the gender perspective in the early stages of the education system (kindergarten and primary

⁸ The Ministry of Finance presented a calculation in December 2010 showing that full gender equality (i.e. same rate of employment, the same rate of income transfers, working hours and wages and drain on public services) can lead to an employment contribution of 165,000 people and a strengthening of public finances at 6 ½ per cent of GDP. Also the report "Gender equality, Economic growth and employment" by the Swedish gender ministry in 2009, indicates a high growth potential by working towards full gender equality.

school), for instance by using role models, to actively break stereotypes of female and male jobs (see the national goals for education). Such measures will contribute to combating labour market segregation by increasing flexibility and diversity in employment.

- Actively engage a more equal gender-balanced use of maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave, child's first sick day, etc... in order not to lose the large and well-educated female potential of women with small children.

ESTONIA

The situation of women and men

Gender Pay Gap	27.6	
Proportion of children under 3 not in formal care	79*	
	Women	Men
Employment Rates women and men aged 20-64	65.7	67.7
Share of part time workers in total employment	14.5	7.1
At-risk-of-poverty rate	22.0	21.5
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers for older people over 65 years	18.6	8
Percentage of total board members of largest publicly quoted companies (2012)	6.7	93.3

Year of Reference: 2010.

Sources: Eurostat. EC Report 2011 "Progress on Equality between women and men"

* Source: Eurostat – Formal childcare by duration and age group – Less than 3 years – no formal childcare – year of reference: 2010

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ESTONIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

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Recommendations:

- Elaborate a long-term well-resourced national strategy to reduce the gender segregation of the labour market and the gender pay gap; implement the strategy, monitor and report on progress made, regularly review the strategy, design programmes and measures to overcome gender stereotyping at schools; gender sensitise teacher training, including revision of curriculum content, educational materials and teaching approaches at all levels of education.
- Design programmes and measures to diversify options for flexible working arrangements that help create work-life balance for both women and men.
- Sensitise employers to the issue of reconciliation of professional and private life,
- Adapt social security schemes and the tax system to the increased diversity in working patterns and facilitate a more prompt return of young mothers to the labour market after the fully paid parental leave (currently 18 months).
- Design positive measures to reduce the number of women facing the risk of poverty; provide measures for lone-parent families which predominantly concerns women.
- Address domestic violence against women as a human right violation and also as a barrier to work and full employment, provide support to women victims of violence to seek and remain in employment.

GERMANY

The situation of women and men

Gender Pay Gap	23.1	
Gender Pension Gap	59.64*	
Proportion of children under 3 not in formal care	80**	
	Women	Men
Employment Rates women and men aged 20-64	69.6	80.1
Share of part time workers in total employment	45.5	9.7
At-risk-of-poverty rate	20.9	18.6
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers for older people over 65 years	15.9	12.1
Percentage of total board members of largest publicly quoted companies (2012)	15.6	84.4

Year of Reference: 2010.

Sources: Eurostat. EC Report 2011 "Progress on Equality between women and men"

* Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens Women and Youth, The Gender Pension Gap. Developing an Indicator Measuring Fair Income Opportunities for Women and Men, 2011. It should be noted that Germany is one of the rare EU Member States to have a gender pension gap based on individual income derived from the three pillars pension system (1.State/public; 2.Occupational/professional; 3.Private). The EWL is calling for a similar EU gender pension gap indicator
 ** Source: Eurostat – Formal childcare by duration and age group – Less than 3 years – no formal childcare – year of reference: 2010



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Assessment:

- Regarding women's employment rate: In several places, the National Reform Programme, referred to as the "Strategy", describes the rise of women's employment rate in Germany. However it does not state whether this rise is a result in the absolute volume of women's working time and/or the rate of full time employment⁹.
- Regarding atypical and precarious employment: To a great extent, women in Germany do not earn a sufficient income that provides for their living wage because of their atypical and precarious employment patterns. In this context, the Strategy is misleading as 'success' of the mere rise of the general employment rate does not translate into a decent/living wage for the majority of women.
- Regarding, reconciliation of family and work life: A frequent reason for women to take a part time job or to suspend work for some time is the fact that there are insufficient day care facilities for preschool as well as school age children. For children older than three years, they have a legal right to go to kindergarten. From 2013 on, there will also be a legal right to day care for children younger than three years. In reality, there are many regions in Germany where such a right is not possible due to the lack of necessary facilities. Moreover, many facilities do not meet the standards with regards to quality. As a consequence, there is a limited choice for parents to be part of the labour market – particularly mothers who are expected to take care of their children. In practice, the legal right for childcare facilities for under-three-year old children cannot be met because of poor funding and insufficient qualified personnel. The lack of sufficient funding also leads to the privatisation of the care sector and de facto burdens relatives and volunteers with the responsibility for elder fellow citizens – a responsibility that should lie with society as a whole.
- Regarding the latest reform of the labour market: By stating that the past reforms of the labour market were a success, the Strategy ignores the negative consequences these have had for many citizens. In general it should be noted that the official unemployment figures gloss over the reality because they do not include people who are currently working in subsidised labour market projects and measures. In addition, women's dependence on the so called 'breadwinner' model has been intensified by the introduction of a so called Bedarfsgemeinschaft (community of needs). This means that social welfare is only granted when a person's needs exceed the financial

⁹ The latest figures available in this respect were raised in 2009: 66,3 percent of women were employed which equaled a full time employment rate of 50,7 percent.

capacities of the other members of their household who are by law obliged to cover these needs.

- Regarding longer working life: The Strategy speaks of a “culture for a longer working life”. The underlying reason why people should work longer is related to contributions for the pension insurance funds. Retirement at the age of 67 is de facto a reduction in people’s pensions. Highly problematic is that people who work in strenuous jobs – be it physical or mental – will not be able to work longer and will therefore have to give up working before the official retirement age. Harsh cuts to their pension will be the consequence. The so called “retirement dialogue” had, as one of its initial goals, to improve the situation for women who are threatened by poverty in old age. This goal seems to be forgotten. The criteria to get a full pension are so high that they cannot be met by most women and many men – a problem that has previously been raised and discussed by experts in the pre-mentioned dialogue process.
- Regarding equal pay: Women in Germany still earn 23 percent less than men who work in the same or a comparable job. All kinds of voluntary commitments as well as public discussion have not been successful in changing this. Particularly jobs in the social care systems which are mostly taken by women such as child care work or the care for elderly are paid much less than male-dominated jobs. A job’s wage always mirrors its appreciation (value) in society.
- Regarding women in decision-making positions: Voluntary commitments have not been successful and there is still a lack of willingness to achieve real equality of women and men in the economy, in science and research, in politics and public administration.

Recommendations:

- Convert the general employment rate into a full time employment rate equivalent in every single future statistics and publish the results to make them available as widely as possible.
- Take immediate measures to reduce the number of precarious jobs and abolish them in the long term. Changes in the tax system for married couples are necessary. The Ehegattensplitting (a system where both partners’ are taxed based on half of their combined income) offers an incentive for women to take low income jobs. It is recommended to the German government to eliminate such incentives.
- Focus all funds on the quantitative and qualitative improvement of child day care services while abolishing other financial support such as the proposed childcare subsidy (Betreuungsgel: subsidy for parents who choose to take care of their children at home for which a monthly payment is provided). Abolishing the child subsidy should serve to save money to benefit collective day care system and would eliminate incentives to suspend work for a certain time or to take a part time job.
- Focus all funds on quantitative and qualitative improvements of a professional care system and eliminate incentives to suspend or to reduce employment such as “family care time” or other regulations in the law providing for a new orientation of care activities starting from 2013 (Pflegeneuausrichtungsgesetz).
- Include, in unemployment statistics, all people with jobs that are not part of the social security system to include people with precarious and atypical jobs.
- Remove the concept of the “Bedarfsgemeinschaft” with the aim of achieving an independent, sustainable living wage.
- Revoke the rise of the retirement age and examine other ways to allow a longer working life for those who wish to keep working beyond retirement age.
- Revise the draft of the “law for the acknowledgement of the achievements of a lifetime” aimed to reach the initial goal to improve the situation for women who are threatened by poverty in old age. Should an assessment of this draft legislation show that it cannot reach its declared aims, it should be changed. Changes should include removing reference to compulsory private retirement savings which many persons cannot afford.
- Increase wages and improve the recognition of care jobs. An appropriate draft has been introduced by the Social Democratic political group in the German Parliament.
- Adopt a legally binding quota for women on boards of directors and supervisory boards and promote - legally binding –quotas in all fields of the economy, politics and public administration.

HUNGARY

The situation of women and men

Gender Pay Gap	17.6	
Proportion of children under 3 not in formal care	91*	
	Women	Men
Employment Rates women and men aged 20-64 (2010)	55.0	66.0
Share of part time workers in total employment	8.0	3.9
At-risk-of-poverty rate	30.3	29.4
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers for older people over 65 years	4.8	2.8
Percentage of total board members of largest publicly quoted companies (2012)	5.3	94.7

Year of Reference: 2010.

Sources: Eurostat. EC Report 2011 "Progress on Equality between women and men"

* Source: Eurostat – Formal childcare by duration and age group – Less than 3 years – no formal childcare – year of reference: 2010



Hungarian Women's Lobby

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Assessment:

- One of the unexpected outcomes derived from the increase of employer's contribution to social security and the inclusion of a minimum wage, has been job cuts on a massive scale, a resort to the black economy, an increase of the "quasi" part-time employment in particular for women by formally employing people as part time but in fact employing them as full time informally. Furthermore, people who have lost their jobs may be turning to labour migration but the degree of this is not yet known.
- The new Labour Code introduces serious reductions in employee's rights. For example, an employer can terminate contracts of women returning from maternity leave. In addition, the measure to oblige employers to create part-time employment possibilities for women returning from maternity leave is highly problematic in terms of gender equality (for reasons often discussed by the literature and policy debates).
- The so called 'family tax allowance' has no positive impact on the participation of women in the labour market. Instead, it increases the difference between the incomes of low-income and unemployed families on the one hand and those of high-income families on the other. This affects in particular single-parent families, the majority of which are headed by women. The family allowance rate has not increased in the past four years. The family tax allowance on the other hand is higher than the family (children's) allowance. This represents a serious injustice since single-parent household families (primarily headed by women) can only take modest advantage or no advantage at all of the family tax allowance because there is not a second -usually higher – income derived from a husband/partner.
- The ratio of care services for children in the 0-3 year-old category has not risen from 10-11%.
- Due to high fees, family day-care centres are accessible only for higher income families (typically relying on father's high income).
- For budgetary reasons the government allowed the crèches to make their services fee-paying, which reduces the chances for better access to services.
- Unemployed women/families or those with poor employment prospects will not have access to early child-care services, which is essential to seeking work and improving employment prospects.
- START programmes are adequate tools to promote employment for women upon returning from maternity leave. But when the programme ends, employers tend to lay off the beneficiaries in order to hire new ones and take advantage of State support offered within these programmes.

Recommendations:

- Combat “quasi” part-time employment in particular for women by paying workers for the actual number of hours worked.
- Promote regular quality employment by assessing, from a gender perspective, the impact that heavy social security contributions have on job creation and working patterns (part-time wages for full time work).
- Reform the ‘family tax allowance’ in a way that is beneficial for female labour market participation and low income households, in particular single-parent households.
- Improve access to affordable child care facilities.
- Ensure protection against discrimination of women returning to work after maternity leave and develop programmes with long term perspectives to promote employment of women after maternity leave.

LITHUANIA

The situation of women and men

Gender Pay Gap	14.6	
Proportion of children under 3 not in formal care	87.0*	
	Women	Men
Employment Rates women and men aged 20-64 (2010)	65.1	63.6
Share of part time workers in total employment	9.3	6.7
At-risk-of-poverty rate	33.8	32.9
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers for older people over 65 years	11.2	8.1
Percentage of total board members of largest publicly quoted companies (2012)	14.5	85.5

Year of Reference: 2010.

Sources: Eurostat. EC Report 2011 “Progress on Equality between women and men”

* Source: Eurostat – Formal childcare by duration and age group – Less than 3 years – no formal childcare – year of reference: 2010



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Assessment:

- The gender pay gap is caused by a number of complex factors. Some of the most complicated are deep sectorial and professional segregation of the labour market, disproportionate representation of women and men in small and medium-sized businesses and in decision making positions.
- Women's employment rate highly depends on work life balance. In Lithuania women's (and men's) employment rate remains far from the 75 per cent target of the Europe 2020 Strategy

Recommendations:

- Apply special measures to support women's entrepreneurship and provide support for women's businesses.
- Apply measures for promoting women's leadership, including women on boards of the biggest companies.
- Support projects including awareness-raising and training in order to promote women in male dominated sectors of the economy and men in female dominated areas.
- Strengthen opportunities to reconcile work and family life, first of all by accessible and qualitative child care facilities and facilities for dependant family members (elderly and disabled).
- Introduce measures to prevent and combat the feminisation of poverty by improving working conditions and pay both in part time work and also in sectors where women are overrepresented.

LUXEMBOURG

The situation of women and men

Gender Pay Gap	12.0	
Proportion of children under 3 not in formal care	64.0*	
	Women	Men
Employment Rates women and men aged 20-64	62.0	79.2
Share of part time workers in total employment	36.0	4.0
At-risk-of-poverty rate	17.7	16.5
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers for older people over 65 years	6.3	5.5
Percentage of total board members of largest publicly quoted companies (2012)	5.7	94.3

Year of Reference: 2010.

Sources: Eurostat. EC Report 2011 "Progress on Equality between women and men"

* Source: Eurostat – Formal childcare by duration and age group – Less than 3 years – no formal childcare – year of reference: 2010



COORDINATION LUXEMBOURGEOISE
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Assessment

- The fact that the personal incomes of women are below those of men is not acknowledged when tackling the objective to promote social inclusion and poverty reduction. Wage inequality is due to factors such as the over-representation of women in part-time jobs and the interruptions or the reduction of their working time, which translate into lower pensions for women. Single parent families are particularly affected by the phenomenon of poverty.
- The continued lack of childcare and care facilities prevents many women to build a professional career.
- Women are more strongly affected by unemployment than men. This phenomenon is worsening in recent years. While the period 2009 (December) saw an increase in the unemployment rate for men at 5.67%, the unemployment rate for women remained stable at 7.94%. From January 2010 to January 2011, the unemployment rate for men declined by 0.13% while it increased to 10.31% for women.

Recommendations

- Explore innovative measures to promote more equal distribution of working hours between women and men.
- Introduce measures to target the phenomenon of women's unemployment both upstream and downstream.

MALTA

The situation of women and men

Gender Pay Gap	6.1	
Proportion of children under 3 not in formal care	89.0*	
	Women	Men
Employment Rates women and men aged 20-64 (2010)	41.6	77.8
Share of part time workers in total employment	25.0	6.0
At- risk- of- poverty rate	21.5	19.7
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers for older people over 65 years	17.5	20.4
Percentage of total board members of largest publicly quoted companies (2012)	3.0	97.0

Year of Reference: 2010.

Sources: Eurostat. EC Report 2011 "Progress on Equality between women and men"

* Source: Eurostat – Formal childcare by duration and age group – Less than 3 years – no formal childcare – year of reference: 2010



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Assessment:

- The word gender is used once (Section 3.1.3.2 – p80) in the whole document; the words gender mainstreaming are totally missing from the report.

Recommendations:

- Provide affordable childcare services of good quality including an increase in subsidies to parents particularly to those with low income and to single mothers.
- Extend operational hours of public childcare centres from 16.00hours to that required by working parents.
- Enact legislation to regulate child care services/centres.
- Introduce attractive incentives for employers to provide childcare services for their employees.
- Extend before and after-school programmes providing extra-curricular activities, for all children in all localities; these are currently too few and not effective enough to enable women with young children to remain in the labour market.
- Promote flexible working hours, such as tele-working and timetable reductions in the labour market with justification to be given when such requests are refused.
- Increase maternity leave from 16 to 20 weeks with the State shouldering financial costs and introduce a two weeks paid paternity leave on a 'use or lose' principle.
- Extend the current 3 months (unpaid) parental leave in the private sector to 6 months.
- Address the gender pay gap that according to the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality report stands at 23%.¹⁰
- Introduce temporary special measures to address the low (3%) percentage of women on boards.
- Ensure that publicity campaigns to address gender equality are better focused to achieve declared objectives.
- Gender mainstream projects offering employment support to persons with disabilities in order to address the low rate of women with disabilities in the labour market.
- Reinstate the Employment and Training Corporation Gender Equality Unit to continue work on focusing on women and work.

¹⁰ Eurostat figures provided for Sources: Eurostat. EC Report "Progress on Equality between women and men", in the year of Reference 2010 are far lower than that communicated here

- Gradually reduce social security benefits given to single women re-entering the labour market until the probation period is over.
- Remove compulsory retirement age with government taking the initiative as a model employer thus increasing the number of older workers, particularly women, in the labour market that is presently very low.
- When addressing the problem of elderly poverty, take into consideration the fact that women live longer than men with the consequential increase in dependence, ill-health and decreasing family and financial resources.
- Extend the eligibility for full pension upon the death of a spouse to couples where both partners have worked. If this is not introduced, women who become widows will be pushed to work in the black economy instead, hence losing their much needed contributions.

THE NETHERLANDS

The situation of women and men

Gender Pay Gap	18.5	
Proportion of children under 3 not in formal care	50.0*	
	Women	Men
Employment Rates women and men aged 20-64 (2010)	70.8	82.8
Share of part time workers in total employment	76.5	25.4
At-risk-of-poverty	16.0	14.1
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers for older people over 65 years	6.3	5.5
Percentage of total board members of largest publicly quoted companies (2012)	18.5	81.5

Year of Reference: 2010.

Sources: Eurostat. EC Report 2011 "Progress on Equality between women and men"

* Source: Eurostat – Formal childcare by duration and age group – Less than 3 years – no formal childcare – year of reference: 2010



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Assessment:

- There is a general lack of gender equality assessment.
- Average employment of women has to increase -especially women with low skills/low educational and professional qualifications. More than 60% of women are not economically independent. In case of divorce they are in a critical situation.
- The pay gap and the fact that women work fewer hours will lead to a pension gap for women which increases women's risk of poverty in old age.
- Violence against women and trafficking need special attention. The current approach is prevention but we assess that this approach cannot stand alone and requires more stringent measures.

Recommendations:

- Apply gender mainstreaming in the National Reform Programme.
- Increase female labour market participation and ensure that women are economically independent.
- Provide educational opportunities during the whole life-cycle.
- Increase flexibility in work hours.
- Improve the availability of affordable day care for children.
- Promote a more equal distribution of unpaid caring responsibilities.

POLAND

The situation of women and men

Gender Pay Gap	1.9	
Proportion of children under 3 not in formal care	98.0*	
	Women	Men
Employment Rates women and men aged 20-64 (2010)	57.7	71.6
Share of part time workers in total employment	11.5	5.7
At-risk-of-poverty rate	28.5	27.0
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers for older people over 65 years	16.8	9.9
Percentage of total board members of largest publicly quoted companies (2012)	11.8	88.2

Year of Reference: 2010.

Sources: Eurostat. EC Report 2011 "Progress on Equality between women and men"

* Source: Eurostat – Formal childcare by duration and age group – Less than 3 years – no formal childcare – year of reference: 2010



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Assessment:

- The actual pension law in Poland could hamper the situation of women who would have to retire later which means that in most cases, they will simply be unemployed longer. Instead of getting a pension at 60 (or earlier) they would get a social security benefit for one year and then nothing until they are 67. Until now they could at least retire and have a small pension to support themselves. In this situation boosting the employment of women 50+ should be one of the priorities.
- There are also many obstacles if women want to create a business – (for men also) due to excessive administrative red tape.
- Many bureaucratic obstacles stand in the way of an adequate distribution and access to EU funded programmes, such as the Structural Funds, which need to be made easier to enable access of all those concerned by the programmes objectives.

Recommendations:

- Take specific measures to combat poverty among older women by increasing female labour market participation and paying attention to the gender dimension when reforming the pension system.
- Remove obstacles for female and male entrepreneurs setting up businesses.
- Enhance the efficient use of Structural Funds by simplifying rules and reducing bureaucracy and increasing transparency in programming and implementing EU funded programmes.

THE UNITED KINGDOM

The situation of women and men

Gender Pay Gap:	19.5	
Proportion of children under 3 not in formal care	65.0*	
	Women	Men
Employment Rates women and men aged 20-64 (2010)	67.9	79.3
Share of part time workers in total employment	43.3	12.6
At-risk-of-poverty rate	24.2	22.1
At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers for older people over 65 years	24.5	17.6
Percentage of total board members of largest publicly quoted companies	15.6	84.4

Year of Reference: 2010.

Sources: Eurostat. EC Report 2011 "Progress on Equality between women and men"

* Source: Eurostat – Formal childcare by duration and age group – Less than 3 years – no formal childcare – year of reference: 2010

UK Joint Committee on Women



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UK:

Recommendations:

- Include an equality statement when setting out the budget for 2013/14 and beyond, identifying the differential impact of the budget on women and men, and describing any policy changes made to mitigate the negative impacts on women and men. This will include modelling the impact of 'growth-enhancing expenditure' on women and men's participation in the labour market.
- Insure that intermediate skills programmes operating in different countries within the UK aiming to improve the skills of young people, like the Modern Apprenticeship programmes, are militating against gendered occupational segregation, and not entrenching it at a cost to the public purse.
- Address the gendered barriers to women's full labour market participation, and particularly the labour market participation of single parents. Provide sufficient and good-quality childcare, using a funding model that does not displace out-of-work poverty by increasing the in-work poverty of childcare workers.
- Gender-impact assess all recommendations, the welfare reforms and the impact of the UK budgetary cuts both directly and indirectly on women. Commit to monitor the impact of said changes and report annually on the impact on women specifically.

- Investigate the impact of the fiscal measures on the third sector and publically report on and address in order to ensure on-going support for organisations supporting women.
- Ensure that state-supported non-bank financing for SMEs provides accessible capital to women-owned businesses, and that female entrepreneurs are adequately supported by business support services.
- Ensure equality of the fiscal measures to support the development of business. Assess the support given to SME's in relation to gender -i.e. ownership and employment by and of women/men be assessed to ensure fair distribution of support.

Wales:

Recommendations:

- Regarding research and development, increase Wales' share of Research Council's funds from 3.3% to 5%.
- Continue funding for the implementation of the Arbed programme.
- Ensure access to Higher Education for all by providing accessible University Fees.
- Ensure that the Welsh Government's forthcoming Domestic Abuse (Wales) Bill covers ALL forms of violence against women and girls, and is rooted in a gender-based human rights perspective.

Northern Ireland:

Assessment:

- The NRP takes little account of persistent gender inequality or the impact of the policies proposed on women or gender equality. While this is in keeping with the Northern Ireland Executive's Economic Strategy, the Economic Strategy at least recognises the need for affordable childcare and that its absence is a barrier to work. A fully gendered approach will require the equal participation of women in decision making whether in politics, in public bodies or on boards as well as the use of tools like gender budgeting.
- The commitments and steps taken in the Programme for Government for equality, including the requirement to consider social clauses in all public sector procurement, are notable. However current policy, including rebalancing the economy, has not been subject to a gendered analysis despite its potential impact on public sector employment, part time working and the gender pay gap.
- The years between 2003 and 2009 saw a year on year decrease in childcare places in Northern Ireland while provision in the rest of the UK has increased.¹¹ Both the policy on and the delivery of childcare are fractured. For Northern Ireland, childcare appears in the NRP solely as a social inclusion matter though it is recognised as a major barrier to employment.

Recommendations:

- Put in place temporary measures to involve women in decision making, especially in economic policy.
- Subject future NRPs to consultation and equality assessment.
- When drafting the NRP, take account of the tools set out in the Gender Equality Strategy for establishing indicators for measuring success.
- Set targets across the full spectrum of action on the impact of rebalancing the economy, including training measures, careers advice, parental leave, flexible working and pay audits.
- Include specific socially responsible initiatives across the public sector;
- Ensure that the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Public Sector Contracts is confirmed and maintained.
- Works should be done by the Northern Ireland Executive to the goal of universal good quality, accessible and affordable childcare for children up to the age of fourteen. A childcare strategy should be brought forward for consultation as a matter of priority and it should include full participation in the labour market and child development as well as the eradication of child poverty as its targets.

Annex 1: MORE ACTION FOR MORE GENDER EQUALITY NOW! HOW CAN WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS GET INVOLVED?

Extensive pressure needs to be put on Member States as well as the European Commission to incorporate a gender equality dimension throughout the whole of the Europe2020 Strategy and corresponding processes.

Taking into account the complexity of the process, there is a need to design a comprehensive lobbying strategy in order to input into all the stages of the European Semester Process and to reach all the institutions involved at the European and national level (see table below).

It is crucial that all EWL member organisations engage in this process at national level to put pressure on their governments to include gender equality objectives and policy actions in the respective NRPs. It is crucial to be fully involved, sooner rather than later!

EWL Members can do the following at national level:

- **February or Early March: Send the enclosed model letter** to the Minister or to the exact person in the ministry responsible for the implementation of the 2020 Strategy to demand that a women's rights and gender equality perspective is included in the National Reform Programme. Also alert ministries in charge of women's rights and gender equality (send them a copy of the letter).
- **April: Get involved in the drafting of National Reform Programmes.** Member States have been encouraged to consult stakeholders, including NGOs. Check websites of ministries (often Economic and Financial affairs) to find contact persons in each country.
- **End of April: Find and Assess the National Reform Programme of your country** (check the website of ministries, call and ask for it, it is a public document). Inform the EWL about what is happening: Are there measures targeted at women or measures that can advance women (gender pay gap, childcare services, feminisation of poverty)? Are there measures that are counterproductive to gender equality (for example, pension reforms that do not take the patterns of women's working lives into account)? Has the Programme been gender mainstreamed?
- **June: Assess the Country Specific Recommendations of the European Commission** and drafting Alternative Country Specific Recommendations from a Gender Equality Perspective. Send the information to the national governments and call them to take into account the Alternatives during the EPSCO, ECOFIN Council meeting and European Council Summit.

In order to cover all the processes of the European Semester, a broader strategy should be set in place to be coordinated and shared between the EWL Secretariat and the EWL Members throughout the six months of the European Semester.

The table below suggests a number of actions that can be taken by the EWL members and all other women's organisations and gender equality bodies that aim to strengthen women's rights and gender equality in the EU.

Annual Calendar	Activities	Opportunities for EWL action
November-January	The Commission publishes the “Annual Growth Survey” (AGS) that analyses the economic situation and the progress on Europe 2020 Strategy and sets the main priorities for Member States’ national strategies for the year to come.	The EWL can: Send a letter to Commission President prior to the adoption of the AGS to make proposals regarding gender equality. Assess the results of the AGS from a gender equality perspective.
February-March	Different Council formations and the European Parliament discuss the Annual Growth Survey. In early March, the Spring European Council gives strategic advice to Member States based on the AGS.	The EWL can: Use the gender assessment of the ASG as its main tool in influencing the discussions in the European Parliament, the Council of the EU (EPSCO, ECOFIN, and the Presidency) and finally the European Council, to ensure that guidance to be given by the European Council has a gender equality perspective. EWL Members should write to their governments calling for a strong gender dimension in forthcoming National Reform Programmes (see model letter).
March-April	Member States draft National Reform Programmes and Stability and Convergence Programmes based on the guidance of the European Council.	EWL Members should get involved in consultation of the drafting of the NRPs to ensure that gender equality perspective is included. The EWL can provide advocacy materials. Ideally, these materials should be tailored to the situation in each country and take into account the national situation regarding gender equality and the assessment of the NRP from the previous year from gender equality perspective.
May-June	The European Commission analyses the National Reform Programmes and the Stability and Convergence Programmes. Based on the assessment, the Commission makes proposals for new Country-Specific Recommendations or reinforces the recommendations from the previous year. The European Council endorses the recommendations in late June.	The EWL can analyse the Country-Specific Recommendations proposed by the Commission. The EWL Members can assess their respective NRP and also the CSR published by the EC and propose Alternative Recommendations. The EWL Members can send their alternative CSR to their governments and call them to take into account the Alternatives during the EPSCO, ECOFIN Councils and European Council negotiations. The EWL can also address the EPSCO, ECOFIN Councils and the European Council prior to the adoption of the CSR, drawing attention to the gaps in them.
Autumn	Member States will make their budgets for the following year based on the NRPs and the Country-Specific Recommendations	EWL Members can lobby their national governments for gender budgeting. In order to prepare for the following year and advocacy process, EWL Members can monitor the outcomes of the lobbying process and follow up the CSR from one year to another.

Model lobbying letter

Attn: Minister and officials responsible for the implementation of the EUROPE2020 Strategy

RE: Integrate a women's rights and gender equality perspective in forthcoming National Reform Programme

(Date)

Dear Minister,

As a member of the European Women's Lobby (EWL), the largest coalition of women's non-governmental organisations in the European Union (EU), the (name of national co-ordination) follows closely the implementation of the EUROPE2020 Strategy at national level. We believe that the priorities developed in the coming weeks will set the pace for the years to come. Therefore, we would like to highlight some issues to make sure that the 2020 Strategy is implemented from the very beginning in a way that has a positive impact on women and that advances equality between women and men.

First, we urge you to ensure that the National Reform Programme of (name of the country) has a strong women's rights and gender equality perspective. As you probably are aware, on 7th March 2011 the Employment, Social, Health, and Consumer Affairs Council adopted the European Pact for Gender Equality 2011-2020 that encourages the Member States to "apply a gender equality perspective and to promote gender equality policies especially concerning the Employment Guidelines in developing and implementing their National Reform Programmes." The Pact also renews the commitment to Barcelona childcare targets.

Second, while we acknowledge that the European Commission's Annual Growth Survey (Year) contains specific recommendations to tackle unemployment and the social consequences of the crisis, we urge you to ensure that the National Reform Programme (NRP) are ambitious and build on these recommendations by applying a gender equality perspective to deliver for those women and men who have been worst hit by the crisis. To this end the Programme should include long-term investments in social infrastructure, including adequate social benefits and pensions, and public services such as care for children and other dependants.

This means that the National Reform Programmes must include a detailed plan to increase the provision of care services for children and other dependants; include specific measures to tackle the gender pay gap and its causes; and take women specifically into account in measures to tackle poverty such as national targets broken down by gender, active inclusion policies and renewal of social protection systems. We also believe that more attention to the quality of women's work is needed and to ensure policy coherence, the whole NRP, including its macro-economic elements, must be gender mainstreamed.

We hope that these considerations will be taken into account and (country) will have a forward-looking National Reform Programme that includes concrete measures to promote gender equality in all areas of life, to tackle women's poverty, and to remove long-standing gender inequalities in paid and unpaid work.

(Name of the national co-ordination) is available to co-operate in the drafting of the National Reform Programme.

Yours sincerely,

USEFUL LINKS AND INFORMATION

- Europe2020 Strategy: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm
- European Semester: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/who-does-what/eu-institutions/index_en.htm
- National Reform Programmes 2012-2013 and European Commission Country Specific Recommendations: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm
- The Council of the European Union: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/homepage?lang=en>
- Council of Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs, EPSCO: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/policies/council-configurations/economic-and-financial-affairs?lang=en>
- Council of Economic and Financial Affairs, ECOFIN: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/policies/council-configurations/employment,-social-policy,-health-and-consumer-affairs?lang=en>
- The Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2013 will be held by Ireland (January – June) and Lithuania (July –December)
- The European Council: <http://www.european-council.europa.eu/home-page.aspx?lang=en>
- Spring Summit: March
- Summer Summit: June
- European Women's Lobby webpage: <http://www.womenlobby.org>
- List of EWL National Coordination Members: <http://www.womenlobby.org/spip.php?rubrique64&lang=en>



THE EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY (EWL) IS THE LARGEST UMBRELLA ORGANISATION OF WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU), WORKING TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN. EWL MEMBERSHIP EXTENDS TO MORE THAN 2000 ORGANISATIONS IN ALL EU MEMBER STATES AND THREE CANDIDATE COUNTRIES, AS WELL AS TO EUROPEAN-WIDE ASSOCIATIONS.