



Brussels, 11 May 2020

2020/TD/53/FL

President von der Leyen
European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium
ec-president-vdl@ec.europa.eu

Dear President,

We contact you to express some concerns of the EFBWW, the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers, about the Commission work programme.

We understand from the ETUC that the EU Commission considers putting the EU Pay Transparency Directive and the whole Gender Equality Strategy on ice.

We urge you to reconsider. In our assessment, such an approach would be a mistake with far reaching consequences.

As EU President, you made gender equality a cornerstone of your Presidency. Binding Pay Transparency was one of your commitments for the first 100 days.

Actions to secure gender equality cannot be called into question even in times of COVID-19. Equal pay is a requirement of the EU Treaty, it is not a fair weather option.

There is a strong interconnection between the EU road to recovery plan and establishing the new normal after Covid-19. This underscores the need for a Gender Equality Strategy. Throughout the EU, key workers, in sectors where the work is predominantly undertaken by women, are underpaid and undervalued. This needs to be tackled as part of the recovery. Working women should not be put to the back of the queue as an issue to be dealt with after the recovery.

The announced Pay Transparency Directive must go ahead and must be reframed to tackle the root causes of inequality and undervaluing of work. Covid-19 has highlighted how the unfair market-determined salaries of workers, such as cleaning, retail, transport, care and healthcare workers have diverged from the real value that they contribute to society and the economy. A permanent income boost for low-wage workers is long overdue. They need to have a fair wage with adequate benefits.

The Pay Transparency Directive can do this by including provisions that assist workers and their unions to re-evaluate pay and to secure increases that reflect the real value of the work to the organisations and society.

Crucially it must empower unions to bargain, allowing them to build a new normal, where work done by women is properly valued and paid.

This crisis will mark a new beginning. We need to remember those who are working on the frontlines, in services, care, cleaning. We cannot repeat what happened after the 2008 crisis when companies bounced back, but working people and gender equality paid the price.

I look forward to your positive response and we remain available to assist you in your endeavours to secure an EU where Gender Equality is a reality for all women.

Yours sincerely,



Mercedes Landolfi
on behalf of the EFBWW Women's Network



Tom Deleu
EFBWW General Secretary