

On 8 March, International Women's Day, the eyes of the public are on the situation of women all over the world. It is a day to celebrate the rights that have been achieved – and at the same time, a day to demand real equality for women. The Group of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament strongly campaigns for gender equality on all levels – and throughout the year – and takes this opportunity to present the **Manifesto for making equal rights for women a reality**.

The economic situation for women shows that there is still much to do to achieve gender equality. In addition we also have to fight violence against women on a European and on a global level. The economic crisis has led governments not only to impose harsh austerity measures, but also to put aside the gender aspect of the crisis in different dimensions. The rise in poverty and unemployment has affected women more than men. Therefore, particularly in a crisis, we must not forget about gender equality in society and we must continue to fight for measures to help give women equal opportunities in the labour market.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY MANIFESTO

by the **S&D Group**



Women MEPs and staff of the S&D Group



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Making EQUAL RIGHTS
for **WOMEN**
A REALITY

OUR FIGHT in EUROPE:
past, present and future



Group of the Progressive Alliance of
Socialists & Democrats
in the European Parliament

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IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS

- WORKING ON CONCRETE SOLUTIONS

1 GENDER PAY GAP

Women in the EU still earn 16.2% less than men, even when women are better educated. This means that women would have to work around 2 months more every year to get the same annual salary as a man. This gender pay gap has long-term consequences. Lower salaries result in lower pensions which can lead to increased risks of poverty.

As 60% of graduates from universities are women, education is not enough to close the gender pay gap. Women have to have higher representation levels in decision-making processes, on the boards of companies and as CEOs. The Commission must also revise its directive on the Gender Pay Gap and impose sanctions on member states that do not implement this directive.

2 POVERTY

Women in the EU are generally poorer than men. Currently 23% of the European citizens are at risk of poverty or social exclusion and all over Europe women are at higher risk of falling into poverty than men according to EUROSTAT. The poorest women are often single mothers, as well as immigrant women. Women often become the principal beneficiaries of social policies and thereby increase the feminisation of poverty. Older women are more at risk than older men. Often women face a combination of difficulties leading to poverty.

Child care, affordable to all women and men, is one of the most effective measures to ensure that women are not excluded from the labour market when they have children. Children have to be seen as a resource for society and not only as a private issue. Equal pension systems are also crucial for future gender balance. Care for older people and other dependents is of utmost importance so as not to make women more vulnerable than men.

3

UNEMPLOYMENT

Women benefited from job creation in the EU between 1998 and 2008 where levels of female employment rose by 12.7% and yet the employment rate remains lower for women than for men. There is still a gender employment gap: the EU 2020 goal is a 75% employment rate for all. Currently the employment rate for women is 62.8%, with a variation of 48.6% to 77.2% which makes the employment gap 12.2%.

To boost growth, it is crucial to use all the resources we have and to create inclusive job opportunities as well as equal possibilities. Flexibility, new working models and abolishing austerity measures can also contribute to new work opportunities, as can the fight against gender stereotypes.

4

PRECARIOUS AND PART-TIME JOBS

The number of women taking up informal and unpaid jobs is rising according to the OECD, domestic work accounts for 33% of the GDP in the OECD countries, mostly done by women. Women in Europe also work part time more often: 31.6% compared to 8.1% for men.

The S&D Group fights for legally recognised jobs and full rights to health-care and other social benefits both for women and men. Neither women, nor men, should have to accept part-time jobs imposed on them. In this case it is better to fight for shorter working hours for everyone which should also support a better work-life balance.

5

VIOLENCE

Economic problems and unstable situations very often force women into dependent relationships. Moreover, violence against women is an issue that needs attention – not only under national law – but also at European level. In Europe, seven women are killed every day and one woman in five has experienced severe physical violence at least once in her life.

The S&D urges the Commission, working with all member states, to draw up an overall strategy to combat violence against women and to fight for more shelters for victims. In addition, it must sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention and transform it into a directive with the option of taking action in the form of sanctions.