

Achieving Equal Opportunities for Equal Rights

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1 - Gender Equality Issues

Achieving equality between women and men in Europe is still a challenge at national and European level. Although the education gap between women and men seems bridged and women's rights in Europe have progressed considerably in the last decades, the road ahead remains fraught with obstacles to achieving genuine equal rights in a society built on a patriarchal model. Therefore, employment rates and wages of women are lower than those for men with large variations across industrial sectors and across Europe, often caused by employment discrimination patterns. Due to a changing European political landscape in recent years (austerity measures) and diminishing corporate social responsibilities (infringements of freedom of collective bargaining), women have been the first in line to fall into precarious work and poverty. IndustriAll Europe must therefore encourage above all the unionisation of employed or unemployed female workers and ensure better representation in its bodies in order to defend their rights as best as possible.

Gender Pay Gap: Women throughout Europe are still earning on average [16.4%](#) ⁽¹⁾ less than men for the same job. European trade unions aim to raise awareness and lobby to close the gender pay gap with all tools available (i.e. Collective Bargaining, Social Dialogue) at all levels (national and European). To fight wage inequality, trade unions should for example via collective bargaining and/or legal measures, push for:

- Development and use of transparent pay systems.
- Upgrading predominantly-female functions and occupations (salary enhancement, improvement of working conditions, skills validation, qualification recognition).
- Promoting a gender-balanced workforce.
- Combatting any forms of precarious work, in particular forced part-time jobs (working towards setting a minimum duration no less than ½ of full-time).
- Combatting the barriers to career progression (For example: "sticky floors" phenomenon or glass ceilings phenomenon).
- Combatting job segregation between women and men
- Promoting equal access to parental leaves and combatting financial disadvantages of parenthood.
- Combatting recruitment discrimination, of which women are too often the victims due to the persistence of gender stereotypes.

Glass Ceilings: Women's career progression is too often held back as women are prevented from accessing managerial positions. In addition, women are segregated into certain jobs and shut out of others. In 2016, only [23.3%](#) ⁽²⁾ of board members of publicly listed companies registered in EU countries were women. Trade unions are dedicated to promoting women in all sectors and businesses, and increasing female union members to better represent their interests. At present, women still have a higher likelihood than men of working in low qualified/unskilled, precarious jobs, with little or no training provided. Trade unions need to ensure access to training and take measures to facilitate professional development of women.

(1) Source: European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) [Gender Pay Gap in unadjusted form \(2015\)](#).

(2) Source: European Commission (EC) [Gender balance in decision-making positions \(2016\)](#).

Pension Gap: A majority of women have shorter employment careers and tend to work in precarious employment (i.e. part-time, fixed-term, flexible contracts, etc.). The burden of family duties leads to a higher frequency of part-time work among women. Employment discrimination patterns contribute to a gender pension gap. The average EU28 gender pension gap in [2014 stood at 40.2%](#), with men aged 65-74 on average earning pensions that are forty percent greater than those of women in the same age bracket. Even though the pension gap has remained stable in Europe since the economic crisis, it has widened significantly. Social security systems and, in particular, pension systems, must be solidarity-based, safeguarded, improved and adapted to allow women to have a secure and decent life at all ages.

Work-Life-Balance: Reconciling work life and home life is a concern for women and men, and a key element for positive wellbeing at work. More suitable conditions for women as well as men must be created to better reconcile work and private life. IndustriAll Europe calls for policies promoting family-friendly working environments including access to care periods for both women and men (for children, dependants, and the elderly). This implies more gender friendly working time policies and arrangements including the reduction of working times, collective or individual, as well improving the protection of health and safety at work of pregnant women through European and national legislations and collective agreements at both sectoral and company levels. Protection against dismissal and discrimination of pregnant women should also be improved. To this end, industriAll Europe calls on the modernisation of the of the [Maternity Leave Directive](#).

IndustriAll European Trade Union welcome the [EC proposal on work life balance](#) which represents a breakthrough. The package includes a mixed policy approach of legislative and non-legislative measures on family leave and flexible working arrangements, childcare and long-term care, and economic incentives for parents and carers to work. Workers must not be compromised or discriminated against when they resort to this type of leave. The periods of leave will be included in the calculation of social benefits and in particular for the retirement pension.

Only legislative measures will bring concrete results. Together with the ETUC, industriAll European Trade Union will make sure that this proposal paves the way for new rights for workers. Within each Member States, efforts should also be made to set up Public Services for early childhood care to facilitate the professional re-entry after maternity leave of women and for dependent persons.

Fighting stereotypes: Despite the last decades of progress on gender equality, gender stereotypes are still present in our everyday lives, at home and at work, and they lead to discrimination. IndustriAll Europe must combat gender stereotypes by the revalorisation of predominantly female jobs by updating wages, improving working conditions, recognising qualifications, promoting gender diversity in skills-sets, etc. Strengthening the role of women in industry is key to improving female perception in the labour market, specifically in the promotion of technical skills and promotion of abilities. The burden of family duties (Child-raising and households) should not be perceived as relying on women's shoulders exclusively. It must be an equal responsibility for both parents, women and men. IndustriAll European Trade Union promotes gender mainstreaming and is developing a horizontal gender equality approach in all its reflections, political positions and demands. The EO working group has to develop demands and strategies in coordination with the social & collective bargaining policy committee and the company policy committee. Gender stereotypes are a consequence as well as a cause of persistent inequalities between women and men and are to be firmly opposed.

Violence against women: Gender based violence is everywhere: at home, at work, within our trade union structures, in school, on the streets or online, regardless of social background and education. Gender-based violence remains the most fundamental and widespread violation of human rights for women with [1 out of 3 women](#) in Europe having experienced physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives (since the age of 15). Male violence against women is still a major cause of death among women in today's world. IndustriAll

Europe will continue working jointly with the ETUC on the 'Safe at Home, Safe at Work' project. Furthermore, we will continually be vigilant towards protecting women's fundamental rights to be in charge of their own bodies and lives. For instance, women should freely and independently decide whether or not they wish to terminate a pregnancy without punishment. Free access to contraception and abortion should be provided. IndustriAll Europe demands the adoption of binding legislation in each Member State to more broadly punish sexist behaviours, sexual harassment and violence at work, at home and in society. Moreover, measures to prevent, protect and support victims must be implemented everywhere and especially at the work place and sanctions imposed on persons found guilty of sexual or sexist violence. The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, 25 November, should become a day of European action for industriAll Europe.

2 - Diversity Policies

The Equal Opportunities working group (EOWG) focuses on fighting against all forms of discrimination (gender, age, people with health conditions or disabilities, philosophical or religious beliefs, migrant workers, ethnic groups, sexual orientation or gender identity) in the workplace, the labour market and in society as a whole. IndustriAll European Trade Union's call is backed by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights in the Treaty and Directive 2000/78/EC prohibiting discrimination in employment. Trade unions are front-line observers of the fact that even today discrimination is still prevalent in all dimensions of employment from hiring procedures to payday and career progression. IndustriAll Europe as a European federation of industrial trade unions plays a key role in fighting all factors of discrimination, by engaging in social dialogues and collective bargaining with employers.

Ethnic groups: European trade unions reject all forms of prejudice, racism, and xenophobia in compliance with industriAll Europe resolution and the [EU Directive 2000/43/EC](#) on ethnic equality. Trade unions need to fight against any forms of discrimination in recruitment and at work. Unions should provide information on effective procedures for victims to file a complaint and seek protection at both national and European levels.

Migrant workers: The European continent is experiencing the worst humanitarian crisis in its history. Over recent months, several million people have sought refuge fleeing poverty, war and persecution or have been forcibly displaced. IndustriAll Europe calls upon all of its affiliated organisations, their staff and their active membership in all companies across Europe to show active solidarity with refugees and to reject all forms of prejudice, racism, xenophobia and acts of violence in the strongest possible terms ⁽³⁾. In our view, building fences is not a sustainable solution. Member states and the EU have to affirm that asylum is a fundamental human right (Geneva Convention), and refugees in the European Union have to be humanely and responsibly treated (i.e. Germany suspension of the Dublin convention), and access to the labour market and vocational training needs to be ensured. Finally, industriAll Europe is deeply committed to seeking peace, in the Middle East as well as in the rest of the world. We demand that all European governments contribute to a political solution to end the conflicts, in order to pursue humanitarian and foreign economic policies based on solidarity and respect among peoples.

People with health conditions or disabilities: In 2010, the EC adopted and committed to the [European Disabilities Strategy 2010-2020](#) (EDS) in line with the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(UNCRPD\)](#). Trade unions have to ensure workers with disabilities are not discriminated against. One panel of the EDS is to significantly raise the share of persons with disabilities working in the open labour market as well as their access to quality jobs and education. They represent one-sixth of the EU's overall working-age population, but their employment rate is comparatively low. People with disabilities should also benefit from equal access to quality education and lifelong learning. These aspects have to be debated at CB and company

(3) Source: [industriAll Europe congress 2016 - Resolution on the Refugees Crisis](#).

policy level. For example: Companies (especially those with more than 250 employees) should be encouraged to define a minimum and statutory hiring rate in the law of employees with disabilities. Sanctions should be applied if this rate is not respected.

Prevent old age poverty: Trade unions should advocate for health promotion and the creation of workplace and working conditions appropriate for elderly workers. Equally, emphasis should be put on the improvement and expansion of social systems, services, social insurance, and solidarity-based and non-speculative pension systems so that a dignified and secure life is possible for all workers at every age.

Sexual Orientation and gender identity (LGBTQI): IndustriAll Europe is committed to equal treatment and respect for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning and intersex workers (LGBTQI). LGBTQI workers are most vulnerable to being discriminated at the work place. The [EU binding directive](#) protects workers against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation LGBTQI. The implementation of effective penalties for discriminating companies and administrations should be promoted. A group action enabling victims of discrimination to go to court together must be established.

3 - Industrial work transformation

Digital technologies are increasingly present in both our daily lives and our working lives. They have transformed the way in which we work, and they have dramatically changed whole industries and will continue to do so in the future. Digitalisation cannot be regarded as a gender-neutral process because female workers are more likely to feel the impact as they have a higher likelihood of working in low qualified/unskilled, precarious jobs. The industrial work transformation has left a severe gender gap especially in the ICT sector. IndustriAll European Trade Union must use collective bargaining and legislation to make sure that Digitalisation is a gender-neutral process. Careful attention should be paid to all forms of telework, remote casual work and the right to disconnect.

Ensuring the right to training and education: In order to reduce the negative impact of digitalisation on female workers, access to training must be secured on a life-long basis for women irrespective of their type of working contracts and its duration. We have to fix mandatory and sufficient training rights for workers to keep and improve their chances in the labour market. Trade unions need to integrate the new digital qualifications, tasks and work categories in negotiations with employers, giving workers access to permanent re-skilling and paying particular attention to women aged 55 and over, in order to safeguard them from exclusion from the labour market. This is especially the case as men tend to have more time on their hands than women to invest in training and life-long learning since they typically engage less in housework and care work than their female counterparts. Trade unions need to raise awareness on the anticipation of needs for new qualifications and competences, especially for young people and the least-skilled.

4 - Women Representation within industriAll Europe

The goal of 30% is a strong recommendation (4), many steps have already been taken, but this goal still has to be achieved. Though it should be our medium-term goal, we are far from reaching parity. Procedures for reviewing compliance with congress decisions to this effect should be decided.

(4) Article 18 – Executive Committee Members

e) A share of 30% female representation within the Executive Committee is strongly recommended. Affiliated organisations with more than one member in the Executive Committee should appoint at least one female representative as full member of the Executive Committee. The first Executive Committee after each Congress should take adequate measures to increase the female representation in the Executive Committee.

CONCLUSION

The Equal Opportunities working group is dedicated to raising awareness and reinforcing social & collective bargaining policies on the issues of gender inequality, diversity policy, and industrial work transformation. It aims to improve working conditions for women and include more women in the labour market and in trade unions by strengthening the role of women in industry. The Equal Opportunities Working Group's meetings ensure a space to exchange Europe-wide practices on Equal Opportunities issues. It works to develop a cross-disciplinary approach to gender and diversity in all of industriAll's reflections, political positions and demands in collaboration with the Industrial Policy, Collective Bargaining & Social Policy and Company Policy committees. This implies that the above-mentioned committees and the Executive committee should take care to consult the EOWG on all the topics included in the action plan and in this resolution.