



Ms Helena Dalli
Commissioner for Equality
European Commission
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Brussels, 22 April 2020
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Dear Commissioner,

We are writing to you to raise our concern about the leaked EU Commission work programme where it seems that the plan is to put the EU Pay Transparency Directive on ice. The leaked version states the following:

“European Gender Equality Strategy (non-legislative, Q1 2020), Adopted - followed by binding pay transparency measures (legislative, incl. impact assessment, Article 157 TFEU, Q4 2020): On pay transparency, this was highlighted in the Political Guidelines, but it should be noted that anything of substance will inevitably mean more administrative burden for companies. It is questionable whether the autumn will really be the right time for this proposal.”

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

Action to secure equal pay cannot be called into question. Equal pay is a requirement of the EU Treaty, it is not a fair-weather option. There is a strong interconnection between a need to create a new normal after Covid-19 and guaranteeing equal and fair pay. In many of those sectors where women predominantly work, key workers are unfairly underpaid and undervalued.

Covid-19 has put a spotlight on this: workers in cleaning, retail, logistics, care and healthcare earn market-determined salaries that are below the real value that these jobs provide to society and the economy.

The announced Gender Pay Transparency Directive must go ahead and moreover must be re-framed to tackle the root causes of inequality and undervaluing of work. It can do this by including provisions that assist workers and their unions to re-evaluate their pay and to secure increases that reflect the real value of the work to their employer and society. It must promote collective bargaining in order to build a new normal where work that is done by women is properly valued and paid.

This crisis will mark a new beginning. We need to recognise the important role that service workers have been playing, especially those on the frontlines. We cannot repeat what happened after the 2008 crisis when companies bounced back but working people and equality paid the price.

We urge you to reconsider.

We look forward to your positive response and we remain available to assist you in your endeavours.

Yours sincerely,



Oliver Roethig
Regional Secretary



Veronica Fernandez Mendez
Head of UNI Equal Opportunities