



# **Closing the GPG in public services in the context of austerity**



Final Report of the EU Social Dialogue  
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### **Closing the GPG in public services in the context of austerity**

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# 1. Introduction

This report is based on the findings of a European Union Social Dialogue project exploring the impact of austerity on the Gender Pay Gap (GPG) in public services across Europe and the strategies that have been adopted by trade unions to address the gap. The research starts from evidence that austerity-induced measures in the public sector, primarily pay freezes and cuts, have impacted upon the GPG (EPSU, 2013)<sup>1</sup>. Figure 1 confirms that the average unadjusted GPG in the public sector across the EU-28 between 2007 and 2018 increased during the recession and has only just started to recover, although the overall average obscures variations between countries as well as actions by trade unions that have made a difference. Austerity measures have varied in their ferocity between EU states (Appendix 4) and have had differential outcomes; while they have disproportionately affected women, they may also involve the ‘downward levelling’ or convergence of gender gaps in employment, pay and working conditions, with men’s position deteriorating rather than women’s improving<sup>2</sup>.

The factors that reproduce the GPG are well known – labour market segregation, part-time work, maternity penalties, gendered and opaque pay systems and discrimination<sup>3</sup>. However, the statistical findings of this research also identify a relationship between public sector pay policies between 2008 and 2018 and the GPG, illustrated by a range of case studies across the EU.

**The Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) has called for pay equity in the COVID-19 recovery to be prioritized and for governments to take action to close the pay gap between women and men<sup>4</sup>. The findings of this report constitute a stark warning for governments in the light of the COVID-19-driven recession.**

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<sup>1</sup> EPSU (2013) Cuts in public sector pay and employment: the impact on women in the public sector. Brussels: EPSU.

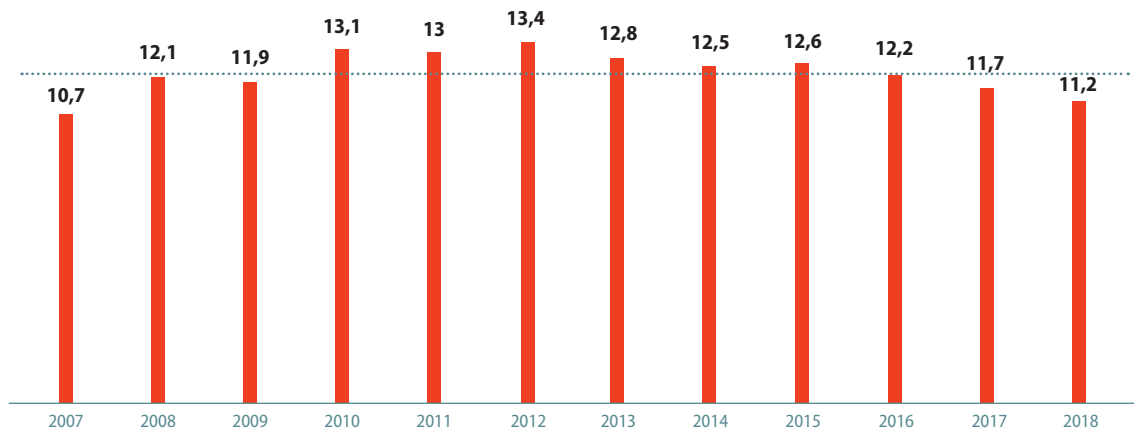
<sup>2</sup> Smith, M. and Villa, P. (2015) EU-Strategien zur Geschlechter und Lohngleichstellung und die Auswirkungen der Wirtschaftskrise, WSI Mitteilungen.

<sup>3</sup> Grimshaw, D., Fagan, C., et al., Eds. (2017). Making work more equal: A new labour market segmentation approach. Manchester, Manchester University Press.

<sup>4</sup> The Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) comprises the ILO, OECD and UN Women (18 September 2020) [https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_755894/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_755894/lang--en/index.htm)

The unadjusted GPG represents the difference between average gross hourly earnings of men and women as a percentage of the average gross hourly earnings of male paid employees (excluding overtime). It is important to emphasise that the GPG is a measurement of pay inequality and does not address, in particular, the situation where women don't get equal pay for work of equal value. Equal pay was a principle in the 1957 Founding Treaty of the European Union and is enshrined in EU and national legislation wherein all workers irrespective of gender are entitled to equal pay for work of equal value.

FIGURE 1: Average unadjusted gender pay gap in public sector in EU-28 (% , 2007 – 2018)



Source of data: Eurostat. GPG in unadjusted form by financial control – public ownership and the economic activity - NACE Rev. 2 activity (B-S except O), structure of earnings survey methodology [online data code: EARN\_GR\_GPGR2CT; public control (public ownership is more than 50%).

# 2. Key Findings

The project is based upon 21 case studies of trade union responses to the Gender Pay Gap (GPG) and analysis of Eurostat data. Table 1 identifies the case studies and case study summaries can be found on EPSU's website under [Gender Pay Gap](#) policies, alongside statistical tables and calculations. Recommendations arising from the research can be found on page 32. These are the key findings:

## **The impact of austerity measures**

- The average unadjusted GPG in the public sector across the EU-28 between 2007 and 2018 increased during the recession and has only just started to fall as Figure 1 confirms, although the overall average obscures variation between countries - austerity measures have differed in their ferocity between EU states and have had differential outcomes.
- Two measures of austerity impact the GPG. Increases in unemployment across economies and lower government expenditure on public sector pay both increase the GPG. The latter suggests that public sector pay policies under austerity have impacted negatively on the GPG.
- The GPG is wider for those earning most and narrower at the bottom of pay distributions, which may support the suggestion that austerity can cause convergence between men and women's pay at the lower end. The trend may be affected by trade union attempts to protect the lowest paid against pay cuts or freezes and/or an outcome of statutory minimum pay policies.
- Overall, there has also been a narrowing in the difference between the hours worked by men and women in public services between 2008 and 2018. A number of EU countries have seen a decline in the proportion of full-time men in the public sector. This is the case in Italy where there has also been a reduction in the GPG.
- Austerity measures, and associated privatisation, have undermined collective bargaining across Europe, including the suspension or contraction of collective bargaining, agreements and negotiations that may address gender inequality (Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland). In many cases trade unions have focussed on mitigating the adverse effects of austerity measures for all workers in terms of job losses.
- Differential pay for new entrants plus recruitment and pay freezes stall progress on closing the GPG. This is particularly the case where they block career progression for existing workers

(Ireland), or where the ad hoc use of recruitment and retention allowances distorts pay systems (UK). Where wage systems are based on seniority, pay freezes can trap younger women at the bottom of pay grades. However, resulting inequality has been the subject of successful legal cases by trade unions, challenging length of service as the means of progression and establishing new pay structures (UK).

- A key feature of the austerity period has been industrial action by women across Europe in occupationally segregated sectors, particularly health, social care and education, to defend their jobs, pay and conditions (Polish teachers and Polish nurses and German childcare workers). This includes action where strikes are outlawed (Slovakian nurses) and among outsourced homecare workers with no stable workplace who are considered to be hard to organise. In many cases such action is not posed in terms of the GPG, but of the under-valuation of women's work. In the Netherlands action reversed budgetary cuts to homecare.
- Pay cuts and freezes have led to pay rates lower than statutory minimums or 'living wages' (Slovakia, UK). Subsequent moves by trade unions focussing increases on the lowest paid or removing the lowest paid grades can positively impact on the GPG, but can also disrupt established pay and grading systems producing 'crowding' at the bottom end of pay scales and undermine equal value proofed job evaluated differentials. In doing so, they can also undermine those in supervisory grades who find themselves paid little more than those they supervise.
- Privatisation of public services in which women predominate – particularly health and social care – has led to downward pressure on women's earnings and working conditions and exclusion of women from collective bargaining and GPG reporting regulations, thereby disguising the real GPG within public services.

### Gender pay gap reporting

- Pay transparency measures requiring organisations to report their GPG have been introduced across a number of countries, but in some have been limited to the private sector (Austria, France). Trade unions have produced critiques of the current reporting guidelines and online checklists of how to analyse GPG reports, highlighting the elements that should be included to produce real transparency (Austria, Spain). France saw its first direct collective initiative on the GPG when the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) took a class action against the Ile-de-France Savings Bank (CEIDF) to secure measures to close an 18% GPG. The Bank claimed the GPG was one per cent and unions argue that the Index Égalité has been used to conceal pay gaps in organisations.
- In a number of EU Member States the GPG is still not recognised as an issue and there is an absence of reliable data. In others, concern about low pay in general, including disparity within the EU, overshadows discussions of gender inequality and equal pay for work of equal value (Romania, Slovakia).

### Equal pay for work of equal value

- Despite some important trade union initiatives to counteract low pay in occupations in which women predominate, there is limited knowledge and use of EU or Member State equal pay



legislation or EU initiatives intended to promote it. This means that it is not being fully utilised as a vital tool to help close the GPG, whether in collective bargaining, legal action or the design of gender-neutral job evaluation schemes. In Hungary the principle has been removed from the Labour Code altogether.

- In two UK case studies in local government and the civil service, equal pay legislation was the explicit basis of legal and industrial strategies and collective bargaining that addressed the GPG. In the case of local government, the GPG has been substantively narrowed.
- Attempts to establish equal pay in the context of budget cuts can lead to a 'levelling down' of men's pay, rather than 'levelling up' of women's pay. This is a weakness in equal pay legislation which does not require 'levelling up' of women's pay to that of men doing work of equal value.
- Where equal pay for work of equal value has been raised for women in senior and/or high-profile positions, trade unions have reported that women concentrated in lower grades have not seen this as relevant to them. In this context trade unions have raised the wider GPG and its roots in occupational segregation (Ireland).
- The UK local government case study highlights an example of the negotiation of a job evaluation scheme designed explicitly to evaluate all jobs in a way which reflects equal value principles with a subsequent closing of the GPG. Other case studies show unions seeking to link occupational wage levels to educational attainment (Sweden, Italy, Cyprus).

### **Collective bargaining**

- The positive effect of collective agreements on the GPG was confirmed in public administration and education where the average GPG was lower in organisations with national or industry level pay agreements in comparison to those with no agreement (Figure 3). However, in health and social work, the relationship is not as straightforward, and the collective agreement does not necessarily translate into a lower GPG (possibly because privatisation has removed workers from collective bargaining).
- The case studies reveal attempts by unions to reform collective bargaining processes that reinforce gender segregation by negotiating higher rates for sectors dominated by women in lower paid jobs. In Sweden there was agreement between Kommunal and the Swedish metal workers' union, IF Metall, that the unions would demand an additional increase for assistant nurses. This resulted in a three-year agreement with additional pay increases for assistant nurses. In Finland the TEHY nurses' union has pushed for the removal of health and social care professionals from the general collective agreement for local government and for a separate collective agreement, accompanied by an equality allowance which would secure successive higher pay increases in female-dominated sectors that will eventually close the pay gap.
- In the Italian prison service, trade unions have promoted Azioni Positive (positive action) in a male-dominated sector to address organisational and cultural barriers perpetrating direct and indirect discrimination against female participation and progression, including improving work-life balance, increasing women's representation and participation in decision-making positions and combating sexual abuse and harassment.

## Women's organisation within trade unions

- Trade union women's committees and trade union training and development activity can educate and empower women to raise the issue of the GPG (Romania). The failure of mainstream trade unions to address women's low pay and poor conditions has led to initiatives to organise women separately, within and outside trade unions (Slovakia, Poland). In a number of cases women in trade unions have established networks of allies from public and political life to raise awareness of the GPG and in Hungary have done so in a resistant environment.



# 3. The Research

The report is based upon:

- An EU-wide literature review reflecting (i) the most up-to-date statistics and analyses on the GPG across Europe; (ii) the impact of austerity and cuts in public services on the GPG; (iii) legal cases driven by the GPG; and (iv) any outcomes of pay transparency legislation at organisational level<sup>5</sup>.
- Descriptive statistics based on analysis of Eurostat data on the GPG in European public services and the Structure of Earnings Survey (SES). Appendix 2 outlines methodology and definitions and key findings are reported in 4.1.
- In addition to the descriptive statistics, further analysis is based upon a standard Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition, which estimates a linear model separately for the sample of male and female workers. The decomposition also provides an estimate of the part of the wage gap that is due to worker characteristics (explained component) and the estimated coefficients (unexplained component) – reported in 4.2.
- 21 organisational case studies across Europe focussing upon public administration (central and local government), health and social care and education, whether provided directly or outsourced (Table 1). Case studies are based upon documentary evidence and interviews, using standardised topic guides, with trade union officers responsible for the organisation, organisational union representatives and where possible, representatives of management. Interviews were face-to-face where possible, but otherwise and, in the context of Covid-19, online.

Each of three partners took responsibility for one of three EU regions – Southern Europe (ADAPT), Central and Eastern Europe (CELSI) and Northern and Western Europe (CREW) respectively. Case studies were identified through EPSU’s Gender and Women’s Equality Committee, national trade unions, web-based research and researcher networks. It was not possible to identify cases studies for all countries in the three regions – the case studies are thus not representative of trade union activity across Europe. Ethical clearance for the research was secured through the University of Greenwich Research Ethics Committee.

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<sup>5</sup> The three regional Literature Reviews can be found on EPSU’s website under [Gender Pay Gap](#) policies.

**TABLE 1: The Case Studies**

	COUNTRY	CASE STUDY	ORGANISATION
<i>Central and Eastern Europe</i>			
Case Study 1	Austria	Real Pay Transparency	ÖGB (Österreichische Gewerkschaftbund)
Case Study 2	Hungary	Women trade unionists raising awareness in a hostile environment	Hungarian Trade Union Confederation (MASZSZ)
Case Study 3	Poland1	National Teachers Strike	ZNP (Związek Nauczycielstwa Polskiego)
Case Study 4	Poland2	Nurses coordinated action	All-Poland Trade Union of Nurses and Midwives (Ogólnopolskiego Związku Zawodowego Pielęgniarek i Położnych OZZPiP) and National Chamber of Nurses and Midwives (Naczelnej Izby Pielęgniarek i Położnych, NIPIP)
Case Study 5	Romania	The empowerment of women	GAZ-ROMANIA (Fedraica Sindicatelor Gaz Romania, GAZ)
Case Study 6	Slovakia1	The Higher-Level collective agreement for public sector workers	KOZ SR (Konfederácia odborových zväzov Slovenskej)
Case Study 7	Slovakia2	The mass resignation of nurses and midwives	OZ SaPA (Odborové združenie sestier a pôrodných asistentiek) and SK SaPA (Slovenská komora sestier a pôrodných asistentiek)
<i>Southern Europe</i>			
Case Study 8	Italy1	The movement of men into public education	UIL SCUOLA RUA Federation. (Unione Italiana del Lavoro-Federazione sindacale Scuola, Ricerca, Università e AFAM)
Case Study 9	Italy2	Azioni Positive for Prison Officers	FP CGIL (Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro, Funzione Pubblica)
Case Study 10	Spain	Planes de Igualdad (Equality Plan)	UGT (Unión General de Trabajadores)
Case Study 11	Greece	Gendered pension reform	ADEDY (Anotati Diikisis Enoseon Dimosion Ypallilon)
Case Study 12	Cyprus	The varying impact of austerity?	PA.SY.D.Y (Pancyprian Public Servants' Trade Union)
Case Study 13	Malta	Fiscal stimulus of female workforce participation	UHM (Union Haddiema Maghqudin)
Case Study 14	France	The Index Égalité	CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail)
<i>Northern and Central Europe</i>			
Case Study 15	Finland	Equality Allowances	THEY (Terveydenhuoltoalan ammattijärjestö)
Case Study 16	Germany	Industrial action by Kita (childcare workers)	Ver.di (Vereinte Dienstleistungsgewerkschaft)
Case Study 17	Ireland	Equal Pay and the Gender Pay Gap in RTÉ	SIPTU (Services Industrial Professional and Technical Union)
Case Study 18	Netherlands	Action by Thuiszorg (homecare workers)	FNV (Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging)
Case Study 19	Sweden	Assistant Nurses – the reform of collective bargaining	Kommunal
Case Study 20	UK1	UK Civil Service – Using Equal Pay Legislation	Prospect
Case Study 21	UK2	Local Government – enshrining equal pay for work of equal value	UNISON

# 4. Statistical analysis – measuring the impact of austerity on the Gender Pay Gap

## 4.1 Descriptive statistics – trends in the GPG 2008-18

Statistics based on analysis of Eurostat data with public services defined in terms of ownership are given in Appendix 1<sup>6</sup>. As seen in Figure 1 (above) the overall average GPG in public services for the whole of the EU-28 rose from 10.7% in 2007 to 13.1% in 2010, peaking at 13.4% in 2012. Subsequently the figures indicate recovery with the GPG at 11.2% in 2018. It should be emphasised that these are average values for all Member States with available data, however, increases in the average GPG between 2010-2012 suggest the impact of austerity policies.

The unadjusted GPG in the three sub-sectors of public services in the period 2008-2017 confirms that in most countries the GPG is highest in human health and social work where women are predominant and lowest in public administration (Appendix 2, Table 3). While there is an expectation that the gap will be smaller in public services, Eurostat data based on ownership show exceptions. In Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania, the GPG has been consistently higher than in the private sector although in Hungary the gap has been closing since 2014 (and in 2017 it also closed in Romania) and there is variation within sub-sectors (Appendix 2, Table 4). In Slovenia and the UK there has been convergence between the public and private sectors

<sup>6</sup> This definition will explain differences with nationally published figures based on industrial activity.

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TABLE 2: Unadjusted Gender Pay Gap in public sector variations between EU-28 (% , 2008–2018)

		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Decreasing Gender Pay Gap	Czechia	22.1	20	21.4	21.5	21.3	20.7	<u>20.8</u>	<u>20.3</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>19.3</u>
	Denmark	14.5	17.8	12.9	13.6	12.6	12.1	12	11.7	11.9	12.1
	Germany	<u>14.4</u>	13.9	13.9	14.1	13.4	13.8	13.3	12.7	12.3	12.1
	Italy	6.5	4.5	3.4	5.6	6.3	3.7	2.9	4.4	<u>4.1</u>	<u>3.2</u>
	Luxembourg	9.3	9.3	:	:	:	-0.4	:	:	:	-3.3
	Netherlands	18.6	18.4	16.7	15.9	15	13.6	13	12.7	12.7	12.2
	Finland	20.3	19.4	17.4	19.3	18.4	19	19.2	18.4	18.9	18.1
	Sweden	14.3	14.5	13.3	13	11.9	11.7	11.7	10.1	9.7	9.2
Recovering Gender Pay Gap	Bulgaria	22.4	21.5	20.5	22.1	19.2	21.7	23.7	22.9	21.4	20
	Croatia	:	12.6	:	:	13.3	13.8	:	10.1	9	8.2
	Denmark	14.5	17.8	12.9	13.6	12.6	12.1	12	11.7	11.9	12.1
	Austria	:	19.6	:	:	:	20.1	:	:	:	18.1
	Poland	3.6	0.1	1.9	3.7	<u>3.8</u>	3.9	3.4	2.8	2.8	3.8
	Hungary	17.9	20	20.5	24.4	22.4	11	13.5	11.8	13.3	12.2
	Romania	<u>12.8</u>	21	21.3	16.5	12.8	12.3	<u>11.6</u>	<u>8.7</u>	<u>3.6</u>	-1.4
	Slovakia	15.8	14.9	16.4	15	13.7	12.9	13.2	12.3	12.9	14.1
U. Kingdom	20.2	<u>30</u>	21.8	21.8	23.8	24.1	24.3	24.6	23.5	21.5	
Increasing Gender Pay Gap	Belgium	-3	-2.6	-2	-1.3	-0.5	0.3	1	1.3	1.6	2.1
	France	:	13.2	:	:	:	20.1	:	:	:	17
	Latvia	13.7	16.8	18.3	19.1	20.5	20.2	20.8	19.7	17.8	19
	Malta	-1.6	-1.3	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	8.8
	Portugal	12.1	10.1	11.4	13.3	12	13.6	14.7	15.6	16.4	17.8
	Slovenia	1.7	2.3	8.2	8.9	11.4	12.7	11.6	12.3	12.5	13.9
Insuf. Data	Greece	:	16.4	:	:	:	13	:	:	:	<u>1.4</u>
	Ireland	13.2	12.1	11.3	10.4	7.3	9.6	:	:	:	:

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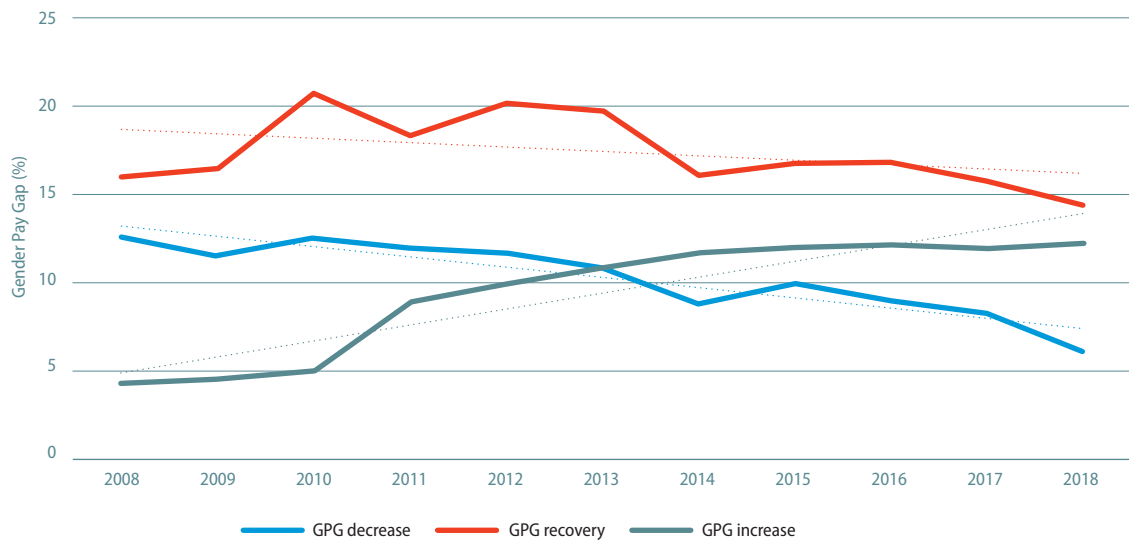
Source of Data: Eurostat custom dataset used: Gender pay gap in unadjusted form by type of ownership of the economic activity - NACE Rev. 2 activity (B-S except O), structure of earnings survey methodology [EARN\_GR\_GPGR2CT]. Public type of ownership.

because of the increase in the public sector GPG. In Finland in 2017 the gap was higher in the public sector, but previously was broadly similar.

Table 2 shows the GPG in each country between 2008 and 2018, developing Smith and Villa’s typology (2015) to cluster countries to reflect, firstly those with a generally decreasing GPG, secondly those whose GPG increased during the period and is now falling and thirdly those where there has been an upward trend in the GPG over the period. It is worth pointing out that while the UK is in the recovery cluster, it is recovering from a uniquely high public sector GPG.

Figure 2 shows the trends for each of the three clusters, suggesting spikes between 2009 and 2013 for those in recovery and a rise in the GPG from 2010 for those with an upward trend – potentially the impact of austerity measures. It suggests that countries that had the lowest GPG have seen an increased gap, those in recovery were those with higher GPGs and those experiencing a decreasing GPG started in the middle. Figure 7 (Appendix 2) shows the trends in the percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) spent by governments on public sector pay, again grouped by the same three GPG clusters. Figure 8 (Appendix 2) suggests some relationship between reductions in expenditure on public sector pay and increases in the GPG, confirmed by statistical tests outlined in 4.2.

**FIGURE 2: Unadjusted percentage Gender Pay Gap in public sector – trends within country clusters (EU-28 2008–2018)**

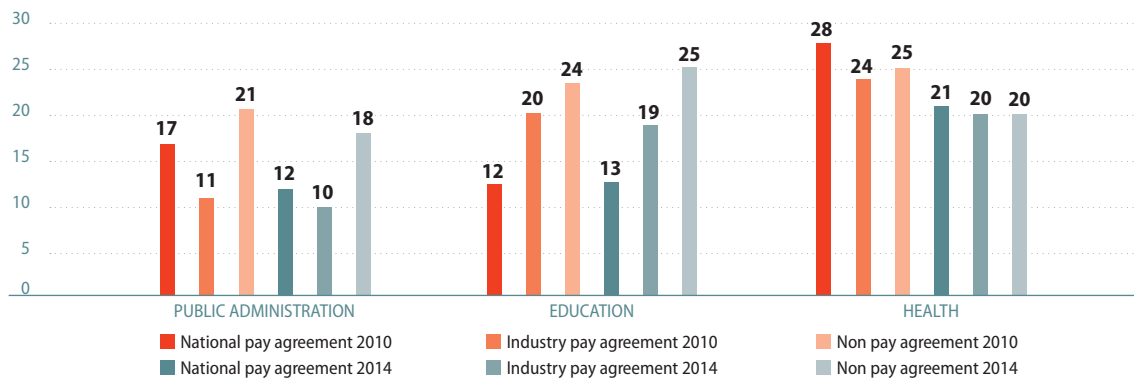


**Source of Data:** Eurostat custom dataset used: Gender pay gap in unadjusted form by type of ownership of the economic activity - NACE Rev. 2 activity (B-S except O), structure of earnings survey methodology [EARN\_GR\_GPGR2CT]. Public type of ownership

Previous research has shown that collective bargaining reduces the overall level of wage inequality, and while the impact on the GPG may be more variable, collectively regulated wage structures tend to reduce direct gender pay discrimination. In this study the positive effect of collective agreements on the GPG was confirmed in public administration and education

where the average GPG was lower in organisations with national or industry level pay agreements in comparison to those with no agreement (Figure 3). However, in health and social work, the relationship is not as straightforward, and the collective agreement does not necessarily translate into a lower GPG, possibly because privatisation has removed these groups from the public sector and collective bargaining. The case studies highlight how austerity measures have undermined collective bargaining across Europe including the suspension of collective bargaining that may address gender inequality (Italy, Poland).

**FIGURE 3: Gender pay gap by public subsectors and type of collective pay agreement**  
(% of EU-level, 2010 and 2014)



Source of the data: Eurostat; Mean hourly earnings by sex, economic activity and collective pay agreement; structure of earnings survey methodology [online data code: EARN\_SES14\_12\_\_custom\_311554; EARN\_SES10\_12\_\_custom\_311676], own calculation.

## 4.2 Factors explaining the GPG

In addition to the descriptive statistics, further analysis is based upon a statistical model using EU-SILC data for 2008-18 based on three sectors (public administration, education, health and social care,) rather than ownership. The statistical model (Appendix 3, Table 5) found that the average GPG is 23.1%<sup>7</sup> and so higher than that based on public ownership. This is likely to reflect the inclusion of private or privatised services in the three sub-sectors. Nearly 11% of the GPG could be accounted for by ‘explained’ factors – men work longer hours, are more often in managerial positions and occupations with higher wages. Thus, if women worked the same hours as men the GPG would decrease. On the other hand, women tend to be more educated, therefore closing the wage gap. Nearly 16% of the model was unexplained; this is often used as a measure for discrimination, but there are other differences that have an impact. The model shows that even if women have the same tenure or service as men, there is still a wage gap, so women have lower return on their experience. There is an unexplained wage difference of 3% for each year of working experience.

<sup>7</sup> The difference between this figure and that in Figure 1 is explained by different definitions of the public sector – see Appendix 2.



Two measures of austerity had an impact on the GPG. Firstly, an increasing unemployment rate in the overall economy increased the unexplained component of the wage gap. Secondly a higher proportion of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) spent on public employee pay decreased the gender wage differential. This suggests that wider recession and government pay policies impact the GPG, not only directly reflecting pay cuts or freezes, but also reductions in public service jobs and recruitment restrictions.

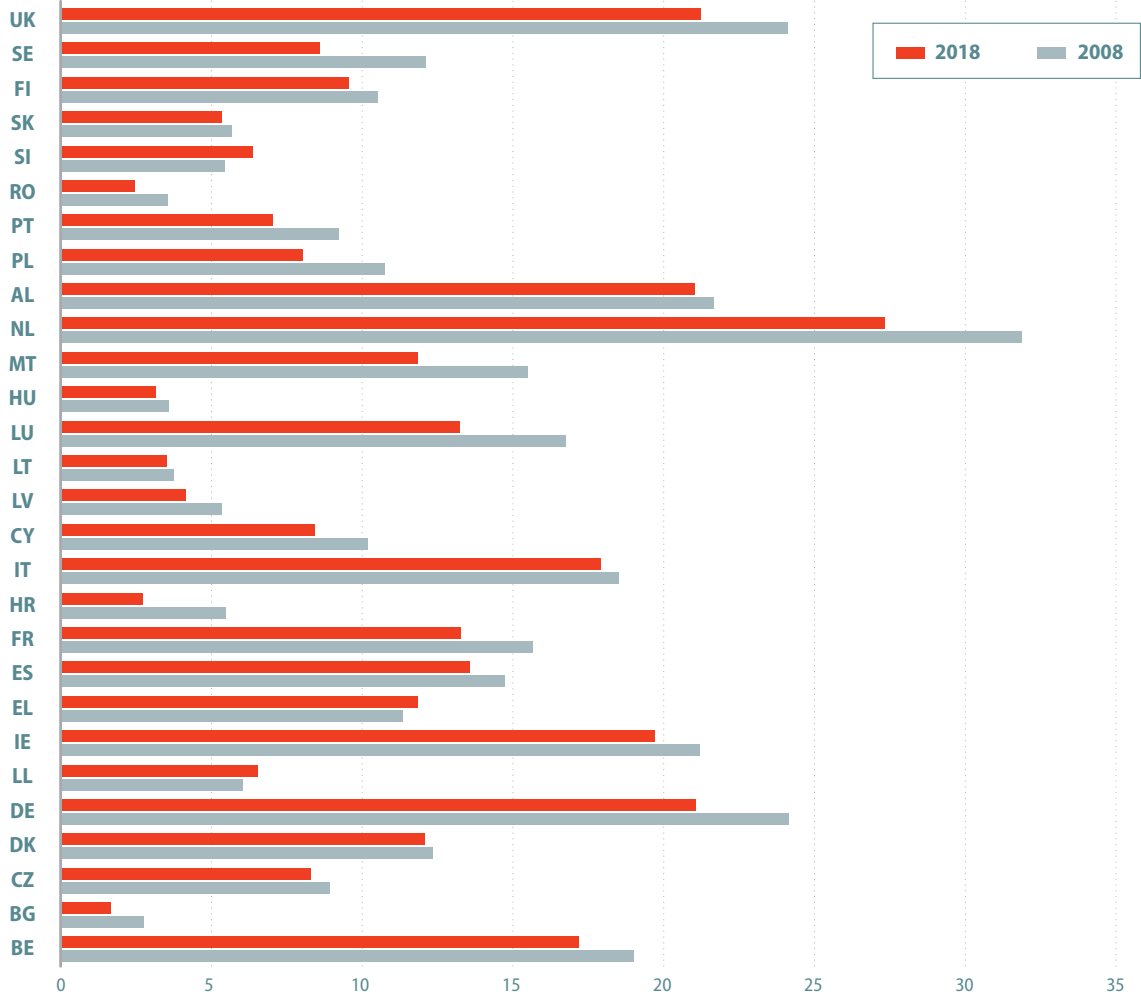
The model also shows that the GPG increases with income (Appendix 3: Table 6). In the bottom quantile (group) of earners there is a 14% median wage difference between men and women, in the middle group (fifth quantile) there is 16% median difference, but in the top group (ninth quantile) there is a 18% median GPG. This trend may reflect individual means of pay determination at the top. It could also indicate a narrowing of the gap between men and women as a result of trade union attempts to protect the lowest paid against pay cuts or freezes and/or an outcome of statutory minimum pay policies.

The statistics show that the gap in hours between men and women narrowed between 2008 and 2018 (Figure 4) across all countries. This could reflect a decrease in the full-time male workforce – the case studies suggest that in some countries labour market exit was driven by pension reform or redundancy compensation based on service. In Cyprus the civil service trade union, PA.SY.D.Y, indicated that a narrowing of the GPG might be driven by the reduction in public servants' pensions and decision to tax pensions and to reduce and tax additional allowances. This led to a number of higher paid public servants, the majority men, to retire to protect their pensions improving the gender composition of the public service workforce and allowing some access for women to higher job positions (**Case Study 12**).

In a number of countries there has been a decline in the proportion of full-time men in public services and in Germany, Italy and Luxemburg this could be linked to a narrowing of the GPG under austerity (Figures 5 and 6). Changes in the GPG are linked to variations in the composition of the workforce. For example, Malta has seen an increase in the proportion of full-time women and an increase in the GPG, possibly reflecting the fact the public sector employs a much higher proportion of full-time men than in other EU countries (**Case Study 13**). In the Netherlands, the public sector was dominated by part-time women over the 10-year period, but there has been a small decline in full-time men and similar increase in full-time women: the country has seen a 6.4% decrease in the GPG since 2008.

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FIGURE 4: Gender gap in hours worked 2008 and 2018 (absolute numbers)



Source: Eurostat, Average number of usual weekly hours of work in main job, by sex, professional status, full-time/part-time and economic activity (from 2008 onwards, NACE Rev. 2) - hours [lfsa\_ewhun2]

# 5. The Case Studies

## 5.1 Raising awareness of the GPG in a hostile environment

The case studies show that the GPG is not recognised as a specific issue in a number of EU countries, but that unions have developed their capacity to address the issue. In Hungary, in the face of trade union opposition, the Fidesz party has removed the principle of equal pay for work of equal value from the Labour Code, in contravention of the requirement on Member States to transpose EU equal pay legislation and principles into domestic legislation. Trade union representatives reported that the GPG is not seen as a problem and pay inequality between regions is perceived by trade unions as more important. The Hungarian Trade Union Confederation (MASZSZ) Women's Committee brings together women across male-led trade unions and is represented on the Confederation's governing body (**Case Study 2**). While it has limited financial resources and access to decision-making, a number of gradual steps to raise awareness have been adopted. In 2015 the Women's Committee coordinated a project that aimed to investigate wage differences across Hungary, creating an online 'Wage Barometer' allowing workers to compare wages in specific jobs by gender and region. Over the course of three years the Committee has organised a number of events to 'smuggle' the GPG onto the agenda of parliamentary committees and has established a network of 'allies' among women politicians, women's NGOs and women journalists. It organised several 'tea parties' to form relationships with relevant stakeholders leading to ongoing cooperation. A conference 'The Wage Gap is not only about money' was particularly effective with nearly 500 shop stewards from 13 affiliated trade unions and employers attending and huge press interest. Several smaller regional meetings were organised and the symbol of the campaign was a coin of a value of 100 Ft with a missing slice presenting the GPG. The events emphasised that the wage gap is not only about money, but also about working conditions with multiple consequences.

The Women's Committee has repeatedly attempted to put the issue of the GPG on the agenda of the Parliamentary Enterprise Development Committee. While initially this failed, attention was drawn to the topic and drew the support of the Hungarian Socialist Party and has now been raised in Parliament. In 2018 a Wage Transparency Conference established alternative social dialogue, inviting social partners and governmental representatives. Despite limited resources and a hostile environment, the campaign continues, including online, with the slogans '*Let to say no to the wage gap! Did you know?*' and '*Less wage, less pension*'.

In Italy the Women's Coordinating Committee of the CISL (Italian Confederation of Workers' Trade Unions – Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori) has also made alliances with civil society organisations, including feminist groups such as Non Una di Meno, parliamentarians and journalists to demand that half of the Covid-19 anti-crisis funds are allocated to women

to guarantee equality between men and women, in terms of employment and pay. The CISL states that: “funds must be invested to structurally change the reality of women’s work”.

In Romania, east-west pay inequalities within the EU are perceived as more important than the GPG in terms of the difference between what multinational corporations pay in Romania and in Western Europe for the same job. Trade unions are fighting for better pay and working conditions for all workers. Yet following the 2008 crisis when public sector pay was subject to a 25% reduction and women’s employment in public administration, health and education fell by 15%, the GPG in the public sector increased from 11.3% in 2008 to 21.3% in 2011, with the gap higher than in the private sector. The social partners withdrew from institutional social dialogue, longer hours were imposed and the proportion of employees below the poverty threshold increased. In 2007 unions did take issue with the unequal treatment of women under private pension arrangements.

Trade unions in Romania have engaged in raising awareness of gender issues, for example, the Romanian Trade Unions Confederation GAZ-ROMANIA (Fedraica Sindicatelor Gaz Romania, GAZ) participated in the project ‘Strengthening women’s role in society’ (**Case Study 5**). The two-year project aimed to improve the representation of women in collective bargaining, promoted women’s networking and provided assistance to women in getting jobs. It resulted in the establishment of eight equality centres and online support. The 2014–2015 project challenged stereotypical views on gender, including women’s perceptions that they deserve lower pay, are not worth better jobs and should be economically dependent on men. It comprised training focused on personal development, team management, and psychological self-awareness. Overall, approaching 1000 women have been involved; a women-only space was created, where women could share experiences, leading to an ‘awakening’ and empowerment. Women realised that gender inequalities were part of their daily realities and sharing experiences led to awareness of the unfair distribution of unpaid work. The project resulted in tangible actions, encouraging women to apply for higher positions or to leave abusive relationships. It increased recognition of trade unions as organisations that address women’s issues. One of the lessons learned is that to address the GPG, a certain level of women’s empowerment has to be achieved.

## 5.2 Equal pay and the gender pay gap

Case studies reveal the problematic relationship between equal pay and the GPG. The case study of RTÉ, Ireland’s public service broadcaster (**Case Study 17**) began as an equal pay case arising from the differences in the pay of male and female ‘on-air’ presenters, but through trade union intervention raised the wider issue of the GPG. This led to an independent review on role and gender equality which calculated the overall pay differential in RTÉ at approximately 4%, claiming that this represented ‘minor disparities in pay’. The report refuted a significant GPG issue, claiming that differentials within grades were accounted for by historical factors, including specific qualifications and experience relative to the grades and ‘traditional employment or recruitment practices, which are now evolving’.

The trade union SIPTU challenged the findings and questioned the report’s rationale for choosing to examine gender profiles above and below the €90,000 salary level when the figures demonstrated more women than men were employed at salaries of less than €60,000. In fact,

61% of women in RTÉ earned up to €40,000 compared to 39% of men. SIPTU'S response also highlighted that the report did not differentiate between part-time and full-time workers in terms of gender and actually grossed up part-time earnings to provide a full-time figure circumnavigating a key factor underpinning the GPG. For SIPTU the report focussed on equal pay rather than the GPG and the focus on high paid workers 'took no cognisance of the people who were on lower pay grades' with a lack of clarity amongst union members as to what the GPG is, leading the union to conclude 'we have a job of education to do with our own members to get them to understand.' The Irish Congress of Trade Unions concurred that: "much of the discussion around the pay of senior journalists is far from the experience of the vast majority of women".

### 5.3 Occupational segregation and collective action

A key theme emerging from the case studies across the EU is collective action by women in occupationally segregated sectors to defend and/or improve their pay and terms and conditions in the context of austerity and, in particular, reductions in local government spending. In the case of health and care workers this often reflected the impact of privatisation. In fact, EPSU has identified a spate of industrial action in health and social care across Europe between 2018 and 2020<sup>8</sup>. In most cases industrial action is not framed in terms of equality or the GPG but may be posed in terms of the recognition and societal value of women's work. In this sense women's demands are both economically defined and gendered<sup>9</sup>.

In Poland austerity measures included a pay freeze and the cancellation of seniority benefits and other bonuses alongside job cuts and the abolition of the eight-hour working day. Between 2011 and 2013 a tripartite framework agreement on wages and the development of working life mitigated the adverse effects of austerity measures, yet collective bargaining was weakened reducing trade union influence. A number of collective negotiations and agreements were terminated<sup>10</sup>. These measures brought deterioration in the working conditions of nurses, predominantly women, in the decentralised and increasingly privatised Polish health-care system (**Case Study 4**).

Nurses represented by the All-Poland Trade Union of Nurses and Midwives (OZZPiP), and the National Chamber of Nurses and Midwives (NIPiP) collaborate closely and operate outside the mainstream trade union confederations. The separate organisation of women is seen as pragmatic in order to protect their interests. The history of action in support of better working conditions for nurses, including decent pay, is longstanding, yet unions had never succeeded in organising a nationwide protest, partly because of the decentralised healthcare system. However, in 2015 they managed to coordinate across organisations and regions and threatened a general strike in healthcare. Trade union leaders convinced local representatives to coordinate

<sup>8</sup> [www.epsu.org](http://www.epsu.org)

<sup>9</sup> Marx Ferree, M. and Roth, S. (1998) Gender, Class, and the Interaction between Social Movements: A Strike of West Berlin Day Care Workers. *Gender and Society*, Vol. 12, No. 6, pp. 626-648.

<sup>10</sup> Pillinger, J. (2014). Bargaining How collective bargaining contributes to eliminating pay discrimination between women and men performing the same job or job of equal value for Equality, European Trade Union Confederation; [http://www.genderpaygap.eu/documents/2014\\_bargaining\\_equality\\_en\\_ETUC.pdf](http://www.genderpaygap.eu/documents/2014_bargaining_equality_en_ETUC.pdf)

activities in order to enter into collective disputes with all the hospitals at the same time. The upcoming elections put pressure on decision-makers. While negotiations with the Ministry of Health on a national pay mechanism continued, a massive demonstration in Warsaw took place and there was the threat of a general strike from multiple regions. After intense negotiations, the Ministry of Health signed an agreement called '4 x 400', guaranteeing that nurses' wages would increase gradually in four stages over four years. Each year wages would rise by gross 400 PLN (approx. 100 euros with tax). The agreement would be resourced by a special fund created by the Ministry of Health transferred to the National Health Fund. The after-tax wage increase was 230 PLN (approx. 50 euros) monthly. The pay increase covered nurses on all contracts. The agreement was based on the prohibition of nurses' organised protest at national level. Understaffing causing work-related stress and endangering patients was not addressed. However, a stable pay mechanism was agreed and anchored in a centralised financing system to avoid arbitrary implementation at local level.

In Slovakia the organised protest activities of nurses and midwives for the improvement of working conditions, including an increase in wages, resulted in the so-called 'mass resignation action' (**Case Study 7**). It reflected dissatisfaction with the valuation of nursing work - "*We are not just injecting and picking up phones*" - and a lack of representation of nurses at all levels of management of the health sector, as well as in negotiations with employers. The representation of nurses has been fragmented, the trade Union of Nurses and Midwives (OZ SaPA) and Slovak Trade Union of Health and Social Services (SOZZaSS) have been fighting for improvements in working conditions since the 1990s. The law forbids industrial action by nurses and doctors in Slovakia, therefore mass resignations was perceived as the only possible solution after several years of protests and unsuccessful negotiations. In 2011, the doctors had taken similar action, while the nurses stayed with the patients, resulting in the recalculation of health-care workers' remuneration. However, the law was drafted and approved without the input of nurses and did not take into account their service, resulting in a decline in earnings. An improved law guaranteeing higher wages for nurses was declared unconstitutional due to lack of financial resources.

As a result of a long-term disregard for nurses' demands, the mass resignation was organised jointly by OZ SaPA and SOZZaSS at the end of 2015, several months before parliamentary elections. The nurses demanded an increase in the minimum wages for nurses in hospitals as well as for nurses in outpatient clinics and social services facilities, who earned only 84% of the average wage at that time – a change in the coefficient for determining salary taking service into account, measures to stop misappropriation of public finances in healthcare and an increase in the number of nurses to ensure patient safety. About 10% of nurses out of 30,000 resigned, with some charged with the crime of threatening public health. The action was supported by some senior doctors and the medical trade unions.

The mass resignations action did not result in a direct wage increase. However, attitudes towards nurses by the Ministry and hospital management changed and nurses and midwives realised their strength, leverage and bargaining power. A number were elevated to representative bodies with the possibility of political influence. In 2017, the wages of nurses reached the value of the average wage in the economy. However, this applied only for nurses in institutional healthcare facilities, not in outpatient clinics, social services and spas. The wage difference between hospital and outpatient nurses could be up to 20%. Slovakian doctors earn a value

of 2.36 of the average wage in Slovakia, while the value for nurses' wages is 1.13.<sup>11</sup> The action initiated a discussion about the equal value of work and remuneration of university-educated nurses and doctors, leading to the detailed documentation of nursing tasks in relation to those of doctors, including their wider responsibilities.

In Poland, as elsewhere, teaching is a disproportionately female sector (75%), with vertical gender segregation – men disproportionately occupy senior positions (**Case Study 3**). Teachers are represented by two trade unions, the larger and more left-wing Polish Teachers' Union (ZNP) and the more right-wing Free Trade Union Solidarność-Oświata, which is a part of the biggest and strongest general trade unions NSZZ Solidarność. Dissatisfaction amongst teachers rose following educational reform implemented in 2017 in haste and leading to the dismissal of many teachers. While there is a relatively low GPG in the sector, pay is below the average national wage and a pay freeze driven by austerity eroded teachers' status leading to further discontent. The ZNP pushed for a pay increase, but despite mediation negotiations failed with the ZNP rejecting government proposals and 78% of members voting for strike action. The unions demanded an increase of 1,000 PLN (about 225 EUR), increased expenditure on education, changes to the assessment of teacher's work and to promotion paths alongside the resignation of the education minister.

The biggest strike in Poland since the 1990s began in April 2019 with two-thirds of schools closed completely. Initially most parents and pupils were supportive of teachers, however the government launched a mass hostile campaign against the action. Support was lost in the face of threats to exams which students depended upon to secure grades to go to university. The government introduced a special law allowing non-professionals to work as examiners. In the face of public anger, the ZNP suspended strike action with no agreement, with teachers feeling demoralised, with their status further degraded. The government awarded a minor pay increase, but in the face of local government cuts this was not properly funded. The perceived failure of the strike led to teachers leaving the sector and to shortages. Those remaining took further industrial action refusing to engage in extra-curricular activities and effectively working to rule. Overall many teachers, disappointed with the outcome, cancelled their trade union membership.

In the Netherlands the case study focused on homecare (thuiszorg) workers and depicts a tipping point in a long campaign (2010-2018) to curb austerity measures in the care sector as a whole (**Case Study 18**). The 2012 election resulted in a government that wanted to 'move from a welfare state to a participatory society' and one implication was that the budget for homecare would be cut by 75%. The FNV-union was the only union that refused to sign off on the 2012 austerity policies. The union challenged the decentralisation of public accountability (from central government to city level), merging private and public sectors through the outsourcing of publicly financed care to private providers and tendering processes that transferred risk to the workers through the introduction of contracts with no employer contributions towards sick pay, health coverage or pension rights (*Alfahulp, similar to zero-hours contracts*). As in other EU countries homecare had become a sector where workers had workplace that could provide

<sup>11</sup> OECD stats - Health - Health Care Resources - Remuneration of health professionals - Remuneration of specialists, 2017 v Zdravotníctvo I a II. MF

the basis of organisation: *'Homecare workers didn't have a shared space at work, you couldn't walk in and start organising them.'*

However, in May 2013 FNV organised a small demonstration in Varsseveld, against Sensire, a company with homecare contracts with seven Dutch cities. The union set up a marquee tent in front of Sensire's headquarters. The sight of the tent right in front of the employer HQ was a powerful symbol of union strength attracting media attention and subsequently the union decided to maintain the tent as a FNV union office for six months:

*'Having the marquee tent there was a real boost for the activists, seeing the other workers there but also seeing the community come in and chat.'*

Following the campaign that included homecare workers taking strike action for short periods in 2013 Sensire was replaced by two other companies (TSN and Zorgkompas), with seven city councils agreeing to retain workers and to guarantee that the sector minimum wage would be paid. Workers would keep their rights and seniority in future contract transitions and no use would be made of *alfahulp* contracts.

Further campaigning sought to replicate this success for care workers at national level with a focus on recruitment. The method of marquee tents and even occupation of city halls was used in other cities. Demonstrations were organised – the biggest one in September 2015 in Amsterdam in which 30,000 people participated. The government gave in. Budget cuts were curbed from 75% to 40%. Furthermore, the government agreed funding to maintain home-care work for 2 years and to ban *alfahulp* contracts in care, while there would be talks over the specification of wages in the tendering process for home-care provision. However, implementation has been difficult due to the decentralised funding of the care sector: there are more than 350 city councils, so this presents a huge task for FNV.

*In Germany over the past 10 years there has been two major strikes by childcare workers securing improved conditions and raising the importance of their work (Case Study 16).* In 2009 they took national strike action in support of the re-negotiation of the national collective bargaining agreement for better pay and also over the criteria for the calculation of wages. This was a strike for recognition of the role of childcare workers as educators, including in terms of pay. As one trade union activist pointed out:

*'We are not the singing and crafting aunts of the nation, but it is our mission to educate our children'*

The strike achieved a new collective bargaining agreement (Gesundheitstarifvertrag), that re-evaluated the responsibilities of childcare workers and entitled them to additional health and safety measures to ease the physical and mental strain of the job. However, action was also about improved pay, changes in the criteria on which pay was calculated and recognition of the educational role of childcare workers.

In Germany, the expansion of childcare places for children under three since 2013 has led to an increase in childcare employees, but also staff shortages and high workloads for existing staff, leading to sickness and absence. There has been increased provision by the private sector. In



2015, 50,000 childcare workers took part in a six-week strike over pay, demanding increases for younger staff. It was part of a campaign (*Aufwertungskampagne fuer Frauenberufe*) promoting the value of women's work through the slogan '*really something good, really worth something*'. A proposed settlement recommended by Ver.di was rejected by the workers and they ultimately achieved wage increases of 3.5%. Ver.di recruited 15,000 members as a result of the strike. While initially it was well-supported by parents, as it went on support faded as they faced difficulties balancing work with increased childcare responsibilities. The collective bargaining agreement that was negotiated through the 2015 strike lasted for five years and negotiations were supposed to start again in early 2020 but were postponed to 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Occupational segregation also involves the under-representation of women in male-dominated occupations. In Italy the CGIL pointed to the under-representation of women in the Penitentiary Police including in senior positions, proposing an 'Equal Opportunity Platform' to the Department of Penitentiary Administration in March 2019 with the aim to '*bring gender equality to those jobs, such as that of the Prison Police Corps, which have always been characterized by a predominantly male presence. It is a civil evolution due*' (**Case Study 8**). The Platform aims to implement 'Azioni Postive' (Positive Action) to address organisational and cultural barriers perpetrating direct and indirect discrimination. They include improving work-life balance, increasing women's representation and participation in decision-making positions, and combating sexual abuse and harassment. There is consideration of access to training for female workers with a focus on barriers to professional and career development, emphasising promotion based on skills and professional expertise (unless there is a need for male or female workers to work with detainees of the same gender). The measures are to be enforced through decentralized bargaining with a view to the feminization of the sector. In terms of implementation a Committee has been established at the headquarters of the Department of Penitentiary Administration and is chaired by a representative of the Administration and is jointly composed of officials of the Administration and union representatives. At national level, there have been a number of draft agreements on the promotion of equal opportunities involving Cgil, Cisl (Italian Confederation of Workers' Trade Unions - Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori) and the Union of Italian Workers (Unione italiana del lavoro, Uil), the municipal administrations and the provincial equal opportunities advisers. Such measures are often aimed at removing discriminatory mechanisms and at achieving equal opportunities in the world of work by means of monitoring instruments and positive actions.

#### 5.4 Collective bargaining – addressing pay structures

In response to austerity measures a number of European trade unions, have targeted pay increases to the lowest paid, with implications for the GPG. In the UK a collective agreement by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services for 2018-2020, has helped to enshrine equal pay for work of equal value into the future and has narrowed the GPG (**Case Study 21**). The NJC covers 1.6 million employees across councils in England and Wales and in Education Boards in Northern Ireland; 76% of them are women and 60% work part-time (less than 37 hours a week). In 1997 a 'Single Status' Agreement harmonised working conditions across manual and administrative, professional and managerial ('white collar') jobs, establishing a job evaluation scheme and pay system based on 'equal pay for work of equal value'. Since 2010, almost 60% of Government funding for local government has been slashed, pay was frozen between 2009-2010, increases have been capped at 1% until recently and conditions have

been universally cut. Despite low NJC settlements, two thirds of councils had implemented the independent Foundation Living Wage (FLW) by 2018 – a higher level of pay for the lowest paid workers than NJC pay. This had distorted job evaluated differentials and caused ‘bunching’ of pay points at the lower end of the pay scale. The 2018-2020 NJC pay agreement established a universal rate of pay equal to the FLW as the bottom pay point, re-structured the pay spine and equalised gaps between pay points up to scale point 20. This ensures that job evaluated differentials reflecting equal pay for work of equal value can be maintained into the future and that points on the pay spine – at least up to the middle - are equal. As a result, the GPG has narrowed from 5.3% to 2.7%<sup>12</sup>.

In Slovakia, the civil service employs one fifth of the national workforce (416,000 in 2018) covering education, public healthcare professional workers, social workers and home carers, scientists and police (**Case Study 6**)<sup>13</sup>. Two thirds are women, concentrated in education and healthcare. Pay in the sector was determined on the basis of qualification, the complexity of the work and working years, but also reflected personal supplements, premiums/bonuses and additional allowances assigned without exact criteria and contributing to the differences in men’s and women’s pay. Following the economic crisis, pay was effectively frozen and trade unions focussed on protecting jobs. The lowest pay rate subsequently dropped below the statutory minimum wage which had been increased and by 2017 half of the lowest pay rates and a high proportion of employees in the public sector had fallen below the minimum wage, disproportionately women. The state and regional governments were obliged to pay the difference between the lowest rate and statutory minimum wage, but this was often taken up by personal supplements, leaving the real wage very low.

The Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic (KOZ SR) raised the issue of wage rates below the minimum wage and considered the situation unlawful and unsustainable. The union wanted a systemic valorisation of pay in the public sector by shifting the lowest wage tariffs up to the level of the statutory minimum wage and with a percentage increase to all other rates to reflect qualification, work complexity/difficulty and years worked. The consistent pressure by the KOZ resulted in agreement that the lowest wage tariff would start at the level of the current statutory minimum wage (520 EUR/2019) and a compromise on a 0.5% increase each year after 40 years of working experience an increase from 32 to 40 years. In November 2018, the higher-level collective agreement for the state and public employees meant a pay increase of 21% in total at the sectoral level, compared to 10% in 2019 and 10% in 2020, affecting 300,000 civil servants and securing the highest pay increase in civil and public administration in the history of Slovakia. Pay grades were simplified with three grades merged into one, taking into account both work activity and length of professional experience. There were also reductions in working time and increases in holiday entitlement. While not promoted as addressing the GPG, the increase may contribute to the equalisation of the man’s and women’s pay at the sectoral level. As in the UK, regional administrations did not receive an appropriate budget to fund the higher-level collective agreement resulting in the removal of personal supplements for some employees that then led to complaints to the Labour Inspectorates.

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<sup>12</sup> As calculated by UNISON 2018.

<sup>13</sup> All employees working and being remunerated under the Act No.553/2003 Call. on working in public interest and the Act of 55/2017 Call. on state service.

## 5.5 Challenging collective bargaining structures and introducing equality allowances

In a number of cases, trade unions have challenged existing collective bargaining structures that reflect occupational segregation in order to address the GPG, by negotiating pay increases that aim to equalise pay between sectors through an equality fund or allowance – examples include Sweden, Norway and Finland<sup>14</sup>.

In Sweden (**Case Study 19**) historical occupational segregation remains the biggest barrier to gender pay equality, with occupations allocated to a particular union confederation and collective bargaining agreement largely defined by gender. Kommunal represents municipal workers, in which the largest groups are assistant nurses and care assistants and 78% of its membership are women. Kommunal had made several attempts to unite the blue collar, LO union confederation, around a GPG strategy that links the level of wage increases to the percentage of women working in a particular occupation. However, this did not prove to be a successful argument. Around 2013 Kommunal started developing a different strategy that involved removing the emphasis on gender and instead focussing upon education. Kommunal calculated that on an average yearly basis, assistant nurses earned SEK 4,000 less than car mechanics, yet these two occupations require the same educational level. Discussions about this new strategy took almost two years, necessary to make sure Kommunal could carry this strategy across the LO confederation (as a group). Eventually Kommunal got support from the metal-union, the biggest union within the LO confederation:

*I remember a meeting where, once again, they said ‘no broad brush, you have to pick a group’ and our head negotiator responded ‘OK you ask us to pick a group? Well, ok, we pick assistant nurses’. And you could see them think ‘Oh my god, they picked the biggest group’.*

In 2016, a one-year Industrial Bargaining Agreement with an increase of two per cent for all blue-collar workers was agreed. There was an understanding that Kommunal would then demand an additional increase for assistant nurses, and that if the strategy was not successful during that year, the metal-union would join Kommunal in strike action giving the assistant nurses huge leverage. A three-year deal was signed early in 2016 for an additional wage increase for assistant nurses: SEK 500 in 2016 (in addition to SEK 535 increase for all), SEK 180 in 2017 (in addition to an overall SEK 535 increase), and SEK 150 in 2018 (in addition to an overall SEK 540 increase).

The 2016 deal obtained by Kommunal for the assistant nurses was initially deemed a success. However, in 2017 and 2018, a buoyant economy caused a labour shortage across industry, pushing private sector blue collar wages up at a higher percentage than the negotiated minimum. Public sector wages, however, only increased according to the negotiated deal. Hence, the impact of the Kommunal deal was reduced. Nevertheless, the gap would have been bigger without the negotiated additional wage increase for assistant nurses. Kommunal’s current strategy is to maintain the education level argument to close the GPG, but to broaden it to

<sup>14</sup> Pillinger, J. (2014). Bargaining How collective bargaining contributes to eliminating pay discrimination between women and men performing the same job or job of equal value for Equality, European Trade Union Confederation; [http://www.genderpaygap.eu/documents/2014\\_bargaining\\_equality\\_en\\_ETUC.pdf](http://www.genderpaygap.eu/documents/2014_bargaining_equality_en_ETUC.pdf)

other occupations. It is not clear whether other unions within the LO confederation will further support Kommunal in breaking away from industry level agreements.

*In Finland (Case Study 15)*, TEHY, the largest trade union for health and social care professions, has pushed for an equality allowance. It has done so in the context of the deterioration of pay and conditions for women in the health and social care sectors, contributing to a widening of the GPG. The background is the Competitiveness Pact, a national collective agreement signed by the Finnish government, business representatives and 90% of trade unions in 2016. Under austerity measures the 'Pact' resulted in a reduction in real hourly wages, including a weakening of established working arrangements and benefits. The national agreement introduced a wage freeze for workers in private and public sectors until 2017, a 24-hour increase in annual working time, a 30% reduction in holiday bonuses in the public sector and an increase in pension and employment insurance contributions for employees. TEHY argues that the Competitiveness Pact has brought exceptional deterioration of workers' terms and conditions with the health and social care sector hit particularly hard, since female workers represent 90% of the sector the pact has been a setback on progress on the GPG. TEHY asserts that in the case of the general collective agreement, achieved under the Competitiveness Pact, gender equality is not a high priority as the representatives taking part in the negotiations come from male dominated sectors or occupations.

To improve the relatively lower-paid salaries in healthcare, TEHY and its sister union SUPER, have aimed for an additional 1.8% salary increase in the health and social care sector through a 10-year programme of increases above the average for the technology sector, which is seen as a key benchmark. The unions argue that this strategy could contribute to narrow, and potentially end, the GPG over the period. The unions also want a separate agreement to cover the 170,000 health and social care workers that are currently part of the general agreement. The Director of Collective Bargaining at TEHY argues that,

*'a separate agreement would allow for better consideration for the special characteristics of nursing work in terms of working hours and wages, such as shift work and being on call, wage system and renewals in job descriptions due to future health and social care reform already in the agenda. This will be absolutely necessary in case of a reform in the sector. It is a laborious task to change the regulations governing the working hours and wages of nursing staff because these regulations are incorporated in the larger general agreements, and changes always require approval from all parties'.*

TEHY believes that a separate agreement is the only way to "lift the salaries and make the pay system just in the sector". In the 1990s teachers and doctors moved to separate collective agreements, resulting in improved pay. TEHY had taken significant steps towards the goal of a separate agreement for health and social care staff in the public sector during negotiations in 2018 and were preparing regulations to be implemented in the new collective agreement in March 2020, when elements of the Competitive Pact were due to be rescinded.

## 5.6. Using national and European law

Surprisingly there is limited evidence of the use of European or national equal pay law to address the GPG, although the first, class action taken on the GPG in France by the Confédération

Générale du Travail described below is one example. However, in the UK, the civil service union Prospect has successfully combined litigation with collective bargaining to achieve equal pay and narrow the GPG in parts of the civil service, despite the impact of a move to localised pay determination in the early 1990's and the impact of government austerity leading to pay freezes within the public sector since 2010 (**Case Study 20**). A key issue is length of service as the means of progression. The landmark cases of Cadman and Wilson were lodged against the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in 2001, when the union successfully challenged length of service as the means of progression. The European Court of Justice (ECJ) modified the findings of the Danfoss case, which found that length of service was a legitimate means of determining pay, ruling that the employer had to show that longer service/experience resulted in better performance.

In the Meteorological Office a pay matrix had been introduced, designed to reduce the GPG and progress staff to an appropriate 'rate for the job'. Subsequently the proportion of female employees increased from 25% to 32%, although at February 2014 over 60% of females had less than five years' service. A pay freeze meant that rates remained at 2008 levels and by 2014 70% of people were still in the 'development zone', despite their experience, widening the GPG. The ad hoc use of recruitment and retention allowances had also distorted the pay system. In 2016 an equal pay claim was submitted to the Employment Tribunal on behalf of 77 women members, with their male colleagues stepping up as pay comparators. Legal action provided a catalyst and despite ongoing pay freezes in the public sector, in 2018 the Met Office got agreement from the Treasury to settle individual cases and establish a new pay structure. This resulted in a pay increase of up to 20% per annum for 70% of employees, narrowing of the GPG from 10% to 2% in three years. It did, however, include reductions in allowances, weekend premia and performance related pay, which the employer insisted on to make the offer affordable and which caused some tensions between employees.

In Greece from 2012, wage-setting for public sector employees was removed from the jurisdiction of collective bargaining and following cuts, pay was frozen between 2013 and 2016 (**Case Study 11**). The derogation of sectoral/occupational agreements to company-level was allowed and the scope of arbitration limited to basic wages and subject to employer consent. In response to the situation, Greek unions have adopted litigation strategies that put austerity reforms under the test of legality before the Courts. The Supreme Administration of Greek Civil Servants Trade Unions (ADEDY), the confederation representing employees in the public administration, demanded the cancellation of the austerity measures and the increase in both salaries and recruitment. With other civil society associations, it developed a legal mobilisation strategy at national and supranational level, involving a judicial review by the Council of State against government decisions that provided for wage and pension cuts<sup>15</sup>. In 2012 the major unions, including GSEE and ADEDY, submitted a complaint to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Committee on Freedom of Association concerning the austerity measures. This Committee found repeated interventions in free and voluntary collective bargaining, with a substantial lack of social dialogue and thus highlighted the need to strengthen the institutional framework for these fundamental rights.

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<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Decisions no. 668/2012 and no. 2307/2014.

## 5.7 Pay transparency

The 2014 EU Transparency Recommendation and Member State law governing pay transparency potentially provide a positive impetus to narrow the GPG. In 2019 France saw the introduction of the *Index égalité* requiring private sector companies with 50 or more employees to publish a range of measures calculating the GPG, to be extended to the public sector at the end of 2020 (**Case Study 14**). The Index provides a common methodology to measure unjustified GPGs according to an 'equal pay for equal work' principle, with a score out of 100 calculated on five indicators. If a company scores lower than 75 it is required to put in place corrective measures within three years. Companies that do not publish their index or do not implement their scores expose themselves to a maximum penalty of 1% of their wage bill. Publication is expected to be on company websites or circulated to employees by other means with worker representatives having access to the information.

As in other European countries French unions critique the exclusion of smaller organisations with under 50 employees from pay transparency policies. Additionally, the Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (CFDT) argues that a major weakness of the Index is employer discretion to determine what constitutes categories of 'equivalent jobs'. Employer discretion on GPG reporting has emerged in the case of the Ile-de-France Savings Bank (CEIDF) where the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) has taken a class action overpay inequality - the first time in France collective action has been taken on the GPG<sup>16</sup>. Under 2016 judicial reforms, class action allows a judge to order measures to put an end to discrimination and redress the harm suffered by all those included in the group concerned. The CGT had been urging the CEIDF management to enter negotiations over the GPG since June 2019, calculating the gap at 18% or 700 euros per month. It also reported that it takes women on average three years longer to get promoted and that they face a 'glass ceiling'. The bank claims the pay gap is only one per cent. The CGT see this 'group action' as a way to open ambitious collective bargaining on the GPG, which if successful means that all 2,700 women working for CEIDF can benefit, as they can then join the claim once the judgment has been made. The union suggests that the *Index Égalité* has been used to conceal pay gaps - a company can claim 95 points out of 100 while maintaining a pay gap of 10%.

*The Austrian Trade Unions Confederation, Österreichische Gewerkschaftsbund (ÖGB) and its Women's section (ÖGB - Frauen) have also reported shortcomings in GPG reporting requirements (Case Study 1).* They only apply to permanent employees, excluding temporary workers who are likely to be lower paid. While all pay components must be included, they do not have to be disaggregated, so it is not clear which pay components contribute to gender differences. Further, income reports are confidential to the company and are not publicly available and it is not clear if employee representatives can share reports within the workplace. One survey found that over one quarter (28%) of companies did not provide data as there is no legal obligation to do so and nearly half (46%) reported no willingness to further address the GPG or to take measures<sup>17</sup>. Most companies adhere to the minimum requirements of the transparency policy, although trade unions may ask for additional information. As one Austrian employee representative put it:

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<sup>16</sup> While this is not a public sector organisation the action is instructive in suggesting how unions can challenge pay transparency legally, with implications for the public sector and services.

<sup>17</sup> Eurofound (2018), Pay transparency in Europe: First experiences with gender pay reports and audits in four Member States, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

*'The pay reports are a good instrument for asking questions, but they are not so good at providing the answers.'*

The ÖGB is now pushing for the extension of the reporting duty so that income reports are mandatory for all organisations of over 100 employees and include all employers including states and municipalities. They also want reports to be shared with work councils or made available to employees at the workplace, if there is no council. There is also a possibility to initiate a procedure for enforcing claims under the Equal Treatment Act. The ÖGB has created an online platform with information, materials to promote awareness about wage transparency, a checklist on how to analyse an income report and a manual for income reporting. It calls for the following aspects of pay to be considered:

1. Are women and men equally classified?
  - Check for qualifications and working years;
  - Ensure service is taken into account;
  - Ensure classifications correspond to differences in activities;
  - Ensure there is equal access to training and progression.
  
2. Do women and men in the same classification earn the same amount?
  - All components of pay must be considered;
  - Overtime pay must be based on transparent criteria;
  - Allowances and supplements must be based on actual activities and requirements.

In Spain, in 2019, a Royal Decree established the concept of work of equal value for the first time in the Spanish legal system. This law extends the obligation to develop Planes de Igualdad (Equality Plans) with worker representatives, to organisations with more than 50 employees and requires the plans to be registered (**Case Study 10**). Before the law, the ceiling was 250 employees. It implements pay transparency measures in both the public and private sectors so that employers need to disaggregate pay, pay supplements and allowances by gender. All workers are entitled to access such data and worker representatives have the right to receive annual reports of the data. The Royal Decree establishes the presumption that there is a prima facie case of discrimination in companies with more than 50 workers, when the average remuneration of workers of one gender is at least 25% higher than the average remuneration of workers of the other. *Planes de Igualdad* cover the selection and recruitment process, female under-representation, professional classification, training, professional promotion, working conditions and sexual harassment.

The Royal Decree facilitates a number of measures to encourage both parents to participate in childcare and the sharing of personal, family and work life rights. The inability of workers to combine work with caring responsibilities has been seen as a key explanation for the GPG in Spain. The Royal Decree establishes the right of workers with responsibilities for the care of children under 12 years of age - or other dependents - to have their working day adapted to their needs. A reasonable balance between the needs of the worker and the organisational needs of the employer must be established, but the employer must justify any refusal. The Decree also establishes new rights for breastfeeding mothers consisting of one hour of paid daily leave or, when used at the beginning or end of the day, half an hour of paid daily leave until the child is nine months old.

# 6. Conclusion and recommendations

The findings set out in this report confirm a concern about the ‘stagnation’ of the Gender Pay Gap across Europe in the last decade in the context of economic crisis<sup>18</sup> and particularly in the public sector where the gap has historically been smaller than in the private sector. The report emphasises the disproportionate impact of government spending cuts and pay and pension freezes, along with privatisation, on women and their generally negative impact on the GPG. Overall trends hide national differences in both austerity policies and outcomes, while data in some EU states is missing or unreliable. Differential pay for new entrants and pay freezes trap younger women at the bottom of grading systems, encouraging ad hoc individual arrangements that distort pay systems. The GPG is larger at the top of the pay distribution and there is evidence of convergence at the bottom as men’s earnings have deteriorated, rather than women’s having increased. In addition, there is evidence that the gap in working hours between men and women has closed since 2008 and 2018 and suggestions that this has reflected the exit of full-time men from the public sector workforce, sometimes as a result of pension reform or redundancy compensation based on service.

Existing literature has established that there is a relationship between overall pay inequality and GPGs and that trade unions may play a role in reducing overall pay inequality, but also gender inequality. The case studies described above show that variations, fluctuations and even stagnation in the GPG undoubtedly reflect effective trade union actions. The recent working paper for the International Labour Organisation (ILO)<sup>19</sup> on the role of trade unions in closing the GPG identified three measures relevant to the public sector: collective action on the under-evaluation of women’s work, action to address internal pay differentiation through job evaluation and intervention in procurement. The first two measures feature strongly in this report, with case studies of women in occupationally segregated public sector roles taking industrial action in the face of cuts to services, jobs and terms and conditions. Generally, such action is not framed in terms of the GPG, but challenges the value attached to women’s work. There is evidence that many women do not see the relevance of equal pay cases taken by higher paid women as relevant to them. Case studies suggest the importance of education and the role of trade union women’s committees in raising awareness of the GPG. The report also concurs that job evaluation is underused, but where it is comprehensively negotiated, has concretely affected GPGs. Similarly, legal action at national and EU level is limited, but has been used to promote equal pay.



The findings also confirm the positive role of collective bargaining in supporting inclusive labour markets and reducing the GPG in public administration and education. In health and social care, it is likely that the impact has been reduced by the removal of groups of largely women workers from the remit of collective bargaining through privatisation. The latter lessens the likelihood of women having appropriate comparators in equal pay cases. However, the report cites trade union strategies to prevent job losses and to protect the lowest paid from pay cuts and freezes or pay restraint, including action where pay levels have dipped below statutory or living wage levels and led to compression at the bottom of pay scales. The suspension or weakening of collective bargaining in periods of crisis is thus of concern.

The report highlights attempts to reform collective bargaining structures that reinforce pay inequality driven by occupational segregation through compensatory increases or equality allowances. Such measures raise debates about the extent to which collective bargaining reflects, but also reinforces, gender segregation and whether they can resolve the GPG in the long-term. In some cases, unions are breaking from existing sectoral or industrial agreements and pursuing separate collective bargaining arrangements and agreements for female-dominated occupations, raising the issue of the support of male-dominated unions. The case studies also identify trade union experiences of pay transparency or GPG reporting measures and suggest that these need to be robust to ensure employers cannot conceal pay gaps – in this respect class action by the CGT to challenge employer interpretations of the GPG is of interest. Pay transparency is compromised by the exclusion of outsourced employees, who are often lower paid women. The report concludes that currently EU or Member State equal pay legislation is not being fully utilised as a vital tool to help close the GPG – whether in collective bargaining, legal action or the design of gender-neutral job evaluation schemes. The capacity of equal pay legislation to allow for the levelling down of men’s pay rather than uprating women’s pay was highlighted, as was the underfunding of equal pay settlements.

Finally, the research was undertaken in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic and related recession. In the context of major challenges to work and society – pandemics, climate change, automation and artificial intelligence – ending the GPG must be linked to a more fundamental reorganisation of paid work and unpaid domestic labour. Reorganisation should include a shorter working week that allows equal labour market participation on the basis of truly shared domestic labour, eldercare and childcare; universal access to childcare and eldercare; maternity and parental rights which remove the ‘motherhood’ pay penalty and allow fathers/partners to share childcare; equal access to education and work-based training and time for trade union and democratic participation. Trade unions should lead this debate, with support from the EU Commission, governments, and trade union confederations.

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<sup>18</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO\\_14\\_160](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_14_160)

<sup>19</sup> Rubery, J. and Johnson, M. (2019) Closing the Gender Pay Gap: What Role for Trade Unions? International Labour Organisation.

## Recommendations

### Ensuring Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value

- The European Commission must ensure that all Member States have adequately transposed the principle of equal pay for work of equal value into domestic legislation and take urgent action to ensure it is applied across the public sector and private providers funded by public bodies.
- Knowledge and expertise in utilising equal pay legislation to close the GPG through collective bargaining, legal action or the design of gender-neutral job evaluation schemes needs to be substantially improved across European trade unions, governments and public sector employers.
- The EU Commission could help support public sector trade union initiatives to mainstream equal pay principles in collective bargaining and to develop and promote gender-neutral job evaluation schemes.
- Attempts to establish equal pay must be adequately funded to ensure that there is no 'levelling down' of men's pay, rather than 'levelling up' of women's pay. Equal pay legislation should be amended to ensure that it requires the 'levelling up' of women's pay to that of men doing work of equal value.

### Closing the Gender Pay Gap in a Covid-Era Recession

- Closing the GPG should be a policy priority for public sector employers and private providers funded by the public sector across the EU, particularly in times of recession when the GPG is likely to stagnate or increase.
- Under Covid-related recession it needs to be made clear that redundancies, differential pay for new entrants, pay freezes and reductions will lead to at least the stagnation of the GPG, particularly if collective bargaining is suspended.
- No public sector worker should be paid below statutory minimum pay rates, which should not become a benchmark for public sector pay systems or be allowed to undermine pay systems based on equal value principles.

### Strengthening collective bargaining to close the GPG

- Trade unions, governments and public sector employers should take steps to discuss the gendered nature of collective bargaining systems, particularly the extent to which they reflect pay differentials based on occupational segregation.
- Equality allowances or supplements for female-dominated occupations can help to close gaps, but the longer-term goal should be effective gender-neutral collective bargaining arrangements (as above).

- **Public sector and outsourced public service pay systems should be re-designed to ensure equal pay for work of equal value, using jointly designed, gender neutral, job evaluation schemes.**
- **Occupational segregation itself needs to be addressed through collective bargaining initiatives to establish equal pay for work of equal value, access to training and development, appropriate childcare, good maternity agreements and parental leave.**
- **Trade unions must empower women members to address unequal pay and the GPG through self-organisation in trade unions, widespread education and training and links with supportive external women's organisations. The EU Commission could usefully support such measures.**

## **Improving Gender Pay Gap Reporting**

- **The EU must ensure accurate and reliable GPG figures are reported annually by all Member States.**
- **GPG reporting and pay transparency measures need to be improved and standardised to enable rigorous comparisons within and across European nations.**
- **GPG reporting should be based on transparent criteria and not permit employer discretion in classifying comparable work. All components of pay - bonuses, overtime, allowances, supplements – should be included and length of service must be taken into account. Access to training and progression should also be reported, along with the rate of return from maternity leave.**
- **Groups of outsourced employees such as care workers should be included in GPG reports of public bodies commissioning outsourced services.**
- **Employers should be required to negotiate and agree GPG reporting mechanisms with trade unions and provide all emerging information, which must be open to challenge by trade unions with recourse to the law.**
- **Employers should be required to draw up annual action plans based on the results of GPG reporting, with trade unions.**

## **Closing the GPG in an Uncertain Future**

- **Trade unions should lead urgent discussions on the fundamental reorganisation of paid work and unpaid domestic labour in the light of major global challenges, including pandemics, climate change, automation and artificial intelligence. This should include a shorter working week that allows equal labour market participation on the basis of shared domestic labour and care.**



**Appendix 1:**

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# 1: Austria

## Real pay transparency

**Austria is the only country in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) that is implementing the EU Pay Transparency Recommendations with regard to the Gender Pay Gap (GPG). Private companies with at least 150 employees are obliged to prepare an income report every other year. Austrian trade unions and especially their women's sections have long been lobbying for the implementation of pay transparency policies. Moreover, they are pushing for the expansion of the duty to the public sector and all organisations employing 100 or more workers. The ÖGB trade union confederation and its women's section (ÖGB Frauen) have produced a critique of the current reporting guidelines and an online checklist of how to analyse an income report, but also the elements that should be included to produce real transparency.**

The Austrian government has imposed a duty on private sector companies with at least 150 employees to report on average gender pay levels since 2014. Organisations are obliged to draft a report showing gender-segregated mean or median pay by full-time equivalents per job category and qualification level. The ÖGB trade union confederation and its women's section (ÖGB Frauen) have lobbied over a long period for pay transparency on the basis that many women do not know whether their colleagues earn more for work of the same value („Viele Frauen wissen gar nicht, dass ihre Kollegen für gleichwertige Arbeit mehr verdienen“) and it is the right of workers to have such information. The ÖGB is now pushing for the extension of the duty so that it is mandatory for all companies over 100 employees and covers all employers including states and municipalities. It wants reports to be anonymous but shared with work councils; or if there is no council at the workplace, then made available to employees. There have also discussed the possibility of initiating a procedure for enforcing claims under the Equal Treatment Act.

Evaluation of company gender pay reports by ÖGB Frauen found that in one third women were disproportionately represented in lower paid jobs and a similar proportion showed that women earned less than men in the same pay category. A GPG of between 10% and 19% was revealed

in nearly a quarter (23%) of the company reports and between 5% and 9% in 16% of reports; it was below 5% in just over a quarter (27%). Over a quarter (28%) of the companies had not provided data as there is no legal obligation to do so. The ÖGB report found several shortcomings in the reporting requirements. They only apply to permanent employees, excluding temporary workers who are likely to be lower paid. While all pay components must be included, they do not have to be disaggregated, so it is not clear which pay component contributes to gender differences. It is also not clear if employee representatives can share reports within the workplace. Most companies adhere to the minimum requirements of the transparency policy although trade unions may ask for additional information. As one Austrian employee representative put it:

*'The pay reports are a good instrument for asking questions, but they are not so good at providing the answers.'*

The ÖGB has created an online platform promoting awareness about wage transparency, with a checklist of how to analyse a pay report and a manual for income reporting which should ask the following:

1. Are women and men equally classified? – check for qualifications and working years; ensure service is taken into account; ensure classifications also correspond to the differences in those carried out activities; and ensure there is equal access to training and progression.
2. Do women and men in the same classification earn the same amount? – all the components of pay must be considered; overtime pay must be based on transparent criteria; and allowances and supplements must be based on the actual activities and requirements?

## 2: Hungary

# Women trade unionists raising awareness in a hostile environment

**In Hungary, the principle of equal pay has been removed from the Labour Code with the trade unions fighting for its restoration. The Gender Pay Gap (GPG) has not been accepted as an issue while and the Labour Code allows for differential wage setting by region. The Women's Committee of the Trade Union Confederation, bringing together women across trade unions, has adopted a strategy of gradually raising awareness of the GPG, including an online wage barometer allowing workers to compare occupational rates by gender and region. It has organised, over a three-year period, a number of campaigns on the GPG establishing a network of "allies" from public and political life and becoming the focal point for the GPG and putting the GPG on the political agenda.**

The Hungarian Trade Union Confederation (MASZSZ) was formed in 2014 through the merger of two confederations (MSZOSZ and Autonomous Trade Union Association). Currently it consists of 31 affiliates from the public, and the private sectors and has three social committees for women, youth and retired workers. The executive of the Women's Committee comprises one representative from each affiliate and the president is a regular member of the managing board of MASZSZ (mostly male representatives) with a right to vote. This right ensures a con-




nection to decision-making and the articulation of the interests of the Women’s Committee and women trade union members. The Women’s Committee organises regular training and events to raise and promote women’s issues and has organised an annual International Women’s Day conference over the past 20 years.

In 2015 a first step was taken in to address the GPG. The Women’s Committee coordinated a project aimed to investigate the wage differences across the country including regional wage differences between the East and West. An online wage comparison system the ‘Wage Barometer’ was created to allow workers to compare wages for specific professions on the basis of gender and region. From 2016 the campaign aimed to identify ‘allies’, among woman politicians, women’s NGOs and women journalists. The Committee organised several ‘tea parties’ to promote relationships with relevant stakeholders and raise awareness about the GPG. Ongoing cooperation with these allies is proof of the success of this activity.

The Committee organised a conference, ‘the wage gap is not only about money’ that unexpectedly attracted more than 80 participants, so that the organisers had to enlarge the conference room to accommodate those registered. Where was huge press interest. A number of smaller meetings were organised across the country, including male colleagues from the trade unions. The symbol of the campaign was a coin of the value of 100 Ft with a missing part representing the GPG. A key aim was to get the GPG on the parliament agenda and this was seen as essential for change to be achieved. The Women’s Committee planned to use a meeting of the Enterprise Development Committee to raise the issue but failed in this. However, the opposition party approached them and offered help. The campaign slogans were, ‘Let’s say no to the wage gap! Did you know?’ and ‘Less wage, less pension’.

In 2017 the International Women’s Day Conference was used to increase awareness about the relationship between the GPG and women’s poverty drawing attention to the fact that the wage gap is not only about money but about working conditions with multiple consequences. About 480 shop stewards from 13 affiliated trade unions and employers attended the conference with a strong media response. The campaign continued in 2018 with a Wage Transparency Conference that comprised an alternative social dialogue, with all the social partners including governmental representatives invited. With the help of the Hungarian Socialist Party, the GPG was placed on the parliamentary agenda.



## 3: Poland

# National teachers' strike

**The education sector in Poland is female-dominated, with wages below the national average. Education reforms and a pay freeze driven by austerity lowered teachers' status leading to widespread dissatisfaction. After the failure of negotiations, a massive strike involving two-thirds of teachers was organised by the Polish Teachers' Union in 2019. The government's antagonistic response eventually turned the public against teachers and their unions. Inadequate resources in local government meant that a minor pay increase could not be funded. The failure of the action meant that many teachers left the sector and trade unions.**

In Poland three quarters (75%) of teachers are women and earn significantly below the average wage. Men are more likely to be in managerial positions in education. Teaching is seen as a gendered profession since school holidays and shorter hours support work-life balance and childcare - being a male teacher is not perceived positively since wages are low. This is a problem in big cities where living costs are high. The Polish Teachers' Union (ZNP) is the largest and most active trade union in Poland and the organisation actively participated in shaping the democratic face of Polish education. The Free Trade Union „Solidarność-Oświata also represents teachers, although its political orientation is more to the right. Both unions are politically affiliated, have longstanding male leaderships and are similar in structure.

Teachers' dissatisfaction started to increase in 2017 with the hasty implementation of education reform that drastically changed the existing school system and was critiqued by professional teacher associations. The reform led to the dismissal of teachers and the contraction of a three-year curriculum into two years. Following a pay freeze driven by austerity unions began to negotiate a pay increase. Despite mediation, the negotiations failed and the ZNP announced a ballot for strike action covering nearly 20,000 schools and kindergartens. Around 78% of schools voted in favour of strike action. The teachers demanded a pay increase of 1,000 PLN (about 225 eu), an increase in state expenditure on education, changes in teachers' work assessment and promotion pathways, as well as the resignation of the education minister. The

strike started on 8th April, 2019 in 74% of schools. Teachers - mostly women - refused to teach. Exams were in danger of being cancelled, but went ahead with of administrative workers substituting for teachers. The government introduced a special law allowing non-professionals to work as examiners removing teachers from their role in exams.

Parents and pupils were supportive of teachers at the beginning, but the government launched a mass campaign against the action. Parents and pupils became less supportive of the strike when students could not get their grades to finish high school and progress to the enrolment exams for University. Anger at teachers reached high levels and the ZNP decided to suspend the strike, which ended without a settlement. To calm the situation, the government awarded a minor pay increase, but without providing funding to the local authorities managing schools. This meant that more than 60 local authorities came close to bankruptcy.

The strike mostly affected women, they received no salary for a month and the strike was seen as a failure. The government's campaign destroyed teachers' motivation, they felt that their professional status was undermined and satisfaction with the profession fell. Many left the profession leaving 70,000 teaching posts vacant in Warsaw and other major cities. Those who remained worked to rule meeting only the minimum requirements of the job and not engaging in after-school activities. The strike was a significant loss for women and the trade unions. After the strike many teachers cancelled their trade union membership.

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## 4: Poland

# Nurses' coordinated action

**Austerity measures in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis brought further deterioration in the working conditions of nurses in the decentralised Polish healthcare system. To better protect nurses' interests and achieve their agenda, the nursing trade unions organised outside the trade unions mainstream and its confederation – a more autonomous organisation of women workers. The decentralisation of healthcare hindered nurses' action until 2015 when the unions coordinated simultaneous nation-wide mass protests and the threat of a general strike. The action resulted in a centrally funded four year pay deal for all nurses.**

Austerity measures following the 2008 economic crisis led to a pay freeze for Polish healthcare staff, the cancellation of seniority benefits and bonuses from 2013 and the abolition of the eight-hour working day with employers given flexibility over working time. Budget cuts meant a reduction in medical staff and a recruitment freeze for nursing staff. The tripartite framework agreement on wages and the development of working life for the years 2011-2013 mitigated the adverse effects of the crisis, yet the gender impact was not considered. Collective bargaining weakened and a number of collective agreements were terminated.

Nurses comprise the largest occupational group in the health care sector with 98% women. In the past, nurses had to have extra jobs as cleaners due to inadequate income and many nurses have full-time jobs in one hospital and work extra hours in another private or public healthcare facility. They are often self-employed and could work 300 hours a month, since working time is not regulated. Shortages of nurses and midwives mean there is no problem finding nursing work. Since there is no minimum ratio of nurses to patients or minimum wage, hospital managers can keep the number of nurses and pay low. The current average age of the nursing staff is 52 years.

The nursing trade unions - the All-Poland Trade Union of Nurses and Midwives (OZZPiP) and the National Chamber of Nurses and Midwives (a professional association whose activities resemble the activities of a trade union) - have been established outside the mainstream of Polish trade unions and its confederation. This 'separatist' women's trade unionism is seen as a pragmatic and a necessary strategy to protect their interests relying on the mobilisation of members and a transformational agenda. The union focus on the quality of care and forms of protest that do not harm patients and captures public and media attention. In pursuit of better pay and working conditions Polish nurses have engaged repeatedly in so-called White marches, blockades of streets, roundabouts, pedestrian areas and border crossings, the establishment of tent villages, strikes in hospitals and even hunger strikes. In 2007, they occupied the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Health, the Chancellery of the Prime Minister and the visitors' gallery in Parliament. They organised the so-called White City protest, a campsite in front of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister, established when their leaders were occupying the public administration building. The decentralisation of healthcare meant that it was not possible to organise a nation-wide protest until 2015 when the unions coordinated collective disputes across all hospitals and regions. The upcoming elections put pressure on the government, *'nobody wants hospitals on strike during the elections'*. A massive demonstration in Warsaw took place alongside the threat of a general strike from the regions. The unions demanded a stable wage mechanism incorporated into the budget and independent of the individual decisions of hospital managers. After intense negotiations, the Ministry of Health signed an agreement. called '4 x 400' guaranteeing that nurses' wages would increase by 400 PLN (approx. 100 euros with tax) per year over four years. Funding would come from a special central fund created by the Ministry of Health. The after-tax wage increase was 230 PLN (approx. 50 euros) monthly. Nurses working full-time as well as having other types of contracts were eligible for the increase. The agreement restricted future nurses' protest activities, while the understaffing of nurses that cause work-related stress and pressure and endangers patients was not addressed.

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## 5: Romania

# The empowerment of women

**The Gender Pay Gap (GPG) is not recognised as a problem in Romania, rather the pay inequalities between Eastern and Western Europe are perceived as more profound and unjust. Ingrained gender stereotyping leaves gender discrimination unacknowledged. Despite this, the two-year project run by the trade unions accomplished the “awakening” of the women attending, resulted in tangible changes in some women’s lives and increased recognition of trade unions as organisations caring about women. One of the lessons learnt is that women need to be empowered to address unequal pay and the GPG.**

The fight against the gender pay gap, and trade union strategies to close it in the public sector has to be seen in relation to overall living conditions in Romania. The real GDP per capita is three or four times lower than the EU-28 average. Romania also scores high on the gender stereotypes index and low on the overall Gender Equality Index produced by the European Institute for Gender Equality.

Poor overall living standards might contribute to the relatively low level of unadjusted gender pay differences in the overall economy - 3.5% in 2017- and the public sector - 5.4% in 2017. However, this has only been the case since 2016. During the 2008 crisis and its aftermath, the GPG in the public sector increased from 11.3% in 2008 to 21.3% in 2011. Although wages in the public sector are regulated, the GPG during the crisis was higher than in the private sector. Austerity measures hit Romanians heavily. Between 2008 and 2014, women’s employment in public administration, health and education fell by 18.4%. Social security benefits were cut by 15%, overtime pay was cancelled and longer hours were imposed. Public sector employment fell substantially between 2009 and 2012.

For the male-dominated trade unions' in Romania, the GPG is not an important issue. Since wages are low in general trade unions are fighting for better pay and working conditions for all workers and the fight for women's pay equality is not perceived as a priority. On the other hand, trade unionists are keenly aware pay gap between Eastern and Western Europe. Romania has high productivity, but the lowest average wages in Europe. Significant gender stereotyping and pay inequality between eastern and western countries hinders recognition of the GPG and gender inequalities and undermines action on them. However, trade unions do have their own Women's Committees which monitor developments in the labour market and scrutinise new legislative initiatives from a gender perspective. The Women's Committees collaborate closely with non-governmental organisations.

Failure to acknowledge the GPG means that Women's Committees focus on awareness-raising, such as the Romanian Trade Unions Confederation project "Strengthening women's role in society". The project aimed to improve the representation of women in collective bargaining teams. It involved women's networking and assistance to women in getting jobs and support and resulted in the establishment of eight equality centres and online support. A further project in 2014 – 2015 aimed to challenge gender stereotyping of work. The women-only training focused on personal development, team management, psychological self-awareness and empowerment. Overall, 854 women were involved and inequalities in women's lives were shared. Women participants identified gender inequalities in their daily lives leading to awareness of unfairly distributed unpaid work, discrimination against working mothers and domestic violence, including marital rape, which was presented as unlawful and potentially punishable. Legislation to protect women was discussed. The project had tangible results. Some of the women applied for higher positions at work or resigned from low paid jobs. Others filed for divorce and left abusive relationships. Recognition of trade unions as organisations caring for women increased. The Women's Committees recognise that to address the problem of equal pay and the GPG, women's awareness has to be raised and women need to be empowered.

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## 6: Slovakia

# The higher-level collective agreement for public sector workers

***The Higher-level Collective Agreement for Slovakian civil and public employees was agreed, following lengthy negotiations in 2018, leading to a total pay increase of 21% at the sectoral level. This is the highest pay increase for employees in civil and public administration in the history of Slovakia and followed a pay freeze that resulted in half of public sector pay scales falling below the statutory minimum wage. The increase, over two years, was expected to affect more than 300,000 civil servants in public administration, all female-dominated sectors. Union demands were not articulated in terms of the Gender Pay Gap (GPG) and the impact of the agreement is not yet clear but achieved an improvement at the bottom end of the pay structure where women are concentrated.***

The Slovakian civil service employs one fifth (over 400,000) of the workforce, including state and public servants in national and regional administration, teachers and non-pedagogical employees in education, public healthcare professional workers, social workers and homecare workers, scientists and police. Two-thirds of public sector employees are women, with the proportion reaching 80% in education and healthcare. Pay is regulated by wage tariffs based on qualification, the complexity of the work and service. However, individually determined



personal supplements, premiums, bonuses and additional allowances supplement pay and contributed to the 15% GPG in the public sector. Public sector pay was frozen between 2009 and 2013 and thereafter rose in line with inflation. By 2017 half of the pay points in the public sector had dropped below the statutory minimum wage. In response the Confederation of the Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic (KOZ) and relevant sectoral trade unions demanded a systemic valorisation of public sector pay shifting the lowest pay points up to the level of the minimum wage with increases above this reflecting qualifications, service and job content. A committee affiliated to the Office of the Slovak Government (OSG) set out to recommend the revalorisation of public sector pay, but following the intervention of the Ministry of Finance the government's proposal was rejected by both the KOZ and OSG negotiation teams, both headed by women. The trade unions publicised their rejection of the proposal to the anger of the government which was used to the support of the trade unions.

Subsequent negotiations resulted in agreement in 2018 that the lowest pay point would start at the level of the statutory minimum wage (520 EUR/2019) with a 0.5% increase each year (with the period taken into account increasing from 32 to 40 years). Collective bargaining then delivered an average 10% increase in salaries in 2019, and another 10% increase in 2020 based on the Higher-level Collective Agreement for Public and State Employees signed by the Government and Association of the Towns and Villages of Slovakia (ZMOS) as political insurance of implementation. The pay structure was simplified taking into account job content and length of professional experience. In addition, the working week was reduced to 37.5 hours (36.4 hours for two-shifts and 35 hours for round-the-clock work) and basic holiday entitlement was increased to five weeks (six weeks at 33 years old) with increased contributions to supplementary pensions savings and pension insurance compensation.

The impact of the agreement on the GPG is not yet clear, but female employees were the major beneficiaries of increased pay at the bottom of the scale. Yet the issues leading to the agreement were not articulated in terms of the GPG and women are under-represented in trade union leaderships. Since regional administrations have not received sufficient funding to support the implementation of the agreement pay increases were funded by removing personal supplements resulting in complaints to the Labour Inspectorates. Despite the wage increase, the absence of compliance mechanisms has meant that in 2020 the lowest wage tariffs were again in danger of falling below the statutory minimum wage.

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## 7: Slovakia

# The mass resignation of nurses and midwives

**The Slovak healthcare sector, dominated by women, has been characterised by low pay reflecting the perception of nursing as a charitable role rather than a profession requiring expertise. Healthcare workers have no right to strike, but nurses and midwives have organised repeated protest activities for the improvement of working conditions and an increase in wages, culminating in the so-called “mass resignation action” in 2015/16. About 10% of nurses (out of 30,000) resigned. Although the action did not directly result in a pay increase, the nurses’ bargaining position and self-awareness of their leverage improved leading to discussions on equal value of the work of university-educated nurses and doctors. The attitudes of the relevant authorities towards nurses changed.**

The overwhelming proportion of nurses in Slovakia (98%) are women and pay is based on a specific multiple of the average monthly salary of an employee in the Slovak economy in the preceding two years. The Nursing and Midwives trade union (OZ SaPA) and professional body, the Slovak Chamber of Nurses and Midwives (SK SaPA) have been fighting for improved working conditions since the 1990s. A Petition of the Chamber of Nurses in 2011 adopted the motto *‘If we do not take care of ourselves, who will take care of you?’*, demanding a minimum hourly wage for nurses and midwives, provision for early retirement, compliance with staffing ratios, regulation of the provision of healthcare in social services, support for healthcare outside the hospitals, support for life-long education for nurses and midwives and the establishment of a Nursing Department at the Ministry of Health. In 2013 a protest tent town was established in

front of the Office of Government, a manifestation of dissatisfaction with the long-term failure to address the social status of nurses and midwives.

The most significant action was the mass resignation of nurses. Slovakian law bans strike action by nurses and doctors, therefore collective resignation was perceived as the only possible course of action after several years of protests and unsuccessful negotiations. In 2011, the doctors took similar action, while the nurses stayed with patients. The doctors' resignations resulted in a new law on healthcare workers' remuneration. However, the law was drafted and approved without reference to nurses. Consequently, the recalculation of wages did not take into account the service of nurses and instead of an increase in pay there was a reduction. Subsequent legislation guaranteeing higher wages for nurses was attacked in the Constitutional Court and declared unconstitutional due to lack of financial resources.

The mass resignations were organised by OZ SaPA and SK SaPA several months before parliamentary elections. The nurses demanded an increase in minimum wages for nurses in hospitals as well as in outpatient clinics and social services facilities (who received only 84% of the average wage), an increase in the coefficient for determining salary taking in account service, measures to stop misappropriation of public finances in healthcare, and improvements in the ratio of nurses to patients to improve patient safety. Overall between December 2015 and January 2016 1,200 or 10% of nurses tendered their resignation, with some charged with the crime of threatening public health. While subsequently some withdrew their resignation, others were determined to take the risk of losing their jobs. The action was supported by some senior doctors and the Medical Trade Unions and there was positive media coverage. A Solidarity Fund was established to support nurses financially, while the SK SaPA provided loans and helped members search for jobs where they could not be left without income.

The mass resignations action did not directly result in wage increases. However, the position of nurses and midwives changed with nurses realising their strength, leverage and bargaining power. The Ministry of Health started to take nurses and midwives seriously. A discussion was initiated about the equal value of university-educated nurse and doctors and the actual responsibilities of nurses, leading to the establishment of the 'nursing diagnosis'; the detailed documentation of nursing tasks in relation to those of doctors with higher value being placed on nursing work.

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## 8: Italy

# The movement of men into public education

**This case study discusses the deterioration of pay and conditions for women in the Italian education sector as a result of austerity measures, contributing to the widening of the Gender Pay Gap (GPG). One factor appears to be the movement of unemployed men from the private sector into the public education system. At the same time budget cuts in schools have placed pressures on workloads and working time, making it harder for teachers to combine teaching with caring responsibilities.**

In Italy a public school system coexists with a private system. Schools are mostly state-owned, but as non-state schools perform a public function, they are authorized to issue qualifications with the same legal value as those of the corresponding public schools. The education sector has been hit particularly hard by austerity policies with wage cuts and freezes spanning ten years and including a suspension of collective bargaining between 2010 and 2016 with weakened, decentralized negotiations. As in other European countries the 21st century has seen educational institutions granted autonomy over budgets and staffing, but increasingly in the context of the reduction of financial resources. Italian education has employed a high proportion of women; overall 80%, but in 2016 it varied from 99% in kindergartens to 63% in secondary schools and 37% in universities. Although nearly 60% are over 50 there is a better gender balance among younger teachers under the age of 30 in both secondary and tertiary education, where 52% of young teachers are women. Alongside horizontal segregation is vertical segregation with males in more senior positions.

The education trade union UILSCUOLA RUA, reported that austerity measures had meant an increase in the male workforce in education with transitions from the private to public sector in the context of unemployment in largely male-dominated private sector jobs. The public

sector was seen as more secure in a period of crisis. This move was particularly into secondary education and involved not only teachers, but administrative and support staff. The higher pay rates of secondary teachers thus impinge upon the GPG, while men were more likely to maintain some of their previous professional activities on a self-employed or consultancy basis providing a second source of income.

Austerity has also meant there has been more focus on working outside of the usual working day, which is not possible for part-time workers, disproportionately women. Cuts in wider professional activities to support pupils (for example therapists) have increased the focus upon the teaching timetable which again makes it more difficult for teachers to combine work with caring responsibilities, particularly single parents. In a system where schools have autonomy over their budgets pay is often linked to taking on extra responsibilities, again more difficult for women with caring responsibilities.

A representative of the education union, UILSCUOLA RUA, reported that there are no official statistics on the GPG and a lack of awareness of its impact in a female-dominated sector. Yet teachers are now required to be graduates highlighting the pay gap with other civil servants. The union also points out that that the issue of gender has been overshadowed by concern about the low overall level of wages in the education sector.

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## 9: Italy

# Azioni positive for prison officers

The case of the Italian penitentiary police or prison officers is one where occupational segregation involves the under-representation of women in a male-dominated occupation, including senior positions. In response in 2019 the Italian General Confederation of Labour (CGIL) proposed an 'Equal Opportunity Platform' to the Department of Penitentiary Administration to implement "Azioni Positive" (Positive Action) to address organisational and cultural barriers perpetrating direct and indirect discrimination. They include improving work-life balance, increasing women's representation and participation in decision-making positions and combating sexual abuse and harassment. The measures are to be enforced through decentralized bargaining with a view to the feminization of the sector.

In Italy, the Penitentiary Police or prison officers are one of the four Italian public security corps coming under the Department of Penitentiary Administration of the Ministry of Justice. The proportion of women among penitentiary police staff is much lower than for men, they comprise 9% of officers/agents, 7% of superintendents and 12% of police inspectors. The CGIL Public Penitentiary Police Department (Funzione Pubblica CGIL Polizia Penitenziaria) deals with the protection of workers of the Corps and has pointed to the under-representation of women in the Penitentiary Police including in senior positions:

*'It must also be considered that Italy currently excludes women not only from the roles operating within the prison sections, but also from roles and duties that do not provide for section work: inspectors and superintendents. The last competition to access the aforementioned roles, in fact, provided for only 172 female places for the superintendents, equal to 6% (against 2,679 male places) and 35 female places for the inspectors equal to 5% (against*

608 male). For agents the percentage increases to 22%, with 196 female agents and 678 male agents.’

In response the CGIL proposed an ‘Equal Opportunity Platform’ to the Department of Penitentiary Administration in March 2019 with the aim to

*‘bring gender equality to those jobs, such as that of the Prison Police Corps, which have always been characterized by a predominantly male presence. It is a civil evolution due’.*

The Platform aims to implement Azioni Positive to address organisational and cultural barriers perpetrating direct and indirect types of discrimination. They include improving work-life balance, increasing women’s representation and participation in decision-making positions and combating sexual abuse and harassment. The measures are to be enforced through decentralized bargaining with a view to the feminization of the sector.

In terms of implementation a Committee has been established at the headquarters of the Department of Penitentiary Administration and is chaired by a representative of the Administration and is jointly composed of officials of the Administration and union representatives. The commitment to positive action has delivered research on the male and female employment situation in the penitentiary police sector in Italy, with the aim of analysing the professional positions of female workers and, in particular, occupational segregation and wage differentials between men and women. There is consideration of access to training and professional development for female workers with a focus on barriers to career development emphasising promotion based on skills and professional expertise (unless there is a need for male or female workers to work with detainees of the same gender). There is also a specific focus on addressing sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace. For the union:

*‘A greater presence of women in such closed and delicate environments could provide an important contribution, making them more serene and liveable, improving workers’ and prisoners’ wellbeing’.*

## 10: Spain

# Planes de Igualdad

**In 2019 the concept of equal pay for work of equal value was incorporated into Spanish law requiring pay transparency measures in both the public and private sector so that employers need to develop Planes de Igualdad (Equality Plans) and to disaggregate pay, pay supplements and allowances by gender. The Royal Decree establishes the presumption that there is a prima facie case of discrimination when, in companies with more than 50 workers, the average remuneration of workers of one gender is at least 25% higher than the average remuneration of workers of the other gender. Representatives of the UGT trade union confederation reported that the inability of workers to combine work with caring responsibilities was a key explanation for the GPG in Spain. The Royal Decree establishes the right of workers with responsibilities for the care of children under 12 or other dependents to have their working day adapted to their needs and a number of further measures encourage both parents to participate in care.**

In Spain, a Royal Decree 6/2019 has augmented the Organic Law 3/2007, applying it to the area of employment and occupation. The Royal Decree establishes, for the first time in the Spanish legal system, the concept of work of equal value: *'Work has equal value in relation to other work when the work or tasks involved, the educational, professional or educational conditions, the training required for its exercise, the factors strictly related to its performance and the working conditions in which those activities are carried out are in fact equivalent'*. This law extends the obligation to develop Planes de Igualdad to companies with more than 50 employees (before the law, the ceiling was 250 employees) and requires them to register the plans. It implements pay transparency measures in both the public and private sector so that employers need to disaggregate pay, pay supplements and allowances by gender. All workers are entitled to access such data and worker representatives have the right to receive annual reports of the data. The Royal Decree establishes the presumption that there is a prima facie case of discrimination when, in companies with more than 50 workers, the average remuneration of workers of one gender is at least 25% higher than the average remuneration of workers of the other gender. Planes de Igualdad cover selection and recruitment processes, female under-representation, profession-



al classification, training, professional promotion, working conditions, sexual harassment and the co-responsible exercise of personal, family and work life rights.

The Government has introduced a number of measures to encourage both parents to participate in childcare. Equality plans cover selection and recruitment process, female under-representation, professional classification, training, professional promotion, working conditions, sexual harassment and the co-responsible exercise of personal, family and work life rights. The Royal Decree establishes the right of workers with responsibilities for the care of children under 12 or other dependents to have their working day adapted to their needs. A reasonable balance between the needs of the worker and the employer must be established and the employer must justify any refusal. The Decree establishes new leave for breastfeeding mothers. The character of parental leave, as established by the CJEU in the Roca Alvarez case, is reinforced. Thus the Royal Decree establishes that parental leave is individual and nontransferable; the new leave has the same characteristics as the previous, it consists of one hour of paid daily leave or, when used at the beginning or end of the day, half an hour of paid daily leave until the child is nine months old,. If both parents request it, the leave is extended for one of the parents to when the child is 12 months old.

UGT representatives reported that addressing indirect gender discrimination, including job evaluation, is problematic because Spanish legislation makes it difficult to challenge collective agreements, in part because it involves a judicial process and in part because it would be against the interests of the social partners that have negotiated it. In addition, there is an absence of disaggregated data on which to prove that a collective agreement is indirectly discriminatory.

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## 11: Greece

# Gendered pension reform

**In Greece the sovereign debt crisis saw a series of measures cutting jobs and reducing and freezing pay. Pension reform encouraged the exit of women from the public sector reinforcing a decline in full-time female employment. The case of Greece highlights the impact of austerity and pension reform on the Gender Pay Gap (GPG) in pensions. The abolition of collective bargaining in the public sector has stalled progress towards gender equality and unions, including the civil servants' trade union confederation (AD-EDY), have put austerity reforms under the test of legality before the Courts and to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on the basis of intervention in free and voluntary collective bargaining.**

Following the sovereign debt crisis all three Memoranda of Understanding signed with the Troika between 2012 and 2015 promoted public sector reform. This meant a reduction in public employment of at least 150,000, cuts in public sector pay with the abolition of the 13th and 14th month wage payments, increased working hours and the introduction of 'temporary lay-offs' paying 60% of basic salary. The government estimated that between 2010 and 2011 cuts in public sector pay led to a 15% reduction in pay for civil servants and 25% for workers in public utilities, agencies and undertakings. The decline of male employment has not, however, led to any reduction in gender inequality in employment. Greece retains the most significant gap between female and male unemployment in the EU.

Austerity measures undermined welfare and social security provision, shrinking health services with major pension reform including the equalisation of pension rights for men and women (65 years for a full pension and 60 for a reduced pension). Changes to the age at which pensions could be accessed necessarily affected women disproportionately. For civil servants, entitlement to a full pension is now at the age of 65 after 40 years of contributions. Initial reforms offering early retirement led to the departure from the public sector of many full-time female employees, keen to protect their pensions. These were disproportionately more highly educated women and recruitment freezes means these women have not been replaced and

opportunities and progression for women are closed. Subsequently changes to early retirement schemes trapped women in the labour market with austerity measures partly based on women's increased labour market participation.

Greek trade unions have been concerned with the promotion of gender equality, including gender pay equality through collective bargaining and collective employment agreements. However, austerity measures meant the abolition of collective bargaining in state-owned public enterprises; from 2012 wage-setting for any category of public sector employees was removed from the jurisdiction of collective bargaining. The derogation of sectoral/occupational agreements to company-level was allowed and the scope of arbitration limited to basic wages and subject to employer consent. In response to the situation, Greek unions have adopted litigation strategies that put austerity reforms under the test of legality before the Courts. The Supreme Administration of Greek Civil Servants Trade Unions (ADEDY), the national body representing employees in the public administration, demanded the cancellation of the austerity measures and the increase in both salaries and recruitments. With other civil society associations, they developed a legal mobilisation strategy at national and supranational level, involving a judicial review by the Council of State against government decisions that provided for wage and pension cuts. While, at international level, the major unions, including GSEE and ADEDY, in 2012, submitted a complaint to the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association concerning the austerity measures and this Committee found repeated interventions in free and voluntary collective bargaining, with a substantial lack of social dialogue and thus highlighted the need to strengthen the institutional framework for these fundamental rights.

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## 12: Cyprus

# The varying impact of austerity?

**In Cyprus the civil service trade union, Pasydy reported the disproportionate impact of the economic crisis and structural reform on women. There has, however, formally been a reduction in the Gender Pay Gap (GPG). The case study shows how austerity measures have varying impacts, with the reduction in civil service pensions leading to the retirement a number of higher paid men, improving the gender composition of the remaining workforce and allowing some access for women to higher job positions. In addition, in 2019, open competition for the hiring of graduate civil servant roles was introduced, removing discretionary appointments that could favour men.**

The economic crisis in Cyprus had two 'waves', the first during 2009-2010 and the second in the period 2011-2014. The last wave involved austerity measures imposed in 2013 by the Troika. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with the Troika involved public spending cuts and tax increases, reform of the system of distribution of public benefits, as well as a privatization scheme for profitable semi-governmental organizations. Pay cuts ranged from 0% for the lowest wage bracket (below 1,000 Euro) up to 12.5% for the highest wage bracket (above 4,000 Euro). An additional flat rate reduction of 3% on all wages of public employees and pensioners was implemented in 2014. A recruitment freeze reduced the number of public sector employees by 5000 between 2011-2016; the abolition of all vacant posts through a four-year plan meant the abolition of at least 1,880 permanent posts (a reduction of 3.8%), and the adoption of a ratio of recruitment to retirements. Between 2012 and 2016 pay and pensions were frozen with the abolition of occupational pensions for new employees.

A representative from the Pancyprian Public Employees Trade Union (PASYDY) reported a lack of awareness about the GPG. According to Eurostat data the gap has been negative in the

public sector and decreased between 2009 and 2015 (although there is also a paucity of data). However, in February 2019, the Ministry of Labour, the equality body and the Committee on Gender Equality in Employment and Vocational Training organised a forum on equal pay at which surveys and statistics concerning the gender pay gap were presented suggesting the overall GPG was 13.9 %. It was reported that since the introduction of equal pay legislation in 2003, only three complaints of unequal pay had reached the Labour Relations Department. In 2017 the Government introduced paid Paternity Leave providing new fathers with two consecutive weeks statutory leave and allowances from the Social Insurance Fund. Attempts by trade unions to push for full pay for five weeks of unpaid parental leave on top of maternity pay were abandoned under the conditions of economic crisis.

PASYDY suggests that one factor that might contribute to the decline in the GPG may be the retirement of more senior civil servants triggered by the decision to tax and cut public sector pensions. This may have facilitated a reconfiguration of the gender composition of the public sector workforce, with the exit of older and higher paid male workers providing opportunities for women.

Another measure that might have impacted the GPG is the introduction, in December 2019, of open competition in the recruitment of civil servants, with graduate applicants required to pass an exam and an interview. This procedure ended the use of discretionary selection criteria in recruitment that may have operated against women, particularly considering that women have, on average, higher levels of education than men. Similarly, in nursing the introduction in 2006 of a requirement to have a four-year degree rather than a three year diploma, may favour women as those with degrees will start on higher pay grades.

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## 13: Malta

# Fiscal stimulus of female workforce participation

**In Malta austerity policies were relatively mild, and the influence of the global recession led to the adoption of a broad-based fiscal stimulus package including the introduction of childcare centres for working parents, and a lowering of tax on part-time work. These policies together contributed to increasing the participation rate of female workers in the labour force, albeit starting from a low level, but by far the largest increase among EU countries. It has also led to an increase in the Gender Pay Gap (GPG).**

Malta has seen a dramatic increase in the employment rate of women with full-time equivalents (FTEs) rising from 25% to 40% compared to 64% to 65% for men between 2005 and 2017, although the gender employment gap (FTE) still remains the largest in the EU - 56 % for women and 95 % for men. Around 25% of women work part-time, compared to 7% of men. Women are disproportionately concentrated in education, health and social work, 30% of women work in these sectors compared to 10% of men.

Malta weathered the financial and sovereign debt crisis with relative ease, unlike most Member States, where the financial crisis resulted in a squeeze on public spending. The public sector avoided austerity measures, however, the Government's response to global recession was to adopt a broad-based fiscal stimulus package and targeted budget policies. These included investment in child-care facilities and day centres for elderly persons to support working parents, the Youth Guarantee helping young people find paths into employment, lower tax on part-time work and a tax cut incentive for the middle classes. The earning potential of women is affected by the duration and the frequency of their career breaks. Public sector employees can enjoy a 5-year career break available on the birth of a child, as well as one year parental leave for every child born. The take-up of career breaks and parental leave by men is minimal.

Employees can avail themselves of reduced working hours until their children are 12 years of age. The government, as a model employer, has introduced these family-friendly measures in order to retain women in the labour market. The Union Haddiema Maghqudin (UHM) has engaged with the government to suggest ways in which these measures can be improved in order to ensure take-up. Government policies have together contributed to the increase in the participation rate of female workers in the labour force, by far the largest increase among EU countries, albeit starting from a low level.

The increase in female employment has led to slow increases in the GPG, it stood at 9.2% in 2008 and rose to 11.7% by 2018, but below the EU-27 average of 14.8% (2018). Since the Government is more concerned with the retention of jobs there have been no specific measures to address the pay gap. However, the Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) has strived to improve teachers' wages in a sector dominated by women, in 2020 the union ordered industrial action by its members following the refusal by government to increase teachers' allowances. In 2018, the video produced by V Squared Media, a Maltese media house, in collaboration with EY Malta and with the support of the Centre for Labour Studies at the University of Malta, the National Statistics Office and emPOWER: Platform for Organisations for Women raised awareness of Malta's gender pay gap and the factors that contribute to it. The pay gap was found to be more pronounced than the 11 % Maltese average in specific industries: a 28.3 % pay gap was found in the financial and insurance industry, a 23.1 % pay gap was found in professional, scientific and technical activities and a 20.6 % pay gap was found in the ICT industry .

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## 14: France

# The Index Égalité

**In France the introduction of the Index Égalité in 2019 requires private sector companies with 50 or more employees, including those in health and social care, to publish a range of measures calculating the Gender Pay Gap (GPG). The Index was to be extended to the public sector by the end of 2020. October 2019 saw the first collective initiative taken in France on the GPG when the CGT trade union confederation took a class action against the Ile-de-France Savings Bank (CEIDF) to secure measures to end a 18% GPG. The Bank claims the GPG is one per cent and unions argue that the Index has been used to conceal pay gaps in companies.**

In 2019 France saw the introduction of the Index Égalité requiring disclosure of the GPG by private sector companies with more than 50 employees, including health and social care services in France where universal provision is provided by public and private companies. The Index provides a methodology to measure GPGs according to an 'equal pay for equal work' principle. The Index measures the GPG with a score out of 100 calculated on the following indicators:

- The GPG between women and men, calculated in reference to the average pay of women compared to the average pay of men, by age cohorts and categories of equivalent jobs (40 points).
- 1. The rate of disparities in individual pay rises that do not reflect promotions between women and men (20 points).
- 2. The rate of disparities in promotions between women and men (15 points).
- 3. The percentage of employees who benefited from a pay rise during the year of their return from maternity leave if there were increases in pay during their leave period (15 points).
- 4. The number of workers of the under-represented gender among the ten employees who earn the highest wages in the firm (10 points).



Indicators 2 and 3 are combined (35 points) for companies with between 50 to 250 employees. A score lower than 75 requires companies to put in place corrective measures within three years. Workers' representatives have access to information. Companies that do not publish their Index or do not implement their scores expose themselves to a maximum penalty of 1% of their wage bill. Publication is expected to be on company websites or circulated to employees by other means.

The CFDT has a number of criticisms of the Index, in particular employer discretion to determine what constitutes categories of 'equivalent jobs'. Focusing on the 'rate' of disparities in individual pay rises does not reveal the amount of pay actually awarded to both categories. Publishing the rate of disparities in promotions between women and men says nothing about the nature of the promotions. As in other European countries unions are critical of the exclusion of smaller companies.

For the first time in France collective action has been taken on the GPG. In October 2019, the CGT took the Ile-de-France Savings Bank (CEIDF) to court in a group or class action over discrimination against women. Under 2016 judicial reforms class action allows a judge to order measures to put an end to discrimination and redress the harm suffered by all those included in the group concerned with companies summoned before the Paris Tribunal de Grande if management has not addressed the GPG through adequate measures. The CGT had been urging the CEIDF management to enter negotiations over the GPG since June 2019 calculating the gap at 18% or 700 euros per month. It also reported that it takes women on average three years longer to get promoted and that they face a 'glass ceiling'. The bank claims the pay gap is only one per cent. The CGT see this 'group action' proceedings as a way to open ambitious collective bargaining on the GPG, which if successful means that all 2,700 women working for CEIDF can benefit, as they can then join the claim once the judgment has been made. The union suggests that the Index Égalité has been used to conceal pay gaps - a company can claim 95 points out of 100 while maintaining a 10% gender pay gap.



## 15: Finland

# Equality allowances

**This case study discusses the impact of national sectoral collective bargaining on the Gender Pay Gap (GPG) and particularly women in health and social care. The background is the Competitiveness Pact, a national collective agreement signed by the Finnish government, business representatives and 90% of trade unions in 2016, which had a disproportionate impact on low paid women and by implication the GPG. In response TEHY, the healthcare union, adopted a strategy of negotiating an 'Equality Allowance' for those in female-dominated occupations aiming to remove nursing staff from general collective agreements with a view to the negotiation of a separate collective agreement for healthcare professionals.**

There are over 220,000 Finnish healthcare professionals, of whom 92% are women. TEHY is the largest trade union in Finland for health and social care professionals with 160,000 members. All union members are qualified professionals who have a degree in health or social care or are studying to become a qualified health or social care professional. TEHY negotiates 10 collective agreements (one in the municipal sector, one in the state sector and eight in the private sector). On average, women are paid 84% of what men earn in Finland, with the GPG largely arising from occupational segregation.

The Competitiveness Pact was introduced by the Government in 2016 in the context of economic stagnation since 2008, resulting in a rapid increase in both unemployment and government debt. The 'Pact', negotiated and agreed as a way of preventing the introduction of further austerity measures, is the first in Finland to have resulted in a reduction in real hourly wages, including a weakening of established working arrangements and benefits. The national agreement introduced a wage freeze for workers in private and public sectors until 2017, a 24-hour increase in annual working time, a 30% reduction in holiday bonuses in the public sector, an increase in pension and employment insurance contributions for employees, and a reduction of the same for businesses. It covered 133,000 employees in the health and social care municipal sector hitting women in low paid jobs particularly hard. In this con-

text and despite government and social partners commitment to challenging the GPG progress has stalled.

TEHY's strategy is to negotiate an Equality Allowance for women in female-dominated sectors over and above nationally negotiated increases along with the removal of the extra 24 hours annual working time. It also aims to remove health and social care professionals from the general collective agreements and is pressing for a separate collective agreement allowing for:

*'better consideration for the special characteristics of nursing work in terms of working hours and wages, such as shift work and being on call, the wage system and renewals in job descriptions due to health and social care reform.'*

TEHY negotiators believe:

*'it is a laborious task to change the regulations governing the working hours and wages of nursing staff because these regulations are incorporated in the larger general agreements, and changes always require approval from all parties.'*

*They argue that gender equality is not a priority for general collective agreements as the representatives taking part in the negotiations come from male dominated sectors or occupations. TEHY economists suggest that a 1.8% salary increase in the health and social care sector on top of what will be paid in future general collective agreements yearly (in male dominated occupations) could contribute to narrow, and potentially end, the GPG in Finland within ten years.*

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## 16: Germany

# Industrial action by Kita (childcare) workers

In Germany in 2018, 94 per cent of the pedagogical staff in childcare were women and less than one third (31%) worked full-time. Over the past ten years there has been two major strikes by kita or childcare workers securing improved conditions and raising the importance of their work. National industrial action in 2009 was followed by a six week strike of 50,000 kita workers in 2015. The strikes were not framed in terms of the Gender Pay Gap (GPG), but rather a campaign (Aufwertungskampagne fuer Frauenberufe) promoting the value of women's work through the slogan 'really something good, really worth something'. The kita workers concerns were the quality of childcare and recognition of the societal value of kita workers and right to pay and improved working conditions properly reflecting their training, skills and responsibilities.

In December 1989 the longest strike in Berlin since World War Two was staged by around 4000 Kita or childcare workers in West Berlin, 90 per cent of them women, bringing the city to a standstill for 11 weeks. The strike was about pay and working conditions and was deemed unsuccessful. Following a substantial increase in trade union membership in 2009 there was a national strike in the light of the re-negotiation of the national collective bargaining agreement covering Kita workers. Since national collective bargaining for public sector workers had concluded in 2008 industrial action was justified by demands for an additional collective agreement on health (Gesundheitstarifvertrag) whereby kita workers won the right to an individual risk assessment according to labour protection law and to be informed in writing about

the outcome of this assessment. The risk covers the physical as well as mental strain of the job, addressing working conditions. However, action was also about improved pay, changes in the criteria on which pay was calculated and recognition of the educational role of Kita workers. As one trade union activist pointed out:


*'We are not the singing and crafting aunts of the nation, but it is our mission to educate our children'.*

The 2009 strike secured an extra annex to the general public sector collective bargaining agreement setting out a national pay spine for the kita workers overall, but specifically for younger early career Kita workers. So many workers joined public sector union Ver.di during the dispute that the it ran out of membership-forms, as one Ver.di representative put it:

*'More trade unionism means more pay. We women need to be active in the trade unions. We cannot wait for the men to negotiate our pay'.*

In Germany an expansion of childcare places for children under three since 2013 has led to an increase in kita, but also staff shortages and high workloads for existing staff leading to sickness and absence. There has been Increased provision by the private sector. In 2015 50,000 kita workers took part in a six-week strike over pay, in particular demanding increases for younger staff. It was part of a campaign (Aufwertungskampagne fuer Frauenberufe) promoting the value of women's work through the slogan 'really something good, really worth something'. A proposed settlement recommended by Ver.di was rejected by the workers and they ultimately achieved wage increases of 3.5%. Ver.di recruited 15,000 members as a result of the strike. While initially it was well-supported, particularly by parents, as it went on support faded with the difficulty of balancing work with increased childcare responsibilities.

The collective bargaining agreement that was negotiated through the 2015 strike had a duration of five years and negotiations were supposed to start again in early 2020 but were postponed to 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.



## 17: Ireland

# Equal Pay and the Gender Pay Gap in RTÉ

The case study of RTÉ in Ireland reveals the problematic relationship between equal pay and the Gender Pay Gap (GPG). It began as an equal pay case amongst highly paid television presenters, but through trade union intervention raised the wider issue of the GPG in the context of government austerity measures and proposed legislative change on GPG reporting. The case study highlights the role of 'historical anomalies', individual arrangements and allowances and the use of fixed-term contracts in justifying the GPG along with data protection issues that inhibit transparency in the pay of senior staff. Beyond this the GPG in RTÉ hinged on occupational segregation and recruitment freezes for directly employed staff in a period of financial constraint, leading to informal recruitment of freelancers or contractors on an ad hoc basis that has blocked career progression.

RTÉ is Ireland's public service broadcaster, employs around 2000, but also has contractors or freelancers remunerated through individual arrangements. There is an almost 50:50 breakdown in terms of gender. SIPTU is the largest union in RTÉ with 850 members; the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) has around 200 members. Initially issues were about the differences in the pay of male and female 'on-air' presenters at RTÉ in the light of similar cases at the BBC in the UK. Consequently, RTÉ's Executive Board agreed to carry out an independent review on gender equality and commissioned Kieran Mulvey to do so. The Mulvey report published in September 2017, calculated the overall pay differential in RTÉ at approximately 4%, representing 'minor disparities in pay'. It found that men comprised around 70% of those on salaries over €90,000 but attributed this to differences in service. The report additionally showed that 60% of men received allowances for specific responsibilities and shifts compared to 40% of women. Mulvey identified a number of grades that 'for understandable reasons in the past' were all

male or female grades. The report refuted a significant GPG issue, claiming that differentials within grades may be accounted for by historical factors, including specific qualifications and experience relative to the grades and ‘traditional employment or recruitment practices, which are now evolving’. The Mulvey report identified that RTÉ, like all public bodies in Ireland, has had major restrictions on making new appointments and a key issue was the low attrition rate (1.4%) in the organisation attributed in part to its family-friendly policies.

For SIPTU the focus on high paid workers ‘took no cognisance of the people who were on such lower pay grades’ and this issue was summed up by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions:

*‘much of the discussion around the pay of senior journalists is far from the experience of the vast majority of women.’*

SIPTU responded to the Mulvey Report, firstly, by pointing out that the review did not consider the significant use of self-employed contractors and their role in suppressing the formal advertisement and recruitment of positions and subsequent promotion to higher paid positions within the organisation. SIPTU also questioned Mulvey’s rationale for choosing to examine gender profiles above and below the €90,000 salary level when the figures demonstrated more women than men were employed at salaries of less than €60,000. In fact, 61% of women in RTÉ earned up to €40,000 compared to 39% of men. The response also highlighted that the report did not differentiate between part-time and full-time workers in terms of gender and actually grossed up part-time earnings to provide a full-time figure circumnavigating a key factor underpinning the GPG. For SIPTU Mulvey was an equal pay report and not a gender pay gap report and there was a lack of clarity amongst members as to what the gender pay gap was, leading the union to conclude

*‘we have a job of education to do with our own members to get them to understand.’*

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## 18: Netherlands

# Action by thuiszorg (homecare) workers

This case study demonstrates effective action by thuiszorg or homecare workers in the Netherlands in the face of austerity measures in the care sector. The measures involved cuts to homecare jobs in the context of the outsourcing of homecare contracts to the private sector. Women homecare workers fought collective dismissals despite not having a history of unionisation or a shared workplace. The action secured an end to the use of zero-hour contracts or *Alfahulp* in homecare and was the tipping point in reversing budget cuts in the care sector as a whole.

The 2012 Netherlands election resulted in a government that wanted to ‘move from a welfare state to a participatory society’. One of the implications would be that the budget for homecare would be cut by 75%. The FNV-union was the only union that refused to sign off on the 2012 austerity policies. **The union started to make attempts to halt the precarisation of care sector workers in general, including** the use of zero-hours contracts or *Alfahulp*. Homecare is not a sector with a tradition of unionisation, nor is it a sector where workers have a shared workspace through which they can be organised:

*‘Homecare workers didn’t have a shared space at work, you couldn’t walk in and start organising them’*



The background to the case study was the decision of seven municipalities in the Achterhoek region to tender a contract for homecare in 2014 with the aim of reducing costs. Facing the expiry of the contract, in 2013 one of the existing major providers in one municipality, Sensire, announced its intention of cutting 800 jobs. Homecare workers decide to fight the collective dismissals, in part because of the uncertainty faced by their clients. Opposition included demonstrations and the construction of a marquee tent outside Sensire's Headquarters in Varseveld, drawing the attendance of the Secretary of State. The sight of the tent right in front of the employer's HQ was a powerful symbol boosting activists and getting media attention and subsequently the union decided to maintain the tent as an Abvakabo FNV union office for six months:

*'Having the marquee tent there was a real boost for the activists, seeing the other workers there but also seeing the community come in and chat'*

In November 2013 a solution was reached: Sensire workers would be taken on by two other employers (TSN and Zorgkompas) and would keep their seniority and contractual rights. All seven municipalities agreed to keep the same contract, in terms of conditions and pay, with these providers as with the previous one. After a six-month long campaign, the union could now take down the tent. The agreement ensured that the sector minimum wage would be paid, that workers would keep their rights and seniority in future contract transitions and there would be no use of *Alfahulp* contracts.

Further campaigning sought to replicate this success for care workers at national level with recruitment through advertisements and social media. The use of marquee tents and occupations of city halls were extended across the country. Demonstrations were organised with the largest in September 2015 in Amsterdam in which 30,000 people participated.

The government gave in. Budget cuts were reduced from 75% to 40%. Further, the government agreed to maintain homecare funding for two years, to ban *Alfahulp* contracts in homecare and to discuss putting wage specifications in the tendering process for home-care provision. Implementation has, however, been difficult because of the decentralised way in which the care sector is funded. Since there are more than 350 city councils FNV has a major challenge.

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## 19: Sweden

# Assistant nurses – the reform of collective bargaining

The case study follows the strategy of Kommunal, the Swedish municipal workers' union, to address the Gender Pay Gap (GPG) by linking occupational wage levels to educational attainment. In 2016 there was agreement between Kommunal and the Swedish metal workers' union, IF Metall, that the unions would demand an additional increase for assistant nurses, and that if the strategy was not successful IF Metall would join Kommunal in strike action. This resulted in a three year agreement with additional pay increases for assistant nurses.

Historical occupational segregation remains the biggest barrier in Sweden with occupations represented by a particular union confederation. Blue collar occupations are covered by the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) where 14 member unions represent blue collar workers roughly on the basis of industry. The 1997 Industrial Agreement stressed the principle that no wage increases should be higher than those in the industry –the industry norm.

Kommunal had made several attempts to unite the LO unions around a GPG strategy that linked the level of wage increases to the percentage of women working in a particular occupation. However, this did not prove successful. Around 2013 the union started developing a different strategy, which involved removing the emphasis on gender and instead focussing upon education. Given that in Sweden, education provides access to occupation the strategy appeared to make sense in addressing the occupational segregation that underpins the GPG.

Eventually Kommunal got support from the metal workers' union, the biggest union within the LO confederation, and were asked to pick one group of workers to focus on, as a Kommunal officer reported:

*I remember a meeting where, once again, they said 'no broad brush, you have to pick a group' and our head negotiator responded 'OK you ask us to pick a group? Well, ok, we pick assistant nurses'. And you could see them think 'Oh my god, they picked the biggest group'.*

*Assistant nurses and care assistants comprise 78 per cent women and are organised and represented by Kommunal. Assistant nurses are a distinct occupation in Sweden requiring a formal education of three years in upper secondary school. The union calculated that on an average yearly basis, assistant nurses earn SEK 4,000 less than car mechanics. Yet these two occupations require the same educational level.*

*In 2016 a one-year industrial bargaining agreement with an increase of two per cent for all blue-collar workers was agreed. There was an understanding that Kommunal would then demand an additional increase for assistant nurses, and that if the strategy was not successful during that year, the metal-union would join Kommunal in strike action giving the assistant nurses huge leverage. A three-year deal was signed early in 2016 for an additional wage increase for assistant nurses: SEK 500 in 2016 (in addition to SEK 535 increase for all), SEK 180 in 2017 (in addition to an overall SEK 535 increase), and SEK 150 in 2018 (in addition to an overall SEK 540 increase).*

*The 2016 deal obtained by Kommunal for the assistant nurses was initially deemed a success. However, in 2017 and 2018, a buoyant Swedish economy caused a labour shortage across industry pushing private sector blue collar wages up at a higher percentage than the negotiated minimum. Public sector wages, however, only increased according the negotiated deal. Hence, the impact of the Kommunal deal was reduced. Nevertheless, its impact remained real; the gap would have been bigger without the negotiated additional wage increase for assistant nurses. Kommunal's current strategy is to maintain the education level argument to close the GPG, but broaden it to other occupations. It is however not clear whether other unions within the LO confederation will provide further support in breaking away from industry level agreements.*

## 20: UK

# Civil service – using equal pay legislation

Through a long-term campaign based on UK equal pay law, the UK civil service union Prospect has successfully combined strategic litigation with collective bargaining to achieve equal pay and to narrow the gender pay gap in several parts of the civil service including the Met (Meteorological) Office. The landmark case of Cadman and Wilson, against the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in 2001, challenged length of service as the means of progression. Prospect's success is despite the impact of localised pay bargaining imposed by the Government in the early 1990's and pay restraint within the public sector since 2010, which led to pay stagnation and a subsequent increase in the Gender Pay Gap (GPG) in four central government departments.

Prospect is a UK trade union with almost 145,000 members, covering a range of professional jobs, including engineers, scientists, managers and civil servants within the civil service and private sector. Over a third (40%) of its members are women. The union has used a combination of litigation and collective bargaining to tackle unequal pay since 2001. It has mobilised its lay representatives and paid officials behind its equal pay strategy, with significant success. Equal pay litigation has been focussed on different aspects of gender discrimination within pay systems across different Government Departments and Agencies and has generally been followed by settlements and collective bargaining to narrow the gender pay gap. The union is also pursuing equal pay for its private sector members. The first landmark cases of Cadman and Wilson were lodged against the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in 2001, when the union successfully challenged length of service as the means of progression. Historically civil service pay scales have been impacted by length of service and Prospect argued that this has a disproportionate effect on women workers. Often women will have shorter service due to family or caring responsibilities and particularly where they are working in a male dominated field. In

the HSE women experienced pay differences with longer serving male comparators doing the same work of up to almost £9,000 per annum. The case had nine hearings – from the UK Employment Tribunal to the European Court of Justice (ECJ), which modified the findings of the Danfoss case, that had ruled that length of service was a legitimate means of determining pay. In the case of Cadman and Wilson, the ECJ ruled that the employer had to show that longer service/experience resulted in better performance.

Since Cadman and Wilson, Prospect has also taken cases in the Valuation Office, Veterinary Laboratory Agency, Prison Service and Intellectual Property Office, all with the support of male comparators. The union's most recent success was in the Meteorological Office. Here a pay matrix had been introduced designed to reduce the GPG with the aim to progress staff to an appropriate 'rate for the job'. Subsequently the proportion of female employees increased from 25% to 32%, although as at February 2014, over 60% of females had less than five years' service. A pay freeze meant that rates remained at 2008 levels and by 2014 70% of people were still in the 'development zone', despite their experience, widening the GPG. The ad hoc use of recruitment and retention allowances had also distorted the pay system. Alongside litigation, Prospect took industrial action, lobbied MP's and produced an 'Equal Pay Manifesto'. Despite ongoing pay freezes in the public sector, the Met Office got agreement from the Treasury to settle individual cases and establish a new pay structure. Individual settlements and a new pay agreement were negotiated in 2018, following successful litigation. This resulted in a pay increase of up to 20% per annum for 70% of employees, narrowing of the gender pay gap from 10% to 2% in three years. It did, however, include reductions in allowances, weekend premia and performance related pay, which the employer insisted on to make the offer affordable and caused some tensions between employees. Prospect is also using newly established UK Gender Pay Gap Reporting requirements to negotiate better recruitment and promotion schemes, flexible working and training for women.

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## 21: UK

# Local government – enshrining equal pay for work of equal value

In 1997, the 'Single Status' agreement established a new pay and grading system based on equal pay for work of equal value across manual and administrative, professional and managerial ('white collar') workers in local government. A collective agreement by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services for 2018-2020, will help to enshrine equal pay for work of equal value into the future. This includes the reconfiguration of grading structures following the introduction of the independent Living Wage Foundation's (LWF) Living Wage for the lowest paid. The NJC agreement has had a substantive impact on the Gender Pay Gap (GPG), which has narrowed to 2.7%. However, budget cuts in local government have led to the levelling down of men's pay rather than the levelling up of women's pay in some local authorities, leading to litigation.

The National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government covers 1.6 million employees across councils in England and Wales and in Education Boards in Northern Ireland. Three quarters (76%) of them are women and 60% work part-time - less than 37 hours a week. They are represented on the trade union side by three trade unions – UNISON, GMB and Unite. The employer side is made up of elected councillors and officers from the Local Government Association.

The 'Single Status' Agreement was concluded after lengthy negotiations in 1997. It harmonised working conditions across manual and white-collar jobs and established a pay and grading system which complied with the Equal Pay Act and was based on 'equal pay for work of equal value' principles. Holiday and sick pay were harmonised and a new job evaluation (JE) scheme - designed to apply to all jobs - was jointly drawn up. Manual workers already had an equal pay proofed JE scheme and national grades, while pay for white-collar workers was largely negotiated locally – with the exception of a few national grades. This had led to pay discrimination within and across local authorities.

It was important to have one common JE scheme and pay system for the harmonised workforce. The Employer Side would not agree to 'national' grades, so each employer – over 400 councils and many schools - had to evaluate jobs and establish local pay structures, based on an NJC pay spine. The trade unions and the Equal Opportunities Commission provided much support and guidance. Unfortunately, the Government would not provide extra funding for employers to establish equal pay, at a time when 'efficiency reviews' were impacting on councils' budgets. This led to the 'levelling down' of men's pay, rather than 'levelling up' of women's pay by many employers and mass litigation. Since 2010, almost 60% of Government funding for local government has been cut, pay increases have been capped at 1% and conditions have been universally cut.

Despite low NJC pay settlements, two thirds of councils had implemented the independent Living Wage Foundation's (LWF) Living Wage by 2018 – an hourly rate of pay for the lowest paid workers that was higher than NJC pay at the bottom grades. This had distorted job evaluated differentials and caused 'bunching' of pay points at the lower end of the pay scale.

The 2018-2020 NJC pay agreement established a universal rate of pay equal to the FLW as the bottom pay point, re-structured the pay spine and equalised gaps between pay points up to scale point 20. This ensures that job-evaluated differentials, reflecting equal pay for work of equal value, can be maintained into the future and that points on the pay spine – at least up to the middle - are now equal. The gender pay gap has narrowed from 5.3% to 2.7% as a result.





## Appendix 2 – Statistical methodology

# 1. Descriptive analysis

EUROSTAT statistics and the Structure of Earnings Survey (SES) were used for the descriptive analysis. The SES is a 4-yearly survey which provides EU-wide harmonised structural data on gross earnings, hours paid and annual days of paid holiday leave. Despite obtaining the raw microdata for the respective years, we decided to use the standardised datasets and the SES earnings available in Eurostat for our calculation and analysis. In our view, the standardised datasets guarantee a lower risk of inconsistency, incomparability and overall low data quality. For the years between SES surveys we used national estimates based on national sources, from the reference year 2008 onwards, with the same coverage as the SES, which are the established way to calculate the GPG. The standardised Eurostat SES datasets, however, brought limits as to the categories and possible disaggregation to explore our research questions. The most significant limitation is that the Eurostat standardised SES datasets are aggregated data on the country level and provide a limited number of observations. Statistical testing is not possible. Therefore, we relied on detailed descriptive statistics as available data allowed.

Definitions of key statistical concepts and measurers used from the EUROSTAT data:

**Gender pay gap (GPG)** is based on the mean hourly gross earnings which are defined as gross earnings in the reference month divided by the number of hours paid during the same period. The gap is calculated as the difference between average gross hourly earnings of male paid employees and of female paid employees as a percentage of average gross hourly earnings of male paid employees. The indicator has been defined as unadjusted because it gives an overall picture of gender inequalities in terms of pay. All employees working in firms in public ownership with 10 or more employees, without restrictions for age and hours worked, are included.

**Public sector** is based on the “economic activity” coded in NACE Rev. 2 (General industrial classification of economic activities within the European Communities): [O] Public administration and defence; compulsory social security; [P] Education and [Q] Human health and social work activities.

To obtain a measure for the public sector we calculated the arithmetic average for all the three subsectors as their representative value of central tendency when a category for public was not present in the data. However, this could blur the differences between values and sectors.

As an alternative to the public sector derived from the NACE Rev. 2 categories, when necessary, we use the SES category of “form of economic and financial control” of the enterprises surveyed. That was the category that was used to calculate GPG. The public economic control relates to the public ownership of more than 50%.

**Employees:** Employees are all persons who have a direct employment contract with the enterprise or local unit and receive remuneration, irrespective of the type of work performed, the number of hours worked (full or part-time) and the duration of the contract (fixed or indefinite).

**Part-time and full-time percentage of females and males in the public sector** was calculated as a percentage of the summed number (in thousands) of all part-time and full-time employees with O, P and Q codes.

**Collective pay agreement** relates to the type of pay agreement covering at least 50% of the employees in the local unit. We used the following categories in the analysis:

- an agreement at national level, or an inter-confederal agreement, covering employees of more than one industry, and usually signed by one or more trade-union confederations and by one or more national employers’ organisations,
- an industry agreement setting the terms and conditions of employment for all or most workers and employees in an individual industry or economic sector
- no collective pay agreement exists<sup>20</sup>.

# 2. Statistical Analysis

In addition to the descriptive analyses we use a standard Oaxaca-Blinder (Blinder 1973; Oaxaca 1973) decomposition, which estimates a linear model separately for the sample of male and female workers. The decomposition also provides an estimate of the part of the wage gap that is due to worker characteristics (explained component) and the estimated coefficients (unexplained component). The gender wage gap is studied using a quantile regression with fixed effects (Machado, Santos Silva, 2018) in order to estimate the effects across wage distributions.

## Sample and limitations

The microdata from EU-SILC 2008-2018 are used for both the decomposition and the quantile regression. For the three studied sectors (public administration, healthcare, education) there are 273017 valid observations of which 186408 are female. The higher proportion of women is explained by the pre-dominantly female sectors which are studied. A limitation is represented by the fact, that the EU-SILC does not include a variable on public versus private employment, therefore an assumption that the three sectors studied are predominantly public has to be made. The sectoral approach has an advantage, allowing us to capture the teachers or health-care workers which would not be considered to be government or public workers in some member states.

The question of austerity, is also challenging to measure. It can be described by pay freezes and cuts, loss of jobs, increase of taxes and other government policy measures that aim to decrease the debt. Due to the lack of such variables in a suitable format and time coverage, for the needs of this study of public sector, three proxy variables are used to estimate austerity measures: the unemployment rate, real GDP growth % and compensation of general government employees as % of GDP obtained from public Eurostat database.

## Appendix 3 – Descriptive Statistics

**TABLE 3: GPG in unadjusted form in sub-sectors of Public Sector (% , 2008-2017)**

COUNTRY	SUB-SECTOR	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<i>Central and Eastern Europe</i>											
BULGARIA	Public administration	10.8	13	12.5	9.5	9.2	3.7	5.2	6.3	4.9	6.7
	Education	11.9	14.5	13.2	11.3	13.9	12.4	15.6	15.5	11.3	8.2
	Health/Social work	30.2	30.5	27.2	25.3	29.2	28.5	29.2	31.7	30.2	28.0
CZECHIA	Public administration	18.1	17.0	16.3	14.2	13.8	12.3	12.6	13.2	13.2	14.1
	Education	25.4	24.8	21.7	24.3	24.6	25.5	25.9	25.3	24.7	24.4
	Health/Social work	25.6	27.1	25.6	27.7	29.8	29.9	27.2	27.8	26.8	25.7
HUNGARY	Public administration	15.1	7	3.7	3.9	-1.7	-0.8	3.6	4	14	9.3
	Education	20.6	18.9	20.7	17.6	19.9	36.0	13.4	11.7	14	17.2
	Health/Social work	18.6	17.0	16.1	16.4	16.1	16.2	15.3	16.0	16.5	19
AUSTRIA	Public administration	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
	Education	:	:	27.8	:	:	:	24.3	24.2	24.3	23.6
	Health/Social work	:	:	12.0	:	:	:	12.8	12.7	11.5	11.1
POLAND	Public administration	17.3	17.1	16.8	17.2	17.6	16.8	16.0	15.6	15.1	15.1
	Education	4.6	2.8	1.0	1.3	1.6	3.4	5.1	4.9	4.8	4.8
	Health/Social work	22.8	20.3	17.8	19.2	20.6	19.0	17.4	15.5	13.6	13.6
ROMANIA	Public administration	-2.1	3.7	-0.2	2.0	0.2	0.2	-1.1	0.6	0.3	3.3
	Education	16.9	12.5	11.5	10.4	7.9	7.3	3.3	2.2	9.8	9.4
	Health/Social work	9.4	11.3	8.6	9.1	6.6	9.3	8.9	6.8	7.4	8.5
SLOVAKIA	Public administration	19.6	21.2	23.2	18.9	20.9	18.1	21.4	22.9	19.7	23.2
	Education	10.7	14.9	14.5	15.6	15.4	13.9	13.0	14.7	14.9	13.9
	Health/Social work	17.4	17.5	23.8	24.2	24.2	22.8	24.6	26.2	24.1	27.0
<i>Southern Europe</i>											
GREECE	Public administration	:	:	15.9	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
	Education	:	:	12.4	:	:	:	9.6	:	:	:
	Health/Social work	:	:	20.6	:	:	:	8.4	:	:	:
SPAIN	Public administration	12	11.1	10.1	12.5	10.5	12.1	6.6	5.1	6.9	6.2
	Education	10.5	10.8	10.5	12.8	11.3	9.5	7.9	5.9	9.2	9.7
	Health/Social work	23.6	24.7	24.2	23.5	25.9	24.9	22	22.7	24.6	23.5
FRANCE	Public administration	:	:	11.6	12.2	11.6	13	12.2	12.2	11.8	11.5
	Education	15.8	13.1	13.9	13.4	14.3	15.1	17.5	17.1	17	16.7
	Health/Social work	18.6	18.7	18.2	16.1	16.1	16.4	15.3	15.3	15.7	16.2
ITALY	Public Administration	:	:	:	:	:	:	13.7	:	:	:
	Education	:	:	12.6	11.8	8.0	6.1	7.6	:	:	:
	Health/Social work	:	:	28.5	24.7	28.1	28.6	28.3	30.1	28.1	27.6
CYPRUS	Public administration	20.4	18.8	16	16.2	14.5	14.1	13.6	14.1	14.4	11.8
	Education	13.0	11.3	11.4	10.3	8.9	7.3	7.0	10.0	13.2	16.4
	Health/Social work	32.7	35.4	37.6	36.4	24.9	20.1	14	13.9	15	16

COUNTRY	SUB-SECTOR	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
MALTA	Public administration	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
	Education	7.2	1.2	-3.0	-0.6	4.9	9.8	13.8	11.5	12.1	11.7
	Health/Social work	8.5	10.5	12.4	13.7	15.4	16.7	17.8	18.5	18.9	18.8
PORTUGAL	Public administration	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
	Education	17.2	17.5	12.4	11.1	11.1	10.7	10.3	12.2	13.9	15.8
	Health/Social work	31.4	33	35.9	30	28.5	27.7	26.2	27.8	27	26.5
SLOVENIA	Public administration	6.7	8.5	5.5	5	4.9	3.5	4.1	4.1	7.5	8.3
	Education	9.2	9.0	9.7	10.7	11.1	12.3	13.4	14.2	14.2	15.5
	Health/Social work	20	20	19	18.9	19.7	19.9	21.8	20.3	18.9	17.8
<i>Central and Northern Europe</i>											
BELGIUM	Public administration	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
	Education	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.1	2.9	3.0	2.9	2.7
	Health/Social work	9.4	9.3	9.3	6.8	4.5	1.9	-0.5	-0.6	-0.8	-1.1
DENMARK	Public administration	5.0	11.0	11.7	9.5	9.4	10.0	11.0	7.3	6.5	6.0
	Education	8.6	8.7	10.3	8.6	8.2	8.4	7.1	5.7	5.2	5.3
	Health/Social work	14.3	8.9	13.0	10.4	10.7	9.9	10.1	8.9	8.6	9.3
GERMANY	Public administration	:	:	8.5	8.0	8.1	7.8	8.2	8	8	7.7
	Education	12.8	11.1	9.6	10.5	10.5	11.4	12.7	12.5	13	12.7
	Health/Social work	24.4	24.5	24.6	24.4	24.2	23.9	23.3	21.6	20.9	20
IRELAND	Public administration	11.4	8.6	7.0	16.6	14.8	14.6	14.1	:	:	:
	Education	26.0	25.9	25.3	18.0	15.7	14.1	16.9	:	:	:
	Health/Social work	23.7	21.4	16.8	21.4	19.5	18.5	16.4	:	:	:
NETHERLANDS	Public administration	15.9	15.3	13.7	8.1	6.7	4.5	3.2	3.2	2.5	1.0
	Education	22.2	21.8	21.2	13.4	12.5	12.3	11.7	11.3	11.2	10.1
	Health/Social work	17.2	17.0	16.5	24.5	23.7	22.7	21.8	21.8	21.1	20.6
FINLAND	Public administration	18.0	17.6	18.3	15.5	16.1	15.9	17.0	16.6	14.8	14.4
	Education	16.9	15.4	15.8	16.3	15.8	15.7	15.3	14.8	12.9	12.5
	Health/Social work	30.2	30.2	29.6	28.7	27.7	26.6	25.8	25.9	24.2	23.5
SWEDEN	Public administration	12.2	10.7	10.1	8.1	6.8	5.4	3.7	6.6	6.0	5.2
	Education	12.0	11.3	11.2	11.7	11.3	10.7	10.7	10.1	8.6	8.2
	Health/Social work	16.0	14.0	13.3	14.6	13.7	12.2	10.5	12.0	9.5	9.9
UK	Public administration	19.8	17.7	19.4	17.1	15.6	14.4	13.7	12.8	13.5	12.8
	Education	19.2	18.5	21.2	20.8	20.9	20.1	20.3	20.4	21.0	20.1
	Health/Social work	29.9	31.6	31.9	29.0	28.0	27.3	26.6	26.4	25.8	25.4
ICELAND	Public administration	16.5	15.6	14.5	13.3	12.5	11.6	9.8	8.6	10.9	11.4
	Education	21.8	17.3	15.9	15.7	15.1	14.9	13.3	13.2	12.7	12.8
	Health/Social work	18.5	16.2	13.3	14.5	14.3	11.2	10.2	12.4	12.8	13

Source: NACE Rev. 2 activity - structure of earnings survey methodology (earn\_gr\_gpgr2).

Notes: Public Administration = Public Administration, Defence and Social Security  
Health/Social work = Human health and social work

: = not available.

**TABLE 4: Gender Pay Gap in unadjusted form by ownership – public v private (% 2008-17)**

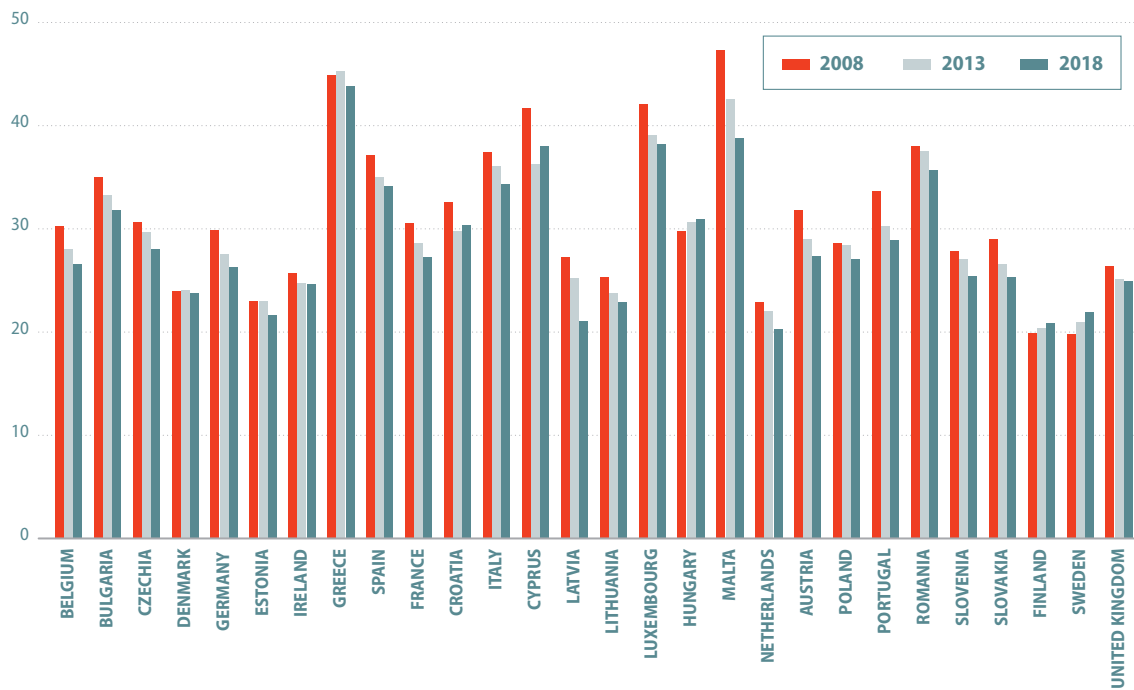
COUNTRY	SECTOR	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<i>Central and Eastern Europe</i>											
BULGARIA	Public	20.3	22.4	21.5	20.5	22.1	19.2	21.7	22.5	20.6	17.9
	Private	11.5	11.9	11.6	11.2	12.9	12.8	12.5	13.5	12.3	12.2
CZECHIA	Public	23.3	22.1	20.0	21.4	21.5	21.3	20.7	20.8	20.3	20.0
	Private	26.1	26.5	23.3	23.3	23.4	23.1	23.5	23.4	22.5	22.3
HUNGARY	Public	17.5	17.9	20.0	20.5	24.4	22.4	11.0	13.5	11.8	14.3
	Private	17.2	15.8	16.2	15.3	16.3	15.0	15.6	13.4	15.0	14.3
AUSTRIA	Public	:	:	19.6	:	:	:	20.1	:	:	:
	Private	:	:	24.6	:	:	:	22.6	:	:	:
POLAND	Public	7.0	3.6	0.1	1.9	3.7	3.8	3.9	3.4	2.8	2.8
	Private	21.2	19.2	17.2	16.7	16.1	17.0	17.9	17.0	16.1	16.1
ROMANIA	Public	11.3	12.8	21.0	21.3	16.5	12.8	12.3	12.2	9.9	5.4
	Private	11.6	8.5	4.9	3.0	3.9	3.1	4.6	6.0	6.8	7.0
SLOVAKIA	Public	16.1	15.8	14.9	16.4	15.0	13.7	12.9	13.4	12.7	13.5
	Private	22.1	23.7	21.0	20.7	22.5	20.6	21.7	20.9	20.4	21.4
<i>Southern Europe</i>											
GREECE	Public	:	:	16.4	:	:	:	13.0	:	:	:
	Private	:	:	17.3	:	:	:	16.4	:	:	:
SPAIN	Public	11.6	11.4	12.3	13.0	14.3	13.6	13.3	13.0	15.9	15.9
	Private	18.8	19.6	20.3	21.4	21.9	21.1	17.8	19.0	19.3	19.3
FRANCE	Public	:	:	13.2	:	:	:	20.1	:	:	:
	Private	:	:	16.4	:	:	:	15.3	:	:	:
ITALY	Public	6.7	6.5	4.5	3.4	5.6	6.3	3.7	2.9	4.4	4.1
	Private	17.1	17.6	17.5	17.7	18.2	19.9	19.6	19.0	17.9	20.7
CYPRUS	Public	0.0	0.1	0.3	-0.9	-2.1	-3.3	-4.7	-6.8	-6.6	-6.6
	Private	27.5	26.8	25.3	24.9	24.1	23.8	23.5	23.4	23.0	22.8
MALTA	Public	-3.6	-1.6	-1.3	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
	Private	15.5	12.0	11.9	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
PORTUGAL	Public	10.0	12.1	10.1	11.4	13.3	12.0	13.6	13.6	13.4	13.0
	Private	22.7	21.9	24.1	23.0	25.6	21.1	22.8	22.8	22.6	22.5
SLOVENIA	Public	4.8	1.7	2.3	8.2	8.9	11.4	12.7	11.1	11.3	11.0
	Private	12.2	8.5	8.9	9.7	9.5	9.7	9.8	7.7	7.9	8.2

COUNTRY	SECTOR	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<i>Central and Northern Europe</i>											
BELGIUM	Public	-3.0	-3.0	-2.6	-2.0	-1.3	-0.5	0.3	0.4	0.1	-0.2
	Private	14.1	13.9	13.9	12.8	11.8	10.6	9.6	9.6	9.2	9.1
DENMARK	Public	15.1	14.5	17.8	12.9	13.6	12.6	12.1	11.9	11.6	11.7
	Private	16.1	16.6	14.0	18.3	17.5	16.2	16.1	15.0	15.6	15.0
GERMANY	Public	16.0	14.4	13.9	13.9	14.1	13.4	13.8	13.4	13.0	12.8
	Private	26.2	25.8	25.8	25.7	25.4	25.1	25.3	24.6	24.0	23.0
IRELAND	Public	12.5	13.2	12.1	11.3	10.4	7.3	9.6	:	:	:
	Private	21.4	19.9	21.6	20.4	19.2	19.5	19.7	:	:	:
NETHERLANDS	Public	18.6	18.6	18.4	16.7	15.9	15.0	13.6	13.0	12.7	12.7
	Private	19.3	18.8	18.0	23.1	22.2	21.7	21.6	21.8	21.6	21.1
FINLAND	Public	20.7	20.3	19.4	17.4	19.3	18.4	19.0	18.3	17.7	18.3
	Private	19.7	20.2	19.2	17.6	18.3	17.9	17.6	16.9	17.1	16.2
SWEDEN	Public	15.0	14.3	14.5	13.3	13.0	11.9	11.7	11.7	10.2	9.8
	Private	14.8	13.8	13.1	13.7	13.4	12.8	12.4	12.2	11.8	11.2
UK	Public	19.0	20.2	30.0	21.8	21.8	23.8	24.1	24.2	24.4	23.9
	Private	26.3	26.1	23.0	26.4	27.1	24.7	24.5	23.0	21.9	21.8
ICELAND	Public	19.0	15.6	14.2	14.2	13.6	12.0	10.2	12.1	12.1	12.2
	Private	22.4	20.1	17.8	17.6	16.8	17.2	16.3	16.7	15.8	15.6

Source: Eurostat, Gender pay gap in unadjusted form by type of ownership of the economic activity - NACE Rev. 2 activity (B-S except O), structure of earnings survey methodology (earn\_gr\_gpgr2ct). Note: ":" data not available

Closing the GPG in public services in the context of austerity

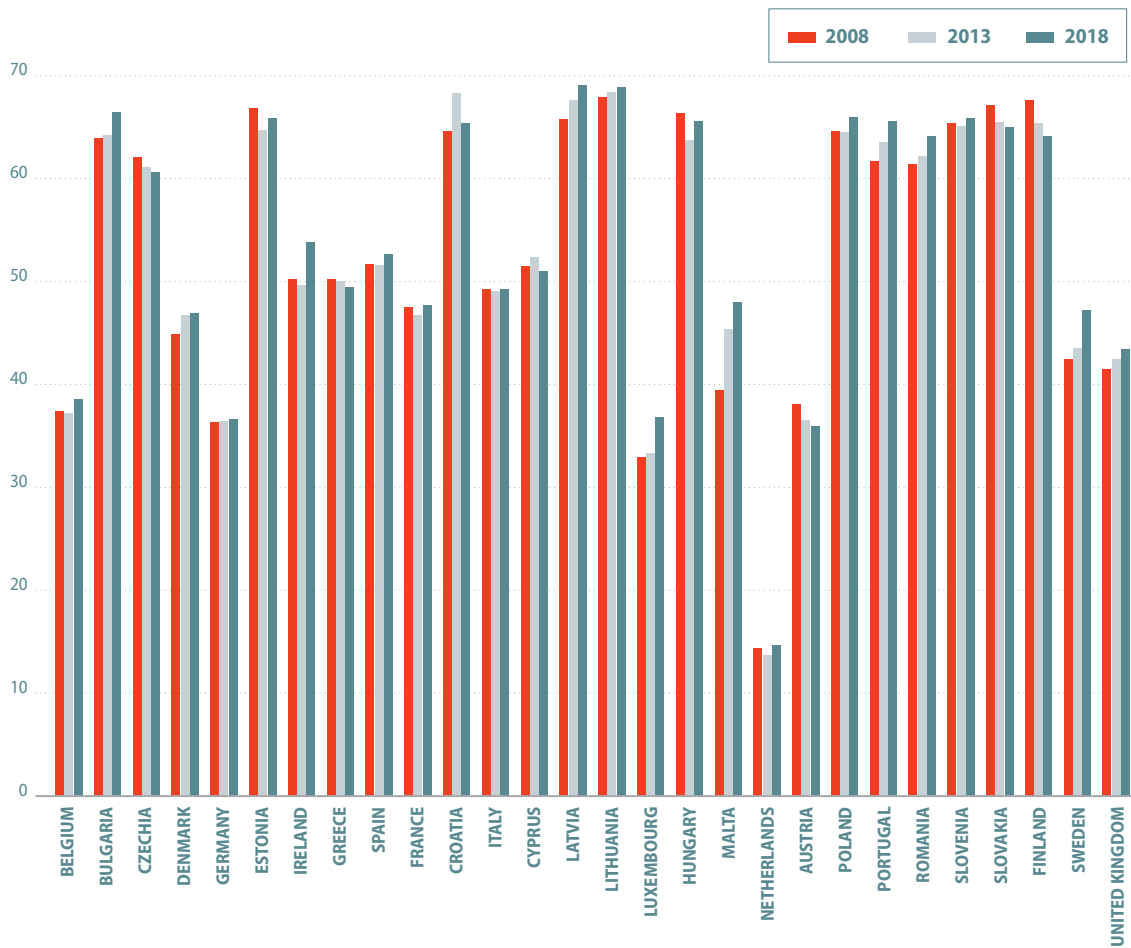
FIGURE 5: Full-time men as a percentage of total employed (2008, 2013, 2018)



Source of Data: Eurostat custom dataset used: Full-time and part-time employment by sex and economic activity (from 2008 onwards, NACE Rev. 2) - 1000 [LFSA\_EPGAN2\_\_custom\_361233] - Public administration and defence; compulsory social security, Education, Human health and social work activities.



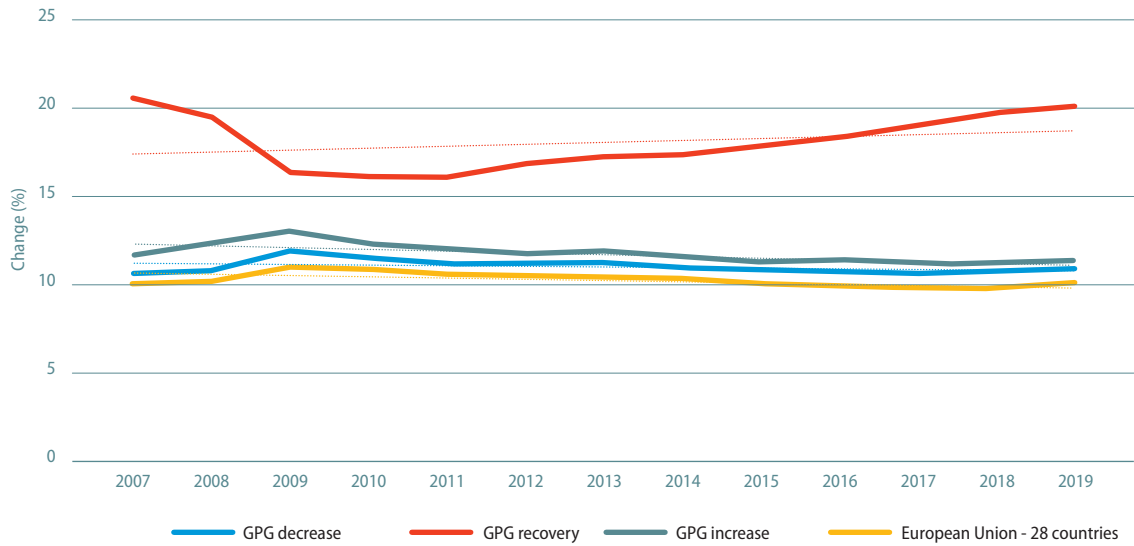
FIGURE 6: Full-time women as a percentage of total employed (2008, 2013, 2018)



Source of Data: Eurostat custom dataset used: Full-time and part-time employment by sex and economic activity (from 2008 onwards, NACE Rev. 2) - 1000 [LFSA\_EPGAN2\_custom\_361233] - Public administration and defence; compulsory social security, Education, Human health and social work activities.

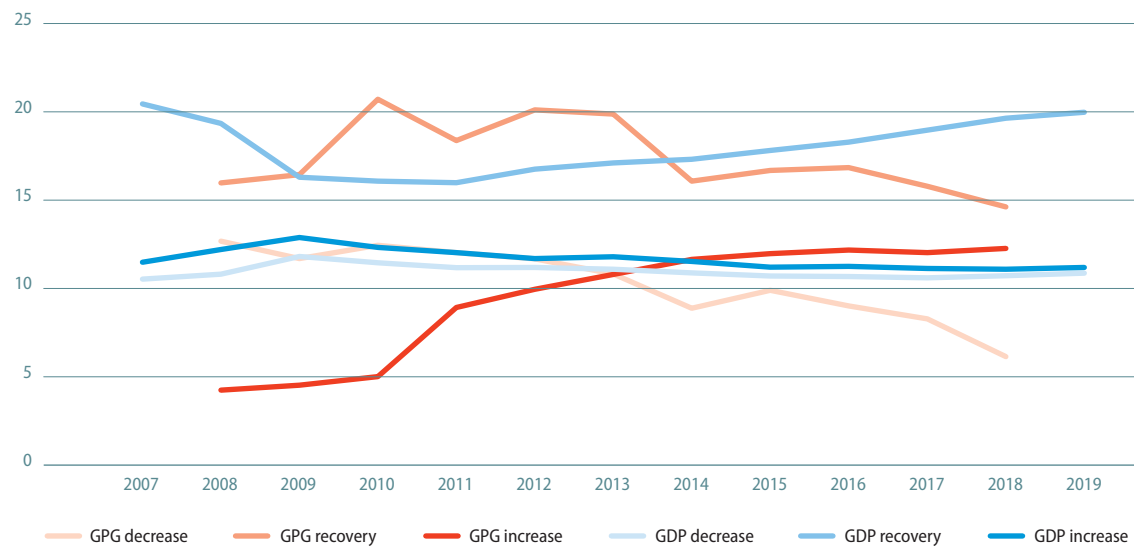
Closing the GPG in public services in the context of austerity

**FIGURE 7: Trends in % of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) spent on public sector pay by Gender Pay Gap country clusters (unadjusted form %, 2007 - 2019)**



Source of data: Eurostat Government revenue, expenditure and main aggregates [gov\_10a\_main]

**FIGURE 8: Trends in % of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) spent on public sector pay AND Gender Pay Gap Groups (unadjusted form %, 2007 - 2019)**



Source of Data: Eurostat custom dataset used: Gender pay gap in unadjusted form by type of ownership of the economic activity - NACE Rev. 2 activity (B-S except O), structure of earnings survey methodology [EARN\_GR\_GPGR2CT]. Public type of ownership and Eurostat Government revenue, expenditure and main aggregates [gov\_10a\_main]

## Appendix 4 - Decompositions

**TABLE 5: Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition of the gender wage gap in public sector**

Predicted log wage of males	7.9186*** (0.0040)	
Predicted log wage of females	7.6532*** (0.0029)	
Difference	0.2654*** (0.0049)	
Explained	0.1085*** (0.0047)	
Unexplained	0.1569*** (0.0022)	
	<b>Explained</b>	<b>Unexplained</b>
Tenure	-0.001*** (0.0004)	0.0323*** (0.0060)
Tenure^2	0.0042*** (0.0002)	-0.0248*** (0.0034)
Manager	0.0149*** (0.0004)	0.0071*** (0.0012)
Hours worked	0.0504*** (0.0007)	-0.1036*** (0.0146)
Education, Country, Year	-0.0153*** (0.0045)	0.0598*** (0.0080)
Occupation and Sector	0.0269*** (0.0012)	0.0171* (0.0095)
Real GDP growth (per cap)	0.0003* (0.0001)	-0.003 (0.0021)
Unemployment rate	-0.0031*** (0.0005)	0.0434*** (0.0149)
Government employee expenditure (% gdp)	0.0069*** (0.0005)	-0.1022* (0.0543)
Constant		0.1757*** (0.0541)
Observations male		86609
Observations female		186408

Estimation: OLS Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition.

Sample: Full sample. Decomposition is expressed from the viewpoint of females in contrast to males.

Individual controls: Education dummies, tenure, tenure squared, manager. The table reports the sum of contributions for three variables (education, year fixed effect and country fixed effect) and the sum of occupational and sector fixed effect

Institutional austerity variables: real GDP growth (per capita), unemployment rate, compensation of general government employees (% GDP) Inference: Robust standard errors obtained with the Delta method are in parentheses, significance levels are  $\_ p < 0:10$ ,  $\_ p < 0:05$ ,  $\_ p < 0:01$ .

Source: Own calculations based on the EU-SILC 2008-2018, Eurostat

**TABLE 6: Quantile regressions of log hourly wages**

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IV
Quantile	Q10	Q20	Q30	Q40	Q50	Q60	Q70	Q80	Q90
Dependent variable	log wage	log wage	log wage	log wage	log wage	log wage	log wage	log wage	log wage
Female	-0.1391*** (0.0044)	-0.1463*** (0.0033)	-0.1508*** (0.0027)	-0.1545*** (0.0023)	-0.1579*** (0.0021)	-0.1612*** (0.0021)	-0.1647*** (0.0022)	-0.1687*** (0.0026)	-0.1746*** (0.0033)
Tenure	0.0076*** (0.0002)	0.007*** (0.0001)	0.0065*** (0.0001)	0.0062*** (0.0001)	0.0058*** (0.0001)	0.0055*** (0.0001)	0.0052*** (0.0001)	0.0048*** (0.0001)	0.0042*** (0.0001)
Tenure^2	0.0001*** (0.0000)	0.0001*** (0.0000)	0.0001*** (0.0000)	0.0001*** (0.0000)	0.0001*** (0.0000)	0.0001*** (0.0000)	0.0001*** (0.0000)	0.0001*** (0.0000)	0.0001*** (0.0000)
Manager	0.1397*** (0.0048)	0.1375*** (0.0036)	0.1361*** (0.0029)	0.1349*** (0.0025)	0.1339*** (0.0023)	0.1328*** (0.0023)	0.1318*** (0.0024)	0.1305*** (0.0028)	0.1287*** (0.0037)
Hours worked	0.0216*** (0.0003)	0.0205*** (0.0002)	0.0198*** (0.0002)	0.0192*** (0.0001)	0.0187*** (0.0001)	0.0182*** (0.0001)	0.0177*** (0.0001)	0.0171*** (0.0002)	0.0162*** (0.0002)
Real GDP growth (per cap)	-0.0008 (0.0011)	-0.0008 (0.0008)	-0.0008 (0.0006)	-0.0009 (0.0006)	-0.0009* (0.0005)	-0.0009* (0.0005)	-0.0009* (0.0005)	-0.0009 (0.0006)	-0.0009 (0.0008)
Unemployment rate	-0.0062*** (0.0015)	-0.0055*** (0.0011)	-0.0051*** (0.0009)	-0.0047*** (0.0008)	-0.0044*** (0.0007)	-0.0041*** (0.0007)	-0.0037*** (0.0007)	-0.0033*** (0.0009)	-0.0028** (0.0011)
Compensation_GDP_generalgov	0.058*** (0.0051)	0.0547*** (0.0038)	0.0526*** (0.0031)	0.0509*** (0.0027)	0.0493*** (0.0024)	0.0478*** (0.0024)	0.0461*** (0.0026)	0.0443*** (0.0030)	0.0415*** (0.0039)
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Occupation FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sector FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Estimation: Quantile regressions.

Sample: Full sample.

Dependent variable: Log gross monthly wage.

Individual Controls: Education dummies, tenure, tenure squared, manager

Institutional austerity variables: real GDP growth (per capita), unemployment rate, compensation of general government employees (% gdp)

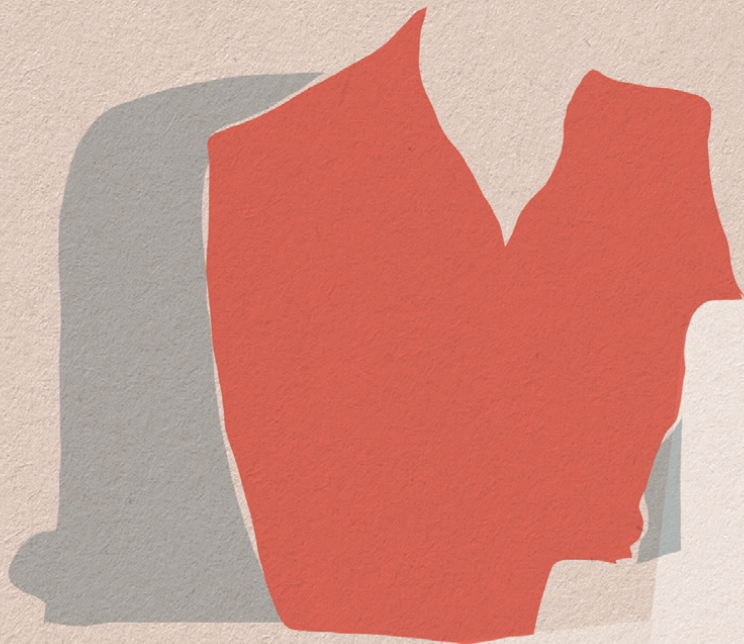
Fixed effect: country fixed effect, year dummies, occupational and sector dummies

Inference: Standard errors are in parentheses, significance levels are \* p < 0:10, \*\* p < 0:05, \*\*\* p < 0:01.

Source: Own calculations based on the EU-Silc 2008-2018, Eurostat

## Appendix 5: Public sector austerity measures

<b>Pay cuts</b>	» Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain
<b>Pay freezes</b>	» Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, UK
<b>Pay restraint</b>	» Denmark, Sweden
<b>Recruitment freeze</b>	» Austria, Denmark, France, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Spain
<b>Job cuts</b>	» Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, UK
<b>Changes to hours</b>	» Belgium, Finland, Greece, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, UK
<b>Changes to other benefits (holidays, redundancy, maternity and paternity leave and pay)</b>	» Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Netherlands, UK
<b>Pension reform (postponing retirement and/or bringing the age for women in line with that for men or freezes)</b>	» Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, UK
<b>Cuts and restrictions on social security benefits</b>	» Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, UK
<b>Suspension or contraction of collective bargaining</b>	» Ireland, Italy, Greece, Poland, Romania, Spain







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