



**Equality between women and men in the EU**  
**Public consultation by the European Commission**  
*Eurofound's contribution*

**Gender equality in the EU:**  
**Priorities for EU strategy**

It is important to underline that when referring to gender issues there is a risk of limiting the discussion, views and study exclusively to the situation of women and overlooking wider gender issues, including the situation of men. Eurofound, as the tripartite European Agency responsible for analysing trends on the European labour markets since the mid-70s, has conducted research in both areas: specific analysis on women's situations and more gender-driven research. In the latter, issues and analysis are developed that examine the situation of both men and women, particularly as regards the labour market and at work.

## 1. Persistent gender inequality in Europe

### a) Gender inequality: an issue for men and women

#### Employment

##### *Segregation in the labour market*

Segregation in the labour market is pervasive for both men and women: the secondary analysis of the 5th European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) on women, men and working conditions in Europe investigates occupational, sectoral, time and pay gaps. Its findings indicate that women and men do different jobs, in different sectors, and this leads to differences in working conditions such as different hours and different pay, as well as differences in terms of exposure to risks.

5th European Working Conditions Survey: Women, men and working conditions in Europe (Eurofound, 2013)

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef1349.htm>

##### *Increase in the labour market participation of women*

The increased participation in higher education and thus attainment of better qualifications by women has, in combination with the greater social and economic freedom of women in the past 50 years, has led to a stronger labour market orientation and higher participation rates. Nevertheless, the employment rate of women today is still below that of men, mainly as a result of the gendered division of labour in private households.

Demographic change and work in Europe (Eurofound, 2010)

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/articles/working-conditions-social-policies/eu-level-demographic-change-and-work-in-europe>

##### *Equal opportunities*

Findings drawn from the EWCS brings into focus the obstacles faced by women in their career paths, highlighting not only the 'glass ceiling' but also the 'glass walls' effect, with vertical segregation still an issue of concern: when women become managers (slow progress toward equality) they are often managers of smaller teams (middle managers). This issue is considered in Eurofound's report on women managers and hierarchical structures.

**Women managers and hierarchical structures in working life (Eurofound, 2009)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2009/other/women-managers-and-hierarchical-structures-in-working-life>

Eurofound will publish another analysis shortly, on management and gender, based on data from the 5th EWCS.

## **Working conditions**

Given the persistent deep gender segregation on the labour markets, women and men continue to work in different sectors and occupations and therefore are confronted with different working conditions, which impact on the way they work and on work outcomes.

### **Physical and psychosocial risks**

Men and women experience different workplace risks, mostly related to the job they do: while men are more often faced with physical risks, women tend to work in jobs where they are in contact with people – while this can be rewarding, it can also involve psychosocial risks. It is crucial, therefore, that occupational health and safety (prevention mechanisms) covers both mental and physical elements.

### **Violence and harassment**

These are specific issues, occurring more commonly in certain sectors than in others and linked to the perception some people have of the ‘natural’ division of roles between men and women in society. The well-being of workers is dependent on a wide range of factors, including exposure to risks, work organisation, etc. However, the secondary analysis on gender based on the 5th EWCS indicates that workers who work in gender-mixed teams usually have higher levels of well-being.

**5th European Working Conditions Survey: Women, men and working conditions in Europe (Eurofound, 2013)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef1349.htm>

**Working conditions in the European Union: the gender perspective (Eurofound, 2007)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef07108.htm>

## **Impact of the crisis**

The financial and economic crisis has impacted on the working conditions of both men and women. Indeed, it has been shown that the crisis has affected working conditions across EU Member States and Norway in different ways and to differing extents. Some of the general findings with regard to gender are presented in this section.

### **Male employment**

The crisis destroyed male employment disproportionately, in large part due to the sectors mainly affected. The most recent employment growth (in 2013q2-2014q2) has been more evenly balanced by gender. The biggest difference from the previous two-year period is the recovery of male employment in low and mid-paid jobs. Women continue to take up more of net new employment in well-paid jobs.

Since 2008, the EU gender employment gap has contracted by some two percentage points, reflecting the greater impact of the crisis in male-employing sectors, especially in its early 2008–10 phase. Male employment, especially in manufacturing and construction, contracted very sharply while predominantly female-employing sectors – e.g. health and education – continued to add new jobs. Women now account for 46% of total employment in the EU, outnumber men in the Latvian and Lithuanian workforces and are close to parity (>48% share) in France, Portugal, Estonia, Cyprus and Finland.

**Upgrading or polarisation? Long-term and global shifts in the employment structure: European Jobs Monitor 2015: (Eurofound, 2015)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2015/labour-market/upgrading-or-polarisation-long-term-and-global-shifts-in-the-employment-structure-european-jobs>

### **Job insecurity**

Job insecurity has been widespread since the crisis, mainly in countries severely affected by the crisis and for specific social groups: young people, low-skilled workers and, depending on the country, men or women.

### **Job mobility**

A decrease in job mobility between 2008 and 2010, especially for women, was also found.

### **Labour migration**

The crisis is changing the migration patterns of a range of EU countries. As well as the changes in the numbers of migrants coming and going, those working in foreign countries were often hit harder than the average national worker during the crisis. One reason for this impact is that immigrants, especially male workers, are more often employed than nationals in sectors such as construction that were badly affected by the crisis. The impact of the crisis on immigrant women was much smaller: in general, their participation rates even increased as women are more active in the services sector, which up to now has been less affected by the crisis. Young immigrants, often employed under a precarious contract type and on a part-time basis, also suffered more, as did low-skilled immigrants. As noted in the OECD's International migration outlook 2012, this type of worker is also more often employed on temporary contracts in vulnerable sectors.

**Impact of the crisis on working conditions in Europe: Executive Summary (Eurofound, 2013)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/executive-summary/2013/working-conditions/impact-of-the-crisis-on-working-conditions-in-europe-executive-summary>

**Labour mobility in the EU: Recent trends and policies (Eurofound, 2014)**

<http://eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2014/eu-member-states/labour-market-social-policies/labour-mobility-in-the-eu-recent-trends-and-policies>

### **Women in specific situations**

Women in Europe are more engaged in temporary employment than men. However, the crisis had a reverse impact on the participation of men and women in temporary employment. For men,

temporary employment generally increased, while it decreased for women and thus the gender gap in temporary employment was reduced to some extent.

Part-time employment is traditionally higher for women and this situation remained so during the crisis. However, an increase can be found for both men and women. In terms of the evolution of involuntary part-time employment, the numbers for men always exceed those for women and a larger increase can also be found for men during the crisis.

### **Asocial behaviour**

Asocial behaviour – including violence, harassment, sexual violence but also verbal abuse, threats and humiliating behaviour – has increased during the crisis. There are huge differences between countries, and also between sectors. Asocial behaviour is found mainly in the health, transport, and public administration sectors, some of which are female-dominated sectors. In any sector, people of the opposite sex are more vulnerable in terms of asocial behaviour. It is important to deal with this behaviour because it can substantially decrease mental well-being and sustainability of work.

**5th European Working Conditions Survey: Overview report (Eurofound, 2012)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef1182.htm>

**Psychosocial risks in Europe: Prevalence and strategies for prevention (Eurofound and EU-OSHA, 2014)**

[http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef\\_publication/field\\_ef\\_document/ef1443en\\_0.pdf](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef1443en_0.pdf)

## **Pay/income**

### **Wage differentials**

Wage differentials between men and women across Europe are a major policy concern for the European Commission and the social partners. They epitomise the gender differences and segregation prevailing on the labour market.

### **Pay equality between men and women**

The issue of pay equality between men and women has been on the European political agenda for a long time. Part of the gender pay gap can be attributed to a range of factors that help to reinforce the differences that persist between male and female employment, including the fact that women tend to engage more often in part-time work, take more and longer career breaks which reduce job tenure and work experience, and work in low-paid sectors with less collective representation and bargaining power. Interpreting the adjusted gap as being the only discriminatory component, however, falls short of reality. In fact, many studies find that individual characteristics, such as the level of education, tend to explain less and less of the observed gap, particularly in a context where the level of female education has been increasing. Rather, the major reasons for this gap are very often related to both horizontal and vertical segregation – or the fact that women tend to choose lower-paid professions, reach a ‘glass ceiling’ in their careers, or have their jobs valued less favourably. The origins of these factors could be judged as being discriminatory in themselves – that is, when they are rooted in gender stereotypes of male and female occupations.

**Addressing the gender pay gap: Government and social partner actions (Eurofound, 2010)**

[http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef\\_publication/field\\_ef\\_document/ef1018en.pdf](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef1018en.pdf)

**The gender pay gap: Background paper (Eurofound, 2006)**  
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef06101.htm>

## **b) Specific groups in need of attention**

### **Young workers**

Young workers as a whole merit attention, but especially young women workers. Despite starting almost on an equal footing with their male colleagues at the very beginning of their careers, the careers of women – depending on their life course and some key life events (for example, having children or dependent relatives later) – can lose momentum and they can find themselves disadvantaged in terms of promotions and pensions etc.

**Helping young workers during the crisis: contributions by social partners and public authorities (Eurofound, 2011)**  
[http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef\\_files/docs/eiro/tn1101019s/tn1101019s.pdf](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_files/docs/eiro/tn1101019s/tn1101019s.pdf)

**NEETs – Young people not in employment, education or training: Characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe (Eurofound, 2012)**  
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2012/labour-market-social-policies/neets-young-people-not-in-employment-education-or-training-characteristics-costs-and-policy>

### **Single parents and very atypical workers**

Single parents and very atypical workers are categories where women tend to be in the majority, with huge repercussions on income, working conditions and employment perspectives.

**Very atypical work: Exploratory analysis of 4th European Working Conditions Survey – Background paper (Eurofound, 2010)**  
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2010/working-conditions/very-atypical-work-exploratory-analysis-of-fourth-european-working-conditions-survey-background>

**Flexible forms of work: 'Very atypical' contractual arrangements – Executive summary (Eurofound, 2010)**  
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/executive-summary/2010/working-conditions-labour-market/flexible-forms-of-work-very-atypical-contractual-arrangements-executive-summary>

### **Workers with multiple disadvantages**

Some groups of workers are subject to several disadvantages regarding various aspects of working conditions – low pay, poor working conditions, unfavourable perspectives on the labour markets – and these workers merit specific attention. These low-quality jobs are found in both female- and male-dominated occupations.

**5th European Working Conditions Survey: Trends in job quality in Europe (Eurofound, 2012)**  
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2012/working-conditions/trends-in-job-quality-in-europe>

**Occupational profiles in working conditions: Identification of groups with multiple disadvantages (Eurofound, 2014)**  
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2014/working-conditions/occupational-profiles-in-working-conditions-identification-of-groups-with-multiple-disadvantages>

**5th European Working Conditions Survey: Women, men and working conditions in Europe (Eurofound, 2013)**  
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef1349.htm>

## 2. Increasing the labour market participation of men and women

### a) Work–life balance

Striking a balance between one’s work and private life is an issue for both men and women. While research shows that women still tend to take on the burden of household tasks, it is more likely to be men – particularly if there are children in the household – who report problems with work–life balance.

#### Quality of life

In terms of working men and women, this involves attaining an adequate work-life balance and juggling care facilities, working time arrangements and labour market participation. Aspects include the way work allows to combine work with our private life, in light of working hours, organisation of working time, predictability and worker-led flexibility, all of which can have a positive effect on work–life balance. See, for example, the importance being able to take time off at short notice (in the section on ‘Working time’ below and the links to the EWCS overview report).

**3rd European Quality of Life Survey: Quality of life in Europe – Quality of society and public services (Eurofound, 2013)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2013/quality-of-life-social-policies/quality-of-life-in-europe-quality-of-society-and-public-services>

**3rd European Quality of Life Survey: Quality of life in Europe – Impacts of the crisis (Eurofound, 2012)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2012/quality-of-life-social-policies/quality-of-life-in-europe-impacts-of-the-crisis>

**3rd European Quality of Life Survey: Quality of life in Europe – Trends 2003-2012 (Eurofound, 2014)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2014/quality-of-life-social-policies/quality-of-life-in-europe-trends-2003-2012>

**3rd European Quality of Life Survey: Families in the economic crisis (Eurofound, 2014)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2014/quality-of-life-social-policies/quality-of-life-in-europe-families-in-the-economic-crisis->

**5th European Working Conditions Survey: Overview report (Eurofound, 2012)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef1182.htm>

**5th European Working Conditions Survey: Women, men and working conditions in Europe (Eurofound, 2013)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef1349.htm>

**3rd European Quality of Life Survey: Trends in job quality in Europe (Eurofound, 2012)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2012/working-conditions/trends-in-job-quality-in-europe>

#### Working time

Working time is an important element in work–life balance, and in this area there are still gender gaps: women tend to work more part time, while men tend to work slightly longer hours. However, in terms of work–life balance, what is important is not only working hours, but also the organisation of working time in general. Aspects conducive to work–life balance are not working asocial hours in general, predictability, and worker-led flexibility: through, for instance, both flexitime and the ability to take leave at short notice for private reasons.

## ***Life-course perspective***

Throughout a person's working life, the time needed for household and care activities varies. The presence of children or adults in need of caring increases the number of hours that must be dedicated to so-called 'unpaid activities' for both men and women. However, unpaid activities still remain largely the responsibility of women.

**5th European Working Conditions Survey: Overview report (Eurofound, 2012)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef1182.htm>

**Working time and work-life balance in a life course perspective (Eurofound, 2013)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2013/working-conditions/working-time-and-work-life-balance-in-a-life-course-perspective>

**Foundation Focus 16 – Sustainable work: Toward better and longer working lives (Eurofound, 2015)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/foundation-focus/2015/working-conditions-labour-market-social-policies/foundation-focus-sustainable-work-toward-better-and-longer-working-lives>

## **Equal sharing of household and care activities**

### ***Parental leave and maternity leave***

While the right to take parental leave exists in most countries, there is still a difference in take-up between men and women, with such leave being largely adopted by women. A number of countries have taken initiatives to try and encourage greater take-up of parental leave by fathers. However, the main elements to be considered are: the existence of the right, the duration (often it is from a couple of weeks to a couple of years) – and the subsequent effect on a career and on work-life balance – and the way it is financed. In reality, often it is a financial calculation between mother and father.

**Promoting uptake of parental and paternity leave among fathers in the European Union (Eurofound, 2015)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/customised-report/2015/working-conditions-industrial-relations/promoting-uptake-of-parental-and-paternity-leave-among-fathers-in-the-european-union>

Eurofound's recent report on maternity leave, drafted following a request from the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality of the European Parliament (FEMM), gives an overview of national regulations regarding maternity leave based on the Maternity Leave Directive (92/85/EEC), against the background of the possible future revision of the directive.

**Maternity leave provisions in the EU Member States: Duration and allowances (Eurofound, 2015)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/customised-report/2015/working-conditions/maternity-leave-provisions-in-the-eu-member-states-duration-and-allowances>

## **b) Caring responsibilities: better sharing**

### **Care services**

The issue of how to combine work and caring responsibilities over the life course is critical in many societies across Europe, given the demographic challenge and pressure on welfare systems due to population ageing. Overall, the childcare sector is growing in the EU; however, working conditions



vary in terms of employment practices, opening hours and coverage. Across Europe, the lack of availability, high costs and inaccessibility of services often prevail.

### ***Men: an untapped labour reserve in social care***

It is important for gender balance to put in place strategies that target men in order to attract them to careers in the social care or education sectors. Eurofound's study on [home-care services in Austria](#) documents the 'Boys Day' initiative which aims to raise awareness among young men of occupational choices in the health, care and education professions. Similar efforts have been carried out in the childcare sector (for example, through the ESF-funded initiative 'Mehr Männer in Kitas' in Germany).

### **More and better jobs in home care services (Eurofound, 2013)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2013/labour-market-social-policies/more-and-better-jobs-in-home-care-services>

### **Foundation Findings: Childcare services in Europe (Eurofound, 2009)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/foundation-findings/2009/quality-of-life-social-policies/foundation-findings-childcare-services-in-europe>

### **Foundation Focus 4 – Family matters (Eurofound, 2009)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/foundation-focus/2007/working-conditions-quality-of-life-social-policies/foundation-focus-issue-4-family-matters>

### **Importance of care services**

Care facilities for both children and dependants are of crucial importance in enabling people to organise their work and private life. This is important not only with regard to children of different ages but also for other dependants such as disabled relatives or older persons. Eurofound has carried out research into facilities which offer care services for different groups. The study included a focus on the effect of lack of care services on the career choices and situations of young men and women in the labour market, particularly the impact of the crisis on the accessibility of these services.

### **Caring for children and dependants: Effect on careers of young workers – Background paper (Eurofound, 2013)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/customised-report/2013/social-policies/caring-for-children-and-dependants-effect-on-careers-of-young-workers-background-paper>

### **Parenting support in Europe (Eurofound, 2013)**

[http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef\\_publication/field\\_ef\\_document/ef1270en.pdf](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef1270en.pdf)

### **Out-of-school care services for children living in disadvantaged areas (Eurofound, 2008)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2007/quality-of-life-social-policies/out-of-school-care-services-for-children-living-in-disadvantaged-areas>

### **Early childhood care: Accessibility and quality of services (Eurofound, 2015)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2015/social-policies/early-childhood-care-accessibility-and-quality-of-services>

## Company initiatives and measures

Companies can also play a role with regard to the work–life balance issues of workers with specific care responsibilities. Eurofound compiled 50 cases of companies in 11 Member States that have adopted measures to support employees with care responsibilities for disabled children or adults. Some of the key initiatives by companies include: various types of leave; reduced working hours; and support measures such as information, counselling and practical support. The report concludes that effective approaches combine measures targeted at working carers and measures that the entire workforce can avail of, line managers have a pivotal role to play in supporting working carers, and it is possible to create solutions that either avoid the need for employees to leave the job, or that enable them to return to work.

**Company initiatives for workers with care responsibilities for disabled children or adults (Eurofound, 2011)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2011/working-conditions-social-policies/company-initiatives-for-workers-with-care-responsibilities-for-disabled-children-or-adults>

**5th European Working Conditions Survey: Overview report (Eurofound, 2012)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef1182.htm>

## c) Combating violence

Violence both at home and in the workplace needs to be tackled. Greater understanding is required of the impact of prolonged exposure to violence and harassment on the sustainability of work – in terms of, for instance, participation in employment and the productivity of workers. Research has shown that extensive legislation may not, on its own, be sufficient to tackle effectively violence and harassment at the workplace. Some of the key recommendations in this area are: raising awareness, putting in place a continuous, coordinated policy with the participation of all stakeholders, introducing company-level initiatives, practical guidelines and labour inspections

**Violence and harassment in European workplaces: Extent, impacts and policies (Eurofound, 2014)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/comparative-information/violence-and-harassment-in-european-workplaces-extent-impacts-and-policies>

Workplace violence, harassment and discrimination are serious issues that if not addressed could lead to serious health consequences and/or premature exit from the labour market. Some findings on this subject can be found in the EWCS overview report.

**5th European Working Conditions Survey: Chapter 4 – Violence, harassment and discrimination in the workplace**

[http://eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef\\_files/docs/ewco/4EWCS/ef0698/chapter4.pdf](http://eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_files/docs/ewco/4EWCS/ef0698/chapter4.pdf)

**Preventing violence and harassment in the workplace (Eurofound, 2002)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/2003/other/preventing-violence-and-harassment-in-the-workplace-report>

## d) Role of social partners and collective bargaining in gender issues

In tandem with the European agenda, Eurofound has developed since its inception, and especially in the mid-90s, awareness around collective bargaining and equal opportunities. Several studies at the time were carried out to analyse how, when and under what conditions gender issues are dealt with in collective bargaining processes. Since then, the issues have been looked at through several

perspectives, from working conditions in general to the gender pay gap in particular, as well as workers' profiles in atypical or very atypical forms of work – where women tend to be in the majority.

For example, on the gender pay gap: 'Empirical findings show that the [social partners'] influence has the potential to substantially narrow the gender pay gap – for instance, through centralised collective bargaining or the establishment of an increase in minimum wages. ... The trade unions and employer organisations have also developed a significant number of activities to tackle the issue of pay inequality and gender segregation.'

**Addressing the gender pay gap: Government and social partner actions (Eurofound, 2010)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2010/working-conditions-industrial-relations/addressing-the-gender-pay-gap-government-and-social-partner-actions>

**The gender pay gap - Background paper (Eurofound, 2010)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/customised-report/2006/other/the-gender-pay-gap-background-paper>

**Strengthening and mainstreaming equal opportunities through collective bargaining (Eurofound, 1998)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/other/1999/other/strengthening-and-mainstreaming-equal-opportunities-through-collective-bargaining>

**Illuminating the process: equal opportunities and collective bargaining in the European Union (Phase IV) (Eurofound, 1999)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/1999/other/illuminating-the-process-equal-opportunities-and-collective-bargaining-in-the-european-union-phase>

Recently, Eurofound has researched the key issue of resources and the means social partners have dedicated to promote and deal with gender issues, not only on the global labour market but also internally, in their own organisations. The outcomes have shown the challenges faced by social partner organisations in addressing these issues. There is clearly room for improvement, notably in putting gender issues back on the internal and external agenda: to develop concerted actions to achieve a more mixed and equal society, at work, in the household and in organisations.

**Social partners and gender equality in Europe (Eurofound, 2014)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2014/working-conditions-industrial-relations/social-partners-and-gender-equality-in-europe>

Some social partner organisations, mainly trade unions, have devised specific actions with a view to addressing the issues linked to the vulnerability of particular groups of workers on the labour market, including women.

**Trade union strategies to recruit new groups of workers (Eurofound, 2010)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/comparative-information/trade-union-strategies-to-recruit-new-groups-of-workers>

**Developments in social partner organisations – Employer organisations (Eurofound, 2010)**

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/comparative-information/developments-in-social-partner-organisations-employer-organisations>

## e) Key tools for going forward

### EU policies

EU actions and legislation will play a role in shaping the framework in order to ensure that men and women throughout their life-course can participate in the labour market and combine their work with their private life: including the necessary transitions and compensations, where relevant, in order to avoid paying a price for their career gaps at the end of their working life.

### Gathering data

In order to develop actions, it is important to be equipped with the necessary data and research. Eurofound can contribute with its policy-relevant studies and research, which can help the European Commission and also the other actors at European, national and local level – governments, managers, social partners, NGOs and individuals – to move towards the agreed goals. Both the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) and European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) offer information which can help policymakers to have an overview of differences and similarities within the EU and a few neighbouring countries and to elucidate some links between certain elements of working and living conditions and outcomes.

Future comparative analytical reports will map results from EU Member States and Norway, including putting them into the national context, explaining the legal infrastructure including the collective bargaining process. Recent examples are the reports on maternity leave and parental leave (see above).

The new European Working Life country profiles, covering all Member States and Norway (to be published in Autumn 2015), will contain comparative information on maternity/paternity/parental leave, as well as on equality and equal opportunities and on the gender pay gap.

The European Observatory of Working Life (EurWORK) also features related topical articles from Eurofound's network of European correspondents. See, for example:

**Germany: Family benefit rule changes encourage parents to share childcare duties (Eurofound, 2015)**  
<http://eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/articles/quality-of-life/germany-family-benefit-rule-changes-encourage-parents-to-share-childcare-duties>

Case studies will map and highlight examples of good practice which can promote arrangements that facilitate both men and women, in companies or in countries, in carrying out, for example, care responsibilities.

Eurofound's current 'Gender employment gap: challenges and solutions' project aims to map recent trends in women's labour market participation, estimate the economic loss due to the gender gap in employment participation in Europe, investigate the future effect of reducing the gender gap on economic growth and present the most successful recent approaches to facilitate women's participation in the labour market. (The report will be published at the end of 2015.)

### Future analysis

As part of its mission, Eurofound will continue to look into gender issues when analysing labour market, work and work organisation.

For example, fieldwork for the 6th EWCS is currently being carried out. The first findings will be available at the end of 2015 and an overview report prepared by the second half of 2016.

Gender mainstreaming is one of the red threads in the revision of the questionnaire at each wave. Gender issues will be highlighted in the overall analysis of data and, as with the updating of previous research, a specific gender analysis will be carried out. Some of the new questions, devised for this 6th EWCS, will shed light on specific aspects related to gender and reconciliation:

- the spill-over between work and private life, both from work to private life, and vice versa;
- the potential enrichment of combining work with private life.

Other aspects of the questionnaire have been refined, including the following topics: place of work, employment status; health, health impairment (e.g. long-standing illness), sleeping problems; organisational justice; engagement. These new modifications are intended to facilitate greater understanding of the working conditions of both men and women.