

Gendered unpaid care and domestic work

Globally, women do three times as much unpaid care and domestic work as men. Indeed, across the world, unpaid care work on a fulltime basis is performed by 21.7% of women and 1.5% of men¹ while in the EU, women report spending an average of 39 hours per week caring for their children compared with men's 21 hours.²

As a result, time spent by women and girls on unpaid care and domestic work limits their opportunities to participate in the labour market. In effect, caregiving responsibilities are estimated to keep 7.7 million women out of the labour market, compared with just 450 000 men.²

The Covid-19 pandemic is further intensifying women's unpaid care and domestic work. As a result of the lockdown measures to combat the spread of the coronavirus, household chores, caring and home schooling for children and care for the elderly are taking up more of people's time.³ Although both women and men are facing some of these responsibilities, women are more likely to be in charge of unpaid childcare and schooling, unpaid adult care and unpaid domestic work.⁴

In order to address this concern, the EU adopted the Work-life Balance Directive that entered into force on 1st August 2019⁵ with the aim of modernising the existing EU legal framework in the area of family-related leaves and flexible working arrangements. This Directive seeks to support a work-life balance for parents and carers, encourage a more equal sharing of parental leave between men and women, and address women's underrepresentation in the labour

¹ Report of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls - United Nations Human Rights Council <u>https://undocs.org/A/HRC/44/51?utm_source=Unknown+List&utm_campaign=10250d60a3-</u>

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² <u>https://eige.europa.eu/publications/beijing-25-fifth-review-implementation-beijing-platform-action-eu-</u> member-states

³ <u>https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/report/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women-en-1.pdf</u>

⁴ <u>https://data.unwomen.org/resources/surveys-show-covid-19-has-gendered-effects-asia-and-pacific</u>

⁵ <u>https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&furtherNews=yes&langId=en&newsId=9438</u>



market. Member States have three years to adopt laws and provisions to comply with the Directive.

In this context, the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls by the United Nations Human Rights Council recommends⁶ that States ensure universal access to paid maternity, paternity and parental leave for all workers and enable the equal sharing of paid and unpaid care work between women and men by providing universal paid parental leave for all parents.

Furthermore, States are urged to increase investments to ensure universal access to affordable and high quality childcare, disability and aged care services, and ensure that care work is a central pillar of macroeconomic policies, with the aim of redistributing unpaid care and domestic work between the State and families and between women and men.

Since unpaid care and domestic work is essential for family survival and affects all dimensions of development and equal treatment, it is vital for policymakers to maintain a sharp focus on this area of concern in order to implement measures for more equitable sharing of unpaid care work between women and men, particularly in the labour market.

In Malta, the government has introduced flexible working arrangements in the public sector such as telework, reduced hours and flexitime⁷, as well as various family-friendly measures including free childcare, pre-school breakfast clubs, and after-school services to address work-life balance that should result in equality of opportunities between women and men.

Moreover, some private companies have also improved the availability of family-friendly measures. Indeed, companies awarded with the Equality Mark by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) are required to provide incentives for men and women with

⁶ Report of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls - United Nations Human Rights Council <u>https://undocs.org/A/HRC/44/51?utm_source=Unknown+List&utm_campaign=10250d60a3-</u> <u>EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_07_06_11_27&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-10250d60a3-</u> <u>&utm_source=Unknown+List&utm_campaign=10250d60a3-</u> <u>EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_07_06_11_27&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-10250d60a3-</u> <u>&utm_source=Unknown+List&utm_campaign=10250d60a3-</u> <u>&utm_source=Unknown+List&utm_campaign=10250d60a3-</u>

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https://publicservice.gov.mt/en/Documents/Public%20Service%20Management%20Code/PSMC%20Manuals/ Manual on Work-Life Balance Measures.pdf



caring responsibilities to remain employed, return to work and advance in their careers by offering measures such as reduced hours, telework and flexitime.

The NCPE offers guidance to organisations in implementing gender equality measures. The NCPE is also empowered by Chapter 456 of the Laws of Malta to investigate alleged cases of discrimination in employment on the grounds of gender and family responsibilities in order to enable equality of opportunities for all.

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) can be contacted on: 2295 7850 or <u>equality@gov.mt</u> or our Facebook page.

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