

EU Equal Pay Day highlights women 'working for free' until year end

Written by Lorna Hutchinson on 4 November 2019 in News
News

The 16 percent disparity in pay between women and men in the EU means that from November 4 until the end of the year, women will effectively work for free.



Photo credit: Adobe Stock

This was the message hammered home on EU Equal Pay Day on Monday, as politicians and groups across the political spectrum joined in their condemnation of the continuing gulf between what women and men are paid to do the same jobs.

European Commission President-elect, Ursula von der Leyen - herself a passionate advocate of gender equality - said, "Today on Equal Pay Day, women earn on average 16 percent less than men. Written in the European Treaties 60 years ago, equal pay for equal work is still not a reality."

She added, "That's why I will table measures to introduce binding pay transparency measures. We must give women and men equal rights."

RELATED CONTENT

- [International Women's Day: Seizing the momentum behind gender equality](#) [1]
 - [Europe's contraception deficit](#) [2]
 - [#MeTooEP: In the corridors of power, abuse continues while prosecutions are conspicuously absent, writes Barbara Matera](#) [3]
 - [MEP candidates should commit to reform and sign the #MeTooEP election pledge, write Jeanne Ponte and Alfiaz Vaiya](#) [4]
 - [Soraya Post: Some think of feminism as a women's issue, but it is not - it is an equality issue](#) [5]
-

EU Commissioner-designate for Equality, Helena Dalli, reiterated the Commission's resolve to propose legislation and policy to ensure that women and men are paid equally for work of equal value.

"I will thus work with President von der Leyen and EU Justice to table measures for binding pay transparency," she added.

The European Commission tweeted, "Today is European #EqualPayDay. It's the day when women symbolically stop getting paid compared to their male colleagues for the same job."

The Commission pointed out that though the 16 percent figure is slightly down on last year's 16.2 percent, the gap continued to be too wide.

"Today on Equal Pay Day, women earn on average 16 percent less than men. Written in the European Treaties 60 years ago, equal pay for equal work is still not a reality" **Ursula von der Leyen, European Commission President-elect**

Dubravka Šuica, Commission Vice President-elect for Democracy and Demography, said, "this year the Equal Pay Day falls on 4th Nov, marking the day when women symbolically stop getting paid compared to our male colleagues for the same job. As a member of the EU Commission, I will strongly promote equal pay and support all the measures of our College in ensuring it."

In the European Parliament there was also widespread support for equal pay, with vociferous criticism of the fact that in 2019, women still earn less than their male counterparts.

The EPP Group urged the incoming Commission and Equality Commissioner to bring forward concrete measures to increase pay transparency in the first 100 days of office, while Renew Europe said, "Equal work must mean equal pay! Women have waited long enough!"

PES Women, a group promoting gender equality and women's representation both inside and outside the Party of European Socialists, delivered its message on the gender pay gap in a memorable way by posting an 'out of office' prompt on Twitter.

"Thank you for your email. I will be out of the office from 4 November until the end of the year. So will

Francesca, Aisha, Ingrid, Fatima and all my female colleagues. If your enquiry is urgent, please forward it to Alexander, Abdul, Lucas, Jin, or any other men in the office who are still being paid."

Newcomers to the Parliament, having won their first seat in May's elections, Volt Europa said, "It's long overdue! Every woman deserves, equality and true recognition 4 their work."

Irish MEP Frances Fitzgerald said that the incoming EU Equality Commissioner must bring forward "proactive, concrete action to deliver for citizens on gender equality issues including equal pay."

"Would you work for free? Well, women do as from today. It is time we move to hard commitment and enforceable laws to ensure full equal pay in the EU. The new Commission should take this issue seriously" **Samira Rafaela MEP**

"I will continue to keep this issue high on the agenda as EPP Group Coordinator."

UK Liberal Democrats MEP Luisa Porritt said, "From today, women across Europe will be working for free for the rest of the year. Men doing the same job earn on average 16 percent more. Equal pay was a founding principle of the EU, but for many women it isn't a reality. I will push for change."

Erasmus+, the European Union programme for education, youth, training and sport, tweeted, "Myth: Men are more highly educated, so should earn more. Fact: Today almost 60 percent of graduates in the EU are women, with 46 percent of 30 to 34-year-old women having higher education versus 36 percent of men."

Renew Europe deputy Samira Rafaela asked, "Would you work for free? Well, women do as from today. It is time we move to hard commitment and enforceable laws to ensure full equal pay in the EU. The new Commission should take this issue seriously."

A resounding male voice in the issue came from senior Liberal MEP Guy Verhofstadt, who said, "Simply unacceptable that women are still paid 16 percent less than men! Very good that von der Leyen will come with measures."

About the author

Lorna Hutchinson is Deputy Editor at The Parliament Magazine

Tags

[Employment and Social Affairs](#) [6]

[European Commission](#) [7]

[Justice and Rights](#) [8]

Categories

[Gender equality](#) [9]

[Employment](#) [10]

[Public order, justice and rights](#) [11]

[Society and welfare](#) [12]



Site Sections

- [Home](#)
- [Content](#)
- [Policy](#)
- [Magazines](#)
- [PM+](#)
- [Thought Leader](#)
- [Climate Crisis](#)
- [Editorial Calendar](#)
- [Policy Events](#)
- [Event Coverage](#)
- [MEP Awards 2020](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

Services

[Dods PeopleDods](#)
[MonitoringDods](#)
[ResearchDods](#)
[EventsDods](#)
[Training](#)

Media & publishing titles

[Politics HomeThe](#)
[HouseThe](#)
[Parliament](#)
[MagazineHolyrood](#)
[Total PoliticsPublic](#)
[Affairs NewsCivil](#)
[Service](#)
[World](#)
[PublicTechnology](#)
[Training](#)
[JournalDods](#)
[Parliamentary](#)
[CompanionVacher's](#)
[Quarterly The](#)
[European Union and](#)
[Public Affairs](#)
[Directory](#)

Dods events

[Westminster Briefing](#)
[Digital Health & Care](#)
[Scotland MEP Awards](#)
[The Skills Summit](#)
[Scottish Public Service Awards](#)
[Public Sector Procurement Summit](#)
[Public Sector ICT Summit](#)
[Cyber Security Summit](#)
[Cyber Security 2017 Training](#)
[Journal Awards](#)

Partnership events

[The Health and Care Innovation Expo](#)
[Civil Service Live](#)
[Civil Service Awards](#)
[Chief Nursing Officer for England's Summit](#)
[Women into Leadership](#)
[The Youth Justice Convention](#)
[Socitm Spring Conference](#)
[NHSCC Annual Members' Event](#)
[Dods at Party Conference](#)

Source URL: <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/eu-equal-pay-day-highlights--omen-%E2%80%98working-free%E2%80%99-until-year-end>

Links

- [1] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/opinion/international-womens-day-seizing-momentum-b-hind-gender-equality>
- [2] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/event-coverage/europe%E2%80%99s-contraception-deficit>
- [3] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/opinion/metoo-dragging-dark-acts-light>
- [4] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/opinion/metooep-actions-speak-louder-words>
- [5] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/interviews/soraya-post-some-think-feminism-women%E2%8-%99s-issue-it-not-it-equality-issue>
- [6] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/employment-and-social-affairs>
- [7] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/european-commission>
- [8] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/justice-and-rights>
- [9] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/gender-equality>
- [10] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/employment>
- [11] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/public-order-justice-and-rights>
- [12] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/society-and-welfare>