



Geneva

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Statements on behalf of the EU

UNECE Beijing+25 Review Conference - Item 5. Closing the gender gaps: Effective economic and social policies in the ECE region

Thank you, Mme. Moderator,

I speak on behalf of the EU and its Member States,

We would like to thank the panelists for their important contributions.

Gender-transformative economic and social policies, quality education and decent work and equal access to social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure are indispensable to ensure that women and girls are able to take full control over their lives and are protected against social risks and discriminations which they may face throughout their lifecycle.

In this context, guaranteeing the full enjoyment of every woman of all of her human rights is essential in order to vigorously promote the rights of persons with disabilities and take stronger measures to ensure their full inclusion in society and their equal participation in the labour market.

Appropriate policies will ensure that women and girls have access to and control over resources and care when they are not able to work. It is important to ensure that needs of all women and girls, including those who potentially experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, are taken into consideration.

Traditional and stereotypical attitudes are a persistent obstacle to women's equality in all spheres of life. It is important that men are fully involved in changing societal perceptions and achieving full gender equality.

Work is the best road to economic independence. But female labour market participation is not sufficient, the root causes of the gender pay gap – still amounting to 16% in the EU - hinders gender equality are often linked to gender stereotypes in work and in private life. Women and men tend to do different jobs, in different sectors and in different positions which is often linked to their educational choices. We therefore need to promote equal opportunities for women for full and productive employment and decent work, and finally equal pay for work of equal value. To tackle gender pay gap, an EU Action Plan was approved in 2017, which includes a number of measures aiming to promote equality between women and men, such as

combating segregation in the labour market and at the workplace, eliminating gender stereotypes or encouraging to have more women in leadership positions.

Another issue is care work. Women still carry out the bulk of unpaid care work, domestic work and care for children and other dependents. This needs to be tackled in a holistic way, through work-life balance for women and men, through sharing of family leaves and through flexible work arrangements, thus encouraging an equal sharing of domestic work and care tasks between women and men. Gender equality at home coincides with gender equality at work. Availability of affordable and high quality care services for children and other dependents is crucial. European structural investment funds fill in some of the gaps in care services in the EU. EU adopted recently a Directive to promote work-life balance that intends to enable parents and people with caring responsibilities to better balance their work and family lives and to encourage the equal sharing of caring responsibilities between women and men.

The EU Global Strategy, the Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality, European Pillar of Social Rights and the European Consensus for Development are the main cornerstones of our gender mainstreaming strategy both internally and externally towards more equal, secure, resilient, peaceful, prosperous and freer societies. Furthermore, in October 2015 the EU adopted a Gender Action Plan (entitled Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations (2016-2020), which focuses on concrete actions towards promoting the economic and social rights of women and girls and strengthening their voice and participation in these areas.

While progress is being made, we need to ensure that gender-transformative economic and social policies continue to tackle these gender stereotypes and social norms.

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