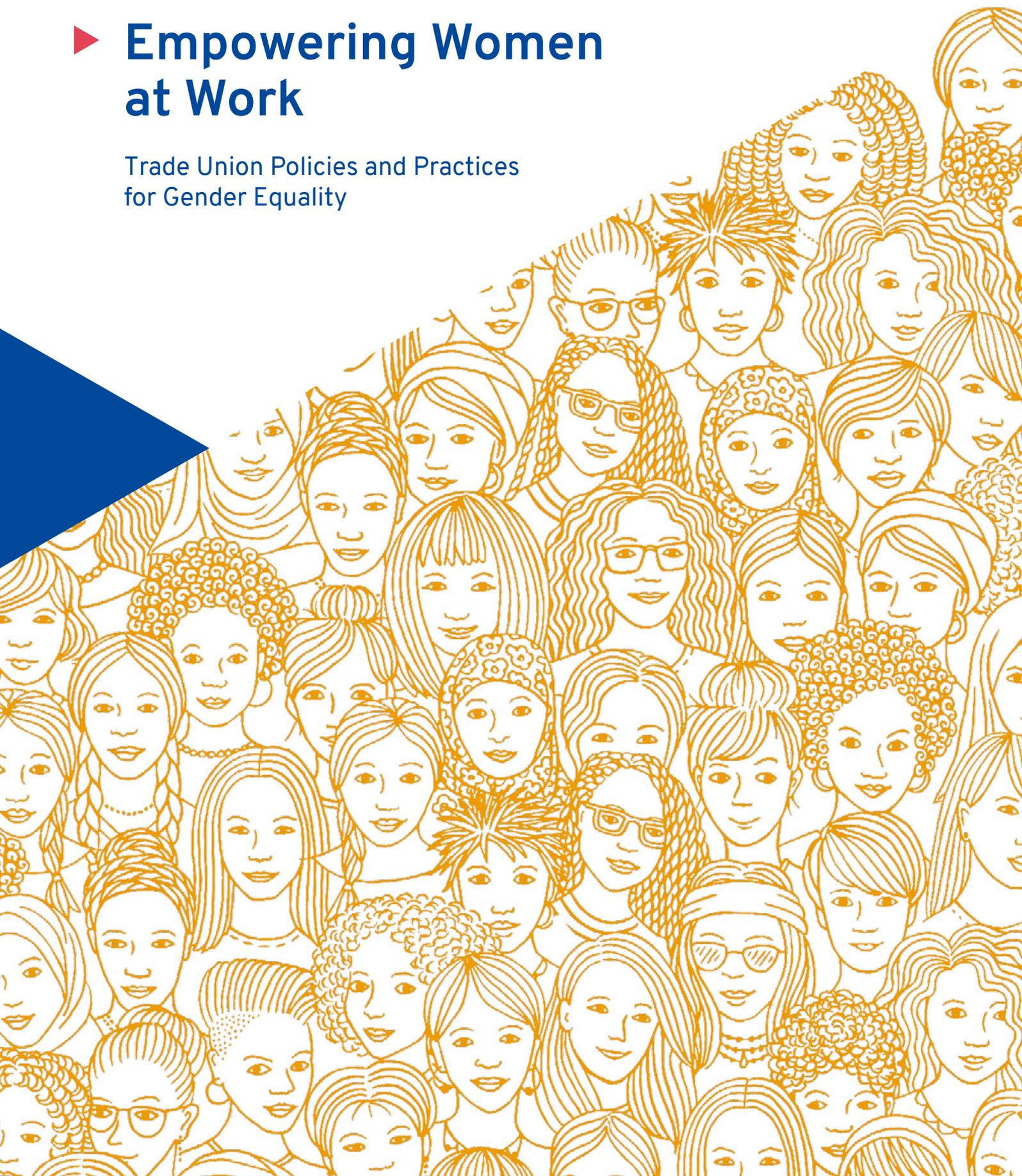




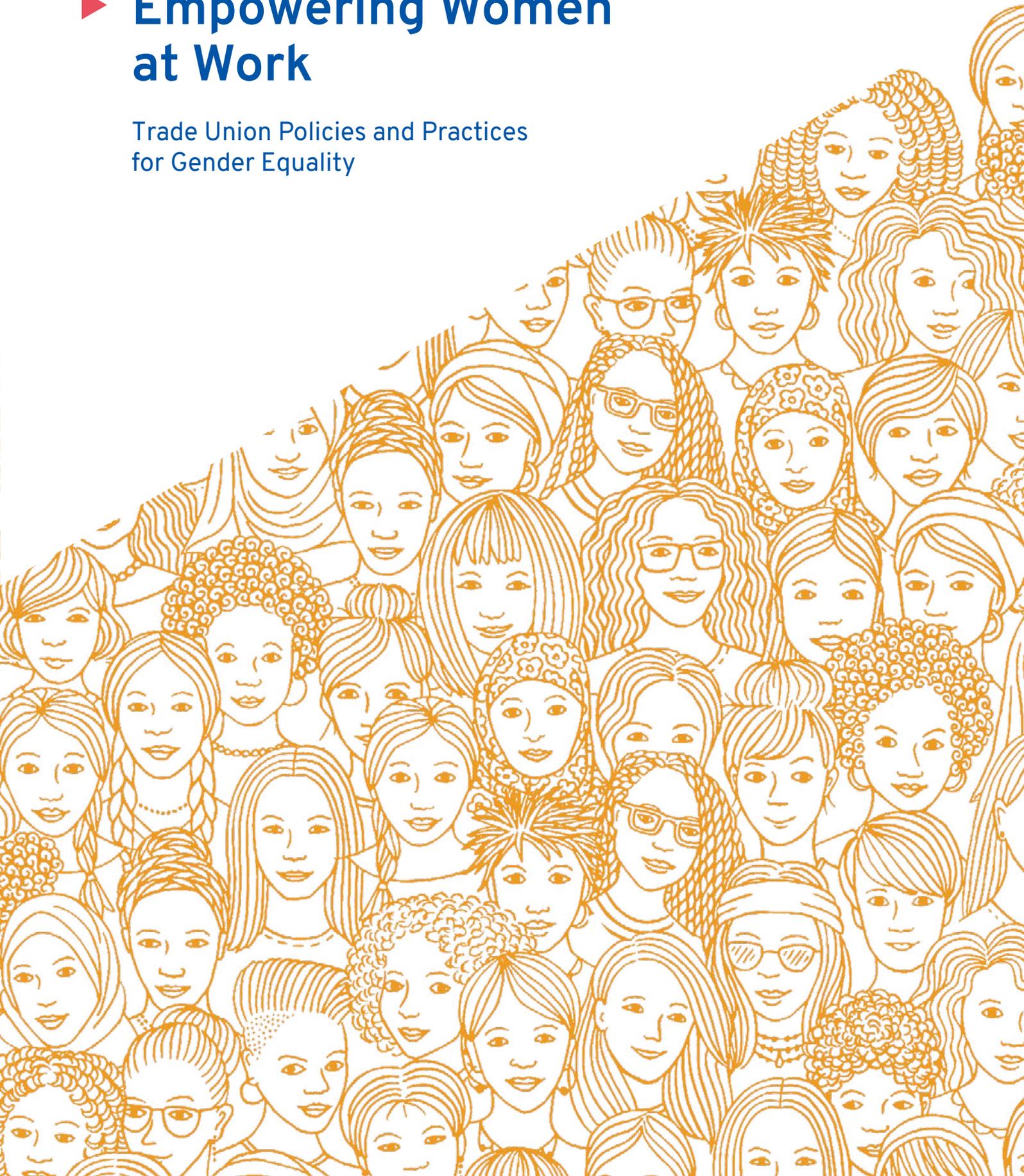
▶ Empowering Women at Work

Trade Union Policies and Practices
for Gender Equality



► Empowering Women at Work

Trade Union Policies and Practices
for Gender Equality



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Executive Summary

Persistent gender-based discrimination and inequalities in the labour market reflect long-established unequal power relations, which carry enormous consequences for women and society. Moreover, the COVID-19 crisis, like no other previous global threat, has laid bare the structural nature of gender-based discrimination and its consequences, with a large number of women working on the frontline as health professionals, care workers, cleaning and maintenance workers, domestic workers, and in other jobs, fighting the virus while often having to balance family responsibilities during lockdowns. These largely underpaid, undervalued and at times insecure jobs are essential for the resilience and survival of societies.¹

Trade unions have a key role to play in promoting gender equality in the world of work by challenging the status quo of gender roles in the workplace. Many of them are doing so by incorporating a gender perspective into their work and, as a result, their activities are actively contributing to the achievement of gender equality.

This paper outlines key areas where trade unions are addressing the barriers that women face in the labour market and in employment, and underlines the fact that gender equality is union business. **Part 1** shows what unions are already doing in promoting women's empowerment, but also what more can be done. This section also describes the existing policy frameworks that are being applied, in particular by G7 and EU countries. Finally, this part underlines the importance of collective bargaining, women's unionization and women's leadership in efforts to address these barriers.

Part 2 showcases 27 good practices implemented by trade unions in the G7 countries and in Member States of the European Union in the areas of: 1) promotion of women to trade union leadership positions; 2) non-discrimination in employment and equal pay for work of equal value; 3) ending violence and harassment against women in the world of work; 4) work-life balance (leave policies, childcare and other care services, and family-friendly working arrangements); and 5) decent jobs in the care economy.

In the concluding section, the authors outline particular persistent challenges on the road to gender equality, as well as lessons learned from various gender-equality strategies. They also propose a series of actionable recommendations for trade unions and other stakeholders with a view to setting a genuinely transformative agenda.

List of acronyms

ACV / CSC	Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond / Confédération des syndicats chrétiens /Confederation of Christian Trade Unions
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations
AMETIC	Asociación Multisectorial de Empresas de Tecnologías de la Información, Comunicaciones y Electrónica
ASÍ	Icelandic Confederation of Labour
CBA	Collective Bargaining Agreement
CCOO	Comisiones Obreras / Workers' Commissions
CEEP	European Centre of Employers and Enterprises
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CGT	Confederación General del Trabajo/General Workers Confederation of Spain
CLC	Canadian Labour Congress
CNV	Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond / National Federation of Christian Trade Unions in the Netherlands
CUPE	Canadian Union for Public employees (CUPE)
COVID-19	'CO' stands for corona, 'VI' for virus, 'D' for disease and '19' for 2019.
EC	European Commission
EI	Education International
EMSC	European Minimum Standard of Competences on Gender Equality
EPIC	Equal Pay International Coalition
EPSU	European Public Service Union
EU	European Union
EU MS	European Union Member States
ETUC	European Trade Union Confederation
ETUCE	European Trade Union Committee for Education

FAI-CISL	Federazione Agricola Alimentare Ambientale Industriale Italiana
FLAI-CGIL	Federazione lavoratori agroindustria
FLESTU	Federation of Lithuanian Education and Science Trade Unions
FNV	Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging / Netherlands Trade Union Confederation
FBZ	Federatie van Beroepsorganisaties in de Zorg
GBVH	Gender-based Violence and Harassment
G7	Group of 7
HORECA	Hotel, restaurant and catering sector
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDWF	International Domestic Workers Federation
ILC	International Labour Conference
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILO MNE Declaration	ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy
ILS	International Labour Standards
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
IUF	International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations
LGBTI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, plus
LVO	Landelijke Vereniging van Operatieassistenten
MEAE	Ministère des Affaires Etrangères / French Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MUT	Malta Union of Teachers
NIC-ICTU	Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions
NU HRCT	Nordic Union for Workers in the Hotel, Restaurant, Catering and Tourism Sector
NVAM	Nederlandse Vereniging van Anesthesiemedewerkers
NVHVV	Nederlandse Vereniging voor Hart en Vaat Verpleegkundigen / Dutch Society of Cardiovascular Nursing
NVLA	Nederlandse Vereniging van Longfunctieanalisten
NVLKNF	Nederlandse Vereniging van Laboranten Klinische Neurofysiologie
NVZ	Dutch Association of Hospitals

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ÖGB	Austrian Federation of Trade Unions
PSA	Public Service Association – Te Pūkenga Here Tikanga Mahi
PSI	Public Services International
PSS	Police Trade Union of Slovenia
RENGO	Japanese Trade Union Confederation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGWW	Strategic Group on Women and Work
SNB-CFE-CGC	Syndicat National de la Banque, de la Finance et du Crédit
SPS	Trade Union of Slovenian Police Officers
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
STC	Servicio y Tecnología del Caucho
STUC	Scottish Trades Union Congress
TU	Trade Union
TUC	Trade Union Congress
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UEAPME	European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
UGT	General Union of Workers / Unión General de Trabajadores
UIL	Unione Italiana de Lavoro / Italian Labour Union
UILA UIL	Unione Italiana dei Lavori Agroalimentari
UN	United Nations
US	United States
Ver.di	Vereinte Dienstleistungsgewerkschaft / United Services Trade Union
VGN	Vereniging Gehandicaptenzorg Nederland / Dutch National Disability Care
W7	Women 7
WE EMPOWER – G7	EU, UN Women and ILO project “Empowering women at work through responsible business conduct in G7 countries”
WEPS	The Women’s Empowerment Principles



Introduction

Women's empowerment is a precondition for a just, sustainable and rights-based economy. Yet, women continue to be disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination and exploitation. Moreover, gender discrimination is responsible for the over-representation of women in insecure, low-wage jobs. At the same time, senior decision-making positions remain male-dominated, even in those sectors where women are over-represented.

These serious gender gaps persist despite national, regional and global policy frameworks, and in some instances have widened as a result of the financial crisis of 2008–2009. More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the precariousness and injustices of the world of work. Moreover, this crisis has the potential to further deepen and exacerbate these inequalities, unless intentional measures to promote equality and dismantle inequality are part and parcel of the response and recovery measures.

Trade unions have a key role to play in challenging the status quo of gender roles in the workplace and promoting gender equality in the world of work. Many of them are doing so by incorporating a gender perspective into their work and, as a result, their activities are actively contributing to the achievement of real equality. Initiatives by trade unions are focusing on promoting women to leadership positions, and on improving the outcomes for women with regard to equal pay for work of equal value, non-discrimination in employment, work-life balance, and preventing and addressing violence and harassment in the world of work.

Trade unions were once a brotherhood of men in large-scale workplaces.² While the situation is changing, men continue to outnumber women in terms of both membership and leadership positions. Where female membership is concerned, the number of unionized women has increased over the last ten years. In November 2019, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) numbered over 200 million members in 332 affiliated organizations in 163 countries and territories across the world,³ of whom more than 80 million were women.⁴ Higher female unionization rates are found in the public sector, where more women tend to be employed.⁵ Within the ITUC and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), women's membership rates average 42 per cent and 43.5 per cent, respectively.⁶ However, where union leadership is concerned, in the case of ITUC affiliates the average representation of women in the highest decision-making bodies is 28 per cent, while in the case of ETUC affiliates only 11 of the 39 confederations have a woman in a key leadership position.

Women trade unionists are helping drive trade union action to dismantle traditional and persistent structural barriers at the intersections of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and class. They have also been advocating on new and old fronts, including economic and social justice for women, gender based-violence and harassment, equitable and sustainable development, and a just transition for climate justice and industrial transformation.

However, the increased presence of women in trade union membership and leadership does not automatically lead to substantive change in terms of gender equality. The process of achieving gender equality is more complicated, and requires systemic change in a range of institutions and areas of action. Good governance, for example, is key to delivering positive gender-equality results. Meaningful changes on the ground require a coordinated, competent and powerful commitment, and clear and effective mechanisms in place within and across government

institutions, in order to translate public policies, programmes, services and budgets into concrete benefits for women and men.⁷

Public policies, in particular, can go a long way to ensuring women's rights and equal treatment, addressing violence and harassment, enforcing equal pay for work of equal value, re-valuing caring activities, adapting infrastructures and working arrangements, and redirecting government spending for the benefit of women and men alike. The social partners, representatives of workers and employers, have a significant role to play in shaping policies and practices through social dialogue so as to ensure that genuine equality between women and men becomes a reality.

This report is divided in two parts. Part 1 sets forth the case for trade union action to address the barriers that women are facing in the labour market and in employment, and underlines the fact that gender equality is union business. It also presents an overview of the most up-to-date international and regional normative instruments and initiatives to guide trade union action on gender equality. Part 2 describes selected and illustrative trade union practices on key gender equality issues and proposes a series of actionable recommendations for trade unions and other stakeholders, with a view to setting a genuinely transformative agenda.

This compilation of illustrative trade union practices on gender equality has been created in collaboration with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) under the EU, UN Women and ILO project "Empowering women at work through responsible business conduct in G7 countries" (WE EMPOWER – G7). It is part of a series of publications on key stakeholders' illustrative practices to achieve gender equality at work. The project is guided by the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), as well as international labour standards on gender equality and the ILO's Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration). Further information on the MNE Declaration, the WEPs and WE EMPOWER G7 is contained in Annexes 1 and 2.

Methodology

This report relies on a variety of sources. It draws on research carried out by the ITUC, the ETUC, the ILO and the European Union, as well as by national trade unions in G7 countries and EU Member States. The selection of illustrative trade union practices featured in this document was the outcome of a three-step methodology: first, taking stock of the mappings and good practices produced within the WE EMPOWER-G7 programme; second, conducting a review of online knowledge products describing good practices on gender equality at work relevant to workers' organizations in G7 and EU countries; third, supplementing the initial list of practices with suggestions received from ITUC and national trade union representatives, aligned with priority topics of the transformative gender-equality agenda of the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work.

The selection of trade union practices was also made with the purpose of showcasing the numerous forms of trade union initiatives undertaken to support gender equality both within trade unions (quota systems to increase women's representation in leadership positions or the representation of marginalized groups, e.g. young workers) and in the world of work (sectoral collective bargaining, company-level agreements, policy research, lobbying, and awareness-raising campaigns).

The practices were selected in the light of their transformative and replicable nature, their positive impact on gender equality, where assessed, and their alignment with the principles

contained in international labour standards and other normative frameworks. Their aim is to inspire gender-transformative action and describe ways in which trade unions can engage in advancing women’s economic empowerment, despite the ongoing challenges.

The examples come from publicly available reports and focus on the experiences of workers’ organizations in G7 and EU countries. Nonetheless, it is hoped they will provide inspiration for a wide range of trade unions, which can adapt them to their own circumstances. Table 1 categorizes the 27 illustrative practices by topic, the geographical location of the trade unions concerned and the type of initiative.

► Table 1. Illustrative practices by topic, geographical coverage and type of initiative			
Topic	Country or other geographical level	Type of Initiative	Total number of practices
Promotion of women to leadership positions in trade unions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global • Austria • Japan • United States 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global campaign • Promotion of youth representation and gender equality • Action plan for gender equality • Convention resolution 	4
Non-discrimination and equal pay for work of equal value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belgium • Iceland • Italy, Malta and Lithuania • Spain • United Kingdom • United Kingdom (Scotland) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual campaign • Equal pay management system • Gender equality training • “Manifesto for digital talent” • Equality auditing • Women’s employment summit 	6
Ending violence and harassment against women in the world of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global • Australia • Canada • Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden • France 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global campaign #RatifyC190¹ • Collective bargaining agreement on domestic violence • #DoneWaiting Campaign and guidebook to stop sexual harassment in the workplace • Report on sexual harassment and awareness-raising campaign • Collective bargaining agreement on harassment and violence at work 	5
Promoting work–life balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germany (2) • Italy • The Netherlands • Slovenia • Spain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company level agreement on supporting care responsibilities • Collective agreement on flexible working arrangements and benefits • Company level agreement on childcare • Company level agreement on paternity leave • Collective agreement on working arrangements and working time • Company level agreement on family leave 	6
Decent work in the care economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Union (2) • Belgium • The Netherlands • New Zealand • United Kingdom (Northern Ireland) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy research for awareness raising • Action plan on gender equality in the education sector • Collective bargaining agreement on wages and working conditions for domestic workers • Collective agreement on long-term care leave • Collective bargaining agreement and awareness raising in the care sector • Policy research and awareness raising on childcare policy 	6
Total			27

¹ See Box 2.

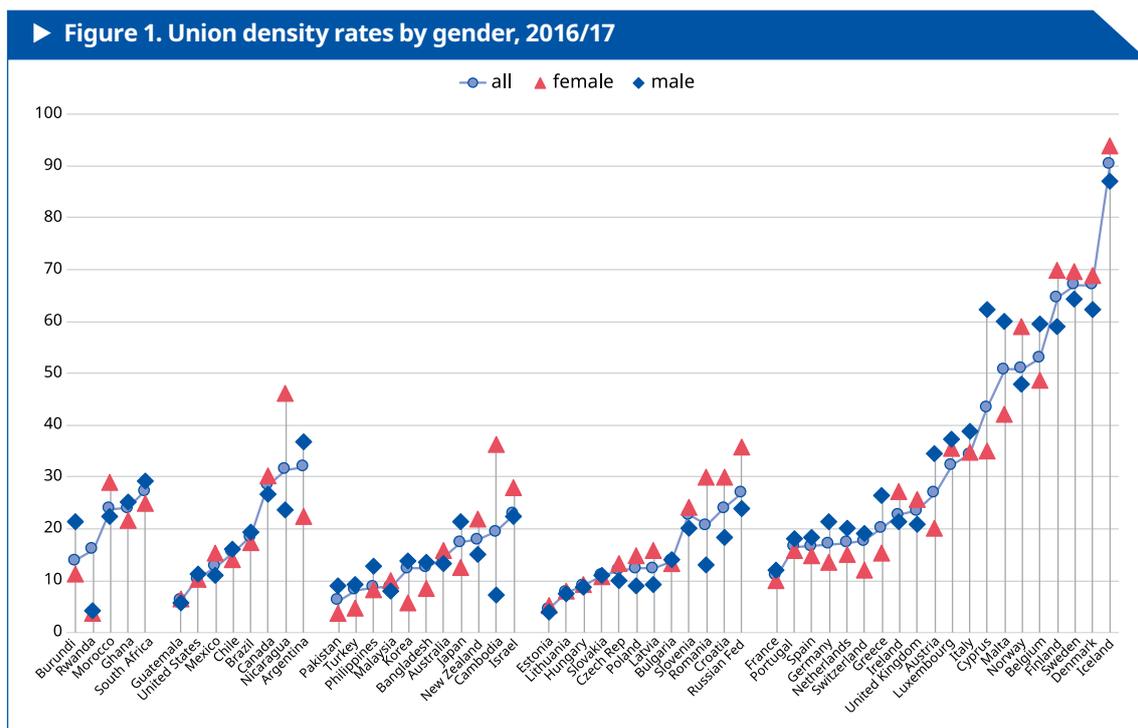


PART 1:

SETTING THE SCENE FOR TRADE UNION ACTION FOR THE PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY AT WORK

At the national level, there is a discernible under-representation of women on national social-dialogue bodies, such as economic and social councils, tripartite commissions and labour advisory boards. Evidence suggests that the presence of women in the bargaining process is essential in attaining outcomes that benefit women.⁸ Thus, it is of critical importance that women have equal opportunities to engage in trade unions and assume leadership positions in trade unions and in collective bargaining processes.

During the past decades, one of the biggest changes in trade unions has been the rise of female membership. This process began around 1970 and has occurred nearly everywhere, with certain countries in northern Europe and the Anglo-Saxon world taking the lead. Today, there are more women than men in trade unions in Central and Eastern Europe, northern Europe, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and the United Kingdom. The lowest unionization rates of women, and the largest gender gaps in unionization rates in G7 and EU countries, are found in Austria, Cyprus, Germany, Greece and Japan (Figure 1). In nearly all countries, the share of female union members is still rising.⁹



Source: J. Visser, 2019. [Trade unions in the balance](#), ILO ACTRAV working paper, Geneva, 30.

This rise of female union membership sets the stage for increased leadership on the part of women, as well as the role of social dialogue in promoting women's empowerment. Regional and international frameworks, in turn, inform national frameworks, and policies are useful in providing guidance for the efforts of trade unions in promoting gender equality at work.

1.1 Social dialogue and gender equality: The case for action

Sound industrial relations and effective social dialogue contribute to good governance in the workplace, decent work, inclusive economic growth, democracy and gender equality. Social dialogue includes all types of negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between, or among, representatives of governments, employers and workers, on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy. This may be a tripartite or a bipartite process.

Freedom of association, which refers to the fundamental human right of workers and employers to form and join organisations of their own choosing, enables workers to come together the better to fight for and protect their social and economic interests, rights and freedoms. It is "the cornerstone of the ILO's approach to development [...] ensuring that all men and women have the ability to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity."¹⁰ It is also of fundamental importance for the empowerment of women, as it grants the right to join or form a union and actively promotes the process of collective bargaining in support of gender equality.

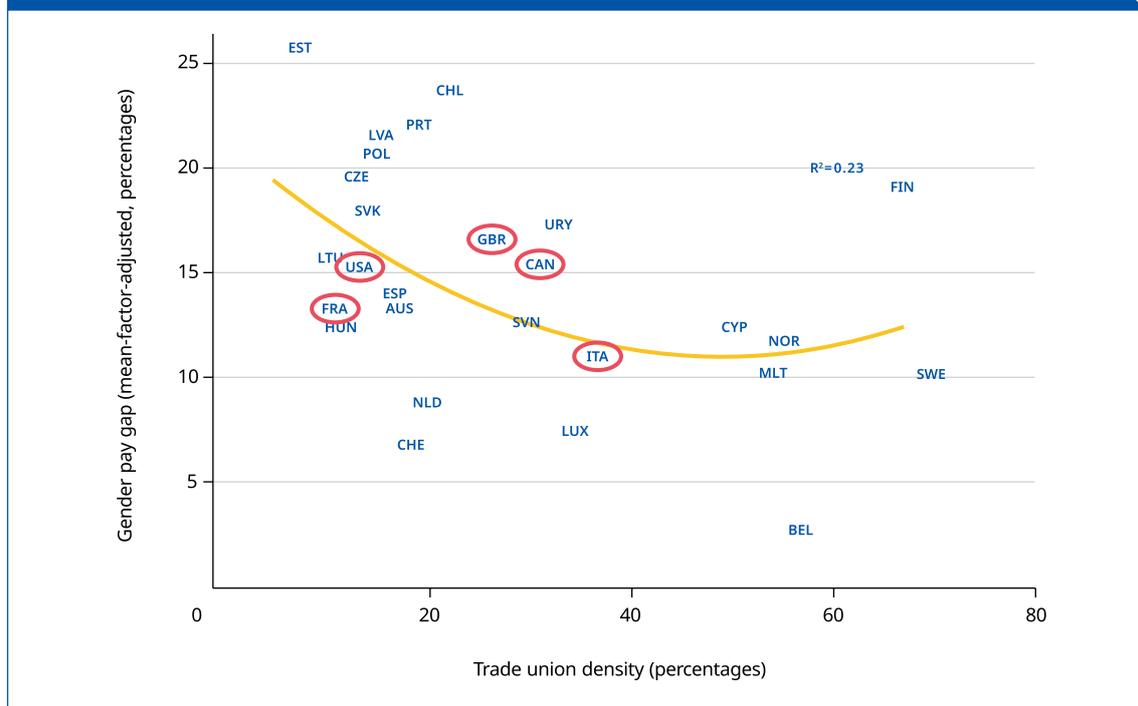
Women's movements and organizations have traditionally played a key role in the advocacy of women's economic, social and political rights, and remain key engines of social change. Women's participation in social dialogue, including collective bargaining agreements (also known as enterprise agreements, collective labour agreements or workplace agreements), contributes to more diverse and democratic decision-making processes. The active participation of women in decision-making bodies is considered to be an important precondition for the pursuit of women's interests in the world of work.¹¹

Collective bargaining, defined as negotiations that take place between an employer, a group of employers or one or more employers' organizations, on the one hand, and one or more workers' organizations, on the other,¹² leading to the conclusion of a collective agreement regulating working terms and conditions of employment, has been an important factor in improving the economic status of women workers and in fostering their economic empowerment.

Gender equality has an important place in collective bargaining due in no small measure to the growing role and action of women within the trade union movement across countries, often institutionalized in the form of women's committees in trade unions. In 2017, for instance, social dialogue at the national level in half to two-thirds of EU Member States involved cases relating to terms and conditions of employment, pension reform, skills, training and employability, and gender equality.¹³ In particular, equal pay, work–life balance, and harassment and violence are issues that have been brought to the bargaining table, with significant labour-market outcomes for women.

In terms of reducing pay disparities within and across sectors and firms, collective agreements can promote pay transparency, higher pay rises for female-dominated occupations, and gender-neutral job evaluations to address gender biases in job classification and pay systems. ILO research shows that in high-income countries a greater trade union density rate is associated with lower gender pay gaps (Figure 2). In the United States, the gender pay gaps experienced by women covered by union contracts are half the size of the pay gaps experienced by workers with no coverage.¹⁴ In Canada, in 2019, women workers who were unionized earned on average over six dollars more per hour than non-unionized women.¹⁵

► Figure 2. Gender pay gap (mean factor-adjusted) and trade union density, latest year



Sources: ILO, 2019, [A quantum leap for gender equality: For a better future of work for all](#), 71, based on ILO, 2018 and ILOSTAT, 2019.

The level and modalities of collective bargaining can also affect the gender pay gap. The more centralized the collective bargaining process, the smaller the gender pay gap.¹⁶ Other elements that are also likely to help tackle overall and specific gender pay inequality are the inclusion of gender considerations in wage setting mechanisms, the availability of formal grievance processes, and women's representation in addressing wage complaints. In France and Spain, for instance, regular equality bargaining, and the adoption of a gender equality plan, is mandated by national law. Belgium adopted a law in 2012 mandating the inclusion of equal-pay measures in inter-sectoral agreements, based on a gender-neutral job classification.¹⁷ This set the legal framework in which trade unions negotiate for equal pay for work of equal value. As a result of this 2012 law, there has been a significant decrease in the gender pay gap in Belgium, now one of the lowest globally.¹⁸

Incorporating a gender perspective in trade union work requires an integrated and transformative approach that has not always been easy for unions, taking into account the specific needs of women in the labour market and their diversity of circumstances. It requires more than adopting special resolutions on women's issues, implementing specific programmes for women, including a women's component in projects, adding a paragraph on women in trade union documents, or organizing women's conferences. While these efforts are positive steps in drawing attention to the issue of gender equality, integrating gender perspectives means, among other things, changing attitudes, providing space and power for women's voices and organization, organizing around different needs, and adopting a gender-focused approach to work and private life.

Trade union activities that meet these requirements are an important vehicle for achieving gender equality in the world of work. By targeting gender discrimination, promoting inclusive wage determination, pursuing specific gender pay equality measures and enhancing women's representation in decision-making, trade unions can contribute effectively to addressing gender gaps, in particular the entrenched gender pay gap.¹⁹

Trade unions have been successful in addressing gender inequalities by adopting a two-pronged approach: on the one hand, pushing for a general gender equality strategy; on the other, pursuing specific improvements in working conditions or pay for women. Trade unions are thus in a unique position to negotiate, for example, collective agreements that help reduce the gender pay gap and push for more inclusive, gender-equal employment and labour markets.

1.2 International policy frameworks

International policy frameworks include international labour standards (ILS) and [core international human rights instruments](#), most importantly the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). International labour standards and other ILO normative instruments are adopted by the International Labour Conference, which consists of delegates from the governments and employers' and workers' organizations of each of the 187 member States. Together, by providing global standards for gender equality, they form a strong and uncontested framework for action.

The [United Nations \(UN\) Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#) calls on states to work towards changing “the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women”. (Article 5).

[The 1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women](#), building on CEDAW, defines violence as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women”. It also recognizes that gender-based violence is a manifestation of gender inequality.

The 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women and its Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action provides a broad agenda of change in [12 critical areas of concern](#), namely:

1. Women and poverty
2. Unequal access to education and training
3. Women and health
4. Violence against women
5. Women and armed conflict
6. Women and the economy
7. Women in power and decision-making
8. Institutional mechanisms
9. Human rights of women
10. Women and the media
11. Women and the environment
12. The girl child

More recently, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes in its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), [SDG 5 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'](#). Its targets include the ending of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, as well as the elimination of harmful practices and recognition of the value of unpaid care and domestic work. SDG 8 "Inclusive economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all" also includes a target relating to equal pay for work of equal value.

[ILO conventions and recommendations](#) set out international labour standards related to gender equality at work. These include: the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) and Recommendation No. 90; the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) and Recommendation No. 111; the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981, (No. 156) and Recommendation No. 165; the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), and Recommendation No. 191; and, more recently, the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and Recommendation No. 206.²⁰ To date, 173 countries have ratified Convention No. 100 on equal pay for work of equal value and 175 countries have ratified Convention No. 111 on non-discrimination in employment and occupation. As for Conventions Nos. 156 and 183, they have received 45 and 38 ratifications respectively.²¹

[Convention No.190](#) and [Recommendation No. 206](#) are the most recent international standards adopted on gender equality. The labour movement has played a key role in the adoption of these instruments, which set out progressive, inclusive and historic labour standards that recognize that all workers have the right to work in freedom from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence. It defines violence and harassment and focuses on eliminating all forms of physical, psychological and sexual violence and harassment, including gender-based violence, in the world of work. The Convention also covers domestic violence, acknowledging its impacts on employment, productivity and health and safety – impacts that the various actors in the world of work can help to recognize, respond to and address.

In addition to these conventions and recommendations, the following two ILO Declarations are important in this context. [The Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work](#), adopted in 1998, commits all ILO Member States to respect and promote principles and rights in four categories, whether or not they have ratified the relevant Conventions. These categories are: freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; the elimination of forced or compulsory labour, and the abolition of child labour; the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation; and the principle of equal remuneration of men and women for work of equal value.

The [Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy](#), adopted in 1977 and updated several times, most recently in 2017, is the only ILO instrument that provides direct guidance to enterprises on social policy and responsible and sustainable workplace practices. Its principles, addressed to multinational and national enterprises, governments, and employers' and workers' organizations, cover areas such as employment, training, working and living conditions, and industrial relations, as well as general policies. All of these principles build on international labour standards (ILO conventions and recommendations, explicitly listed in Annex I of the MNE Declaration) and, as such, include a number of recommendations that are directly or indirectly related to gender equality (see Annex 1).²²

1.3 European Union and other European policy frameworks

EU laws and strategies have been guided by the initial approach of the founding members of the EU to gender pay equality, which was integrated into the Treaty of Rome (1957), under Article 119 (now Article 141). This approach enshrined the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value in the constitutional framework and fostered [a series of ground-breaking binding gender equality and anti-discrimination directives](#).²³ Moreover, the EU has since strengthened its commitment to applying gender mainstreaming across all policy fields.

In 2019, the EU adopted a new [Directive on Work-Life Balance](#). Most recently, the EU committed to work on a pay transparency directive, with a view to tackling the gender pay gap in the EU as part of its new [Gender Equality Strategy \(2020-2025\)](#). This Strategy addresses the issue of equitable employment for women, including in particular pay transparency, work-life balance, and violence against women. Giving both women and men the opportunity to lead and participate in all sectors of the economy and in political life is also a key aspect of the new Strategy. Recently, the EU has revived plans to promote the adoption of the [Women on Boards Directive](#), proposed by the EC in 2012.²⁴ The proposal set the aim of a minimum of 40 per cent of non-executive members of the under-represented sex on the boards of European-listed private- and public-sector companies.

While the European Union's legislative commitments to fighting gender-based violence are still to come, sexual harassment at work was included in the scope of Directive 2006/54/EC²⁵ on equal treatment in employment and occupation; Directive 2004/113/EC²⁶ on equal treatment in goods and services; and Directive 2010/41/EU²⁷ on equal treatment in self-employment.

[Directive 2006/54/EC](#) defines sexual harassment as “any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature [...] with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.” Article 26 (prevention of discrimination) stipulates that: “Member States shall encourage, in accordance with national law, CBAs or practice, employers and those responsible for access to vocational training to take effective measures to prevent all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex, in particular harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace, in access to employment, vocational training and promotion.”

[The Victims’ Rights Directive, Directive 2012/29/EU](#), on common minimum standards for the rights, support and protection of victims, contains some important measures for women victims of violence. The Directive strengthens the rights of victims of crime so that any victim in the EU is entitled to a minimum level of rights, protection, support and access to justice, whatever their nationality and wherever in the EU the crime takes place.²⁸

Social partners in the EU have also sought to reduce gender-based discrimination, particularly violence and harassment. In 2010, European social dialogue partners in the services sectors developed [The Multi-sectoral Guidelines to Tackle Third-party Violence](#) and harassment at work, which identifies key elements of good practices, including: “a partnership approach; clear definitions; prevention through risk assessment; awareness raising, training; clear reporting and follow-up; and appropriate evaluation”.²⁹ The guidelines promote a “holistic approach, covering all aspects from awareness raising over prevention and training to methods of reporting, support for victims and evaluation and ongoing improvement”.³⁰ They were drawn up as a response to growing levels of third-party violence in health care, education, local government, retail, commerce and private security.

Some significant [European Framework Agreements](#)³¹ related to gender equality have been adopted by European social partners, including Business Europe, the European Centre of Employers and Enterprises (CEEP), the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (UEAPME) and the ETUC. Among other things, these agreements provide an action-oriented framework for employers, workers and their representatives to identify, prevent and manage problems of harassment and violence at work, promote work-life balance, and regulate part-time work.

Other European normative frameworks include the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, better known as the [Istanbul Convention](#), a human rights treaty which was opened for signature on 11 May 2011, in Istanbul, Turkey. The aim of the Convention is to prevent violence, protect victims and remove the impunity of perpetrators.

1.4 The G7 gender policy framework

The G7 created a [policy framework for gender equality](#), at its meeting in Biarritz in 2019, which included the promotion of a feminist foreign policy. In March 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic intensified and the implications for women became more visible, members of the 2018 and 2019 G7 Gender Equality Advisory Councils, which are composed of gender specialists and present [recommendations to the G7 leaders](#) during their annual summits, urgently called on G7 member states to take into account the gendered dimensions of the crisis and to prevent the deterioration of gender equality and women's rights worldwide. The ILO, UN Women and the European Union have also [called on G7 nations](#) to put in place measures to promote gender equality amid the [COVID-19 crisis](#).

Previously, the recommendations of the G7 Gender Advisory Council had included the adoption of paid leave for victims of violence, the transitioning of women from the informal to the formal economy and better healthcare access. Among other things, the [G7 Social Communiqué](#) of June 2019 called for the training and integration of women and girls into STEM fields.³² It also issued recommendations for tripartite participation, working with governments on gender-equality initiatives such as preventing gender-based violence and harassment at work, work-life balance issues, and equal pay for work of equal value.

Alongside the G7, the [W7](#) brings together feminist civil society organizations from G7 countries, as well as from other parts of the world. The aim is to ensure that G7 leaders adopt political and financial measures, in 2019 and beyond, which should have a tangible and lasting impact on women's and girls' lives across the globe. The W7 called on G7 leaders to adopt domestic and foreign policies that are truly feminist, gender transformative and designed to redress traditional and patriarchal power dynamics.



PART 2:

GENDER EQUALITY AND TRADE UNION ACTION: ILLUSTRATIVE PRACTICES

Around the world, trade unions have played a pivotal role in organizing workers in the workplace, providing their members with information and advice, and representing their members when negotiating with employers on improving working conditions and workplace policies and when pressing for improvements in national law and practice. There are different types of measures and initiatives that trade unions can take, for instance:

- ▶ raising awareness of gender equality issues and monitoring gender commitments;
- ▶ advocating and campaigning for improvements in national and international law and practice;
- ▶ underscoring statutory rights and improving legislation through collective bargaining agreements (CBA);
- ▶ assisting workers in defending their rights;
- ▶ consulting and representing women workers, taking into account their diversity;
- ▶ promoting equal representation in decision-making, including on issues relating to gender equality;
- ▶ negotiating collective agreements on gender issues with employers and employers' organizations;
- ▶ developing, reviewing and monitoring gender-equality policies at work and in the union itself;
- ▶ developing gender-responsive approaches to all labour issues;
- ▶ contributing to research efforts and making women's experiences in the workplace more visible.¹

The following overview highlights good practices that trade unions have initiated in respect of gender equality at work and women's economic empowerment in the areas of:

- ▶ promoting women to leadership positions in trade unions;
- ▶ achieving non-discrimination in employment and equal pay for work of equal value;
- ▶ ending violence and harassment against women in the world of work;
- ▶ promoting work-life balance and the equal sharing of care responsibilities;
- ▶ achieving decent care jobs in the care economy.

Under these five thematic areas, 27 initiatives are presented by name and country, the trade union(s) involved, the sector(s) covered and the type of measure or initiative. Background information and a brief description of the main results – where available – are provided. References to further resources are included in Annex 3.

2.1 Promotion of women to leadership positions in trade unions

Ensuring that women have a way of organizing and voicing their needs and concerns is a first fundamental step. Awareness-raising campaigns to support women's unionization and promote solidarity among women workers have played a key role in fostering women's organization.² Innovative organizational techniques involving the use of digital technology have been an important enabler of labour organization and collective action, especially for women in the informal economy and migrant workers.³

Equal representation of women as members of trade unions needs to be complemented by proactive measures to promote equal representation in union leadership positions and decision-making processes and bodies. As the world of work has historically embedded traditional gender roles, a male-dominated culture and a disregard for the care responsibilities of women, so too have trade unions long reflected these gender imbalances in their own governance systems.

This is changing as more and more women enter and participate in the labour force, and trade unions are making greater efforts to become inclusive and diverse organizations.⁴ At the global level, there are an increasing number of measures promoting women's equal representation in leadership positions. The ITUC Constitution, adopted in 2006 and most recently revised in 2018, mandates women's rights, gender equality, gender parity in all leadership bodies and the full participation of women trade unionists at all levels. At the 2018 ITUC Congress, the global trade union movement set a target of a minimum 40 per cent representation of women in leadership positions.⁵

The ITUC has also run a number of campaigns: "Count Us In!", which in 2014 set the ambitious target for at least 80 per cent of its affiliates to achieve 30-per-cent female representation on their decision-making bodies by 2018, as well as a five-per-cent increase in women's membership (see more information about the results of the campaign below). The "Decisions for Life" campaign aims to empower a new generation of young women leaders from 14 countries; and the "Labour Rights for Women" project has organized women in vulnerable employment and fostered their participation in collective bargaining and social dialogue. Many global unions have similar schemes: the UNI Global Union, for example, runs a mentoring programme to prepare young women trade unionists for future

leadership, which is reinforced by “40 for 40”, a campaign to ensure 40-per-cent female representation on all UNI decision-making bodies.⁶

While women currently account for only 28 per cent of the membership of the highest decision-making bodies of trade unions globally,⁷ and 35 per cent in the case of European trade unions,⁸ there is an ongoing push for increased diversity in leadership. This is resulting in a more gender-responsive organizational strategy, specifically for women.⁹ In Europe, the majority of trade union organizations have a specific gender or broader equality/diversity committee (respectively 61 and 18 per cent), although around 16 per cent do not. At the same time, 70 per cent of unions have an internal operational strategy regarding female representation in the organization (for example, internal guidelines or quotas).¹⁰ Where the G7 countries are concerned, women’s representation in trade unions shows a similar picture, hovering around 30 per cent. Some countries have used quota systems to reduce the representation gap. The Trade Union Congress (TUC) in the UK, for example, has introduced quotas on collective bargaining committees to ensure sufficient female representation on these bodies; and so have some German trade unions.¹¹

Moreover, women lead at the highest levels of the movement: the ITUC, the world’s largest trade union confederation representing 207 million workers, and three global union federations (UNI Global Union, IUF and PSI) are currently headed by women. An increasing number of national unions are also led by women, as in the United Kingdom.

At the national level, proactive measures such as quota systems have also been adopted by a growing number of unions to achieve a more equal participation and representation of women in the internal governance structure of trade unions and among negotiators during collective bargaining. All the global unions have introduced such quotas, including the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers and the International Transport Workers’ Federation, whose members work in highly male-dominated sectors.

These efforts have positively influenced women’s representation and organizational outcomes, and this has contributed to union revitalization.¹² In Spain, for example, the General Workers Confederation (Confederación General del Trabajo; CGT) implemented a quota system establishing a minimum 40-per-cent representation of each gender on decision-making bodies.¹³

Beyond quotas, women’s committees and networks have been a major factor in the promotion of women’s participation at the national, regional and international levels of the trade union movement. They have also been crucial in advancing the gender-equality-at-work agenda, by advocating for improvements in working conditions and better work-life balance, and building a working environment free from gender discrimination, unfair treatment and gender-based violence and harassment.¹⁴

Trade unions have been working on institutional mechanisms for women's advancement, which include institutional commitments and the establishment of committees, departments or other dedicated bodies, as well as adopting and implementing gender-specific strategies and policies, training women to take a greater roles in decision-making, and addressing violence. Workers' organizations offer non-formal educational opportunities for workers of all ages, and this can provide a training ground for women leaders to enter local, regional, national and international politics.

Box 1: A life story: "What the unions did for me"

Angela Rayner, a British Member of Parliament and shadow Secretary of State for Education, got pregnant at 16 and left school with no qualifications. After becoming a shop steward for UNISON, she said: "[Being in a trade union] *took me from the girl on a council estate [social housing] who thought that she wasn't worth anything, who thought she'd let the world down by getting pregnant at 16 and failing at school. They took me from that to a woman who feels like she can conquer the world, be something, and continue to help people and be proud of who I am. [...] They gave me lifelong learning. We had learner reps in the workplace that gave us opportunities. That's what the trade unions movement did for me.*

Source: TUC150. [Angela Rayner MP. A remarkable journey to Westminster.](#)

At the 2017 Women's Assembly, the ITUC Women's Committee committed affiliates to organizing for leadership as well as for transformation, to reinforcing efforts to achieve equal and equitable representation of women through leadership of unions, and to further develop mentorship programmes for young women. Following a commitment by its 2018 Congress, in 2019 the ITUC launched a pilot training programme, entitled "Women in Global Leadership", which aims to support women's leadership in workers' organizations and so establish the next generation of feminist labour leaders.¹⁵

The practices below illustrate other steps trade unions can take to promote women in trade union leadership positions.

Count Us In! Women in Leadership, Global¹⁶

Trade Union: ITUC

Sector: All sectors

Type of initiative: Global campaign

Background and description: In 2012, the Women's Committee of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) took stock of the status of women in trade union organizations and in the labour market generally. The results were disconcerting. Whilst women's membership of ITUC-affiliated trade unions amounted to 40 per cent, women occupied fewer than 15 per cent of the top two positions in their organizations. Responding to these challenges, the Women's Committee called for a global campaign to accelerate progress

on women's leadership within trade unions and achieve at least 30-per-cent female representation on the decision-making bodies of ITUC affiliates by 2018. The "Count Us In!" campaign was endorsed by the 3rd ITUC World Congress in May 2014, which further extended the scope of the campaign to address key structural issues impeding women's advancement in the labour market, with a particular focus on the role of the care economy.

The results of the "Count Us In!" campaign were evaluated at the 3rd ITUC World Women's Conference/Organizing Assembly in Costa Rica in 2017. Women's membership rates averaged 42 per cent in ITUC affiliates, but women were still heavily under-represented in leadership positions. The high level of affiliate engagement in the campaign has helped to drive major improvements. The average representation rate of women in the highest union decision-making bodies is now 28 per cent, with 7 per cent of top leadership posts held by women. The ITUC "Women in Leadership" campaign is now promoting 40-per-cent participation of women in leadership positions.

"Promoting gender equality through the representation of youth in trade unions", Austria¹⁷

Trade union: "Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund" (ÖGB - Austrian Federation of Trade Unions)

Sector All sectors

Type: Statutory youth representation in trade unions

Background and description: Since 1972, youth representatives have been part of the statutory mechanism of representation in Austrian companies that employ more than five young persons. Through the legal establishment of youth representatives, the ÖGB's youth organization has evolved into a fully representative body of young workers.

Youth representatives have promoted gender equality in the workplace, for example by calling for the recruitment of more female apprentices and encouraging the unions to address the under-representation of young women in both union membership and leadership. Youth representatives have also operated beyond the workplace, proactively reaching out to young workers, for example by visiting youth centres. The executive board of the ÖGB's youth organization has a 50 per cent gender quota, and the union is actively organizing in female-dominated sectors such as catering and hotels.

This practice demonstrates that youth representatives can promote gender equality in the workplace by demanding the recruitment of more female apprentices and encouraging trade unions to address the under-representation of young women.

“Women in Leadership - Organizational commitments for the promotion of women”, Japan¹⁸

Trade union: Japanese Trade Union Confederation (RENGO)

Sector: All sectors

Type: Action Plan for Gender Equality

Background and description: The programme began in 2013, when the concepts of “gender equality” or “diversity” were less commonly understood and the emphasis was more on the “advancement of women”. Only recently, in response to rapidly developing global trends, have the two concepts become better accepted. This has affected the new Action Policy, which RENGO adopted in 2019: “We will Change the Future – Towards a Secure Society”. It seeks to promote workplaces, and a broader society, in which people accept diversity and support one another, irrespective of gender, age, nationality, disability, type of employment, etc. To achieve this goal, RENGO will advance initiatives for the equal participation of men and women and other aspects of “True Diversity,” including the adoption of relevant laws and the improvement of workplace environments.

The Action Plan notes: In order to raise the proportion of women in leadership positions in trade unions, politics, economic fields, etc. to the international level, we will promote the advancement of women by strengthening affirmative action, for example by introducing a quota system. The goal for the share of women in decision-making positions is 30 per cent by September 2020.¹⁹

“Resolution 19: Diverse and Inclusive Leadership for a Thriving Labor Movement”, United States

Trade union: American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)

Sector: All sectors

Type: Convention resolution

Background and description: Union leaders recognize the need for equity in their organizations and in the workplace. A diverse and inclusive labour movement is essential to connecting with and representing the workforce of the future. Resolution 19 was adopted in 2017 and is part of an overall diversity initiative in the AFL-CIO that encourages their bodies to implement measures to increase diversity in their organizations. It followed “Resolution 20: Building a Diverse and Inclusive Labor Movement Now and for the Future” (2013), which required the AFL-CIO to audit diversity throughout its ranks. As progress had been slow, Resolution 19 set up pathways to promote leadership for women, people of colour, immigrants, and members of the LGBTI community, based on the following pillars of action: 1) accountability; 2) recruitment; 3) candidate support; 4) innovation; 5) cultural change.²⁰

The final evaluation is not yet available but some of the challenges that have arisen include countering the anti-gender ideologies that prevail in some unions.

2.2 Non-discrimination and equal pay for work of equal value

While 173 countries have ratified ILO Convention No. 100, globally women still earn on average 20 per cent less than their male counterparts,²¹ while for disabled, indigenous, racialized, LGBTI+ and other groups of women in marginalized and vulnerable situations, this gap is even larger.²² The pay gaps that women experience must be considered within the broader context of gender inequality, including the fact that women have more limited access to paid employment and that their skills are often underutilized, the unequal division of tasks within the household, occupational segregation, and the over-representation of women in low-paid and vulnerable employment. Policies and practices geared towards non-discrimination and equal pay for work of equal value should focus particularly on intersectionality to ensure that the work of women of different backgrounds, identities, and abilities are equally valued in the workplace.

Collective bargaining is key in improving the pay and employment conditions of women workers. Other actions trade unions can take to promote equal opportunities and close the gender pay gap include targeting overall gender discrimination and occupational segregation, enhancing women's representation in decision-making, promoting inclusive wage setting, and pursuing specific gender-pay-equality measures, such as gender-neutral job classifications and evaluations, and the incorporation of work-life balance clauses in collective agreements. In addition, workers' organizations can play an important role in raising awareness and monitoring gender commitments, for instance by conducting gender pay audits and developing action plans at the enterprise level. It has been argued that pay reports or audits are more effective when they involve trade unions in the monitoring and evaluation process.

Trade unions are also bringing legal actions, negotiating settlements, collecting data and campaigning for legislative changes, as well as building alliances to further the cause of equal pay. The joint Education International (EI) and Public Services International (PSI) '[Pay Equity Now!](#)' campaign was a first of its kind at the global level. It aimed to encourage teachers' organizations worldwide to collect solid evidence, adopt union policies and network for well-coordinated lobbying to get governments to commit to implementing pay equity for all. The campaign was launched on April 15, 2010, European Equal Pay Day, as a reminder that a gender pay gap still exists within every single European country. It is no coincidence that April 15 was chosen for Equal Pay Day as it symbolizes exactly how many more days into the year women must work simply to earn the same amount as men for work of equal value.²³

Demands to improve the wage structure in women-dominated parts of the labour market – ascribing increased value to the work performed, in particular in the care economy – can send important social and political signals. This in turn may help to restructure the labour market so that it takes full and equal account of women's labour.

The ILO, the OECD and UN Women jointly established the [Equal Pay International Coalition \(EPIC\)](#), which is an outstanding example of how to accelerate progress towards equal pay for work of equal value within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Goal 8.5). Within this framework, governments, employers, trade unions and civil society have all pledged to accelerate progress towards eliminating the gender pay gap by 2030. These commitments are supported by international labour standards (ILS), most directly the [Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 \(No. 100\)](#), and the [ILO 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work](#), that focus attention on the commitment to eliminate discrimination in the world of work.²⁴ The EPIC illustrates how trade unions can bring about change, with global, regional and national trade union organizations taking part in the Initiative.²⁵

The following practices show what trade unions are doing to promote equal opportunities, achieve equal pay for work of equal value and reduce the gender pay gap.

“March, equal pay month” (“Mars, mois de l’égalité salariale”), Belgium²⁶

Trade union: Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (ACV / CSC)

Sector: All sectors

Type: Annual campaign

Background and description: Every year, the ACV/CSC decrees “March, equal pay month”, because a woman must work until the following March to earn as much as a man earned in the previous year. This annual campaign focuses on one of the causes of the pay gap, analyses it and makes it a public issue to challenge politicians, employers and the general public. Relatedly, the ACV/CSC booklet “Act on the wage gap in your company” provides information on how to determine the pay gap at a company on the basis of the annual social report.²⁷ The annual campaign helps to keep the issue on the unions’ and the public agenda and provides updated information. It is good practice to organize a recurring annual campaign around equal pay. It signals that it is time to take stock, review progress and mobilize affiliates so that the issue does not slip off the union’s agenda.

Equal Pay Standard, Iceland²⁸

Trade Union: Icelandic Confederation of Labour (ASÍ)

Sector: All sectors

Type: Equal pay management system

Background and description: In 2018, Iceland passed legislation mandating companies and institutions in Iceland with 25 or more employees to implement the Equal Pay Standard, undergo an audit and receive certification that they offer equal pay for work of equal value.

Icelandic trade unions, the employers’ confederation and government officials have developed an equal pay management system called “The Equal Pay Standard” to help employers prevent salary discrimination.

On 1 January 2018, Iceland became the first country in the world to legally enforce equal pay for work of equal value. Employers are expected to renew their equal pay certification every three years. Preparations began in 2008 when government officials from the ministries of labour and finance, the employers' confederation and the ASÍ agreed to create the Equal Pay Standard, based on ILO Convention 100. This was the first time that a standard has been developed from scratch in Iceland, and it was also the first standard on gender equality in the world. In 2012, the Equal Pay Standard was introduced.

The amending of Article 19 of the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men was possible because all the social partners involved were committed to ensuring the goal of equal pay for work of equal value.

“GET UP Project”: Gender equality training to overcome unfair discrimination practices in education and labour market, Italy, Lithuania, Malta²⁹

Trade unions: Italian trade union confederation UIL, education trade unions MUT in Malta and FLESTU in Lithuania

Sector: Education

Type: Gender equality training

Background and description: Education and career paths are often influenced from the early stages by gender-based stereotypes. This gender bias in society and in the labour market can affect individual in transition periods, in particular young people who are at the beginning of their career path. There is therefore a need to improve young people's understanding of gender equality and raise awareness of gender stereotypes in the workplace.

The Italian trade union confederation UIL, and education trade unions MUT in Malta and FLESTU in Lithuania, came together and jointly implemented the European-funded GET UP project. The chief priority was to address the stereotyping of educational and career choices and to promote gender equality in education, training and careers guidance, and in the workplace.

The project defined a European Minimum Standard of Competences on Gender Equality (EMSC) for those responsible for human resources in the workplace (directors, employers, trade unions), as well as publishing a report comparing and analysing existing training offers on gender equality, and producing training sheets.

Addressing occupational segregation through a “Manifesto for digital talent”, Spain³⁰

Trade unions and signatories: UGT and CCOO, and the Ametic business association

Sector: Digital sector

Type: Manifesto

Background and description: Artificial intelligence, automation and robotics are becoming more significant in individual jobs, the larger labour market and society as a whole, giving rise to both new opportunities and new risks. With these changes come new and larger social and economic divides, even as geographical divides are shrinking. For example, there is obvious gender inequality in the tech world, which must be addressed in order to tackle occupational segregation.³¹

The “Manifesto for digital talents” was signed by UGT and CCOO, and the Ametic business association, in 2014. It highlights the need to improve education and training to match the need for skills, to adapt to digitalization, and to improve the gender balance in the sector.

The manifesto makes clear demands, which unions have been using in negotiations. Unfortunately, there has not been any progress in the sector in terms of improving the gender balance. An overall policy framework is needed to address the future of work and its impact on gender equality.

“TUC Equality Audit”, United Kingdom

Trade union: Trade Union Congress (TUC)

Sector: All sectors

Type: Equality auditing

Background and description: A key challenge for the TUC has been to have an accurate account of what trade unions are doing to promote equality. In 2001, the UK Trade Union Congress (TUC) introduced a rule committing the TUC and its affiliated trade unions to conducting equality audits and publishing reports every two years. This measure was not only a way for the TUC to obtain information on what its affiliates were doing on equality, but also a tool for the unions themselves to measure and assess progress made in this area, by monitoring what they were doing, identifying any gaps and taking action to address them.

Since its implementation, the Equality Audit has looked at the practical steps trade unions are taking to ensure they reflect the diversity of the workforce. It provides examples of how unions are recruiting and supporting under-represented groups into membership and activism. It also looks at what unions were doing to give these groups a voice in their internal union structures.

The 2018 TUC Equality Audit indicated that nearly all members of the unions responding to the audit were covered by rules or procedures for allegations of discrimination and harassment. In total, 66 per cent of respondents were in unions with women’s representatives, while half of unions had equality action plans in place.³²

The external evaluation of the first TUC Equality Audit concluded that, overall, the process of auditing union structures and equality work had been valuable for most unions. Many unions stated that the Equality Audit had helped to integrate the union’s equality and

negotiating agendas, and a majority felt it had brought to light gaps in union policy and action on equality, which they planned to rectify. Monitoring equality and the ability to adequately analyse the membership database were also highlighted as important benefits.

“Scottish Women’s Employment Summit”, United Kingdom (Scotland)³³

Trade union: Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC)

Sector: All

Type: Major trade union conference

Background and description: The first ever Scottish Women’s Employment Summit took place in September 2012 in Edinburgh, hosted by the Scottish Government and Scotland’s Trade Union Centre (STUC). The Summit included commissions on a number of themes, including occupational segregation, childcare, women in enterprise and rural issues. The participants identified short, medium- and long-term goals. As a result of conference resolutions, STUC affiliate unions have subsequently adopted policies that support action to address occupational segregation.

A number of follow-up mechanisms were put in place after the 2012 Employment Summit:

- ▶ In October 2012 the Strategic Group on Women and Work (SGWW) was established to take forward the actions and recommendations of the Summit. The group conducted a strategic overview of the Scottish Government’s approach to tackling the barriers women face in entering and progressing in the labour market.
- ▶ In April 2013 a Cross-Directorate Working Group was re-established to act as the main vehicle for taking forward work to tackle occupational segregation, and to implement the recommendations of the Summit.
- ▶ A series of subsequent workshops were held on areas identified for specific interventions to boost entrepreneurship amongst women. The workshops contributed to the introduction of the Framework and Action Plan for Women’s Enterprise, launched in March 2014.

While the organizational side and process are well defined, there appears to be a lack of accessible funding mechanisms to sustain the initiatives.

2.3 Violence and harassment against women in the world of work

Gender-based violence is a core trade union and workplace issue affecting workers safety, health and dignity. Trade unions have played a unique and leading role in the global movement to eliminate gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH), whether in the international standard-setting arena or “through collective bargaining, negotiating workplace policies to expose, address and redress sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence,

lifting the issue into occupational safety and health measures, organising more women into unions, undertaking awareness-raising campaigns or building alliances with feminist organisations and civil society”.³⁴

Ten years ago, women trade unionists and allies from around the world came together to organize and secure an international response to preventing and addressing violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH), in the world of work. In June 2019, the International Labour Conference (ILC) overwhelmingly adopted Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206 (see Section 1.2). These historic new international labour standards recognize, for the first time in international law, the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, and pave the way for transforming workplace cultures based on equality, dignity and respect. Convention No. 190 explicitly recognizes that ending GBVH requires confronting its root causes: gender-based discrimination, power relationships and precarious working arrangements.³⁵

Box 2: ITUC global awareness-raising on ILO Convention No. 190, including in the time of the Covid-19 crisis

In June 2020, Uruguay became the first country to ratify Convention No. 190, followed by Fiji.³⁶ Unions around the world have been organizing to demand governments ratify C190 and protect all workers from GBVH, regardless of their contractual status.³⁷ The [ITUC campaign #RatifyC190](#) – for a world of work free from violence and harassment aims to: 1) ensure wide ratification and effective implementation of the new ILO international labour standards to realise a world of work free from violence and harassment with a strong focus on the elimination of GBVH; 2) mobilize and strengthen trade union action for the elimination of GBVH from the world of work; 3) raise public awareness of ILO C190 and R206.³⁸

During the unprecedented COVID-19 public health crisis, the ILO has called for urgent action to ensure everyone’s right to a world of work free from violence and harassment, not only during and after the outbreak, but also to build a sustainable recovery and better resilience in the face of future crises. Efforts to ratify Convention No. 190 and implement both the Convention and Recommendation need to be a key element of response and recovery measures.³⁹

Trade unions are on the frontline of awareness-raising and action to counter the heightened risks of GBVH, including domestic violence, in the COVID-19 context.⁴⁰ Preliminary reports suggest that many essential workers are experiencing increased exposure to GBVH from employers, colleagues and/or members of the public. This includes workers in health and care services – including domestic workers – as well as food retail workers, transport workers, cleaners and others.⁴¹ The shift to working remotely/teleworking from home also has implications in terms of risks to exposure to ‘cyber bullying’ and domestic violence. Trade unions continue to advocate for ratification and implementation, which is “now more important than ever”.⁴²

The ITUC and its national affiliates are sharing information and resources to help unions tackle the issue of gender-based violence in the COVID-19 context. The [ITUC webpage “Unions responses to gender-based violence and the COVID-19 pandemic”](#) provides up-to-date examples of trade union action at the global, regional (e.g. European) and country levels.⁴³

At regional level, the ETUC and its affiliates have been at the forefront of combating GBVH. In 2007, the ETUC worked with European employers to successfully negotiate a European Social Partners’ Framework Agreement to tackle violence and harassment at work. As a result of the implementation of related national actions, a European Commission report

published in 2015 indicated that in 13 out of 31 countries (including France, Germany and Spain) there had been a positive impact on raising awareness of the issue of violence and harassment at work.⁴⁴ Around 40 per cent of respondents, including both employers' and workers' representatives, reported that companies had made changes to existing procedures to prevent and identify harassment and violence, and had implemented new procedures. In 2017, more than 160 collective agreements were in place in ten European countries, addressing the multiple forms of violence and harassment prevalent in the world of work.

Although the United States has to date not ratified ILO Convention No. 190, the trade union movement is using this framework to push for protections through collective bargaining, to promote accountability and transformation within its own structures, and to press for comprehensive legislation at the federal, state and local levels. In 2019, the [BE HEARD in the Workplace Act](#) was introduced. It is a good example of legislation to ensure that all workers are legally protected against discrimination and harassment at work, including in relation to pregnancy and childbirth.⁴⁵ If enacted, the BE HEARD Act would extend legal protections to workers in non-standard employment relationships or under alternative work arrangements, such as workers in the platform and gig economy, unpaid interns, trainees and volunteers. In June 2020, a landmark ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court clarified that unlawful sex discrimination at work includes discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.⁴⁶ The BE HEARD Act would protect workers especially vulnerable to GBVH because of their membership of marginalized groups, including LGBTQ individuals.

Domestic violence and the world of work

Trade unions have long acknowledged that domestic violence is a workplace issue and have engaged in trail-blazing work to ensure that women are safe at work and in their workplace, even when experiencing violence at home.⁴⁷ ILO Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206 refer to domestic violence and its impact on the world of work, including employment, productivity and health and safety. They note that “governments, employers' and workers' organizations and labour market institutions can help, as part of other measures, to recognize, respond to and address the impacts of domestic violence”.⁴⁸ This recognition marks a fundamental change. Historically, domestic violence was considered a “private” issue; now its spill-over effects on workers, enterprises and society at large are embedded in international law, enhancing the positive contribution that actors in the world of work can make towards improving the well-being of victims of domestic violence.⁴⁹ Domestic violence can have devastating physical, economic and psychological consequences for survivors, while control and abuse can make it difficult to sustain meaningful employment.⁵⁰ Trade unions have played a key role in this ground-breaking shift.⁵¹

Other examples of workers' actions range from measures to provide women with effective support and assistance, and working with employers to develop safe reporting procedures

for the victims of GBVH, to providing training so that staff members dealing with such cases are able to do so with the appropriate sensitivity and knowledge. Trade unions also strive to ensure that survivors do not lose their jobs and income due to absenteeism, poor performance or other reasons related to domestic violence.⁵²

In 2014, [DV@WorkNet](#), a Canadian-led international network of researchers, domestic violence experts, social and labour organizations and employers was set up to mobilize research and disseminate knowledge. The network is conducting national surveys in countries such as Canada, Belgium, Mongolia and New Zealand, and provides training and resources for trade unions, employers and policymakers. Other key examples of trade union action include research on the impact of domestic violence at work,⁵³ the [#DoneWaiting](#) Campaign organized by the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), and a [Model Clause on Family and Domestic Violence](#) promoted by ACTU (see case studies below).⁵⁴ In 2016, the province of Manitoba (Canada) became the first to introduce paid domestic-violence leave. This paved the way for the federal government to amend the country's labour code to include five days of paid domestic-violence leave for federal workers.⁵⁵

In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, trade unions are offering information, guidance and assistance concerning immediate and long-term actions that can be undertaken in response to the increased risk of domestic violence during the crisis and beyond, and particularly how affected workers can be protected and supported.

Box 3: Domestic violence and the COVID-19 crisis: immediate actions that can be undertaken by trade unions

- Supporting workers and members working remotely from home by taking immediate and practical steps to protect members affected by domestic violence
- Helping workers who are survivors to develop their own safety plans, and staying in regular contact with them
- Staying in touch with members through union communication channels and providing regular information about safety measures, legal advice, rights and obligations, and how to seek help
- Discussing and negotiating with employers to protect workers' safety and health while they work remotely from home
- Negotiating for language prohibiting discrimination against victims of gender-based violence and harassment in rehiring and maintaining the employment of essential workers
- Providing financial assistance to workers for safety measures to stay safely in their homes or for those who are evicted from their homes
- Putting in place union strategies and awareness raising to protect the safety and health of those working in essential services and the most vulnerable workers, such as homeworkers and domestic workers
- Campaigning for the ratification of ILO Convention No. 190. "The need for the Convention and for it to be ratified is now more important than ever". Even if not ratified, using the provisions in ILO Convention No. 190 and accompanying Recommendation No. 206 as a basis for advocacy with governments and negotiations with employers.

Source: [dv@worknet](#). 2020. [DV@WORK Network COVID-19 Briefings. Briefing 4: Domestic violence and the COVID-19 crisis – what can workers and trade unions do?](#)

Addressing domestic violence through collective bargaining, Australia⁵⁶

Trade unions and signatories: Australian Services Union’s Victorian and Tasmanian Authorities and Services Branch and the Surf Coast Shire Council

Sector: Service sector

Type: Collective bargaining agreement

Background and description: The first collective bargaining clauses addressing domestic violence were pioneered in Australia between the Australian Services Union’s Victorian and Tasmanian Authorities and Services Branch and the Surf Coast Shire Council in 2010. Among other measures, the clause provided for up to 20 days’ paid domestic leave. By 2015, 944 collective agreements in Australia contained a domestic violence clause. These clauses covered 804,649 employees, largely in the private sector, including some of the country’s largest employers and a broad range of industries (retail, public transport, banking, education, manufacturing, airlines and maritime). In 2017, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) ran a campaign for the inclusion of ten days’ paid family and domestic-violence leave in the National Employment Standard. In 2018, this also led to the adoption of a new law to provide five days’ paid family and violence leave.

Stopping workplace violence through awareness-raising, Canada⁵⁷

Trade unions: Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and Canadian Union for Public Employees (CUPE)

Sector: All; Public employees

Type: Awareness-raising campaign; Guidebook.

Background and description: Sexual violence at work is a serious matter and has an impact on all workplace and union members. Trade unions in Canada are committed to addressing and preventing sexual violence at work and recognize that everyone has a right to work in a safe environment.

In 2018, the CLC launched the [#DoneWaiting](#) campaign, which called for economic justice and government action to end sexual harassment and violence, fix the childcare crisis, and end wage discrimination. This campaign provided the needed sense of urgency and supported progress toward ending sexual harassment and violence. By March 2019, seven Canadian provinces and the federal government had introduced paid domestic-violence leave, and new federal occupational health and safety legislation offers better protections for workers who experience violence and harassment at work.⁵⁸

In addition, in 2018, CUPE published [a bargaining guide on domestic violence and the workplace](#), intended to stop sexual violence in the workplace, for local union stewards, health and safety representatives, elected officers and other activists. The guide provides wide-ranging information to those who may have to deal with violence and sexual harassment in the workplace, particularly local stewards.

'We are not on the Menu', Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark⁵⁹

Trade unions: The Nordic Union for Workers in the Hotel, Restaurant, Catering and Tourism Sector (NU HRCT)

Sector: HORECA

Type: Report on sexual harassment and awareness-raising campaign

Background and description: In recent years, there has been growing awareness among Nordic trade unions in the tourism sector of sexual harassment being a serious health and safety problem. A systemic change is necessary for the industry to realize its full potential and make it an attractive industry to work in.

The NU HRCT member unions conducted surveys in 2016 and a report was published. The findings indicated that sexual harassment, including unwanted attention or intimidation of a sexual nature, were experienced widely in the industry. Sexual harassment had been experienced by 35 per cent of all workers in the hotel and restaurant sector, and the number was closer to 60 per cent for women working in frontline service, such as waiters, baristas and bartenders. Young women in part-time employment were most vulnerable. The findings of the study were taken up as part of a recurring campaign.

Many of the NU HRCT member unions repeat the campaign in the run-up to the end-of-year festivities.

Collective Bargaining Agreement on Harassment and Violence at Work, France, 2014⁶⁰

Sector: Banking

Type: CBA between BNP Paribas and the banking union SNB/CFECCG

Background and description: In March 2010, employers and unions concluded a national agreement on harassment at work, which applies to all companies in France and requires employers to establish measures to prevent and address harassment, in consultation with workers and their representatives. The CBA between BNP Paribas, a signatory of the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) since 2011, and the banking union SNB/CFECCG is an example of how the national agreement is implemented.

The CBA covers definitions, prevention, the roles of the different parties, awareness-raising and training, procedures for identifying situations of harassment and making complaints, the establishment of a national confidential committee, and measures to protect victims and witnesses.

As a result, companies now have an official policy to combat harassment. It is not clear whether the gender dimension or gender-based harassment has been a focus. One lesson that has been learned is that, for maximum effectiveness, gender-based harassment needs to be dealt with in its specificity and cannot be subsumed under a general anti-harassment policy.

2.4 Work–life balance

Good practices in relation to a healthy work–life balance and equal sharing of caring responsibilities have been identified in several countries. Negotiated by social partners, and often prompted by trade unions, the examples below show how collective bargaining can lead to better work–life balance policies at sectoral, cross-sectoral and company levels⁶¹.

Social dialogue has played an important role in improving maternity protection and work–life balance, especially family leave schemes and family-friendly working arrangements. Collective agreements have been instrumental in embedding generous maternity-protection and parental-leave policies in national legislation in Nordic and other European countries, facilitating high levels of women's labour force participation.⁶² In the United States, workers who belong to unions have higher wages and better access to paid sick days and health insurance than their non-unionized counterparts.⁶³ In Greece, centralized collective bargaining has increased the length of maternity leave for workers covered. In the European Union, 49 per cent of trade unions have concluded collective agreements for improved work–family balance. In addition, national, sectoral or company-level social dialogue has been key in the regulation of teleworking in Belgium, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden. Work–life balance has also been included on the collective bargaining agenda in Japan, where, in 2017, the government published an Action Plan for the Realisation of Work-Style Reform. Trade unions and employers have provided input and agreed on two major issues: reduction of working hours and equal pay for equal work.

More recently, even more so in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, trade unions have been active in calling for quality public childcare services, demanding that childcare be recognized as a universal aspect of national social protection systems. They have also been calling for increased national and local government spending on quality public childcare services and for childcare personnel to have decent work, including adequate wages, access to labour and social protection, including occupational safety and health for essential workers, and suitable skills development (see Section 2.6).⁶⁴

Box 4: Responding to the COVID-19 crisis with family-friendly policies

Family-friendly policies including childcare services can make a critical difference for working parents in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The following are actions that trade unions can advocate and negotiate for in consultation with employers in times of crisis and recovery:

Implement flexible work arrangements

- Undertake an organizational assessment to determine what kind of flexible scheduling will best meet the needs of workers, including parents and those with other family responsibilities such as caring for elderly or sick family members, in the context of the crisis, while ensuring business continuity.
- Provide flexible work arrangements that respond to the needs of workers and their families. Arrangements can include, for example, teleworking (see ILO guidance), flexitime and reduced workload (see table below). Flexible work arrangements should be based on social dialogue and consultation with workers and their representatives.
- Apply time flexibility (and where possible, location flexibility) in case of teleworking, so working parents can work at the time and in the place most convenient for them. Agree on priority tasks to support workers to be as productive as possible in the context of additional care and family responsibilities. Ensure that all supervisors demonstrate flexibility in cases of teleworking.
- Ensure working parents have enough time to support their children's learning and development, and to spend time with their children to cope with stress. In case of family illness or separation, ensure paid time off to allow workers to care for and maintain contact with family members without jeopardizing income security.
- If flexible working arrangements are not possible, consider alternative support for working parents such as childcare support.

Support working parents with childcare options that are safe and appropriate in the context of COVID-19

- Bear in mind that childcare support can take multiple forms based on feasibility and workers' needs. Employers should ideally provide a mix of measures that reflect the varied needs of workers and their children, including by providing information on the availability of childcare services in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Consider measures that can include on-site childcare centres (as appropriate in the context of COVID-19), emergency childcare, schooling for front-line workers' children (including health workers and other care workers), childcare allowances, childcare referral systems and collaboration with external childcare providers for emergency situations (private or public).
- Consider that some parents prefer care arrangements closer to home, where they have trusted networks of support and/or when they are not able to or concerned about traveling with their child (e.g. long commutes, unsafe conditions, high costs). In such cases, ensure support through, for example, flexible work and childcare allowances.
- Ensure the coverage of workers most in need. Childcare support should cover as many working families as possible, particularly children from the most vulnerable families (e.g. low-income, migrant and informal workers, domestic and care workers, persons with disabilities, single-headed households and parents without support from extended family).
- Ensure that childcare is non-discriminatory, needs-based, accessible, affordable, safe and of high quality.⁶⁵
- Ensure that jobs in the childcare sector are quality jobs. Quality childcare services rely on adequate numbers and decent working conditions for childcare workers.⁶⁶

Source: [UNICEF, ILO, UN Women. 2020. Family friendly policies and other good workplace practices in the context of COVID-19: Key steps employers can take.](#)

The following practices are divided into three areas relevant to work–life balance and care: leave policies, childcare and other care services, and family-friendly working arrangements.

Leave policies

Paternity leave, The Netherlands⁶⁷

Trade unions and signatories: FNV, CNV, De Unie and ING

Sector: Banking

Type: Company level agreement

Background and description: There are two main reasons why this good practice focused on paternity leave was initiated at ING: 1) awareness that the relationship of the father to a new-born child from the early days is very important for all the family; and 2) competition for competent workers in information and communication technology (ICT) in the banking sector: as companies are looking for new talent, the offer of paternity leave is essential for attracting and retaining the workers required. Other contextual factors that contributed to the establishment of the practice were an awareness that in other European countries paternity leave was longer than in the NL, and that addressing work–life balance issues was important. The FNV did not consider the EU Directive on paternity leave – 10 days paid at sick-pay level – to be sufficient, but negotiated for a longer time and better remuneration.

Some of the key provisions are that employees of the ING Bank, a WEPs signatory since 2015, are entitled to three months' paternity leave, of which one month is fully paid (the legal provision at the time was 5 days' paternity leave with 2 days paid).

According to the FNV, the feedback has been positive: the employees are satisfied, the company has not raised any issues, and eligible employees are taking the opportunity to use the leave. The practice has received positive media coverage, and has worked as an incentive for other companies to set up similar structures, demonstrating that paternity leave is essential in the competition for attracting and retaining the needed workforce.

While this initiative focuses on encouraging a father's presence on and around the date of birth of the child, it is not clear whether it has an impact beyond that, e.g. on the father's being willing to take parental leave as well.

Ericsson Agreement on Equality at Work, Spain⁶⁸

Trade unions and signatories: UGT, CC.OO., CGT, STC and Ericsson Spain S.A

Sector: Telecommunications

Type: Company-level agreement.

Background and description: The agreement on equality at work was adopted in 2015. It was framed within a wider context of collective bargaining in which the criteria were set and the means put in place to achieve equality between men and women in the Ericsson Spain company. A management/trade-union commission was established to follow the implementation of the agreement, so that the impact and results could be further analysed.

The key measures are that all employees shall be entitled to the following paid periods of leave:

- ▶ a maximum of 16 hours off work in the course of a year for direct (first-degree) relatives for reasons of medical consultations or care and attention due to illness or indisposition of minor children, spouses, children or elderly persons with some degree of increasing disability;
- ▶ up to 28 hours per year for people with first-degree relatives with a serious, rare or chronic illness, for the time necessary to perform diagnostic tests, medical consultations and / or treatments;
- ▶ up to 1 month due to the hospitalization, serious illness or accident of ascendants of first-degree family members.

Promotion of these measures and the flexibility of the permitted hours will reduce the impact of psycho-social risks and make for a more satisfactory and efficient social environment.

After five years of implementation, trade unions report that the measures are a beginning, but do not suffice to meet the real needs of employees: the time off allowed is much too short to have a significant impact. However, it is an important starting point. In order to address issues surrounding the needs of workers who care for family members, bringing social partners to the table and negotiating a first agreement can help pave the way for gradually improving workers' rights to more care leave.

Childcare and other care services

"People in Ferrero", Italy⁶⁹

Trade unions and signatories: FLAI CGIL, FAI CISL, UILA UIL and Ferrero

Sector: Food production

Type: Company-level agreement.

Background and description: The food sector in Italy has national and company-level agreements, as well as provincial-level agreements. The food sector companies in general have good relations with the trade unions. All agreements for the food sector contain different work-life balance provisions.

In July 2018 a new supplementary agreement was signed, with a “People in Ferrero” section that includes the following provisions for the care of children:

- ▶ free medical examinations at the factory out-patient clinic for children (0-14 years old);
- ▶ summer camps for children aged 6 to 12, for which the employee pays only the transport costs;
- ▶ a 2-year paid internship abroad at another Ferrero factory for children of employees with a permanent contract who have an undergraduate degree from university (max. 10 students per year);
- ▶ a stipend of EUR 800 toward the costs of first-year attendance at university for children of employees with a permanent work contract who graduate from high school with a mark of 90/100 or above;
- ▶ an on-site crèche (for 0 to 3 year-olds) and a kindergarten for 3 to 6 year-olds at the main Ferrero production site in Alba.

As a result, the company has made great progress, not only in treating workers as individuals, but also in relation to their family context, thus improving its reputation as a family-friendly company.

A collective agreement fit for the future, Germany⁷⁰

Trade unions and signatories: Ver.di (United Services Trade Union) and ING DIBa-AG

Sector: Banking

Type: Company-level agreement

Background and description: In 2017, the union reported that this was the first time that a company in its sector had shown so much interest in work-life balance issues, considering it one of its priorities in terms of labour relations. The care provisions are part of a larger collective agreement – “A collective agreement fit for the future” – setting forth both soft and hard measures. Among the soft measures, DIBa offers special arrangements with kindergartens near its corporate locations and financial support for caring for the elderly or paying for childcare. This support includes a financial contribution from the employer of up to EUR 150 a month for the care of an elderly parent, and a contribution to childcare services until the child reaches the age of six, up to a certain limit.

In 2018, a company survey carried out jointly by employer and union investigated whether the agreement was suited to the actual circumstances of the staff. Statistics were collected, and results discussed in works councils and members’ general assemblies. The surveys highlighted the acceptance of the measures in the agreement, but also made clear that certain provisions contained in subsequent agreements made at branch level were not welcomed by all. A telling example was the agreement that one branch of the ING made with kindergartens close to the factory. The survey revealed that parents preferred childcare/ kindergarten close to their homes rather than near to their place of work.

Family-friendly working arrangements

“Together for tomorrow - my life/my life-time: rethinking work”, Germany⁷¹

Trade unions and signatories: IG Metall; regional organizations of IG Metall and Gesamtmetall, represented by the regional associations of employers

Sector: Metal and Electrical Industry

Type: Collective bargaining agreement

Background and description: Demands relating to working time were part of a strategy that had developed slowly, starting with a nationwide campaign. Over time, IG Metall received more and more appeals to push for better working time arrangements. There had not been such widespread campaigns regarding working time since the hard-fought introduction of the 35 hour-week in 1984. In 2013, IG Metall conducted one of the largest surveys in years in numerous companies and found that average working times generally exceeded the legal limits. A further in-depth survey conducted in 2016, harvesting a record number of 680,000 replies, was used as ammunition for the next rounds of collective bargaining. One of the findings of the survey was that workers had to adjust their lives to their working time in 90 per cent of cases, highlighting the difficulties inherent in balancing work and family/social life. Where working time was concerned, the goal was that workers should be given the right to plan and have more control over their working time. Closely related were the demands of IG Metall for better work–life balance provisions.

Key provisions include:

- ▶ More money and more worker control over his/her working time;
- ▶ A one-off payment of €100 in March 2018;
- ▶ A wage increase of 4.3 per cent, as of 1 April 2018;
- ▶ An additional wage increase as part of the collective agreement: 25.7 per cent of the monthly wage once a year; from 2020 this will become an annual payment of €400, independent of changes to the collective agreement. There is also the option to trade this payment for eight free days (two of them as extra days) to fulfil care responsibilities for children or care for family members (in line with different caring needs/medical certificate); this option is also available for employees doing shift work;
- ▶ The right to reduced full-time work, to no less than 28 hours per week, for a period up to two years (and the right to return), with reduced pay.

The results of the collective agreement, in particular the right to reduce full-time work and the right to additional days off for childcare and care, demonstrate that IG Metall has addressed socially relevant issues and contributed to their solution. By introducing a general reduction of working time for full-time workers, IG Metall has created a building block that allows all workers to better combine employment and family responsibilities. It is planned to evaluate the impact of the collective agreement in 2020.

The union demands included the right to reduce working time for all workers. Those who have children, care for the sick or work shifts should be entitled to adjusted, additional remuneration while working a reduced number of hours. In addition, the union demanded a 6 per cent rise in salaries. The employers reacted immediately, particularly regarding the demand for salary compensation on account of reduced working time due to family responsibilities. Not only did they reject the proposal out of hand, but they went a step further and filed a legal complaint on the basis that such a demand was discriminatory vis-à-vis those workers who were already working part time. In order to put pressure on the employers, the union called on workers to go on a warning strike. The response was enormous with more than 1.5 million workers responding. The strikes had a tangible impact on the negotiations.

The union is aware that there are still some outstanding issues, including a new legislative proposal to increase the legal limits of working time. IG Metall is also concerned about carers' leave, arguing that the ten days granted under the legislation, as well as the compensation, does not adequately address the problem. IG Metall continues with its campaign on work-life balance and the implementation of the newly agreed rights.

Working arrangements and working time, Slovenia⁷²

Trade unions and signatories: The Police Trade Union of Slovenia (PSS) and Trade Union of Slovenian Police Officers (SPS); The Government of the Republic of Slovenia (the Minister of the Interior).

Sector: Police officers

Type: Collective agreement.

Background and description: The initial collective agreement negotiated between the Slovenian State and the Police Trade Union of Slovenia (PSS) in 2012 got off to a difficult start, with the State initially refusing to negotiate. During that time, the Slovenian government had been introducing crisis-related austerity measures, which were pushing wages downward. The PSS was concerned as these measures were also affecting certain benefits, such as reimbursement schemes, which the police, given the nature of their work, was using considerably more than other parts of the public sector. Moreover, many police officers, women and men, were demanding better parental rights. When the State refused to negotiate, the PSS decided to go on strike, a move which was supported by 80 per cent of the union membership.

Key provisions of the collective agreement include:

- ▶ Parents of school children can take at least 10 days of their annual leave during school holidays. If both parents are police officers, they have the right to use their annual leave at the same time.

- ▶ Parents cannot be stationed or transferred to another unit more than 30 km from their current place of work until their child is seven years of age. This applies to one of the parents of a police family, and in the case of a single-parent family.
- ▶ This right is also guaranteed to a worker who takes care of a seriously mentally or physically disabled family member.
- ▶ Parents cannot be expected to work past 15:30, unless the parent in question gives her/his agreement to different working arrangements. This protection is guaranteed for pregnant and breastfeeding workers and those who are taking care of a child up to three years of age, and in the case of a single-parent family up to seven years of age. If both parents are police officers, this right may be exercised by one of the parents.

The collective agreement was initially agreed for a period of five years, with automatic prolongation of three years unless one of the contracting parties denounces the contract within six months of its expiration date.

Despite the progress made, the PSS notes that there are still some important outstanding issues, including the assessment and promotion of women who have been on maternity and parental leave, and the extension of carers' leave to cover the care of elderly dependents.

2.5 Decent work in the care economy

The care crisis and the quality of care jobs are a trade union priority. Cuts in funding and personnel in public care services, applied as part of the austerity measures in reaction to the financial crisis of 2008-2009, have had a double impact on women. Women have been finding it harder to get decent jobs; in most countries the pressure to reduce social investment has meant that it is mainly women who end up filling the gap as unpaid carers. This in turn keeps them out of the paid workforce for even longer, or forces them to accept underpaid and undervalued jobs, often without any security net. Meanwhile, the care sector itself has maintained high rates of precarious work and low pay.

Trade unions have long advocated for a shift towards investing in the care economy, arguing that the economic rationale for public investment nowadays must take account of gender and apply sensitive, socially inclusive macroeconomic policies.⁷³ The majority of respondents to a 2016 ITUC Gender Equality Survey pointed out the critical importance of embedding gender-equality principles in trade union structures and culture. While the union movement is developing a care economy agenda, with a special focus on organizing across the care sector, in union ranks the care agenda still needs developing, enabling both women and men to balance their trade union roles with their jobs and unpaid care work.⁷⁴

The trade union movement, in close collaboration with other domestic workers' organizations, has been pivotal in the adoption and the promotion of the ILO Domestic

Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), the first international labour standard that recognizes the right to decent work of this category of care workers. The ITUC, in cooperation with the IDWF (the first global “federation” of domestic workers’ organizations), the IUF and other global federations launched the global “12 by 12” campaign, with the aim of securing 12 ratifications of Convention No. 189 by the end of 2012. This activism has also promoted significant reforms of national legislation, resulting in the recognition of basic labour rights for domestic workers, including a minimum wage, a written contract of employment, daily and weekly rest times, restrictions on in-kind payments, and respect for the right to join a union and to engage in collective bargaining.⁷⁵ Although more efforts are needed, Convention No. 189, combined with trade union action, has delivered social and economic justice for millions of domestic workers by recognizing their rights as workers in law and in practice.

In 2019, global unions held a global day of action to support investment in the care economy (on 7 October, World Day for Decent Work). Since 2017, the PSI has included a clear concern for the gender responsiveness of public services in its work, highlighting the role of public services in realizing gender justice and sustainable development.⁷⁶

The call made by the ITUC in 2016 has been embedded in the [ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work](#) and has been echoed during the COVID-19 crisis. This is the right and long-overdue time to reconsider the value we give to certain drivers of the economy. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated the role that women play in providing care and other services in essential areas, often as a majority of the workforce, and how societies and economies depend on care and care work that is decent and adequately valued.

Promoting freedom of association for care workers and employers, social dialogue and the right to collective bargaining is of paramount importance. The ILO’s “5R Framework for Decent Care Work” represents a successful recipe of legislative and policy measures for achieving decent work in the care economy. Its five key components are Recognizing, Reducing and Redistributing unpaid care work; Rewarding paid care work through more and better quality care jobs; and ensuring Representation, social dialogue and collective bargaining for care workers.⁷⁷

“She works hard for the money”, European Union⁷⁸

Trade Unions: European Public Service Union (EPSU)

Sector: Health and Social Care

Type: Policy research

Background and description: Low pay is a major problem in certain parts of the public services – particularly those where women make up the majority of workers.

Description: In 2018, the EPSU commissioned a study conducted by the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI). The “She works hard for the money” report investigates the situation in the health and social care sectors and reports on what trade unions are doing to address the issue. The data from this study confirms that workers in lower-skilled health and social care assistant positions earn considerably less than the national average wage in their country. It also shows that the higher the proportion of women in the sector, the lower the average relative income.

The report argues that the wage penalty for working in female-dominated sectors and occupations, such as health and social care, can be explained by the underfinancing and privatization of social care, weaker bargaining power in these sectors than in many male-dominated sectors, and the fact that care work is subject to a general undervaluation of what often continues to be seen as women’s work.

Based on the policy evidence, EPSU affiliates around Europe, for instance in Finland, Germany, Sweden and the UK, have been developing collective bargaining policies, using legal action and pushing for legislative change to help them address the persistent problem of low pay in sectors dominated by women.

Research and data are tremendously helpful in flagging up the issues and bringing forth strong evidence. However, the political will to tackle persistent low pay and labour market segregation remains weak. The drivers of low pay have been identified in all their details, but there is no consistent political will to address the problem. The COVID-19 pandemic offers an opportunity for transformative action on this front.

Gender Equality Action Plan, (ETUCE), European Union⁷⁹

Trade unions: European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE)

Sector: Education

Type: Action Plan

Background and description: The education sector and the teaching profession are still disappointingly unequal on such gender-related issues as pay, career prospects, work-life balance and violence. By producing the ETUCE Action Plan on Gender Equality (2020), education trade unions across Europe have shown that employees and their unions can take the lead in making the education sector fairer and more attractive for women and men. The plan sets out concrete measures to improve gender equality at national, regional and local level. It covers six key topics: gender stereotypes and gender roles, vertical gender segregation in the education sector and within trade unions, difficulties in reconciling work and private life, gender pay and pension gaps, horizontal gender segregation in the education sector, and gender-based violence and harassment.

The Action Plan lists numerous actions to be taken in tackling each of the six key issues, which will enable the monitoring of results in due course.

“Fair collective agreement on wages and working conditions for domestic workers employed via service vouchers”, Belgium⁸⁰

Trade unions: Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (ACV/CSC) and FGBT Horval

Sector: Domestic Workers

Type: Collective bargaining agreement

Background and description: Since June 2019, trade unions and employers in Belgium have been negotiating to conclude a fair collective agreement on wages and working conditions for domestic workers employed via service vouchers.

While all salaries have increased by 1.1 per cent in Belgium, only domestic workers’ employers still categorically refuse to negotiate a pay rise worthy of the name. Yet, domestic workers are the most vulnerable workers, being among the lowest paid in Belgium and facing some of the hardest working conditions.

In November 2019, ACV CSC and FGBT Horval went on strike and organized a massive gathering to make the voice of domestic workers heard. Together they called for:

- ▶ an increase in the subsidies granted to the sector by the government;
- ▶ a slight increase in the service voucher rate;
- ▶ full indexation of the exchange value.

The ACV/CSC has also conducted a survey of the domestic work sector in Belgium (2018). It was sent to 51,000 persons and yielded 7,400 replies. Belgium’s 160,000 domestic workers, who are paid using the service vouchers scheme, won a pay rise after walking out on strike. Cleaners and housekeepers will see their gross pay increase by 0.8 per cent, back-dated to 1 January, after unions and employers reached an agreement in the first week of February 2020. Other agreed measures include an extra 10 per cent allowance for taking ironing work home, better leave for parents and caregivers, and the drafting of a new charter to combat inappropriate behaviour.

Collective agreement on long-term care leave, The Netherlands⁸¹

Trade unions and CBA signatories: NVZ (Dutch association of hospitals), FNV, CNV Zorg en Welzijn, FBZ, NU’91, BRV, NHV, NVAM, LVO, Donor, NVHV, VF&O, NVLA, NVLKNF, VITHaS, Landelijke vereniging van MS verpleegkundigen and VGN

Sector: Hospitals

Type: Collective agreement

Background and description: Carers' leave has been an important issue for many years in the hospital sector. In 2017, the hospital employers found it necessary to reach an agreement because many healthcare workers have family care responsibilities: one in three employees provides informal care in addition to their paid work. What is more, the care sector employs a majority of women.

Key provisions of the agreement include:

- ▶ Workers in the hospital sector are entitled to 11 weeks of paid leave per year to provide home nursing in the event of the need for terminal or palliative care on the part of their spouse or relationship partner, their child or a child of the spouse or relationship partner, or an adopted child; or a foster child or parent living at the same address.
- ▶ It is obligatory for an employer to discuss possible care responsibilities with each worker annually.
- ▶ The employer must adjust working times or make other arrangements, if necessary, to facilitate a worker's taking care leave.

When a worker with care responsibilities takes carer's leave, a substitute will be arranged. The workers concerned considered this a necessary measure because taking leave would otherwise burden their colleagues.

Decent work for care workers, 2018, New Zealand⁸²

Trade unions and CBA signatories: Public Service Association – Te Pūkenga Here Tikanga Mahi (PSA), E tū

Sector: Care sector

Type: Collective agreement and awareness-raising campaign

Background and description: The PSA is the largest union in New Zealand, with 70,000 members, 74 per cent of whom are women, working in the public and community services. Over 25,000 PSA members are employed in the health and disability sector, including the provision of community-based care services. PSA is supporting tri- and bipartite discussions to ensure security and protection for support workers in the care economy, including contractors on digital platforms.

The PSA has played a vital role in starting to build a new care economy that will benefit both care providers and recipients. A union campaign conducted by the PSA and E tū (New Zealand's largest private-sector union) for "decent pay, decent work, decent lives" for both workers and service users helped secure a 20 per cent equal-pay increase for thousands of home care workers, an end to zero-hour contracts and reimbursement for travel time and costs between client visits, as well as pay equity for aged care, disability, home support, vocational disability, mental health and addiction support workers. Both agreements were enshrined in relevant legislation.

To ensure a fair and sustainable care sector, the relevant parties also discuss how to attract and train workers, protect them from violence and harassment and enable them to get organized. These issues are particularly pertinent in promoting decent work for platform workers. For platform users themselves, flexibility, choice and control over when, where and by whom a care service is provided are the key attractions of the business model. However, care workers' job security, protection of their terms and conditions, continuous training, safety and having a collective voice must also become an integral part of this service model – and unions are well positioned to achieve this.

'Care, Cost and Gender Equality', United Kingdom (Northern Ireland), 2019⁸³

Trade unions: Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NIC ICTU)

Sector: Childcare system

Type: Research on childcare policy for awareness-raising

Background and rationale: Childcare in Northern Ireland is a policy issue that needs careful and comprehensive consideration, for example:

- ▶ Households in Northern Ireland are increasingly paying for childcare and having to use more of it. At the same time, public expenditure is disproportionately aimed at funding childcare through social transfers. Public support for childcare must be rebalanced towards greater provision and less reliance on reimbursement.
- ▶ Increasing women's access to decent employment should be a key policy aim of a comprehensive childcare system. At the same time, consideration must also be given to supporting parents by enhancing their entitlements to paid parental leave and flexible working.
- ▶ The current childcare situation is characterized by low pay and little or no career progression. The workforce is also almost entirely female. While greater access to childcare can improve the prospects of many women workers, this should not be at the expense of workers in the childcare sector. Improvements in support for childcare provision must go hand in hand with the quality of childcare jobs.

A policy paper published in 2019 as part of NIC ICTU "Better Work Better Lives" campaign represents the coming together of 23 unions within Northern Ireland to represent the interests of over 200,000 workers.

By engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, including political parties, and becoming involved in civil society campaigns such as "Childcare for All", the ICTU has sought to chart a better way forward for mothers, families, children and childcare workers.



Conclusions

Trade unions play a major role in addressing gender inequalities and discrimination. Collective agreements have been their main vehicle. They are good for workers in general, but also have important advantages for women in the labour market. In highly unionized companies and sectors of the economy, as well as in countries with a high coverage of collective bargaining agreements, there is a general trend towards shorter working hours for both women and men, more flexible work options under secure employment conditions, and better protection for non-standard workers, in addition to a reduced gender pay gap. The issues of equal pay, work–life balance, and violence and harassment in the workplace have been addressed mainly through collective agreements.¹ However, as this paper shows, union action to promote gender equality can take many different forms, ranging from strikes to training materials to fighting gender-based violence. The good practices featured here include equality standards, surveys, studies and the collection of data relating to gender-equality issues, as well as one-off or annual campaigns that challenge different forms of discrimination.

It is important to highlight the good practices that aim to strengthen commitment to gender equality within unions, where women continue to be under-represented in decision-making positions, including negotiation teams. In many cases, policies to address these inequalities have been launched and supported by women’s committees within the trade unions concerned. Measuring the impact of these policies presents particular challenges. Firstly, the practices introduced are usually time-limited and lack proper monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Allocation of adequate resources and political commitment are significant factors in this respect. Secondly, in times of crisis, as in 2008–09, gender equality policies tend to take a back seat, despite the fact that some groups of women are particularly affected by the impact of such crises. More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic is threatening to reverse some of the gains made towards gender equality. Thirdly, rapid changes in the labour market are producing more social and economic divides. There is no clear policy framework that addresses women’s under-representation overall, as well as sector-specific forms of discrimination.

Structural transformation of labour markets due to globalization and digitalization, compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, present enormous challenges for trade unions. Mainstreaming a gender/intersectional perspective into their work should no longer be a choice, but a necessity.

Challenges and lessons learned

Despite the progress made in recent years, including ILO Convention No. 190 and the Istanbul Convention, implementation remains a major challenge, as national policy frameworks are slow in taking up international standards. Setting binding, time-sensitive targets for establishing gender equality in the workplace, or introducing quota systems to

improve the number of women in decision-making positions, are hotly contested measures, although they have been shown to be very effective in enhancing gender equality.

Large organizations, including trade unions, still exhibit a male-dominated organizational culture, particularly in sectors where the majority of workers are men. But even in sectors such as health and education, where women make up most of the workforce, women remain under-represented in decision-making positions. It is doubtful whether there can be a cultural shift without more women in decision-making positions, reaching a critical mass of at least 33 per cent.

The allocation of resources and funding is a political choice and generally reflects organizations' priorities. Funding for projects promoting gender equality remains limited and has hardly been at the level the issue merits. Pressure from women's committees in trade unions draws attention to issues such as equal pay, work-life balance and gender-based violence, and generates funding for specific projects. However, as many of the illustrative good practices indicate, such projects have seldom been able to ensure proper follow-up in terms of measuring the results and drawing appropriate lessons from them.

The gender pay gap has not significantly reduced in G7 and EU countries, remaining at a high of 16 per cent, despite the host of international, regional and national commitments. Campaigns, studies and collective agreements have not been sufficient to trigger significant progress. Similarly, the gendered segregation of the labour market is as fossilized as it was 50 years ago, and this is directly related to pay issues. Health care workers, for example, whose importance in providing an essential service has only recently been acknowledged, are mostly women; and where women are in the majority, pay is generally low. More than projects and programmes are required to tackle this issue, as it is deeply ingrained in the structure of the labour market and the economy, reliant as it is on the so far immeasurable extent of unpaid work that women perform.

The adoption of ILO Convention No. 156 in 1981 has been instrumental in shaping union campaigns in respect of work-life balance (such as the ITUC's "Decent Work, Decent Life for Women" campaign in 2008). These efforts have been bringing work-life balance issues into workplace discourse for over a decade, with companies and employers acknowledging that supporting a healthy work-life balance not only guarantees better worker retention rates, but also boosts productivity. Yet, some union practices show that there is still little understanding of the different needs of working parents and carers, and how they can be effectively addressed so that all parties are better off.

Trade unions are uniquely placed to address gender-based discrimination in the workplace. Unions can use all the tools available to them to address these issues with success, whether collective agreements, campaigns or strike action. It is also noteworthy that tripartite agreements driven by top-down initiatives and relying on hard evidence can be particularly powerful in introducing structural shifts in respect of gender equality.

The way forward – actionable recommendations

For governments:

- ▶ Pursue national legislation on gender equality, including inter alia equal pay for work of equal value, work–life balance and gender parity, with a view to establishing de facto equality; pay particular attention to women’s health and reproductive rights and invest in the care economy;
- ▶ Ratify and effectively implement the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and other key ILO conventions related to gender equality at work (Nos. 100, 111, 156, 183 and 189);
- ▶ Ensure an ongoing commitment to end gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work in all its forms, to prevent it and to protect the survivors of gender-based violence and harassment;
- ▶ Develop gender equality standards for the economy in concertation with the social partners;
- ▶ Make use of targets and adequate measures to raise the number of women in decision-making positions and processes;
- ▶ Ensure regular gender-disaggregated data collection, analysis and dissemination;
- ▶ Initiate and support studies of gender in the labour market, paying particular attention to intersectionality and taking into account the role of unpaid care and household work and how it intersects with paid work for distinct groups of workers in situations of vulnerability;
- ▶ Ensure that social security (pension arrangements/health provision) is de-linked from working life, and provide a secure base for all women and men to prepare for equitable retirement provisions;
- ▶ Strongly consider – unless already established – the creation of an independent agency responsible for monitoring the implementation of gender equality, including in collective agreements, and having the authority to apply adequate punitive correctional measures;
- ▶ Ensure women’s rights to social security and guarantee that social-protection and taxation systems are gender-responsive;
- ▶ Improve the availability, accessibility, affordability and quality of publicly funded care facilities and services;
- ▶ Ensure paid carers’ rights, including occupational safety and health, adequate working conditions and remuneration, training opportunities and equal pay for work of equal value;
- ▶ Value unpaid care and foster the societal and economic changes required to establish a functioning and equitable care economy;
- ▶ Ensure adequate and quality provision of out-of-school care, and bridge the gap between school hours and regular working hours.

For trade unions:

- ▶ Establish a global monitoring framework to assess the impact of all levels of collective agreements on gender equality; use the findings to highlight the benefits of gender equality for workers, employers and society at large;
- ▶ Develop and maintain a database of model agreements specific to gender equality in different sectors;
- ▶ Make available adequate resources to further awareness of gender equality;
- ▶ Implement established global and national targets on parity decision-making in trade unions, supported by quotas (where lacking), timetables and action plans;
- ▶ Provide relevant training for members on gender-equality issues, as well as specific training on gender-based violence and harassment at work;
- ▶ Undertake a campaign to promote ratification of the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190);
- ▶ Develop a general toolkit for unions to support gender mainstreaming, disseminate it and monitor its use;
- ▶ Work towards gender-sensitive collective agreements and identify successful drivers for including gender-equality issues;
- ▶ Ensure that gender policy is adequately resourced;
- ▶ Develop gender-equality action plans as a policy measure in trade unions;
- ▶ Finance and develop studies to gain a better understanding of the drivers of inequalities;
- ▶ Audit union structures and policies from a gender perspective;
- ▶ Maintain annual campaigns on specific issues, such as the gender pay gap and gender-based violence and harassment at work;
- ▶ Organize the systematic collection of past and present collective agreements that include gender equality clauses, in order to assess their usefulness and provide models for future agreements;
- ▶ Involve as many union members as possible in gender-sensitive campaigns and actions, and in developing new actions.

For social partners (workers' and employers' organizations):

- ▶ Promote collective bargaining as an effective way to improve gender equality and respect at work;
- ▶ Ensure equal pay for work of equal value;
- ▶ Apply gender mainstreaming to all collective agreements, with monitoring and evaluations carried out on a regular basis;
- ▶ Ensure that external experts engaged in negotiations understand gender mainstreaming and gender equality, and support this by providing training;
- ▶ Establish gender parity in negotiating teams;
- ▶ Promote collective agreements that acknowledge the diversity of families, such as single-parent families, recognize adoptive and same sex parents' rights, and so on;
- ▶ Tackle stereotypes so as to increase the take-up of paternity leave and improve the work-life balance of both women and men;
- ▶ Give employees room to find their own solutions where working time is concerned, especially in sectors such as healthcare; flexibility should be driven by the workers themselves, and the right to disconnect from technology-based working devices enforced.



ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Principles of the ILO MNE Declaration

	PRINCIPLES DIRECTED TO GOVERNMENTS	PRINCIPLES DIRECTED TO ENTERPRISES
General Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further the aim of the Declaration by adopting appropriate laws and policies, measures and actions, including in the fields of labour administration and public labour inspection [paragraph 3] • Ensure equal treatment between multinational and national enterprises [paragraph 5] • Ratify all the Fundamental Conventions [paragraph 9] • Promote good social practice in accordance with the MNE Declaration among MNEs operating in their territories and their MNEs operating abroad [paragraph 12] • Be prepared to have consultations with other governments whenever the need arises [paragraph 12] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect the sovereign rights of the state and obey national laws and respect international standards [paragraph 8] • Contribute to the realization of the fundamental principles and rights at work [paragraph 9] • Carry out due diligence, taking account of the central role of freedom of association and collective bargaining, industrial relations and social dialogue [paragraph 10] • Consult with government, employers' and workers' organizations to ensure that operations are consistent with national development priorities [paragraph 11]
Employment	<p>Declare and pursue, as a major goal, an active policy to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment, and decent work [paragraph 13]</p> <p>Develop and implement an integrated policy framework to facilitate the transition to the formal economy [paragraph 21]</p> <p>Establish and maintain, as appropriate, social protection floors within a strategy to progressively ensure higher levels of social security [paragraph 22]</p> <p>Take effective measures to prevent and eliminate forced labour, provide victims with access to an appropriate remedy, develop a national policy and action plan, and provide guidance and support to employers [paragraphs 23-24]</p>	<p>Endeavour to increase employment opportunities and standards, taking the employment policies and objectives of governments into account [paragraph 16]</p> <p>Before starting operations, consult the competent authorities and the national employers' and workers' organizations in order to keep employment plans, as far as practicable, in harmony with national social development policies [paragraph 17]</p> <p>Give priority to the employment, occupational development, promotion and advancement of nationals of the host country [paragraph 18]</p> <p>Use technologies which generate employment, both directly and indirectly; and take part in the development of appropriate technology and adapt technologies to the needs of and characteristics of the host country [paragraph 19]</p>

	PRINCIPLES DIRECTED TO GOVERNMENTS	PRINCIPLES DIRECTED TO ENTERPRISES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a national policy designed to ensure the affective abolition of child labour, take immediate measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency, and progressively raise the minimum age of admission to employment [paragraph 26] • Pursue policies designed to promote equality of opportunity and treatment in employment, with a view to eliminating any discrimination based on race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin [paragraph 28] • Promote equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value [paragraph 29] • Never require or encourage multinational enterprises to discriminate and provide guidance, where appropriate, on the avoidance of discrimination [paragraph 31] • Study the impact of multinational enterprises on employment in different industrial sectors [paragraph 32] • In cooperation with multinational and national enterprises, provide income protection for workers whose employment has been terminated [paragraph 36] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build linkages with local enterprises by sourcing local inputs, promoting the local processing of raw materials and local manufacturing of parts and equipment [paragraph 20] • Contribute to the transition to the formal economy [paragraph 21] • Complement and help to stimulate further development of public social security systems [paragraph 22] • Take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of forced labour in their operations [paragraph 25] • Respect the minimum age of admission to employment and take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour [paragraph 27] • Be guided by the principle of non-discrimination and make qualifications, skills and experience the basis for recruitment, placement, training and advancement of staff [paragraph 30] • Endeavor to provide stable employment for workers and observe freely negotiated obligations concerning employment stability and social security, promote security of employment, providing reasonable notice of intended changes in operations and avoiding arbitrary dismissal [paragraphs 33-35]
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop national policies for vocational training and guidance, closely linked with employment, in cooperation with all the parties concerned [paragraph 37] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training for all levels of workers employed to meet the needs of the enterprise as well as the development policies of the country [paragraph 38] • Participate in programmes aiming at encouraging skill formation, lifelong training and development, as well as providing vocational training, and make skilled resource personnel available [paragraph 39] • Afford opportunities within the enterprise for local management to broaden their experience [paragraph 40]

	PRINCIPLES DIRECTED TO GOVERNMENTS	PRINCIPLES DIRECTED TO ENTERPRISES
Conditions of Work and Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endeavour to adopt suitable measures to ensure that lower income groups and less developed areas benefit as much as possible from the activities of multinational enterprises [paragraph 42] • Ensure that both multinational and national enterprises provide adequate safety and health standards and contribute to a preventive safety and health culture, including taking steps to combat violence at work and attention to building safety; and that compensation is provided to workers who have been victims of occupational accidents or diseases [paragraph 43] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across their operations, provide wages, benefits and conditions of work not less favorable than those offered by comparable employers in the country concerned, taking into account the general level of wages, the cost of living, social security benefits, economic factors and levels of productivity [paragraph 41] • Maintain highest standards of safety and health at work, make known special hazards and related protective measures associated with new products and processes, provide information on good practice observed in other countries, and play a leading role in the examination of causes of industrial safety and health hazards. [paragraph 44] • Cooperate with international and national safety and health organizations, national authorities, workers and their organizations, and incorporate matters of safety and health in agreements with representatives of workers [paragraphs 45-46]
Industrial Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply the principles of Convention No. 87, Article 5, in view of the importance, in relation to multinational enterprises, of permitting organizations representing such enterprises or the workers in their employment to affiliate with international organizations of employers and workers of their own choosing [paragraph 51] • Not include in their incentives to attract foreign investment any limitation of the workers' freedom of association or the right to organize and bargain collectively [paragraph 52] • Ensure through judicial, administrative, legislative or other appropriate means that workers whose rights have been violated have access to effective remedy [paragraph 64] • Ensure that voluntary conciliation and arbitration machinery is available free of charge to assist in the prevention and settlement of industrial disputes [paragraph 67] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throughout their operations, observe standards of industrial relations [paragraph 47] • Respect freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, provide the facilities and information required for meaningful negotiations [paragraphs 48, 57 and 61] • Support representative employers' organizations [paragraph 50] • Provide for regular consultation on matters of mutual concern [paragraph 63] • Use leverage to encourage business partners to provide effective remediation [paragraph 65] • Examine the grievances of worker(s), pursuant to an appropriate procedure [paragraph 66] • Seek to establish voluntary conciliation machinery jointly with representatives and organizations of workers [paragraph 68]

ANNEX 2: The Women’s Empowerment Principles and targets

Principle 1: Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality

- ▶ Affirm high-level support and direct top-level policies for gender equality and human rights.
- ▶ Establish company-wide goals and targets for gender equality and include progress as a factor in managers’ performance reviews.
- ▶ Engage internal and external stakeholders in the development of company policies, programmes and implementation plans that advance equality.
- ▶ Ensure that all policies are gender-sensitive – identifying factors that impact women and men differently – and that corporate culture advances equality and inclusion.

Principle 2: Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination

- ▶ Pay equal remuneration, including benefits, for work of equal value and strive to pay a living wage to all women and men.
- ▶ Ensure that workplace policies and practices are free from gender-based discrimination.
- ▶ Implement gender-sensitive recruitment and retention practices and proactively recruit and appoint women to managerial and executive positions and to the corporate board of directors.
- ▶ Assure sufficient participation of women – 30 per cent or greater – in decision-making and governance at all levels and across all business areas.
- ▶ Offer flexible work options, leave and re-entry opportunities to positions of equal pay and status.
- ▶ Support access to child and dependent care by providing services, resources and information to both women and men.

Principle 3: Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers

- ▶ Taking into account differential impacts on women and men, provide safe working conditions and protection from exposure to hazardous materials and disclose potential risks, including to reproductive health.

- ▶ Establish a zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of violence at work, including verbal and/or physical abuse, and prevent sexual harassment.
- ▶ Strive to offer health insurance or other needed services – including for survivors of domestic violence – and ensure equal access for all employees.
- ▶ Respect women and men workers' rights to time off for medical care and counselling for themselves and their dependents.
- ▶ In consultation with employees, identify and address security issues, including the safety of women traveling to and from work and on company-related business.
- ▶ Train security staff and managers to recognize signs of violence against women and understand laws and company policies on human trafficking, labour and sexual exploitation.

Principle 4: Promote education, training and professional development for women

- ▶ Invest in workplace policies and programmes that open avenues for advancement of women at all levels and across all business areas, and encourage women to enter non-traditional job fields.
- ▶ Ensure equal access to all company-supported education and training programmes, including literacy classes, vocational and information technology training.
- ▶ Provide equal opportunities for formal and informal networking and mentoring.
- ▶ Articulate the company's business case for women's empowerment and the positive impact of inclusion for men as well as women.

Principle 5: Implement enterprise-development, supply-chain and marketing practices that empower women

- ▶ Expand business relationships with women-owned enterprises, including small businesses, and women entrepreneurs; and implement gender sensitive procurement.
- ▶ Support gender-sensitive solutions to credit and lending barriers.
- ▶ Ask business partners and peers to respect the company's commitment to advancing equality and inclusion.
- ▶ Respect the dignity of women in all marketing and other company materials.
- ▶ Ensure that company products, services and facilities are not used for human trafficking and/or labour or sexual exploitation.

Principle 6: Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy

- ▶ Lead by example – showcase company commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment.
- ▶ Leverage influence, alone or in partnership, to advocate for gender equality and collaborate with business partners, suppliers and community leaders to promote inclusion.
- ▶ Work with community stakeholders, officials and others to eliminate discrimination and exploitation and open opportunities for women and girls.
- ▶ Promote and recognize women's leadership in, and contributions to, their communities and ensure sufficient representation of women in any community consultation.
- ▶ Use philanthropy and grants programmes to support company commitment to inclusion, equality and human rights.

Principle 7: Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality

- ▶ Make public the company policies and implementation plan for promoting gender equality.
- ▶ Establish benchmarks that quantify inclusion of women at all levels.
- ▶ Measure and report on progress, both internally and externally, using data disaggregated by sex.
- ▶ Incorporate gender markers into ongoing reporting obligations.

ANNEX 3: Helpful resources

European Commission, [Gender Equality Strategy 2020-25](#)

ILO, [Rules of the Game: An introduction to standards-related work of the International Labour Organization](#).

ILO, [Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy \(MNE Declaration\)](#)

ILO, [Helpdesk for Business on International Labour Standards](#)

ILO-ITC, [Empowering Women at Work Capacity Building Platform](#)

UN Women and UNGC, [WEPs Equality Means Business – Using our principles as a multiplier for action and progress](#)

UNGC, [The Women’s Economic Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool](#)

WE EMPOWER G7, [Closing Gender Pay Gaps to Achieve Gender Equality at Work Guidance Note](#)

WE EMPOWER G7, [Empower Women](#)

WE EMPOWER G7, Enel Case Study, [Creating a Culture of Inclusion](#)

WE EMPOWER G7, Group PSA Case Study, [Harnessing Women’s Potential through a Global Network](#)

WE EMPOWER G7, Orange Group Case Study, [Taking a Global Approach to Gender Equality](#)

WE EMPOWER G7, Relx Case Study, [Improving Gender Balance on Boards and in Leadership](#)

WE EMPOWER G7, Sodexo Case Study, [Building a Gender-Balanced Business](#)

Equal Pay

EPIC, [Equal Pay International Coalition](#)

Equality and Human Rights Commission, [Gender-Neutral Job Evaluation Schemes. An Introductory Guide](#)

ILO, [Equal Pay: Introductory Guide](#)

ILO, [Promoting Equity: gender-neutral job evaluation for equal pay. A step-by-step guide](#)

Institute for the Equality of Women and Men, [Checklist Gender neutrality in job evaluation and classification](#)

UN Women, [Diagnosis for Equal Remuneration \(DIR\) self-evaluation tool](#)

WE EMPOWER G7, [Swedbank Case Study, Closing the Gender Pay Gap](#)

WE EMPOWER G7, [WEPs Action Card – Closing Gender Pay Gaps](#)

WE EMPOWER G7, Tele2 Case Study, [Confronting Gender Imbalances Head-on](#)

Violence and harassment in the world of Work

Eversafe, [Online Workplace Violence Training](#)

ILO Portal, [Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the world of work](#)

ILO and UN Women, [Handbook: Addressing Violence and Harassment against Women in the World of Work](#)

ILO, [Sample Sexual Harassment Policy](#)

ITUC, [Union responses to gender- based violence and the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

WE EMPOWER G7, L'ORÉAL Case Study, [Fighting Everyday Sexism and Domestic Violence in the Workplace](#)

WE EMPOWER – G7, [Tackling Sexual Harassment in the World of Work.](#)

WE EMPOWER G7, [The COVID-19 Shadow Pandemic: Domestic Violence in the World of Work - A Call to Action for the Private Sector](#)

Work-life balance

ILO, [Guide to developing balanced working time arrangements](#)

ILO, [International Labour Standards on Work-Life Balance](#)

ILO, [Maternity Protection Resource Package](#)

ILO, [Wise-R Action Manual Module 5 – Family-friendly measures](#)

ILO, [Work and family: Creating a family-friendly workplace](#)

UNICEF, ILO, UN Women, [Family-Friendly Policies and Other Good Workplace Practices in the Context of COVID-19: Key steps employers can take](#)

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