



TOGETHER FOR A FAIR DEAL FOR WORKERS

IS/AB

Brussels, 1 August 2024

Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European
Commission

[Letter sent by e-mail]
ec-president-vdl@ec.europa.eu

Dear President of the European Commission,
Dear Ursula von der Leyen,

Allow us to warmly congratulate you on your re-election as President of the European Commission.

Following closely the presentation of your political guidelines and your speech in the European Parliament, we are contacting you to share some key concerns of the ETUC Women's Committee in matters of gender equality with you.

We welcome very much the announced appointment of a Commissioner for Equality, your commitment to a renewed Gender Equality Strategy for post-2025, the Roadmap for Women's Rights to be presented on 8 March, as well as the express mention of the need for further measures in the fight against gender-based violence and empowering women in the labour market. In addition, we trust in you to form a gender-balanced College of Commissioners.

Representing women workers across Europe, the ETUC Women's Committee calls on you to deliver in particular to:

1) Present a proposal for a Directive combatting gender-based violence in the world of work

The Directive combatting violence against women and domestic violence, adopted this year, is an important milestone in the fight against gender-based violence. Yet, it fails to deliver concrete measures to make workplaces safer for women workers.

New legislative measures preventing and combatting gender-based violence in the world of work, online and offline, are urgently needed. A proposal for a new Directive should include measures to prevent and tackle all relevant forms of gender-based violence in the world of work, in particular sexual harassment, domestic violence and its spillover effects in the world of work, third-party violence and cyber-violence.

A new Directive should deliver practical solutions for safe workplaces through an intersectional lens, with the strongest involvement of social partners, supporting trade unions and collective bargaining. A strong focus should be made on how to define and address different aspects of economic violence, as well as the prevention of secondary victimization and further discrimination.



A Directive to eradicate gender-based violence in the world of work should be included in the work programme of the upcoming European Commission and European Parliament on the basis of the social policy chapter of the TFEU. In the same vein, the fight against gender-based violence in the world of work should be mainstreamed in all upcoming legislative initiatives, in particular in measures relating to psychosocial risks and Artificial Intelligence in the world of work.

2) Ensure equal pay and quality jobs

A Union of Equality that does not secure equal pay and quality jobs for all women workers will remain incomplete.

The Pay Transparency Directive is an important tool that, if ambitiously transposed, will significantly advance our struggle to close the gender pay gap and to end the undervaluation of work done by women. We call on you and the respective Commissioner and DG to closely monitor the transposition of the Directive in the upcoming term and to ensure that all EU Member states fully respect the obligation of transposing the Directive as soon as possible.

Whereas collective bargaining is a key component for decent pay and good working conditions, we call on you to support women workers and their unions throughout all upcoming initiatives in the field of gender equality and beyond.

3) Safeguard fundamental rights and counter the backlash against women's rights and gender equality

The upcoming legislative term should be used to further build a robust firewall against the far-right that consistently seeks to dismantle long-fought-for women's rights and progress on gender equality at work and in private life. Access to affordable and quality public infrastructure, such as educational and care facilities, health services and transportation is essential to ensure women's participation in the labour market. Guaranteeing the right of all women, in all their diversity, to access safe, legal and free abortions, as well as abortion care, contraception and emergency contraception must be part of this equation. We call on you to stand firmly in support of women and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

We remain fully available for any support the ETUC and its Women's Committee can offer in bringing these priorities forward.

Kind regards,

Isabelle Schömann
ETUC Deputy General Secretary

Gloria Mills
President of the ETUC Women's Committee