

COMMITTEE : Discrimination (ILO5)

ISSUE : How can we reduce the pay gap between men and women working for the same job and with the same level of education?

CHAIRS : Mina DEGRUSON, Ima EFANGA and Leya PETITJEAN

CHAIR'S PRESENTATION

Dear delegates, welcome to FerMUN 2025! My name is Leya Petitjean, I'm 16 and I'm in the English section at the Lycée International de Ferney-Voltaire. I've always lived in France but I'm of Indian origin. My hobbies are tennis and skiing, and I've been playing the clarinet for 10 years alongside the piano. I've been involved in the MUN programme since seconde (Year 10), starting as a delegate. It was a role that taught me a lot and made me want to discover a new approach to MUN through the role of committee chair. At FerMUN 2025, we will be debating issues that affect us all with no exception:



discrimination. It's a broad subject, covering different types of discrimination, based on gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability and many other important topics. We need to find solutions based on equality or fairness if our societies are to progress. Our committee will therefore be debating how to find appropriate solutions to reduce pay inequalities between men and women with the same professional experience. Women's rights have come a long way in recent years, but we can still improve women's living conditions, and it's up to us, dear delegates, to take action! I hope to see you all in good shape in January to start these exciting debates and wish you all the best for the future.

KEYWORDS

Discrimination : when a person is treated unfairly and differently, without any objective reason, simply because of who they are, the language they speak, the religion they practice, their sexual orientation, their ethnicity, their beliefs, their gender, etc. It is a distinction which prevents a person from fully enjoying human rights.

(source:<https://www.guidedroitshomme.fr/themes/discrimination/qu-est-ce-que-la-discrimination>)

Gender : Socio-cultural construction of masculine and feminine roles and of relations between men and women, independent of the sex assigned at birth and/or biologically (Source: Mission de l'Organisation des Nations unies pour la Stabilisation en République Démocratique du Congo (source: MONUSCO)).

Sexism : The assumption that one sex is superior to the other and the resulting discrimination against members of the supposedly inferior sex. (source: UNTERM)

Gender equality : This term refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men, girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities do not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of women and men are taken into account, recognising the diversity of groups. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully involve both men and women. Equality between women and men is seen as a human rights issue; it is a prerequisite and indicator of human-centered sustainable development.

Women's rights : a struggle in which millions of women and girls continue to suffer discrimination and violence, and are denied their rights to equality, dignity and autonomy, and even their right to live.

Gender stereotype : Social norm defining the behavior supposedly characteristic of a gender. It is a generalized opinion or prejudice that indicates how a woman or a man should behave. Gender stereotypes have a negative impact, which may be disproportionate, on certain groups of women, such as women from minorities or indigenous groups, disabled women, women from a lower social class or with lower economic status, migrant women, etc. (source: UNTERM).

Professional segregation refers to the distribution of employees among professions, based on demographic characteristics (which may be gender, age group, immigration status, etc.).

OVERVIEW

1. The gender pay gap

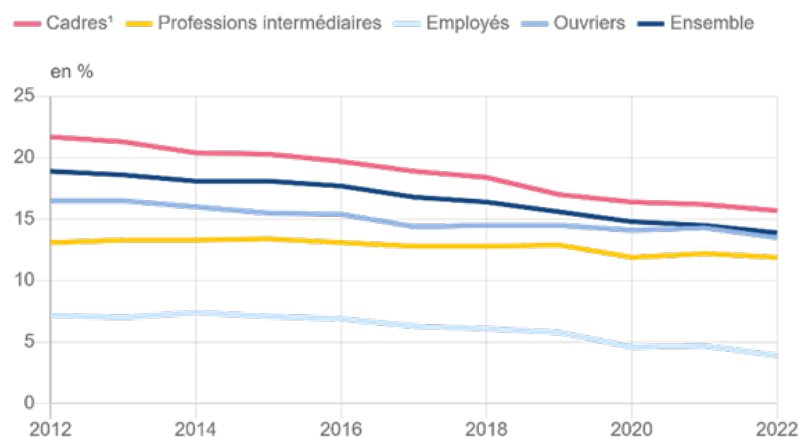
The pay gap between men and women can be linked to differences in jobs, level of education, qualifications or professional experience. However, these reasons do not always justify the disparity, and pay is one of the symbols of the inequality between men and women that persists in our society. In France, for example, for the same job and working hours, a woman earns on average 4% less than a man. However, this difference equals to 23.5% of the average annual salary, or only around 75% of a man's salary, all professions combined. This is largely due to the time women spend on unpaid work (see next paragraph). Moreover, for a woman of color, an immigrant, a disabled person or a woman with children, the gap may be even more significant.



Net pay gap between women and men in 2022, source: INSEE



Part-time work by gender in 2023, source: INSEE



Full-time equivalent pay gap between women and men, source: INSEE

2. Economic figures and explanations

A number of arguments have been put forward to justify this significant pay gap.

a) Working hours

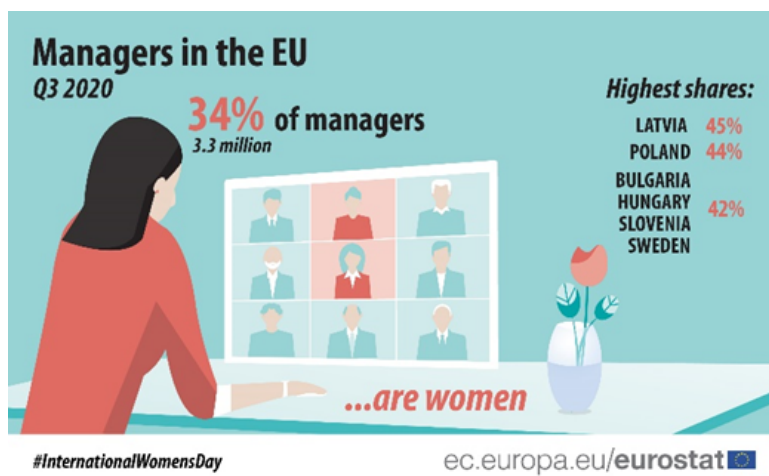
In 2020, women were working on average fewer hours than men, with around 27% of women working part-time compared to 8.4% of men. This means they are paid less than men who work longer hours. On the other hand, they spend more time on unpaid work such as childcare and housework, and shoulder the greater share of the mental load within the household. Considering both paid and unpaid work, women work more hours per week than men. Nevertheless, more and more men are working part-time, which can be seen as progress. (INSEE : Femmes et hommes, l'égalité en question)

b) Sectors of activity

Some professions are better paid than others, and women are often over-represented in lower-paid sectors such as education or healthcare, while men are more likely to work in more lucrative sectors such as finance or engineering. Career choices are influenced by family responsibilities, such as childcare, which can lead to career interruptions. The jobs associated with physical hardship are predominantly male, while those involving psychosocial risks are predominantly female (sources: INSEE and ILOSTAT).

c) Difference in hierarchy

Women generally 'choose' a job with less responsibility, while men tend to occupy more managerial positions, which are better paid. In 2020, for example, women accounted for 34% of managers in the EU. Furthermore, when a woman wishes to pursue an ambitious career, she may be perceived as selfish or as putting her work before her home, unlike a man for whom it seems normal to aim for a very good job.



3. Social explanation

Unlike the previous arguments, the last point concerning the pay gap between men and women has no economic explanation; it is purely ideological and based solely on gender stereotypes. 'Women will work less well than men'. Some women may therefore fear that they will not find a job as a result of these sexist prejudices, which is why 'It is also prohibited for an employer to discriminate on the basis of a potential future pregnancy, for example to refuse to take on a woman because she is considered to be of 'child-bearing age'.

(Source: <https://www.defenseurdesdroits.fr/grossesse-et-emploi-des-discriminations-connaître-et-combattre-148>)

The pay gap between men and women makes economic sense for the most part, but that doesn't mean it's justified. Individuals, and women in particular, tend to make career decisions based on their gender. This social difference is not necessarily the result of a free choice and leads to significant pay inequality. It is a process of socialization.

ILO TREATIES AND MAJOR EVENTS

1951 (n. 100)

The Equal Remuneration Convention sets out the principle of equal pay for male and female employees for work of equal value.

2000 (n. 183)

The **Maternity Protection Convention** (among others) stipulates ‘the prevention of exposure to safety and health risks during pregnancy and nursing, the right to paid maternity leave, maternal and child health and the granting of breastfeeding breaks, protection against discrimination and dismissal during maternity, as well as the guarantee of the right to return to one's job at the end of maternity leave’. - source ONU ([here](#))

04/03/2021

The **European Commission** has presented a proposal for a directive aimed at strengthening the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women through mechanisms for transparency and enforcement of pay ([here](#)). This would help to reduce the pay gap between men and women. So there is a real desire for equality, although it is taking time to put it in place in the various countries.

15/11/2019

At the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Third Committee set 18 September as the official date for **International Equal Pay Day**. This resolution was co-sponsored by 105 Member States. The aim of this event is equal pay for work of equal value.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Although the cause of pay inequality between men and women is recognised, it is vital to reduce the gender pay gap, in order to achieve greater gender equality while reducing poverty. Here are some ideas for potential solutions:

- ❖ **Make companies accountable** for pay inequalities.
- ❖ **Increase inspections** to ensure that pay equity is respected, by asking companies to obtain EDGE certification. (Economic Dividends for Gender Equality)
- ❖ **'Favoring women'** in the recruitment process
- ❖ **Overcoming gender stereotypes** and popularizing equal pay for both sexes.
- ❖ **Facilitating communication with the hierarchy within a company** to enable women to raise issues of pay inequality when they are justified.
- ❖ **More training rights** to enable those working part-time or more to obtain the same rights on their personal training account as full-time employees.
- ❖ **Include a pay rise during parental leave**, indexed to the increase in the salaries of the company's active employees.
- ❖ **Allowing working hours to be adjusted when there are children**, for both men and women: for example, on certain days when the children do not have school, allowing remote working, or simply having the flexibility to come home earlier in the evening.
- ❖ **Give women access to more important positions**, for example by requiring companies to have executive committees (positions of responsibility) with the same number of men as women (include quotas).
- ❖ **Make it possible to work part-time** while holding high-level positions.

Questions to consider :

- Is your country greatly affected by the gender pay gap?
- Has your population ever rebelled against this? If so, what were the consequences?
- What is the most important factor in wage inequality?
- Which high-level individuals could remedy the pay gap?
- Does your delegation recognise the pay gap between men and women? If so, which measures have already been put in place?
- Does your country/government/trade union/employer agree to give women access to more equal pay?
- Does your delegation have the means to increase the salaries of women affected by this inequality without creating major economic problems ?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Sites :

- [UNTERM](#) : provides the correct definition of words according to international bodies (glossary)
- [Guide des droits de l'homme](#) : brings together a large number of conventions
- [MONUSCO](#) : Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République Démocratique du Congo – site de l'ONU pour un pays africain en développement et qui fait face à de nombreux problèmes de discrimination (conventions)
- [UN Women](#) : is a branch of the UN site devoted to women and development (programmes)
- [CSW commission condition de la femme](#) : website of the organisation promoting women's equality (programmes)
- [Parlement Européen](#) : source for finding legislative information on EU member countries. (reports)
- [Nations unies droits de l'homme haut-commissariat \(HCDH\)](#) : the United Nations' main human rights body (reports)
- [INSEE](#) : reliable source of data and statistics

Videos :

- [Pourquoi y a-t-il des inégalités de salaires homme/femme ?](#) – lumni
- [Égalité des salaires : les femmes manifestent](#) – franceinfo
- [Pour que l'égalité de rémunération devienne réalité en 2030](#) - ILO