



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
LOBBY
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

**2010 BUILDING A
EUROPE FOR ALL**
www.endpoverty.eu



The European Women's Lobby calls on European leaders to address the feminisation of poverty and social exclusion

Poverty/social exclusion in Europe - predominantly female

1. Gender inequalities continue to be the most pervasive form of inequality. Unequal positions in the labour market, in political systems, in legal codes including divorce; dependency status in social protection systems, limited pensions, lack of quality affordable child care and a European average gender pay gap of 17.4% put European women at a greater risk of poverty than men.

2. Women are part of every group at risk of poverty and social exclusion, and in most cases, they are **affected more strongly.** Only 56.3% of European women with disabilities are employed (compared to nearly 75% of men). Women in rural areas experience higher unemployment: 10.6%, compared to men's 7.9%. 22% of women over the age of 65 are at risk of poverty.

3. Poverty and social exclusion severely impede upon women's empowerment. The consequences lead to severe gender inequalities, inadequate incomes, poor housing and homelessness, poor access to health, including reproductive health, and other

social services, lack of child-care services, poor work options and opportunities, as well as male violence against women, including prostitution and trafficking. The feminisation of poverty/social exclusion compromises equality between women and men.

Did you know...?

- In every age group, more women are living in poverty than men and face a much higher risk of poverty in situations of separation, divorce or death of their partner.
- One third of single-parent families in Europe, most of which are headed by women, are living in poverty.
- The employment rate for women aged 55-64 is 36.8%, 18.2 percentage points lower than men in the same category.
- European women are four times more likely to work part-time, more likely to have fixed term contracts and are more often part of the informal economy characterised by the absence of working contracts.
- The employment rate of women with children under the age of 12 drops by 11.5% whereas it increases by 7% for men in the same situation.
- Women in seven European countries earn 20% less than their male counterparts.

The European Women's Lobby calls for:

- ✓ **A Human Rights Framework** to combat poverty and social exclusion: every woman, man, girl and boy living in the European Union have the right to a dignified life.
- ✓ **Visibility** to address women's poverty and social exclusion: revise the household unit measure used to determine income-related poverty assuming that resources are distributed equally within households; develop a framework to establish a minimum income for all.
- ✓ **Individualised rights** with regards to taxation and social protection entitlements: guarantee gender quality in social protection systems, especially pensions.
- ✓ **Affordable, good quality and accessible care structures**, including child care and the care of dependent persons.
- ✓ **No gender gaps in wages;** protection of women's rights at work, including rights during pregnancy, maternity leave and breastfeeding **Strengthened collective mechanisms of solidarity** – no two-tier system which relegates women to the margins of economic power, social justice, compromising their participation in all spheres of life.



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Did you know...?*

- One third of **single-parent families** in Europe, most of which are headed by women, are living in poverty.
- In every age group, more women are living in poverty than men. In Belgium, 17% of women in total, and 22% of women above the age of 65 (compared to 14 and 18% of men, respectively) are at risk of poverty.
- Women face a much higher risk of poverty in situations of **separation, divorce or death of their partner**: estimates in Belgium reveal that the individualized risk of poverty would be **36% for women** against 11% for men, if the individualised income of women and men is taken into consideration against the current measurement of global/accumulated household income.
- European women are **four times** more likely to **work part-time**, more likely to have fixed term contracts and are oftentimes part of the informal economy characterised by the absence of working contracts.
- Women's share of part time work is **35%** in Denmark and Luxembourg, **40%** in Belgium, Sweden, Austria, the United Kingdom, Germany and **75%** in the Netherlands.
- The **employment rate of women with children under the age of 12 drops** by 11.5% whereas it increases by 7% for men in the same situation (91.6% for men with children under 12 against 78.5% for men without children under 12)
- Around **30% of working-age women with care responsibilities** are either inactive or work part-time but would prefer to work more hours due to the lack of care services for children and other dependent persons. It is **60%** in Spain and Greece and **80%** in Latvia and Romania.
- In 2005 **12.8 million women had care responsibilities** for adult dependent persons (against 7.6 million men)
- The employment rate for women aged 55-64 is 36.8%, 18.2percentage points lower than men in the same category
- Women count for two-thirds of the 'inactive' population (63 million persons between 25-64 years) due to involuntary part-time employed and unpaid care responsibilities.
- For women the chances of not being re-employed are higher than for men
- Women in seven European countries, namely Germany, the Netherlands, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Greece and the UK, **earn 20% less than their male counterparts and 25% less** in Estonia and Austria. **Belgian female employees earn 15% less than their male colleagues.**
- 52% of **women living alone** in Cyprus are at risk of poverty; 54% for women over the age of 65 years are at risk of poverty
- Women are more likely to have become **homeless** as a consequence of poverty; in France, the numbers of homeless women have increased from 14% in 1999 to 20% in 2008**
- GDP would rise 30% in the EU if the gender gaps in employment were eliminated (working patterns (full/part-time) and pay

(Gender pay gap defined as the difference between men's and women's average gross hourly earnings as a percentage of men's average gross hourly earnings)

*Sources: European Commission, *Equality between women and men – 2010*, 18.12.2009

**Coordination française du Lobby européen des femmes