



Declaration on Policies for the Employment of Women

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Date(s)

Adopted on 16/04/1980

Noted by the Council on 09/05/1980

Abrogated on 29/05/2013

THE HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN OF OECD MEMBER COUNTRIES,

CONSIDERING that men and women, as equal members of society, should have equal opportunities for paid employment, independently of the rate of economic growth and conditions in the labour market;

CONSIDERING that Member governments have a continuing commitment to provide equality of employment opportunity and pay for women and men;

CONSIDERING that the responsibilities of men and women for the upbringing of children are dependent not only on social and educational policies but on their capacity to provide income through employment;

CONSIDERING that men and women have the joint responsibility for the upbringing and care of children;

CONSIDERING that the participation of women in the labour market has risen and is likely to continue to rise in most Member countries, and has made and will make an essential contribution to economic and social developments;

CONSIDERING that constraints on economic growth in the medium-term will mean a challenge for governments to improve their policies in order to meet the aspirations of men and women for employment;

HAVING REGARD to the Declaration by Ministers of Education at the OECD in Paris, 20 October 1978, and in particular to their statement that one of the aims deserving priority consideration was "to adopt positive educational measures which contribute to the achievement of equality between girls and boys, women and men";

HAVING REGARD to the Recommendation of the Council on a General Employment and Manpower Policy of 5 March 1976, for "creating and maintaining employment and improved conditions of working life for all those who are able and want to work, with the support of relevant economic, employment, manpower and social policies";

TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION the arrangements, notably of a constitutional nature, which in certain Member countries affect the competence of governments in relation to the following aims;

DECLARES:

A. The following aims should be given priority consideration in the formulation of the relevant policies of Member countries, bearing in mind the possibility of constrained growth of employment opportunities:

- i) To adopt employment policies which offer men and women equal employment opportunities, independently of the rate of economic growth and conditions in the labour market;
- ii) To adopt policies to deal with unemployment which do not discriminate either directly or indirectly against women;
- iii) To implement an integrated set of policies to eliminate segregation in employment and reduce differentials in average earnings between women and men by means of:
 - a) The prohibition by law of direct discrimination;
 - b) Positive action to reduce indirect discrimination in recruitment, training and promotion, and in other terms and conditions of employment;

- c) The reduction of persistent social biases and negative institutional practices which limit the range and level of occupations open to girls and women; and
 - d) The implementation of equal pay for work of equal value¹;
- iv) To give attention to the special problems of minority women in the relevant items herein;
 - v) To encourage the development, in co-operation with employers and unions, of more flexible working time arrangements (e.g. Part-time, flexi-time) on an optional basis, in order to achieve the more efficient functioning of labour markets and provide a wider range of employment choices to women and men; special consideration should be given to workers, both men and women, with responsibilities for children;
 - vi) To provide for part-time workers levels of pay and social security benefits which are proportional to those of full-time workers, and the same levels of working conditions and standards of protection;
 - vii) To endeavour to ensure that the provisions of taxation, social security and child-support systems do not bias the decisions made by both women and men as to how they allocate their time between paid employment and other activities;
 - viii) To stimulate and further the development of, and increased access to employment, training and "recurrent" education programmes, particularly for women whose skills need upgrading and for women re-entering the labour force, taking into account new technologies and industrial developments;
 - ix) To review the provisions of labour legislation, for example protective legislation for women, to ensure its consistency with the goal of equal opportunity in employment, and to improve working conditions and the environment for all workers;
 - x) To guarantee pregnant women and women returning from maternity leave protection from dismissal and the right to return to work without loss of earned benefits;
 - xi) To develop education so as to progressively eliminate traditional sex role stereotyping in curricula and to provide a full range of educational choices for young women and young men, both for further education and skill qualifications for employment;
 - xii) To use more actively those measures directly available to governments to expand equal opportunities for women, e.g. Recruitment, training and promotion in the public sector, employment exchanges, employment creation programmes and, in certain countries, regional development policies and public procurement;
 - xiii) To ensure that there are effective organisational arrangements for the coordination and implementation of policy over the whole range of relevant public policies which affect the equal employment opportunities for women; and
 - xiv) To ensure that the special problems of migrant women are given consideration in relation to all the aims set out above.

B. That the achievement of equal opportunity in employment and the elimination of wage differentials between women and men are dependent not only on government measures but on the concerted efforts of employers and trade unions.

C. That the pursuit of these aims by Member countries will be facilitated by strengthened co-operation through the competent bodies of the OECD, in particular by studies of women's employment in the context of emerging economic and social conditions, and by periodic assessments and evaluations of the implementation of equal opportunity and wage equality policies for women.

¹ As defined, for example, in ILO Convention No.100 and EEC Directives on Equal Pay.

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