



**WHEN SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEMS
ENSURE GENDER EQUALITY:
HOW TO (RE)DESIGN SOCIAL SECURITY
SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT GENDER
EQUALITY?**

ESIP event 3 December 2019

European Parliament

Highlights of the debate



About the European Social Insurance Platform (ESIP)

The European Social Insurance Platform (ESIP) represents **over 50 national statutory social insurance organisations in 17 EU Member States and Switzerland**, active in the field of health insurance, pensions, occupational disease and accident insurance, disability and rehabilitation, family benefits and social inclusion as well as unemployment insurance. The aims of ESIP and its members are to **preserve a high-profile social security for Europe**, to **reinforce solidarity-based social insurance systems** and to **maintain the quality of European social protection**. ESIP builds strategic alliances for developing common positions to influence the European debate and is a consultation forum for the European institutions and other multinational bodies active in the field of social security.

About the Family and Social Inclusion Committee

The Family and Social Committee (FaSI Com) of the European Social Insurance Platform (ESIP) is based on two pillars that may interact with one another. On one hand, the committee deals with **family policy issues including childcare facilities and services, parental support, changes in family patterns or family benefits**. On the other hand, it also monitors **social inclusion topics such as fight against poverty, especially through family poverty or poverty at work, minimum income or activation measures**. It provides a forum for exchange of practices as well as analyses of EU initiatives that can impact its members. It contributes also to the elaboration of positions on such EU initiatives as well as participating to European projects (i.e. European reconciliation package).

The FaSI COM decided to hold an event at the European Parliament on **gender equality and social security** as this specific issue has been integrated in the Working programme of the FaSI COM since the beginning of the year.

The current momentum on the topic gathered from both the activities of the Finnish Presidency as well as the new European Commission was seen as an opportunity to exchange with EU institutions and stakeholders on **how social security system can support or, on the contrary, be deterrent for gender equality**. The focus was put on family policies. This event was an opportunity to be able to hold an **exchange between social security experts and three MEPs as well as representatives of the European Commission and the Council**.

Gender equality in social security systems: Policy-makers' perspective



The role of social security to support women

Ms Kumpula-Natri (S&D, Finland) kindly hosted the event and supported ESIP in its organization. She opened the meeting by stressing the role of social security in gender equality by supporting parents and encouraging men to take their part in childcare. She also highlighted the role of the Finnish daycare system in supporting the participation of women in the labour market but also the necessity to have adequate compensation for parental leave. She also welcomed the concrete promotion of gender equality in the new college of Commissioners of Ursula von der Leyen, by achieving a near gender balance.



“Social security can play a role in gender equality by supporting parents and encouraging men to take their part in childcare.”

Miapetra Kumpula-Natri
Member of the European Parliament, S&D group, Finland

Managing the impact of traditional gender roles

Mr Dennis Radkte (Germany, EPP group) explained that gender inequalities are reproduced in social security systems because of their historical roots: they were built when men and women had specific roles in society with men as bread-earners and women as care givers and housewives. Gender wage gap is a real concern and he explained that in the EU the pension gap is in average of 33% while in Germany women's pensions are 53% lower than men's. As

well, even if a new law framework has been adopted, in reality it is difficult after giving birth to a child to return to work first on a part-time basis before a full-time return. He acknowledges steps forwards, especially with the latest [Directive \(EU\) 2019/1158 on work-life balance for parents and carers](#): 10 days of paternity leave is surely not enough but it is a first step. The EU should keep on working with Member States on implementing the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights at national level. Working on solving Gender pay gap is part of this process.

“Traditional gender roles are still affecting gender equality today despite some progress.”

Dennis Radtke

Member of the European Parliament, EPP group, Germany



For a gender mainstreaming approach

Ms Kim van Sparrentak from the Greens-EFA highlighted the situation in the Netherlands: women working part-time is a tremendous phenomenon. In addition, social security systems may not be adapted to new situations. She mentioned that as many Millennials, she lives with flat mates. Under Dutch law, they are legal cohabitants: they do share their electricity bills and Netflix account, but they do not pool their wages. Because of the current social security model, if one of them gets unemployed, they would have difficulties accessing social rights: their situation will be assessed through the situation of their household. That is the reason why Kim van Sparrentak advises to move toward the individualization of social rights. This is already partly introduced within the Work-Life Balance Directive. The progressive language of the Directive is also very welcome, allowing the recognition of all forms of families. Concerning the future EU Gender strategy, she mentioned several aspects, including two crucial issues: gender mainstreaming in all EU policies and the inclusion of a Gender pillar into the European semester cycle.



“Social security systems have supported the emancipation of women but may need to adapt to the variety of living situations today.”

Kim Van Sparrentak

Member of the European Parliament, Greens/EFA group, The Netherlands

Recommendations from national social security institutions



How can family policies promote rather than inhibit gender equality?

Arnaud Emériaux presented ESIP to the participants and some of the FaSI's latest activities: its follow-up on WLB initiatives and on ECEC, the exchanges held on minimum income experimentations and the FaSI contribution to ESIP response to the public consultation on EU Disability strategy. He stressed that ESIP was involved in consultations and discussions with EU institutions on work-life balance and early childhood education and care and will continue to provide its social security expertise.

"We need to scrutinize our social security systems to ensure inequalities are not being reproduced."

Arnaud Emériaux
ESIP President



Gilles Kounowski explained that family policies can both promote or inhibit gender equality. He presented the results of [a report conducted by CNAF on «Gender equality and family policies: factors and impacts»](#). In particular, maternity leave has very positive effects for women participation but can create disincentives if it is too short or too long and depending on the level of paid compensation. Among the guidelines proposed in the report, the need to put in place family leave systems favourable to women's employment, the need to develop care solutions for children and dependent adults, as well as the need to ensure the collection of child support payments are highlighted. The implementation of family pension rights as

well as the fight against informal work (in particular in domestic services and care) are also important aspects of promoting gender equality.



“Maternity leave has very positive effects for women participation but can create disincentives if it is too short or too long.”

Gilles Kounowski

Innovation and eHealth Advisor, CNAF, France

During the discussion, Marco Lemme from the German Familienkasse pointed out some contradictions in Germany: while Germany adopted a new parental leave to achieve a better work life balance, a new Bavarian regulation extends parental leave for mothers.

For Alexandra Brunner from the Austrian social security, we are focusing on gender and pension gaps due to childcare responsibilities while in practice, even without having family responsibilities, the gender pay gap between women and men is a reality. In addition, the decision to stay at home for women can often be an economic one, men often being the parent able to bring the highest wage to the household. The issue is therefore to improve wage equality from the beginning of working lives and to tackle sectoral wage gaps (sectors where women are most represented are often where wages are the lowest).

“The Work-Life Balance Directive has had a positive impact in the Netherlands where a paternity leave was introduced as a result of its implementation.”

Sacha Geenen

International advisor, SVB, The Netherlands



Gender Equality in Social Security Systems: EU Perspective



What can the EU do to support social security systems in ensuring gender equality?

Greet Vermeylen presented the most recent European Commission initiatives to improve gender equality in the EU. She also mentioned the upcoming proposals of the new European Commission: its fight to be gender-balanced, to mainstream gender issues in all relevant portfolio and the designation of a specific Commissioner for Equality are strong messages.

For the Commission, gender equality requires better work life balance for parents, to create a virtuous circle. And it specifically requires getting men on board. It is a necessity to ensure that domestic and professional work is shared more equally between men and women. In that view, women should be able to participate fully on the labour market and men should be supported when deciding to take paternity and parental leaves. Tackling gender stereotypes and ensuring a sufficient level of paid compensation are therefore crucial.

The Commission took a holistic approach by adopting specific legislation, developing EU funds, promoting and monitoring development and access to ECEC and long-term care services, monitoring the implementation and use of parental leaves. Yet, more needs to be done by the new Commission such as monitoring the implementation of the WLB Directive, monitoring gender inequalities, continuing to tackle gender stereotypes, exchanging good practice examples, and continuing the work in forthcoming Presidencies also on long-term care, and binding measures on pay transparency, among others.



“Specific attention should be given to women working in flexible, precarious and informal jobs that may not open social security rights.”

Greet Vermeylen

Policy Officer, European Commission, DG Just, Unit on gender equality

Antero Kiviniemi from the Permanent Representation of Finland to the EU gave insight into the Finnish Presidency's orientations and actions taken. Finland integrated gender equality in all 4 of its priorities of its Presidency: none of the other priorities can be achieved without progress in gender equality. He mentioned that four types of instruments have been used in particular by the Presidency in this regard: high-level seminars, policy debates at the EPSCO council, council conclusions and gender mainstreaming in various other fields (such as occupational safety at work for instance). The Presidency program forms a part of the trio program with Romania and Croatia: gender equality made a consensus among the trio. Antero Kiviniemi insisted on the goal of the Presidency to bring a common message from all the Member States even if Member States have different cultures and approaches regarding gender equality to guide EU actions.

"There is a common willingness across the EU to make progress towards gender equality."

Antero Kiviniemi

Social Attaché, Permanent Representation of Finland to the European Union



Reactions from the audience

Romano Silvia FNMF
@SRomanoMF


Au [#ParlementEuropéen](#) aujourd'hui avec [@ESIP_EU](#) pour échanger avec MEP [@miapetrakumpula](#) sur comment les systèmes de [#sécurité sociale](#) peuvent contribuer à l'égalité de genre ! 👩👧
[#ESIP4genderequality](#) [@mutualite_fr](#) [@MutElles](#) [@EP_GenderEqual](#) [@Europarl_FR](#)

Translate Tweet
10:47 AM · Dec 3, 2019 · Twitter for iPhone

2 Retweets 7 Likes

Fernando Ariza
@FernandoArizaR

Today representing [@MutuaAbogacia](#) in the [#ESIP4genderequality](#) event celebrated in the [@Europarl_EN](#) about how to ensure [#genderequality](#) in [#SocialSecurity](#) Systems with MEPs [@miapetrakumpula](#) [@RadtkeMdEP](#) [@kimvsparrentak](#) [@ESIP_EU](#)



11:06 AM · Dec 3, 2019 · Twitter for iPhone

5 Retweets 9 Likes

Janne Metsämäki
@JanneMetsamaki

ESIP :n seminaari Brysselissä tasa-arvosta sosiaaliturvajärjestelmissä. How to (Re)Design social security systems to support gender equality?
[#Esi4genderequality](#)

Translate Tweet



11:42 AM · Dec 3, 2019 · Twitter for iPhone

2 Retweets 9 Likes

Niko Väänänen
@NikoVaananen

MEP Dennis Radtke reminds that in Germany the pension of women is 53 % lower than that of men. Household chores have been mainly the responsibility of women. Also, return from parttime to fulltime work is still challenging in Germany affecting esp women.
[#ESIP4genderequality](#)

10:53 AM · Dec 3, 2019 · Twitter Web App

2 Retweets 2 Likes

Fernando Ariza
@FernandoArizaR

"#Socialsecurity Systems have hardly support the emancipation of women, but they must be rethought because of the new 21st century social reality" says MEP @kimvsparrantak in #ESIP4genderequality @Europarl_EN @ESIP_EU @MutuaAbogacia



11:34 AM · Dec 3, 2019 · Twitter for iPhone

1 Retweet 2 Likes

Niko Väänänen
@NikoVaananen

'I live in Rotterdam with flatmates, this is surprising for a MEP but normal for millenials. We share our Netflix but don't pool our wages. However, if one becomes unemployed, social security treats us as we would, this is problematic', says @kimvsparrantak #ESIP4genderequality

11:07 AM · Dec 3, 2019 · Twitter Web App

2 Retweets 6 Likes

Niko Väänänen
@NikoVaananen

How caring needs are shared between partners, the right to ask family friendly work arrangements. Also, taxation regarding second earner might disincentivize employment. Some points influencing gender employment gap, says Greet Vermeylen from DG JUST #ESIP4genderequality

11:55 AM · Dec 3, 2019 · Twitter Web App

1 Like

Romano Silvia FNMF
@SRomanoMF

@cnaf_actus : « les politiques pour la famille peuvent à la fois promouvoir ou alors freiner l'#égalitédegenre .Le congé maternité favorise la participation des #femmes mais peut aussi créer des distorsions si trop court ou trop long » #ESIP4genderequality @REIFSecu @ESIP_EU

Translate Tweet

EU Social Insurance @ESIP_EU · Dec 3

Gilles Kounowski of CNAF explains that family policies can both promote or inhibit gender equality. Maternity leave has very positive effects for women participation but can create disincentives if it is too short or too long. #ESIP4genderequality



11:45 AM · Dec 3, 2019 · Twitter for iPhone

1 Like

WHEN SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEMS ENSURE GENDER EQUALITY: HOW TO (RE)DESIGN SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT GENDER EQUALITY?

ESIP event

3 December 2019

European Parliament - ASP 5G305

10:00

Registration

10:15

10:30

Introductory speeches

- **MEP Miapetra Kumpula-Natri** (S&D/Finland), hosting MEP
- **MEP Dennis Radtke** (EPP/Germany)
- **MEP Kim Van Sparrentak** (The Greens-EFA/Netherlands)
- **Arnaud Emériaux**, President of ESIP

Gender Equality in Social Security Systems: Recommendations from national social security institutions

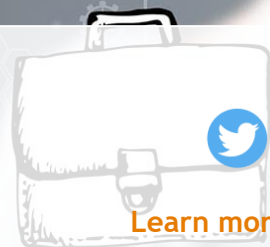
- **Gilles Kounowski**, International Affairs Director, CNAF, France: *Report on «Gender equality and family policies: factors and impacts»*
- Questions and answers with the audience

Gender Equality in Social security Systems: EU Perspective

- **Greet Vermeulen**, Policy Officer, European Commission, DG JUST, Unit Gender equality: *European Commission initiatives to improve gender equality*
- **Antero Kiviniemi**, Social attaché, Permanent Representation of Finland to the EU: *Gender Equality: Priority of the Council Presidency: Concrete Steps Taken*
- Questions and answers with the audience

12:30

Moderation: **Sacha Geenen**, International Policy Advisor, Sociale Verzekeringsbank



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