

GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN THE SLOVAK LABOUR MARKET

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Abstract

The labour market is affected by the same patterns as other markets, but it also has some specificities. One of the issues discussed in economically advanced countries is the issue of equal opportunities for men and women in the labour market. In all of the countries we are seeing on the one hand the preferential treatment of some individuals and, on the other hand, a double standard applied in the treatment of other individuals in the labour market. These differences may be due to different nationality, gender, age, religion or sexual orientation. With respect to the labour market, we focused on gender discrimination, i.e. the different positions of men and women in individual labour market areas on the basis of their gender. The aim of this paper is to identify and evaluate the development of gender differences in the Slovak labour market in the context of global understanding of this issue and to determine whether these differences have a growing trend or are on the decline. The assessment of Slovakia's position with the Global Gender Gap Index points out on negative development. Additionally, the paper set out to find in which job positions these differences are the most pronounced.

Keywords

Labour Market, Gender Discrimination, Risk Groups, Salary Differences, Global Gender Gap Index

I. Introduction

The labour market is affected by the same patterns as other markets, but it has some specificities. These specificities arise from the features of work as a factor of production. Work itself does not exist, but only people, the workforce, have the ability to work (Lisý, 2011). The labour market is a pivotal component in the market economy because it is expected to fulfil the following: provide the economy with the necessary labour force in the required composition - thus allowing for the labour processes to take place and thus enabling the production of goods and services, ensuring the adequate labour supply by the appropriate means (in particular by expenditures going towards labour costs). From the perspective of social policy, employment is always one of the key mirrors of the status of one of the social groups. If a certain part of the population is discriminated in the labour market (e.g. applying unequal selection criteria or different remuneration for the same job), it harms the entire society in the long run. If a particular population has a lower employment rate and/or wage, it is mostly related to deeper issues in its overall social status. In recent years, one of the issues discussed in economically advanced countries is the issue of equal opportunities for men and women in the labour market. In all the studied countries we are seeing on the one hand the preferential treatment of individuals and, on the other hand, with a double standard applied in the treatment of individuals in the labour market. These differences may be due to different nationality, gender, age, religion or sexual orientation. There is an enormous literature which explores the economics of discrimination, starting with Becker's book *The Economics of Discrimination* (1957) and its second edition (1971). In fact, Becker (1957) launched the formal analysis of labour market discrimination among economists. The second edition of his book (1971) includes three further discussions of the issue, new introduction considering the development of the literature, and some important remaining issues. Basically, there are two dominant economic models of discrimination: taste-based (Becker, 1957, 1971) and statistical (Phelps, 1972; Arrow, 1973, Aigner and Cain, 1977). Becker (1957) modelled discrimination as a personal prejudice (taste) against, associating with a particular group. Becker later (1971) in the

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second edition of his book develops the idea that some employers (workers, customers) do not want to come in contact with other racial groups or women. There has been a lot of criticism of Becker's model, because in theory, competitive markets should eliminate the gap. One of the implications from Becker's model is that discriminating employers earn lower profits. Discrimination is costly, if you discriminate and hire more expensive workers, you do not have the opportunity to hire cheaper labour. So, at the end of the day, with higher costs is your profit lower and there is a competitive advantage for non-discriminating firms. Finally, non-discriminating firms will drive out discriminatory firms. Black and Brainerd (2004) conclude that Becker's model implies a positive relationship between market power and employment discrimination. In other words, international competition (and decreased market power) should reduce the wage gap. Theory of statistical discrimination is represented by, among others, Phelps (1972), Arrow (1973) and Aigner and Cane (1977). Autor (2003) points out that the premise of the statistical discrimination literature is that firms have limited information about the skills of job applicants. It gives the firms an incentive to use easily observable characteristics such as race or gender in order to infer the expected productivity of applicants.

There are many changes in the world today and the labour market is no exception. These changes include globalization, migration, economic integration, the increased importance of knowledge, and the aging of the population. All of these factors significantly affect the structure of the workforce. The aim of the paper is to identify and evaluate the development of gender differences on the Slovak labour market in the global context, and secondly, whether these differences tend to grow or diminish, and also to point out the areas in the labour market where these differences are the most pronounced.

II. Statement of a Problem

The global economic crisis in 2008 to 2012 has not only hit individual economies hard, but also impacted in a significant way the global labour markets. In essence, it is possible to say that the decisive phenomenon has been the reduction of costs, the pressure to enact wage freezes, the letting go of workers across the sectors of the economy and the overall reduction of employment (Staněk and Ivanová, 2016). Not only has there been a significant drop in the number of jobs in individual countries, but, importantly, it has also fundamentally separated the issue of economic growth from the development of employment. Classical theoretical approaches based on the premise that a growth of more than 1% in the economy also leads to a certain increase in jobs have proved to be flawed. However, this development was not just a product of the crisis processes, but essentially embodied fundamental changes in the global labour market that took place over the past 12 to 15 years. The positioning of labour in the labour market differs between different population groups' due to factors such as age, gender, health status, ethnicity, or level of education attained. Some groups within the population are facing significant difficulties in finding employment, staying employed or to get ahead. At the same time, they are at high risk of unemployment, especially long-term and recurrently. These groups may be considered at risk in terms of their position in the labour market because they require some support and supervision in order to join back into the labour market. Taking these factors into account, the individuals' at risk characteristics are, in particular, low education level and qualifications, older age, transition from educational institutions to the labour market, deterioration in health or disability, being a national or socio-cultural minority, as well as of the female gender. Often, a combination of multiple "risk" signs is the cause of the problem of finding placement in the labour market, usually due to the combination of low educational level attained with other, characteristics.

The following individuals in particular are among the so-called risk groups in Slovakia (Vagač, 2011):

- Pre-retirement individuals;
- Young graduates (especially dropouts);
- Women with small children or after return from parental leave;

- People with disabilities;
- People with low level of formal education;
- Members of the Roma ethnic group;
- Specific groups (immigrants, individuals released from correctional facilities, young people who grow up without families, the homeless, etc.).

In expert terminology and political practice, the terms target or priority groups are often used (from the point of view of the policy direction), as well as marginalized groups (in terms of their marginalization with respect to the labour market) or disadvantaged groups (with respect application for employment in the labour market, remuneration for work, etc.). Discrimination can be divided into different types, such as gender, race, health, faith and religion, age. Disadvantages in the labour market may take various forms. The most common manifestation is the high risk of long-term and repeated unemployment. Another significant manifestation is segregation into low-income, temporary and non-standard employment, for which not only lower wages but also overall lower protection is characteristic. Such workers are mostly among the first to be dismissed and are being pushed to the end of the imaginative line when it comes to hiring of new workers. These phenomena come to the fore especially during periods of economic recession, when demand for labour is decreasing and a large number of people compete for a limited number of vacancies. Long-term disadvantage in the labour market is also a major factor in the rise of poverty and social exclusion (Vagač, 2011).

Gender Discrimination in Theory and Legislation

Gender discrimination can occur on both sides, women's and men's side, but more often in relation to women. This type of discrimination is that women are less represented in senior positions, have lower wages than men, even if they work in the same position.

Gender Segregation of Professions is addressed by Three Basic Theories:

1. The theory of a neoclassical model / model of human capital;
2. Institutional theories and theories of labour market segmentation;
3. Non-economic and feminist theories.

The Neoclassical Model / Model of Human Capital

The Theory of Human Capital was drafted by Gary Becker. "Human Capital analysis is based on the assumption that individuals are deciding on their education, work, medical care, and other complementary knowledge and health based on a comparison of earnings and costs. Revenue includes, besides improving earnings and employment, both cultural and other profits, while the costs usually depend on the time spent earning these investments" (Becker, 1997). According to this theory, the lower earnings of women are the result of their choice, which is conditional on the priorities of women and men in choosing a job. Women mostly invest in areas that satisfy them, but are not reflected in the return on investment they have made in these areas. According to Becker, the main concern of women is to concentrate attention on their family and household care, and therefore women choose less demanding occupations (Barošová, 2006). Both of these theories are based on the assumption that employers and employees behave rationally and also anticipate the efficient functioning of the market. Employees try to find the best paid jobs, taking into account their personal abilities, limitations and preferences. Employers try to maximize their profits, maximize labour productivity at the lowest possible costs (Barošová, 2006).

Institutional Theories and Theories of Labour Market Segmentation

These theories explain why the male and female occupations are segmented or divided between the primary and secondary sectors. In the primary sector, we include occupations that are characterized by higher wages, better workplace opportunities and also job security. Enterprises in this sector prefer men over women because they consider the former to be more educated and skilled. Women are under-represented in this sector, due to a break due to pregnancy and maternity leave. The secondary sector includes professions that we could call "women's professions." Typical features for these occupations are lower wages, limited chances for career advancement, and also worse working conditions. This sector is exposed to tougher competition (Barošová, 2006).

Non-economic and Feminist Theories

Feminist theories consider the disadvantaged position of women in the labour market to reflect the patriarchal approaches and subordinate status of women in family and society (Barošová, 2006). In all societies, domestic work and childcare are considered to be the responsibility of women. On the other hand, the role of men is to provide for a family, men are referred to as "family breadwinners". Such a division of labour determines what knowledge and skills should be available to men and what to women in terms of their family tasks. Such a division means that women have decreased opportunities to accumulate human capital compared to the male gender before entering the labour market. This is a consequence of why women are less educated, and women are less inclined to continue in certain areas of study, such as technical sciences.

Within the EU, many documents have been enacted to ensure the equal status of women and men, including the following ones:

- **Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) 1957** - this Treaty (Article 119) contains the principle of equal pay for equal work for men and women. This was the first important legislative act in the legal texts of the European Community on equality;
- **Amsterdam Treaty of 1997** - this Treaty amends Article 119 of the EEC Treaty to Article 141; this Treaty includes as one of its priorities equality between men and women;
- **The European Employment Strategy (1997)** - based on it, the four pillars of the strategy were established, with one pillar representing equal opportunities in the labour market;
- **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000)** - Article 15 provides for free choice of occupation and right to work, Article 21 - Non-discrimination, Article 23 - Equality between women and men (EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, 2000).
- **The Treaty of Lisbon (2009)** - this Treaty included all articles on gender equality within a single EU framework;
- **Women's Charter** - The Commission adopted this Charter in 2010, which seeks to achieve gender equality and at the same time strengthen gender equality in all its policies;
- **The Commission's Strategy for equality between men and women** - set up for 2010-2015, at the outset of this strategy, it is said that equality is one of the five values on which the Union is founded.

III. Methods

All The main objective of the contribution is to map and evaluate the development of gender differences in the Slovak labour market, to identify whether these differences tend to grow or diminish.

In the framework of the sub-objectives, we have set out to: (i) identify the differences in working men and women by education, (ii) find out the jobs where women earn more than men, (iii) determine in which age categories the greatest gender pay gap is, (iiii) compare gender equality between countries by using the Global Gender Gap Index.

The data analysis and the comparison method were used as the main methods for making the contribution. This was an analysis of the data we obtained mainly from the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, but also from other statistical sources. This processed data helped us better compare the development of gender differences in the labour market within the Slovak Republic as well as among the 145 economies of the world. The underlying data were obtained from book publications, statistical data from domestic and foreign databases, and from research publications.

IV. Development and Current Status of Women in the Labour Market

On the basis of the first written records, we can assess that there was an unequal status of men and women in our country already in the past. In the past women were under the tutelage of their father, and when they got married, this guardianship was assumed by their husband who had the right to the wife's property. When the 1874 law stipulated that women become independent when they reach adulthood. Nevertheless, such laws were, at that time, rather an exception than a rule. Already in 1997, the difference between men's and women's wages was approximately 21%. From time immemorial, work has been divided to male and female work, with men being responsible for ensuring for family livelihoods (hunting), or the man was understood to hold the role as a breadwinner of the family. The woman was primarily a mother, and her role was closely related to family and household care. This work was mostly done at home, so such a role was considered as taken for granted. Women could not be educated to the same extent as men, because their education has long been denied to them. Nevertheless, the industrial revolution brought new changes. The biggest change was that women started to do work for which they received a financial reward. Despite the changes brought about by the industrial revolution, women's opportunities remained limited. Women were mostly employed in jobs related to the care of people or household. The financial reward for their work was lower than that of their male counterparts, even for the same job. The main reason for this difference is the fact that women were seen as an unstable workforce due to maternity, and also that women's income was a "supplementary" income for the family (Pietruchová, 2007).

Examining the differences between men and women shows that women's discrimination in the world persists despite the various legislative measures. In the Slovak Republic, the male employment rate is 77.5%, while the employment rate for women is 64.7% (2017). By age group, employment in 2017 compared to 2016 increased in almost all age categories (the only one exemption is the age category 25-34), especially for the benefit of workers aged 55 and over. For this age category, the number of working people grew by up to 35,000, of which almost 27,000 were women. The largest percentage (30%) of the total number of workers is represented by people aged 35-44 years. Table 1 shows the number of workers in the Slovak Republic by age group. A positive trend can also be seen in the younger age group of 15-24. The number of workers aged 55 and over grew by 121,000 in 2017 compared to 2011.

Table 1 Employees in the Slovak Republic in thousands

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
15-24 yrs	151	146	144	148	154	160	164
25-34 yrs	630	626	612	599	620	630	615
35-44 yrs	628	640	661	694	702	727	739
45-54 yrs	610	598	581	579	582	593	596
55 yrs and over	296	318	331	342	365	382	417
Total	2 315	2 328	2 329	2 362	2 424	2492	2531

Source: Own processing based on data from the Statistical Office of the SR

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Differences between men and women also prevail in education. Women are mostly interested in humanitarian and economic majors, and men focus on technical curriculum. We can also include the area of higher education as an area of gender diversity, because women account for the majority of university students. In 2016, the share of women in the total number of college graduates was 59.22%. In the Slovak Republic, in the 25-34 age group, 30% of the population has attained university education, but only 24% of men and 36% of women (Ministry of Education of the SR, 2017). These values are well below the Europe 2020 target of 40%. Women work predominantly in sectors and professions such as health, education, social care, commerce, etc. where the wage is below the average wage in the economy. Some professions have typically become female, such as nurses, tailors, salespersons, or teachers in kindergartens. As typically male occupations we can include mason, truck driver, pilot and others. Thus, we can conclude that men are over-represented in positions that are more financially valued.

In the following table 2, we can see the numbers of women and men employed in the Slovak Republic based on education. The table shows that men and women are more represented in lower secondary and completed secondary education. Women are also more represented in the field of higher education, although men dominate positions in higher tier jobs.

Table 2 Working women and men based on education in Slovak Republic in thousands

Education		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Primary and none	Women	48	46	48	46	50	51	58
	Men	43	42	44	40	48	54	59
Lower secondary	Women	237	244	241	240	235	230	233
	Men	494	503	459	438	437	448	430
Completed secondary	Women	504	493	495	492	502	520	523
	Men	530	535	552	580	599	606	606
Higher	Women	234	242	250	268	288	313	332
	Men	225	223	240	258	265	270	290

Source: Own processing based on data from the Statistical Office of the SR

Slovakia is among the EU countries with the highest gender pay gap, although this gap is gradually decreasing. In the first quarter of 2017, the average gross monthly wage for women reached €912. Men earned an average monthly wage of €1,176. The total gross gender pay gap, calculated from average gross monthly wages, is 22.46%. The average hourly salary by gender in the business sphere is €7.07 per hour for men, only €5.62 per hour for women.

In the next section, we will list the jobs in which men earn more than women and also give reasons why women earn less. The main reason is the maternity leave and, as a result, women get delayed in attaining higher positions.

In Table 3, we can see jobs where men earn significantly more than women. The difference between their salaries is almost a third, ranging from 25% to 43%. The biggest difference between the salary of men and women can be seen in the position of the chef, this difference represents up to 43%. A man in this position earns €1,303 compared the woman who earns just €747.

Table 3 Jobs where men earn significantly more than women (March 2016)

	Earnings in EUR/month		Difference in %
	Male	Female	
Chef	1 303	747	43%
Manager for operations	2 132	1 405	34%
Leader of a sales group	1 787	1 242	30%
Cook	769	566	26%
Financial agent	1 119	842	25%

Source: Own processing based on *Platy.sk* (2016)

In some jobs, women's wages are higher than men's, as can be seen in Table 4. However, despite this fact, it can be noted that these differences are smaller and range from 9% to 17%. Thus, occupations where women earn more include the following: computer network administrator, clinical studies monitor, process engineer, tax adviser assistant, and product manager. However, the actual number of women in these occupations, especially computer network administrator, remains very low, and it could be one of the reasons why women's earnings are higher, as seen in Table 4. Lubyová et al. (2016) also concludes that according to the data (year 2015), most women have gross average monthly wage 450 to 500 EUR, while most men earn 650 to 700 EUR, and it confirms high gender discrimination in wages in Slovakia. As a result of the fact that women are more likely to be a low income group, gender pay gap remains pervasive.

Table 4 Average gross monthly nominal wage by age and sex (March 2016)

	Earnings in EUR/month		Difference in %
	Male	Female	
Computer network administrator	1 125	1 316	17%
Clinical studies monitor	1 667	1 925	15%
Process engineer	1 199	1 375	15%
Tax adviser assistant	1 175	1 330	13%
Product manager – specialist	1 570	1 714	9%

Source: Own processing based on *Platy.sk* (2016)

The women in the Slovak labour market are often faced with vertical and horizontal segregation. They often work in the field of healthcare, education and social services, over 80 percent of the workforce in these sectors are women and 59 percent in the public sector. It means that the private sector with higher salaries employs only 41 percent of women. Moreover, among entrepreneurs the ratio for women and men is 1:3. The National Strategy for Gender Equality in the Slovak Republic 2014 – 2019 (Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, 2014) points out following challenges related to the gender equality and Slovak labour market:

- parenthood and family,
- unpaid work and parenting,
- poverty, social exclusion and feminization of poverty in older age,
- Roma women from marginalized communities.

V. Slovakia through the prism of Global Gender Gap Index

The Global Gender Gap Index was created in 2006 and is compiled and published by the World Economic Forum. This index is based on three basic "pillars" or terms. The first pillar is focused on measuring differences rather than levels. As an example, we can list well-to-do countries that can offer better education and health care services. Another pillar focuses on capturing the gaps in resulting variables as gaps in input variables. The variables that are examined include the comparison of differences between men and women in highly qualified jobs (managers, legislators) without taking

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into account data on the length of maternity leave. The main task of the third, the last pillar, is to organize countries by gender equality rather than by women's domination. It is focused on finding whether the differences between men and women are shrinking. Situations when women achieve higher position in the labour market comparing to men are not punished but even not rewarded.

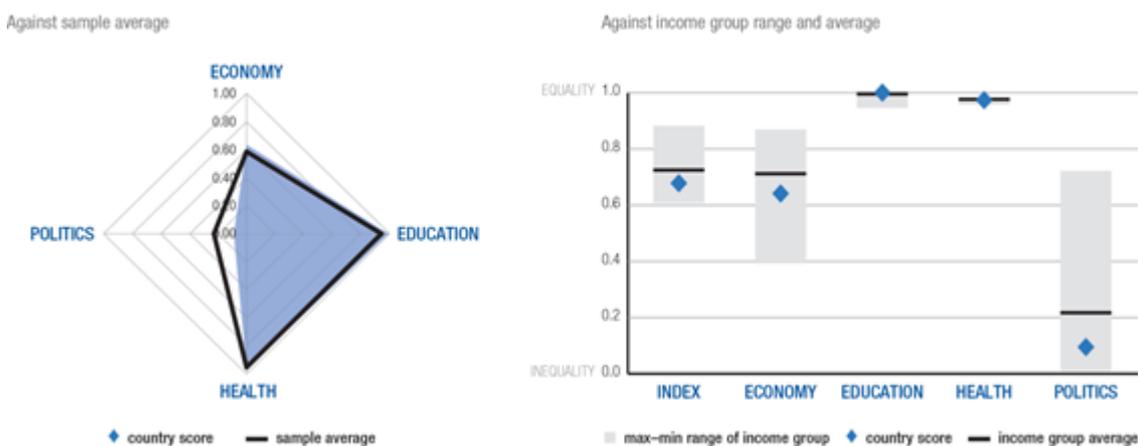
This Index is geared to measuring gender equality between countries on the basis of four indicators, namely:

- An economic area that compares wage levels and access to skilled work;
- The education achieved is another area that focuses on access to basic education as well as access to higher education;
- The political area measures inequality between men and women at the highest level of political decision-making;
- The last indicator of this Index is health and provides information on the mean life expectancy, assuming that women enjoy a higher life expectancy than men (World Economic Forum, 2015).

Figure 1 shows the results for the Slovak Republic in the Global Gender Gap Index where individual countries are assessed on the basis of four indicators.

Figure 1 Assessment of the Slovak Republic based on Global Gender Gap Index

Country Scores Compared



Source: World Economic Forum (2015)

Currently the Index covers 145 of emerging economies. In 2015 the Slovak Republic has ranked 97th in the Global Gender Gap Index in 97th place out of 145 economies. This index is being developed since 2006 when the Slovak Republic ranked 50th out of 115 countries, marking a negative development. The biggest drop was recorded by the Slovak Republic in 2014, when it fell up to 16 ranks in one year, placing in 90th spot. This was caused by economic and political factors. So far, the only positive results were achieved by the Slovak Republic in 2012, when it grew by two slots (from 72nd place to 70th place). The development of the "economy" area has a volatile tendency, recording a decline for most years, but some years (such as 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2015) a growth has been recorded. After evaluating data from all of the past years, we have come to the conclusion that this pillar is developing negatively on the whole.

"Education" is another area included in the Index, which shows a positive development (0.005) compared to the "economy" area and thus helps to strengthen the Slovak Republic's position in the ranking vis-à-vis other countries. From 2008 to 2015 Slovakia has ranked in 1st position in comparison with the other 145 countries. Another area assessed by the Index is "health". From 2006

to 2013, the values in this category remained unchanged. This has secured 1st place for Slovakia out of the other countries in the ranking. Only in 2014 has this figure dropped from 0.980 to 0.973 (resulting in 74th out of 142 ranks, while in 2014 and in 2015 Slovakia ranked 79th out of 145 countries). The last area assessed by the index is "politics", which also has a fluctuating tendency. The best ranking was achieved by the Slovak Republic in 2008, when it secured 71st place out of all ranked countries. In the last two years the development trend has been negative, when Slovakia ranked in 115th position out of the 145 countries. When taking into account data from all years, we can assume that the value of this indicator is positive (World Economic Forum, 2015).

VI. Conclusion

Gender differences between men and women may manifest in any area such as the gender inequality of men and women in education, and rights and inequalities in the labour market. Based on the many research studies and analyses, we know that women are always disadvantaged, whether in terms of access to jobs or jobs in professions with lower salaries. Despite the fact that women are studying longer than men, their earnings are lower and they are less often represented in higher managerial positions. In the Slovak Republic, a legislative framework is in place to regulate the equality of men and women in the labour market. In the Slovak Republic, the area of employment and remuneration belongs to areas where inequality between the sexes persists. Despite the fact that women achieve higher education than men, their salary is lower. Differences also occur as a result of the disparity in the employment of better and worse paid jobs by men and women. In the private sector with better job positions, women account for only 41%. On the contrary, at work positions that are rated by lower wages (such as education, healthcare and social services), women account for more than 80% of all employees. Nevertheless, gender inequalities in the labour market still persist. In recent years, the situation in the Slovak labour market in the area of gender gaps has partially improved. These differences, however, are reflected, inter alia, in disadvantaging women, when it comes to the jobs available for them or wage levels, which still favour men. Women, especially at a certain age, choose a job that does not require much responsibility, and they also try to work in a company where they do not spend a substantial part of the day. Their main goal is to reconcile personal life and work life. Most women take care of children and their household during their maternity leave, but after starting work, these responsibilities are not spread evenly between the woman and the man, but the woman must still continue to do all the work that she did during her maternity leave. This only underlines the reason why women are employed in professions that do not require much responsibility. Higher-ranking jobs are almost exclusively occupied by men. Employers prefer men over women because of the interruption of women's career due to pregnancy and consequently maternity leave. At present, many women also work during parental leave. Their aim is to keep their jobs, thus offering the employer their time, even if only part-time, or doing their jobs via remote access from the comfort of home. Other women take part in different language and other types of courses during their maternity leave and thus become more attractive employees in the labour market after their maternity leave. In order to alleviate this situation, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family has created a project entitled "Employer for Family, Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities". With this project, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family seeks, on the one hand, to motivate employers to create conditions in which women can reconcile family and work life at the same time. The second objective of this project is the appreciation and visibility of employers who have been able to create a working environment that is also family-friendly, as well as those employers who promote equal opportunities for women and men. In current societies, the level of gender equality is very closely linked to public policy, and with the ability to reconcile family and working life. In view of this, one of the main objectives of social policy has to be childcare remuneration, together with the unpaid household work.

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