



REMOVE THE OBSTACLES! ON THE RIGHT PATH TOWARDS EQUALITY!

More than 50 years ago, the International Labour Organization adopted what remains the most complete international instrument for non-discrimination and equality of labour in the world.

The Convention on Discrimination (Employment and Profession) of 1958 (No. 111) was, at the time, a strong vision of the future, and remains as important today as it was at the end of the 1950s. It is time to celebrate the fifty years since this key Convention on equality and the progress that has been attained. It is also time to reflect, since the goal to eliminate discrimination in the workplace established in the Convention has not been attained.

In order for us to remain on the right path towards equality, it is time for us to identify and remove the obstacles that hinder gender equality, and for us to promote it.

GENDER EQUALITY AT WORK: A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT AND PRINCIPLE

Since 1919, the ILO has sought to guarantee labour rights and improve working conditions for women and men. Equality is consecrated in the ILO Constitution.

The principle was established operationally for the first time in 1951, when the ILO adopted the Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100), based on the knowledge that discrimination of remuneration could not be effectively combated without ensuring greater protection against employment and occupation discrimination.

The ILO adopted the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111) in 1958. The commitment of the ILO to eliminate discrimination was reaffirmed in 1998 in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for Just Globalisation, in 2008, reaffirmed that gender equality and non-discrimination are transversal issues in all ILO activities.

The Convention (No. 111) is amply accepted. The progress that was attained with the application of the principle of equality of opportunities and treatment between men and women, and the important role of the Convention during the past fifty years, should be mentioned. This progress should be one more incentive for the universal ratification of this key Convention on equality, as well as for its broader implementation.

Source: International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Gender Equality

TCF Textile, Clothing and Footwear



Best practices in the field of gender equality



Portugal - Malta - Turkey

Partnership:



Co-funded by: European Commission



FESETE



Portugal



Professional classifications are an important regulatory aspect, in that they structure professional hierarchies and the salaries of workers.

Because the textile, clothing and footwear industries are predominately female, between 2010 and 2012, FE-

SETE sought to study and evaluate roles in these industries, in order to improve and correct, through collective bargaining, possible injustices and discriminations in the salary guidelines defined in Article 23 of the Labour Code: “work of equal value as that in which the roles performed are equivalent in terms of qualification or experience required, responsibilities, physical and mental effort and conditions in which the work is performed”.

The results obtained proved to be of great importance as regards both collective bargaining and gender equality, which led to an evaluation of the content of the Collective Labour Conventions, in order to eliminate all of the content that could promote discrimination between men and women, promote harmony between family and professional life, and ensure a concept of labour of equal value, understood as “(...) that which, being different in content (...) has the same value, for which it should be remunerated equally.”

From this long and important work, the Collective Labour Contract stands out for the home-textiles industry, signed between FESETE and ANIT-LAR (employers association), which represents a qualitative advance in regard to elimination of discriminatory content in the norms, as well as the promotion of harmony between family and professional life, by providing that:

- The workers can exercise their right of maternity and paternity, and share in the responsibilities to their children;
- The support provided to female workers for their children's day care in a nursery, preschool or other institution, until six years of age, are also provided to fathers;
- Ensure access to all professional categories for all workers.

Turkey



Participation of Women in the Turkish Economy - Platform for Labour Equality - The Labour Equality Platform was established during the World Economic Forum on the Middle East, North Africa and Eurasia regions, held between the 4th and 6th of June 2012, in Istanbul, Turkey.

The Labour Equality Platform was established in order to coordinate and fulfil the responsibility to reduce the existing gap between women and men in economic participation and opportunities by 10% in three years, as cited in the report “Global Gender Gap”, published by the World Economic Forum in 2012. To this end, the Declaration of Gender Equality was developed for companies to sign.

In Turkey, female workers can attain more rights with more active labour union intervention. Female workers compose a significant part of the workforce in the textile industry, and the effort to unionise can provide them with better working conditions and greater harmony between family and professional life. Collective labour conventions can therefore train female workers and help them to reinforce already-established rights, as well as attain more ample rights and opportunities.

The collective contracts signed by DISK Tekstil extend the rights of workers set forth in law in regard to maternity leave and the right to early childcare, as for example, in the companies British Coats in Bursa (where 60% of the workers is female) and Kilim Mensucat in Edirne (where 50% of the workforce is female). In these companies, the agreements set forth salary increases above the rate of inflation, the right to early childcare for children and the right to work according to labour standards for health and safety.

In the companies American VF in Soke (where 63% of the workforce is female) and BCS in Bursa (where 58% of the workforce is female), after a period of two years of labour struggle and work, the workers obtained Collective Labour Agreements, and thus the possibility of extending to these workers their rights, for example better wages, eight-hour work days, prizes and other social benefits.

This resulted in workers from both companies attaining better working conditions, higher wages, eight-hour workdays, insurance and other social benefits.

Malta



Since 2010, the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) in Malta has awarded the Equality Mark Certification to companies that demonstrate a commitment to the improvement of practices in the area of gender equality.

The Equality Mark Certification is awarded to companies that make gender equality a corporate value, and whose management is based on the recognition and promotion of the potential of all workers, independent of gender and family responsibilities.

The Equality Mark is part of a four-year program financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) titled, “Liberate the Female Potential.”

The certification process begins when an organisation formally applies to the NCPE by submitting documents that attest to its eligibility for the Equality Mark, which are then evaluated. When the recommendations are applied, the documents presented are verified by the Promoter of the Equality Mark through a visit to the company's facilities.

The entire process is completely confidential in order to encourage companies to apply, even if the Equality Mark is not awarded at the end of the process. The final decision is made by vote of the Evaluation Committee, which also formulates recommendations for the employer to consider if there are issues that need to be dealt with before being eligible for certification with the Equality Mark.