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Answer given by Ms Lahbib
on behalf of the European Commission
(26.3.2025)

Directive 2006/54/EC¹ prohibits sex-based discrimination in employment and occupation including in pay, translating the equal pay principle of Article 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU into detailed legislation that EU Member States have to follow. An evaluation of the Directive found that the application of the principle is hindered by a lack of transparency in pay systems, a lack of legal clarity and awareness on the concept of work of equal value, and by procedural obstacles faced by victims of discrimination².

To remedy these shortcomings and following an impact assessment³, Directive (EU) 2023/970⁴ aims to strengthen the implementation of the equal pay principle through pay transparency and supports the elimination of gender bias in pay mechanisms. The Directive requires Member States to ensure that analytical tools are made available to employers which support the assessment and comparison of the value of work. It also strengthens enforcement mechanisms by providing for better compensation, more effective sanctions (fines) and better support of victims of pay discrimination through equality bodies and workers' representatives.

The Directive entered into force in June 2023 and Member States have to transpose it by June 2026.

The Commission has also made funds available to Member States under the 2024 Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme⁵ on gender equality to develop guidance and/or tools for gender-sensitive job evaluation and classification systems to help employers assess work of equal value in compliance with the principle of equal pay⁶.

Moreover, the European Institute for Gender Equality is preparing a step-by-step toolkit on gender-neutral job evaluation and classification systems building on the existing Commission and International Labour Organisation guidance⁷.

¹ Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006, OJ L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 23–36.

² Evaluation of the relevant provisions in the Directive 2006/54/EC implementing the Treaty principle on ‘equal pay for equal work or work of equal value’, SWD(2020) 50 final, 5.3.2020.

³ Impact assessment accompanying the document Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council to strengthen the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women through pay transparency and enforcement mechanisms, SWD/2021/41 final, 4.3.2021.

⁴ Directive (EU) 2023/970 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023, OJ L 132, 17.5.2023, p. 21–44.

⁵ Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme overview available at: https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/citizens-equality-rights-and-values-programme/citizens-equality-rights-and-values-programme-overview_en

⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/projects-results?isExactMatch=true&programmePeriod=2021%20-%202027&frameworkProgramme=43251589&topicAbbreviation=CERV-2024-GE&order=DESC&pageNumber=1&pageSize=50&sortBy=title>

⁷ International Labour Organisation, Promoting Equity: gender-neutral job evaluation for equal pay, A step-by-step guide, 2009, available at <https://www.ilo.org/publications/promoting-equity-gender-neutral-job-evaluation-equal-pay-step-step-guide>; Commission Staff Working Document SWD/2013/0512 final available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52013SC0512>

