

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001167/26
to the Commission
Elena Kountoura (The Left)
(19 March 2026)**

Subject: Structural inequalities and the need for Europe to take immediate action to address the EU gender pension gap

In the EU, the pension gap between men and women stands at 25% ⁽¹⁾ and is the result of structural inequalities that accumulate throughout people's working lives ⁽²⁾. Care-related career breaks, part-time and informal employment, and the over-representation of women in historically undervalued sectors and in jobs where they are paid less for work of equal value, exacerbate the pay gap and result in cumulative losses when women retire ⁽³⁾. Millions of informal carers are not covered by social security systems, as well as being excluded from occupational pension schemes and being at risk of poverty in old age.

Given that at the current pace it will take up to 90 years to close the pension gap in the EU ⁽⁴⁾, and taking into account the new Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030 and the European Parliament resolution calling for an action plan to tackle the gender pay and pension gap ⁽⁵⁾, can the Commission answer the following:

1. Does it intend to put forward an action plan that sets additional measurable targets with a specific timeline to reduce the pension gap, besides the process for monitoring and exchanging best practices, which has been foreseen the strategy?
2. Will it support the allocation of dedicated European resources in the next MFF and the inclusion in the European Semester's country-specific recommendations of measures aimed at accessible quality care services and the elimination of the gender pension gap?
3. Does it intend to propose minimum European standards to allow caregiving periods to count towards pension entitlements?

Submitted: 19.3.2026

**Answer given by Ms Lahbib on behalf of the European Commission
(22 May 2026)**

As outlined in the 2026-2030 Gender Equality Strategy ⁽¹⁾, the Commission will strengthen monitoring of the gender pension gap and poverty risks among women aged 65+, analysing root causes (gender employment and pay gaps, part-time work disparities) via the social scoreboard.

The Commission will also map best practices on addressing the gender pension gap and publish the 2027 report on adequate social protection in old age, detailing older women's socioeconomic challenges and persistent pension and poverty gender gaps.

Within the framework of the European Semester, the Commission systematically assesses relevant indicators to inform targeted policy responses and makes recommendations to Member States, as appropriate.

The Commission proposal for the next Multiannual Financial Framework, which includes National and Regional Partnership Plans, will rely on the European Semester as one of the elements of the reference framework underpinning the programming and design of the plans.

The proposal also envisages social cohesion, social inclusion, equal opportunities, access to services and associated infrastructure and supporting strong social safety nets as specific objectives.

Moreover, the proposed Performance Regulation makes gender equality a horizontal principle, embedding it across EU funding through gender-disaggregated indicators and expenditure tracking to assess the performance. The Commission's proposal is under negotiation between the Council and the Parliament.

¹ In Greece, the pension gap in the 65+ age group reaches 21.5%, accurately reflecting this accumulation (ELSTAT, Pay gap between men and women, Reference year 2024, Period 2022-2024, Piraeus, 30-01-2026).

² Eurostat, EU-SILC, ilc_pnp13, 2024.

³ The gender pension gap is not only the result of accumulating pay inequalities over the course of a lifetime but also of different opportunities on the labour market, unequal distribution of informal care work at home, and gender bias in society.

⁴ According to official data, there has been a modest reduction over the past decade in the average gender pay and pension gaps across the EU and the current pace of change remains insufficient to close the gaps before 2100.

⁵ European Parliament resolution of 11 March 2026 on the gender pay and pension gap in the EU (2025/2038 (INI)).

⁽¹⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en.