

**Advisory
Committee on
Equal
Opportunities for
Women and Men**

**Opinion on
NEW CHALLENGES FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN THE
CHANGING WORLD OF WORK**

The Opinion of the Advisory Committee does not necessarily reflect the positions of the Member States and does not bind the Member States

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The purpose of this opinion is to provide from a gender equality angle an input to a first reflection on medium and long-term challenges. These are created by recent labour market developments, such as new forms of work structures or changes in the way work is organized, delivered and supported by technology; new and emerging sectors, changing skills needs, work patterns, attitudes and requirements of workers and businesses. The focus is in particular on opportunities and challenges that have implications on work-life balance, the gender pay/pensions gap and on gender equality more generally. The opinion sheds light on future possible policy priorities for further EU action and objectives, building in particular on the Work-Life Balance initiative and the Gender Pay Gap Action Plan presented by the Commission in 2017.

INTRODUCTION

The way people work today and how people will work in the future is changing. Certain forms of more 'flexible' and individualised ways of working, some of them new or emerging, create opportunities as well as challenges for gender equality. Increased digitalisation¹, crowd-work, the gig economy², platform work³, etc. have led to important changes in the employment structures, in the way work is organised and in the skill content of jobs, allowing generally a more flexible work organisation in terms of place and time of work. Numerous studies in this field, the Council conclusions prepared by the Bulgarian Presidency on the future of work and the exploratory opinion from the European Parliament on the Digital gender gap show the importance of the topic.⁴

The changes taking place also highlight some of the existing challenges, bringing about their urgency, for example the persistence of gender stereotypes and biases, segregation in education, training and

¹ While the term "digitalisation" is related to the process of converting information into a digital format and can be understood in many different ways, this opinion refers to digitalisation as a process of integration of digital technologies into the work environment and working conditions.

² Gig economy can be understood in a broader sense, meaning a way of working that is based on having temporary jobs or doing separate pieces of work, each paid, separately, rather than working for an employer. The digital gig economy is usually understood as including two forms of work: "crowdwork" (working activities that imply completing a series of tasks through online platforms) and "work on demand via apps" (a form of work in which the execution of traditions working activities is channelled through apps by managed firms), see De Stefano, Valerio, The rise of the „just-in-time workforce“: On-demand work, crowdwork and labour protection in the „gig-economy“, published by the International Labour Organization, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/publication/wcms_443267.pdf (last access 27.07.2018), p. 1.

³ The term (digital) platform economy refers to economical and social activity made possible or facilitated by (digital) platforms, typically online matchmakers or technology frameworks, see Kenney, Martin, and Zysman, John, The Rise of the Platform Economy, *Issues in Science and Technology* 32, no. 3 (Spring 2016), <http://issues.org/32-3/the-rise-of-the-platform-economy/> (last access 27.07.2018).

⁴ Exploratory opinion from the European Parliament on the Digital gender gap, adopted 19/09/2018 <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/digital-gender-gap-exploratory-opinion-european-parliament>; European Commission (2016), The Future of Work, Skills and Resilience for a World of Change, Issue 13 / 2016; Eurofound (2017), Non-standard forms of employment: Recent trends and future prospects, Background paper for Estonian Presidency Conference 'Future of Work: Making It e-Easy'; Flecker (ed) (2016), Space, Place and Global Digital Work; Frey & Osborne (2013), The Future of Employment; Fuchs and Fisher (eds) (2015), Reconsidering Value and Labour in the Digital Age; Huws, Spencer and Joyce (2017), work in the European Gig Economy; ILO (2018), World Employment Social Outlook 2018 Women: Global snapshot; ILO/Eurofound (2017), Working anytime, anywhere, effects on the world of work; ILO (2016), Non-standard employment over the world: understanding challenges and shaping prospects; ILO (2015), Report of the Director-General Report I, The future of work centenary initiative; ILO (2015) Labour market institutions in inequalities: building just societies in the 21st Centuries; McKinsey (2017), Technology, jobs, and the future of work; OECD Future of Work initiative; Webster and Randle (ed) (2016), Virtual Workers and the Global Labour Market; Webster (2016), Who are the virtual workers and where in the labour market are they to be found: gender division in virtual work; the European Institute for Gender Equality has also developed a report for the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the EU on the opportunities and risks of digitalisation for youth and gender equality.

the labour market and the need for better work-life-balance policies for both women and men on an equal footing. Therefore, and despite tangible progress, some challenges remain the same and should be addressed in order to avoid widening gender gaps, whereas other challenges are due to the new forms of work and the way work is organized.

Changes in the forms and nature of work, as well as in the new and emerging sectors, can widen the job opportunities for the groups that have not been able to participate before, inter alia due to care responsibilities, health issues, disabilities, other structural inequalities and discrimination or distance from the workplace. However, due to horizontal segregation, fast growing sectors such as STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and ICT (information and communication technology) might be enabling mostly men to benefit, as women are currently underrepresented in those technology sectors and therefore are less likely to work in those future jobs if changes are not made to reverse this tendency.

The gig economy might increase the participation of women in the labour market, but at the same time can elude and blur the roles, power division and responsibilities of labour market participants. While still the overwhelming majority of workers doing work via a platform are doing this as a supplementary activity (second job) on top of another main job, a growing group carries out their main job via these platforms. Often, a lot of time is spent on looking for new tasks, as stated in a recent ILO research⁵. Depending on the specificities of a platform, jobs are often cut into smaller units, which are contracted out separately.

The gig economy does not always guarantee economic independence for women and men and workers are not always considered as employees, but as independent contractors, thus facing potentially more precarious conditions, such as low earnings and less employment protection⁶. Additionally, this might increase the probability of problems such as (cyber) harassment and violence.

It also raises the question of the adequacy of contemporary social protection systems, still very focused in many countries on traditional full-time employment relationships and contracts, and their ability to answer to the needs of the actors in the changing labour market.

Gig work, including online labour such as crowd work and online freelancing, or physical gig economy such as location-based service delivery (e.g. transporting persons, delivery of goods, renting accommodation) is part of a larger challenge in Europe with a general growth of “just-in-time” forms of work and non-standard forms of work, such as involuntary part-time work, temporary work, an increased use of subcontracting. There are also some legal issues such as disguised employment relationships and undeclared work. In this context there is an urgent need to define, measure and get reliable gender segregated information on the extent and characteristics of the undefined and rapidly changing world of work and about its medium- and long-term impact on women’s economic independence, employment rights and wellbeing.

⁵ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_645337.pdf

⁶ Many people crowdwork to complement pay from other jobs, yet there is also an important group of workers who rely on crowdwork as their primary source of income. Low pay is also one of the main challenges, and there is a considerable amount of unpaid working time. See: Income security in the on-demand economy: Findings and policy lessons, from a survey of crowd workers. Conditions of work and employment series n° 74, ILO 2016.
http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/publication/wcms_479693.pdf

Gender stereotypes and segregation

Gender stereotypes, bias and cultural norms influence the behaviour and choices of girls and boys from a very young age. This, being also perpetuated by the media and other players, has an effect on many areas of life, inter alia affecting their educational and future career choices.

Women experience many gender-specific barriers to join and remain in the labour market. The majority of care and household duties still fall on women, due to which their presence in the labour market is irregular and unequal compared to that of men. Because women care on average for dependent relatives more often than men do, they are also more likely to use family-friendly measures at workplaces and do part-time work, which can have a negative impact on their careers, pay and pensions in the longer term⁷.

The rising gig economy provides new opportunities for women to enter the labour market, take up a higher workload or to better balance work and family life through more flexible working arrangements. At the same time, it might also lead women to patchier career-paths and therefore diminish their already limited chances of a linear career progression, if the **gender imbalance in care responsibilities** of dependent family members persists. This might hinder women from applying and being selected for higher positions⁸, leaving them more dependent on part-time and precarious work⁹ and further compounding vertical segregation.¹⁰

The future labour market is very much affected by digitalisation, automation and ageing workforce. Due to technological developments, many current jobs will be lost and many of the tasks in the jobs that remain will be transformed by automation, robotization, as well as requiring more and more skills in information and communications technology (ICT). It is crucial that skills updating for men and women alike take into account these developments. New jobs will appear in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) or related fields. However, **gender segregation** is a serious impediment to the inclusive economic growth: a mere 17% of ICT specialists in the EU are women and in a number of Member States, the share of women ICT professionals has even dropped in recent years. Therefore, men have a potential advantage in taking up these positions as women are underrepresented in ICT and STEM fields (due to horizontal segregation). This counts not only for the labour market, but also for education, especially for vocational education and training.

Although this division is a reflection of gender segregation in studies, gender also influences chances of getting jobs even for women with STEM educational backgrounds. Many of the female graduates instead of working in the field matching their qualifications go into teaching, which is rarely so with

77 Fagan et al (2014), In search of good quality part time work, ILO Conditions of Work and Employment Series, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_protect/@protrav/@travail/documents/publication/wcms_237781.pdf

⁸ To break the so-called glass ceiling that continues to bar female talent from top positions in Europe's biggest companies, the European Commission published a legislative proposal on 14 November 2012 to attain a representation of 40% of the under-represented sex among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges, see COM/2012/0614 final - 2012/0299 (COD).

⁹ Many people crowdwork to complement pay from other jobs, yet there is also an important group of workers who rely on crowdwork as their primary source of income. Low pay is also one of the main challenges, and there is a considerable amount of unpaid working time. Income security in the on-demand economy: Findings and policy lessons, from a survey of crowd workers. Conditions of work and employment series n° 74, ILO.2016.

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/publication/wcms_479693.pdf

¹⁰ Horizontal segregation means that groups of one gender are concentrated in certain sectors or disciplines; vertical segregation means that groups of one gender tend to be in lower or higher hierarchical positions.

men¹¹. Such a leaking pipeline effect calls for urgent action from the European Commission to support the Member States in not only stepping up the measures to reduce horizontal segregation in education and occupation, but also in increasing the gender equality awareness among students, parents, teachers, educators, trade unions and employers.

The persistence of gender segregation, as shown by studies,¹² can lead to a situation where women miss tomorrow's best job opportunities and therefore benefiting from the rise of good quality jobs and pay levels. This might have an impact not only on pay but also on women's labour market participation if measures are not taken for women to move into male-dominated sectors where many new jobs are being created.

At the same time, ageing population in Europe means even greater demand of workforce in the health and welfare sectors. This might mean that high quality and well-paid jobs in these sectors are becoming more and more important for a society geared to the well-being of all. However, as ICT is mainstreamed also more and more into care-work, women not qualified in ICT may end up clustering into the low-quality jobs not involving technology. Therefore, jobs in care and welfare sector need to be reassessed also in terms of value they produce and upgraded, both in terms of pay and working conditions. Since the majority of those working in these sectors are women, action in this field has a great impact on gender equality, as it would help, inter alia, to reduce the gender pay (and pension) gap.

EIGE's research shows that on average women in ICT are paid higher than those in other professions and the gender earning gap of 13 % is smaller among ICT specialists when compared to health professionals (26 %) or the rest of the employees (33 %)¹³. Therefore, if women and girls were to move more strongly into STEM and ICT fields and to fill positions on all levels of responsibility, this would not only help women to benefit from the changes in the labour market, but would also have a positive effect on diminishing the gender pay gap and on the development of growth.

This ongoing change of jobs and the growing of STEM and ICT fields in the labour market require fast adaptation and life-long learning by women and men wanting to be active in the labour market. It has been forecast that due to automation and digitalisation, the labour market will go through **greater polarization**. This means that part of the so-called "medium-skilled" jobs will be lost and there will be an even greater need for the high-qualified jobs that require skills in STEM and more low-qualified jobs in services.¹⁴

Automation and technological advances are likely to lead to loss of some jobs, whilst also creating other jobs and bringing changes to existing jobs. This will have an impact on people with low qualifications and those working in precarious jobs, who do not have the appropriate skills set. As

¹¹ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2016a), *Gender and digital agenda*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, available at: http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/ti_pubpdf_mh0216896enn_pdfweb_20170124121443.pdf

¹² From 2011 to 2015, ICT professionals employed more men than before, with the share of women even declining, see Piasna and Drahokoupil Gender inequalities in the new world of work,(2017) etui. Vol. 23(3), p. 316.

¹³EIGE. (2018). Women and men in ICT: a chance for better work-life balance.

¹⁴ A key driver of job polarisation in the past decades was the increasing ability of technology to perform routine tasks, see OECD (2017), *Employment Outlook*, p. 84.

women tend to be employed more than men in precarious jobs, they might lack opportunities to upscale their skills, to keep up with the changing demands of their job and to avoid skills loss¹⁵.

Additionally, the complexity of jobs is also increasing across all sectors and occupations and there is inflation in relative skills demand, even for low-skilled jobs. Digital skills gap affects women negatively. Therefore, it is important to invest in digital capacities for both women and men and to guarantee that genders benefit equally from these changes and from high quality jobs. It is also crucial to ensure that low-qualified women and men can work in jobs that provide decent living conditions and social protection.

Flexibility and work-life balance

The changing nature and forms of work bring more flexibility to the labour market. The gig economy enables workers to do work in a piecemeal way with an opportunity for breaks in line with personal time needs. Technological progress enables more and more employees to work from a distance and on flexible hours, which might have a positive impact on reducing pay differences between rural and urban areas, providing that digital infrastructures in rural areas are well developed and efficient.

This trend has a potentially positive impact on women who until now faced many barriers in participating (with sufficient hours) or advancing in the labour market. This could be the case especially for women occupied with care responsibilities, rural women, women from minority ethnic groups, migrant women and women with health issues or with disabilities.

Wider access to internet and new technology could help women in rural areas and women with disabilities to become more connected, access information, education and training and improve their skills and competences to participate in the labour market and become independent entrepreneurs.

More **flexibility** can enable workers to combine private life and working life and push employers to focus more on the results of work rather than the way work is delivered or on how many hours are spent to create the given value. Therefore, it can also allow businesses to respond better to increasingly challenging consumer demand if applied in an effective way, supporting their competitiveness and advance improving and creating quality jobs.

Flexible and non-standard forms of employment can contribute to increasing gender equality in the labour market, as these can facilitate a better work-life balance. However, it would not necessarily dissolve inequalities if certain forms of flexible arrangements with most implications on pay and career trajectories, such as part time work, continue to be mostly used by women with care obligations. In this case, the unequal position of women due to the unpaid care and domestic work continues to be reinforced instead of questioned.¹⁶

However, flexible working arrangements are usually most beneficial to work life balance when employees have control over the working arrangements. Depending on the type of work, this may not always be the case in the gig economy given the power differentials at play between clients and workers. However, work in the gig economy can also give opportunities for better work-life balance, if workers can choose their working arrangements, including their working time. In this sense it creates opportunities for some workers who otherwise cannot be employed in the labour market for instance because of private time-constraints, such as health or care issues.

¹⁵ EIGE (2017) Gender, Skills and Precarious work <http://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/gender-skills-and-precarious-work-eu-research-note>

¹⁶ Piasna and Drahoukupil Gender inequalities in the new world of work,(2017) etui. Vol. 23(3), p. 324.

Precarious work can be characterised by four main dimensions, namely very low pay, very short working hours (which can also be seen as positive), low job security and no or low social security (health and unemployment insurance, pension schemes). According to this definition, 15% of men and 27% of women employees aged 15-64 are in precarious employment¹⁷. Depending on the job and tasks, non-standard forms of work or specific occupations and/or tasks can blur the lines between work, private and family life and cause additional problems such as the expectation to be reachable at all time, having to work inconvenient and unduly hours in order to make a decent living or balancing the working hours with family responsibilities. It also raises the question of work-related mental and physical health, which can be negatively affected. Already today, even though women's time in paid work is on average less than men's, women work longer hours per day than men when both paid and unpaid work are taken into consideration.¹⁸ To achieve gender equality, both the equal division of paid work and unpaid work between women and men and the female overrepresentation in part-time work needs to be addressed. Also, the access of women to the labour market on equal working conditions must be facilitated.

Changing work patterns as regards working hours, place and time require a reflection on the organisation of care, including on how childcare facilities and other care arrangements can be adapted to the needs of workers with unconventional work patterns. In 2016, the EU has met only the first one of the 'Barcelona targets', which is to have at least 33 % of children below the age of three in care facilities, but has not yet reached the second target of putting 90 % of children between three years and school-age in formal childcare.¹⁹ Member States need to ensure the availability, accessibility and affordability of high quality childcare facilities and other care arrangements that are flexible and available also during out-of-normal-office hours and at short notice to serve the needs of all workers, including gig-economy workers, people who work outside the standard working patterns and those living in rural or remote areas. Otherwise, the new forms of work will only bring opportunities for those who do not have caring responsibilities.

The Communication²⁰ accompanying the **Work-Life Balance Directive**²¹ also addresses the need to achieve a better balance between the career and private life for women and men, a more equal sharing of care responsibilities between women and men and remove barriers to women's labour market participation and career advancement. One of the crucial elements is the availability of affordable and high quality care services. Moreover, for workers with non-standard working patterns or trajectories who make use of flexible working arrangements, it is important to ensure that care facilities as well as parental and care leave schemes are flexible and adapted to their needs. Additionally, parental and care leaves schemes should be revised and updated from a gender perspective in order to avoid perpetuating the traditional division of roles between women and men.

¹⁷ EIGE (2017) Gender, Skills and Precarious work <http://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/gender-skills-and-precarious-work-eu-research-note>

¹⁸ International Labour Office, Non-standard employment around the world: Understanding challenges, shaping prospects, 2016, p. 119. Eurofound, Sixth European Working Conditions Survey overview report, 2017, p 116, See also EIGE index on time domain (<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index>)

¹⁹ Source: Eurostat EU SILC [ilc_caindformal]

²⁰ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: An initiative to support work-life balance for working Parents and carers COM(2017) 252 final <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017DC0252&from=EN>

²¹ See the European Commission's proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU, COM (2017) 253.

Tax systems, working conditions and social protection

The question of regulating crowd work²² is constantly debated, but there is very little emphasis on gender equality and if and how the possible regulations would have an impact on men and women.

Most countries' tax and social protection systems are based on the traditional 40-hour workweek throughout the working life course for the employers and employees, who pay certain taxes and contributions to cover social system's costs. The gig economy and platform work are challenging this system, as, depending on the business model, they could create patchier career paths and bring more precariousness to the labour market in terms of a lack of access to social protection and application of employment protection and regulations.

Women are more often working part-time²³. They also rely more on social protection systems when different life events occur due to caring for children or dependent adults. Therefore, women might bear higher costs for eluding social protection rights in terms of both qualifying periods and contributions. As people tend to shift between jobs and job statuses more often in the modern economy, those transitions need to be facilitated by national **social protection systems** covering all types of work (including crowd work, work in the gig-economy, etc.) and guaranteeing transferability of entitlements, in line with national systems.

Moreover, women often face strong economic disincentives when entering the labour market or wanting to work more. The way tax-benefit systems are set up, together with the cost of childcare, can act as a deterrent for second earners, who are most often women. One of the direct consequences of such disincentives are lower or no contributions paid to pensions systems, which further translates into lower pensions and old-age poverty. There is no wider consensus, all though ongoing debate over the status of a person participating in the gig economy whether in the category of employee or a self-employed person.

The gig economy is made up of many different business models, which strongly affect the work relationship, which also differs greatly between different platforms. If workers are independent contractors rather than employees, this may mean they do not have the same labour rights, working conditions, such as leaves and pay entitlements²⁴, are not covered by legal occupational health and safety protections, social protection, freedom of association and participation in social dialogue²⁵.

Sexual harassment affects women more than men and women and girls are particularly exposed to **cyber violence**.²⁶ In terms of the rise of the gig economy and digitalisation, this can create new non-safe or precarious spaces for women and hinder women from benefiting from the merits of the changing world of work. Other forms of violence and harassment can also occur due to the more vulnerable position of crowd workers sent to the private place of customers, as they depend for their

22 Crowd work is work that is organised via an online platform to enable organisations or individuals to access an indefinite and unknown group of other organisations or individuals to solve specific problems or to provide specific services or products in exchange for payment. These platforms organise the outsourcing of tasks to a large pool of online workers rather than to a single employee. Technology is essential in this form of work.

²³ Eurostat: EU Labour Force Survey 2017

²⁴ Many people crowd work to complement pay from other jobs, yet there is also an important group of workers who rely on crowd work as their primary source of income. Low pay is also one of the main challenges, and there is a considerable amount of unpaid working time. See: Income security in the on-demand economy: Findings and policy lessons, from a survey of crowd workers. Conditions of work and employment series n° 74, ILO.2016.

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/publication/wcms_479693.pdf

²⁵ See also the proposal for Council recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed the European Commission has adopted in March 2018, <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1312&langId=en#navItem-2>

²⁶ Cyber violence is a form of violence that takes place online or through the use of new technologies.

next job on the 'like' of those who have ordered these services, for instance cleaning, care work done in private households and other domestic work, often done by women.

Therefore, the discussions on the social security and safe (online) spaces, precariousness of labour market and changes in taxation systems related to the new world of work should be gender-sensitive and the results as well as actions taken benefit all.

Policy recommendations

Gender equality should be placed as a priority issue on the European Union's and the Member States' political agenda. Therefore, regarding the opportunities and challenges the changing world of work is posing to the Member States and the European Union, the Advisory Committee foresees the following actions necessary to be taken.

For the European Commission to:

- Mainstream gender equality into all EU Strategies (current and coming), policies and funding programmes, in particular regarding employment, social protection, education and lifelong learning, as well as the Digital Single Market Agenda. Monitor the progress including gender impact assessments (of the legislative proposals of the European Commission) and gender budgeting while ensuring that gender equality and work-life balance keep on having a central place in the economic and social planning and monitoring system of the European Union, the so-called European Semester and its successor.

The gender aspect in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies and programmes on matters related to the labour market including segregation, work-life balance and innovation-related investments is, even though evident, often overlooked. Therefore, a monitoring mechanism with guidance at EU level can support Member States. This includes for example reports based on gender-disaggregated data to demonstrate relevant gender gaps and gender specific impacts with an intersectional approach. The EU Institutions should also encourage Member States in this endeavour.

- Utilise representative statistical data and case studies in order to assess the effects that new forms of work (for example crowd work and work on demand via apps) have on gender equality.

It is crucial to carry out research to identify and analyse the conditions, effects, circumstances and needs of different groups of women and men in new forms of work. It is also important to follow any new developments in use of, and legislation on these forms of work (including legislation on status and social protection). Representative Time-Use-Surveys that provide data on the time spent not only on paid work, work in care and the household, but also on self-care, education and leisure are an important measure to assess work-life balance.

- Taking into account the European Union subsidiarity principle, when promoting a better common understanding of the different national definitions of employment and self-employment, as well as temporary agency employment and the rights and social protection for all working people. This should be done with a gender perspective and without prejudice to the right of Member States to introduce or maintain provisions, which are more favourable to the protection of working people.

- Take concrete measures to effectively tackle horizontal and vertical segregation in education and the labour market.

Gender segregation perpetuates skills shortages as well as surpluses and hinders the EU's economic and innovation-related growth. Therefore, stepping up efforts to diminish segregation is crucial in order to use the whole talent pool for all jobs and to satisfy the growing need of workers in all sectors concerned. Stereotyping needs to be addressed and tackled from a young age in education to combat segregation in the labour market.

Moreover, in order to address vertical segregation, unequal working patterns in the gig economy and in the changing world of work should be analysed and addressed to ensure that women and men have equal opportunities of advancing in their careers and taking on decision-making positions.

Vertical and horizontal segregation are also very much related to how household and care responsibilities are shared between women and men. Therefore, equal opportunities should be promoted at the workplace and at home to ensure that more men make use of family friendly measures and flexible working arrangements to bring about effective gender equality²⁷. In addition, available, affordable, flexible and high-quality care facilities are the prerequisite particularly for women to participate in all sectors of the labour market, in education and life-long learning and to pursue higher careers.

- Continue efforts in promoting apprenticeship and work-based learning across Europe, as effective means for promoting non-stereotypical careers as well as re-skilling and up-skilling activities for women and men.
- Facilitate the discussions of the Work Life Balance directive as well as developing and promoting effective measures that enhance the labour market participation of women (removing tax disincentives etc.), ensure better sharing of care tasks (e.g. increasing child-care and other dependants' care facilities and support services etc.) that are supportive to the productivity and competitiveness of businesses and respond to modern challenges in terms of work-life balance.

Regarding the challenges that the changing world of work is posing to European societies, it is crucial to work towards enabling parents and workers with caring responsibilities to better balance their work and family lives and to encourage a better sharing of care responsibilities between women and men.

- Review and update the Barcelona targets on the development of childcare facilities with a view to making the targets more ambitious and to extending the approach to care of other dependent persons.
- Draft and adopt a comprehensive new EU Strategy for Gender Equality, aligned with all the EU governance mechanisms and instruments, and respecting the division of competences between the EU and national level, as well as in the key areas of the post EU2020 strategy.

²⁷ An example of this engagement is an initiative of UN Women „Women's Empowerment Principles“ which offers companies, including those in digital sectors, ICT and STEAM, concrete guidance on empowering women in the workplace, marketplace and community.

The new EU Strategy for Gender Equality should address the new challenges for gender equality arising in the world of work after 2019²⁸. It should further strengthen and promote the integration of a gender perspective in all matters related to the changing world of work.

- Continue funding initiatives that tackle the challenges and provide regular monitoring, reporting and evaluation on the extent and characteristics of the changing world of work and its medium and long-term impact on women's economic independence, employment rights and wellbeing; as well as promote opportunities for gender equality in the changing world of work.

Initiatives such as research, awareness raising, training and mentoring as well as sharing good practices among the Member States facilitate tackling the challenges posed by the changing world of work. Training can incorporate educating employers and employees on the access and use of digital technology, on new forms of work and the management of family friendly measures.

Moreover, funding should be provided for research and campaigns to raise awareness of different stakeholders including policy makers, governments and citizens on the opportunities and challenges related to the new ways of work in order to attract workers from among both women and men and encourage investments in education and lifelong learning. Sufficient means to fund these projects should be made available, while also integrating a gender-responsive planning, budgeting and monitoring, which is in line with European commitments as well as international commitments, the Agenda 2030 and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda following a mainstreaming approach between poverty, employment, education etc. in line with the Social Development Goals. The funds should effectively support focused smart investments in skills, driven by existing demand and emerging trends. A lifelong learning and a gender perspective approach will help to support workers' employability and full participation of women and men in the changing labour market.

- Promote and support cooperation between the Member States in order to facilitate mutual learning and the exchange of good and promising practices that address challenges related to gender equality in new ways of work to strengthen the gender perspective in the labour market.
- Promote and support regular exchanges with the European social partners in the context of the tripartite dialogue on these issues.

For the Member States to:

- Consider the necessary adjustments to cater for gender equality rights in new forms of work in light of the EU legislative framework and policy recommendations to guarantee the transposition into national laws and policies of appropriate definitions of employment.
- Ensure, for all women and men, rights and adequate level of social protection to all forms of employment, while making work pay for all. Adapt when necessary social protection schemes to enable new forms of employment, self-employment and subordinate

²⁸ See the Opinion „Future Gender Equality Policy after 2019: Old and new challenges and opportunities“, which is also prepared by the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

employment to be covered in line with national practices. Social protection systems in Member States should take into account the gender perspective in relation to new patterns of employment, including the situation of people moving frequently between different employment forms.

- Step up efforts to tackle gender stereotypes and horizontal segregation and promote life-long learning to provide women and men in the labour force with adequate skills for the demands of future jobs and increase the gender equality awareness among students, parents, teachers and educators.

Regarding the challenges of the changing world of work, it has become obvious that a policy on national or EU level cannot be comprehensive, if it lacks a careful analysis of the impacts on all: the planning, implementing as well as monitoring and reporting should include gender-segregated data and gender-sensitive approaches.

Tackling segregation and promoting life-long learning is crucial to promoting gender equality and achieving growth and prosperity for all. Equal access to education and life-long learning must be ensured, especially in the fields where new jobs are created. Moreover, introducing and maintaining for example girls' interest in ICT and boys' interest in care-related skills is important from early on²⁹.

Vocational training, gender-neutral career counselling, apprenticeship and female entrepreneurship deserve particular attention. The cooperation between education and the world of work needs to be improved for promotion of non-traditional careers.

- Support and promote projects and practices, which bring together education and training establishments and enterprises, to understand skills needs.
- Assess how current tax systems and social protection systems (individualisation of rights) respond to the needs of women and men and promote gender equality in light of the challenges of the changing world of work.

The changes that have an impact on the concept of work and the participants in the labour market, as well as challenges on the tax and social security systems, require gender-sensitive analysis. Member States should assess whether their tax and/or social protection systems contain disincentives for second earners to work at all or to work more and take effective action to remove these disincentives. Interventions and changes that might rise upon these analyses should benefit all and not disadvantage one gender. Social protection schemes shall, when necessary, be adapted to enable new forms of employment to be covered in line with national practices.

- In terms of the changing world of work, implement and/or enforce legislation to guarantee decent work and the rights of women and men to equal pay for work of equal value³⁰. Provide workers' rights, in accordance with national laws, regarding suspension and termination of work, work-life balance, maternity and paternity leaves, health and safety for all workers and rights regarding leave entitlement and flexible working arrangements, as well

²⁹ Enhanced measures to reduce horizontal gender segregation in education and employment, Council Conclusions by the Estonian Presidency 2017

³⁰ See the Commission Recommendation of 7 March 2014 on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through transparency, 2014/124/EU and the EU Action Plan 2017-2019 Tackling the gender pay gap, COM(2017) 678 final.

as access to collective bargaining to guarantee adequate equal pay and facilitate a better work-life balance for all. Measures to eliminate the gender pay gap and increase pay transparency should be implemented in the new areas of work.

- Facilitate the reconciliation of work, family and private life for women and men by introducing well-designed work-life balance measures and ensuring their widest possible availability in all sectors and occupations, including for parents and caregivers taking up new forms of work³¹. Invest in a targeted manner in digital working practices in order to improve work-life balance for all. Also by providing an infrastructure, which supports people in all ways, e.g. broadband expansion, traffic and public transportation, especially in rural areas.
- Make lifelong learning systems more accessible and flexible, also taking into consideration work-life balance needs, while encouraging employers and individuals to invest in learning. Mechanisms for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning in the labour market should be introduced and widened.
- Effectively support focused smart investments in skills and digital competences for all, in order to tackle digital gender gaps.
- Raise awareness of policy makers, governments and citizens on the challenges and benefits of new forms of work and invest in equal education and lifelong learning, always considering the gender impacts.

Additionally:

- Member States, the European Commission, and according to national practices, the social partners, shall be encouraged, where applicable, to enhance cooperation by exchanging information and best practices on the future of work. Through mutual learning, it might be possible to create a toolbox comprising a range of solutions (including internet-based ones) that enable policy systems to adapt to an ever-changing labour market.
- Social partners at EU level and Member States at national level, in accordance with national practices, shall raise awareness about potential benefits and challenges of the emerging employment forms for all.
- Social partners at the appropriate level, in accordance with national practices, shall be encouraged to look into new forms of employment and the interconnection with existing social dialogue.
- Safeguard a safe working environment. Identify, analyse and address potential risks of harassment and other forms of violence in the gig economy and in the changing world of work. In view of the digitalisation of various work practices, ensure that the information and communications technology at work are not used to perpetuate violence against women.

³¹ Enhanced measures to reduce horizontal gender segregation in education and employment - Council Conclusions (23 nov 2017).