

Panel 4 – Tools for enhancing gender mainstreaming – from political will to e-solutions

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- 1) Majority of gender equality applications to equal treatment commissioner in Estonia are related to the gaps between real, human life and laws or regulations, between the difference of working with or without family obligations. The gaps are between work and family life. The second biggest group of applications is related to accessibility.
- 2) Accordingly, all labour law is actually the most powerful tool for gender mainstreaming, which gives the society models for not equal or equal treatment. It's because labour law is one of the basic laws in the society – what are your rights to earn your living and live a human life. Despite the fact, that women and men work equally and according to basic understanding, are both fully responsible for their welfare themselves, women still give births. Both men and women still have a possibility to become a parent or to take care of one's parents or other family members. The latter as an equal obligation and possibility is not an absolutely common understanding, despite its very human to work and have a family life at the same time. The labour law is still extremely on so-called productive (men's) work-oriented (without touching family issues directly) and the child raising laws are very much reproductive-work oriented, not paying sufficient attention to so-called productive work. The most powerful tool would be in a mobile, borderless, modern, multicultural in many new ways – but still work-life balancing world to combine these two sets of laws into one more holistic, human approach, supporting the free choice.
- 3) Simple things in life are not reflected in labour laws nor in official paradigms. Our last very popular and powerful tool seems to be a volume of parents' rights, the basic ones collected together, written in an easy language, well illustrated and helping parents (mostly women) to combat the challenges of productive and reproductive work-combo. Especially at times, when men acting as women (raising small kids at home) get discriminates in the same way as women and women, who act as men (having small kids, but not raising them at home) do not meet the gender pay gap nor the discrimination in the same way as their sisters. (will show the brochures). It's usual to talk about children's rights, but the rights of the child need for protection also parents, who need equal pay and equal possibilities.
- 4) The next steps have to be adopting the labour law to the life realities and vice versa. High gender pay gap is related to very protective and inflexible maternity leave system, which prohibits income over 390 € per month, but allows mothers and fathers to

leave or to return each month with a short notice only 15 days in advance. Accordingly, there are many law changes under discussion now at ministry of Social Affairs on parental leave, youth work etc. The political will has risen to make changes, but there is a long way to go and the overall political situation in Europe is not so stable. We look forward that this kind of tools – law changes and much better information about the fundamental rights helps us to go further towards more equal society.

- 5) Talking about E-tools we prepare and have got a lot of interest to an application, where people could get information on accessibility. Accessibility is a broader scope, not too often related directly to gender mainstreaming. But if you take your smartphone and tap or name a request like please give me all employers in Tallinn who invite blind employees or who offer childcare at workplace or who offer childcare while parents are on working visits to other countries – we understand, that accessibility is really a broader concept and because it's 2016, all this kind of information should be easily accessible.