

ROUNDTABLE

The parenthood penalty?

Work-life balance, pregnancy and parenthood related discrimination: equality bodies and MEPs contributing to new EU and national initiatives

Wednesday 20th April 2016, 13:30 – 15:00
European Parliament (room A3H1), Brussels

Roundtable co-organised by Equinet – the European Network of Equality Bodies and the EHRC (Equality and Human Rights Commission, Great Britain) and hosted by the Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats (S&D)



AGENDA

12:45	Registration Meeting point in front of the European Parliament Infopoint
13:30 – 13:45	Opening addresses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEP Mary Honeyball (S&D, UK) • Evelyn Collins, Equinet Chair and Chief Executive of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland • Caroline Waters, Deputy Chair, Equality and Human Rights Commission (Great Britain)
13:45 – 14:05	Presentation of the project #WorksForMe – Quinn Roache, Project Manager, Equality and Human Rights Commission (Great Britain)
14:05 – 14:50	Roundtable discussion Chair: Evelyn Collins , Equinet Chair and Chief Executive of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland Speakers (MEPs and equality bodies' representatives) will exchange on the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key issues and challenges in the areas of work-life balance, pregnancy and parenthood related discrimination? • What can be done at EU and national levels? • How can Members of the European Parliament and equality bodies cooperate to promote work life balance and pregnancy and parenthood related discrimination?
14:50 – 15:00	Questions & answers and closing of the roundtable

SPEAKERS DURING THE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Members of the European Parliament:

- MEP **Marie Arena** (S&D, Belgium)
- MEP **Mary Honeyball** (S&D, UK)

- **MEP Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz** (EPP, Poland)
- **MEP Jean Lambert** (Greens, UK)
- **MEP Angelika Mlinar** (ALDE, Austria) (TBC)
- **MEP & Vice-Chair of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality João Pimenta Lopes** (GUE/NGL, Portugal)

Representatives of national equality bodies:

- **Evelyn Collins**, Equinet Chair and Chief Executive of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
- **Theresa Hammer**, Moderator of Equinet Working Group on Gender Equality and Lawyer, Ombud for Equal Treatment, Austria
- **Liesbet Stevens**, Deputy Director, Institute for the Equality of Women and Men, Belgium
- **Caroline Waters**, Deputy Chair, Equality and Human Rights Commission, Great Britain
- **Katarzyna Wilkońska-Żuromska**, Commissioner for Human Rights, Poland

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Equinet has worked extensively on the situation of women in the labour market. It focused in particular on Work Life Balance, including by **(1)** hosting a [Seminar on Work Life Balance and Pregnancy and Parenthood Related Discrimination](#) in 2015, **(2)** publishing a [Perspective on Equality Bodies Promoting a Better Work Life Balance for All](#) in 2013, **(3)** focusing on work-life balance and pregnancy-related discrimination in the Perspective [The Persistence of Discrimination, Harassment and Inequality for Women](#).

In parallel, the launch of the [campaign #Worksforme](#) by the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) (EHRC - UK) illustrates the great need for equality bodies to take action in this area. In particular, the findings of the research [“Pregnancy and Maternity Related Discrimination and Disadvantage”](#) suggests more than three quarters of pregnant women and new mothers, the equivalent of 390,000 women, experience negative and potentially discriminatory treatment at work each year.

This rich evidence-base from the work of Equinet and equality bodies could valuably **inform the work of EU institutions and partners**, following the withdrawal of the Proposal for a Directive amending Directive 92/85/EEC (so-called new Maternity Directive) and the publication of the [European Commission’s Roadmap for the initiative “New start to address the challenges of work-life balance faced by working families”](#).

OBJECTIVES

The roundtable event aims to:

- **Exchange on current priorities** of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and equality bodies on the issues of work life balance and pregnancy and parenthood related discrimination
- **Enhance the understanding of members of the European Parliament** on the work of equality bodies.

