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)

DRAFT AGENDA

13:00 – 13:30	**Registration and welcome**
13:30 – 13:45	**Opening addresses** • 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** – Equality and Human Rights Commission (Great Britain)
14:05 – 14:50	**Roundtable discussion** Participants will exchange on the following topics: • 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**

PARTICIPANTS TO THE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Members of the European Parliament:
• **MEP Marie Arena** (S&D, Belgium)
• **MEP Beatriz Becerra** (ALDE, Spain) *(TBC)*
• **MEP Mary Honeyball** (S&D, UK)
• **MEP Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz** (EPP, Poland) (*TBC*)
• **MEP Jean Lambert** (Greens, UK)
• **MEP João Pimenta Lopes** (GUE/NGL, Portugal) (*TBC*)

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)

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".

In this context, Equinet and the EHRC will co-organise **roundtable event** at the European Parliament in Brussels on **Wednesday 20th April**.

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.